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Thursday, June 9, 2022

The Honourable GEORGE J. FUREY,
Speaker

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THE SENATE

Thursday, June 9, 2022

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

Prayers.

SENATORS' STATEMENTS

THE HONOURABLE MICHÈLE AUDETTE

CONGRATULATIONS ON HONORARY DOCTORATE

Hon. Amina Gerba: Honourable senators, in this National Indigenous History Month, I would like to introduce you to someone who needs no introduction, an exceptional person, whom I consider today as a sister in the great Senate family. Yes, I would even say a twin sister, because we were appointed on the same day, July 29, 2021, as independent senators from Quebec to the Senate of Canada. I chose to present her to you today because yesterday was another great day for this great and inspiring lady, who received an honorary doctorate from the Faculty of Social Sciences at the University of Ottawa. I'm talking about my very dear Michèle Audette.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

Senator Gerba: Born to a Quebec father and an Innu mother, Senator Audette has played a key role in the transformation of relations between Indigenous peoples and Quebec and Canadian society since the 1990s. At only 27 years old, she was elected president of Quebec Native Women Inc. In 2004, she was appointed associate deputy minister of Quebec's Secretariat for the Status of Women. She served as president of the Native Women's Association of Canada from 2012 to 2015. In 2015, she helped create an innovative graduate program in Indigenous public administration for the National School of Public Administration.

The Honourable Michèle Audette was appointed as one of five commissioners to lead the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. Since 2019, she has held the position of assistant to the Vice Rector of Academic and Student Affairs and senior adviser for reconciliation and indigenous education at Université Laval.

Senator Audette has an inspiring career that has allowed her to receive countless recognitions, including the Women of Distinction Award in the Inspiration category from the Montreal Women's Y Foundation. In addition, to highlight her admirable dedication to the cause of Indigenous women, the Université de Montréal also awarded her an honorary doctorate. Our country should consider itself lucky to have a leader like her in the upper house of Parliament.

Dear friend and "twin sister," the Honourable Clément Gignac and I were marked by your speech delivered in front of hundreds of young graduates, all equally enthralled.

Congratulations on this umpteenth recognition. Continue to share love as you do around you. It is very contagious, and it is the main ingredient needed for reconciliation. Thank you.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

Hon. Bernadette Clement: I, too, rise to congratulate Senator Audette.

"I am here. I am alive. We are here. We are alive." Honourable senators, these words have echoed in my mind and in my soul ever since they were first uttered by my dear colleague and friend, Senator Michèle Audette.

[English]

A leader and advocate, she has spent less than a year in this colonial institution, but already her impact is irrefutable. When she enters a room, Senator Audette brings with her warmth and kindness, as well as a drive to make historic wrongs right, to Inuitize, to Indigenize, to pursue equality, equity and social justice. This is a continuation of a lifetime of work transforming relationships between Indigenous peoples and Canadian and Québécois societies.

Senator Gerba has already done justice to what has been an astounding career, and now she is a recipient of an honorary doctorate from the University of Ottawa.

[Translation]

At yesterday's celebration, I was sitting next to Senator Audette's dad, whom she describes as "the most wonderful dad in Quebec." He mentioned that, even at age four, she had a way of commanding a room. He fondly recalled seeing her wearing a dress made by her maternal grandmother, displaying pride in her culture.

As Jacques Frémont, the President and Vice-Chancellor of the university, put it so well, "You are an exemplary role model of perseverance . . ."

• (1410)

[English]

And she has been an inspiring role model for me as well.

Timing is a funny thing, folks. In her speech yesterday, Senator Audette spoke of the dream she had, at age 28, of becoming a senator. Now she is here at exactly the right time, during the International Decade of Indigenous Languages, a time when we must focus on truth, reconciliation and healing and a period when Canadian society is coming to terms with our history.

My friend, as you light the way for your children, your grandchildren and your community, please know that your light shines in this place, too.

[Translation]

Congratulations on this well-deserved recognition from the University of Ottawa.

[Editor's Note: Senator Clement spoke in an Indigenous language.]

[English]

Congratulations, honourable senator.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

FILIPINO HERITAGE MONTH

Hon. Yonah Martin (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, I rise today to celebrate the fourth annual Filipino Heritage Month in memory of our dear friend and former colleague the late Honourable Tobias Enverga Jr., who had been a true champion of the Filipino-Canadian community.

The month of June recognizes the contributions that Filipino Canadians have made to Canada and celebrates the Filipino history, culture and traditions that have been passed down through generations.

Filipino history in Canada dates back as far as the late 1800s, when mostly male migrants came and worked in the fishing, mining and forestry sectors in the Lower Mainland of British Columbia. The first large wave of immigrant families would follow in the 1930s. The first Filipino Canadians were mainly women who worked as teachers, nurses and those who worked in the health sector. In later years, many immigrated to Canada and settled in large urban centres with more opportunities for jobs and communities to share their culture and start new lives in Canada. And today, Filipino Canadians are entrepreneurs, lawyers, accountants and contributing in nearly every sector within our nation.

According to Statistics Canada, Filipinos are the third-largest Asian immigrant community and one of the fastest growing ethnic communities in Canada.

During this Filipino Heritage Month, June 12 will be the one hundred and twenty-fourth anniversary of Filipino independence, a date that marks a momentous milestone for the Philippines and the heroic patriots who fought to end Spanish colonial rule, a path that would eventually lead to full independence in 1946 when the strong and vibrant country would realize true democracy and freedom.

Earlier today, I had the honour of attending the flag-raising ceremony on Parliament Hill on behalf of the Senate and as Vice-Chair of the Canada-Philippines Interparliamentary Group. Together with Ambassador Robles, Rosemer Enverga and her three daughters and members of the Filipino-Canadian community, we proudly raised the Philippine flag and unfurled

the largest flag you have ever seen to show our sincere appreciation for the contributions that Filipino Canadians have made to Canada, and as a symbol of the deep friendship and diplomatic ties between our two countries.

This important ceremony was established on Parliament Hill by the late Senator Enverga, one of his proudest moments as a parliamentarian and now part of his enduring legacy.

Honourable senators, please join me in remembering our former colleague and in celebrating Filipino Heritage Month. In his words:

Mabuhay ang Philippines and mabuhay ang Canada!

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

VISITOR IN THE GALLERY

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I wish to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of Beth Bechdol, Deputy Director General, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. She is the guest of the Honourable Senator Black.

On behalf of all honourable senators, I welcome you to the Senate of Canada.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION

Hon. Robert Black: Honourable senators, I rise today to highlight the work of the Food and Agriculture Organization, also known as the FAO. The FAO is a specialized agency of the United Nations that leads international efforts to defeat hunger.

As we know, the pandemic and the ongoing war in Ukraine, in addition to climate change and supply chain instabilities, have placed unprecedented stress on global food systems. Earlier this week, the FAO and the World Food Programme released their *Hunger Hotspots* report, which highlighted that:

... an all-time high of up to 49 million people in 46 countries across the globe could be at risk of falling into famine or famine-like conditions, unless they receive immediate life and livelihoods-saving assistance.

This is a shocking statistic that deserves immediate attention. I am hopeful that this is an issue that is prioritized both domestically and internationally, by this chamber, by our colleagues in the other place and by governments around the world.

At this time, I'd like to thank the FAO, as well as Deputy Director-General Beth Bechdol, who, as you know, is with us today in the Red Chamber, and her colleagues travelling with her for their continued efforts to achieve food security around the world.

As I've previously mentioned in this chamber and at the Standing Senate Committee on Agriculture and Forestry, food security is also an issue right here at home. A poll recently conducted by Food Banks Canada found that one in five Canadians reported going hungry at least once between March 2020 and March 2022, and almost a quarter of Canadians reported eating less than they should due to rising prices.

And, as we have all seen during our trips to the grocery store or to the gas station, the war in Ukraine, in combination with other factors I previously mentioned, has further exacerbated what were already steadily rising food and energy prices. While we are facing increased costs at the store and the gas station, we can, unfortunately, expect to see the situation grow even more dire in places that are dependent on agri-food products coming out of Ukraine and Russia.

Honourable colleagues, I'd like to take this opportunity to highlight the connection that our grain industry shares with that of Ukraine. In fact, you could say that:

The entire development of Canada's wheat industry, the most renowned in the world, is due mainly to this single Ukrainian grain of wheat.

This is from the late research biologist Stephan Symko's posthumous monograph, *From a single seed*, which found that Red Fife — Canada's oldest wheat — and its many hybrids, descended from a single grain of Halychanka wheat grown in western Ukraine that found its way into a shipment of winter wheat in 1842.

With this intrinsic relationship in mind, I am hopeful that Canada will continue to help Ukraine not only work out options on how to export their already-stored grain, but also to help address the global food security concerns through our own domestic grain production. Thank you, *meegwetch*.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

VISITOR IN THE GALLERY

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I wish to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of Marwa Haroon. She is the guest of the Honourable Senator Smith.

On behalf of all honourable senators, I welcome you to the Senate of Canada.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

ANISHINABEK NATION GOVERNANCE AGREEMENT

DOCUMENT TABLED

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Honourable senators, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the *Anishinabek Nation Governance Agreement*.

HUMAN RIGHTS

BUDGET AND AUTHORIZATION TO ENGAGE SERVICES AND TRAVEL—STUDY ON ISSUES RELATING TO HUMAN RIGHTS GENERALLY—SECOND REPORT OF COMMITTEE PRESENTED

Hon. Salma Ataullahjan, Chair of the Standing Senate Committee on Human Rights, presented the following report:

May 31, 2022

The Standing Senate Committee on Human Rights has the honour to present its

SECOND REPORT

Your committee, which was authorized by the Senate on Thursday, March 3, 2022, to examine such issues as may arise from time to time relating to human rights generally, respectfully requests funds for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2023 and requests, for the purpose of such study, that it be empowered:

- (a) to engage the services of such counsel, technical, clerical and other personnel as may be necessary;
- (b) to adjourn from place to place within Canada;
- (c) to travel inside Canada.

Pursuant to Chapter 3:06, section 2(1)(c) of the *Senate Administrative Rules*, the budget submitted to the Standing Committee on Internal Economy, Budgets and Administration and the report thereon of that committee are appended to this report.

Respectfully submitted,

SALMA ATAULLAHJAN

Chair

(For text of budget, see today's Journals of the Senate, Appendix A, p. 668.)

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, when shall this report be taken into consideration? • (1420)

(On motion of Senator Ataullahjan, report placed on the Orders of the Day for consideration at the next sitting of the Senate.)

AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY

BUDGET AND AUTHORIZATION TO TRAVEL—STUDY ON THE STATUS OF SOIL HEALTH—FOURTH REPORT OF COMMITTEE PRESENTED

Hon. Robert Black, Chair of the Standing Senate Committee on Agriculture and Forestry, presented the following report:

Thursday, June 9, 2022

The Standing Senate Committee on Agriculture and Forestry has the honour to present its

FOURTH REPORT

Your committee, which was authorized by the Senate on Tuesday, April 26, 2022, to examine and report on the status of soil health in Canada, respectfully requests funds for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2023, and requests, for the purpose of such study, that it be empowered to:

- (a) travel outside Canada.

