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Tuesday, April 9, 2024

The Honourable RAYMONDE GAGNÉ,
Speaker

This issue contains the latest listing of Senators,
Officers of the Senate and the Ministry.

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THE SENATE

Tuesday, April 9, 2024

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

[Translation]

Prayers.

MAUDE CYR-DESCHÊNES

SENATORS' STATEMENTS

SOLAR ECLIPSE

Hon. Paul J. Prosper: Honourable senators, as with all Indigenous cultures, Mi'kmaq teachings have been traditionally passed down orally. In part inspired by Senator Manning's ongoing series, I've decided to share some stories and teachings from time to time. These stories being captured in the Hansard will help preserve them for future Mi'kmaq and the broader Canadian public. I would like to call this series "Nta'tukwaqnminal," or "Our Stories."

In the aftermath of the solar eclipse yesterday, many Indigenous cultures have their own version of light versus darkness. Darkness is simply the lack of light.

Henry Knockwood, an elder from the Sipekne'katik, spoke of a *kinap* named Saul Piel Sagamaw, Chief Peter Paul. A *kinap* is a person with extraordinary skills and abilities.

One time, the chief faced a great challenge with the arrival of a *puoin* in his community. A *puoin* possesses supernatural powers that can be used for light or dark purposes. The *puoin* use their supernatural powers to create much disruption and separation in the community.

Feeling powerless, the *kinap* prayed for help. His prayers were answered with the arrival of the *plamu*, or salmon. The unprecedented rising of waters in the Bay of Fundy marked the start of an epic battle between the light energy of the *plamu* and the dark energy of a sea serpent. This extended battle caused the waters to turn muddy where the *plamu* eventually defeated the sea serpent.

When *Gisult*, the Great Spirit, created the sun, the dark or shadow energy was never anticipated or required. The sun, or light-based energy, is unaffected by its shadow. While the perception of the shadow changes based on the position of the experiencer, it is never in the way of the light-filled energy. Although the dark or shadow energy may seem real in a light-based journey, it is essentially a non-character in our life journey.

Wela'liog. Thank you very much.

Hon. Percy Mockler: It was incredible and true.

Honourable senators, here in the Senate today, I want to congratulate Maude Cyr-Deschênes, winner of the 10th edition of the popular TV show *La Voix* in Montreal on Sunday.

Who is Maude Cyr-Deschênes? Coached by France D'Amour, the 24-year-old musician from Madawaska, in northwestern New Brunswick, endeared herself to the audience and captured the coveted prize. She was extraordinary and spectacular.

Back home, Maude is a well-known artist who participated in a number of projects, including a production called *L'Acadie des terres et forêts* from 2002 to 2018.

France D'Amour described Maude as an "up-and-coming artist" and praised her stage presence. I would add that she is indeed up and coming, and she isn't about to stop.

Maude was very focused and disciplined throughout the season as she showcased her musical talents. As her coach, France D'Amour, said, Maude inspired strength and confidence.

Honourable senators, I'm so happy for her parents, Étienne Deschênes and Sylvie Cyr, whom I know very well. They've always been there for their family, and they have contributed and continue to contribute to cultural development throughout New Brunswick via cultural, economic, educational and social channels.

Maude, you make Madawaska, our province and all the people of Acadia very proud.

Congratulations on how far you have come. There is no doubt that your perseverance, your talent and the support of your family, friends and community were key to your success.

Good luck in the future. We will continue to follow you in the long career that you have ahead of you.

Congratulations, Maude. I tip my hat to you. It's true that you are exceptional and extraordinary.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

[English]

NUNAVUT

Hon. Pat Duncan: Honourable senators, on April 1, 1999, the Northwest Territories was officially divided into two, creating Nunavut. On that day, the Leader of the Government in the Yukon Legislative Assembly, Piers McDonald, said the following:

The name Nunavut means “Our Land” in Inuktitut. The land it refers to takes in one-fifth of Canada’s total land mass. It spans three time zones and stretches from the high Arctic islands in the north to Baffin Island in the east and to the shores of Hudson Bay in the south.

With a total area of two million square kilometers, it is larger than any Canadian province and much larger than many nations.

Nunavut’s geography has helped shaped a common sense of purpose among the Inuit people, and the creation of this new territory is evidence of how much a united community can achieve together.

Honourable senators, on this, the twenty-fifth anniversary of Nunavut, may I remind us of our role in its creation. Nunavut is, as are the Yukon and the Northwest Territories, an act of Parliament. We are represented in the other place and in our chamber by one member each. We in this chamber look forward to the appointment of the next Nunavut senator.

Honourable senators, you have heard me say on several occasions that the Parliament of Canada is uniquely responsible for the territories since they are not entrenched in the Constitution Act. Their small “c” constitutions are acts of Parliament that can be amended through the regular legislative process that includes our chamber, without invoking any amendment formulas.

Our friend and former colleague Dennis Patterson worked tirelessly in his capacity as a member of the Northwest Territories Council to achieve territorial status for Nunavut, and to continue the long and complicated process of devolution. In his inaugural speech in this chamber, 10 years after Nunavut’s creation, he spoke about the need to complete the process for Nunavut to be masters in their own house, to chart their development, their governance — meaningful and local control over their destiny through their duly elected consensual government.

• (1410)

In his speech, Dennis Patterson urged the government of the day to respect the Inuit and their elected government to complete a devolution agreement — as the Yukon had achieved in 2003 and later the Northwest Territories in 2014. He said in part:

The people of Nunavut no longer need the federal government, no matter how well intentioned, to make critical decisions about the management of lands and resources in Nunavut. We deserve the same involvement in developing our significant natural resources as southern

Canadians. The Inuit of Nunavut have constitutionally protected rights, through their land claim, to participate in the responsible development of our resources. . . .

I remind honourable senators that the next step in Nunavut’s development and our constitutional work as Canadians will be to address the amendments to the Nunavut Act and further the constitutional development of our country, which will truly give life and meaning to the devolution agreement respecting the wishes of the Inuit of Nunavut.

Thank you. *Gúnáłchish. Mahsi’cho. Matna.*

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

PROFESSOR LENA DOMINELLI

Hon. Wanda Thomas Bernard: Honourable senators, I am pleased to rise today on Algonquin Anishinaabe territory to recognize National Social Work Month, which was in March. We use March each year as an opportunity to publicly recognize the important work that over 50,000 social workers in Canada do for our communities every single day.

There is one particular social worker I wish to single out today — Dr. Lena Dominelli. She is world-renowned and has made significant contributions over three decades. From feminist and anti-racist social work in the late 1980s to her current innovative practice in green social work and disaster planning, her influence extends globally.

Dr. Dominelli is a prolific writer and holds a Chair in Social Work at the University of Stirling in Scotland. She is a Canadian — an active member of the BC Association of Social Workers — but she resides and works in Scotland.

Dr. Dominelli and I also have a personal connection. We first met in 1991 when she was visiting another feminist scholar in Halifax. Two years later, I entered the University of Sheffield in England as their first joint-location doctoral student. Dr. Dominelli volunteered to be my PhD supervisor. I can still hear her saying, “I don’t know much about Black men’s resilience, but I believe in you!”

Dr. Dominelli believed in me when I didn’t believe in myself. She inspired me to be the best social work researcher that I could be. She taught me to use the master’s tools to break through the multiple barriers to enter and succeed in the master’s house. She inspired me to become a positive disruptor as a social worker. She continues to be an inspiration to her students. She continues to be an inspiration to me.

Just last month, we, along with the Canadian Association of Social Workers, hosted an online event where we talked about green social work, disaster planning and educating social workers for this important work.

Today, I have the privilege to publicly thank Dr. Lena Dominelli for her many contributions to social work over these past three decades. And I want to wish a belated happy Social Work Month to all social workers in Canada.

Asante. Thank you.

EID AL-FITR

Hon. Mohamed-Iqbal Ravalia: Honourable senators, I rise today on behalf of Senators Ataullahjan, Gerba, Yussuff, Jaffer and Al Zaibak to recognize an occasion that reminds us of the essence of compassion, unity and gratitude. Tomorrow evening marks Eid al-Fitr, the Festival of Breaking Fast, celebrating the end of the holy month of Ramadan, a sacred time of fasting, benevolence and spiritual reflection for Muslims worldwide.

With increasing global polarization, it is crucial to reflect on the values that bind us together as humanity. Eid al-Fitr serves as a beacon of hope, reminding us of the power of resilience, faith and community. It is a time when families and communities come together, regardless of background or creed, to celebrate the blessings of life, the strength found in diversity and the importance of extending a hand of kindness to those in need.

These celebrations often include families and communities gathering around festive meals and people taking the opportunity to connect with their old and new friends, creating special moments and memories to share. For many children, Eid comes along with sweet treats and gifts to share — or not — with their siblings and fun activities that provide opportunities to connect with cultural roots and local community.

This past weekend, I had the privilege of spending some time with my sisters Aisha and Nuru in Aurora. We reflected on our blessing of being part of this wonderful country and our respect for our pluralistic nation.

As we navigate through the complexities of our modern world, it is imperative that we draw inspiration from the values that are upheld during this period — values of peace, compassion and understanding. In the face of conflict and division, let us reaffirm our commitment to dialogue, cooperation and mutual respect and not allow the foundations of our beliefs to be marginalized by fundamental and extremist views.

I extend my warm wishes on behalf of all of us here today to the broader Muslim community on this joyous occasion. May Eid serve as a reminder of our shared humanity and our collective responsibility to strive for a world where peace and harmony prevail.

Thank you. *Meegwetch.*

MILLION PEACEMAKERS

Hon. Tony Loffreda: Honourable senators, I rise today to highlight the work of an outstanding organization called Million Peacemakers. Co-founded by Canadian Stephen Hecht, co-author of the best-selling book *Nonflict: The Art of Everyday Peacemaking*, the organization has big goals in helping shape a better future. In its essence, “nonflict” is all about transforming any conflict into a “nonflict” situation and empowering everyone with the ability to foster reconciliation, mutual understanding and peace in the workplace, at school, at home and in our communities.

First, Million Peacemakers wants to train one million peacemakers in the “nonflict way,” a proven method for everyday peacemaking.

Second, it wants to establish a peace institute in Rwanda, focused on research and education, with a particular interest in conflict resolution, peace and genocide prevention. The organization has already signed a memorandum of understanding with the Government of Rwanda.

Third, it wants to develop and launch a world-class online learning experience for everyone to have access to and benefit from the power of “nonflict.” Through workshops, Million Peacemakers hopes to provide any interested party — from schools and youth to business executives and family members — with the tools needed to deal with everyday peacemaking in a meaningful and effective manner. Participants will learn how to communicate effectively, how to engage in healthy and positive dialogue and how to demonstrate empathy — which is very important — in any conflict resolution situation.

No conflict is too small to benefit from the “nonflict way.”

I recently met with the group’s Executive Director, Jon Moyal, and Director Mark Sadovnick to learn more about this innovative approach, one that is needed more than ever before. I was struck by the impact the “nonflict way” can have in the workplace. A recent analysis shows that 85% of people experience workplace conflict, and one in four people will miss work this year to avoid conflict. In Canada, workplace conflicts cost Canadian businesses more than \$2 billion a year, which can have a detrimental impact on a workplace’s productivity.

To reduce the costs of destructive workplace conflict, “nonflict” training can help any workplace enhance team cohesion, boost productivity, strengthen leadership and improve employee engagement — among other benefits. Employee engagement is so key for results and for empowering the people working for us. It’s a wonderful model, proven to achieve tangible results. It’s worth considering for any manager.

Honourable senators, I encourage you to learn more about the Million Peacemakers movement, and I invite all Canadians to embrace the principles associated with “nonflict” to help nurture better relationships at work and at home.

• (1420)

[Translation]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

THE SENATE

COMPANION TO THE RULES OF THE SENATE OF CANADA—
THIRD EDITION TABLED

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, with leave of the Senate, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the *Companion to the Rules of the Senate of Canada, Third Edition, 2024*, prepared by the Clerk of the Senate.

[English]

Electronic copies will be available online shortly.

JUSTICE

CHARTER STATEMENT IN RELATION TO BILL S-17—
DOCUMENT TABLED

Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate): Honourable senators, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, a Charter Statement prepared by the Minister of Justice in relation to Bill S-17, An Act to correct certain anomalies, inconsistencies, out-dated terminology and errors and to deal with other matters of a non-controversial and uncomplicated nature in the Statutes and Regulations of Canada and to repeal certain provisions that have expired, lapsed or otherwise ceased to have effect, pursuant to the *Department of Justice Act*, R.S.C. 1985, c. J-2, sbs. 4.2(1).

QUESTION PERIOD

ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

CARBON TAX

Hon. Donald Neil Plett (Leader of the Opposition): Senator Gold, a few days before he hiked the carbon tax by another 23%, a reporter asked Prime Minister Trudeau if he would be willing to sit down with premiers who have raised legitimate concerns about the issue.

The Prime Minister responded by calling the premiers liars. They don't agree with him, so he calls them liars.

Funny thing: After he made this accusation against the premiers, I didn't hear a single Liberal condemn the Prime Minister for his words. Yet, last year, when I called Prime Minister Trudeau a liar, I was called out of order.

Why the double standard, leader?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you very much for your question. There's no double standard here. Regrettably, there are politicians in this country who have been misleading Canadians consistently with regard to the impact of the price of pollution on the cost of living, on the cost of housing.

I am using the words advisedly. They are misleading Canadians, and they are doing so in full knowledge of the facts — period.

With regard to the preamble to your question, the Prime Minister has made it clear that he welcomes — and I've made it clear, by the way, in this chamber — constructive input from premiers who have the opportunity, if they choose, to put into place tailored programs to reduce emissions in their provinces for the benefit of the planet and their citizens.

Senator Plett: Liars — he called them liars. If Susan Delacourt can write in the *Liberal Toronto Star* that he called the premiers liars, then I can say he called the premiers liars.

To be specific, he accused Conservative premiers of lying to Canadians, and there were no consequences nor reprimands. Did the Prime Minister forget that Premier Furey is a Liberal? Did he forget that the Liberal parties in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Ontario also opposed his carbon tax? Or does he think they're all liars as well?

Senator Gold: The position of the Government of Canada and of the Prime Minister has been clear for years that the price on pollution is the most market-sensitive and effective measure to combat pollution. It has also been established by independent third-party validators that the impact on the cost of living is negligible. Again, I stand by my response earlier.

FINANCE

BUDGET 2024

Hon. Leo Housakos: Senator Gold, we have the budget coming up in one week, although we have already seen a lot of what's in it as your Prime Minister has rolled out a series of photo ops, which he seems to like.

I think the interesting thing for Canadians will be what is not in the budget, and that's a tangible, credible plan to help everyday Canadians who are struggling under the weight of your government's fiscal mismanagement. Pierre Poilievre has sent the letter to your boss, Justin Trudeau, with three easy fixes that would not only help Canadians, but would earn Poilievre's support for the budget, and God knows this government needs some credible support: one, axe the tax on farmers and food; two, build homes and not bureaucracy; three, cap spending with a dollar-for-dollar rule to bring down interest rates and inflation. Will your government commit to these three things to fix what will otherwise just be another Liberal budget with a lot of promises and no deliverables?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): No. The answer is no. First of all, the government is doing an enormous amount to help Canadians and has been doing so for some time. The announcements to which you referred are further examples of targeted, practical, realistic and prudent measures to assist Canadians in housing and other areas where the costs of living continue to pose challenges, especially to younger people. I will not repeat because really it has become tedious that the government remains committed to the price on pollution, and the government remains — to your third point — committed to prudent, practical investments for the benefit of Canadians now and for future generations.

Senator Housakos: Senator Gold, here's just another example of how badly things have been broken over the last eight years under Justin Trudeau. Prior to his election, a Canadian household earning the median income could cover the cost of owning an average home by spending 39% of their pay. Now, according to RBC, that number has jumped to a whopping 64%.

Senator Gold, why won't your government finally take real action and axe the tax, build homes and cap spending?

Senator Gold: You make it irresistible to respond in kind, senator. Since 2015, the government has helped over 2 million Canadians get the housing that they needed, and since September alone, a suite of measures unlocking over 1.2 million homes. During the previous government, when your leader was the self-styled Minister of Housing, here are the statistics: in terms of co-op housing built, zero; in terms of apartments for middle-class families, zero; and in terms of affordable houses, a whopping six.

GLOBAL AFFAIRS

ISRAEL-HAMAS CONFLICT

Hon. Yuen Pau Woo: Senator Gold, what is the government doing to assess if there have been violations of international humanitarian law in the ongoing conflict between Hamas and Israel, including the possibility of war crimes?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): The government remains very, very concerned with the circumstances unfolding in that area, in Gaza. It remains in regular contact with our democratic allies, which include Israel, Five Eyes and others. As the government has made clear, it also supports international processes to ensure that humanitarian law is respected by all parties to the conflict, and it will continue to do so.

Senator Woo: Senator Gold, the conflict is ongoing, and there are many credible allegations of violations of international humanitarian law. I would expect that the government would be doing its own analysis. Will the government make that analysis available to Canadians, and will it also consider employing its full gamut of autonomous sanctions against violations?

Senator Gold: There are indeed allegations. I'm not in a position, nor is the government at this juncture, to assess the credibility of those allegations. Again, the government is

continuing to monitor the situation carefully and will take all appropriate measures for this government in the context of this very tragic unfolding situation.

• (1430)

HEALTH

REGULATION OF VAPING FLUIDS

Hon. Donna Dasko: My question is directed to Senator Gold. This question has been asked before, but it is definitely worth asking again.

Vaping is less harmful than smoking, but it's still not safe, and a new generation is getting hooked on nicotine. Experts say teen vaping rates in Canada are some of the highest in the world.

In June 2021, Health Canada proposed regulations that would prohibit flavours — with the exception of mint and menthol — from being added to e-cigarettes. Ottawa has yet to implement these regulations almost three years later. Now 15 Canadian health organizations — including the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada and the Canadian Cancer Society — and many international health organizations are calling for more: a ban on all flavourings, including mint and menthol, other than tobacco flavour.

When will the federal government act on its proposed ban, especially now that the health community is calling for even stronger action than before? Thank you.

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for your question. The government remains committed to helping Canadians quit the use of tobacco, and remains committed to protecting the health of Canadians — young and not so young. The government will continue to restrict advertising, and it is in the process of assessing the proposals to limit vaping products, flavours, nicotine content and the online availability to which you referred.

There was, as you know, a consultation on this proposal, which closed in 2021. The government received 25,000 submissions. Given the time that has elapsed, the government has re-engaged recently with stakeholders on the proposal in order to obtain their feedback and bring it up to date. I'm advised that the government will have more to share in the months to come.

Senator Dasko: Will the government consider adding mint and menthol to the proposed regulations in terms of prohibiting those flavours? Thank you.

Senator Gold: This is a matter that is amongst the issues that the government is considering and taking advice from stakeholders. Some provinces, including my own, have already done that. The government is looking seriously at all measures to reduce the attractiveness of vaping becoming a gateway to tobacco use.

HEALTH

FUNDING FOR PRIMARY HEALTH CARE

Hon. Flordeliz (Gigi) Osler: My question is for Senator Gold. In a newly released survey from the Commonwealth Fund, Canada ranks last among 10 high-income countries when it comes to having a family doctor. This includes countries such as the United States, the U.K., France and other peer countries. The 10-country average is 93%. The proportion of Canadian adults with access to a primary care provider dropped from 93% in 2016 to 86% in 2023. The recently signed bilateral health agreements include a commitment to uphold the Canada Health Act principle of accessible health care.

Senator Gold, this — and other data — shows that Canadians have worsening access to a primary care provider. How will the federal government hold the provinces and territories accountable if Canadians continue to go without a primary care provider?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for your question, and for underlining a challenge for many households and individuals across the country.

The government has brought in measures for the Express Entry of foreign national physicians as permanent residents, which is one aspect within federal jurisdiction to address this. It has also announced \$86 million in federal funding for faster foreign credential recognition in order to get more than 6,000 new internationally educated health professionals into the health care system to serve our citizens across the country.

At the health ministers' meeting in October 2023 — working with the federal government, of course — the provinces and territories committed to increasing the number of training seats for nurses, physicians and nurse practitioners. And the Government of Canada — through its funding and through its leadership and convening role — will continue to support the provinces and territories in this regard.

