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The Honourable GEORGE J. FUREY,
Speaker

CONTENTS

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

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THE SENATE

Thursday, November 25, 2021

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

Prayers.

BUSINESS OF THE SENATE

MOTION TO EXTEND SENATORS' STATEMENTS FOR THE
REMAINDER OF THE CURRENT SESSION ADOPTED

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

That, notwithstanding any provision of the Rules, for the remainder of the current session, the normal duration for Senators' Statements be 18 minutes.

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to.)

For many homeowners, this is an untenable situation. No one wants or can afford to take on the increased stress of these high insurance rates, and presently people are walking away from their investments and returning to public housing, adding more stress to an already overstressed system. At least one condo corporation presently has no insurance coverage, which is unsafe and illegal.

It is also important to note that a survey recently showed 43% of condo owners in Nunavut are Inuit.

I urge the federal and territorial governments to work together to provide immediate relief to homeowners. We need to also work on long-term solutions to lowering the overall cost of insurance so that we can make sure that people's investments are properly insured and that Nunavummiut are protected should their homes face catastrophe. We need to eliminate barriers to home ownership, so that those who can buy can do so and alleviate the stress on our public housing system. We need to solve the housing crisis, but we need to be aware that that doesn't always mean more money to build more units.

Thank you. *Qujannamiik. Taima.*

THE CLIMATE AND WATER

SENATORS' STATEMENTS

CONDOMINIUM INSURANCE

Hon. Dennis Glen Patterson: Honourable senators, Nunavut is facing a housing crisis. I know this statement isn't a new concept to many of you. However, since this summer's recess, I've been made aware of a major problem facing current and prospective Nunavut homeowners: condo insurance.

There are currently 20 condo corporations in Nunavut. Condominiums are individually owned units. Owners help share the cost of maintaining common elements, making it a cheaper, low-barrier entry point for homeowners in the territories. But inaction on the current pressing issue is causing Nunavut to lose a type of housing along a housing spectrum that already has major gaps.

Skyrocketing condo insurance is one of the major contributors to the low uptake of the Government of Nunavut's home ownership program, which offers 60 condos for direct sale in Iqaluit. Condo corporations are seeing an average premium increase of 173%, while deductible increases have been anywhere between 100% and 1,900%. That is not a typo. One condominium corporation saw their deductible increase by \$95,000 for a 1,900% increase.

Hon. Mary Coyle: Honourable senators, as we gather here in our Senate Chamber, welcoming our remarkable new colleagues and greeting each other joyfully after our COVID-imposed separation and, at the same time, overcome by great sadness as we grieve our beloved colleagues Judith and Josée, I rise to make my first statement in this, Canada's Forty-fourth Parliament.

Colleagues, like all Canadians, today I have water on my mind — the current crises and the hope.

Colleagues, today we are witnessing water-related destruction from coast-to-coast-to-coast. On the West Coast, we see the devastating flooding, mudslides, loss of human lives, loss of animal lives, loss of homes, loss of farmland, loss of vital infrastructure and Indigenous communities hard hit. Our Arctic coast neighbours have been plagued with melting ice, sea level rising and domestic water infrastructure breakdowns long before the recent issues with Iqaluit's toxic drinking water supply.

Now our East Coast communities are being ravaged by severe wind and rainstorms. I need to get home to attend to the tree in my yard that knocked out the power to my street. You may have read in today's *Globe* of the residents of a trailer park in

Antigonish having to be rescued from the windows of their homes and ferried to safety in boats — again, the vulnerable being the hardest hit.

Colleagues, the Canadian Institute for Climate Choices reported last year the number of catastrophic weather events in Canada was three times higher this past decade than in the 1980s. And the average cost of each disaster jumped by 1,250% since the 1970s.

While these climate-related water crises are severe and on the increase, I wanted to turn to an important source of water-related climate hope: our oceans.

Last week, while visiting Dr. Anya Waite, CEO of the Ocean Frontier Institute, who recently returned from COP26, Senator Kutcher and I learned that the ocean is the most important global storage depot of carbon on earth. It holds 50 times more carbon than the atmosphere, soaking up more emissions than all the world's rainforests combined, and that the North Atlantic is the most intense carbon sink on the planet.

We also learned that we need to invest in understanding our changing oceans better. Colleagues, in closing, it would serve us all well to defy the words of Jacques-Yves Cousteau who said, "We forget that the water cycle and the life cycle are one."

Thank you, *Wela'liog*.

THE HONOURABLE DONALD H. OLIVER

Hon. Wanda Elaine Thomas Bernard: Honourable senators, I rise today to bring attention to the work of a former senator, the first Black man appointed to the Senate and my mentor, the Honourable Don Oliver. Senator Oliver is an elder statesman, ambassador, community builder and strong advocate for human rights. Throughout his career, he broke barriers to enact social change. Honourable colleagues, we are still building on the social change that he imagined here in the Senate on equity and diversity.

• (1410)

Senator Don Oliver's impact on Canada is not limited to his impressive career working to dismantle systemic racism and systems of oppression; his legacy lives strong within the young scholars of African descent that he has mentored. He has committed himself to removing the barriers for young Black people to access further education through scholarship and mentorship.

I happen to be one of the many students who have benefited from his advocacy. Don Oliver was the first African-Nova Scotian senator, and I now stand on his shoulders. The word *Ubuntu* comes to mind: I am because you are, you are therefore I am.

Senator Oliver embodies the commitment to give back to one's community, and that theme has taken root in my own journey in my community and now in the Senate.

Senator Oliver recently released an autobiography called *A Matter of Equality*, which serves as a Call to Action to people in leadership positions, especially those with White privilege who have the power and ability to fulfill his vision of a racism-free society.

Learning from those who came before us, we must use our power to move the dial on public policy that will elevate and improve members of equity-deserving groups and communities.

Honourable senators, it is an honour to recognize the work and contributions of Senator Don Oliver today, and to bring this message of inspiration as we begin this Forty-fourth Parliament. *Asante*. Thank you.

CANADA'S INFRASTRUCTURE

Hon. Pamela Wallin: Honourable senators, this week we have witnessed the deadly impact of severe weather on both coasts of our country, with the loss of human and animal life, the loss of homes and businesses and the loss of incomes and futures.

Weather is the Canadian reality — winter whiteouts, ice storms, forest fires and even atmospheric rivers are a fact of life. We are ruled by weather as any travelling senator knows.

But what the parade of rainstorms has put into sharp relief is the sorry state of infrastructure across Canada. In the last two years, COVID has also exposed other serious infrastructure issues. We need only remember the frightening story of the millions of dollars' worth of much-needed PPE — masks, gowns and gloves — that were recklessly discarded but never replaced, leaving us at risk for months as the pandemic unfolded.

In fact, hospitals, seniors' homes and even schools were not prepared and already facing critical staff and equipment shortages or faulty air circulation systems. Our health system virtually collapsed as many were denied service for a vast array of other life-threatening illnesses.

Entire communities often wait hours or days for police assistance. Others wait for an ambulance to take a stroke victim to a hospital or finally just decide to put them in a vehicle to drive them to an emergency room down the road. But if you don't have a road or a bus or a train or a car to get to the hospital, then we know the outcome.

Supply chains come to a halt too, keeping food and medicine — not just Christmas presents — out of reach.

Infrastructure is in crisis. A 2019 report from the Federation of Canadian Municipalities showed that 40% of roads are in poor condition. Water and sewage infrastructure is out of date. Today, we still have boil-water advisories in First Nations and in many small towns, mine included.

Funding is piecemeal, which leaves provinces and municipalities to fix the potholes rather than moving the road to higher ground or securing the bridge. So we just patch things up or rebuild a road or the home in the same problematic place. It is all well and good to have aspirational goals to meet the climate change issues, but today we must deal with our reality.

Of course, we can always call in the army to fill sandbags or fight fires or clean bedpans, but that is not the answer. We need less bureaucracy and more common sense, more coordination and less finger pointing. We need a national infrastructure revitalization commitment. Let's set a goal to update and modernize by 2030. Surely, in a wealthy G7 country, we can put the health and safety and lives and livelihoods of Canadians at the top of our agenda.

AFGHANISTAN CRISIS

Hon. Salma Ataullahjan: Honourable senators, as a young child in Pakistan, there were few things I would look forward to more than a journey to Kabul. I have fond memories of summers spent in Afghanistan where the people are generous, the landscapes are breathtaking and the food incomparable.

Women had a very visible presence in every place in society, and it was common to see women owning businesses. I never would have expected the region to be plunged into devastation and have all the world's eyes on it.

Because of my love and concern for that part of the world, as a new senator in 2010, I proposed a study on the role of the Canadian government in supporting women's rights after ending combat operations in Afghanistan. The committee recommended concrete ways that Canada could make the advancement of women's rights a fundamental element of its approach to Afghanistan post-2011.

For the past three months, I have been receiving desperate emails from Afghans trying to flee Kabul and from Canadians concerned about their loved ones. The Canada-Afghanistan Parliamentary Friendship Group has been very active since January 2021.

In our last meeting with women parliamentarians in June, there was a sense of desperation and we were begged for help. Those who remain in Afghanistan face economic hardship, a lack of essential services, hunger and the threat of violence.

The United Nations currently estimates that nearly half of the country's population — 23 million people — is facing acute hunger, and 3.2 million children under the age of 5 are expected to suffer from acute malnutrition by the end of the year.

Already, the Ministry of Women's Affairs has been replaced by the Ministry of Vice and Virtue, known for its public beatings of women. Humanitarian groups worry that 97% of the country will sink below the poverty line over the next few months.

I also worry about the thousands of years of history, culture and music that are under threat. We are hearing reports from old Kabul of musical instruments being dismantled, of the silencing of the voices that sung of the majesty of Afghanistan, of its mountains, rivers and valleys.

One story that struck a chord with me is that of an *ustad*, or master, who buried his rabab, a stringed instrument. For me, the burying of the rabab is a significant act. The strings of the rabab pull at the heartstrings of everyone for that region. For me, it signifies the burying of the heart and the soul of Afghanistan.

My fear is that as the news cycle changes, the world will forget about Afghanistan again. Already, the story is starting to fade from our headlines. Already, a space women had carved out in society is disappearing. Already, they are becoming invisible. How long before their plight fades from our headlines completely and they become invisible to us too?

Thank you, and as I say in Pashto, *manana*.

THE LATE CAROL-ANN MARSHALL

Hon. Gwen Boniface: Honourable senators, on a rare occasion, you meet someone whose friendship lasts a lifetime. This makes loss even more difficult.

Carol-Ann Marshall walked into our lives in 1978 at our Ontario Provincial Police detachment. She was the first Black female officer to join the OPP at a time when her peers were White and overwhelmingly male. She was courageous, fearless, brilliant, had a vivacious laugh and suffered no fools.

