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The Honourable RAYMONDE GAGNÉ,
Speaker

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THE SENATE

Tuesday, February 13, 2024

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

Prayers.

SENATORS' STATEMENTS

THE LATE HONOURABLE DARYL KRAMP

Hon. Donald Neil Plett (Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, today I want to honour a dear friend and former Conservative caucus colleague Daryl Kramp, who passed away last Thursday.

Daryl lived a professional life of service. He was a restaurateur, a police officer, and then was elected at all three levels of government in Ontario. His political beginnings started in Madoc as councillor and reeve. He then served as the Conservative Member of Parliament for Prince Edward—Hastings from 2004 to 2015. He also served in Queen's Park as the Progressive Conservative member for the riding of Hastings—Lennox and Addington from 2018 to 2022.

Throughout his many years of service, Daryl always stayed very connected with the people of his community. He truly cared for them, which is why he dedicated his time and energy to making life better for people at home.

Daryl Kramp was a gentle giant; he had a presence that would brighten up a room. There was something special about him that made him uniquely personable.

I will always remember fondly the moments that we shared while we served together as co-chairs on the Canada–China Legislative Association. While this provided me with an opportunity to get to know Daryl better, it has also allowed me to get to know his lovely wife, Carol Ann.

When both Betty and I heard of the passing of our dear friend, our hearts and prayers immediately went to Carol Ann and their three daughters: Kari Layne, Taryl and Shelby. Losing a loved one is never easy, but when that loved one is such a caring and giving individual, their departure is even more difficult.

Shelby Kramp-Neuman, Daryl's daughter who has followed in her father's footsteps and is now our colleague in the other place as the current Member of Parliament for Hastings—Lennox and Addington, shared the following:

A life of greatness lived with purpose, leaving behind a legacy of love and inspiration. An extraordinary man who embodied wisdom, kindness, integrity, and devotion to family, community, and nation. My guiding light, my mentor, my father; an exemplary soul whose impact will be felt for generations. . . .

I couldn't agree more.

On behalf of the Conservative caucus and on behalf of Betty and me, our heartfelt condolences go out to Daryl's loved ones. May God strengthen them as they grieve the departure of this great man. Thank you, colleagues.

[Translation]

WILLOW KEY

Hon. Sharon Burey: Honourable senators, I rise today to draw your attention to the work of Willow Key, a young Canadian Ph.D. student at the University of Windsor's history department. Her main research topic, "We were here," has captured attention locally, provincially and internationally. The McDougall Street Corridor Project involves a GPS-based self-guided walking tour, as well as an online tour.

[English]

McDougall Street Corridor was a mostly self-sufficient, vibrant African-Canadian community in Windsor, Ontario, where a historic neighbourhood emerged during the mid-19th century as formerly enslaved freedom seekers and free people of colour crossed the Detroit River to Upper Canada in search of refuge from enslavement and oppression and a place to call home.

This community fell victim to the urban renewal policies across Canada during the mid-20th century that destroyed businesses and historic, culturally rich meeting places like historical churches, social halls and multi-generational homes in the name of progress and modernization.

This information is particularly relevant now because as a country we grapple with a national housing crisis.

Through meticulous research and dedication, Willow has ensured that the remnants of the McDougall Street Corridor are not erased. Her project encapsulates this vital chapter of Canadian history through a comprehensive collection of essays, maps, artifacts, documents and images. Collaborations from Irene Davis, President of the Essex County Black Historical Research Society, and the University of Windsor, ensured the project's success.

Furthermore, this project carries profound personal significance for Willow, who remarked:

My research interests have always involved Black Canadian history and through this opportunity of sharing the McDougall Street corridor's history with the public, I also discovered my own family's connection to the neighbourhood.

She is the recipient of the Architectural Conservancy Ontario award which recognizes an individual early in their career for outstanding contributions in the field of heritage and community engagement. It is truly inspiring to witness the youth of our nation, our future leaders, actively contributing to the remembrance of Black Canadian history — yes, colleagues,

Canadian history — thus enriching our understanding and appreciation of our diverse cultural diversity and tapestry. 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 Matthew Bongiorno and Aaron Nutting from the Canadian Olympic Committee. They are the guests of the Honourable Senator Deacon (*Ontario*).

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

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

[*Translation*]

SELECT LUXURY ITEMS TAX

AEROSPACE INDUSTRY

Hon. Éric Forest: Quebec's aerospace industry generates \$18 billion in sales and accounts for 37,000 jobs. Quebec exports nearly 80% of its production outside Canada. In 2022, the aerospace industry was the largest exporter in Quebec, accounting for 10.9% of Quebec's total exports.

Over the past 25 years, aerospace industry sales in Quebec have grown at an average annual rate of almost 5%. However, various ill-advised decisions by the current government are impeding the industry's growth.

We have talked a lot about the fact that the government prevented the Quebec industry from even submitting a proposal for the renewal of its reconnaissance aircraft.

However, I'd like to give you another example today. When the luxury tax was introduced, several members of the National Finance Committee warned the government against this measure, which seemed to stem from election-related ideological prejudice rather than a rational, fact-based decision.

At the time, we asked the government to produce a cost-benefit analysis, because we were worried that the damage to jobs and the economy would be greater than the tax revenue, particularly for the aerospace industry, an economic engine for Montreal and Quebec. In the end, we learned that no such analysis had been done.

What we feared has now come to pass. According to a study by HEC Montréal, the aerospace industry is out \$1.1 billion in revenue. The anticipated luxury tax revenues are well below the \$55 million in GST that the federal government would have collected on those purchases.

In short, the luxury tax revenue was less than the GST revenue would have been. Let me just say that the luxury goods tax has been anything but good for the aerospace industry.

[Senator Burey]

Let's just look at Bombardier. Since the tax was introduced, the company has lost orders for 20 planes: 12 Global aircraft and eight Challengers. This represents an US\$880-million shortfall and the annual labour of 750 workers.

What the industry wants the government to do is, at the very least, change the tax to ensure fair treatment for Canadians who buy a plane for commercial purposes.

It's time the government acknowledged that this tax is wrong-headed and that its main victims are aerospace industry workers.

• (1420)

[*English*]

Hon. Donald Neil Plett (Leader of the Opposition): I would like to rise on a point of order, please, before Senator Oh speaks.

I am being told by my office that the sound is still a real problem. Some of the Senators' Statements we are recording because people want to send them out. On the TV broadcast, there is almost no sound. Clearly, the Senators' Statements will not be recorded if they continue.

The Hon. the Speaker: We will be testing the sound.

(The sitting of the Senate was suspended.)

(The sitting of the Senate was resumed.)

Senator Plett: My office is now saying the online sound is fine but the TV broadcast sound is still off on the floor version.

The Hon. the Speaker: The floor language is an issue. We will suspend again to try to fix the problem.

(The sitting of the Senate was suspended.)

(The sitting of the Senate was resumed.)

• (1440)

VISITOR IN THE GALLERY

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I wish to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of Jenny Qi, Chair of the Canada Confederation of Shenzhen Associations. She is accompanied by a delegation. She is the guest of the Honourable Senator Oh.

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

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

LUNAR NEW YEAR

Hon. Victor Oh: Honourable senators, today I rise to mark the occasion of the Lunar New Year. It is a special holiday for my community and for many around the world that began on February 10 and is celebrated through February 24.

As most of you know, the Lunar New Year is a vibrant celebration that holds immense historical and cultural significance. All those who mark this holiday will gather to celebrate with friends and family while taking the opportunity to reflect on the many blessings of the past.

This important holiday also encourages intentions to be set for the year ahead. According to Chinese lore, the auspicious Year of the Dragon will usher in strength and progress with optimistic possibilities.

During this time of reflection, I would be remiss if I didn't acknowledge the sacrifices and contributions of the Chinese-Canadian community who helped make our nation the prosperous country it is today.

• (1450)

As we continue to mark the 100-year anniversary of the Chinese Exclusion Act, I cannot help but reflect on the Lunar New Years of the past and how different the celebrations must have been. Let us be appreciative of how far we have come and the progress toward inclusivity our society has made.

I also want to share that this marks my final Lunar New Year statement in the Senate Chamber as I prepare for retirement this year. It has been an honour to celebrate these rich traditions with all of you, and I am grateful for the memories we have created together over the years.

[Editor's Note: Senator Oh spoke in another language.]

Colleagues, as we embark on the Year of the Dragon, I offer you my best wishes for a year filled with joyous moments and positive transformation. In closing, I would like to wish you all a happy Lunar New Year in dialects from all over China.

[Editor's Note: Senator Oh spoke in another language.]

And I wish you a happy Valentine's Day tomorrow.

Thank you, *xie xie, meegwetch*.

[Translation]

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE JEAN CHRÉTIEN

Hon. Mobina S. B. Jaffer: Honourable senators, I'm proud to rise in tribute to a visionary politician and a great Canadian, my dear friend and mentor, the Right Honourable Jean Chrétien.

[English]

On January 11, Senator Cordy and I had the privilege of attending an event that honoured former Prime Minister Chrétien, who recently celebrated a triple crown: the thirtieth anniversary of his election as Prime Minister, the sixtieth anniversary of his arrival in Parliament, and the ninetieth anniversary of his birth.

Throughout the evening, all those in attendance reflected on his incredible accomplishments, which extended far beyond partisan lines and positively impacted all Canadians.

[Translation]

Mr. Chrétien has worked hard to realize his vision of a prosperous, inclusive Canada playing a responsible and respectable role on the world stage. For this, we are grateful.

[English]

Honourable senators, former Prime Minister Chrétien's role in my professional journey cannot be understated. Both Mr. and Mrs. Chrétien opened doors for me that, historically, women — especially women of colour — never had the opportunity to walk through. Not only did he actively work to dismantle barriers and amplify the voices of people who look like me, but he also listened to our challenges.

[Translation]

He single-handedly paved the way for a more inclusive Canada. Thanks to his vision, Canada is stronger and more dynamic.

[English]

Behind every great leader stands an equally impressive partner. In former Prime Minister Chrétien's case, it was his late wife, Aline, who stood by his side throughout his career as an equal partner and his closest adviser. Aline's influence extended far beyond what any of us will ever understand. I was privileged to share a friendship with Aline, a woman whose strength and resilience quietly inspired me as I navigated the challenges of public life.

Honourable senators, in closing, let us extend our deepest appreciation to former prime minister Jean Chrétien for his tireless dedication to our nation and for laying the groundwork for a political landscape that continues to inspire so many Canadians. May his legacy guide us as we work toward building a Canada that truly reflects the strength found in our diversity.

Thank you.

PROGRESSIVE SENATE GROUP LEADERSHIP ELECTIONS

Hon. Pierre J. Dalphond: Honourable senators, it is my pleasure to rise today to share the results of the Progressive Senate Group leadership elections, which took place earlier this afternoon.

Senator Judy White was acclaimed as our new deputy leader —

• (1500)

[Translation]

— and Senator Amina Gerba has been acclaimed as chair of the group. These two remarkable women will make an important contribution to the leadership of our group as well as the leadership of the Senate, which I look forward to. These new roles will be effective as of February 26, upon our return.

[English]

Our team will be completed by Senator Wanda Bernard as liaison.

On behalf of all the senators in the Progressive Senate Group, I also want to extend our thanks to our outgoing group chair, Senator Brian Francis, who has been and will continue to be a tremendous source of guidance to our group, the Senate and its committees, including the Standing Senate Committee on Indigenous Peoples.

Finally, I am grateful to my group colleagues for putting their trust in me as their new leader, though I know it will be difficult to follow in the footsteps of Senator Cordy, who has served in this role since December 2019.

Jane, you have set such a high standard. I know that you were not expecting to become leader back in December 2019, and I heard a rumour that you were “voluntold” that the team needed you. I’m grateful that your former colleagues were able to convince you to accept this role because the Progressive Senate Group has been shaped in great part by you and Dennis Dawson and your joint decision to embrace reform and transform the former Liberal caucus into a truly independent group, which is now made up of 12 senators appointed under the new system — one appointed by former Prime Minister Harper and one by former Prime Minister Chrétien.

Your kindness has been welcomed by all senators in our group and at leaders’ meetings, but we also know what it means when your teacher’s voice comes out — and we are sometimes a bunch of unruly students. There are still two weeks left in your tenure, but I promise I won’t take much of your time. I will let you go and travel with our Speaker and be back at the end of February.

I’m happy to say that we are all working toward this reform and these transitions, and I think our team and our leadership team will be most interested to work with all of you to achieve this reform that we have all embarked on since 2015.

Thank you.

[Senator Dalphond]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

CANADIAN FLAG AS PART OF CELEBRATING NATIONAL FLAG OF CANADA DAY

NOTICE OF INQUIRY

Hon. Andrew Cardozo: Honourable senators, I give notice that, two days hence:

I will call the attention of the Senate to the Canadian flag as part of celebrating National Flag of Canada Day.

QUESTION PERIOD

PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT

AUDITOR GENERAL’S REPORT

Hon. Donald Neil Plett (Leader of the Opposition): Leader, we now know that the “ArriveScam” contracts were rigged from the start in favour of a two-man firm, GC Strategies. We all remember “Adscam,” leader, or the sponsorship scandal, where a Liberal government rigged public contracts so that public funds would be diverted to the coffers of the Liberal Party.

The Auditor General’s report shows a level of incompetence around “ArriveScam” that is simply mind-blowing. The rot is so deep and the Trudeau government’s efforts to cover it up are so enormous that one can only think there’s something more nefarious going on here.

Can you assure this chamber, leader, that not one penny — we have no more pennies — that not one nickel of money thrown around on “ArriveScam” did or will find its way into the Liberal Party coffers?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for your question. Unless and until the investigations by both the CBSA, the Canada Border Services Agency, and the RCMP, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, are completed and made public, none of us will know the full story of who did what. Although you are entitled to make the assumptions and innuendos that you do on this file, I will await the results of the inquiries. I have no information at this point to answer your question specifically.

