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Wednesday, June 7, 2023

The Honourable RAYMONDE GAGNÉ,  
Speaker

## CONTENTS

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

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## THE SENATE

Wednesday, June 7, 2023

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

Prayers.

### SENATORS' STATEMENTS

#### VOICES OF YOUTH INDIGENOUS LEADERS

**Hon. Yonah Martin (Deputy Leader of the Opposition):** Honourable senators, I rise today to give a warm welcome to the participants of this year's Voices of Youth Indigenous Leaders. These eight inspiring youth are here to share their perspectives on this year's theme: Indigenous education.

Honourable colleagues, this issue is very close to my heart. As a former teacher, I know that quality education can uplift and empower our youth to succeed. I have seen first-hand the power of education in a classroom setting, but I have so much to learn from these youth who are here today. These young Indigenous leaders are here to share their experiences on education with us, and it is in our very best interest to listen.

It is now my pleasure to introduce two of these wonderful Voices of Youth Indigenous Leaders participants.

Dylan Adam is Métis from Princeton, which is in my home province of British Columbia. For the past five years, he has served as the youth representative for the Vermillion Forks Métis Association. In this role, he has helped organize community events and worked to promote Métis culture. Mr. Adam is currently a full-time student at the University of British Columbia — Okanagan where he is pursuing a degree in political science.

I would also like to welcome Helaina Moses. She is a 27-year-old member of the Na-Cho Nyäk Dun First Nation in Mayo, Yukon. She grew up learning how to hunt, trap and fish with her grandfather. He learned those skills at a young age because he did not have access to grocery stores or highways. Ms. Moses credits both her grandparents for teaching her to become an environmentalist. She also ran for her local band council because she believes her government needs young, strong voices advocating for change.

Honourable senators, please join me in welcoming this incredible group.

**Hon. David M. Arnot:** Honourable senators, I rise today to welcome and celebrate this year's Voices of Youth Indigenous Leaders participants. It has been an incredible honour to participate in this event as the Deputy Chair of the Standing Senate Committee on Indigenous Peoples.

I have had the opportunity to meet with this dynamic group during a beautiful reception last evening and again this morning for the opening ceremonies. What strikes me most is their passion. It is clear that they care deeply about their communities and the work that they do. Honourable colleagues, I hope that

you will take the time today to listen to their stories and ideas. May we all work together to create a better country for First Nations, Métis and Inuit youth.

I would like to introduce two more of the participants to you today, both with Saskatchewan connections.

Chante Speidel travelled here from Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, where she studies at the University of Saskatchewan. She is Swampy Cree from the Treaty 4 territory in Manitoba, the Sapotawayak Cree Nation. She's also Hunkpapa Lakota from the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe in South Dakota. She's a Lakota speaker. In 2017, when she was 15 years old, she became a national leader as the youth ambassador for the Manito Ahbee Festival to raise awareness for missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls. She is also the youth adviser for the Oyateki Partnership, and she manages her own youth-led organization named Techa Oaye.

Also from Saskatchewan is Paula MacDonald. She's a Saulteaux-Cree deaf woman and a member of the Pasqua First Nation, from Treaty 4 territory. She now lives here in Ottawa, where she advocates for the Indigenous deaf youth community throughout Canada. She attends talking circles to share the voices of Indigenous deaf youth. Her long-term goal is to continue working with Indigenous deaf communities to improve accessibility and provide expanded resources for the home, school, community and health care sectors.

On behalf of the Senate, thank you both for being here.

**Hon. Dennis Glen Patterson:** Honourable senators, it is my pleasure to stand today to welcome the participants of this year's Voices of Youth Indigenous Leaders. These eight young people are joining us as we celebrate National Indigenous History Month in June. It's a time to honour the resilience, contributions and storied history of the Inuit, First Nations and Métis peoples across the country. It is also a time to reflect on the legacy of colonialism and the many ways in which our country has failed Indigenous peoples.

Honourable colleagues, the youth here today remind us that we can do better. They are working hard to support their respective communities, and they are true role models for Indigenous youth across the country.

Their presentations to our committee this morning were heartwarming and inspirational. It is with my deepest respect, awe and gratitude that I stand before you to introduce two of these young leaders.

I would first like to welcome Dina Koonoo who has come all the way from Pond Inlet to be with us. She is the manager of the Early Years program for Piruvik Preschool in Pond Inlet, Nunavut. As part of her role, Ms. Koonoo facilitates the support of mothers, fathers, infants, toddlers, preschoolers and families. She especially loves working with women and children in her community.

I would also like to introduce Katherine Merrell-Anderson who is from Elizabeth Métis Settlement. She's joining us from Treaty 6 territory, also known as Edmonton, Alberta. She is a social worker in a school district where she works to ensure that her students have a safe environment to connect to their culture.

