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Thursday, October 6, 2022

The Honourable GEORGE J. FUREY,
Speaker

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THE SENATE

Thursday, October 6, 2022

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

Prayers.

SENATORS' STATEMENTS

HOCKEY CANADA

Hon. Éric Forest: Honourable senators, as you know, I devoted part of my career to hockey. I have always believed that it is a great developmental tool for our youth because it instills the values of responsibility, solidarity and respect.

In addition, hockey is an excellent way to develop pride and a sense of belonging in our communities. Like many Canadians, I am shocked that Hockey Canada has betrayed our youth and deliberately violated the values that should guide this Canadian organization.

Our hearts go out to the victims of sexual violence who have been doubly betrayed by Hockey Canada, which has failed to mentor its players and has been more willing to cover things up than hold perpetrators accountable. At the very least, Hockey Canada owes it to the victims to make sure that they clean house.

Over the past few months, the management team has failed to live up to Canadians' expectations. In their two public statements and two appearances before parliamentary committees, they have repeated half-truths about the use of the funds they manage and have been unapologetic. Hockey Canada's governance needs a fundamental change in culture.

Paying to prevent abusers from being held accountable, using minor hockey registration fees to buy silence, not being transparent with parliamentarians and Canadians, developing an action plan with public relations experts rather than sexual violence prevention experts, and blaming the media and politicians rather than acknowledging their own shortcomings is totally unacceptable.

However, it is reassuring to hear that Hockey Québec and the Ontario Hockey Federation will no longer transfer funds to the national organization, and that several major sponsors, such as Tim Hortons, TELUS, Canadian Tire and Scotiabank, have pulled their support. Hockey Québec says it no longer has "confidence in the ability of Hockey Canada to act effectively to change the culture of hockey with the structure in place."

I salute the Quebec and Ontario federations for their leadership, and I invite other members and sponsors to do their part. We need to pressure Hockey Canada to adopt an accountability and transparency framework. For the sake of the

victims of sexual assault and our young hockey players, we need to put an end to toxic management and restore confidence in our national sport and its governing body.

Thank you. *Meegwetch.*

[*English*]

VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I wish to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of Joe Blakeman, Reeve of Lac Ste. Anne, Alberta, and his spouse, Kristin Blakeman. They are the guests of the Honourable Senator LaBoucane-Benson.

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

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

THE LATE FREDERICK GEORGE FORD

Hon. Patricia Bovey: Honourable senators, you know how important the Arctic is to me and the many concerns I have about the interconnected issues Arctic inhabitants face: security, climate change, food security, health and culture, to name but a few. Inuit art and artists have been part of my life since my childhood, and my respect is huge for those who have heralded Inuit culture and life and for those who have expanded that awareness and knowledge into the South.

The North lost a quiet, impassioned and staunch voice and supporter this past August when Fred Ford passed away in Winnipeg. Born in St. Catharines, Ontario, in November 1949, Fred — after he completed high school and was backpacking through Europe — began his quest to know his roots. In December 1980, Fred moved his young family to Baker Lake, Nunavut, to learn more about his Inuit culture and family connections. He lived in Baker Lake until moving to Winnipeg in 2003. In Baker Lake, he managed the Iglu Hotel, served as executive director of the Kivilliq Inuit Association, opened the Qamanittuq Fine Arts Gallery, taught in the school and lectured at Arctic College.

Embracing all aspects of his culture while in the North, he continued to support it in Winnipeg. I met Fred soon after he moved to Winnipeg. I can attest to his substantial work for the Winnipeg Art Gallery and its collections — through hosting visiting Inuit artists, translating for them when needed and, as a board member, his tireless work towards the building and opening of Qaumajug, the gallery's new Inuit art centre.

Music was important to him, too. He served on the board of Camerata Nova, which is now called Dead of Winter, and assisted in inviting Inuit throat singers to this program.

Fred was a founding board member — in 2012 — as well as the president and board chair of the Manitoba Inuit Association. It was an honour for me to attend the very special opening of their new space in 2019, in which many aspects of Inuit culture were presented. Fred's pride in his culture and heritage was palpable, as was his love of sharing Inuit history and culture whenever he could. It was wonderful to see the dance in his face when he talked of what he loved most: his family, as well as Inuit art, artists and their creative expression.

I will miss his depth of knowledge and his dedication to this important part of Canada.

• (1410)

My condolences go to Gela, his children and beloved grandchildren. Rest in peace, dear friend.

Thank you.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I wish to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of former Irish senator and children's rights advocate Jillian van Turnhout and Mr. Ron Ensom, a child protection consultant. They are the guests of the Honourable Senator Kutcher.

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

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

CAPTAIN WILLIAM JACKMAN

Hon. Fabian Manning: Honourable senators, I am pleased to present Chapter 63 of "Telling Our Story."

Newfoundlanders and Labradorians are people of the sea. While we have reaped the bounties of the ocean that surrounds us for more than 500 years, our history is full of sad stories of lives lost to stormy seas, hurricane winds and treacherous, rocky coastlines. Today, I want to tell you a story of courage and bravery that had a happy ending and, in turn, produced one of our province's most famous heroes.

Captain William Jackman was born on May 20, 1837, in the community of Renew's on the southern shore. As a boy, he was taught the ways of the cod and seal fisheries by his father. At a young age, he became a sea captain and began commanding sealing vessels for the Bowring Brothers company of St. John's.

On October 9, 1867, while anchored at Spotted Islands in Labrador, Captain Jackman and a friend went for a walk along the shoreline, and as they approached a headland, Jackman noticed that the sealing vessel *Sea Clipper* had run aground on a reef about 600 feet from shore. The 30-year-old captain quickly realized that the ship was not going to last long in those conditions and that all souls on board — later counted at 27 — were facing certain death.

Captain Jackman wasted little time. He sent his companion for help and, without hesitation, pulled off his heavy clothes, plunged into the icy Labrador waters and swam towards the stricken ship.

Once aboard the *Sea Clipper*, Jackman took a man on his back and swam back to shore. By the time extra help arrived, Jackman had made 12 trips out and back to the vessel, and he had carried 12 fishermen to the safety of the land. After taking a rope and tying it around his waist, he dove into the water once again and made 15 more trips to the ship, bringing all 27 sailors to dry land. A short time later, the *Sea Clipper* was torn apart by the waves.

Following what many believe was one of the greatest feats of heroism ever recorded in the annals of marine history, Captain Jackman was awarded the prestigious silver medal by The Royal Humane Society in Britain in 1868.

Other notable recognition was granted as well, including the naming of the Captain William Jackman Memorial Hospital in Labrador City, the W. Jackman Canadian Coast Guard rescue vessel and the 1992 Canada Post Legendary Heroes stamp that honoured Captain William Jackman. His legacy continues to be honoured through poetry and music in our province today.

For nine years after his heroic deed, Captain Jackman continued to command ships and men. Sadly, the ordeal of 1867 had taken its toll, and on February 25, 1877, one of Newfoundland's greatest heroes passed away at the young age of 39.

As a sign of respect, on the day of his funeral all the businesses in St. John's closed their doors and all the flags in the province flew at half-mast as the hero from Renew's was laid to rest in the Belvedere Cemetery.

No other person better represents the determination and selflessness of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians like Captain William Jackman.

John F. Kennedy once said, "One person can make a difference, and everyone should try." Captain Jackman surely did.

Thank you.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

ONTARIO AGRICULTURE WEEK WORLD FOOD DAY

Hon. Robert Black: Honourable senators, I rise today to highlight Ontario Agriculture Week, which takes place from October 3 to October 9, 2022. Ontario Agriculture Week is dedicated to celebrating the abundance of food our farmers produce, the Ontarians the industry employs, the rural communities they support and the economic engine they fuel.

According to a recent edition of *Canadian Agriculture at a Glance*, Ontario represents the largest national share of farms and farm operators, and was the second-largest contributor to Canada's farm operating revenues. In fact, Ontario farmers

proudly grow and produce more than 200 different food commodities for markets right here at home, across Canada and worldwide.

While these are amazing statistics, the industry has experienced a great deal of hardship over the past few years in relation to unmet labour needs, issues accessing fertilizer and other important supplies as well as the transition to more sustainable operations. It is clear agriculture communities in Ontario and across the country need our support.

At this time, I would also like to acknowledge that World Food Day will take place just after Ontario Agriculture Week on October 16, 2022. This year's theme of leaving no one behind reflects the many compounding factors that have impacted global food security — from the pandemic to the many conflicts that are taking place in different parts of the world to the effects of climate change as well as rising prices — all of which have impacted the way many of us access food.

Let me be frank: Food security is not somebody else's issue. It is a concern that exists for many here in Canada and around the world, and it will take a collaborative, cross-sector effort to address.

With that being said, I am proud that Canadian farmers are known to be among those who produce some of the finest, safest and highest quality food that feeds not only our country, but countries around the world. I am confident that they will continue doing their utmost to ensure that nobody is left behind on this World Food Day and all year round.

At this time, I would like to acknowledge and thank the many farmers, producers and other agri-businesses who stepped up to support food banks and other services through donations of both food and funds, especially over the course of the pandemic during the last two years.

Honourable senators, I encourage all of you to meet with your local agricultural organizations and learn more about how we can support their efforts to continue feeding the world. From dairy, fruit, wineries and vegetable farms here in Ontario to the huge wheat fields and cattle ranches in Canada's Prairies and the many other farms and agri-businesses across the country, our farmers, producers and processors have something for everyone.

I know that we can all learn from them if we take the opportunity to do so.

Thank you. *Meegwetch.*

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

CANADA'S INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

Hon. Colin Deacon: Honourable senators, it's often said that knowledge is power. I don't agree — it's the application of knowledge that is powerful. The application of knowledge creates opportunities, jobs and prosperity. Those who master its application maintain robust growth in an increasingly complex world.

Why? Because increasingly complex products, systems and services are more difficult to imitate and deliver much greater customer value than alternatives. The ability to manage increasing complexity relies on the capacity to protect and commercialize intellectual property, or IP.

How is Canada doing in this global race to discover, protect and commercialize the globally competitive IP that will deliver increasing prosperity to future generations? Not good, according to Harvard University's Economic Complexity Index.

Since 1995, Vietnam's economic complexity has improved from one hundred and seventh in the world to fifty-second. China has moved from forty-sixth to seventeenth. Over that same period, Canada has slid from twenty-second to forty-third.

One of our challenges is that we have a historical reliance on unprocessed resources and products. Consider agriculture, where the Dutch are — pardon the pun — eating our lunch. Their complex value-added systems generate 74 times more export value per arable acre of land than in Canada.

Despite being a nation of innovators with a globally competitive research engine, far too much of our IP is commercialized elsewhere. Over the past 20 years, the number of Canadian-invented patents transferred to foreign firms has tripled from 18% to 56%. Think about it. Half of our IP is commercialized outside of Canada.

What do we get in return? Over the last six years, Canada's annual investment in university-based research has only returned 1.2% per year in cumulative income on licensed IP. Something isn't working.

While countries around the world have been increasingly monetizing their IP for decades, Canada has been going backwards. We've yet to master the skills needed to systematically compete in an increasingly complex global ideas economy.

One group that's helping is called Innovative Asset Collective. They have temporary funding from Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada as a pilot project in the clean technology sector. Over the past 18 months, the Innovative Asset Collective has successfully modelled global leaders like the Fraunhofer Institutes in Germany, the sovereign patent funds of South Korea, Japan and Singapore and the Office of International Intellectual Property Enforcement in the U.S.

The Innovative Asset Collective's expertise and strategic partnerships address a long-standing weakness in our innovation economy — one that we must overcome if we're to achieve our global potential. We have no time to waste. American businesses invest three times more per worker in IP than Canadian businesses, further widening the productivity gap. We must reverse this trend. We have the ability. We must find the determination to make it happen.

Thank you, colleagues.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

• (1420)

HIS HIGHNESS THE AGA KHAN

Hon. Mobina S. B. Jaffer: Honourable senators, for 65 years, His Highness Prince Karim Aga Khan has served as the spiritual leader to over 15 million Ismaili Muslims around the world.

For his entire adult life, he has worked tirelessly to improve the lives of not only Ismaili Muslims, but for all people, particularly those who live in the most impoverished and often forgotten corners of our world.

Operating in over 30 countries in the world, and employing almost 100,000 people, the Aga Khan Development Network has established two universities, built over 700 medical centres, launched over 200 schools, supported over 600,000 farmers and provided financial services to over 50 million people.

Last week, members of His Highness Prince Karim Aga Khan's family, including his brother Prince Ayn and his children Princess Zahra and Prince Rahim, were in Canada for ceremonies to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the Ismaili community's substantial presence in Canada, and to launch initiatives for the next 50 years.

In Toronto, His Highness the Aga Khan was conferred the Key to the City for his generous contributions to Toronto and his global humanitarian work. In Edmonton, the Diwan Pavilion in the Aga Khan Garden was inaugurated, supporting the garden's mandate of providing a venue for dialogue and engagement.

In Vancouver, an agreement of cooperation between the Government of British Columbia and the Ismaili Imamat solidifies a partnership with a focus on addressing issues of climate change in B.C. and around the world.

The significance of these events goes beyond just the buildings, the agreements or the accolades that will emerge from them. What is truly to be celebrated is that in a world faced with increasing divisiveness and adversity, there are reassuring forces propelling us in kinder, gentler and inclusive directions.

Honourable senators, I am so lucky to be in a position where my two greatest blessings — being Canadian and Ismaili Muslim — are not only able to peacefully coexist, but can actively interact and build upon one another.

Indeed, the values of generosity, compassion for those less fortunate and service have been instilled in me and in the community through the leadership of His Highness the Aga Khan. Today and every day, I am grateful for these multiple identities, and also for the acceptance and deep commitment to equal opportunity that this country continues to champion on the global stage.

I am very aware that because of His Highness the Aga Khan and Canadians, I am a senator. Thank you.

[*Translation*]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL TRADE

BUDGET AND AUTHORIZATION TO ENGAGE SERVICES AND TRAVEL—STUDY ON ISSUES RELATING TO FOREIGN RELATIONS AND INTERNATIONAL TRADE GENERALLY—SEVENTH REPORT OF COMMITTEE PRESENTED

Hon. Peter M. Boehm, Chair of the Standing Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade, presented the following report:

Thursday, October 6, 2022

The Standing Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade has the honour to present its

SEVENTH REPORT

Your committee, which was authorized by the Senate on Thursday, February 10, 2022, to examine issues relating to foreign relations and international trade 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,

PETER M. BOEHM

Chair

(*For text of budget, see today's Journals of the Senate, Appendix A, p. 896.*)

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

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

[English]

BUDGET AND AUTHORIZATION TO ENGAGE SERVICES AND TRAVEL—STUDY ON THE CANADIAN FOREIGN SERVICE AND ELEMENTS OF THE FOREIGN POLICY MACHINERY WITHIN GLOBAL AFFAIRS—EIGHTH REPORT OF COMMITTEE PRESENTED

Hon. Peter M. Boehm, Chair of the Standing Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade, presented the following report:

Thursday, October 6, 2022

The Standing Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade has the honour to present its

EIGHTH REPORT

Your committee, which was authorized by the Senate on Thursday, February 24, 2022, to examine and report on the Canadian foreign service, 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,

PETER M. BOEHM

Chair

(For text of budget, see today's Journals of the Senate, Appendix B, p. 902.)

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

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

[Translation]

MEDICAL ASSISTANCE IN DYING

SPECIAL JOINT COMMITTEE AUTHORIZED TO EXTEND DATE OF FINAL REPORT

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

That, notwithstanding the order adopted on March 31, 2022, the deadline for the Special Joint Committee on Medical Assistance in Dying to submit its final report on its review, including a statement of any recommended changes, extended on May 4, 2022, be further extended from October 17, 2022, to February 17, 2023; and

That a message be sent to the House of Commons to acquaint that House accordingly.

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.)

[English]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL TRADE

NOTICE OF MOTION TO STUDY THE PROVISIONS AND OPERATION OF THE SERGEI MAGNITSKY LAW AND THE SPECIAL ECONOMIC MEASURES ACT

Hon. Peter M. Boehm: Honourable senators, I give notice that, at the next sitting of the Senate, I will move:

That the Standing Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade be designated to conduct a comprehensive review of the provisions and operation of the *Justice for Victims of Corrupt Foreign Officials Act (Sergei Magnitsky Law)* and the *Special Economic Measures Act*, pursuant to section 16 of the *Justice for Victims of Corrupt Foreign Officials Act (Sergei Magnitsky Law)*;

That, in accordance with subsection 16(2) of the *Sergei Magnitsky Law*, the committee submit its report on this review no later than June 23, 2023.

ETHICS AND CONFLICT OF INTEREST FOR SENATORS

NOTICE OF MOTION TO AFFECT COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

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

That, notwithstanding any provision of the Rules or previous order, the Honourable Senator Smith take the place of former Senator White as one of the members of the Standing Committee on Ethics and Conflict of Interest for Senators.