Senator Osler: In the 2021 mandate letter to the then-Minister of Health, it instructed the minister to strengthen compliance with and modernize the interpretation of the Canada Health Act, specifically on matters of extra-billing for publicly insured services.

Senator Gold, can you please provide us with details on how compliance has been strengthened, and how the Canada Health Act has been modernized?

Senator Gold: As you understand, the goal has always been — under the Canada Health Act and the mandatory Canada Health Transfer deductions — to ensure that patients don't pay out of pocket for medically necessary services. We now know — as you know, and as I've announced — about the bilateral agreements with all provinces and territories. Through these bilateral arrangements, the federal government is working with the provinces and territories to give Canadians greater access to health services to modernize our system, and it will continue to do so on the issues that you have identified.

CANADIAN HERITAGE

MEDIA SUPPORT

Hon. Andrew Cardozo: My question is for the Government Representative in the Senate. I'm pleased to tell you that yesterday — along with Senator Cordy, Senator Yussuff and Senator Loffreda — we hosted a round table on the crisis facing news media. There have been many layoffs and sell-offs — Bell, CTV, the CBC, SaltWire, and the *Whitehorse Star*, most recently. There were many constructive suggestions put forward. There was much support for federal measures, such as a non-profit model for registered journalism organizations, like the one used by *La Presse*.

Does the government share the view that news media is facing a crisis, and will you extend the digital news subscription tax credit for consumers, which is due to expire in 2025?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): The Government of Canada — and, I'm sure, in that respect, all governments and citizens — supports strong journalism. It's an essential pillar of our democracy.

I'm not in a position to speak to your question about the extension of the digital news subscription tax credit, but the Government of Canada will continue to do its part to support local journalism. It has already done many things: It has put into motion and introduced the Online News Act. There are a range of programs as well, such as the Canada Periodical Fund and the recently boosted Canadian journalism labour tax credit.

The government remains committed to supporting a free press that is viable, reliable and independent at a critical time when we're all facing an onslaught of less than credible news sources.

Senator Cardozo: My supplementary question is on the point you mentioned about strong journalism as a pillar of democracy. One of the issues that came up several times during the round table, especially from academics, was the concern that journalism is under attack from some politicians. They differentiated between ad hominem attacks on journalists versus challenging reporters when they disagree with them.

What is your view on the role of parliamentarians in respecting the work of journalists whose obligation is to hold public institutions accountable, ask the tough questions and inform the public?

Senator Gold: Again, I don't presume to speak for everyone in this country, but I do believe there is — and certainly ought to be — a strong consensus that a rigorous and vigorous free press is essential to democracy. That includes, though it is not limited to, holding governments to account.

CANADA MORTGAGE AND HOUSING CORPORATION

[Translation]

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Hon. Yonah Martin (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Government leader, the Prime Minister recently flew to Vancouver to make an announcement about rent. He said young Canadians are facing skyrocketing rents, “renovictions,” unfair competition and the lack of housing options. Of course, this is an indictment of his own government’s failure to take housing and the high cost of rent seriously. In February, the average monthly residential rent in Canada stood at \$2,193. This is an increase of 10.5% in one year. In fact, rent has gone up 21% in just two years, for an average of \$384 per month.

Leader, why should Canadians believe the Trudeau government can build more homes and solve this crisis when rent has doubled under their watch?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for your question and, again, for underlining the very important challenge that Canadians are facing — especially younger Canadians, but not only younger Canadians.

Again, colleagues, respectfully, this government has done more than any previous government — in tangible ways — to assist Canadians, whether they are renters or seeking to purchase homes. That is notwithstanding both the market complexity and the jurisdictional complexity that surround any attempts to accelerate and create accommodations for Canadians.

This fall alone, the Government of Canada has delivered measures that will unlock well over 600,000 new rental homes, including many which are in the affordable housing range.

• (1440)

Senator Martin: Leader, as I said, rent has doubled under your government’s watch. The Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, or CMHC, which is a Crown corporation, issued its *2024 Housing Market Outlook*, saying:

Despite more rental completions, growing demand for rental homes will not be met because the cost of homeownership will lead households to stay in rental housing. Rents will rise and vacancy rates will fall.

Leader, if the Trudeau government’s so-called Housing Accelerator Fund and its other announcements and photo ops are working, then wouldn’t the cost of rent go down, not keep going up?

Senator Gold: Thank you for your question.

Respectfully, the cost of housing is a function of many market forces in addition to initiatives that the government is doing to increase supply. It is clearly a more complicated issue than the simple binary one of who happened to sit in the Prime Minister’s Office at a given time.

NATIONAL DEFENCE

CANADIAN ARMED FORCES

Hon. Claude Carignan: Leader, it was predicted almost a century ago that there would be a total eclipse in the region yesterday. Why did the government choose to make its announcements about the armed forces’ plan and its investment of \$8 billion over five years on the same day there was a solar eclipse? Was it hoping for a media eclipse? Was the government trying to hide because it was embarrassed about its announcement?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for the question. With all due respect, that was a nice try to make a connection between two things that are unrelated. The government made its announcement because it is serious about its obligations and Canada’s obligations toward our armed forces. It is serious about the task of moving closer to the 2% target set by NATO. It is serious about continuing to invest in our armed forces and continuing to ensure that Canada can meet its objectives to better defend the country.

Senator Carignan: The Parliamentary Budget Officer said last year that we would need an additional \$18 billion annually to reach that 2% target. Your government announced that it was investing \$8.1 billion over five years. How do you expect Canadians, our military personnel and our NATO colleagues to take us seriously when it comes to achieving what is now a minimum of 2%?

Senator Gold: Let me make a simple but important comparison. In 2006, our spending percentage was 1.1%. With this week’s announcement, we’re approaching 1.76%. This is tangible, real progress, and those are the facts.

EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

NATIONAL SCHOOL FOOD POLICY

Hon. Julie Miville-Dechéne: Senator Gold, Prime Minister Trudeau recently made a number of announcements that directly affect provincial jurisdictions, particularly in the area of housing. These proposals are in addition to others, including in health care, which prompted Quebec to tell the federal government to mind its own business. I realize that most people aren’t too concerned about the division of powers. They just want programs that meet their needs. However, these issues are essential to our constitutional order. They can seriously aggravate federal-provincial relations.

One of those announcements was about a new federal school food program, with \$1 billion in funding over five years. After the first five years of funding, how will this program continue to operate? Will this expense be transferred to the provinces, which have exclusive jurisdiction over education but probably don't have the funds to take over?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for the question. The announcement that you mentioned is very important, because close to one out of every four children in Canada does not have enough to eat, which hurts their chances at school and elsewhere. The program you mentioned is important for Canadians, as is the case in many areas, senator. The federal government must work closely with the provinces and territories to resolve problems in this particular area since there is a shared responsibility, especially because of the federal funding and the constitutional jurisdictions of the provinces and territories. I'm confident that the Government of Canada will continue to work with the provinces and territories to meet the needs of Canadians and ensure that agreements are reached to better serve children who need food.

Senator Miville-Dechêne: I want you to know that I have no problem with the program. What I'm worried about is whether it is sustainable.

Prime Minister Trudeau also wants to create a Canadian renters' bill of rights, and the Government of Quebec is certainly up in arms about that. This doesn't even have anything to do with money for housing construction. The Legault government has already rejected the idea of such a public registry. Is it really the central government's constitutional job to create this kind of bill of rights?

Senator Gold: That's a good question, a legitimate question. The answer will depend on the details of the bill of rights and the consequences for those who violate its tenets. The details are as yet unknown. The federal government has to play a leadership role. This isn't necessarily about constitutional powers. Once we have more details about the bill of rights, I'll be in a better position to answer your question.

[English]

FINANCE

CANADA DISABILITY BENEFIT

Hon. Kim Pate: Senator Gold, faced with growing economic uncertainty and instability, disability groups and parliamentarians, including more than 60 Liberal MPs, are calling on the government to fund the Canada disability benefit in Budget 2024.

When we studied the Canada disability benefit, the Minister of Diversity, Inclusion and Persons with Disabilities committed to senators that the benefit would be there to support people in need by the end of 2024. In next Tuesday's budget, will the government be honouring that commitment to persons with disabilities — too many of whom have been waiting far too long and continue to languish, living in poverty — by funding the Canada disability benefit?

[Senator Miville-Dechêne]

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for your question. It has been a long wait since we passed this historic piece of legislation.

On this particular issue, I am not in a position to make any announcements about what will be in the budget, but, fortunately, that will become very clear as of next week.

Thank you for your question.

Senator Pate: If the government does not act in Budget 2024, what concrete steps will be taken to meet its commitment to deliver the Canada disability benefit by the end of 2024?

Senator Gold: Thank you. Again, I really don't want to speculate as to what may or may not be in the budget because I am not in a position to speak to that.

The government has always been determined to get this right, in consultation with those within the disability communities, and it will continue to do so. This is an important priority of the government, and I have every confidence it will deliver on its promise.

FISHERIES AND OCEANS

RIGHTS-BASED FISHERIES

Hon. Paul J. Prosper: My question is for the Leader of the Government in the Senate.

Senator Gold, last week, two Mi'kmaq youth were detained inhumanely by Fisheries and Oceans Canada, or DFO, agents. The youth were exercising their traditional treaty and Aboriginal rights to fish on Mi'kmaq territory, and two DFO agents took their phones and shoes, forcing them to walk some distance in socked feet. This is not treatment that any Canadian deserves, and no Canadian would be okay with their children being treated this way. It cannot go unaddressed.

Senator Gold, how is DFO responding to these serious allegations of harassment and, quite frankly, abuse of power?

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

The government is taking this very seriously and would not at all quibble with the way you have characterized it, senator.

My understanding is that Fisheries and Oceans Canada has launched an investigation into the incident. I'm also advised that they have been in touch with community leadership on this area. I don't have more details about the investigation that's being launched, and even if I did, it would not be appropriate for me to share them. But the government is following this very seriously. It's unacceptable, and we look forward to the results of the investigation.

Senator Prosper: Senator Gold, there continues to be tensions between DFO and Indigenous peoples throughout the Atlantic region.

• (1450)

When will Fisheries and Oceans Canada, or DFO, start approaching fisheries in Mi'kmaq territory from a rights-based perspective and start properly honouring the *Marshall* decision made some 25 years ago?

Senator Gold: It's important that DFO — and all — respect the rights recognized in our constitution and by our courts, and to give priority to dealing with Indigenous communities on a right-based basis.

Some work has been done. More work needs to be done. The government and DFO are committed and obligated to do so. My understanding is there will be more to say from the federal government with regard to future substantive policy review in this area.

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

VISA APPLICATION PROCESSING

Hon. Donald Neil Plett (Leader of the Opposition): Leader, after eight long years of the NDP-Trudeau government, Canada's immigration system is broken. The evidence of this is everywhere you look.

In recent days, Global News says the Trudeau government spent at least \$115 million over the past year to house asylum seekers at hotels in Niagara Falls. The full amount is not known.

The *Toronto Sun* says over 28,000 failed refugee claimants are awaiting deportation, including 649 claimants for serious criminality.

A response to one of my written questions said 34,000 asylum seekers are awaiting a security screening. The backlog and processing times have gotten worse, leader. The oldest file awaiting screening dates back to May 2019.

Leader, why should anyone believe the Trudeau government can fix what they themselves broke so badly?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Many of the things that you identified, and others that you didn't, are unacceptable in Canada — that asylum seekers should, as we unfortunately know, find themselves sleeping on the streets. Indeed, there are better ways. The government is pursuing new and better ways to address the challenges that the system faces.

With regard to your comments about accommodations in hotels, the government has provided \$362 million in funding to continue to support municipalities in housing asylum seekers and refugees through the Interim Housing Assistance Program. That's in addition to over \$200 million announced last summer.

The government remains committed to addressing these challenges in our system.

Senator Plett: At a photo op last week, even Prime Minister Trudeau himself said temporary immigration has, "... grown at a rate far beyond what Canada has been able to absorb."

Leader, who does he think has been in government for the last eight years? If the system he described isn't broken, then what is it?

Senator Gold: The government takes its responsibility and its time in power seriously.

The Minister of Immigration has announced over the last period of time adjustments to various aspects of our immigration policy so as to better calibrate that with the ability of our provinces, our universities and our labour market to absorb and integrate, where appropriate, those who arrive, and the government will continue to do so.

[Translation]

The Hon. the Speaker: The time for Question Period has expired.

[English]

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

MOTION FOR ADDRESS IN REPLY—DEBATE CONTINUED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Gold, P.C., seconded by the Honourable Senator LaBoucane-Benson:

That the following Address be presented to Her Excellency the Governor General of Canada:

To Her Excellency the Right Honourable Mary May Simon, Chancellor and Principal Companion of the Order of Canada, Chancellor and Commander of the Order of Military Merit, Chancellor and Commander of the Order of Merit of the Police Forces, Governor General and Commander-in-Chief of Canada.

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY:

We, Her Majesty's most loyal and dutiful subjects, the Senate of Canada in Parliament assembled, beg leave to offer our humble thanks to Your Excellency for the gracious Speech which Your Excellency has addressed to both Houses of Parliament.

Hon. Donald Neil Plett (Leader of the Opposition): Not many of us were here when Senator George Baker was a member of this august chamber. But Senator Baker would get up and say “I have just a few words to say” on a matter.

I have a few words to say today on the Speech from the Throne and, in particular, Justin Trudeau’s legacy — his legacy of scandals.

Colleagues, we are now in the ninth year of Justin Trudeau’s reign in power. While it will be up to historians to write — some years from now — what exactly should be remembered about him, I would like to take the opportunity to outline just a few highlights of the Prime Minister’s legacy.

In his 2015 report on senators’ expenses, former Supreme Court Justice Ian Binnie wrote:

. . . Senators also play a significant role in questioning, criticizing and holding to account the Government. In the traditional language of Sir Walter Bagehot, it falls to the Houses of Parliament to inform “the Nation of defects in the administration” and even of teaching the Nation — “altering it for the better...teaching the Nation what it does not know.” . . .

Colleagues, this is what this speech is about — teaching the nation, telling the nation what it may or may not know about Justin Trudeau or, rather, reminding Canadians what the last nine years have been all about.

I know some of you dream about a Senate that would be above partisanship. Of course, when a Liberal says that, it means that the Senate should never criticize the Liberals. Their definition of partisanship is this: Attacking Liberals is partisan, but attacking Conservatives is democratic debate. We will not fall into this trap, colleagues.

To quote the Prime Minister himself:

If the Senate serves a purpose at all, it is to act as a check on the extraordinary power of the prime minister and his office . . .

That, colleagues, is what the Conservative opposition in the Senate has been doing since 2015. This is what we will continue to do as long as the Liberals manage to hold onto government.

The first aspect of Justin Trudeau’s legacy that I want to point out is his and his government’s record on ethics. The motion on the Speech from the Throne is the ideal venue for this, as I will cover a lot of general policy of the government.

Historically, the Liberal Party of Canada has always fostered a culture of nepotism and corruption. But the Trudeau Liberals are a special breed of Liberals. First, they are totally incompetent. So their many ethical breaches are a mix of goofiness, incompetence and moral turpitude.

The Trudeau Liberals are also special in their belief that whatever they do, even if it is unethical, is done for a higher cause. They truly believe they are above the law, and that the ethics rules are only for mere mortals, not for them, the great justice warriors.

Let me quote Andrew Coyne, who wrote in *The Globe and Mail* last December:

. . . Liberals have always been prone to being corrupted by power, but the current crop of Liberals are unique for being corrupted by their own virtue.

The preening moral vanity that is a signature of the Trudeau Liberals — the gratitude, as in the Pharisee’s prayer, that they are “not like other men” — is not, alas, an act. They truly believe it, to the point that they are literally incapable of conceiving of themselves doing wrong.

It isn’t only that they are surrounded by people like themselves, in other words: They are surrounded by people who think like them, and whose first thought at all times is that whatever it is they are thinking must be for the Good. . . .

• (1500)

That was Andrew Coyne. That makes the Trudeau Liberals so inoculated to ethical breaches that they no longer even recognize them. They have been dragged, kicking and screaming, over a flaming bed of hot coals that they themselves created before they even admit that something might be wrong. Then, when caught, they would like us to forgive and forget because they mumble, “I’m sorry,” with a little tear in the corner of their eyes. We all know they are not sorry about anything. They are not even good actors. So, since 2015, the Trudeau Liberals have done what Liberals always do: give jobs and contracts to friends. And, of course, one of the most coveted prizes is a judgeship.

As soon as he came to power, Dominic LeBlanc wrote to citizenship judges to pressure them to resign so that he could appoint Liberals in their places. The media has reported that high-level judges attended pricey Liberal Party of Canada fundraisers before being appointed by Trudeau. In fact, the journalists found that over 75% of Canadian judges appointed are donors to the Liberal Party of Canada.

An Hon. Senator: Shocking.

Senator Plett: At least six current justices of the Superior Court may have paid to meet with the Prime Minister or the Deputy Prime Minister at Liberal Party fundraisers shortly before being appointed. The Minister of Justice and the Prime Minister’s Office had to admit that they were using the Liberalist before making appointments to the bench.

Maybe that is why the government seems unable to appoint enough judges — because the pool of Liberal supporters is getting smaller and smaller.

Also, there are all kinds of troubles with the diplomatic appointments of Justin Trudeau. Remember when the Prime Minister decided to fire Stéphane Dion, the worst Minister of

Foreign Affairs in a long time? That was a good move, but the Liberals managed to bungle his appointment as ambassador by giving him two different posts. The appointment to the EU had to be rescinded after the EU protested.

Now, speaking of bungled appointments of disgraced ministers, who can forget John McCallum, who was so bad, he got fired twice — first as a minister and then as an ambassador to China? He simply forgot that he was working for Canada in China and not the contrary.

Quite a number of Trudeau cronies have been placed in diplomatic posts. This would not be such a problem if these appointments received normal compensation for Canadian diplomats. However, at least nine well-connected Liberals received compensation as diplomats above the regular pay scale, including three former ministers.

Now, I don't dispute for a second that someone who has been involved in public life can make a great diplomat or that the Prime Minister doesn't have to appoint career diplomats as ambassadors or consuls, but what justifies the fact that these political appointees are paid more than a career diplomat? Is the cost of living in Paris or London or New York higher if you are a friend of Justin Trudeau compared to a bureaucrat? I suppose it is if you want to invite Justin Trudeau to spend the night. This is a good example of what Canadians know as "Liberal entitlements."

One of those overpaid Liberals is Bob Rae, Ambassador to the United Nations and a former Liberal leader. The man managed to insult a list of people through Twitter, including the British Prime Minister and the Quebec government. Is this what is expected of an ambassador under the Trudeau government? Were these tweets authorized by someone at Global Affairs Canada? We don't know. I filed Order Paper questions on this, but they remain unanswered after two years — oh yes, we are supposed to change the Rules so that Senator Gold is obligated to answer our questions. Obviously, our well-paid ambassador is anything but a diplomat, and the Trudeau government would like to have us forget about this. Speaking of Liberal insiders, I am eager to see if former minister Carolyn Bennett will get extra pay for her post in Copenhagen.

Then there is the case of Dominic Barton. The former executive of McKinsey & Company was dispatched to the Beijing embassy after Justin Trudeau fired John McCallum. At McKinsey, Barton preached a necessity for Canada to get closer to Russia and China. We can all see the foolishness of that. He is the last political appointment to China. Trudeau now recognizes that although he admires their basic dictatorship, the Chinese do not reciprocate the admiration for "little potato." Barton is also believed to be the architect of the Liberal open-door immigration policy and of the Canada Infrastructure Bank — two of the many disastrous policies of this government.

The exact role of Mr. Barton in the shady dealings at McKinsey & Company while he was there is still unknown. This is the firm that advised Purdue Pharma and their strategy to get thousands and thousands of people hooked on OxyContin and has now agreed to pay close to \$1 billion in settlements over this. To trust the top executive of this organization represents at best a serious lack of moral compass on the part of Justin Trudeau.

Another overpaid Liberal and good friend of Justin Trudeau, David MacNaughton, was the first and only ambassador in Canadian history to be investigated and found guilty by the Ethics Commissioner.

