



DEBATES OF THE SENATE

1st SESSION



44th PARLIAMENT



VOLUME 153



NUMBER 11

OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Tuesday, December 14, 2021

The Honourable GEORGE J. FUREY,
Speaker

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THE SENATE

Tuesday, December 14, 2021

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

Prayers.

[Translation]

SENATORS' STATEMENTS

SMALL BUSINESS WEEK

Hon. Tony Loffreda: Honourable senators, I would like to tell you about Louise, a Quebec entrepreneur who owns a business in downtown Montreal. She employs about 30 people. Thanks to her entrepreneurial spirit, leadership and creative vision, her company has doubled its sales over the past few years.

There are stories like Louise's across Quebec and Canada. Not only is Louise helping to keep our economy moving, but she is also meeting the needs of her family and contributing to the financial well-being of her employees.

It is important that we recognize and celebrate Louise's contributions, particularly in the current context of the pandemic. It is for Louise and all of the other entrepreneurs across the country that the Business Development Bank of Canada has been celebrating BDC Small Business Week for over 40 years.

[English]

The BDC has already held its annual Small Business Week. It is always important to acknowledge and celebrate the people who build businesses, employ millions of Canadians and ensure that the heartbeat of our economy is steady and strong. I have always believed that small businesses are the heart and soul of any economy, and they are pillars in our communities.

According to Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada's most recent *Key Small Business Statistics* report from 2020, the Canadian economy totalled 1.23 million employer businesses, and 97.9% of these are small businesses with fewer than 100 employees. The numbers have certainly fluctuated over the last 18 months because of the pandemic; however, as of 2019, small businesses employed 8.4 million Canadians, or 68.8% of the total private labour force.

The ongoing pandemic, with its lockdowns and health restrictions, has put our small businesses through tough times. Case in point: As of November 4, approximately 900,000 businesses were approved for Canada Emergency Business Account loans, and nearly \$50 billion in funds were approved by the government as an emergency lifeline to our struggling businesses.

Governments have put in place several programs to help businesses during the pandemic. It is now key to start shifting investments from business survival to business recovery and growth. The pandemic has accelerated the need for small businesses to further embrace technology. Governments should

provide additional help in this area, which has the potential to help businesses reach new markets, increase revenues and improve overall competitiveness.

We should all continue supporting our entrepreneurs next door and our local shops. I know they are depending on us all to help them recover and emerge from the crisis more resilient than ever.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

CANADA-BULGARIA RELATIONS

Hon. Yonah Martin (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, it is an honour to speak about the importance of this year, 2021, which marks the fifty-fifth anniversary of diplomatic relations between Canada and Bulgaria. Our two countries share a long-standing history that dates back to the 19th century and is founded upon mutual respect and value placed on people-to-people ties, cultural and academic exchange, political and diplomatic values and commitment to democracy and human rights.

Today, the more than 80,000 people of Bulgarian descent who call Canada home have established strong communities from coast to coast across Canada and have contributed to Canada's vibrant multicultural tapestry and the strengthening of our economy.

I am proud to serve as co-chair of the Canada-Bulgaria Inter-Parliamentary Friendship Group, working alongside House co-chair Shaun Chen and fellow parliamentary colleagues in both houses of Canada's Parliament, as well as with our counterparts in Bulgaria, to further develop and strengthen Canada-Bulgaria relations.

June 30 marked the historic fifty-fifth anniversary of Canada-Bulgaria bilateral relations. Our countries enjoy mutually beneficial commercial relations that include trade, investment and cooperation on innovation, science and technology, to name a few.

In 2014, the Ambassador of Bulgaria in Canada, Svetlana Stoycheva-Etropolski, began her diplomatic post in Ottawa as Head of the Political Section and Deputy Head of Mission at the embassy. In 2017, we established the Canada-Bulgaria Inter-Parliamentary Friendship Group. Ambassador Stoycheva-Etropolski was at the helm as *chargé d'affaires* and has served as head of mission ever since. I wish to commend Her Excellency Svetlana Stoycheva-Etropolski for her steadfast leadership and for the important role that she continues to play as the bridge between our two nations.

I have had the honour and pleasure of working closely with Ambassador Stoycheva-Etropolski, whose extensive private and diplomatic experiences — including a long list of achievements on the international stage — have served her country and our bilateral relations very well.

Honourable senators, please join me in recognizing the significance of the historic fifty-fifth anniversary of Canada-Bulgaria diplomatic relations. Thank you.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

THE LATE DAVID STUART BARBER

Hon. Patricia Bovey: Honourable senators, periodically one reads a headline that carries one back through decades, bringing memories of one's youth and various stages in adulthood. Such was the case when I read the July 28 *Winnipeg Free Press* headline "One of the good ones."

That "good one" was none other than David Barber, a brilliant visionary in Winnipeg's film scene. His sudden passing has left a huge hole in Winnipeg's film and arts groups.

Indeed, David's impact on Canada's film sector and that further afield was truly significant too, remembered by the many tributes that flowed in immediately after his passing. He was called "a fosterer of filmmakers" and "a champion of local and Canadian cinema."

Dave was a programmer and the force of the Winnipeg Film Group from 1983 until his passing. A mentor to many and good friend to even more, he knew what films were being created, what festivals were happening and which films would be of interest where. He was a consummate connector supporting film artists, a constant promoter of Canadian film and a true builder of Winnipeg's film community. His eye for excellence never wavered, his support of independent film was resolute and his deep passion for his calling was ever-present. Self-effacing, his kindness was well known, and his sense of humour was deep.

• (1410)

From the time he was a child, his powers of observation were keen. I knew him from the time he was a very little boy. His family lived a block over from mine. I was at school with his oldest brother, and our parents were close friends. David and I reconnected when I moved back to Winnipeg. He was fully ensconced as the force of the Winnipeg Film Group. I was thrilled when he received the first ever Making a Difference Award from the Winnipeg Arts Council in 2007 — an award much deserved, as was his Diamond Jubilee Medal.

We frequently met at arts events and our local grocery store and always had time to catch up. His sense of fun, friendship and insightful grasp of multiple policy issues permeated every conversation. He was truly a quiet, deep, committed and knowledgeable soul.

The theatre at Winnipeg's Cinematheque has already been named the Dave Barber Theatre, and no naming has ever been more fitting.

Dave, the community is hurting but ever so grateful for your many accomplishments and steadfast dedication. My thoughts and condolences go to your brothers and their families.

Thank you, my friend, for your pioneering work and ever-present support of so many.

[Senator Martin]

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

CONSERVATION IN CANADA

Hon. Diane F. Griffin: Honourable senators, conservation in Canada, especially land conservation, has been very important to me for all of my working life, whether it was as the natural areas coordinator in Alberta — that was a great job by the way — working with the Island Nature Trust and the Nature Conservancy of Canada or as a deputy minister for environment.

Also, the opportunity I've had to work with the volunteer organizations has primarily been in land conservation. The important part of conservation is not only the projects that are in parks and other natural areas — because, of course, you can justify those as refuges and sources of biodiversity conservation — but also in the whole general landscape; the other 85% of the landscape that's not in parks or protected areas. How that land is managed is really important for all of us and for the world, not just for Canada. We're lucky to have lots of space here, but we contribute to conservation throughout the world, whether it's sequestering carbon, growing food for Canada or providing "fibre" as foresters like to refer to forests.

We're so blessed in our country with all of that. However, I've mentioned lands that are in parks and other small parcels of the landscape. These protected areas in our country are relatively small. The goal is to protect many more by working on conservation projects with governments — federal, provincial, even municipal — but also with a lot of the conservation groups which have become increasingly active over the years.

I've been on the board of the Nature Conservancy of Canada. I plan to go back again sometime in the future. These organizations have made major contributions to assist the goals that have been espoused by the various governments in our country. They protect forests and wildlife such as the burrowing owl in Saskatchewan. We have a couple of senators behind me and across the way from Saskatchewan who I'm sure must have heard of the burrowing owl and maybe even seen them first-hand.

However, the majority of those endangered creatures are in the southern part of Canada, within 100 miles of the border with the United States. It's in the part of Canada that is the most heavily populated and the most heavily impacted by development.

During the last few months that I have on the Standing Senate Committee on Agriculture and Forestry, I want to ensure that we always have conservation top of mind.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

CANADIAN ATHLETES

Hon. Marty Deacon: Honourable senators, we have heard much about our Canadian athletes as of late. They lead by example day in and day out. What is less discussed are their stories off the field of play that demonstrate their resilience and are sometimes more profound than their athletic

accomplishments. For my purposes today, it is not their exploits on the field I would like to highlight but instead their leadership outside of competition.

As you will recall, shortly before the Paralympics opened in Tokyo, Kabul had fallen to the Taliban. Many Afghans worried about what was to come. Would they face repercussions? Would their families? As you can imagine, for those who competed in athletic competition for the joy of it — particularly women — these fears were front, centre and immediate.

Since 2012, it has been my privilege to mentor women in Afghanistan. I have also participated in and supported the Secret Marathon, an incredible annual event connected with International Women's Day and spearheaded by hopeful young Afghani women. It has been humbling to observe their growth, their desire to learn and their desire to lead.

I and others in the Canadian sports and education community were contacted by several athletes, coaches, sports leaders and leaders in the LGBTQ2+ community to help them get out of Afghanistan.

Their stories were all gut-wrenching. My heart broke, and I knew we had to do whatever was possible to help. I still cringe to think that some of these athletes who marched into the opening ceremonies of the Olympic Games in July were now running for their lives as their homes were invaded and personal property destroyed.

Over the hours, days and weeks, we collectively used every government, NGO and sport and education connection we could to leverage their escape from Afghanistan. I am proud to say that these connections, made through the love, humanity and unity of sport, led to the escape of dozens of Afghan athletes and coaches from the country.

By September, through this work and other work done by the Canadian and International Olympic Committee, specifically the Solidarity unit, every athlete who participated in the Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games was out of Afghanistan with humanitarian visa in hand. There is little that is more powerful than when I received a photograph of a family last week moments after they were able to leave Afghanistan.

As we know, there are still many seeking support and their escape from Taliban rule. We continue to push and work with other countries to assist, facilitate and leverage wherever possible. I know there are a number of domestic and international leaders working collectively on the ground to help facilitate a move to Canada or to another country or to support refugees when they arrive. The degree of community at the international level and in Canada never fails to give me hope. Our national sports community has stepped up, like others, to exemplify our Canadian values in their response to the crisis in Afghanistan.

Thank you, *meegwetch*.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

HIS HIGHNESS THE AGA KHAN

CONGRATULATIONS ON THE OCCASION OF EIGHTY-FIFTH BIRTHDAY

Hon. Mobina S. B. Jaffer: Honourable senators, yesterday Ismaili Muslims residing in 25 countries around the world celebrated His Highness Karim Aga Khan's eighty-fifth birthday.

Born in 1936 in Geneva, Switzerland, His Highness succeeded his grandfather as the forty-ninth spiritual leader of the Ismaili Muslims when he was just 20 years old.

For over three quarters of his life, His Highness has made tremendous personal sacrifices to improve the lives of Ismaili Muslims and continues to work tirelessly to improve the quality of life of all people, especially those living in less developed regions in the world.

Education, specifically for girls, has always informed much of His Highness's work. In fact, the Aga Khan Development Network works hard to ensure that students of all ages have access to quality learning opportunities.

His Highness has spent much of his life working to improve health outcomes for people living in vulnerable regions in the world.

The Aga Khan hospitals are a network of international hospitals based in Dar es Salaam, Mumbai, Kisumu, Mombasa, Nairobi and Pakistan.

The hospitals are managed by Aga Khan Health Services, one of the most comprehensive non-profit health care systems in the developing world.

Finally, as the world navigated the hardship and difficulties incited by COVID-19, His Highness reminded us to keep our hearts open and to help one another.

The Aga Khan network of agencies adapted their operations to respond to the pandemic, focusing on developing regions which were in particular need. He has been a vocal advocate for vaccination.

• (1420)

Honourable senators, typically on your birthday your loved ones shower you with gifts. I often think about what I could possibly give to someone who has given so much to me.

Without the guidance of His Highness and his grandfather before him, I may not ever have received a high-quality education and certainly would not have become a lawyer or a senator. Without the support of His Highness, I would not have been able to seek refuge in Canada. His constant love and guidance have truly made me who I am today.

On His Highness Prince Karim Aga Khan's eighty-fifth birthday, I would like to reconfirm my commitment to use my time, my knowledge and my position as a Canadian senator to help all those who are most vulnerable in society and to help groom and empower future generations of leaders.

Happy birthday, Your Highness, from the very bottom of my heart. Thank you for everything you do to make the world a peaceful and safer place for all.

Salgirah Mubarak.

Thank you, senators.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

[Translation]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

AUDITOR GENERAL

2021 FALL REPORTS TABLED

The Hon. the Speaker pro tempore: Honourable senators, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the 2021 Fall Reports of the Auditor General of Canada to the Parliament of Canada, pursuant to the *Auditor General Act*, R.S.C. 1985, c. A-17, sbs. 7(3).

[English]

FISHERIES AND OCEANS

REPORT PURSUANT TO RULE 12-26(2) TABLED

Hon. Bev Busson: Honourable senators, pursuant to rule 12-26(2) of the *Rules of the Senate*, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the first report of the Standing Senate Committee on Fisheries and Oceans, which deals with the expenses incurred by the committee during the Second Session of the Forty-Third Parliament.

(For text of report, see today's Journals of the Senate, p. 159.)

[Translation]

NATIONAL FINANCE

REPORT PURSUANT TO RULE 12-26(2) TABLED

Hon. Percy Mockler: Honourable senators, pursuant to rule 12-26(2) of the *Rules of the Senate*, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the first report of the Standing Senate Committee on National Finance, which deals with the expenses incurred by the committee during the Second Session of the Forty-Third Parliament.

(For text of report, see today's Journals of the Senate, p. 160.)

[Senator Jaffer]

[English]

THE SENATE

MOTION TO RESOLVE INTO COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE TO CONSIDER SUBJECT MATTER OF BILL C-2 ADOPTED

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

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

1. the Senate resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole at 5 p.m. on Thursday, December 16, 2021, to consider the subject matter of Bill C-2, An Act to provide further support in response to COVID-19, with any proceedings then before the Senate being interrupted until the end of Committee of the Whole;
2. if the bells are ringing for a vote at the time the committee is to meet, they be interrupted for the Committee of the Whole at that time, and resume once the committee has completed its work for the balance of any time remaining;
3. the Committee of the Whole on the subject matter of Bill C-2 receive the Honourable Chrystia Freeland, P.C., M.P., Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, accompanied by no more than four officials;
4. the Committee of the Whole on the subject matter of Bill C-2 rise no later than 95 minutes after it begins;
5. the witness' introductory remarks last a maximum total of five minutes;
6. if a senator does not use the entire period of 10 minutes for debate provided under rule 12-32(3)(d), including the responses of the witnesses, that senator may yield the balance of time to another senator; and
7. the start of the evening suspension be delayed until the Committee of the Whole has reported, and last one hour, provided that if under the terms of paragraph 13 of the order of November 25, 2021, something is to take place at 7 p.m., it instead take place once the sitting resumes after the evening suspension.

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to.)

COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTARY ASSOCIATION

COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTARY ASSOCIATION UNITED
KINGDOM VIRTUAL PARLIAMENTARY FORUM ON
CLIMATE CHANGE, MARCH 22-24, 2021

Hon. Terry M. Mercer: Honourable senators, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the report of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association concerning the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association United Kingdom Virtual Parliamentary Forum on Climate Change, held by video conference, from March 22 to 24, 2021.

[Translation]

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

COMMITTEE AUTHORIZED TO STUDY THE APPLICATION OF THE
OFFICIAL LANGUAGES ACT AND RELEVANT REGULATIONS
AND DIRECTIVES AND REFER PAPERS AND EVIDENCE
SINCE THE BEGINNING OF THE FIRST SESSION
OF THE FORTY-THIRD PARLIAMENT

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

That the Standing Senate Committee on Official Languages be authorized to study and to report on the application of the *Official Languages Act* and of the regulations and directives made under it, within those institutions subject to the Act;

That the committee also be authorized to study the reports and documents published by the Minister of Canadian Heritage, the Minister of Official Languages, the President of the Treasury Board and the Commissioner of Official Languages, and any other subject concerning official languages;

That the documents received, evidence heard and business accomplished on this subject by the committee since the beginning of the First Session of the Forty-third Parliament be referred to the committee; and

That the committee submit its final report no later than June 15, 2023, and that the committee retain all powers necessary to publicize its findings for 180 days after the tabling of the final report.

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to.)

[English]

FISHERIES AND OCEANS

NOTICE OF MOTION TO AUTHORIZE COMMITTEE TO STUDY
ISSUES RELATING TO FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'S CURRENT
AND EVOLVING POLICY FRAMEWORK FOR MANAGING
FISHERIES AND OCEANS

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

That the Standing Senate Committee on Fisheries and Oceans be authorized to examine and report on issues relating to the federal government's current and evolving policy framework for managing Canada's fisheries and oceans, including maritime safety; and

That the committee submit its final report to the Senate no later than June 30, 2025.

• (1430)

NOTICE OF MOTION TO AUTHORIZE COMMITTEE TO STUDY THE
IMPLEMENTATION OF INDIGENOUS RIGHTS-BASED FISHERIES
ACROSS CANADA AND REFER PAPERS AND EVIDENCE
FROM THE SECOND SESSION OF THE
FORTY-THIRD PARLIAMENT

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

That the Standing Senate Committee on Fisheries and Oceans be authorized to examine and report on the implementation of Indigenous rights-based fisheries across Canada, including the implementation of the rights of Mi'kmaq and Maliseet communities in Atlantic Canada to fish in pursuit of a moderate livelihood;

That the Committee study how Indigenous rights-based fisheries have been implemented by the federal government thus far, and that the Committee identify the most appropriate and effective ways to ensure the recognition and implementation of Indigenous rights-based fisheries going forward;

That the papers and evidence received and taken and work accomplished by the Standing Senate Committee on Fisheries and Oceans during the Second Session of the Forty-third Parliament as part of its study of issues relating to its mandate as set out in the relevant subsection of rule 12-7, be referred to the Committee; and

That the Committee report to the Senate no later than December 31, 2022, and that the committee retain all powers necessary to publicize its findings for 180 days after the tabling of the final report.

ETHICS AND CONFLICT OF INTEREST FOR SENATORS

COMMITTEE AUTHORIZED TO REFER PAPERS AND
DOCUMENTS FROM THE SECOND SESSION OF
THE FORTY-THIRD PARLIAMENT AND BY
THE INTERSESSIONAL AUTHORITY

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

That the papers and documents received and/or produced by the Standing Committee on Ethics and Conflict of Interest for Senators during the Second Session of the Forty-third Parliament, and by the Intersessional Authority be referred to the Standing Committee on Ethics and Conflict of Interest for Senators.

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to.)

NOTICE OF MOTION TO AUTHORIZE COMMITTEE TO MEET
DURING SITTINGS OF THE SENATE AND HOLD HYBRID
OR ENTIRELY VIRTUAL MEETINGS

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

That, for the remainder of the current parliamentary session, the Standing Committee on Ethics and Conflict of Interest for Senators be authorized to:

- (a) meet even though the Senate may then be sitting, and that rule 12-18(1) be suspended in relation thereto;
- (b) hold hybrid meetings or meetings entirely by videoconference; and

That for greater certainty the provisions of subparagraphs 20 to 22 of the order adopted by the Senate on November 25, 2021, concerning hybrid committee meetings apply in relation to meetings of this committee, including meetings held entirely by videoconference.

AUDIT AND OVERSIGHT

NOTICE OF MOTION TO AUTHORIZE COMMITTEE TO REFER
PAPERS AND EVIDENCE FROM THE SECOND SESSION
OF THE FORTY-THIRD PARLIAMENT AND BY
THE INTERSESSIONAL AUTHORITY

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

That the papers and evidence received and taken and the work accomplished or produced by the Standing Senate Committee on Audit and Oversight during the Second Session of the Forty-third Parliament and by the Intersessional Authority be referred to the Standing Committee on Audit and Oversight.