Senator Plett: Of course, there were no innuendos there. There was a question, and I guess the answer to my question is no.

ARRIVECAN APPLICATION

Hon. Donald Neil Plett (Leader of the Opposition): Yesterday, I heard a lot of passing of the buck from ministers in the Trudeau government about their \$60-million “ArriveScam” app — not from the Prime Minister, of course. He stays silent because he has zero respect for taxpayers.

Something I didn’t hear the Liberal government say was a promise to tell Canadians how much “ArriveScam” cost. The Auditor General could only provide an estimate.

Will the Trudeau government tell Canadians exactly how their “ArriveScam” app went from \$80,000 to \$60 million?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): As we know from the Auditor General’s report, there was a glaring lack of paperwork in the procurement process that was followed within the CBSA. That made it impossible for the Auditor General to have more than the estimate of the costs, which she shared with us. The answer is I do not know the answer, and I don’t know when that answer will actually be available.

PUBLIC SAFETY

ARRIVECAN APPLICATION

Hon. Leo Housakos: Senator Gold, yesterday, in response to my colleague Senator Martin’s question about ArriveCAN, you said the investigation by the RCMP is:

... designed to find out if any wrongdoing took place and to make sure that those responsible are held accountable if such is the case.

In what world would nobody be held accountable for cost overruns that saw a project go from \$80,000 to \$60 million — with record-keeping so bad that we’ll never know the true cost? Seventy-six per cent of contractors did no work. Technical glitches saw law-abiding citizens denied entry into their own country, and another 10,000 law-abiding Canadians were mistakenly detained.

Senator Gold, we used to have something called ministerial responsibility in Canada. Of course, it was before the time of the new Senate. But instead of raising the alarm or asking questions during all of this, Minister Blair and Minister Hajdu were busy signing off on bonuses for those individuals involved. Since neither of these ministers possesses enough integrity to do the right thing and resign, why won’t our Prime Minister fire them?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): I’m not sure where to answer into that rather long question. The investigations that are under way — to take a part of your question, first of all — by the RCMP are, by definition, criminal investigations. Therefore, my answer to our colleague’s question stands. There’s a difference between mismanagement and crime, and there are many shades in between. The RCMP is looking at wrongdoing in the criminal sense.

The minute that Public Services and Procurement Canada became aware of this issue — and this goes back to November 2023 — they took proactive steps to address it, including suspending the delegated authorities of 87 client departments, which included the CBSA.

The fact is that you can ask questions about the firing of ministers. It is very important that any action be informed by what actually took place on the ground with those who were actually responsible on a day-to-day basis for this project.

Senator Housakos: Senator, incompetence or crime or both should be unacceptable to taxpayers. Yesterday, you also took offence to the use of the word “corruption,” calling it hyperbole and saying the Auditor General made no mention of corruption. But, in fact, Ms. Hogan said she did not weigh in on the criminality because matters have been referred to the RCMP and she did not want to jeopardize their investigation.

Is that what it would take for a minister in your government to be held accountable? Criminal charges? Or is ministerial accountability reserved only for those who won’t take part in Liberal corruption, as was the case with minister Jody Wilson-Raybould?

Senator Gold: Again, I stand by my answer yesterday. It is appropriate for public officials, the Auditor General or anybody else, to have respect for the integrity of criminal investigations, just as we in this chamber have respect whether it’s for cabinet secrets or national security information. I have nothing further to add to my answer yesterday.

ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

NATIONAL ADAPTATION STRATEGY

Hon. Mary Coyle: Senator Gold, the Insurance Bureau of Canada recently reported that 2023 was the fourth most expensive weather year in history, with over \$3 billion in insured damages, including approximately \$1.4 billion in damages caused by the wildfires out west, \$690 million from severe summer storms, \$335 million in damages from Nova Scotia wildfires and floods and \$330 million from last April’s ice storm in Ontario and Quebec. These numbers don’t include the toll on human health and lives lost.

Canada’s National Adaptation Strategy on climate was introduced last year. It’s meant to help Canadians and our communities reduce the impact of climate-related disasters.

Senator Gold, this is urgent. Can you tell us what progress is being made in the implementation of the adaptation strategy?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for this very important question. The government has made significant investments and progress to prepare for, to respond to and to recover from climate-related disasters. Let me cite just a few of the many initiatives.

We are reducing the risks of wildfire in our communities by investing up to \$284 million over five years to enhance community prevention and mitigation activities, support innovation and wildland fire knowledge and research, as well as establishing a Centre of Excellence for Wildland Fire Innovation and Resilience. We are investing up to \$60 million over five years to accelerate the use of climate-informed code standards and guidelines for resilient infrastructure in Canada. We are expanding the Green Municipal Fund by up to \$530 million to support community-based adaptation initiatives in collaboration with the Federation of Canadian Municipalities.

These are a few of the initiatives under the National Adaptation Strategy. I've been informed that the government is committed to continue delivering progress on these programs.

Senator Coyle: Thank you, Senator Gold.

The Insurance Bureau of Canada also reported that 1.5 million households across Canada are unable to afford flood insurance. They've called on the federal government to follow through on its promise to create a national flood insurance program. When can we expect this flood insurance program to be implemented?

Senator Gold: Thank you. I'm not in the position, of course, to comment on any future budget initiatives that may apply to this area. However, the government has already invested up to \$31.7 million over three years to protect households at high risk of flooding and without access to adequate insurance. This is in addition to ensuring that Canadians have access to free up-to-date and high-quality flood hazard maps through investments of \$164 million and the collaboration with provinces and territories to increase our resilience.

• (1510)

FUEL CHARGE PROCEEDS RETURN PROGRAM

Hon. Tony Loffreda: My question is for the Government Representative in the Senate. Senator Gold, I would like to explore the government's Fuel Charge Proceeds Return Program, or FCPRP.

Last week, I met with the Canadian Federation of Small Businesses. The federation claims that the federal government has been sitting on \$2.5 billion in carbon tax revenue collected since 2019 despite repeated promises to return 10% to eligible small businesses as part of the FCPRP.

The pandemic was tough on our small to medium-sized enterprise community. Many of them are still struggling to make ends meet. Can you provide this chamber with an update on the program? Why is it taking so long for small businesses to receive their fuel charge proceeds?

[Senator Gold]

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for your question. I'm informed that every effort is being made by the Government of Canada to deliver on its commitment to return all fuel charge proceeds to eligible small and medium-sized enterprises by the expected deadline. Further, I understand that the returns will be made in two phases.

The first phase will distribute approximately \$2.5 billion of fuel charge proceeds to small and medium-sized businesses in Alberta, Manitoba, Ontario and Saskatchewan. This comprises proceeds collected in those four provinces in the 2019-20 to 2023-24 fiscal years.

The second phase of the return program will distribute approximately \$70 million of fuel charge proceeds to small to medium-sized enterprises in New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island. This also comprises the proceeds collected in the four Atlantic provinces in the 2023-24 fiscal year.

Senator Loffreda: Thank you for that answer, Senator Gold, but there seems to remain confusion about the eligibility of businesses. We know the program wants to target small to medium-sized enterprises in emissions intensive and trade-exposed sectors. What criteria will be used to determine if a business is eligible for the disbursement of fuel charge proceeds? I know the Canadian Federation of Independent Business and the business community as a whole would appreciate some clarity on the matter.

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): I'm not in a position to share the exact criteria, but the fuel charge proceeds will be returned through a federal program to groups that may be disproportionately impacted such as Indigenous communities and organizations, farmers as well as small and medium-sized enterprises in sectors disproportionately impacted by carbon pricing. The government remains committed to ensuring that our small to medium-sized enterprises are competitive in Canada and on the global stage.

CENTRE FOR RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

INNOVATION, SCIENCE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Hon. Jim Quinn: My question is for Senator Gold. Senator Gold, the Centre for Rural Economic Development is housed within Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada. Its purpose is to work with federal government departments to ensure the needs of rural Canadians are considered when developing policies and programs. The centre has several rural advisers that work with stakeholders and identify critical issues affecting economic growth within rural Canada. All territories and provinces in Western Canada and Ontario have rural advisers. However, there are zero rural advisers for Atlantic Canada and Quebec.

Senator Gold, I understand that Eastern Canadians feel left out of the Government of Canada's rural policy development process. Can you explain why there are zero advisers from Eastern Canada?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for your question. Honourable senators, the Centre for Rural Economic Development is there to ensure that rural stakeholders and community leaders are properly consulted and properly supported when it comes to the activities of this government. It's vital and it ensures that this government takes on and absorbs the realities for those who live in rural Canada. It helps the government craft better programs.

In response to your question, my understanding is that the former advisers for Atlantic Canada and Quebec have recently taken on different new positions and that the government is working quickly to engage new advisers to take on the important work with the Atlantic provinces and Quebec as soon as possible.

Senator Quinn: Thank you for that answer, Senator Gold. Will you be in a position to advise us when those appointments are made?

Senator Gold: I will do my best to be on top of this file, Senator Quinn. I imagine that when they are filled, there will be announcements. Nevertheless, I'll ask my office to keep an eye on it and report to the Senate.

[Translation]

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

IMMIGRATION LEVELS

Hon. Clément Gignac: My question is for the Government Representative in the Senate. Senator Gold, I'd like to talk to you about a somewhat sensitive subject that has become a cause for concern in Canada, as we saw from the motion adopted yesterday by all of the opposition parties in the other place, who are calling on the government to review its immigration targets.

In 2023, Canada's population jumped by more than 1.2 million, or 3.2%, a rate of growth that has not been seen in 70 years. Our population grew five times faster than the OECD average. However, unlike the post-war baby boom, over 95% of this rapid population growth is due to immigration, which is putting pressure on our health and education systems and, most importantly, exacerbating the housing shortage.

Senator Gold, there's no question that Canada is a welcoming place and that immigration is a source of wealth creation for our country. However, don't you think it's time to sit down with the provinces and work together on this issue, given the unintended consequences of this immigration boom?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for the question. That certainly is a sensitive subject, and an important one. We know that the Minister of Immigration is taking a serious look at the issue. I'm told that, in developing the immigration plan, the Government of Canada has

already consulted with the provinces and territories and other stakeholders to identify labour needs and integration capacity, as you rightly pointed out in your question.

Furthermore, as part of the planning process, the government consults the provinces and territories every year as it sets immigration targets. That is why the current plan for immigration targets will stabilize in 2026.

Senator Gignac: I understand that consultation is taking place with respect to permanent immigrants. However, the main source of tension right now is the booming number of temporary workers and international students.

To avoid a breakdown, politicization or a decline in the social acceptability of immigration in Canada, don't you think it would be wise to set up a council of non-partisan experts tasked with providing public decision makers with a transparent estimate of the required population growth that Canada is able to absorb?

Senator Gold: Thank you for the suggestion. As I said, there's already a structured stakeholder consultation process in place that includes the provinces and territories. However, your suggestion is an interesting one, and I'll share it with the minister.

CANADIAN HERITAGE

LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

Hon. Percy Mockler: My question has to do with an issue related to official languages. It concerns the ongoing uncertainty that has been hanging over local journalism for some time. This uncertainty is threatening the very existence of official language minority community media, because last November's economic statement made no mention of renewing the program. Will the consequences of not renewing the Local Journalism Initiative, or LJI, be immediate? Everything expires on March 31, 2024. Can the Government Representative in the Senate tell us whether the program will be considered and included in the government's upcoming budget for 2024-25?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for the question, senator. I also thank you for highlighting the importance of access to information in official language minority communities and the challenges faced by local newspapers, not only in minority situations, but, unfortunately, in many contexts across Canada.

Although I can't comment on any potential measures in the upcoming budget, I'll certainly raise this issue with the appropriate ministers at the earliest opportunity. It's an important subject.

• (1520)

Senator Mockler: I'd like to ask a supplementary question and take this opportunity to thank Senator Cormier for his leadership on modernizing the Official Languages Act to promote the development of francophone and anglophone minority communities across the country.

Government Representative in the Senate, can you commit to asking the Honourable Randy Boissonnault, the minister responsible for official languages, to meet with the groups concerned to inform them of his government's position on continuing to help official language minority community media across Canada?

Senator Gold: Thank you for the question. The answer is yes; I will share this request with Minister Boissonnault and I will contact you directly. I will also raise the question with other departments that have similar responsibilities and with which the minister works on this file.

PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT

PROCUREMENT PROCESS

Hon. Claude Carignan: Leader, I will quote from the Auditor General's report:

Those responsible for managing the program broke the government's own rules in the way they selected communications agencies and awarded contracts to them.

That is an excerpt from the Auditor General's November 2003 report on what later became known as the sponsorship scandal. Some 21 years later, another Auditor General said, and I quote:

We found that the agency had little documentation to support how and why GC Strategies was awarded the initial ArriveCAN contract through a non-competitive process.

Leader, given these similarities, are we dealing with another sponsorship scandal, version 2.0?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): As I've mentioned on several occasions, first, contracts with GC Strategies have been suspended.

Second, in November 2023, Public Services and Procurement Canada suspended the goods and services purchasing authorities of 87 client departments, including the CBSA, so they can no longer purchase anything, in any capacity, without the support and oversight of Public Services and Procurement Canada.

Measures have been put in place to ensure that the serious issues raised by the Auditor General do not happen again.

Senator Carignan: I'm quoting the Auditor General's 2003 report:

Documentation was very poor and there was little evidence of analysis to support the expenditure of more than \$250 million.

Here, I'm quoting the Auditor General's 2024 report:

The Canada Border Services Agency's documentation, financial records, and controls were so poor that we were unable to determine the precise cost of the ArriveCAN application.

There again, another similarity. Will Minister Blair be fired, or will he be appointed ambassador, in the Liberal tradition, like Mr. Gagliano?

