



DEBATES OF THE SENATE

1st SESSION



44th PARLIAMENT



VOLUME 153



NUMBER 194

OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Thursday, April 18, 2024

The Honourable RAYMONDE GAGNÉ,
Speaker

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Publications Centre: Publications@sen.parl.gc.ca

Published by the Senate
Available on the Internet: <http://www.parl.gc.ca>

THE SENATE

Thursday, April 18, 2024

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

[English]

Prayers.

[Translation]

SENATORS' STATEMENTS

SUPPORT FOR BLACK ENTREPRENEURS

Hon. Amina Gerba: Colleagues, I knew early on, after arriving in Canada back in 1986, that entrepreneurship would be my path forward. Like many newcomers, however, I was soon forced to confront the hurdles involved in negotiating my way through an unfamiliar system.

I remember the difficulties I encountered in getting my first credit card and how many times my applications were turned down for no apparent reason. Later I found out it was because my social insurance number started with "9," which meant that I was considered a visitor.

Without a credit card, I had no credit history. This put me in the middle of a vicious circle that was hard to break. On top of that, I didn't know that once I had a credit history, I had to take care of it to get a better credit rating.

I also remember a time when my management skills were called into question. A potential lender once asked me, "Ms. Gerba, have you ever managed this much money before?"

These systemic barriers are sometimes compounded by discrimination. For example, according to a Canada-wide survey commissioned in 2021 by Senator Colin Deacon and the African Canadian Senate group, 76% of Black entrepreneurs surveyed said that their skin colour was a barrier to business success in Canada, and only 19% said they trusted their financial institutions to do what was best for them or their community.

This reality prompted me and our esteemed colleague Senator Deacon to begin a study last summer on initiatives that support Black entrepreneurs, the results of which we released in late February.

Colleagues, I invite you to read this study, which is available on our respective networks. It makes 10 recommendations, and it illustrates that bold, decisive action is needed to ensure that Black entrepreneurs have the same opportunities as others to prosper and succeed in our society.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

DIVERSITY IN ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Hon. Colin Deacon: Honourable senators, I am pleased to see increasing awareness of Canada's dismal productivity growth and acknowledgment that this is putting our prosperity in jeopardy.

As we finally start to work to address our productivity problems, we need to ensure that we harness the power of diverse entrepreneurs like our own highly successful colleague Senator Gerba. Specifically, we need to see diversity, equity and inclusion not just as a social imperative but as an economic catalyst critical to our future prosperity.

Diversity fuels disruptive innovation, which is essential to fostering prosperous and inclusive growth. Why? Because when we favour homogeneity over diversity, we choose to look at the same old problems the same old way. Canada can no longer afford to miss out on the benefits of economic and social innovations that Black and diverse entrepreneurs have to offer. We have one of the most diverse populations in the world, but this global advantage is profoundly underutilized when we reinforce the status quo through our actions.

This is why Senator Gerba and I chose to examine the progress being achieved by Black entrepreneurs in Canada and to report on our findings. Importantly, our interviews with financial institutions found a rapidly growing awareness of the barriers facing Black entrepreneurs who want to finance their business growth.

We were inspired by the creative approaches that many financial institutions are demonstrating when they work with Black entrepreneurs who are looking to expand their domestic and global businesses. We encourage you to read the report available on my website in English and French.

Colleagues, homogeneity stifles creativity and innovation; diversity achieves the opposite. There are countless reports on this issue, one being the Centre for International Governance Innovation's 2017 report called *Diversity Dividend: Canada's Global Advantage*. CIGI found that ethnocultural diversity increases a business's revenue and productivity growth. Yet, in Canada, three quarters of our venture capital comes from the U.S., where 58% of venture capital investors are White men and they control a staggering 93% of venture capital funds. Too often this sort of structural bias means that our non-inclusive status quo is perpetuated.

We need to keep searching for ways to help Black and diverse entrepreneurs creatively solve both local and global problems. Their innovations transcend national boundaries, reaching previously untapped or ignored international markets and consumers.

Colleagues, innovative entrepreneurs do amazing things, but evidence shows that adding diversity can unlock even more previously untapped opportunities in Canada and globally. Diversity, equity and inclusion is not just a social imperative; it's crucial to driving innovation and ensuring our collective economic prosperity.

Thank you, colleagues.

• (1410)

VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I wish to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of the Honourable Kim Jin-pyo, Speaker of the National Assembly of the Republic of Korea, and a delegation.

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

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

SCIENCE MEETS PARLIAMENT

Hon. Judith G. Seidman: Honourable senators, on behalf of Senator Galvez, Senator Kutcher and me, I rise today to invite you to participate in the fourth edition of Science Meets Parliament, sponsored by the Canadian Science Policy Centre in partnership with our Chief Science Advisor of Canada.

The Science Meets Parliament model is an adaptation of a successful Australian program that started in 1999. Similar programs exist in the EU, the U.K. and Spain.

This initiative is not meant to be an advocacy exercise but, rather, a unique opportunity for scientists to learn about policy-making on the Hill, and for parliamentarians to connect with Canadian researchers to become familiar with their research. This program aims to build stronger connections between the scientific and political communities, enable two-way dialogue and promote mutual understanding.

This year's diverse group of researchers from across Canada, with expertise in science, engineering and social science disciplines, will be on Parliament Hill in hopes of meeting with senators.

You can participate by offering a 30-minute one-on-one meeting with one or more delegates, by accepting to be shadowed by a scientist throughout the day, by joining a table of scientists during breakfast or lunch, by inviting a delegate to a committee meeting you may have on that day and by attending the networking reception that evening.

Colleagues, Senator Galvez, Senator Kutcher and I are pleased to be this year's co-champions. Should your schedule permit, we would encourage you to be part of this year's Science Meets Parliament event on Tuesday, May 7. Our offices will be sending you a copy of the invitation with all the details very shortly. Thank you.

[Senator Deacon (Nova Scotia)]

VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I wish to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of Dr. Allen Benson, spouse of the Honourable Senator LaBoucane-Benson. He is accompanied by Dave and Julie Tuccaro, Hope Regimbald and Miranda Ross, who are recipients of the Indspire Awards.

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

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

PROFESSIONAL WOMEN'S HOCKEY LEAGUE

Hon. Margo Greenwood: Honourable senators, yesterday, Senator Pate introduced you all to the Ottawa Professional Women's Hockey League team. I think Senator Pate and I attended the same game on March 23 of this year.

It is also where I had the pleasure of taking my granddaughter, Everly, to her first Professional Women's Hockey League game.

Everly currently plays on two hockey teams — one coed and the other all-girls. Each time she plays, she gets better.

I know many of you are parents and grandparents, and know the pride and joy you feel in sharing in a small part of your children's lives and your grandchildren's lives. I feel that too every time I am with Evie, and especially on March 23.

Before the game, Evie had the opportunity to meet with Brienne Jenner, the captain of the Ottawa hockey team. Evie was almost speechless — meeting her hockey hero.

Brienne Jenner is an extraordinary young woman who is a remarkable ambassador for women in sport. In all humility, Captain Jenner reminded me of those women who had trailblazed before her and her teammates. I witnessed how proud she was to see and speak of women of all ages wearing their jerseys and cheering women's hockey teams on in Boston, Minnesota, New York, Montreal, Toronto and Ottawa.

Seeing my granddaughter — and all the other young girls her age — cheer on Ottawa also reminded me of when I was a child, skating on the river and playing pickup hockey with all the neighbourhood children. There were no girls' leagues in my day.

When I watch my granddaughter skate in the rink in Vernon, British Columbia, and cheer on Captain Jenner and the Ottawa hockey team, I think about how far women's hockey has come.

It is disputed as to whether the first women's game was in 1889, or in 1890, or in 1891, but there is no dispute about the hurdles women face. This includes Canadian Olympian and flag-bearer Abby Hoffman who, as a young girl, cut her hair and joined the local boys' league. She excelled in hockey until she was found out and forced to stop playing. Abby Hoffman is still breaking barriers today fighting for gender equality in amateur sport.

It was women like Abby Hoffman, and others, who would break barriers for generations of women and girls. Young women who followed would join leagues of their own.

Now Canada's National Women's Hockey team dominates international competitions.

Before I end, I must inform the chamber that Ottawa came from a two-goal deficit to win over Toronto, thanks to goals from Brianne Jenner, Hayley Scamurra and a hat trick by Daryl Watts. *Hiy hiy.*

VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I wish to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of members of the Organizing Committee of the Toronto Dragon Festival. They are the guests of the Honourable Senator Oh.

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

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

TRAGEDY IN NOVA SCOTIA

FOURTH ANNIVERSARY

Hon. Michael L. MacDonald: Honourable senators, hear these names: Joy Bond, Peter Bond, Gina Goulet, Elizabeth Joanne Thomas, John Joseph Zahl, Corrie Ellison, Dawn Madsen, Frank Gulenchyn, Aaron Tuck, Emily Tuck, Jolene Oliver, Sean McLeod, Alanna Jenkins, Tom Bagley, Lisa McCully, Heather O'Brien, Greg Blair, Jamie Blair, Joey Webber, Lillian Campbell Hyslop, Kristen Beaton, Baby Beaton and Constable Heidi Stevenson.

These are the names of the 23 Nova Scotians who were murdered on April 18 and April 19, 2020. Four years have passed today, and the wounds that were inflicted on Colchester County — and on all of Nova Scotia — have yet to fully heal.

Remember these names. They were our friends, co-workers, loved ones and neighbours. May they rest in peace and may they never be forgotten. Thank you.

[Translation]

VISITOR IN THE GALLERY

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

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

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

THE LATE HONOURABLE ROLAND ROY MCMURTRY, O.C., O.ONT

Hon. Bernadette Clement: Honourable senators, I rise today to join my colleagues Senator Boniface and Senator Cotter in paying tribute to the late Roy McMurtry. In so doing, I hope to add another layer to our collective memory of this great leader and ally. As you already know, Roy McMurtry served as the Attorney General of Ontario, Chief Justice of Ontario and Canadian High Commissioner to the United Kingdom.

[English]

My home community of Cornwall knows the name Roy McMurtry because our legal clinic is named after him. Cornwall's legal clinic was one of the first to open in this province, and in 2015 it was renamed in his honour. My career started at the Clinique juridique Roy McMurtry Legal Clinic where I eventually served as executive director. Much to the chagrin of the staff managing my calendar, I still spend non-sitting weeks serving clients of the clinic.

• (1420)

Legal clinics and the concept of providing access to justice for those most vulnerable in our society were also dear to McMurtry, and his spirit continues to inspire a devotion to that cause.

As a political figure, Roy McMurtry chose a path of kindness and consideration. As a diplomat, he represented the country he helped make a better place, honourably and with distinction. As a judicial officer, he conferred the dignity of marriage upon those to whom it had previously been denied.

This is what he told TVO about legalizing gay marriage:

I knew the sky would not fall. I knew that people would, within a very short time, generally accept it as just an evolution of our society.

We have much to learn from his brave approach to public life and a great deal for which to be grateful.

I am most grateful for the example he provided as an ally.

[Translation]

He was an outstanding advocate. When he worked on the reform of the Ontario justice system, an unpopular process, he consulted with Franco-Ontarians and let them lead the way.

[English]

The end result was a court system where francophones were no longer required to leave their language at the doorstep as they sought justice.

As a lawyer, Ontarian and francophone, I'm inspired by McMurtry's example. As a Black Canadian, I have been in need of allies my whole life, and I am moved by his allyship and leadership. As a senator, I am hopeful I can emulate his progressive spirit.

McMurtry writes in his 2013 autobiography that he was inspired by the words attributed to the poet Emerson. Indeed, I hope we will all be moved by them:

Do not follow where the path may lead. Go instead where there is no path and leave a trail.

Thank you. *Nia:wen*.

VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I wish to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of Michael Patterson, brother of the Honourable Senator Coyle.

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

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I wish to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of Mieka Buckley-Pearson, granddaughter of the late Honourable Landon Pearson. She is the guest of the Honourable Senator Carozzo.

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

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

QUESTION PERIOD

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

IRANIAN SOCCER TEAM VISA APPLICATIONS

Hon. Donald Neil Plett (Leader of the Opposition): Leader, let me first — before I ask a question — offer my best wishes to your wife, Nancy, as she recovers from her shoulder surgery. We wish her well.

Leader, I have had a written question on our Order Paper since June 2022 regarding a soccer match between Canada and Iran, which was rightfully cancelled amid outcry from Canadians, including the families of Flight PS752.

Documents released through the Access to Information Act show that the Immigration Department gave the minister's office answers to some of my questions back in 2022. They show the department received 58 temporary resident visa applications for this so-called friendly soccer match, but no visas were issued, as the match was cancelled.

Leader, why hasn't this answer been tabled in the Senate? Is it because Minister Fraser and his office did not want to answer my specific questions about their involvement in this fiasco?

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

Thank you and thanks to all colleagues for your best wishes for my wife, Nancy. She is doing well. Thank you. I am relieved and grateful to you all.

I don't know the answer to that, Senator Plett. I do know that the tardiness in providing answers to your written questions is something that is a source of frustration not only to you, who pose the questions, but to me as someone who is responsible here for overseeing that process, at least from the Senate's point of view and on behalf of the Senate.

I have expressed my sincere regret many times. I will repeat it now.

I will also repeat my commitment to you, as reflected in the initiatives that the government is taking to have — finally — an institution within the Senate to ensure that those answers are delivered in a timely fashion.

Senator Plett: Instead of bullying through a government motion to do away with the opposition, you should put more effort into getting us answers.

The answers to my written questions about this incident should have been tabled in the Senate long ago. Clearly, the minister and his office don't want to say what they knew about the soccer match with Iran and when they knew it.

Why am I so sure about this? I'll tell you. The documents show that my question was given a risk level of "high" by the Trudeau government.

Leader, what is your government so desperate to hide?

Senator Gold: The government is not desperate to hide anything, Senator Plett.

The government does what it deems appropriate in order to ensure that its relations, security and all other issues are dealt with in a proper way.