Carol-Ann was born in Kirtons, Saint Phillip, Barbados, in 1953. Her father, Ashton, was an assistant commissioner with the Barbados police and her mother, Doreen, a nurse. She grew up attending Rices Methodist Church, singing in the choir and honing her beautiful classical soprano voice.

At 17, Carol-Ann left Barbados to study in Virginia on an international scholarship, eventually finding her way to Canada to attend Trent University. She earned a Bachelor of Science degree in geography and an education degree from the University of Toronto.

• (1420)

A woman always taking on new adventures, she was a teacher in Ontario public schools, she served six years with us in the Ontario Provincial Police and moved on to a variety of roles in public service, including the Ontario Human Rights Commission. She taught English language to adults in Japan and Toronto and took classical voice training at the Victoria Conservatory of Music. Her work was never done.

In 2017, she wrote a book called *I Dare You!* to help women assess emotional abuse in their relationship and to provide them with practical and legal resources to leave toxic relationships. She drew on her personal experience.

Carol-Ann was taken from us both suddenly and unexpectedly on October 28. She had a second book in the making, a new business to run, another mountain to climb after mastering Machu Picchu and so many dreams to fulfill.

She would want me to remind you, senators, that this is International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women. I encourage all of us to continue the important work that meant so much to her.

I send my condolences to her many friends — particularly the “posse,” as she called them, who cared for her during her short illness — and to her family in Barbados and in England. She was a remarkable person, and will be missed.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

GOVERNOR GENERAL

COMMISSIONS APPOINTING DEPUTIES—DOCUMENTS TABLED

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Honourable senators, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, copies of commissions appointing the Right Honourable Richard Wagner, the Honourable Andromache Karakatsanis, the Honourable Michael J. Moldaver, the Honourable Suzanne Côté, the Honourable Russell S. Brown, the Honourable Malcolm H. Rowe, the Honourable Sheila L. Martin, the Honourable Nicholas P. Kasirer, the Honourable Mahmud Jamal, Mr. Ian McCowan and Ms. Christine MacIntyre as deputies of the Governor General.

FOOD DAY IN CANADA BILL

FIRST READING

Hon. Diane F. Griffin, with leave of the Senate, for the Honourable Senator Black, introduced Bill S-227, An Act to establish Food Day in Canada.

(Bill read first time.)

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

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

CONSTITUTION ACT, 1867

FIRST READING

Hon. Dennis Glen Patterson introduced Bill S-228, An Act to amend the Constitution Act, 1867 (property qualifications of Senators).

(Bill read first time.)

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

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

[Translation]

COMMITTEE OF SELECTION

MOTION FOR APPOINTMENT ADOPTED

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

That the Honourable Senators Downe, Duncan, Housakos, LaBoucane-Benson, MacDonald, Mercer, Omidvar, Saint-Germain and Woo be appointed a Committee of Selection to nominate, pursuant to rule 12-2(2), the senators to serve on the several committees, except the Standing Committee on Ethics and Conflict of Interest for Senators, during the current session; and

That the committee be authorized to make recommendations to the Senate on issues relating to the scheduling of committee meetings, to hybrid meetings of committees, to the coordination of such meetings, to measures that would facilitate or enhance their operations and to the duration of membership on committees.

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to.)

THE SENATE

MOTION PERTAINING TO THE STRUCTURE OF COMMITTEES FOR THE REMAINDER OF CURRENT SESSION ADOPTED

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

That, for the remainder of the current session, and notwithstanding any provision of the Rules, previous order or usual practice:

1. the Standing Committee on Internal Economy, Budgets and Administration elect three deputy chairs;
2. the Standing Committee on Audit and Oversight, and the Standing Committee on Rules, Procedures and the Rights of Parliament elect two deputy chairs;
3. if a committee has elected more than one deputy chair:
 - (a) the reference to the deputy chair in rule 12-18(2)(b)(ii) be understood as referring to all deputy chairs of the committee acting together;
 - (b) the reference to the deputy chair in rule 12-23(6) be understood as referring to any deputy chair of the committee acting alone; and
 - (c) any reference to the deputy chair of a committee in any policy or guideline be understood as referring to all deputy chairs acting together, until the Standing Committee on Internal Economy, Budgets and Administration decides otherwise;
4. the Standing Committee on National Security and Defence be composed of 12 senators, in addition to the ex officio members;
5. the Standing Committee on Audit and Oversight be composed of four senators, in addition to the two external members; and
6. the Committee of Selection be a standing committee.

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to.)

• (1430)

[English]

NOTICE OF MOTION TO RESOLVE THAT AN AMENDMENT TO THE REAL PROPERTY QUALIFICATIONS OF SENATORS IN THE CONSTITUTION ACT, 1867 BE AUTHORIZED TO BE MADE BY PROCLAMATION ISSUED BY THE GOVERNOR GENERAL

Hon. Dennis Glen Patterson: Honourable senators, I give notice that, at the next sitting of the Senate, I will move:

Whereas the Senate provides representation for groups that are often underrepresented in Parliament, such as Aboriginal peoples, visible minorities and women;

Whereas paragraph (3) of section 23 of the *Constitution Act, 1867* requires that, in order to be qualified for appointment to and to maintain a place in the Senate, a person must own land with a net worth of at least four thousand dollars in the province for which he or she is appointed;

Whereas a person's personal circumstances or the availability of real property in a particular location may prevent him or her from owning the required property;

Whereas appointment to the Senate should not be restricted to those who own real property of a minimum net worth;

Whereas the existing real property qualification is inconsistent with the democratic values of modern Canadian society and is no longer an appropriate or relevant measure of the fitness of a person to serve in the Senate;

Whereas, in the case of Quebec, each of the twenty-four Senators representing the province must be appointed for and must have either their real property qualification in or be resident of a specified Electoral Division;

Whereas an amendment to the Constitution of Canada in relation to any provision that applies to one or more, but not all, provinces may be made by proclamation issued by the Governor General under the Great Seal of Canada only where so authorized by resolutions of the Senate and House of Commons and of the legislative assembly of each province to which the amendment applies;

Whereas the Supreme Court of Canada has determined that a full repeal of paragraph (3) of section 23 of the *Constitution Act, 1867*, respecting the real property qualification of Senators, would require a resolution of the Quebec National Assembly pursuant to section 43 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*;

Now, therefore, the Senate resolves that an amendment to the Constitution of Canada be authorized to be made by proclamation issued by His Excellency the Governor General under the Great Seal of Canada in accordance with the Schedule hereto.

SCHEDULE

AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION OF CANADA

1. (1) Paragraph (3) of section 23 of the *Constitution Act, 1867* is repealed.

(2) Section 23 of the Act is amended by replacing the semi-colon at the end of paragraph (5) with a period and by repealing paragraph (6).

2. The Declaration of Qualification set out in The Fifth Schedule to the Act is replaced by the following:

I, *A.B.*, do declare and testify that I am by law duly qualified to be appointed a member of the Senate of Canada.

3. This Amendment may be cited as the *Constitution Amendment, [year of proclamation]* (Real property qualification of Senators).

MOTION PERTAINING TO SENATORS' ATTENDANCE ADOPTED

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

That, from the start of the current session until the earlier of the start of hybrid sittings of the Senate, if authorized by the Senate, or the end of 2021, senators who were not or are not present at a sitting of the Senate be presumed to be or to have been on public business unless they advise the Clerk of the Senate otherwise.

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to.)

RCMP'S ROLE AND MANDATE

NOTICE OF INQUIRY

Hon. Peter Harder: Honourable senators, I give notice that, two days hence:

I will call the attention of the Senate to the role and mandate of the RCMP, the skills and capabilities required for it to fulfill its role and mandate, and how it should be organized and resourced in the 21st century.

QUESTION PERIOD

AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

SUPPORT FOR FARMERS AND PRODUCERS

Hon. Donald Neil Plett (Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, my question today is again for the government leader. I hope this will not be answered by saying that one of the reasons for the farmers' problems is climate change. That's the answer we got yesterday.

My question for the government leader yesterday concerned our farmers in British Columbia. Today I have a matter of importance to farmers on the East Coast, specifically potato farmers on Prince Edward Island. The Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food has signed an order banning the export of all fresh potatoes from Prince Edward Island to the United States, related to the discovery of potato wart on two farms last month. Premier Dennis King said this ban is devastating for his province. This ban was made with no consultation from the province and contained no mention of compensation for farmers, no plan to support the industry and its workers, no plan to deal with the existing stock already in storage and no date for when market access will resume.

Leader, what will the Trudeau government do to assist potato farmers in Prince Edward Island and all those whose jobs are impacted by the export ban? How long will they have to wait for help?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for your question, honourable senator. The government is closely following the situation in Prince Edward Island and is engaging with the potato industry to understand their concerns and needs. I've been advised, for the benefit of the chamber, that potato wart is a fungus that reduces the yield of a crop but does not pose any risk to human health. Despite plant health controls put in place by Canada, the United States expressed serious concerns and made it clear that they plan to impose a federal order banning imports of all fresh PEI potatoes if Canada did not act first to suspend trade. Therefore, as of November 21, 2021, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency has temporarily suspended trade of fresh potatoes from Prince Edward Island to the U.S. I've been advised that this issue was raised by the Prime Minister with U.S. President Joe Biden last week, that the government is working on a plan to support potato growers who are impacted by this temporary market suspension and has created a potato working group with provincial and industry stakeholders.

Senator Plett: Leader, you just finished us telling us what the problem is. I told this chamber what the problem is. You have told us what the President of the United States has said and that our Prime Minister wants to cooperate with the President of the United States. That's not much consolation for the fine farmers of Prince Edward Island. A working group has been started. We have more working groups than they have potatoes in Prince Edward Island.

On Monday, Premier King quoted Minister Bibeau as saying that the decision to stop export of Prince Edward Island potatoes to the U.S. was made “to appease a trading partner,” which you just confirmed. That’s a remarkable admission, leader, especially considering that the Prime Minister finally got to meet with President Biden last week. Instead of fixing our trade disputes with the United States on agriculture, softwood lumber, pipelines, electric vehicles and “buy American” policies, the situation is now arguably worse. Yesterday, the U.S. doubled our softwood lumber tariffs, and now Prince Edward Island is banned from exporting its fresh potatoes.

Leader, how long does the Trudeau government intend to leave its export ban in place? What specifically, aside from a working group, are you doing now to rectify this situation with the United States on Prince Edward Island farmers?

Senator Gold: Thank you for your question. Having been asked by some leaders to be short in my responses, I will refrain from reminding this chamber of the work that our government does day in and day out, typically behind the scenes, on this issue and many others to manage the ongoing and important trade relationship with the United States. I will simply say this: The government is working with the industry and engaged in finding a solution so that the ban is temporary, and that includes consideration of all measures to assist this important industry.

• (1440)

[Translation]

PAROLE BOARD OF CANADA

RIGHTS OF VICTIMS OF CRIMINAL ACTS

Hon. Pierre-Hugues Boisvenu: Senator Gold, I would like to come back to the brutal murder of Marylène Levesque, who was killed by a repeat offender who murdered his first wife in 2004. That murder, which sent shockwaves through Quebec and continues to do so, raises questions about the Department of Public Safety’s responsibility with regard to the murderer’s parole conditions.