Senator Gold: Once again, I'm here to answer questions and, apparently, to repeat the answers ad nauseam. I'm not in a position to provide information on the future of any particular minister.

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

IMMIGRATION TO QUEBEC

Hon. Jean-Guy Dagenais: Leader, Justin Trudeau has earned an unenviable reputation by making a lot of promises that haven't yet been and never will be kept.

For example, Ukraine is still waiting for the missile defence system that it was promised 13 months ago. Canadian communications companies haven't received the help that they were promised during the last election campaign and some of them have already had to close their doors. Even the New Democratic Party, with whose support this minority government has managed to remain in office, is still waiting for the government to keep some of its costly social promises and is now threatening to withdraw its support for the Liberals.

With such a track record, can you guarantee that Prime Minister Trudeau will keep his word when it comes to immigration and pay back the \$370 million that he still owes Quebec to cover the costs related to asylum seekers?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for your question. The Government of Canada is working very closely with Quebec and the other provinces to help them deal with the large number of asylum seekers in Quebec and here in Ontario. When it comes to the relationship between the federal government and the provinces, it is only natural that there are often differences of opinion on the way the provincial government determines the amount owing.

That being said, the Government of Quebec and the Government of Canada are working together to determine the appropriate support for the work that Quebec did by welcoming and taking care of asylum seekers.

Senator Dagenais: Regarding promises on Ukraine, Mr. Trudeau's word choice appears to have changed. His government is now giving assurances instead of guarantees. Can you tell us whether those two words mean the same thing to your Prime Minister, or is he devising a way out because he can't keep his promises?

Senator Gold: The Government of Canada is a faithful partner to the government of Ukraine and to the people of Ukraine, who are fighting for their sovereignty and fighting for us against an illegal invasion by an anti-democratic Russian government.

[English]

PUBLIC SAFETY

DEMONSTRATIONS

Hon. Leo Housakos: Senator Gold, members of your government have been very quick to condemn certain aspects of the war between Israel and Hamas, including your Minister of Foreign Affairs running to social media to wrongfully accuse Israel of an attack at Al-Shifa Hospital — an accusation she has yet to correct.

Last night in Toronto, pro-Hamas protesters descended on Mount Sinai Hospital — a hospital that, I remind you, two Jewish women founded because Jewish doctors were not allowed to practise medicine in this country once upon a time.

These protesters jumped over barricades, climbing scaffolds, waving giant flags and yelling anti-Semitic slurs. They even harassed an employee trying to leave the hospital by stopping her car and demanding that she sound her horn in support of their protest.

Despite a federal law in this country protecting against such actions at our hospitals, nobody — yet — from your government has condemned this action. When will the government start applying laws in this country?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): I'm going to answer in two parts. The demonstrations — though this is a free country, and people can demonstrate as they did outside the Prime Minister's Office, and as they do outside my apartment in Montreal every week — are disturbing. To target a hospital and to harass anybody, regardless of the cause, this government and I find it very regrettable — one could use harsher words. That's the first part.

The second part is that it is not the federal government that enforces the law. When I passed by from a cabinet committee meeting on Monday — and I passed along Wellington Street to come to the Senate for a sitting on Monday — and I heard the demonstrations outside the Prime Minister's Office, with slogans being chanted that come straight from the Hamas charter, you can understand, as a proud Jew and as a Zionist, it shook me to my core. But it is not the federal government that has a responsibility to determine whether or not laws have been broken, much less to support them.

Again, colleagues, at a time when communities across this country — mine, Arab and Muslim communities, and all Canadians — are struggling and suffering with the tragedies that are going on, to be blaming the government for something that touches all of us, I think, is regrettable. I encourage you to continue to ask appropriate questions in this place, and I will answer them all with your indulgence, Your Honour. But let's not play politics. There are people dying. There are people

suffering, and there are communities that are hurting. So let's understand the constitutional division of powers on the administration of justice. At the very least, we as senators and legislators should know that much.

• (1530)

Senator Housakos: Senator Gold, we're all for freedom, but we're not for anarchy and hate, and, last I checked, we want from our Prime Minister — the guardian of these laws — to provide leadership.

Your government is also quick to condemn action against places of worship unless those places of worship are churches. Another church was attacked this weekend with clear video showing someone attempted to set it ablaze. The silence from your government is deafening, and the question is why. Why is your government quick to show solidarity with certain attacks of hate on religious institutions, and when it comes to churches in this country, we don't hear a word from this government? Or is it, again, not your responsibility to apply the law?

Senator Gold: Attacks against places of worship are deplorable and ought to be condemned. Again, I think this government's record in standing up for freedom of religion and for the right of communities to live in peace stands on its own. Again, it is not illegitimate to question the acts of government, but, in this particular case, I think this government deplores all actions of hate against any institution, whether of learning, health care or worship.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

BUSINESS OF THE SENATE

Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate): Honourable senators, pursuant to the order adopted December 7, 2021, I would like to inform the Senate that Question Period with the Honourable Ginette Petitpas Taylor, P.C., M.P., Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence, will take place on Thursday, February 15, 2024, at 4 p.m.

[Translation]

SPEAKER'S STATEMENT

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, yesterday the Senate discharged Bill S-241 and its subject matter from the committees that were dealing with those topics, and the bill was withdrawn. This decision resolved the questions that had given rise to the point of order raised by Senator Plett last Thursday, and a ruling is no longer required. Debate on Bill S-15 can therefore proceed. I do, however, wish to thank colleagues for their analyses of the topic.

[English]

**CANADA-UKRAINE FREE TRADE AGREEMENT
IMPLEMENTATION BILL, 2023**

SECOND READING—DEBATE ADJOURNED

Hon. Peter Harder moved second reading of Bill C-57, An Act to implement the 2023 Free Trade Agreement between Canada and Ukraine.

He said: Honourable senators, before I begin I would like to do a land acknowledgement and acknowledge that we are on the lands of the unceded territory of the Algonquin Anishinaabe people. I do so because I think it is appropriate that on major speeches — of which sponsoring a bill is one — we should begin with that acknowledgement.

I rise today to speak to Bill C-57, the legislation to implement the Canada-Ukraine Free Trade Agreement. I'll refer to it as CUFTA so that I don't have to repeat the language throughout the bill.

While this bill is primarily aimed at implementing a free trade agreement with Ukraine, the modernization of CUFTA has come to represent far more than just a mechanism to encourage and foster bilateral trade. In fact, it can be argued that the true value of this agreement, particularly at this time, reaches far beyond trade and investment.

The fact that Canada and Ukraine worked in tandem to conclude this agreement during Russia's illegal invasion and ongoing war shows that our bilateral relationship is as strong as ever. This represents a strong statement to the world of Canada's recognition of Ukraine as a sovereign, independent nation at a moment in time that that very sovereignty is being challenged by the aggression of its neighbour.

To that effect, beyond goods, services, market access and other trade elements, current circumstances have made this agreement yet another demonstration of Canada's continued and unwavering support to our Ukrainian allies in their time of need as they defend their independence, sovereignty, democracy and freedom in the face of this protracted Russian aggression since at least February 2022 and, I would argue, since the 2014 invasion of Donbas and the Crimea.

Since the beginning of this conflict, Canada has committed over \$9.7 billion in multi-faceted support covering military, financial, humanitarian, development, security and cultural assistance to Ukraine. As Canadians, we ought to be proud that this support has remained a priority and galvanized Canadians towards this common goal.

The modernization of CUFTA, which we are discussing here today, is the latest demonstration of this steadfast support, this time through means of facilitating trade and investment with Ukraine.

Indeed, a modernized CUFTA will not only offer assistance in the short-term but will extend well beyond Russia's war of aggression by strengthening the foundation on which Canadian and Ukrainian businesses can work together during Ukraine's recovery and economic reconstruction for years ahead.

It will also bolster an already strong relationship between Canada and Ukraine, which dates back as far as 1991 when Canada became the first Western country to recognize Ukrainian independence — an issue that Ukraine is unfortunately still fighting for to this day. Furthermore, these bilateral relationships are strengthened by warm people-to-people ties rooted in the Ukrainian-Canadian community of roughly 1.3 million people and our shared values, many of which are reflected in the modernized CUFTA that I will be discussing today.

I would now like to say a few words about this historic agreement and highlight some of the benefits and opportunities it represents for Canadians and Ukrainians alike.

As you may already know, the original CUFTA entered into force in August 2017 after much work spanning two governments. Upon entry into force, the CUFTA immediately eliminated tariffs on 99% of imports from Ukraine. Similarly, the 2017 CUFTA immediately eliminated tariffs on 86% of Canadian exports to Ukraine with the balance of tariff concessions to be implemented over a seven-year period by January 1, 2024.

While reductions in coal supplies from Canada caused a slight drop in total trade following the 2017 CUFTA's entry into force, non-coal exports grew at a rapid pace, and, in 2021, total bilateral trade reached its highest level ever at \$447 million before dipping to \$421 million in 2022, primarily due to the Russian invasion.

In 2022, top Canadian exports to Ukraine included armoured vehicles, fish, medicine, motor vehicles and parts and pet food. Top imports from Ukraine included fats and oils, iron and steel, electrical machinery and processed foods. Canadian investment in Ukraine in 2022 amounted to \$112 million.

While comprehensive in perspective of trade in goods, the 2017 CUFTA did not include chapters on trade in services or investments. These areas were left out of the agreement due to divergent views and approaches at that time. Rather, the CUFTA contained a clause committing Canada and Ukraine to review the agreement within two years of its entry into force, with a view to expanding it. The review clause specifically identified services and investment as potential additions without restricting the parties from exploring other areas. As such, this was an opportunity to make this agreement a fully comprehensive one on par with Canada's most comprehensive free trade agreements or, as we know them, FTAs.

Pursuant to this review, in a visit to Ottawa in July 2019, the Prime Minister and Ukrainian President Zelenskyy announced their intention to modernize the CUFTA.

• (1540)

The government held formal public consultations on the modernization of CUFTA in the winter of 2020. Submissions supported the initiative as a means of strengthening the bilateral relationship, building on Canada's commercial engagements with Ukraine, and further promoting an open, inclusive and rules-based trading environment for our businesses and investors.

The Government of Canada also received positive feedback from the provinces and territories, several of which were particularly supportive of the potential inclusion of new or modernized chapters on cross-border trade in services, financial services, investment, digital trade, and additional commitments to support small- and medium-sized enterprises — SMEs. All of these areas have been successfully included in the modernized CUFTA, as well as new chapters or provisions on trade and gender, trade and Indigenous peoples, transparency, labour and environment, among other areas.

Following these internal consultations and delays due to the COVID-19 pandemic, CUFTA modernization negotiations were officially launched in January 2022. Unfortunately and horrifically, only weeks later, on February 24, 2022, Russia began its illegal invasion of Ukraine. As part of our support to Ukraine, Canadian trade officials relayed to their Ukrainian counterparts that they stood ready to proceed with CUFTA modernization discussions in accordance with Ukraine's capacity and willingness to do that negotiation.

Negotiations happily were initiated at the officials' level in June of 2022, and despite compressed timelines and difficult circumstances for our negotiating partner, they were highly constructive. Both sides demonstrated an eagerness to reach an ambitious and high-standard agreement, on par with Canada's most comprehensive trade agreements, with the aim of facilitating increased trade between our two nations, not just to meet the immediate needs of reconstruction but for a long time thereafter.

In this agreement with Canada, Ukraine has undertaken ambitious commitments not found in its existing trade agreements with other nations. The openness to negotiating new commitments is reflected in how comprehensive the final CUFTA is, with due respect not only to trade in goods from the original agreement but also to the new chapters and provisions on investment, services, labour, environment, inclusive trade and others.

I suspect Ukraine's neighbours in the EU are looking to this ambition on Ukraine's part as confirmation of their capacity to negotiate further ties with the EU.

During a visit on April 11, 2023, Ukrainian Prime Minister Shmyhal and Prime Minister Trudeau announced the conclusion of negotiations for the modernized CUFTA, and each committed to completing their respective domestic processes to facilitate its signature and entry into force as soon as possible.

As you may remember, Ukraine further demonstrated the importance it places on this agreement by designating President Zelenskyy himself to sign the final modernized CUFTA when he was here in Ottawa on September 22. This was a historic milestone in the Canada-Ukraine bilateral relationship, and, as mentioned, served as another clear demonstration of Canada's support for Ukraine's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity.

Allow me now to go into more detail with respect to the content of the agreement and explain why it is a positive outcome for Canadian firms and a model agreement for Ukraine to demonstrate its ability to adhere to a modern, ambitious and high-standard agreement with other partners around the globe.

Substantive negotiations have resulted in a modernized CUFTA that will include nine dedicated new chapters and upgrades to eight existing chapters from the 2017 CUFTA.

I will begin with an overview of the new chapters that have been added.

First, the agreement includes a dedicated new chapter on cross-border trade in services, which includes substantive obligations consistent with Canada's existing trade agreements, putting both Canadian and Ukrainian service suppliers on a comparable footing vis-à-vis our main services trading partners. This chapter provides market access, non-discriminatory treatment, transparency and predictability for both Ukraine and Canadian service suppliers. Additionally, this chapter includes provisions on the recognition of professional qualifications seeking to facilitate trade in professional services, which is strategically important for both parties in a knowledge-based and digital economy.

As part of the CUFTA modernization, parties also negotiated a comprehensive and progressive stand-alone financial services chapter with core obligations related to market access, national treatment and most-favoured-nation treatment that will provide a level playing field through a framework of rules tailored to the unique nature of the financial sector. This includes ambitious commitments for Canadian financial services through legally binding rights and obligations that will support a predictable, stable and transparent investment environment for investors while maintaining flexibility for regulators to preserve the integrity and stability of the financial system. The financial services chapter allows Ukraine a 10-year period to transition from its existing World Trade Organization commitments to those included in this agreement.