Pursuant to Chapter 3:06, section 2(1)(c) of the *Senate Administrative Rules*, the budget submitted to the Standing Committee on Internal Economy, Budgets and Administration and the report thereon of that committee are appended to this report.

Respectfully submitted,

ROBERT BLACK

Chair

(For text of budget, see today's Journals of the Senate, Appendix B, p. 678.)

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, when shall this report be taken into consideration?

(On motion of Senator Black, report placed on the Orders of the Day for consideration at the next sitting of the Senate.)

NATIONAL SECURITY AND DEFENCE

BUDGET AND AUTHORIZATION TO ENGAGE SERVICES AND TRAVEL—STUDY ON ISSUES RELATING TO SECURITY AND DEFENCE IN THE ARCTIC—SECOND REPORT OF COMMITTEE PRESENTED

Hon. Tony Dean, Chair of the Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence, presented the following report:

Thursday, June 9, 2022

The Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence has the honour to present its

SECOND REPORT

Your committee, which was authorized by the Senate on Thursday, February 10, 2022, to examine and report on issues relating to security and defence in the Arctic, respectfully requests funds for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2023, and requests, for the purpose of such study, that it be empowered:

- (a) to engage the services of such counsel, technical, clerical and other personnel as may be necessary;
- (b) to adjourn from place to place within Canada;
- (c) to travel inside Canada; and
- (d) to travel outside Canada.

Pursuant to Chapter 3:06, section 2(1)(c) of the *Senate Administrative Rules*, the budget submitted to the Standing Committee on Internal Economy, Budgets and Administration and the report thereon of that committee are appended to this report.

Respectfully submitted,

TONY DEAN

Chair

(For text of budget, see today's Journals of the Senate, Appendix C, p. 686.)

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, when shall this report be taken into consideration?

(On motion of Senator Dean, report placed on the Orders of the Day for consideration at the next sitting of the Senate.)

ABORIGINAL PEOPLES

BUDGET AND AUTHORIZATION TO ENGAGE SERVICES—STUDY ON THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'S CONSTITUTIONAL, TREATY, POLITICAL AND LEGAL RESPONSIBILITIES TO FIRST NATIONS, INUIT AND MÉTIS PEOPLES— THIRD REPORT OF COMMITTEE PRESENTED

Hon. Brian Francis, Chair of the Standing Senate Committee on Aboriginal Peoples, presented the following report:

Thursday, June 9, 2022

The Standing Senate Committee on Aboriginal Peoples has the honour to present its

THIRD REPORT

Your committee, which was authorized by the Senate on Thursday, March 3, 2022, to examine the federal government's constitutional, treaty, political and legal responsibilities to First Nations, Inuit and Metis peoples and any other subject concerning Indigenous Peoples, respectfully requests funds for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2023, and requests, for the purpose of such study, that it be empowered to engage the services of such counsel, technical, clerical and other personnel as may be necessary.

Pursuant to Chapter 3:06, section 2(1)(c) of the *Senate Administrative Rules*, the budget submitted to the Standing Committee on Internal Economy, Budgets and Administration and the report thereon of that committee are appended to this report.

Respectfully submitted,

BRIAN FRANCIS

Chair

(For text of budget, see today's Journals of the Senate, Appendix D, p. 696.)

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, when shall this report be taken into consideration?

(On motion of Senator Francis, report placed on the Orders of the Day for consideration at the next sitting of the Senate.)

[Translation]

BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION BILL, 2022, NO. 1

FIFTH REPORT OF LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE ON SUBJECT MATTER TABLED

Hon. Mobina S. B. Jaffer: Honourable senators, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the fifth report of the Standing Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs, which deals with the subject matter of those elements contained

in Divisions 1, 21 and 22 of Part 5 of Bill C-19, An Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on April 7, 2022 and other measures.

[English]

AUDIT AND OVERSIGHT

BUDGET AND AUTHORIZATION TO ENGAGE SERVICES— FIFTH REPORT OF COMMITTEE PRESENTED

Hon. Marty Klyne, Chair of the Standing Committee on Audit and Oversight, presented the following report:

Thursday, June 9, 2022

The Standing Committee on Audit and Oversight has the honour to present its

FIFTH REPORT

Your committee, which is authorized on its own initiative, pursuant to rule 12-7(17), to supervise and report on the Senate's internal and external audits and related matters, respectfully requests funds for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2023, and requests, for the purpose of such study, that it be empowered:

- (a) to engage the services of such counsel, technical, clerical and other personnel as may be necessary.

Pursuant to Chapter 3:06, section 2(1)(c) of the *Senate Administrative Rules*, the budget submitted to the Standing Committee on Internal Economy, Budgets and Administration and the report thereon of that committee are appended to this report.

Respectfully submitted,

MARTY KLYNE

Chair

(For text of budget, see today's Journals of the Senate, Appendix E, p. 702.)

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, when shall this report be taken into consideration?

(On motion of Senator Klyne, report placed on the Orders of the Day for consideration at the next sitting of the Senate.)

BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION BILL, 2022, NO. 1

EIGHTH REPORT OF SOCIAL AFFAIRS, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE ON SUBJECT MATTER TABLED

Hon. Ratna Omidvar: Honourable senators, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the eighth report of the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and

Technology, which deals with the subject matter of those elements contained in Divisions 23, 24, 26, 27, 29 and 32 of Part 5 of Bill C-19, An Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on April 7, 2022 and other measures.

THE SENATE

MOTION TO RESOLVE INTO COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
TO RECEIVE PHILIPPE DUFRESNE, PRIVACY
COMMISSIONER NOMINEE, ADOPTED

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

That, after Question Period on Tuesday, June 14, 2022, the Senate resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole in order to receive Mr. Philippe Dufresne respecting his appointment as Privacy Commissioner;

That the Committee of the Whole report to the Senate no later than 65 minutes after it begins;

That the witness' introductory remarks last a maximum of five minutes;

That, if a senator does not use the entire period of 10 minutes for debate provided under rule 12-32(3)(d), including the responses of the witness, that senator may yield the balance of time to another senator; and

That the application of rule 3-3(1) be suspended until the committee has reported.

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.)

[Translation]

BILL TO GIVE EFFECT TO THE ANISHINABEK NATION GOVERNANCE AGREEMENT AND TO AMEND OTHER ACTS

BILL TO AMEND—FIRST READING

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate) introduced Bill S-10, An Act to give effect to the Anishinabek Nation Governance Agreement, to amend the Sechelt Indian Band Self-Government Act and the Yukon First Nations Self-Government Act and to make related and consequential amendments to other Acts.

(Bill read first time.)

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

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

[English]

QUESTION PERIOD

FINANCE

INCOME TAX CREDITS

Hon. Donald Neil Plett (Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, my question is for the Leader of the Government in the Senate.

Senator Gold, later this afternoon the Senate will start third reading debate of Bill C-8. This bill, amongst other measures, expands the school supplies tax credit and introduces a new refundable tax credit for farming businesses. The changes to these tax credits are retroactive to 2021.

Senator Gold, since the bill was introduced last December, all Canadians had to file their 2021 income tax returns. Teachers and farmers filed for the tax credits I just mentioned. They have since been told by the Canada Revenue Agency that they will not get their tax refund until Bill C-8 has been passed — not just the portion of their refund that comes from Bill C-8, but all the money that CRA owes them is being withheld. And when people complain, this is the answer they get: They are told to contact parliamentarians and pressure them to adopt Bill C-8.

• (1430)

Senator Gold, as Leader of the Government in the Senate, why did you allow your colleagues in government to use such a blatant blackmail tactic to put pressure on parliamentarians to adopt a government bill? Isn't this reflective of the Trudeau government's willingness to bully parliamentarians?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for the question. Bill C-8, which was held up in the House for an inordinate amount of time, is a bill designed to assist Canadians. I am very pleased that we finally did receive it. I am very pleased that it was properly studied in this chamber, and I look forward to the third-reading vote so that it can benefit Canadians, as intended.

Senator Plett: Again, you just let all Canadians know why it is called "Question Period," and not "Question-and-Answer Session."

Leader, the government could have used a simple solution: It could have adopted, in December, a ways and means motion in the House of Commons on those two tax credits, which would have allowed the CRA to process the tax refunds of teachers and farmers, but they didn't.

Senator Gold, why did your government decide to take teachers and farmers hostage? Why should these hard-working Canadians be victims of the NDP-Liberal government's contempt for Parliament?

Senator Gold: The Government of Canada has taken neither teachers nor agricultural workers hostage. The delays in Parliament, the partisan politics that have characterized the daily practice in the other place, are far more disrespectful — and I will not use stronger words — to Canadians and their interests and right to be served by parliamentarians who should care more about their interests than about scoring political points on Twitter.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

DETENTION OF CANADIANS IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Hon. David M. Wells: Honourable senators, my question is for the Leader of the Government in the Senate.

Senator Gold, on April 5, 2022, more than two months ago, a Pivot Airlines crew of five Canadians were arbitrarily detained and imprisoned in the Dominican Republic after discovering and reporting that they found 210 kilograms of cocaine in the avionics compartment of the flight they flew into the Dominican Republic.

On April 28 I asked you, Senator Gold, a question about the detained crew. More specifically, I asked if the Minister of Foreign Affairs has intervened in this urgent matter. It's now June 9, and the crew is still asking for help from the government.

Senator Gold, you'll know that Prime Minister Trudeau is at the Summit of the Americas in Los Angeles and will have the opportunity — or, perhaps, has had the opportunity — to meet with Dominican President Abinader on the sidelines of the summit or, perhaps, in one of the main meetings that they have.

It's unacceptable that crew members who reported, as per the rules, to both the RCMP and the local authorities have been detained for more than two months, moving from safe house to safe house ahead of those who want to see them stopped or harmed.

Has the Prime Minister or did the Minister of Foreign Affairs make representation to the president of the Dominican Republic regarding these Canadian crew members?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for your question and for reminding us of the situation that continues to be a challenge and a priority for this government.

I don't know whether representations were made to the president. I do know that the Government of Canada and consular officials are providing consular assistance to those detained and are in regular contact with the families. I know, as well, that the government, through the parliamentary secretary and the minister, is directly engaged in this file.

Senator Wells: Thank you, Senator Gold. This morning my office received the delayed answer from April 28. It really is too long when the lives and safety of Canadians are at stake.

I'd like to know, and I think this chamber should know. Canadians are being detained for following the rules. They are, in fact, being held hostage in another country. Their passports have been confiscated.

If we could have an answer on the result of any intervention that the Prime Minister may have made at the Summit of the Americas before we rise for the summer, that would be appreciated.

Senator Gold: I'll certainly make inquiries, senator, and I hope to get an answer back as quickly as I can. Thank you.

[Translation]

TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS

BUSINESS OF THE COMMITTEE

Hon. Julie Miville-Dechéne: Honourable senators, my question is for the chair of the Standing Senate Committee on Transport and Communications, Senator Leo Housakos.

Senator Housakos, as you know, the senators in this chamber spent two weeks debating the merits of having a pre-study on Bill C-11, An Act to amend the Broadcasting Act and to make related and consequential amendments to other Acts. The Senate voted in favour of conducting a pre-study.

Given this democratic vote and the fact that, according to my information, the majority of senators on the committee would like to start this pre-study, when do you intend to begin this study in committee and call witnesses so that we can start to understand this important and complex bill?