You used to be a member of the Parole Board of Canada, so I am sure that you’ve seen the National Joint Board of Investigation’s report that pointed out many shortcomings with regard to the supervision of Eustachio Gallese, the murderer. Among other things, the report makes mention of the many visits he was allowed to make to a massage parlour, the board members’ lack of training and the many warning signs that were ignored by correctional officers and halfway houses. Nevertheless, these shortcomings were identified by the Auditor General of Canada in 2018. In her investigation report tabled on November 9, coroner Stéphanie Gamache recommended that this type of criminal be made to wear an electronic bracelet and added that the measures taken by the Parole Board and the Correctional Service of Canada following this tragedy were completely insufficient.

Senator Gold, on September 18, the federal government announced that it was going to compensate Marylène Levesque’s family. According to what I heard, they will be receiving a very substantial sum.

Can you confirm that the family was compensated and tell us how much they were given?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for the question, honourable senator, and for your steadfast commitment and dedication to this cause, to the tragedy you spoke of, a tragedy that resonates with us all.

I’m not aware of any compensation or of an amount, but I’ll look into it and get back to you.

Senator Boisvenu: Senator Gold, according to the information I received, Ms. Levesque’s family was offered \$2 million in compensation — \$2 million. There must be a very good reason the Parole Board decided to offer Marylène Levesque’s family that much money, and we would like to know what that reason is.

Does Public Safety Canada acknowledge its responsibility for the murder of this 22-year-old woman who was stabbed more than 30 times?

Senator Gold: I cannot answer for the minister, and as to correctional services and the board I was formerly a member of, they have their own chain of command. Once again, I will ask the government for information and get back to you.

[English]

AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

SUPPORT FOR FARMERS AND PRODUCERS

Hon. Paula Simons: Honourable senators, my question is for the government representative. As Senator Plett rightly noted yesterday, farmers in British Columbia’s Fraser Valley are just now beginning to reckon with the full impact of this month’s devastating flooding on their operations. I am afraid to say the weather forecast for the next few days shows more heavy rain ahead.

In the meantime, grain farmers in Alberta and Saskatchewan are facing their own economic challenges, because rail closures and slowdowns have led to bottlenecks and congestion. Prairie farmers face the prospect of significant ongoing delays in getting products like wheat, canola, oats and lentils to market. It’s a particular problem, because they don’t get paid until delivery. Can you tell us what financial supports your government can deliver to farmers in the face of this crisis?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for your question. The government has been and will continue to work with provincial and territorial farmers and stakeholders to ensure that the damage they suffer is dealt with and treated fairly. I have no specific answer to the question of compensation, but no doubt the government and its provincial counterparts will be seized with this issue.

[Translation]

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

FRANCOPHONE IMMIGRATION

Hon. Tony Loffreda: My question is for the Government Representative in the Senate, Senator Gold.

Let me begin by saying how pleased I am to be back here with you and to welcome our eight new colleagues.

[English]

A very warm welcome to all new senators.

[Translation]

My question is on francophone immigration. Last month, I co-organized a meeting with the Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne du Canada to discuss matters having to do with francophone immigration in Canada.

We were reminded that the demographic weight of francophones outside Quebec is declining at an alarming rate. A big part of the solution could be immigration.

Two days ago, the government recommitted in its Speech from the Throne to amending the Official Languages Act.

Last June, the government tried to amend the legislation by introducing a bill that would:

provide that the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration is required to adopt a policy on francophone immigration;

Senator Gold, the minister does not have to wait until the Official Languages Act is amended to draft a solid plan. Can you assure us that the government, through its new Minister of Immigration, is committed to solidifying this plan immediately without waiting for future legislation to pass?

The government has an ambitious immigration program for the next few years and the francophonie has to be central to that commitment.

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

The government is well aware that immigration is essential to the vitality of our francophone minority communities. That is why the government has announced additional measures for francophone and bilingual applicants under the Express Entry program. The government is committed to finding new ways to attract francophones, including the development of a francophone integration pathway and programs like the Welcoming Francophone Communities Initiative.

Senator Loffreda: Thank you for that answer.

Year after year, Canada fails to meet its target for new French-speaking immigrants. It has a lot of catching up to do, and it is urgent. In my view, it is high time that Canada committed to increasing francophone immigration to this country. We're not the only ones wanting to recruit the best candidates.

Can you confirm that the government's francophone immigration plan will include strategic marketing and an aggressive recruitment campaign in countries of the Francophonie?

A laissez-faire approach to francophone immigration is no longer good enough.

Senator Gold: The answer is yes. The survival of the French language in Canada is dependent primarily on an increase in francophone immigration. The Government of Canada is committed to working with the provinces and territories to promote access to and the provision of quality French as a second language programs and I can cite several examples. The government is committed to protecting and promoting French across Canada.

[English]

HEALTH

PROOF OF VACCINATION—INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL

Hon. Jane Cordy: Honourable senators, my question today is in response to concerns raised to me by a number of Nova Scotians, often when my husband and I were out for walks in our neighbourhood. This concern was expressed by many Canadians who, in good faith and on the advice of Health Canada, received their vaccinations at the earliest opportunity.

Many travel to the United States for business or pleasure during non-COVID times. As we moved closer to reopening our borders, there was much confusion and anxiety about whether the U.S. would allow Canadians with mixed vaccines into their country. It was a relief to many when the U.S. announced last month that, as of November 8, Canadians with any combination of two doses of a COVID-19 vaccine authorized by U.S. regulators or the World Health Organization will be considered fully vaccinated and able to enter the United States.

• (1450)

Senator Gold, my question is this: Does the same apply for other international destinations? Will the Government of Canada make this information readily available to the public? I guess the big thing is, will it be easy to find and understand? Because that's extremely important.

In the Speech from the Throne this week, the government stated that it had ensured a standardized Canadian proof of vaccination for domestic and international use. Do all international jurisdictions recognize Canadian proof of vaccination? What, if any, vaccinations are or are not internationally recognized? Thank you.

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for the series of questions, all of which are important and none of which I can answer with any precision today. With your indulgence, I will make inquiries and report back.

Senator Cordy: That would be great. I understand things are changing on the fly and many people are hoping it changes significantly before spring of 2022.

My supplementary question, Senator Gold, is this: Would you be able to provide us with clarity on the status of Canadians who are ineligible for vaccination in international travel? Specifically, I'm talking about younger Canadians who are under the age of 5. I know that after two years of the pandemic, many Canadian families are anxious to travel again as the world is beginning to open up.

More specifically, my question is about travelling to the United States with young children or grandchildren, as families start to consider spring travel. Will those under the age of 5 be allowed to enter the United States, as they will not be vaccinated?

Senator Gold: Thank you for your question. I will certainly make initial inquiries, and first and foremost, with regard to the situation in the United States. The hundreds of countries elsewhere in the world each have their own sovereign right to determine access and the conditions under which tourists and others can visit. To determine the situation around the world will take much longer, even for a government that is well known for finding answers very quickly. I will do my best to get as many answers as I can and as quickly as I can.

PUBLIC SAFETY

NATIONAL SUPPLY CHAIN

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

As noted in the Speech from the Throne, our country is witnessing significant disruptions associated with severe weather events due to climate change. These have crippled our supply chains, as is evident from ongoing weather events in British Columbia and now in Atlantic Canada. Local marketplaces, and even those across Canada, are experiencing disruptions in Canada's supply chain management which, of course, have a direct impact on the availability of essential consumer goods in local and national marketplaces. Global experts at COP26 outlined that our global community will experience more frequent and severe weather events that will disrupt the movement of these essential consumer goods.

Senator Gold, my question is this: What assurances can the government give Canadians that they are looking to provide made-in-Canada transportation options to safeguard the secure supply of essential goods for our country, given the reality of supply chain disruptions that will continue to occur due to climate change?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Senator, thank you for your question. Welcome, again, to the chamber.

The government is very aware of this serious situation that is caused by flooding and mudslides in B.C., as well as the impact of the weather disruptions on the East Coast and on transportation networks and supply chains. Working with key industry partners and members of the federal and provincial governments, the federal government has formed a joint Supply Chain Recovery Working Group to assess transport networks and plan in the short-term for prioritized movement of goods. I am assured that the government will continue to work closely with these partners to address the broader supply chain issues, including transportation.

Senator Quinn: Thank you, Senator Gold. A supplementary, if I may.

Other countries are making significant investments in critical infrastructure to alleviate supply chain disruptions. Their investments will no doubt put competitive pressures on our seaports, railways and trucking industries.

What assurances do we have that appropriate investments will be made in New Brunswick and other Maritime provinces where critical infrastructure is vital for enhancing Canada's competitive position and for providing necessary options for the smooth delivery of goods to all areas of Canada?

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

Senator Gold: Thank you for your question. The government continues to provide funding under the National Trade Corridors Fund and announced yesterday funding for \$4.1 million to the Vancouver Fraser Port Authority to help with bottlenecks and supply chain issues in British Columbia. I have been advised and assured that the government is monitoring supply chain issues in the Atlantic provinces, as well as in the rest of the country, caused by the combination of weather and the pandemic. I've been informed as well that the government continues to work closely with industry and provincial partners to assess transport needs going forward and to smooth out supply issues that continue to emerge.

CANADIAN RADIO-TELEVISION AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

WHOLESALE INTERNET RATES

Hon. Dennis Glen Patterson: Honourable senators, my question is for the Leader of the Government in the Senate.

Senator Gold, Canadians continue to pay very high rates for home internet and wireless services. In 2019, the Government of Canada issued a policy direction to the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) to ensure that, when exercising its duties, the commission is "implementing the Canadian telecommunications policy objectives to promote competition, affordability, consumer interests and innovation."

However, there are now three cabinet petitions asking the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry to overturn the CRTC decision to reverse its 2019 decision on wholesale rates. There is also a cabinet petition asking the Ministers of Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada (ISED) to review the 2021 decision to limit the access of mobile virtual network operators (MVNOs), which smaller providers have argued only benefit Canada's largest providers.

My question is this: What concrete action is your government taking to ensure that CRTC decisions are in line with the government's own 2019 policy direction? Will your government exercise its power to overrule decisions that are, in the end, harming Canadian consumers and small-business owners?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for your question and for raising this important issue. If we have learned anything from the pandemic, it is how important reliable and affordable mobile networks are to our well-being and prospects of recovery. The government remains committed to ensuring that all Canadians pay fair prices for reliable telecom and other services.

I will note, however, as honourable senators know, that the CRTC is an independent agency. The government remains committed to working with them and with all other stakeholders as the situation evolves. The government will work with stakeholders and others to drive investment that will make telecom services more affordable in Canada.

Senator Patterson: The CRTC may be independent, but the government does have the authority to issue policy direction.