Again, I regret that you did not get the answer in a timely fashion. Again, I continue to do my best to make that happen better.

ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

CARBON TAX

Hon. Leo Housakos: Senator Gold, two days after your government's disastrous budget that didn't include one measure to make life more affordable for hard-working Canadians, and just over two weeks after your government brought in another hike to the carbon tax, Canadians awoke this morning to a 14-cent-per-litre jump at the pumps. Some people are paying more than \$1.85 for a litre of gas today. It is not just gas. Everything is more expensive today because of your government's irrational ideological stubbornness to keep the carbon tax.

You had the opportunity to spike the hike on April 1, and you didn't. You had the opportunity to axe the tax on Tuesday, and you didn't. Admit it, Senator Gold: Justin Trudeau is just not worth the cost for hard-working Canadians, and only Pierre Poilievre and common-sense Conservatives will bring Canada back from the brink.

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Congratulations on managing to jam more than three or perhaps more of your talking points into a question.

This government is doing a great deal to assist Canadians in affordability. The budget includes many measures, as I am sure you are all aware.

It is also the case that the government believes — along with reputable economists and other non-partisan figures — that the price on pollution is a market-driven, sensible, prudent, most effective and least costly way to address climate change.

The existential question is whether or not one believes that fighting climate change and saving the planet for the benefit of our children and our grandchildren is actually worth the cost. This government believes it is worth the effort. It is going to stand by that. It is asking Canadians to understand that that's where the government is coming from, and that's where the government shall remain.

Senator Housakos: Canadians are all excited about the next Pierre Poilievre government, which will bring relief coast to coast to coast.

Senator Gold, you can blame it on as many external factors as you want, but your government chose to make it even worse by adding fuel to the fire by increasing the carbon tax. None of these external factors are unknown, and yet Justin Trudeau chose to go ahead and add to them with the carbon tax over and over again. But the good news is that Pierre Poilievre and his common-sense Conservatives will fix it. Justin Trudeau and Jagmeet Singh have broken it. Give up on this carbon tax. Give Canadians some relief.

Senator Gold: There's policy, there's principle and there's politics. The right thing to do — and this government is committed to doing it — is to address climate change with a broad range of policy instruments, only one of which is the price on pollution.

• (1430)

Senator LaBoucane-Benson: At least he has a plan.

FINANCE

CANADA DISABILITY BENEFIT

Hon. Kim Pate: I join with others in sharing that it is great news to hear that Nancy is doing well. Thank you very much.

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you. You are spoiling her.

Senator Pate: Senator Gold, last year, the government asked persons with disabilities to trust that the Canada disability benefit would be adequate, accessible and available by 2024. Budget 2024 broke this promise. It's a benefit of \$200 per month reaching, at best, less than half of those with disabilities who live in poverty and starting in 2025. The Minister of Diversity, Inclusion and Persons with Disabilities says this is a starting point. Last night, at the Standing Senate Committee on National Finance, the Parliamentary Budget Officer said it amounts to less than half the minimum benefit that his office costed.

People with disabilities — including someone who called today at 7:00 a.m. — are calling our offices since the announcement and saying that it feels like a slap in the face. What is the timeline for increasing the benefit to an adequate amount?

Senator Gold: Thank you for your question. Again, the government understands the disappointment that so many have with regard to the timing of the rollout of this program. Nonetheless, the budget commitment is a significant commitment in cementing the benefit so that it is available for generations to come. It's now a crucial time when the government needs to balance very carefully the need to strengthen our social security net while making sure that government spending is also available and able to help Canadians with the everyday cost of living.

Like all of the progressive measures this government has delivered, this is built to be enhanced and expanded, and the government has, indeed, indicated this in its budget. I understand and am advised that the government hopes this benefit will grow to the level of Old Age Security and the Guaranteed Income Supplement. However, the focus right now is to get this in people's pockets. The government does not have a timeline for this increase but is committed to seeing it happen.

Senator Pate: As more Canadians struggle to keep a roof over their heads and food on their plates, we cannot leave people behind. Pre-budget, 9 in 10 people supported the Canada disability benefit, but only 1 in 20 trusted the government to implement it. Many are also calling for a guaranteed liveable income.

What concrete steps is the government taking to rebuild trust and deliver on its promises of a guaranteed liveable income for persons with disabilities and to explore a working group with P.E.I. on guaranteed liveable income?

Senator Gold: Thank you for your question and for your continued advocacy on this. I understand that the government is reviewing various studies on this matter as well as other research on basic income. This government, I'm advised, is committed to supporting Canadians, and has already lifted close to 2.3 million Canadians out of poverty between 2015 and 2021. This includes 653,000 children.

Hon. Mary Coyle: My question is for the Government Representative in the Senate. Senator Gold, those dark clouds, cold rains and biting winds we experienced on our way to the Senate today remind me of the gloom that must be felt by people living with disabilities in Canada who are living in poverty today. Tuesday's budget announcement of the \$200-per-month Canada disability benefit scheduled to flow in June 2025 to

600,000 Canadians is shocking and disappointing, and it is not what was promised. It is, quite frankly, too little, too late and for too few.

Senator Gold, will the government commit to reviewing this benefit as announced and come back with an improved plan that will actually help bring Canadians living with disabilities — those needing that support — out of poverty and into the life of dignity that they were promised and, frankly, deserve?

Senator Gold: Thank you for your question. The government will always monitor its programs and will continue to work with those in the disability community to build and enhance this program. However, it is important, colleagues, to understand that the government is already doing a considerable amount to assist in this area. The government's Disability Inclusion Action Plan already includes about \$1.7 billion per year to support persons with severe and prolonged mental and physical impairments through the Disability Tax Credit, and there is ongoing support for the Registered Disability Savings Plan.

The government is not shirking its responsibilities in this area, but it is also calling upon the provinces and territories to do their part within their jurisdictions to assist persons with disabilities. Together, the government is committed to moving forward.

Senator Coyle: As I said, it is too little, too late, for too few, Senator Gold. Yes, monitoring is a nice thing to do, but will we see the appropriate adjustment in the Fall Economic Statement of this disability benefit amount — or before that?

Senator Gold: I'm not in a position to answer that, but I'll certainly raise your concerns and questions with the minister.

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

TEMPORARY FOREIGN WORKERS

Hon. Krista Ross: My question is for the Government Representative in the Senate. Senator Gold, recently, the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship announced changes to the levels of temporary residents in Canada, including temporary foreign workers. Specifically, this means decreasing the number of temporary foreign workers that employers in certain sectors are allowed to hire, cutting it down from 30% to 20% of their workforce. With over 600,000 unfilled job vacancies and nearly 12,000 in New Brunswick alone — along with tens of thousands of looming retirements — how does the government think that this reduction will address the persistent labour challenges experienced in certain sectors of our economy?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for your question. It is an important one and — I think we would all acknowledge — a complicated policy issue. It is incontrovertible that our economy relies upon temporary workers to fill much-needed jobs and to help sustain our economy. It is also the case that provinces, territories and municipalities have been challenged at times in terms of making

sure that proper resources, social supports and services are there for those workers who arrive. It is a deplorable fact that in a country such as ours, some workers have been subjected to living and working conditions that are simply shameful.

In light of these factors and other challenges to the proper integration of and support for immigrants, the government has made its calculation in consultation with provinces and territories that this is the right and prudent thing to do at this time.

Senator Ross: I appreciate the government's intentions of easing the burden on Canada's social services. I believe a better strategy might be to focus on those services and not punish businesses who are struggling with their labour requirements.

Also, due to the many unique characteristics of New Brunswick, such as the seasonal nature of jobs, our labour needs differ drastically from other parts of the country. Would the government agree that it makes sense to take provincial and regional differences into consideration instead of applying an Ottawa-centric, pan-Canadian approach?

An Hon. Senator: Hear, hear.

Senator Gold: Thank you. Without denying at all the specificity and uniqueness of the situation in your province, that is also true in many provinces. Certainly, it is true in my own. I'm not in a position to comment on whether or not this is an Ottawa-centric, pan-Canadian approach. My understanding is that the minister and the government work with their counterparts to be attentive, at least, to regional needs and differences.

GLOBAL AFFAIRS

SUPPORT FOR HAITI

Hon. Wanda Thomas Bernard: My question is for the Government Representative in the Senate. Senator Gold, I want to inquire about the situation in Haiti, which is quite dire. A March 28 United Nations human rights report referred to the situation as "cataclysmic." Canada was slow to get involved in a multinational security support mission for Haiti. Finally, in March, Canada deployed 70 Canadian Armed Forces members to train Caribbean Community, or CARICOM, troops in Jamaica to strengthen the Haitian police force.

• (1440)

Now that Canada has troops in Jamaica, can you assure us that Canada's involvement in the security of Haiti will be for the long term and meaningful rather than performative?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for your question and underlining the human, political and social crisis in Haiti. There are so many problems in the world that things can get overlooked.

Canada's involvement with Haiti and its commitment to assisting the people of Haiti are longstanding and will endure. It works closely with its partners in the region to ensure that its

interventions, whether financial, for training or otherwise, meet the needs in Haiti as well as they can. I have every confidence that the government will continue to support the people of Haiti in their ongoing struggle for a better, more decent, peaceful and safe life.

Senator Bernard: Thank you.

Senator Gold, there are Haitian refugee claimants who are waiting for their hearings before the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada. While they have refugee claimant status, they are unable to reunite with their loved ones in Haiti.

Will the Canadian government prioritize hearings for Haitian refugee claimants?

Senator Gold: Thank you for your question.

I am really not in a position to know exactly how the prioritization among different categories of applicants is progressing, but I'll certainly raise this with the minister.

FINANCE

RECOVERY OF FRAUDULENT COVID-19 SUPPORT PAYMENTS

Hon. Denise Batters: Senator Gold, in February 2023, I asked you questions about how many government employees, including at the Canada Revenue Agency, or CRA, had inappropriately received CERB payments. I received the so-called answer yesterday, 14 months after my original question. It stated:

As of December 20, 2023, the CRA can report that 185 individuals are no longer with the CRA as a result of this internal review. . . .

Of course, we already knew that, since a media article — published on the date referenced in the answer — stated that fact four months ago. When pressed by the media, the government disclosed the updated number of CRA personnel fired as being 232 in an article published last month, yet the answer I got yesterday was still 185.

Senator Gold, this is totally unacceptable. This information was released publicly months ago, so why is your government withholding the truth from the opposition and from Canadians?

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

I'm not in a position to answer how the media received that information. I'm not challenging the figures you quoted, nor am I defending the tardiness with which you received your answer. Again, it is unacceptable that answers have taken so long. Although considerable progress is being made, as I think we all will acknowledge, with the number of answers that have been tabled, the situation is far from adequate. The Senate still remains deprived of timely answers, and I continue to undertake to remedy that by using all of the means at my disposal.

Senator Batters: Senator Gold, it took your incompetent Trudeau government months to produce a simple answer, and they are now actively manipulating the release of information to avoid accountability. This should concern all senators, especially given your draconian motion to rewrite the Senate Rules, including those governing Delayed Answers.

Senate Gold, when will your government stop hiding the truth from all Canadians?

Senator Gold: Senator Batters, I can understand your opposition to the motion for which I gave notice, but to describe the provisions in that motion as “draconian” is really a stretch, even for you, when this government is supporting a process to bring us in line, for the first time in the Senate's history, with practices in Canada.

NATIONAL DEFENCE

SUPPORT FOR VETERANS AND ARMED FORCES MEMBERS

Hon. Yonah Martin (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): The Royal Canadian Legion is among the many groups across Canada that are disappointed by the budget brought forward by the Trudeau government on Tuesday. The Legion said it was:

. . . alarmed by the lack of ready-to-go plans and actions to immediately tackle ongoing issues affecting still serving and retired Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) members.

As an example, it said that the commitment to repurpose Crown lands for military housing doesn't have “. . . a specific timeline to make a difference immediately. . . .” As well, the promise to build 1,400 military housing units over 20 years is “. . . an excessively long time frame. . . .” that will “. . . do little to address the CAF retention issues. . . .”

Leader, what is your response to the Legion?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): First, I express my personal and the government's respect for those who serve or have served and for the Legion. I managed to make it through law school by playing in some nondescript bands in a series of Legion halls in your hometown.

To answer your question, this government is doing more now — and this budget reflects that — to reinvest in our military than previous governments have, at least in recent memory. To be sure, more still needs to be done, and those who serve or have served honourably in our defence and in the service of Canada deserve to be housed, fed and treated with the utmost dignity and respect. The government's investments in this budget will take us further in that direction, but more work certainly needs to be done.

Senator Martin: The Legion also indicated that with the recent reports of homeless or precariously housed Canadian Armed Forces members, our country needs a strategy yesterday. When brave men and women step forward to serve their country, their government should ensure they are not homeless.

Leader, I don't think that's too much to ask, but is that too much to ask from the Trudeau government?

Senator Gold: No, of course, it's not too much to ask. Every citizen and group is entitled, in a democratic society, to ask; however, if this government is to continue to be a prudent manager of our public finances and economy, difficult decisions have to be made and not every request from every group can necessarily be accepted to the fullest extent of their demands.

INNOVATION, SCIENCE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE REGULATIONS

Hon. Tony Loffreda: Senator Gold, there was an insightful discussion on the risks associated with artificial intelligence, or AI, during our Global Parliamentary Forum organized by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, or IMF, this week. Many at the World Bank would prefer that there be a collaborative global approach to regulating AI.

To what extent does the Government of Canada share this objective? How are we collaborating with our global partners in legislating and regulating AI?

I noted that, about a month ago, the European Parliament adopted its Artificial Intelligence Act. Its aims include providing AI developers and employers with clear requirements and obligations regarding specific uses of AI. The act is considered the first-ever comprehensive legal framework for AI in the world.

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

Colleagues, artificial intelligence has tremendous economic potential; however, as with all technology, it presents important challenges and considerations to make sure that its development and implementation are safe. Canada is a global leader in responsible AI and is supporting an AI ecosystem that supports the responsible use of this important technology.