QUESTION PERIOD

CANADIAN HERITAGE

IMPACT OF BILL C-11

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

Senator Gold, yesterday, YouTube launched an awareness campaign warning Canadians about the impact of Bill C-11 that is currently before our Senate Transport and Communications Committee.

As reported in *The Globe and Mail*, YouTube's Chief Product Officer, Neal Mohan, has very significant concerns about the bill, including the insidious danger of vaguely worded clauses.

In his blog, he also adds that Bill C-11 could "... change the personalized experience of millions of Canadians who visit YouTube every day."

• (1430)

Senator Gold, can you please share with this chamber whether you believe it is appropriate that the Minister of Heritage — your government's lead on Bill C-11 — is trying to discredit the voices of concern by claiming that YouTube is engaged in a "little scare campaign"?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for the question. No, I do not agree. This is an important bill for the artistic community, for content producers and, indeed, for all Canadians. It is the subject of robust study and a fair bit of over-the-top rhetoric.

This bill is currently being pre-studied by the committee. I hope that all speakers who are scheduled — or intend — to speak on second reading will do so quickly so that the committee can turn to its study, properly seized with the bill, and conclude the study in a timely and effective fashion so that we have the opportunity for a full and fulsome debate in this chamber.

Senator Plett: Thank you for sharing with us where the bill is. I do not think that anyone in this chamber had any doubt about where the bill is at this point.

Senator Gold, your government's attempt to discredit voices they do not agree with is alarming. Sadly, this is not the first and only occurrence.

Yesterday, YouTube said:

We have a responsibility to our Canadian viewers and creators to inform them of changes to their online experience. And we think it's worth standing up for our viewers' interests and creators' livelihoods.

You say that this is a little scare campaign. That is what you agree with the minister about.

Senator Gold, do you agree that YouTube has not only a right but a responsibility to inform its viewers and creators about the potential impact of Bill C-11?

Senator Gold: All Canadians have the right to express their views on YouTube or TikTok — or any of the other platforms that some of us spend time on — as they are doing before the committee, through email campaigns and through other communication that we're receiving. I have every confidence that this chamber can separate truth from rhetoric, as well as separate facts from exaggeration. Again, I have confidence that, when it comes to both the study and our debate in this chamber, we will make the right decision on behalf of all Canadians.

NATIONAL DEFENCE

RETENTION AND RECRUITMENT OF MEMBERS

Hon. Yonah Martin (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Government leader, our men and women in uniform have always stood tall when our country needed it. Whether it was advancing under the barrage of artillery fire to take Vimy Ridge, landing on the beaches of France under the hail of gunfire or standing their ground while surrounded on the hills of Korea, our soldiers have always done what was expected of them, and we will be forever grateful.

However, according to an article in today's issue of the *Toronto Star*, the military faces lagging recruitment and a shortage of experienced personnel. The Chief of the Defence Staff, General Eyre, has stated that these problems are so acute that they:

... imperil our ability to recruit, train, employ and retain diverse Canadian talent, thus jeopardizing the readiness and long-term health of Canada's defence capabilities.

Senator Gold, what specifically is the government doing to address this problem of lagging recruitment and the retention of experienced personnel?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for your question. It is an important one. Indeed, our Armed Forces are an important institution upon which we all rely.

The government knows that our success as a country — in defending ourselves and our interests — comes down to having a military with the right numbers, the right training and the right resources to sustain our regular operations and to step up during times of crisis. That is why the government is looking at both short-term and long-term ways to increase recruitment.

To answer your question, in the short term, the government has been maximizing staffing of recruitment centres and training schools, as well as temporarily shortening basic training. In the longer term, the government is continuing to work on building an institution where everyone feels safe, protected and respected in order to reach their full potential.

In this regard, the work that has been done — to expose and address the military's problems and toxic culture — is of fundamental importance in making the Canadian Armed Forces an attractive option for all Canadians.

I have also been advised and assured that recruitment to our Armed Forces is a priority for Minister Anand — as it is, of course, a priority for the Canadian Armed Forces.

Senator Martin: Government leader, to quote military doctrine:

The ultimate role of the armed forces is to apply force, or the threat of force, in the furtherance of the interests of the state. . . .

To achieve that goal and follow in the footsteps of the heroes in uniform who came before them, key trades in the Armed Forces need to be filled with exceptional personnel. They need to have the capacity to fight and to respond to emergencies if our nation calls upon them to do so.

Senator Gold, you did list some of the efforts that are being made, but would you commit to informing the Senate about the government's exact plan to recruit and retain the personnel required to defend our country and respond to national emergencies?

Senator Gold: Of course, as more information becomes available, I will certainly share it with this chamber, either proactively or in response to questions.

I would also encourage us in this chamber to perhaps take advantage of ministerial Question Period and invite Minister Anand, at the appropriate time — and our office would be happy to facilitate this — so that you can ask her questions directly. That said, I will make my own inquiries.

[Translation]

CANADIAN HERITAGE

NEXT ACTION PLAN FOR OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

Hon. René Cormier: My question is for the Government Representative in the Senate.

Senator Gold, in preparation for the renewal of the Action Plan for Official Languages 2023-28, yesterday the Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne du Canada, the FCFA, published a brief entitled *Éviter le point de rupture* or “Avoiding the breaking point,” describing an exceptionally critical situation within francophone minority organizations.

This brief, based on a poll of 188 organizations, reveals, in a very worrisome way, the precariousness of Canadian francophone organizations. It reveals that 90% of the organizations offer a lower salary than the Canadian average and that more than half the organizations consider the lack of competitive salary critical to achieving their mission.

The FCFA estimates that your government will need to invest an additional \$300 million for francophone minority organizations in the next action plan.

How does your government plan respond to the data and findings of this brief, especially in the context of the renewal of the Action Plan for Official Languages 2023-28?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): I thank the honourable senator for the question.

The brief published by the FCFA identifies a number of challenges, and I am told that the minister had a chance to review the brief during the recent Canada-wide consultations on official languages.

As part of the Action Plan for Official Languages 2018-23, the government increased funding for official language minority community organizations, or OLMCs, by 20%. However, it's clear that several issues remain.

As you pointed out, the government is currently working on a new action plan for official languages to support OLMCs, implement our language reform, and protect and promote French across the country, including in Quebec.

The government is grateful for the contributions made by community members and advocates in the discussions on the action plan. It intends to respond to the challenges raised, which are described in the brief and which you mentioned. It will respond in greater detail in the action plan to be announced shortly.

Senator Cormier: Senator Gold, as I'm sure you would agree, Canada's francophone organizations, in all regions of the country, are tireless leaders when it comes to defending and promoting our two official languages. How does the government plan to respond to their grievances in the context of the current modernization of the federal language regime?

Senator Gold: I thank the honourable senator for this supplementary question.

Since coming to power in 2015, the government has made record investments to support our OLMCs. In May, the government launched a consultation process on the next action plan for official languages, which will help it continue with the necessary work of protecting and promoting French across the country while supporting our OLMCs.

I am told that the government received more than 6,000 submissions and it wants to ensure that the action plan includes measures designed to address the issues and challenges raised by OLMCs, including all francophone organizations and all Canadians.

• (1440)

[English]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

SPECIAL ECONOMIC MEASURES ACT

Hon. Ratna Omidvar: Honourable senators, my question is for Senator Gold and it is about Iran and hope — specifically the hope that we are seeing based on the actions of courageous Iranian women and girls who are fighting and demonstrating for their freedom.

Canada is helping. We have sanctioned 34 more Iranian officials, adding to the 41 who were already sanctioned along with 161 entities. That is good, but I think that we can do more. You will remember, Senator Gold, that in the Budget Implementation Act that we passed in June of this year, Canada has the authority to confiscate and repurpose sanctioned assets back to the victims. I think this is a glorious opportunity for Canada to step forward in this way.

Can you confirm whether Canada will use this new tool and move to confiscate Iranian assets to help the victims of this oppressive regime?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): I thank the honourable senator for the question. The government remains horrified by Iran's violence toward its citizens and their blatant disregard for human rights. The government has imposed new sanctions and will continue to impose sanctions upon the regime.

The new sanctions framework that the government has put in place is targeting the core leadership of the Iranian regime. I'm assured that the government is looking at using all the tools at its disposal to hold the regime to account and that it has placed all options on the table.

Senator Omidvar: I am pleased to hear that the government is exploring all options. Could the government provide the dollar amount of Iranian assets that have been sanctioned by the Canadian government?

Senator Gold: Thank you for the supplementary question. I do not have an answer for that. I will endeavour to seek answers from the government and I hope to report back to the chamber in a timely fashion.

[Translation]

SANCTIONS AGAINST STREET GANGS

Hon. Jean-Guy Dagenais: Honourable senators, my question is for the Government Representative in the Senate.

Leader, gang-related murders continue to terrorize parts of Montreal and Toronto. The situation isn't changing despite lofty promises from politicians. There have already been 32 fatal shootings in Toronto this year, one more than in 2021. In Montreal, there have been 95 in the first six months of this year, which is a 15% increase over 2021. I was shocked to learn yesterday that the Minister of Foreign Affairs has been working with the United States and Mexico on a plan to impose sanctions on street gangs that are wreaking havoc in Haiti — not Canada, Haiti.

My goodness, leader, they are doing in Haiti what they are unable to do in our own country. How credible is this statement by Minister Joly?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): If I understand correctly, your question is about violence in Montreal and across Canada. The government has done a lot to restrict or even prohibit firearms, assault rifles and handgun imports. I followed the debate on the Firearms Act here in the Senate closely. Would you mind repeating your question? I'm sorry, but I don't really understand what you're getting at with it.

Senator Dagenais: Look, what I want to know is, what is Canada going to do in Haiti that it hasn't necessarily been able to do in Canada? I know you're a reasonable person, so do you honestly think Minister Joly can do any better in Haiti? After all, last April she promised to sell Russian assets seized in Canada to fund Ukrainian reconstruction, but now she has to admit she can't do that because it would violate international law.

I would remind you that Ms. Joly is Canada's Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Senator Gold: We have important relations with many countries, including Haiti, because there's a large diaspora in Canada. I'm very confident in the work that Minister Joly is doing and will continue to do, not just for the well-being of Canadians, but also for our interests elsewhere.

[English]

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

AFGHANISTAN CRISIS

Hon. Salma Ataullahjan: Honourable senators, my question is for the Leader of the Government in the Senate. Last week, *The Globe and Mail* reported on the case of Mohammad Salim Saberi, a former guard at Canada's embassy in Kabul who was attacked by the Taliban earlier this month leaving him with a broken thumb. Mr. Saberi believes that they are also tracking and following him. Since then, he has gone into hiding as he waits to be approved for resettlement by IRCC.

It has been more than a year since he first started asking to be rescued. This is not the first Trudeau government failure to secure the safety of Afghans in need of help. What is taking so long? What steps, if any, is your government taking to bring Mr. Saberi, and others who find themselves in this situation, safely home to Canada?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Well, honourable senators, I cannot comment on specific cases, even if I had the information.

This government is working very hard and under extraordinarily difficult circumstances to bring home those who have assisted us and those who were seeking refuge in Canada. To date, we've helped airlift over 3,700 people, dating from August 2021.

The challenges are well known in this chamber. I will not repeat them. I understand that the logistical challenges of identifying and providing an ability for them to provide safe passage out of the country have been exacerbated in no small measure by the insistence of the Taliban that they have certain travel documents. We can all well understand how reluctant someone might be to present themselves at a Taliban-run station to explain why they want to leave the country.

The government is working as hard as it can with its partners and will continue to do so.

Senator Ataullahjan: Government leader, Mr. Saberi is one of many Afghans. If you remember, I raised the case of Mr. Haqmal, the interpreter who was stuck in Ukraine and who has since moved to Germany. He is still waiting for his papers. These people risked their lives working alongside our soldiers and diplomats. Yet, they have been effectively abandoned by your government and are now being targeted by the Taliban. After the Taliban's takeover, the Trudeau government promised to rescue 40,000 Afghans to Canada, but IRCC says only 19,395 Afghans have arrived since August 2021.

Why is your government not doing everything in its power to bring these people to safety? Do you not realize that their lives are at stake?

Senator Gold: The government is aware of the risk and realizes that lives are at stake. The government is, in fact, doing everything that it can. It has just not been possible. It remains

incredibly challenging to get everyone out not only as quickly as we would hope but also as quickly as they would hope. Efforts continue and shall continue.

PUBLIC SAFETY

CANADA BORDER SERVICES AGENCY

Hon. Leo Housakos: Honourable senators, my question is for the government leader in the Senate. Senator Gold, in a recent report to Parliament in response to a question from the opposition, your government misleadingly stated that the deeply flawed ArriveCAN app had cost taxpayers a total of approximately \$29.5 million for developing, maintaining and promoting this app. What the report did not make clear is that the amount only covers the cost for the fiscal year that ended last March and that an additional \$25 million has been approved for the current fiscal year by the CBSA — which expects to use that full amount — bringing the total closer to twice what the government reported in their parliamentary report.

Senator Gold, why does your government have such difficulty providing truthful and forthright responses to questions on behalf of hard-working Canadians who want to know where their money is going? I know that sometimes you are frustrated by the question, but is it simply that the government does not know how to count or that they deliberately fudge the numbers in order to give a false representation of the facts?

• (1450)

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): I sometimes pause, and perhaps my body language betrays me, because I am trying to ensure that my answer is factual, responsible, that it isn't misleading and certainly doesn't contain assumptions which I regularly have to remind you I do not accept.

I do not accept that this government cannot count. I do not accept what I think is a rather irresponsible allegation of deliberately trying to deceive Canadians.

The ArriveCAN app was designed and implemented to protect Canadians, to make sure that we had the best tools available in as quick a time as possible to be aware of and track cases of people infected with COVID coming into Canada.

As is the case with so many measures that were introduced quickly — both by the government and, in some cases, through legislation that we passed quickly in this house — it was imperfect. There is no question that this will be true of this app and many other apps.

The government still believes that it played a useful purpose, and the money invested in it was money invested for the safety of Canadians.

Senator Housakos: Senator Gold, the only people who feel betrayed in this country are Canadian taxpayers who have been betrayed by this government for a number reasons.

Senator Gold, now that the mandatory use of the ArriveCAN app has finally and rightfully been scrapped by your government — that is how useful it has been — why does the CBSA still expect to use the full amount that has been budgeted for this fiscal year, which doesn't end until March 31, 2023? It's a simple question.

Also, will your government do the right thing and forgo enforcing financial penalties wrongfully levied against Canadians because of their inability to use this flawed app?

There have been a number of hard-working Canadians who reached out to my office and who have been fined up to \$18,000 for the simple fact that there was a glitch or they did not have access to ArriveCAN. At the end of the day, don't you think it is only responsible to remove these fines, or has this flawed app become another tax grab at the expense of these betrayed Canadian taxpayers?

Senator Gold: If your question is whether I agree with your proposed solution, the answer is no.

CANADA MORTGAGE AND HOUSING CORPORATION

NATIONAL HOUSING STRATEGY

Hon. Mary Coyle: Honourable senators, my question is for the Government Representative in the Senate, Senator Gold.

Yesterday, I had the pleasure of meeting with representatives of the YWCA from my region of Atlantic Canada. The YWCA, as you know, is dedicated to, among the many things that it is dedicated to doing, ensuring the provision of housing solutions that meet the needs of women, gender-diverse people and their families.

Our guests cited several troubling statistics about the gendered housing crisis and they brought those to my attention. For example, one in four women-led single-parent households live in unsuitable, inadequate or unaffordable housing. Also, women and gender-diverse people are more likely to experience hidden forms of homelessness, such as couch-surfing or staying with friends and family, meaning that the full scale of the gendered housing crisis is not fully understood.

Senator Gold, will the government heed the call of the YWCA and increase funding under the National Housing Strategy through a grants-based system to fully fund shelter, transitional housing and permanent affordable housing specifically dedicated to women and gender-diverse people?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): I thank the honourable senator for the question.

Not every home is a safe home. The pandemic has only intensified this very sad and altogether too often tragic truth.

That is why the government took swift action to support women and children fleeing violence by providing \$100 million to women's shelters, sexual assault centres and other gender-based violence support organizations across the country.

As well, the importance of transitional housing cannot be overstated. The government has made sure, through the National Housing Strategy, that 25% of this 10-year, \$70-billion plan is being dedicated to women and children. That means at least 7,000 spaces will be created or repaired for survivors of family violence. In March of this year, \$30 million was announced to build 160 new affordable housing units in Regina, 39 specifically designated for women and children fleeing domestic violence. Half of those 39 are second-stage transitional housing.

The government will continue to evaluate emerging needs in terms of financing.

Senator Coyle: Thank you. I look forward to hearing anything more you have to say about that.