I would like to turn your attention, Senator Gold, to the January 2020 report of the Broadcasting & Telecommunications Legislative Review Panel entitled *Canada's Communications Future: Time to Act*. Included amongst the many excellent recommendations were several related to increasing the transparency of the CRTC and the commissioner appointment process.

I know that I myself have had a very difficult time trying to connect with the commissioner responsible for Nunavut, who is based in the Atlantic region. In fact, my request for a meeting has been flatly refused.

I also understand that there are ongoing concerns about the express bias of the chair and his meeting with senior executives from Bell Canada in the midst of challenges to the wholesale internet rates appeal.

Senator Gold, will your government be acting on the recommendation that would result in a more accountable and transparent commission? If so, when can we expect to see those changes instituted?

Senator Gold: Thank you for your question, senator. The government is aware of the recommendations. I have been advised that no decision has yet been made in that regard.

FINANCE

MONETARY POLICY

Hon. Donald Neil Plett (Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, my next question is for the government leader as well and concerns the cost-of-living crisis in our country.

Last week, Statistics Canada reported that inflation is at its highest level in 18 years. In August, during the federal election campaign, the Prime Minister admitted that he doesn't think about monetary policies. I believe him. It is clear he never thinks about these. But massive inflation is making everyday life unaffordable for Canadians. These Canadians are thinking about monetary policies.

• (1500)

On December 31, the agreement between the Bank of Canada and the Government of Canada on our country's inflation-control target will lapse — just over a month away. We still don't know the Trudeau government's position on this. Leader, you didn't have an answer for Senator Bellemare yesterday, so perhaps I will have better luck. Will the inflation-control target be renewed at its current rate of 1 to 3%, yes or no?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for the question. I don't know the answer to your question. I do know, however, that this government remains focused on the important question of affordability and the cost of living for Canadians. The government has reached its target of 1 million jobs. It has restored employment back to pre-pandemic levels. In addition, the work that is being done to reach agreements with provinces, to establish early learning and child care centres across the country; it's a strong policy to improve affordability for families in all parts of the country.

I'm advised that the government is confident that the prudent plan it has put forward sets out a new fiscal anchor that is committed to reducing the federal debt as a share of the economy over the medium term, and unwinding the deficits that were created as a result of expenditures and investments in COVID-19. The government remains committed to assisting Canadians as we transition from this period to a better one going forward.

Senator Plett: That was a pretty long no.

Tuesday's Speech from the Throne mentioned inflation only once. The Trudeau government's total lack of interest in monetary policy has real consequences, leader, for Canadians. On average, families are paying almost \$700 more for groceries this year compared to 2020. Year over year, home prices are more expensive all across Canada by as much as 30% in the Greater Toronto Area and in New Brunswick. I'm finding this myself; we're building a new house.

Leader, the decision to keep the current inflation target should be an easy one for the Trudeau government to make, or is your government content to simply stand by while the cost of living gets more and more unaffordable for Canadians?

Senator Gold: The Government of Canada is not standing by. On the contrary, it's assisting Canadians with the ability and the levers it has at its disposal, and the government is confident that its measures will make a real difference in the lives of Canadians, reducing the costs with regard to some of the programs I mentioned and that were announced earlier. Again, in the interest of brevity and giving as much time for other questions to be asked, I resist the temptation to expound upon the worldwide phenomenon of inflation caused, as most economists agree, by supply chain issues and the like, and that domestic responses in terms of monetary policy may not indeed be the most effective lever. That said, the government is considering all measures appropriate to assist Canadians through this difficult time.

HEALTH

RETENTION OF HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS

Hon. Bev Busson: My question is for the representative of the government in the Senate. Senator Gold, on October 5, the presidents of the Canadian Medical Association and the Canadian Nurses Association called an emergency COVID-19 summit of representatives of 30 national and provincial health organizations. We know how many challenges to the country the COVID pandemic has created, but the profound and longer-term threat to the integrity of our national health care system caused by the burnout, fatigue and moral distress experienced by front-line health care workers is amongst the most serious. Many nurses and doctors are packing up and leaving the profession.

Against this background, could you please inform the Canadian people, by means of informing us here in the Senate, whether the Minister of Health or Health Canada is in talks with its provincial counterparts to develop a strategic plan to confront this human resource crisis in health care. If Health Canada is not in such talks, might the Minister of Health consider sponsoring this strategic initiative?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you. Notwithstanding that health is a provincial jurisdiction, the Canadian government, the Ministry of Health and their counterparts have been working with their provincial and territorial counterparts in all kinds of ways. The chamber knows the effort that the federal government has made to move and help move personnel from place to place as need be. Military personnel and the like continue to work with their provincial counterparts to make sure that we can do our part collectively to make sure the human resources that are necessary for a vital health care system are strengthened, nurtured and promoted.

[Translation]

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

MOTION FOR ADDRESS IN REPLY—DEBATE ADJOURNED

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate) moved:

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.

(On motion of Senator Gagné, debate adjourned.)

[English]

THE SENATE

MOTION TO AUTHORIZE HYBRID SITTINGS ADOPTED

On the Order:

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

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

1. as soon as practicable after the adoption of this order the Senate begin to hold hybrid sittings, with all senators able to participate in sittings either from the Senate Chamber or through an approved videoconference technology to be determined from time to time by the Speaker after consulting with the leaders and facilitators, with the provisions of this order applying until hybrid sittings cease, and during the time this order is in effect, the Senate Administration continue to implement a system to allow senators in the Senate Chamber to see, on screen, the senators participating by videoconference;

2. the Speaker, after consulting the leaders and facilitators, determine the date on which such hybrid sittings shall commence;
3. hybrid sittings of the Senate be considered, for all purposes, proceedings of the Senate, with senators participating in such sittings by videoconference from a designated office or designated residence within Canada being considered, for all purposes, including quorum, present at the sitting; the sitting being considered to take place in the parliamentary precinct; and times specified in the Rules or this or any other order being Ottawa times;
4. subject to variations that may be required by the circumstances, to participate in hybrid sittings of the Senate by videoconference senators must:
 - (a) use a desktop or laptop computer and headset with integrated microphone provided by the Senate for videoconferences;
 - (b) not use other devices such as personal tablets or smartphones;
 - (c) be the only people visible on the videoconference from an active video feed, other than those in the Senate Chamber; and
 - d) (except while the bells are ringing for a vote:
 - (i) have their video on and broadcasting their image at all times; and
 - (ii) leave the videoconference if they leave their seat;
5. the Senate recognize that, except as provided in this order, there should generally be parity of treatment among all senators attending in person and those attending by videoconference during hybrid sittings of the Senate and that proceedings should follow usual procedures, subject to such variations required for technical reasons as may be directed by the Speaker, subject to appeal to the Senate if technically feasible;
6. senators participating in hybrid sittings of the Senate by videoconference need not stand;
7. without restricting the operation of rule 3-6 and the right of senators to move a motion to adjourn the Senate as allowed under the Rules, without affecting requirements in certain circumstances that the Senate continue sitting after receipt of a message from the Crown or the announcement that a message is anticipated, and except as otherwise provided in this order:
 - (a) when the Senate sits on a Monday, the provisions of rule 3-3(1) be suspended and the sitting:
 - (i) start at 6 p.m.; and
 - (ii) adjourn at the earlier of the end of Government Business or 9 p.m.;
 - (b) when the Senate sits on a Tuesday, the sitting:
 - (i) start at 2 p.m.; and
 - (ii) adjourn at the earlier of the end of business for the day or 9 p.m.;
 - (c) when the Senate sits on a Wednesday, the sitting:
 - (i) start at 2 p.m.; and
 - (ii) adjourn at the earlier of the end of Government Business or 4 p.m.;
 - (d) when the Senate sits on a Thursday, the sitting:
 - (i) start at 2 p.m.; and
 - (ii) adjourn at the earlier of the end of business for the day or 9 p.m.; and
 - (e) when the Senate sits on a Friday, the sitting:
 - (i) start at 10 a.m.; and
 - (ii) adjourn at the earlier of the end of Government Business or 4 p.m.;
8. the Speaker be authorized to suspend the sitting of the Senate as required for technical and other reasons, and the microphones of senators participating by videoconference shall be muted during any suspension;
9. the Speaker be authorized to direct that the sitting of the Senate be adjourned for technical reasons, provided that this direction be subject to appeal if technically feasible;
10. the times provided for adjournment of the sitting in paragraph 7 be considered the ordinary time of adjournment for the purposes of the Rules, and, for greater certainty, any provisions of the Rules permitting the continuation of the sitting beyond that time in certain circumstances continue to apply, provided that if the provisions of paragraph 9 are invoked when an item that would allow the Senate to continue beyond the ordinary time of adjournment is under consideration, that item of business shall, except in the case of an emergency debate and subject to the provisions of rule 4-13(3), be dealt with at the start of the Orders of the Day of the next following sitting;

11. on the first day of debate on a motion moved in relation to a case of privilege, debate may be adjourned, even if normally prohibited under rule 13-6(6);
12. the evening suspension provided for in rule 3-3(1) end at 7 p.m.;
13. when the Senate sits on a day other than a Friday, any provision of the Rules requiring that something take place at 8 p.m. be read as if the time therein were 7 p.m.;
14. the Senate recognize the importance of providing the Speaker with information necessary to allow him to assist with the orderly conduct of business in hybrid sittings, and therefore, subject to normal confidentiality practices, strongly encourage all senators:
 - (a) to advise their party or group representatives, or the Clerk of the Senate or his delegate, as far in advance as possible, if they intend to intervene during the sitting; and
 - (b) to provide the Clerk of the Senate or his delegate, as far in advance as possible with an electronic copy in English and French of any amendment, subamendment, notice of motion, notice of inquiry, committee report to be tabled or presented, bill to be introduced, or any other document required for the sitting as far in advance as possible;
15. a senator who has provided an advance copy of a document under subparagraph 14(b) be considered to have fulfilled any obligation to provide a signed copy of that document;
16. the following provisions have effect in relation to voting during hybrid sittings of the Senate:
 - (a) only senators present in the Senate Chamber shall participate in:
 - (i) the procedure for a voice vote; and
 - (ii) the determination as to whether leave is granted for bells of less than 60 minutes;
 - (b) to be one of the senators requesting a standing vote, a senator participating by videoconference must clearly indicate this request, but need not stand;
 - (c) rule 9-7(1)(c) shall be read as follows:

“(c) then:

 - (i) ask the “yeas” in the Senate Chamber to rise for their names to be called;
 - (ii) ask the “yeas” participating by videoconference to hold up the established card for voting “yea” for their names to be called;
 - (iii) ask the “nays” in the Senate Chamber to rise for their names to be called;
 - (iv) ask the “nays” participating by videoconference to hold up the established card for voting “nay” for their names to be called;
 - (v) ask those who are abstaining in the Senate Chamber to rise for their names to be called; and
 - (vi) ask those who are abstaining and participating by videoconference to hold up the established card for abstaining for their names to be called.”;
 - (d) when a standing vote is underway, senators participating by videoconference must have their camera on for the duration of the vote and each senator must be seen on camera when voting;
 - (e) except as provided in subparagraph (h), if a vote is deferred pursuant to rule 9-10, it shall be held at 3:30 p.m. on the next day the Senate sits, after a 15-minute bell, interrupting any proceedings then underway, except another vote or the bells for a vote;
 - (f) except as provided in subparagraph (h), if a vote is deferred pursuant to rule 4-6(1), it shall be held at 3:30 p.m. on the same day, after a 15-minute bell, interrupting any proceedings then underway, except another vote or the bells for a vote;
 - (g) except as provided in subparagraph (h), in the case of votes deferred pursuant to other provisions of the Rules, the usual processes for such votes shall hold, with the sitting being suspended, if necessary, at the end of the time otherwise provided for the end of the sitting pursuant to this order; and
 - (h) if a deferred vote is to be held on a Monday, it shall be held at the end of Question Period, after a 15-minute bell;
17. for greater certainty, leave be considered granted during hybrid sittings of the Senate when requested, unless the Speaker, after a sufficient period of time, hears an objection from a senator, either in the Senate Chamber or participating by videoconference;
18. from the time of the adoption of this order:
 - (a) any return, report or other paper deposited with the Clerk of the Senate pursuant to rule 14-1(6), may be deposited electronically;

- (b) the government be authorized to deposit electronically with the Clerk of the Senate any documents relating to its administrative responsibilities, following the process of rule 14-1(6);
 - (c) written replies to oral questions and to written questions may be deposited with the Clerk of the Senate electronically following the process of rule 14-1(6), provided that written replies to oral questions be published as an appendix to the *Debates of the Senate* of the day on which the tabling is recorded in the *Journals of the Senate*; and
 - (d) written replies to oral questions deposited electronically with the Clerk of the Senate shall be distributed to all senators;
19. from the time of the adoption of this order, Senate committees have the power to hold hybrid meetings;
20. for greater certainty, and without limiting the general authority granted by this order, when a committee holds a hybrid meeting:
- (a) members of the committee participating count towards quorum;
 - (b) such meetings be considered to be occurring in the parliamentary precinct, irrespective of where participants may be; and
 - (c) the committee be directed to approach in camera meetings with the utmost caution and all necessary precautions, taking account of the risks to the confidentiality of in camera proceedings inherent in such technologies;
21. subject to variations that may be required by the circumstances, to participate in a committee meeting by videoconference senators must:
- (a) participate from a designated office or designated residence within Canada;
 - (b) use a desktop or laptop computer and a headset with integrated microphone provided by the Senate for videoconferences;
 - (c) not use other devices, such as personal tablets or smartphones;
 - (d) be the only people visible on the videoconference;
 - (e) have their video on and broadcasting their image at all times; and
 - (f) leave the videoconference if they leave their seat;

- 22. if a committee holds a hybrid meeting in public, the provisions of rule 14-7(2) be applied so as to allow recording or broadcasting through any facilities arranged by the Clerk of the Senate, and, if such a meeting cannot be broadcast live, the committee be considered to have fulfilled any obligations under the Rules relating to public meetings by making any available recording publicly available as soon as possible thereafter; and
- 23. the terms of this order cease to have effect, and hybrid sittings of the Senate and hybrid meetings of Senate committees cease, at the end of the day on March 31, 2022.

Hon. Dennis Glen Patterson: Honourable senators, there are some points I would like to make on this important issue. One of the realities we need to acknowledge is that we are not the same demographic as those serving in the other place. Many senators are older or have underlying conditions and that does require us to be more vigilant and take more precautions than our counterparts. That is why, in principle, I am in favour of continuing hybrid sittings.

However, before we vote on this motion, I want to put on the record something that we are all aware of but maybe are not actively considering — not every Canadian has access to the same level of internet service required to fully participate in Senate proceedings. In Nunavut, the entire territory lost its internet connection when it rained on a satellite dish in Saskatchewan. That may sound odd, but that is the reality of our satellite-based internet services. I know there are other senators who would be joining our proceedings from rural or remote locations, and I know and share their frustrations when the signal drops in the middle of a statement or when asking a question.

The fact of the matter is that Canada consistently underperforms when compared to internet and wireless service delivery across the world. A recent study conducted by Opensignal showed that Canada came second to last in nearly every category when benchmarked against 24 different OECD countries. We did come first in one category, though; cost per gigabyte. Yes, we have the second-worst availability in service, but we have the highest cost per gigabyte out of the 24 countries examined. I could go on about the fact that Canada is one of the last countries that uses a spectrum auction to line its coffers, as opposed to using it as an opportunity to allocate a vital public resource.

I could talk about the absurdity of only having 60 megahertz available for auction when the International Telecommunications Union has set a standard for 200 megahertz of capacity per provider in order to ensure that consumers receive the proper level of service. Or I could go on about the loopholes being created by our current policy of set-asides and the need for better and stronger measures to foster competition in our telecommunications market.

• (1510)

Instead, I will only say that we clearly have a broken system and poor infrastructure, because it is relevant to this debate. When senators are forced to stay home due to medical reasons or

pandemic restrictions, and then are not able to access the level of internet required to fully and actively participate in Senate proceedings and committee work, I would go so far as to say — and I believe — that it's an infringement of our privileges. We must ensure that we have the tools and every opportunity available to us to exercise our duty and privilege to participate in the work of the Senate.

In the short term, that may mean new technology that ensures we have strong, stable signals when attending the Senate virtually. In the long term, to me that means we need to be firm and consistent in our demand for change. We need to ensure we have better, more transparent, accountable and streamlined decision making when it comes to telecommunications policy.

It means we need to make smart and strategic investments in future infrastructure, and it means we need to really hold our institutions to their promises of making internet affordable and service delivery competitive in every region of this vast and beautiful country. Thank you. *Qujannamiik*.

Hon. Donald Neil Plett (Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, I rise today as well to add my voice to the debate on the government's notice of motion regarding hybrid sittings.

Before I begin my remarks, indulge me, please, if you would, colleagues. Sometimes when one doesn't give quite enough information, then information is assumed and people start thinking certain things and that information is spread around. Pretty soon you're receiving all kinds of good wishes and so on and so forth, and expressions of hope that you will be back again. I'm not sure how serious some of those are, but I appreciate them. I now know how to garner sympathy from my colleagues. I appreciate all the good wishes I have received, but I want to assure this chamber that the minor medical issue that I have will be entirely alleviated by being away from all of you for a while.

If I can go and put my feet up, I will be back — maybe before Christmas, but certainly in the new year — to continue to be a pain in your sides and so on. As I may be gone until the new year, I'll take this opportunity to wish all of you a wonderful and safe holiday, happy New Year and Merry Christmas, and I plan to see all of you at least in the new year.

With that, let me just simply say at the outset that I acknowledge the imperative of taking adequate measures to ensure the safety of all senators, their staff and the administration of the Senate. This, colleagues, is not up for debate. What is up for debate, however, is whether hybrid sittings are necessary in order to achieve that. I would argue that they are not.

In fact, not only are hybrid sittings unnecessary, in my opinion, but they are inconsistent with current public health guidelines and make it more difficult for us to complete our work and to complete it in a timely manner. Allow me to elaborate.

It would appear that almost everywhere across the city of Ottawa we are moving out of the pandemic, except, colleagues, in the Parliamentary Precinct.

On October 9, the Ontario government lifted capacity limits to allow 100% capacity at concert venues, theatres, cinemas, meeting and event spaces, spectator areas of sports facilities, horse racing tracks, car racing tracks and television productions with studio audiences.

That means that, as of October 9, 18,652 people who are fully vaccinated and wearing a face mask are permitted to be in attendance to watch the Ottawa Senators play at the Canadian Tire Centre in Ottawa. They flood into the concourse. They stand in line to buy beer, hot dogs, hamburgers, coffee and whatever else is available at the concessions. And then when they get to their seats they are permitted to remove these masks so they can enjoy their purchases.

But at a different senators' venue in Ottawa, called the Senate of Canada Building, we find ourselves debating whether we can have 105 senators in an expansive 309-square-metre room with a 10-metre ceiling.

A couple of weeks later, on October 28, the City of Ottawa dropped all COVID capacity limits and announced a return to 100% capacity levels for recreation and cultural drop-in activities, including halls, pool and arena rentals. If dancing is permitted, then capacity limits would remain at 25%.

But colleagues, other than the occasional celebratory dance moves after the swearing-in ceremonies here in the chamber, we do not usually have dancing in this chamber. This means that, according to public health guidelines, there is no reason we should not have 100% capacity. So why would we not insist upon it?

Perhaps if governing the country and providing accountability and oversight to the spending of public money were not an essential activity, then a compelling argument could be made for the Senate to sit in a hybrid format. However, the last time I checked, Canadians still want their parliamentarians to show up for work.

It seems unconscionable to me that we expect doctors, nurses, school teachers and Costco cashiers to show up for work, and yet we want to give ourselves the option of staying at home.

Just two weeks ago, Canadians watched as 300 Canadian participants showed up at a UN climate change conference in Glasgow, along with thousands of other attendees. This twenty-sixth session of the Conference of the Parties was originally scheduled to take place in November 2020 but was postponed because of the pandemic. This year, COP26 went ahead as planned with thousands of activists and 25,000 delegates from nearly 200 countries in attendance, including approximately 120 heads of state.

We all saw the media coverage of people congregating, often without social distancing and sometimes without masks. Just prior to showing up in Glasgow, our very own Prime Minister was in The Hague where he managed to find time to party it up at a local bar without a mask and with no social distancing. Yet here we are today debating whether senators should show up for work or not.

Watching the ceremonial activities around the Speech from the Throne on Tuesday, I was struck by the contrast of the two images. On the one hand, the Usher of the Black Rod of the Senate, our very own Mr. Greg Peters, could be seen risking his life by walking into an almost full-capacity House of Commons to deliver a message to that house. On the other hand, his trip to this chamber was starkly different with attendance here in the Senate sparse and distanced. I am indeed pleased that Mr. Peters survived his visit to the other place, considering that it was a full house.

Colleagues, let me be clear. Although I am using a bit of humour, I am not advocating for carelessness or having a cavalier attitude towards the virus or the pandemic. I am suggesting that because health guidelines currently permit us to meet in person, there is no compelling reason for us not to do so.

• (1520)

As my colleague, the Honourable Candice Bergen, pointed out yesterday, our prime minister has a pretty good reason to want to stay in a hybrid format. She said:

The reason why Justin Trudeau is putting forward a motion on hybrid Parliament is clear — he wants to avoid accountability. Justin Trudeau is making sure a hybrid Parliament is in place so he will be able to avoid tough questions from Conservative MPs on rising inflation, his contentious scandals, and plans to censor the internet.