Hon. Leo Housakos: Thank you, senator, for the excellent question.

The committee itself will decide when to start its work. It is at the important stage of planning its future activities, and as the senators who are members of several committees in this institution know, we can't move forward without a good plan, so we need time. As you know, the steering committee hasn't reached a consensus yet, and the work is ongoing. The committee will start by establishing a plan before going any further.

[English]

That is the tradition when it comes to work at the committee level, and as we all know, colleagues, committees have a degree of independence in this place. They take guidance from this chamber. Of course, I recognize that this is the ultimate superior authority when it comes to giving direction to committees, but as has been expressed over a number of weeks and months in the chamber by colleagues like Senator Cordy and Senator Downe, committees are masters of their own destiny. So we are going to allow the Transport and Communications Committee the leeway

that they need in order to come up with a plan, to come up with directives and try to follow, of course, the guidelines that have been given by this chamber.

The last time I checked, the motion that you have questioned about has no particular date or timeline. The government has given us the flexibility to do the robust study that needs to be done on such an important bill.

[Translation]

Senator Miville-Dechêne: Senator Housakos, according to my calculations, a majority of the committee members, 8 out of 12, would like to start the pre-study. If, as you say, the committee is free to decide when to start this work, I can tell you that the majority want to start the pre-study now.

I would like to ask you a hypothetical question. In your opinion, when the Senate authorizes a committee to carry out a pre-study on a government bill, does the committee have the right to not carry out the will of the Senate and to refuse to conduct a pre-study?

[English]

Senator Housakos: Absolutely not. There is absolutely no willingness on the part of the committee to refuse the will of this chamber. The motion has been embraced. We left all the work aside, and we dove right into it at the first available moment. The first meeting that we had, colleagues, last night, we dove right into preparing a work plan.

I do appreciate that sometimes the majority laughs when the minority asks important questions, but yesterday there were a couple of motions put before us in order to do the work as diligently as we can. Senator Quinn has a motion that he put before the committee. You may laugh, but he requires certain documents, and I agree with him. Maybe it's just a minority of senators who might agree with him, but he has the right to request those documents. We have the right, democratically, at committee to pursue our work.

• (1440)

She asked the question; I want to give a robust, lengthy answer. Senator Lankin, I appreciate that sometimes some of us —

The Hon. the Speaker: Excuse me, Senator Housakos. I will let you finish, but I saw a couple of senators rising. I will remind senators that no points of order can be raised during Question Period.

Senator Housakos: I want to remind my colleagues on the Transport Committee — and on all committees — that when senators do their work at committee, they have the right to put forward motions. They have the right to amend motions. They have the right, in a fulsome way, to debate those motions.

I can assure my Deputy Chair of the Transport and Communications Committee that I will continue to respect those principles as chair. As I said, very often in a democracy, a parliamentary setting or a committee, the majority — you have come to the assumption that 8 out of 12 wanted to pass the bill

yesterday, and, well, we want to do the work and respect the motion before this committee, and do it in a wholesome way. I will allow even the minority voices to ask the questions they want to ask and to request the documents they want to request, and I assure you that we will respect the motion of the chamber. We will respect the date line of the chamber. But we will also allow for democracy — at least at the Transport and Communications Committee — to function.

[Translation]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

FOOD AID FOR AFRICA

Hon. Amina Gerba: My question is for the Government Representative in the Senate.

Senator Gold, Macky Sall, President of Senegal and Chairperson of the African Union, travelled to Russia last week with Moussa Faki Mahamat, Chairperson of the African Union Commission, to plead for the Black Sea blockades to be lifted so that Ukrainian grain can be exported to the African countries that depend on it, such as Tunisia, which gets half its wheat supply from Ukraine, and Benin, which relies on Ukraine for all of its imported wheat.

Senator Gold, given this food crisis and knowing that Canada is a major grain producer, I would like to know what short- and long-term measures the government is considering to assist Africa with its pressing food needs.

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

With regard to food aid for people in other vulnerable countries, including African countries, the Government of Canada provides food aid in the form of untied grants based on international best practices and recommendations. Canada provides food aid through experienced multilateral and non-governmental organizations, including the World Food Programme.

The current priority is to support Ukraine so that it can get stored grain out of the country and deliver it to its usual markets, including Africa. The Government of Canada is committed to supporting Ukraine's agricultural industry, which makes a significant contribution to global food security.

Our Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food recently expressed Canada's desire to help at meetings with her Ukrainian counterpart, Minister Solsky, and with the ambassador of Ukraine to Canada, Yuliia Kovaliv. Canada is currently in close discussions with our Ukrainian partners to identify meaningful ways for Canada to support the country as effectively as possible in cooperation with our G7 partners. I have been told that the Canadian Food Inspection Agency has met with its Ukrainian counterpart to learn about its needs.

In closing, the government is committed to taking timely action within these parameters.

[English]

PRIVY COUNCIL OFFICE

COST OF LIVING

Hon. Jim Quinn: Honourable senators, my question is to the Government Representative in the Senate.

Families and businesses — including small businesses across Canada, which in many ways are the backbone of our economy — are facing increasing costs across the board. Inflationary pressures, rising interest rates, supply chain disruption, the effects of the pandemic and other national and international factors, such as Russia's invasion and ongoing destruction of Ukraine, are absolute factors in driving increasing costs here at home.

Recent surveys by Food Banks Canada and Mainstreet Research are indicating that families are struggling to buy enough food to feed themselves and their children, and an increasing number of Canadians are reporting that they are going hungry.

In my province of New Brunswick, gas prices rose overnight by 8.9 cents per litre, forcing many New Brunswickers to again make the difficult decision between buying gas for their vehicles so they can go to work or reducing food purchases yet again. Senator Gold, what immediate actions can the government take to address these serious issues today?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for your question, senator. The issues that you raise are complex and pervasive. They affect all Canadians to some degree, as we've discussed and as I answered in the chamber recently.

There is a suite of measures the government is taking that are targeted to various causes, whether it's a question of inflation — the Bank of Canada, as we know, has embarked upon a series of rate hikes — and it is also with regard to measures outlined in the budget — and that we see in the budget implementation act — that will increase productivity, enhance competitiveness and the like.

The fact remains that we are living through a difficult time. The Government of Canada, along with its counterparts in the provinces and territories, is engaged in trying to help Canadians through these tough times.

[Translation]

JUSTICE

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Hon. Pierre-Hugues Boisvenu: My question is for the Leader of the Government in the Senate.

Senator Gold, I was surprised by your brief response on Tuesday when you said that your government has done a lot to combat violence against women by making a number of changes to the Criminal Code to make it fairer, more equitable and more relevant. I did my research and found nothing, not one program or a bill, that would help women and victims of crime more broadly. Worse still, in 2017, your government even voted unanimously to stop the position of Federal Ombudsman for Victims of Crime from being made equal to the position of Correctional Investigator.

Senator Gold, could you name the Criminal Code provisions that the government has amended in the past seven years to protect women and victims of crime?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): The reforms that this government has made to the Criminal Code since taking office were designed to modernize it and to remove parts that conflict with our fundamental values, including equity among different groups. We have other bills before us that will collectively make the system better for everyone, including women who are victims of crime.

Senator Boisvenu: I'm unfortunately going to have to ask my question again. Senator Gold, I asked a simple question: Can you name one measure the government has taken since 2015 to protect women in Canada from being murdered? Just name one thing.

Senator Gold: Thank you for the question, senator. I will make inquiries and get back to you soon.

[English]

NATIONAL DEFENCE

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Hon. Yonah Martin (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, my question is for the government leader in the Senate. General Wayne Eyre, the Chief of the Defence Staff, recently said the cost of living and challenges in finding affordable accommodations are the top issues he is hearing from Canadian Forces members around the country. The lack of available housing in British Columbia has gotten so bad that last month Royal Canadian Air Force members at CFB Comox on Vancouver Island were told to consider contacting Habitat for Humanity if they were having significant difficulty finding adequate housing.

Leader, Habitat for Humanity has helped thousands of Canadian families in need, but it's the Government of Canada's responsibility to support our military families. Why were they referred to a charity to find housing?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for your question, senator. The question of housing affordability is a serious one. The government is engaged in trying to do its part, along with other governments, organizations and the private sector, to increase the supply and affordability of housing. That is why, in Budget 2022, there were

a number of initiatives the government introduced to increase housing supply and to support Canadians. I have listed them in the chamber.

• (1450)

With regard to your question, it is unfortunate not only for members of the Armed Forces, but for others who have difficulty. I think it's totally responsible and appropriate, if there is no other immediate response, to direct to those organizations who, through their good works and beneficence, are there to help Canadians through these difficult times.

Senator Martin: With respect to the shortage of military housing available to Canadian Forces members, General Eyre recently stated:

... we're somewhere in the neighbourhood of 4,000 to 6,000 units short on our bases, which is also accentuating the housing problem.

Leader, your government says it will spend \$55 million on residential housing for Canadian Armed Forces members this fiscal year. Committing funding is one thing, but getting shovels into the ground is another. How many new homes for military families will this funding support, and when are they expected to be built?

Senator Gold: That's a fair question, senator. I don't know the answer, but I'll certainly make inquiries.

[Translation]

EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

CHILD LABOUR

Hon. Julie Miville-Dechéne: My question is for Senator Gold. On Sunday, June 12, Canada will mark World Day Against Child Labour. You would expect Canada to be a leader in this area, but in the last few months, several media reports, coming out of Quebec in particular, have revealed alarming statistics on minors as young as 11 working.

An article published today in *Le Monde* explains that there is no minimum working age in Quebec. I know, of course, that these rules are under provincial jurisdiction, but could you tell me if the Government of Canada has had any discussions with the provinces, including Quebec, about this alarming situation?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for the question. As you said, this falls under provincial jurisdiction. That said, the government is in constant discussion with the provinces and territories on many issues and would like to reiterate that it supports workers.

Senator Miville-Dechéne: I didn't quite understand the last part of your answer, but I will expand on my question. There is every indication that the marked increase in child labour is the result of the labour shortage affecting various economic sectors in Quebec and elsewhere. As the article in *Le Monde* pointed out,

we don't want to "... see young Quebecers sacrificed on the altar of economic necessity." I'm sure you agree with that sentiment, Senator Gold.

Can you tell me what the Government of Canada is considering doing to solve the problem of the dire labour shortage and prevent 14- and 15-year-olds from having to fill this void?

Senator Gold: Thank you for the question. The government has a plan for remedying the labour shortage by bringing talented workers to Canada and introducing \$10-a-day child care, which will make it possible for parents to return to work more quickly. The plan also includes support for training programs, internships and more jobs for youth, while keeping experienced workers in the job market and responding to the specific needs of emerging sectors. The government's action plan to remedy the labour shortage will allow businesses to prosper and take advantage of opportunities arising from our recovery.

I made a mistake with the last part of my answer to your previous question. I'm sorry about that. I meant to say that the government will support workers who want to remain in the labour market and those who want to return to it. I mixed up my answers, and I apologize.

[English]

TRANSPORT

COVID-19 PANDEMIC—TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS

Hon. Donald Neil Plett (Leader of the Opposition): Leader, you may remember that back in January WestJet, Air Canada and Pearson Airport in Toronto asked your government to remove mandatory PCR testing and quarantine for travellers. It took the NDP-Liberal government more than three months to follow through on this request.