THE SENATE

NOTICE OF MOTION PERTAINING TO MINIMUMS FOR
GOVERNMENT BILLS

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

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

1. except as provided in this order, the question not be put on the motion for third reading of a government bill unless the orders for resuming debate at second and third reading have, together, been called at least three times, in addition to the sittings at which the motions for second and third readings were moved;
2. when a government bill has been read a first time, and before a motion is moved to set the date for second reading, the Leader of the Government in the Senate or the Deputy Leader of the Government in the Senate may, without notice, move that the bill be deemed an urgent matter, and that the provisions of paragraph 1 of this order not apply to proceedings on the bill;
3. when a motion has been moved pursuant to paragraph 2 of this order, the following provisions apply:
 - (a) the debate shall only deal with whether the bill should be deemed an urgent matter or not;
 - (b) the debate shall not be adjourned;
 - (c) the debate shall last a maximum of 20 minutes;
 - (d) no senator shall speak for more than 5 minutes;
 - (e) no senator shall speak more than once;

- (f) the debate shall not be interrupted for any purpose, except for the reading of a message from the Crown or an event announced in such a message;
- (g) the debate may continue beyond the ordinary time of adjournment, if necessary, until the conclusion of the debate and consequential business;
- (h) the time taken in debate and for any vote shall not count as part of Routine Proceedings;
- (i) no amendment or other motion shall be received, except a motion that a certain senator be now heard or do now speak;
- (j) when debate concludes or the time for debate expires, the Speaker shall put the question; and
- (k) any standing vote requested shall not be deferred, and the bells shall ring for only 15 minutes.

QUESTION PERIOD

FINANCE

MEDIA REPORT OF LOW MORALE

Hon. Leo Housakos (Acting Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, my question is for the government leader in the Senate. Senator Gold, as we await the details of the Economic and Fiscal Update to be presented later this afternoon, I would like to draw your attention to yesterday's *The Globe and Mail* article about the Finance Department.

According to this report, the Finance Department has low morale, significant staff turnover, a deputy minister unable to control spending or deliver an economic growth plan and a minister who rarely takes departmental briefings, hasn't met with assistant deputy ministers in months and focuses mainly on political outreach.

Leader, is this accurate? If this is accurate, is the Trudeau government concerned about the chaotic state of affairs in this important Department of Finance.

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for your question. The Government of Canada has confidence not only in the Minister of Finance but also in all those public officials who serve diligently and honourably in their roles.

[Translation]

Senator Housakos: I have a supplementary question for the Leader of the Government.

I don't really understand why the Trudeau government is so dismissive of the *Globe and Mail* article, given that the Department of Finance's policies and operations have a direct impact on the day-to-day lives of Canadians, who are already having trouble making ends meet.

We have a Prime Minister who says he isn't concerned about monetary policy, a government that took more than two years to table a budget, a government that didn't mention inflation in the Throne Speech and a Department of Finance that has not yet presented the public accounts or the debt management report for the current year.

Senator Gold, here's another very simple question. Do you dispute these facts, yes or no?

Senator Gold: Yes.

• (1440)

[English]

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

IMMIGRATION PROCESSING BACKLOG

Hon. Salma Ataullahjan: Honourable senators, my question is for the government leader in the Senate.

Senator Gold, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, or IRCC, has been experiencing processing delays since the beginning of the pandemic, leaving nearly 1.8 million immigration applicants in limbo.

These bureaucratic roadblocks have very real impacts on the lives of applicants. While they wait for the government to respond, many must live away from family, and for some it has been many years. As a result, they have missed important moments, such as their child's first step or the death of a loved one. Delays by IRCC have also caused significant financial burdens for applicants.

Senator Gold, families make life-altering sacrifices to come to Canada. The lack of transparency in the immigration process has become harmful and unjust.

When will IRCC release concrete plans to address the backlog of 1.8 million immigration applications?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for your question, senator, and for underlining the importance to all of those who seek to come to Canada of having their files processed expeditiously. I'm advised that Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada's operations have continued to adapt, innovate and evolve since the outset of the pandemic. I'm also advised that the government is on track towards meeting its objective of bringing in 401,000 new permanent residents this year, which would be the largest annual arrival in the past 100 years. Indeed, as of early November, Canada has welcomed 325,000 new permanent residents this year alone.

The government continues to shift resources to focus on priorities to increase the digitization of applications through various means, such as a digital intake Permanent Residence Portal, streamlining its processes where possible and to resume in-person operations while respecting public health and safety guidelines.

Senator Ataullahjan: Senator Gold, we are almost two years into this pandemic and little progress has been made to expedite immigration applications.

Most of the department's in-person offices remain closed and applicants report being unable to communicate with officers unless they hire an immigration consultant, which comes with a hefty fee.

Senator Gold, what measures have been implemented to modernize the IRCC so it can still function in a more virtual world?

Senator Gold: Thank you, senator, for your question. As I mentioned in my previous answer, the government has made progress on the digitization of applications, the creation of a digital portal to facilitate applications in the processing. I'm advised that Canada was the first country in the world to offer citizenship tests online, and the government continues to commit itself to accelerating processing times through the planned investments in modernization set out in Budget 2021.

[Translation]

ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

Hon. Rosa Galvez: Honourable senators, my question is for the Government Representative in the Senate.

[English]

Senator Gold, a recent report by Nature Canada and three other environmental organizations identify shortcomings in Canada's approach to measuring and reporting carbon dioxide emissions from the forest sector. The report showed that Canada's accounting approach fails to include more than 80 million tonnes of CO₂ emissions associated with logging each year in its emissions totals. That's the equivalent of failing to report all the emissions from the heating of every building in Canada.

This understatement of the climate impact of logging is putting the achievement of Canada's climate targets, as well as the protection of Canada's forests, at risk. Will the government agree to appoint an independent expert group to review Canada's approach to forest carbon accounting and issue recommendations for greater accuracy?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Senator, thank you for your question, and I thank you for your leadership on this topic. The report from Nature Canada to which you refer is welcomed by this government. The government has seen enhanced research of greenhouse gas emissions and welcomes that research. I'm advised that the

government will be taking the report of Nature Canada into consideration. The government remains committed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and to look into emission leaks and gaps in order to continuously improve its work.

Senator Galvez: Canada's failure to accurately report the true climate impact from its logging sector is perpetuating a myth that logging in Canada produces minimal CO₂ emissions when in reality industrial logging emits more carbon than the entire agricultural sector. Will the government review its forest carbon accounting practices in order to put in place more effective practices in advance of its fifth biannual report on climate change to the United Nations in 2022?

Senator Gold: Thank you, senator, for your question. As I mentioned, the government is committed to improving its work to reduce greenhouse emissions, which includes exploring where there may be possible leaks in data and the like. The government is further committed to continuously improving its practices and will ensure quality reporting to international organizations, such as the ones you mentioned.

[Translation]

INDIGENOUS SERVICES

ACCESS TO SAFE DRINKING WATER

Hon. Renée Dupuis: My question is for the Government Representative in the Senate.

Senator Gold, on March 17, I asked you what deadline the government had set for itself to review the policy and funding formula for the operating and maintenance costs of public drinking water systems on Indigenous reserves. You did not have an answer at the time.

I therefore asked the Parliamentary Budget Officer to calculate the amounts needed to eliminate the gap between water and sewer services in Indigenous communities and those received by non-Indigenous communities in a similar situation in the rest of Canada.

In his report released on December 1, the Parliamentary Budget Officer found that the funding allocated by the government for the years 2016 to 2026 to cover the operating and maintenance costs of the 1,298 public systems in 550 First Nations communities is insufficient. In fact, there is a \$1.4-billion shortfall to complete the planned work.

The new Minister of Indigenous Services told *La Presse* on November 11 that she is thinking about what a realistic timeline would be for removing the 119 long-term drinking water advisories that are currently in place. According to the minister, she hasn't been able to set a timeline because she is examining the obstacles to removing the advisories.

Senator Gold, could you please check with the minister to find out what obstacles are preventing her from setting a timeline to resolve this issue?

[Senator Gold]

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for the question and for bringing up the unacceptable lack of drinking water in several places on Indigenous lands.

The government has already invested billions of dollars and is committed to continuing investing to ensure that First Nations have reliable water and wastewater infrastructure on reserve for the long term.

The government is also committed to fully funding operating and maintenance costs under the funding formula. It will strive to close any gap in this area.

I am told that the number of high-risk systems continues to decline and that more and more long-term drinking water advisories are being lifted. However, the government knows full well that there is still a lot of work to be done and is committed to addressing these unacceptable gaps.

Senator Dupuis: Senator Gold, could you pass along my question to the minister? I have asked questions about the obstacles to setting a timeline.

I have a supplementary question for you. An agreement was reached between the federal government and a number of First Nations in July 2021. It is an \$8-billion settlement. In fact, a number of First Nations have filed lawsuits seeking compensation for having been under a drinking water advisory for more than a year, from 1995 to this date.

• (1450)

My questions are the following. First, can you provide details about each of the items in the \$8-billion envelope? How many First Nations are included in this settlement? Will this amount be distributed equally to the First Nations included in the settlement? Will the work required to address these problems be carried out more quickly than in the other First Nations not included in this settlement? How many other First Nations not covered by this settlement are affected? Will the government compensate all the other First Nations subject to a drinking water advisory for more than one year, since 1995, but who are not part of this class action suit?

Senator Gold: Concerning all these questions, I will ask the government and try to provide answers as quickly as possible.

[English]

NATURAL RESOURCES

CARBON CAPTURE, UTILIZATION AND STORAGE STRATEGY

Hon. Marty Klyne: Honourable senators, my question is for the government leader in the Senate. Senator Gold, Budget 2021 highlighted that carbon capture, utilization and storage is an important tool for reducing emissions in high-emitting sectors and that Alberta and Saskatchewan have the greatest near-term potential to become global leaders in this technology. This spring, Deputy Prime Minister Freeland spoke positively about carbon capture at our National Finance Committee. In

September, the Senate Prosperity Action Group recommended that the government look at co-investing with venture capital on commercialization opportunities in this area. I saw that Natural Resources Canada received expressions of interest for front-end engineering and design studies for carbon capture facilities earlier this fall. What are the government's plans for the role of carbon capture, utilization and storage in supporting mission net zero, to what scale and which levels of regions?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for your question, Senator Klyne. Recognizing that carbon capture, utilization and storage, known as CCUS, can play an essential role in the transformation of our economy to a prosperous net-zero economy, the government is leading the development of a federal CCUS strategy that will enable Canadian industries to realize its production and commercial potential and ensure that Canada is competitive in this growing industry. This is an important tool to address the challenge that you raise. But it is one solution, and it alone will not solve the problem. Nor should it be considered an entire climate plan.

The government is committed to collaborating with key stakeholders and partners to build a strategy with the vision and set of areas for action to help the CCUS industry realize its full potential. The government will continue to make smart investments to help us reduce our emissions and grow our economy.

With regards to how these jobs will be distributed throughout the country and regions, I don't have a specific answer. I will have to inquire and report back.

AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

Hon. Robert Black: Honourable senators, my question is for the Government Representative in the Senate. Senator Gold, as you know, Canada's federal, provincial and territorial ministers of agriculture held their annual meeting at the beginning of November. During these discussions, the ministers agreed on a vision that seeks to position our producers, processors and others within the sector for continued success as world leaders in sustainable agriculture and enable a globally competitive sector.

This sounds like a good first step forward. However, agriculture has too often been treated as an afterthought. Most recently, your government failed to mention agriculture even once in November's Speech from the Throne. Despite this, our agricultural and agri-food communities have continued to display their resounding strength and resilience, time and time again, through policy and trade disputes, and climate change crises. Even in the toughest of times, our farmers have continued to feed families in Canada and around the world. They are stewards of our environment and the backbone of our nation.

Senator Gold and honourable colleagues, I am confident that agriculture will be a key driver in Canada's post-pandemic recovery if they are properly supported not only by words, but by actions and funding. Senator Gold, is your government willing to finally commit to providing adequate support to ensure the Canadian agriculture industry is able to grow and innovate so they can continue feeding not only Canadian families, but also families around the world?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you, senator, for your question and ongoing advocacy on this important topic. The government understands and agrees that a financially healthy agricultural sector is important for Canada's economic well-being.

I have been informed that in response to the current challenges facing the sector — notably, impacts flowing from the pandemic — the government has committed programming to support agriculture. I note that the government has committed up to \$550 million over the last year to support farmers in the fight against climate change. These include the Agricultural Climate Solutions, Agricultural Clean Technology Program and On-Farm Climate Action Fund program. I have been further advised that the current Canadian Agricultural Partnership provides significant support to the agriculture and agri-food sector, and the next policy framework for agriculture will build off the success of the partnership to help producers and processors address challenges and, importantly, seize the opportunities that lie before them.

PUBLIC SAFETY

CANADIAN CENTRE FOR CYBER SECURITY

Hon. Elizabeth Marshall: Honourable senators, my question is for the Leader of the Government in the Senate. Senator Gold, we are having problems accessing some of the government's websites. The two we are working with are Canada Revenue Agency and Statistics Canada, but I understand it is not confined to those two departments. There is a message on the Government of Canada website that says there is a problem with cybersecurity vulnerability.

Could you give us some information as to what is happening, the severity of it and, especially, how long you think this problem is going to last, since we are going to be adjourning for six weeks?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you. Unfortunately, I cannot provide a timeline for when this problem will be totally resolved. As honourable senators know — and, Senator Marshall, you referred to it in your question — there has been a rather broad challenge to our cyberinfrastructure caused by some weaknesses in a program that is used broadly across many sectors.

Out of concern for security, privacy and other considerations, a number of websites, both government and non-government, have chosen to shut down to make sure that nothing worse happens to the data that is contained therein. I will make inquiries. I have every confidence that the CSE and other institutions that are

responsible for protecting the security of our infrastructure are hard at work to solve the problem. I will report back if I have more information.

Senator Marshall: Thank you very much, Senator Gold. Could you also find out if there is any information about the magnitude of the work and the cost? I think there is about \$60 million in Supplementary Estimates (B), but based on what I'm hearing in the media, the magnitude of the problem is quite extensive so \$60 million doesn't sound like a lot of money. If there is any additional information you could find on that, it would be appreciated. Could you do that?

Senator Gold: I certainly will.

FINANCE

RECOVERY OF FRAUDULENT COVID-19 SUPPORT PAYMENTS

Hon. Tony Loffreda: Honourable senators, my question is for the Government Representative in the Senate. Senator Gold, I would like to ask you a question about COVID-related fraud prevention measures taken by the Canada Revenue Agency and Employment and Social Development Canada and on the implementation of its four-year operational plan for post-payment integrity activities. The Fall Economic Statement 2020 allocated additional funding to increase their capacity to detect, investigate and address cases of fraud and misrepresentation.

In remarks delivered last month, Sarah Paquet, Director and CEO of FINTRAC addressed the issue of suspicious or false applications for COVID programs. Thankfully, Ms. Paquet said that:

Fraud-related activity targeting the Canada Emergency Response Benefit and the Canada Emergency Business Account has been low when compared to the many millions of Canadians who received much-needed support through these programs.

That is certainly reassuring.

• (1500)

Can you provide us with an update on the CRA and the ESDC's post-payment verification work? I understand ESDC's plan is supposed to be refined on a regular basis as the department gains experience and knowledge from its investigations.

I also note that the CRA said three months ago that it would commence post-compliance work. Has this work started? Are departments streamlining their efforts to get more bang for their buck? Are there any early lessons or findings that can help the departments better distribute future emergency aid?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for your question, senator. The government, as we know, has delivered on major income support measures that helped buffer the worst economic impacts of this pandemic with unprecedented speed.

With regard to protection against fraud, the CERB had front-end safeguards and back-end verification measures that allowed payments to be made quickly to workers while ensuring that cases of fraud or deliberate misrepresentations were identified. CRA and Service Canada have actively monitored and identified cases of fraud, and the government has announced multi-year funding to increase the capacity to detect, investigate and address cases of deliberate fraud.

As we move ahead in our economic recovery, the government will continue to work on post-payment verification and will be there to support Canadians.

In regard to some of your remaining questions, I will seek details from the government and report back to the chamber.

Senator Loffreda: Thank you for the answer. I'm encouraged to hear that departments are actively working together to address these fraudulent activities related to the pandemic. I do agree, and I've said before and have always said, that the government was quick, agile and focused when it delivered its various emergency support programs. However, we all know that there were fraudulent activities, some of which could possibly have been prevented.

I appreciate that you will seek answers to my remaining questions and that it's an ongoing exercise.

Can you provide us with a written update with the number of cases detected and the breakdown between fraudulent individual claims and business claims? To your knowledge, how much money was wrongfully disbursed and how much has been recouped since? I would appreciate if you could elaborate on that now.

Senator Gold: Senator, I can provide you some answers now.

To date, the ESDC's integrity measures have identified more than 30,000 cases of potential fraud requiring an immediate stoppage in pay and the start of integrity investigations. By successfully stopping these payments, approximately \$319 million in potentially erroneous payments were avoided.

With regard to the breakdown in cases, I'll have to inquire with the government. I'll add them to my questions and will report back in due course.

PUBLIC SAFETY

CANADA BORDER SERVICES AGENCY—PANDEMIC RELATED TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS

Hon. David M. Wells: Honourable senators, my question is for the government leader in the Senate. Senator Gold, your government's ArriveCAN app can be a great tool for Canadians who choose to use it and are able to use it. However, in making

its use mandatory for all Canadians returning to Canada, your government was actually discriminating against seniors who don't always carry smartphones and people who don't have the costly data plans. As you know, Canada has some of the most expensive data plans in the world.

It also didn't take into account what people would do if the app crashed or became inoperable on their phones.

It appears Canadians now have the option to present their information in person to a CBSA officer, which perhaps should have been the case all along. I say "it appears" because I'm still not entirely sure if they were CBSA and the Public Health Agency of Canada agents at the border and airlines that are refusing boarding to passengers.

So, leader, can you assure us that Canadians will no longer be subject to quarantine at the border for failure to use the app and that airlines have been instructed to stop refusing boarding as well?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for your question. I'm not in a position to verify that. I'll have to make inquiries and report back.

Senator Wells: Thank you, Senator Gold. As you know, many Canadians will be travelling over the next days and weeks, and some are still in quarantine when they perhaps don't have to be. So I would appreciate a timely answer on this, whether it's today or tomorrow, because it is time sensitive, and you'll understand that.

What happens now to those Canadians, many of whom are seniors, who are already forced into quarantine prior to the government's reversal? Are they required to remain under quarantine?

Senator Gold: Again, thank you for your question and for underlining the difficulties some Canadians experience in the face of changing regulations and protocols, all of which are designed to keep Canadians safe from what appears to be a rapidly accelerating new wave of this pandemic.

I'll have to make inquiries, senator, and report back.

FINANCE

CANADA PENSION PLAN

Hon. Yonah Martin (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, my question is also for the government leader. In a recent statement, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business said the following:

CFIB urges the federal government and provincial governments to exercise extreme caution when imposing new costs on small businesses at a time when a majority are still not back to normal sales or out from under their COVID-related debt.

On January 1, the Trudeau government will once again raise Canada Pension Plan payroll taxes on businesses. It will increase labour costs for small businesses while they are still struggling with inflation, supply chain issues and the pandemic.

In 2016, former Minister Morneau promised the CPP premium increases would be “relatively painless.” That is clearly not the case today, leader. Why is your government going ahead with the CPP premium hike in less than three weeks from now?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): The Government of Canada works hard to ensure that Canadians are properly treated with regard to all of the programs upon which we rely. With regard to your specific question, I don’t have an answer related to this particular policy. I will certainly make inquiries.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

APPROPRIATION BILL NO. 4, 2021-22

SECOND READING

Hon. Raymonde Gagné (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate) moved second reading of Bill C-6, 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 rise today to introduce the fourth appropriation act for fiscal year 2021-22, which contains the supply requirements for the 2021-22 Supplementary Estimates (B).

The appropriation bill is a vehicle through which payments from the Consolidated Revenue Fund are authorized for government programs and services. 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 fiscal year is completed.

Through this supply bill, the government requests Parliament’s approval of the planned spending proposals that are detailed in the Supplementary Estimates (B).

The estimates, which include the Main Estimates, supplementary estimates, departmental plans and departmental results reports, in conjunction with the public accounts, help parliamentarians scrutinize government spending.

[Translation]

Esteemed colleagues, we all know how important this information is to the functioning of our system of governance.

[Senator Martin]

Accountability, which is at the core of our system, requires that parliamentarians and the voters they serve must know how public funds are spent so they can hold the government to account.

• (1510)

That is why the government ensures that parliamentarians have access to accurate, timely and understandable information on government spending.

For example, I would draw the attention of my honourable colleagues to the Government of Canada’s InfoBase, an interactive online tool that depicts a large amount of federal data in a visual format. It contains the estimates and other government data on finances, personnel and results.

It is essential to release spending data by using digital tools like this one to provide parliamentarians and Canadians with more information about the allocation of public funds and how they are invested.