In response to your question, Senator Loffreda, to that end, I understand that Budget 2024 proposes \$3.5 million over two years, starting in 2024-25, to advance Canada's leadership role with a global partnership on artificial intelligence, securing Canada's leadership on the global stage when it comes to advancing the responsible development, governance and use of AI technologies internationally.

Senator Loffreda: Thank you for that response.

There are many opportunities associated with the development and deployment of AI, but significant risks also exist.

How is the government supporting an AI ecosystem that promotes responsible use of technology and protects Canadians from the potentially harmful impacts of AI? The more we wait, the more things change and the more we fall behind other jurisdictions.

Senator Gold: In Budget 2024, the government has proposed to provide \$50 million to create an AI safety institute of Canada to ensure the safe development and deployment of AI. That is in addition to the proposed \$5.1 million to equip the office of the proposed AI and data commissioner with the necessary resources to begin enforcing the proposed artificial intelligence and data act. These are major steps toward addressing the need for responsible leadership in this area.

• (1450)

HEALTH

YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH

Hon. Marty Deacon: My question is for the Government Representative. Senator Gold, Budget 2024 announced \$500 million over five years starting in 2024-25 for the creation of a new youth mental health fund, an announcement that I and so many others were pleased to hear about.

My question today is about the parameters of the program, and is a question that probably is the most popular question in the last few days: How will "youth" be defined by the program? Will there be an age cut-off or is that for the local programs receiving the funds to determine? This question comes from youth and those who feel they may not be in the category of youth.

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): As many of us in this chamber regrettably probably feel as well.

It is an important question. Thank you. Unfortunately, I don't have an answer. This funding was just announced in Budget 2024. I can assure you, however, that as the government looks to design this new youth mental health fund, it will be engaging with youth, community organizations, experts, communities and other interested parties to ensure that this new initiative truly responds to the needs of youth. They'll have a voice in this.

Senator M. Deacon: Thank you. This may be a bit soon, but I am also wondering if the government at this moment intends to give these funds directly to youth mental health programs in Canadian communities, and if so, what will that look like?

Senator Gold: You are correct, senator, it is a bit early as it was just announced and the budget has not even yet been passed. I'm really not in a position to provide you a specific answer. Thank you.

[Translation]

PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT

PROCUREMENT PROCESS

Hon. Claude Carignan: Leader, Kristian Firth, the owner of GC Strategies, testified before the House of Commons yesterday after withholding information about his involvement in ArriveCAN. We learned that the Liberal government still hasn't called for the repayment of taxpayers' money. The government has the authority to recover that money but it still hasn't done so. The House of Commons ordered the Liberal government to recover all of the money paid to fraudsters and scam artists.

Senator Gold, what is your government waiting for? When will it get Canadians' money back?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for the question. As you know, there are ongoing investigations into every aspect of this project and the involvement of that company and others.

I believe that, once all the investigations are further ahead, if not completed, you'll have an answer to your question.

Senator Carignan: Thank you. Speaking of investigations and involvement, we also learned that the RCMP conducted a search of the contractor's office yesterday. The search warrant was related to a proposal sent to the Deputy Prime Minister, Chrystia Freeland, and the Liberal Party of Canada's campaign director, Jeremy Broadhurst. Previously, *The Globe and Mail* reported that a business partner had sent a text message to Mr. Firth. Contact was not able to offer context but be ready for questions if asked.

What is the relationship between GC Strategies and the Liberal Party of Canada?

Senator Gold: Thank you for the question. In light of the investigation and the search that you mentioned, the government is unable . . . It would be inappropriate for the government to respond further to these questions because investigations are under way.

[English]

ANSWERS TO ORDER PAPER QUESTIONS TABLED

NATIONAL REVENUE—CANADA EMERGENCY RESPONSE BENEFIT

Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate) tabled the reply to Question No. 23, dated November 23, 2021, appearing on the *Order Paper and Notice Paper* in the name of the Honourable Senator Plett, regarding the Canada Emergency Response Benefit — Canada Revenue Agency.

EMPLOYMENT, WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND OFFICIAL LANGUAGES—CANADA EMERGENCY RESPONSE BENEFIT

Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate) tabled the reply to Question No. 23, dated November 23, 2021, appearing on the *Order Paper and Notice Paper* in the name of the Honourable Senator Plett, regarding the Canada Emergency Response Benefit — Employment and Social Development Canada.

PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT—CHATGPT

Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate) tabled the reply to Question No. 246, dated September 19, 2023, appearing on the *Order Paper and Notice Paper* in the name of the Honourable Senator Plett, regarding ChatGPT — Public Services and Procurement Canada.

TREASURY BOARD—CHATGPT

Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate) tabled the reply to Question No. 246, dated September 19, 2023, appearing on the *Order Paper and Notice Paper* in the name of the Honourable Senator Plett, regarding ChatGPT — Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat.

TREASURY BOARD—ETHICS TRAINING

Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate) tabled the reply to Question No. 250, dated September 19, 2023, appearing on the *Order Paper and Notice Paper* in the name of the Honourable Senator Plett, regarding ethics training.

TOURISM—DESTINATION CANADA

Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate) tabled the reply to Question No. 287, dated February 6, 2024, appearing on the *Order Paper and Notice Paper* in the name of the Honourable Senator Plett, regarding Destination Canada.

TRANSPORT—FEDERAL BRIDGE CORPORATION LIMITED

Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate) tabled the reply to Question No. 291, dated February 6, 2024, appearing on the *Order Paper and Notice Paper* in the name of the Honourable Senator Plett, regarding the Federal Bridge Corporation Limited.

TRANSPORT—GREAT LAKES PILOTAGE AUTHORITY

Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate) tabled the reply to Question No. 294, dated February 6, 2024, appearing on the *Order Paper and Notice Paper* in the name of the Honourable Senator Plett, regarding the Great Lakes Pilotage Authority.

CANADIAN HERITAGE—CANADIAN MUSEUM OF
IMMIGRATION AT PIER 21

[English]

Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate) tabled the reply to Question No. 295, dated February 6, 2024, appearing on the *Order Paper and Notice Paper* in the name of the Honourable Senator Plett, regarding the Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21.

TRANSPORT—LAURENTIAN PILOTAGE AUTHORITY

Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate) tabled the reply to Question No. 297, dated February 6, 2024, appearing on the *Order Paper and Notice Paper* in the name of the Honourable Senator Plett, regarding the Laurentian Pilotage Authority.

TRANSPORT—MARINE ATLANTIC

Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate) tabled the reply to Question No. 298, dated February 6, 2024, appearing on the *Order Paper and Notice Paper* in the name of the Honourable Senator Plett, regarding Marine Atlantic.

TRANSPORT—PACIFIC PILOTAGE AUTHORITY

Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate) tabled the reply to Question No. 303, dated February 6, 2024, appearing on the *Order Paper and Notice Paper* in the name of the Honourable Senator Plett, regarding the Pacific Pilotage Authority.

TRANSPORT—VIA RAIL

Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate) tabled the reply to Question No. 307, dated February 6, 2024, appearing on the *Order Paper and Notice Paper* in the name of the Honourable Senator Plett, regarding Via Rail.

[Translation]

ORDERS OF THE DAY

PANDEMIC OBSERVANCE DAY BILL

MESSAGE FROM COMMONS

The Hon. the Speaker informed the Senate that a message had been received from the House of Commons returning Bill S-209, An Act respecting Pandemic Observance Day, and acquainting the Senate that they had passed this bill without amendment.

BUSINESS OF THE SENATE

Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate): Honourable senators, pursuant to rule 4-13(3), I would like to inform the Senate that as we proceed with Government Business, the Senate will address the items in the following order: Motion No. 165, followed by third reading of Bill S-16, followed by Motion No. 166, followed by all remaining items in the order that they appear on the Order Paper.

RULES, PROCEDURES AND THE RIGHTS
OF PARLIAMENTMOTION TO AMEND THE *RULES OF THE SENATE*—
DEBATE ADJOURNED

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): , pursuant to notice of April 16, 2024, moved:

That the *Rules of the Senate* be amended:

1. by replacing the words “Leader of the Government” by the words “Leader or Representative of the Government” in rules 2-4(2), 3-6(2), 4-3(1), 4-8(1)(a), 5-7(m), 6-5(1)(b), 12-5(a), 12-23(2) and (3), and 14-1(2);
2. in rules 3-3(1) and (2), 4-2(8)(b), and 7-4(2), by replacing the words “6 p.m.” by the words “7 p.m.” in the marginal notes, as appropriate, and the text of the rules;
3. in rule 4-2(2), by replacing the number 15 by the number 18 in the marginal note and the text of the rule;
4. in rule 4-2(8)(a), by replacing the words “At the request of a whip or the designated representative of a recognized parliamentary group” by the words “At the request of a whip, liaison, or the designated representative of a recognized party or recognized parliamentary group”;
5. by:
 - (a) replacing rules 4-9 and 4-10 by the following:

“Delayed Answers and Written Questions

Delayed answers to oral questions

4-9. (1) When responding to an oral question during Question Period, a Senator may indicate that a delayed answer will be provided in writing pursuant to the terms of this rule.

Written questions

4-9. (2) Subject to subsection (5), a Senator may submit a written question to the Government relating to public affairs by sending it in writing to the Clerk if either:

- (a) a written answer is requested; or
- (b) the question seeks statistical information or other information not readily available.

Publication of written questions

4-9. (3) Upon receipt of a written question, the Clerk shall have it published in the *Order Paper and Notice Paper* on the day following receipt and subsequently on the first sitting day of each week until the earlier of the following:

- (a) an answer is tabled;
- (b) a written explanation why an answer has not been provided is tabled;
- (c) the question is withdrawn; or
- (d) the expiration of the 60-day period provided for in this rule for an answer or explanation.

Withdrawal of a written question

4-9. (4) The Senator who submitted a written question may subsequently withdraw it by writing to the Clerk, who shall have a note to that effect included in the *Order Paper and Notice Paper* the next time the question would have been published there.

Limit on number of written questions

4-9. (5) A Senator shall not submit a written question if they already have four such questions that are to be published in the *Order Paper and Notice Paper* under the provisions of subsection (3).

Answer within 60 days

4-9. (6) Within 60 calendar days of the Leader or Representative of the Government, or a Senator who is a minister, indicating that a delayed answer will be provided to an oral question pursuant to the terms of this rule, or of a written question first appearing in the *Order Paper and Notice Paper*, the Leader or Representative of the Government, or the Deputy Leader or Legislative Deputy of the Government, shall table either the Government's answer to the question or a written explanation why an answer has not been provided.

Tabling

4-9. (7) An answer or explanation to be provided under this rule may be tabled either during Delayed Answers, which shall be called at the end of Question Period, or by being deposited with the Clerk. A copy of any such tabled document shall be provided to the Senator who asked the question, and the

delayed answer to an oral question shall be printed in the *Debates of the Senate* of the date the tabling is recorded in the *Journals of the Senate*.

Failure to respond or provide explanation

4-9. (8) If the Government has tabled neither an answer nor an explanation of why an answer has not been provided within the 60-day period provided for under this rule, the absence of an answer shall be deemed referred to the Standing Committee on Rules, Procedures and the Rights of Parliament for consideration and report, with this referral being recorded in the *Journals of the Senate* as soon as possible thereafter.”; and

- (b) renumbering current rules 4-11 to 4-16 as rules 4-10 to 4-15;
- 6. in current rule 4-13(3), by replacing the words “such sequence as the Leader or the Deputy Leader of the Government shall determine” by the words “such sequence as the Leader or Representative of the Government, or the Deputy Leader or Legislative Deputy of the Government shall determine”;
- 7. by replacing rule 6-3(1) by the following:

“Time limits for speakers

6-3. (1) Except as otherwise provided:

Certain Leaders and Facilitators

(a) the Leader or Representative of the Government, the Leader of the Opposition, and the leader or facilitator of the recognized party or recognized parliamentary group with the most members, other than, if applicable, the recognized parties or recognized parliamentary groups to which either the Leader or Representative of the Government, or the Leader of the Opposition belongs, shall be allowed unlimited time for debate;

Other Leaders and Facilitators

(b) leaders and facilitators, other than those provided for in paragraph (a), shall be allowed up to 45 minutes for debate;

Sponsor of bill

(c) the sponsor of a bill, if not one of the Senators provided for in paragraph (a), shall be allowed up to 45 minutes for debate at second and third reading;

Critic of bill

(d) the critic of a bill, if not one of the Senators provided for in paragraph (a), shall be allowed up to 45 minutes for debate at second and third reading;

Designated Senators

(e) one other Senator designated separately by the leader or facilitator of each recognized party or recognized parliamentary group, except for the recognized party or recognized parliamentary group

of the sponsor and critic, shall be allowed up to 45 minutes for debate at second and third reading; and

Others

(f) other Senators shall speak for no more than 15 minutes in debate.”;

8. by replacing rules 7-1(1) and (2) by the following:

“Agreement to allocate time

7-1. (1) At any time during a sitting, the Leader or Representative of the Government, or the Deputy Leader or Legislative Deputy of the Government may state that they have reached an agreement with the representatives of the recognized parties and the recognized parliamentary groups to allocate a specified number of days or hours either:

(a) for one or more stages of consideration of a government bill, including the committee stage; or

(b) for consideration of another item of Government Business by the Senate or a committee.

Motion on agreement to allocate time

7-1. (2) The Leader or Representative of the Government, or the Deputy Leader or Legislative Deputy of the Government may then, without notice, propose a motion based on the agreement.”;

9. by replacing rules 7-2(1) and (2) by the following:

“No agreement to allocate time

7-2. (1) At any time during a sitting, the Leader or Representative of the Government, or the Deputy Leader or Legislative Deputy of the Government may state that they have failed to reach an agreement with the representatives of the recognized parties and the recognized parliamentary groups to allocate time to conclude an adjourned debate on either:

(a) any stage of consideration of a government bill, including the committee stage; or

(b) another item of Government Business.