On Monday, the Canadian Airports Council, representing over 100 airports, called for the removal of vaccine requirements for air passengers and aviation employees. Their statement read:

In order to support this industry's economic recovery and compete globally, Canada must align with the international community and join the list of over 50 countries that have already removed vaccine mandates and COVID protocols for travel.

Leader, summer travel has begun. Canadians can't wait another three months for your government to make the right decision. When will these mandates be removed?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for your question. As I have answered on many occasions, a number of measures have been removed. A number of measures have been introduced to alleviate the burdens of those seeking to enter or leave Canada, but the fact remains that the government continues to believe that some measures, including the ones that you mentioned, are necessary

to protect the health and safety of Canadians. We'll continue to monitor that situation, as they have been doing, and any changes will be announced when they are ready to be announced.

Senator Plett: Well, I would like to thank you for your answer, but I cannot.

Last week another industry group, the Canadian Travel & Tourism Roundtable, also asked the NDP-Liberal government to provide urgent relief at the border saying:

Canadians can attend concerts, go to sporting events, and gather in significant numbers; travel should no longer be singled out with unscientific and unnecessary COVID policies which many countries around the world have rightfully removed.

The situation at Pearson Airport is quickly becoming an international joke. I read this morning that the delays and long lineups at Pearson could continue until the end of August. All this government can do is blame passengers for the delays. Leader, how many more times does your government have to be asked to change your travel policies and drop your mandates before you actually listen?

Senator Gold: The government is listening. It continues to listen, and it continues to make decisions that it believes are in the best interests of Canadians.

It is important for honourable senators in this chamber and for Canadians to understand, first of all, that the government knows how frustrating it is for Canadians to be subjected to long lines and delays at airports. These are not unique to Canada. We are seeing long lines at Dublin Airport in Ireland, cancelled flights in the United States and Schiphol airport in Amsterdam. It doesn't mean it's acceptable, but it means that it is a problem that is not unique to Canada.

The government is taking many steps in order to alleviate the problem. It has now hired over 850 new screeners in airports across Canada. It's rapidly increasing staffing toward pre-pandemic levels. Canadians should be assured that the government is doing what it can to ensure that the travel season bounces back smoothly.

DELAYED ANSWERS TO ORAL QUESTIONS

(For text of Delayed Answers, see Appendix.)

[Translation]

POINT OF ORDER

SPEAKER'S RULING RESERVED

Hon. Julie Miville-Dechêne: I rise on a point of order. I noticed that, in his answer to my question, Senator Housakos mentioned confidential information from an in camera meeting of the Standing Senate Committee on Transport and Communications. I believe that's a breach of confidentiality, which is a serious breach in this place. I paid close attention to

his answers, and in my own question, I was very careful to say nothing about what happened during that meeting because it was in camera.

[English]

Hon. Donald Neil Plett (Leader of the Opposition): This is indeed the pot calling the kettle black. Senator Miville-Dechêne raised a question with Senator Housakos that entirely breached an in camera meeting. She inferred what had happened during an in camera meeting. She talked about the majority of votes: 12 to 8. Where did the 12 to 8 vote come from, other than from an in camera meeting? Indeed, Senator Housakos did refer to issues that had been discussed, but he answered a question that itself entirely breached the in camera meeting.

Senator Martin: Good point.

• (1500)

Hon. Frances Lankin: I want to contribute to this as a person who sat here and listened. I heard no reference to what went on in a meeting, in camera or otherwise. What I did hear was a question about when the committee would deal with it, and how the committee would respond to a motion that was duly passed by the majority in this chamber.

I'm not commenting on what the answer was. That will have to be examined on the record, but I certainly listened very carefully to the question and I heard no such breach of an in camera session.

[Translation]

Senator Miville-Dechêne: I'd like to clarify. I did say that the majority of the committee members wanted to begin the study right away. Let me remind you that I am deputy chair of the committee, so I do prior consultations from time to time to take the pulse. That had nothing to do with what happened in committee. That was not the result of the in camera vote.

[English]

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I will take the point of order matter under advisement.

[Translation]

SPEAKER'S RULING

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, on Thursday, June 2, Senator Plett rose on a point of order concerning various aspects of Question Period. I wish to thank him for having raised his concerns and seeking clarification. I have myself noted various concerns on this point.

The first issue raised pertained to the practice of asking questions to committee chairs. Rule 4-8(1)(c) states that questions can be asked of "a committee chair, on a matter relating to the activities of the committee". While there is considerable flexibility in questions, those asked of chairs must in some way relate to the committee's "activities". We can seek guidance in a ruling of November 13, 1980, which noted that

committee activities include “the specific things that are done by the committee, such as the holding of meetings, the election of a chairman, the calling of witnesses, the hiring of staff, advertising, and any other matter relating to the manner in which the committee conducts its proceedings.” This was reiterated in a ruling of March 20, 2007, where the Speaker added that “[g]eneral issues about planning and upcoming work are [also] included in the broad category of committee activities.”

On this matter, I would also remind honourable senators that questions cannot be asked of chairs of subcommittees. As explained in a ruling of September 29, 2010, this is “because the subcommittee reports to this house through the chair of the committee.” Any question pertaining to a subcommittee should therefore be directed to the chair of the committee in question.

The second issue raised pertained to the length of questions and answers. On this point, I would like to remind the Senate that rule 4-8(2) states that there shall be “no debate during Question Period, and only brief comments or explanatory remarks shall be allowed.” As explained on May 10, 2006:

The rationale for prohibiting debate during Question Period and for creating Delayed Answers is due, in part, to the limited time given to Question Period. The thirty minutes allotted for questions and answers is to promote the immediate exchange of information about the policies of the [g]overnment or the work of a committee.

In the interest of fairness, senators should thus keep their questions and answers brief. This will allow responses to be brief and will allow as many colleagues as possible to participate.

Senators have also taken to sometimes asking two, three, or even four questions at once. This practice circumvents the whole purpose of having a list of senators to participate in Question Period and leads to long and complex answers. I encourage colleagues to ask brief, focused and clear questions, and for answers to be similarly concise.

Before concluding, I would also repeat previous cautions about supplementary questions. These should relate to the main question. They are meant as an opportunity to request clarification, not to ask a completely different, unrelated question. If a senator wishes to ask a different question, their name should go back on the list for a new question.

Question Period in the Senate has traditionally been characterized by the respectful and useful exchange of information. I would encourage all senators to reflect on this and to continue to conduct themselves in a manner that serves all colleagues and the institution.

[English]

VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I wish to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of Gerald O’Brien, Q.C., accompanied by his wife, author and historian Patricia O’Brien. They are my guests.

On behalf of all honourable senators, I welcome you to the Senate of Canada.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

[Translation]

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ECONOMIC AND FISCAL UPDATE IMPLEMENTATION BILL, 2021

THIRD READING

Hon. Clément Gignac moved third reading of Bill C-8, An Act to implement certain provisions of the economic and fiscal update tabled in Parliament on December 14, 2021 and other measures.

He said: Honourable senators, I rise today as the sponsor of Bill C-8, An Act to implement certain provisions of the economic and fiscal update tabled in Parliament on December 14, 2021 and other measures.

Last December, while Canada was being hammered by the arrival of the new Omicron variant, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance saw fit to propose a range of new measures to help Canadians deal with the ongoing challenges posed by the global COVID-19 pandemic and to ensure the recovery of our economy. Those measures included financial aid to support small businesses, farmers, teachers, northern residents, seasonal workers and, of course, the provinces and territories.

Honourable senators, for the sake of efficiency, and since I already had the opportunity to do so when I rose in this chamber at second reading, I will spare you the detailed description of each of these measures.

[English]

However, you should know that the Senate National Finance Committee held several meetings to study Bill C-8 in detail and received more than 30 witnesses. Moreover, allow me to recognize the work accomplished by my fellow members of this committee under the leadership of our chair, Senator Mockler. I want to especially thank Senator Marshall as the critic of this bill for her insightful comments during our deliberations.

[Translation]

Honourable senators, most of the measures set out in the bill were unanimously supported by the committee members, but two measures were adopted on division: the new 1% tax on underused residential property owned by non-resident non-Canadians, which is set out in Part 2, and a measure regarding the procurement of rapid tests to meet the needs of the provinces and territories, which is set out in Part 6.

With regard to the funding of rapid tests, it is true that the procedure that was used by the government caused confusion, but I feel reassured by the Treasury Board Secretariat's assurances regarding the meticulous management of the allocated funds. As a result, my remarks will focus solely on Part 2 of the bill.

Part 2 of Bill C-8 enacts the underused housing tax act, which imposes a new annual tax of 1% on non-resident non-Canadian real estate owners. The government's objective is to try to curb real estate speculation, and I support that objective.

• (1510)

This measure is intended to ensure that non-resident foreign owners who use our housing stock to passively store their wealth pay their fair share of taxes in this country. However, while I can't claim to be a legal expert, I too am concerned about the constitutionality of this tax on residential property, given that the field of property taxation is traditionally under the purview of municipal governments.

Honourable senators, I asked the Minister of Finance, the Honourable Chrystia Freeland, directly about this very issue when she appeared before the Standing Senate Committee on National Finance on May 31. Here is her answer, and I quote:

I agree with you that it is very important to be careful about jurisdiction, and I want to assure you that our government has no intention of using this as a basis to interfere in provincial jurisdictions. That is why the tax only targets certain types of markets and properties that are of greatest concern to Canada's financial stability and to the affordability of housing, which is a very important economic issue for the entire country.

Honourable senators, at this point, I am taking the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance at her word, and I was reassured by her comments.

[English]

However, as a former municipal councillor and senator from Quebec — just like my honourable colleague Senator Forest who is the former president of the Union des municipalités du Québec — I intend to keep an eye on things to ensure that the federal government does not enter a field of taxation that has been reserved for municipalities.

Before concluding, I would like to address a concern raised earlier this week by my colleague Senator Duncan about the timing of tax returns being held up because the Canada Revenue Agency, or CRA, is awaiting the passage of this bill. Following my own inquiry, the Department of Finance told me that the CRA is ready to release the funds quickly following the Royal Assent of Bill C-8.

Having said that, Senator Duncan, I could not presume or speculate about the timing of the result or the vote to be held in this chamber.

[Senator Gignac]

[Translation]

In closing, let me once again thank all of my colleagues on the National Finance Committee for their thorough analysis and constructive criticism. I also thank Senator Gold's team for their support throughout this process. When the time comes, I urge you to support Bill C-8. Thank you. *Meegwetch.*

[English]

Hon. Elizabeth Marshall: Thank you, Senator Gignac, for your comments on Bill C-8. I'm the critic of Bill C-8, An Act to implement certain provisions of the economic and fiscal update tabled in Parliament on December 14, 2021 and other measures.

This bill received first reading in the other place on December 15, and, as my honourable colleague said, it received third reading on May 4 — it was over in the House of Commons for quite a while. It received first reading in the Senate on May 4, and we are presently in third reading.

Honourable senators, the fall fiscal update is usually delivered mid-year and is followed by an implementation bill. Last year, Bill C-14 implemented the provisions of the Fall Economic Statement 2020. This year, it is Bill C-8 implementing the provisions of the Economic and Fiscal Update 2021. I always refer to it as a mini-budget bill.