Honourable senators, please join me in welcoming Ms. Koonoo, Ms. Merrell-Anderson and the rest of this amazing group of young Indigenous leaders.

**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 the eight youth participants of Voices of Youth Indigenous Leaders 2023 as well as Elders Simon Brascoupé, Ruth Kadlutsiak and Reta Gordon. They are the guests of the Honourable Senator Francis.

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

**Hon. Senators:** Hear, hear!

### VOICES OF YOUTH INDIGENOUS LEADERS

**Hon. Brian Francis:** Honourable senators, I am pleased to rise today during National Indigenous History Month to pay tribute to the participants of Voices of Youth Indigenous Leaders — an event hosted by the Indigenous Peoples Committee, with support from the Senate Communications Directorate.

Each year, Voices of Youth Indigenous Leaders provides participants — who represent the history, heritage and diversity of First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples — with a unique opportunity to learn more about the role of the Senate. More importantly, the event provides us with a chance to learn from them.

• (1410)

In line with the theme of this year's event, which is education in all of its forms, Indigenous people aged 18 to 35 were invited to share their knowledge, experiences and perspectives a few months ago. Out of the more than 100 written submissions received, eight young people were invited to travel from their communities across Turtle Island to meet face to face with senators in Ottawa this week.

Yesterday morning, participants had the honour of meeting Governor General Mary Simon and her husband, Whit Fraser, at Rideau Hall, and in the evening attended a welcome reception in the Senate.

Earlier today, four participants testified at the Committee on Indigenous Peoples. The remaining four participants will appear later tonight. I hope all senators take the time to listen, learn and support these remarkable young leaders.

I want to now introduce you to two of the participants in more detail.

Audrey-Lise Rock-Hervieux hails from the Innu community of Pessamit, Quebec. She is the creator of the blog "Maman Autochtone." She also works for Puamun Meshkenu, a non-profit organization that supports Indigenous youth, and for Terre Innue, a film production company. Audrey-Lise hopes to use her voice to empower Indigenous youth to make their dreams come true.

Muin Ji'j, or Bertram Bernard, is a Mi'kmaq business researcher and professional from Eskasoni First Nation. He completed a Master of Business Administration at Cape Breton University, where he focused his research thesis on improving the socio-economic well-being of Indigenous people in Canada. More recently, Muin Ji'j was accepted into the Harvard Business School's Leading People and Investing to Build Sustainable Communities certificate program.

Honourable senators, please join me in giving Audrey-Lise, Muin Ji'j and the rest of this group a warm welcome. Let's make their visit a memorable one. *Wela'lin*, thank you, *tshinashkumitin*.

### VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

**The Hon. the Speaker:** Honourable senators, I wish to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of our former colleague the Honourable Vim Kochhar and members of various deaf-blind services and organizations. They are the guests of the Honourable Senator Marwah.

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

**Hon. Senators:** Hear, hear!

### DEAFBLIND AWARENESS MONTH

**Hon. Sabi Marwah:** Honourable senators, I rise today in recognition of Deafblind Awareness Month, the month of June. This is a month dedicated to promoting public awareness about the distinct experience of Canadians who are deaf-blind and recognizing the tremendous contributions they make.

This month is also an occasion for Canadians to develop an understanding of the people in the communities who are deaf-blind. Being deaf-blind is different from being deaf or blind on its own. It is a combination of both hearing and vision loss. Over 400,000 people in Canada are living with some degree of dual sensory loss.

Deaf-blind people experience far greater adverse consequences than people with either hearing loss or vision loss only. Their experience can be even more isolating and restrictive, and they face unique barriers which require specialized care services, including adapted communication methods.

As the Speaker mentioned, there are many remarkable organizations that support the deaf-blind community, and some of them are with us today: the Helen Keller Centre; the Deafblind and Sensory Support Network of Canada; DeafBlind Ontario Services; CNIB Deafblind Community Services and many other members of the deaf-blind community.

I would like to congratulate and thank them for their leadership and commitment to serving the deaf-blind community and their advocacy to ensure these Canadians have equal rights and opportunities.

I would be remiss if I did not mention the remarkable accomplishments of many members of the deaf-blind community: the legendary Helen Keller, a deaf-blind trailblazer; Kevin Frost, a deaf-blind three-time world champion Canadian speed skater with 16 gold medals and nine world records to his name; Mae Brown, the first deaf-blind person in Canada and the British Commonwealth to graduate from university; and Joan MacTavish, now 103 years old, who was instrumental in starting deaf-blind services at CNIB in 1972. And I must acknowledge a former colleague and my friend, the Honourable Vim Kochhar. He is a timeless advocate who has dedicated decades to helping people with disabilities.