Notice of motion to allocate time

7-2. (2) After stating that there is no agreement on time allocation, the Leader or Representative of the Government, or the Deputy Leader or Legislative Deputy of the Government may give notice of a motion to allocate time for the adjourned debate, including the committee stage of a bill. The motion shall specify the number of days or hours to be allocated.”;

10. by replacing rule 7-3(1)(f) by the following:

“(f) Senators may speak for a maximum of 10 minutes each, provided that the Leader or Representative of the Government, the Leader of the Opposition, and the leader or facilitator of any other recognized party or recognized parliamentary group may each speak for up to 20 minutes;”;

11. in rule 7-3(2), by deleting the words “at 6 p.m.” and the words “at 8 p.m.”;

12. in rule 7-4(5)(d), by replacing the words “the Government Whip” by the words “the Government Whip or Liaison”;

13. by replacing rules 9-5(1) to (3) by the following:

“(1) The Speaker shall ask the Government Whip or Liaison, the Opposition Whip, and the whips or liaisons of the three recognized parties or recognized parliamentary groups with the most members, other than, if applicable, the recognized parties or recognized parliamentary groups to which either the Government Whip or Liaison, or the Opposition Whip belongs, if there is an agreement on the length of time the bells shall ring. If a whip or liaison is absent, that whip or liaison’s leader or facilitator may designate a Senator to act for this purpose.

(2) The time agreed to shall not be more than 60 minutes.

(3) With leave of the Senate, this agreement on the length of the bells shall constitute an order to sound the bells for that length of time.”;

14. by replacing rule 9-10(1) by the following:

“Deferral of standing vote

9-10. (1) Except as provided in subsection (5) and elsewhere in these Rules, when a standing vote has been requested on a question that is debatable, the Government Whip or Liaison, the Opposition Whip, or the whip or liaison of any of the three recognized parties or recognized parliamentary groups with the most members, other than, if applicable, the recognized parties or recognized parliamentary groups to which either the Government Whip or Liaison, or the Opposition Whip belongs, may defer the vote.”;

15. by replacing rule 9-10(4) by the following:

“Vote deferred to Friday

9-10. (4) Except as otherwise provided, if a vote has been deferred to a Friday:

(a) the Government Whip or Liaison may, at any time during a sitting, further defer the vote to 5:30 p.m. on the next sitting day if it is on an item of Government Business; and

(b) the Government Whip or Liaison, the Opposition Whip, or the whip or liaison of any of the three recognized parties or recognized parliamentary groups with the most members, other than, if applicable, the recognized parties or recognized parliamentary groups to which either the Government Whip or Liaison, or the Opposition Whip belongs, may, at any time during a sitting, further defer the vote to 5:30 p.m. on the next sitting day if it is on an item of Other Business.”;

16. by replacing rule 10-11(2)(a) by the following:

“(a) by the Leader or Representative of the Government, or the Deputy Leader or Legislative Deputy of the Government, at any time during a sitting; or”;

17. by:

(a) replacing rule 12-3(3) by the following:

“Ex officio members

12-3. (3) In addition to the membership provided for in subsections (1) and (2), and subject to the provisions of subsection (4), the Leader or Representative of the Government, the Leader of the Opposition, and the leaders or facilitators of the three recognized parties or recognized parliamentary groups with the most members, other than, if applicable, the recognized parties or recognized parliamentary groups to which either the Leader or Representative of the Government, or the Leader of the Opposition belongs, are ex officio members of all committees except the Standing Committee on Ethics and Conflict of Interest for Senators, the Standing Committee on Audit and Oversight, and the joint committees. For the purposes of this provision, in case of absence, the Leader or Representative of the Government is replaced by the Deputy Leader or Legislative Deputy of the Government, the Leader of the Opposition is replaced by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, and the leader or facilitator of any other recognized party or recognized parliamentary group is replaced by that Senator’s deputy leader or deputy facilitator.

Ex officio members voting

12-3. (4) Of the ex officio members of committees provided for in subsection (3), only the Leader or Representative of the Government, and the Leader of the Opposition, or, in their absence, their respective deputies, shall have the right to vote.”; and

(b) renumbering current rule 12-3(4) as rule 12-3(5);

18. by replacing rule 12-8(2) by the following:

“Service fee proposal

12-8. (2) When the Leader or Representative of the Government, or the Deputy Leader or Legislative Deputy of the Government tables a service fee proposal, it is deemed referred to the standing or special committee designated by them following consultations with the Leader or Deputy Leader of the Opposition, and the leader or facilitator of any other recognized party or recognized parliamentary group, or the designate of such a leader or facilitator.”;

19. by replacing rule 12-18(2) by the following:

“Meetings on days the Senate is adjourned

12-18. (2) Except as provided in subsection (3) and elsewhere in these Rules, a Senate committee may meet:

(a) when the Senate is adjourned for more than a day but less than a week, provided that notice was given to the members of the committee one day before the Senate adjourned;

(b) on a Monday the Senate does not sit that precedes a Tuesday on which the Senate is scheduled to sit; or

(c) during other periods the Senate is adjourned and that are not covered by the above provisions, provided that the meeting was either:

(i) by order of the Senate, or

(ii) with the agreement, in response to a request from the chair and deputy chair, of a majority of the following Senators, or their designates: the Leader or Representative of the Government, the Leader of the Opposition, and the leaders or facilitators of the three recognized parties or recognized parliamentary groups with the most members, other than, if applicable, the recognized parties or recognized parliamentary groups to which either the Leader or Representative of the Government, or the Leader of the Opposition belongs.”;

20. by replacing rule 12-26(1) by the following:

“Appointment of committee

12-26. (1) As soon as practicable at the beginning of each session, the Leader or Representative of the Government shall move a motion, seconded by the Leader of the Opposition, and the leader or facilitator of the recognized party or recognized parliamentary group with the most members, other than, if applicable, the recognized parties or recognized parliamentary groups to which either the Leader or Representative of the Government, or the Leader of the Opposition belongs, on the membership of the Standing Committee on Ethics and Conflict of Interest for Senators. This motion shall be deemed adopted without debate or vote, and a similar motion shall be moved for any substitutions in the membership of the committee.”;

21. in rule 14-1(1), by replacing the words “Leader or Deputy Leader of the Government” by the words “Leader or Representative of the Government, or Deputy Leader or Legislative Deputy of the Government”;

22. in rule 16-1(8), by replacing the words “Leader or Deputy Leader of the Government” by the words “Leader or Representative of the Government, or Deputy Leader or Legislative Deputy of the Government”, both times they appear; and

23. in Appendix I:

(a) in the definition of “Critic of a bill”, by replacing the words “Leader or Deputy Leader of the Government” by the words “Leader or Representative of the Government, or Deputy Leader or Legislative Deputy of the Government”;

(b) by replacing the definition of “Deputy Leader of the Government” by the following:

“Deputy Leader or Legislative Deputy of the Government

The Senator who acts as the second to the Leader or Representative of the Government and who is normally responsible for the management of Government business on the floor of the Senate. The Deputy Leader or Legislative Deputy is also generally responsible for negotiating the daily agenda of business with the Opposition and other recognized parties and recognized parliamentary groups. In the absence of the Deputy Leader or Legislative Deputy, the Government Leader or Government Representative may designate another Senator to perform the role. The full title is “Deputy Leader of the Government in the Senate” or “Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate”. (*Leader adjoint ou coordonnateur législatif du gouvernement*);

(c) in the definition of “Evening suspension”, by replacing the words “between 6 and 8 p.m.” by the words “between 7 and 8 p.m.”;

(d) in the definition of “Government Business”, by replacing the words “Leader of the Government or the Deputy Leader” by the words “Leader or Representative of the Government, or the Deputy Leader or Legislative Deputy of the Government”;

(e) by replacing the definition of “Government Leader” by the following:

“Government Leader

See “Leader or Representative of the Government”. (*Leader du gouvernement*);

(f) by replacing the definition of “Government Whip” by the following:

“Government Whip or Liaison

The Senator responsible for ensuring the presence of an adequate number of Senators of the Government party in the Senate for purposes such as quorum and the taking of votes, and to whom the Leader or Representative of the Government normally delegates responsibility for managing the substitution of Government members on committees as appropriate. The Government Whip or Liaison may be responsible for outreach on Government Business in the Senate. (*Whip ou agent de liaison du gouvernement*);

(g) by replacing the definition of “Leader of the Government, or Government Leader” by the following:

“Leader or Representative of the Government

The Senator who acts as the head of the Senators belonging to the Government party, or who is appointed by the Government to represent the Government in the Senate without affiliation to a Government party. In modern practice, the Leader or Representative of the Government is normally sworn in as a member of the King’s Privy Council for Canada and can be a member of Cabinet. The full title is “Leader of the Government in the Senate” or “Government Representative in the Senate”. (*Leader ou représentant du gouvernement*);

(h) by replacing the definition of “Ordinary procedure for determining the duration of bells” by the following:

“Ordinary procedure for determining duration of bells

The Speaker asks the Government Whip or Liaison, the Opposition Whip, and the whips or liaisons of the three largest recognized parties or recognized parliamentary groups, other than, if applicable, the recognized parties or recognized parliamentary groups to which either the Government Whip or Liaison, or the Opposition Whip belongs, if there is an agreement on the length of time, not to exceed 60 minutes, the bells shall ring. With leave of the Senate, this agreement constitutes an order to sound the bells for the agreed length of time, but in the absence of either agreement or leave, the bells ring for 60 minutes. In some cases provided for in the Rules, this procedure is not followed, with the bells ringing for shorter periods of time. (*Procédure ordinaire pour déterminer la durée de la sonnerie*);

- (i) in the definition of “Public bill”, under “Bill”, by replacing the words “(introduced by a Cabinet Minister or in a Minister’s name) or a non-Government bill (one introduced by a Senator who is not a Cabinet Minister)” by the words “(introduced by a Cabinet Minister, in a Minister’s name, or by or on behalf of the Leader or Representative of the Government if that Senator is not a minister) or a non-Government bill (one that is not a Government bill)”;

- (j) by replacing the definition of “Senator who is a minister” by the following:

“Senator who is a minister

A Senator who is a member of the Cabinet. The Leader or Representative of the Government is generally sworn in as a member of the King’s Privy Council for Canada and may be a member of Cabinet. (*Sénateur-ministre*);

- (k) in the definition of “Sponsor of a bill”, by replacing the words “the sponsor will typically be a government member” by the words “the sponsor is designated by the Leader or Representative of the Government”; and

- (l) by adding the following new definitions in alphabetical order:

(i) **“Deputy Leader or Deputy Facilitator**

The Senator who acts as the second to the leader or facilitator of a recognized party or recognized parliamentary group, other than, if applicable, the recognized parties or recognized parliamentary groups to which either the Leader or Representative of the Government, or the Leader of the Opposition belongs. (*Leader adjoint ou facilitateur adjoint*);

(ii) **“Government Liaison**

See “Government Whip or Liaison”. (*Agent de liaison du gouvernement*);

(iii) **“Government Representative**

See “Leader or Representative of the Government”. (*Représentant du gouvernement*);

(iv) **“Leader of the Government**

See “Leader or Representative of the Government”. (*Leader du gouvernement*);

(v) **“Legislative Deputy of the Government**

See “Deputy Leader or Legislative Deputy of the Government”. (*Coordonateur législatif du gouvernement*); and

(vi) **“Representative of the Government**

See “Leader or Representative of the Government”. (*Représentant du gouvernement*);

That all cross references and lists of exceptions in the Rules be updated as required by these changes, but otherwise remain unchanged;

That, in relation to the amendments to current rules 4-9 and 4-10, provided for in point 5 above:

1. new rule 4-9(5) not apply to any written question submitted before the adoption of this motion, so that only written questions submitted after the adoption of this motion are counted as if subject to that provision;
2. the provisions of the new rules have effect from the time of the adoption of this motion in relation to questions arising from that time forward, subject to point 3 below; and
3. the provisions of the new rules relating to the 60-day period for answering written questions, tabling, and a failure to respond or provide an explanation take effect, in relation to written questions submitted before the adoption of this motion, on the date that is six months after the adoption of this motion as if that were the date on which these questions were submitted, provided that if the current session ends before the expiration of this six month period, these elements of the new rules take effect on the last day of the current session; and

That, within 30 days that the Senate sits after the adoption of this motion, the Standing Committee on Ethics and Conflict of Interest for Senators present a report to the Senate proposing changes to the *Ethics and Conflict of Interest Code for Senators* to take account of the amendments to rule 12-26(1) provided for in point 20 above.

• (1520)

He said: Honourable senators, I rise today to speak to Motion No. 165, which aims to align our rules to the reality of today’s Senate.

One of this government’s longest-standing policy objectives is to facilitate an evolution toward a Senate that more fully fulfills its constitutional role as a complementary, thoroughly independent and less partisan legislative body of sober second thought. This process was kick-started with the establishment of the Independent Advisory Board for Senate Appointments and the Government Representative Office. In the life of this government, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has recommended the appointment of 81 senators through an open, merit-based selection process, and all senators appointed were asked to sit as independents.

As has been noted in the past, this process has resulted in one of the most diverse parliamentary chambers in the world, one that is representative of Canadian society with respect to cultural communities, Indigenous peoples, gender and professional backgrounds.

• (1530)

To continue to support the Senate’s transformation, two years ago, the government introduced amendments to the Parliament of Canada Act that established a legislative underpinning for a Senate composed of multiple independent-minded groups. But the Parliament of Canada Act is a framework legislation. In order to implement those changes, the regulating body has to adopt implementing regulations. In other words, the Senate has to adopt

a revised set of Rules. Absent that, the amendments to the Parliament of Canada Act would remain a paper tiger and an empty promise.

Regardless of what the Parliament of Canada Act prescribes, the functioning of the Senate would remain incoherently defined by a two-party system that has been over for three successive parliaments — a system which excludes an absolute majority of the senators who have been duly called on to serve under our Constitution.

Today, with Motion No. 165, I am proud to take the next step in the process of Senate renewal.

[Translation]

Let's be clear, honourable senators. There is no other legislative chamber in the Westminster system whose rules exclude or ignore the majority of its own members or the group with which they choose to affiliate. That is not the case in New Zealand, the United Kingdom, Australia, Ireland or India. As part of its growing evolution, the Senate has been patient and courteous in the face of constant obfuscation and deliberate neglect. Through successive parliaments, repeated committee studies and many reports, our Rules remain at a standstill, reflecting a bygone era. We need to adapt, and this motion will enable the Senate to finally do so.