Speaking of the Ethics Commissioner, following the resignation of Mario Dion, the Liberal government decided to appoint Martine Richard, Dominic LeBlanc's sister-in-law, to replace him. They didn't see anything wrong there until the public uproar forced Ms. Richard to step down.

Again, to quote Andrew Coyne, ". . . they are literally incapable of conceiving of themselves doing wrong." Appointing your sister-in-law cannot be nepotism when you are a Liberal. Those are not my words; they're Andrew Coyne's.

After Ms. Richard left, Justin Trudeau left the position open for six months. He then appointed a career bureaucrat as interim commissioner and after another additional six months, he made this guy permanent. Obviously, the Liberals don't take the position seriously. The fact that the Liberal government is by far the worst offender ever in terms of ethics probably explains why they are not interested in appointing someone who is not connected to them and who will do that work seriously.

Speaking of agents of Parliament, you will remember the Trudeau government decision in 2017 to nominate Madeleine Meilleur as the Commissioner of Official Languages, only to see the former Liberal Ontario MPP withdraw her candidacy when it came to light that she had discussed this position with key members of the Prime Minister's Office.

What is worse than just bad appointments, the Trudeau government clearly has an agenda of starving the different officers of Parliament by not giving them enough resources to do their job. The Liberals are making sure that the extent of their incompetence and corruption is not known by the public.

As the Auditor General Karen Hogan said:

When you're dependent on getting funding from an organization that you audit, then it has an ability to impact your independence.

The Trudeau government has even tried to undermine the credibility of the Parliamentary Budget Officer when he found out that the government policies on the environment are not worth the cost. Minister of Environment and Climate Change Stephen Guilbeault attacked the Parliamentary Budget Officer, or PBO, while Gerald Butts called him incompetent and accused him of doing real damage to the policy discussion in Canada.

• (1510)

Liberals only respect the referee when he doesn't call their penalties.

Of course, the Governor General is not part of the government, but it is the government that recommends the Governor General appointment and manages the office of the Governor General. Former governors general have expense accounts of \$206,000 per year on top of their \$150,000 annual pensions for life. While you may have the details for the expenses of all ministers, MPs, senators and their staff, the Canadian public does not have access

to the details for former governors general. We learned in 2021 that the Office of the Secretary to the Governor General is unable to provide that level of detail. This is not only against the spirit of open government that Justin Trudeau promised in 2015 — it leaves open many questions on how taxpayer funds are spent.

Julie Payette was appointed as Governor General in 2017. She was hand-picked by the Prime Minister after he refused to follow the process put in place by former Prime Minister Harper to have a committee vet the nominations — which, for somebody who likes to have committees help him make his appointments, was surprising.

She was appointed without thorough due diligence. A vetting process would have shown that she was investigated for running over a pedestrian and committing violence against her spouse. It would have shown that, in all of her previous positions, she dealt with accusations of harassment. We learned that from the media after she was appointed.

Ms. Payette immediately hired her good friend as principal secretary. She requested renovations to Rideau Hall to allow her to exit the building through the back door without having to see those pesky tourists who come to visit. In her first speech, she managed to insult Canadians who believe in God. She decided to freelance in her first Speech from the Throne. She had her plane fly her from Ottawa to Mirabel, a 20-minute flight, so she could go to her cottage, with meals cooked by her chef at Rideau Hall.

When the stories about her treatment of her staff became public, Justin Trudeau had no choice but to fire this modern-day Marie Antoinette.

That debacle cost Canadians millions of dollars, not only due to her frivolous expenses but in damages paid to the numerous victims she left behind. If there is one appointment that could be a symbol of Justin Trudeau's legacy, it is that one, which was done on a napkin and based simply on the legend surrounding the individual and not her actual qualities — all spin, no real thinking, no due diligence and disastrous results.

In 2021, even Dominic LeBlanc admitted — to quote a CTV News headline for a story by The Canadian Press — “Payette fiasco shows need for stronger GG vetting process: LeBlanc.”

They still could not find a bilingual Canadian to fill the job.

That would not have been so bad if former Governor General Payette had been a superstar, but on the contrary, you heard about her only when the Canadian media learned about her lavish expenses, such as \$100,000 for food on flights to Dubai, the equivalent of \$218 per plate. That trip, on which she invited 40 friends and acquaintances, cost Canadian taxpayers \$1.3 million.

Spending at Rideau Hall increased by 11% in 2022, and we can expect a similar number for 2023. The cost of the viceregal office is now around \$40 million annually.

Even though that is an eye-popping amount, the Trudeau government rejected an all-party demand for more public accounting and scrutiny of Governor General Mary Simon's expenses. One has to wonder why the government is so afraid to show the details of those expenses.

Not only has Justin Trudeau managed to damage the reputation of the position of Governor General with mediocre appointments, but he also managed to destroy the stellar reputation of David Johnston, one of the best governors general that I can remember, in an attempt to cover up his own refusal to defend Canada from foreign interests and threats.

When news came out that China managed to meddle in Canadian elections, the Prime Minister tried to hide the help he got from Beijing's communist government by using Mr. David Johnston. Trudeau appointed his family friend, ski buddy, cottage neighbour and a member of the Beijing-funded Pierre Elliott Trudeau Foundation to this fake job of special rapporteur intended to legitimize another Liberal cover-up. After eight months of denying clear evidence of conflict of interest, after refusing to respect the will of Parliament to allow a public inquiry and after hiring Liberal lawyers and consultants to try to legitimize the sham process, the Prime Minister's special rapporteur finally did the right thing and resigned.

That circus cost taxpayers millions of dollars in fees to well-connected Liberals for nothing.

The public inquiry is just starting, but we already know that a lot of evidence of foreign influence over the results of the last two elections was swept under the rug by the special rapporteur.

The mix of incompetence and wilful blindness by the highest levels of bureaucracy in dealing with this is simply staggering, because, of course, the rot is found throughout the government. Let me quickly go through a list of the greatest hits of government scandals under Justin Trudeau. I won't go through all of them; it would take weeks. I will only mention a few examples.

First, there were the funds given to bigoted anti-racism consultants. Yes, you heard that correctly: Folks who pretend to be against racism, but it is only a facade. Laith Marouf, a well-known violent anti-Semite, received \$500,000 from the Trudeau government for his work on racism.

That was not an isolated incident. The Community Media Advocacy Centre in Montreal also received grants, even though the organization regularly hosts anti-Semitic diatribes. Minister Omar Alghabra never explained how an anti-Semitic organization, which called the Holocaust a hoax and praised the killing of Jews, was invited to a Parliament Hill reception that he organized.

There are others like this.

It is not surprising, then, that the Liberals are selective about which racism needs to be combatted. They are funding a group called the Canadian Anti-Hate Network, which admits it will not

deal with anti-Semitism from leftist groups because they focus on hate from the extreme right — no hate on the left.

It is not just the consultants who can be anti-Semitic; the Liberals will also hire anti-Semites in ministers' offices. A senior legal advisor to the Liberal Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations shared social media posts condoning Palestinian revolutionary violence and supporting Palestinian liberation through whatever means necessary. That person used a hashtag calling for the destruction of Israel.

There is also the case of Amira Elghawaby, the so-called Canada's Special Representative on Combatting Islamophobia, who once said that a decade of Stephen Harper serving as prime minister was more hurtful than 9/11. She has a very narrow focus and sees only one type much discrimination. She sees it everywhere, coming only from the right side — another high-priced Liberal appointee who brings nothing and has no credibility.

• (1520)

Let me go to another type of Liberal scandal. All senators here know this: Liberal times are always good to Liberal insiders. Patronage, nepotism and money flowing to good friends and political allies have always been a staple of Liberal governments in Ottawa, so it is not surprising that we have seen a lot of this in the last eight years. It is well known that several Liberal insiders made a lot of money following the legalization of cannabis.

FinDev Canada invested \$43.4 million in a Kenyan phone company, M-KOPA. Jesse Moore, an activist from Toronto with Liberal connections, was the owner of that company. The benefit to Canadians in investing in a phone company in Africa when we pay some of the highest cell charges in the world is already dubious, but losing all that money makes this ridiculous.

The Trudeau government gave money to Canada 2020 to sponsor a conference that featured Liberal cabinet ministers as speakers. Canada 2020 is a self-described progressive think tank run by Tom Pitfield, a longtime friend of Justin Trudeau and husband of Liberal MP Anna Gainey, the former president of the Liberal Party of Canada.

Sustainable Development Technology Canada is now known as a Liberal green slush fund. More than \$150 million was diverted to companies owned by board members. The board chair and the CEO both resigned. The government is trying to pretend that it was caught by surprise, but we now know that the minister was warned years ago that there was a problem here. As usual, the government is working to cover up this other scandal, throwing money at consultants to prepare reports while they shut down any real investigation with the help of the NDP. Yet we always hear Senator Gold tell us that they take this seriously: "The government takes this seriously." We heard it four times today.

In 2020, Medicago Inc., a firm in Jean-Yves Duclos' riding, was paid \$150 million for COVID-19 vaccines that were never delivered. It received \$173 million in research money, for a total of \$323 million in federal aid. Medicago was to build a vaccine factory, but that never happened. Once again, the Liberals, with the help of their friends, shut down any investigation into why the taxpayers paid such an amount and received absolutely nothing in return.

The COVID-19 crisis was synonymous with an open bar for sole-source contracts to Liberal insiders. We will never know the extent of this. The government has steadfastly refused to give a detailed accounting of the money spent. Because of the Senate Conservative opposition, over and over, we were able to learn that the consulting firm Accenture was given a \$208-million contract to administer the pandemic business loan program, which is something the public service should have done. A large part of that work was done from Accenture's Brazilian offices. The government lied about that for months on end.

Speaking of consultants who have had it good under Justin Trudeau, the Liberals are now spending more than \$21 billion — yes, billion — a year on outside consultants, even though the public service has grown by 100,000 people since 2015. Justin Trudeau still doubled the amount of taxpayers' money sent to consultants. McKinsey, Dominic Barton's firm — the guy whom I already spoke about — received more than \$100 million since his friend Justin Trudeau came to power. KMG, Deloitte, PwC, EY — they all became rich under this government. It is so bad that the Liberals actually gave a contract to KPMG to study how to reduce the number of contracts given to consultants. It would be funny if it wasn't so terribly, terribly sad.

It is no wonder this government is morally bankrupt. It comes from the top. Katie Telford and Gerald Butts received more than \$200,000 to move to Ottawa, even though they had been working for years in Trudeau's office. Where? Right here in Ottawa. I guess they moved across the street.

Let me turn to what I think is the podium, the top three of the Liberal government's scandals so far. I say "so far," because we have no idea what we might learn about Liberal corruption down the road. There could be a book on each one of these, or at least a long chapter in Trudeau's biography. I won't get into it all of the details; I will just give you a reminder.

The first scandal in the top three is the SNC Lavalin affair. This started when the Liberals snuck a change to the Criminal Code into the budget bill to allow the government to make deals with corporations found guilty of corruption. Again, pre-empting: "We know there will be corrupt people, so let's find a way out for them." This came after months of intense lobbying by SNC Lavalin officials and their lawyers on several Liberal officials, including the Prime Minister's Office. There were several allegations of corruption of officials in Canada and around the globe against the engineering and construction firm SNC

Lavalin. The Prime Minister himself pressured the former Attorney General Jody Wilson-Raybould to sign an agreement to let SNC Lavalin off the hook. She was of the opinion that SNC Lavalin did not meet the criteria in the provisions added to the Criminal Code just months before, but the Prime Minister sent his most trusted adviser and his Clerk of the Privy Council to make it clear to the minister that she had better obey, or else.

Minister Wilson-Raybould had more credibility than anybody in the PMO, and she did not budge. For that reason, she was shuffled off to Veterans Affairs, opening the position of Attorney General to David Lametti who didn't have the same moral compass as Ms. Wilson-Raybould. He was just happy to be in the cabinet, so he signed whatever paper Justin Trudeau put in front of him.

When this scandal became public, the Prime Minister claimed that what is in *The Globe and Mail* is false. Of course, it wasn't false. Justin Trudeau lied, and his office tried to ruin the reputation of Ms. Wilson-Raybould in the media, but it did not work. Justin Trudeau lost what I would suggest were his two best cabinet ministers, Ms. Wilson-Raybould and Ms. Jane Philpott, and his trusted adviser Gerald Butts was forced to resign. The Clerk of the Privy Council followed shortly after. It was a complete political mess and an epic failure on the ethics side.

The SNC Lavalin affair was more than just breaching ethics rules. The Prime Minister made a mockery of the separation of power between his office and the Attorney General's. He was so incompetent or so corrupt that he pushed aside the Shawcross principle in order to help friends get away from criminal prosecution. To get his way, he threw the first Indigenous Minister of Justice under the bus.

The second member of the top three Trudeau scandals is the WE Charity. You will remember that the government signed a contract with the WE Charity where this organization would have had close to \$1 billion to hand out to young Canadians. The WE Charity was an organization that had deep ties to the Trudeau family, the then Minister of Finance, the Prime Minister's Office and the Liberal Party. Members of the Trudeau family were paid by the WE Charity. Bill Morneau and his family were taken on a lavish trip to Africa. One question that bothers me about the WE Charity scandal is why the Prime Minister and his ministers thought it was a good idea to give a third party that had zero relevant experience \$1 billion to throw away to an undefined group of people based on criteria so loose that you could fit anything into it.

• (1530)

On the face of it, this program made absolutely no sense. It was a feel-good operation blowing money to fake social entrepreneurs. It is mind-boggling that WE Charity could stand a due diligence of more than 10 minutes before one realized it was built on lies and deception. In fact, when the media started to scratch the surface, WE Charity's house of cards came tumbling down. But, thankfully, the program was stopped in its tracks. It's not because Justin Trudeau and his ministers suddenly realized they had made a mistake. No, it is because the obvious conflicts of interest were laid bare. The Liberals never thought that there could be a problem with choosing WE Charity to do this work. It is incredible that there could be this many conflicts of interest

converging on one government program, and yet it didn't raise any red flags with anyone in the Prime Minister's Office or around the cabinet table.

There is no explanation for this except that this government is so blinded by the brilliance of their own self-righteousness that they can no longer even recognize an ethical breakdown when it's glaring them in the face, and they can no longer apply simple common sense to a decision. You could see the Prime Minister and his cabinet acting shocked and offering up lukewarm apologies like they had no idea what was going on. You could see it in the annoyed looks that flashed across their faces when they were being asked questions by the opposition or sometimes even by the Liberal press. It was like they were offended that anyone would dare question their motives are anything less than lily-white. They are so steeped in their own self-righteousness that they actually believe it's real.

The third scandal on this podium is the "ArriveScam." I already spoke about those lucrative sole-source contracts that were given all over the place during the COVID pandemic. The Trudeau government blew tens of billions of dollars on all kinds of products and services, and it is now becoming clearer and clearer that there were no guardrails and that money was no object. The government spent \$60 million on an app that was supposed to cost \$80,000. The app turned out to be badly designed and flawed. Again, thanks to the work of the Conservatives, the Auditor General was called in to investigate this. Her report was damning: It uncovered a system of corruption running through the bureaucracy, where bureaucrats pose as consultants, where contracts are given to phony organizations, and where work is done after several intermediaries take a cut.

For example, GC Strategies and its partners have become multi-millionaires under the Trudeau government, and they admitted that they were paid up to \$2,600 an hour for recruiting and doing no actual IT work. We don't know the full extent of this scandal. The NDP-Liberal cover-up coalition is trying desperately to stop the media and the MPs from getting to the bottom of how Justin Trudeau gave millions of dollars to this shady two-person IT firm that did no actual IT work. And what is slowly coming out is that this rotten system was not just for "ArriveScam" — it permeated the Trudeau administration.

We know that the RCMP is investigating the "ArriveScam" deals, but that is not enough. In my opinion, all sole-source contracts given during COVID should be made public, with an explanation as to why they were needed, why the contractor was selected, how the price was fixed and who authorized the contract. The "ArriveScam" scandal also shows that Crown corporations and agencies are not immune to this Liberal mix of incompetence and corruption.

Over the last eight years, several government-appointed CEOs of those corporations and agencies left their positions prematurely and under a cloud of suspicion — the National Research Council Canada, VIA Rail and the Canada Infrastructure Bank are examples. Because this government is allergic to openness, it is impossible to know why these people were let go.

Speaking of the Liberal government not telling us the truth, there was a leak at Statistics Canada on the job market numbers in 2020. Bloomberg reported it, and it moved the value of the Canadian dollar. Four years later, we still don't know what happened, who leaked, if anyone got rich or if anyone was caught. I said it before: Liberal times are good times for Liberals.

During the last eight years, all the Crown corporations continued to pay outlandish bonuses to their executives while they were losing money or not meeting their objectives. You can mention the Business Development Bank of Canada, or BDC; Export Development Canada, or EDC; and the Canada Infrastructure Bank. In the Trudeau public service, bonuses are not performance-based; they are guaranteed income.

I recently received an answer to one of my Order Paper questions: Last year, EDC paid over \$40 million in bonuses. That is an average of \$19,000 per employee. The worst case is certainly the CBC, where the CEO had the gall to complain about imaginary cuts to its budget, announce massive layoffs and then give \$15 million in bonuses to the top brass.

Now let's look at all those MPs embroiled in scandals throughout Justin Trudeau's tenure as Prime Minister.

George Chahal, a Calgary MP, was caught stealing literature from mailboxes. Han Dong stepped away from the Liberal caucus in March 2023 after Global News published a report alleging that he advised senior Chinese diplomats in 2021 that Beijing should hold off on freeing Michael Kovrig and Michael Spavor, who were detained by China at the time. Minister Dominic LeBlanc said he planned to obtain information from Canada's intelligence agency, as he was tasked with looking into MP Dong's prospects for returning to the Liberal caucus. That was a year ago — Dong is still outside caucus. So either Minister LeBlanc could not find a way to absolve Dong, or he received confirmation that Dong should not be allowed back in caucus. We don't know.

The common-law spouse of Liberal MP Lisa Hepfner had to repay Canada Emergency Response Benefits that he received under false pretenses. MP Pam Damoff, a parliamentary secretary, lobbied on behalf of a Liberal Party donor opposed to Bill C-280. She went to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food meetings even though she was not a member, and she was the only member of Parliament in the House who voted against Bill C-280.

One thing came out of the "ArriveScam" scandal that I spoke about before: the abuse by some of the programs for Indigenous people. No wonder it is now prevalent in Canada. Even Liberal MPs pretend they are Indigenous when they are not. Nickel Belt MP Marc Serré says he will continue identifying as Indigenous despite being removed from the Algonquins of Ontario in their recent registry cleanup. He pretends he is Algonquin since he has an Algonquin ancestor born somewhere around 1630.

Greg Fergus was previously caught in an ethics violation — as Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister — after writing a letter to the CRTC in support of a television channel with an application before it, leading an exasperated Ethics Commissioner to call for mandatory training in conflict of interest issues for all ministers and parliamentary secretaries.

Since his selection as Speaker, he has been caught in a series of wrongdoings — apparently forgetting, time after time, that as Speaker, he should not be involved in partisan politics.

Who can forget that a former Waffen-SS soldier was invited to President Zelenskyy's speech in the House of Commons? The Trudeau government was quick to push the then-Speaker under the bus for that one. But later, when it was highlighted that the Prime Minister invited the former Nazi to a reception in Toronto, the Prime Minister's Office went strangely silent. If Justin Trudeau would apply to himself the same standard he applied to Anthony Rota, he would have — and should have — resigned.

• (1540)

And that is only since the last election.

Now let's look for a few minutes at the Liberal hall of shame for 2015 to 2021.

Former Liberal MP William Amos was twice caught in indecent positions during House Zoom proceedings.

Former Liberal MP Yasmin Ratansi was wrongfully employing her sister with taxpayers' dollars and deliberately hiding this information from Canadians.

Former Liberal MP Ramesh Sangha was removed from the Liberal caucus in January 2021 after accusing multiple Liberal MPs of supporting the Khalistan movement.

Former Liberal MP Darshan Singh Kang had to leave the Liberal caucus in 2015 over accusations of sexual harassment.

Former Liberal MP Nicola Di Iorio didn't show up to work for a year after he announced his resignation in 2018. Then the public found out he didn't actually resign. He continued to collect his salary as an MP — even while he was working full-time for a law firm in Montreal. To this day, this situation has never been clearly explained by Trudeau and the Liberals.