Colleagues, deaf-blind Canadians deserve to live fulfilling lives. While progress has been made improving the quality of their day-to-day lives, there is still much to be done. We need to take collective responsibility for assisting people with this lonely condition. We can contribute to the betterment of our society, and it begins with awareness. We must use our voices to raise awareness and gain better access to funding for the deaf-blind community and the organizations that support them.

Honourable senators, please join me in recognizing Deafblind Awareness Month and working towards a country more inclusive for deaf-blind Canadians. Thank you.

#### VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

**The Hon. the Speaker:** Honourable senators, I wish to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of Senator Oh's son Derek Oh, Mary Beth Moellenkamp and Mohd Faraz Nomani.

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

**Hon. Senators:** Hear, hear!

#### CANADIAN ENTREPRENEURS

**Hon. Victor Oh:** Honourable senators, I rise today to acknowledge my son, Derek Oh, and his business partner, Faraz Nomani, for their success as entrepreneurs in the Canadian health field.

Five years ago, Derek and Faraz launched a start-up business in Toronto focusing on women's health. They took a leap in this unpredictable industry, and though they faced many hurdles, were successful in creating locally sourced and produced natural health products.

Their hard work and tenacity paid off, as leading doctors and researchers now recommend their products throughout Canada to help prevent urinary tract infections and help those suffering from an overactive bladder. Even more importantly, they have created over 15 full-time jobs and their products have helped over 50,000 people naturally reduce their dependency on drugs.

I proudly celebrate not only Derek and Faraz, but all those who take the brave step into entrepreneurship. As I have stated before, local businesses are the backbone of our great nation and play a vital role in creating jobs, driving innovation and boosting our economy.

It is always inspiring to me to see people who take steps to start their businesses and pursue their dreams. It is necessary to celebrate and foster this courage, creativity and determination. Let's continue to support and commemorate these trailblazers who are making a difference in our communities and the world. I also would like to wish Derek and Faraz continued success and commend their focus on driving innovation in the health industry. Thank you.

[*Translation*]

#### VISITOR IN THE GALLERY

**The Hon. the Speaker:** Honourable senators, I wish to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of Franca Ciambella. She is the guest of the Honourable Senator Gerba.

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

**Hon. Senators:** Hear, hear!

#### VOICES OF YOUTH INDIGENOUS LEADERS

**Hon. Michèle Audette:** Good afternoon.

[*Editor's Note: Senator Audette spoke in Innu-aimun.*]

Colleagues, I just want to take a few seconds to thank you for your contribution to our celebrations this month. For Indigenous peoples across Canada, the month of June is a time to celebrate our stories and especially to celebrate our lives today and the youth who have finally put their feet, their moccasins, their running shoes in a place that may seem complicated and difficult. For me, the month of June is also salmon month.

Thank you to all of the youth who participated in the Voices of Youth Indigenous Leaders program.

[*Editor's Note: Senator Audette spoke in Innu-aimun.*]

You can see that my new *Shaputuan* is very pleasant, appealing and full of people who want to walk with you every day.

[*Editor's Note: Senator Audette spoke in Innu-aimun.*]

• (1420)

[English]

### VISITOR IN THE GALLERY

**The Hon. the Speaker:** Honourable senators, I wish to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of Geraldine Muganwa. She is the guest of the Honourable Senator Bernard.

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

**Hon. Senators:** Hear, hear!

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

### PUBLIC SECTOR INTEGRITY COMMISSIONER

CERTIFICATE OF NOMINATION AND BIOGRAPHICAL  
NOTES TABLED

**Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate):** Honourable senators, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the certificate of nomination and biographical notes of Harriet Solloway, the nominee for the position of Public Sector Integrity Commissioner.

### ADJOURNMENT

#### NOTICE OF MOTION

**Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate):** Honourable senators, I give notice that, at the next sitting of the Senate, I will move:

That, when the Senate next adjourns after the adoption of this motion, it do stand adjourned until Tuesday, June 13, 2023, at 2 p.m.

### JANE GOODALL BILL

BILL TO AMEND—NOTICE OF MOTION TO AUTHORIZE LEGAL  
AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE TO STUDY SUBJECT  
MATTER

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

That, notwithstanding any provision of the Rules, previous order or usual practice, and without affecting progress in relation to Bill S-241, An Act to amend the Criminal Code and the Wild Animal and Plant Protection and Regulation of International and Interprovincial Trade

Act (great apes, elephants and certain other animals), the Standing Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs be authorized to examine and report on legal and constitutional aspects of the subject matter of Bill S-241; and

That, for greater certainty, if Bill S-241:

1. has been referred to a committee before the adoption of this motion, the adoption of this motion have no effect on that referral; and
2. is referred to a committee after the adoption of this motion, that referral have no effect on the study on legal and constitutional aspects of the subject matter of the bill as authorized by this motion.