Honourable senators, the evolution of this chamber and the formation of the non-partisan parliamentary groups in which you sit today were not imposed. This evolution took place gradually and organically, and our Rules were amended in 2017 to take into account the existence of these groups and their growing influence on the Senate's activities. New senators didn't want to join a caucus or political party and get involved in all that caucus membership would imply, but many of them want to have the opportunity to discuss and exchange ideas, seek impartial advice and do research with like-minded colleagues on all legislative and policy issues.

[English]

Some sitting senators — those who are members of a political party caucus — also saw the value of belonging to an independent group, and joined the small ranks of those appointed through this new system. Slowly but surely, several recognized groups were formed: the Independent Senators Group, the Progressive Senate Group and the Canadian Senators Group. There still exists a Senate Conservative caucus — a group aligned with members in the other place. Nothing in this motion takes away from the role played by the opposition, but because of the formation of the groups I mentioned, the *Rules of the Senate* were adjusted to allow for the participation of these groups, or sessional orders were put in place so that new senators could be included.

Colleagues, take a moment and look around.

To those who may be watching, take a look at the Senate of today.

[Senator Gold]

What are you going to see? There is no government-only bench to the right of the Speaker of the Senate, or an opposition-only bench to the left. What you see is the reality of the Senate of Canada, and it is high time that the *Rules of the Senate* reflect that reality.

From a constitutional and organizational perspective, it was a given in the beginning that the Government Representative Office, or GRO, was necessary. It was — and is — essential that at least one individual has the authority to bring forward and facilitate the government's business and see to it that bills, motions or other items are dealt with at committee and in this chamber. From the outset, the GRO — first under my predecessor Senator Harder, and now under myself — has been committed to fostering the conditions for the Senate to thrive in a more independent, less partisan manner and to be a complementary chamber to the other place.

The motion before you, which proposes changes to the *Rules of the Senate*, flows directly from the amendments to the Parliament of Canada Act passed by both houses of Parliament through the former Bill C-19 in 2022.

With the changes to the act came the necessity that our Rules had to conform. It makes little sense for the act to recognize the existence of other groups other than the government and the opposition, and to make specific reference to leaders or facilitators, deputy leaders or deputy facilitators, whips or liaisons, without allowing those individuals to have decision-making authority under the *Rules of the Senate*.

This is not the first iteration of the many attempts to advance similar Rules changes. The former Special Senate Committee on Senate Modernization issued 13 reports. Its first report entitled *Senate Modernization: Moving Forward* was tabled on October 4, 2016. Its final report entitled *Reflecting the New Reality of the Senate* was tabled on December 11, 2018. Our colleague Senator Greene was a major player on this committee, and his input is reflected in many of the reports.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

Senator Gold: In fact, Senator Greene and Senator Massicotte — together — began a Senate modernization initiative as early as 2015.

The final recommendation of the Senate Modernization Committee could hardly have been clearer. Permit me to quote from that final report:

Your committee concludes that true equality among senators necessarily requires adjustments to the framework currently governing the procedures and deliberations of the Senate and that these adjustments must be considered in its modernization.

Your committee, therefore, recommends:

1. That the Standing Committee on Rules, Procedures and the Rights of Parliament undertake a review of, and recommend amendments to, the *Rules of the Senate* with a view that all recognized parties and recognized parliamentary groups in the Senate are treated equally.

[*Translation*]

Colleagues, that was nearly six years ago. As envisioned by the Special Senate Committee on Senate Modernization, the Standing Senate Committee on Rules, Procedures and the Rights of Parliament has been studying and recommending changes for several years, since the beginning of the Forty-second Parliament. Senators Tannas and Woo also presented their own motions with proposed changes, both separately and together. This discussion has not remained stagnant; far from it.

However, in view of the changes to the Parliament of Canada Act and the fact that it will not be possible to achieve unanimity on the Rules, the time has come for this chamber, as a whole, to act. The result is the motion before you, which proposes a number of necessary changes. This motion will also fulfill the commitment made by the Government Representative Office, the GRO, in 2021, to update the *Rules of the Senate* and establish a more level playing field. It will also follow through on an electoral commitment by this government to do everything in its power to advance and cement reforms to establish a Senate that more fully fulfills its role as a complementary chamber of sober second thought — one that is fully independent and less partisan than the other place.

At present, 80 of the 96 senators are affiliated with neither the government nor the opposition. As a result, the Rules, as they currently exist, have made it increasingly difficult for all senators to participate fully.

• (1540)

I think it's clear that the number of independent senators and the different groups they represent will only grow. The proposed changes are designed to ensure fair and equitable treatment of the parliamentary groups in the Senate and their respective leadership teams. The changes will reflect the current composition of the Senate and modernize parliamentary procedures in the Rules to improve the day-to-day running of the Senate.

[*English*]

As I have mentioned, the government-opposition duopoly, which long defined the Senate's organizational structure, no longer exists. The Parliament of Canada Act was amended in 2022 specifically to reflect and recognize the existence of parliamentary groups. As a result, the government has a direct interest in ensuring that consequential changes to these rules are achieved. The official recognition in the act of a recognized party or group and the leader or facilitator of a recognized party or group in a Senate was essentially the culmination of years of work through the former Special Senate Committee on Senate Modernization, the Standing Committee on Rules, Procedures and the Rights of Parliament and the numerous reports and motions that were debated in this chamber. And while this recognition in the act is a victory, the *Rules of the Senate* need to change in order to reflect the recognition that the act confers.

The changes in this motion would reach beyond the government and opposition and extend certain privileges to other groups. They are designed to provide equity and fairness in our procedural processes. The government, of course, would continue

to have a direct say in the order and timing of government business, and the opposition would continue to be in a position to hold the government to account. But the pragmatic approach of this motion would ensure equity and support related measures that have been supported by the vast majority of senators over the past years and enable those to become, finally, a reality.

Colleagues, the role of the opposition is a time-honoured and respected one, and I do not — and have never in this chamber, as Hansard will reveal — discount, dismiss or disparage its role. However, one need only look around this chamber to realize that the old structure, the two-party structure, the attempt at mirroring the way in which the other place operates, is no longer acceptable. Even the other place has rules recognizing the presence of other parties, beyond the government and opposition, and their ability to participate in the day-to-day activities of parliamentary business. None of the proposed rule changes would dilute the ability of the opposition to hold the government to account. What the motion would do is work towards the inclusion of other groups in the day-to-day procedural processes. Colleagues, it is, after all, within these groups where the vast majority of senators sit.

Honourable senators, it is possible to respect the past while, at the same time, embracing the future. This motion is not about the exclusion of anyone, but, rather, the inclusion of the majority.

[*Translation*]

From a practical point of view, neither the three senators who make up the Government Representative Office nor the 13 senators who sit as opposition members constitute a majority in this chamber. Yet, as an example, Senator Plett and I currently have veto power over whether or not a Senate committee can meet during an extended recess. How is this justified when the committees are made up of a majority of senators who are not under my jurisdiction or that of the Leader of the Opposition? The motion would require the permission and agreement of the majority of the Senate leadership — the opposition, the government and the three largest groups — to authorize a committee to meet during an extended break. This change is fair, and it is also consistent with what happens in the other place, where a meeting is called while the House is in recess if four committee members agree. Neither the government nor the opposition alone can veto this request.

Another important change is the inclusion of all recognized parties and parliamentary groups in negotiations on time allocation — with or without agreement — and on speaking time during debate on a time allocation motion. That is also consistent with the method used in the other place. To exclude the leadership of a majority of senators from discussions on such an important matter as speaking time seems neither just nor fair. All senators are affected by time allocation if they want to intervene in an important, time-limited debate. Therefore, all leaders should take part in this discussion and in this important decision.

[*English*]

Further modifications would include cementing the current sessional order by extending the period for senators' statements to 18 minutes from the current 15 outlined in the Rules to give more senators the opportunity to participate. The evening

suspension would commence at 7 p.m. for one hour rather than the current two hours beginning at 6 p.m. And to ensure equity among all the groups, the addition of “or representative” to Leader of the Government when referred to, the addition of “or Legislative Deputy” to Deputy Leader of the Government when referred to, and the addition of “or Liaison” to Government Whip when referred to will also ensure inclusiveness while reflecting the way the government has chosen to organize itself in the Senate. So too will the rules change in relation to the length of bells when calling in the senators for a vote. The agreement of the whips and liaisons of the three largest groups, as well as the government and opposition, would be required in order to modify the default time for bells on standing votes. This is currently exclusive to the government and opposition. A majority is not represented.

Time limits for speakers has long been a topic of discussion. The change outlined in this motion would continue to allow for unlimited speaking time for the representative or Leader of the Government and Leader of the Opposition but would now include the leader or facilitator of the group with the most members, other than government or opposition. For other leaders and facilitators, speaking time would be extended to 45 minutes, as would the time allotted for the sponsor of a bill, the critic of a bill and the designated senator for each other group. For all other senators, speaking times would remain at 15 minutes.

While ex officio status has been considered before in previous motions and committee studies, the motion before you aims to extend non-voting ex officio status to the leaders or facilitators of the three largest groups. This change would recognize the role of government, opposition and the current makeup of the Senate. It would enhance leaders’ experience on committees, allow them to move motions, raise points of order and receive committee documents — an important reform.

This change, nonetheless, reserves voting privileges for the government and the opposition, which speaks to the unique role that they play in our parliamentary system. As the government is not represented on all committees, retaining ex officio voting status for the government allows it to register its position and its perspective on bills and on amendments to bills.

The Monday committee meetings that have long been required to seek permission to sit after an adjournment of the Senate would now be allowed to meet without seeking such permission, if the Senate had sat the Tuesday of the preceding week. If the Senate has been adjourned for a period exceeding a week, different mechanisms exist, specifically the one I referred to earlier in my speech to allow for committees to meet as requested.

This motion also includes a provision that answers to delayed answers and written questions submitted by senators will be provided by the government within a 60-day period, and senators would be limited to up to four questions at a time, which is, colleagues, a similar requirement in the other place.

• (1550)

The 60-day time frame accounts for the fact that the government will need to respond both to written questions and to delayed answers, and the transitional provisions will enable the

government to deal with outstanding written questions while ensuring that they will be able to properly deal with the increasing volume of parliamentary returns.

The length of time written questions have remained on the Order Paper has long been a source of frustration and discussion, and I have acknowledged this many times in the chamber. These proposed changes will finally address that source of frustration that many honourable senators have felt with respect to this issue.

[Translation]

I am well aware that, for some, this motion goes too far, while for others, it doesn’t go far enough. I believe that this motion proposes a reasonable and pragmatic set of changes to the *Rules of the Senate*, changes that are needed to fairly and effectively implement the 2022 amendments to the Parliament of Canada Act, the legislation governing the Senate.

I’m sure that there will be other suggestions on how to modernize the Senate as this process moves forward, and I am happy about that, especially for the senators who have chosen not to sit as a member of a party or recognized parliamentary group.

I recognize that this motion may not respond to many of the frustrations you may have about your ability to participate in the work of the chamber. Each of you plays a valuable role, and that must be acknowledged.

To that end, I think that this is a matter that should be explored further. I can confirm that, in the near future, I will be proposing that the Standing Senate Committee on Rules, Procedures and the Rights of Parliament examine the role of unaffiliated senators, as well as explicit mechanisms or means of facilitating their full participation in and contribution to a modernized Senate.

I hope that such a study will make it possible to identify practical ways to increase the ability of unaffiliated senators to participate in the work of the chamber, while recognizing the role that caucuses and groups play in the proper functioning of the Senate.

[English]

In addition, it has been suggested that any proposed changes should be examined and studied by the Rules Committee before they can be implemented. Colleagues, the committee conducted a study on this issue one year ago. It culminated in its fifth report, entitled *Equity Between Recognized Parties and Recognized Parliamentary Groups*. While the committee found many areas of near-unanimous agreement, it did not produce an actionable or tangible report for the Senate to consider because the committee operated on the basis of their understanding of consensus, which, in their view, required unanimity in order to move forward.

As mentioned previously, the former Special Senate Committee on Senate Modernization also called for changes to the Rules, in a report published during the Forty-second Parliament. Unanimous agreement could not be reached in that case either.

Colleagues, while coming to a unanimous agreement of all interested parties is obviously an ideal and the best way forward, it's also obvious that unanimity is not in the cards. Were we to rely on unanimity, change would be impossible, and the vast majority of senators would continue to be marginalized in many decision-making processes.

Senators across the regions of our vast country should have a voice in Senate processes so they can better reflect the voices of the Canadians they represent, even if they are not part of the government or part of the opposition. The Senate needed to find another way forward, and this motion, and its passage, was and is the best option.

Colleagues, before concluding, I want to take a moment to specifically thank our colleague and my friend Senator Frances Lankin, who joined our team and has spearheaded this initiative to change our Senate Rules. Her keen intellect, her collaborative and constructive nature and her desire to bring about meaningful reform to this chamber is to be commended. This motion would not have been the reality it is without her tireless efforts and dedication. Thank you.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

Senator Gold: Colleagues, from the initial efforts at Senate modernization by Senators Greene and Massicotte in 2015 to the first of 13 reports of the Special Senate Committee on Senate Modernization in 2016, to the fifth report of the Rules Committee in 2023, and from the motions put forward by individual senators, from the sessional orders of the Forty-second and Forty-third Parliaments, I submit to you that the discussions, debates and deliberations regarding the *Rules of the Senate* have gone on long enough.

The motion before you is a culmination of everything that went before. This motion will ensure that the Rules reflect the governing legislation, the Parliament of Canada Act. I respectfully ask colleagues to approve these changes and to allow a more level playing field that is inclusive of all senators, regardless of which group or caucus he or she may wish to align themselves with. I thank you for your kind attention.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

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

Hon. Donald Neil Plett (Leader of the Opposition): Yes. Would the senator take a few hours of questions on this?