Our guests also informed me that the YWCA has asked the government to develop a national definition of homelessness, one that reflects the unique causes, conditions and experiences of homelessness for women, girls and gender-diverse people.

Senator Gold, can you tell us if the government will commit to developing a national definition of homelessness, one which includes this important gender dimension?

Senator Gold: All of the government's work in this area takes into account the diversity of needs and the diversity of profiles of those in need of this. That said, through the government's initiative entitled Reaching Home: Canada's Homelessness Strategy, the government is supporting the most vulnerable Canadians in maintaining safe, stable and affordable housing, and also, of course, to try to reduce chronic homelessness.

The government acknowledges that homelessness has an impact in every community in Canada. It affects individuals, families, women fleeing domestic violence, youth, seniors, veterans, people with disabilities. No one escapes.

The Reaching Home initiative continues to support efforts to increase the understanding of homelessness in Canada and to ensure that communities have the information and tools they need to prevent and reduce homelessness, and this is a first step toward raising the issue, not only at the federal level but at all levels of society.

ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

EMISSIONS REDUCTION TARGET

Hon. Donald Neil Plett (Leader of the Opposition): Government leader, in July, the NDP-Liberal government announced its plan for reducing emissions in the oil and gas

sector by 42% in eight years, which included a policy option for a cap-and-trade system. To meet these targets, your government would have to halt all new oil and gas projects, in addition to delaying existing ones.

I can get into many reasons why this is misguided, but in a recent *National Post* article, Robert Merasty, former chief of Flying Dust Cree Nation, argued that this policy will particularly harm Indigenous communities that have already invested in these projects.

As you know, leader, Truth and Reconciliation Day was last week. Your government, again, verbally affirmed its commitment to reconciliation efforts many times, and yet your actions do not reflect this. Mr. Merasty stated that your government's efforts often fall short of real self-determination for Indigenous peoples.

Leader, knowing that a majority of Indigenous peoples support oil and gas development, as reflected in our Environics Research poll in June, why then would your government propose a policy that would wipe all of that away and take them a step backwards from self-determination?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for the question. It is an important question, but I respectfully don't agree with the premise.

We all know that we have to find the right balance between real measures and effective measures to combat climate change — not only for our sake but for the sake of future generations — while still developing our country, our economy and our resources, including the energy sector, in a responsible and sustainable way.

In that regard, the Government of Canada is pleased to have Indigenous partners and Indigenous communities participating to a growing degree in resource projects. That is a good thing for the country and for those communities.

The government is pleased that Indigenous communities are our partners in developing new strategies for combatting climate change, benefiting from Indigenous knowledge and practices so that we can have a strong, robust economy, including an energy sector, which is in transition — the corporate world and capital investment sometimes speak louder than we can in this chamber — and do so in a way that works for the benefit of all Canadians.

[*Translation*]

ORDERS OF THE DAY

MEDICAL ASSISTANCE IN DYING

MESSAGE FROM COMMONS

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I have the honour to inform the Senate that a message has been received from the House of Commons which reads as follows:

Wednesday, October 5, 2022

EXTRACT, —

That, notwithstanding paragraph (e) of the order made Monday, May 2, 2022, the deadline for the Special Joint Committee on Medical Assistance in Dying to submit to Parliament a final report of its review, including a statement of any recommended changes, be no later than Friday, February 17, 2023; and that a message be sent to the Senate to acquaint Their Honours that this House has passed this order.

ATTEST

Charles Robert

The Clerk of the House of Commons

• (1500)

[*English*]

DECLARATION ON THE ESSENTIAL ROLE OF ARTISTS AND CREATIVE EXPRESSION IN CANADA BILL

THIRD READING

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Bovey, seconded by the Honourable Senator Gignac, for the third reading of Bill S-208, An Act respecting the Declaration on the Essential Role of Artists and Creative Expression in Canada, as amended.

Hon. Salma Ataullahjan: Honourable senators, I rise today to speak as critic of Bill S-208, An Act respecting the Declaration on the Essential Role of Artists and Creative Expression in Canada. I would like to begin by commending Senator Bovey on introducing such a comprehensive and ambitious bill.

At first glance, Bill S-208 may seem idealistic, but at its core it simply requires the government to apply an art lens to its operations. We have already spoken on the importance of using Gender-based Analysis Plus to take a gender- and diversity-sensitive approach to our work. In fact, the Government of Canada committed to using GBA Plus to advance gender equality in Canada in 1995, but lacks any legislation to enforce its active use in policy-making.

Unlike GBA Plus, Bill S-208 will make the application of an artistic lens to all legislation mandatory by putting the onus on the Minister of Canadian Heritage to develop an action plan to operationalize the declaration in order to recognize the essential role of arts to society, increase access to the arts and events, improve the ability to engage in the arts, improve the ability of artists to benefit from their work while freeing them from cultural appropriation, address disability barriers and encourage investments.

To do so, the Minister of Canadian Heritage will be called upon to consult with key stakeholders, including the Ministers of Labour, Crown-Indigenous Relations, Justice, and Health, as well as with many other interested organizations and artists. The minister must also convene a conference with stakeholders and ministers in order to develop an action plan.

Bill S-208 is also about governmental accountability and transparency. At the end of each fiscal year, the minister must prepare a report that sets out the implementation of the action plan and the activities undertaken by the department to achieve the objectives of the declaration as set out in the bill. This will ensure a constant evolution of the action plan by identifying its progress and its weaknesses.

I believe Bill S-208 has merit, namely by inviting ministers to work together, as the government is well known for working in silos. Honourable senators, Bill S-208 is important to our collective future as it will give Canadian artists the recognition they deserve. Thank you.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

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

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS AND GOVERNMENT SERVICES ACT

BILL TO AMEND—THIRD READING

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Quinn, seconded by the Honourable Senator White, for the third reading of Bill S-222, An Act to amend the Department of Public Works and Government Services Act (use of wood), as amended.

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

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

CRIMINAL CODE

BILL TO AMEND—THIRD READING

Hon. Salma Atallahjan moved third reading of Bill S-224, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (trafficking in persons).

She said: Honourable senators, I rise today to speak to Bill S-224, which aims to facilitate the conviction of those charged with human trafficking-related offences. This bill will amend the Criminal Code's definition of exploitation in human trafficking offences so that the Crown is no longer required to prove that a reasonable person in the victim's circumstances feared for their safety or the safety of someone they know. This will put the onus on the perpetrator rather than the survivors.

I would like to thank Senator Miville-Dechéne for showing support for this bill and offering suggestions to strengthen the bill while highlighting the necessity to first change the wording of the current definition of exploitation in human trafficking offences in the Criminal Code.

Human trafficking is a modern form of slavery that is on the rise worldwide, with an estimated 40 million victims. It is a practice that relies on abuse and coercion to exploit young victims for sexual purposes or work. Traffickers will approach victims in various ways, either by convincing them that they are a potential friend or boyfriend, contacting them on social media, posting ads for jobs or even threatening or kidnapping them. Victims often do not realize that traffickers don't have their best interests at heart.

In Canada, the geography and layout of the highways makes it easy for traffickers to avoid detection by law enforcement and maintain control over their isolated and disoriented victims. Although there is a popular belief that victims of human trafficking are brought into the country, most victims are young Canadian women. Among the most at-risk groups are women and girls, new immigrants, children in the welfare system, persons living with disabilities, members of the LGBTQ2+ community and migrant workers. The most vulnerable are Indigenous children who live with the impact of hundreds of years of ongoing trauma.

It is incredibly difficult for a victim to break free from their trafficker, and it is a practice known as low risk with high reward among traffickers. Very few cases have been successfully prosecuted in Canada: According to Statistics Canada, less than 8% of perpetrators charged with human trafficking have been prosecuted.

Too much responsibility is put on the shoulders of people who have endured unimaginable things. Most survivors do not identify as victims as a result of manipulation and gaslighting, and yet they are usually the only evidence against traffickers. Without their testimony, the Crown has no case.

Sadly, testimony shows that the fear-based model is the biggest issue when dealing with convictions and that the experience is more traumatizing than being forced to work in the sex trade. During cross-examination, it is common for the defence lawyer to twist their words and call them a liar. This can lead to survivors recanting or simply dropping charges.

According to the current Criminal Code, the offence rests more on a victim's ability to perform on the witness stand rather than on what the perpetrator has done. Hence, human trafficking charges are often dropped, and traffickers are charged under related crimes such as prostitution-related offences, kidnapping, assault, sexual assault and sexual exploitation. This is not justice.

Honourable senators, by removing this barrier — the element of fear — we will finally be able to tackle bigger challenges in human trafficking in Canada. This is the first crucial step to putting an end to this horrible practice in our country. Thank you.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Julie Miville-Dechéne: Thank you, Senator Ataullahjan.

I rise to once again support, at third reading stage, Bill S-224, which is sponsored by my colleague, Senator Salma Ataullahjan.

As she clearly stated, I'm the critic for the bill to amend the Criminal Code in respect of trafficking in persons. I agree with its objective, as I explained at second reading stage.

• (1510)

[*English*]

According to the International Justice and Human Rights Clinic of the University of British Columbia School of Law, asking victims to prove reasonable fear may be a barrier to a conviction for human trafficking. The requirements of the human

trafficking offence are more onerous than those of other offences of a similar nature. For example, in the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, trafficking in persons is also prohibited, but it does not require that an individual believe that their safety would be threatened. That is a more appropriate standard.

The new section proposed by Senator Ataullahjan has the great merit of sticking to the vocabulary of the Palermo protocol, and therefore focuses on the actions of the trafficker and not on the fears of its victims. The change in language proposed in Bill S-224 is even more necessary because this crime has a disproportionate effect on Indigenous women and girls, who are 10 times more likely to be victims of trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation than non-Indigenous women and girls.

I strongly believe it is time that we adapt our Criminal Code to the reality of women and girls who are the victims of human trafficking.

Thank you very much, senators. I hope we pass to the next step.

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

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

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE ACT EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE REGULATIONS

BILL TO AMEND—THIRD READING—DEBATE CONTINUED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Duncan, seconded by the Honourable Senator Clement, for the third reading of Bill S-236, An Act to amend the Employment Insurance Act and the Employment Insurance Regulations (Prince Edward Island), as amended.

Hon. Colin Deacon: Honourable senators, it so happens that I'm speaking to a concern that the Speaker pro tempore raised yesterday regarding Bill S-236 and its impact on the net savings reported by the Parliamentary Budget Officer. The PBO calculated the savings over five years to be \$76.6 million.

It's important to consider a few factors here. First, this is a one-and-a-half-page report that came out just under a month ago — well after our study was completed in the Agriculture Committee. The PBO's calculations are based on the current Employment Insurance system and historical data. Finally, the PBO itself acknowledged that there is significant uncertainty in their study where it says, "The cost estimate produced is highly sensitive to the PBO's labour market outlook."

[Senator Ataullahjan]

I thank Senator Ringuette for ensuring that we have this question appropriately addressed. That's why I chose to stand and offer the perspective of a committee member involved in the study of this bill.

Colleagues, we need to remember what Bill S-236 is and what it is not. Specifically, Bill S-236 does not set a rate for the size of benefits or their duration. It does not tie the department's hands on how to calculate benefits and the duration of those benefits. It is not about cutting anyone's benefits.

Bill S-236 sets out a structure to make the province one zone to ensure equity across EI claimants to avoid the current situation of the unfair treatment of citizens based on their place of residence and to assist with the labour shortage currently affecting the province.

Bill S-236 is purely about creating one zone for a small geographical area with a population in the region that has unique labour-market characteristics. We heard compelling testimony from witnesses representing business, municipal interests and labour. For those who are not from Prince Edward Island, people regularly work in one zone and live in the other. Neighbours across the road from one another, who work at the same location, can end up receiving fundamentally different levels of EI support. Again, they are working at the same location and working the same number of hours but living a few feet apart.

Folks live and work in different places all over the Island. They live in Surrey but work in Charlottetown. They live in Charlottetown and work in Summerside. This is not a "Charlottetown versus the rest of P.E.I." question; this is a P.E.I. question. It is a question about fairness across Canada's smallest province with a very mobile, urban and rural population.

My first question to the Employment and Social Development Canada, or ESDC, official who testified before our committee last spring when we studied the bill was whether he had ever been to Prince Edward Island, because, if he had, he would see how foolish having the second zone is. The arguments for why the two zones were originally created and have been maintained were anything but convincing.

When we studied the bill, that same ESDC official said that the Charlottetown EI zone was shaped as it was because it corresponded with Statistics Canada's Charlottetown metropolitan zone. It does not. For some reason, one district was arbitrarily dropped and another arbitrarily added. They are not in the same areas. They are not the same zones.

Additionally, for years, the Commissioner for Workers of the Canada Employment Insurance Commission has advised for this change and told us that the officials kept ignoring it. His frustration was absolutely palpable during the study.

To answer the concerns raised by Senator Ringuette, first, as Senator Duncan discussed, this job of setting rates is not ours. The government generally, and ESDC specifically, can choose to set a rate that it thinks is fitting. That is the government's

responsibility. This actually happened recently in an effort to ensure equity among Islanders during the COVID-19 pandemic. The rate was artificially set at 420 insurable hours to qualify, regardless of the actual unemployment rate. However, that temporary measure just expired on September 24, and the province is back to two zones, leaving many residents in the Charlottetown zone without the necessary 700 insurable hours needed to qualify for EI.

We all know that this province needs certainty now more than ever, given the events of Fiona in the last two weeks. The current circumstances are exacerbating the insecurity.

Second, the reason Bill S-236 does not address the rates is because that could lead to a charge on the Consolidated Revenue Fund. The bill then would need a Royal Recommendation, and we cannot do that here in the Senate. It can be done in the other place, either by amending the bill or introducing an amendment to the act in some legislation or a budget implementation bill. That is not something we can do here in the Senate.

So, as Senator Duncan said, that's why the bill should go to the other place where they can decide to leave the rate and qualifying decisions in the hands of ESDC or, if need be, introduce an amendment to set such a rate and affix a Royal Recommendation to such an amendment.

I don't think that will be necessary, however. Further committee study in the Senate, as suggested by Senator Ringuette, will not change that particular situation. The Senate is not in a position to instruct the government to set a rate that would need a Royal Recommendation. That is something that elected representatives in the other place can do.

Colleagues, that is why I ask for you to consider my observations. My hope is that you will choose to bring Bill S-236 to a vote today and call the question. Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

Hon. Donald Neil Plett (Leader of the Opposition): Would the senator take a question?

Senator C. Deacon: Certainly.

Senator Plett: Senator Deacon, thank you for your explanation. It would have been nice if the sponsor of the bill had been able to give an explanation yesterday; we probably wouldn't be discussing this today. However, we did not get that yesterday.

I do have a question before I ask for the adjournment. I am told that there are two Liberal members of Parliament in the House of Commons who have completely opposing views on this. Both of them are from Prince Edward Island. If this is something that all Islanders want, why would those two members have completely opposing views? There is something there that we are not seeing, I think. I might be wrong.

Senator C. Deacon: I think it's good when parties can have members with differing views on situations. I view that as a positive thing. This is a situation where there is a lack of fairness. Yes, one side is benefiting in a manner that is not justifiable.

Certainly in the eyes of the commissioner it is not justifiable and hasn't been for quite some time, and another side is being penalized for sure. Those MPs are doing a good job of representing their constituents.

• (1520)

We're talking about having a system that delivers greater fairness across a very small area, and that the change itself was not justified and how it was justified was not accurate. The Employment Insurance system has evaluated that through the Commissioner for Employers for several years and the recommendation keeps being ignored.

Is it a politically divisive issue, and does that benefit one politician and not another? Potentially, but that's not our job here. Our job here is to try to bring as much fairness to those that are not being properly represented.

Senator Plett: Well, I won't bother asking another question because I'm getting exactly what we got yesterday. It's not an answer to a very simple question. Instead I'm being schooled in politics. Clearly, Your Honour, you asked a simple question yesterday and did not get an answer; I asked an equally simple question today and got absolutely no answer. I'm not sure whether Senator Deacon believes the same as Senator Duncan did about Question Period. You don't answer questions. This is not Question Period.

Nevertheless, in light of the ambiguity here and in light of some of the issues, there are some of us who would like a little more information that we are clearly not going to get in this chamber. I'm not sure how we're going to do that.

I want to assure this chamber the Conservative caucus will in no way try to delay this bill, but we do have a one-week break coming, so I'm going to ask for the adjournment for the balance of my time and we will deal with this when we come back in a week's time.

The Hon. the Speaker pro tempore: Before we move to adjourning debate, Senator Patterson, do you have a question?

Hon. Dennis Glen Patterson: Would Senator Deacon take a question?

Senator C. Deacon: Yes.

Senator Patterson: Senator Deacon, since there are apparently concerns in the other place, according to Senator Plett, would you agree that, rather than trying to deal with those concerns in this chamber, the best way to deal with any concerns that may be extant in the other place would be to give the bill third reading now and let the House of Commons deal with any concerns they might have when the bill is referred to the other place?