## QUESTION PERIOD

### FOREIGN AFFAIRS

#### HUMAN RIGHTS IN IRAN

**Hon. Donald Neil Plett (Leader of the Opposition):** My question again today is for Trudeau's government leader in the Senate and it has to do with a vote last night, leader, on Motion No. 102, which was brought forward by Senator Omidvar. It's a short motion, so I'll put it on the record:

That, given reports of human rights abuses, repression and executions of its citizens, particularly women, in Iran by the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), the Senate call upon the government to immediately designate the IRGC as a terrorist entity.

Leader, instead of allowing this motion to pass with the support of the entire Senate, you called out, "On division," which means the motion passed but not unanimously.

Senator Gold, could you explain why you were opposed to this motion? Does it mean that it is the position of the Trudeau government to never list the IRGC as a terrorist entity?

**Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate):** Thank you for your question, and I am pleased to respond.

The government has been very clear with regard to its denunciation of the regime in Iran. It has taken several measures — important measures — to provide sanctions.

I know that the members of the opposition do not enjoy it when I respond that the issue of listing entities as terrorist organizations under the Criminal Code is a complicated affair that engages considerations that go far beyond the scope of Question Period.

I expressed it “on division” because it is the government’s position that at this juncture it is not prepared to take that step for reasons that I have explained in this chamber before.

**Senator Plett:** In fact, you didn’t explain it, and although Senator Omidvar usually sits on our side of the chamber, the last time I looked, she wasn’t a member of the opposition.

Leader, in October at a protest here in Ottawa following the murder of Mahsa Amini by Iran’s morality police, the Prime Minister said:

We will stand with you. I march with you. I will hold hands with you. We will continue to stand with this beautiful community —

— but we won’t support them in a vote.

This Sunday, another large rally is scheduled to take place on Parliament Hill. Canadians will once again take to the streets in the hopes that the Trudeau government — and maybe Senator Gold — will hear them and list the IRGC as a terrorist entity.

Leader, doesn’t the vote last night sum up the Trudeau government in a nutshell? Offer to hold hands during a protest, vote against a motion in the Senate and then do absolutely nothing?

**Senator Gold:** Again, the short answer is “no.” The Government of Canada stands with the victims of oppression in Iran, and it has taken serious measures, appropriate measures — thank you.

It has banned IRGC officials from Canada. It has created a new sanctions regime, increased sanctions on Iran and imposed sanctions on senior officials, prominent regime supporters, senior members of the judiciary, senior members of the prison system and law enforcement officers as well as political leaders. It sanctions against two entities linked to the IRGC, Iran’s national police force and the Iranian International University, as well as, previously, 17 individuals and 3 entities that have participated in or enabled gross human rights violations. The government has also expanded its ability to seize and freeze assets.

Canada has some of the toughest measures of any country in the world against the Iranian regime. Impunity is not a policy of this government, nor is it an option for Canadians. Canada will continue to defend human rights in Iran and elsewhere and will continue to stand in solidarity with the Iranian people.

[Translation]

## FINANCE

### STATE OF THE ECONOMY

**Hon. Claude Carignan:** My question is for the Leader of the Government in the Senate.

This morning, the Bank of Canada announced that it was increasing its policy interest rate by 25 basis points to 4.75%. That is 19 times higher than it was a year ago. While the Trudeau

government is putting its foot on the gas by announcing \$60 billion in additional spending, the Governor of the Bank of Canada is putting his foot on the brakes by increasing rates. Prices continue to soar, making life more and more difficult for Canadians.

• (1430)

Leader, this week Equifax Canada reported that in the first quarter of 2023, 175,000 Canadian consumers missed payments on at least one non-mortgage debt product, representing an 18.8% increase over last year, and for mortgage debt, missed payments are up 15.7% over last year. Of course, the phony grocery rebate isn’t going to change any of that for Canadians.

Senator Gold, when will you admit that this government’s economic strategy is a complete failure? How much longer will Canadians have to put up with these higher interest rates and higher consumer prices?

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

The government’s handling of Canada’s economy has not only helped Canadians get through a very difficult period, but has also ensured that we are well positioned for the present and for the future. This doesn’t mean that anyone is denying the challenges and problems facing Canadians as a result of global inflation and the supply chain issues I have described on a number of occasions.

Still, facts are facts. Canada leads the G7 in terms of the debt-to-GDP ratio. Furthermore, the fact that the Bank of Canada has independently decided to raise the policy interest rate is a testament to the strength and health of our economy. There are always two sides to a coin when it comes to fighting inflation.