Senator Gold: Of course.

Senator Plett: Thank you very much. We will be here for a while, and you, Your Honour, will tell me when someone else's turn comes up, and then I will have more questions again after that. Let me at least start this off. We weren't all quite as enthusiastic as others were, obviously, leader.

The government is pushing these unilateral changes to the Rules clearly with the goal to silence the opposition. You are acting for a Prime Minister who hates the opposition, loathes Canadians who do not think like him and admires China's basic

dictatorship. I'm really happy when I can always excite Senator Simons this much. It makes my day when she is excited about what I do.

From your research, Senator Gold, can you tell us how many times in the history of the Senate the government has imposed unilateral changes to the Rules through a government motion?

Senator Housakos: Never. Next question.

Senator Gold: The government is not imposing unilateral rule changes. The government is —

The Hon. the Speaker: Order. Senator Gold, you have the floor.

Senator Gold: Thank you. The government has submitted a motion to the Senate for its consideration. As I explained in my remarks, the content of this motion reflects years and years of discussion, debate and, unfortunately, some obstruction such that the *Rules of the Senate* remain ill-fitted to both the reality of the Senate and the reality of the governing legislation, the Parliament of Canada Act. Finally, after years of failure and opposition to reasonable, pragmatic recommendations supported by a vast majority of this chamber, it is a responsible thing for the government to come forward and invite the Senate as a whole to pronounce on these necessary changes.

Senator Plett: Obviously, the answer is never. I don't know why we can't at least hear answers to the questions. This isn't Question Period, where you don't need to answer the questions. You should at least try. I'm always amazed that when we ask a question that somebody doesn't like, people do this, like it's under the table. Why — I'm talking to Senator Gold, Senator Francis. Thank you very much. I'm talking to Senator Gold. So maybe just stop waving around.

• (1600)

Why did you refuse, Senator Gold, to properly consult with the Conservative opposition on these changes? Please, let me finish.

Why did you phone me on a Sunday night, after a two-week break, asking, "Have you thought about it?" I said, "Yes. I don't like it," and you said, "Well, then talk to Senator Lankin." Then, Senator Lankin did the same thing. I told her, "I don't like it."

I set up a meeting with Senator Lankin; obviously, you must have ordered her not to take that meeting. Why did you order Senator Lankin not to have a meeting with me? Why was I not allowed to properly negotiate — I'm over here. Why was I not allowed to properly negotiate this? Clearly, you've had these conversations. And, yes, I said that, inherently and overall, I'm opposed to this, which I am.

However, from the list of questions I have here, we clearly could have had a lot of consultation about this and maybe reached something somewhere along the line. Instead, you're ramming it through — as you do.

Senator Gold: We shared a draft of this motion with all the groups before the two-week break. We invited comments and input. We received concrete comments from three of the four groups. We received nothing from your office.

You expressed both publicly and privately to me, early on in the process, your opposition to this motion and, in particular, to extending the rights and privileges that hitherto are only within the purview of the government and the opposition to all groups.

You were clear that, in your opinion — which is not correct in terms of the actual motion before you, but which I believe you are entitled — this was an attempt to completely destroy the opposition. It is not.

You made your position clear both publicly and privately to me. You made it clear to Senator Lankin — who, for the record, did not receive orders from me to not meet with you. Importantly, you failed to take advantage of the time that we gave to receive feedback, and we gave plenty of time.

When we spoke, as we have done — and normally those conversations are not something about which I would comment — I explained to you the essence of our project and what is not negotiable on our part. That is part of my job: to be transparent with you in terms of our intentions, Senator Plett, as I have always tried to be.

The fact is that you didn't like that I said certain things about, in particular, creating equity between the three groups, which is the essence of the Parliament of Canada Act. That is the centrepiece of this initiative, its *raison d'être*, its DNA. It is like the object of a bill. Certain things cannot be given up, if I can use the analogy, without destroying the bill. It would be out of order in that situation were this a piece of legislation.

I was clear with you about what was at the heart of this. You were clear about your opposition to it. I think we gave you and your colleagues — I hope, if you shared it with your colleagues — the opportunity to provide responses to me and to our office. You chose not to, which was consistent with your longstanding opposition to reforms of this kind.

Therefore, we have come forward with this motion. After you've exhausted yourself with your questions and perhaps me with my answers — and others will take up the debate — the Senate can do its job in considering this motion, as I am inviting it to do.

The Hon. the Speaker: Senator Plett, I have started a list.

Senator Plett: Will you put me on the list again, please?

The Hon. the Speaker: Yes, I will. I have Senators Batters, Housakos, Carignan and Quinn.

Hon. Denise Batters: Senator Gold, the opposition powers in this motion are so significantly diluted because many of these very important opposition powers have been given to all of the other parliamentary groups — the same opposition powers. These include things like speaking time limits for leaders, sponsor and critic responsibilities and speaking times, time allocation agreement, time allocation of leaders' speeches, bell agreement — which would cause chaos — deferral of standing votes, ex officio members of committee power for all leaders and meetings on days when the Senate is adjourned. Those are just some of the ones I wrote down as you were speaking today.

Basically, this would create a government-appointed senator majority, which would trample the rights of the opposition whose stated duty is to challenge the government. In the Westminster system, the government proposes; the opposition opposes. That is how Parliament works at its best. Why can't you understand that providing those kinds of powers to all of these other groups — the same powers as the opposition has, with their stated purpose — is absolutely fundamental to diluting the power of the opposition and harming democracy?

Senator Gold: Senator, with the greatest of respect — and you have been a very articulate proponent of this view since literally the first day I arrived in the chamber and sat on the Rules Committee — the government and I disagree.

This proposal does nothing to take away from the opposition's role, however many members it has and whatever party it aligns itself with, to hold the government to account.

Yes, it does extend powers and privileges on procedural matters to other members of the Senate, as I explained in my speech. That is consistent with what is done in the other place — hardly a bastion of non-partisanship — and other Westminster systems, as I also mentioned in my remarks.

I know it is not sufficient to you that this does not touch the office of the opposition. Neither does the Parliament of Canada. I know it is not sufficient to you that it does not preserve the veto that you have over decisions; however, it is inappropriate for that veto power — and the one held by the government, by the way — to be held by only two groups in the Senate which currently represent a small minority of the senators. To use one example that I mentioned, a majority of senators on every committee are not subject to the control or authority — or whatever the right word is — of either the government or the opposition.

The government is and has since day one been committed to creating the conditions for a more independent and less partisan Senate. This is a step in that right direction.

With that comes a certain dilution of government powers, too. However, the government is prepared to do that because it believes in equity and fairness for all groups.

We understand very well, Senator Batters, your point of view. We don't share it, and we invite the Senate to consider this motion in that light. It is a step in the direction of a less partisan, more independent Senate that reflects how senators have now chosen to organize themselves to do their work.

Senator Batters: With respect to the definition of "Leader or Representative of the Government" that is proposed in this motion, it says:

The Senator who acts as the head of the Senators belonging to the Government party —

— that was how former Speaker Furey defined it —

— or who is appointed by the Government to represent the Government in the Senate without affiliation to a Government party. . . .

That second part would be how you define yourself as “Government Representative in the Senate.” But what if that person is a member of the government party — that is, they hold a membership to that political party? What if they are a donor to the government party? You have been a maximum donor to the Liberal Party in the past, and many other senators in this chamber who call themselves independent are maximum donors to the Liberal Party. That is absolutely an affiliation. Having a political party membership, being a donor or being a volunteer mean affiliation with the government party.

However, to hold that role, you have to be without affiliation to the government party. Why would you preclude that particular type of senator from being the Government Representative in the Senate?

Senator Gold: Someone who is appointed by the government of the day to lead or represent them or be their representative in the Senate can be styled either a government leader, if they meet the definitions of government leader, or as a government representative.

There’s nothing in these definitions nor in the changes — and this was much discussed, if I recall, at the Rules Committee. If I recall, that was something upon which all senators happened to agree — including yourself, Senator Batters, but you are entitled to change your mind, of course.

• (1610)

The definitions and the change of the language I do believe reached a high degree of consensus.

But I stand by my answer. There is nothing in these definitions that would preclude any government from deciding that it wanted to organize its work in the Senate differently, and the definitions allow for that possibility.

Again, it doesn’t take away the ability of any government to decide to have a government leader rather than a representative nor, should I add — without getting into all the political parties that I have supported in my life. That is a matter of public record and you know what it is, beyond the parties that you mentioned. But that is irrelevant. Donating to a political party is a democratic right. It does not make one an affiliate, much less a member, of a party.

I stand by my answer. There is nothing in these definitions that would limit any government from deciding how to organize itself in this Senate.

Hon. Leo Housakos: Government leader, your definition and the Westminster parliamentary definition of independence are radically different.

At the end of the day, we’re talking about changing procedural rules in this chamber, an independent house of Parliament. This is a house of Parliament, and unless you change that in the Constitution, it remains part and parcel of our parliamentary system.

We have a government that has changed rules to our parliamentary procedural process. Yes, you have support from the vast majority and you get a standing ovation when you table those changes.

Do you know why you get a standing ovation? You get a standing ovation from those who have been appointed by this government. You are changing the fundamental procedural rules of this independent house, with support and applause raining down in this place by Trudeau-appointed senators. Your goal is to put the official opposition, who are not appointed by the government, on the same footing with other senators appointed by the government.

Somehow, you’ve convinced yourself that this is democratic. Try to convince any academic, any constitutionalist in this country or any individual who loves our parliamentary process that this makes sense.

My question to you is the following: As an independent senator, do you think it is appropriate that you are ramming through procedural changes in this institution? From day one, starting in 2015, this whole concept was rammed through and imposed upon us from the platform of the Liberal Party of Canada. The vetting process and the appointment process — all of that comes from the Liberal platform of 2015, driven by the current Prime Minister.

Do you think something that comes from a partisan political platform in an electoral process, by your definition, is independence?

Senator Gold: With all due respect, Senator Housakos, you and I — long before I was even in this role — discussed and debated the implications of the Westminster system, the role of the opposition and the arguments for and against it. Again, I am not sure they wear all that well with time, but I invite senators who weren’t here, if you are interested in my point of view, to read them. You will see there — and it is the case — that I have always respected and will continue to respect the role of the opposition.

Where we disagree is that the Senate, in order to fulfill its historic constitutional duty, requires a duopoly, regardless of the composition of the Senate and regardless of the constitution within the Senate of different groups.

Of course, you will know, senator, having studied these matters, that the opposition in the Senate and in the Senate Rules does not date back to 1867 or 1903. It is a relatively recent change. Of course, it was a change that was introduced at a time when there were just two parties.

More to the point, we are not ramming through anything. The Senate has engaged for six-plus years in a process of reflection and study to see how the Senate could be made more independent. Independence means independent from the control of the Prime Minister’s Office.

Let's be clear what gave rise to this. We don't need a lesson in history to know exactly why the independence of the Senate was an important step — a necessary correction — to what had become a rather unhealthy situation inconsistent with the constitutional history of our country. But I digress.

The Senate has been very patient. It has engaged in study and reflection; motions have been brought forward and discussions have been had. Decisions have been frustrated because, rightly or wrongly, the degree of consensus or I should say — let's not be cute — unanimity within committees could not be reached.

However, in a democracy, we do not require unanimity to make changes — changes that are within our jurisdiction as masters and mistresses of our own house. What the Senate can do, the Senate can undo. That has been the history of the Senate.

After seven — and longer — years of patient reflection with very little progress, the government is taking its responsibilities to complete the work that was done with the passage of the Parliament of Canada Act.

Let's remember, colleagues, this is not a motion that has decided that Marc Gold has these fantastic ideas about how the Senate should be working better.

An Hon. Senator: No.

Senator Gold: I have the floor. You can keep me here and I will answer questions all night long, but allow me to answer them. This is not Question Period.

After seven and eight long years, a vast majority of senators are excluded from participating in the day-to-day work of the Senate under rules that were put into place relatively recently governing all kinds of issues that are the subject of this motion. It is the right and privilege of the Senate to revisit its rules. It is the responsibility of this government to complete the work that was passed in this chamber and in the other place and given Royal Assent to change the Parliament of Canada Act. If that is not done, then what we did and passed is not of any true value. It was always understood, colleagues, that rules had to follow the changes to the Parliament of Canada Act.

That they were frustrated within the Rules Committee over the opposition to any equity to be extended to other groups is an unfortunate matter. However, the government is taking the position that the Senate should now take responsibility for itself and decide how it wants to move forward. That is democratic.

Senator Housakos: Senator Gold, don't throw around the word "democracy" that lightly. Democracy in this chamber arises from general elections and comes from the House of Commons. We get our democratic mandate from the other place. We're appointed by prime ministers who get elected by the public. That's the only democracy that this chamber engages in. The moment we don't respect the outcome of that, this chamber has no more place in democracy.

It has been eight and a half long years for the opposition in this place that we've tolerated a Prime Minister and a government that are imposing their political agenda on this place. That goes back to 2015. We've respected that because they won three

successive elections. But to stand here and say that you will change the rules and procedures of this place on the strength of 80 Justin Trudeau-appointed senators is not necessarily the best argument. You are not changing any rules that affect the government because the government has had absolutely no problem implementing its agenda for the last eight and a half years.

You can't, in all honesty, stand up on the chamber floor and say, as Government Representative, that there has been any obstructionism to putting in place the democratically elected government's agenda. We can have a discussion about how destructive it has been for Canadians, how good or how bad. That is democracy. But the moment you are trying to put the rules that guide the role of the opposition at the same level with other —

The Hon. the Speaker pro tempore: Senator Housakos, do you have a question?

Senator Housakos: With all due respect, Your Honour, when you give the floor to the response for minutes and minutes, I think you can give the same consideration to the question. That would be fair.

Some Hon. Senators: Question.

Senator Housakos: As I said, colleagues, there has been a long tradition in this chamber that, in debate, both sides of the chamber receive equal consideration. The speakers historically have respected that. I expect the same consideration in this case. I'm only responding to the comments that the government leader himself spoke to.