There are seven parts to Bill C-8. I spoke to each part of this bill during second reading, so today I will be more selective. I will discuss two parts of the bill that are of interest to me, and which I feel are of significance to all Canadians and people who are not Canadians and have homes within Canada. It is the most controversial part of Bill C-8.

Part 2 of the bill is the so-called underused housing tax act, and it's an act within Bill C-8. It should have been introduced as a stand-alone bill to be debated on its own and not included as part of the omnibus bill, Bill C-8. The other six parts of Bill C-8 are initiatives that cost money, while the underused housing tax is the only initiative within Bill C-8 with the objective of generating revenues. All the others are expenditure initiatives.

The underused housing tax act is quite complex and over 90 pages long. The government initially announced its intention to implement the tax in its Fall Economic Statement 2020. At the time, the government announced it was targeting the unproductive use of domestic housing owned by non-resident non-Canadians that removes those assets from the domestic housing supply. Budget 2021 then provided more details and proposed a national 1% tax on vacant or underused housing. It also announced a consultation process to provide stakeholders with an opportunity to comment on the parameters of the proposed tax. The consultation period ran last year from August 6 until December 2.

The primary objective of the underused housing tax has changed from using it as a vehicle to increase the supply of housing, as was announced in the Fall Economic Statement 2020, to using it as revenue generation. Generally speaking, the act proposes to impose an annual tax of 1% on the value of residential property located in Canada that is owned directly or indirectly by persons who are neither citizens nor permanent residents of Canada, unless the owner is able to claim one of the exemptions permitted under the act.

There are two key areas of the underused housing tax act which I would like to refer to. The first is the definition of excluded owners. These are the individuals or entities who are exempt from paying the tax, the most significant being an individual who is a Canadian citizen or resident. The second area outlines exemptions to the tax. In other words, if an individual or entity is not an excluded owner and therefore must pay the tax, they may qualify for an exemption. The act lists 18 exemptions. If an individual or entity is not an excluded owner but qualifies for 1 of the 18 exemptions listed within the act, they will not have to pay the tax.

Finance Canada officials indicated during the course of meetings that they were unsure of the impact of the underused housing tax because there is a lack of information on vacancy rates in the housing market. Budget 2021 estimated that the revenues over the next four years will be about \$700 million, and the Parliamentary Budget Officer estimates that the tax will raise about \$600 million over the next five years, with estimated revenues of \$130 million in this fiscal year. However, the Parliamentary Budget Officer stressed the uncertainty of some of the assumptions used to calculate the estimates, and Finance officials testifying at our National Finance Committee also expressed similar views.

Finance officials told us that there are 16.5 million residential units in Canada, and they estimate that 30,000 units will be subject to the tax based on data from Statistics Canada and the experience of the speculation and vacancy tax imposed by the Government of British Columbia. They were also unable to estimate the number of residential units that would become available as a result of this tax, which was the initial objective of the tax.

While the proposed act defines 18 exemptions to the tax, Finance officials told us that two new exemptions will come forward when the bill receives Royal Assent. In addition, the economic and fiscal update released last December indicates that another exemption will be brought forward. Specifically, that exemption said that the government plans to bring forward an exemption for vacation and/or recreational properties, which would apply to an owner's interest in a residential property for a calendar year if certain conditions are met.

• (1520)

As the government had identified this “additional” exemption when they released the Economic and Fiscal Update 2021, they should have included it in Bill C-8.

Since the government can easily change the exemptions outlined in the current bill, as they have indicated, the bill is also worded so that “excluded owners” can be amended. Of specific

concern to me is the ease with which the government can amend “excluded owners” so that Canadian citizens, residents or other categories will no longer be excluded.

At a recent meeting of the Senate Banking Committee, the Superintendent of Financial Institutions told the committee that about 250,000 households are created every year in Canada, compared to approximately 200,000 to 210,000 housing completions every year, so there is a mismatch between supply and demand. It remains to be seen whether the 1% unused housing tax will result in more houses being available to address the shortfall.

Stephen Poloz, former governor of the Bank of Canada, told the Banking Committee that municipal regulations were to blame for the shortage of available housing. Specifically, government rules are what stand in the way of the private sector solving many of our problems.

The underused housing tax is also causing concern for Canadian homeowners. A recent report raised the issue of the implementation of an annual deferrable, progressive surtax on home values starting at \$1 million. Despite the assurances of the Minister of Housing that the government is not looking at charging capital gains or any surtaxes on primary residences, homeowners were concerned to learn through media reports that the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, or CMHC, is tracking millions of mortgage holders to identify homeowners with more than one property — raising the possibility that the unused housing tax may, in the future, be extended to secondary residences owned by Canadians, such as summer cottages.

This morning I saw another article that referred to the possibility of a home equity tax being implemented. It seems that despite the assurances of the government to the contrary, there continues to be evidence that the government will continue its foray into the taxing of homes.

Another concern I have is that there has been no assessment on other impacts of the housing tax act. For example, what would happen if our American neighbours implemented the same type of legislation? If the United States were to adopt reciprocal legislation or legislation with a mirror effect, it would mean that many Canadians would be assessed a reciprocal tax, which would impact a significant number of us.

Concern has also been expressed over the federal government's intrusion into the area of property taxes, which has traditionally been the major source of revenue for municipalities. This is seen as a dangerous and regrettable precedent, especially since municipalities were not specifically consulted during the consultation period.

The Standing Senate Committee on National Finance received from the Union of Quebec Municipalities a copy of a letter that it had written to the Minister of Finance regarding Bill C-8. They are opposed to the annual 1% tax on underused housing because of the government's foray into the jurisdiction of property taxes, citing it as an “unfortunate precedent” since property taxes account for a significant source of revenue for Quebec municipalities.

The other part of the bill that concerns me is Part 6 — specifically, clause 46 — which authorizes the Minister of Health to make payments of up to \$1.7 billion out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund for the purpose of covering any expenses incurred on or after April 1, 2021, in relation to COVID-19 tests. As a result of an amendment proposed by the Finance Committee of the House of Commons and accepted by the House, Bill C-8 now includes an accountability clause that requires the minister to report every three months on the total amount paid under the act, the number of tests purchased and how they were distributed.

While Bill C-8 is requesting \$1.7 billion relating to COVID-19 tests, two other bills have provided money for COVID-19 tests. I have mentioned this before.

Bill C-10 provided \$2.5 billion for COVID tests, and the appropriation bill for Supplementary Estimates (C) last year provided \$4 billion. We were told that \$4 billion was actually spent.

In a recent report, the Parliamentary Budget Officer said that the \$4 billion provided by the appropriation bill for Supplementary Estimates (C) is a duplication of the funding being requested through Bill C-8.

This raises the question: Why is the government requesting money for the same initiative twice? When Parliament approves the same funding twice, an extra \$4 billion will be available to be spent on some other unknown project.

Officials have indicated that the \$2.5 billion approved by Bill C-10 has been frozen by Treasury Board. In addition, all but \$6 million of the \$1.7 billion in this bill has been frozen. It will be interesting to track this \$1.7 billion to determine whether it remains frozen and unspent in this fiscal year.

The Standing Senate Committee on National Finance, in its report on Supplementary Estimates (C), expressed concern over the duplicate budgeting of this initiative. Specifically, the committee said that the government should end duplicate funding requests, as it lacks transparency.

I will conclude my speech with comments on the public debt, because debt is funding the costs of Bill C-8. Finance officials said that the cost of implementing the fall Economic and Fiscal Update 2021 will be \$2 billion. Most of this \$2 billion will be spent by the end of this fiscal year.

As we all know, government revenues are not sufficient to cover all the costs of government spending, including the \$2 billion in Bill C-8.

The most recent Public Accounts for the 2020-21 fiscal year — which we didn't receive until December, just before Christmas — indicate that the public debt charges were \$20 billion for that year. It is important to know that this is not just interest on unmatured debt. The interest on unmatured debt was actually \$14 billion of the \$20 billion. Interest related to pensions and other employee and veteran future benefits was \$5 billion. The remaining \$1 billion was for a variety of other interest expenses and the amortization of premiums and discounts.

Budget 2021 forecasted public debt charges to increase over the next several years from \$20 billion in 2020-21 to \$26.9 billion this year. So the concern I have is the understanding of the cost of the debt, because it is not just interest costs.

As we all know, the Bank of Canada purchased over \$400 billion of government bonds during the pandemic, most of which still remain on the books of the Bank of Canada. I think this is now down to about \$397 billion.

In 2021, the Government of Canada incurred net losses of \$19 billion relating to the Bank of Canada's purchase of Government of Canada bonds on the secondary market. This \$19-billion loss is recorded as negative revenue on the government's books. Negative revenue is actually an expense. The \$19 billion is an expense related to the Government of Canada's debt. The cost of the public debt is not just the \$20 billion recorded as "debt servicing charges;" it also includes the \$19-billion loss incurred by the Bank of Canada.

By reporting this \$19-billion loss as negative interest income rather than what it is — namely, an additional cost of servicing the public debt in 2021 — the government is not reporting the actual cost of servicing the public debt in 2021.

When Treasury Board officials appeared at the National Finance Committee earlier this week, I asked them about this issue — one of great concern to me from the perspective of transparency. They gave an initial response but said they would follow up in writing. I will be interested to see what they say.

An additional concern was raised by the Governor of the Bank of Canada at a recent meeting of the Banking Committee. Governor Macklem told us that if the Bank of Canada sold off Government of Canada bonds currently on its books, the bank would incur a loss of \$20 billion. This \$20-billion loss would be covered by the Government of Canada.

I will have additional comments on this issue next week, when I speak to the appropriation bills and the budget bill.

In closing, I wish to thank my colleagues on the Senate Finance Committee — the chair, Senator Mockler; the deputy chair, Senator Forest; and the members of the steering committee. I thank all members of the committee for their excellent questions during our meetings. I also extend my appreciation to our clerk and analysts, as their support ensures that our meetings run smoothly and remain productive. Thank you.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

• (1530)

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

Some Hon. Senators: Question.

Some Hon. Senators: No.

The Hon. the Speaker pro tempore: All those in the chamber in favour of the motion will please say “yea.”

Some Hon. Senators: Yea.

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

Some Hon. Senators: Nay.

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

And two honourable senators having risen:

The Hon. the Speaker pro tempore: I see two senators rising, calling for a standing vote.

Do we have agreement on a bell?

Senator Seidman: Yes, we do, Your Honour. One hour.

The Hon. the Speaker pro tempore: The vote will take place at 4:30 p.m. Call in the senators.

• (1630)

Motion agreed to and bill read third time and passed on the following division:

YEAS THE HONOURABLE SENATORS

Anderson	Gignac
Audette	Gold
Bellemare	Greene
Black	Hartling
Boehm	Klyne
Bovey	Kutcher
Busson	LaBoucane-Benson
Campbell	Lankin
Christmas	Loffreda
Clement	Lovelace Nicholas
Cormier	Marwah
Coyle	McCallum
Dagenais	Mégie
Dalphond	Miville-Dechêne
Dasko	Moncion
Dawson	Pate
Deacon (<i>Nova Scotia</i>)	Petitclerc
Deacon (<i>Ontario</i>)	Quinn
Dean	Ravalia
Downe	Ringette
Duncan	Saint-Germain

Dupuis
Forest
Francis
Gagné
Gerba

Sorensen
Tannas
Verner
Yussuff—51

NAYS THE HONOURABLE SENATORS

Ataullahjan
Batters
Boisvenu
Housakos
MacDonald
Marshall
Mockler

Oh
Plett
Richards
Seidman
Smith
Wells—13

ABSTENTIONS THE HONOURABLE SENATORS

Nil

• (1640)

[*Translation*]

BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION BILL, 2022, NO. 1

FIRST READING

The Hon. the Speaker informed the Senate that a message had been received from the House of Commons with Bill C-19, An Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on April 7, 2022 and other measures.