Colleagues, on the other hand, we have no reason to be shirking accountability. All of us are the ones to be holding the government to account, not the other way around. We can do that best if we are present in this chamber.

Our appointment to the Senate and our responsibility to the nation compels us to hold ourselves to a higher standard, not a lower one. A failure to do so amplifies the concerns of some Canadians that the decisions being taken are too often based on fear and convenience rather than on science.

It has not helped that the public health guidelines have been constantly shifting over the last two years as our understanding of the virus has changed. The use of face masks is just one example. At the beginning of the pandemic, we were told no face masks were necessary. Later, we were told we should consider wearing one. Eventually, they became mandatory.

People have been generous in their willingness to adapt and comply with the ever-changing landscape. But fatigue and cynicism sets in when the rules are not only changing but are also confusing and inconsistent.

Let me give you a few examples.

This summer, my son was at a school volleyball game where his son was playing. Everyone in the stands had to wear masks. Even the umpire was required to wear a mask sitting high up on a chair. Because the umpire could not properly blow his whistle with the mask on, he was permitted to cut a slit in his mask through which he could blow his whistle. I am very unclear on

the science that speaks to mostly spreading COVID, and so therefore you should wear a mask, but blowing a whistle loudly at an indoor sports event does not spread COVID.

We spent a good part of our summer on a property that we lease on a lake in Manitoba where we have a fairly large deck. Manitoba health guidelines permitted five people to be on our deck, which was supposedly on private property, however, our deck touches public property.

The rules were completely different as soon as we got off our deck, where people could set up patio chairs and gather without limitations because it was public property. I could barbeque the hamburgers on my deck and hand them off my deck. These kinds of stories go on and on.

I realize that our understanding of science is evolving, but the inconsistencies drive people crazy, especially when they are criticized simply because they point out these discrepancies and question what the real science is.

Consider the fact that we have governments which one day are threatening to suspend people without pay because they are not fully vaccinated, but when they realize that they are going to be left with a significant hole in their workforce, they do an about-face and change their policy. What are people to conclude from this? Were those decisions based on science, convenience or popular opinion?

We now have a vaccine for children. I think that's wonderful for those who want to see their children vaccinated. How long will it be until we begin to erode the rights of parents to raise their children by mandating that they must be vaccinated to attend school? I question why we are mandating vaccines at all.

I went and got my vaccine, colleagues, as soon as I was eligible. Nobody had to coerce me or mandate me. I did it because I felt that it was the best thing for my safety, and that of people around me. Not everybody has my opinion, and they have the right to theirs.

I question why we are mandating vaccines at all, not because I question the value of being vaccinated. I encourage everyone who is able to get vaccinated to do so.

If someone is unable, is fearful or believes that the risk is higher for them to be vaccinated than to remain unvaccinated, why would we not adopt a policy which is more reflective than on the autocratic dictatorship that we have now in a democracy, which believes in personal rights and freedoms? This kind of approach is a danger to our society because it fosters fear and paranoia, and erodes the public trust which is essential to the health of our society.

Colleagues, when we are insisting that others must show up for work while we should be able to stay home, and we have no real scientific basis to support the claim that it is more dangerous to assemble in this chamber than it is to shop at Walmart, we strengthen the narrative that feeds the conspiracy theories and empowers those who want to ignore public health directives.

I would argue that gathering in person to do our work as senators is not only permitted and safe under current public health guidelines, but it is necessary for the proper execution of our responsibilities as senators.

Just two days ago, colleagues, we witnessed the summoning of eight new senators to this chamber. Like every senator, their appointment to the Senate of Canada was made by a summons from the Governor General. Part of that summons reads as follows:

AND WE do command you, that all difficulties and excuses whatsoever laying aside, you be and appear for the purposes aforesaid, in the Senate of Canada at all times whensoever and wheresoever Our Parliament may be in Canada convoked and holden, and this you are in no wise to omit.

Sometimes I wonder if disproportionate anxiety about COVID-19 falls under the category of difficulties or excuses. Either way, we are admonished to lay aside such challenges and appear in the Senate of Canada at all times whensoever and wheresoever our Parliament may be in Canada convoked and holden.

I am quite concerned that almost two years into the pandemic — when we are fully vaccinated, understand the value of face masks and have public health approval to meet in person — we are still insisting that we need to defy the summons which brought us to this place in the first place.

Colleagues, our prior experience with hybrid sittings demonstrated quite clearly that they are a less efficient use of our time and impede our ability to do our work. Senator Patterson pointed that out just a few minutes ago with some internet problems that they have up north.

First, because of the technological limitations, there were bandwidth and connectivity issues. Concurrent committee meetings had to be scaled back because of limited resources. Furthermore, it has been reported that some 70% of our interpreters suffered some form of acoustic or cognitive injuries as a result of either technological limitations or the failure of parliamentarians to use the equipment properly.

I would argue that, in addition to the technological challenges, fulfilling the role of a senator simply cannot be done properly without a face-to-face meeting. Much of our work takes place outside of this chamber in smaller meetings, conversations in hallways, and through building relationships and trust with each other. One cannot underestimate the value of trust, understanding and camaraderie, which are very difficult to build and maintain when you are meeting virtually.

Holding in-person meetings, both in this chamber and outside of it, maximizes our effectiveness and ensures that we are serving Canadians to the very best of our ability. Colleagues, I understand this is not a vote that we in all likelihood would win if we decided on a standing vote. For that reason, we're not going to insist on it. I, for one, will allow this to pass on division. There may be others that think otherwise. But I am very concerned that we are minimizing the true cost of hybrid sittings, both in terms of public confidence in this institution and in terms of our ability to do our work effectively. If I could be assured that these were

temporary changes, my concerns would be somewhat alleviated. However, I think it is time to come to terms with the fact that COVID is not temporary. All signs are that it will become endemic and will continue to extract its toll on society on an annual basis far into the future. Vaccinations will minimize that impact, but not eliminate it.

• (1530)

Our objective must not be to avoid all risk, but to determine how we can effectively do our work in this place in as safe a manner as possible. If we fail to do this, colleagues, then I see no sunset on the demands for hybrid sittings, which means we are in danger of ratcheting down the effectiveness of this institution on a permanent basis. In my view, it is imperative that we avoid such an outcome.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

Hon. Ratna Omidvar: Thank you, Senator Plett. Let me start by wishing you a speedy recovery and a return to this chamber. We wish you all the best. I'm sure your absence will be noted.

I would like to ask you whether your comparisons of the Senate community here are actually valid — for a simple reason. The collective age of this chamber is not the collective age of the population at large as you have described them — people who go to a hockey game; people who shop at Walmart. We are much older than that population. Many of us may well have underlying conditions, and we've been reminded most brutally what underlying conditions and age can do to a sick person in COVID with the passing of our colleague. Do you not believe that given the particular situation in this chamber and because of our age and the pandemic — endemic — that an abundance of caution is required and should be exercised in such a way that we can be both safe and do our job?

Senator Plett: Thank you for that question. Let me first of all say that you and I are not of that older age category. We're from the younger category. You and I wouldn't fall under that.

Senator Omidvar: Oh, thank you.

Senator Plett: You know, senator, it's a very valid question, but I'll address two things. Number one: I have made this argument over and over when we have heard of the toll that COVID has taken over the last years. We hear of the deaths. Yet, the media and even our public health officials constantly omit the truth of the matter that 85% of the people who have died of COVID are 85 years of age and over. So you are correct. We are of that age, which is why even my sons, who are not big on vaccinations, encouraged me to get mine as quickly as I could. I was happy with that. They at least seemed to want to keep me around.

So we are inconsistent there. The second thing I would say is that it's not only the Senate that is trying to do this; in the other place, we have those people that are not of our age. The Prime Minister is much younger and he is pushing it as actively over there as we are over here. Let's try to get some consistencies into all of this.

I probably would go along with the argument, senator, but the inconsistencies of all of this is what is creating — we don't have civil unrest yet, but we have a lot of civil unhappiness that is getting close. One of the reasons for that is the tremendous inconsistencies that we have about the rules and regulations. But your point is taken that, certainly, it is a disease that attacks people with weaker immune systems or older people, for sure.

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

Some Hon. Senators: Question.

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

Some Hon. Senators: Agreed.

An Hon. Senator: On division.

(Motion agreed to, on division.)

[Translation]

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION ADOPTED

Hon. Raymonde Gagné (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate), pursuant to notice of November 24, 2021, moved:

That, when the Senate next adjourns after the adoption of this motion, it do stand adjourned until Tuesday, November 30, 2021, at 2 p.m.

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to.)

[English]

SPEAKER'S STATEMENT

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I wish to advise you that hybrid sittings of the Senate will begin on Tuesday, November 30, 2021, using Zoom with multi-factor authentication. As of that time, the terms of the order of Thursday, November 25, 2021, concerning hybrid sittings, will govern proceedings.

[Senator Plett]

NATIONAL FINANCE

MOTION TO AUTHORIZE COMMITTEE TO STUDY A ROADMAP FOR POST-PANDEMIC ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL POLICY TO ADDRESS HUMAN, SOCIAL AND FINANCIAL COSTS OF ECONOMIC MARGINALIZATION AND INEQUALITY—
DEBATE ADJOURNED

Hon. Kim Pate, pursuant to notice of November 24, 2021, moved:

That the Standing Senate Committee on National Finance be authorized to examine and report on a roadmap for post-pandemic economic and social policy to address the human, social and financial costs of economic marginalization and inequality, when and if the committee is formed;

That, given recent calls for action from Indigenous, provincial, territorial and municipal jurisdictions, the committee examine in particular potential national approaches to inter-jurisdictional collaboration to implement a guaranteed livable basic income; and

That the committee submit its final report no later than December 31, 2022.

She said: Honourable senators, I rise to speak to Motion No. 6 to authorize the Standing Senate Committee on National Finance to examine and report, no later than December 31, 2022, on a roadmap for post-pandemic economic recovery that incorporates the urgent need to address the human, social and financial costs of economic marginalization and inequality.

This pandemic has been likened to a storm at sea. While some of us are on a sturdy, multi-storey, well-serviced, stable ship with robust engines, others face the same waves without even a life preserver, let alone a rowboat minus the oars. This pandemic has not affected everyone equally.

During the first year of the pandemic, the financial situations of one in five Canadians, primarily those with incomes over \$100,000, improved. People like us were relatively well protected. Our jobs and our income were never in peril because of the pandemic. Meanwhile, for far too many, the situation was dire. Canada's unemployment rates skyrocketed to heights not seen since the Great Depression.

In responding to the pandemic, the government has stated that a healthy, resilient and vibrant economy is an economy "for all." Canada's economy does best when we uphold values of substantive equality, when the economy is inclusive and when no one is abandoned to poverty or prevented by poverty from contributing to their communities to their full potential.

The government created laudable financial supports, such as the Canada Emergency Response Benefit, to ensure safety and dignity for individuals and stability for economies. And yet, by design, these "life preservers" did not reach those most in need.