[English]

Honourable colleagues, I would now like to turn to the 2021-22 Supplementary Estimates (B), which are the basis for this supply bill.

The supplementary estimates present information to Parliament on spending that was either not ready for inclusion in the Main Estimates or has since been refined to account for new developments in programs or services. With these Supplementary Estimates (B) for 2021-22, the government is seeking Parliament’s approval of funding to address matters of importance to Canadians. This includes the government’s ongoing response to the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as infrastructure and services to address the specific needs for Indigenous communities.

The supplementary estimates provide information on \$8.7 billion in voted budgetary spending for 60 federal organizations. These estimates also show, for information purposes, forecasted budgetary statutory expenses of \$4.7 billion, primarily due to the extension of the Canada Recovery Benefit and forecasted requirements for the Canada Recovery Caregiving Benefit and the Canada Recovery Sickness Benefit. These benefits have been instrumental in supporting Canadians through the worst of this pandemic.

Of the voted budgetary spending, \$1.2 billion is related to the COVID-19 pandemic response, and a portion of these funds are earmarked for helping those in need outside of our borders. Along with providing domestic supports, we must be mindful that we live in a community of nations. That is why Canada is committed to a robust global effort to stop COVID-19 and address its devastating health, social, economic and security impacts on people around the world.

Honourable colleagues, Canada is a founding member of the Access to COVID-19 Tools (ACT) Accelerator, a global partnership to ensure that people worldwide have equal and affordable access to COVID-19 vaccines, tests and treatments.

Canada is also a strong supporter of the COVAX Facility, the COVID-19 Vaccine Global Access Facility, to support the procurement, distribution and delivery of COVID-19 vaccines.

To continue to provide these types of assistance, Budget 2021 announced funding to help some of the world's poorest countries access the tools they need to help contain the spread of COVID-19. The Supplementary Estimates (B) seek \$375 million to deliver on that commitment to support access to vaccines, therapeutics and diagnostics by developing countries.

[Translation]

Honourable senators, as I mentioned earlier, the purpose of the supplementary estimates is to have Parliament approve the funding necessary to address the needs of Indigenous communities.

Although the government has made progress on righting Canada's historical wrongs in its relationship with Indigenous peoples, there is still a lot of work to be done. We must invest in improving the quality of life of people living in Indigenous communities and create new opportunities for them.

As part of the government's collaboration with Indigenous partners, these investments will help close the gaps between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people; promote the health, safety and prosperity of Indigenous communities; and advance reconciliation with the First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples.

This is why the Supplementary Estimates (B) provide for a total of \$1 billion to Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada and \$2.1 billion to Indigenous Services Canada.

I want to highlight some of the key voted items requested by these two departments. In Budget 2021, the government announced funding to help close infrastructure gaps in Indigenous communities, as well as to create good jobs and build healthier, safer and more prosperous Indigenous communities in the long term.

The Supplementary Estimates (B) honour that commitment by allocating a little over \$725 million for the construction, renovation, operation and maintenance of housing, schools, health facilities, water and wastewater, and other community infrastructure.

This funding will also support the transfer of infrastructure to Indigenous-led organizations and fund the operation and maintenance of Indigenous-owned infrastructure.

[English]

These estimates also seek just over \$412 million for the Specific Claims Settlement Fund to provide compensation to First Nations in accordance with negotiated agreements. Specific claims are claims by a First Nation against the federal government that relate to the administration of land or other First

Nation assets and to the fulfillment of historic treaties and other agreements. The primary objective of the Specific Claims Policy is to discharge outstanding legal obligations of the federal government through negotiated settlement agreements.

Just over \$361 million is also sought to fund prevention and protection services to support the safety and well-being of First Nations children and families living on reserve. These include early intervention and alternatives to traditional institutional care and foster care, such as the placement of children with family members in a community setting.

To ensure Indigenous peoples can access high-quality health care, Budget 2021 announced several measures including one in these estimates for just over \$332 million to ensure continued high-quality care through the Non-Insured Health Benefits program. This program supports First Nations and Inuit people with medically necessary services not otherwise covered, such as mental health services, medical travel, medications and more.

Another budget initiative presented in these estimates is funding to help people on reserve and status Indians in Yukon transition from income assistance to employment and education. Specifically, almost \$309 million is sought to assist eligible individuals and families with basic or special needs case management and pre-employment measures designed to increase self-reliance, improve life skills and promote greater attachment to the workforce.

These estimates also seek just over \$212 million for the partial settlement of the *Gottfriedson* litigation concerning Indian residential school day scholars and in support of Indigenous childhood claims litigation management. This funding will be used to compensate approximately 13,500 day school survivors and their first-generation descendants. As well, it will be used to establish a day scholars revitalization fund to support survivors and descendants in pursuing healing and wellness; to revitalize and protect their Indigenous languages, cultures and heritage; as well as to promote education and commemoration.

This funding will also be used for legal fees, third-party administration costs and ongoing management of Indigenous childhood claims litigation.

[Translation]

Esteemed colleagues, we are fortunate to have a professional public service that provides a multitude of services with a tangible impact on Canadians' lives.

• (1520)

Those services range from food inspection and drug safety and efficacy regulation to border security and icebreaker operation in the Northwest Passage.

In a crisis, the public service steps up to the challenge. Six years ago, public servants worked tirelessly to resettle over 25,000 Syrian refugees. That was a titanic job.

Just over a year and a half ago, public servants had to respond to another crisis, this time a pandemic. I think we can all agree that they did an amazing job.

The supplementary estimates include \$1.5 billion to compensate federal organizations for salary adjustments resulting from recently negotiated collective agreements and changes to terms and conditions of employment. The government remains committed to reaching agreements with all bargaining agents that are fair to employees, mindful of today's economic and fiscal context, and reasonable for Canadians.

This funding will also be used to compensate employees for damages associated with the Phoenix pay system and for the extended implementation time frames of collective agreements during the 2018 round of collective bargaining.

[English]

Honourable senators, when it comes to responding to crises, we are also fortunate to be able to rely on the dedicated personnel of the Canadian Armed Forces. We thank them for their help in responding to the devastating floods in British Columbia and the global pandemic.

These estimates seek almost \$328 million to cover the pay increase for Canadian Armed Forces personnel to align with the bargaining settlements for the core public administration. The funds will also support restructuring of pay and allowances for certain occupations within the Armed Forces as well as an extension of the allowance for personnel deployed to support Canadians during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The last voted item I would like to draw your attention to is just over \$253 million to the Department of National Defence and Veterans Affairs Canada for the *Heyder* and *Beattie* class action settlement agreement. This funding will be used to continue to assess and pay claims under the Heyder Beattie Final Settlement Agreement.

[Translation]

Colleagues, the government continues to prioritize how it presents the estimates, with detailed explanatory material readily available online for parliamentarians and for Canadians.

The government has also taken several steps to ensure that they have access to even more information. For example, departments regularly report their spending through quarterly financial reports.

The Department of Finance also provides monthly updates on the financial situation of the government in the *Fiscal Monitor*.

[Senator Gagné]

In addition, due to the extraordinary circumstances and expenditure levels generated by the pandemic, the government has reported spending authorities related to its response to the COVID-19 pandemic in the supplementary estimates. It also reported on spending authorities and expenses incurred for each measure taken against COVID-19 through the Government of Canada InfoBase and the Open Government portal.

These reporting tools allow Canadians to easily see the spending authorities approved by Parliament, as well as the money spent to implement the government's response to the pandemic.

Finally, to ensure greater clarity on the relationship between the figures presented in the estimates and supplementary estimates, the government is also providing a reconciliation of these two expenditure forecasting documents.

[English]

Honourable senators, the bill I have the honour of introducing today is important to delivering on the government's commitment to the priorities of Canadians.

In summary, the government seeks Parliament's approval of \$8.7 billion in new voted spending for those who need it most. It is for low-income Canadians with health, education and income assistance needs; for child and family services of Indigenous Canadians; for Indigenous housing and infrastructure projects; for the personnel costs of our public servants, including members of the Canadian Armed Forces; for settlement agreements with Indigenous groups; and for medical and economic supports for developing countries that are shouldering heavier burdens in this hour of the pandemic.

[Translation]

The COVID-19 pandemic is having a significant impact on many aspects of the lives of Canadians. We have all been called upon to stand shoulder to shoulder and pull together.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of you, colleagues, for your cooperation. I would also like to acknowledge the important work done by the members of the Standing Senate Committee on National Finance, under the superb leadership of Senator Percy Mockler.

[English]

I would like to acknowledge Senator Marshall's work as critic of the bill. We are fortunate to have an incredible depth and breadth of talent across our chamber. Your ability to assess the government's performance is welcome and important moving forward. There is always place for improvement for the benefit of all Canadians. Thank you.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

Hon. Elizabeth Marshall: Thank you, Senator Gagné, for your comments on Bill C-6 and Supplementary Estimates (B).

Honourable senators, Bill C-6 is requesting authority to spend \$8.7 billion. To support Parliament's consideration and review of this \$8.7 billion, the Treasury Board president has tabled Supplementary Estimates (B), which provides information and details on the spending authorities requested.

If Bill C-6 is approved by Parliament, this \$8.7 billion will bring the total spending approved by appropriation bills this year to \$176 billion.

In addition to the \$176 billion approved by appropriation bills, the government already has authority to spend another \$230 billion this year, which has been approved by legislation other than appropriation bills. This \$230 billion is called statutory expenditures and is authorized by various pieces of legislation, such as the Financial Administration Act, the Budget Implementation Act, 2021 and the Canada Recovery Benefits Act.

These statutory expenditures are included in Supplementary Estimates (B) for information purposes only. The Parliamentary Budget Officer, in a recent report, said there is currently no standing parliamentary review mechanism in place for statutory expenditures.

By providing spending authority in legislation other than appropriation bills, the government does not have to annually request parliamentary approval for spending because parliamentary approval has already been given for these expenditures.

It is interesting that over the past number of years, "statutory" expenditures that are approved by various other legislation actually exceed the expenditures approved annually by appropriation bills. For example, if Bill C-6 is approved by the Senate this week, \$175 billion will have been approved by appropriation bills this year, while \$230 billion in expenditures will have been approved by legislation other than appropriation bills.

Even more interesting is that statutory expenditures are included in the estimates for information purposes only, as I've mentioned. There is no standing parliamentary review mechanism in place for these statutory expenditures. When we say that we are studying the estimates, it means that we are studying less than half the expenditures presented in Supplementary Estimates (B) because 58% has already been approved by Parliament.

Honourable senators, I have spoken many times inside and outside of this chamber of the difficulties in tracking government expenditures. One of the problems is that the information in these estimates documents does not align with the information in the budget.

For example, the budget this year is forecasting expenditures of \$497 billion, yet Supplementary Estimates (B) disclosures spending of only \$405 billion. There are several reasons for this discrepancy. For example, the Supplementary Estimates (B) document we are studying does not include all of the new budget initiatives.

In other instances, the Supplementary Estimates (B) document does not include certain expenditures authorized by the Income Tax Act, such as some of the COVID expenditures.

• (1530)

Regardless of the reasons for the discrepancy, it is difficult to track government expenditures. The government has tried to reconcile the \$497 billion in the budget with the \$405 billion in the Supplementary Estimates (B) document by providing a chart or reconciliation to explain the difference. Senator Gagné referenced this in her speech. While the chart is somewhat helpful, it is confusing since there is no recognition of additional expenditures expected in Supplementary Estimates (C), which are expected in March.

In addition, the chart summarizes a number of transactions, all of which must be reviewed in order to understand why the budget includes \$497 billion while the estimates document only includes \$405 billion. In essence, a chart placed in the introductory section of the Supplementary Estimates (B) document is no substitute for an estimates document that is properly aligned with the budget.

In 2017-18, former president of the Treasury Board Scott Brison enthusiastically undertook an estimates reform project and piloted several changes to the estimates documents. He met with the Finance Committee a number of times to discuss the project. Parliamentarians were provided with the opportunity to participate and provide feedback.

Unfortunately, successive presidents of the Treasury Board did not support the initiative, and based on the comments of the present minister last week, the estimates reform project is over, and we have returned to the old ways of preparing the estimates documents.

The COVID expenditures, in particular, further complicated our review of government expenditures since government did not provide parliamentarians with the information they needed. COVID expenditure reports were initially provided in April 2020; then they ceased in August 2020; then they resumed again in April 2021; then ceased again in July 2021.

The government itself recognizes that it has a problem. Its own website asks a question: "Do you understand the process the Government uses to spend your tax dollars?" And the website also provides the answer: "If you're a little foggy about it, you're not alone." That is the way it is when you are reviewing government expenditures.

To further complicate our review of the Supplementary Estimates (B) document, the government has yet to release the public accounts for the last fiscal year. Actually, I think they were released about two hours ago, now that we have finished our review of Supplementary Estimates (B).

The public accounts are the financial statements of the government, which have been audited by the Auditor General of Canada. It includes information on expenditures, revenues, debt, contingent liabilities and other financial data which is valuable in assessing appropriation Bill C-6 and the supplementary estimates document which supports the bill.

Historically, the public accounts provide financial and other information as at March 31 of a fiscal year, and have traditionally been tabled in parliament during the fall sitting. For the past 11 years, the public accounts have been tabled seven times in October, twice in November and three times in December. The three December tablings occurred since the 2015 election, when the current government came to power. This is a government that continually tells us it is committed to openness, transparency and accountability.

The former Parliamentary Budget Officer said recently that the public accounts should have been at the front end of the current four-week sitting. He went on to say that how the money was spent last year will help inform debate about the requests for more funds.

The late date of the tabling of the public accounts raises another concern. Once the minister tables the public accounts, she is required to table the Debt Management Report for last year within the first 30 sitting days after the public accounts are tabled.

By delaying the release of the public accounts until today, government is able to delay the deadline for the release of the Debt Management Report. Since the public accounts were released today, the deadline for the tabling of the Debt Management Report is now late March. Imagine. The Debt Management Report for the year of the pandemic, when an incredible amount of debt was assumed, may not be released until March 2022, a full year after the end of the fiscal year.

In addition to government's withholding of the 2021 public accounts, government has yet to release the departmental performance reports. These reports are usually released in the fall and would ordinarily have been available for our review of Bill C-6 and the Supplementary Estimates (B). Treasury Board released them, I think, December 7 of last year.

However, Treasury Board officials told us that government does not plan to release the departmental results report until January. Since we do not see it until January 30 or 31, we are going to be waiting until that time to get the departmental results reports. Without that information, it is not possible to complete our review of Bill C-6 and Supplementary Estimates (B). So here is the government insisting we hurry along and approve the appropriation Bill C-6 so they can spend more money, yet they are refusing to provide the information we need to do our jobs as parliamentarians.

The Department of Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs, and the Department of Indigenous Services Canada were created in 2019. Taking into account the proposed spending in Supplementary Estimates (B), the spending for these two departments so far this year will be about \$28 billion. According to the Parliamentary Budget Officer in his report on Supplementary Estimates (B), Indigenous-related spending in 2017-18 was just under \$14 billion, so the budget has increased 93% over the past five years; almost double.

Committee members were interested in knowing where the money is actually going. To which First Nations? Is it being fairly distributed? And are the desired results being achieved?

The public accounts for last year and the departmental results reports would have assisted us in answering these questions, if the government had released those documents.

Given the significant increase in expenditures in those two departments over the past five years, committee members were also interested in the oversight functions being provided by Treasury Board. Officials explained their oversight function, how they review spending proposals, and emphasized that departments must disclose the performance indicators they will use to measure the success of each program. But what is the point of the performance indicators if they are not provided in a timely manner to parliamentarians?

Of particular interest to the committee was the \$624 million being requested by the Department of Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs for the Specific Claims Settlement Fund and the Indian Residential Day Scholars litigation.

Honourable senators may recall that Supplementary Estimates (A) in June provided \$610 million for the Federal Indian Day School settlement agreement, \$256 million for the Sixties Scoop settlement and \$1.2 billion for the out-of-court settlements.

When I spoke in this chamber on Supplementary Estimates (A), I indicated that departmental officials could not provide the Finance Committee with any details of the \$1.2 billion requested for out-of-court settlements, citing confidentiality of discussions during the litigation process. That \$1.2 billion was being requested to ensure funding was available should there be settlements.

The \$624 million is being requested in Bill C-6 so that money is available if claims are finalized. Officials also indicated that these claims have been set up as a contingent liability in the 2021 public accounts, which we didn't have access to.

Since government was withholding the 2021 public accounts, it was not possible to complete a review of the \$624 million and the contingent liability. This is just one example which indicates that the 2021 public accounts and the 2021 departmental performance reports are necessary to complete our review of Bill C-6 and Supplementary Estimates (B).

Included in Supplementary Estimates (B) is a statutory payment of \$2.35 billion for the Canada Enterprise Emergency Funding Corporation. Given that Supplementary Estimates (B) discloses expenditures of \$16 billion in total, the \$2.35 billion is quite significant.

The funding for the Canada Enterprise Emergency Funding Corporation is statutory. That means it has already been approved by the Financial Administration Act and, therefore, funding is not being requested in Bill C-6. However, the funding is disclosed in Supplementary Estimates (B) for information purposes.

The Canada Enterprise Emergency Funding Corporation was created in 2020 as a wholly owned subsidiary of the Canada Development Corporation. In essence, it is a Crown corporation, and it was created by government to provide a credit support program for large Canadian companies in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. That would have been companies like Air

Canada. The government, through the purchase of shares, provides the corporation with funding so it can implement the credit support program. So far, the government has purchased \$2.89 billion in shares of the corporation, and the corporation uses that money to administer the program and provide it to large employers.

• (1540)

Earlier this year, Finance officials told us that the corporation has appointed its auditors; it has not used its discretion to appoint an observer on the board of directors of any borrower; and information on standardized terms of the program are made public on the corporation's website. However, detailed terms and covenants on the individual loan agreements are commercially confidential and therefore they are not publicly available.

The corporation has also provided substantial information on its website, including quarterly financial statements and details of the financial assistance provided to Canadian companies. Government contributions, as of September 30, 2021, were \$2.89 billion and represent preference shares in the Crown corporation issued to the Government of Canada. Loans to borrowers at the end of September totalled \$2.581 billion. Information on financial assistance to individual companies is disclosed on the corporation's website.

Companies that receive financing through this program must agree to sustain their domestic operations, make commercial efforts to minimize the loss of jobs and demonstrate a clear plan to return to financial stability. They must also agree to place restrictions on executive compensation. That issue was raised at the Finance Committee; they have to agree to place restrictions on executive compensation, on dividends and on share buy-backs. They must also publish annual climate-related disclosure reports indicating how their future operations will support environmental sustainability and Canada's climate goals.

The corporation has disclosed — and this is something that is very important for the Finance Committee — that there is a substantial amount of credit risk associated with these loans based on the terms and eligibility criteria of the program. Currently, the \$2.89 billion advanced by the government would be recorded as an investment or loan and would therefore be considered non-budgetary. However, if there are losses, these losses will increase the government's deficit. Departmental officials were unable to tell the committee the deadline for applications, when the program would end and what the "exit strategy" is, not only for the program but for the corporation.

Honourable senators, the Department of National Defence is requesting \$644 billion in Bill C-6, of which \$327 million is for pay increases for certain categories of employees within the department. Senator Gagné mentioned that in her speech. These pay increases are in accordance with the National Defence Act. There is a specific section within the act that gives Treasury Board the authority to establish the rates and conditions of pay for certain categories of members of the Canadian Armed Forces. These economic increases are aligned with salary improvements reached through the collective bargaining process for employees of the federal public service and cover three fiscal years, from 2018 to 2021.

The department is also requesting \$250 million for the Heyder Beattie Final Settlement Agreement. These were the class action lawsuits — we are all familiar with them — that were initiated in 2016 and 2017, and sought damages related to gender-based discrimination, sexual assault and sexual harassment. Funding will be used to fulfill obligations and payments under the final agreement including the assessment of claims, payments to claimants, administration and case management. There is also \$2.5 million being requested to pay for IT and information management equipment related to the settlement agreement.

There are also \$64 million being requested by the department for NATO programs. Senators were interested in Canada's commitment to NATO and raised questions regarding the age of our aircraft, lack of protection of the North and the lack of ships within our navy. Senators were also interested in the operation and maintenance of the North Warning System and whether any of the \$64 million will be used to upgrade the North Warning System and/or assist Canada's presence in the Arctic, given the increased presence of other countries.

Officials referred to the \$252 million included in the budget to support NORAD modernization and sustain existing continental and Arctic defence capabilities over the next five years. Of the \$252 million included in the budget — it's for a five-year period — \$45 million has been earmarked for this fiscal year but has yet to be requested in an appropriation bill. So here we are; it's near the end of December, I haven't seen where that \$45 million has shown up in an appropriation bill and I don't think it is statutory.