Former Liberal MP Raj Grewal admitted that he racked up millions of dollars in debts playing casino blackjack. After this came to light following an RCMP investigation, he resigned from the Liberal caucus in 2018. But after suddenly announcing he had paid off his seven-figure debts, he stayed on as a member of Parliament for the rest of the parliamentary session. You may recall that Mr. Grewal was already under investigation by the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner at the time, and was later found guilty of a conflict of interest.

Former Liberal MP Marwan Tabbara was allowed to run again, for the Liberal Party in the 2019 election, even though detailed allegations of sexual harassment had been made against him. After being arrested in April 2020, he remained in caucus for almost two months because the Prime Minister's Office claimed they knew nothing about it. It took a newspaper article for the Liberals to kick him out of caucus.

Former Liberal MP Frank Baylis signed one of those juicy sole-source contracts with the Liberal government during the COVID epidemic. He received \$237 million. Public Health Agency of Canada figures indicate that more than 90% of the 10,000 Baylis Medical Company ventilators bought were never used in any clinic or hospital.

Sadly, there were even worse ethical lapses amongst cabinet ministers. I will give you a few examples. As there are many, I will proceed in alphabetical order.

Anita Anand's husband was also a recipient of one of those juicy COVID contracts. LifeLabs received tens of millions of dollars' worth of COVID contracts. They sell test kits. Anita Anand's husband, John Knowlton, is a director of LifeLabs. The LifeLabs division has received multiple contracts worth millions since Anand was elected to Parliament in 2019.

Navdeep Bains was Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry and, as such, promised to crack down on big telcos that overcharge Canadians for internet and cellphone service. Guess what? He found a job at Rogers after leaving the government. The Commissioner of Lobbying said she was frustrated by this, but Liberals will always find loopholes where it means more money for them.

Then there was Bill Blair. On several occasions, he lied and meddled in the work of the RCMP regarding the worst mass killing in the history of Canada, in Portapique, Nova Scotia.

While he was President of the Treasury Board, Scott Brison tried to block approval of a contract for a navy supply ship being built at the Davie shipyard in Quebec because he was lobbied to do so by the powerful New Brunswick Irving family — owners of the rival Halifax Shipyard. Former Minister Brison also tried to argue that there was no need for him to set up a conflict of interest screen to prevent him from participating in government decisions involving two of Atlantic Canada's wealthiest families — even though he used to chair one of their investment firms and his spouse continued to sit on the company's board of directors.

François-Philippe Champagne owned two apartments in London, England, worth millions of dollars. His mortgages were with a Chinese bank. It is strange for a Canadian MP in the U.K. to have to go to a Chinese bank for a mortgage.

Judy Foote became involved in the Frank Norman affair. I will talk about that later. What is interesting here is that she resigned for health reasons. But, suddenly, her health improved, and she was rewarded with the job of Lieutenant Governor of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Steven Guilbeault forgot to pay his taxes, but he never forgot to travel, especially to China. This minister is running around the globe, busy lecturing Canadians while patting Chinese or Gulf emirates officials on the back. Catherine McKenna and Jonathan

Wilkinson, his predecessors at Environment and Climate Change Canada, were of the same ilk — jetting around the world to lecture the common folk about how they should bicycle to work.

Foreign Affairs Minister Mélanie Joly's office staff didn't read an email that said her department was sending a representative to a Russian embassy party — so we had a representative at a party drinking vodka with Russian officials just after Putin invaded Ukraine.

Not reading their emails is a hallmark of Trudeau ministers and their staff. It was an excuse given by Bill Blair, Marco Mendicino and, of course, Justin Trudeau.

When David Lametti was turfed from cabinet, many people wondered why. We thought he had, after all, done much of Trudeau's bidding. In the last few weeks, we learned that Lametti cancelled a verdict of first-degree murder against Jacques Delisle, a former judge, even though all the experts were against the decision. Lametti and the government refused to come clean on why he'd done that, even though Delisle later pleaded guilty to manslaughter. You all heard senators' non-answers to our questions on this issue.

What about Dominic LeBlanc, who, despite his connection to the powerful Irving family, was appointed Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard? He had to consult with the Ethics Commissioner for weeks to figure out how to stickhandle around this obvious conflict of interest.

Then there was the time when Minister LeBlanc flew from Moncton to Montreal and back aboard a jet owned by J.D. Irving, Limited — nothing to see here, folks. But when former Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner Dion found Minister LeBlanc guilty of breaking the Conflict of Interest Act because he'd awarded a lucrative Arctic surf clam licence to a company linked to his wife's cousin, he couldn't wiggle out of it.

Speaking of Dominic LeBlanc and Scott Brison, we still don't know what their exact role was in the Vice-Admiral Norman affair. The Liberals tried to renege on a contract for a supply ship in order to give it back to the Irvings. When they were caught, they decided they would get ahead of Vice-Admiral Norman. The Prime Minister even sent him to trial before the police had completed their investigation. Scott Brison and Judy Foote left their positions, and taxpayers ended up being invoiced for an undisclosed sum of money paid out to Vice-Admiral Norman. That is a first-class cover.

Marco Mendicino's case was hopeless — there were conflicts of interest, emails not read, bold lies in public and pure incompetence. When you are so bad that even Justin Trudeau thinks you are bad, you have hit the bottom. Someday, I will give a speech just on Marco Mendicino's scandals. I may need unlimited time for that.

Ministers sometimes organize fundraisers outside their ridings, but when you represent a downtown Montreal riding, this is strange. It is even stranger if this fundraiser happens to be in New York in the United States. To my knowledge, that is a first, and this honour belongs to Marc Miller.

Maryam Monsef had to admit that she was not born in Afghanistan, as she had told people and led them to believe for years.

Bill Morneau is another former minister who was scandal-prone. He started his political career with violating the Elections Act, for which he was fined. This is, after all, the same former finance minister who forgot that he had — and forgot to declare in his ethics reporting — his villa in France.

• (1550)

This is the same finance minister who sponsored Bill C-27, which happened to increase the value of pensions sold by the minister's own company, Morneau Shepell. When the bill was tabled in the House of Commons, the value of Morneau Shepell shares jumped, and Minister Morneau just happened to still be holding \$21 million worth of shares.

And I already mentioned his role in the WE Charity scandal. When he quit, he pretended he was going to the top position at the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, or OECD. No one knows for sure if this was true. What is true and real is that taxpayers footed the bill for his failed campaign. I still have an Order Paper question on the true cost, which remains unanswered after 25 months. It was reported in the media that the phony campaign cost at least \$11 million.

Mary Ng was found guilty by the Ethics Commissioner of giving contracts to her best friend. In a Trudeau government, that means you pretend to be sorry and there are no consequences.

How about Seamus O'Regan? The government spent \$180,000 defending him in a defamation suit. Do you remember Hunter Tootoo? He had to leave cabinet to deal with, sadly, addiction issues, but what was strange was when he said that Justin Trudeau hugged him after he revealed that he had an inappropriate relationship with a staff member. Harjit Sajjan was found to have lied about his role in Afghanistan.

But this happy bunch knows how to organize a party — sorry, a cabinet retreat. The three affordability retreats held in Charlottetown, Vancouver and Hamilton between 2022 and August 2023 cost \$1,325,000. Hey, life is better with lobster and white wine, especially when you are discussing affordability.

It's not surprising to see all those ethical lapses. After all, this is the leader of an organization who sets the tone. Justin Trudeau does not believe the rules of ethics apply to him. So how could he insist that his officials, his MPs and his ministers be any better?

In 2015, we learned that Justin Trudeau was billing charities for speaking engagements, even as an MP. This was a first, colleagues. A sitting politician who charges people to hear him speak. When he got caught, he said he was sorry and wrote a cheque.

A few weeks later, he was caught again. He had charged the House of Commons for expenses that had also been reimbursed by the organizations to which he spoke. Again, we had the "I'm sorry; here's a cheque" routine. This was a preview of things to come.

Who can forget the "thank you for your donation" comment and incident, where the PM's elitist and condescending attitude was on full display when he jeered at an Indigenous protester before that?

Before that, we had "Elbowgate," when Justin Trudeau pushed aside fellow MP Ruth Ellen Brosseau because he was in a hurry to vote. His time was more precious than others', and pushing aside women who get in the way is something our fake feminist Prime Minister does without hesitation.

That was in line with Justin Trudeau's behaviour in the "Kokanee grope" incident, where he groped a female journalist and then said, "Oh my, I would not have done this had I known that the woman was a national reporter." I guess in his mind it's more acceptable to grope a person who is not a national reporter than one who is. Now, we all remember, of course, that our Prime Minister decided that this was, indeed, a lesson not just for him but for all of us. We all know that some "people experience things differently," he said.

Now, let's not forget the three, four, five, maybe more incidents where Justin Trudeau wore blackface because he thought it was funny to pretend he was Black. We don't know how many times he did that, because he can't remember. It seems that this was a classic for Justin Trudeau, the comedian, to wear blackface. What does it show about his true character?

One thing we know about him is that he likes to travel. And these trips will sometimes cause problems with his international guests, often be ethically wrong and always very expensive to the Canadian taxpayer.

There is the case of his vacations, of course, from the Aga Khan island to the \$80,000-a-week resort in Jamaica. Justin Trudeau will only vacation first class and always on someone else's dime.

Last Christmas, the Trudeaus enjoyed a \$9,300-a-night, 5,000-square-foot villa that boasts six bedrooms, a private pool, a hot tub, butlers, a housekeeper and a chef. After initially telling the media that Trudeau would be paying out of pocket for his family vacation to Jamaica over Christmas, the Prime Minister's Office admitted that Trudeau and his family were actually staying in Jamaica at no cost — again this habit of lying to the public.

Trudeau's arrogance was on full display when he explained with a smirk that "like a lot of Canadian families, we went to stay with friends for the Christmas holidays."

I also spent a day or two with friends over the Christmas holidays. I think we ordered in some chicken.

Trudeau does not use his wealthy connections only to get vacation spots down south. He gets to use a Calgary millionaire's beachfront house when goes surfing in Tofino, B.C., which

allows him to get away from it all, especially get away from visiting the Indigenous people who invited him for the first-ever National Day for Truth and Reconciliation.

Now, our Prime Minister does not only enjoy water sports. His four-day ski trip to Montana last year cost the taxpayers over \$230,000. I do not dispute the right for the Prime Minister to take vacations with his family — we all like to do that — but I do not recall Prime Ministers Mulroney, Chrétien, Martin or Harper going to billionaires' islands while they were in office. They spent most of their break weeks at Harrington Lake. It makes sense for the prime minister to go there. It's close to Ottawa, already organized for security, a bit like Camp David in the U.S.

The government decided to spend upwards of \$11 million to renovate Harrington Lake, including moving the secondary house closer to the lake. But Justin Trudeau does not use Harrington Lake. Why?

Senators will certainly remember Trudeau's performance at Queen Elizabeth's funeral where he sang Queen songs at his posh hotel, where he had a \$6,000-a-night suite with a butler. Remember how Senator Gold was refusing to answer who was in the suite? It is because of a mistake by a staffer that we learned what we all suspected. It was Justin Trudeau sleeping in the room. He spent \$61,000 to attend a summit with entertainers to talk about — get this — how to end poverty. When you spend \$1.3 million talking about affordability, you should spend at least \$60,000 talking about poverty.

Trudeau's trip to India in 2018 was a complete disaster. He brought to India an Indian chef. I guess they didn't have any there. He invited a terrorist on the trip. He made a fool of himself by not only appearing in disguise, but trying to be more Bollywood than the Bollywood stars themselves. He single-handedly caused a rift between Canada and India, one of the most populous countries on earth.

One aspect of Justin Trudeau's legacy that we will need to thoroughly investigate is why the Vancouver Chinese community has funded his campaigns in Montreal for years.

Also, there is a lot to learn about the dealings that went on at the Trudeau Foundation. This secretive and nebulous organization was granted \$100 million by Jean Chrétien. You would think that was enough to do whatever the small clique of elitists wanted to do. But no, they accepted gifts from shady characters. Hopefully, a new government will do what it can to provide Canadians with the truth about this organization.

• (1600)

Colleagues, one thing is clear about Justin Trudeau. He is the Prime Minister who was found guilty of breaking the Conflict of Interest Act so many times that we have lost count. The Ethics Commissioner recommended that the Prime Minister and all of his cabinet receive a special refresher on what ethical conduct is and what is in the Code. Of course, those Liberals believe they are above the law. The rules are made for others, so they snubbed the commissioner.

[Senator Plett]

Colleagues, I am nowhere near finished detailing the list of ethical breaches and misconduct committed by the Prime Minister, his cabinet and other party MPs, but even if I have unlimited time, I will stop here because I think you get the point.

An Hon. Senator: Oh, no.

Senator Plett: But I must point out that all these facts are known because some journalists and the Conservative opposition has worked tirelessly to find the truth.

The Trudeau government has developed what the Information Commissioner called a culture of secrecy. Senators can have a glimpse of what this culture of secrecy is right here in the Senate when the government continually refuses to answer our questions that it deems inconvenient. Canadians now call the NDP-Liberal coalition the costly cover-up coalition because the NDP will always join the Liberals to stop House committees from investigating Liberal corruption.

Here in the Senate, the Conservative opposition has managed — even though we are badly outnumbered — to shed some light on all that Liberal corruption. I suspect it is because we have been so effective that the government is cooking up a scheme to unilaterally change the *Rules of the Senate* to reduce the powers of the opposition. They are so tired of us digging up the truth, "We have to do something."

So, colleagues, prepare for that because that's what the Leader of the Government has indicated. "We are going to take away the power of the opposition. We are going to take away the rights of the opposition. We are going to give the rights that you have to people who stand for nothing." Conservatives stand and support 6 million voters who voted for them in the last election, and we will continue to do our job.

Justin Trudeau will be remembered as a Prime Minister who broke the code of ethics several times. He will be remembered for leading a government that considered ethics rules as mere suggestions that could be discarded in pursuit of what they thought was the greater good.

Let me quote the Prime Minister again. This is what he said:

It really sucks right now. Like, everything sucks for people, even in Canada. We're supposed to be polite and nice, but, man, people are mad. . . .

That is what Trudeau said in New York last fall. Yes, Prime Minister, people are mad. They are mad at your complete disregard for rules. They are mad at your audacity to lecture us at the same time. They are mad at your virtue signalling, which gives you a free pass on ethics. Justin Trudeau, you are not worth the cost.

Harry Truman had a sign on his desk when he was President of the United States, and it said, "The buck stops here." Colleagues, Justin Trudeau is no Harry Truman. He is trying to put blame on everybody and everything else. The Liberals will deflect, obfuscate and lie to cover up their ethical lapses. That also makes Canadians mad.

Justin Trudeau will soon leave his role as Prime Minister either because he may finally do the right thing and step down or because Canadians will vote him out of office. One thing is sure — these scandals will be part of his legacy. Canadians will turn to Pierre Poilievre and the common sense Conservatives to bring back integrity and ethics to this government and to our country.

An Hon. Senator: Hear, hear.

Senator Plett: Colleagues, I intend to cover more of what Justin Trudeau's legacy will be all about. With that, I move the adjournment of the debate for the balance of my time. Thank you, colleagues.

(On motion of Senator Plett, debate adjourned.)

[Translation]

JURY DUTY APPRECIATION WEEK BILL

THIRD READING—DEBATE ADJOURNED

Hon. Lucie Moncion moved third reading of Bill S-252, An Act respecting Jury Duty Appreciation Week.

She said: Honourable senators, I rise today to speak at third reading as the sponsor of Bill S-252, An Act respecting Jury Duty Appreciation Week.

Bill S-252 proposes to recognize jury duty appreciation week during the second week of May each year in Canada.

Over the past few years, I've had the privilege of speaking on a number of occasions in this chamber in support of the recognition of jury duty in Canada. In particular, a motion I moved calling on the federal government to recognize a national jury duty appreciation week was adopted by the Senate on May 12, 2022. I was also the critic for Bill S-206, a bill sponsored by Senator Boisvenu that lifted the rule of secrecy in very specific cases and therefore allowed jurors to talk to a mental health professional about jury deliberations after a trial. That bill was passed and received Royal Assent in 2022. These interventions enabled me to shed light on an issue that was previously little known to parliamentarians.

As senators, we have the privilege of proposing bills to establish national days or weeks. Although the symbolic scope of this process sometimes draws criticism, it helps fill certain gaps by generating a national dialogue on issues that are important but less well known to governments and Canadians.

Weeks like this offer an opportunity to achieve a number of goals. In addition to promoting recognition, education and awareness among Canadians about this civic duty, a national week honouring the role of jurors would foster collaboration and coordination efforts by organizations, courts and provincial and territorial governments in implementing the recommendations of the 2018 report of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights entitled *Improving support for jurors in Canada*. The Standing Senate Committee on Social

Affairs, Science and Technology made observations on the bill, and a national week would also permit an examination of those observations.

Why does the bill propose the second week of May as jury duty appreciation week? It's a question that I was asked in committee and that I would like to answer in this chamber as well, to explain the reason for this choice.

Spring marks the end of many trials, making it an appropriate time to express our gratitude to jurors and recognize their contribution to the justice system. The conclusion of a trial is also an opportunity to inform jurors about the support available to them.

• (1610)

In the United States, the second week of May coincides with the recognition of such a week by the American Bar Association and by other jurisdictions, notably California and Louisiana. In addition, courts across the U.S., as well as the Texas and Oregon legislatures and the Pennsylvania State Senate, also recognize a week dedicated to honouring jury duty in the month of May.

In Canada, the second week of May has already been acknowledged as a week of recognition for two years by various stakeholders and by the federal government, through the Minister of Justice. The Senate recognized the week in question when it adopted a motion on May 12. As you can understand, colleagues, it is not very efficient to propose a similar motion every year. These recognitions are not legislated and therefore provide no long-term certainty to those involved in and affected by this cause. We are talking about thousands of Canadians every year.

Bill S-252 is not just about the symbolic recognition of jury duty. Enshrining an official week in legislation could be a catalyst for change in many ways. The bill's preamble not only helps us understand the bill's purpose, but also enables us to look ahead to understand the potential scope of the proposal. The preamble recognizes that thousands of Canadians are called upon to serve as jurors every year and that jury duty is a vital component of our justice system and our democracy. Promoting jury duty could foster a sense of pride and accomplishment that would help jurors feel that their sacrifices are seen and recognized by the government and the justice system.

The preamble also draws attention to the link between the mental health and well-being of jurors and the proper functioning of our justice system. This is something that I really care about, since I myself have suffered from post-traumatic stress disorder as a result of my experience as a juror. Tangible measures must be put in place to support jurors before, during and after their service. Better informing and preparing jurors before the trial could make a huge difference in their ability to handle this responsibility calmly and objectively. This means clear and transparent communication about how the trial will unfold, the rules the jurors must follow and the different types of cases that they may have to deal with.

When people are called for jury duty, they often have no idea what awaits them. All they get is an order to show up at court, or else they'll be fined \$5,000 or have to serve time. They're told nothing about what's in store for them. Faced with a complex system and strong emotions, they're often unprepared to manage the stress and the psychological impact of the experience. Jurors also need support after the trial. They may need time to process the testimony and the verdict, time to talk about their experiences with others who have been through the same thing and time to talk to mental health professionals if necessary.

Jurors must receive better support throughout the process, right from that first summons. Designating an official week each year would increase awareness of how jurors' well-being and the proper functioning of the Canadian justice system are interrelated. This will help certain key players understand the nature of that connection.

Lastly, the preamble states that this legislation will serve as an educational initiative seeking to inform and mobilize citizens, organizations, the justice system as a whole, and the provincial and federal governments, by promoting greater awareness and understanding of the complex issues involved in performing this civic duty. An initiative to celebrate a national appreciation week will help address the fragmentation in our current system, which encourages discussions in silos between various organizations and the provinces and territories when it comes to the administration of justice or even the delivery of mental health services. While respecting the jurisdictions of the provinces and territories, the bill lays the foundations for cooperative federalism in juror support and builds a bridge between a variety of civil society actors who work in fields related to justice, education and health.