To answer your question, no, the strategy is not a failure. On the contrary, it has been a success.

**Senator Carignan:** Leader, let me show you the other side of the coin: young people who want to buy property.

After eight years of the Trudeau government, the average down payment for a house has more than doubled. In fact, the gross salary required to buy a home on the island of Montreal is \$251,000 a year, which means that young people and immigrants can’t afford to buy property.

Will you admit that the Trudeau government has failed and is changing the property market so that these young people will forever be tenants?

**Senator Gold:** Once again, it’s very easy to blame the federal government for all the problems in every city, in every big city suburb and across the country. This is a very real and serious

issue for the generation you've just described. The government has stepped up to support young people who want to buy property for their families by investing in our economy to create jobs, good jobs, for the generation entering the workforce.

The federal government is doing its part with the provinces, territories and municipalities, as well as with entrepreneurs, to try to increase the supply of affordable homes for young families.

[English]

## TRANSPORT

### CANADIAN AIR TRANSPORT SECURITY AUTHORITY

**Hon. Paula Simons:** Would the Government Representative take a question?

**Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate):** Thank you for asking, but it's your prerogative.

**Senator Simons:** Sorry, I blame Senator LaBoucane-Benson. It's become contagious across the floor.

In the United States, the Transportation Security Administration, or TSA, conducts regular tests where disguised agents attempt to sneak contraband items, including drugs, guns and fake bombs, through airport security. In 2017, America's Department of Transportation Inspector General reported that about 70% of such contraband items went undetected by TSA inspectors. Two years before, in 2015, 95% of contraband went undetected. I have to say that under the Trump administration, however, the government in the United States stopped reporting those numbers.

My office got curious, and we contacted the Canadian Air Transport Security Authority — CATSA — and were told that similar tests are indeed run in Canada as well. But when we asked whether there was any data on how much contraband gets past our airport screeners in this country, we were told that information was classified as secret and could not be released.

My question is: Does the government see any value in making generalized information about the efficacy of CATSA screening public on an annual basis?

**Senator Gold:** Thank you for your question and for raising the important issue of the security of our borders. I will certainly bring your question to the attention of the relevant minister and officials in the hope of receiving an answer.

[Translation]

## HEALTH

### REGULATION OF VAPING FLUIDS

**Hon. Chantal Petitclerc:** My question is for Senator Gold, the Government Representative in the Senate. Senator Gold, my question has to do with the rate of vaping among Canadian teenagers, which, as you may know, is one of the highest in the world.

Last month, the results of the Canadian Student Tobacco, Alcohol and Drugs Survey 2021-22 confirmed that this increase in use is largely due to the appeal and availability of flavours. The existing restrictions do not seem to be sufficient. As senators will recall, vaping was supposed to help adult smokers stop smoking without attracting young non-smokers.

Does the government realize that it needs to act quickly to make vaping less appealing to young people and thereby protect them from nicotine dependency?

**Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate):** Thank you for the question and your ongoing commitment to this issue, senator. As you know, honourable senators, the government has already taken a number of steps to reduce the appeal of vaping products, not only for young people but for everyone.

The government eliminated and banned lifestyle advertising on television and in stores, as well as the social media content of influencers who are trying to encourage young people to take up this habit.

That being said, I have been informed that the government is still examining this issue to find more ways to help adults, in particular, transition from smoking cigarettes, cigars and the like to vaping, while not encouraging the younger generation to take up this habit.

**Senator Petitclerc:** Senator Gold, I would like to get a clear and precise answer, especially about the flavours. You will recall that during study of Bill S-5, we were assured that this bill would provide Health Canada with the necessary flexibility to respond very quickly and make adjustments based on the most recent data available. We have that data now.

We can see that several provinces are taking the initiative and taking action. Quebec recently banned all vaping flavours other than tobacco. Don't you think that it is the federal government's responsibility to take action and use regulatory mechanisms to restrict or outright ban, nationwide, flavours that are appealing to young people?

**Senator Gold:** Thank you for the question. I have been told that the federal government is working closely with the provinces and territories that have a say about this in the system. I have also been told that conditions remain with respect to shared responsibilities between the two levels in this regard.

[ Senator Gold ]



• (1440)

[English]

## OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

### BUSINESS OF THE COMMITTEE

**Hon. Dennis Glen Patterson:** My question is for the Chair of the Official Languages Committee.

Senator Cormier, I understand that the government has confirmed that there is a significant drafting error in Bill C-13 which is currently before your committee. I also understand this is not a mere grammatical or typographical error. The error is the exclusion of a coordinating amendment that would ensure former and potential employees outside of Quebec would still be able to file complaints under subclauses 18(1.1) and (1.2) of the Use of French in Federally Regulated Private Businesses Act. By fixing this issue, we would ensure that francophones outside of Quebec have the same rights as those who live in Quebec.

