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The Honourable RAYMONDE GAGNÉ,
Speaker

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THE SENATE

Wednesday, December 6, 2023

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

Prayers.

[Translation]

SENATORS' STATEMENTS

NATIONAL DAY OF REMEMBRANCE AND ACTION ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Hon. Diane Bellemare: Honourable senators, on this National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women, I want to commemorate the lives of the following women: Geneviève Bergeron, Hélène Colgan, Nathalie Croteau, Barbara Daigneault, Anne-Marie Edward, Maud Haviernick, Maryse Laganière, Maryse Leclair, Anne-Marie Lemay, Sonia Pelletier, Michèle Richard, Annie St-Arneault, Annie Turcotte and Barbara Klucznik-Widajewicz.

On December 6, 1989, 14 women were killed by an individual with a profound hatred for women during the École Polytechnique massacre in Montreal. Why? Because they were women. Why women engineering students? Because he hated women in power and, for him, these students represented women who might take the place of men in positions of power.

Even though this massacre took place over 30 years ago, unfortunately, we are still witnessing acts of femicide today. That is unacceptable and it needs to change. Let's not forget that violence against women isn't just physical and that it can be hard to identify in some cases. We must listen to survivors because far too many of them live in fear.

A study published by Statistics Canada shows that the majority of women who are victims of violence do not report their abuser. We need to destigmatize this subject and ensure that these women are heard, supported and protected.

Colleagues, heinous crimes like the Polytechnique massacre have never had a place in Canada, and the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women is a sad reminder of this ever-present reality and of the importance of this constant struggle.

Since 1991, wearing a white ribbon on December 6 has been a powerful symbol of our opposition to all forms of violence against women. It also underscores our ongoing struggle against violence. It is our duty to continue our fight by implementing effective public policies to ensure that what happened at École Polytechnique never happens again in this country.

Honourable senators, you've all received messages from PolySeSouvient, urging us to legislate to crack down on the movement of firearms.

Thank you. *Meegwetch.*

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

[English]

VISITOR IN THE GALLERY

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I wish to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of the Honourable Jeremy Harper, Speaker of the Yukon Legislative Assembly.

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

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

REGIONAL CHIEF ANDREA PAUL

Hon. Mary Coyle: Honourable senators, as I rise today in this chamber on the unceded lands of the Anishinaabe Algonquin Nation, I am honoured to draw the Senate's attention to a remarkable visionary and indefatigable fighter for justice, Andrea Paul, our new regional chief for Nova Scotia, former chief of Pictou Landing First Nation and the first ever woman to represent our region at the Assembly of First Nations, or AFN.

Regional Chief Paul is here in Ottawa for the AFN Special Chiefs Assembly with her counterparts from all across Canada. Andrea Paul fills the very big shoes of our colleague, former regional chief Senator Prosper, who revealed his gifts of intelligence, eloquence and authenticity in his first speech in this chamber last evening.

Colleagues, Chief Andrea Paul is best known in her community and in our region for her dedication to education and to the environment. She is a teacher. She was an education counsellor for years. This past weekend, she received her Master of Education and the famous X-Ring at St. Francis Xavier University. Her good friend St. Francis Xavier professor Dr. Lisa Lunney Borden is impressed with Andrea Paul's dedication to her community and to always doing the right thing.

Probably best known for her decades-long fight for the local environment, Chief Paul and members of her Pictou Landing Mi'kmaq community were successful in persuading the Nova Scotia government to live up to past promises and end the flow of toxic wastewater effluent from the Northern Pulp mill into Boat Harbour.

Chief Paul's fight for environmental justice was highlighted in *There's Something in the Water*, a film on environmental racism directed by Elliot Page and Ian Daniel. Boat Harbour, originally a tidal estuary, was considered to be one of Nova Scotia's worst cases of environmental racism. Chief Paul had online threats to her life and received a letter including a drawing of an Indigenous person and a Black person hanging from a tree with a threatening message.

While swearing the oath of her new office, Regional Chief Paul wore a beautiful headdress with hieroglyphics that evoke her life and passions — the water, the environment, her people, her beloved grandson and one that symbolizes the act of listening, which she says will be key to her new role representing her Mi'kmaq people.

Honourable senators, please join me in congratulating Regional Chief Andrea Paul and wish her well as she seeks, in her own words, to see real movement and positive change in the Mi'kmaq communities of Nova Scotia.

Wela'liog, thank you.

VISITOR IN THE GALLERY

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I wish to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of Mary Beth Moellenkamp, Chief Executive Officer of Peel Children's Aid Society, and members of the Peel CAS team. They are the guests of the Honourable Senator Oh.

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

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

• (1410)

PEEL CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETY

CHILD WELFARE IMMIGRATION CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE

Hon. Victor Oh: Honourable senators, today I stand before you to recognize an important organization — from my hometown of Mississauga — that plays an instrumental role in the lives of children, families and immigrants: the Peel Children's Aid Society, or Peel CAS, as well as the Child Welfare Immigration Centre of Excellence, or CWICE, which is a branch of Peel CAS.

Peel CAS is a beacon of hope for countless children and families in the Peel Region. They are committed to protecting children from abuse and neglect, and work tirelessly to ensure the safety and well-being of vulnerable youth. Their support, intervention and resources help countless families facing adversity. The dedicated team at Peel CAS is committed to providing the rights to safety, care and a nurturing environment where children can thrive.

Additionally, CWICE is devoted to aiding immigrant families in navigating the intricate landscape of child welfare. Their dedication to supporting newcomers facing these challenges and

assessing child welfare services is commendable. Their guidance, resources and culturally sensitive assistance ensure that immigrant families are not only aware of their rights, but also empowered to advocate for the best interests of their children.

In March, I had the opportunity to visit their new facility in Peel, and meet the people who are committed to making a meaningful difference in the lives of the children and families who rely on their services. I witnessed their spirit of compassion, empowerment, advocacy and invaluable support, as well as the protection they provide for the most vulnerable members of our communities. Please join me in welcoming the whole team to Ottawa.

Thank you. *Meegwetch*.

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 Patricia and Peter Spinelli, as well as Katherine and Andrew Wilder. They are the guests of the Honourable Senator Patterson (*Ontario*).

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

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

THE LATE LIEUTENANT-COLONEL JESSIE CHENEVERT

Hon. Rebecca Patterson: Honourable senators, I rise today in remembrance of Nursing Sister, Lieutenant-Colonel — Retired — Jessie Chenevert, who passed away on November 28 at the age of 101 years old.

Born Jessie Urquhart in Ottawa's Glebe neighbourhood, Jessie trained as a hospital nurse in Brockville, Ontario, and went on to work in Kapuskasing. But in 1950, the world changed: The Korean War broke out. She made the brave choice to enlist in the Royal Canadian Army Medical Corps as a nursing sister, partly because she was very worried about her brother Bob, who was an army logistics officer with the Canadian Transport Company.

Upon landing in Japan in May 1953, Nursing Sister Chenevert became one of only 60 Canadian nurses — women — to serve in the Korean War. She served between two sites: the 400-bed British hospital in Kure, Japan; and the 120-bed No. 25 Canadian Field Dressing Station, located about 25 kilometres south of the Imjin River. The Royal Canadian Army Medical Corps faced the daunting challenge of treating battle-inflicted injuries and infectious diseases. Then, when the ceasefire came into effect, Canadian nursing sisters worked with the newly released prisoners of war, helping to restore their physical health before repatriating them back to their home countries.

After the war, Jessie continued to serve in the military. She served in Germany, Ottawa and Churchill, Manitoba. Over the course of her 25 years of service, she rose to the rank of

Lieutenant-Colonel, and retired as Director of Nursing at the National Defence Medical Centre here in Ottawa, where I myself spent my first few years as a nursing officer.

This past year, I met Jessie when the city of Ottawa honoured her by naming a street after her. As I was due to travel to South Korea later that month with parliamentarians and Korean War veterans to mark the seventieth anniversary of the Korean War armistice, I asked Jessie if there was anywhere that she wanted me to visit in her honour. Ever spry at 101 years old, she looked at me and said, “You should be taking me with you.” I got the evil eye from the family, but she meant it. Unfortunately, we had to settle with bringing her photo with me.

I, along with other Canadian parliamentarians, paid tribute to her and other Korean War veterans — both those who died during the war and those who came home — at the United Nations Memorial Cemetery in Busan.

In her own words, and always very humble, she said, “I am no one special. I only did my job, what I signed up for.” But, Jessie, I have to respectfully disagree; you were pretty special.

The one thing that all military nurses have in common is our unwavering commitment to our patients, often without recognition. Colleagues, today, in the presence of her family, I would ask you all to take a moment to remember Jessie as a pioneer, and for the enormous impact that she had on so many.