The new chapter on temporary entry for businesspeople supports economic opportunity for Canadians, including permanent residents, by making it easier for businesspeople to move between the two countries, as well as encouraging highly skilled workers to benefit from jobs in both markets. The temporary entry provisions remove barriers, such as economic needs tests or numerical quotas, and provide new and reciprocal market access commitments for eligible Canadians and Ukrainian businesspeople.

This includes new access for Canadian investors to enter and stay in Ukraine to establish, develop or administer an investment with a duration of stay of up to one year, thereby facilitating business opportunities and the growth of partnerships.

The chapter also includes commitments that ensure that accompanying spouses of Canadian investors, intra-corporate transferees or highly skilled professionals will also be able to enter Ukraine and work.

For Canada, this chapter offers a range of options and benefits to Canadian employers who will have easier access to highly skilled Ukrainian talent on a temporary basis across a broad range of occupations, including engineers, architects, software developers and programmers.

Parties have also added a new chapter on investment, which was omitted, as I indicated earlier, from the 2017 CUFTA, and that will replace the Canada-Ukraine Foreign Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement — or FIPA — which was signed in 1994. The CUFTA investment chapter modernizes the framework of protections for investors and their investments, with a comprehensive set of obligations in line with Canada's most ambitious trade agreements. This investment chapter is also the first negotiated using Canada's most recent model that seeks to better ensure that investment obligations act as intended and provide the necessary policy flexibility for governments to act in the public interest.

As such, this new drafting for the investment chapter will allow Canada and Ukraine to maintain their right to regulate in key areas such as environment, health, safety, Indigenous rights, gender equality and cultural diversity.

Additionally, this chapter also includes a modern dispute settlement mechanism that offers strengthened alternatives to avoid arbitration, as well as enhanced transparency of proceedings commitments. In all, these outcomes represent a significant improvement over the 1994 FIPA, which this chapter will replace and will strengthen the environment within which Canadian investors can invest with more confidence in Ukraine's reconstruction.

A new chapter on telecommunications promotes competition and provides enhanced certainty for telecommunications service suppliers when operating in Canadian and Ukrainian markets. This chapter has the benefit of helping to facilitate trade more broadly, including online, by ensuring that non-telecommunication companies can also access and use telecommunications networks and services. It also includes commitments to ensure that regulators of the telecommunications sector are independent, impartial and transparent.

Another new chapter to the modernized CUFTA covers good regulatory practices, which demonstrates to current and future trading partners that Ukraine can take on commitments that support a regulatory environment conducive to trade.

• (1550)

Lastly, the modernized CUFTA reaches high standards regarding inclusive trade with specific chapters on trade and gender; trade and small and medium-sized enterprises, or SMEs; and trade and Indigenous peoples.

The "Trade and Gender" chapter aims to promote gender equality, remove barriers to trade for women and facilitate improved access to benefits and opportunities of the CUFTA. For Canada, advancing women's equality could add an estimated \$150 billion to the gross domestic product, or GDP, by 2026.

To ensure that the benefits of free trade can be maximized and widely shared, it is important for Canada to consider gender-related issues when developing trade policy and negotiating free trade agreements. As such, this chapter aims to empower more women to participate in trade and benefit from the modernized CUFTA when it comes into force.

To achieve these goals, the "Trade and Gender" chapter includes an article committing parties to enforce — and not weaken — their domestic laws and protections afforded to women in order to attract trade and investment. It further includes a commitment to undertake cooperation activities and establish a committee to facilitate the chapter's implementation.

Additionally, responding to stakeholders' interest to see the enforcement of the "Trade and Gender" chapter, Canada and Ukraine delivered on this by subjecting the chapter to a dispute settlement arrangement. This sends an important signal to Canadian stakeholders that Canada is committed to advancing gender equality and women's economic empowerment.

Another new inclusive chapter concluded under the CUFTA modernization is the chapter on "Trade and Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises." It seeks to enhance their ability to participate in and benefit from the opportunities created by this agreement.

Over the 2015-19 period, the SME contribution to Canada's GDP was, on average, just over 53% in the goods-producing sector and 51.8% in the services-producing sector. Additionally, in 2021, small and medium-sized businesses composed 97.9% and 1.9%, respectively, of the 1.21 million businesses in Canada. Based on this recognition of the importance of SMEs to the economy, both Canada and Ukraine are committed to working together to remove barriers so that SMEs may be better placed to participate in and benefit from international trade and investment.

As such, both Canada and Ukraine made important commitments to developing a dedicated digital medium for SMEs to easily find relevant information of interest to them under this modernized agreement. Canada and Ukraine also agreed to establish a committee and to carry out cooperation activities. These commitments will not only contribute to removing barriers to trade for SMEs but also support inclusive and sustainable growth for all.

Lastly, the modernized CUFTA includes a “Trade and Indigenous Peoples” chapter, which will seek to ensure that Indigenous peoples in Canada have access to the benefits and opportunities that flow from international trade and investment. More than this, it is also a significant milestone for Canada, as our first stand-alone trade and Indigenous peoples chapter is concluded in this FTA.

This economic-focused and cooperation-based chapter establishes a bilateral committee to facilitate cooperation activities to remove barriers and challenges that Indigenous peoples face when participating in international trade. The chapter also includes a binding commitment to enforce and strengthen domestic laws and protections on Indigenous peoples’ rights in order to attract trade and investment in the spirit of these commitments. Canada and Ukraine both reaffirm the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in this agreement.

Additionally, and consistent with the UN principles, this chapter also advances our reconciliation efforts with Indigenous peoples by ensuring that Indigenous peoples are included in discussions about their interests. In that regard, the bilateral committee under this chapter may directly include the participation of Indigenous peoples.

Beyond the new chapters that I’ve outlined, Canada and Ukraine have also agreed to update the existing eight chapters of the agreement.

The first is the “Rules of Origin and Origin Procedures” chapter, where Canada and Ukraine have agreed to activate an article from the 2017 CUFTA on cumulation of origin. This will allow materials of any non-party with which both Canada and Ukraine have existing FTAs — such as the European Union — to be taken into consideration by the exporter when determining whether a product qualifies as originating under the CUFTA. This will make it easier for Canadian and Ukrainian businesses to participate in regional value chains, and it reflects a shared desire to support trade among like-minded partners.

The “Digital Trade” chapter includes updated language previously contained within the CUFTA “Electronic commerce” chapter, ensuring that customs duties will not be applied to digital products transmitted electronically. This modernized chapter also contains ambitious commitments to facilitate digital trade. This includes protections against unnecessary requirements to store data locally or provide access to proprietary software source code as well as commitments to facilitate public access and use of open government information to support economic development, competitiveness and innovation.

Moreover, commitments regarding the protection of individuals online have been included, ensuring frameworks are in place to protect personal information and address online fraudulent and deceptive commercial practices in order to build trust and confidence in engaging in digital trade.

For the first time in any of Canada’s free trade agreements, this chapter contains a provision prohibiting government authorities from using the personal information collected from private organizations to conduct targeted discrimination against a person

on wrongful grounds. With increasing concerns about how governments use personal data, this commitment is intended to provide user confidence in the digital economy.

This modernized CUFTA also includes a stand-alone chapter on competition policy with updated and new obligations to promote a comprehensive and competitive marketplace. The chapter furthers Canada’s and Ukraine’s objectives towards a fair, transparent, predictable and competitive business environment. This is notably done through enhanced obligations for competition authorities on procedural fairness and transparency, as well as new obligations for the identification and protection of confidential information. These new obligations provide assurance that fundamental principles, including the rights of defendants, are guaranteed during competition law investigations and enforcement proceedings.

The “Designated Monopolies and State-Owned Enterprises” chapter has been upgraded to include important definitions for state-owned enterprises and designated monopolies and updated commitments on transparency and technical cooperation.

In the modernized “Government Procurement” chapter, Canada and Ukraine have carried over the ambitious market access commitments from the 2017 agreement. In modernizing the chapter, Canada and Ukraine have clarified that they are allowed to take into account environmental, socio-economic or labour-related considerations in their procurement processes. This means it is now clear that the agreement does not prevent parties from adopting domestic policies and programs to support initiatives such as green and social procurement.

The updated chapter also includes a new article to ensure integrity in procurement processes by committing parties to have criminal or investigative measures in place to address corruption in government procurement. Finally, the updated chapter also facilitates greater participation by Canadian and Ukrainian SMEs in government procurement.

The upgraded chapter on labour shows that Canada and Ukraine are committed to the highest labour rights standards. This chapter is robust, comprehensive and fully subject to the dispute settlement arrangements of the agreement. It also commits Canada and Ukraine to implementing in their own labour laws the content of the core International Labour Organization conventions.

Two particularly notable articles were added: an import prohibition on goods made in whole or in part with forced labour and a stand-alone article on violence against workers. This chapter confirms that Canada and Ukraine are fully committed to the highest labour rights standards and agree to cooperate further in the field.

The updated “Transparency, Anti-Corruption, and Responsible Business Conduct” chapter significantly builds on and improves the 2017 version. This chapter provides a framework for promoting transparency and integrity among public officials

and the private sector while advancing the enforceability of anti-corruption laws. Therefore, the new chapter furthers Canada and Ukraine's objective of an open and transparent international rules-based trading system that also promotes measures to prevent and respond to corruption. The chapter also includes a new section to encourage responsible business conduct per internationally recognized standards, guidelines and principles, further supporting Ukraine's domestic reform agenda in this area.

• (1600)

Lastly, the modernized Canada-Ukraine Free Trade Agreement also includes perhaps the most comprehensive and ambitious environment chapter ever achieved in a Canadian free trade agreement. Canada recognizes the importance of fostering strong environmental governance while expanding trade and investment partnerships. Promoting robust environmental governance as trade relationships deepen is crucial to ensuring long-term, sustainable economic growth and well-being that can be publicly supported. To achieve this sustainability, trade and environment policies need to be mutually supportive, and the modernized Canada-Ukraine Free Trade Agreement provides the framework to make this happen.

Ukraine is a partner who also recognizes the importance of the linkages between trade and the environment — which is why, in 2017, Canada and Ukraine negotiated a comprehensive environment chapter with strong, legally binding commitments to protect our environment. At the time, the 2017 Canada-Ukraine Free Trade Agreement broke new ground by including the most comprehensive environmental commitments ever negotiated by Ukraine up to that point. Now, in 2023, Canada and Ukraine have built upon this foundation even further.

The updated chapter promotes robust, ambitious and transparent environmental governance, and a dedicated article reaffirming the parties' commitment to addressing climate change and providing for cooperation in this area.

Senators, let me be clear that the environment chapter in this agreement does not implement a carbon pricing regime in Ukraine. This has been made clear through trade experts, journalists and, yes, even the Ukrainian embassy. "There aren't binding provisions on carbon taxes or climate change." These are not my words, but the words of Canada's chief negotiator Bruce Christie, who testified at the Standing Committee on International Trade in the other place. In fact, Ukraine has had its own version of carbon pricing since 2011 — long before the backstop system was created and enforced in Canada.

At the Standing Committee on International Trade in the House, one amendment was adopted to the bill and put forward by Bloc Québécois MP Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay. The effect of this amendment is to ensure that the Canadian companies operating in Ukraine comply with the principles and guidelines referred to in Article 15.14 of the agreement. Article 15.14 deals with the responsible business conduct provisions of the "Transparency, Anti-Corruption, and Responsible Business Conduct" chapter of the agreement. The amendment calls for the minister to establish processes for receiving complaints and reporting to Parliament each year. This will add transparency and teeth to the business conduct provisions of Canadian businesses in Ukraine.

Honourable senators, I hope this overview of the modernized Canada-Ukraine Free Trade Agreement helps you understand why this agreement is important for both Canada and Ukraine. Ukraine has already expressed to Canada the value of modernizing the Canada-Ukraine Free Trade Agreement as a model agreement to demonstrate its ability to reach a comprehensive, modern and high-standard agreement with prospective trading partners around the globe.

To that effect, this agreement positions Ukraine as a country that stands with like-minded allies who believe in the rule of law, inclusivity and the need to act for the protection of the environment and labour rights. This is why, despite the circumstances, Ukraine dedicated scarce trade policy resources toward achieving that goal, and pushed forward this modernization with Canada.

Beyond the short-term and medium-term benefits related to the reconstruction efforts that will be needed, Ukraine also recognizes and acknowledges the long-term importance of further developing relationships with like-minded partners, as well as building and safeguarding an open and inclusive rules-based global trading system — a system that contributes to creating strong and resilient economies, and enables long-term growth.

As you are undoubtedly aware, the past few months have seen some debate on this modernized Canada-Ukraine Free Trade Agreement, with suggestions that it may not be what Ukraine needs at this point.

It's no secret that, in this day and age, trade policy has become broader than what it used to be. In an increasingly complex world that requires multi-pronged approaches due to the global interconnectivity of our activities and their consequences, unilateral approaches are not adequate. As the world becomes increasingly complex, so should our policies in order to remain relevant and meet challenges head-on.

It was Ukraine who initiated our re-engagement and determined the pace of our negotiations, recognizing that a modernized Canada-Ukraine Free Trade Agreement would be but one mechanism to support Ukraine's rebuilding and future economic prosperity.

To that end, this is why the modernized Canada-Ukraine Free Trade Agreement tackles difficult issues of inclusive trade, environmental concerns and labour rights, in addition to its ambitious market access provisions.

This agreement, as mentioned, is not only meant to support Ukraine in the present time as it struggles with an illegal invasion of its territory. It is also meant to underpin our bilateral relationships far into the future, beyond the war and, hopefully, for generations to come.

In closing, this agreement and its accompanying bill are significant to me personally. This year marks 100 years since my parents immigrated to Canada from Ukraine, as refugees fleeing the Soviet revolution, which makes this bill personal.