(Bill read first time.)

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

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

[*English*]

CHEMICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION IMPLEMENTATION ACT

BILL TO AMEND—SECOND READING—DEBATE ADJOURNED

Hon. Mary Coyle moved second reading of Bill S-9, An Act to amend the Chemical Weapons Convention Implementation Act.

She said: Honourable senators, I am pleased to introduce you to Bill S-9, An Act to amend the Chemical Weapons Convention Implementation Act.

I am speaking to you today from Mi'kma'ki, the unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq people.

Colleagues, some of you will recall that I had previously sponsored Bill S-2, an identical bill which was first introduced in the Senate on October 27, 2020. Senator Ataullahjan was the critic. Through its readings and referral to the Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade, the bill was thoroughly reviewed, and no objections were raised. The bill passed at third reading in December 2020. It was introduced in the House of Commons on February 25, 2021, but died on the Order Paper because of the election later that year.

Colleagues, Bill S-9 is an important bill, a bill with a connection to a long and disquieting international and domestic history, and a bill with enduring relevance in our ever-shifting world order.

Ahmet Üzümcü, past Director-General of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, said:

We did not reach the heights of our modern civilization by technology alone. We were only able to do so because of our commitment to shared norms and values such as equality, justice and human dignity for all.

Bill S-9 is a simple but crucial bill. Bill S-9 essentially amends Canada's Chemical Weapons Convention Implementation Act in order to clearly align that act with the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on their Destruction, otherwise known as the Chemical Weapons Convention, or CWC.

This is accomplished by amending our act to remove the old list of prohibited chemicals appended to our act and making it clear that the correct, up-to-date list of prohibited chemicals is the one maintained by the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, which is easily accessible on their public website.

This work on the prohibition of chemical weapons is part of Canada's overall disarmament effort. Chemical weapons are labelled as weapons of mass destruction, along with nuclear and biological weapons.

Let's step back for a minute or two to look at what led us to the convention on chemical weapons in the first place.

Throughout history, people have discovered new and terrible ways to harm and kill one another, and the use of chemical weapons represents a particularly vicious and cruel means of warfare. Chemical weapons involve a toxic chemical used to incapacitate, injure or kill its targets. In ancient times, this involved putting poison on arrows or creating clouds of blinding or choking gas.

Colleagues, it was during the First World War that our Canadian soldiers had their first encounter with poison gas at the Battle of Ypres on April 22, 1915. Released from large steel

cylinders, a cloud of chlorine six kilometres across and one kilometre deep blew onto Canadian and French lines. Heavier than air, chlorine filled the trenches as it moved. Though our Canadians held the line, over 6,000 were injured, and several hundred died.

As the war progressed, gas masks were eventually employed, but deadlier gases such as phosgene and mustard gas were used. Mustard gas burns any exposed skin, and it persisted in the mud causing grave injuries even days later. It also injured doctors and nurses who came into contact with it on soldiers' clothing.

It is important to note, colleagues, that Canada and our Allies were not just victims of chemical weapons. We were not innocent, as we too relied heavily on chemical weapons, especially during the final 100 days of that war. All told, chemical weapons injured over 1.2 million people during World War I, and 90,000 people died.

The use of chemical weapons in the interwar period and World War II was, thankfully, much smaller in scope. While not widely deployed, development and testing of increasingly horrific chemical weapons continued on all sides. By the end of that war, toxic stockpiles of these weapons had grown significantly and continued to grow during the Cold War years.

Canada was a major centre for chemical and biological weapons development and testing for the Allies. Human experimentation was carried out during World War II, and CFB Suffield in Alberta became the leading research facility.

Following both world wars, Canadian military forces returning home were directed to dump millions of tonnes of unexploded ordnance into the Atlantic Ocean off ports in Nova Scotia. Some were known to be chemical weapons. The 1972 London Convention prohibited further marine dumping of unexploded ordnance.

Beyond the two world wars, chemical weapons have been used throughout the world at various times.

In 1845, during the French conquest of Algeria, French troops forced more than 1,000 members of a Berber group into a cave and then used smoke to kill them.

In 1935 and 1936, Benito Mussolini dropped mustard gas bombs on Ethiopia to destroy the army of Emperor Haile Selassie.

Between 1961 and 1971, during the Vietnam War, the United States used napalm and the herbicide Agent Orange.

From 1963 to 1967, Egypt used mustard gas and a nerve agent in Yemen to support a coup d'état against the Yemeni monarchy.

In the 1980s, Iraq used chemical weapons, such as tabun, against Iran and its own Kurdish minority.

Kim Jong-nam, half-brother of North Korean leader Kim Jong-un, was assassinated with the nerve agent VX at the Kuala Lumpur International Airport in 2017.

Chemical weapons have been used in eight confirmed attacks by the Assad regime in Syria, targeting and killing several hundred civilians, and by Daesh in both Syria and Iraq.

And of course, colleagues, front of mind at this time is the threat of chemical weapons use by Russia in Ukraine. Canada is particularly concerned about the possibility that Russia will use chemical weapons in Eastern Ukraine in a “false flag” attack, blaming Ukrainian forces and using the incident as further justification for their invasion. Both sides have made allegations against the other, but no formal requests for investigation by the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons have been made as of this time.

Colleagues, Canada has played a very important role in the creation of the Chemical Weapons Convention we are discussing here today.

Some of the earliest efforts to govern how nations behaved during times of war tried to address chemical warfare. The Hague Convention of 1899 prohibited the use of poisons in war and forbade the use of projectile weapons whose sole purpose was to spread asphyxiating gas. We know that major powers who ratified this convention ended up building massive arsenals of chemical warfare agents and then using them in World War I.

After that war, the Geneva Protocol of 1925 stated:

Whereas the use in war of asphyxiating, poisonous or other gases, and of all analogous liquids, materials or devices, has been justly condemned by the general opinion of the civilized world; . . .

It goes on to declare their prohibition as part of international law. Still, chemical weapons continue to be produced and stockpiled.

At the 1980 United Nations Conference on Disarmament, negotiations began that would eventually lead to the Chemical Weapons Convention.

On January 13, 1993, 13 years later, the convention opened for signatures. On April 29, 1997, the convention, which is the subject of Bill S-9, came into force. Canada was one of the first countries to sign on to it in 1993. We frequently serve on the Executive Council of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, the body established to implement that convention. In fact, on May 12 of this year, Canada began a new two-year term on the Executive Council.

• (1650)

The convention, which has 193 states parties, seeks to eliminate an entire group of weapons of mass destruction by banning the development, production, acquisition, stockpiling, retention, transfer or use of chemical weapons. It also prohibits any states party from using chemical weapons under any circumstances, from engaging in military preparations to use them and from transferring or enabling another country to develop them.

The convention also affirms that states have the right to work with chemicals for peaceful purposes, and that the prohibition should not unnecessarily hamper legitimate work in chemistry. The convention was far more comprehensive than its predecessor, the Geneva Protocol, which banned the use but not the possession of chemical weapons.

Today, 98% of the world’s population falls under the protection of this convention. When the convention entered into force, five states parties entered as possessors of chemical weapons. These were the United States, Russia, India, Albania and one other state that remains anonymous. Three more such countries joined later: Libya in 2004, Iraq in 2009 and Syria, interestingly, in 2013. Finally, Japan, though not a possessor state in the same way as the others, remains responsible for the weapons it abandoned in China at the end of World War II.

Under the supervision of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, these states parties have undertaken to destroy their chemical weapons stockpiles. Of the 72,304 tonnes of chemical weapons declared to the organization, 71,029 have been destroyed. This represents over 98.3% of the world’s declared chemical weapons stockpiles.

The word “declared” is an important one here, and I will return to this point later on.

A list of the most common toxic chemicals and their precursors, or those ingredients used to make them, form an important part of the Chemical Weapons Convention. This has had no previous updates until very recently.

The list is divided into three schedules. Schedule 1 chemicals have only one purpose, and that is to maim and kill. Any chemical on this list is unequivocally considered a chemical weapon. Their use is prohibited in all cases, except for limited activities related to defence against chemical weapons.

Schedules 2 and 3 chemicals have increasingly common uses in industry, therefore they are subject to fewer restrictions. Despite the existence of these schedules, any chemical can be considered a chemical weapon if it is used in a way that goes against the convention, as was the case in Syria when chlorine was used against its citizens.

Of course, the destruction of chemical weapons is not enough. Constant monitoring in order to ensure that the re-emergence of chemical weapons does not occur is absolutely vital.

The Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons inspects and verifies that facilities meant to produce chemicals for peaceful purposes, such as for commercial and industrial use, are not being misused to manufacture chemical weapons.

Each states party to the Chemical Weapons Convention must create a national authority which serves as that country’s contact point for the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. Chemical plants in each country declare their activities to their national authority, which then passes that information on to the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. The organization then decides which plant sites to visit and inspect based on those declarations.

The Chemical Weapons Convention Implementation Act, as the name suggests, is the implementing legislation for the Chemical Weapons Convention here in Canada. It criminalizes the possession and use of chemical weapons, and it creates the Canadian National Authority, which is housed in Global Affairs Canada.

The act and its regulations compel Canadian entities involved in the production or handling of chemicals to make declarations to the Canadian National Authority, compels them to accept inspections by the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons in certain circumstances and requires that facilities handling highly toxic Schedule 1 chemicals obtain a licence to do so from the national authority. About 140 entities report to the Canadian National Authority, of which 31 are subject to inspection by the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. With this act, Canada is fully in line with the provisions of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

Colleagues, despite the remarkable achievements of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, recent developments internationally have taught us that this critical work is far from done. As I mentioned earlier, incredible progress has been made towards the destruction of all declared stockpiles of chemical weapons, “declared” being the keyword here. Unfortunately, it is the undeclared chemical weapons programs that remain a threat to humankind today. The attacks with chlorine and with sarin gas perpetrated by the Assad regime in Syria have shown the world what can happen when chemical weapons go undeclared.

On March 4, 2018, we witnessed yet another violation of the Chemical Weapons Convention. If this incident weren’t so tragic, one would think it was a spy plot twist straight out of a Hollywood movie. It had everything you would find in a Cold War-era film: a former spy, Russian operatives and a fake Nina Ricci perfume bottle at the centre of it all. Sergei Skripal and his daughter Yulia had been poisoned in Salisbury, England, with a chemical weapon referred to as a Novichok. Developed by the Soviet Union, Novichoks, which in Russian means newcomers or newbies, are a class of extremely toxic nerve agents that persist in the environment and are very difficult to detect. Until recently, they were not listed in the convention and were not subject to verification and declaration by the organization for the prohibition of these weapons, though their use to inflict harm has always been a violation of the convention.