Jessie, thank you for your service. Rest in peace.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

VISITOR IN THE GALLERY

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I wish to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of Richard Sauvé, Community Legal Worker at Queen’s Prison Law Clinic and PeerLife advocate. He is the guest of the Honourable Senator Pate.

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

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

RICK SAUVÉ

Hon. Kim Pate: Honourable senators, today, may we all pause and take note of the ongoing need to address violence against women.

Unless we address the fundamental social, economic, health, racial and gender discrimination that facilitates the continuing epidemic of such violence, we will still be talking about this and the devastation of tragedies — like the École Polytechnique — another 34 years from now.

The National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, the Mass Casualty Commission and countless years of advocacy underscore that a central feature of the work to end violence involves the acceptance of responsibility by men to promote and model non-violent behaviour.

My friend and mentor Rick Sauvé models and educates others in this regard. Born into a working-class francophone family with Indigenous roots, and despite still awaiting redress to remedy his wrongful conviction, with every fibre of his being, Rick works to promote and protect the rights of others.

In addition to earning his high school diploma, a Bachelor of Arts degree in psychology from Queen’s University and an Honours Bachelor of Arts degree in criminology from the University of Ottawa, Rick has fought for the rights of others. I first came to know Rick when he and members of the Manitoba Stony Mountain Indigenous Brotherhood led the prisoners’ voting cases. Once paroled to the community, Rick refused to leave his friends and colleagues behind, and continued to support and assist men and women in and out of prisons. He also developed one of the first — and quite clearly the most successful — gang disaffiliation initiatives in the country.

Many Indigenous and Black prisoners and former prisoners credit Rick and his interventions with assisting them to exit gang life and transform their lives, their families and their communities. In fact, since prisoners who identified as gang affiliated are disproportionately segregated, during the study of Bill C-83 — the bill to replace segregation with structured intervention units, or SIUs — the Parliamentary Budget Officer identified Rick’s initiative as a far more effective alternative approach to the use of either SIUs or segregation.

Rick’s decades of exemplary paid and volunteer work resulted in him being awarded the 2017 Ed McIsaac Human Rights in Corrections Award by the Correctional Investigator of Canada.

Please join me, honourable colleagues, as I say: *Chi-miigwech*, Rick, to you and to your family — especially your beautiful, lovely partner Michele, your daughter, your grandson, and your brothers — for so generously sharing you with us.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

• (1420)

VISITOR IN THE GALLERY

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I wish to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of Charles Zach. He is the guest of the Honourable Senator Dagenais.

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

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

[Translation]

ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE

CRAM THE CRUISER FOOD DRIVE

Hon. Percy Mockler: Honourable senators, I'd like to share some information about food banks in Canada as well as an RCMP initiative in the communities of Saint-Léonard and Clair, in northwestern New Brunswick.

A special event was held on Saturday, December 2, between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., with one very clear and precise objective: to help the food banks.

I would be remiss if I didn't recognize the leadership of Staff Sergeant Eric Dubé and his team at the RCMP. I want to sincerely thank them for this unprecedented initiative to help the most vulnerable in our region.

[English]

As I share with my colleagues, being the son of a single mother, my sister and I, when we were on welfare, always appreciated getting a box of food and toys at Christmas. It did put a few sparkles in our eyes. It is troubling when we look at Food Banks Canada revealing disturbing and alarming statistics, such as having 2 million Canadians going to food banks every month to put food on their tables. What is the most distressful, honourable senators, is the fact that over half a million kids access food banks across Canada.

[Translation]

Honourable senators, the RCMP detachment in northwestern New Brunswick reached out to ask our entire population to support the food banks.

[English]

Staff Sergeant Eric Dube and his team of officers dedicated themselves to asking the people of the region to team up under a slogan and program, "Cram the Cruiser." Yes, they did that, but not just one cruiser; they put together and delivered six and a half cruisers full of food —

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

Senator Mockler: — plus \$900 in cash.

[Translation]

Honourable senators, in closing, this was a first-time initiative for the RCMP and a resounding success in every way. The public response was positive.

[English]

I had a chat with Staff Sergeant Dube and the other RCMP members. They shared with me their experiences. During the discussion, they said, "Percy, do you know Senator Busson?" And I said, "Yes, I do." The staff sergeant said, "Tell her, for us, she is a legend of the RCMP."

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

Senator Mockler: Let us continue to reach out to the most vulnerable in our society this Christmas season and envision other projects across Canada like the RCMP's.

Thank you.

THE LATE HONOURABLE NOËL A. KINSELLA

SILENT TRIBUTE

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, it is with deep regret that I convey to you the news that the Honourable Noël A. Kinsella, P.C., former Speaker of the Senate, has passed away. There will be an opportunity for us to pay tribute at a later time, but, at this time, I extend to his loved ones the deepest sympathies on behalf of all senators and all who are associated with this place.

Honourable senators, I would ask that you rise and join with me in a minute of silent tribute.

(Honourable senators then stood in silent tribute.)

[Translation]

BUSINESS OF THE SENATE

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, when the Senate adjourns, I ask that you please cooperate by remaining where you are for a Senate Chamber fire drill. Instructions will be given prior to the drill.

[English]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

STUDY ON THE CANADIAN FOREIGN SERVICE AND ELEMENTS OF THE FOREIGN POLICY MACHINERY WITHIN GLOBAL AFFAIRS

TWELFTH REPORT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL
TRADE COMMITTEE DEPOSITED WITH CLERK DURING
ADJOURNMENT OF THE SENATE

Hon. Peter M. Boehm: Honourable senators, I have the honour to inform the Senate that pursuant to the orders adopted by the Senate on February 24, 2022, and November 30, 2023, the Standing Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade deposited with the Clerk of the Senate on December 6,

2023, its twelfth report entitled *More than a Vocation: Canada's Need for a 21st Century Foreign Service* and I move that the report be placed on the Orders of the Day for consideration at the next sitting of the Senate.

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

[Translation]

INCOME TAX ACT

BILL TO AMEND—FOURTEENTH REPORT OF NATIONAL FINANCE COMMITTEE PRESENTED

Hon. Percy Mockler, Chair of the Standing Senate Committee on National Finance, presented the following report:

Wednesday, December 6, 2023

The Standing Senate Committee on National Finance has the honour to present its

FOURTEENTH REPORT

Your committee, to which was referred Bill C-241, An Act to amend the Income Tax Act (deduction of travel expenses for tradespersons), has, in obedience to the order of reference of Thursday, June 8, 2023, examined the said bill and now reports the same without amendment but with certain observations, which are appended to this report.

Respectfully submitted,

PERCY MOCKLER

Chair

(For text of observations, see today's Journals of the Senate, p. 2313.)

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

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

[English]

THE SENATE

NOTICE OF MOTION TO RESOLVE INTO COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE TO RECEIVE MARIE-CHANTAL GIRARD, PRESIDENT OF THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION NOMINEE

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, at 3:30 p.m. on Tuesday, December 12, 2023, the Senate resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole in order to receive Marie-Chantal Girard respecting her appointment as President of the Public Service Commission of Canada;

That the Committee of the Whole report to the Senate no later than 45 minutes after it begins;

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

That, if a senator does not use the entire period of 10 minutes for debate provided under rule 12-31(3)(d), including the responses of the witness, that senator may yield the balance of time to another senator.

• (1430)

[Translation]

QUESTION PERIOD

(Pursuant to the order adopted by the Senate on December 7, 2021, to receive a Minister of the Crown, the Honourable Pascale St-Onge, P.C., M.P., Minister of Canadian Heritage, appeared before honourable senators during Question Period.)

BUSINESS OF THE SENATE

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, today we have with us for Question Period the Honourable Pascale St-Onge, P.C., M.P., Minister of Canadian Heritage. On behalf of all senators, I welcome the minister.

Honourable senators, let me remind you that during Question Period with a minister the initial question is limited to 60 seconds, and the initial answer to 90 seconds, followed by one supplementary question of at most 45 seconds and an answer of 45 seconds. The reading clerk will stand 10 seconds before these times expire. Pursuant to the order adopted by the Senate, senators do not need to stand. Question Period will last 64 minutes.

[English]

MINISTRY OF CANADIAN HERITAGE

LAITH MAROUF

Hon. Donald Neil Plett (Leader of the Opposition): Welcome, minister.

Almost a year and a half ago in August 2022, Canadians learned that a well-known racist and anti-Semite, Laith Marouf, was awarded a grant of well over \$100,000 of taxpayers' money to work as an anti-racism consultant. In fact, as Irwin Cotler, a Liberal, pointed out in October, this person is not only anti-Jewish but anti-francophone and anti-Indigenous. Yet, minister, your government — the Trudeau government — funded him.