Senator C. Deacon: I don't know how to answer the question because I couldn't have said it better myself. The reality is we can only deal with what we have control over. The issue raised by Senator Ringuette is one we feel we addressed in committee. It's one that doesn't actually affect our chamber. If there are disagreements in the House of Commons — and I gather they occur from time to time, even within given parties, even within the Conservative Party and within the Liberal Party — that

happens. That's not our job to fix, and I still encourage my colleagues to call the question on this today. Thank you very much.

(On motion of Senator Plett, debate adjourned.)

DEPARTMENT FOR WOMEN AND GENDER EQUALITY ACT

BILL TO AMEND—SECOND READING—DEBATE CONTINUED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator McCallum, seconded by the Honourable Senator Mégie, for the second reading of Bill S-218, An Act to amend the Department for Women and Gender Equality Act.

(On motion of Senator Martin, debate adjourned.)

CRIMINAL CODE

SECOND READING—DEBATE ADJOURNED

Hon. Stan Kutcher moved second reading of Bill S-251, An Act to repeal section 43 of the Criminal Code (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's call to action number 6).

He said: Honourable senators, I rise today in this chamber, situated on unceded Algonquin Anishinaabeg territory, as a representative of the Province of Nova Scotia within the lands of Mi'kma'ki to speak to second reading of Bill S-251, An Act to repeal section 43 of the Criminal Code (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's call to action number 6).

I begin by stating that this act addressing the TRC's Call to Action number 6 is only a small but very necessary step on the path of reconciliation — or, as our colleague Senator Christmas has more eloquently put it, reconciliACTION.

I also do not view this repeal as a cure-all for ending all violence against children. I strongly wish that such a cure-all were possible. That said, repealing section 43, which currently provides protection for persons who use corporal punishment as a parenting tool, will be one step on this important journey here at home. I think every member of this chamber wishes that all violence against children would stop. We can do a small part in achieving that goal by supporting the rapid passage of Bill S-251 through this chamber.

Senators, physical punishment is defined as “the application of force to induce pain or discomfort for the purpose of correcting or modifying behaviour.” And, as you will hear from me today, physical punishment is neither necessary nor helpful in guiding and disciplining young people.

Indeed, the overwhelming scientific evidence supports the TRC's Call to Action number 6, so let us move forward to make that recommendation a reality.

Journalist Carl DeGurse recently penned a piece for the *Winnipeg Free Press* on the issues around what some have called “corrective violence” or “corrective punishment” and parenting. He reminds us how difficult parenting is — and I can speak from personal experience that he is absolutely correct — and that those who spank or otherwise hit their children are not evil or acting out of cruelty. They may have learned this parenting technique through their own experiences or seen it practised within their communities.

What I will lay out today is that there are much better ways to provide guidance and discipline to children, ways that promote good physical and mental health without putting children at risk for poor outcomes. These corrections can be firm and comprehensive. But these techniques do not depend on violence or other types of physical punishment. We also now know that spanking and other types of violence against children often result in the opposite of what a parent is trying to achieve. And we now know that such use of so-called “corrective violence” or “corrective punishment” actually causes harm.

• (1530)

Through repeal of this section of the Criminal Code — which provides protection for those who use violence as a parenting tool — and through the pan-Canadian promotion of evidence-based parenting supports, we can both protect children from violence and assist all Canadian parents in learning and applying effective and much less damaging child-rearing practices.

I also believe that the repeal of section 43 is a necessary step in our continued evolution toward the type of society we strive to be — one that provides safe and secure environments for the next generations to grow and to thrive. It is a society that is working on acknowledging and righting historical wrongs, a society that puts the welfare of its children as a top priority, a society that stands up for those who are not yet able to stand on their own and a society that has evolved its parenting practices from corporal punishment to guidance and positive discipline.

Achieving passage of this bill is to uphold the commitments our country has made to abide by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child — which Canada ratified in 1991 — and to address all 94 of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action. It also responds to the numerous reports calling for this repeal over the past several decades, including the Standing Senate Committee on Human Rights' 2007 report, which called for this repeal by 2009. Honourable colleagues, we are 13 years past that date.

As a reminder, section 43 of the Criminal Code of Canada states:

Every schoolteacher, parent or person standing in the place of a parent is justified in using force by way of correction toward a pupil or child, as the case may be, who is under his care, if the force does not exceed what is reasonable under the circumstances.

This clause was the subject of a Charter challenge in 2004. At that time, the Supreme Court ruling — which was a split decision, six to three, and which was accompanied by much public confusion about the meaning behind “not exceed what is reasonable under the circumstances” — included a set of guidelines to be followed with regard to hitting children. These guidelines noted that teachers may reasonably apply force to remove a child from a classroom; imposed an age range of 2 to 12 years in which hitting a child was allowed; and disallowed hitting a child with a cognitive disability, hitting with an implement, hitting a child on his or her head and hitting while angry.

Of interest, the court did not make any unique mention of human services providers — such as youth care workers, child care workers, corrections officers, police officers, child psychiatrists and psychologists, and many others — who must deal, day in and day out, with young people who demonstrate some of the most challenging, disruptive behaviours. These providers do not seem to be able to access the protections offered by section 43.

As one legal expert told me in discussing this ruling, “Happy second birthday. Now we can hit you.” Another commentator said:

It's okay to hit a child, as long as the violence is premeditated and nothing larger than a fist is used.

Also, section 43 provides little — if any — additional protection that can be provided by alternatives already existing under the law, such as those used in defence when charged with assault.

Section 43 is an anachronism — an historical holdover from laws written in 1892 that permitted corporal punishment of employees, wives and children. Today, we've moved well beyond that. Employers are not legally protected from assaulting their employees. Husbands are not legally protected from assaulting their wives. However, it is still permissible, in our Criminal Code, to assault children.

Colleagues, as many of us know, this is not the first time a bill addressing this issue has been tabled in this chamber. The last time we saw a similar bill was in 2017. At that time, the bill passed second reading and was waiting for committee study when Parliament was prorogued. You will remember that the last senator to champion the repeal of section 43 was the Honourable Murray Sinclair, who had been chair of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. He had taken on this bill from the former Senator Hervieux-Payette, who had introduced this bill eight times. I am privileged to be able to continue this work.

In further context, various versions of Bill S-251 have been introduced in the House and in the Senate since 1989. Actually, this will be the eighteenth time this bill has been brought forward. I am hopeful that we can finally see it through. Auspiciously, the number 18 is considered to be lucky in the Jewish tradition. It is synonymous with the word *chai*, meaning “life.” I feel that that this is a fitting omen. In this chamber, we can promote a better *chai* for our children by repealing section 43 this time — the eighteenth attempt.

As many of you know, thoughtful speeches on the repeal of section 43 have been delivered in this chamber, but it has been five years now since our last debates. Canadian society has changed substantially since 2017. I would ask you to consider how much more we, as a society, now know about the legacy of residential schools. How much more do we, as a society, now know about the negative impact that hitting has on children's development and their subsequent health, including their mental health? How much more do we, as a society, now know that parenting techniques that include corporal punishment are no longer popularly supported, even by some organizations that had condoned or even promoted such approaches in previous decades?

Simply put, in a modern and equitable Canada, there should be no special legal protection for people who hit children. There already exist legal remedies against assault. Why should those legal remedies not also apply to children? Why should children have less protection from violence than any other group of Canadians?

Many Canadians are asking these questions and have taken up the cause of repealing section 43. Civil society groups, such as UNICEF Canada, Corinne's Quest, Canadian Council of Child and Youth Advocates, as well as over 650 organizations and prominent Canadians have currently endorsed the Joint Statement on Physical Punishment of Children and Youth and have been imploring the federal government to repeal section 43.

Recently, nine national child service organizations, including the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada and the Child Welfare League of Canada, put forward a comprehensive rationale for this repeal. It can be found on the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario, or CHEO, website. This rationale lays out the issues surrounding children's rights and protection against assault, as well as the evidence for long-lasting personal and societal harms of violence against children, changing Canadians' attitudes toward hitting children, international developments and legal contexts.

I will touch on these issues that have taken place since our last debates five years ago. First, I will talk about children's right not to be hit or — put into more poignant language — children's right not to be assaulted. Let us remember what the definition of "assault" is in Canada, as noted in section 265.1 of the Criminal Code, an assault occurs when a person directly or indirectly applies force intentionally to another person without their consent.

When we say "physical punishment" or "corrective discipline," we might be using a sanitized code phrase for "assault." Internationally, Canada is falling behind on protecting the rights of children and falling behind on their commitments to reducing violence against children.

In 1979, Sweden led the way in outlawing "corrective violence" against children in any setting. Since then, 62 other countries have enacted laws prohibiting physical punishment of children in all settings. Eleven of those countries have moved to do so since this chamber last debated a bill to repeal section 43. This includes Nepal, France, South Africa, Japan, the Republic of Korea and Colombia.

• (1540)

We were privileged to host Senator Jillian van Turnhout from the Republic of Ireland in the chamber today. She played an important role in having Ireland become one of the countries to prohibit physical punishment of children. That occurred in 2015.

We should be embarrassed by how our country is not keeping up its international commitments to end violence against children. Canada has signed and ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, or CRC. Section 1 of Article 19 states:

States Parties shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child.

Since ratifying the CRC in 1991, Canada's progress has been frequently reviewed by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, most recently this year for the combined fifth and sixth report. Each review has noted failings in Canada's action on children's rights, and reports have repeatedly called for the repeal of section 43.

Further, in 2015, Canada committed to supporting the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In that document, target 16.2 calls for an end to all forms of violence against children. In 2018, Canada signed on as a pathfinding country under the Global Partnership and Fund to End Violence Against Children. Canada is signing on to international agreements to prevent violence against children and saying the right things, but where is the action? The purpose of the pathfinding countries is to be leaders in the prevention of violence against children. How can Canada be among this group if we still permit our children to be hit?

We must question what it will take for us to repeal section 43, which the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, or TRC, report describes as "... a relic of a discredited past and has no place in Canadian schools or homes." Call to Action 6 simply states, "We call upon the Government of Canada to repeal Section 43 of the Criminal Code of Canada."

This Call to Action is placed in the education section of the report, which demonstrates the significant, long-lasting impacts on Indigenous people that occurred in educational institutions. The shameful legacy of residential schools has had substantive negative impacts on Indigenous communities and families for decades.

Many parliamentarians from all sides have stood in this place and in the other place condemning what happened in residential schools and apologized. Many have pledged their support to seeing all 94 Calls to Action moved forward.

Prime Minister Harper rose in the House of Commons on June 11, 2008, to deliver an apology on behalf of Canada for its role in the establishment of residential schools. He remarked on how new legal remedies would be applied to address the impact

of these schools and how such remedies would form part of a “new relationship” between Indigenous peoples and other Canadians.

Upon receiving the final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in 2015, Prime Minister Trudeau’s statement referenced the previous government apology and included these words:

. . . we will, in partnership with Indigenous communities, the provinces, territories, and other vital partners, fully implement the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission . . .

Other federal leaders such as Tom Mulcair, Elizabeth May, Yves-François Blanchet and Jagmeet Singh have addressed the importance of the Calls to Action and the necessity of their implementation. Former leader of the Conservative Party Erin O’Toole called for a plan to tackle all Calls to Action, and said:

We’re going to make progress on the TRC calls to action because they’re very important and they should be beyond politics.

Some have called for action beyond apology. As former member of Parliament Romeo Saganash said, “An apology, once made, is only as good as the actions that come after it.”

Let’s take these words to heart, honourable senators. We can act to repeal section 43.

This inglorious legacy itself merits this chamber moving forward to the repeal. Responding to this TRC Call to Action is, to my mind, enough reason for parliamentarians to move this bill expeditiously. There is, however, additional considerations for the rationale of appeal, and these considerations strongly support the TRC call.

Senators, there is substantial evidence demonstrating the enduring negative impact of physical punishment of children. Hundreds of research studies from many different countries conducted across decades have consistently demonstrated that physical punishment places children’s physical and mental health at risk, and that it worsens behaviour over time. Furthermore, and very importantly, there is simply no substantial body of research evidence that demonstrates that corporal punishment of any kind is actually helpful for children or that it has a positive effect on child health and mental health outcomes.

This evidence informs shifts in thinking and practice about physical punishment, similar to social shifts in seatbelt use and the impact of exposure to second-hand smoke based upon evidence of harm. These realizations hit a tipping point, and we acted. I believe we are now at another tipping point for physical punishment of children, and we have the power to act.

Indeed, a recent study has shown the negative impact of corporal punishment on child brain development. Children who are hit become more highly reactive to perceived threat, which is

part of why physical punishment is consistently linked to increased child aggression. Being hit translates into hitting others.

Good evidence compiled since 2015 now clearly demonstrates that what was once called “mild corrective force” also has substantial negative impacts on children. In 2016, researchers Gershoff and Grogan-Kaylor conducted a comprehensive meta-analysis of 75 scientific studies related to non-injurious spanking that was intended to correct a child’s misbehaviour. This was the kind of punishment that is consistent with the guidelines of the 2004 Supreme Court ruling. Such force does not leave a mark, is not applied to the head or to the area around the head and is not applied with an instrument. This is the type of assault that is colloquially called spanking. Gershoff and Grogan-Kaylor showed that, across the board, spanking children is associated with more aggression, more mental health problems, greater negative relationships with parents and lower cognitive ability. In their concluding statement, they said:

. . . there is no evidence that spanking does any good for children and all evidence points to the risk of it doing harm.

More recently, in 2021, an analysis of 69 prospective longitudinal studies of child spanking and its impact on subsequent behaviour was published in the leading medical journal *The Lancet*. Some have argued, in support of spanking, that there is a chicken-and-egg problem — we don’t know if spanking causes bad child behaviour or if bad child behaviour elicits spanking from parents. That is an important issue. The 2021 study was conducted to address this question head-on. They analyzed studies that followed children over time to see if spanking predicted changes in their behaviour, taking into account — importantly — their initial levels of problematic behaviour. These researchers found that spanking consistently predicts worsening child behaviour problems over time and that this relationship is robust across different child and parent characteristics. They conclude that spanking is harmful to children’s development and well-being.

Some have argued that the evidence against spanking is not strong enough because it can’t definitely show that spanking is the cause of all these negative outcomes. It is true that experimental evidence — the bedrock of science — is difficult to obtain with regard to spanking because our ethics committees do not allow experiments in which children are randomly assigned to be hit.

However, numerous researchers have used quasi-experimental statistical methods to get as close as possible to an experiment. Separate studies using these methods with data collected from Colombia, Japan and the U.S. have universally found that, after they are statistically matched on family and individual demographic characteristics, children who are spanked have worse behaviour and worse performance on cognitive tests than children who are not spanked. These studies provide strong evidence that spanking does lead to worse outcomes for children.

• (1550)

Another argument that I have come across is that hugging children after spanking helps reduce any potential harm. Research has indeed indicated, over and over again, that showing

children love and warmth is good for their development. However, such love and warmth are not enough to counteract the harms of spanking. Research has shown that spanking predicts increases in child aggression over time, regardless of how warm parents are to their children.

Colleagues, there is no solid research evidence that mild physical punishment is effective in improving behaviour or is in any way consistently beneficial to children. There are, however, numerous studies showing that hitting children increases the risk that they will become aggressive and develop mental health problems. In short, spanking makes the parents' job harder, not easier.

Also in my research, I came across some arguments that it is biblically directed to hit children as a form of correction. In my assessment, as the son of a Presbyterian minister and a long-time churchgoer, this is not the case. Is there any place in the Bible where the words of Jesus Christ encourage parents to hit their children? No. Indeed, quite the opposite. Jesus Christ recognized the responsibility of kind and considerate parenting, and that did not include hitting children.

The King James Bible version of Luke 11:11 says:

If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent?

Or in Mark 10:15:

Truly I tell you, anyone who does not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.

Or Matthew 19:14:

But Jesus said, "Let the little children come to Me, and do not hinder them! For the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these."

Does that sound like spanking to you?

Are there passages in the Bible that have been interpreted as encouragement to hit children? Yes, there are, mostly in the Old Testament, particularly in the Book of Proverbs.

Before I address that, let me be clear: The Book of Proverbs is not a child-rearing manual.

Proverbs 13:24 states:

He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes.

That is the basis for the saying that many people think is written in the Bible, "Spare the rod and spoil the child." Well, that statement actually does not appear in the Bible. It was created by one Samuel Butler, a 17th-century poet. It appears in a

poem called *Hudibras*, where a love affair is likened to a child, and spanking is mockingly commended as a way to make love grow stronger. The verse reads:

What medicine else can cure the fits
Of lovers when they lose their wits?
Love is a boy by poets still'd;
Then spare the rod and spoil the child.