Those who were on social assistance and were unable to work prior to the implementation of CERB could not access the program, which offered previously employed folks \$2,000 per month.

• (1540)

How do you think the average child leaving care fared in Toronto, for example, with \$390 for housing and \$343 for food every month, or how the average single mom fared each month in isolation trying to obtain housing for less than \$700 and nutritious food for her and her children for \$360 per month?

Too many of those who received the CERB also faced desperate financial situations. According to media reports, for people with disabilities and for close to 90,000 low-income seniors, drawing CERB in the past means that they now cannot access the full amounts of income supports they would usually rely on. The situation is particularly stark for many who received CERB in good faith, but now face repayment orders on top of receiving less of their usual entitlements. Their struggles echo those of other marginalized groups, particularly recipients of provincial and territorial social assistance and youth transitioning out of state child welfare “care.”

The pandemic policies excluded those most vulnerable and marginalized, leaving them in the lurch. The results are devastating from both a financial and a human and social perspective. Two in five Canadians — those with the least, those living in poverty — struggle every day with the stressful realities of hunger, housing and personal insecurity, in addition to the spectre of illness and homelessness.

This week, the government listed addressing child poverty as one of its priorities in the Speech from the Throne. According to the report card just released by Campaign 2000, more than 1.3 million children — nearly one in five of those who represent Canada’s future — are growing up in poverty, deprived of necessities and opportunities that have become intergenerational. The chasm between children who have and those who do not is wide and deep.

The Canada child benefit is also lifting fewer people out of poverty than when it was introduced. It is not providing sufficient support to those in profound poverty.

On the housing front, things are just as dire. More than 250,000 households in Canada have accumulated over \$350 million in rental arrears since the onset of the pandemic. Though the National Housing Strategy aims to build 150,000 new units of housing over the next 10 years, approximately 235,000 individuals experience homelessness each year and 1.7 million households lack the housing they need.

Black and Indigenous peoples are 2.7 times more likely than the overall population to report incomes inadequate to allow them to pay rent. Of Indigenous people in urban centres, 1 in 15 will experience homelessness, compared to 1 in 128 for the general population.

Failing to address poverty also carries punitive economic costs for government and for all of us. Indeed, the cost of poverty in Ontario is conservatively estimated at \$27.1 billion to \$33 billion

per year, and \$72 billion to \$84 billion per year in Canada in the forms of lost tax revenue, health care, prison and legal system costs.

Let’s consider poverty in the context of health care. Living in poverty doubles or triples the chances of developing diabetes and complications such as blindness and cardiovascular disease. On a human level, this is unacceptable. However, if that weren’t enough, poverty also results in an estimated additional \$7.6 billion cost to the Canadian health care system.

And what about poverty in the context of the criminal legal system? Of women in prison, 80% are there for poverty-related crimes. The most common convictions for Indigenous women are theft under \$5,000, theft over \$5,000, fraud, and trafficking drugs or stolen goods. Most of the women convicted of violent “offences” are criminalized as a result of their attempts to negotiate poverty, violence and racism.

In this light, it is not surprising that the Public Health Agency of Canada stated in 2008 that:

... \$1 invested in the early years saves between \$3 and \$9 in future spending on the health and criminal justice systems, as well as on social assistance. ...

Honourable colleagues, despite these glaring inequities, the situation is remediable. We can work together to reduce these disparities. We can and we must work to find the best path forward. This study could help us to lead the way.

At the height of the pandemic in 2020, the National Finance Committee recommended, among other measures, examination of the potential of a guaranteed livable basic income to unite and align human, social and economic well-being. This study would allow the committee to delve into this question in an in-depth and expanded way, considering issues including the role of the federal government and the federal spending power in light of the intersection between federal, provincial and territorial responsibilities, programs and finances; the relationship between Indigenous nations and the federal government and economic approaches to decolonization; as well as issues of design and cost of programs, including potential examination of tax fairness and reform.

This study could allow us to examine how, for instance, here in Ontario, despite the pandemic, Dufferin County reduced chronic homelessness in its community by 50% thanks to a combination of housing allowances and support services; how Guelph and Wellington County reduced chronic youth homelessness by 43% during the first year of the pandemic; how London, Ontario, ended homelessness for veterans; and how Medicine Hat, Alberta, became the first city in Canada to end chronic homelessness.

This motion aims to map a way forward for inter-jurisdictional collaboration to economic recovery that prioritizes overall well-being, not merely GDP. Economic recovery must include poverty eradication within the context of social, gender and racial equality.

This month marks the fiftieth anniversary of the 1971 Croll report, from the Special Senate Committee on Poverty. This committee recommended that:

... the Government of Canada implement a Guaranteed Annual Income ... on a ... national basis ... financed and administered by the Government of Canada.

Since then, the 1985 Royal Commission of the Economic Union and Development Prospects for Canada recommended:

... the provision of a Universal Income Security Program with relatively low guarantee levels and tax-back rates is an appropriate long-term goal for the Government of Canada and the provincial governments to pursue ...

In 2008, former Conservative senator Hugh Segal and former Liberal Senator Art Eggleton championed guaranteed livable income in this chamber and beyond. As a result, the report of the Senate Subcommittee on Cities recommended a federal annual income replace the current provincial and social assistance schemes.

Just four years ago, this chamber passed Senator Eggleton's motion calling on the government to support provincial, territorial and Indigenous initiatives aimed at evaluating the cost and impact of guaranteed livable income programs.

Two years ago, the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls called on the government to implement this fiscally responsible step to addressing the needs of Indigenous women in order to assist them to escape violence, homelessness, prison and death.

Honourable colleagues, interest in a guaranteed livable basic income is far from new. What's more, it's absolutely doable. The Parliamentary Budget Officer provided one example of a way guaranteed livable basic income could be achieved at a net-zero cost. Dr. Evelyn Forget and other progressive economists have proposed additional approaches. In B.C., an incremental approach was advocated.

Virtually everyone agrees on replacing existing provincial and territorial social assistance programs with income-tested cash transfers that provide resources sufficient to live on. Prince Edward Island is looking for federal assistance to implement a basic income guarantee.

Over five years, a guaranteed livable income could increase GDP by between 1.6% and 2.4%, create between \$46 billion and \$80 billion in new government revenues, and create between 298,000 and 450,000 new jobs. The potential to increase economic growth and human well-being is obvious.

Honourable colleagues, two out of three people in Canada believe implementing a guaranteed livable income to ensure that everyone can afford basic necessities is the right thing to do. This motion reflects the reality that we must make additional effort to consider those who are too often left behind or forgotten when we think of national recovery.

• (1550)

Currently, acute financial problems can result in chronic poverty. It can happen to those who least expect it; those trying to escape violence in their homes; those expected to care for their children, elders or people with disabilities; those who lose their jobs; and those who have health challenges.

Poverty shortens life expectancy by some 21 years.

Poverty intersects with and worsens systemic racism in gendered ways. Racialized women are 48% more likely to be unemployed and earn 55.6% the income of non-racialized men.

Senators, the aim of this motion is to enable us in this place to do what we do so well: namely, taking into account the interests of those whose needs are not front and centre in the other place. Let's work to ensure that every Canadian is considered as we map the road to recovery. I look forward to working with each and every one of you and to honouring the legacy of those who have gone before us as well as the interests of those who have yet to be considered.

Thank you. *Meegwetch*.

(On motion of Senator Duncan, debate adjourned.)

THE SENATE

MOTION PERTAINING TO THE RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL SYSTEM— DEBATE ADJOURNED

Hon. Mary Jane McCallum, pursuant to notice of November 24, 2021, moved:

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.

(On motion of Senator McCallum, debate adjourned.)

MOTION TO CALL ON THE GOVERNMENT TO ADOPT ANTI-RACISM
AS THE SIXTH PILLAR OF THE CANADA HEALTH ACT—
DEBATE ADJOURNED

Hon. Mary Jane McCallum, pursuant to notice of November 24, 2021, moved:

That the Senate of Canada call on the federal government to adopt anti-racism as the sixth pillar of the *Canada Health Act*, prohibiting discrimination based on race and affording everyone the equal right to the protection and benefit of the law.

(On motion of Senator McCallum, debate adjourned.)

**ENERGY, THE ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL
RESOURCES**

MOTION TO AUTHORIZE COMMITTEE TO STUDY THE
CUMULATIVE IMPACTS OF RESOURCE EXTRACTION
AND DEVELOPMENT—DEBATE ADJOURNED

Hon. Mary Jane McCallum, pursuant to notice of November 24, 2021, moved:

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

That the committee submit its final report no later than December 31, 2022.

(On motion of Senator McCallum, debate adjourned.)

THE SENATE

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—
DEBATE ADJOURNED

Hon. Thanh Hai Ngo, pursuant to notice of November 24, 2021, moved:

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*.

He said: Honourable senators, I rise today on a matter of great importance: to reintroduce my motion for the Government of Canada to call upon six or more of the current parties to the Act of the International Conference on Viet-Nam to agree to reconvene the International Conference on Viet-Nam. As you may recall, my motion died on the Order Paper because of the 2021 federal election. Today, I am delivering my speech and reiterating the same arguments that I raised on June 29.

[Translation]

Honourable senators, in an effort to end the Vietnam War and come to a lasting resolution, the Agreement On Ending the War and Restoring Peace in Viet-Nam and its protocols, commonly known as the Paris Peace Accords, were signed by the U.S.; the Republic of Vietnam, called South Vietnam; the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, called North Vietnam; and the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of Vietnam, called Viet Cong, in Paris on January 27, 1973.

[English]

According to Article 19 of the Paris Peace Accords, on February 26 to March 2, a second international conference was held again in Paris, which, among other things, established the International Commission of Control and Supervision — Vietnam's rules of conduct and its reporting mechanisms to support the agreement's implementation. The conference was concluded on March 2, 1973, by the signing of the Act of the International Conference on Viet-Nam, wherein the parties of the Paris Peace Accords and eight other countries — Canada, France, Hungary, Indonesia, Poland, the U.K., the Soviet Union and China — pledged they would, henceforth, not only uphold and support its terms but also abide by its provisions, including those related to foreign interference. Both the Paris Peace Accords and the act were registered with the UN Secretariat on May 13, 1974.

In addition to the many Canadian soldiers who died during the Vietnam War, Canada made significant contributions toward the effort to reach a lasting peace in Vietnam. It was part of the first International Commission for the Supervision and Control — Vietnam, established by the 1954 Geneva Agreements. It was also the part of the second International Commission of Control and Supervision, the ICCS, established by the Paris Peace Accords, sending peacekeeping forces in 1973 to investigate compliance and uphold its provisions. More importantly, it is a signatory to the Act of the International Conference on Viet-Nam.

[Translation]

As one of the signatories to the act, Canada played an integral supervisory role in the effort to support peace. As part of the ICCS — along with Poland, Hungary and Indonesia, which were at the time, respectively, communist countries and dictatorships — Canada made key contributions by investigating and overseeing that respect of the ceasefire, withdrawal of troops and return of captured military and civilian personnel were maintained.