My question, senator: Has your committee been advised by the government of this error?

**Hon. René Cormier:** Thank you for the question, Senator Patterson. I would be pleased to answer any questions about the content of the bill in third reading after the studying in committee.

In my understanding for this Question Period, I'm relating here to the Companion to the Rules of the Senate, page 74. It is specified that rule 4-8(1)(c):

. . . permits questions relating to the "activities" of a committee.

The "activities" of the committee would obviously be the specific things that are done by the committee, such as the holding of meetings, the election of a chairman, the calling of witnesses, the hiring of staff, advertising, and any other matter relating to the manner in which the committee conducts its proceedings. These are all "activities" of the committee.

I would be pleased to answer that question. Thank you, sir.

**Senator D. Patterson:** I believe the honourable chair has raised a point of order that my question is outside the Rules. In doing so, he has given me the opportunity, I hope, to explain that, in my view, the question is in order. The Rules —

**The Hon. the Speaker:** Senator Patterson, I'm sorry, but this is not a point of order. I think he was answering the question. I believe that, according to the rule quoted by the senator, a committee chair will comment on a matter relating to the activities of the committee. This is pertaining to the bill, so it would be certainly not in order as a question. This is Question Period.

**Senator D. Patterson:** Could I ask a supplementary?

**The Hon. the Speaker:** Is it on the activity of the committee?

**Senator D. Patterson:** Yes.

As Senator Cormier just said, the activities of the committee can include the calling of witnesses. I'd like to ask the chair if the committee would consider recalling government officials or perhaps even the minister to discuss this drafting error. Thank you.

**Senator Cormier:** Thank you for this question. What is planned, actually, is public, so I can say who the witnesses are for the next meeting, which is next Monday.

[Translation]

We will welcome the following witnesses: Michel Doucet, Professor Emeritus at the Université de Moncton's Faculty of Law, Érik Labelle Eastaugh, Associate Professor at the International Observatory on Language Rights, Janice Naymark, Counsel, and Benoît Pelletier, Distinguished Professor at the Civil Law Section of the Faculty of Law at the University of Ottawa.

These witnesses are scheduled to attend the meeting on Monday, after which we will proceed to clause-by-clause consideration. That is the answer I can give you, Senator Patterson, at this point.

[English]

## NATURAL RESOURCES

### WILDFIRE MANAGEMENT

**Hon. Andrew Cardozo:** My question is for the Government Representative concerning the wildfires. I want to compliment the federal and provincial governments for responding to the needs of Canadians facing the tragic consequences of wildfires in many parts of the country. This is the time when governments have to step up to the plate and literally throw all the resources possible to help Canadians.

If it means considerable deficit spending, I hope we're all in agreement that this is essential.

Senator, could you share with us the services that have been provided, whether through Emergency Preparedness via Public Safety Canada, the Canadian Armed Forces or elsewhere, and is there any sense of how much the federal government is prepared to spend over the course of the summer on this likely continuing tragedy?

**Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate):** Thank you for your question. I think it is fair to say that what we're witnessing now is something that we are going to be confronted with increasingly due to climate change. The government is in close contact with all affected provinces and territories, and has deployed Canadian Armed Forces and other federal supports to Quebec, Nova Scotia and Alberta, at the request of those provinces.

Senator, it's too early to say what the final costs might be because the focus right now is on assisting. There are 400-plus wildfires of which I think over 200 are still not under control. We know that the damage in many communities has been very significant. For example, as fires get under control in the area around Halifax, according to a family living there with whom I'm in contact, it has become safe to re-enter the community but we're seeing the devastating images there and elsewhere of what has happened with homes burnt and areas ravaged.

When the cost to respond and recover from a disaster exceeds provincial or territorial capacity, as colleagues should know, the government provides fair and equitable assistance to the disaster financial assistance arrangements, which has provided almost \$8 billion in support to provinces and territories over the years. The government can cover up to 90% of eligible costs. But provinces and territories, as we know, are in full control of the design and delivery of these recovery plans. Provinces and territories may request advance payments or interim payments to address early requirements of recovery, the need to rebuild and additional allocations for projects that include those enhancements to mitigate the impacts of such disasters in the future.

**Senator Cardozo:** I would press you further on the matter of climate change that you mentioned, senator. What is the government doing to address these fires from a longer-term perspective — the environmental perspective — given that this could go on all summer, or maybe become the norm every summer or even every spring, summer and fall? How much more do we need to be doing about the environment and climate change?