The Main Estimates of the Department of National Defence also provide \$5.7 billion for capital projects. In previous Finance Committee meetings, obtaining information on capital projects has been very difficult.

Budget 2021 committed \$267 million over three years to modernize the department's information systems, specifically the systems needed to manage its assets, finances and human resources. These improvements will ensure the Canadian Armed Forces will have access to the equipment they need, when and where it is required. Of the \$267 million committed over the next five years, \$89 million has been committed for this year. Again, we're almost at the end of December, but I don't see where the department has yet requested that \$89 million.

That concludes my remarks for second reading of Bill C-6. I would like to thank our chair Senator Mockler and our deputy chair Senator Forest for their assistance in arranging the meetings this past week. I did find it quite a challenge to get all the meetings in, in one week, especially since the government didn't provide all the information that we needed.

I would also thank all members of the Finance Committee for their excellent questions during our meetings and also to all the staff who assisted in organizing and making sure that our meetings ran as smoothly as possible. Thank you, honourable senators.

The Hon. the Speaker pro tempore: Senator Marshall, would you take a question from Senator Galvez?

Senator Marshall: Yes, of course.

Hon. Rosa Galvez: Thank you, Senator Marshall. Every time you talk about the budgets and the money bills, I learn a lot. Your work is incredible. It's true that it is difficult to go through the budgetary cycle and all these estimates and tracking the government expenses. I have a degree in engineering; math doesn't scare me, and I'm plunging into the numbers, but it's true that it is difficult to reconcile them in some areas.

We heard the PBO. He recommended several easy things that we can ask of the government in order to increase the facility to do our jobs. Out of the many recommendations that the PBO gave, do you have some preference or priority in asking the government to put some order in the way it puts forward the information? Thank you.

Senator Marshall: Yes. Thank you very much, Senator Galvez, for that question. My personal preference would be to reinstate the estimates reform project. When Minister Brison was there, for two consecutive years he had tried two different things. While they weren't perfect, they were helpful. I did find that, while we are struggling to try to make sense of the estimates, when we had those two years where we were trying something new, it was really motivational. I found that Minister Brison was very receptive; he appeared many times before our Finance Committee and he was really engaged. That would be number one.

I would like to sneak in item number two. I think the government should put a bigger effort into providing financial information. Sometimes, I get the feeling they are withholding it for a purpose, like they don't want to give us the information. So we are not able to track it. If they don't give us the information, all I can say is that I don't have the information. If they gave me the public accounts I could probably come up with 500 questions, but right now all I can say is, "where are the public accounts?" We do have them, but our review is done. We are going to discuss our report tomorrow. So it's not a good situation.

• (1550)

Senator Galvez, I'm used to working with numbers, so the government documents don't intimidate me. But as I said to the President of the Treasury Board the other day, when I review Supplementary Estimates (B), I almost need a calculator, pen and paper as I'm trying to go back and forth because the government won't provide the information.

[Translation]

The Hon. the Speaker pro tempore: Senator Dupuis, do you wish to ask a question?

Hon. Renée Dupuis: Would Senator Marshall take another question?

[English]

Senator Marshall: Yes.

[Translation]

Senator Dupuis: Thank you, Senator Marshall, for your comments. You talked about all the spending authorized by legislation other than appropriation acts. Statutory expenditures are estimated at \$233 billion this year.

When you stated that there is no parliamentary mechanism to review this spending, what are you suggesting as a mechanism for parliamentary review to ensure that legislators like us can fulfill our mandate to hold the government to account for its spending?

The Hon. the Speaker pro tempore: Senator Dupuis, we are having audio problems and, therefore, there was no interpretation. We are truly sorry for this technical problem, but it seems that the interpreters cannot hear you and provide the English interpretation. Therefore, Senator Marshall cannot answer your question.

However, you could ask your question at third reading stage, if you wish. Perhaps the technical difficulties will be resolved by then.

Senator Dupuis: Would you like me to put the question in the chat of the Senate hybrid session?

The Hon. the Speaker pro tempore: It seems, Senator Dupuis, that that will not be possible.

Senator Dupuis: Thank you.

[English]

Hon. Kim Pate: Thank you to Senator Gagné and Senator Marshall for their comments. I echo the appreciation expressed to all members of the Finance Committee, as well as the support staff.

Honourable senators, the government has committed to recovery for all — a response to COVID-19 that leaves no one behind, neither during nor after this pandemic. The reality so far is, quite frankly, starkly inadequate.

A significant part of Supplementary Estimates (B) concerns responses to the pandemic. Millions of Canadians remain below the poverty line, yet for nearly two years meaningful economic supports have been unavailable to those who vitally need them. The evidence continues to roll in with regard to the avoidable human, social and financial toll of excluding disproportionate numbers — in fact, millions — of women, Indigenous, African-Canadian and other racialized people, as well as those with disabilities.

We have an opportunity and duty to urge the government to be bold. Emerging from this pandemic should not mean going back to normal but, rather, building toward greater equality.

Programs like the CERB and CRB have demonstrated the difference that direct income supports can make for those in need. For many who lost jobs or income as a result of the pandemic, \$2,000 per month meant being able to put the health and well-being of themselves, their families and communities first, without the worry of how to feed their families or the spectre of eviction.

For those who did not qualify for programs like the CERB because their incomes were too low, new data reaffirms the inadequacy of the alternative supports available. Already inadequate social assistance payments were compounded by inadequate emergency pandemic supports. In some provinces, a single person was left with as little as \$660 per month. This had to cover not only everyday necessities such as housing, food and clothing, but the many extra costs of trying to safely survive the pandemic.

In many provinces, the combined provincial and territorial emergency pandemic benefits for those on social assistance amounted to only 1 to 2% of what a CERB recipient received — \$24 per month, or less than a dollar a day.

Across Canada, people continued to be abandoned to poverty at a time when it became impossible to ignore the link between economic stability, health and well-being. There was not a single jurisdiction, not a single province or territory, where amounts were sufficient to get people out of deep poverty, let alone above the poverty line.

Even for those who were able to access programs like the CERB, there are sharp differences in outcomes for those with the least and those who are more well off.

According to the Parliamentary Budget Officer, this year about 88,222 of Canada's lowest-income seniors lost part or all of their entitlement to a non-pandemic basic income program, the Guaranteed Income Supplement, on which they rely to make ends meet. Why? Because they claimed CERB last year, and when their new GIS payments were calculated this summer based on last year's income, CERB payments were counted.

The situation is more dire for many who claimed CERB in good faith and later found out they were not eligible. They are being told to make CERB repayments to the government. At the same time, their GIS payments have been cut. Where will they get the money to repay? How will they survive this, let alone live?

Families have also seen cuts to Canada Child Benefit payments for the same reason. Since at least May, federal officials have acknowledged this problem with CERB and similar types of pandemic supports, such as the CRB and the recently proposed Canada worker lockdown benefit, and yet have not taken corrective steps. The effect on lowest-income recipients has been the worst.

While CERB has functioned as intended for many higher-income recipients, for those with less, the programs have not prevented but have only delayed economic hardship. Against this backdrop, in the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic alone, the wealth of 47 Canadian billionaires increased by \$78 billion.

For decades, wealth inequality has been increasing in Canada. As of 2019, one quarter of Canada's family net wealth was held by 1% of families. The 40% of families with the least had access to a mere 1.1% of total wealth.

• (1600)

To date, pandemic economic policy has reinforced — worse yet, increased — inequalities.

Honourable senators, we have not yet seen recovery for all, and we have an obligation to demand nothing less.

On the eve of the pandemic, in more than half of the households in which people went hungry, family members were working but not earning enough to cover the costs of basic necessities. Economic inequality results in worse health and social outcomes. It also contributes to outrageous and unacceptable situations such as the steady increase in and reliance on food banks. Too many forced to seek such sustenance are seniors and people with disabilities. Many food banks also report a significant number of clientele who are workers, too many of whom are also living in homeless shelters. Food banks were created as temporary measures. They have become permanent fixtures with significant costs that treat the symptoms but fail to address the root causes of poverty, inadequate wages and income supports.

Escalating economic inequality leads to increased costs in terms of homelessness, shelters, the criminal legal system and emergency health care. It also significantly impedes economic growth.

In 2014, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, or OECD, found that rising inequality in wealthy countries significantly impacts gross domestic product.

Furthermore, the UN's *World Social Report 2020* emphasizes that slower economic growth is associated with income inequality, in particular because of disparities in health care and education.

Today, the National Advisory Council on Poverty reported that, relative to 2015 levels, the government had reduced poverty by 30% by 2020, but they caution that the numbers conceal the deep inequities that persist in Canada. They recommend a whole-of-society approach to create equitable systems to address poverty.

The Standing Senate Committee on National Finance is still awaiting a full response from the Department of Finance to questions regarding how the government is evaluating whether the measures it is proposing in the supplementary estimates are expected to achieve recovery for all.

Unfortunately, what we have seen so far reveals we are missing the mark. It is long past time, honourable senators, for measures like a guaranteed liveable income to ensure that no one is left behind. Poverty puts people's health, well-being and lives at risk. Alleviation is a question of human rights that Canada cannot afford to continue to ignore.

Thank you, honourable senators. *Meegwetich.*

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.)

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

(On motion of Senator Gagné, bill placed on the Orders of the Day for third reading at the next sitting of the Senate.)

[Translation]

SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

MOTION FOR ADDRESS IN REPLY—DEBATE CONTINUED

On the Order:

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

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

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

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY:

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

Hon. Pierre J. Dalfond: Honourable senators, I rise today in reply to the Speech from the Throne. I have the honour of being the first of my colleagues to do so, but I am sure I will not be the last.

I want to start by acknowledging that we are here today on the unceded territory of the Algonquin Anishinaabe people. As the Governor General said in the introduction of her speech, which historically are her own words, this acknowledgement is not just a symbolic declaration. In making this declaration, I want to note

an important fact about our true history that was not taught to my generation, namely that in many cases, our ancestors appropriated land belonging to those who were here long before us.

I hope that, as suggested by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, then chaired by the Honourable Justice Murray Sinclair, this omission is now being addressed in every province and territory. Indeed, without a proper understanding of our country's colonialist and assimilative past, we cannot build a viable path to reconciliation.

[English]

That said, I would now like to address the other part of the speech: the one written by the government. It is called *Building a Resilient Economy: A Cleaner & Healthier Future for Our Kids*.

In addition to reconciliation, the government indicated that it will focus on our collective health and well-being as we face the numerous aftermaths of the pandemic and the need to rebuild an economy that works for everyone. The government said that its priorities include plans on housing and child care. Like most of you, I agree with these plans.

The government is also committing to respond to the climate crisis that the world is facing. As stated in the speech, our earth is in danger, with some regions — particularly the North of Canada — even more exposed.

This situation calls for significant and transformative measures to our economy and even to our way of life, possibly requiring legislative support. For example, it remains to be seen how the government will achieve its goal of capping and significantly reducing oil and gas sector emissions. The climate crisis, as the government acknowledged in the speech, also requires stronger actions to prevent and prepare for floods, wildfires, droughts, coastline erosion and other extreme weather worsened by climate change.

[Translation]

Like many Quebecers, on the recommendation of a good friend I recently explored the wonderful Magdalen Islands. Unfortunately, that ecosystem is fragile. The rising water temperatures in the Gulf of St. Lawrence are causing a loss of winter sea ice, while the rising sea level is eroding the islands. I look forward to seeing meaningful proposals put forward by the federal government, in collaboration with the Government of Quebec and the Magdalen Islands residents, to save this treasure in the Gulf of St. Lawrence.

[English]

The government also indicated its willingness to stand up for diversity and inclusion by investing in the empowerment of Black people, Indigenous peoples and other racialized Canadians by fighting harmful content online and by strengthening French outside and inside Quebec. These are all measures that the Senate should support while reviewing carefully.

I was also happy to hear that the government will address gun violence, which is on the rise in many of our biggest cities, including my home city of Montreal. The government's commitment to the mandatory buyback of banned assault-style weapons is good news. However, easy access to handguns by members of street gangs — essentially young men — has resulted in increased casualties and injuries, including to young people with no connection to gangs.

I agree that the best way to deal with this problem is investing in prevention and supporting the work of law enforcement. I salute the plan, recently released by the Quebec government, to allocate \$52 million for this purpose. However, other policies must include measures to further restrain access, such as more resources dedicated to preventing illegal imports of handguns into Canada and to the use of straw buyers within Canada.

• (1610)

Our collective response to gun violence also requires strengthening handgun legislation as has been said repeatedly by various groups, including Canadian Doctors for Protection from Guns, Danforth Families for Safe Communities and PolySeSouvient. Unfortunately, the government has been rather timid so far on this issue.

[Translation]

Before the last general election, the government introduced a bill that would have allowed Canadian municipalities to ban handguns in their jurisdictions. The mayors of the largest cities in Quebec, the Fédération québécoise des municipalités, the mayor of Toronto and the mayors of several other major Canadian cities all spoke out against this problematic approach and the challenges it would create.

Since it came to power, the government has been floating the possibility of having the provinces ban handguns in their respective jurisdictions. This new approach, like the original one, seems motivated by the federal government's desire to avoid assuming direct responsibility and leave it up to provincial governments to decide whether to ban handguns.

Esteemed colleagues, how can we, on the one hand, recognize that illegal importation from the United States is one of the main reasons behind the increase in handguns on the streets of our major cities, in spite of border controls, yet, on the other hand, opt for provincial bans, when provincial governments generally don't control access to their provinces?

[English]

In other words, the government is contemplating implementing the U.S. approach to handgun control in Canada, which is a proven recipe for an ineffective, patchwork solution. I urge the government to assume its responsibilities and enact an effective handgun ban applicable all across Canada.

Finally, it is notable that the speech says nothing about the ongoing transformation of the Senate. This is despite the fact that we are now the sole upper house in the Westminster model made essentially of groups unaffiliated to political parties, where individual independence is the central principle for selecting and

appointing senators. This reform requires amendments to the Parliament of Canada Act beyond additional paid leadership positions. For this, we may have to wait for bolder government initiatives.

Senate reform also requires changes to our Rules, an area where we have full authority to ensure greater transparency, equality and independence. In this task, our Rules Committee should not hesitate to take the time to consider the 12 reports of our now-dissolved Modernization Committee, as well as ideas raised by senators in the Forty-third Parliament and reports from other legislatures where there is an upper house made of more than two recognized groups.

In the French Senate, where there are 348 indirectly elected senators, there are eight recognized groups. In the House of Lords, where we currently have 783 life and hereditary peers, there are six groups with 25 or more members, including 192 cross-benchers, a group not affiliated with any political party. Interestingly, like our Senate, both places are looking at ways to be more relevant to the democratic governance of their country.

Through incremental changes, we are reforming the Senate to better complement the House of Commons and more effectively improve laws for Canadians thanks to our increasing independence from partisan politics. As a result of these internal reforms, senators now have the choice of four recognized groups, along with the options of non-affiliation or of starting a new group. Senators are exercising greater mobility, evident on many occasions since 2019, especially with the creation of the Canadian Senators Group and the rebirth of the Progressive Senate Group, now largely modelled on the cross-benchers group in the U.K. House of Lords. In addition, we have elected our Speaker pro tempore by secret ballot rather than, as we did previously, allocating the position by negotiation.

Logically, the next step in modernization should be the election of the chair and deputy chair of most committees by secret ballot, possibly in a manner consistent with the distribution of these positions by group. Greater democratization of this process will further establish these roles as positions of trust conferred by other senators. For example, we could look at the House of Lords model where some chairs of committees are elected by the whole house. As stated in the 2009 report of the House of Commons Reform Committee in the United Kingdom, the time has come to reduce the influence of leaderships and to democratize the process of committee appointments and house governance.

In our own House of Commons, rule changes have been made over the years to increase the ability of members to debate and vote on private members' bills. The influence of party leaders has been reduced by more free votes. Furthermore, a new division was added to the Parliament of Canada Act in 2015. The Honourable Michael Chong's Reform Act granted members of a recognized caucus in the House of Commons the power to recall and replace their leader and caucus chair by secret ballot, as well as the power to expel or readmit an MP from caucus by secret ballot. Then Prime Minister Harper supported these changes. As Mr. Chong said at the time, the Reform Act was "... a once-in-a-generation opportunity for MPs to reclaim their influence in caucus and, by extension, Parliament."

No doubt, colleagues, these changes are reflective of the desire of Canadians and citizens in other democratic countries to have a new style of governance — less like a pyramid — where backbenchers have rights. Of course, political parties remain focused on winning seats and forming government, and this purpose calls for a well-organized structure and a considerable degree of discipline.

However, as senators, we sit in a chamber where members serve until 75 years of age and where direct partisan influence is limited to one group. In this framework, we should not hesitate to embrace maximum independence for each of us to discharge our constitutional function as the chamber of sober second thought.

[Translation]

In conclusion, esteemed colleagues, in 2022 we will be facing the interesting challenge of redefining this chamber.

I hope that we will all keep the objective of a more independent Senate in mind as we do this exciting work, while also acknowledging the Senate's role as a complement to the House of Commons. We are not here to usurp the instrumental role of the chamber of elected members. We are here to provide value added to parliamentary business as the chamber of sober second thought.

I wish all senators a happy holiday season and I look forward to working with you on these reforms in the new year.

Thank you. *Meegwetch.*

(On motion of Senator Gagné, debate adjourned.)

• (1620)

[English]

FIGHTING AGAINST FORCED LABOUR AND CHILD LABOUR IN SUPPLY CHAINS BILL

SECOND READING

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Miville-Dechéne, seconded by the Honourable Senator Cormier, for the second reading of Bill S-211, An Act to enact the Fighting Against Forced Labour and Child Labour in Supply Chains Act and to amend the Customs Tariff.

Hon. Salma Ataullahjan: Honourable senators, I rise to speak to Bill S-211, short titled “Fighting Against Forced Labour and Child Labour in Supply Chains Act.”

I would like to thank Senator Miville-Dechéne for reintroducing this important human rights bill. I would also like to acknowledge the hard work of the members of the All Party Parliamentary Group to End Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking.

[Senator Dalphond]

This bill lifts the veil on the prevalence of modern slavery around the world, impacting at least 90 million children and adults.

Canada is far behind in terms of forced labour legislation. If we are to uphold our standing as a champion of human rights, we must keep pace with countries such as France, Germany and the United Kingdom, which have already passed legislation requiring their companies to investigate and report on the risk of forced labour in their supply chains.

With this bill, we would uphold Canada's international commitment to contribute to the fight against forced and child labour.

Modern slavery is the severe exploitation of other people for personal or commercial gain, which encompasses many forms of exploitation, such as human trafficking, descent-based slavery, forced and early marriage, as well as forced and child labour.

The latter is particularly troubling and is defined as work that is mentally, physically, socially and morally harmful to children, and it interferes with their ability to receive an education. Yet, one in four victims of modern slavery is a child.

We know the major factor in child labour is poverty, as children work for their survival and that of their family. This is part of a vicious cycle where education is seen as secondary to earning an income, which in turn prevents child workers from escaping poverty once they reach adulthood.

Of course, this bill cannot solve these root issues alone, but it can force private sector entities and government institutions to take steps to prevent the exploitation of the vulnerable.

One of the key steps outlined in this bill is the requirement for large entities and government institutions to submit an annual report outlining steps taken to curtail forced or child labour; additionally, any training provided to employees on the prevention of modern slavery in any step of the production of goods produced, purchased or distributed.

Education is a vital step because many of us are too far removed from the goods we purchase and consume. Personally, I had the unique opportunity to visit the site of the 2013 Rana Plaza collapse in Bangladesh. I arrived only three months after the eight-storey building collapsed, killing over 1,100 people and injuring countless individuals. I witnessed first-hand the cost of cheap fast fashion. These poorly paid workers had been forced to keep producing clothes even after police had ordered the evacuation of the building due to deep visible cracks in the walls.

It is time for Canada to implement legislation to curtail forced and child labour around the world.

As critic of the bill, I do have to point out some potential concerns that should be reviewed at committee. Some of you raised excellent questions last week. Senator Black questioned the broad definition of child labour and Senator Omidvar had concerns regarding the ramifications for children who rely on employment for survival. This is not a simple bill nor is it comprehensive in addressing forced labour.

Discussions will need to take place regarding the additional responsibilities provided to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness; the broad powers allotted to designated persons in enforcing mandates outlined in the bill; and legal considerations of holding executive members, employees and/or agents liable for any discrepancies in the annual report.