[English]

Despite the subsequent invasion of South Vietnam by North Vietnam's Communist forces in 1975, in absolute violation of the Paris Peace Accords and of the act, I believe they remain valuable diplomatic tools for the resolution of disputes between signatory parties that arise from violations of their terms.

I wish to draw your attention to Articles 7(a) and 7(b) of the act, which provide a useful mechanism for dispute settlement in the event the Paris Peace Accords are infringed upon. Article 7(a) allows the parties to determine necessary remedial measures:

In the event of a violation of the Agreement or the Protocols which threatens the peace, the independence, sovereignty, unity, or territorial integrity of Viet-Nam, or the right of the South Vietnamese people to self-determination

Article 7(b) states that:

The International Conference on Viet-Nam shall be reconvened upon a joint request by the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Democratic Republic of Viet-Nam on behalf of the parties signatory to the Agreement or upon a request by six or more of the Parties to this Act.

[Translation]

Canada has a vested interest in continuing to uphold stability, peace and democracy in Asia. To this end, it is incumbent upon Canada's government to call upon six or more of the current parties to the act to agree to reconvene the International Conference on Viet-Nam.

There are compelling arguments that indicate there are sufficient grounds to engage Article 7(b) of the act and thereby reconvene the said conference.

[English]

On April 23, 2015, the Journey to Freedom Day Act was adopted. The first two elements of its preamble acknowledge the involvement of Canadian Armed Forces by assisting in the enforcement of the Paris Peace Accords and the subsequent invasion of South Vietnam by military forces of the Vietnam People's Army, and the National Liberation Front in 1975. Considering these two elements of the said preamble, the Parliament of Canada unequivocally recognized violations of the

Agreement on Ending the War and Restoring Peace in Vietnam and its *Protocols*; and the Act of the International Conference on Viet-Nam.

• (1600)

Not only are there no provisions within the Paris Agreement allowing the parties to terminate it, but also the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties, which provides the mechanisms for states to either withdraw, terminate or suspend treaties, is inapplicable in this case because it came into force after the Paris agreement was reached. Article 4 of the Vienna Convention regarding its non-retroactivity makes it impossible to invoke it. Furthermore, the United States has never ratified it.

[Translation]

Additionally, when the U.S. and Vietnam decided to establish diplomatic relations after the fall of Saigon and the reunification of South and North Vietnam, public statements referring to the Paris Agreement were made by their respective officials, thus suggesting it could be considered as still in force, at least in part.

[English]

As is the case with the Paris Peace Accords, the act is bereft of provisions that allow for its termination or sunset clauses to apply. Also, since the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties came into effect after the act, the convention is also inapplicable to the act. Contrary to the Paris Peace Accords, where customary international law makes it difficult to give a clear-cut and conclusive answer because of the ambiguity regarding its status, in this particular case one must look to customary international law to interpret the act. Such an interpretation would imply that the act continues to be in force, as it specifically provides a mechanism for the international conference to be reconvened without the U.S. and Vietnam jointly requesting it. Therefore, the act continues to be binding on the other eight signatory countries. Furthermore, the act is also listed among multi-party treaties and agreements by the U.S. Department of State as still being in force as of January 1, 2020, with Canada still listed as one of the parties.

For the purpose of reconvening the international conference in accordance with Article 7(b) *in fine*, Canada, France, Hungary, Indonesia, Poland, the U.K., the U.S., Russia and China — most of which are democratic countries, including Hungary, Indonesia and Poland, which were not at that time — should be considered as being the current parties to the act. To reconvene the international conference, at least six of them must agree. Alternatively, and pursuant to Article 7(b) *in limine*, the reconvening of the conference could also happen if the U.S. and Vietnam jointly request it, provided that Vietnam clearly states its intention to continue North Vietnam's participation in the act.

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. Articles 4 and 5 of the act indicate that its signatories, including China:

... solemnly recognize and strictly respect the fundamental national rights of the Vietnamese people, *i.e.*, the independence, sovereignty, unity, and territorial integrity of Viet-Nam, as well as the right of the South Vietnamese people to self-determination. The Parties to this Act shall strictly respect the Agreement and the Protocols by refraining from any action at variance with their provisions.

In 1974 and 1988, China invaded Vietnam's Paracel Islands and Spratly Islands respectively. These invasions are in violation of the act, allowing any signatory country to reconvene the international conference as per the conditions set out in Article 7(b) of the act.

On December 30, 1974, President Ford signed Public Law 93-559. Section 34(b)(4) requires the U.S. executive branch to reconvene the international conference in the eventuality of any violation of the Paris Peace Accords. By the intermediary of Article 7 of the act, and by invoking the spirit of public law 93-559, the U.S. has legal grounds to initiate a reconvening of the international conference and to force signatory governments to the conference table.

This past April, during an appearance at the House of Commons Special Committee on Canada-China Relations, Minister Harjit Sajjan, the Minister of National Defence at that time, said:

... Canada opposes land reclamation projects and building outposts in disputed areas for military purposes. We support lawful commerce, freedom of navigation and freedom of overflight in accordance with international law.

We will continue supporting our allies and partners in the Asia-Pacific region, especially in the face of unilateral actions that undermine peace and stability.

The minister also delivered a similar speech during the twelfth annual Conference on the South China Sea held in Vietnam in November 2020. It's worth mentioning that Canada is also actively maintaining a naval presence in that region.

Colleagues, for all of these reasons, it is therefore of the utmost importance to reopen this important debate and give serious consideration to reconvening the historic, multilateral forum that is the international conference on Vietnam. I truly believe this would be a vital policy tool and a useful means for diplomatic and peaceful resolution of conflicts in Asia, and I ask for your support. Thank you.

(On motion of Senator Duncan, debate adjourned.)

[Translation]

MOTION PERTAINING TO SECTION 55 OF THE CONSTITUTION ACT, 1982—DEBATE ADJOURNED

Hon. Pierre J. Dalphond, pursuant to notice of November 24, 2021, moved:

That the Senate:

1. recall that, despite the commitment found in section 55 of the *Constitution Act, 1982* to have a fully bilingual Constitution, as of today, of the 31 enactments that make up the Canadian Constitution, 22 are official only in their English version, including almost all of the *Constitution Act, 1867*; and
2. call upon the government to consider, in the context of the review of the *Official Languages Act*, the addition of a requirement to submit, every five years, a report detailing the efforts made to comply with section 55 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*.

(On motion of Senator Dalphond, debate adjourned.)

(At 4:09 p.m., the Senate was continued until Tuesday, November 30, 2021, at 2 p.m.)

CONTENTS

Thursday, November 25, 2021

	PAGE		PAGE
Business of the Senate		RCMP's Role and Mandate	
Motion to Extend Senators' Statements for the Remainder of the Current Session Adopted		Notice of Inquiry	
Hon. Pat Duncan	45	Hon. Peter Harder	50
SENATORS' STATEMENTS			
Condominium Insurance		QUESTION PERIOD	
Hon. Dennis Glen Patterson	45	Agriculture and Agri-Food	
The Climate and Water		Support for Farmers and Producers	
Hon. Mary Coyle	45	Hon. Donald Neil Plett	50
The Honourable Donald H. Oliver		Hon. Marc Gold	50
Hon. Wanda Elaine Thomas Bernard	46	Parole Board of Canada	
Canada's Infrastructure		Rights of Victims of Criminal Acts	
Hon. Pamela Wallin	46	Hon. Pierre-Hugues Boisvenu	51
Afghanistan Crisis		Hon. Marc Gold	51
Hon. Salma Ataullahjan	47	Agriculture and Agri-Food	
The Late Carol-Ann Marshall		Support for Farmers and Producers	
Hon. Gwen Boniface	47	Hon. Paula Simons	51
		Hon. Marc Gold	51
ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS		Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship	
Governor General		Francophone Immigration	
Commissions Appointing Deputies—Documents Tabled		Hon. Tony Loffreda	52
Hon. Marc Gold	48	Hon. Marc Gold	52
Food Day in Canada Bill (Bill S-227)		Health	
First Reading		Proof of Vaccination—International Travel	
Hon. Diane F. Griffin	48	Hon. Jane Cordy	52
Constitution Act, 1867 (Bill S-228)		Hon. Marc Gold	53
First Reading		Public Safety	
Hon. Dennis Glen Patterson	48	National Supply Chain	
Committee of Selection		Hon. Jim Quinn	53
Motion for Appointment Adopted		Hon. Marc Gold	53
Hon. Yuen Pau Woo	48	Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications	
The Senate		Commission	
Motion Pertaining to the Structure of Committees for the Remainder of Current Session Adopted		Wholesale Internet Rates	
Hon. Yuen Pau Woo	49	Hon. Dennis Glen Patterson	53
Notice of Motion to Resolve that an Amendment to the Real Property Qualifications of Senators in the Constitution Act, 1867 be Authorized to be Made by Proclamation Issued by the Governor General		Hon. Marc Gold	54
Hon. Dennis Glen Patterson	49	Finance	
Motion Pertaining to Senators' Attendance Adopted		Monetary Policy	
Hon. Pierre J. Dalphond	50	Hon. Donald Neil Plett	54
		Hon. Marc Gold	54
		Health	
		Retention of Health Care Professionals	
		Hon. Bev Busson	55
		Hon. Marc Gold	55

CONTENTS

Thursday, November 25, 2021

	PAGE		PAGE
ORDERS OF THE DAY		The Senate	
Speech from the Throne		Motion Pertaining to the Residential School System—Debate Adjourned	
Motion for Address in Reply—Debate Adjourned		Hon. Mary Jane McCallum	64
Hon. Marc Gold	55	Motion to Call on the Government to Adopt Anti-racism as the Sixth Pillar of the Canada Health Act—Debate Adjourned	
The Senate		Hon. Mary Jane McCallum	65
Motion to Authorize Hybrid Sitings Adopted		Energy, the Environment and Natural Resources	
Hon. Dennis Glen Patterson	58	Motion to Authorize Committee to Study the Cumulative Impacts of Resource Extraction and Development—Debate Adjourned	
Hon. Donald Neil Plett	59	Hon. Mary Jane McCallum	
Hon. Ratna Omidvar	61	65	
Adjournment		The Senate	
Motion Adopted		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—Debate Adjourned	
Hon. Raymonde Gagné	62	Hon. Thanh Hai Ngo	
Speaker's Statement		65	
The Hon. the Speaker		Motion Pertaining to Section 55 of the Constitution Act, 1982 —Debate Adjourned	
62		Hon. Pierre J. Dalfond	
National Finance		67	
Motion to Authorize Committee to Study a Roadmap for Post-pandemic Economic and Social Policy to Address Human, Social and Financial Costs of Economic Marginalization and Inequality—Debate Adjourned			
Hon. Kim Pate	62		