• (1620)

All I am simply saying, government leader, is that your changes address opposition veto powers; you yourself said that in your answer. Somehow, all other groups should have the same rights and privileges vis-à-vis those vetoes. How can you circle that square and say to me that other caucuses that are populated primarily by people appointed by the Prime Minister — the head of the executive branch — should have the same authority and privileges on opposition issues that the official opposition has? The moment the government implements that, this place is no longer democratic.

The question I have for you now, government leader, more precisely, is that 18 months from now — when some of these rules, by the way, will be very palatable to me and less palatable to some of your colleagues — will you respect the outcome of the next general election and what will be in the platform of those political parties that face the public, and immediately after that election accept the changes of rules and procedures in this institution?

Senator Gold: In 18 months, colleagues, regrettably, you won't have me to kick around anymore but, as a student of the Constitution, I will be watching with interest.

Senator Housakos, I fully hope and expect that all senators, regardless of how they were appointed, by whom they were appointed or their personal points of view, will consider to do their job responsibly, as I believe we are doing now; that is to

say, to give appropriate deference to the decisions of the elected house. I have made that argument many times in this place, and I receive a fair amount of pushback from colleagues at times.

The truth is that there are circumstances where the Senate has to dig in its heels properly on constitutional matters or where there is grotesque unfairness to regions or vulnerable minorities. This is what we were created for.

In most cases, senators recognize that we have a responsibility as a complementary chamber. I have every expectation that senators, regardless of who appointed them, regardless of their personal political ideologies, will continue to behave in the responsible way that they do. We are not ramming anything through. We are presenting to the Senate an opportunity to decide upon how it should organize itself.

Someday there will be a change in government. If that government decides to introduce initiatives, studies or motions to change the *Rules of the Senate*, then the Senate will decide, as I'm inviting the Senate to do now. There is no difference, nor should there be.

[Translation]

Hon. Claude Carignan: Senator Gold, you told Senator Batters earlier that there was nothing in your rules, or proposed rules, to take away from senators' power to hold the government to account. I would refer you to your proposed rule 4-9, which limits senators to four written questions on the Order Paper. Can you explain why?

Senator Gold: For the first time in the history of the Senate, we're introducing a system that will require the government to answer questions. This was inspired not only by senators' well-founded frustration with the delays, but also by the experience in the other place. As you know, honourable senators, in the other place, the number of questions that each member of Parliament can submit is limited to four.

This is the first time in the history of the Senate that such a system is being introduced. We also have a system in this chamber that does not exist in the other place, that is, the obligation to answer questions by means of delayed answers. The House of Commons is subject to the same system we're putting in place.

The answer is therefore very clear: This system exists in the other place, and we think it's a good starting point to begin this process.

If the Senate, in its wisdom and with the experience that will come out of all this . . . If this motion is adopted, the Senate can change that in the future, because it's the master of its own affairs. The Senate can always consider a change to the Rules in the future.

Senator Carignan: So what you're saying, in your speech on the proposed changes to the Rules, is that you want to depoliticize debates in this chamber, yet you're using a politicized rule from the House of Commons in the Senate to limit the number of questions.

You said that the purpose wasn't to take away senators' power, but to hold the government to account. If all senators are independent, I don't understand the purpose of limiting the number of questions, other than to mimic what goes on in the House of Commons.

You didn't answer my question. I'm sorry, it's a technical question, but there will be others. Usually this type of debate happens in committee, where we can ask questions on technical aspects and get answers. Unfortunately, you decided to use this forum, so please answer my question precisely. Don't give me a political speech. Why impose a limit of four questions, and what is considered a question?

Senator Gold: We drew inspiration from the system in the other place in deciding to allow all senators to ask four written questions at a time. We have almost 100 senators who have the same opportunity to ask questions and ask that the government answer those questions. It will be up to the government to respond within a reasonable time frame. The details of what is considered a question weren't spelled out, but I also didn't think it would be necessary. It will be up to senators to judge how they will behave in this regard.

The Conservative caucus has a lot of experience in drafting multi-part questions, and there's nothing in this motion that will change the way you can ask your questions.

Senator Carignan: If we go through it item by item, I don't know. Unfortunately, this isn't the appropriate forum to discuss amendments to the Rules. As you know, that's usually done at the Standing Senate Committee on Rules, Procedures and the Rights of Parliament. These are technical questions, and the subject matter is not well suited to being put on hold in the middle of the discussion.

The Hon. the Speaker pro tempore: Senator Carignan, I'll give you a third question. Many senators want to ask questions.

Senator Carignan: There are quite a few changes, so I'll have quite a few questions. As you can see, I'm very technical.

What is the consequence if the government fails to respond by the deadline? How will the government be penalized?

Senator Gold: The answer is in the motion, but I'll summarize it for you. If the government doesn't provide an answer within the allotted time, the question will be sent directly to the Standing Senate Committee on Rules, Procedures and the Rights of Parliament so it can look at why the government failed to respond on time.

[English]

Hon. Jim Quinn: Thank you for bringing rule changes forward, Senator Gold. Mine is a process of trying to better understand a couple of the changes that have been made. Many times here questions have been asked and you have to go and make inquiries. I certainly understand, because of the variety of topics that we have, that you can't possibly have all of the answers, and then we have frustration about not getting answers for one, two or three years.

• (1630)

On that basis, I thought that doesn't put you, as our Government Representative, in a good position while allowing us to do our job, so I wrote to the Rules Committee and proposed that they follow the process that's outlined at Privy Council Office. For those who don't know, there was an audit in 2017 at the Privy Council Office that outlined the steps in the response process. I proposed to that committee that we adopt that which the Privy Council Office has outlined and is in effect in the other place. Today, you have referred a number of times to what happens in the other place. And for me, I thought the 45-day standard is exactly the type of process that would help you do your job, and help us do ours, by having a reasonable request to get responses back in that time limit that has been prescribed for Parliament. In the Senate I understand that we have just chosen to let this slide.

My question is: How did it come to 60 days? Where did the 60 days come from, which is outside of the Privy Council Office's guidelines and adhered to in the other place?

Senator Gold: It's a fair question. Thank you. First of all, just to be clear, in terms of the process that will happen once a question is submitted, it's going to be the same process. That is to say, in other words, in the sense that when an oral question is posed here, then that is communicated directly to the relevant ministers and goes through the same process that would happen in the other place for a written question. And it's the same for written questions.

The difference between 60 and 45 days was arrived at simply in recognition of the fact that, first of all, the Senate has never had this rule in place, and that it was thought necessary. This is in light of the fact that, in addition to the written questions, there is also an obligation on the government to respond to delayed answers, which is not the case in the other place, that they wanted to make sure that there was adequate, sufficient time — 15 extra days — in this first stage of what is an innovation to make sure they could do the job properly, as I said in a different context.

Again, once we have that experience in the Senate, if it turns out that the Senate believes that 60 days is too long, then I have every expectation that will be raised by the Senate. This was a decision that was reached after long discussions and consultations with the government to ensure that what we're putting in place will actually work. It was in discussions with the government.

Senator Quinn: Thank you for that, Senator Gold. Often, since I have been here, I have heard different senators talk about who we are, and all I know is that I'm a member of Parliament. I happen to serve in the upper house, in the appointed house. The others are elected, serving in the lower house. I think that, in good conscience, we should be treated as members of Parliament. The rules or the guidelines of Privy Council are for Parliament, which includes us, and I think that we do ourselves a disservice, recognizing that we're members of Parliament, by allowing deviation from this rule. I'm not sure that the 15 additional days are justified by saying, "let's get some experience." The Rules

have been there, the process has been there, and I think we should be treated as members of Parliament. Would you agree, Senator Gold?

Senator Gold: We are members of Parliament, of course. There are two separate and independent houses of Parliament. They have separate and independent rules. The House of Commons has decided to continue with hybrid meetings, and we have not. The House of Commons does not have rules that require the government to respond to delayed answers; we do. There is nothing inconsistent with respect to the Senate having its own Rules and being master of its own house with regard to those Rules.

The rationale for 60 to 45 days, as I tried to explain, was because we have rules that they don't have that have and will continue to require the government to provide written responses to questions that are not necessarily submitted in writing but orally. In that regard, it was thought that in this first step, introducing what is an historical initiative, which was the fruit of input from senators to my office and then proposed by my office to the government, was out of respect for the Senate and senators. This was what we were able to arrive at, and this is what we have chosen to bring forward.

I hope — though, as I said in my speech, it goes too far for some and not far enough for others — that this is a pragmatic, realistic and honourable attempt to move ourselves forward toward a more independent and less partisan Senate that respects the reality of the current makeup of the Senate. I hope that answers your question if it doesn't totally satisfy you.

Hon. Yonah Martin (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): As the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, and having been the former deputy leader of the government — we were both the minority and majority — we tried to look at some of the Rules we might change and consider, because in government there were some things that the opposition had rights to that we felt were really impeding the overall work. Just the thought of a sweeping motion that looks to change so many rules when we looked at just one — and the reason why there should be unanimity or consensus at the Rules Committee is that it comes back to the chamber, and then as a chamber we have to agree.

We had a rule that was approved at the Rules Committee, and when we returned to the chamber Senator Cools opposed this rule change. We had to look at it carefully, because, the way our Rules currently exist, every senator has the right to say "no" to procedural, routine items, and we need leave of the entire chamber for anything to happen. In fact, that one rule shows how malleable our Rules are already to adapt to change and has happened.

That's just one kind of commentary. Maybe I'll weigh in on the debate later, just to talk about my experiences with the Rules and my preoccupation with them.

Senator, you said that under the current makeup of the Senate it is difficult for senators to fully participate. And yet I was thinking about what we have done since the changes have been

implemented in the last number of years, that during Question Period, or QP, we think about proportionality — whether it's QP questions, Committee of the Whole, at committee — and in this chamber, when debating a bill or motion, every single senator has the right to speak. We participate fully in so many ways.

I fail to understand the statement you made, “difficult for senators to fully participate.” What do you mean by that?

Senator Gold: Thank you for the question. Nothing in the motion, nor in my speech, was meant to imply — because there is nothing in the speech or any implication — that we in the Senate have not worked together to find ways to accommodate the Senate as it has changed, whether through Standing Orders or just accommodation. I'm not standing up and saying otherwise.

But it is time to now translate those into the *Rules of the Senate*. The reason there is an inconsistency between the Parliament of Canada and the *Rules of the Senate* — and this is my answer to your question — with regard to certain procedural decisions, whether it's the length of bells or the right of committees to sit when the Senate has been adjourned for a period of time, or, indeed, even to sit on a day when the Senate is not sitting, even if it hasn't been adjourned for a long period of time — that currently the leaders or facilitators of three of the groups in the Senate — to say nothing, by the way, of non-affiliated who represent the great majority of senators — have no actual role to play. You are entirely right, Senator Martin, and nothing in this motion changes the basic rule that if we need the unanimous consent of the Senate, if we need leave, it has to be unanimous. We don't touch that rule. That is fundamental to the equality of all senators in the Senate. We are not changing the rule that allows each and every senator to rise on debate or speak to a motion — none of that. We're simply extending to the leaders of the groups — and most of the Rules to the three largest groups, which is our current situation — the right to participate in procedural decisions around the organization of the work of the Senate. These are decisions that affect their members and a majority of members who don't answer to me, and they don't answer to the opposition.

• (1640)

That's what I meant by that. I hope that clarifies it.

Senator Martin: Again, I don't see how your examples illustrate what you meant by saying that the current makeup makes it difficult for senators to fully participate. We've had sessional orders that were discussed at the leaders' meeting that were then taken back to the groups and caucuses to ensure that a certain change to the rule for a session could be done, and then we adopt that. That's how we ensure that everybody's opinions and what the groups want are reflected in those sessional orders. Also, when we're debating a very difficult bill, there are special motions to ensure we know how we're going to navigate that. We did that in the past, whether it was with cannabis legislation or the medical assistance in dying legislation. So, we have managed. To my recollection, we have done that as a chamber.

I still don't understand how it has been so difficult for senators to participate fully. I have seen a lot of full participation around.

Senator Plett: Hear, hear.

Senator Gold: Let me repeat. I'm really speaking to related issues, and I'm not speaking about the ability of us to debate bills. There is nothing in the motion that changes that, and properly so.

We are talking about the inability under the Rules currently for the leaders of three groups representing the majority of senators to have the same input in many — though not all — decisions around the organization of the work. The second aspect of that flows from the first. They have been delegated and mandated by their groups to represent them in the chamber. But the committees, for example, who do important work in the Senate, are made up of a majority of senators who don't belong to either the government or the opposition. When their leaders or facilitators don't have a say in whether or not a committee can meet, they are being deprived — at least through their representatives — of an ability to fully participate in the organization of the work.

There are many examples that run through this. This has been a matter that all groups have had a chance to study — you have clearly studied it because your questions reflect a study of it — and provide input to us. It's now time for this to be discussed in the chamber — as we are — and for the chamber ultimately to take its responsibilities and decide whether it agrees with this motion or not.

[Translation]

Hon. Raymonde Saint-Germain: I've been a member of this house since December 2016. I read up on this chamber before registering for the selection process, and I understood it to be an upper chamber that was above party politics, with an obligation to serve the fundamental interests of Canadians in legislation. I've heard a number of speeches saying that your motion poses threats to democracy, particularly with regard to the opposition's role. My first question is this: Can you tell us what power your motion takes away from the opposition?

Senator Gold: We're not taking away any powers.

Senator Saint-Germain: I sit on the Rules Committee and, mindful as I am of the considerable effort made over the past few years, I understand that, in moving amendments to the *Rules of the Senate* to prevent there being two classes of senators in this chamber, something I consider a fundamental principle of democracy, we were trying to uphold respect for the principle of senatorial equality. Can you tell me whether you would have moved forward with such a motion if not for the opposition's filibustering of any changes to the Rules?

Senator Gold: Let me respond as follows. We were disappointed with the results of the serious process that was undertaken by the Rules Committee. It was serious. The committee heard witnesses and had in-depth discussions. It's up to our committees to decide how they wish to proceed, and I fully respect that principle.