[English]

To address gaps in support for jurors, a dedicated jury duty appreciation week could significantly enhance the juror experience across multiple aspects. Drawing on the accounts of former jurors and my own firsthand observations, the following examples highlight key needs that such a week could address.

Serving as a juror can be a psychologically challenging experience and may even lead to symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder. Jurors and their families face a variety of pressures, and the repercussions of serving on a jury can be felt long after the trial is over.

The lack of financial support, especially for low-income individuals, is a major stress factor that undermines the representation and diversity of Canadian juries. Juror pay is currently below the minimum wage. In Ontario, for example, a juror receives \$5 per hour, which does not compensate for the loss of income incurred by participating in the justice system. The lack of financial support can make it difficult for low-income individuals to serve on juries and can lead to a lack of diversity in the jury-selection process.

Employers often underestimate the challenges faced by employees called for jury duty. Support and compensation from employers, provinces and territories are mostly negligible and

insufficient. The lack of support can make it difficult for employees to serve on juries and can lead to financial hardship and job loss.

Finally, after a trial our society expects jurors to return to their normal lives as if nothing had happened. Employers often perceive this extended absence as vacation time. Educating employers, in particular, is essential. Employers need to be made aware of the challenges faced by jurors, and they need to be prepared to support their employees who are called for jury duty.

It is imperative to address these unrealistic expectations and start discussions about removing these barriers in order to create a more inclusive and equitable jury system. Supporting the well-being of those who make sacrifices to ensure the proper functioning of the Canadian judicial system and democracy is essential. This includes providing adequate financial support, ensuring job security and offering mental health resources to jurors.

[Translation]

Bill S-252 is the key to creating an environment conducive to achieving these goals.

Based on my experience as juror number one in a first-degree murder trial, conversations with former jurors and stakeholders, and the reflections of our parliamentary committees, I've come to believe that federal leadership is necessary. There is a real gap that needs to be filled at the national level.

I will now briefly discuss the federal government's role with respect to jury duty. The lack of federal leadership partly results from the fragmented and inconsistent services and supports provided to jurors. This same deficiency also accounts for the failure to recognize how the juror's role contributes to justice and democracy in Canada.

Justice is a shared jurisdiction. The role of the federal government and the Department of Justice is pivotal in each of the recommendations made in the 2018 report entitled *Improving support for jurors in Canada*. All this is also consistent with the purpose of Bill S-252.

For example, the report recommends federal funding in certain areas and the sharing of best practices with the provinces and territories. It also highlights the importance of raising awareness among judges, coroners and judicial officers about the potential impact of court proceedings on the mental health of jurors.

[English]

While jury duty is a vital function of our justice system and democracy, the federal government has not yet taken a leading role in supporting jurors. This bill proposes an effective way for the federal government to address this gap, all while respecting the provincial and territorial administration of justice.

I had the privilege of appearing before the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology as part of its study of Bill S-252. The members of the committee listened to my testimony with attention and compassion. I am very grateful for their kindness and consideration.

The committee members not only showed great sensitivity toward me and the other witnesses, but also took a pragmatic and analytical approach to examining these issues. The committee's report does not contain any amendments, but it does make three constructive observations.

• (1620)

The first observation concerns the lack of diversity in juries in Canada, particularly with respect to the representation of racialized, Black and Indigenous peoples. The committee therefore recommends that the federal, provincial, territorial and Indigenous governments try to identify measures that improve the diversity of juries in accordance with the intent to be judged by a jury of our peers.

The second observation concerns vicarious trauma experienced by jurors, and mental health programs and services. As defined by Health Canada:

Vicarious trauma is the experience of bearing witness to the atrocities committed against another. It is the result of absorbing the sight, smell, sound, touch and feel of the stories told in detail by victims searching for a way to release their own pain. . . . Vicarious trauma is the energy that comes from being in the presence of trauma and it is how our bodies and psyche react to the profound despair, rage and pain.

I wish I'd known the notion of vicarious trauma when I was going through difficult times as a result of my experience as a juror. It would have helped me understand that my feelings were both normal and valid, and I'm sure it's the case for many other former jurors. Understanding the science behind our experience can be powerful in our recovery, and having access to evidence-based programs is crucial.

With respect to this second observation, the committee expresses concern about the lack of mental health support for jurors before, during and after a trial. It therefore recommends the creation of comprehensive government programs focused on trauma management to support and protect the well-being of jurors.

The third observation underlines the financial impact on the participation of Canadians in jury duty, particularly in terms of lost wages, but also the lack of adequate compensation for expenses incurred in the performance of jury duty, including child care and travel. These financial barriers partly explain the lack of diversity on juries. In response, the committee proposes that the Government of Canada consider using the Employment Insurance program to provide financial support to jurors during their service.

On the subject of financial compensation, Tina Daenzer, a former juror who testified before the committee, explained as follows:

Jury pay is still woefully inadequate in order to ensure a truly well-balanced jury panel. In fact, in Ontario, it has not changed since I sat on the Bernardo trial in 1995. The initial ten days are unpaid until the tenth day, when you receive \$40 per day.

She sat in 1995, I sat on a jury in 1989, and the same rules applied then.

Millions of Canadians work in minimum wage jobs or in the gig community, which means that they are financially unable to participate in the jury process. If we truly want a jury of our peers, then we need to ensure that every Canadian can participate.

The former jurors and other witnesses heard by the committee were unanimous in their view that this week of appreciation is necessary not only to raise awareness but also to recognize and celebrate those who have exercised this duty. A national week would provide an opportunity for in-depth reflection and discussion on the observations made by the Social Affairs Committee and the recommendations contained in the Justice Committee report from the other place, which now dates back six years.

The Senate has already voted in favour of recognizing jury duty appreciation week through a motion. I hope, colleagues, that I can count on your support for this modest and simple legislative proposal. The adoption of Bill S-252 by Parliament would reflect the scope and importance of the contributions of citizens who serve as jurors. This recognition would show our appreciation for the sacrifices they make and the important role they play in ensuring the proper functioning of our justice system.

I'd like to quote Tina Daenzer once again, this time on Canadian society's lack of appreciation for jurors. During her testimony before the Social Affairs Committee on Bill S-252, she said:

If the job of sitting on a jury is so important to our entire legal system, why are the people selected so underappreciated in both adequate pay and mental health support? Many studies have shown that recognition in the workplace boosts engagement, attracts better employees, helps employees find meaning and reinforces the positive. As a country, we should all want that not just for employees but also for those who are chosen as jurors. We must ensure they feel supported and appreciated, and at the end of the trial, they can walk away feeling like it was a rewarding and enriching experience.

I'm going depart from my speech for a minute. This is probably the last time I will speak on my experience as a juror, and I will tell you a story.

For the last 35 years, I've been worried that the people who were convicted would someday come out of jail and come after me or anyone who was on the jury. That was one of my concerns. The other concern that I had as a juror was about the first-degree murder verdict that we decided upon. There was always a doubt — not because we didn't have the evidence, but because there was always a thought: "What if I made a mistake, or what if it was the wrong verdict?"

A little while I go, I decided to google the names of the two convicts. I came up with the name of one of them. That person has been out of jail since 2014. He is now 62 years old. He is a reformed inmate. In the segment that I saw, he was speaking about his life as an inmate. Not only did he confirm that he had

killed the person who was the subject of the jury trial upon which we served when he was first convicted, but he also killed again when he was in prison.

What I could see from his testimony today is that this man is reformed. Like I said, he is a 62-year-old man. He lives somewhere in this country. He's a grandfather, and he is reformed. He has written a book. He goes into schools and testifies and speaks to young people there, and he talks about his experience. He talks about how he became an inmate, how he got into the life that he did, what happened to him in prison to make him change his way of thinking, and that what he developed while he was in prison was empathy. He started to understand that everything he was doing had consequences on others.

This man is now a reformed man. He's now a working Canadian. He is part of our society. After reading this, I told my husband, "I saw this." He said, "Are you telling me that you pardon him for what he did?" I said to him, "I'm not sure if I pardon him, and I'm not sure how I feel about this man today." But I've always wanted to make sure that there was something good that came out of the work that I had done 35 years ago. I only googled the name of the person, so I was only able to find the information on one person. This man has also written a book.

It's just a story. For me, it is like closing the loop on this. I still don't know how I feel about this man and where he is in his life today. One of the things that he said is that he is not proud of what he has done. He was incarcerated for 32 years, but he said, "I still live in a prison of my own making because I'm still living with what I have done, and this is something I will carry to my death."

[*Translation*]

On that note, I would remind senators that by supporting Bill S-252, we are raising awareness among Canadians and governments, every year, about the many issues associated with jury duty.

• (1630)

I'm sure you can see that time is of the essence. This bill needs to go back to the House of Commons. I humbly request your support so this bill can go through the process in the other place quickly.

Thank you for your attention.

[*English*]

Hon. Jane Cordy: Would you take a question?

I really want to thank you so much for doing this. I was on the Social Affairs Committee, and I remember that we heard that your bill was coming before us, it was Jury Duty Appreciation Week and I thought, "Oh, well, that's nice." But then you were our first witness, and you spoke about your experiences, what happened afterwards and how you had no preparation going in. Then the day after the trial, you go back to your regular life — as regular as it can be after going through the trauma.

[Senator Moncion]

I think you spoke about the underappreciation of jurors. I have known people who have served on juries. You see them again, and it's great that they're finished, but they can't talk about what they went through. It's not even right to ask them what they have gone through.

I guess my question would be this: During Jury Duty Appreciation Week — which I think will do really good things — what types of activities do you envision taking place so that Canadians understand what jurors have gone through? We often think that a trial lasts a week or two, but we heard one witness tell us that it was months and months, and then after all this period of time, walk back into his office the next day and move along just as if life had been going on as "normal" for the previous six or nine months he was doing it.

I'm wondering if you can give us some ideas of what you envision. Hopefully, people are very creative in what they do if this bill passes. Can you tell us some of the things you think might happen that would help jurors or potential jurors understand what's going to happen, but also to help the general public have a better appreciation of the role that members of a jury play in our society?

Senator Moncion: Thank you for the question, senator, and thank you for all the good questions that you and all your colleagues on the Social Affairs, Science and Technology Committee were asking when we, the witnesses, attended.

A lot of things are already in the process, and they were used last year in Jury Duty Appreciation Week. This information is being built as different provinces come into the program. Since we started working on the changes to the legislation for the secrecy rules, a Canadian Juries Commission has been created, and their work is to bring awareness to the work that jurors have to do.

They are working with provinces that want to come onboard. So there is information on the web that is available. There are all kinds of courses people can take or sessions they can participate in to prepare them for jury duty. There are different things that are done in different provinces.

This work has been building over the last couple of years, so more and more material is available. There is going to be more information provided for employers whenever a staff member is asked to be on jury duty. Understanding the obligations as an employer, the work that the juror is going to have to do and how time consuming that is — all this information is provided. But it will also be made more accessible.

The appreciation week just brings awareness. Then people will maybe start looking at that information and see what happens when they are called to become jurors. There is going to be more information available, and all kinds of tools are out there now to help jury duty.

Thank you.

(On motion of Senator Martin, debate adjourned.)

CANADA REVENUE AGENCY ACT

BILL TO AMEND—THIRD READING—DEBATE CONTINUED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Downe, seconded by the Honourable Senator Quinn, for the third reading of Bill S-258, An Act to amend the Canada Revenue Agency Act (reporting on unpaid income tax).

(On motion of Senator Martin, debate adjourned.)

CRIMINAL RECORDS ACT

DECLARATION OF PRIVATE INTEREST

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I wish to draw to your attention that the Honourable Senator Anderson has made a written declaration of private interest regarding Bill S-212, and in accordance with rule 15-7, the declaration shall be recorded in the *Journals of the Senate*.

INCREASING THE IDENTIFICATION OF CRIMINALS THROUGH THE USE OF DNA BILL

BILL TO AMEND—TWENTY-SECOND REPORT OF LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE—
DEBATE ADJOURNED

The Senate proceeded to consideration of the twenty-second report of the Standing Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs (*Bill S-231, An Act to amend the Criminal Code, the Criminal Records Act, the National Defence Act and the DNA Identification Act, with amendments*), presented in the Senate on December 12, 2023.

Hon. Brent Cotter moved the adoption of the report.

He said: Honourable senators, I have the honour of presenting to the chamber the report of the Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee's report on Bill S-231, which began consideration before our committee before December 13, 2023. Our report came to the Senate on December 13, 2023. This constitutes my brief speech with respect to the committee report. I want to thank the chair of the committee, Senator Jaffer, for making this opportunity available to me.

The bill, sponsored by Senator Carignan, is entitled "An Act to amend the Criminal Code, the Criminal Records Act, the National Defence Act and the DNA Identification Act." The short title of the bill, which better conveys its import, is "Increasing the identification of criminals through the use of DNA Act."

Generally speaking, the bill proposes legislation that amends a series of laws — the laws I have just mentioned — so that the collection of DNA from people convicted of serious criminal offences and people found not guilty on account of mental

disorder would be expanded in terms of the categories of persons and offences where DNA can be collected and placed in the DNA data bank.

The bill would also expand, in limited circumstances, the ability of investigative police agencies to obtain information with respect to investigations under way in what are known as familial searches. This is when there was not a direct match between the DNA found in an investigation and a person whose DNA profile is in the data bank, but there shows a match with a person who has a genetic affiliation to the person whose DNA is in the bank. These are known as familial searches. The bill was substantially amended at committee. In a moment, I will highlight these amendments.

• (1640)

Your committee met on four occasions to consider the bill, beginning on November 9, 2023. There was one committee meeting for a clause-by-clause study, which was held on December 7, 2023.

Three amendments proposed at committee were adopted, and four clauses of the bill were defeated. The key changes to Bill S-231 are as follows:

First, clause 3 of the bill regarding mandatory DNA orders was defeated.

The Criminal Code currently requires a defendant to provide a DNA sample where they have been convicted of or received a discharge for what are known as "primary designated offences." Primary designated offences are serious offences under the Criminal Code, including several sexual offences, murder, manslaughter, aggravated assault, robbery and others.

A court also has the discretion in these circumstances to order a defendant to provide a DNA sample where they have been convicted, discharged or found not criminally responsible in cases of what are known as "secondary designated offences."

Clause 3 of the original bill would have amended the Criminal Code to require a DNA order following conviction, discharge or a finding of not criminally responsible on account of a mental disorder for any primary or secondary designated offence, with some exceptions.

The committee removed this clause from the bill, leaving the Criminal Code unchanged with respect to the authority of the courts to either have the power to or make a requirement to issue these DNA orders.

Second, clause 4 of the bill, which is the timing for such orders, was also defeated.

Clause 4 of the original bill set out the timelines during which a court would have been required to make a mandatory DNA order. This clause was connected to and followed the proposed amendments under clause 3, about which I have spoken.

The committee — by majority — removed this clause from Bill S-231.

A third clause related to what are known as “familial DNA searches” was also defeated.

Clause 18 of the bill would have amended the DNA Identification Act to allow familial searches of the National DNA Data Bank in certain limited circumstances. This would have enabled a search of the National DNA Data Bank for a DNA profile that could identify a biological relative of the person whose DNA was in the data bank.

The committee — as I say — removed this clause from the bill.

Fourth, clause 20 deals with amendments related to destroying DNA profiles contained in the convicted offenders index of the data bank if the person is acquitted of the charges tied to the original DNA order, and if the accused had no other findings of guilt, discharges or findings of not criminally responsible for a designated offence that could have triggered a DNA order originally. The committee amended this clause to remove references to findings of not criminally responsible.

The result of this amendment is that an individual who has been acquitted of a designated offence may request that their DNA profile be removed from the data bank despite a separate finding of being not criminally responsible for another designated offence.

Finally, in terms of major amendments, clause 24 of the bill requires that the Minister of Public Safety and the Minister of Emergency Preparedness report on the advisability of taking a DNA sample on the same basis as fingerprints taken under the Identification of Criminals Act. The committee amended this clause to require that such a report proceed, and should include specific analysis of the inculpatory and exculpatory effects toward the liability or the absence of liability that DNA sampling might have on Indigenous, Black and racialized populations.

I think it’s fair to say — and I’m about to conclude — the committee has conducted serious and often spirited consideration of the bill, and was assisted greatly by the 17 witnesses who appeared before the committee. On the committee’s behalf, I want to extend our thanks to the witnesses who met with the committee.

I would like to make two final observations — if I may — which are a little more personal than the committee report. I think it’s fair to say that committee members did not oppose the use of DNA for investigative purposes. However, a majority of the committee was concerned about the specific situations where the capture and use of DNA would be expanded by this bill, leading to clauses that were uncomfortable for them, and leading to their defeat or amendment.

I anticipate that members of the Senate, members of the committee and its sponsor, Senator Carignan, will expand on these bare-bones comments during the Senate’s study of this report. Thank you.

(On motion of Senator Clement, debate adjourned.)

[Senator Cotter]

[*Translation*]

LANGUAGE SKILLS ACT

BILL TO AMEND—SECOND READING—DEBATE CONTINUED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Carignan, P.C., seconded by the Honourable Senator Housakos, for the second reading of Bill S-220, An Act to amend the Languages Skills Act (Governor General).

Hon. Chantal Petitclerc: Honourable senators, I note that this item is at day 15, and Senator Ringuette wants to participate in the debate. Therefore, with leave of the Senate and notwithstanding rule 4-15(3), I move the adjournment of the debate in the name of Senator Ringuette.

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

(Debate adjourned.)

[*English*]

CRIMINAL CODE

SEX OFFENDER INFORMATION REGISTRATION ACT

DECLARATION OF PRIVATE INTEREST

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I wish to draw to your attention that the Honourable Senator Anderson has made a written declaration of private interest regarding Bill S-266, and in accordance with rule 15-7, the declaration shall be recorded in the *Journals of the Senate*.

NATIONAL FRAMEWORK ON SICKLE CELL DISEASE BILL

SECOND READING—DEBATE CONTINUED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Mégie, seconded by the Honourable Senator Cotter, for the second reading of Bill S-280, An Act respecting a national framework on sickle cell disease.

Hon. Wanda Thomas Bernard: Honourable senators, I rise today in support of Bill S-280, An Act respecting a national framework on sickle cell disease. Thank you to my colleague Senator Mégie for giving us a comprehensive overview of sickle cell disease. We are privileged to have her medical expertise to inform the chamber about the complex medical details and

challenges of this hereditary disease impacting descendants of Africa, the Caribbean, the Middle East, South America and certain regions of India and the Mediterranean.

• (1650)

I would also like to thank my colleague Senator Cordy for being a champion of this issue for many years, including her work in 2017 to have National Sickle Cell Awareness Day recognized. I want to thank and recognize the work of the honourable Tony Ince, MLA for Cole Harbour-Portland Valley, who presented and supported Bill 396, An Act to Establish a Sickle Cell Awareness Day, in November 2023 in my home province of Nova Scotia. June 19 will now be observed as Sickle Cell Awareness Day in Nova Scotia.

I support Bill S-280 and urge that it be sent to committee to be studied as soon as possible. Sickle cell disease impacts people living at a particularly vulnerable intersection — the intersection of race and disability. With daily life being so significantly impacted by the forces of racism and ableism, I believe this framework has a particularly important role in improving the lives of Black people with sickle cell disease. This intersection is the result of systemic issues and policy gaps. It requires policy solutions like this framework.

I agree with the importance of creating a national research network, improving training and diagnostic tools, setting evidence-based national standards, creating equitable neonatal screening, supporting public awareness campaigns and implementing a tax credit for families.

Members of my extended family and kinship group have been impacted by sickle cell anemia. For many years, African Nova Scotians suffered in silence because this chronic illness was considered a taboo topic — one you didn't talk about anywhere or to anyone. I am grateful for the leadership of people like Dr. Josephine Etowa, which began when she was a graduate nursing student — she had the courage to take a stand — and Rugi Jalloh, who has led the volunteer work in Nova Scotia and across Canada on this issue. Their efforts have helped to raise awareness, reduce stigma and create policy changes. Now, colleagues, it is time to broaden the scope of this work nationally, and Bill S-280 positions us to do that.

In 2013, the Nova Scotia government announced the introduction of the Maritime Newborn Screening Program. Dr. Josephine Etowa was — as I said earlier — a graduate nursing student instrumental in bringing the sickle cell screening of newborns to Nova Scotia. The ability to screen babies as early as possible saves lives. It means that babies can access life-saving treatments early, preventing irreversible damage, reducing future hospitalizations and preventing serious symptoms from developing.