But if we unpack even that verse in Proverbs, does it really mean that parent misuse a rod to beat a child? Not at all. On the contrary, the use of the rod in the Bible is not as an instrument of corporal punishment. The shepherd uses the rod to guide, to protect and to count the sheep.

Recall the image of the rod in Psalm 23:4:

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death . . . thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

"To spare the rod" doesn't mean to beat the child. On the contrary, it is the responsibility of the parent to guide, discipline and protect. The rod is an instrument of guidance, discipline and protection, not a tool to hit with. "Chastise" does not mean to hit. It means to correct or chasten.

Numerous Biblical commentators and Christian parenting organizations support this perspective. Some don't. The rod is a metaphor for guidance and discipline. It is not a directive to hit a child. Children can be disciplined without spanking.

As Thomas Haller, a Christian parenting and relationship expert notes, they can be treated with "grace, integrity, and love."

Part of the process of ending child-rearing approaches that encourage parents to hit their children should be the work of legislators, such as ourselves. We can end the special protection given by section 43 to people who hit children.

We — and this is so important — can support the dissemination of best available evidence-based interventions that help parents and other adults use different, non-violent and effective forms of discipline and guidance. We have that knowledge now, much more knowledge than we had five years ago. We can right this wrong now.

Senators, it is time to act on Call to Action number 6. We're coming up close to 10 years since the final TRC report was presented. Providing safe and secure environments in which children can grow and flourish is what we all want to have. These environments must include the home as well as all other places. We have many tools in our child guidance tool box that we can use to improve the lives and outcomes of all the children in this great country of ours. Repealing section 43 is an essential and much-needed tool for this tool box.

I ask all of you today to work together to quickly move this piece of legislation through our chamber to detailed study at committee, to help us live up to the commitments that we, as a nation, have made to protect the rights of our children and to advance the process of reconciliation that we are all committed to.

It is important to see this bill through so that we can say, once again, the Senate of Canada has acted to help the children of our country grow up safely and flourish.

I end today with the words of Marvin Bernstein, the child and youth advocate for Prince Edward Island:

. . . we must all take a stand to say emphatically that physically striking children is wrong under any circumstance. It is a matter of ensuring protection for the fragile bodies and tender hearts of our most vulnerable citizens.

Meegwetch. Wela'liog. Thank you.

Hon. Donald Neil Plett (Leader of the Opposition): If Senator Kutcher would take a question, I have one.

Senator Kutcher: And I promise to answer it.

Senator Plett: Well, I'm not sure what the answer was because your mic wasn't on, and there is a reason why I am a little loud sometimes, not because I try to be, but because I cannot hear very well. I am assuming, though, that with your smile you decided to take a question. Thumbs up I can see.

Senator Kutcher, before I ask you a question here, the fact that this has been attempted, as you say, 17 times before over a number of different parliaments and, indeed, different governments should maybe give one an idea that there might not be as much appetite for it as some people would say there is.

I want to read a little bit about what the Supreme Court of Canada considered in whether section 43 was constitutional and consistent with the Canadian Charter of Rights. They say:

Physical punishment cannot be used on a child in anger or in retaliation for something a child did.

Objects, such as belts or rulers, must never be used on a child and a child must never be hit or slapped on the face or head.

Any use of force on a child cannot be degrading, inhumane, or result in harm or the prospect of harm.

The Supreme Court further states:

The seriousness of the child's misbehaviour is not relevant to deciding whether the force used was reasonable. The force used must be minor, no matter what the child did.

And lastly, I will say:

Parents/caregivers can only use corrective force (or physical punishment) that is minor or "transitory and trifling" in nature. . . .

And you have repeatedly, Senator Kutcher, at least implied that any form of physical punishment is abuse. With these guidelines here, how is using force to pick up a child who is throwing a temper tantrum and forcefully putting that child into a car seat, or taking a 5-year-old who is throwing a temper tantrum because he or she doesn't want to go to school and picking up that child forcefully and putting that child into the back seat of a car and taking them to school considered, in your opinion, physical abuse? That is all part of child rearing.

• (1600)

Senator Kutcher: Thank you very much for that question, Senator Plett. Like you, I do have problems in hearing but I didn't have a problem hearing you.

You ask a very important question and one that bedevils people in this discussion all the time. What are the limits to appropriate interaction with your children when they are misbehaving or having difficulties? That's a fundamental question, and everyone in this chamber who is a parent has struggled with that question. I know that. I struggle with it.

I can very well remember when I was interning at The Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto and my wife and, at that time, our 2-year-old son came to see me because we used to work 48-hour shifts. There we were in the rotunda in the middle of the world's most prestigious children's hospital and our son decides he is going to have a temper tantrum. I was sitting there in my white pediatrics coat, my kid is having a temper tantrum and everyone is walking by looking at me, wondering, "What kind of a parent is that?" We just let him finish.

You know, like many of us in this chamber, I was not immune from receiving corporal punishment as a child. A lot of us had it. I will tell you, Senator Plett, some of the corporal punishment that I received no one would want to have. I made a vow, as many others here probably did, that when I was going to parent I wasn't going to do the same thing. Those of us who are lucky enough to have grandchildren all want them to grow up to not be hit for any reason, and that is what this bill is trying to address.

Thank you very much for your question.

Senator Plett: I'm going to simply ask one more, because I do not want this to become a debate. I will probably be speaking to the bill, as I have in the past. As a matter of fact, I was the critic of it in one of its iterations.

Again, I fully support the fact that you let your child finish their temper tantrum and it worked for you. You did not tell me what would have happened if that child hadn't finished his or her temper tantrum. I absolutely 100% support that it would be wonderful if there were any way of raising a child without ever being in any way forceful. You're right when you say you may have been disciplined in a way that you should never have. I was disciplined in a way that for years has been illegal, not by my father but by teachers. I don't know why. I thought I was a model student, but some teachers didn't agree with that. I had a physical education teacher hold me down on a chair physically while the principal beat the tar out of me with a leather belt.

Here I am; I'm still a senator. I'm a mad senator, I guess, at times. Maybe it's because of that beating. I don't think it is.

When I was the critic of this, I had my granddaughter, who was 13 or 14 at the time, write a letter to the Senate, telling the Senate that she supported a form of spanking if children didn't behave. It's not that all children don't believe in it. I don't think she had ever been spanked. I don't know, maybe she had. But she thought that was okay.

Even now, in your answer to my question, you used the extreme, which is why I have a problem with this. We're always using the extreme when we do this about how forceful we are. That on the bum isn't forceful; that means "Move, you're holding up traffic."

We need to talk about what's legal now, when we talk about this bill. The assault that you and many speakers are referring to has been illegal for years, as I just read. I'm sorry, there was no question there. I will stop there. You can comment. I will take an opportunity to speak to this down the road.

Senator Kutcher: Thank you very much. I think that people in this chamber might be shocked that Senator Plett and I had a lot of commonalities in our growing up.

I still have — as many of you may have noticed — quite severe attention deficit disorder and a learning disability. I always had the seat of honour in the classroom, Senator Plett, which was right next to the teacher's desk where I could be hit by the medical intervention of the day, which was the yardstick. It was frequent. Whenever I would get it more than four or five a day, I also got to go down to the principal's office for the — I blame my Dupuytren's contracture on that. But I'm not talking about that.

The research also shows us that just a mild corrective action, like the spanking that you were talking about, has a profoundly negative impact on kids. The Supreme Court didn't know that in 2004, because that research is new.

What we need to focus on here is also thinking about children in other parts of the life cycle. If your mom or my mom were having a problem with dementia and they ran out into the street and we grabbed them and spanked them, people would say, "Whoa, what's wrong with that guy?" If our kid runs out, we grab the kid and we spank the kid, that's perfectly fine. I don't think that's perfectly fine, Senator Plett. I think both are wrong.

Hon. Pierre J. Dalphond: I am a bit younger than Senator Plett, but not by that much, but by a few years. I saw in my classroom, of course, the strap and I also saw the three-foot-long ruler that was really to rule the class and not to take any measurements. I'm glad my children were not exposed to it. I must say I think we have moved as a society toward a better approach to education.

That leads to my question. I remember that with a previous iteration of a similar bill I met with a representative of the Canadian Teachers' Federation who was opposed to the repeal of that section because they had the impression that it might expose them to criminal charges. Did you have any contact with the association?

Senator Kutcher: Thank you for that question, Senator Dalphond. I certainly agree with you that our understanding and our changes in parenting practices have evolved over the last 20 or 30 years, and I think they are evolving still and they are evolving to a good point. I do want to comment that we just can't sit by and let things evolve; we need to help them on their way. I did talk about the importance of bringing in positive parenting programs and parenting supports such as Strongest Families, which is on the Wellness Together app that any Canadian can access for free.

Yes, we are meeting with the Canadian Teachers' Federation tomorrow. I know the Honourable Senator Sinclair met with them a number of times. I spoke to scores, almost hundreds, of teachers whom I know personally from many parts of this country in doing my research on the bill. Most of them were shocked to learn about section 43. They didn't know about it.

• (1610)

I have spent the last 20 years working in schools all across Canada and other parts of the world with mental health programs in schools. I have been really struck by how teachers care for their kids. They want the kids to do well. They want to use the best interventions to help the children succeed and flourish and do the best they can. They don't want to hit kids.

I think we as a society have to make sure we are supporting our teachers, that we're giving them the resources they need, the in-classroom supports and the professional supports. We just had World Teachers' Day. Teachers play such an important role in helping us raise our kids. They're so important to our kids that we have to support teachers more. We have to give them more tools. Why do we have 30 kids in a classroom, for crying out loud? It's so hard to teach. Senator Martin is a teacher, Senator Cordy is a teacher and Senator Deacon is a teacher; they can tell us what it's like. I'm a university teacher. It's not quite as challenging.

I thank you for that question. I'm looking forward to this bill going to committee so that the committee can do a deep dive on the issues Senator Plett raised, which are important concerns. I respect Senator Plett for raising them and challenging us to think about them, because we have to think about them. They're important. Hopefully, the committee can come up with some really good thinking about this bill. Thank you very much, Senator Dalphond.

(On motion of Senator Martin, debate adjourned.)

[Translation]

INCOME TAX ACT

BILL TO AMEND—FIRST READING

The Hon. the Speaker pro tempore informed the Senate that a message had been received from the House of Commons with Bill C-30, An Act to amend the Income Tax Act (temporary enhancement to the Goods and Services Tax/Harmonized Sales Tax credit).

(Bill read first time.)

The Hon. the Speaker pro tempore: 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]

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION ADOPTED

Leave having been given to revert to Government Business, Motions, Order No. 62:

Hon. Raymonde Gagné (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate), pursuant to notice of October 5, 2022, moved:

That, when the Senate next adjourns after the adoption of this motion, it do stand adjourned until Monday, October 17, 2022, at 6 p.m.; and

That rule 3-3(1) be suspended on that day.

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to.)

STUDY ON ISSUES RELATING TO HUMAN RIGHTS GENERALLY

FOURTH REPORT OF HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE AND REQUEST FOR GOVERNMENT RESPONSE ADOPTED

The Senate proceeded to consideration of the fourth report (interim) of the Standing Senate Committee on Human Rights, entitled *The Scars that We Carry: Forced and Coerced Sterilization of Persons in Canada — Part II*, deposited with the Clerk of the Senate on July 14, 2022.

Hon. Salma Ataullahjan moved:

That the fourth report of the Standing Senate Committee on Human Rights, entitled *The Scars that We Carry: Forced and Coerced Sterilization of Persons in Canada — Part II*, deposited with the Clerk of the Senate on July 14, 2022, be adopted and that, pursuant to rule 12-24(1), the Senate request a complete and detailed response from the government, with the Minister of Health being identified as minister responsible for responding to the report, in consultation with the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, the Minister of Indigenous Services and the Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Youth.

She said: Honourable senators, as Chair of the Standing Senate Committee on Human Rights, I wanted to take a few minutes to speak to you about the committee's report entitled *The Scars that We Carry: Forced and Coerced Sterilization of Persons in Canada — Part II*. This report highlights the experiences and perspectives of survivors and outlines solutions that the committee believes are needed to bring an end to this practice.

Our study found that the practice of forced and coerced sterilization of persons in Canada is ongoing, and that law and policy changes are needed to prevent it from being inflicted on others.

As part of the study, the committee heard from academic and civil society representatives, as well as survivors of forced and coerced sterilization, and wishes to extend its deepest gratitude to these witnesses. Their testimony not only confirmed the ongoing practice of forced and coerced sterilization in Canada, it also described various forms of coercion used by medical personnel to obtain consent.

Our report provides 13 recommendations that can only begin to address the issue of forced and coerced sterilization in Canada. We are hopeful that this report and its recommendations can help lead to meaningful change by finally stopping the practice in its tracks. Thank you.

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to and report adopted.)

THE SENATE

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

On the Order:

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

That the Senate of Canada recognize that:

- (a) climate change is an urgent crisis that requires an immediate and ambitious response;

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

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

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

(On motion of Senator Martin, debate adjourned.)

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

On the Order:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

SCHEDULE

AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION OF CANADA

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

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

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

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

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

(On motion of Senator Martin, debate adjourned.)

MOTION PERTAINING TO MINIMUMS FOR GOVERNMENT BILLS—
DEBATE CONTINUED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Tannas, seconded by the Honourable Senator Black:

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

1. except as provided in this order, the question not be put on the motion for third reading of a government bill unless the orders for resuming debate at second and third reading have, together, been called at least three times, in addition to the sittings at which the motions for second and third readings were moved;
2. when a government bill has been read a first time, and before a motion is moved to set the date for second reading, the Leader of the Government in the Senate or the Deputy Leader of the Government in the Senate may, without notice, move that the bill be deemed an urgent matter, and that the provisions of paragraph 1 of this order not apply to proceedings on the bill; and
3. when a motion has been moved pursuant to paragraph 2 of this order, the following provisions apply:
 - (a) the debate shall only deal with whether the bill should be deemed an urgent matter or not;
 - (b) the debate shall not be adjourned;
 - (c) the debate shall last a maximum of 20 minutes;
 - (d) no senator shall speak for more than 5 minutes;
 - (e) no senators shall speak more than once;
 - (f) the debate shall not be interrupted for any purpose, except for the reading of a message from the Crown or an event announced in such a message;
 - (g) the debate may continue beyond the ordinary time of adjournment, if necessary, until the conclusion of the debate and consequential business;
 - (h) the time taken in debate and for any vote shall not count as part of Routine Proceedings;
 - (i) no amendment or other motion shall be received, except a motion that a certain senator be now heard or do now speak;
 - (j) when debate concludes or the time for debate expires, the Speaker shall put the question; and

- (k) any standing vote requested shall not be deferred, and the bells shall ring for only 15 minutes.

(On motion of Senator Martin, debate adjourned.)

[*Translation*]

SENATE'S SELF-GOVERNANCE

INQUIRY—DEBATE CONTINUED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the inquiry of the Honourable Senator McPhedran, calling the attention of the Senate to parliamentary privilege, the *Ethics and Conflict of Interest Code for Senators* and options for increasing accountability, transparency and fairness in the context of the Senate's unique self-governance, including guidelines on public disclosure.

(On motion of Senator Pate, debate adjourned.)

[*English*]

The Hon. the Speaker pro tempore: Honourable senators, is it agreed to suspend the sitting until 6 p.m., when we will resume for Committee of the Whole?

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

(The sitting of the Senate was suspended.)

(The sitting of the Senate was resumed.)

• (1800)

BUSINESS OF THE SENATE

The Hon. the Speaker: Pursuant to the order of Tuesday, October 4, 2022, I leave the chair for the Senate to resolve into a Committee of the Whole on the subject matter of Bill C-30, An Act to amend the Income Tax Act (temporary enhancement to the Goods and Services Tax/Harmonized Sales Tax credit). The Honourable Senator Ringuette will chair the committee.

[*Translation*]

INCOME TAX ACT

CONSIDERATION OF SUBJECT MATTER IN COMMITTEE
OF THE WHOLE

On the Order:

The Senate in Committee of the Whole in order to receive the Honourable Chrystia Freeland, P.C., M.P., Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, accompanied by no more than two officials, to consider the subject matter of

Bill C-30, An Act to amend the Income Tax Act (temporary enhancement to the Goods and Services Tax/Harmonized Sales Tax credit).

(The sitting of the Senate was suspended and put into Committee of the Whole, the Honourable Pierrette Ringuette in the chair.)

The Chair: Honourable senators, the Senate is resolved into a Committee of the Whole on the subject matter of Bill C-30, An Act to amend the Income Tax Act (temporary enhancement to the Goods and Services Tax/Harmonized Sales Tax credit).

Honourable senators, in a Committee of the Whole senators shall address the chair but need not stand. Under the Rules the speaking time is 10 minutes, including questions and answers, but, as ordered, if a senator does not use all of his or her time, the balance can be yielded to another senator. The committee will receive the Honourable Chrystia Freeland, P.C., M.P., Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, and I would now invite her to join us, accompanied by her officials.