It is also important to hear from witnesses at committee to ensure that this bill is as strong as possible.

With further input, we can eliminate corruption and shine a light on forced labour through transparency. I hope you support me in sending Bill S-211 to committee so it can be thoroughly reviewed. Thank you.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

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

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 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 Miville-Dechéne, bill referred to the Standing Senate Committee on Human Rights.)

LANGUAGE SKILLS ACT

BILL TO AMEND—SECOND READING—DEBATE CONTINUED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Carignan, P.C., seconded by the Honourable Senator Housakos, for the second reading of Bill S-220, An Act to amend the Languages Skills Act (Governor General).

Hon. Percy E. Downe: Honourable senators, I want to congratulate Prime Minister Trudeau for appointing Mary May Simon as Governor General, notwithstanding the criticism he knew he would be facing.

Prime Minister Trudeau recognized that, as we all travel the road of understanding, it was time to seize the opportunity and appoint a Canadian of Indigenous heritage as Governor General. Mary May Simon is not just any Canadian but someone who is highly qualified, a leader of her community for decades, a former Canadian ambassador to Denmark, a recognized expert on Arctic issues — the list of her accomplishments goes on and on.

As to the language issue, I think we have to step back and ask ourselves if the policy of our two official languages is a carryover from our colonial past. Prior to francophones or anglophones arriving in this part of North America, there were many Indigenous languages already spoken here.

Colleagues, is it not better to reflect on the true history of Canada and recognize that we may have many Indigenous languages as founding languages? Can the Senate play a major role and also seize this historic opportunity of the first Indigenous Governor General and show leadership by giving our current Language Committee the official mandate and special emphasis on how we can protect these numerous Indigenous languages? Maybe there could be a renamed Senate committee that is focused on founding and official languages.

Colleagues, let us embrace the new Canada. Let us embrace the future rather than resisting change and fighting for the status quo.

As an English-speaking Canadian, I would not object to a francophone who spoke an Indigenous language and who promised to learn English being appointed to a senior position. Colleagues, that is the price we pay to help correct historical wrongs.

We owe it to the Indigenous community to embrace the new Canada we are building together. The old Canada thinking in this bill is partly the result of the distorted history we all studied when we were in school and the massive gaps in our knowledge of the Indigenous community, their customs and their society.

As I personally educate myself on the true history of Canada, I remember the treaties I studied, but there was never any mention in my history books in Prince Edward Island about the treaties signed by the Mi'kmaq of Atlantic Canada with the Crown, the Peace and Friendship Treaty. They were never mentioned.

This absence of knowledge in Canadian society about our Indigenous history is slowly ending, and the appointment of Mary May Simon as Governor General is important both as a symbol and as substance.

• (1630)

Colleagues, Mary May Simon is Governor General and the Governor General is Indigenous and I think that is wonderful. May there be many more appointments where Indigenous languages are given equal treatment to English and French. Thank you, colleagues.

(On motion of Senator Dalphond, debate adjourned.)

[Translation]

LANGUAGE SKILLS ACT

BILL TO AMEND—SECOND READING—DEBATE ADJOURNED

Hon. Claude Carignan moved second reading of Bill S-229, An Act to amend the Language Skills Act (Lieutenant Governor of New Brunswick).

He said: Honourable senators, I rise today to speak to Bill S-229, which I introduced on December 1. The title of the bill is An Act to amend the Language Skills Act (Lieutenant Governor of New Brunswick). It is essentially identical to my Bill S-220, which concerns the bilingualism of the Governor General, but this bill deals with the bilingualism of the Lieutenant-Governor of New Brunswick.

When I introduced Bill S-220 on November 24, there was significant media coverage. That same day, a citizen sent me a newspaper article that addressed a similar issue with respect to the Lieutenant-Governor of New Brunswick, Brenda Louise Murphy.

In 2019, on the recommendation of the Prime Minister of Canada, the Committee of the Privy Council recommended that a commission be issued under the Great Seal of Canada appointing Brenda Louise Murphy as Lieutenant-Governor of New Brunswick. The next day, the Prime Minister announced her appointment as the 32nd Lieutenant-Governor of New Brunswick. In an interview that same day, the Lieutenant-Governor admitted that she couldn't speak and understand both of New Brunswick's two official languages with proficiency.

That appointment kind of snuck in under the radar, and the information went virtually unnoticed in the Senate. Had I had the information sooner, I would probably have introduced a bill to propose that both positions, those of Governor General and Lieutenant-Governor of New Brunswick, be added to the list of high-level positions whose occupants must be bilingual in accordance with the Language Skills Act.

In hindsight, I now believe it is better to have two separate bills. Certainly the underlying issues of respect for official languages are very similar, but New Brunswick being Canada's only officially bilingual province raises specific issues regarding the appointment of a unilingual lieutenant-governor for that province.

Let's start by looking at what the Constitution says about New Brunswick. The preamble to the 1867 Constitution states that New Brunswick is a party to the new Confederation pact. The first "whereas" reads as follows:

Whereas the Provinces of Canada, Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick have expressed their Desire to be federally united into One Dominion under the Crown of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, with a Constitution similar in Principle to that of the United Kingdom . . .

Throughout the rest of the constitutional text, particularly in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, there are specific passages about New Brunswick. I think it would be useful to list the main ones.

[English]

(2) English and French are the official languages of New Brunswick and have equality of status and equal rights and privileges as to their use in all institutions of the legislature and government of New Brunswick. . . .

English and French linguistic communities in New Brunswick

16.1(1) The English linguistic community and the French linguistic community in New Brunswick have equality of status and equal rights and privileges, including the right to such distinct educational and cultural institutions as are necessary for the preservation and promotion of those communities. . . .

Then Section 18:

New Brunswick's statutes and records

(2) The statutes, records and journals of the legislature of New Brunswick shall be printed and published in English and French and both language versions are equally authoritative.

Section 20:

Communications by public with New Brunswick institutions

(2) Any member of the public in New Brunswick has the right to communicate with, and to receive available services from, any office of an institution of the legislature or government of New Brunswick in English or French.

[Translation]

The Constitution Act, 1867 also stipulates that the executive powers of Canada are vested in the Queen. The Queen is represented in Canada by the Governor General and the lieutenant-governors of each province. Provincial lieutenant-governors are appointed by the Governor-in-Council.

"Governor-in-Council" is an expression referring to the Governor General acting by and with the advice of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada. According to the constitutional conventions arising from the principles of constitutional monarchy and responsible government, the advice of the Queen's Privy Council is, in fact, the advice of the Prime Minister of Canada. Although the term "advice" is used in the Constitution Act, 1867, constitutional convention requires that the Governor General, the holder of formal power, exercise it in accordance with the advice of elected members.

According to the Société des Acadiens du Nouveau-Brunswick, the appointment of Brenda Louise Murphy is unconstitutional. I quote as follows:

In this case, the advice of the Prime Minister recommending that the Governor General appoint Ms. Murphy as the Lieutenant-Governor for the Province of New Brunswick is inconsistent with the constitutional language rights protected by subsections 16(2), 18(2) and 20(2) and section 16.1 of the Charter. Neither this advice nor the resulting appointment respect the Constitution. Therefore, this appointment is illegal.

New Brunswick has a constitutional language regime that is quite peculiar to New Brunswick and unique in the country. Subsections 16(2), 17(2), 18(2), 19(2), 20(2) and section 16.1 of the Charter are exclusively devoted to the linguistic rights of New Brunswick. The purpose of all these provisions is to protect the rights of French and English linguistic communities in New Brunswick.

These provisions and the language rights they afford have to be considered as a whole, but also in the historic context in which they were enacted. Although French has been spoken in the Atlantic provinces since 1604, French speakers did not receive any legal protection of their language and culture when New Brunswick was founded in 1784. No rights relating to the use of the French language in government institutions in New Brunswick were enshrined in the Constitution Act, 1867, as was the case for English in Quebec. The French linguistic community of New Brunswick did not have that luck. It was more than 100 years after joining Canada, during the patriation of the Constitution in 1982, that New Brunswick changed this state of affairs. In 1982, New Brunswick had to submit to linguistic obligations that exceeded all those that exist for the other Canadian provinces and even for the federal government.

These obligations were specifically enacted to remedy the status quo, which, in reality, represented a situation of advanced diglossia and a progressive cultural degradation for the French linguistic community in New Brunswick. For anyone who might be wondering, the word “diglossia” refers to a situation in which one of the two languages spoken by a bilingual individual or community has a lower sociopolitical status.

• (1640)

[English]

In 1982, the simple protection of acquired rights or the defence of minority language-use rights would have been insufficient to reverse hundreds of years of damage. It would have been too little too late. That is why the Constitution confers protections whose purpose is to correct a situation.

[Translation]

When the Canadian Constitution was repatriated in 1982, New Brunswick enshrined institutional bilingualism by imposing a series of obligations on its state institutions. These obligations are similar to those that enshrine institutional bilingualism at the federal level, but some are more robust and provide for a better guarantee of bilingualism in New Brunswick.

According to the Constitution, the New Brunswick Lieutenant-Governor is the only representative of the state who is a unique, essential, irreplaceable and irreducible part of both the executive and the provincial legislature. The executive and legislature of New Brunswick are subject to a number of bilingualism obligations set out in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Furthermore, these two institutions are the only institutions to which the Charter expressly assigns the role of promoting the equality of New Brunswick's two official language communities.

I mentioned last week that the government recognizes that French is in decline in Canada. In its document setting out the modernization of the Official Languages Act, Minister Joly, who was the official languages minister at the time, said, and I quote:

The federal government must act in its areas of jurisdiction to respond to the concerns of Francophones in Quebec and across the country in order to protect and promote French and reinforce a sense of linguistic security.

The federal government must play a leading role in bilingualism. The judges appointed to the Supreme Court must be bilingual, the role of the CBC/Radio-Canada as a cultural institution must be strengthened, and the powers of the Commissioner of Official Languages must be enhanced. The public service, as the main point of contact for Canadians with their federal government, must also lead by example.

The minister emphasized that the government must act in its areas of jurisdiction to protect and promote French and reinforce a sense of linguistic security. The appointment of a Lieutenant-Governor of New Brunswick falls entirely within the federal government's jurisdiction. What possible reason could it have had for appointing a person who has a very hard time speaking French to the position of Lieutenant-Governor for Canada's only officially bilingual province?

Ultimately, I think the solution to preventing another such lapse is to amend the Language Skills Act to add the position of Lieutenant-Governor of New Brunswick to the list of high-level officials who must be bilingual.

When I gave my speech at second reading of Bill C-220 on the Governor General, I expounded at length on arguments in favour of the Governor General of Canada being bilingual and why it was logical to use the Language Skills Act to provide a framework with respect to bilingualism for the appointment of governors general. I will not revisit each of my arguments for the position of Lieutenant-Governor of New Brunswick. I will just say that they all apply holus-bolus.

Furthermore, constitutional requirements specific to New Brunswick's institutional bilingualism further justify adding the Lieutenant-Governor of New Brunswick to the Language Skills Act list of high-level officials who must be bilingual upon appointment.

After Brenda Murphy was appointed Lieutenant-Governor, several complaints were in fact submitted to the Commissioner of Official Languages. In his investigation report, which was made public by Radio-Canada last week, he concluded that there had

been no violation of the Official Languages Act because the Privy Council Office, a federal institution subject to the Official Languages Act, had not had to intervene in the selection of the new lieutenant-governor. That decision was recommended to the Prime Minister by the Prime Minister's Office, which is not recognized as a federal institution within the meaning of the Official Languages Act and is therefore not subject to its provisions.

Nevertheless, in his report, the Commissioner of Official Languages makes the following observation and recommendation:

The issue of proficiency in both official languages was clearly not a prerequisite at the time of appointment, although it is a factor usually considered in the appointment process, along with diversity and professional background. If the issue of proficiency in both official languages was discussed, as confirmed by the Privy Council Office, it must be noted that it was not retained. The issue of proficiency in both official languages was raised when the PCO contacted the nominee. The nominee then would have committed to improving her proficiency in French.

Building on this close collaboration between the Privy Council Office and the Prime Minister's Office, I strongly encourage the PCO to take full advantage of this working relationship with the PMO and to leverage its role of supporting, guiding and advising the Prime Minister to emphasize the special and unique nature of New Brunswick's linguistic duality and to protect it in future appointments of this kind in the province. Subsection 16(2) of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms recognizes that French and English are the official languages of New Brunswick and this recognition was enshrined in the Charter at the express request of the province.

Again, during my speech on Bill S-220 regarding the bilingualism of the Governor General, I highlighted section 12 of the Canadian Constitution, which clearly gives Parliament the power to amend, through simple legislation, the powers to appoint the Governor General. This section reads as follows:

All Powers, Authorities, and Functions which . . . are vested in . . . Governors or Lieutenant Governors . . . shall . . . be vested in and exerciseable by the Governor General . . . subject nevertheless . . . to be abolished or altered by the Parliament of Canada.

After introducing my two bills to amend the Language Skills Act to add the Governor General and the Lieutenant-Governor of New Brunswick, a distinguished professor, Benoît Pelletier, who is also a great lawyer, constitutional expert and professor at Ottawa University's faculty of law, published a very interesting piece in *Le Droit* on December 11.

I draw your attention to this excerpt from Professor Pelletier's article, where he states the following:

Nevertheless, Mary Simon's appointment speaks volumes about how little importance the federal authorities often accord to the French language, even though everyone is elated that an Indigenous person is, for the first time, the head of state.

Speaking of Mary Simon, it was her lack of proficiency in one of Canada's official languages that led Senator Carignan to propose amendments to the Language Skills Act, an act dating back to 2013, requiring that anyone aspiring to become the Governor General of Canada or the Lieutenant-Governor of New Brunswick be able to clearly speak and understand French and English. We can only applaud this initiative. These legislative amendments could effectively limit the discretion or prerogative of Canada's Prime Minister . . .

Honourable senators, I would especially like to highlight this excerpt from Professor Pelletier's article, which reads as follows:

While that discretion or prerogative is, in fact, constitutional, it is still derived from conventions, which are not, strictly speaking, rules of law. Even an ordinary law can override similar constitutional conventions, which are not sanctionable by a court of law.

Bill S-229 essentially has two provisions. The first would amend the Language Skills Act to add the office of Lieutenant-Governor of New Brunswick to the list of senior officials who must be bilingual at the time of their appointment. The second provision involves coordinating amendments. It accounts for the fact that another bill, Bill S-220, would also amend the Language Skills Act and provides instructions in the event that one bill is passed before the other.

[English]

In conclusion, honourable senators, I would like to repeat that we have a constitutional responsibility to protect minorities in Canada. Today, we are faced with a situation that certainly requires us to fulfill that constitutional function.

• (1650)

[Translation]

Honourable senators, I urge you all to support Bill S-229 at second reading stage so that it can be studied in committee.

Thank you.

(On motion of Senator Duncan, debate adjourned.)

[English]

COMMITTEE OF SELECTION

SECOND REPORT OF COMMITTEE ADOPTED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator MacDonald, seconded by the Honourable Senator Smith, for the adoption of the second report (interim) of the Committee of Selection, entitled *Duration of membership on committees*, presented in the Senate on December 2, 2021.

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

Hon. Senators: Question.

The Hon. the Speaker pro tempore: It was moved by the Honourable Senator MacDonald, seconded by the Honourable Senator Smith, that this report be adopted now.

Those in favour of the motion and who are in the Senate Chamber will please say “yea.”

Some Hon. Senators: Yea.

The Hon. the Speaker pro tempore: Those opposed to the motion and who are in the Senate Chamber will please say “nay.”

Some Hon. Senators: Nay.

The Hon. the Speaker pro tempore: In my opinion, the “yeas” have it.

And two honourable senators having risen:

The Hon. the Speaker pro tempore: I see two senators rising. Do the government liaison and opposition whip have agreement on the length of the bell?

An Hon. Senator: Thirty minutes.

The Hon. the Speaker pro tempore: Is there leave for the proposed length of the bell from senators in the chamber?

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

The Hon. the Speaker pro tempore: The vote will be at 5:22.

Call in the senators.

• (1720)

Motion agreed to and report adopted on the following division:

YEAS THE HONOURABLE SENATORS

Arnot	Manning
Ataullahjan	Martin
Boehm	Marwah
Boisvenu	Mégie
Boniface	Mockler
Boyer	Moncion
Busson	Ngo
Carignan	Oh
Christmas	Omidvar
Clement	Pate
Coyle	Patterson
Dasko	Petitclerc
Deacon (<i>Ontario</i>)	Poirier
Dean	Ravalia
Duncan	Richards
Dupuis	Saint-Germain
Forest	Simons
Griffin	Sorensen
Housakos	Wells
Jaffer	Wetston
Loffreda	Woo
MacDonald	Yussuff—44

NAYS THE HONOURABLE SENATORS

Anderson	Klyne
Batters	Kutcher
Bellemare	Lankin
Bovey	Lovelace Nicholas
Cordy	Marshall
Dalphond	Massicotte
Dawson	McCallum
Deacon (<i>Nouvelle-Écosse</i>)	McPhedran
Francis	Mercer
Gerba	Miville-Dechêne
Gignac	Quinn—23
Harder	

ABSTENTIONS
THE HONOURABLE SENATORS

Audette	Gold
Cormier	LaBoucane-Benson
Cotter	Tannas
Gagné	Wallin—9
Galvez	

• (1730)

[Translation]

Hon. Rosa Galvez: Honourable senators, allow me to explain why I abstained. Given that each group allocates seats on each committee differently, that some committees deal with Senate governance matters and that others deal with issues in Canadian society, I am of the view that a single rule that applies to all the committees goes against the principle of a more independent Senate. I therefore still have doubts.

[English]

POINT OF ORDER—SPEAKER'S RULING RESERVED

Hon. Yonah Martin (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): On a point of order, Your Honour.

For the record, I know in the last Parliament there were quite a few explanations for abstentions. I wanted to just ask you to explain that an abstention speaks for itself, and often clarifying the abstention would happen if there were a conflict of interest. In debate, senators can explain why they may vote for, against or potentially abstain, but once a vote is done I thought that there was some indication in the last Parliament that we would not go into explanations for abstentions. Otherwise, it just prolongs the debate.

I know I'm doing that at this time, but it's the first time this has happened in this Parliament. I just wanted to ask for your clarification on this. Thank you.

The Hon. the Speaker pro tempore: Thank you, Senator Martin. I believe we have a history in this chamber with regard to abstentions, but I will discuss this point of order with His Honour and we will report back to the chamber.

[Translation]

THE SENATE

MOTION TO RECOGNIZE THAT CLIMATE CHANGE IS
AN URGENT CRISIS—DEBATE CONTINUED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Galvez, seconded by the Honourable Senator Forest:

That the Senate of Canada recognize that:

- (a) climate change is an urgent crisis that requires an immediate and ambitious response;
- (b) human activity is unequivocally warming the atmosphere, ocean and land at an unprecedented pace, and is provoking weather and climate extremes in every region across the globe, including in the Arctic, which is warming at more than twice the global rate;
- (c) failure to address climate change is resulting in catastrophic consequences especially for Canadian youth, Indigenous Peoples and future generations; and
- (d) climate change is negatively impacting the health and safety of Canadians, and the financial stability of Canada;

That the Senate declare that Canada is in a national climate emergency which requires that Canada uphold its international commitments with respect to climate change and increase its climate action in line with the Paris Agreement's objective of holding global warming well below two degrees Celsius and pursuing efforts to keep global warming below 1.5 degrees Celsius; and

That the Senate commit to action on mitigation and adaptation in response to the climate emergency and that it consider this urgency for action while undertaking its parliamentary business.

Hon. Raymonde Gagné (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate): Honourable senators, I rise to speak to Motion No. 7 moved by Senator Galvez.

This motion calls on the Senate of Canada to recognize that climate change is an urgent crisis that requires an immediate and ambitious response. Honourable colleagues, as you know, the Honourable Catherine McKenna, the then Minister of Environment and Climate Change, moved a similar motion at the other place on May 16, 2019.

At the time, the minister's motion noted the impacts of climate change, such as flooding, wildfires, heat waves and other extreme weather events, as well as other concerns, such as the fact that climate change impacts communities across Canada, with coastal, northern and Indigenous communities particularly vulnerable to its effects.

The disastrous flooding in British Columbia should serve a reminder that climate change is real and that governments around the world must act quickly and decisively. Inaction is no longer acceptable.

As the new Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Steven Guilbeault, said, Canada is doing its part and has taken the following measures.

To reduce greenhouse gas emissions, the government put a price on carbon pollution and set a price trajectory out to 2030 that is one of the most ambitious in the world.