Finally, last week, your department said it was taking legal action to recoup the funds. Minister, what took so long, and what funds have you recouped?

[Translation]

Hon. Pascale St-Onge, P.C., M.P., Minister of Canadian Heritage: Thank you for the question.

Everyone acknowledges that this situation is unacceptable and never should have occurred. Since we have been informed of the situation — again, I did not serve in this capacity at the time of the events — the department took steps to make sure that situations like this one never happen again.

We need to ensure that groups and organizations that we give funding to put measures in place to fight racism and discrimination, uphold the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and respect official languages. We have taken significant action. There are ongoing court challenges to recoup the money.

[English]

Senator Plett: Thank you, minister. Of course, the nice thing about ministers is that when they change roles, they can say something wasn't their responsibility. You are right; it wasn't in your ministry. I agree with that.

However, minister, can you tell us why it took your government this long or why, in fact, they have not yet reprimanded anyone for giving roughly \$123,000 to a known anti-Semite? Why wasn't anyone fired over this? What are the specific steps being taken to ensure this never happens again? This, minister, is under your mandate.

[Translation]

Ms. St-Onge: As I said before, significant steps have been taken by the department to make sure that situations like this one never happen again. When we give funding to an organization, there are commitments to keep, and we perform additional

verifications to make sure that there's nothing in the organization's past that suggest any discriminatory or racist motivations.

We also ensure that when the agreements are signed between the department and the organizations, there are clear commitments to take every necessary step to make sure that no organization member —

[English]

ONLINE NEWS ACT

Hon. Leo Housakos: Minister, you and your government have been busy congratulating yourselves for coming to an agreement with Google at the eleventh hour, before they carried through on their threat to stop linking to news articles in Canada — a move that would have decimated a mainstream news media that is already on life support thanks in large part to your flawed legislation. Can you tell the chamber specifics of how this deal differs from what Google had offered one year ago, before your government rammed through your short-sighted Bill C-18?

• (1440)

Minister, can you give us three or four specific differences between what Google had offered a year ago and what was negotiated recently?

[Translation]

Hon. Pascale St-Onge, P.C., M.P., Minister of Canadian Heritage: You mentioned the crisis facing the media for over a decade now. This crisis was brought on by the arrival of the various platforms that are currently taking the lion's share of advertising revenues. This means Google and Facebook, in the media sector.

For more than a decade, these platforms have refused to contribute to our system, to support newsrooms and to recognize the value of the content produced by our newsrooms. They have also refused to take action to support Canadian media.

The only reason agreements have been reached in recent years with certain media outlets chosen by Google or Facebook is because those companies knew that Canada was working on new legislation to regulate them. They knew that Canada was going to create a more equitable system.

The reason we have an agreement with Google today, not only to pay and compensate the media of their choice but all Canadian media outlets eligible under section 11(1) of the act, is because we took action, because we passed legislation that comes into force on December 19. Otherwise, make no mistake, we would have nothing.

[English]

Senator Housakos: Minister, many news outlets already had deals with platforms. The truth is that there is no discernible difference. The government could have agreed to this deal a year

earlier, and even used it as a framework to negotiate a similar deal with Meta that would have prevented them from blocking news links altogether.

The truth is that Bill C-18 has done much to harm not only traditional news outlets, but also online digital start-ups. They are also suffering because of Bill C-18. My question to you is this: How can anyone in the communications domain trust your government with anything it does?

[Translation]

Ms. St-Onge: I will say it one more time: Google entered into agreements with certain media outlets in recent years because it was well aware that the law would compel it to do so.

Google thought it could persuade the government not to regulate the sector, similar to the way things unfolded in other countries, which could enter closed-door agreements with the major media of their choice. Our government decided to enact legislation so that Google not only continues to enter into agreements with the media, but also so that media with no access to assistance and no compensation from Google for their content —

Senator Housakos: Like the CBC —

Ms. St-Onge: — would be included in the act and receive fair compensation.

CULTURAL DIPLOMACY

Hon. Peter M. Boehm: Good afternoon, minister. As you know, in June 2019, the Standing Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade tabled a report entitled *Cultural Diplomacy at the Front Stage of Canada's Foreign Policy*.

Since that report could not be adopted before the 2019 federal election, it was tabled again in the Senate earlier this year and adopted on October 26.

Can you tell us what form the government's response will take and which measures will be taken by your department to implement the recommendations found in the report?

Hon. Pascale St-Onge, P.C., M.P., Minister of Canadian Heritage: Thank you for your very interesting question. As we know, cultural diplomacy sometimes gives nations, people who may not think they have much in common with other people, something that brings them together.

As part of my mandate over the next few months and years, I most certainly intend to address this important issue of cultural diplomacy and obviously take a page from this report. It will be my pleasure to discuss this issue of cultural diplomacy with you and those who are interested in it.

I believe that in our troubled world right now, where we sometimes get the impression that countries are more divided than united around common issues, cultural diplomacy can very certainly build bridges and we must bring this important aspect of diplomacy to centre stage.

Senator Boehm: Thank you.

[English]

REGULATION OF GAMBLING ADVERTISEMENTS

Hon. Marty Deacon: Hello, minister, and thank you for being here this afternoon.

Since single sport betting was legalized a few years ago, Canadians of all ages across the country have been bombarded with ads for placing bets. While this is a newer industry in Canada, we have seen other countries begin to heavily regulate these ads because of the harms they have caused over time. My bill, Bill S-269, would require the government to work with provinces and stakeholders to implement nationwide guidelines that would protect vulnerable Canadians from the harms this onslaught of advertising causes; however, the government could do this of their own accord at any time. We have national standards for the advertising of alcohol, tobacco and cannabis. Speaking as the minister responsible for the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission, or CRTC, will the government consider regulating gambling ads nationally as well?

[Translation]

Hon. Pascale St-Onge, P.C., M.P., Minister of Canadian Heritage: Thank you for your question. You're correct, the issue you're raising is one we need to think about and move forward on. It is very worrying to see how people of all ages are bombarded with ads when they want to watch sporting events, whether on television or on digital platforms. It is an issue we really need to think about as a society.

You're also right that other areas of advertising are more regulated by the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission or CRTC, which is an organization that can take regulatory action.

I would be very happy to continue to discuss this issue with you and look at your important bill.

[English]

Senator M. Deacon: Thank you. We appreciate that Ontario has announced a plan within their own province, but research shows us that that's just the beginning. It's not quite enough.

This has a tremendous national reach for ads. The effectiveness of provincial and territorial regulations are only as good as the lowest standard set. I'm very hopeful that gambling and the harms of gambling meet the same thresholds as other vice industries like alcohol and tobacco. Thank you.

[Translation]

The Hon. the Speaker: Are you able to comment?

Ms. St-Onge: I think that's a symptom of the profound societal changes brought on by the advent of digital platforms and the new forms of advertising that you mentioned. That's why our government has worked very hard to start modernizing the legislative and regulatory framework for what is happening online. That is another thing we need to think about.

[English]

CANADA BOOK FUND

Hon. Percy E. Downe: Thank you, minister, and welcome to the Senate.

When I meet with members of the Canadian publishing industry, many of the concerns they have expressed over the years remain outstanding. The Canada Book Fund has not seen an increase in its funding in over two decades, resulting in a 55% loss in the actual value of the fund.

The good news is that in its 2021 election campaign, the Liberal Party promised to increase funding to the Canada Book Fund by 50%, a commitment that was reinstated in the ministerial mandate letter. However, to date, this commitment has not been fulfilled. Can you inform the Senate when the government is going to meet this commitment from the previous election?

[Translation]

Hon. Pascale St-Onge, P.C., M.P., Minister of Canadian Heritage: Thank you for your question. In the last budget and the fall economic statement, I think we saw that our government is taking a very reasonable approach to act quickly on things that can help Canadians at a time when the country's economic situation is still uncertain. We've introduced targeted measures on health and provincial health transfers, the housing crisis and help for the most economically vulnerable.

• (1450)

However, our government has always been very clear in its desire to support the cultural industry, and that's why we committed to enhancing the fund in our 2021 platform.

I fully intend to keep the commitments that we made at an appropriate time, including commitments regarding public finances, which are very important. I'm very proud of the role that I'm playing today.

[English]

Senator Downe: Minister, as you know, there are more than 200 book publishers in communities across our country. Increased and sustained support for Canadian literature is the only way we can guarantee that Canadians get to see and read their own stories.