Dr. Etowa studies racism in health systems, and through her research, she identified the issue of a lack of screening for sickle cell disease. This early screening program is an excellent working example of race equity in the health system. A test that in mainstream medical systems may not seem to make a

remarkable change for most children has the power to make a significant change specifically for Black families and other racialized families whose quality of life would be improved with the knowledge of an early diagnosis. Essentially, colleagues, this is an example of bringing a culturally responsive lens to health care systems.

I consulted with Ase Community Foundation for Black Canadians with Disabilities, who stated that they are in support of Bill S-280 in principle due to the capacity the bill has to improve the lives of Black people with this chronic illness. They recommend that the bill explicitly recognize the intersectionality of race and disability and how anti-Black racism impacts health outcomes and access to support and care. They also suggest that the bill explicitly recommend the framework include culturally responsive training for health care professionals.

They stated:

Bill S-280 represents a crucial step toward recognizing and addressing the unique challenges Black Canadians face with sickle cell disease.

When this bill goes to committee, I encourage you to invite Dr. Etowa and the Ase Community Foundation as witnesses. You will be enlightened.

The Sickle Cell Disease Association of Atlantic Canada recently sent out a newsletter, and in it the founder and President, Rugi Jalloh, recounted an interaction they had when they asked a person with sickle cell disease how they were doing. Their response was, "It hurts to breathe, but hey, I'm glad to be alive."

They shared that this person was unable to attend the entire semester at university due to multiple hospitalizations, even with the usual educational accommodations that were offered. I share this person's story to highlight how sickle cell disease can prevent people from accessing education and, subsequently, meaningful employment.

Honourable colleagues, for a person with sickle cell disease, the impact touches every area of their life, and a framework addressing this disease has the capacity to change lives for Black Canadians who live with sickle cell anemia.

I believe their lives are worth it. I urge you to see the importance of supporting Bill S-280, and I look forward to the committee work our colleagues will do to examine the whole impact of this proposed framework.

Asante. Thank you.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

(On motion of Senator Martin, debate adjourned.)

CANADA NATIONAL PARKS ACT

BILL TO AMEND—SECOND READING—DEBATE CONTINUED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Boehm, seconded by the Honourable Senator Galvez, for the second reading of Bill C-248, An Act to amend the Canada National Parks Act (Ojibway National Urban Park of Canada).

(On motion of Senator Martin, debate adjourned.)

FINANCIAL PROTECTION FOR FRESH FRUIT AND VEGETABLE FARMERS BILL

BILL TO AMEND—SECOND READING—DEBATE CONTINUED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator MacDonald, seconded by the Honourable Senator Boisvenu, for the second reading of Bill C-280, An Act to amend the Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act and the Companies' Creditors Arrangement Act (deemed trust — perishable fruits and vegetables).

Hon. Brent Cotter: Honourable senators, I rise to speak as the critic on Bill C-280, An Act to amend the Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act and the Companies' Creditors Arrangement Act (deemed trust — perishable fruits and vegetables).

I realize I have as much as 45 minutes today. I want to tell you that my speech is 21 pages long. I could call out the pages as I go, if you like.

I want to start on page 0. When I came to the Senate, I confess that I was surprised that I had, almost by accident and by experience in my career, bumped into many of the issues that we are addressing here, and I used to sit over in that corner in the nosebleed seats. I was there with former senator Judith Keating. We would compare notes on, remarkably, the kinds of things that we knew and perhaps didn't even know that we knew.

• (1700)

One of the things I learned from former Senator Keating during those conversations was why she had asked Senator Percy Mockler to be her sponsor. I am sorry that he is not here at the moment. Some of you who are new to the Senate may know that former Senator Keating unfortunately passed away after only serving here for a couple of years. The temerity of the question was on my part, to ask her why she had asked Senator Percy Mockler to be her sponsor. She told me the reason was that, although she may not have agreed with everything that Senator Mockler stood for, she wanted to be a senator just like Percy Mockler.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

Senator Cotter: In the four years that I have been here, I too have wanted to — as much as I can, both as a senator and in life — be like Senator Mockler. That is the shortest tribute Senator Mockler will receive this week.

Returning to this bill, if I may, as you will see from my remarks, I am a friendly critic and support this bill. I urge you, colleagues, to do the same.

The legislative path of this bill commenced on November 22, 2021, in the other place. Hopefully, we are close to the finish line. My remarks are in four parts.

First, I intend to speak for a few minutes about the bill itself, its general objectives and why it is needed.

Second, I will speak at some length — this will be the most fascinating part of my remarks — about how the bill works and the way in which it fits into a generally complicated and, in some respects, inadequate public policy structure related to creditors in bankruptcies, insolvencies and restructurings.

This is a complicated area of law into which we are wading. I want to offer some thoughts that I hope can explain its nuances and why a somewhat unusual and artificial technique is being legitimately pursued to protect the interests of perishable fruit and vegetable growers.

Connected with this, I will highlight four shortcomings — or, at least, virtually inevitable limitations in the effectiveness — of the bill and its hopes of protecting perishable fruit and vegetable producers in situations where their buyers have gone bankrupt or become insolvent.

Third, I will say a few words about the issue of unsecured creditors more generally, of whom fruit and vegetable producers are an important subset.

In this discussion, I hope to identify for you a consistent set of vulnerabilities experienced by unsecured creditors — vulnerabilities that are pervasive and that call out for a more comprehensive, organized study of the public policy shortcomings inherent in the present bankruptcy and insolvency structure when it comes to how unsecured creditors are placed and not much compensated.

Fourth, and finally, I will say a few words about this bill in the context of international trade and the way in which it can be a constructive olive branch between our country and the United States, benefiting both Canadian and American fruit and vegetable producers and generating economic benefits for both.

To begin, as the sponsor of the bill in the House of Commons has highlighted, and as Senator MacDonald — its sponsor here — pointed out in his second reading speech, specific events associated with the insolvencies of grocers have generated significant adverse consequences for perishable fruit and vegetable growers.

The way these consequences come about is that when somebody sells fruit and vegetable products to a wholesaler or retailer but has not yet been paid, and the wholesaler or retailer becomes insolvent and unable to pay their bills, the fruit and

vegetable seller has a low place in the totem pole of compensation. They are, in the language of the bankruptcy and insolvency laws, unsecured creditors.

“Unsecured” means that they do not have any kind of property or security in what they sold or in the assets of the person who bought the produce. As it turns out, unsecured creditors are at the low end when the distribution of insolvent estates takes place.

Second, I will speak about how the bill works. As I said, this will be the longest and most fascinating part of my remarks. To put the bill in context, it is necessary to talk about the situation of creditors generally and the ways this plays out in bankruptcies and insolvencies.

In another life, I used to give these talks in another capacity. I used to use props. Oh, for a prop today.

When businesses go into operation or expand, they nearly always need capital. While sources of capital vary, borrowing from financial institutions is the most common way of attaining it.

Financial institutions in this country make significant investments in loans to business enterprises every day. They put a lot of money at risk, and they are not stupid. They know better than most that a significant number of enterprises in a wide range of industries are liable to fail. For that reason, they wisely secure their investments as best as possible.

I choose the word “secure” advisedly to make a particular point. Financial institutions generally secure their investments through a range of what are often called in law “security interests.” These might be mortgages — or hypothecs in Quebec — floating charges, assignments of receivables or, in the case of banks, Bank Act securities.

The effect of nearly all of these forms of security interest is they give the financial institutions the equivalent of an ownership in many, and often most, of the assets of the enterprise to which they are lending the money. This is a perfectly reasonable business proposition, as Senator Loffreda would remind us. Indeed, a significant amount of the vibrancy of our economy and society depend on access to credit that is provided by these financial institutions. They also have the leverage to acquire these very powerful security interests to protect their investments.

When a bankruptcy or insolvency occurs, the particular attractiveness of these security interests becomes apparent. What happens in bankruptcies and insolvencies is that a neutral third party, a trustee or receiver, becomes responsible for gathering in all of the assets of the insolvent debtor and dividing up the proceeds among the creditors in accordance with a particular structure of distribution — for example, the one set out in the Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act.

The financial institution’s protection is in the form of, essentially, an ownership interest in the insolvent debtors’ assets to the tune and extent of the indebtedness to the financial institution.

As a result, the legal understanding is that, to the extent of that lender’s claim, the assets of the insolvent debtor essentially belong to the financial institution. In law, then, to the extent of that claim, those assets are not part of the insolvent debtor’s business to be shared among other creditors.

Indeed, secured creditors often proceed to recover their investments without reference to bankruptcy or insolvency proceedings, since the terms of their lending arrangements nearly always entitle them to recover those investments by seizing and selling the assets of the debtor when the debtor defaults on the loan payments.

You may be familiar with the movie *Repo Man* or a person who has had their car repossessed for not making payments. Well, think *Repo Man* writ large.

In many of these cases, the financial institutions themselves lose money. It makes another option, particularly in the case of fairly large insolvent debtors, attractive.

This is an opportunity, if sufficiently agreed upon by creditors, for the company to restructure and enter into what are called “arrangements” under the Companies’ Creditors Arrangement Act. This is intended to create the opportunity, under guidance, for the company to be revitalized for the benefit of all, including the creditors. It is what the Companies’ Creditors Arrangement Act makes possible. I will say more about one aspect of this act in a few minutes.

Returning to your standard bankruptcy or insolvency, after the secured creditors have asserted their claims, there is often not much left for the remaining unsecured creditors — and sometimes nothing. One of those remaining unsecured creditors is the category of perishable fruits and vegetable producers, in many circumstances, who will have sold their product to a company that is now insolvent, and will have done so without having been paid.

• (1710)

At this point, you may be inclined to say, “Well, too bad. They should have assessed their risk better when they began selling their product to the company that ultimately went under.” Or, you might say, “They should have taken better security in relation to their credit claim, like the banks.” Ironically, though, they are in the position that they face partly because they do not have access to the kind of financial information about their buyer that financial lenders are entitled to require. And they do not have the bargaining power to leverage security interests from their customers in the same way that financial institutions do when they lend money to the enterprise.

The same dilemma applies to workers who are — until they get paid at the end of their pay period — unsecured creditors in similar positions to the fruit and vegetable growers. Let me give you a small example at this point on this access to financial information and lack of leverage in the context of employees.

Earlier this week, my partner’s 16-year-old granddaughter was offered a job at a clothing store. She has no idea about the financial viability of the clothing store. I suggested to her that prior to taking the job and in order to secure her pay at the end of

each month, she demand the store's financial information — its revenues, expenses, payroll, debt load, profit and loss and — I am not done yet — a mortgage on all the assets of the clothing store to secure her part-time wages. Can you imagine how that conversation would go? I don't quite know how it would go, but the last sentence in the conversation is likely to be, "I think we'll hire someone else." At 16, even she found this proposition to be preposterous and laughable. Well, it's not quite as dramatic for fruit and vegetable producers, but the lack of leverage prevails in their industry as well.

Returning to the fruit and vegetable business, there is no doubt that the financial injections provided by financial institutions are an indispensable element in creating and building enterprises. But keep in mind that in that sector, and in the food sector generally, the providers of the basic product that will be sold by that grocery company or that manufacturer are no less critical to the company's success. I am sure you would agree with this: It doesn't matter how beautiful the grocery store or the factory processing the fruits and vegetables is. If there is no fruit or vegetables, the business is going nowhere. In circumstances where the grocery business or other buyer becomes insolvent, it is not immediately obvious that the fairest distribution of proceeds to creditors' claimants should privilege financial institutions. Indeed, that privilege is based on the market power available to those institutions when they lend money.

There is one other factor worth considering when we look at this insolvency picture. I wouldn't try this out, except I tried it out on Senator Robinson and she seemed to like it.

When financial institutions take a loss on investments like this, they have strategies available to address and balance risks across their lending portfolios. Furthermore, they have the ability to adjust the interest rates at which they lend money, by small amounts, to guard against this risk. However, it is rare, at least to my knowledge, for a financial institution to become insolvent just because one debtor went under. By comparison, most fruit and vegetable producers are not operating at such a high level of size, expertise and resourcefulness. In circumstances where significant amounts of fruit and vegetables have been advanced on credit, and suppliers are not paid, it becomes a significantly greater risk to them that they might become insolvent. This is a financial tragedy, and it has consequences for their own creditors, workers and so on.

When a tree falls in the forest and nobody is there to hear it, does it make a sound? I don't know. But when a tree falls in the forest and knocks over another tree, and that tree knocks over another and another, whether anybody hears it or not, a lot of trees will have fallen down. Trying to reduce the risk of that first tree falling over so that a whole line of trees doesn't bear the impact seems like good public policy to me. It becomes easy to see why a public intervention is appropriate to try to rebalance this situation.

As to that intervention, Bill C-280 passed in the other place by a vote of 320 to 1.

Now that we have seen the way in which financial institutions, perfectly legitimately, seek to protect their interests when lending money to a financial enterprise, you can see the way in which

Bill C-280 attempts a slightly modified version of the same strategy in order to protect unpaid producers of fruit and vegetables.

Here is how it works — I need another prop at this stage.

This bill creates what is known as a statutory deemed trust in favour of fruit and vegetable producers. To understand this slightly better and to understand its limitations, we need to appreciate the concept of a trust.

Let me give you an unrelated example. Some of us have been asked to serve as executors in other people's wills — family members' or close friends'. When that happens, the executor takes over the assets of the person who died and acquires what is often called a bare legal interest in that property. You might have to sell some of the assets of the person whose estate you are executing. In order to do so, you need to have the legal ownership facility, but in law, you hold the property in trust for the beneficiaries of the will. This means they are known — you are not — as the beneficial owner of the property, not the trustee.

As well, in the law of trusts, trustees are expected not to mingle their own personal property, such as their bank accounts, with the assets that come into their hands as executors, that is, separate bank accounts, for example. Co-mingling of assets is not allowed. Indeed, in standard trust law, co-mingling puts the existence of the trust in jeopardy, partly because you can no longer figure out what the trust property is and what isn't. In legalese, you can't trace the trust property.

This bill seeks to create, on behalf of the perishable fruit and vegetable growers, who are creditors in this situation, essentially, a legal fiction. The bill establishes a deemed trust so that the supplier of the fruit and vegetables acquires, at a certain point, a beneficial interest in the fruit and vegetables or the proceeds of the sale of them, even though the legal ownership might have been transferred to the now insolvent buyer. The legal effect of this trust is to seek to prevent the buyer of the fruit and vegetables — the one who didn't pay, that is, the insolvent buyer — from acquiring the complete legal and legally enforceable interest in the fruit and vegetables. This bill holds back from the acquirer the beneficial ownership of the product or the money that the product might have generated.

You can see at once that this is tricky, but legislation can do a lot of tricky things to achieve good public policy.

Essentially, the idea is to prevent the asset, namely the fruit or vegetables and their proceeds, from becoming the beneficial ownership of the buyer until such time as the fruit and vegetable seller has been paid, thereby preventing the property from falling under the security interest of the financial institution. This enables the fruit and vegetable producers who supplied the product to have the first claim on those assets in the bankruptcy, insolvency or restructuring because, by virtue of this bill, the product or the proceeds are their property and not the property of the debtor who bought the property.

To some extent, you can see why it needs to be done in this fashion. Once the full ownership of the property reaches the soon-to-be-insolvent buyer, a lender's security interest latches onto it, and any priority for the fruit and vegetables is lost. The

ordinary structure of the provisions of this bill achieve this outcome. However, to make that perfectly clear, subclause 2(2) of the Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act amendment and 3(2) of the Companies' Creditors Arrangement Act amendment state — and you get the point here:

For greater certainty, once the perishable fruits or vegetables, as well as any of the proceeds of sale, are deemed to be held in trust by the purchaser for the supplier in accordance with subsection (1), they are not included in the property of the purchaser.

Let me emphasize, “they are not included in the property of the purchaser.”

• (1720)

The second part of this conversation, though, is that however powerful that trust is, to be honest, there are four aspects of the bill that might limit its effectiveness. I think it would be important to share them with you.

First, by virtue of the structure of the bill, the trust itself, and those assets, does not kick in until a series of procedural things have happened. The fruit or vegetable supplier has to give notice under the relevant section of the act of its intention to rely on the trust provision, and it is necessary that a period of time pass — up to 30 days — during which the buyer fails to pay the entire balance owing for the fruits or vegetables.

Here is the problem: During this short period of time, the trust has yet to land on the property, and it is almost a sure thing that a financial lender's security interest will land on the fruit or vegetables and their proceeds during that interregnum and essentially out beat them to a property claim against the fruit or vegetables before the trust has the ability to kick in.

I spent years studying and writing about the ways by which such “deemed” trusts and other vehicles could try to get ahead of commercial interests of financial institutions to protect unpaid wages in bankruptcy, and it's fair to say that it is almost impossible to do absent watertight and highly interventionist — and to some extent, highly fictitious — assumptions in legislation.

Let me give you one example. Provinces have been the most active in trying to protect employees' wages in circumstances of insolvency. They have tried deemed mortgages and deemed trusts, with super-priority, to protect these situations. Take statutory trusts for wages as an example. Here is what often happens: You start work today and begin to earn wages to be paid at the end of the month. You're a creditor of the employer until you are paid.

We are actually creditors of the Government of Canada today, as we speak. Some of us have worked hard and earned nine days' worth of pay for which we have not yet been paid. We probably have an employer that is stable enough that we'll get paid at the end of April.

A statutory trust in the situations I was just describing — created by a province, let's say — immediately attaches to the employer's assets to secure your pay. That's great. It's given

priority in many jurisdictions over any other creditor, including any secured creditor. When you get paid, though, you are no longer a creditor, even for a day. The trust ends, to be started up again on Monday when you start work for the next month. But, during that weekend, your statutory trust has come to an end — in legal language, the trust was vacated by payment — and automatically, the secured creditors' secularity kicks in.

So, on Monday, when your trust starts up again to attach to the employer's property, it applies to property the employer owns, which is the property less the value of that security interest from the financial lender, because, over the weekend, the security interest plopped down on the property when you weren't looking.

The courts have been diligent in protecting these conventional rules of priority with respect to commercial security interests when the conventional laws and the facts on the ground make it possible. It's not evil; it's just a competition among claimants and, quite frankly, the “littler folks” have little leverage and tend to lose out. Having to wait for the trust to kick in pursuant to this bill might actually be fatal to its overall effectiveness.

Second, since it is common for the goods that are being supplied in these situations to be mixed together with other goods, and certainly the proceeds mixed together in bank accounts or cash registers or wherever, co-mingling is sure to occur. As I mentioned earlier, in the law of trusts, co-mingling of trust assets with other assets can be fatal to a trust. This is made more complicated since those rules are governed by provincial jurisdiction and the legislation is specific in saying it does not upend the basic laws of trusts in provincial jurisdiction.

Third, a narrow slice of the law to which this bill applies — and this should emphasize for the chair of the Banking Committee some concerns about the structure of the distribution of the assets or their value in bankruptcies and insolvencies.

In this narrow slice of the law relating to corporate restructurings of larger companies under the Companies' Creditors Arrangement Act, CCAA, another impediment arises. When these initiatives to restructure a company are pursued to rescue a failing company through a financial restructuring, people with talent need to be retained to do the heavy lifting to try to get the company back on its feet — business people, accountants, wise financial people and the like — and they need to be paid; that seems to be fair. The Companies' Creditors Arrangement Act allows courts to protect the payment arrangements for these people. Otherwise, many would not, in some cases, even take on the work — fair enough.

Under the CCAA, the courts can order that they be paid ahead of secured creditors and the most super-prioritized trust of all in federal legislation, the statutory trust in the Income Tax Act for the remittance of income tax deductions from employees' pay that the insolvent employer was supposed to retain and remit but didn't. The Income Tax Act gives this claimant claim under the Government of Canada as a true super-priority.

In 2021, the Supreme Court of Canada, in a case entitled *Canada v. Canada North Group Inc.*, ruled in a five-to-four ruling that a judge could order security against a company's assets to pay the restructuring team, and such an order was a super-priority that took precedence over everything, including the super-priority of the income tax statutory trust, a bigger, more powerful statutory trust than is contemplated in this legislation. It seems likely that the deemed trust for perishable fruit and vegetable producers created by Bill C-280 will have to give way to similar claims for compensation when a CCAA restructuring occurs.