The government is also offering support to help homeowners improve their home's energy efficiency and help drivers buy zero-emission vehicles.

The government is accelerating its plan to phase out traditional coal-fired electricity generation and is offering industries incentives to decarbonize and develop clean tech. The government also introduced regulations to reduce methane emissions from the oil and gas sector, and it is committed to doing the same for the entire Canadian economy.

Alongside that, the government is committed to protecting 25% of our land and oceans by 2025. That is why it earmarked \$4 billion to support natural climate solutions, which include an initiative to plant 2 billion trees over the next 10 years.

[English]

Honourable senators, finding ways to speed up climate change action can be a frustrating experience for many of us.

• (1740)

As early as 1973, when many of us might have been learning of ecological problems for the first time, in his classic work *Small is Beautiful*, E.F. Schumacher wrote of:

An attitude to life which seeks fulfilment in the single-minded pursuit of wealth — in short, materialism — does not fit into this world, because it contains within itself no limiting principle, while the environment in which it is placed is strictly limited. Already the environment is trying to tell us that certain stresses are becoming excessive.

Nearly 50 years later, these environmental stresses have only increased. As the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change constantly reminds us — and more recently at COP26 — we are now reaching points of ecological exhaustion in several areas.

Before concluding, I want to commend Senator Galvez for tabling this motion and for her relentless climate change advocacy.

Here at the Senate, as elsewhere, we need to tackle climate change on a number of fronts. We are up against a problem of titanic proportions that requires all hands on deck if we are to avoid the proverbial iceberg that is now well within sight.

Senator Galvez's motion is an important action but, of course, more needs to be done. In this chamber, in committees and individually, we need to be creative and innovative in contemplating how we can act to increase greater climate action for today and tomorrow.

Thank you, *meegwetch*.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

[Translation]

Hon. Marie-Françoise Mègie: Honourable senators, I rise today to speak in support of Motion No. 7 moved by Senator Galvez that aims to recognize the urgency for action on climate change.

The responsibility is in our hands, colleagues, and we must take the lead so that all our legislative actions can contribute to finding appropriate solutions.

A few years ago, as a private citizen, my understanding of environmental protection was limited to reducing the use of plastic bags and bottles, reducing harmful emissions from vehicles and industry, and reversing the effects of holes in the ozone layer caused by chlorofluorocarbons, or CFCs. This concept has evolved over time, with media coverage and speeches by politicians on the subject. In the Senate, my conversations with Senator Galvez and the reading of her white paper convinced me of the urgency to act.

In medicine, we use the word “emergency” when a patient's life is in danger and they require immediate care. Today, this is true of our planet, which supports life. It can't wait any longer for us to act. It needs intensive care without further delay.

Honourable senators, I would like to focus on the importance of part (d) of the motion, which reads as follows: “climate change is negatively impacting the health and safety of Canadians.”

In medical practice, the questionnaire on a patient's environment includes questions about their home and workplace.

For example, if a person suffers from chronic lung problems and there are questions about why they have been repeatedly hospitalized despite using medication appropriately, a home visit may sometimes reveal a damp basement and signs of mould.

At work, if a person has an asthma attack or presents with skin lesions and itching as soon as they set foot in their office, this can be a sign of mould in the walls or poor air quality.

Two updates were published by the American Heart Association, in 2004 and 2010. They clearly established that air pollution is a risk factor and a cause of heart attacks and strokes.

In his article on the impact of atmospheric pollution on the health of Quebecers and Canadians, Dr. François Reeves, interventional cardiologist and associate professor of medicine at the University of Montreal, pointed out the following:

Extensive use of fossil fuels affects human health in two ways: through direct toxicity and through climate events. The environmental impact on our health is highly significant: air pollution is the leading global cause of death

It causes more than 8 million excess deaths a year, which is more than tobacco or COVID-19.

In 2019, the Public Health Agency of Canada reported that air pollution accounts for C\$114 billion a year in health and disability costs.

Hussein Wazneh, a researcher at Quebec's centre for research and innovation in civil security, said the following:

Heat waves have significant health implications in Quebec and elsewhere in the world. For example, a five-day heat wave in 2010 led to the death of 106 people in Montreal. During this time, there were 280 extra deaths

Extra or premature deaths refer to deaths that would not have occurred if not for the adverse factor in question.

It is widely accepted that climate change will make the severity, duration and frequency of heat waves increase in the coming decades. The number of 30°C days could triple as early as 2080 in several Canadian cities.

These figures are masking some significant inequalities in terms of health determinants. People in precarious socio-economic situations often live near highways and urban heat islands.

According to Quebec's department of the environment and the fight against climate change, road pollution accounts for 62% of the fine particles, sulphur dioxide, nitrogen dioxide and ozone in the air. The difference between some wealthier neighbourhoods, which have ample green space, and working-class neighbourhoods, where every square inch is paved, reflects social and public health disparities. In its report entitled *The Health Costs of Climate Change*, the Canadian Institute for Climate Choices emphasized that:

Disadvantaged groups are at higher risk of heat-related illnesses and death

Some of the pre-existing diseases that affect heat risk are associated more strongly with disadvantaged groups.

A literature review published in March 2021 by Quebec's public health institute, the INSPQ, paints a picture of the many climate phenomena that affect population health, from extreme

heat to extreme cold, from storms to floods, from air pollution to smog events, from drought to forest fires, from human encroachment on natural spaces to zoonotic diseases, and so on.

As we saw in Western Canada, the catastrophic consequences of deforestation that depletes soils, combined with forest fires and extreme rainfall, caused devastating floods. It is therefore not surprising that we once again called in the Canadian army to help us cope with disastrous meteorological phenomena.

Climate disturbances are causing cascading effects that can be seen in Canada from coast to coast to coast. Canada has the longest coastline in the world, with about one in five people living on the coast. The impact of climate change is generally considered over the long term, that is, over 10, 20 or even 50 years. Coastal erosion in the Arctic can be observed from one day to the next. According to Natural Resources Canada, it is estimated that each year in the Arctic, 30 to 40 meters of coastline are lost.

Changes related to erosion have been affecting the food supply of Inuit populations for the past 10 to 15 years. The extraordinary and urgent steps we must take to counter the impact of climate destabilization are crucial to combat food insecurity among northerners.

While the health impacts of pollution are obvious, as I mentioned earlier, some of the effects of climate change on population health are more insidious.

Take, for example, zoonotic diseases, which are diseases or infections that naturally spread from an animal species to humans. Lyme disease has been in the news every summer for the past few years. Tick migration on white-tailed deer populations is responsible for the arrival of this disease north of the forty-fifth parallel.

• (1750)

The risk of zoonotic diseases increases as humans continue to encroach on wild spaces.

In a book on epidemics in Quebec entitled *Brève histoire des épidémies au Québec*, the author references a 2015 warning from virologist Patrick Berche:

With population and poverty levels rising and contact with animals becoming increasingly common, it is highly likely that we will see other epidemics, such as flu or coronavirus

We must take care of our ecosystems. This type of intervention will help prevent future epidemics or even pandemics.

Dear colleagues, we know what we need to do. The Government of Canada has proposed a number of concrete measures to improve our chances of reversing the devastating effects of climate change, including building sustainable and net-zero buildings, accelerating the energy transition to renewable sources, moving away from our dependence on dirty fossil fuels by electrifying vehicles, and purifying our air by planting 2 billion trees in Canada.

In the “Initiatives” section of Senator Galvez’s website, you’ll find other measures, such as improving soil health, improving the National Building Code and creating a circular economy.

Motion No. 7 reflects the observations made by the INSPQ. Even if we significantly reduce Canada’s production of greenhouse gases in the coming years, the effects of climate change are already being felt and will continue to affect our communities for decades to come.

This is why it is more important than ever that we work even harder to combat the causes of climate change.

This is the only way to guarantee a longer life expectancy and good health for current and future generations.

Thank you.

[English]

The Hon. the Speaker pro tempore: Senator Pate, there are eight minutes before six o’clock.

Hon. Kim Pate: Honourable senators, I rise to speak in support of Senator Galvez’s motion as well. This emergency is real, though the extent to which each of us, in Canada and globally, feel its effects so far depends in large part on our class, our race, our gender and our access to resources — in short, on our privilege.

Environmental degradation has both amplified and been driven by systemic inequalities. Our climate action will not be successful if we continue to leave the most marginalized behind. Future generations will be shaped by our collective work. We must uphold international commitments to reconciliation, eradicate inequality and urgently act to redress environmental destruction.

The first of the UN Sustainable Development Goals is the eradication of poverty in all its forms. Millions of Canadians live below the poverty line. They are disproportionately bearing the consequences of our failure to manage carbon and other emissions, from increased flooding, droughts and fires to catastrophic weather events like hurricanes and tornadoes. Too many families and communities do not have the resources to shield themselves from the impacts of climate change.

Money pays for air conditioning as temperatures soar; money fills grocery carts as food insecurity increases; money pays for relocation and shelter away from natural disasters, such as floods, landslides and hurricanes.

Those living in poverty have fewer viable means to prepare for, protect themselves from and safely leave areas experiencing environmental disasters. Policy decisions intentionally ignore and abandon them.

In 2020, the woeful inadequacies of social assistance programs meant the poorest and most marginalized were left to survive a pandemic that cut them off from many community supports and services, on amounts ranging from 34% to 63% of the poverty line.

Let us be very clear, colleagues. This is below even Canada’s deep income poverty threshold. In some provinces, more than 50% were below that threshold.

While the poorest of the poor suffer the greatest consequences, the richest of the rich are actually driving climate change. Oxfam tracks the richest 1% of the global population as having used two times as much carbon as the poorest 50% over the last 25 years.

This inequality has only been exacerbated by COVID-19. The pandemic saw the wealth of billionaires increase by \$3.9 trillion between March 18 and December 31, 2020, alone, while the number of people living on less than \$5.50 per day is estimated to have increased to as many as 500 million in 2020.

During pandemic-related commercial travel bans, sales of private jets soared internationally. The jets and yachts of billionaires are the main contributors to their huge, unfair and unsustainable carbon footprints.

According to Oxfam:

... it is the richest who are least affected by the pandemic, and are the quickest to see their fortunes recover. They also remain the greatest emitters of carbon, and the greatest drivers of climate breakdown.

Their report concludes that the division between those who reap the rewards of carbon-producing processes and those who pay the price needs to be a top priority for global governments. As Oxfam states, “. . . The fight against inequality and the fight for climate justice are the same fight. . . .”

Bearing the brunt of this crisis are women. On average, women have lower incomes and are more likely to live in poverty than men. Black and Indigenous women in particular experience the highest rates of poverty. Globally, they also typically bear responsibility for tasks such as securing food and water — tasks made more difficult by climate change.

In 2017, the United Nations Development Programme reported that 80% of people displaced by climate change are women.

When natural disasters associated with climate change occur in Canada, they are accompanied by notable increases in violence against women.

Systemic racial inequality contributes to disproportionately negative health outcomes, overrepresentation in jobs being outside exposed to the elements and therefore face disproportionate exposure to extreme heat and air pollution. First Nations peoples living on reserve are 33 times more likely than others to face evacuations due to wildfires. Racialized and low-income communities in Canada are in peril as a result of our inaction.

Women and girls are a powerful force for climate action. Polls consistently indicate that women are more aware than men of environmental degradation and its harms, want the government to take urgent action on this issue and they vote based on issues relating to climate.

Action to arrest, mitigate and prevent climate change and environmental degradation is a fundamental part of upholding the right of women and girls to equality. Climate policies won't last if they do not reflect feminism or intersectionality. Success depends on us identifying vulnerabilities, creating more inclusive climate policies and improving economic equality and inclusion.

As Senator Galvez's white paper highlighted, guaranteed liveable income initiatives would help to foster climate resilience. Such programs create opportunities for everyone to participate in climate action.

Climate action:

... requires urgent, society-wide mobilization to provide children born today with the liveable environment and functioning health systems they need to thrive in a climate changed world.

The COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated what governments can do to respond effectively to a global crisis. The climate crisis demands the same level of action. We need policies that reduce demand for energy, end subsidies to fossil fuel industries and we need banks to end investments in fossil fuels and ramp up investment in sustainable, renewable energy. We need to end tax benefits for fossil fuel corporations that, according to last week's report of the Parliamentary Budget Officer, cost \$1.8 billion annually or about \$9.2 billion between 2015 and 2019.

• (1800)

The Hon. the Speaker pro tempore: Senator Pate, I am sorry to interrupt. Honourable senators, it is now six o'clock, and pursuant rule 3-3(1) and the order adopted on November 25, 2021, I'm obliged to leave the chair until seven o'clock unless there is leave that the sitting continue.

Some Hon. Senators: Agreed.

The Hon. the Speaker pro tempore: If you wish the sitting to be suspended, please say "suspend."

Therefore, we continue with the sitting.

Senator Pate: As we saw with the Canada Emergency Response Benefit during the pandemic, income support can help keep families and communities afloat through the challenges associated with such mobilization, from lost employment to ensuring that all have the means necessary to protect themselves

from health hazards. This type of support could be particularly important as the economy transitions to better align with human, social and environmental well-being.

Looking forward, in addition to alleviating poverty, it is important to recognize and support Indigenous traditional knowledge and leadership in plans for climate action. Despite being differentially impacted by climate change and having fewer resources to adapt as a result of systemic inequities, Indigenous peoples continue to take the lead in protecting land and water in ways that benefit all of us. In spite of their laudable work, Indigenous peoples are too often criticized for causing "inconveniences" and depicted as transgressors of the rule of law, then criminalized and even imprisoned when they act to protect waters and lands.

Canadian legal systems have too often failed to protect and uphold rights conferred by Indigenous and international legal orders, such as those that Wet'suwet'en land and water protectors have been asserting. Canada has not, however, demonstrated the same hesitation when it comes to criminalizing and imprisoning Indigenous peoples for taking measures to protect themselves, their families or the environment.

As we work to address climate change and environmental degradation, it is clear that Canada needs to better recognize and respect Indigenous laws and rights. This must include following through on its commitment to fully implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Criminalizing people for protecting their environment and asserting their rights will only escalate and underscore historic injustices.

Honourable senators, it is incumbent on us as people in positions of power to lead the way forward in climate action. We must not forget that the harms of climate change are not felt evenly, and that the most marginalized populations need our immediate attention. I urge us all to act now and support this motion and the work of Senator Galvez and many others, and help build a more sustainable, equitable and healthy society for generations to come. *Meegwetch.* Thank you.

Hon. Mary Jane McCallum: Honourable senators, I am speaking on behalf of the Wa Ni Ska Tan Alliance of Hydro-Impacted Communities in Manitoba.

We welcome the opportunity to speak to this motion and offer insights into emerging urgencies and new threats, such as climate change, while also warning of the dangers posed by blindly accepting large-scale hydroelectric projects as a route towards the future reliance on renewable energy. Though the climate crisis offers a very real danger to all peoples of the world, promoted solutions must be founded in principles of justice and avoid the sacrifice of communities for the benefit of others.

The people who comprise our research partnership include grassroots individuals from a number of hydro-impacted First Nations in northern Manitoba who have expressed concern about the history and expansion of hydro power in their respective territories. Our alliance also includes researchers and academics from nine universities, as well as members of several local NGOs.

Northern Manitoba is home to many freshwater lakes and tributaries, some of which were critical to the earliest encounters and commercial activities that would eventually influence the settlement of Canada. Scholars have clearly documented the historic importance of several ancient tributaries such as the Churchill, the Nelson and the Saskatchewan rivers. For Ithiniwuk (the Cree), these tributaries sustained their ancestors and their communities for millennia. Beginning in the mid 1960s, however, a new industrial presence would irreversibly alter landscapes and reverse waterways.

During this time Manitoba, together with the federal government, embarked on a joint study which examined, in part, the feasibility of large-scale hydropower in the north. Not long after the completion of the study, Manitoba's public utility ambitiously set out to "harness" the power of the waters in the region. Mega projects followed and in what would become known as the Churchill River Diversion and Lake Winnipeg Regulation projects, massive diversion channels were excavated en masse so water flows could be rerouted. The purpose for the dams along the Nelson River was originally to save money on electricity production for Winnipeg and other communities in Southern Manitoba, not for any environmental reasons. The public discourse on climate change and its connection with fossil fuels did not enter public discourse until much later.

The Churchill River Diversion affects the flow of the Churchill River which historically and naturally flowed into Hudson Bay. This river was, by the mid 1970s, intentionally and artificially rerouted via the Missi Falls Control Structure at the outlet of South Indian Lake. Its new path now flows through the Rat and Burntwood Rivers and eventually into the Nelson River system. The Province of Manitoba writes that "CRD is used for the generating stations on the Nelson River, which account for about 75% of power generation in Manitoba."

Large-scale hydro projects like the CRD in Manitoba were made possible by a series of agreements and deal making spanning more than 30 years, affecting four generations, and counting, in numerous Indigenous communities. Dam building for commercial purposes, and export, was ushered in with the signing of the Northern Flood Agreement in 1977. While this agreement involved the Province of Manitoba, the Board of Manitoba Hydro, the federal government, and five First Nation communities collectively represented by the Northern Flood Committee, it was effectively triggered by the resistance of the Cree whose reserve lands would be flooded as a result of Hydro's CRD and Lake Winnipeg Regulation projects. This agreement, which has been acknowledged as a treaty, was meant to mitigate a broad range of adverse impacts, the scope of which were not entirely known at the time of its signing.

The CRD has directly impacted more than 8,000 kilometres of shoreline. This is a conservative estimate based on available data sets from publications of shorelines around South Indian Lake, but the true numbers are difficult to calculate due to the inaccessible nature of supposedly public information. . . . Both the Manitoba government and public have to rely on the information provided by Manitoba Hydro, because they fund the vast majority of scientific studies on their projects and utilize strategies of divide and conquer when signing agreements with communities.

The South Indian Lake community and its people were self-sufficient, thriving and even prosperous, before the CRD project came to fruition, not having to rely on government intervention or support. The South Indian Lake Commercial Fishery was the third largest lake whitefish fishery in North America. South Indian Lake had an average annual income approximately seven times that of other Northern communities, because they were mainly reliant on fishing and trapping activities. Scientific reports on potential adverse impacts of the project were ignored by authorities and licences were granted for the Crown corporation to legally proceed.

• (1810)

The hydroelectric energy produced by these megadams has long enjoyed an undeserved reputation as "clean" and "renewable" energy. In the move towards addressing climate change through electrification, "greenwashing" of hydro power poses an emerging threat of ideological proportions. Ongoing dysfunctional and deep-rooted colonial structures, including jurisdictional gaps, also strain existing power imbalances in the region. This ecological footprint has resulted in impacts that have yet to receive due environmental consideration. Entire islands have been swallowed up. Historic and commercial fisheries have been decimated. Thousands of people and entire communities have been flooded, displaced and dispossessed.

Emissions from hydro dams are produced through the flooding of shorelines and forests, which introduces organic matter into the water that then decomposes, producing carbon dioxide, nitrous oxide, and methane. Flooding in northern Manitoba was not restricted to a single project or event. In the areas impacted by hydro operations, the water levels and flows are raised or lowered based on the demand for power. This results in ongoing inundation and/or de-watering of tributaries and produces greenhouse gas emissions on an ongoing basis. Hydroelectric reservoirs are a source of greenhouse gases and in individual cases can reach the same emission rates as thermal power plants. Independent scientific studies have shown emissions related to hydroelectricity to be severely undercounted. Rigorous monitoring of individual reservoirs is desperately needed, in order to ensure that they are not contributing significantly to climate change.

The shorelines of several historic tributaries throughout this region contain two histories and two competing narratives: one before hydro and the other after hydro. The former, life before hydro, represented an era where the people moved with the ebbs and flows of the land and waters, were independent, and sustained themselves on the very land and waters that have become critical to hydropower and its operations. Before hydro, the land and waters were pristine. Today these same lands, and the communities who relied on them, carry the cultural, social, environmental, and economic scars of a fairly recent and ongoing colonial encounter. The danger of marketing this energy as responsible, green, and clean, must be avoided; this energy is not without consequence and we have yet to measure the full scale and scope of its environmental footprint in terms of greenhouse gas emissions, its cumulative environmental impacts, or the ways it can exacerbate the climate crisis.