**Senator Gold:** It's a very large question. I'll answer it briefly. The government has made it clear ever since it ran for office and was elected in 2015 that addressing climate change is a serious priority of this government, as it should be, for the country as a whole. It's put into place a panoply of measures, all designed to work towards reducing climate change, helping create a more resilient infrastructure and economy and help us transition away from a carbon-reliant power grid and other measures so that our economy can continue to grow, but also mitigate and ultimately, we hope, reverse the impact of climate change.

[Translation]

## PUBLIC SAFETY

### CORRECTIONAL SERVICE CANADA—TRANSFER OF INMATE

**Hon. Pierre-Hugues Boisvenu:** My question is also for Senator Gold.

Senator Gold, last week, I asked Minister Mendicino about the RCMP's refusal to share information with the Savoie family about the circumstances of and its involvement in the death of their daughter Francesca 16 years ago.

[ Senator Gold ]

I have also asked you questions in this chamber on numerous occasions about other families, including the Serre family and the Freeman family, to find out why the Parole Board of Canada did not inform these families of its decisions concerning the parole eligibility dates of the offenders responsible for their suffering.

Now we learn that the families of the victims of the horrific murderer Paul Bernardo were informed of his transfer to a lower-security penitentiary only after the fact. On top of that, Correctional Service Canada refuses to inform them of the reasons for the transfer or give them any details of his detention conditions, citing the criminal's rights under the federal Privacy Act.

Senator Gold, why doesn't the Trudeau government enforce the right to information enshrined in the Canadian Victims Bill of Rights, a law that applies to federal institutions directly under its authority? Is it because the Trudeau government believes that criminals have more rights than victims do?

• (1450)

**Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate):** The short answer is no. The minister clearly stated that the Correctional Service of Canada's decision to transfer Paul Bernardo to La Macaza Institution in Quebec is shocking and incomprehensible.

Before saying more, I believe that I'm probably speaking for all my colleagues when I say that we are thinking of the families of Kristen French and Leslie Mahaffy, who are now reliving the horror and the terror they suffered.

Minister Mendicino has already spoken with the Commissioner of the Correctional Service to reaffirm that the situation is unacceptable. I am of the opinion, and I think this is a matter of public record, that the commissioner will review this decision.

For now, Mr. Bernardo is still imprisoned for life and serving an indeterminate sentence in a maximum-security prison. Canadians can be reassured that heinous crimes like the ones he committed will be punished in the most serious manner as required by law.

**Senator Boisvenu:** Let us go back to the statements by the minister in the other place.

First, neither the Prime Minister nor the minister apologized to the families. Furthermore, the minister told the House of Commons that he does not have the power to intervene and cancel this transfer.

I will remind you that in the murder of little Victoria Stafford by a woman named Terri-Lynne McClintic, the accomplice was returned to her penitentiary after obtaining a secret transfer to an Indigenous healing lodge. The then minister, the Honourable Ralph Goodale, officially ordered the Correctional Service of Canada to reverse the decision, and that is what was done.

Can you tell us why the current minister no longer has the same powers that Minister Goodale did at that time?

**Senator Gold:** As I said, esteemed colleague, the minister clearly told the commissioner that the decision was unacceptable; he then took the appropriate steps to ensure that the decision was reviewed.

[English]

#### PRIVY COUNCIL OFFICE

##### INDEPENDENT SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR ON FOREIGN INTERFERENCE

**Hon. Donald Neil Plett (Leader of the Opposition):** Leader, the Prime Minister's made-up Special Rapporteur confirmed multiple times yesterday that his report on Beijing's interference was based on incomplete information. Before a House committee, he admitted that he didn't have the intelligence that the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, or CSIS, provided to former Conservative leader Erin O'Toole. He said, "The evidence that we had before us . . . was what was available to us at that time."

He later told the CBC, "The amount of information available was an ocean and we saw a very large lake."

Leader, who chose the CSIS information that the rapporteur based his report on? Also, since the rapporteur admits he didn't see everything, what value is the report, other than to serve as another cover-up for the Prime Minister and his government?

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

I think the interpretation you've given to what the Special Rapporteur said is not necessarily borne by the facts. The Special Rapporteur had access to classified information — it was made available to him by the intelligence forces — and he made the decision based upon that information. If I recall, he mentioned that he was not made aware of the information that was provided to Mr. O'Toole, and I think that was the context within which his remarks took place.

Beyond that, honourable colleague, as I've said on far too many occasions, and to repeat myself again, the assumptions and insinuations you make about the motives behind the contents of the report are simply not based in fact or truth; they are simply attempts to impugn the integrity not only of the Special Rapporteur but of the process.