This horrifying attack left Sergei and Yulia Skripal and police Detective Sergeant Nick Bailey in the hospital for months.

The weapon itself, which was delivered by a custom-made perfume bottle found in nearby Amesbury, contained enough Novichok to kill thousands of people. Unfortunately, it was found by innocent passerby Mr. Charlie Rowley, who gave it to his girlfriend, Ms. Dawn Sturgess. Both were exposed to this chemical agent, which had been discarded after use on the Skripal family. Ms. Sturgess lost her life due to her exposure. She was 44 years old when she passed away, leaving behind an 11-year-old daughter.

Canada and its allies concluded that it was highly likely that the Russian government was responsible for the attack. The Novichok attack in Salisbury highlighted the fact that, despite the

completed destruction of Russia’s declared chemical weapons, the Russian Federation had retained some capacity to produce and use Novichok-type chemical weapons.

Canada immediately condemned the act. Four Russian diplomats were expelled. There was a collective response taken by several allies including the United Kingdom and the United States. It was decided to take further action and criminalize the possession of Novichoks. This is where the need for Bill S-9 comes in.

Honourable senators, Canada was one of the leaders in efforts to add Novichoks to the schedules of the Chemical Weapons Convention, along with other close allies the United States and the Netherlands. A total of four new categories of chemicals were officially added to Schedule 1 of the convention in November 2019. The decision to add these chemicals to the schedules came into force on June 7, 2020. Unfortunately, this development was not able to prevent the attack on Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny, in which a Novichok agent had again been used.

As part of Bill S-9, the Government of Canada has decided that the best way to make our Chemical Weapons Convention Implementation Act up to date and render it future-proof is to remove the now-out-of-date schedule from the act itself.

Currently, this schedule to the act contains three sections. The first is a list of definitions found in Article II of the Chemical Weapons Convention. The second is the current text of Schedules 1, 2 and 3 from the Annex on Chemicals. The third is a list of definitions from Part I of the Chemical Weapons Convention Verification Annex.

Bill S-9, An Act to amend the Chemical Weapons Convention Implementation Act, repeals the schedule in its entirety. It also amends the definition of “convention” under subsection 2(1) and deletes subsection 2(3) entirely. These last two amendments remove references to the now-repealed schedule. Repealing this schedule from the act will not impact how the act applies to Canadians. In no way does it change Canada’s obligations or commitments under the Chemical Weapons Convention. It imposes no new burdens upon Canada, Canadian citizens or Canadian industry. It merely prevents confusion. Once the schedule is removed, it will be obvious to all Canadians that the correct list of chemicals is the one maintained by the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons on its website.

• (1700)

Again, colleagues, this is simply an act of good governance in order to ensure that the legislation and compliance requirements are as clear as possible to all Canadians.

Canada has no chemical weapons or chemical weapons production facilities, but we do produce and retain chemicals for domestic riot-control purposes and for protective research, development and testing. Canada was one of the first countries to sign on to the convention in 1993, as I said, and continues to be a leader in disarmament work.

Still, we know that there is more work to be done, and there is a need for constant vigilance in monitoring chemical activities. The Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons has experienced cyberoperations against its network, and a coordinated disinformation campaign has attempted to undermine states parties' confidence in the OPCW. Does that sound familiar?

Canada continues to be at the forefront of efforts to reinforce the Chemical Weapons Convention and support the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. We recently contributed \$2.56 million to support the enhancement of cyber and physical security at OPCW facilities, capacity-building assistance in Africa and support for chemical forensics through chemical profiling that will be used to assess the origin of chemicals used in chemical weapons attacks.

Colleagues, the global commitment to prohibit chemical weapons and the organization mandated to uphold that commitment require our unflagging support now more than ever. Ensuring that Canada's implementing legislation is clear and current is an important step.

Unfortunately, colleagues, the threat of a resurgence in chemical weapons use is real. Canada will continue to play a key role in upholding the tools of the rules-based international system, including the Chemical Weapons Convention, in order to fight flagrant violations of international law and global norms.

Honourable colleagues, I hope you will join me in supporting Bill S-9, which underscores Canada's commitment to the Chemical Weapons Convention and the restoration of the norm against the use of these heinous weapons. Colleagues, let's send Bill S-9 to committee for further study. We passed an identical bill 18 months ago. While it is our duty to study this bill, hopefully we can proceed with haste.

Thank you, *wela'liq*.

(On motion of Senator Wells, debate adjourned.)

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION ADOPTED

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

That, when the Senate next adjourns after the adoption of this motion, it do stand adjourned until Tuesday, June 14, 2022, at 2 p.m.

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to.)

CITIZENSHIP ACT IMMIGRATION AND REFUGEE PROTECTION ACT

BILL TO AMEND—SECOND READING—DEBATE CONTINUED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Jaffer, seconded by the Honourable Senator Cormier, for the second reading of Bill S-235, An Act to amend the Citizenship Act and the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act.

Hon. Kim Pate: Honourable senators, I rise in support of Bill S-235. Thank you, Senator Jaffer, for introducing this bill to correct an injustice affecting some of the most powerless, marginalized and ignored children and youth in this country.

The Canadian state has assumed the role of parent for tens of thousands of children by taking them into "care" and relegating them to the control of child welfare agencies and foster care. By assuming the role of parent, federal, provincial and territorial governments assume responsibility to provide for the care, guidance, counselling and services generally expected of parents. However, particularly when it comes to Indigenous, immigrant, refugee and racialized children and youth, too often the state has neglected such duties and failed to keep safe the children they seize.

Bill S-235 seeks to redress just one such failure; namely, Canada's inattention when it comes to ensuring that children aging out of care, although not born in Canada, have citizenship. These children are Canadian; many have spent nearly all their lives in Canada, have grown up here and have planned their futures here. Most know no home except Canada, but because of their state parent's neglect or disregard, they can be prevented from asserting their rights as Canadians and are not protected from the risk of removal from Canada.

Some of you will recall the circumstances of Abdoul and Fatouma Abdi that were outlined by Senator Jaffer earlier this week. The siblings arrived in Canada as refugees and were apprehended by child welfare services after being removed from school in response to racist bullying. While in state care, the siblings experienced horrific abuse, instability in housing and, despite his school absence being the reason Abdoul was apprehended, Canada only provided him with a Grade 6 education.

Abdoul was criminalized as part of a pattern of marginalizing neglect and harm that the Ontario Human Rights Commission has coined the "child-welfare-to-prison pipeline." At age 24, due to his record, he was threatened with deportation to a country that

was embroiled in conflict and with which he had no connections. Why? Because his parent, his legal guardian — the government — failed to ensure he had citizenship.

In 2018, Fatouma Abdi asked Prime Minister Trudeau the question that we might all consider as we debate this bill, “. . . if it was your son, would you do anything to stop this?”

Bill S-235 aims to prevent the travesty of Canada failing the children in care and then — instead of taking responsibility for the role that Canada has played in their marginalization, victimization, criminalization and/or institutionalization — not only telling them that they do not belong in this country but kicking them out of their home.

As “parents,” provincial and territorial governments too often fail to support — and, indeed, they neglect — those in their care. The treatment of children and youth in child welfare systems usually falls horrifically and unthinkable short of the care that parents — you, me and most others — strive to provide for our own children.

• (1710)

Being in the care of the state increases children’s risks of criminalization, so much so that child welfare services provide those leaving care with information about what to do if or when they are arrested. As one former child in care asked, “Can you imagine giving your kids that kind of material before they leave your home?”

Can you imagine calling the police on your own children for being late, insolent or disobedient? It is not unusual for group or foster home providers — that is, those acting in the place of a parent — to call the police in response to incidents such as missed curfews, verbal challenges, property damage or failure to adhere to house or conduct rules. In my own work with youth, I have seen too many children charged with crimes for resisting being unlawfully restrained, for running away from abusive situations, for challenging abusive caregivers or damaging furniture or other property. In addition, historically, many of the beds in state-contracted group homes operated both as child welfare beds and open custody prison beds for young people.

Children who are poor, Indigenous, Black or racialized have disproportionately been taken, and often forced, into care in ways that reflect and intensify intergenerational effects of poverty and inequality, as well as the legacies of racism and colonialism.

For former youth in care who lack citizenship, there is a devastating additional cost to being abandoned to the criminal legal system. They face the risk of being deported to countries they may not remember, where they may not speak the language, have no support or hope of a livelihood and from which their families may have originally fled because their lives were at risk. In some cases, the countries where they were born may no longer even exist, which renders them stateless.

In 2017, Senator Oh amended Bill C-6 such that non-parent guardians could apply for citizenship for children and to allow older children to be able to apply for citizenship themselves.

Moved by the circumstances faced by Fliss Cramman, which Senator Jaffer described in her speech, Senator Oh was trying to remedy the situation her case exposed. Allow me to refresh your memory regarding the sobering reality for Fliss. At age 33, Ms. Cramman, a mother of four and trained chef, had to fight from her hospital bed to prevent her deportation to the United Kingdom, where she had not lived since she was a young child.

The chief of surgery at Dartmouth General Hospital, where Ms. Cramman was shackled to a hospital bed by correctional authorities, advocated for her, explaining that she would arrive in England:

. . . in a jumpsuit, with no money, no phone, no contacts, no home, no food, in one of the world’s busiest airports. . . it would be a terrible place for someone with mental illness to show up with nothing and be homeless . . .

He described her threatened deportation as “un-Canadian” and “just simply wrong.”

How can we justify punishing marginalized folks for failing to navigate and understand the complexities of the immigration system on their own? Most, like Fliss Cramman, do not know they lack citizenship in the first place until it is too late for them to make the application for the citizenship to which they were entitled when the state seized them and assumed parental responsibility for their care and overall well-being.

While some provincial and territorial child welfare authorities have taken steps to invest in and build expertise around issues of citizenship, most have not. The result is a patchwork of unequal treatment. The children most in need of protection and support are not receiving it. Bill S-235 could fix this.

Courts are beginning to take note of the policy concerns related to the failure of child welfare authorities to obtain citizenship for children in their care. Bill S-235 provides a coherent policy response to those concerns.

Unrelenting advocacy and consequent last-minute interventions by the government averted the deportations of Fliss Cramman and Abdoul Abdi. Consider the gross inequities for those who lack such support. It is time to ensure that justice for children in care without citizenship status is the rule, not the exception.

A growing number of former youth in care are going to court to expose the blatant injustices in the current system that mean they face risk of deportation, lost educational and employment opportunities and loss of identity, community and belonging.

In Ontario, a multimillion-dollar class action lawsuit was launched against the province for failing to obtain citizenship for non-citizen Crown wards. Senator Jaffer told us about the

representative plaintiff in that case. Kiwayne Jones believed he was Canadian until, as an adult, he learned that although Ontario decided to be his parents, he was not in fact adopted as a Canadian.

The class action by Mr. Jones and the deportation defences of Abdoul Abdi and others are cemented by Canada's violations of their constitutional rights by the state's failure to secure their citizenship. Bill S-235 could redress such injustices and prevent future similar manifestations.

According to Article 20.1 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, Canada owes "A child temporarily or permanently deprived of his or her family environment. . . special protection and assistance . . ."