Given the vital role that the Canada Book Fund plays in fostering young and upcoming writers and those independent publishers willing to take on the risk of developing unpublished writers, will you impress upon the Minister of Finance the urgent need to address this in the next budget?

[Translation]

Ms. St-Onge: Let me say that our government is fully committed to providing additional supports to culture, including our writers and editors, in other words the entire book publishing sector. That's why we've made some very ambitious commitments, despite a difficult economic context. I will be working very hard with all my colleagues to fulfill these commitments between now and the next election campaign.

CBC/RADIO-CANADA

Hon. Clément Gignac: Welcome to the Senate, minister.

Before I get to my questions, as an independent senator from Quebec, I'd like to take a moment to express my appreciation for the fact that you defended our right, as francophone parliamentarians, to express ourselves in our mother tongue here in Ottawa. This right is recognized by all of my colleagues here and is near and dear to the heart of our Speaker.

That being said, let's talk about the job cuts at the CBC and Radio-Canada.

In a recent announcement, we learned that the job cuts anticipated at our public broadcaster will be the same at Radio-Canada and CBC, even though their business revenues are not the same, the number of employees is not the same, and the drop in advertising revenues at Radio-Canada is three times lower than at the CBC.

Are you comfortable with the CBC president's decision, given that your mandate letter refers to the protection and promotion of the French language across the country, including in Quebec?

Hon. Pascale St-Onge, P.C., M.P., Minister of Canadian Heritage: Thank you for asking a very important question that is on the minds of a lot of francophones like you and me everywhere in Quebec.

Obviously, in my role as Minister of Canadian Heritage, I have to be very careful about what I say because the Crown corporation operates at arm's length from the government. The Crown corporation, its board and its executives are responsible for making decisions in the best interests of the public broadcaster. The public broadcaster is accountable to Canadians, and I encourage the public to offer its input on the proposed proportionality of the anticipated job cuts.

Obviously, CBC/Radio-Canada plays a very important role in promoting the French language across Canada. I also acknowledge the importance of its presence in Quebec. The corporation must comply with its mandate and mission despite the current challenges it faces amid the media crisis and its declining private revenues.

Senator Gignac: Thank you for your answer.

Ministers can still hold Crown corporations to account, though. For instance, I met with the board of a Crown corporation to get additional answers when I wasn't satisfied with the explanations given publicly.

A recent study shows that Canada ranks 15th out of the 20 most developed countries for public broadcaster funding. Canada is at roughly \$33 per capita, whereas France is at \$80 and the U.K. is at, I believe, \$100 for the BBC.

Is having a public broadcaster a priority for your government? Please explain why there's such a gap in support levels.

Ms. St-Onge: Thank you.

Our public broadcaster, for a number of reasons, was built in such a way as to have a mix of public and private funding. However, the world has changed tremendously since its creation. Obviously, it is time to reopen the debate on the future of our public broadcaster.

I want to reaffirm our commitment to CBC/Radio-Canada. We're convinced that we need a strong public broadcaster across Canada to serve all Canadians in both official languages and the eight Indigenous languages. The public broadcaster plays a truly unique role that we must protect and defend. We also need to reassess its entire structure to ensure its long-term viability and make sure that it can continue to serve Canadians for years to come.

MEDIA SUPPORT

Hon. Claude Carignan: Good day, minister.

You are the fourth Minister of Canadian Heritage since the Trudeau government came into power. Since 2015, your government has tried what we call the "same old Liberal ways" of helping the media by handing out more money and adding more regulations.

After eight years, we can measure the extent of the damage: 1,300 job cuts at Bell Media, 800 job cuts at Quebecor and 800 more job cuts at CBC/Radio-Canada. Radio and television broadcasters, the written press, the national press and local press are in a crisis.

Are you going to keep the same policies that aren't working?

Do you think that taxpayers should simply invest more money? Should the government make more rules or are you going to be creative and allow the creators and broadcasters to develop business models that are adapted to the reality of the 21st century?

Hon. Pascale St-Onge, P.C., M.P., Minister of Canadian Heritage: First of all, there's absolutely nothing preventing Canadian creators and media from being creative and adapting their business models to today's reality.

However, we are seeing the effects of the free market, because new digital platforms weren't regulated or codified at all in Canada before the Broadcasting Act was modernized and before

the Online News Act was passed last spring. The free market doesn't work with digital platforms, and that's what has caused the media crisis over the past decade.

These platforms caused a lot of upheaval in the whole revenue structure of media outlets and broadcasters in Quebec and Canada. Deregulation is not what is going to fix this situation; rather, we need to adapt to today's reality and ensure that digital platforms contribute to Canada, because they make enormous profits here. We need a fair industry and we need to ensure that trade relations between platforms, Canadian businesses and Canadian creators are much more balanced. That is the future. We cannot expect the American platforms, which are extremely powerful and have considerable means at their disposal, to make room for Canadian businesses, because we're not forcing them to do so.

Senator Carignan: And yet, minister, Pierre Karl Péladeau stated before the CRTC that federal regulations are killing Quebecor's activities. The CRTC must urgently relax the rules governing Canadian media to let them adapt. Top Bell Media executives have reached the very same conclusion.

Minister, our creative talent and broadcasters are perfectly capable of going head-to-head with the American giants, if you give them the freedom to do it.

Why not try it? Don't you trust them?

Ms. St-Onge: Thank you.

That's why we modernized the Broadcasting Act, to give the CRTC the means to introduce much more flexible approaches with Quebecor, Bell and all Canadian broadcasters, to account for market realities, and to adapt the regulatory framework and their obligations accordingly.

However, we mustn't kid ourselves. Defending French, the existence of French, the existence of our two official languages and Indigenous languages, and the presence and capacity of our creative talent to survive online despite the sway of U.S. platforms, requires support measures. That's why it's important.

• (1500)

[English]

PROCUREMENT AUDIT

Hon. Yonah Martin (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Hello, minister. In December 2022, your department released the results of an audit of its procurement practices. A random sample of contracts were reviewed, and among its findings, the audit found only 63% of contracts put to competitive bidding had established evaluation criteria. Of the contracts put to competitive bidding, just over half indicated all bids were never fully evaluated against the criteria and only 47% maintained a summary of evaluation results demonstrating the winning bidder provided the best value.

So this audit report made seven recommendations to improve oversight of Canadian taxpayers' dollars. How many of these recommendations have been addressed over the past year?

[Translation]

Hon. Pascale St-Onge, P.C., M.P., Minister of Canadian Heritage: Thank you. That's a very good question. I will have to get back to you with more details. I'm a little caught off guard by your question, but I will definitely get back to you with an answer.

[English]

Senator Martin: Minister, the audit of your department found particularly careless approval and monitoring in the use of credit cards for purchases under \$10,000, which is what the audit calls "... low-dollar value items ...". While \$10,000 is not a lot of money to the Trudeau government, it certainly is for the vast majority of Canadian families.

Minister, what has been done over the past year to give much-needed oversight to credit card usage in your department?

[Translation]

Ms. St-Onge: Obviously, we expect everyone who holds a position in the public service or in government to show the utmost respect for the use of public funds and for accountability. As I said earlier, I will get back to you with more details to answer these questions. Naturally, I expect everyone in the department — and within government more generally — to be extremely diligent in using public funds in accordance with the highest standards of governance.

CANADA ARTS PRESENTATION FUND

Hon. René Cormier: Good afternoon, minister. Welcome to the Senate. It is my turn to congratulate you on defending your right to use French everywhere in Parliament. You're an example that I hope all parliamentarians in Canada will follow.

Minister, in the recent economic update, we learned that the government plans to cut the once-a-year transfer of \$8 million to the Canada Arts Presentation Fund, or CAPF, a program that enables artists to go into communities and that gives Canadians access to the arts and creative work.

This is a surprising announcement, given that the performing arts community is still struggling to recover from the effects of the pandemic. Experts estimate that it will take another two years for the industry to return to its pre-pandemic state. Through its #FutureOfLIVE campaign, the Canadian Association for the Performing Arts has been calling for months for the government to make permanent that \$8 million in funding for the CAPF.

Minister, at a time when needs are so pressing, can you reassure these organizations by confirming that the federal government will help them? Will the 2024-25 federal budget provide for additional ongoing funding for the CAPF?

[Senator Martin]

Hon. Pascale St-Onge, P.C., M.P., Minister of Canadian Heritage: Thank you for your question. As you put it so well, the performing arts were among the hardest hit by the pandemic because people could no longer get together. To this day, theatres and festivals are still struggling to get back to the same attendance levels. That's why the cultural sector is one of the sectors for which the government extended COVID support measures even after health restrictions had been lifted.