(Pursuant to the Order of the Senate, the Honourable Chrystia Freeland and her officials were escorted to seats in the Senate chamber.)

The Chair: Minister, welcome to the Senate. I would ask you to introduce your officials and to make your opening remarks.

Hon. Chrystia Freeland, P.C., M.P., Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance: Thank you, Madam Chair. I want to thank the officials from the Department of Finance who are here with me: Miodrag Jovanovic, Assistant Deputy Minister, Tax Policy Branch, Finance Canada, and Pierre Leblanc, Director General, Personal Income Tax, Finance Canada.

Madam Chair, I'm pleased to be here with you and the senators to discuss Bill C-30, the Cost of Living Relief Act, No. 1, which will provide targeted tax relief for Canadians who need it most. This bill proposes to double the GST credit for six months.

Single Canadians with no children would receive \$234 more and families with two children almost \$500 more. Seniors will receive an additional \$225.

[*English*]

This is additional support for roughly 11 million Canadian households.

Bill C-30 is just one element of our new package of support. As members of the Senate know, Bill C-11 includes a Canada dental benefit and a one-time top-up of \$500 to the Canada Housing Benefit.

[*Translation*]

If we adopt these two new pieces of legislation, up to half a million children under 12 could go to the dentist. What is more, low-income renters who are among the most vulnerable will have a bit more breathing room.

These measures are part of our plan to make life more affordable and this plan is already putting more money in Canadians' pockets this year.

We improved the Canada Workers Benefit. We are cutting child care fees in half by the end of the year. In July, we increased Old Age Security by 10% for people 75 and older.

[*English*]

Honourable senators, our plan is targeted, fiscally responsible and supports the most vulnerable Canadians — our lowest-paid workers, low-income renters and families who cannot afford to take their kids to the dentist. We are doing this in a way that will not pour unnecessary fuel on the fire and in a way that is fiscally responsible.

I want to be clear: We cannot compensate every single Canadian for the rising costs that are driven by the global pandemic and by Putin's illegal invasion of Ukraine. To do so would only make inflation worse and make the Bank of Canada's job harder. Canadians are smart, and I know they understand that.

This plan is targeted at the most vulnerable Canadians who do need a bit of help. It represents an approach that is fiscally responsible and compassionate at the same time.

We recognize that all Canadians are cutting back on costs right now, and we recognize that our government needs to do that, too.

[*Translation*]

In our spring budget, we committed to reducing government spending by \$9 billion. This year, Canada has the lowest deficit of all the G7 countries. Of those countries, we have the lowest debt-to-GDP ratio. Our AAA credit rating was confirmed this year by Moody's, S&P and DBRS. Our new targeted inflation relief measures represent a cost of only 0.1% of Canada's GDP, or an additional cost of \$3.1 billion.

With this legislation, we want to strike a balance between compassion and financial responsibility. These support measures provide help to Canadians when they need it.

Canada can afford to be compassionate to the most vulnerable among us and it will do just that.

I will now be pleased to answer your questions.

[*English*]

Senator Plett: Thank you, minister, for being here to discuss Bill C-30. We are not discussing the dental plan today; we are discussing the GST plan.

I am always a little afraid when we have a minister of the government saying, “Only \$3 billion.” To many of us, that is a very large number.

My first question, minister, is simple: Did your department conduct any analysis of the impact that this spending measure will have on the inflation rate in Canada?

Ms. Freeland: Thank you, Senator Plett. Let me be clear: I take spending very seriously, and I absolutely recognize that \$3.1 billion is a significant sum of money. We were very careful and thoughtful in choosing this measure, striking a balance between compassionate support for those who need it the most and remaining fiscally responsible.

The \$3.1 billion in incremental spending — which includes the incremental spending on the other measures as well — is 0.1% of Canada’s GDP. I want to remind people that, today, Canada has the lowest deficit, as well as the lowest debt-to-GDP ratio, in the G7.

Senator Plett: Minister, when we ask a question, we are given a limited amount of time. I would appreciate you at least mentioning something in your answers about the question I asked.

I will go to a different question and see if this one will work better.

It is now clear that your government’s policies have directly contributed to the rising cost of living. This is why it is now widely referred to as “JustinFlation.”

In fact, earlier today in Halifax, the Governor of the Bank of Canada said, “. . . we need to slow spending in the economy so supply can catch up with demand.”

Minister, how will Bill C-30 slow spending in the economy, as requested by the Governor of the Bank of Canada?

• (1810)

Ms. Freeland: With due respect, senator, I disagree with many of the assertions you have just made. I very much disagree with the assertion that Canada’s government spending or that our fiscal policy is loose.

As I said at the beginning, we have the lowest deficit in the G7. That is the appropriate group of peer countries to compare us to. I was very mindful, and our government was mindful, when we tabled our budget in April, of the fact that inflation was elevated. We understand that it is very important for fiscal policy not to work at cross-purposes with monetary policy. That is why we were careful in April. That is why, as I said in my remarks, this support is not going to support everyone. This is carefully targeted relief that is supporting the people who need it the most. It is absolutely within a fiscally responsible approach, which is the one our government is taking.

Senator Plett: Well, that is two-for-two, minister. You may disagree with my approach and you may disagree with what I’m saying, but you cannot disagree with a question. My question was very clear and quite specific. Again, you did not touch it, but rather you told me what you think of my approach.

During the last election, the Prime Minister told Canadians he doesn’t think about monetary policies. Since then, inflation has skyrocketed by 7%, and grocery prices are up by 10.8%, rising at the fastest pace in 40 years.

You can disagree with that, minister, but I would appreciate an answer to whether you can tell this chamber and all Canadians — the Canadians that you say are very smart, and that is the one thing that I agree with you on, minister — whether the Prime Minister has started thinking about a monetary policy yet. If not, do you have any idea how high inflation and interest rates will need to go before he starts thinking about a monetary policy?

Ms. Freeland: Thank you, senator. Our government understands that monetary policy is the province and the responsibility of the Bank of Canada. We also understand the importance of the independence of the Bank of Canada in Canada’s institutional framework. I think that it is important for all of Canada’s political parties to respect that institutional independence, particularly at a time when there is a high degree of volatility and uncertainty in the global economy.

When it comes to inflation, it is probably worth pointing out that for the past two consecutive months, inflation has actually been falling in Canada. It was at 8.1% in June, 7.6% in July, and the August number was 7%. It is still elevated and it is still a very serious concern for Canadians. It is worth noting that trend as well.

Senator Plett: Minister, according to your calculations, because of Bill C-30, a single mother with one child and a \$30,000 net income will receive an additional \$386.50 for July through December. This works out to an additional \$2.10 a day. However, over the same period, the purchasing power of this single mother’s income will have been reduced by more than \$1,000 due to inflation, or about \$5.43 a day.

While your government is presiding over the highest inflation hike in 40 years, which takes more than \$5 a day from a single mother such as this, you are turning around and offering \$2 a day and pretending to be a hero. When will your government take real action, minister, to fight inflation, which is making life more expensive for all Canadians?

Ms. Freeland: Thank you for the question, senator. I think it is important for us to be clear — and this is why I underscored this in my opening remarks — that it is simply not possible or advisable for the government to compensate all Canadians for the very serious impact of inflation. We are not claiming to do that. It is not possible to do that precisely because we understand that at a time of elevated inflation, it is really important for fiscal policy not to be at odds with monetary policy.

We understand the importance of a fiscally responsible approach. At the same time, we know that we can afford, as a country, to be compassionate and provide targeted support to the Canadians who need it the most.

Senator, this may be a second point upon which we agree: I agree with you that this is inflation relief. I absolutely understand that things are hard for a lot of Canadian families and hardest of all for the most vulnerable. I do think that it is the right thing to provide this support now and I am glad that in the House of Commons we had unanimous support for this legislation earlier today.

Senator Plett: You will likely have good support for this legislation here, too. That does not preclude us from having issues, minister.

When the measures in Bill C-30 and Bill C-31 were announced, economists had already begun to warn the Trudeau government against measures that would worsen inflationary pressures. The CIBC, Bank of Montreal and Scotiabank have all released reports expressing concern over using revenue windfalls for additional spending. I will quote Derek Holt from Scotiabank:

. . . it seems sensible to assume that this will add to pressures on measures of core inflation Any belief that it will ease inflationary pressures must have studied different economics textbooks.

Minister, do you have a different economics textbook from other Canadian economists?

Ms. Freeland: We believe that, right now, we need to strike a balance between fiscal responsibility and compassion. I am confident that this measure does precisely that. Let me remind honourable senators that Canada has a triple-A credit rating and the lowest deficit in the G7.

Senator Loffreda: Thank you, minister, for being with us here this evening. I'm honoured to sponsor Bill C-30 in the Senate, and I'm happy about the collaboration and commitment both here in the Senate and in the House of Commons to ensure that Bill C-30 receives Royal Assent this month. Our Speaker pro tempore, Senator Ringuette, had asked a question during my Bill C-30 briefing, and I figured why not obtain an answer and confirmation straight from the minister; she will be joining us.

This is a tax-free credit, and there is no possibility of any clawback from the provinces; the keyword here is "clawback." The credit will be a full benefit for those in need, as intended, and help individuals and families offset the GST or HST that they are paying. Have there been any discussions with the provinces, and will there be any clawbacks to that effect? Just looking for confirmation on your part.

Ms. Freeland: I'm happy to confirm that. Mr. Jovanovic, who is here with me and has forgotten more about tax policy than I think pretty much anyone in the world will ever learn, has confirmed that as well.

Senator Loffreda: I agree that it is targeted, fiscally responsible and will support low-income Canadians.

My question now is on Canadians who do not file taxes. Obviously, to benefit from the GST tax rebate, one must file his or her taxes. However, according to our Auditor General, we know that close to 10% of Canadians do not file taxes, and many

of those Canadians would likely fall into the category of low- or moderate-income individuals. They are the target recipients for this type of rebate.

I think that this is a major issue. It is a shame that not all Canadians who deserve and need the GST rebate will be getting it. Have you looked into how the government could further encourage every working-age Canadian to file his or her taxes and, within your department, how much of a problem or challenge is this? How do you suggest we rectify this situation?

• (1820)

Ms. Freeland: Yes. I think it is a very good question. It is something that we thought about and talked about a lot in choosing this approach.

Our view was that we wanted to use a vehicle that already existed and was effective at targeting the most vulnerable Canadians. We knew that people needed some support with elevated inflation, and we thought it would be more practical and more effective to choose a vehicle that exists already and has been designed to do that, such as the GST tax credit. That is why we chose this vehicle for delivering that extra support.

You make a good point that there are some people who don't file tax returns. I do think that we need to be working together — all of us — to encourage people to do that, because there are a lot of benefits available for low-income Canadians if they file their return and we know who they are and can identify them.

Senator Galvez: Welcome, Minister Freeland. Thank you very much for your opening remarks.

The goal of Bill C-30 as part of a package to support low-income families is well received and needed. This support has the potential to impact 11 million people and families, which is great.

However, I take a look at the global economy and follow on the questioning of my colleague Senator Plett. When we look at the generosity of the government in distributing taxpayer money, Canadian taxpayers are offering the fossil fuel industry between \$4.5 billion and \$18 billion per year in subsidies, and, at the same time, this sector is reporting record profits. We know that inflation is related to the war and the energy crisis.

My first question is: Can you please update us on the progress of eliminating inefficient fossil fuel subsidies in the peer review with Argentina? That started in 2018, but it was a promise, I think, from the Harper government in 2009 as part of the G20.

Ms. Freeland: Yes, thank you for the question.

Canada, together with our peers, has committed to eliminating fossil fuel subsidies, and we will do that ahead of schedule.

I will leave it there. That is what we have committed to do. We are doing the work on it now, and we will do it ahead of schedule.

Senator Galvez: The preoccupation here is that we are picking up on our credit, and we are disbursing public money. This situation is no different from what is happening in Europe or elsewhere, where they are considering an excess profit tax or windfall tax.

Are you considering a way to recoup some of this through an excess profit tax on the fossil fuel industry?

Ms. Freeland: I would actually argue that the situation in Europe and in Canada is, in fact, really different. In Canada today, I think we find ourselves very lucky to be richly endowed with natural resources, and we are lucky to be a producer of oil and gas.

When we speak to and look at the situation that our European allies are facing, it is really good that we can heat our homes and power our industries.

Europe, unfortunately, finds itself in a position where it is hugely dependent on Russia — on a dictatorship — for fossil fuels, and that is causing much greater disruption in the economies of Europe than we are facing. I do think the situation is really different, and the way the energy market works in Europe and the way the energy market works in Canada is really different.

Senator, where you and I can agree is I absolutely do think that it is important for a country like Canada, where we believe in a strong social safety net, to ensure we have a tax system that can pay for that and ensure that those who are the best off pay their fair share. That is why we introduced in the budget a permanent 1.5% tax on the largest banks and insurers. It is why we introduced a 15% COVID recovery dividend to help pay for the costs of supporting Canada and Canadians through the pandemic. Our luxury tax on really expensive cars, planes and yachts came into force on September 1, 2022.

Senator Galvez: You committed to moving toward mandatory reporting on climate-related financial risk only for some institutions, starting sometime in 2024.

Given the present situation, and because of what you are saying about equilibrium between compassion but also fiscally responsible —

Senator Downe: Point of order, Madam Chair. This is a Committee of the Whole, where I believe we're allowed points of order.

I had many questions for the minister relating to topics other than the legislation before us, but I was advised it was against the rules and that we are to ask about the legislation before us. I would like to ask the minister about beneficial ownership, but it is not covered in this bill, so I think we are required to stay on topic.

The Chair: Agreed.

As long as you tie your question to the bill, Senator Galvez.

Senator Galvez: My question is related to the bill in the same sense as Senator Plett's. It is exactly the same situation. We need to be fiscally responsible, and we need to fight inflation. If there were no points of order on Senator Plett's questions, I do not understand why my question would be the subject of a point of order.

Will it be important to advance this idea of moving forward with mandatory reporting on the climate-related financial risk?

The Chair: I am sorry, Madam Minister, the time has expired.

[*Translation*]

Senator Bellemare: Welcome, minister. We're pleased to have you here with us.

Bill C-30 is obviously welcome, and I will vote to support it. I do think this is a bit of a weak measure, however, when you consider the significant increase in the cost of groceries and transportation, and the increase in government revenue from the GST. As you know, GST revenues have increased by almost 50% in one year. This increase is partly linked to inflation and represents roughly five times the cost of your bill.

Minister, has your department considered anti-inflation strategies targeted directly at prices, such as a temporary reduction in the GST and certain energy taxes?

France has experimented with similar kinds of measures and, according to its National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies, they have had a meaningful and significant impact. France's current inflation rate is 5%, not 8%.

In your opinion, should the federal government use such interim measures to reduce the rate of inflation caused by temporary problems in the supply chain?

Ms. Freeland: Thank you for your question, senator. I want to begin by saying thank you for your support of this bill. I also share your concern because, over the past few months, it's been difficult for our government to strike a balance between compassionate support for those who need it the most and remaining fiscally responsible. We have kept that balance in mind during every decision we have made.

• (1830)

You asked me whether we had considered other potential measures to combat inflation.

In our view, the primary measure in our type of economy, in our institutional system to fight inflation, is the work of the Bank of Canada. Our government has great respect for the importance of the Bank of Canada. To help the Bank of Canada, we need to respect its institutional independence and demonstrate fiscal responsibility. That is the balance we have tried to strike, and we believe that in Canada, those are the most important tools that we can use.

Senator Bellemare: Of course, I understand your point of view, but lowering the GST would have reduced the rate of inflation and supported the work of the Bank of Canada. In this state of affairs, the economic costs of the current strategy to fight inflation could be high and there's no guarantee that it will work. One thing is certain, the current monetary policy has cost 110,000 Canadians their jobs since August and EI costs will increase.

Will the federal government decide to start paying into the EI fund again as it did until the 1990s, especially since there may be a downturn on the horizon? Wouldn't that be a fairer approach? At present, only employers and workers pay into the fund.

Ms. Freeland: Thank you for your question. I think that our EI program is a very important component of our support system for the most vulnerable and for all workers.

Given the uncertainty in the global economy, it is very important to have a solid and well-funded EI system. That is why our government doesn't support lowering premiums. We believe that, at present, given the fragile global economy, which the managing director of the International Monetary Fund spoke about today, it's important to have a well-funded EI system. You're right. My colleague, Carla Qualtrough, spoke to the House of Commons about this today. We're currently examining the EI system. We plan to modernize it, and I believe everyone supports that.

[English]

Senator Klyne: Deputy Prime Minister, a chief responsibility of government is to help those who are struggling, the most vulnerable. Doubling the GST tax credit for six months will have a positive impact for those living on a fixed income. Obviously, the rising cost of living affects everyone, but those living on a fixed income and those hovering near or below the poverty line feel it the most. There is an immediate need to support people in those categories.