In my previous life, I occupied — at a time — the role of Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs at the department that is now Global Affairs Canada. In my time as the deputy minister, I witnessed first-hand the complexities of maintaining and developing bilateral relationships. I am personally quite pleased that Canada has been able to contribute to strengthening the bilateral trade relationship with Ukraine in such a productive and forward-looking manner, with the negotiation of a comprehensive and ambitious Canada-Ukraine Free Trade Agreement. I'm certain my ancestors would be pleased.

Let me conclude by saying that while some differences appeared in the House of Commons regarding this bill, the ethos of what it represents — which is Canada's support to Ukraine in these difficult times, and our commitment to expanding our long-term bilateral commercial relationship — has, thankfully, enjoyed broad support. To that effect, our Senate consideration of this bill is urgent so that we may convey to our Ukrainian allies ongoing support for their economic future. We now need to meet the moment to move things forward, as time is of the essence.

Colleagues, Ukraine has started their own implementation process. Considering their Verkhovna Rada is unicameral, it shouldn't take them long. They are relying on us to get this job done. Ukraine wants this. Canada wants this. I, therefore, urge this chamber to advance this bill as quickly as possible. Thank you.

[Translation]

Hon. Amina Gerba: Would Senator Harder take a question?

Senator Harder: Absolutely.

Senator Gerba: Senator Harder, I want to congratulate you on this bill and on your speech. This is a bill I can get behind, since I personally help facilitate our trade relations with other countries and I like to see them developed.

I'm sure you're well aware of what is happening in France. I'm referring to the fact that French farmers are being flooded with chicken products from Ukraine. Are there any safeguards in this bill to protect our farmers, particularly in this sector?

[English]

Senator Harder: Thank you, senator, for your question. You'll know that Canada has been aggressive in protecting its agricultural sector in the supply-managed area.

(On motion of Senator Martin, debate adjourned.)

• (1610)

[Translation]

DEPARTMENT OF EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT ACT EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE ACT

BILL TO AMEND—EIGHTEENTH REPORT OF SOCIAL AFFAIRS,
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE—
DEBATE CONTINUED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Omidvar, seconded by the Honourable Senator Clement, for the adoption of the eighteenth report of the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology (*Bill S-244, An Act to amend the Department of Employment and Social Development Act and the Employment Insurance Act (Employment Insurance Council), with an amendment*), presented in the Senate on December 11, 2023.

Hon. Diane Bellemare: Please pardon my eagerness. I'm nervous about this bill. First reading happened on May 4, 2022. The Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology studied it this fall, and the committee unanimously adopted its 18th report, which was on Bill S-244.

This bill, which was the subject of an order of reference on June 14, 2023, would amend the Department of Employment and Social Development Act and the Employment Insurance Act with respect to the employment insurance council. It would establish an employment insurance council to advise the Canada Employment Insurance Commission, the CEIC.

I must start by saying that I proposed an amendment to my bill at a previous sitting because an error was made when the bill was being drafted. The process of Bill S-244 has been a long one. It was tabled in 2022, but I've been working on it since 2019.

I worked on this bill with all of the employer and union associations in the country. The following organizations participated in drafting this bill: the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, the Business Council of Canada, the Conseil du patronat du Québec, manufacturers, the Canadian Labour Congress, Unifor, the Fédération des travailleurs et travailleuses du Québec (FTQ), the Confédération des syndicats nationaux (CSN), and I've likely forgotten others. We held several meetings. When we created this council in the bill, we added a small point requiring the commission to hold at least three meetings a year with the employment insurance council. Without this, a committee could be created without ever meeting. This was lost in the course of the changes we made. I introduced this amendment during the study in committee.

I'm not going to take too much of your time, but I have to say that the committee met on November 29, November 30 and December 7. So the report was adopted on December 7. The committee heard several witnesses, including representatives from the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, obviously, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business... The president of the Canadian Labour Congress, Bea Bruske, strongly supported the report. The same goes for the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, Unifor, the EI commissioners and a few officials who came to present their view of this report.

Every representative from the labour market spoke in favour of this bill because it is their report. My role was that of coordinator in all this. I don't want to say too much because I want to make a speech at third reading, but this bill, which creates the employment insurance council, tries to return employment insurance back to its roots. When employment insurance was originally created, it was managed by a tripartite council made of up the government, the unions and the business community. Then employment insurance slowly became the responsibility of the department and labour market partners slowly lost the ability to weigh in.

That is very important in the context of the current transition, because the employment insurance system is one of Canada's human resource practices. If we want to adopt good human resource practices that produce sustainable jobs that are also productive, because productivity is dropping dangerously in Canada, then it's important for stakeholders to be able to provide a common opinion. That is the key thing that this bill will do. It will make it possible to provide a common opinion on matters related to employment insurance.

I also wanted to mention that this bill seeks to provide a basis for social dialogue between labour market partners so that they can meet regularly. If we want to ensure prosperity in our society, then we need to find winning solutions for everyone — mutually beneficial solutions.

Parliamentarians aren't used to this process. As parliamentarians, we are in the seat of power, so what one party wins, the other loses. Solutions for parliamentarians in the political arena are not usually positive-sum games. However, in society, parliamentarians have the duty to establish institutions that can promote positive-sum games. That is the mission that I gave myself as a parliamentarian, and that explains my professional path. On that note, I would ask senators to pass the bill at this stage, if possible, so that it can move on to third reading.

To wrap up, I'd like to mention the meeting we had yesterday. My Twitter feed lists all the officials and organizations in attendance. They included Perrin Beatty from the Canadian Chamber of Commerce and Bea Bruske from the Canadian Labour Congress. In addition to the organizations I mentioned earlier, there were also representatives from Canada's building trades, homebuilders, building trades unions and some key industry associations.

I hope to be able to tell you more about it at third reading. Everyone said yesterday that they hoped Bill S-244 would be passed quickly.

Thank you for your attention.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

(On motion of Senator Martin, debate adjourned.)

• (1620)

[English]

UKRAINIAN HERITAGE MONTH BILL

SECOND READING—DEBATE CONTINUED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Kutcher, seconded by the Honourable Senator Boehm, for the second reading of Bill S-276, An Act respecting Ukrainian Heritage Month.

Hon. Donna Dasko: Honourable senators, this item stands adjourned in the name of the Honourable Senator Plett. After today's interventions, I ask for leave that it remain adjourned in his name.

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

The Hon. the Speaker: So ordered.

Senator Dasko: Honourable senators, I rise today to add my voice in support of Senator Kutcher's Bill S-276, An Act respecting Ukrainian Heritage Month, which designates the month of September as Ukrainian Heritage Month.

The preamble of the bill articulates its purpose. Canada is home to more than 1.3 million Ukrainian Canadians, and Parliament, through this bill, recognizes the significant contributions that Ukrainian Canadians have made and continue to make to Canada's social, economic, political and cultural fabric, including artistic, linguistic, culinary, religious and folkloric contributions. By designating September as Ukrainian Heritage Month, Parliament would provide an opportunity to remember, celebrate and educate future generations about the impactful role that Ukrainian Canadians have played and continue to play in communities across the country.

These are the premises of this bill, and for me, recognizing Ukrainian heritage in this way, like the recognition we accord to other communities, continues to build the respect that all communities seek and have earned for their contributions to this country.

On September 7, 1891, Ivan Pylypow and Wasyl Eleniak landed in Quebec City and made their way to the Edmonton area, becoming the first Ukrainians on record to settle in this country. They went on to found the first and largest block settlement of Ukrainians, which was east of Edmonton. But that was just the beginning of Ukrainian settlement, and Canada was about to change radically.

The end of a world depression, rising agricultural prices and a realization that the settlement of the West was the last and most important link to bind a national economy led the new government in Ottawa to undertake its most aggressive immigrant outreach ever in 1896. Under Clifford Sifton, the new Minister of the Interior, the goal of immigration policy was to settle the Prairies with farmers as soon as possible, and massive recruitment in Britain, the United States and Europe — especially Eastern Europe — was undertaken. Mr. Sifton placed unbounded faith in these new and rather exotic Ukrainian immigrants whom he was recruiting to Canada, and who demonstrated ingenuity and courage and opened up some of the most fertile and isolated parts of the Canadian West.

I trace my own Ukrainian roots to this time. My grandfather on my father's side came to Canada from western Ukraine in 1909, and my grandmother in 1912. They settled first in Winnipeg, where my father and his siblings were born, then took up farming in the Pine Ridge community northeast of the city.

Approximately 170,000 Ukrainians, mainly from the Austro-Hungarian Empire, arrived in Canada from 1891 to 1914. This first wave of Ukrainian immigration was halted by the First World War, and a second wave began after the Canadian government lifted restrictions against citizens of Austria in 1923. These immigrants settled mainly in Central and Eastern Canada, taking factory, industrial and mining jobs in urban and northern regions. A third wave of immigrants began arriving right after the Second World War and included refugees and displaced persons seeking refuge after the war.

Later, in the 1970s and 1980s, Ukrainians dissatisfied with the Soviet regime came to Canada looking for greater freedom and economic opportunities. These immigrants were attracted to the urban centres, especially Toronto and Montreal. Economic motivations persisted after the breakup of the Soviet Union and the achievement of Ukrainian independence in 1991. With fewer social services, low-paying employment and job losses, leaving Ukraine for a better life was once again attractive.

It didn't take much for Ukrainians to realize that Canada was just about the best place to move to. There were jobs and opportunities, as well as encouragement from the Canadian government through various programs, including family sponsorship. There was a multicultural ethic and, of course, there were Ukrainian Canadians to connect with just about everywhere. It should be no surprise that today, Canada has the second-largest diaspora of Ukrainians of any country in the world.

While today Ukrainian Canadians are a vital part of the great mosaic of Canada, it's also true that every account of Ukrainians in Canada that I have read makes considerable mention of discrimination, bigotry and prejudices — welcome to the West at the beginning of the 20th century. Attitudes hardened during the First World War. Even while over 10,000 Ukrainian Canadians signed up to fight for Canada in the Great War, 80,000 others were forced to register as enemy aliens, report to the police regularly and carry identity papers. Thousands were disenfranchised. Another 5,000 Ukrainians were interned in concentration camps in this country, where they suffered hunger and forced labour.

My own grandfather was fired from his job with the City of Winnipeg because he was a Ukrainian immigrant and a returning veteran of Anglo-Canadian background wanted his job. Ukrainians changed their names to avoid discrimination and found refuge in their communities and families.

Growing up as I did in the late 1950s and 1960s, in the very multicultural, multi-ethnic city of Winnipeg, I recall many stories of discrimination, ethnic stereotypes and inequality, all of it related to race and ethnic origin. Winnipeg was diverse, but this diversity was not seen as especially desirable and was not embraced. The further you or your group were from the Anglo-Canadian ideal, the lower you were on the social and economic hierarchy. In the words of sociologist John Porter, Canada was a "vertical mosaic."

It was especially debilitating for Indigenous peoples when I was growing up, and it makes me very sad when I think about that reality. But that was about to change significantly. The Ukrainian Canadian community was central in forging respect for diversity and a multicultural vision of Canada. We've heard from Senator Kutcher about the leadership of Senator Paul Yuzyk in advancing multicultural awareness, but there is more to the story as well.

The tipping point was the establishment of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism in 1963. At first, other groups other than the English and French origin groups were entirely ignored by the commission. But the Ukrainians were vocal, insistent and extremely well organized, much more so than any other ethnic community, in pressing for inclusion and a larger vision of Canada. In the end, the commission relented by inviting witnesses representing other ethnic communities and prepared a volume devoted to the contributions of other ethnic groups to Canada.

In 1971, former prime minister Pierre Trudeau announced a policy of multiculturalism for Canada, an outcome that was never anticipated at the beginning of the process. This country became the first in the world to adopt such a policy. This policy — and the philosophy behind it — has provided Canada with a foundation, a set of values and assumptions, for how we look at cultural diversity and other diverse communities as well. Ukrainian Canadians can be justly proud of their pivotal role in its creation.

We've heard from Senator Kutcher and Senator Simons about the contributions of the Ukrainian community in culture, music, art, sports and politics. We've also heard about the many distinguished Canadians of Ukrainian background, people like Roberta Bondar, Sylvia Fedoruk, Ray Hnatyshyn, Wayne Gretzky, William Kurelek and so many others.

• (1630)

Let me add to this list five provincial premiers: Saskatchewan premier Roy Romanow, Manitoba premier Gary Filmon, Ontario premier Ernie Eves, Alberta premier Ed Stelmach and Canada's first female premier. Can anybody name who she was? Her name is Rita Johnston, and she was a former premier of British Columbia. Who knew?

Since my appointment to this chamber almost six years ago, I have appreciated my conversations with colleagues who share Ukrainian heritage, such as Senator Batters, Senator Kutcher and others. I have reflected upon our different experiences. For me, growing up, we had no ties with Ukraine. I didn't learn Ukrainian. I didn't live in a Ukrainian community. I didn't attend a Ukrainian church or school. Let's call my upbringing "Ukrainian lite," but there was family, of course, and there was this phenomenon called ethnic identity. Identity is a beautiful thing, because identities can evolve, change and grow throughout one's life.

When I started working in the public opinion business, we spent a lot of time measuring ethnic identity. However, in those days, ethnic identity was often seen as something opposed to Canadian identity — kind of like a choice you had to make between the two. Thankfully, we don't view it that way — and nobody views it that way — anymore. We now understand that people have multiple identities and are fully capable of strongly identifying with the many statuses they have in their life.

I started my comments today describing the journey of Ukrainians to Canada that began over a century ago, but there is now another chapter in this story, and this one is the most heartbreaking. Putin's genocidal war in Ukraine has resulted in untold hardship, the needless loss of life and is a tragedy of monumental proportions. Canadians have reached out and have shown compassion, welcomed to Canada those fleeing the war and have supported Ukraine with military and humanitarian assistance.

Canadians are steadfast in this time of greatest need.