I'm well aware of the challenges facing this sector. I've had the pleasure of meeting with stakeholders who are calling for more funding. We're going to see what we can do to continue supporting this sector of the economy, which is so important to many communities. It's the local festivals and cultural activities that attract and sustain commerce and tourism every season.

I'm well aware of all that. The government has been there and will continue to do its utmost to support the performing arts sector across the country.

Senator Cormier: Thank you for your answer. You and I both know that the performing arts are a vehicle for identity and culture, and a true force for bringing communities across the country together. At a time when Canada is seeing troubling hate movements target its minorities, I believe that the performing arts are part of the solution. They foster dialogue and openness to diversity in the same way as cultural diplomacy.

Could you tell us how you and the federal government see the role of the performing arts in Canada, economically, of course, but also as a social binding agent that fosters better cohesion between communities?

Ms. St-Onge: You've touched on a lot of my own concerns, and that's exactly what I hope to do with the arts community over the next few months and years. The pandemic certainly exacerbated people's isolation and loneliness. It is essential that we create gathering places and events where people can get together and talk, and where we can forge connections between various communities. I'm convinced that culture and the arts can contribute to social cohesion and the discovery of other realities that we need.

NORTHERN ABORIGINAL BROADCASTING

Hon. Pat Duncan: Thank you, minister. I'm sorry, I speak very little French.

[English]

You are responsible for the Northern Aboriginal Broadcasting funding. I have repeatedly been informed by my Yukon constituents that Indigenous-owned-and-operated radio stations, such as CHON-FM or NNBY, Northern Native Broadcasting Yukon, struggle with funding to replace equipment and increase their cultural programming. This funding program is within your department. It cannot be used for operations. It's project-based. It's a boutique program. Will you commit to examining the funding program to ensure that the financial conditions in which

Northern Native Broadcasting Yukon operates allows them to continue to provide the programming that is within the spirit and intent of the Indigenous Languages Act?

Hon. Pascale St-Onge, P.C., M.P., Minister of Canadian Heritage: I speak English a little bit as well.

[Translation]

Thank you for your question. The Department of Canadian Heritage is deeply involved in the revitalization of Indigenous languages. This obviously requires that Indigenous communities be able to hear their own languages spoken on TV or on the radio. My hat's off to the hard-working people in community radio stations.

Indeed, our government is deeply committed not only to reconciliation, but to the collaborative work that is necessary to ensure the success of community initiatives. I'll examine the ways in which the Department of Canadian Heritage can better support Indigenous community radio stations across Canada. Indigenous language revitalization and cultural transmission to future generations are absolutely essential.

[English]

Senator Duncan: Thank you. Minister, Northern Native Broadcasting Yukon was the founding organization of Aboriginal Peoples Television Network. In 2024 they are celebrating 40 years of service. Their delivery of essential cultural First Nations and Indigenous programming is essential throughout the Yukon, and the Yukon legacy is at risk without an increase in funding. This is the hard question. I've asked if you will look at your program to see if you can somehow increase the funding. Will you also request a funding increase to your colleague the Minister of Finance?

[Translation]

Ms. St-Onge: Thank you for bringing this particular case to my attention. I'll see what we can do to support them within the program and, if required, to ask for more financial resources to ensure the success of broadcasters in the Yukon and across Indigenous communities. It's an essential step toward reconciliation and the resources need to be there.

• (1510)

CBC/RADIO-CANADA

Hon. Jean-Guy Dagenais: Hello, minister, here I am. Don't worry, you're not the only one not to notice me sometimes.

Broadcasting the news is one of CBC/Radio-Canada's primary missions. We see that over the past 20 years, more than 80% of the public broadcaster's news programming is no longer on traditional channels and is reserved for CBC News Network and RDI, two cable channels whose ratings aren't always great.

Since your government seems to believe that quality news needs to be accessible, explain to us why Canadians must pay a monthly cable subscription to have access to news produced by Radio-Canada, in addition to paying taxes.

Hon. Pascale St-Onge, P.C., M.P., Minister of Canadian Heritage: Thank you very much, Senator Dagenais. I can see you clearly. You're right in saying that, in recent years, CBC/Radio-Canada has sought to diversify its revenue to support its mission and mandate with the help of digital platforms and other means. It is essential that, together, we're able to reconsider and reimagine the public broadcaster based on today's reality and market challenges, as well as best practices. That is what we should expect from a public broadcaster supported by public funds.

You're right in saying that the news should be accessible to the entire population, particularly when it's produced by our public broadcaster. We're aware of the financial difficulties being encountered right now by CBC/Radio-Canada, like all of the other media outlets. That has led to a significant drop in advertising revenue and an increase in production costs. That is part of the reality, and we need to take that into account going forward.

Senator Dagenais: Canadians, armed with their phones and tablets, now have round-the-clock access to weather forecasts. The tax dollars of these same Canadians pay for Environment Canada's weather service, available to everyone. Technology has evolved over the past 30 years and the CRTC should perhaps take note.

Do you think that the time has come for the CRTC to end the mandatory channel status granted in 1989 to The Weather Network? The channel is funded by monthly payments that 10 million Canadian cable subscribers are forced to make to the Pelmorex company, whether they need it or not. I think it's time for the CRTC to adjust to the realities of 2023.

Ms. St-Onge: Thank you for your question. It's also important to respect the CRTC's independence and to have a regulator that analyzes and considers the statements and comments of the general public, while also accounting for the broader market realities affecting the various broadcasters.

This question will have to be put to the CRTC. Modernization of the Broadcasting Act now allows for more flexibility in adjusting the regulatory framework.

I'll leave it up to the CRTC to comment on that.

Hon. Andrew Cardozo: Minister, welcome to the Senate.

First of all, congratulations on the agreement with Google, which you announced on the heels of Bill C-18. This is a very important development.

My question is about CBC/Radio-Canada's long-term future. What is your vision of the CBC over the next five to 10 years in terms of programming and technology?

Hon. Pascale St-Onge, P.C., M.P., Minister of Canadian Heritage: That's a good question. Yes, I have my views on what a public broadcaster should look like in the 21st century, but this question needs to be debated among Canadians.

Despite the diversity of platforms, despite access to content and the amount of content Canadians can access today through technology, I think it's even more important that Canadians are able to rely on their public broadcaster, in such a context. As we know, despite the diversity and the quantity of content, fewer and fewer media outlets, for example, can produce the news content that is essential to democracy. There are fewer and fewer private broadcasters or private producers that have the means to showcase less commercial aspects of our culture, up-and-coming talent and more specialized cultural spaces, while at the same time adding to the diversity of this country.

In that context, I think we need to strengthen our public broadcaster and ensure its long-term viability and sustainability, so that it can continue to play this very special role as our public broadcaster.

Senator Cardozo: Minister, in today's world, where there are many broad changes happening, both here and in the media, will CBC/Radio-Canada play a key role in the coming years?

Ms. St-Onge: I think so.

One of the things that I find most disappointing is all that we've lost in terms of international journalism, for example. Fewer and fewer media outlets have the capacity to send journalists to different parts of the world to tell us what is happening there and to bring us the Canadian perspective on the various events that are occurring around the world.

That's one example of something that CBC/Radio-Canada should be doing. We know that a lot of budget cuts had to be made at Radio Canada International over the past decade. That's a big loss, because, now more than ever, we need that Canadian perspective to explain to Canadians what is going on.

[English]

REPORT ON ISLAMOPHOBIA

Hon. Salma Atallahjan: Good afternoon, minister.

The Standing Senate Committee on Human Rights has released a report outlining findings and recommendations following a year-long study on Islamophobia in Canada. The committee learned that Islamophobia is a pervasive issue in the country that has infiltrated every aspect of daily life. Canadian Muslim children are growing up with internalized Islamophobia, and young women in hijab are being harassed in public spaces.

Minister, considering the rise in hate-related incidents since October 7, how do you intend to tackle Islamophobia and anti-Semitism in Canada besides appointing special representatives?

[Translation]

Hon. Pascale St-Onge, P.C., M.P., Minister of Canadian Heritage: Thank you for your question. I think it's a question that covers a very broad spectrum. In terms of the fight against racism, discrimination, anti-Semitism and Islamophobia, yes, special representatives have been appointed. That is one aspect of the work that needs to be done, but this must be integrated into everything we do.

That's why the idea of fostering diversity within government organizations and fighting all forms of discrimination really needs to be a priority for the government as a whole, for all our Crown corporations and for all our departments. We need to think about the impact that each of our policies and each of our laws will have on diverse communities across the country.

Our government must lead by example, with a cabinet that reflects Canada's diversity. That will also help ensure that different perspectives are part of the decision-making process.