We see the impact of inflation everywhere, not just at the grocery store and the gas pump. It's my understanding that this bill is targeted to provide relief to those most in need, and it can't come soon enough.

Could you please tell us if this measure of relief is means tested — I assume it is — and do you have a sense of what percentage of Canadians will qualify for this temporary enhancement?

Ms. Freeland: Thank you very much, Senator Klyne. Maybe I'm mistaken, but I believe this is the first time we've spoken in the Senate. It's very nice to talk to you.

I agree with you very much, senator, that this relief is needed by people. That's why I am grateful to all the MPs in the House of Commons who decided to support the measure so we were able to move it through quickly, and I am grateful to everyone here. You are all working late at night and interrupting your regular schedule to get this job done, and I'm sincerely grateful.

Part of our effort to make it possible to get that support to people quickly was to make a conscious decision not to reinvent the wheel. We used a pipe that already exists in Canada to support the most vulnerable, and that is the GST tax credit. We decided to double it for six months to give that extra support. That is what we're doing.

The means test through which the GST tax credit is ordinarily provided applies in this case as well. It should be 11 million households.

[Translation]

Senator Dagenais: I have no problem with the GST rebate proposed in Bill C-30. I think Canadians deserve one-time support to help them through the tough times we're experiencing. One thing is certain: Sending cheques to 11 million people will certainly help families. However, since the measure is going to cost \$2.5 billion, I'd like to know if this expenditure will be added to the deficit or if it will be financed by the surplus of taxes that the government collects because of inflation-related price increases. Let's face it, inflation is good for the government.

Ms. Freeland: Thank you for the question, and thank you for supporting this bill. I agree with you that this measure will help many Canadians.

On the subject of finances, the fact is that the Canadian economy has been very strong this year. We've had the strongest growth in the G7, and that is real growth. I travelled extensively across Canada this summer, and when I talked to businesses and workers, everyone told me they just couldn't produce enough for their customers. We have lots of customers here in Canada and abroad. I would say that is a good thing.

As Minister of Finance, I hope that all of you, as Canadian senators, agree with me that a strong Canadian economy, a growing economy, is a good thing. I am very pleased with how the Canadian economy is growing. Government revenues are growing too. You're right; that's what we've been seeing since the beginning of the fiscal year. From April to July, we recorded a \$6.3-billion surplus. At the same time, I know we have a lot of expenses. I am keenly aware of the importance of fiscal responsibility, and I also have to tell you that I'm paying very close attention to global economic uncertainty, as are our Department of Finance officials. I believe that a responsible fiscal stance is more important today than ever.

• (1840)

In addition, it is clear that the Bank of Canada is reacting to high inflation by raising interest rates, and the effect on the economy is already being felt. The economy has clearly slowed down, and this will obviously have a fiscal impact.

The Chair: Senator Dagenais, you have approximately one minute left.

Senator Dagenais: I will yield the balance of my time to Senator Patterson.

[English]

Senator Patterson: Thank you for being here, minister. We all agree, I'm sure, with your statement that Bill C-30 should deliver tax relief to the Canadians who need it the most. Yet — and this was raised earlier — you have to file a tax return to get the benefit. But we know the rate of non-filing is highest amongst economically vulnerable communities. That's especially true in the North. Research shows that the non-filing rate in Nunavut, in my region, is estimated at 28.5%, the highest in Canada. I think this is partly because tax returns are not in the first language of the majority — Inuktitut — or of the many who are unilingual.

Will your government consider providing support services from Inuit personnel — this has been put in place by the Canada Revenue Agency, or CRA, in the past, but was discontinued — to encourage unilingual residents, those who are linguistically challenged or those who don't speak the official languages to be able to file tax returns and thereby qualify for this important benefit?

Ms. Freeland: Well, senator, that is a really good and important question. As I said, in thinking about and making a choice on how to provide this support, we made what I think is both a practical and a right choice of “Let's not reinvent the wheel; let's use the pipe we have.”

However, I absolutely agree with you that there is a significant downside, namely, the one you have identified. You have identified a really particular problem for the people you represent. I hope you'll agree that our government — at this point, frankly, I think it's all Canadians — understands the importance of reconciliation and the duty we — non-Indigenous people, in particular — have to support Indigenous people and to include them as fully as possible in everything. So you make a very good point.

I can assure you that I hear you and this is duly noted by both me and our team.

Senator Patterson: Thank you, minister. CRA made that work in the past. They provided convenient, accessible services, sometimes over the phone. It would be great if that could be revived.

Your government did recognize this hurdle in the Canada Emergency Response Benefit, or CERB, program, which didn't require the filing of a tax return. Hopefully, we can encourage more Inuit to file tax returns, which will provide revenues to your government and also allow them access. They are usually the folks who most need it.

Ms. Freeland: All I can say is that is an excellent point. It is duly noted. We heard it earlier today.

The CRA has been doing a fantastic job since COVID first hit Canada. It turns out to be an effective way to help support Canadians. The GST rebate is another example of that. Together, the more we can make it easier for Canadians to file tax returns and to understand that it can be a path to getting the support that you deserve and that you're eligible for, I think the better.

I welcome your question. We have noted it. It's a question also to the CRA, so it's noted.

Senator Patterson: I understand. Thank you. I will yield to Senator Tannas.

Senator Tannas: Minister, if people took this opportunity to file their income taxes in order to access this benefit and future benefits, is there retroactivity? Is there a cut-off in that if they don't file their taxes by a certain day, they won't get it? What kind of window is there by which people who haven't filed their taxes could do so and still receive this benefit and any future ones?

Ms. Freeland: People can file now to be present in the system and get the benefit. To the point about future benefits, they will be eligible for future benefits too.

I want to point out one quick thing. I'm going to take an opportunity to plug a very important benefit people really need to be aware of, which is the Canada Workers Benefit. This is another huge support for low-income, working Canadians. Even if you don't owe us tax, please file so you can get that support that you deserve.

Senator Martin: Minister, I note that the bill before us today is accompanied by a Royal Recommendation. This means that the bill authorizes new charges for purposes not anticipated in the estimates.

The Main Estimates were tabled on March 1, the same month that Statistics Canada reported a 6.7% rise in inflation. Supplementary Estimates (A) were tabled on June 7, the same month that inflation hit 8.1%. Yet, neither of these estimates contained any mention of the spending initiative before us today.

Minister, can you tell us why your government could not see this spending crunch coming for Canadian families? Can you also tell us exactly when your government finally realized that “Justinflation” was hurting our most vulnerable citizens?

Ms. Freeland: Honourable senators, you are here working tonight. It's almost 7 o'clock on a Thursday night. I think we're all here to support Canadians. I think we all understand that this is a very challenging time for Canadians and for Canadian families. We all understand that inflation is a significant challenge.

As we saw inflation rising as the economy reopened following the COVID closures and what the global economy did, my objective and our government's objective was to try to strike a balance between maintaining fiscal responsibility — not making the problem worse and not making the Bank of Canada's job harder — while, at the same time, providing some relief to the people who needed it the most. This measure is part of it, but it is far from the only thing.

I spoke right at the beginning about the fact that dental care is going to be really important for young families. The housing benefit is also going to be really important. The housing benefit and dental care were both something that I talked about and made provision for in the budget in April. I just spoke to Senator Tannas about the Canada Workers Benefit, which kicked in at a higher level in April. That is another important source of support, as is the Old Age Security, or OAS, pension going up by 10% in July.

There are a number of programs and additional support measures people are getting this year as inflation has been elevated. I am glad about that and I'm glad we're doing a bit more now.

Senator Martin: The one-time help contained in Bill C-30, which Conservatives support as welcome relief for families, is for \$467. The average family of four is now spending over \$1,200 more each year to put food on the table, not to mention the rising costs of heat, gasoline and rent. Grocery prices are up by 10.8%, rising at the fastest pace in 40 years.

• (1850)

Minister, what assurances do you have that, once that \$467 has been spent by families, inflation will have been beaten?

Ms. Freeland: Senator Martin, in my opening remarks and in all the opportunities I've had to speak to Canadians about this, I have intentionally been candid with Canadians. I have said that this is inflation relief. This is not and does not claim to be a measure that will compensate every single Canadian for all of the additional costs that people are bearing in this time of elevated inflation.

The fact is we need to find the balance between some compassion and some inflation relief while also being fiscally responsible.

I think Canadians really are smart and do understand that it is actually impossible for us to compensate everyone for everything. If we were to try to do that, it would be a Sisyphean struggle, and we would be making the Bank of Canada's job not only harder but impossible.

So that's not what we're setting out to do. We're setting out to provide some extra support for people who really need it and, at the same time, chart a fiscally responsible course, which will mean that the fiscal policy is not running in opposition to monetary policy.

Senator Martin: Under Bill C-30, a family of four earning more than \$58,500 for a couple with two children will receive no benefits. Minister, what do you tell those families? Is a couple, each making \$30,000 a year, with two children, considered too rich by your government to be a part of the middle class?

Ms. Freeland: As I said, what we have sought to do with this measure — and I am grateful to all the senators who will support it — is find that balance between compassion and fiscal responsibility. That has meant targeting the support to the people who need it the most. This measure does cover 11 million households, and I'm glad we're able to support those households.

I would also say, senator, that there are other measures in place in Canada to support families. I am a big proponent of the work we have done together now with every single province and territory in Canada, regardless of political affiliation, to create a universal early learning and child care program.

You spoke about family, senator. Canadian families across the country will have a 50% reduction in child care fees. That is a real affordability measure. I've talked to a lot of families who say that child care is like a second mortgage. We are lowering that second mortgage by 50%. That will help.

Again, I want to speak again about the Canada Workers Benefit. There are a lot of middle-class families who are working hard, and the Canada Workers Benefit gives them an added boost. It has been increased a lot this year.

Senator Martin: Back on April 27, Tiff Macklem admitted to senators on the Senate Banking Committee that “. . . we got a lot of things right and we got some things wrong . . .” Since that date, every news release issued by the Bank of Canada has made clear that its number one priority is to tackle inflation by reducing aggregate demand.

Minister, how do you square the Governing Council's level of intense commitment to achieve the 2% target with Bill C-30?

Ms. Freeland: Thank you very much, senator.

Of course it is the case that the press releases of the Bank of Canada focus on the inflation target. We renewed at the end of last year the mandate that the government gives to the Bank of Canada every five years, and we reasserted the centrality of targeting and fighting inflation as the Bank of Canada's central mandate. That is the Bank of Canada's job. Our government very much understands and respects the independence of the Bank of Canada.

I actually believe that today, at a time of real uncertainty in the global economy, understanding the value of institutional stability in Canada, including the Bank of Canada, is of great importance. That's why our government absolutely takes that position.

In terms of this measure, as I said at the outset, we are very confident that it fits within our fiscally responsible framework. The incremental cost of all of our measures is 0.1% of Canada's GDP. We were very careful about that.

Senator Pate: Thank you for joining us, minister. Thank you to you and your associates for all the work you have been doing during this time and beyond that.

As you have said tonight and before, Canada can afford to be compassionate to the most vulnerable among us. I agree, and I believe you share the concern that, unfortunately, as you have already acknowledged, this won't meet the needs or reach everybody in need. Significantly, Bill C-30 contributes to a patchwork of services within the Income Tax Act that still leaves some poverty-related issues unaddressed.

I echo the concerns raised by Senators Patterson and Tannas that, for those who are the most economically impoverished, the challenges of tax filing for benefits claims can be prohibitive. We

look forward to the additional supports you mentioned to them that you are looking at, in addition to assisting those currently not on the tax rolls.

My question is related to that. The last time that Canada had a major tax reform was in the 1970s. The age of the Income Tax Act, if I can be so bold, is showing. What steps are you and your government planning to take to consider modernizing the income tax system to make it more equitable and user-friendly?

Ms. Freeland: I can't resist trying a little joke here. I was actually born before the 1970s, and it concerns me a little bit that we would consider something born in the 1970s to be "aging." That's just a joke.

I do take your point, and I guess the aging applies to someone born, like me, in 1968 as well. That is just a moment of levity.

You talked about there still being poverty in Canada. That's an important point to make. It's very characteristic of you to bring that to the fore. Our government and I take it very seriously. We have been working to put measures in place that will bring Canadians out of poverty. The Canada Child Benefit is a really important measure, and it has lifted around 300,000 Canadian children out of poverty. That's important.

I agree with you, though, senator, that there is work to be done on our tax system and our social safety net. We've also had some discussions about EI.

So I agree. I'm happy to continue the conversation with you and other senators who are interested in that work.

Senator Pate: The law commission has been reinvigorated. It strikes me that a very good project for the reinvigorated law commission to look at is the whole tax system, including everything from, as was alluded to, tax evasion, offshore, beneficial ownership and many of the other issues that contribute to inequality.

Ms. Freeland: Duly noted. I will point out — and I know you're well aware of this — that in the budget in April, a number of measures were put in place — very careful, targeted and smart — to close some very significant tax loopholes in the Canadian system.

• (1900)

Again, I would be the last person to claim that the work is complete. But on the tax side, the April budget did some really important work there which will help to ensure that everyone is paying their fair share in Canada.

Senator Coyle: Welcome back to the Senate of Canada, Minister Freeland. It is great to see you.

I am going to continue a little bit on that line. Minister, in today's context of high inflation, I think that everyone in the room understands that Bill C-30 — and some of us understand that Bill C-31 — are part of the government's response to the current affordability crisis, and you have my support.

I think that it is really important to understand this in the context. I know it is a one-time thing and it is this current inflationary environment, and that is why we have these, but you have mentioned other already announced, very important government supports. You have described some of them in some detail for various population groups.

Minister, as you know, in fact, for many of us — a surprising and concerning number — the number that we're expecting to be benefiting from this is 11 million Canadians who are economically vulnerable. That is very concerning and surprising. I know that you haven't yet, but could you describe for us any further elements of the government's plan — not those that you have already mentioned — to help those economically vulnerable Canadians today, in the medium term or in the longer term to really get at that vulnerability that we're seeing? It is acute, and we're seeing it because of the inflationary environment, but it is there, with the environment or not.

Ms. Freeland: Yes, it is a very good point, Senator Coyle. I am not here to make news or announce any new programs. We think about them a lot. But I'm not here to announce those. So I'm not going to do that.

I will take the opportunity that your question provides to just mention the housing benefit and dental care. The housing benefit is a one-off payment specifically targeted at people who are renting. Many people who rent are among the most vulnerable, and rents have been going up. So I do hope that senators will look at that with understanding as being part of the same effort.

I want to make a bit of a pitch also for dental care for kids under 12. I do not know about you, but again I spent the summer travelling a lot across the country and talking to a lot of people in smaller environments. I found there was really strong support across the country, in many different groups and communities, for this idea.

I feel that once it was put on the table, to actually say, are you really against the idea that kids under 12 should be able to go to the dentist, regardless of how much money their parents pay? It is sort of hard to argue that side of it.

I hope we will provide that support. It speaks, senator, to your point that we're sort of dealing with two things. We're dealing with an immediate affordability challenge. We are talking today about a targeted measure to support people through that. But I do agree with you that there are a lot of Canadians who have challenges all the time. It is the right thing for us to try to support them.

Finally, for many Canadians, the most important support is a good, well-paying job. I think about that a lot as well. A big focus for me during COVID was to not allow our economy to be scarred and not allow the people who lost their jobs right away to become permanently unemployed. I think that is a tragedy and a blight for people and their families.

I do think part of the job of the government, of the House of Commons and the Senate is for us to be thinking as well about ensuring that we're working to build a Canadian economy where there are lots of dignified, good-paying, steady jobs for everyone who wants one, and that people have the training they need to do those jobs.

Senator Coyle: I agree with you on the jobs. I think that everyone here would agree on that.

We know, minister, that people in other countries, particularly those in the Global South, are acutely impacted by the same factors affecting affordability here and they are experiencing the same, even more acute vulnerabilities.

Could you tell us if the Government of Canada is providing additional development assistance, for example, to any of our global partners in response to this global crisis? We're talking about Canada, but it is being experienced in very serious ways elsewhere.

Ms. Freeland: I will say, yes, you are right. We are supporting our partners in the Global South. I will say one way to support our partners — direct support is important. A lot of work is being done on food security. My colleague Minister Sajjan is very engaged in that. Next week I will be at the IMF-World Bank meetings where I know that this will be very high on the agenda.

I will also say that a huge part of the problem with food security and high energy prices is Putin's illegal invasion of Ukraine. Helping the Ukrainians to win quickly and end the war is going to not only save a lot of suffering in Ukraine but also help the whole world.

Senator Batters: Thank you, Minister Freeland. A new Leger survey indicates that one in five young Canadians is either delaying or has given up on their dream of ever owning a home. With inflation and interest rates rising and the hopes of Canadians plummeting, this dream-killing Trudeau government is a far cry from the sunny ways of 2015.