Fourth is a more general limitation. There are a lot of official statistics in relation to bankruptcy proceedings and official receiverships. To give you an idea of where the story lies, during and after COVID the number of official bankruptcies and receiverships declined. You might ask yourself how that could possibly be. The Government of Canada, supported by all of us, was supportive of a lot of those business enterprises, but there were real economic struggles during that period.

At this point, you will see the answer: Those official statistics disguise the true impact of not getting paid by insolvent companies. This is because a vast number of small companies simply fold up shop, unable to pay their bills. In those circumstances, unsecured creditors receive next to nothing on their claims.

As many of you will know, if an individual is unable to pay his or her debts, the only option is to go through a formal process, either through bankruptcy or the processes the Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act authorizes to get back on your feet. You really do need to get back on your feet.

I taught a course on bankruptcy and insolvency for a period of time, and I used to refer to this as the process of taking a "financial shower," where your debts are washed away but you lose everything except the most basic — "financial underwear." Everything else gets turned over to creditors. Without that "financial shower," you are essentially stuck.

• (1730)

With incorporated companies, it is different. To begin with, they are not natural persons. If they get into serious financial trouble, secured creditors repossesses the assets, and the unsecured creditors can go after them or put them into bankruptcy, but it is often not worth the cost of doing so and unsecured creditors just swallow their losses. The insolvent company can essentially drop dead financially and walk away from its debts. This is the part of insolvency that is below the official numbers but the tip of the proverbial iceberg, so to speak.

It is nearly always the corporate buyers, large and small, who are engaged in buying and selling products. The trust works, but to make it work, the creditor might have to actually initiate a claim against one of those debtors recognizing that if there are secured creditors, they will have swooped in and claimed the assets of the debtor — the buyer of the fruits or vegetables. It is not as simple to do this as it is to asserting a claim in a bankruptcy because you have to initiate the process at some

financial risk to yourself. In light of what I have suggested about some of the delicacies around the quality of this deemed trust, people may be reluctant to do so.

I come now to my third, much briefer set of remarks, I'm sure you'll be relieved to know. I want to say a word or two about unsecured creditors, generally. As I noted earlier, these folks are at the bottom of the pile when it comes to recovering unpaid bills in bankruptcies and insolvencies. My point here — and this bill emphasizes one part of it — is that there are serious questions to be asked about whether from a public policy point of view we have the compensation priorities right in the cases of bankruptcies and insolvencies.

Each of the claimants in these circumstances has a legitimate claim. The priorities for these claims, however, tend to be determined by market power on the one hand and government-structured priorities on the other. Let me highlight one incongruous example.

The recovery of employees' income tax deductions at source from an insolvent employer seems to me to be perfectly legitimate. People need to pay their taxes, otherwise, how will senators get paid? It is given a legislative super-priority in the recovery scheme, these employees' income tax deductions. Well, I would have thought that employees' unpaid pay, the part where employees actually earned, would deserve at least the same protection. As far as I know, the Government of Canada has not gone under due to the failure to recover some of these source tax deductions, but employees, particularly those working in low-end, low-paid positions, are extremely vulnerable in circumstances where they do not get paid. It is an injustice, in my opinion.

Second, in trying to address this question, the Government of Canada has structured modest compensation for unpaid employees under the Wage Earner Protection Program. This ensures that employees will receive a portion of what they are owed, but only part, and rarely get much of the remainder. Does it actually make sense on this point for taxpayers to be subsidizing the claims of larger creditors who could easily restructure their priorities and in exchange give workers a better claim status or to protect perishable fruit and vegetable producers in a similar way? There are many more anomalies and, of course, implications for these changes if we were to make them. The point is that the whole regime cries out for careful study and reconsideration.

Admittedly, such a study was done by Parliament a decade ago. What did it produce? A parliamentary report and nothing else. Elephants laboured mightily to produce not even a mouse. We must revisit this. It would be an honourable and ideal project for us — perhaps for our Banking Committee — and I use this opportunity to urge that it be taken up.

Finally, an important trade policy dimension of this bill, about which Senator MacDonald spoke as well. The absence of the kind of protection that this bill would provide to perishable fruit and vegetable producers has denied them access to this kind of protection when they sell perishable fruits and vegetables to buyers in the U.S. The U.S. has a comparable form of protection for these sellers in the U.S., which had previously been available to Canadian sellers. The name of this legislation is the Perishable

Agricultural Commodities Act. The absence of reciprocity for U.S. fruit and vegetable sellers into Canada for this kind of protection has resulted in the denial of similar protections for Canadians who sell perishable fruit and vegetables into U.S. markets.

Aside from the cooperative and constructive trade policy that this bill represents, it also has the ability to facilitate expanded trade for our perishable fruit and vegetable sellers. It reduces the risk that when they sell into the U.S., and it will no doubt encourage the expansion of our producers into those markets. It is, in that respect, a win-win trade measure.

In conclusion, despite concerns that I have about the bill's ability to achieve all that is hoped for, as I have mentioned, it is a significant step forward, strongly supported in the other place and, if I may say so, good interim public policy. I urge you to support the bill and see it to proceed through the Senate expeditiously. Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

The Hon. the Speaker: Senator Simons, do you have a question?

Hon. Paula Simons: I do. Senator Cotter, would you accept a question?

Senator Cotter: Yes.

Senator Simons: In no way can I match your expertise in understanding bankruptcy law — I doubt there is a senator in this chamber who can — but I am concerned because the Superintendent of Bankruptcy wrote to the members of the Agriculture Committee and the Banking Committee raising serious and significant concerns about what the superintendent called a piecemeal approach to creating special categories, suggesting that if we made an exception for fruit and vegetable growers that other groups will come forward and ask for similar exemptions. They also raised a concern that with this kind of restructuring, the deemed trust could:

... result in the depletion of a purchaser's working capital at a time when it is most needed and could prevent the purchaser from obtaining interim financing thus endangering the prospects of successful restructuring that would preserve business value, save jobs and improve creditor recovery.

I wonder what your response is to that concern.

Senator Cotter: Let me answer your second question first. You can protect your working capital by paying your bills. One of those bills is to the fruit and vegetable producers who provided you the product that makes you successful. My sympathy is pretty limited there.

On the first point, I think it's the reason why I somewhat unjustifiably, I think, included what I called "section 3" and encouraged the Banking Committee to give this some consideration because your point is an extremely accurate and valid one.

We tend to do this in various areas in the Senate. We work on individual provisions of the Criminal Code, and you and I at the Legal Committee participate in that work, and there is some risk that by doing that we aren't being very effective and thinking more comprehensively. What we tend to do is say that until the comprehensive initiative comes along, we should make a small improvement, and I think that's what this bill does. But this whole area calls out for reflective public policy consideration of who needs better protection and who is more vulnerable in these kinds of circumstances.

I don't know if I'm a capitalist, but I respect markets, including capital markets. I respect the need for people who make financial investments to try to see those financial investments protected. But the consequences for the most vulnerable here — and the most vulnerable in this particular context are significant and we should be working hard to see them addressed, Senator Simons. I hope that beyond this specific bill and the work we did with respect to pensions, we look at this in a richer and more complete way, weigh the pros and cons throughout and actually take action in accordance with our findings. Thank you.

Hon. Yuen Pau Woo: Will Senator Cotter take another question?

Senator Cotter: Certainly.

Senator Woo: Senator Cotter, would you comment on the relative merit of other protection tools for these producers, such as accounts receivable insurance or factoring, which separate the risk away from the buyer of the product to a third party?

Senator Cotter: Senator Woo, I think you would be much more knowledgeable about the various tools available to a seller in this context. Essentially, it invites them to spend money to insure themselves against the risk of not getting paid. That's a fair enough proposition. Indeed, it is in a way what we ask the financial institutions to do when they have to measure risk.

• (1740)

It's a lot tougher if you are a little guy, where you have so little access to information to know what kind of risk you have, because you may not know very much about the viability of the person to whom you are selling the product. I use the little example of the granddaughter wanting to know the status of the company that she is going to work for part-time. It's not quite the same with fruit and vegetable growers, and some of them are quite substantial in their operations. It's harder for them to facilitate and implement those kinds of risk management measures, I think. You would know better. I wish Senator Robinson were required to answer this question.

It's a legitimate point, but I don't think it solves the problem for so many of the suppliers in these circumstances.

(On motion of Senator Clement, debate adjourned.)

FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL TRADE

MOTION TO AUTHORIZE COMMITTEE TO STUDY THE SITUATION IN LEBANON—DEBATE CONTINUED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Housakos, seconded by the Honourable Senator Smith:

That the Standing Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade be authorized to examine and report on the situation in Lebanon and determine whether Canada should appoint a special envoy, when and if the committee is formed; and

That the committee submit its final report no later than February 28, 2022.

Hon. Yonah Martin (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, with leave of the Senate, I would like to take the adjournment 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.)

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

COMMITTEE AUTHORIZED TO STUDY FEDERAL SPECIFIC CLAIMS POLICY AND PROCESS

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Francis, seconded by the Honourable Senator Klyne:

That the Standing Senate Committee on Indigenous Peoples be authorized to examine and report on the federal specific claims policy and process including, but not limited to:

- (a) the research and development of specific claims;
- (b) the settlement of specific claims including compensation and availability of mediation;

That the committee report to the Senate no later than October 30, 2025;

That the committee retain all powers necessary to publicize its findings for 180 days after the tabling of the final report; and

That the committee be permitted, notwithstanding usual practices, to deposit reports on this study with the Clerk of the Senate if the Senate is not then sitting, and that the reports be deemed to have been tabled in the Senate.

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to.)

[Translation]

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

COMMITTEE AUTHORIZED TO STUDY PROVISIONS AND OPERATION OF THE INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES ACT

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Francis, seconded by the Honourable Senator Klyne:

That the Standing Senate Committee on Indigenous Peoples be authorized to examine and report on the provisions and operation of the *Indigenous Languages Act* (S.C. 2019, c. 23) pursuant to Section 49.1 of said Act;

That the committee submit its final report to the Senate no later than December 31, 2025;

That the committee be permitted, notwithstanding usual practices, to deposit reports on this study with the Clerk of the Senate if the Senate is not then sitting, and that the reports be deemed to have been tabled in the Senate; and

That the committee retain all powers necessary to publicize its findings for 180 days after the tabling of the final report.

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to.)

[English]

**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. Yuen Pau Woo: Your Honour, it's been six months since anyone has spoken to this inquiry. I would like to exercise my right of final reply.

The Hon. the Speaker: I wish to inform the Senate that if the Honourable Senator Woo speaks now, his speech will have the effect of closing the debate on this inquiry.

(On motion of Senator Martin, debate adjourned.)

[Translation]

NATIONAL FINANCE

COMMITTEE AUTHORIZED TO EXTEND DATE OF FINAL REPORT
ON STUDY OF MATTERS RELATING TO FEDERAL ESTIMATES
GENERALLY AND OTHER FINANCIAL MATTERS

Hon. Percy Mockler, pursuant to notice of March 20, 2024, moved:

That, notwithstanding the order of the Senate adopted on Tuesday, March 29, 2022, the date for the final report of the Standing Senate Committee on National Finance in relation to its study on matters relating to federal estimates generally and other financial matters, as described in rule 12-7(7), be extended from April 14, 2024, to December 31, 2025.

He said: Honourable senators, I move the motion standing in my name.

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to.)

(At 5:47 p.m., the Senate was continued until tomorrow at 2 p.m.)

THE SPEAKER

The Honourable Raymonde Gagné

THE GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVE IN THE SENATE

The Honourable Marc Gold

THE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION

The Honourable Donald Neil Plett

FACILITATOR OF THE INDEPENDENT SENATORS GROUP

The Honourable Raymonde Saint-Germain

THE LEADER OF THE CANADIAN SENATORS GROUP

The Honourable Scott Tannas

THE LEADER OF THE PROGRESSIVE SENATE GROUP

The Honourable Pierre J. Dalphond

OFFICERS OF THE SENATE

INTERIM CLERK OF THE SENATE AND CLERK OF THE PARLIAMENTS

Gérald Lafrenière

LAW CLERK AND PARLIAMENTARY COUNSEL

Philippe Hallée

USHER OF THE BLACK ROD

J. Greg Peters

THE MINISTRY

(In order of precedence)

(April 1, 2024)

| | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| The Right Hon. Justin Trudeau | Prime Minister |
| The Hon. Chrystia Freeland | Minister of Finance |
| | Deputy Prime Minister |
| The Hon. Lawrence MacAulay | Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food |
| The Hon. Dominic LeBlanc | Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs |
| | Minister of Public Services and Procurement |
| The Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos | Minister of National Revenue |
| The Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau | Minister of Foreign Affairs |
| The Hon. Mélanie Joly | Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard |
| The Hon. Diane LeBouthillier | President of the King's Privy Council for Canada |
| The Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan | Minister of Emergency Preparedness |
| | Minister responsible for the Pacific Economic Development Agency of Canada |
| | Minister of Sport and Physical Activity |
| The Hon. Carla Qualtrough | Minister of Indigenous Services |
| The Hon. Patty Hajdu | Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario |
| | Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry |
| The Hon. François-Philippe Champagne | Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (on parental leave) |
| The Hon. Karina Gould | Minister of International Development |
| The Hon. Ahmed Hussen | Minister of Labour and Seniors |
| The Hon. Seamus O'Regan | Minister of Veterans Affairs |
| The Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor | Associate Minister of National Defence |
| | Minister of Transport |
| The Hon. Pablo Rodriguez | Minister of National Defence |
| The Hon. Bill Blair | Minister of Export Promotion, International Trade and Economic Development |
| The Hon. Mary Ng | Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario |
| | Minister of Energy and National Resources |
| The Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson | President of the Treasury Board |
| The Hon. Anita Anand | Minister of Environment and Climate Change |
| The Hon. Steven Guilbeault | Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship |
| The Hon. Marc Miller | Minister responsible for Prairies Economic Development Canada |
| The Hon. Dan Vandal | Minister responsible for the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency |
| | Minister of Northern Affairs |
| | Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Official Languages |
| The Hon. Randy Boissonnault | Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities |
| The Hon. Sean Fraser | Minister of Health |
| The Hon. Mark Holland | Minister responsible for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency |
| The Hon. Gudie Hutchings | Minister of Rural Economic Development |
| | Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Youth |
| The Hon. Marci Ien | Minister of Diversity, Inclusion and Persons with Disabilities |
| The Hon. Kamal Khara | Minister of Canadian Heritage |
| The Hon. Pascale St-Onge | Leader of the Government in the House of Commons |
| The Hon. Steven MacKinnon | Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations |
| The Hon. Gary Anandasangaree | Minister of Citizens' Services |
| The Hon. Terry Beech | Minister of Tourism |
| The Hon. Soraya Martinez Ferrada | Minister responsible for the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Region of Quebec |
| | Minister of Mental Health and Addictions |
| | Associate Minister of Health |
| The Hon. Ya'ara Saks | Minister of Families, Children and Social Development |
| | Minister of Small Business |
| The Hon. Jenna Suds | Minister of Justice |
| The Hon. Rechie Valdez | Attorney General of Canada |
| The Hon. Arif Virani | |

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ACCORDING TO SENIORITY

(April 1, 2024)

| Senator | Designation | Post Office Address |
|--------------------------------------|--|-----------------------------------|
| The Honourable | | |
| Jane Cordy..... | Nova Scotia..... | Dartmouth, N.S. |
| Mobina S. B. Jaffer..... | British Columbia..... | North Vancouver, B.C. |
| Pierrette Ringuette..... | New Brunswick..... | Edmundston, N.B. |
| Percy E. Downe..... | Charlottetown..... | Charlottetown, P.E.I. |
| Paul J. Massicotte..... | De Lanaudière..... | Mont-Saint-Hilaire, Que. |
| Stephen Greene..... | Halifax - The Citadel..... | Halifax, N.S. |
| Michael L. MacDonald..... | Cape Breton..... | Dartmouth, N.S. |
| Percy Mockler..... | New Brunswick..... | St. Leonard, N.B. |
| Pamela Wallin..... | Saskatchewan..... | Wadena, Sask. |
| Yonah Martin..... | British Columbia..... | Vancouver, B.C. |
| Patrick Brazeau..... | Repentigny..... | Maniwaki, Que. |
| Leo Housakos..... | Wellington..... | Laval, Que. |
| Donald Neil Plett..... | Landmark..... | Landmark, Man. |
| Claude Carignan, P.C..... | Mille Isles..... | Saint-Eustache, Que. |
| Elizabeth Marshall..... | Newfoundland and Labrador..... | Paradise, Nfld. & Lab. |
| Judith G. Seidman..... | De la Durantaye..... | Saint-Raphaël, Que. |
| Rose-May Poirier..... | New Brunswick—Saint-Louis-de-Kent..... | Saint-Louis-de-Kent, N.B. |
| Salma Ataullahjan..... | Ontario (Toronto)..... | Toronto, Ont. |
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| Diane Bellemare..... | Alma..... | Outremont, Que. |
| David M. Wells..... | Newfoundland and Labrador..... | St. John's, Nfld. & Lab. |
| Victor Oh..... | Mississauga..... | Mississauga, Ont. |
| Denise Batters..... | Saskatchewan..... | Regina, Sask. |
| Scott Tannas..... | Alberta..... | High River, Alta. |
| Peter Harder, P.C..... | Ottawa..... | Manotick, Ont. |
| Raymonde Gagné, <i>Speaker</i> | Manitoba..... | Winnipeg, Man. |
| Frances Lankin, P.C..... | Ontario..... | Restoule, Ont. |
| Ratna Omidvar..... | Ontario..... | Toronto, Ont. |
| Chantal Petitclerc..... | Grandville..... | Montreal, Que. |
| Yuen Pau Woo..... | British Columbia..... | North Vancouver, B.C. |
| René Cormier..... | New Brunswick..... | Caraquet, N.B. |
| Nancy J. Hartling..... | New Brunswick..... | Riverview, N.B. |
| Kim Pate..... | Ontario..... | Ottawa, Ont. |
| Tony Dean..... | Ontario..... | Toronto, Ont. |
| Wanda Thomas Bernard..... | Nova Scotia (East Preston)..... | East Preston, N.S. |
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| Éric Forest..... | Gulf..... | Rimouski, Que. |
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| Senator | Designation | Post Office Address |
|------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Mary Jane McCallum | Manitoba | Winnipeg, Man. |
| Robert Black | Ontario | Centre Wellington, Ont. |
| Marty Deacon | Waterloo Region | Waterloo, Ont. |
| Yvonne Boyer | Ontario | Merrickville-Wolford, Ont. |
| Mohamed-Iqbal Ravalia | Newfoundland and Labrador | Twillingate, Nfld. & Lab. |
| Pierre J. Dalphond | De Lorimier | Montreal, Que. |
| Donna Dasko | Ontario | Toronto, Ont. |
| Colin Deacon | Nova Scotia | Halifax, N.S. |
| Julie Miville-Dechéne | Inkerman | Mont-Royal, Que. |
| Bev Busson | British Columbia | North Okanagan Region, B.C. |
| Marty Klyne | Saskatchewan | White City, Sask. |
| Patti LaBoucane-Benson | Alberta | Spruce Grove, Alta. |
| Paula Simons | Alberta | Edmonton, Alta. |
| Peter M. Boehm | Ontario | Ottawa, Ont. |
| Brian Francis | Prince Edward Island | Rocky Point, P.E.I. |
| Dawn Anderson | Northwest Territories | Yellowknife, N.W.T. |
| Pat Duncan | Yukon | Whitehorse, Yukon |
| Rosemary Moodie | Ontario | Toronto, Ont. |
| Stan Kutcher | Nova Scotia | Halifax, N.S. |
| Tony Loffreda | Shawinigan | Montreal, Que. |
| Brent Cotter | Saskatchewan | Saskatoon, Sask. |
| Hassan Yussuff | Ontario | Toronto, Ont. |
| Bernadette Clement | Ontario | Cornwall, Ont. |
| Jim Quinn | New Brunswick | Saint John, N.B. |
| Karen Sorensen | Alberta | Banff, Alta. |
| Amina Gerba | Rigaud | Blainville, Que. |
| Clément Gignac | Kennebec | Lac Saint-Joseph, Que. |
| Michèle Audette | De Salaberry | Quebec City, Que. |
| David M. Arnot | Saskatchewan | Saskatoon, Sask. |
| Flordeliz (Gigi) Osler | Manitoba | Winnipeg, Man. |
| Margo Greenwood | British Columbia | Vernon, B.C. |
| Sharon Burey | Ontario | Windsor, Ont. |
| Andrew Cardozo | Ontario | Ottawa, Ont. |
| Rebecca Patterson | Ontario | Ottawa, Ont. |
| Iris G. Petten | Newfoundland and Labrador | St. John's, Nfld. & Lab. |
| Jane MacAdam | Prince Edward Island | West St. Peters, P.E.I. |
| Judy A. White | Newfoundland and Labrador | St. George's, Nfld. & Lab. |
| Paul J. Prosper | Nova Scotia | Hants County, N.S. |
| Joan Kingston | New Brunswick | New Maryland, N.B. |
| John M. McNair | New Brunswick | Grand-Bouctouche, N.B. |
| Réjean Aucoin | Nova Scotia | Cape Breton, N.S. |
| Krista Ross | New Brunswick | Fredericton, N.B. |
| Rodger Cuzner | Nova Scotia | Cape Breton, N.S. |
| Marnie McBean | Ontario | Toronto, Ont. |
| Toni Varone | Ontario | Toronto, Ont. |
| Paulette Senior | Ontario | Pickering, Ont. |
| Mary Robinson | Prince Edward Island | Charlottetown, P.E.I. |
| Mohammad Al Zaibak | Ontario | Toronto, Ont. |
| Manuelle Oudar | La Salle | Quebec City, Que. |