Renewable energy projects are desperately needed in the face of the climate crisis, but they must not be undertaken in a way that repeats the mistakes of the past. The hydro dams in Manitoba were developed in a colonial manner that did not prioritize collaboration with Indigenous Peoples or minimize environmental harm. Future energy projects should focus on renewable energies such as wind and solar that can be built closer to urban centres such as Winnipeg — reducing the amount of necessary infrastructure and fuel. These energies will also be less susceptible to future changes in our climate, unlike the susceptibility of hydroelectricity to a drought, such as we are currently experiencing in Manitoba. Northern Canada is also predicted to experience greater warming than the global average, signalling another reason to focus efforts on resilient solutions. We call upon governments and industry to seize the opportunity to develop innovative solutions to our energy needs and in a manner that does not contribute to additional environmental, socio-economic, and cultural degradation.

Today we are witnessing, across Canada, a shift in how the public views megadam projects. From Site C in British Columbia, to Keeyask in Manitoba and Muskrat Falls in Labrador, the cost overruns and unnecessary environmental harms are being weighed against the supposedly cheap electricity that they will produce. Indigenous communities have always been voicing their opposition to these projects, but the non-Indigenous public is finally starting to listen. We recommend that all public utilities and Provincial Governments in Canada collaborate meaningfully, in good faith, with hydro-impacted communities in order to receive consent on all existing and planned energy projects. We also recommend that an immediate moratorium be placed on all megadam construction. This moratorium should be maintained until proper research has been done into all aspects of hydro's impact on climate change, including greenhouse gas production, release of sequestered carbon, and all other effects of hydro that worsen climate change.

Today, the very waters and lands that gave the region and the original peoples of that land life and meaning have been disrupted and destroyed, displacing many Indigenous communities. In this era of reconciliation, we offer you a brief glimpse of one more history, and one more story, that requires a reckoning and redress of sorts: it is the story of

hydropower in Manitoba. Four generations have already been affected by large-scale hydro development. As we find ourselves amid a rapidly evolving climate crisis, the cautionary tales to be gleaned are many, so too are possibilities and opportunities. We need to keep the next generations in mind as we move forward towards a more just and sustainable future.

We thank Senator Galvez for raising this very important issue, and we also thank the Senate. Thank you.

(On motion of Senator Tannas, for Senator Black, debate adjourned.)

MOTION PERTAINING TO THE RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL SYSTEM— DEBATE CONTINUED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator McCallum, seconded by the Honourable Senator Dean:

That the Senate of Canada:

- (a) acknowledge that racism, in all its forms, was a cornerstone upon which the residential school system was created;
- (b) acknowledge that racism, discrimination and abuse were rampant within the residential school system;
- (c) acknowledge that the residential school system, created for the malevolent purpose of assimilation, has had profound and continuing negative impacts on Indigenous lives, cultures and languages; and
- (d) apologize unreservedly for Canada's role in the establishment of the residential school system, as well as its resulting adverse impacts, the effects of which are still seen and felt by countless Indigenous peoples and communities today.

Hon. Yvonne Boyer: Honourable senators, I'm honoured to speak today to Senator McCallum's motion, and I thank her for her tireless advocacy on behalf of First Nations, Métis and Inuit across Canada.

Today I speak in full support of this important motion, which will certainly help move reconciliation forward in this country. In preparing to speak on this motion, I thought to myself, "how can I ensure my speech has an impact? What can I do to help advance the voices of those who have suffered deeply and continue to do so at the hands of this country's government?"

As I thought about this, the answer became clear in my mind. I wanted to bring a voice into this chamber that for so long had been ignored and even barred from speaking here.

Today, I give my voice to a dear friend, respected Elder and residential school survivor, Garnet Angecone.

Garnet Angecone is an Anishinaabe man who has survived a long journey. He grew up on his family's traditional territory until the age of seven when he was forced by the Government of Canada to go to Pelican Lake Indian Residential School. Garnet suffered many negative effects of government policies in the decades that followed. Despite those personal hardships, he became a journalist, a community leader and a respected elder in both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities.

Honourable senators, it is now my honour to share Garnet's words with you.

• (1820)

Senators: I am so honoured to speak to you through Senator Yvonne Boyer inside this Chamber of honour and privilege. I acknowledge the Algonquin Anishinaabe people whose traditional lands the Red Chamber is located.

Today, I speak to you in the spirit of truth. The Elders teach us to speak the truth and so with this sacred teaching, I will speak firsthand about lived experiences of Indian residential schools.

I presently live in Sioux Lookout in northwestern Ontario and I am a proud member of the Lac Seul First Nation. We live in the traditional territory of Treaty #3, an area which encompasses 55,000 square miles of land; an area surrounded with beautiful lakes and forests.

Treaty #3 is a living document which is the foundation of our relationship with Canada. Not only that, but Treaty #3 binds the region together with the Anishinaabe people; politically, economically and socially.

Treaty #3 was signed in 1873. However, Lac Seul First Nation signed onto the Treaty with an adhesion in 1874. Our people continue to honour the Treaty, a treaty that is viewed as a sacred covenant of co-existence.

Upon signing the Treaty #3 adhesion in 1874 on behalf of the Lac Seul Anishinaabe, Chief Sakatcheway so eloquently said, "If you give what I ask, the time may come when I will ask you to lend me one of your daughters and one of your sons to live with us; and in return I will lend you one of my daughters and one of my sons for you to teach what is good and after they have learned, to teach us. If you grant us what I ask, although I do not know you, I will shake hands with you."

So upon signing this Treaty, you can see that that started a long relationship of coexistence, a relationship that still exists to this day and is recognized under the 1982 Constitution Act of Canada.

However, from time to time, the relationship has hit bumpy spots and trying times along the way. Chief Sakatcheway's vision of coexistence, to "teach" and "learn" from each other, has not always been practiced, nor honoured."

No matter the issue, we need to continue to walk together on the path of learning. Learning more about residential schools is no exception. As a survivor of the Indian residential schools system, I continue learn about it. There is so much

to learn about the post residential school era: the impacts, historic trauma, transgenerational anger, healing, reconciliation and so much more.

Let me try and explain what I mean so that we can all learn from each other.

In March 2017, A Senator speaking in the Red Chamber made less than distinguished comments about the "good" of Canada's Indian Residential Schools system and the "well-intentioned" staff that worked within the schools. Her comments are contrary to the lived experiences of survivors and the findings of Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

As a survivor of the Indian residential school system myself and to my family and community, the Senator's remarks, vile views, and her subsequent actions remain hurtful and deeply offensive. I also submit to you that her negative actions and tune go against the country's move toward true reconciliation. Many people, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, remain offended.

After being released from the confines of the residential school system with a wounded spirit, I didn't want to listen to anyone. No one. The residential school system had made too angry.

I was bitter — very bitter. I was angry at myself. I was angry at my parents for allowing me to attend, but little did I realize it was the law of the state and role of the churches that separated me from my family. Dare I say it, I was even angry at God my Creator. Simply put, as a confused young man, I was mad at the world.

However, on the positive side, and through my personal healing journey, I was able to cope and I learned to control my anger. I found the strength to not let the anger control my life.

Why am I telling you this, you might ask?

You see, it was like this.

When I first heard and learned about the comments embraced by this Senator, I was puzzled. I felt the need to rise up to the challenge that we — the collective — still had a lot of work to educate each other about our shared history.

However, as more comments and actions were spewed out, I could feel the remnants of the Indian residential school anger rearing its ugliness.

Try as we did, in July 2017, a number of residential school survivors met face-to-face with this Senator, to seek more understanding of the effects of the legacy. This meeting failed. Following this meeting, it became obvious that the meeting was a meeting of convenience for the Senator; portraying a message that everything was well. Things actually got worse which led to this Senator's exclusion from her political party not to mention her two suspensions from this Chamber.

Without malice, I found the Senator's responses and actions to be condescending. She may have listened to our stories but somehow it appeared she didn't hear our message. I ascertain that she was not engaged in a meaningful conversation of the healing of relations.

And so, given this ongoing matter, I hope you can see why some old wounds can be easily reopened. This is why I speak about anger stemming from historic trauma and that the effects of historic trauma are sadly transgenerational. This anger — a lingering effect of the system — certainly resurfaced in this situation.

Racism.

Like opening the wounds inflicted by the residential school system, the veneer is so thin that the embers of racism can be easily reignited. Certainly the words and actions of this Senator reignited the flames of racism in this country.

In the 1960s and 70s, as a young Anishinaabe man growing up in northwestern Ontario, I lived through very turbulent times dealing with overt racism including the impacts of systemic racism. Those living in northern Ontario can understand the threat of raging forest fires. In the era I speak about, racism in the north was ablaze. Although some fires have subsided, embers still smolder away and racism is still easily ignitable.

At least with raging forest fires, they can be extinguished with a lot of effort and firefighting equipment. But the raging fires of racism are not that easily extinguished. In this country, racism is on the rise. Northwestern Ontario is not free of racism. We still need collective effort and proper tools to fight racism.

Move Toward Healing and Reconciliation.

Senators, it is my belief that the healing of relationships is in order. Healing efforts through dialogue will lead all of us to meaningful reconciliation. But in saying this, healing must happen first before reconciliation efforts take shape.

In conclusion, let us move forward in the spirit of reconciliation. Let us talk to each other in a good way. Let us talk in a responsible way until every ounce of pain caused by the Indian residential schools system has dissipated.

My friends, the time is here. The time is now to listen to the wisdom of leaders past, for their guidance lives in each one of us today. Let us be guided by the spirit of leaders like Chief Sakatcheway.

And so what is this all about? This is about our children and our grandchildren and those yet to be born. Whenever I look into the eyes of my beautiful children, I cannot help but tell them: This is for you and the future of our country.

I have spoken the truth. Through truth, we will understand. Through understanding, there is hope. Through hope, there is healing. Through healing, there is reconciliation. Through reconciliation, there is forgiveness. Through forgiveness, there is peace.

Miigwetch, for listening.

Thank you, Garnet, my dear friend, for your powerful words. And thank you, colleagues, for listening with an open heart.

(On motion of Senator Martin, debate adjourned.)

MOTION TO URGE GOVERNMENT TO CALL UPON CURRENT PARTIES TO THE ACT OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON VIET-NAM TO AGREE TO THE RECONVENTION OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON VIET-NAM NEGATIVED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Ngo, seconded by the Honourable Senator Patterson:

That the Senate note that, by adopting the *Journey to Freedom Day Act* on April 23, 2015, and taking into account the first two elements of the preamble of the said Act, the Parliament of Canada unequivocally recognized violations of:

- (a) the *Agreement on Ending the War and Restoring Peace in Viet-Nam* and its protocols (Paris Peace Accords); and
- (b) the *Act of the International Conference on Viet-Nam*; and

That the Senate urge the Government of Canada to call upon six or more of the current parties to the *Act of the International Conference on Viet-Nam*, which include Canada, France, Hungary, Indonesia, Poland, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States of America, amongst others, to agree to the reconvention of the International Conference on Viet-Nam pursuant to Article 7(b) of the *Act of the International Conference on Viet-Nam* in order to settle disputes between the signatory parties due to the violations of the terms of the Paris Peace Accords and the *Act of the International Conference on Viet-Nam*.

Hon. Peter M. Boehm: Honourable senators, I would like to thank Senator Ngo for bringing this motion forward. The issue, both in the context of the Journey to Freedom Day Act of 2015 and the application of the agreement on ending the war and restoring peace in Vietnam, and its protocols, known as the Paris Peace Accords of 1975, is of great concern to our colleague and, indeed, to many Canadians of Vietnamese origin — as well it should be.

• (1830)

Indeed, countless people like Senator Ngo and thousands of Vietnamese first came to our shores fleeing conflict and/or persecution. The reasons to leave were traumatic enough, to say nothing of the journey to a new land and ultimately arriving in a strange new place to call home, where refugees face new challenges.

My parents faced a similar situation in losing their land, property and possessions during World War II, after which they came to Canada as refugees. We are all touched by such stories; they are integral to the fabric and the folk memory of so many Canadians.

Nonetheless, while I appreciate the spirit of this motion, I oppose its passage. I will explain why.

Colleagues, this motion calls upon the Government of Canada to reconvene a meeting of the International Conference on Viet-Nam to discuss events that took place 45 years ago, within the framework of that treaty, and of that conference that is just as old. Further, some of the members with which Canada worked at the time, such as Hungary and Poland, were then part of the Soviet bloc. Things have changed somewhat in 45 years, including the fall of the U.S.S.R., which among other points, resulted in these countries completely changing their constitutions and systems of government.

It is not clear to me why Canada should expend great energy, not to mention international political capital, to re-engage in a discussion for which, in my view, there would not be much appetite from other parties to reopen. Also, I do not know what will be included in the government's forthcoming Indo-Pacific strategy, but I would wager that reconvening the International Conference on Viet-Nam will not be in it, and I am not a betting man.

In bilateral terms — that is, the relationship between Canada and Vietnam — I am convinced that this motion would be seen in a negative light by Vietnam, a country with which Canada has enjoyed friendship and cooperation for many decades. That is no small thing, colleagues. Vietnam is a member of the ASEAN group with which both the government of Prime Minister Harper and the current government have sought to achieve closer ties. Vietnam, along with Canada, is a member of the Comprehensive and Progressive Trans-Pacific Partnership, otherwise known as the CPTPP, that is already showing positive signs for both countries and, indeed, all members. Our two-way trade last year was nearly \$9 billion, making Vietnam Canada's largest trading partner among ASEAN countries.

Would it not be more constructive for Canada to focus on developing our positive relationship with Vietnam within the framework of the Canada-Vietnam partnership, where there can be engagement on a comprehensive agenda that could, and in fact does, include economic and political reforms?

Symbolic gestures — and this motion represents just that — can have negative consequences. I have made this important point in the chamber before, colleagues.

I would also note that our dialogue with the government of Vietnam includes larger geostrategic questions, military cooperation that concerns Vietnam, scientific and academic cooperation, clean technologies and cooperation on the Green Climate Fund. It also includes discussions about the ASEAN countries, large neighbouring countries and the wider Pacific region.

We need to work with friends and allies all over the world, the Indo-Pacific region being no exception, particularly when we see ourselves aggrieved or unfairly treated by other countries. Canada has had some recent experience in this regard.

In his speech supporting the motion, our colleague Senator Patterson referred to the international rules-based order. We have had one since 1945 through the United Nations and the Bretton Woods Institutions, and it has changed and expanded over the years with decolonization; the development of regional groupings and alliances, in many of which Canada enjoys membership; the collapse of the Soviet Union; the development of the European Union; regular global and regional summits; and the list goes on.

The end of the Vietnam War falls into that rubric.

There are international norms and rules that are set out that should be followed by all countries. We all know this is not always the case.

I recognize that the concern expressed by Senators Ngo and Patterson revolve around human rights and the development of Vietnam since the peace treaty was signed. Various Canadian governments have, in the interval, raised these issues with the government since 1975, in bilateral terms. But what I consider very important is the multilateral element, as shown in the Universal Periodic Review that Canada had undertaken in the UN system to assess Vietnam's efforts on human rights and the harmonization of its laws with international standards. That is the development in the UN system that has also occurred since 1975, when the peace treaties were signed.

In the last round in 2019, Canada recommended that Vietnam revise its penal code and cybersecurity laws to align with international standards for freedom of expression, association and assembly; to ensure due process rights and the right to a fair trial; to allow religious groups to practise freely; and to allow for the establishment of independent labour unions and gender-equality issues.

That is the way to achieve progress, colleagues: peer review and multilateral engagement, the push that the CPTPP brings today for all parties to step up and continue bilateral dialogue. The solution is not to return to an instrument from 45 years ago, regardless of any perceived symbolic value or reassurance and hope it might provide to our valued and respected community of Vietnamese Canadians, of which our dear colleague is an illustrious member.

Honourable senators, the chances of getting six parties to the Act of the International Conference on Viet-Nam to agree to reopen the conference are well nigh impossible.

As I have said before with respect to motions on international affairs in this chamber, we must keep in mind that the management of Canada's international affairs falls within the Royal Prerogative. While the Senate and the House of Commons can certainly provide indications of what should be done, what actually can be done resides solely with the government of the day.

If we pass motions, they need to be realistic and reflect well on our institution — the Senate of Canada. I don't think this one does.

In my view, our government would need to think long and hard before committing its international political capital toward returning to an issue that, for many people and countries, was settled long ago.

It is for those reasons that, with the greatest respect for our colleague Senator Ngo, I oppose this motion.

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Honourable senators, I rise today to speak briefly to the motion brought forward by our colleague Senator Ngo.

Over the years, Senator Ngo has provided a voice to issues close to his heart and has done so with honesty and passion. This motion is no different. This chamber — and I will presume to speak for this chamber — but I, speaking personally, thank Senator Ngo for his contributions over the years. We will miss his interventions.

The government agrees with Senator Ngo that Canada has a vested interest in continuing to uphold stability, peace and democracy in Asia. However, the government does not agree with the method being proposed by Senator Ngo in Motion No. 13.

[Translation]

Canada's relationship with Vietnam has developed significantly over the years. Vietnam is an important bilateral, regional and multilateral partner for Canada. The relationship between our two countries was recently strengthened, mainly due to the establishment of a comprehensive partnership during the Prime Minister's visit to Vietnam in 2017.

[English]

The comprehensive partnership strengthens cooperation in several key areas, including political and diplomatic engagement; trade and investment; development assistance; defence and security; cultural and academic exchanges; science, technology and innovation; and people-to-people ties. This partnership aims to meet both our countries' priorities, contributes to upholding the rule of law, and to maintaining peace and stability in Southeast Asia and in the Indo-Pacific region.

[Translation]

The government believes that it would be more constructive for Canada to focus on the 2017 comprehensive partnership with Vietnam. As we approach 2023, the fiftieth anniversary of diplomatic relations between Canada and Vietnam, it is vital that

we maintain the positive momentum with Vietnam. The Government of Canada will continue to support Vietnam's progress and to advocate for improved human rights and democracy through this partnership.

• (1840)

[English]

Canada will also continue to support stability, peace and democracy through the existing and growing avenues at our disposal. This includes leveraging our comprehensive partnership with Vietnam, as well as our relationship with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, ASEAN.

Canada has been a dialogue partner of ASEAN since 1977. We are one of only ten countries with this designation. Canada cooperates on political and security issues, regional integration and economic interests. We also provide security assistance to ASEAN member states, which contributes to regional peace and security and promotes Canadian foreign policy objectives in Southeast Asia.

In addition, Canada supports ASEAN's regional development priorities. Our assistance is used to promote and protect human rights, inclusive governance and peaceful pluralism.

To support our work with ASEAN, Canada has both a dedicated mission and an ambassador to ASEAN. As an example, the government is pleased to see that ASEAN members and China have resumed negotiations to develop a code of conduct for the South China Sea. Canada encourages transparency in these negotiations and reiterates that the agreement should not derogate from the rights that parties enjoy under international law or prejudice the rights of third parties.

[Translation]

The government does not agree that the Act of the International Conference remains a viable diplomatic tool for settling disputes or an effective mechanism for initiating negotiations on urgent geopolitical issues, such as developing a code of conduct for the South China Sea.

[English]

Reconvening the international conference, in Canada's judgment, is not an appropriate avenue to uphold stability, peace and democracy in Asia at this time. Moreover, the government does not see a compelling policy rationale to consider reconvening the conference after so many years, as Senator Boehm underlined in his remarks. We have moved on and, frankly, such a motion might very well undermine Canada's bilateral relationship with Vietnam.

As well, we should take into consideration how such a motion could affect the bilateral relationships between Vietnam and parties to the act. Resuming the conference could, in fact, have a negative impact on the decades-long friendship and cooperation between Canada and Vietnam. Canada will continue to advance its relationship with Vietnam and consistently advocate for peace, stability, diplomacy and the upholding of international obligations.

For all of the reasons mentioned, the government respectfully is unable to support Motion No. 13. However, this chamber should be assured that Canada values its relationship with Vietnam and views Vietnam as a friend and partner in the region. Our two countries will continue to work closely together in multilateral fora. Thank you.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

Hon. Yonah Martin (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, I am pleased to speak in support of my colleague Senator Thanh Hai Ngo and his motion to urge the Government of Canada to call upon six or more of the current parties to the Act of the International Conference on Viet-Nam — which includes Canada, France, Hungary, Indonesia, Poland, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States, amongst others — to agree to reconvening the International Conference on Viet-Nam, pursuant to Article 7(b) of the act in order to settle disputes between the signatory parties due to violations of the terms of the Paris Peace Accords and the Act of the International Conference on Viet-Nam.

When World War II ended, there was rejoicing throughout the world. The most horrific war in world history had ended, the axis tyrants were defeated and the hope of freedom to many previously occupied countries like Korea — the country of my birth — and colonial possessions, like India, were on the rise.