As we look around us today and witness increased expressions of hate directed at some communities in this country, it might seem that our cultural mosaic and our respect for diversity is under threat. I believe we can deal with these challenges. I know this country is a better place today than it was when my grandfather arrived on these shores back in 1909, and I know that Ukrainian Canadians have made a huge contribution to making it so.

I'm pleased and proud to support Bill S-276, an Act respecting Ukrainian Heritage Month, and I hope you will also support this worthy bill.

Thank you, *dyakuyu*.

Hon. Denise Batters: Honourable senators, I rise today to speak to Bill S-276, an act which would designate September as Ukrainian heritage month.

I am proud that all of my ancestors are Ukrainian. My grandparents, like so many tens of thousands of others, made the long journey from Ukraine to Western Canada in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Canada now boasts a huge and thriving Ukrainian-Canadian population of 1.4 million, the second-largest diaspora of Ukrainians in the world. For more than 125 years, Canada has proven to be a sanctuary for Ukrainians seeking freedom, prosperity, refuge from conflict and a better future for their children and grandchildren.

The rich heritage of Ukraine, with all her food, music, language, and religious and cultural traditions, is woven into the tapestry of Canadian history and society.

Ukrainian Canadians have contributed greatly to Canadian life and culture. Some names you will know in the sphere of politics are former governor general Ray Hnatyshyn, former deputy prime minister Don Mazankowski and former Alberta premier Ed Stelmach. There have been sports heroes, including my first favourite hockey player, New York Islanders superstar Mike Bossy. And who can forget the great Wayne Gretzky?

Ukrainian Canadian contributors to Canada's arts and entertainment world are many: painter William Kurelek, actress Tatiana Maslany, musician Chantal Kreviazuk, comedian Luba Goy and television personality Alex Trebek are a few of the more well-known examples. Many of those Ukrainian Canadians have ancestors with stories similar to those of my own family, making the long trek across the ocean from Ukraine to Canada in pursuit of freedom and a more prosperous future.

Ukrainians emigrated to Canada in three major waves in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The first came in the 1890s, many emigrating from western Ukraine to Western Canada, where land was advertised as free and plentiful. Skilled at the art of agriculture, Ukrainian immigrants faced and overcame the extreme challenges of settling the vast Prairies, including harsh weather, difficult conditions, and the isolation and loneliness of life in a new land. Out of the desolate wilderness, they cleared and cultivated not only productive farmland but vibrant Ukrainian communities centred around religious and family traditions.

Xenophobia during World War I led to a dark and tragic chapter for Ukrainian Canadians. When the War Measures Act was invoked in 1914, 80,000 people considered enemy aliens, largely from the Austro-Hungarian Empire, had to register and report regularly to the police. The basic rights of those immigrants were taken away, including the freedom of movement; association; and in 1917, their right to vote was revoked.

Sadly, nearly 8,600 Eastern European immigrants, around 5,000 of them Ukrainian, were imprisoned in Canadian internment or forced labour camps.

After World War I ended, a second wave of Ukrainian immigrants came to Canada in the 1920s. It included many more agricultural immigrants bound for Western Canada; labourers and professionals who came to live in urban areas, especially in Ontario and Quebec; and those who came to work in industrial sectors, like forestry and mining.

A third wave arrived after the Second World War and consisted largely of political refugees fleeing Russia and its dictator, Joseph Stalin, who had brutally starved the Ukrainian population in the 1930s during a period of famine, violence and collective suffering known as Holodomor. Millions of Ukrainians died in Holodomor. That, along with the aftermath of World War II, led many Ukrainians to flee persecution for the shelter of safer countries abroad, including Canada.

This is, of course, a theme that has been repeated many times since, including after Russia's invasion of Crimea in 2014. Further, Canada has welcomed nearly 200,000 Ukrainians fleeing from devastating and unjustified Russian aggression with Putin's 2022 invasion of Ukraine, two years ago now as of February 24. Ukrainians continue to die every day in this horrible war.

For the last 130 years, the quest for freedom and refuge has motivated Ukrainians to immigrate to Canada's shores. That is why I find it a bit strange that in the preamble to this bill, Senator Kutcher listed universal values shared by Ukraine and Canada, including human rights, democracy and respect for international law but which did not include freedom. As Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy stated during his address to the Canadian Parliament:

The Ukrainian Canadian community is about millions of Ukrainian destinies that have become the destiny of Canada with all its diversity of communities. Freedom-loving. Courage. Our special inner call for justice.

Ukrainians have proven time and again their willingness to risk everything to obtain freedom and democracy. That is why it's so vital that we continue to support them in their fight for their very survival. Sometimes, that support has repercussions, such as in 2022 when Russia banned a number of Canadians who had been outspoken in support of Ukraine. Many Canadian politicians were on that list, and I was gratified to find that I was one of them. Even though my Ukrainian language skills are fairly rudimentary, I was able to decode my name written in the Cyrillic alphabet, only to discover that they had spelled my name wrong, as "Denez Betters."

In the face of Putin's horrendous atrocities with Russia's unjustified invasion of Ukraine, I could not be prouder to stand with Ukraine.

• (1640)

I come from a long line of Ukrainians committed to freedom and hope. Three of my own grandparents were part of the first wave of Ukrainian immigrants who came to settle in Western Canada in the late 1800s and early 1900s. All of my ancestors were from Western regions in Ukraine: Lviv, Ivano-Frankivsk and Ternopil.

Three of my grandparents entered Canada through Pier 21 in Halifax. My mother's father was born shortly after his parents had already arrived in Canada, but his parents came through Ellis Island in New York.

I've had the opportunity to visit both of these landing sites. It is an incredible experience to stand in the place where your ancestors stood so long ago and where they faced their unknown futures in a new world with optimism and, I'm sure, trepidation.

I took the ferry to Ellis Island where I marvelled that the majestic Statue of Liberty would have also welcomed my great-grandparents to their new lives 100 years earlier.

While at Halifax's Pier 21, I visited their museum's exhibit about trunks. It reminded me of seeing my own grandmother's trunk, knowing that she had fit everything she owned in there to

make the long journey to Canada. Then a 20-year-old young woman, not speaking a word of English, my grandmother travelled alone across the ocean to Canada on a very big ship, fittingly the R.M.S. *Regina*. I recall looking at that trunk in her basement as a child and thinking, "I don't think I could even fit all my toys in there." The bravery and sacrifice required for her to make that trip alone to this country was remarkable.

The bill before us today gives us an opportunity to celebrate the courage of those early Ukrainian immigrants and to mark the contributions they made to building this country we call home. For those of you who might not be familiar with Ukrainian customs and traditions, I thought I would give you a taste directly from my own experience.

I was raised in Regina in a Ukrainian-Canadian home fully steeped in Old World traditions. I was baptized in, and still attend, a Ukrainian Catholic church there, the same church my grandparents attended. My family has always been involved in our church, helping with church governance, events and fundraising. The church held an annual Christmas concert with an appearance by St. Nicholas every year who was on hand to give the good kids candy.

Religion is central to Ukrainian-Canadian heritage. Major life cycle events, whether joyous or sorrowful, are linked to Ukrainian Catholic and Orthodox churches. The masses are very long and, of course, when you're a child, they seem even longer. The complex liturgy is often matched by the elaborate decor.

Ukrainian churches convey a sense of mystery and awe with glorious singing and beautiful domed ceilings stretching to the heavens. Our church has intricate wooden carvings, including the beautiful iconostasis, which separates the altar from the rest of the church.

My sisters and I all attended a half-day of Ukrainian school weekly where we learned Ukrainian religion, history and language. As my parents spoke Ukrainian to each other when they didn't want us kids to know what they were talking about, the language lessons from Ukrainian school came in handy.

From age 5 to 18, I took Ukrainian dance lessons, the last several years of which I danced with the Tavria Ukrainian folk dance ensemble. The highlight of my years in that excellent group was performing at the Canada Pavilion at Expo '86 in Vancouver. My sisters danced with groups that performed at Canada's National Ukrainian Festival in Dauphin, Manitoba, the biggest Ukrainian festival in Canada.

Every year, our Ukrainian dancing groups would perform at the Kyiv Ukrainian Pavilion at Mosaic, Regina's multicultural festival. Mosaic has pavilions showcasing the food, culture and entertainment of many different ethnic groups.

When my three sisters and I were in Ukrainian dance, my mom had to sew the costumes for all of us — a pile of work — as I alone required five different costumes in one year, representing various regions of Ukraine. The costumes required intricate embroidery, and, as a result, my sisters and I became quite good at embroidery to help our mom. The work required was intense.

My mom always had a tongue-in-cheek way of marking time. When you'd ask when something else could be done, she'd reply, "A.M.!" — after Mosaic.

For several years, Regina's Ukrainian community held a large competitive event for young women called Miss Kyiv. The judges evaluated the contestants in talent, interview, speech and modelling components. When I was 18 years old, I was thrilled to win the title of Miss Kyiv 1989. Some of you may be surprised to know I also won Miss Congeniality — it was a big year.

In the two years that followed, I served at the Kyiv Ukrainian Pavilion as youth ambassador and as a youth member on the Ukrainian Canadian Congress executive for the Regina branch.

My mom always prioritized our family's participation in Ukrainian-Canadian culture and in Regina's Ukrainian-Canadian community. She was the memory keeper of Ukrainian heritage in our family. She collected a big book of photos and records from our family's history and has passed that precious legacy on to my sisters and me. I will always be thankful for my mom's commitment to ensuring we valued and celebrated our Ukrainian heritage.

Honourable senators, I'm sure you'll appreciate that family celebrations are a huge part of Ukrainian-Canadian culture. Wedding celebrations are large, joyous affairs. At the ceremony, the bride and groom are crowned with wreaths symbolizing the crowns they will wear in the kingdom of heaven. Ukrainian weddings are three-day events, complete with overwhelming quantities of food and lots of dancing, including Ukrainian dancing.

Some of you may know the tradition of the *kolomeyka*, often performed at weddings and celebrations, where the guests form a big circle and take turns showcasing their best Ukrainian dancing moves in the middle. I even taught a few steps to my Irish-English husband-to-be for our wedding so he could participate too. Dave did very well.

I'm very happy that my own 12-year-old nephew has followed in our family's Ukrainian dance tradition. Last month, he performed in his group's annual *Malanka* — Ukrainian New Year — concert, where they also held a *kolomeyka* during the dance later that night.

Christmas is a big family holiday, which many Ukrainian Canadians celebrated according to the Julian calendar on January 6 and 7 rather than the Western tradition of December 24 and 25. Many, including my own family, also celebrated on December 25.

This year, to align itself more with the Western world and away from Russian influence, Ukraine decided to celebrate Christmas on the December 25 date, a big change for many in the Ukrainian diaspora.

The usual Christmas Eve — or *Sviat Vechir* — tradition goes something like this: The youngest child goes to the window to announce when the first star is out so that the meal can commence. An empty place is set at the table to honour those family members who are deceased. Traditionally, twelve meatless dishes are served, symbolizing the twelve apostles.

While I'm not sure how widely it's practised anymore, one old tradition involves tossing a spoonful of *kutia* — the traditional first dish, a type of wheat soup — at the ceiling. If it sticks, superstition dictates that you can expect a prosperous year. If it doesn't, well, I guess you're probably on cleanup detail. In any case, the meal is followed by opening gifts and then attending mass.

Easter is a key religious and family celebration in Ukrainian culture. Many of you will know the tradition of *pysanky*, or decorated Ukrainian Easter eggs. Perhaps you've even seen the giant *pysanka* in Vegreville, Alberta.

As with so many elements of Ukrainian holidays, the designs on the eggs are rich with religious symbolism. The colours used are significant: green for fertility; white for purity; black for death. The symbols of the design are also representative: a straight line around the egg for eternity; dots for the Virgin Mary's tears; and a sieve symbolizing that which divides good and evil.

Baskets that were blessed the day before or at the Easter Sunday mass are prepared for the Easter meal, with delicious contents that also have symbolic meaning: eggs symbolizing life; butter carved into the shape of a lamb to represent the Lamb of God; and a rich, circular bread called *paska*, served with salt, to symbolize good will and hospitality.

Like most kids who grow up in Ukrainian-Canadian households, my family culture was closely linked with wonderful traditional Ukrainian food. My grandmothers were superb cooks. My grandmothers and mom taught my sisters and me how to make borscht, perogies (*perohi*), cabbage rolls (*holubtsi*) as well as *kutia*. We also loved *nalasnyky* (Ukrainian crepes) and *pereshke*.

My dad's mom made perogies that were so good we could eat them cold out of the fridge. She had a secret recipe for the filling, and she never did give it to anyone. When we girls would go over to help her make perogies, even if we arrived there early, the filling would already be made to allow her to keep her recipe secret. We were only allowed to form and pinch the perogies closed. She was a crafty one, my baba.

Of course, no Ukrainian home was complete without Ukrainian garlic sausage, or *kubasa*. When Christmas carollers would come to our home from our Ukrainian Catholic church, it was customary to invite them in for a drink and some *kubasa*.

The Ukrainian Co-op, a staple in the Ukrainian community for decades in Regina, still has its own smokehouse to make their sausages. It's a great day when you can drive down 11th Avenue past the Ukrainian Co-op, roll down the window and smell that wonderful aroma of the sausage being smoked. I always roll my window down, even if it's 40 below. In fact, I just did this last weekend.

In 2014, as a senator, I had the amazing opportunity to participate as an election observer in the Government of Canada's monitoring mission for Ukraine's presidential elections. What hit me when I arrived, even though I had never been to Ukraine before, was the feeling that I was home. And the food — the smells, the spices and the ingredients in the food —

even if not the traditional dishes, was so familiar to me. I felt like I was back in my grandmother's kitchen. All of this was an incredibly powerful feeling. I told the bellman at my hotel in Kyiv that all my ancestors were Ukrainian. He looked at me and then said, "Well, you didn't even have to tell me that."