SENATORS OF CANADA

ALPHABETICAL LIST

(April 1, 2024)

| Senator | Designation | Post Office Address | Political Affiliation |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|
| The Honourable | | | |
| Al Zaibak, Mohammad | Ontario | Toronto, Ont. | Non-affiliated |
| Anderson, Dawn | Northwest Territories | Yellowknife, N.W.T. | Progressive Senate Group |
| Arnot, David M. | Saskatchewan | Saskatoon, Sask. | Independent Senators Group |
| Ataullahjan, Salma | Ontario (Toronto) | Toronto, Ont. | Conservative Party of Canada |
| Aucoin, Réjean | Nova Scotia | Cape Breton, N.S. | Canadian Senators Group |
| Audette, Michèle | De Salaberry | Quebec City, Que. | Progressive Senate Group |
| Batters, Denise | Saskatchewan | Regina, Sask. | Conservative Party of Canada |
| Bellemare, Diane | Alma | Outremont, Que. | Independent Senators Group |
| Bernard, Wanda Thomas | Nova Scotia (East Preston) | East Preston, N.S. | Progressive Senate Group |
| Black, Robert | Ontario | Centre Wellington, Ont. | Canadian Senators Group |
| Boehm, Peter M. | Ontario | Ottawa, Ont. | Independent Senators Group |
| Boniface, Gwen | Ontario | Orillia, Ont. | Independent Senators Group |
| Boyer, Yvonne | Ontario | Merrickville-Wolford, Ont. | Independent Senators Group |
| Brazeau, Patrick | Repentigny | Maniwaki, Que. | Non-affiliated |
| Burey, Sharon | Ontario | Windsor, Ont. | Canadian Senators Group |
| Busson, Bev | British Columbia | North Okanagan Region, B.C. | Independent Senators Group |
| Cardozo, Andrew | Ontario | Ottawa, Ont. | Progressive Senate Group |
| Carignan, Claude, P.C. | Mille Isles | Saint-Eustache, Que. | Conservative Party of Canada |
| Clement, Bernadette | Ontario | Cornwall, Ont. | Independent Senators Group |
| Cordy, Jane | Nova Scotia | Dartmouth, N.S. | Progressive Senate Group |
| Cormier, René | New Brunswick | Caraquet, N.B. | Independent Senators Group |
| Cotter, Brent | Saskatchewan | Saskatoon, Sask. | Independent Senators Group |
| Coyle, Mary | Nova Scotia | Antigonish, N.S. | Independent Senators Group |
| Cuzner, Rodger | Nova Scotia | Cape Breton, N.S. | Progressive Senate Group |
| Dagenais, Jean-Guy | Victoria | Blainville, Que. | Canadian Senators Group |
| Dalphond, Pierre J. | De Lorimier | Montreal, Que. | Progressive Senate Group |
| Dasko, Donna | Ontario | Toronto, Ont. | Independent Senators Group |
| Deacon, Colin | Nova Scotia | Halifax, N.S. | Canadian Senators Group |
| Deacon, Marty | Waterloo Region | Waterloo, Ont. | Independent Senators Group |
| Dean, Tony | Ontario | Toronto, Ont. | Independent Senators Group |
| Downe, Percy E. | Charlottetown | Charlottetown, P.E.I. | Canadian Senators Group |
| Duncan, Pat | Yukon | Whitehorse, Yukon | Independent Senators Group |
| Forest, Éric | Gulf | Rimouski, Que. | Independent Senators Group |
| Francis, Brian | Prince Edward Island | Rocky Point, P.E.I. | Progressive Senate Group |
| Gagné, Raymonde, <i>Speaker</i> | Manitoba | Winnipeg, Man. | Non-affiliated |
| Galvez, Rosa | Bedford | Lévis, Que. | Independent Senators Group |
| Gerba, Amina | Rigaud | Blainville, Que. | Progressive Senate Group |
| Gignac, Clément | Kennebec | Lac Saint-Joseph, Que. | Progressive Senate Group |
| Gold, Marc | Stadacona | Westmount, Que. | Non-affiliated |
| Greene, Stephen | Halifax - The Citadel | Halifax, N.S. | Canadian Senators Group |
| Greenwood, Margo | British Columbia | Vernon, B.C. | Independent Senators Group |
| Harder, Peter, P.C. | Ottawa | Manotick, Ont. | Progressive Senate Group |
| Hartling, Nancy J. | New Brunswick | Riverview, N.B. | Independent Senators Group |
| Housakos, Leo | Wellington | Laval, Que. | Conservative Party of Canada |
| Jaffer, Mobina S. B. | British Columbia | North Vancouver, B.C. | Independent Senators Group |
| Kingston, Joan | New Brunswick | New Maryland, N.B. | Independent Senators Group |
| Klyne, Marty | Saskatchewan | White City, Sask. | Progressive Senate Group |
| Kutcher, Stan | Nova Scotia | Halifax, N.S. | Independent Senators Group |
| LaBoucane-Benson, Patti | Alberta | Spruce Grove, Alta. | Non-affiliated |
| Lankin, Frances, P.C. | Ontario | Restoule, Ont. | Non-affiliated |
| Loffreda, Tony | Shawinegan | Montreal, Que. | Independent Senators Group |

| Senator | Designation | Post Office Address | Political Affiliation |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| MacAdam, Jane | Prince Edward Island | West St. Peters, P.E.I. | Independent Senators Group |
| MacDonald, Michael L. | Cape Breton | Dartmouth, N.S. | Conservative Party of Canada |
| Manning, Fabian | Newfoundland and Labrador | St. Bride's, Nfld. & Lab. | Conservative Party of Canada |
| Marshall, Elizabeth | Newfoundland and Labrador | Paradise, Nfld. & Lab. | Conservative Party of Canada |
| Martin, Yonah | British Columbia | Vancouver, B.C. | Conservative Party of Canada |
| Massicotte, Paul J. | De Lanaudière | Mont-Saint-Hilaire, Que. | Independent Senators Group |
| McBean, Marnie | Ontario | Toronto, Ont. | Non-affiliated |
| McCallum, Mary Jane | Manitoba | Winnipeg, Man. | Non-affiliated |
| McNair, John M. | New Brunswick | Grand-Bouctouche, N.B. | Independent Senators Group |
| McPhedran, Marilou | Manitoba | Winnipeg, Man. | Non-affiliated |
| Mégie, Marie-Françoise | Rougemont | Montreal, Que. | Independent Senators Group |
| Miville-Dechéne, Julie | Inkerman | Mont-Royal, Que. | Independent Senators Group |
| Mockler, Percy | New Brunswick | St. Leonard, N.B. | Conservative Party of Canada |
| Moncion, Lucie | Ontario | North Bay, Ont. | Independent Senators Group |
| Moodie, Rosemary | Ontario | Toronto, Ont. | Independent Senators Group |
| Oh, Victor | Mississauga | Mississauga, Ont. | Conservative Party of Canada |
| Omidvar, Ratna | Ontario | Toronto, Ont. | Independent Senators Group |
| Osler, Flordeliz (Gigi) | Manitoba | Winnipeg, Man. | Canadian Senators Group |
| Oudar, Manuelle | La Salle | Quebec City, Que. | Non-affiliated |
| Pate, Kim | Ontario | Ottawa, Ont. | Independent Senators Group |
| Patterson, Rebecca | Ontario | Ottawa, Ont. | Canadian Senators Group |
| Petitclerc, Chantal | Grandville | Montreal, Que. | Independent Senators Group |
| Petten, Iris G. | Newfoundland and Labrador | St. John's, Nfld. & Lab. | Independent Senators Group |
| Plett, Donald Neil | Landmark | Landmark, Man. | Conservative Party of Canada |
| Poirier, Rose-May | New Brunswick—Saint-Louis-de-Kent | Saint-Louis-de-Kent, N.B. | Conservative Party of Canada |
| Prosper, Paul J. | Nova Scotia | Hants County, N.S. | Canadian Senators Group |
| Quinn, Jim | New Brunswick | Saint John, N.B. | Canadian Senators Group |
| Ravalia, Mohamed-Iqbal | Newfoundland and Labrador | Twillingate, Nfld. & Lab. | Independent Senators Group |
| Richards, David | New Brunswick | Fredericton, N.B. | Canadian Senators Group |
| Ringuette, Pierrette | New Brunswick | Edmundston, N.B. | Independent Senators Group |
| Robinson, Mary | Prince Edward Island | Charlottetown, P.E.I. | Non-affiliated |
| Ross, Krista | New Brunswick | Fredericton, N.B. | Canadian Senators Group |
| Saint-Germain, Raymonde | De la Vallière | Quebec City, Que. | Independent Senators Group |
| Seidman, Judith G. | De la Durantaye | Saint-Raphaël, Que. | Conservative Party of Canada |
| Senior, Paulette | Ontario | Pickering, Ont. | Non-affiliated |
| Simons, Paula | Alberta | Edmonton, Alta. | Independent Senators Group |
| Smith, Larry W. | Saurel | Hudson, Que. | Canadian Senators Group |
| Sorensen, Karen | Alberta | Banff, Alta. | Independent Senators Group |
| Tannas, Scott | Alberta | High River, Alta. | Canadian Senators Group |
| Varone, Toni | Ontario | Toronto, Ont. | Non-affiliated |
| Verner, Josée, P.C. | Montarville | Saint-Augustin-de-Desmaures, Que. | Canadian Senators Group |
| Wallin, Pamela | Saskatchewan | Wadena, Sask. | Canadian Senators Group |
| Wells, David M. | Newfoundland and Labrador | St. John's, Nfld. & Lab. | Conservative Party of Canada |
| White, Judy A. | Newfoundland and Labrador | St. George's, Nfld. & Lab. | Progressive Senate Group |
| Woo, Yuen Pau | British Columbia | North Vancouver, B.C. | Independent Senators Group |
| Yussuff, Hassan | Ontario | Toronto, Ont. | Independent Senators Group |

SENATORS OF CANADA
BY PROVINCE AND TERRITORY

(April 1, 2024)

ONTARIO—24

| Senator | Designation | Post Office Address |
|----------------|---|----------------------|
| The Honourable | | |
| 1 | Salma Ataullahjan.....Ontario (Toronto) | Toronto |
| 2 | Victor Oh.....Mississauga | Mississauga |
| 3 | Peter Harder, P.C.....Ottawa | Manotick |
| 4 | Frances Lankin, P.C.....Ontario | Restoule |
| 5 | Ratna Omidvar.....Ontario | Toronto |
| 6 | Kim Pate.....Ontario | Ottawa |
| 7 | Tony Dean.....Ontario | Toronto |
| 8 | Lucie Moncion.....Ontario | North Bay |
| 9 | Gwen Boniface.....Ontario | Orillia |
| 10 | Robert Black.....Ontario | Centre Wellington |
| 11 | Marty Deacon.....Waterloo Region | Waterloo |
| 12 | Yvonne Boyer.....Ontario | Merrickville-Wolford |
| 13 | Donna Dasko.....Ontario | Toronto |
| 14 | Peter M. Boehm.....Ontario | Ottawa |
| 15 | Rosemary Moodie.....Ontario | Toronto |
| 16 | Hassan Yussuff.....Ontario | Toronto |
| 17 | Bernadette Clement.....Ontario | Cornwall |
| 18 | Sharon Burey.....Ontario | Windsor |
| 19 | Andrew Cardozo.....Ontario | Ottawa |
| 20 | Rebecca Patterson.....Ontario | Ottawa |
| 21 | Marnie McBean.....Ontario | Toronto |
| 22 | Toni Varone.....Ontario | Toronto |
| 23 | Paulette Senior.....Ontario | Pickering |
| 24 | Mohammad Al Zaibak.....Ontario | Toronto |

SENATORS BY PROVINCE AND TERRITORY

QUEBEC—24

| Senator | Designation | Post Office Address |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------|
| The Honourable | | |
| 1 Paul J. Massicotte | De Lanaudière | Mont-Saint-Hilaire |
| 2 Patrick Brazeau | Repentigny | Maniwaki |
| 3 Leo Housakos | Wellington | Laval |
| 4 Claude Carignan, P.C. | Mille Isles | Saint-Eustache |
| 5 Judith G. Seidman | De la Durantaye | Saint-Raphaël |
| 6 Larry W. Smith | Saurel | Hudson |
| 7 Josée Verner, P.C. | Montarville | Saint-Augustin-de-Desmaures |
| 8 Jean-Guy Dagenais | Victoria | Blainville |
| 9 Diane Bellemare | Alma | Outremont |
| 10 Chantal Petitclerc | Grandville | Montreal |
| 11 Éric Forest | Gulf | Rimouski |
| 12 Marc Gold | Stadacona | Westmount |
| 13 Marie-Françoise Mégie | Rougemont | Montreal |
| 14 Raymonde Saint-Germain | De la Vallière | Quebec City |
| 15 Rosa Galvez | Bedford | Lévis |
| 16 Pierre J. Dalphond | De Lorimier | Montreal |
| 17 Julie Miville-Dechéne | Inkerman | Mont-Royal |
| 18 Tony Loffreda | Shawinegan | Montreal |
| 19 Amina Gerba | Rigaud | Blainville |
| 20 Clément Gignac | Kennebec | Lac Saint-Joseph |
| 21 Michèle Audette | De Salaberry | Quebec City |
| 22 Manuelle Oudar | La Salle | Quebec City |
| 23 | | |
| 24 | | |

SENATORS BY PROVINCE—MARITIME DIVISION

NOVA SCOTIA—10

| Senator | Designation | Post Office Address |
|------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------|
| The Honourable | | |
| 1 Jane Cordy | Nova Scotia | Dartmouth |
| 2 Stephen Greene | Halifax - The Citadel | Halifax |
| 3 Michael L. MacDonald | Cape Breton | Dartmouth |
| 4 Wanda Thomas Bernard | Nova Scotia (East Preston) | East Preston |
| 5 Mary Coyle | Nova Scotia | Antigonish |
| 6 Colin Deacon | Nova Scotia | Halifax |
| 7 Stan Kutcher | Nova Scotia | Halifax |
| 8 Paul J. Prosper | Nova Scotia | Hants County |
| 9 Réjean Aucoin | Nova Scotia | Cape Breton |
| 10 Rodger Cuzner | Nova Scotia | Cape Breton |

NEW BRUNSWICK—10

| Senator | Designation | Post Office Address |
|-----------------------------|---|---------------------|
| The Honourable | | |
| 1 Pierrette Ringuette | New Brunswick | Edmundston |
| 2 Percy Mockler | New Brunswick | St. Leonard |
| 3 Rose-May Poirier | New Brunswick—Saint-Louis-de-Kent | Saint-Louis-de-Kent |
| 4 René Cormier | New Brunswick | Caraquet |
| 5 Nancy J. Hartling | New Brunswick | Riverview |
| 6 David Richards | New Brunswick | Fredericton |
| 7 Jim Quinn | New Brunswick | Saint John |
| 8 Joan Kingston | New Brunswick | New Maryland |
| 9 John M. McNair | New Brunswick | Grand-Bouctouche |
| 10 Krista Ross | New Brunswick | Fredericton |

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND—4

| Senator | Designation | Post Office Address |
|------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------|
| The Honourable | | |
| 1 Percy E. Downe | Charlottetown | Charlottetown |
| 2 Brian Francis | Prince Edward Island | Rocky Point |
| 3 Jane MacAdam | Prince Edward Island | West St. Peters |
| 4 Mary Robinson | Prince Edward Island | Charlottetown |

SENATORS BY PROVINCE—WESTERN DIVISION

MANITOBA—6

| Senator | Designation | Post Office Address |
|--|----------------|---------------------|
| The Honourable | | |
| 1 Donald Neil Plett | Landmark | Landmark |
| 2 Raymonde Gagné, <i>Speaker</i> | Manitoba | Winnipeg |
| 3 Marilou McPhedran | Manitoba | Winnipeg |
| 4 Mary Jane McCallum..... | Manitoba | Winnipeg |
| 5 Flordeliz (Gigi) Osler..... | Manitoba | Winnipeg |
| 6 | | |

BRITISH COLUMBIA—6

| Senator | Designation | Post Office Address |
|-----------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|
| The Honourable | | |
| 1 Mobina S. B. Jaffer | British Columbia | North Vancouver |
| 2 Yonah Martin..... | British Columbia | Vancouver |
| 3 Yuen Pau Woo..... | British Columbia | North Vancouver |
| 4 Bev Busson | British Columbia | North Okanagan Region |
| 5 Margo Greenwood | British Columbia | Vernon |
| 6 | | |

SASKATCHEWAN—6

| Senator | Designation | Post Office Address |
|------------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| The Honourable | | |
| 1 Pamela Wallin..... | Saskatchewan | Wadena |
| 2 Denise Batters | Saskatchewan | Regina |
| 3 Marty Klyne..... | Saskatchewan | White City |
| 4 Brent Cotter | Saskatchewan | Saskatoon |
| 5 David M. Arnot..... | Saskatchewan | Saskatoon |
| 6 | | |

ALBERTA—6

| Senator | Designation | Post Office Address |
|-------------------------------|--------------|---------------------|
| The Honourable | | |
| 1 Scott Tannas..... | Alberta..... | High River |
| 2 Patti LaBoucane-Benson..... | Alberta..... | Spruce Grove |
| 3 Paula Simons | Alberta..... | Edmonton |
| 4 Karen Sorensen | Alberta..... | Banff |
| 5 | | |
| 6 | | |

SENATORS BY PROVINCE AND TERRITORY

NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR—6

| Senator | Designation | Post Office Address |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------|
| The Honourable | | |
| 1 Elizabeth Marshall | Newfoundland and Labrador | Paradise |
| 2 Fabian Manning | Newfoundland and Labrador | St. Bride's |
| 3 David M. Wells | Newfoundland and Labrador | St. John's |
| 4 Mohamed-Iqbal Ravalia..... | Newfoundland and Labrador | Twillingate |
| 5 Iris G. Petten | Newfoundland and Labrador | St. John's |
| 6 Judy A. White | Newfoundland and Labrador | St. George's |

NORTHWEST TERRITORIES—1

| Senator | Designation | Post Office Address |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------|
| The Honourable | | |
| 1 Dawn Anderson | Northwest Territories | Yellowknife |

NUNAVUT—1

| Senator | Designation | Post Office Address |
|----------------|-------------|---------------------|
| The Honourable | | |
| 1 | | |

YUKON—1

| Senator | Designation | Post Office Address |
|-------------------|-------------|---------------------|
| The Honourable | | |
| 1 Pat Duncan..... | Yukon..... | Whitehorse |

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