Yet the conflict that had so thoroughly ravaged the world for nearly a decade had never really ended in Asia. In the 75 years since the end of World War II, there have been 63 military confrontations in Asia, including major wars in China, Korea, India, Pakistan and Vietnam — nearly one for every year.

As a Canadian of Korean descent, I can tell you first-hand the impact war has on a country and its people — the lingering pain of the loss of missing generations, survivor's guilt when friends and family perish, the impact of suffering on the children of war and the legacy of that agony passed on to subsequent generations.

Peace treaties are signed; some are upheld and others, like the Paris Peace Accords, are not. The accords included the governments of the democratic people of Vietnam — North Vietnam, the Republic of Vietnam, South Vietnam — and the United States, as well as the Republic of South Vietnam, PRG, which represented South Vietnamese communists. The accords were an effort to end the conflict and bring peace to the region. The Paris Peace Accords provisions were immediately and frequently broken, with no official response from the United States.

In March 1973, fighting resumed and North Vietnamese offences enlarged their control by the end of the year. In 1975, a massive North Vietnamese offensive finally conquered South Vietnam. On July 2, 1976, the two countries — separated since 1954 — ceased to exist and in its place was born the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.

Conflict continues to escalate in the region around the South China Sea, which includes signatories to the accord. As Senator Ngo so rightly pointed out in his speech in the Senate on

November 25, the Paris Peace Accords remain a valuable diplomatic tool for the resolution of disputes between the signatory parties. It is worth repeating what Senator Ngo said:

Ultimately, if there is consensus among the parties that the Paris Agreement continues to be in force, it can be reopened and renegotiated. The same applies to the act; in its case, it would allow for the international conference to be reconvened in accordance with Article 7(b).

Reconvening this international conference can also be a valuable mechanism in initiating negotiations in some of the most pressing geopolitical issues in Asia today, such as the South China Sea dispute.

Canada, as one of the signatories, has the opportunity to reopen this important debate. Canada has always prided itself on our peacekeeping commitments and peacemaking talent.

Honourable senators, in an effort to spare another generation of children who will witness the atrocities of war, be ripped from their families and unintentionally pass their suffering on to their children, I wholeheartedly support Senator Ngo's motion. He has long been a champion of human rights, freedom and democracy. As the first Canadian senator of Vietnamese descent, Senator Ngo is a respected national leader. Let us make the most of the opportunity that is before us — for Canada and for us, as the chamber of sober second thought — to adopt this important motion, moved by our colleague as the end of his distinguished Senate tenure draws near. His immeasurable courage that powered his journey to freedom to Canada after the fall of Saigon in 1975 and his resoluteness in getting his Senate public bill, Bill S-219, Journey to Freedom Day Act, enacted into law in 2015, are only surpassed by his hope and commitment to human rights, freedom and democracy for all people.

With that, I hope that honourable senators will support this motion as proposed by our colleague Senator Thanh Hai Ngo.

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

An Hon. Senator: Question.

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

Some Hon. Senators: No.

The Hon. the Speaker: I hear a "no." Those in favour of the motion who are in the Senate Chamber will please say "yea."

Some Hon. Senators: Yea.

The Hon. the Speaker: Those opposed to the motion who are in the Senate Chamber will please say "nay."

Some Hon. Senators: Nay.

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

(Motion negated, on division.)

SOCIAL AFFAIRS, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

MOTION TO AUTHORIZE COMMITTEE TO STUDY THE FEDERAL FRAMEWORK FOR SUICIDE PREVENTION— DEBATE CONTINUED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Kutcher, seconded by the Honourable Senator Boehm:

That the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology be authorized, when and if it is formed, to examine and report on the Federal Framework for Suicide Prevention, including, but not limited to:

- (a) evaluating the effectiveness of the Framework in significantly, substantially and sustainably decreasing rates of suicide since it was enacted;
- (b) examining the rates of suicide in Canada as a whole and in unique populations, such as Indigenous, racialized and youth communities;
- (c) reporting on the amount of federal funding provided to all suicide prevention programs or initiatives for the period 2000-2020 and determining what evidence-based criteria for suicide prevention was used in each selection;
- (d) determining for each of the programs or interventions funded in paragraph (c), whether there was a demonstrated significant, substantive and sustained decrease in suicide rates in the population(s) targeted; and
- (e) providing recommendations to ensure that Canada's Federal Framework for Suicide Prevention and federal funding for suicide prevention activities are based on best available evidence of impact on suicide rate reduction; and

That the committee submit its final report on this study to the Senate no later than December 16, 2022.

Hon. Dan Christmas: Honourable senators, I rise today to speak in strong support of Senator Kutcher's motion to authorize the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology to study the Federal Framework for Suicide Prevention.

• (1850)

My remarks today will be brief, but hopefully compelling, as I share the impact of suicide on a young Mi'kmaw man whose life was seemingly filled with promise, yet sadly ended well before its time.

I do so today because I feel I must, rooted in reality that First Nations people, living both on and off reserve, Métis and Inuit, die by suicide at a higher rate than non-Indigenous people. I've

seen suicide not only result in immeasurable loss to family and friends, but also to our communities and their social fabric, especially when the victim is a young person.

As I mentioned, I knew such a young man. He was a member of a family from the Millbrook community in Nova Scotia. I would like to share his story with you now, honourable senators.

His name was Cody Glode. Cody grew up in a warm and loving family. His parents, Matthew and Lisa, described young Cody as a rambunctious child with a wonderful sense of humour which would carry on into his teenage and young adult years. He was the type of man that literally lit up a room when he entered it.

What's more, Cody was an achiever, some might say even an overachiever. At 19, he became the youngest full-time firefighter with the Truro Fire Service and the only Mi'kmaw person in its ranks.

He was also a rising star in the local mixed martial arts scene with dreams of making it to the pinnacle of his sport.

He had a healthy obsession with martial arts, which saw his pastime become his passion. It was his sense of passion and determination that masked his personal battle, for you see, Cody was a high-functioning depressive.

Eventually at age 20, after suffering for eight years, Cody's symptoms were such that he sought help from the local mental health helpline. When he didn't get immediate assistance, he tried the emergency room at a hospital where he was told to follow up with his family doctor, who then recommended he see a psychologist.

Faced with a two-month wait time, which for him felt like an eternity, his light of hope immediately dimmed. Three weeks later, on March 2, 2016, he took his own life, feeling totally defeated.

Three years afterwards, his mother was asked whether she wished she could bring her son back. She replied she would not, noting that "To do that would be so selfish because he was in so much pain."

Yet, indirectly, Cody Glode has left a legacy that has helped to illuminate a path forward, where lives like his might be spared and a system in disrepair might be made right again.

In 2017, the House Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs studied the suicide crisis in First Nations communities and issued its report, *Breaking Point: The Suicide Crisis in Indigenous Communities*.

Members of the Glode family courageously appeared before the committee as witnesses. I will let their words give voice to the legacy of their son and nephew, Cody Glode.

His father, Matthew, spoke of Cody's plight in seeking help with his mental illness:

For a lot of people suffering from mental illness, who are deep in that pit of despair, making a phone call would be climbing Mount Everest. If Cody had gone into the office

with a bump on his head, high sugars, chest pain, or even a broken foot, help would have been immediate. Mental health issues need immediate action. “Mental health” are words that people have to be comfortable with. Our son was not crazy. He did not have bad nerves. He was not lonely. He suffered every day from mental illness. If it had been cancer, there would have been all kinds of help available.

He then described the impacts of suicide and mental illness and offered his advice in the face of this:

Mental health is lonely and crippling. It kills its victims. We as a nation need to make mental health a household word. We need to put in place a system that saves lives, one that, if need be, holds that person's hand until they get the help they need. We need people there to continue the care even after help has been given and received, whether that be with a simple visit or a phone call, or a person in place who would offer a hug, words of encouragement, or a listening ear. Sometimes it's so simple, but yet crucial to that person on the dark and lonely road of mental illness.

Cody's Aunt Pam is Executive Director of the Halifax Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre. She offered the committee context and clarity around mental health issues in the Indigenous community. She said:

I've just listened to a young girl say she was broken, and I take great offence at that. I take great offence that this young girl or any of our children feel like they are broken. As a people, we are not broken. The systems are broken and the policies are broken, and that's what needs to change. In our community, whether you're on reserve or in an urban context, we are not broken. The systems are broken. They've been broken. They've been designed to fail us time and time again. I've seen it happen over and over again.

I believe in my heart of hearts that there is a way forward. We talk about reconciliation—everybody throws that word around now—and it's where we need to go. I actually believe that it can be done. I believe that it will take a long time to be done. I believe that it will take us doing things together, not having government do things to our community, but with us, beside us, not in front of us, and not behind us. I believe that those policies need to be joint and they need to be done together.

I believe in my heart that our community can get better. I believe that when society as a whole recognizes.... [that] we need to have understanding of why things are the way they are. Don't hold it against us that our families were put into residential schools or that there was the sixties scoop, or the past and all of those things that created this, like the Indian Act. They've all been created to assimilate and to eradicate the Indian problem, and those are real things.

People need to be treated with respect. It breaks my heart knowing that out of everything we do, we couldn't even help my own nephew. I questioned what I do because of that. However, I also believe that what happened to Cody, for me, is the changing point even in my life. I believe that something good will come from Cody's passing.

... we have to start doing things together, not in silos, not separately, and not in Ottawa, but together. We talk about a national strategy. We talk about all these things. The reality is that we have to start doing things together. I don't mean at each other. I mean together. We need to have that honest truthful conversation, and humility has to play a role in that.

Honourable senators, if we ever needed a wake-up call, this is it. How can we not move forward in support of this motion after hearing such words of truth as these?

There's an adage of unknown origin which says, “Suicide doesn't end the chances of life getting worse. It eliminates the possibility of it ever getting any better.”

Honourable senators, supporting the adoption of this motion can help measurably improve the possibility of mitigating the seemingly endless tragedy of suicide and its destructive impacts. It has been said of our noble institution that some of its best work is achieved in committee.

I wholeheartedly support Senator Kutcher's position that our committees can be informed by what this chamber considers to be priority areas, and I hope and pray that our collective voice in response to this motion affirms that studying the Federal Framework for Suicide Prevention is indeed of significant import to permit its deliberation by the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology.

Cody Glode suffered. So many others have suffered, and there are so many still suffering but thankfully still with us. It's been said that “All storms end with the rising of a new dawn.” Yet, we are still dealing with the darkness of suicide.

Let us hopefully hasten the dawn with our deliberation of this vital matter in this place, and its committee, through the speedy adoption of this motion.

Wela'in. Thank you.

Hon. Stan Kutcher: Would Senator Christmas take a question?

Senator Christmas: Yes, I would be happy to.

• (1900)

Senator Kutcher: Thank you for sharing Cody's tragic story, Senator Christmas, and for pointing out to us in the words of his family that what needs to be done is not being done. In your opinion, in this situation, was there something that could have and should have been done that wasn't?

Senator Christmas: Thank you, senator. I have reflected on the situation many times. When Cody went to the emergency room and asked for help, the emergency room physician referred him to a psychologist, and that had a two-month wait time. I wish what had happened was that there had been a mental health triage — that within 24 hours, a mental health professional had talked to him, ideally in person but even over the phone, and assessed his mental health to see what kind of mental health services he required. I think if Cody had had someone reach out within 24 hours, it could have made the difference.

Unfortunately, as you know, senator, the mental health system is unable to react that fast. I hope a time comes when we do have a system that is not broken — that is fixed — that will enable young people or anyone who is faced with mental illness to be reached immediately, and from there the care would begin.

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

Your Honour, I want to say, personally, I know this is very important, but right now I will adjourn debate. I hope to get to this soon. Thank you.

(On motion of Senator Martin, debate adjourned.)

CONTRIBUTIONS AND IMPACTS OF MÉTIS, INUIT, AND FIRST NATIONS

INQUIRY—DEBATE ADJOURNED

Hon. Yvonne Boyer rose pursuant to notice of November 24, 2021:

That she will call the attention of the Senate to the positive contributions and impacts that Métis, Inuit, and First Nations have made to Canada, and the world.

She said: Honourable senators, I rise today in this chamber to speak to my inquiry on the positive contributions Indigenous peoples have made to Canada and the world.

In introducing this inquiry, my hope is to provide information that may not be widely known but demonstrates and celebrates the strengths of Métis, First Nations and Inuit peoples and their contributions to building the nation.

As you are aware, in this place, I often speak of my Indigenous sisters. Forced sterilization, cerebral palsy, the murdered and missing, residential school abuse and the physical and sexual abuse of Indigenous women and girls have all been discussed in this chamber. Although these are real issues, and unsettling ones, we cannot neglect to talk of the resilience and strengths of our Indigenous sisters, of how they manage to thrive despite a colonial system that has caused immeasurable harms. In recognizing these achievements, we show that they are so much more than the injustices. We show the beauty, strength, brilliance and love.

In talking about some particularly brilliant women who are Métis, First Nations and Inuit, I want to honour all Indigenous women. I hope this is the first of many tributes in this chamber to their resilience and to who we are as Indigenous women and indeed as Indigenous people.

Today, I want to remember and to honour Gail Guthrie Valaskakis. As I began thinking about celebrating Indigenous women, almost instantly Gail's beautiful face appeared before me, laughing, smiling and shining with its gentle exuberance as if, for a moment, her life force and lovely energy returned from the spirit world.

Gail Guthrie Valaskakis was born on May 8, 1939, to Miriam Van Buskirk and Benedict Guthrie at Lac du Flambeau Reservation in Wisconsin. That's approximately 300 kilometres south of Thunder Bay as the crow flies.

She graduated from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, completed a master's degree at Cornell University and then a PhD at McGill University. She was the leading authority on northern and Indigenous media and communications in Canada. She consistently raised the profile of Indigenous media and communications in university and government circles, and she helped this medium gain critical academic recognition, policy support and resources.

I must interject here with a little story about her research and how seriously she took it. As she was a storyteller, here is a story she shared with me about her northern research and life.

In the late 1960s, she began her fieldwork for her doctoral dissertation studying the impacts the satellite system would have on the people of Canada's North. This work took her to the eastern Arctic, where she studied the role and usefulness of communication technologies and became a leading authority on northern and Indigenous media and communications in Canada.

During this time, Gail travelled frequently to the High Arctic. When in the region, she often stayed with the family of a dear Inuk named Killiktee. During week-long snowstorms that forced her into confinement, she had to develop great personal fortitude and display extreme patience in order to come up with ways to entertain herself and not annoy her host family.

Once the whiteout conditions finally gave way to blue skies, Gail was able to spend time outdoors and participate in seasonal Inuit customs. On one occasion during a spring thaw, she accompanied Killiktee as they went about hunting seals out on the open ice by snowmobile and with harpoons. They ventured many miles from Killiktee's home, with Gail perched snugly on the back of his snowmobile. Over the years, Killiktee had become an expert rider, deftly jumping from ice floe to ice floe during the springtime in daring moves that enabled him to cross vast distances of melting ice in search of seals. On one particularly steep and treacherous floe jump, Gail's grip around Killiktee's waist loosened, she fell off and went through the ice. However, rather than scream in horror, Gail proceeded to laugh hysterically, which was her way of dealing with this terrifying situation.

Her reaction greatly impressed Killiktee, as he had not expected Gail to behave so unexpectedly, turning what could have been a panic-stricken situation into one in which laughter prevailed. Killiktee was able to pull her out of the ice and bring her back to his home, where he had her change clothes and wrapped her in thick blankets. I remember her saying that she had never felt so cold in her life and that it took her a week to warm up. But in retelling the tale over the years, she often credited that unusual reaction to what many would consider a stressful event with forging the enduring trust that enabled her friendship with Killiktee to prosper for the decade that followed.

As you can see, Gail's impressive collaborative and innovative approach to research, evaluation and policy development was groundbreaking. It was adopted by fellow community-based

researchers who today acknowledge her as the innovator. Today, we see community-based research as a normal approach, but Gail was pioneering in her work, which was especially important in its applicability to working with Indigenous peoples in Canada. It is quite possible the phrase “Laughter is the best medicine” was coined here.

Gail was also a founding member of the boards of the Native Friendship Centre of Montreal, the Native North American Studies Institute and Manitou College — the first Indigenous post-secondary institution in Eastern Canada. She worked hard as a founding board member and was critical in establishing a halfway house north of Montreal and moving Waseskun House into a full-fledged healing lodge for men. She wrote a report for the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples entitled *The Role and Future of Aboriginal Communications* and received an Inspire Award in the category of Media and Communication.

For 30 years, Gail taught in the Department of Communication Studies at Concordia University where she established the Native Education Centre and participated in the creation of the Inter-University Joint Doctoral Program in Communications. Her expertise has been recognized internationally, and she has lectured in China, Russia, Israel, the United States and at universities across Canada.

• (1910)

In 1998, she left Concordia and her position of dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences to write a book called *Indian Country: Essays on Contemporary Native Culture*, and to join the Aboriginal Healing Foundation as director of research. It was at that time we developed our friendship, and my life changed forever because of it.

Now I would like you to really meet the person Gail was. Gail was my dear friend and sister, and we spent many, many hours and days together. We were hired at the same time at the Aboriginal Healing Foundation here in Ottawa. The year was 1999. The foundation was a trust fund that had been set up by the federal government to fund Indigenous communities and organizations that were addressing their own healing needs resulting from the physical and sexual abuse by the priests and nuns at residential schools throughout Canada.

The foundation was operated and run by Indigenous people and most, if not all, were survivors or generational survivors of the schools. Gail was hired as the director of research and I was the director of programs. Our chemistry was perfect.

Gail shared many special gifts with me. One was her ability to write and speak with alarming clarity. Her words could be so crystal clear that you had to pinch yourself, having been completely engulfed in her world.

Yet her accomplishments in her lifetime were enormous and are of the stature of the world’s greatest heroines. But her greatest gift was her capacity to share the world she grew up in; I truly feel as if I grew up alongside Gail.

You see, Gail was a blond-haired, blue-eyed beauty raised on an Indian reservation in Lac Du Flambeau — not exactly the stereotype, and an issue we could both certainly relate to. Here are two personal vignettes she gifted me:

“Gail the whale” she shouted, raising her voice above the giggles. “Hey Pig Nose! Where is your brother Egg Head now?: Whoever said that blondes have more fun never went to an Indian school.”

And the second:

The field behind Simpsons Electric Company was a grassy no man’s land continually claimed in the movement of small battalions of school children with roving alliances. I sensed the fever of contagion rise on my neck, knowing I was exposed to the next shot, “Hey Chomoqamon, white girl, where are you going so fast?” Caught in the vortex of a borderzone windstorm, I felt fat and sluggish, barely able to produce the usual lethal stare, the corrupt smile, the corrosive word. The sudden slap to the head was a trophy — NOT a call to war. Tomorrow I might be walking with them teasing someone else. My position rose and fell, depending on whether I answered the questions of white teachers who were drawn to me like magnets, hit a softball hard enough to make first base, smoked a whole reed cigarette without coughing, stayed beyond the lines of fire in other people’s fights or slithered through a hundred other tests of childhood that emerged each day to move the measure of who I was in Indian country.

The Lac Du Flambeau Indian Reservation was Gail’s heart and soul. She spoke of her grandparents’ deep connections to the land that was passed down to her and her brother Greg. She heard the stories of the battles of Strawberry Island and the spirits of Medicine Rock and the mysteries of the shaman, Anewabe. Gail’s father taught her with photographs and artifacts of his life and his ancestors’ lives full of outpost traders, lumber barons and government administrators. She lived in the past and the present while holding a tenacious grasp of the heritage descended from her father’s namesake Kinistano, who signed the 1854 Treaty of La Pointe, allocating land to the Lac du Flambeau Chippewa.

Though she moved around for education and for love, Gail never really left Lac du Flambeau because her spirit and her heart was always there. She never lost her passion for her people and her home, to which she returned often, right up to the end of her life.

A serious and diligent scholar, but also a person so full of life and laughter, private but outgoing, elegant but entirely without pretense. If you had Gail on your team, you knew you were going to get things done. And you knew you were going to have a lot of fun doing them.

Indeed, she lived her life as her father predicted — on the border of Indian country — walking with a moccasin on one foot and a shoe on the other. Gail Guthrie Valaskakis passed away in Ottawa on July 19, 2007. She is loved deeply and missed by many who remember her as a colleague, a mentor, a scholar and a friend.

And she remains with us in spirit, as an Indigenous role model and an inspiration. I know she is smiling, knowing I shared her stories with you in the Senate of Canada.

Thank you, *marsee, meegwetch*.

(On motion of Senator Martin, debate adjourned.)

(At 7:15 p.m., the Senate was continued until tomorrow at 2 p.m.)

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