• (1650)

During this awe-inspiring week in Ukraine as an election monitor, I was deeply moved by how the Ukrainian people do not take their democracy and their right to vote for granted. They were so grateful for the right to exercise their relatively newfound freedom. Many elderly women even brought beautiful flowers from their gardens to the polling locations to show their gratitude for the opportunity to vote. Walking along the Maidan, where more than 100 Ukrainians died only three months earlier fighting for that very election, was a profound experience.

During my time in the Kyiv oblast, and especially in its surrounding villages and farming regions, I was reminded repeatedly of my own Ukrainian grandparents. They, like so many others, left Ukraine seeking freedom and opportunity in Canada's wide open Prairies — seeking a better future for their children and descendants.

That came full circle for me when I had the unbelievable opportunity last fall to meet Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy when he visited Ottawa. I wore the traditional Ukrainian blouse that had been hand-embroidered by my grandmother right before she sailed from Ukraine to her new life in Canada 100 years ago. And I was able to tell President Zelenskyy this and thank him for so bravely defending the Ukrainian homeland.

It was a moment 100 years in the making. As I sat in the centre aisle of the House of Commons, only a few steps away from the Ukrainian president, I thought, "What would my grandmother be thinking at a time like this?" I think she would say, "Mission accomplished." She came to Canada for freedom and for a better life for her children and grandchildren. Now here's her granddaughter — 100 years later — a Canadian senator, trying to make Canada an even better country and trying to help her Ukrainian homeland.

I touched the beautiful embroidery on my grandmother's blouse and thought about how my family's story was emblematic of so many Canadian immigrant families. I commend their courage and their sacrifice.

As we welcomed President Zelenskyy to Parliament that morning, I was honoured to have Conservative Party Leader Pierre Poilievre beside me. Mr. Poilievre introduced me to President Zelenskyy, stating that he was proud to be from Western Canada, where so many Ukrainians had immigrated and contributed so much toward building Canada. Our party and our leader remain steadfastly committed to supporting Ukraine through not only this horrific war, but also into Ukraine's future as a strong, free and sovereign nation.

The Conservative Party of Canada has a long tradition of supporting Ukraine. It is important to recall the many firsts achieved by Ukrainian Canadians and for Ukraine under Conservative governments. In 1957, former prime minister John

Diefenbaker appointed the first Ukrainian-Canadian cabinet minister: Minister of Labour Michael Starr. In 1959, he also appointed the first Ukrainian-born senator: Senator John Hnatyshyn. John Hnatyshyn was the father of Ray Hnatyshyn, who would serve as a senior cabinet minister in the Mulroney government. In 1990, Prime Minister Mulroney appointed him Canada's Governor General. Under Prime Minister Mulroney's leadership, Canada became the first Western nation to recognize Ukraine's independence in 1991.

Canada's support for Ukraine was further strengthened under the leadership of former Conservative prime minister Stephen Harper. In 2005, former Liberal prime minister Paul Martin officially recognized Canada's dark past of Ukrainian internment camps, but the \$2.5-million funding commitment — for memorials and education on the issue — promised by the Liberals did not materialize.

Three years later, it was Conservative prime minister Stephen Harper who established and delivered a \$10-million fund in conjunction with Ukrainian-Canadian partners for education and recognition of that lamentable period of Ukrainian internment in Canada.

Canada was the second country after Ukraine to recognize the Holodomor as a genocide in 2008 with a private member's bill from Conservative parliamentarians. It was introduced by Conservative MP James Bezan, sponsored in the Senate by Senator Raynell Andreychuk and seconded by Senator David Tkachuk — all of them proud Ukrainian Canadians.

Prime Minister Harper was the first G7 leader to visit Ukraine after Russia's illegal occupation and annexation of Crimea in 2014, and it was his Conservative government who started Operation UNIFIER to train Ukrainian soldiers to NATO standards, and who provided legal support to strengthen Ukraine's justice system and combat corruption. Ukraine still credits Canada for this vital assistance, and the Operation UNIFIER training is proving to be invaluable in current Ukrainian war efforts.

Prime Minister Harper was a leader in pushing for Russia to be ousted from the G8 in 2014 after Putin annexed Crimea. And in November 2014, Prime Minister Harper boldly admonished Putin at a G20 meeting, when Prime Minister Harper told him point-blank:

I guess I'll shake your hand, but I have only one thing to say to you: You need to get out of Ukraine.

It was Harper's Conservative government that successfully negotiated the first Canada-Ukraine Free Trade Agreement in 2015; it's an agreement — it is key to remember — that continues to this day.

Stephen Harper's Conservative government donated military equipment and material to Ukraine immediately after Putin's annexation of Crimea. Canada's provision of RADARSAT images to Ukraine in 2015 was later shamefully cancelled by the Liberals in 2016.

In recent years, Conservative support for Ukraine has not wavered. As far back as 2018, the Conservative Party has been pressing the Trudeau government to give Ukraine surplus and retired equipment from our Canadian military, including our light armoured vehicles. Earlier this month, our Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre demanded that the Trudeau government send the Ukrainians our surplus CRV7 attack rockets, which had been specifically requested by Ukraine. Yet, the Trudeau government continues to drag its feet, even while the very lives of Ukrainians hang in the balance.

Our national Conservative caucus has pushed the Trudeau government to apply meaningful economic sanctions on Russia for its illegal actions in Ukraine. Furthermore, we have called upon the Trudeau government to develop Canada's energy resources for export, particularly natural gas, in order to reduce the reliance of countries around the world on Russian energy. But the Liberal government has stood in the way on this too. Meanwhile, the Trudeau government appallingly exempted Gazprom turbines from its own export sanctions, returning them to Russia, and undermining the international sanctions regime against Russian aggression.

In recent days, some have questioned our stance on the carbon tax amendment that the Trudeau government has forced into the Canada-Ukraine Free Trade Agreement. Our Harper Conservative government negotiated the existing free trade agreement between Canada and Ukraine. If the Trudeau carbon tax amendment is not accepted, the existing free trade agreement will continue to be in full effect.

We tried to remove the carbon tax amendment in the House of Commons, but the Liberal and NDP coalition prevented it. Frankly, I find it especially reprehensible that Prime Minister Trudeau would put his personal political agenda and ideology ahead of helping Ukraine — a desperate country fighting for her very existence in the face of Putin's murderous aggression.

Ukrainians' raw determination to defend themselves against the odds has spawned the slogan "Fight like Ukrainians." It is that same dogged persistence, that impulse for self-determination and that yearning for freedom that has spurred Ukrainians to reach for new horizons on Canada's shores. That fighting Ukrainian spirit was the same spirit that compelled my own grandmother to summon her courage and step onto that giant ship bound for Canada — all alone. And it is the spirit and the story of the 1.4 million Ukrainian-Canadian immigrants whose determination and resilience have formed new destinies for generations in this great country.

The rich histories of Canada and Ukraine are intertwined — our united heritage built on the values common to both cultures: the values of freedom, democracy and hope. By designating September as Ukrainian heritage month, Bill S-276 would give us an annual opportunity to reflect on our shared heritage and the future we will continue to forge together. For these reasons, I hope you will give this bill your support.

Thank you. *Dyakoyu. Slava Ukraini.*

(Debate adjourned.)

• (1700)

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 AND REQUEST
FOR GOVERNMENT RESPONSE—DEBATE CONTINUED

On the Order:

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

That the twelfth report of the Standing Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade, entitled *More than a Vocation: Canada's Need for a 21st Century Foreign Service*, deposited with the Clerk of the Senate on Wednesday, December 6, 2023, be adopted and that, pursuant to rule 12-23(1), the Senate request a complete and detailed response from the government, with the Minister of Foreign Affairs being identified as the minister responsible for responding to the report.

Hon. Marty Deacon: Honourable senators, first, I think it's appropriate as I speak about foreign affairs and our experience to, again, acknowledge the descriptions that Senator Batters gave us this afternoon and the importance of our history, culture and heritage as we continue to forge domestically and internationally.

I rise today to speak to the twelfth report of the Foreign Affairs and International Trade Committee, entitled *More than a Vocation: Canada's Need for a 21st Century Foreign Service*.

As I prepared for this study, I reflected on the number of new graduates and Canadians over the past three decades that I have counselled about careers in the Foreign Service. I was pleased to do this and listened to their successes, failures and challenges over the years. I also felt fortunate over the years to have visited and learned from many embassies, high commissions and consulates on how they operate and operate uniquely in a number of countries. In my other field, it was a very important part of international travel with and for large groups.

I have to admit that, candidly, a deep, deep dive into the inner workings of the Canadian government bureaucracy was not the kind of study I had anticipated when I was fortunate enough to join this committee. But in the hands of our capable chair and deputy chair, I had every faith that this was a timely and worthy study. I was happy to have that faith justified. This work was and is essential, timely and urgent. I welcome all senators to view the complexity, the size and the structures that exist presently in the Foreign Service. This is a huge first step.

As Senator Boehm mentioned in his comments, it has been more than 40 years since a substantive examination of Canada's foreign services has been undertaken. To give some perspective, when the Royal Commission on Conditions of Foreign Service was undertaken in 1981, Russia had just invaded Afghanistan, the EU was known as the European Economic Community and had recently welcomed its tenth member — Greece — and China

had the eighth-largest economy in the world — one place behind Canada. All that is to say, colleagues, that the world has changed in the last 40 years. A deep and thorough assessment of our foreign services was long overdue.

Domestically, Canada has undergone its own demographic shifts, too. This includes the changing of traditional family roles, and that is one of the areas I would like to touch on here today. Dual-income households are no longer the exception but the norm. It is common for both partners to have careers — often rewarding ones. This makes a career in the Foreign Service very challenging for many. It's why Recommendation 23 of our report states:

The Government of Canada should undertake a complete modernization of the Foreign Service Directives to ensure that they are adapted to the current and evolving realities faced by Canada's public servants and their families, including with regard to issues related to diversity, inclusion and accessibility. In particular, the Foreign Service Directives should recognize the diversity of family composition, including the realities of single and/or unaccompanied individuals. The modernization of the Foreign Service Directives should also aim to simplify administrative procedures and remove excessive administrative requirements.

Foreign service directives, or FSDs, are a package of allowances and benefits for Canada-based staff working abroad. We heard many times in our study that these FSDs need to reflect the current makeup of the Canadian family if they are to support those working abroad as intended. The tag line of this report, after all, is "More than a Vocation." This is not the kind of job you leave at 5 p.m. and return to the next day. It's really a lifelong commitment of serving. As the Professional Association of Foreign Service Officers, or PAFSO, so effectively put it in their testimony, "This commitment affects not just Foreign Service officers, but also our partners, children, extended families . . . and even our pets."

On our fact-finding missions abroad, we heard numerous first-hand examples of spouses putting careers on hold or changing their career trajectory entirely so they could be posted to the same mission. The problem is not exclusive to Canada, of course, and was discussed with officials and colleagues from the U.S., Germany, the U.K. and Norway during our very important travels. Sometimes it is just the nature of the job, but that is not a reason for inaction.

In their brief, PAFSO noted that the issue of spousal support has largely not changed since the McDougall report in 1981, despite the drastic changes in family incomes and more women and mothers entering the workforce. Staff overseas shared — with a great deal of hope — some examples of what they are managing just to visit their spouse a few times, to move and to find schooling. Some examples were frankly heartbreaking. Witnesses suggested more innovative practices like developing a mechanism to enable accessible job sharing for qualified dual-service couples, support for telework and spousal allowances among other possible supports and solutions.

I hope this and subsequent governments take this issue seriously as too many qualified, talented individuals could not consider this career without these supports for their families and loved ones.

Shifting focus, colleagues, I'd like to also elaborate on one other area of our report, that being Recommendation 16, which states:

Global Affairs Canada should maintain a Legal Affairs Bureau and a Legal Advisor at the Assistant Deputy Minister level within the department.

This should seem to be a no-brainer. Canada has played an outsized role in the world over the last century because of what we've done to help create a rules-based international order. The department's legal bureau played a leading role in diplomatic successes such as the Convention on the Law of the Sea; the advancement of human rights — especially children's and women's rights; the early development of environmental law, including the 1987 Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer; and the advancement of legal accountability for atrocity crimes, culminating in the establishment of the International Criminal Court. Just pause and think about these examples for a moment and their impact. Without the leadership of the people in the bureau, some of these important victories might not have been won.

Despite the many foreign policy contributions of Global Affairs Canada lawyers over the years, the committees heard, via submitted brief, that the department's senior management has, at times, questioned the value of maintaining a functional legal affairs bureau, thinking it would become more cost-effective for the Department of Justice to take on the legal duties of Global Affairs Canada. This, colleagues, would be a mistake. I believe that everyone in this chamber thinks that true experience does not come from reading texts but, rather, from being out there and experiencing the world first-hand. This is the strength of the department's legal bureau. They are not only lawyers but also diplomats who have accumulated international and multilateral experience from earlier postings in assignments with legal responsibilities and through international negotiations. This has enabled them to make contextual connections that deepen their ability to find good solutions.

Given how much sanctions and international legal frameworks such as the International Criminal Court and the International Court of Justice have been in the news in the past year as well as the increasing complexity of cases before these bodies, it is all the more important that we retain and even strengthen the bureau. I should note that the Foreign Affairs Committee will be having a meeting on our international legal commitments this week when, no doubt, this recommendation will be discussed.

There is so much more, colleagues, that I could touch on today, but these are two crucial recommendations that stood out to me in this report. It was a great pleasure working with my colleagues on this. I was proud to serve in the committee and in our travels each day.

• (1710)

The past experiences of the chair and deputy chair added tremendous value to this study.