The government remains confident that the process put in place and the steps that will be taken will best serve Canadians.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

COMMITTEE AUTHORIZED TO DEPOSIT REPORT ON STUDY OF  
THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'S CONSTITUTIONAL, TREATY,  
POLITICAL AND LEGAL RESPONSIBILITIES TO FIRST NATIONS,  
INUIT AND MÉTIS PEOPLES WITH CLERK DURING  
ADJOURNMENT OF THE SENATE

Leave having been given to proceed to Motions, Order No. 126:

**Hon. Brian Francis,** pursuant to notice of June 6, 2023, moved:

That the Standing Senate Committee on Indigenous Peoples be permitted, notwithstanding usual practices, to deposit with the Clerk of the Senate an interim report relating to its study on the constitutional, treaty, political and legal responsibilities to First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples, if the Senate is not then sitting, and that the report be deemed to have been tabled in the Senate.

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

**Hon. Senators:** Agreed.

(Motion agreed to.)

### BUSINESS OF THE SENATE

**Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate):** Honourable senators, with leave of the Senate and notwithstanding rule 5-13(2), I move:

That the Senate do now adjourn.

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

**Hon. Senators:** Agreed.

(At 2:58 p.m., the Senate was continued until tomorrow at 2 p.m.)

## CONTENTS

Wednesday, June 7, 2023

PAGE	PAGE
<b>SENATORS' STATEMENTS</b>	<b>Finance</b>
<b>Voices of Youth Indigenous Leaders</b>	State of the Economy
Hon. Yonah Martin . . . . .	Hon. Claude Carignan. . . . . 3933
Hon. David M. Arnot . . . . .	Hon. Marc Gold . . . . . 3933
Hon. Dennis Glen Patterson . . . . .	
	<b>Transport</b>
<b>Visitors in the Gallery</b>	Canadian Air Transport Security Authority
The Hon. the Speaker . . . . .	Hon. Paula Simons . . . . . 3934
	Hon. Marc Gold . . . . . 3934
<b>Voices of Youth Indigenous Leaders</b>	
Hon. Brian Francis . . . . .	<b>Health</b>
	Regulation of Vaping Fluids
<b>Visitors in the Gallery</b>	Hon. Chantal Petitclerc . . . . . 3934
The Hon. the Speaker . . . . .	Hon. Marc Gold . . . . . 3934
<b>Deafblind Awareness Month</b>	<b>Official Languages</b>
Hon. Sabi Marwah. . . . .	Business of the Committee
	Hon. Dennis Glen Patterson . . . . . 3935
<b>Visitors in the Gallery</b>	Hon. René Cormier . . . . . 3935
The Hon. the Speaker . . . . .	
	<b>Natural Resources</b>
<b>Canadian Entrepreneurs</b>	Wildfire Management
Hon. Victor Oh . . . . .	Hon. Andrew Cardozo . . . . . 3935
	Hon. Marc Gold . . . . . 3935
<b>Visitor in the Gallery</b>	
The Hon. the Speaker . . . . .	<b>Public Safety</b>
	Correctional Service Canada—Transfer of Inmate
<b>Voices of Youth Indigenous Leaders</b>	Hon. Pierre-Hugues Boisvenu . . . . . 3936
Hon. Michèle Audette. . . . .	Hon. Marc Gold . . . . . 3936
<b>Visitor in the Gallery</b>	<b>Privy Council Office</b>
The Hon. the Speaker . . . . .	Independent Special Rapporteur on Foreign Interference
	Hon. Donald Neil Plett . . . . . 3937
	Hon. Marc Gold . . . . . 3937
<b>ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS</b>	<b>ORDERS OF THE DAY</b>
<b>Public Sector Integrity Commissioner</b>	<b>Indigenous Peoples</b>
Certificate of Nomination and Biographical Notes Tabled	Committee Authorized to Deposit Report on Study of the
Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson . . . . .	Federal Government's Constitutional, Treaty, Political and
	Legal Responsibilities to First Nations, Inuit and Métis
<b>Adjournment</b>	Peoples with Clerk During Adjournment of the Senate
Notice of Motion	Hon. Brian Francis . . . . . 3937
Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson . . . . .	
	<b>Business of the Senate</b>
<b>Jane Goodall Bill (Bill S-241)</b>	Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson . . . . . 3937
Bill to Amend—Notice of Motion to Authorize Legal and	
Constitutional Affairs Committee to Study Subject Matter	
Hon. Marty Klyne . . . . .	
<b>QUESTION PERIOD</b>	
<b>Foreign Affairs</b>	
Human Rights in Iran	
Hon. Donald Neil Plett . . . . .	
Hon. Marc Gold . . . . .	