[English]

Senator Atallahjan: Minister, many of the committee's findings are striking. It was particularly jarring to learn that there exists a network of hate and bigotry which is leading to the othering of Canadian Muslims who are already often depicted by hurtful stereotypes in the media.

Minister, how do you intend to respond to the report's fifth recommendation regarding the Department of Canadian Heritage undertaking a review of the role and effectiveness of the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission in fulfilling its mandate, particularly regarding the needs, interests and aspirations of racialized communities?

• (1520)

[Translation]

Hon. Pascale St-Onge, P.C., M.P., Minister of Canadian Heritage: Thank you for the question. When we modernized the Broadcasting Act, we included a lot of concepts surrounding diversity and the representation of diversity in broadcasting and on broadcasting platforms across Canada.

We have made sure that diverse communities can see themselves on television and hear themselves on radio. It is all part of the fight against hatred, discrimination and racism. Once again, it needs to be part of our everyday work.

[English]

CANADIAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION

Hon. Donald Neil Plett (Leader of the Opposition): Minister, a few minutes ago, you complimented Senator Cardozo on a good question about the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, or CBC. I also have a good question about the CBC. I hope you'll feel the same way about mine.

As you know, the CBC launched an unsuccessful lawsuit against the Conservative Party of Canada during the 2019 federal election. Minister, do you know how much the CBC spent on this lawsuit? If you don't have the figure with you here today — and I'm sure you don't — will you commit to tabling that answer in the Senate?

[Translation]

Hon. Pascale St-Onge, P.C., M.P., Minister of Canadian Heritage: That is indeed a very good question, Senator Plett. Thank you. You are correct, I don't have that information on hand.

Once again, the public broadcaster operates at arm's length from the government and makes its own administrative decisions.

[English]

Senator Plett: Minister, the CBC reports to Parliament through your department. Sadly, it doesn't surprise me in the least that you won't commit to providing the figure. I have had the question asking for this information on the Order Paper since May 25, 2021, over two and a half years ago. Minister, does transparency mean anything to you or the Trudeau government?

[Translation]

Ms. St-Onge: Absolutely. Transparency and the highest standards of governance are very important. CBC/Radio-Canada is accountable to the Canadian public and the CRTC and has to show that it is meeting the obligations with which it has been entrusted.

I truly believe that all of our public servants, Crown corporations and departments must be fully transparent.

[English]

ONLINE NEWS ACT

Hon. Paula Simons: Of the \$100 million that was just announced in your deal with Google, can you tell us how much of that is new money in addition to what Google was already paying in its deals with Canadian publishers? Additionally, can you tell us how much of that money will go to the CBC, how much to private broadcasters, how much to large newspaper chains and how much to smaller minority language, ethnocultural and other specialty organizations or start-ups?

[Translation]

Hon. Pascale St-Onge, P.C., M.P., Minister of Canadian Heritage: Thank you for the question. Regarding the proportion of the \$100 million that is new money, it's impossible for me to give you an answer because the agreements between certain media outlets and Google are not public.

That being said, from what I understand, a tremendous amount of money was added for all media through this agreement. The eligibility criteria are listed in section 11.1 of the Broadcasting Act. The media outlets must take part in the process so that the platform can secure an exemption and not have to appear before

an adjudicator to settle a dispute. The media includes official language minority media, Indigenous media, ethnic media, local, regional and community media, as well as traditional and independent media, of course.

[English]

Senator Simons: I ask because the Parliamentary Budget Officer estimated earlier that the vast amount of the money he calculated under Bill C-18 would go to the CBC and private broadcasters because they had the largest costs. Can you tell us if the money will be divvied up based on the operational costs of the organizations, or will there be a different method to make sure that Indigenous minority language and independent start-ups get a piece of the pie, and that the money doesn't all go to the large legacy outlets?

[Translation]

Ms. St-Onge: The final regulations will be published. They are currently being examined by the Treasury Board. They will be made public before the act is implemented on December 19, and that will no doubt answer many of your questions on how the money will be divvied up.

Obviously, journalism is what we want to support with this legislation, so the media outlets have to have journalists working for them in order for them to be eligible under the act.

ONLINE STREAMING

Hon. Marie-Françoise Mègie: Good afternoon, minister.

In today's edition of *Le Devoir*, singer-songwriter France d'Amour pleads with you directly to do something about the inadequate compensation for artists whose music is played on streaming platforms.

The federal government has the power to change things by amending the Copyright Act to provide for a right to compensation, so artists are paid royalties every time their music is streamed on online platforms.

Spain, Belgium and Uruguay have come up with solutions and implemented mechanisms so that performing artists get more equitable compensation. When will Canada follow their lead and implement these types of measures?

Hon. Pascale St-Onge, P.C., M.P., Minister of Canadian Heritage: Thank you for your question. The whole copyright issue is a responsibility shared between me and the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry. We are working on it together. Copyright consultations have taken place, and other consultations on artificial intelligence are in progress.

Obviously, this could be one way to improve artist compensation, especially on the music side of things. The other thing that the government has done to improve artist compensation is modernize the Broadcasting Act. Streaming platforms like Spotify and Apple Music will be asked to contribute more support for musical content production here in

Canada. These platforms will have to support Canadian artists and do more to promote them, which will help them be more discoverable and generate income.

Senator Mégie: Thank you, minister.

[English]

CBC/RADIO-CANADA

Hon. Percy E. Downe: Minister, at the beginning of the COVID pandemic, Prince Edward Islanders were very disappointed that CBC Toronto decided to cancel local TV newscasts in P.E.I. Prince Edward Island only has one English-language television network in the province, and it's CBC. We were disappointed and surprised, pointing out that CBC, as a condition of their licence, promised to maintain at least seven hours of local programming per week. Another condition of their licence is that they would not change that without approval from the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission, or CRTC, following a public process of consultation. None of that happened. Prince Edward Islanders are asking: To whom do we appeal? We were at the beginning of a pandemic; we have a province with a high percentage of seniors and some of the worst rural internet connections in Canada. The information provided by the local CBC News broadcasts was critical. What can you do, minister, to prevent this from happening during the next crisis, and will you instruct the CBC to continue their local broadcasting?

[Translation]

Hon. Pascale St-Onge, P.C., M.P., Minister of Canadian Heritage: Thank you for the question. It's important to have a public broadcaster that is strong and economically viable. We know that CBC/Radio-Canada is currently facing economic pressures that are forcing it to make unfortunate decisions.

Of course, one of the key aspects of its mandate is maintaining a local and regional presence. In fact, its mandate is to serve communities, especially in emergencies or situations such as a pandemic.

The CRTC is an independent body that imposes obligations on public broadcasters and dictates their programming hours, as you mentioned. So that would be the right place to submit complaints, and then you can ask the CRTC to consider them.

• (1530)

More broadly, it's also part of my mandate to review CBC/Radio-Canada's mandate and mission, and to consider how the Canadian government can best support the viability of an independent public broadcaster across the country.

[English]

Senator Downe: Minister, the CBC, in the view of many Islanders, made an idiotic decision when they cancelled the only local TV broadcaster in the province at the beginning of the pandemic. When we needed it the most for information, they

abandoned us. The CBC employees in Prince Edward Island were not asking for that. They said they could carry on and provide the service.

We found out the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission, or CRTC, gives a licence with conditions. They have no enforcement of those conditions, and they have no other option but to give CBC the licence. You are the last hope we have to prevent this from happening again during a crisis. In the case of the pandemic, people could have died because of the lack of information. We had local radio and newspapers, but the CBC is the only TV broadcaster in the province.

Minister, can you prevent this from happening again?

[Translation]

Ms. St-Onge: You are absolutely right. The things that you mentioned must be part of our public broadcaster's fundamental role.

From what I understand, CBC/Radio-Canada had to make some difficult decisions because of the financial pressure that it has been under for many years as a result of the decline in self-generated revenue. That is why we are at a point where we need to consider the future of our public broadcaster and guarantee this essential service for all Canadians.

Canada is a very big country that is very hard to cover. That is part of the broadcaster's mandate. We definitely need to plan our public broadcaster's future.

[English]

INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES

Hon. Brian Francis: Minister St-Onge, in line with the 2021 mandate letter of your predecessor, when does your government intend to amend the Indigenous Languages Act to ensure it is consistent with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, or UNDRIP, and that the language rights of First Nations, Inuit and Métis people are clearly defined and enforceable?

In addition, when will sufficient, predictable and sustainable funding be allocated to support efforts to reclaim, revitalize, maintain and strengthen Indigenous languages in Mi'kma'ki and beyond?

[Translation]

Hon. Pascale St-Onge, P.C., M.P., Minister of Canadian Heritage: Thank you very much for your question.