I take time to really think about this: the work of committee, why we do what we do and who leads what. This work under the leadership of our chair and his capable staff member Christina Cail was as deep and rich as it was because of the global connections and relationships of their office — full stop. We did not have to start at square one in the four countries we visited. I was very proud to be Canadian and on this committee, and to have follow-up conversations after our visits. We also navigated an in-person field trip to Global Affairs Canada, or GAC, while we were here in Ottawa. With great empathy, we sat in the rooms and gained a much deeper understanding of the work of GAC during the pandemic and multiple global crises that impact Canadians in every corner of the world every day. Visiting our colleagues in their offices internationally permitted discussion we could not have had otherwise.

This study and experience was so much more than a look at federal bureaucracy. It was a look at the face Canada will present to our rapidly changing and shifting world. This past century has been good for our country on the international stage. Today's change is rapid; the world is unstable and fragile. We have to be ahead of the curve. Our global prominence is challenged, and it should be.

Moving forward, skills and structures need to be very different than in the past. This report provides an excellent blueprint for Global Affairs Canada to ensure just that.

As I close, I'm reminded of a few things. This report, the government response to it, the actions taken with respect to it and the awareness of all senators of its contents are critical.

I repeatedly hear about how important our committee work is. Some describe it as the heart of the Senate's work. This year, I participated in three studies. Some were very triggering. They were fulsome and difficult at times, but they were all very important, and we look forward to seeing the actions that dominate as a result of them. I am cautiously hopeful that we will get timely responses from the government and much-needed collective action.

Honourable senators, yes, Canadians are following this work and looking for the actions. On December 12, shortly after the Foreign Service report was shared in the Senate, I received an inquiry via email. Gail and her family, which includes young university graduates, indicated that the GAC report generated much discussion in her home and with colleagues. They reached out with good questions about recommendations 8, 11 and 21. For them, this led to discussion within their family on the challenge for and seeming inability of institutions to change — an almost impossible task.

I spoke with this family and share this conversation with them as a reminder of the importance of the work we do and, more importantly, our accountability to that work. Thank you, *meegwetch*.

(On motion of Senator Martin, debate adjourned.)

[Senator Deacon (Ontario)]

THE SENATE

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

On the Order:

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

That the Senate of Canada recognize that:

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

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

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

Hon. Yonah Martin (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): With leave of the Senate, I move the adjournment of the debate in the name of Senator Housakos for the balance of his time.

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

(Debate adjourned.)

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

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Patterson (*Nunavut*), seconded by the Honourable Senator Greene:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

SCHEDULE

AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION OF CANADA

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

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

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

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

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

Hon. Yonah Martin (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, again, with leave of the Senate, I move the adjournment of the debate in the name of Senator Housakos for the balance of his time.

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

(Debate adjourned.)

MOTION PERTAINING TO MINIMUMS FOR GOVERNMENT BILLS—
DEBATE CONTINUED

On the Order:

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

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

- except as provided in this order, the question not be put on the motion for third reading of a government bill unless the orders for resuming debate at second and third reading have, together, been called at least three times, in addition to the sittings at which the motions for second and third readings were moved;
- when a government bill has been read a first time, and before a motion is moved to set the date for second reading, the Leader of the Government in the Senate or the Deputy Leader of the Government in the Senate may, without notice, move that the bill be deemed an urgent matter, and that the provisions of paragraph 1 of this order not apply to proceedings on the bill; and

3. when a motion has been moved pursuant to paragraph 2 of this order, the following provisions apply:

- (a) the debate shall only deal with whether the bill should be deemed an urgent matter or not;
- (b) the debate shall not be adjourned;
- (c) the debate shall last a maximum of 20 minutes;
- (d) no senator shall speak for more than 5 minutes;
- (e) no senators shall speak more than once;
- (f) the debate shall not be interrupted for any purpose, except for the reading of a message from the Crown or an event announced in such a message;
- (g) the debate may continue beyond the ordinary time of adjournment, if necessary, until the conclusion of the debate and consequential business;
- (h) the time taken in debate and for any vote shall not count as part of Routine Proceedings;
- (i) no amendment or other motion shall be received, except a motion that a certain senator be now heard or do now speak;
- (j) when debate concludes or the time for debate expires, the Speaker shall put the question; and
- (k) any standing vote requested shall not be deferred, and the bells shall ring for only 15 minutes.

Hon. Yonah Martin (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): For the third and final time, with leave of the Senate, I move the adjournment of the debate in the name of Senator Housakos for the balance of his time.

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

(Debate adjourned.)

[Translation]

ONE HUNDREDTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE CHINESE EXCLUSION ACT

INQUIRY—DEBATE CONTINUED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the inquiry of the Honourable Senator Woo, calling the attention of the Senate to the one hundredth anniversary of the *Chinese Exclusion Act*, the contributions that Chinese Canadians have made to our

country, and the need to combat contemporary forms of exclusion and discrimination faced by Canadians of Asian descent.

Hon. Bernadette Clement: Honourable senators, I move the adjournment of the debate in the name of Senator Petitclerc until the next sitting of the Senate for the balance of her time.

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

(Debate adjourned.)

BUSINESS AND ECONOMIC CONTRIBUTIONS MADE BY INDIGENOUS BUSINESSES TO CANADA'S ECONOMY

INQUIRY—DEBATE CONTINUED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the inquiry of the Honourable Senator Klyne, calling the attention of the Senate to the ongoing business and economic contributions made by Indigenous businesses to Canada's economy.

Hon. Pierrette Ringuette: Honourable senators, I rise today to participate in Senator Klyne's very important inquiry about acknowledging the contribution that businesses owned and controlled by Indigenous people make to our economy. I feel that this is an extremely important inquiry, because we spend a lot of time talking about and debating reconciliation issues, but we often forget Indigenous Canadians' significant economic contribution.

As they grow, these businesses help strengthen communities, create jobs and improve local economies, not only for First Nations, but also for the surrounding area and even beyond. In the course of this inquiry, I think it's important to highlight the innovation that we're seeing in First Nations' approaches to developing and growing their businesses.

I want to thank Senator Klyne, who initiated this inquiry, and all senators who have spoken to it. All of that enriches our understanding. Over the past three decades, I've witnessed the rise of Indigenous entrepreneurs, but, if not for this inquiry, I wouldn't have done the research necessary to understanding the economic impact these entrepreneurs have on their communities, the next generation and our region.

[English]

I will start with the Atlantic region and then move closer to my home turf, as they say.

The latest data for 2020 produced by the Atlantic Economic Council reports the following for the Atlantic Indigenous businesses and community contribution: \$3.6 billion in direct GDP with a spinoff of \$5.6 billion; over 3% of Atlantic GDP; \$1.2 billion in direct tax — federal, provincial and municipal; 800 Indigenous-owned businesses that employ 56,000 Atlantic Canadians, which is 5% of all Atlantic jobs.

Honourable senators, as you can conclude from the above data, Indigenous entrepreneurs and communities in Atlantic Canada are making tremendous contributions to our economy. Removing shackles and stigma, recognizing and confronting past wrongs and providing them their own pathways provided these results. Give one their wings and they will fly.

• (1720)

Closer to home, New Brunswick Indigenous businesses and communities contribute \$700 million in direct GDP, which is \$1.2 billion in spinoffs; 2% of New Brunswick's GDP; 300 Indigenous-owned businesses; 12,000 direct jobs; \$200 million in direct tax — federal, provincial and municipal; and 1,300 Indigenous self-employed.

Now, I understand if you think that's not a lot, but in the small province of New Brunswick, it is a lot.

There are 17,270 First Nations people in New Brunswick, including 10,014 on-reserve and 7,256 off-reserve. The First Nations of New Brunswick have been enormously successful in driving economic growth for their communities and those around them. I will not be able to list every Indigenous business in the province today, but there are a few that I believe highlight the innovation and drive that lead to economic success.

One successful Indigenous business is Red Island Contractors Inc. in Tobique First Nation. Tobique is one of the six Maliseet First Nations. Located on the north shore of the Tobique River and close to the border with Maine, it has a registered population of 2,640, with about 1,600 on-reserve. Red Island Contractors Inc. is run by Tobique First Nation members Dana Francis and Beaver Paul.

Red Island Contractors develops building projects on traditional First Nations territory. They provide management consultancy from concept to commissioning. They aim to drive projects to provide economic development, respect for communities and the environment, as well as to provide mentorship, apprenticeship and trades development in the communities.

Some projects they have worked on include the Tobique First Nation Health Centre, Tin'wis Resort Laundry and Workers Dormitory in Tofino, B.C.; Marina Resort in Sooke, B.C.; and the Turtle Dome project in Neqotkuk First Nation, among many others.

Red Island Contractors Inc. has been successful in bringing the insights of Indigenous Canadians into project development, in particular, the focus on community and environment.

The Joint Economic Development Initiative, or JEDI, is an Indigenous organization in New Brunswick that works with communities and the provincial and federal governments. They aim to support and grow Indigenous participation in the New Brunswick economy.

JEDI helps communities and businesses through capacity development, support for projects, as well as networking and learning opportunities. They offer entrepreneurs numerous programs to help them build and grow their businesses, including

the Indigenous Business Incubator Program, which helps new businesses develop and learn about marketing, bookkeeping and e-commerce through a 10-week virtual training program. That's quite progressive.

JEDI also provides funding and grants to several programs to invest in businesses. Workforce development is part of the JEDI mandate, which includes literacy, mentorship, internship, apprenticeship and employment coordination programs.

The Joint Economic Development Initiative has been a powerful tool for the growing Indigenous communities in New Brunswick.

Now, moving closer to home and to my heart, I want to talk about the Madawaska Maliseet First Nation. Located along the Saint John River in northern New Brunswick, the Madawaska Maliseet First Nation has a population of 378 people, with 155 on-reserve. You can imagine the size of it, but wait until you see what they've done.

When I was a young MLA in New Brunswick in the late 1980s, we were planning and followed up with the construction of a four-lane Trans-Canada Highway. Since the highway was dividing the north and the south of the Madawaska Maliseet First Nation land, they requested an overpass that would join the north and the south. The overpass was built; however, for many years, there were no roads and no ramps to and from the overpass.

Then in comes my friend Joanna Bernard, the first woman chief of the Madawaska Maliseet First Nation, in 2003. Her leadership was the ignition to a comprehensive economic development plan from the north side of their lands along the Trans-Canada Highway. If you pass by, it's known as the Grey Rock Entertainment Centre.

Located on 36 hectares, the site includes a gas bar that serves more than 15,000 vehicles that pass by every day on the Trans-Canada Highway. In addition, it has a retail complex with shops, a restaurant complex, a casino, a Ford dealership, a multi-terrain dealership and, more recently, a hotel that connects to the casino. I'm so proud of this group.

The Grey Rock Entertainment Centre employs more than 300 people — remember, I told you there are 378 people on that reserve — from the area and has been a major boost to the local economy, both for the Madawaska Maliseet First Nation and for the Edmundston area. This relatively small Maliseet community of 378 has probably the greatest number of entrepreneurs per capita in all of Canada. Most businesses are owned and operated by family names like Bernard, Wallace and Simon.

Let me start with the Bernards. Yes, my friend Joanna was a stellar chief and was followed by her sister Patricia, who is the current chief. Patricia owns and operates Greco Pizza, while Joanna is currently Regional Chief of the Assembly of First Nations and was the interim national chief of the Assembly of First Nations until the recent election. Their big brother, John Bernard, owns and operates the casino and the all-terrain car dealership at Grey Rock. In addition, John Bernard is also the owner and operator of the IT firm here in Ottawa named Donna Cona, which employs over 2,000 people and provides IT services

all over the country. John Bernard is the recipient of the Lifetime Achievement Award 2021 from the Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business.

Next, let's move on to the Wallaces — more precisely, Vicki Wallace. Vicki has a law degree, which serves her in many business endeavours. Along with her husband, Marco Godbout, she owns and operates the Shell Grey Rock gas bar and convenience store and the Burger King. They also own the local radio station Frontière FM and other businesses outside our immediate area. Notwithstanding all that, Vicki and Marco are also volunteers in many community organizations.

Honourable senators, I hope I have been able to convey how much I appreciate and respect the leaders and entrepreneurs of the Madawaska Maliseet First Nation.

• (1730)

In conclusion, I want to speak more broadly to highlight some aspects of Indigenous businesses that are central to their success and critical for Canadians to learn from and apply in their own businesses.

One of the important aspects of a First Nations business strategy is the importance of the environment and the people's relation to the land. First Nations are stewards of the land, and this translates into their businesses. These successes show that economic development and the environment don't have to be at odds but can, in fact, be of mutual benefit. Sustainability, proper management of natural resources and the symbiotic integration of development and the environment are things that have always been important to Indigenous communities.

Colleagues, I have about a minute left. May I have an extra minute?

[Translation]

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

Hon. Senators: Yes.

[English]

Senator Ringuette: Thank you. As part of this inquiry, we should also take some time to mention the hurdles that Indigenous businesses can face and for us to consider and discuss how we can further boost opportunities. One issue we have heard is that while the federal government does a lot to assist First Nations governments, there is a lot less opportunity for assistance for privately owned Indigenous businesses. I believe there are some efforts that should be made there.

One specific issue we heard was getting bonds to bid on federal contracts and other private contracts, despite the ownership having considerable assets. Surety companies are not issuing bonds because owners' property cannot be seized due to section 89 of the Indian Act. This limits access to programs and is a major impediment to growing these businesses.

As part of this inquiry and in our future endeavours, we should also look at these issues and ways to improve access to privately owned Indigenous business to capital, grants and bonds.

I also believe that major communication must occur throughout the country to inform all citizens about the tax issue for Indigenous individuals and businesses. Too often, I hear Canadians criticizing without knowing the facts about taxes. This must stop. I think the Senate can do its job and foster information on this issue.

I have only mentioned a small number of the many successful Indigenous businesses in New Brunswick — there are many more. Their success is shared by their communities and those in the region.

I want to again thank Senator Klyne for this inquiry and the opportunity to speak. Thank you.

(On motion of Senator Clement, debate adjourned.)

(At 5:35 p.m., the Senate was continued until tomorrow at 2 p.m.)

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