UNICEF underscores that this provision reflects:

. . . the duty all societies owe children — . . . if parents cannot meet their children's needs then the children have a moral claim on the rest of us. . . .

We all share the responsibility for redressing vulnerability, marginalization and intentional disregard for children in the care of the state without citizenship. That begins by recognizing them as Canadians, members of our communities and citizens. Let's show our acknowledgement of this collective responsibility by expressing gratitude to Senator Jaffer and supporting her Bill S-235.

Meegwetch, thank you.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

(On motion of Senator Wells, debate adjourned.)

CRIMINAL CODE CANADIAN VICTIMS BILL OF RIGHTS

BILL TO AMEND—SECOND READING—DEBATE CONTINUED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Boisvenu, seconded by the Honourable Senator Seidman, for the second reading of Bill S-238, An Act to amend the Criminal Code and the Canadian Victims Bill of Rights (information about the victim).

(On motion of Senator Duncan, debate adjourned.)

RADIOCOMMUNICATION ACT

BILL TO AMEND—SECOND READING—DEBATE CONTINUED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Patterson, seconded by the Honourable Senator Cormier, for the second reading of Bill S-242, An Act to amend the Radiocommunication Act.

Hon. Marty Klyne: Honourable senators, it's an honour to speak in support of Bill S-242, which has been put forward by Senator Patterson. This is an important piece of legislation, and I trust that this bill will receive the support it needs to become law both in this chamber and in the other place.

I note with interest the fact that for the past 20 years senators and members of Parliament from all parties, groups and caucuses have stood in Parliament and made clear the need for improved broadband internet service in rural and remote areas, and also in areas that are heavily populated by Indigenous peoples. Every Canadian should have an equal opportunity to benefit from the internet and its services, whether it's telemedicine or virtual health care, receiving social services, pursuing education or professional development or even replacing old legacy business systems with new applications.

• (1720)

Internet access allows for expanded participation in new market economies, driving economic transformation for Indigenous nations and other rural and remote communities. It's an issue that supersedes region, province, partisan affiliation and even the different levels of government. The calls have been strikingly similar, even though the politicians making the calls have otherwise had little in common. Frankly, it's a message that hasn't really changed over the ensuing decades. The need for improved broadband services in rural and remote areas remains high, and, in fact, it's a need that has only grown more and more acute with time.

I won't repeat the text of Senator Patterson's bill, but in simple terms this bill, if passed, would require entities that hold an internet spectrum licence, which is a licence to provide internet service within a prescribed geographic area, to offer internet services to at least 50% of the population in the underserved region that the licence covers, and do so within three years of the licence being issued. If the entity does not provide service to at least 50% of the population covered by the licence, then the licence would be reclaimed by the government and put back up for auction.

Under existing legislation, companies that hold internet spectrum licences are not legally required to use it, and many companies instead choose to simply hold on to their spectrum without using it to offer internet services to Canadians — many of whom are in need of the service or upgraded services. In the end, many of those companies will resell their spectrum, making millions in profits while having done nothing to provide improved broadband options in rural and remote communities. It's good for the business that sold the spectrum at a profit, but is a bad result for taxpayers and Canadians generally who tend to

pay more for broadband and have fewer service providers to choose from relative to people living in other developed countries.

Bill S-242 would help put a stop to the practice of private companies sitting on spectrum licences. The “use it or lose it” approach is long overdue, and it just makes sense. The federal government auctions off spectrum to private companies for one primary purpose — to provide broadband internet service options to Canadians in underserved markets. Unfortunately, when companies instead choose to sit on their spectrum, it does a real disservice to those people who live in areas with a limited population, or in areas where poverty and other challenges make connecting to the internet more difficult than in urban centres.

Private companies hoarding spectrum without using it make those challenges more difficult to overcome, and an ever-widening economic and prosperity gap between urban and rural and remote communities continues to exist. It’s time to change this behaviour, and that’s why I support this legislation.

Of course, spectrum, and the way it is allocated, is but one part of the challenge. I do not believe that Bill S-242 will solve all our problems when it comes to providing enhanced broadband service in rural areas. However, it will require internet service providers to offer better and more reliable service in more regions of the country, and that would be a significant improvement over the status quo. In fact, this status quo is not merely inconvenient for rural Canadians, but is costing the country in unrealized productivity and increased economic potential.

This past April, I rose during Question Period and asked Senator Gold about the enormous gap that exists between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples when it came to having access to 50/10 download and upload speed internet service.

While I greatly appreciate the work and funds that the Government of Canada has committed to closing this gap, and to closing the gap in rural and remote areas more broadly, the fact remains that we aren’t getting the job done. Broadband service in the North is notoriously spotty, and it’s the same in many rural portions of Western Canada, especially in Indigenous communities.

As a senator for Saskatchewan, I’m all too aware of the challenges facing Indigenous residents of my province who live outside of the major centres, Regina and Saskatoon. The stories I hear aren’t just anecdotes. In its 2020 Communications Monitoring Report, the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission, or CRTC, released statistics on the percentage of households on First Nations reserves that have access to broadband internet at the CRTC’s standard of 50/10 megabits per second download and upload speed. In Saskatchewan, the number of households on-reserve with access to that speed is just 1.7%. In Manitoba, the number is 2%. We must do better.

Again, a lack of action on improving broadband services is costly. A 2021 article in the *Edmonton Journal* noted that during the COVID-19 pandemic, some households in the Northwest Territories were paying upwards of \$2,000 a month in data overage charges. This at a time when being apart and working virtually was mandatory for many people. That’s not fair, nor is it sustainable. Poor infrastructure, limited competition and lax spectrum laws have all contributed to an unacceptable situation, especially for Indigenous peoples.

A key component of reconciliation is working together to ensure that First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples can share in the same economic opportunities that other Canadians currently enjoy. There is a growing digital gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada. If Indigenous peoples do not have fair and equitable access to broadband internet the gap will only grow, and that will have devastating economic consequences for one of the fastest growing demographics in our country.

We’re at risk of preventing an entire generation of Indigenous youth from reaching the level of economic opportunity they could otherwise strive to, and that’s something we need to fix. I believe that Bill S-242 is a first and important step in that direction.

The reality is that there is nothing more I can say on this topic that hasn’t already been said a hundred times over by politicians at all levels of government and from across the political spectrum. In fact, it’s one of the few things that partisans from all sides can agree on: Canadians need better access to broadband internet. Reforming the method by which the Government of Canada auctions off its spectrum licences and protects the integrity of the same would be a win for everyone, not to mention the need for a more robust usage of the Broadband Fund and good governance of the same.

Honourable senators, I’m tempted to conclude this speech by stating that now is the time to improve broadband internet service in this country. That wouldn’t be the truth. The truth is that the time to have done this was probably 20 or more years ago. Compared with other developed countries we’re way behind, and if Bill S-242 helps us get one small step closer towards closing the gap, then we need to support this legislation.

The internet isn’t just a tool that can be used by a small business to sell their goods across the world, nor is it just a valuable resource for schoolchildren doing their homework. It’s the way we connect with each other. We need to make access to broadband internet service as wide-reaching and as equitable as possible. That’s why I am in favour of this legislation.

Honourable senators, I’m very pleased to lend my support to Bill S-242, and I hope that my colleagues from all groups will do the same. Thank you.

The Hon. the Speaker: Senator Patterson, did you wish to speak?

Hon. Dennis Glen Patterson: No, I have spoken. Thank you, Your Honour. I was hoping the question could be called but I guess that was a vain hope.

(On motion of Senator Duncan, debate adjourned.)

• (1730)

[*Translation*]

ROYAL ASSENT

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

RIDEAU HALL

June 9, 2022

Mr. Speaker,

I have the honour to inform you that the Right Honourable Mary May Simon, Governor General of Canada, signified royal assent by written declaration to the bill listed in the

Schedule to this letter on the 9th day of June, 2022, at 5:09 p.m.

Yours sincerely,

Ian McCowan

Secretary to the Governor General and Herald Chancellor

The Honourable
The Speaker of the Senate
Ottawa

Bill Assented to Thursday, June 9, 2022:

An Act to implement certain provisions of the economic and fiscal update tabled in Parliament on December 14, 2021 and other measures (*Bill C-8, Chapter 5, 2022*)

(*At 5:32 p.m., the Senate was continued until Tuesday, June 14, 2022, at 2 p.m.*)

APPENDIX

DELAYED ANSWERS TO ORAL QUESTIONS

JUSTICE

OMBUDSMAN FOR VICTIMS OF CRIME

(Response to question raised by the Honourable Pierre-Hugues Boisvenu on December 7, 2021)

Department of Justice

The most recently appointed Federal Ombudsman for Victims of Crime concluded her three-year term on October 1, 2021. The process to fill the position is ongoing. The government appreciates the importance of appointing a new ombudsman given that the implementation of victims' rights and addressing ongoing and emerging victim issues remains a priority for our government.

While the position of the ombudsman is temporarily vacant, the Office of the Federal Ombudsman for Victims of Crime remains operational and accessible to victims of crime across Canada requesting their services.

The government appreciates all suggestions to strengthen our ongoing commitment to a justice system that keeps communities safe, treats victims with compassion and respect, protects the vulnerable and holds offenders to account.

PUBLIC SAFETY

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

(Response to question raised by the Honourable Pierre-Hugues Boisvenu on March 29, 2022)

Budget 2017 provided a historic investment of \$2.1 billion over nine years to launch Reaching Home: Canada's Homelessness Strategy in 2019. Since then, the Government

of Canada has provided an additional \$1.8 billion in emergency and incremental funding.

The goal of Reaching Home is to prevent and reduce homelessness by helping people attain and maintain stable housing, and providing support services, which includes navigating access to clinical, health and treatment services (including mental health and addictions support).

The government is also committed to increasing the availability of high-quality mental health services for all individuals in Canada. In 2017, the government invested \$5 billion over 10 years in targeted funding for provinces and territories to improve access to mental health and substance use services, and has continued investing in mental health services since then, including through Budgets 2021 and 2022.

VETERANS AFFAIRS

SUPPORT FOR VETERANS

(Response to question raised by the Honourable Rose-May Poirier on April 5, 2022)

Veterans have served our country courageously, and they deserve a place to call home. The 2021 Speech from the Throne committed to ending chronic homelessness, including among veterans.

Budget 2021 announced \$44.6 million over two years, beginning in 2022-23, for a pilot program aimed at reducing veteran homelessness through rent supplements and wraparound supports (for example, counselling, addiction treatment or help finding a job).

Budget 2022 proposed to move directly to the launch of a targeted program by investing \$62.2 million over three years, beginning in 2024-25.

Taken together, \$106.8 million over five years is available for the program. Further details will become available in the coming months.

This will build upon existing federal homelessness initiatives, notably Reaching Home: Canada's Homelessness Strategy. The program provides support and funding to communities across Canada to address homelessness, including veteran homelessness.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

DETENTION OF CANADIANS IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

(Response to question raised by the Honourable David M. Wells on April 28, 2022)

Global Affairs Canada (GAC)

The Government of Canada's first priority is always the safety and security of its citizens. Consular officials are

providing assistance and are in contact with the families of the Canadian citizens.

As the legal processes develop, Global Affairs Canada will continue to raise the case at every appropriate opportunity. The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs is also directly engaged on this file.

Due to privacy considerations, no further information can be disclosed.

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