Bill C-30, which is supposed to provide relief from the skyrocketing cost of living by increasing the GST credit, obviously took these huge inflationary pressures into account.

So as Minister of Finance, I'm sure that you will know this off the top of your head: How much does "Justinflation" cost the typical Canadian family?

Ms. Freeland: Well, thank you for the question, senator. I am going to address the housing part of your question because I think that it is really important.

The April budget focused a lot on housing. There is a housing challenge in Canada quite separate from the impact of the COVID recession and its after-effects.

[Ms. Freeland]

The good news about Canada is that we have a growing population. That is great. That is important for our economy. It is good for our society. But we are not building enough homes to keep up with that growing population.

So in our budget we put in place a number of measures which are designed to drive an increase in the supply of homes, in the building of more homes in Canada. That is something that we are absolutely committed to, working with provinces, working with municipalities. From my perspective, that is the core of Canada's housing challenge and that is something that we are very committed to addressing.

Senator Batters: Thank you. My question was actually how much inflation cost a typical Canadian family, but I'll move on.

Minister Freeland, regarding GST, it is actually shocking that your government charges GST on top of the Trudeau carbon tax. How much will your government rake in from all of that extra tax? What about when your Trudeau government triples that carbon tax? The only promises that your government seems to keep these days are those that pick Canadians' pockets, which is why I have no doubt that your government will actually keep that commitment to triple the carbon tax on Canadians' heating bills, gas and groceries. Minister, how much more will your government's heartless tax hike take from struggling Canadians?

Ms. Freeland: Okay. Well, I guess we're talking about the price on pollution, and I'm happy to do that.

Senator Batters: The GST, actually.

Ms. Freeland: I want to talk about it from a finance minister's perspective.

• (1910)

I know Senator Tannas is an Alberta senator. This is something that I actually believe is really understood today in Alberta. It's really understood in our oil and gas sector and it's understood across the country that the green transition is real. Our major partners around the world have decided to go all in on the green transition. The EU has been doing that for some time. The United States, with the Inflation Reduction Act has really gone all in as well.

Strictly from an economic point of view, we really need to recognize as a country that these guys are our clients. They are our markets, and they are all in on the green transition. My belief is that to build an economy for today and for the future, Canada has to be there, too, to ensure that our markets and our customers are there for Canada.

I really believe that when it comes to the green transition, we need to understand this is a shift comparable in scale to the Industrial Revolution itself. It is going to take a lot of private capital investing; it is going to take a lot of government investment, and we have invested a lot already. The price on pollution is part of that shift. It is the most economically effective way to accomplish that transition. In fact, in the parliamentary elections in 2021, the Conservative Party campaigned on a price on pollution.

Senator Batters: Well, yes, that was quite some time ago. And, minister, we're not talking about a climate plan. We're talking about a tax plan and a massive one at that.

Minister, the short title for your Bill C-30 states it is for targeted tax relief. But here is what it certainly does not relieve — a family living in rural Nova Scotia who needs to heat their home in the dead of a brutal Atlantic winter, who needs to feed three teenagers groceries every week and who needs to fuel their vehicle not only to get to their jobs but also to take their kids to hockey tournaments around the province on weekends. They cannot bike to work or send their kids on a subway or public transit system. How much does the Trudeau carbon tax cost that rural Nova Scotian family right now? And, also, how much will it cost when you triple that Trudeau carbon tax on the family's heating bill, on their gas and on their groceries?

Minister, you claim you want to get this money under Bill C-30 to vulnerable Canadians right away, but how much will you ultimately just tax away by tripling the Trudeau carbon tax on their gas, heat and groceries?

Ms. Freeland: Well, I think all of us in this room are agreed — it seems like it; I have heard from most people — on supporting this specific inflation-relief measure, and I'm glad about that.

At a time of a lot of partisanship and acrimony, it was a good moment today in the House of Commons when there was unanimous support for this measure. But I do think, senator, that you and I will need to agree to differ when it comes to the urgency of climate action and the effectiveness of a price on pollution as part of the way that Canada gets there. Someone, though, who does agree with a price on pollution as an important measure in that effort is Preston Manning. He was one of the people who initially advocated for it.

Partisanship is part of our political system, and I recognize that, and I think our political system works. But I would urge us all to think about a price on pollution in a non-partisan way and to think about it as a mechanism that will help our whole country in the most economically effective way possible to accomplish this huge and really necessary economic shift.

Senator Batters: Minister, answering questions from a parliamentary body should also be an important part of what we're doing here.

Your Bill C-30 is just one small step in addressing inflationary pressures and huge cost-of-living increases. These financial hardships are also taking a major toll on the mental health of Canadians. This is Mental Illness Awareness Week, and so it's timely to ask you about your government's election promise to establish the Canada mental health transfer.

Your corresponding commitment in last year's election platform was to fund it with \$4.5 billion over five years. Minister Freeland, your Liberal platform provided a detailed year-by-year costing of that Canada mental health transfer. It stated that \$250 million would be provided in the 2021-22 fiscal year and \$625 million in this fiscal year. But, minister, the budget you presented this spring did not contain even \$1 for that Canada mental health transfer. You're already \$875 million behind.

Minister Freeland, why did you choose to break your mental health election promise and not put it in your budget?

Ms. Freeland: Well, I feel like we have travelled quite far from the inflation relief measure that I am here to discuss with you, but I am very happy to talk about mental health because it is a priority for our government. Again, here, I think that there is wide recognition across Canada of the importance of mental health. I think of the particular strains that COVID posed on the mental health of Canadians. Our government has invested significantly in supporting Canadians with their mental health since we formed government in 2015. We are absolutely committed to doing more, and we absolutely will.

Senator Batters: But, minister, your government has proven to be all talk and no action on this issue. We've had a pandemic for two and a half years with isolation, mental health and addiction crises, job losses and business closures. Now Canadians are facing rampant inflation and struggling just to make ends meet. The time for mental health action is now. Your government doesn't hesitate to spend billions of dollars when it deems it a priority. You've talked a lot about compassion tonight but your Canada mental health transfer promise is clearly not a priority at your cabinet table.

As the Minister of Finance, you control the purse strings. Why didn't that crucial commitment to the mental health of Canadians make the cut in your budget?

[Translation]

Senator Forest: Thank you for being here, minister.

I think that, as you say, you didn't reinvent the wheel, which will allow us to be more diligent and respond more quickly. I agree with Bill C-30, which will affect 11 million people. You haven't reinvented the wheel, but you're missing a spare tire.

I'm deeply concerned about the fact that currently 10% of Canadians don't file their tax return, which means we won't be able to reach them. I worked in the trenches at the municipal level for 26 years and those 10% probably represent the least fortunate and most marginalized people.

Shouldn't the government make it a priority to make an extensive effort from coast to coast to coast in Canada to reach these people? I believe in the collaboration of the entire community sector, municipalities and all the stakeholders

striving for the same goal. However, shouldn't we try to identify and join these people who are the most marginalized and the most vulnerable in our society in order to help them?

Ms. Freeland: Thank you for the question, senator. I'd like to start by thanking you for your support of this bill, thank you very much.

If I could just clarify one small thing, it is not just 11 million Canadians that will be helped, it is 11 million households. That means we're reaching a much higher number of people, and that is a good thing.

However, you're right, and you're not the first senator to raise this issue of the most vulnerable. I'd simply say that I agree with you; we all need to work together to include those who are the most fragile and vulnerable.

Now to explain the approach we chose. We decided that it was important to do something effective that could be implemented very quickly. That's why we chose a mechanism that was already in place. That said, you asked an excellent question and I, along with my colleagues and Ms. Lebouthillier, will work on that.

• (1920)

Senator Forest: You know, minister, that is a challenge for Canadian society. For example, I often can't finish my dinner, and it's not because I'm particularly generous. When I order a meal and I have leftovers, I take it over to the homeless people. Today I took my leftover pasta to the people under the walkway next to the Senate. I asked them a few questions. None of them had ever submitted an income tax return.

It is a challenge for our society, for the government and for all stakeholders. It is well beyond the scope of the program, which is very effective. That's why I'll vote for it. So much the better if it helps many more than 11 million people. However, one thing that needs to be on the agenda — and I think this should be the government's responsibility — is that helping the most marginalized members of society is our responsibility as human beings. I would really like us all to think about that. How can we help? We have to take concrete action to help the groups we're not reaching, not hearing from, not seeing. We need to reach the people who don't even send in tax returns.

Ms. Freeland: All I can say is that I agree with you wholeheartedly. We need to do this work. During the pandemic, we as a government found out that the Canada Revenue Agency is really an effective department to help Canadians. That's a good thing, but even though we discovered that, I think you're right that we need to take the next step. It is clearly an effective department with effective tools, but we really need to do the work to make sure that all Canadians feel included. I agree with you. We have work to do.

Senator Dupuis: Good evening, minister. Welcome to the Senate. The Prime Minister said back in 2016 that poverty has a greater impact on women than on men. I agree with him. Since 1995, the Government of Canada has been committed to using Gender-Based Analysis Plus when developing legislation, programs and policies. That commitment has since been renewed by this government. We know that GBA+ is used to assess the

potential impacts of a bill on women, men and people of various gender identities. Was such an analysis conducted when Bill C-30 was being prepared for the memorandum to cabinet?

Ms. Freeland: What I can say is that we conducted an analysis of this measure and we're convinced that women — especially single mothers — will really benefit from this measure being adopted. As far as single women are concerned, this measure will help single mothers and it will help seniors as well. As you know, among our seniors, there are more women than men. Senior women are more likely to end up in poverty.

Since this is a measure that targets the most vulnerable and because there are more women in this most vulnerable category, you are right to say that this measure will target women. I would say that it will also target children. That's why I also talked about households. Obviously children are not individuals that the Canada Revenue Agency has direct contact with, but they will benefit from this measure.

Senator Dupuis: At the Standing Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs, the Minister of Justice agreed to submit, at our request, not the complete text of the Gender-Based Analysis Plus, but a summary of the important elements of the analysis, in order to inform the committee's study of the bill.

Will you undertake to table what the minister called a summary of the elements contained in the gender-based analysis of Bill C-30 to help us with our study of the bill?

Ms. Freeland: Senator, could my office and I follow up with you directly? I wasn't there when Minister Lametti appeared before your committee, but we could follow up with you to understand what specific information you would be interested in.

Senator Dupuis: Thank you.

[*English*]

Senator Cordy: Thank you very much, minister, for being here this evening, and thank you also to your officials for the work that you all have been doing to help those most in need. You have also been very generous this evening about answering questions that are not related to the bill. Thank you very much for that.

When you are this close to the end of the list, most of the questions — if you could see my note pad here, there are scratches and editing along the way.

Minister, as we heard during the study of Bill C-12, which was another bill that boosted Old Age Security benefits this past winter, we learned that Canada Revenue Agency, or CRA, cannot do any preparation work until a bill has actually passed. Has CRA provided a timeline of how long it will take — if the bill receives Royal Assent — until the department can make the changes? Basically, my question is about how soon Canadians who qualify can receive payments?

Ms. Freeland: It is an excellent question. It is one we have been much seized of. Thank you for thanking the officials who have been working really hard. I would like to offer a little bit of a plug for the people who work at CRA and for Minister

Lebouthillier. The CRA has been the workhorse of supporting Canadians during the pandemic. When we looked around to see what tools were at our disposal for providing some inflation relief, we turned to this mechanism that existed and to the CRA, which was really reliable and effective at providing the support.

You are right. It is a challenge that the CRA can only get to work once the law is passed. Canada is a country founded on the rule of law, and they need to know that we, as legislators, have passed legislation to enable it. I'm glad to have the support here.

Let me just say this: We — actually, Mr. Jovanovic and our tax people — have a very good, close working relationship with our counterparts at CRA. Obviously, we worked with them closely in determining that this was going to be the fastest way to do it, notwithstanding the real challenge of it not covering every single person.

They are going to work hard. They have told us they are going to do this as quickly as they can. This is the mechanism that — of all the different possibilities we discussed — is absolutely the quickest. They are going to work hard to have it happen really soon.

Senator Cordy: Thank you, minister. Since others have gotten off the topic of Bill C-30, let me say that I am very supportive of the dental plan for children under 12. I guess it is because I used to be an elementary school teacher in my other life, and dental health is good health.

• (1930)

Minister, at committee hearings in the House you noted that Bill C-30 is not going to be a cure-all, and we all understand that. It's a help but it isn't a cure-all.

Can you tell us what you think this one-time payment will do for those who need financial help?

Ms. Freeland: Senator, you've mentioned dental care, so I'm going to take an opportunity to mention it, too. I think it is a really important measure, and we're going to find that it has an impact beyond what we may have imagined. A doctor I spoke to about it today, talking about this measure, made a very important point, which is the mouth is the centre of a lot of our health and our health problems for the rest of our body. It sounds as if, as a teacher, you encountered that.

Let me in advance urge people to look at the dental health measure from that perspective. We've been talking about inflation and the immediate relief Canadians need, but we have also been talking about the fact that there are some long-term measures people need, and dental care is one of those.

Thank you for being so sensible and recognizing what I think we all recognize, which is that this is a good measure. It's an important measure. I'm glad we're doing it and doing it quickly.

Senator Woo: Welcome, minister. I stand between you and the rest of your Thursday evening, which I hope will give you some downtime and relaxation.

You have been clear about how this bill is about relief for targeted groups to deal with cost-of-living issues in the wake of rising inflation. You'll be aware that there is a growing discussion also about how efforts to combat inflation might be excessive and might lead to an economic downturn, perhaps less so in the United States and in Canada but certainly in the rest of the world, particularly developing countries. This is an issue that I know is monetary policy and not your domain, and it's also principally driven by the Federal Reserve that has become ultra-hawkish. You, as our Minister of Finance, meet regularly with the finance ministers of the G7. You have been meeting, I think, maybe with the G20 finance ministers. You are going to the World Bank-IMF meeting very soon.

What are you saying to them about overtightening, about broader risk to the system as opposed to simply dealing with the problems of your own country and being short-sighted about it? I'm worried about beggar-thy-neighbour policies and how they might affect the world and ultimately ricochet back to Canada.

Ms. Freeland: That's the question that should have been the first one and we should have had five hours to discuss it. It's a very smart question, and you have touched on a lot of the issues, senator, that I think anyone thinking about the Canadian economy and Canadians needs to be thinking about.

I will be travelling to Washington next week for the IMF-World Bank meetings. It's a good time for the finance ministers of the world's leading economies to be getting together for two reasons, both of which you identified. The way I like to think about it is that what's happening right now is we are landing the plane of the COVID economy. When COVID hit, we had this unprecedented thing of the rich countries of the world closing down and providing unprecedented support: COVID recession.

Then we had the reopening with the inflationary pressures that came as part of that, exacerbated by the war in Ukraine, by Putin's invasion of Ukraine. We're now in the third act of the COVID economy, and that is dealing with the inflationary pressures and the economic slowdown that the central banks' work of dealing with those inflationary pressures is creating. Exactly as you say, that work is happening in a global economy, where what each country does has a real impact on everyone else.

Speaking for Canada, it's important for us to coordinate with our partners, and I will be doing that next week and I'm glad to have that opportunity.

Speaking for Canada, from my perspective, one of the things we need to do is keep our powder dry. I think this is a moment to recognize that there is a lot of uncertainty in the global economy and Canada needs to be really ready for that.

The good news I would say to all the senators and to Canadians is we are in a strong fiscal position and in a strong economic position, particularly comparatively. We do have the lowest deficit in the G7. We do have the lowest debt-to-GDP ratio in the G7. Our job recovery from the COVID recession has been remarkably strong.

I don't in any way want to downplay the challenges of today or the challenges of the future, but maybe I can close on a note of optimism, reassuring us all and the Canadians, who I'm sure are tuned in in their millions tonight, that Canada is facing these global storms from a position of fundamental economic and social strength.

The Chair: Honourable senators, the committee has been sitting for 95 minutes. In conformity with the order of the Senate, I am obliged to interrupt proceedings so that the committee can report to the Senate.

Minister, on behalf of all senators, thank you for joining us today to assist us with our work on the bill. I would also like to thank your officials.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

[*Translation*]

Ms. Freeland: Thank you, Madam Chair, and every other senator as well.

[*English*]

Thank you very much for your hard work and the really careful and thoughtful questions. I appreciate it and I've noted many points, as I mentioned during my answers.

The Chair: Honourable senators, is it agreed that the committee rise, and that I report to the Senate that the witness has been heard?

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, the sitting of the Senate is resumed.

[*Translation*]

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Hon. Pierrette Ringuette: Honourable senators, the Committee of the Whole, authorized by the Senate to examine the subject matter of Bill C-30, An Act to amend the Income Tax Act (temporary enhancement to the Goods and Services Tax/Harmonized Sales Tax credit), reports that it has heard from the said witnesses.

(At 7:39 p.m., the Senate was continued until Monday, October 17, 2022, at 6 p.m.)

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