That is indeed one of the priorities that I need to focus on in the coming years. The department has already begun the very important task of working with Indigenous communities across the country. We are working together and giving them the resources and support they need to revitalize Indigenous languages. Since taking over this portfolio, I have had the opportunity to meet with a few of these communities to discuss this challenge. I know that the communities have a lot of work to

[Ms. St-Onge]

do, because most Indigenous languages in the country are genuinely at risk of dying out in the very near future. There is a sense of urgency to work as quickly as possible to make sure that the language and culture is passed on to current and future generations. There is a lot to do, including training people who can teach these languages.

All sorts of extraordinary things are being done in the communities. I am making this commitment, but so is our government. Continuing this collaborative work is an essential part of reconciliation.

[English]

CBC/RADIO-CANADA

Hon. Leo Housakos: This week, CBC/Radio-Canada announced that it will be cutting hundreds of positions across its French and English platforms. When you dig deeper, it's evident that this is more of a hiring freeze than it is a loss of jobs. Regardless, the backdrop of this announcement are documents obtained by the Canadian Taxpayers Federation showing that CBC handed out more than \$51 million in bonuses and pay raises in 2020 and 2021.

When asked whether they will be proceeding with bonuses this year, CBC President Catherine Tait said that they haven't discussed that yet. They have discussed cutting hundreds of jobs but haven't discussed Christmas bonuses with Christmas just a few weeks away. The pandemic didn't stop the bonuses, and hundreds of job cuts announced this week won't stop the bonuses.

Minister, will you stop the bonuses to an organization whose ratings are abominable?

[Translation]

Hon. Pascale St-Onge, P.C., M.P., Minister of Canadian Heritage: First of all, hearing that there are workers who are about to lose their jobs and income is never good news. My thoughts go out to all these CBC/Radio-Canada workers struggling with uncertainty today.

The President and CEO of CBC/Radio-Canada was asked a good question. She has to be transparent and answer perfectly valid questions about her management and the decisions that lay ahead.

The compensation policy is determined internally and approved by the board of directors. It is one of the decisions that fall under their responsibility. However, they are accountable to the Canadian public and are required to answer questions.

[English]

Senator Housakos: Minister, CBC has been a disaster. It's easy to wash your hands by saying it's an independent organization, which your government continues to find ways to fund with more and more of taxpayers' money. Minister, it's not even clear from this week's announcement who, if anyone, at the

CBC will actually lose their jobs. Employees have actually been told that it could be months before people are notified of which positions are being cut. It's like a runaway train at the CBC.

Given your confirmation that CBC will be eligible for a portion of the funds generated by Bill C-18, possibly with a cap, how can this be seen as anything other than a complete shakedown over there?

[Translation]

Ms. St-Onge: Once again, thank you for your question.

As I said earlier, CBC/Radio-Canada management has to explain its decisions and this week's announcement.

However, we cannot ignore the financial difficulties confronting all of Canada's media. CBC/Radio-Canada relies not only on public funding but also on private revenue, and it is also struggling financially.

• (1540)

She must manage the Crown corporation with that reality in mind, and then explain her decisions not only to employees, who will be the first to be affected, but also to the Canadian public as a whole.

[English]

ONLINE NEWS ACT

Hon. Donna Dasko: Welcome to the Senate, minister.

I want to follow up on the agreement you reached with Google for \$100 million. Of course, this is important to the Canadian media, and it's important to the public to have access to news on this platform.

In reaching the agreement, I would like to ask you what is left of the Online News Act. For example, what is the status of the exemption requirements that are articulated in the act, such as fair compensation to news outlets, support for non-profit and for-profit sectors and Indigenous news outlets and so on? What is left of these requirements and these conditions? How do they apply in this environment? Given the deal you have reached with Google, what is the status of them? Does Google have to negotiate with individual organizations with these conditions in mind?

[Translation]

Hon. Pascale St-Onge, P.C., M.P., Minister of Canadian Heritage: Let me begin by pointing out that what we discussed with Google was not about the agreement that will bind Google and the Canadian media collective, but rather about how we would use regulations to answer the questions and legitimate concerns that Google had.

For example, Google wanted to have some predictability relative to the amount it would have to pay the industry to meet the exemption criteria. That was one of the issues. The other was knowing exactly with whom it would have to negotiate.

When Google publicly commented on the regulations, the media said that its questions were legitimate and urged the government to find solutions through the regulations. That's what we did.

The financial aspect, that is, the \$100 million that will be indexed annually, will be included in the regulations. In addition, we authorized another way to negotiate with the media, specifically under a single collective, rather than several. These are the two accommodations we made, but the rest must be negotiated between Google and the media collective.

[English]

Senator Dasko: So there are negotiations anticipated between Google and individual organizations?

[Translation]

Ms. St-Onge: Actually, negotiations will take place through a media collective, which will have to represent all media outlets that are eligible under the act and that put their hands up to say that yes, they want an agreement with Google. The media collective will then have to negotiate, including on the additional non-financial services provided by Google for the media and on other aspects, such as the duration of the mandate, redistribution, and so on.

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, the time for Question Period has expired. I'm certain you will join me in thanking Minister St-Onge for joining us today.

We will now resume the proceedings that were interrupted at the beginning of Question Period. Thank you, Minister.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

NATIONAL FRAMEWORK ON SICKLE CELL DISEASE BILL

PETITION TABLED

Hon. Marie-Françoise Mégie: Honourable senators, I have the honour to table a petition from the residents of Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec and Newfoundland and Labrador expressing their support of Bill S-280, An Act respecting a national framework on sickle cell disease.

[Ms. St-Onge]

[English]

ORDERS OF THE DAY

BILL TO AMEND CERTAIN ACTS AND TO MAKE CERTAIN CONSEQUENTIAL AMENDMENTS (FIREARMS)

THIRD READING—DEBATE

Hon. Hassan Yussuff moved third reading of Bill C-21, An Act to amend certain Acts and to make certain consequential amendments (firearms).

He said: Honourable senators, 34 years ago today, Canada was traumatized by one of the largest mass shootings and worst femicides in our history at Polytechnique Montréal engineering school. On December 6, 1989, a mass murderer entered Polytechnique and murdered 14 women, wounding another 10 women and 4 men, using an assault-style weapon. Why did he do it? He said simply that he was fighting feminism.

I would ask, colleagues, that we take a moment to remember these women who were needlessly murdered in cold blood and think about how passing this bill might bring some peace to their families and the survivors of that horrendous day.

The women who died that day, include Geneviève Bergeron, Hélène Colgan, Nathalie Croteau, Barbara Daigneault, Anne-Marie Edward, Maud Haviernick, Maryse Laganière, Maryse Leclair, Anne-Marie Lemay, Sonia Pelletier, Michèle Richard, Annie St-Arneault, Annie Turcotte and Barbara Klucznik-Widajewicz.

Senators, these weren't just women. They were members of families and loved ones. They died needlessly because an individual did not see their place in society where they belonged. They were studying to become engineers. He could not accept that. Since that day, every December 6, we observe their deaths and try to do better.

As a man, I have to say that if this is ever to end, men have to take responsibility for the violence that continues to occur to women not only in this country but throughout the world. This is men's responsibility. Some of us wear these ribbons to remember and honour those women, but I know we have to do far more than that. Bill C-21, the aspect of which I will speak to, addresses some of that.

Senators, gun violence in this country takes many forms, from suicide to homicide, accidental deaths and femicide that far too often manifests through domestic violence. All Canadians — I think every senator in this place also — want safer communities without fear of violence from guns. The problem has always been how to best achieve that goal.

• (1550)

The legislation before us is not the sole way the government proposes to achieve this goal, but it is one part of the puzzle in doing so.

Broadly speaking, Bill C-21 will cement restrictions on handguns, create new harm reduction measures, increase penalties for those who break the law and prevent new assault-style firearms from entering the Canadian market.

I want to thank my colleagues on the Standing Senate Committee on National Security, Defence and Veterans Affairs, who have worked hard during the past two months on the study of this bill. I also want to thank the many witnesses who appeared during our study on both sides of the debate, including representatives from Indigenous communities and organizations, gun-control advocates, gun rights advocates, academics, researchers, law enforcement and women's and victims' groups.

Today, I want to go over the main measures in the bill and then talk about some of the issues that were raised in the committee's study of it.

As I said in my second reading speech, the debate around gun control is never easy. It is often emotionally charged and often leads to strong opinions on both sides because it is about life and death, safe communities and people's rights and privileges.

I have tried to understand the debate on this bill through the lens of balancing a right with a privilege. I ask you, colleagues, to try to view this debate through that lens as well because, fundamentally, that is what this bill is about — striking a fair balance between the right of Canadians to safe communities and the privilege of Canadians to own certain types or models of guns for hunting, sports shooting or collecting.

Honourable senators, I now want to take a few minutes to go over the key measures in the bill. However, I want to start by clearly stating what this bill will not do, because there has been a lot of confusion, both on the part of the opposition in the other place and on the part of some witnesses who appeared during our committee study, about the effect it will have on existing hunting guns and handguns.

Bill C-21 will not impact the classification of existing firearms, whether they are long guns or handguns, in the Canadian market. To be crystal clear, not one of the estimated 1.2 million handguns owned by approximately 300,000 legal licence holders will be prohibited or confiscated. Not one of the estimated 12 million long guns owned by millions of legal licence holders will be prohibited or confiscated because of this legislation.

Colleagues, you don't have to take my word for it. My colleague Senator Plett, the Leader of the Opposition and critic for Bill C-21, has said the same. In our study of the bill on November 22, Senator Plett said:

This bill does not actually reduce legal firearms in circulation in Canada. The bill will certainly ban the purchase and sale of legal handguns, but it doesn't actually take any handguns out of circulation, at least not until someone dies when the estate loses that handgun. Nothing prevents handgun owners or anyone else from owning or buying another firearm. The bill also confirms a ban on

so-called assault rifles, but it doesn't reduce any other guns in circulation, including semi-automatic firearms. In fact, the government will actually pay gun owners to hand in the firearms that have been prohibited, and then permits those firearms owners to use that money to go out and simply buy other firearms if they choose to do so.

Honourable senators, if you are looking for one area of agreement between the sponsor, myself, and the critic of the bill, it is this.

I hope I have cleared up one of the major sources of confusion and contention about what is not in the bill. I will now speak to what is in it, beginning with handguns.

As we know, handguns represent a serious and growing threat to our communities. Handguns are the most commonly used firearm in homicides. The bill will enshrine in legislation the national freeze on handguns which took effect via regulation in October 2022. While current owners will be able to possess and use their handguns, the vast majority of individuals will no longer be able to buy, sell or import handguns. The bill is careful, however, to create a path for individuals to develop in Olympic and Paralympic sports shooting disciplines.

When the minister appeared at committee, he spoke about this exemption, and yesterday he submitted a letter to our committee to address several concerns that were raised in our study, including the issue of this exemption.

Minister LeBlanc said in his letter:

I want to assure the committee that consultations will take place to clearly establish the process for the elite sport shooter exemption. In my view, this exemption must apply to those who are currently representing Canada, and those who are training, and getting ready, to one day, hopefully represent Canada at the Olympic and Paralympic Games. There must be a pathway for the next generation.

Colleagues, the bill also includes new measures to combat firearms smuggling by increasing the maximum penalties for gun traffickers from 10 to 14 years and setting up new authorities to combat firearms smuggling. The amendments also include measures to address the growing threat of illegally manufactured firearms — the so-called ghost guns.

Bill C-21 will create new offences aimed at the use of 3-D printing for the purposes of manufacturing and trafficking of firearms, classifying "ghost guns" and other illegally made firearms as prohibited. And it will require permits to purchase and import certain firearm parts to help prevent the illegal manufacture and assembly of "ghost guns."

Honourable senators, Bill C-21 also includes new measures to address the harms associated with firearms in general. As I have noted in this place, suicide by firearm accounted for nearly three quarters of all firearms-related deaths in Canada between 2000

and 2020. Furthermore, victims of intimate partner violence are almost five times more likely to be killed if a firearm is present in the home.

Bill C-21 will include amendments to strengthen measures to address the risks associated with firearms in gender-based violence. Under Bill C-21, individuals with a protection order against them or who have been convicted of certain offences relating to family violence will not be eligible for a firearms licence. New “red flag” laws in the bill will allow courts to order the temporary and immediate removal of firearms from individuals who may be a danger to themselves or anyone else.

Measures to protect victims’ and applicants’ identities are included in Bill C-21 to allow judges to conduct hearings and consider the evidence, while also taking steps to protect personal safety. When a weapons prohibition order or a protection order is issued, this will be reported to authorities within 24 hours.

“Yellow flag” laws will allow chief firearms officers to suspend an individual’s firearms licence if the officers receive information calling into question that individual’s licence eligibility. Furthermore, the bill will help protect victims of violence and those at risk of self-harm by a firearm.

Firearms licences would be automatically revoked if a protection order is issued. If a chief firearms officer suspects that an individual has engaged in domestic or intimate partner violence or stalking, they must revoke their licence within 24 hours. Also, if a person is undergoing a mental health crisis, they would be able to transport their firearm to another person or business for temporary safekeeping, helping to keep themselves or their loved ones safe.

Bill C-21 also addresses the clear danger that some firearms pose, specifically those firearms that are better suited for the battlefield than our communities.

Colleagues, we need to stand together and agree that there is absolutely no place in our communities for assault-style weapons. Firearms that fire deadly projectiles as fast as the operator can pull the trigger pose a particular risk for mass shootings. Canadians have been clear about this point.

• (1600)

Now, honourable senators, the responsibility of putting it into law rests on our shoulders. Senators, this bill will accomplish this by codifying a prospective technical definition of “prohibited firearms” in statutes.

[Senator Yussuff]

BUSINESS OF THE SENATE

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, it being 4 p.m., I must interrupt the proceeding. Pursuant to rule 9-6, the bells will ring to call in the senators for the taking of a deferred vote at 4:15 p.m. on the motion in amendment of the Honourable Senator Cormier, seconded by the Honourable Senator Miville-Dechéne.

Call in the senators.

• (1610)

CANADA EARLY LEARNING AND CHILD CARE BILL

THIRD READING—MOTION IN AMENDMENT ADOPTED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Moodie, seconded by the Honourable Senator Miville-Dechéne, for the third reading of Bill C-35, An Act respecting early learning and child care in Canada.

And on the motion in amendment of the Honourable Senator Cormier, seconded by the Honourable Senator Miville-Dechéne:

That Bill C-35 be not now read a third time, but that it be amended in clause 8, on page 6, by replacing lines 13 to 20 with the following:

“8 (1) The Government of Canada commits to maintaining long-term funding for early learning and child care programs and services, including early learning and child care programs and services for Indigenous peoples and for official language minority communities.

(2) The funding must be provided primarily through agreements with the provincial governments and Indigenous governing bodies and other Indigenous entities that represent the interests of an Indigenous group and its members.”.

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, the question is as follows: It was moved by the Honourable Senator Cormier, seconded by the Honourable Senator Miville-Dechéne:

That Bill C-35 be not now read a third time, but that it be amended in clause 8, on page 6, by replacing lines 13 to 20 with the following: —

Shall I dispense, honourable senators?

Kutcher
Loffreda

Woo
Yussuff—58

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

Motion in amendment of the Honourable Senator Cormier agreed to on the following division:

NAYS
THE HONOURABLE SENATORS

YEAS
THE HONOURABLE SENATORS

| | |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|
| Arnot | Marshall |
| Ataullahjan | Martin |
| Aucoin | Massicotte |
| Batters | McCallum |
| Bellemare | McNair |
| Boehm | McPhedran |
| Busson | Mégie |
| Cardozo | Mockler |
| Carignan | Moncion |
| Clement | Oh |
| Cormier | Omidvar |
| Cotter | Pate |
| Coyle | Patterson (<i>Nunavut</i>) |
| Cuzner | Petitclerc |
| Dagenais | Plett |
| Dalphond | Poirier |
| Deacon (<i>Ontario</i>) | Quinn |
| Dean | Richards |
| Dupuis | Ringuette |
| Forest | Ross |
| Gerba | Saint-Germain |
| Gignac | Seidman |
| Greene | Smith |
| Hartling | Tannas |
| Housakos | Verner |
| Jaffer | Wallin |
| Kingston | Wells |

Audette
Bernard
Boyer
Cordy
Dasko
Downe
Duncan
Francis
Gold
Harder

Klyne
LaBoucane-Benson
Lankin
MacAdam
Moodie
Petten
Prosper
Ravalia
Simons
White—20

ABSTENTIONS
THE HONOURABLE SENATORS

Osler
Patterson (*Ontario*)

Sorensen—3

• (1620)

[*Translation*]

BUSINESS OF THE SENATE

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I would like to remind you to remain in your seats immediately following the adjournment of the Senate to participate in a Senate fire evacuation drill. You will be given instructions before the drill begins.

(*At 4:25 p.m., pursuant to the order adopted by the Senate on September 21, 2022, the Senate adjourned until 2 p.m., tomorrow.*)

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