However, I must admit that I was disappointed, and the government was disappointed, that the decision was made, notwithstanding a consensus on many of the issues in this motion. The committee decided, in its wisdom, not to recommend the changes that were supported by a large majority

of senators. Given the importance, in our view, of aligning the *Rules of the Senate* with the Parliament of Canada Act, the Government Representative in the Senate — and I want to be very clear for those who would argue otherwise — right here in the Senate, has decided that the time was not only right but necessary to proceed in this way.

[English]

Senator Plett: Well, we all know that if you take a glass of whisky and pour half a glass of water into it, it dilutes the whisky. As to the answer to Senator Saint-Germain's question, clearly, if you give someone the same amount of latitude and power as somebody else, you are diluting that power. Even a 5-year-old can understand that. Throughout your entire motion, Senator Gold, you are giving additional powers to groups other than the government and opposition. You want to dilute the opposition. You want to silence the dissent in the Senate. You want to bully those pesky Conservatives, who are highlighting your government's complete incompetence and corruption. That is your ultimate goal.

When Senator Harder was the leader here a few years ago, he could not answer this simple question: Should there be an opposition to the Trudeau government in the Senate? Therefore, I'm wondering whether you think there should be an opposition to the government in the Senate, because, clearly, it appears that you do not.

Let's just take the Independent Senators Group, or ISG, for example — and we could go through some of the other groups. The ISG has 41 members, of whom 38 were appointed by Justin Trudeau, and 3 were appointed by Jean Chrétien. So I'm wondering why you think these senators should play the role of the opposition to the government. They were appointed by the government, and yet you want to give them these same powers. These changes are to give the government the powers — not only the government, but also opposition. That's why we have an opposition, yet, somehow, you want to take that away.

The leader of the caucus of the government — that's you, Senator Gold — represents millions of Canadians who voted for the Liberal Party. Whether you want to style yourself as something other than what you are — which Senator Furey made sure you understood in order for you to do time allocation — you needed to call yourself the leader of the Liberal Party. When it suited you, that's what you did. Now, when it doesn't suit you, you want to style yourself as something else. But you represent millions of people. The Leader of the Opposition and the caucus of the opposition also represent millions of people — as a matter of fact, more than the government does.

• (1650)

Senator Housakos: This time, yes.

Senator Plett: So whom do the other leaders represent? You keep saying, because they have the numbers here, they should have equal say. Whom do they represent? Whom does one independent senator in this chamber represent other than themselves? We represent millions of people. You do as well. That is why you have this. Why should individuals who represent no

one else have the same rights and privileges as caucuses that are actually part of a national political party representing millions of people?

Senator Gold, in your view, other than diluting the powers of the opposition, why should the Independent Senators Group, the Progressive Senate Group or the Canadian Senators Group get the same rights and privileges as the opposition? The Independent Senators Group senators pretend they are independent and that's fine — 96% of the time, they vote with the government, but that's okay too. Do independent members have unlimited time to speak? Why would they? Why would they have the right to defer votes or any other right conferred on a recognized party? Do you respect an opposition, and do you think there should be an opposition to this? Your motion makes us an echo chamber.

Senator Gold: Well, there is a lot in your question. My personal view is I do respect the opposition and always have. I don't always agree with the way the opposition comports itself. I certainly don't agree that the opposition in the Senate should be simply an echo chamber from the House of Commons. I do not believe the Senate was created, in 1867 — and I have read the Confederation debates several times — with the intention that it should simply replicate the highly partisan talking points in the other place, but that does not mean that there is not a role for the government to be held to account, and there is nothing in this motion that dilutes those powers. That's point one.

This is point two: I do believe that it is important, and I respect that you and the opposition have a link to the electorate, but this government has taken the position — notwithstanding that the government in power represents millions of people — and chose to structure its role in the Senate differently. It believed, though you do not, that the way in which the Senate had evolved to simply be either a rubber stamp — if they were the same parties in power — or an echo chamber — so simply to parrot the talking points developed by a national caucus and then translate them — was simply a distortion — and that is a mild word — of what the Senate was intended to be and, more importantly, of what the Senate could and should be for the service of Canadians. There is no secret that the job of the Government Representative, albeit assisted by two very able senators and a wonderful staff, is much more complicated in this Senate, and much more difficult than it was in the old system, where I actually was a leader of a caucus.

By the way, I was named the Leader of the Government — and that's why I could do time allocation, which is just a little footnote — because, at the time, the Parliament of Canada had no other way, but I was asked by the Prime Minister to style myself as representative. Happily, now, the law does allow one to be named as representative, though that is a digression.

The fact remains, senator, that this takes no powers away from the opposition, but, yes, it does extend some power — that hitherto only the government leader or Government Representative would have, or the government opposition — on procedural matters to other leaders of the groups. That is, though you disagree, fitting and proper because it would be perverse, in the opinion of the government, and in my personal opinion, for the Senate to be made up of a large majority of senators — who are not members of either the government or the opposition —

[Senator Gold]

who are denied the privilege of participating in the organizational and procedural work decisions around how we, as senators, do our work.

Senator Plett: There isn't another parliamentary chamber anywhere else in the democratic world where independent members have the same rights as the government and the opposition — no other democratic chamber in the world. In *The Hill Times* article — I will be specific here on one of your motions — Senator Lankin is quoted as saying that these rule changes would seek to eliminate time-wasting tactics in the Senate.

Since only two groups can do it now, we're going to make sure that now five groups can waste time. That's a quote, Senator Lankin. Of course, you can get up later and dispute that. These alleged time-wasting tactics are historical powers given to the opposition.

They might be time-wasting to Senator Lankin and to you when we hold the government to account. I guess this government — and Senator Lankin and you — thinks accountability is a waste of time. Are we wasting your time today, Senator Gold? Are we wasting your time at Question Period? Are we wasting your time when we hold this government to account? Are we wasting your time when we debate Justin Trudeau's bills? These Rules changes give power to all groups to use these same time-wasting tactics, as Senator Lankin calls it. Exactly how will the Rules changes eliminate — and please be specific — time-wasting if, instead of only one caucus, you now have four with the same time-wasting powers?

I will go on the next round please.

Senator Gold: First of all, thank you for referring to Senator Lankin, and if she has the opportunity, and if she does enter into the debate, I'm sure she'll be happy to answer your question. The fact is that extending the rights to decide on the deferral of votes on non-government business — when so much more of the work of the new Senate involves non-government business than it might have in the past — is fitting and proper. It still retains certain rights and privileges only for the government. With regard to other matters, the opposition and the government retain certain exclusive powers.

But with regard to decisions about whether a committee could sit, senator, and with regard to what the decision might be on bells, we don't change the fact that one senator can refuse to give leave and it is a 60-minute bell by default. We haven't changed that rule. Allowing others to participate is simply fairness, and whether we waste time or not — or however it is described by other senators — is a matter of how the powers and privileges that are given to each senator are exercised. I encourage us to use our powers and privileges, whatever our role is and whatever the Rules are, in a way that advances the proper study and careful, serious debate of the Senate rather than simply using them for partisan purposes.

But you asked me a question. I do believe in governments being held to account, and again, though I am not a fan, as you know, of many of the ways in which some senators in this chamber — and I'm going to speak not of groups, but of some senators in this group — use their privileges to exercise their

rights and privileges to hold the government to account, such as the tone and the language that is used, I would never, ever dispute the importance — in a democratic institution such as the Parliament of Canada — of having institutions like the House of Commons or the Senate where government can be properly challenged to explain and defend its decisions. I will continue to hold that view after I leave this chamber.

• (1700)

Hon. Andrew Cardozo: Senator Gold, my question is about the role of independent senators.

As I see it, we are not members of a political party. We do not caucus with a party in the House. We're not ordered how to vote by a political party. We do not receive speaking notes from a party. We are not told what to say or what not to say. We do not attend party conventions. We do not participate in party strategy. We do not engage in fundraising. We do not engage in outreach or campaigning for the political party. I call these the 10 points of political independence.

What are your thoughts in terms of the role of independent senators?

Senator Gold: Thank you for your question.

I sat as a member of the Independent Senators Group for many years here. I have enormous respect for the role of independent senators and for the challenges and the diligence with which they approach their tasks, and how they struggle with their role when they have to make their own decisions and they are not told how to vote or they don't feel that they have to follow the party line.

I am not affiliated with a political party, but I represent the government in the Senate. As such, it would be disingenuous of me to presume to speak for independent senators who are not in the Government Representative Office, and I won't do that. I have a client. I have a job to do, namely, to advance the government's legislative agenda and, to the best of my ability, answer the challenging questions that I am getting.

You only need to read Hansard regarding questions on the disability benefits during Question Period to understand that it is not only the opposition holding the government to account. It is not easy to answer questions when the answers aren't great, but you are not — and I'm looking at my colleagues across the aisle — the only ones who ask hard questions. You are not the only ones who are not happy with the answers. I will let other senators speak for themselves.

Senator Cardozo: I want to talk about the reliability of independent senators for the government. My sense is that the government took a risk to have independent senators. I saw a couple of cases last fall where a couple of bills were touch-and-go.

Here is an interesting issue. In the four years before 2015, the Senate amended one bill. We currently amend about 40% to 50% of the bills before this chamber. Rather than voting against bills, we amend them.

Honourable senators, 40% to 50% is a high number, but the next number is interesting: The vast majority of the amendments that we make to government bills are accepted by the government in the House. That is what this Senate is about, namely, sober second thought. Rather than voting against everything — and that proves our independence — we look at everything, review it, give it sober second thought, make a number of amendments and send them back. To the credit of the people in this chamber and in the other place, the government accepts most of them. My question is this: Isn't that proof of how an independent Senate is working?

Senator Gold: Again, I look forward to hearing from other colleagues as to how they see it. For one, I do believe that the Senate, as it is currently constituted, is doing a good job on behalf of Canadians.

I believe that the rules simply reflect neither the reality nor the legal framework that governs the business of the chamber. That's why this motion is before you.

Hon. Denise Batters: I want to go back to that definition of "Leader of the Government" that we were discussing before.

The definition in your motion says that the "Leader or Representative of the Government" is defined as:

The Senator who acts as the head of the Senators belonging to the Government party, or who is appointed by the Government to represent the Government in the Senate without affiliation to a Government party.

If you are the Leader of the Government, you belong to the government party; if you are the Government Representative in the Senate, then you must not have an affiliation to a government party.

In your answer before, I was unclear. Do you consider things like being a donor to the government party, the Liberal Party of Canada currently; or being a volunteer for the Liberal Party of Canada; or taking out a political party membership to the Liberal Party of Canada — all of those things — to be "affiliation to a Government party" or not? What I am wondering as well is why doesn't the definition of "government deputy leader," as you define it with a different title — I can't keep track of these things — or "Government Whip" have the same prohibition? Why only the government leader?

Senator Gold: Thank you for your question.

I think "prohibition" is the wrong word, with all respect, senator. I understand your question better than I did before. I apologize if I was not as crisp as I am going to try to be.

There is no definition of "affiliation" in the rules and there need not be. A government can decide how it wants to organize its work in the Senate. It can decide, regardless of the *Rules of the Senate* — but consistent with the Parliament of Canada Act — how they want to name their leader or representative.

If it turns out that a government decides, as has been stated publicly, that if it forms government it would return to the older system, then it would name a government leader, as you did when Senator Carignan was the government leader here in the Senate and his predecessors before him.

If this government is returned to power, or if I leave this office tomorrow and a new Government Representative in the Senate has to be named, then the government will name someone as they see fit.

I'm not going to enter into my interpretation of what "affiliation" might be. I know what I am, what I do and what I don't do. I am very confident that under no definition of "affiliation" am I affiliated with the Liberal Party of Canada, and I haven't been since long before I took this role, but it's not about me.

This is just, I think, an attempt to create the circumstances where you can be something other than "a government leader affiliated with a political party" and still represent the government in the Senate, as this government has chosen to do.

Senator Batters: I find it quite strange that it's not your own personal view. You are bringing forward a government motion. I'm asking about the definition in a government motion. I think senators who might aspire to your position may actually want to know if they would be qualified to do so or not.

Anyway, I will go on to another point that I have. I have many more rounds of things to ask about this. My second question on this today will be about what Senator Saint-Germain, I think, said: "We don't want to have two classes of senators." Well, you have created it in spades in this motion. You have nine pages that I have printed out here with respect to this motion, and not once do you even say the words "non-affiliated senators" — not once. I just looked through it again. You made a little reference to it in your remarks today to try, maybe, to paper that over, but you have entirely left out an important group in the Senate who has just as many rights as all of us do.

By creating this so-called equity of groups, you are demolishing the equity of actual senators. That is a major failing in this. Your draconian motion also limits the number of groups who will acquire these opposition powers to five groups in total.

• (1710)

If you belong to a very large group — for example, the Independent Senators Group — and perhaps you are not so happy, and there is a smaller group of like-minded, independent senators in that group who might want to break away and form another group, then you will be a group without power, because the top five groups will be the only ones who, according to the Parliament of Canada Act, have the power of titles and money; you won't have the power of any of these changes.

You have created unequal groups and unequal senators through your motion. How do you respond to that?

Senator Gold: Thank you for your question. It gives me the opportunity to elaborate a little bit further. I would have thought that some of this was already clear from my speech.

The impetuses for and sources of this motion are twofold: One is the Parliament of Canada Act, which specifically extends recognition, roles and legitimacy to three groups in addition to the government and the opposition, whose roles it doesn't touch. It also recognizes the legitimacy of certain parliamentary groups not affiliated with a political party and gives, in particular, recognition to the three largest leadership teams. In that regard, the Rules follow that.

Therefore, a large part of this motion, which I acknowledged in my speech, is to provide equity between the groups and bring them into line with the Parliament of Canada Act. That is my first point.

Second, the other impetus for the changes in this was the work that has been done for six or seven years and the emerging consensus from a large majority of senators regarding how to make the changes, not only of nomenclature and legitimacy, but also in terms of the actual procedural workings of the Senate. I'm referring to the motion of Senator Woo and Senator Tannas, as well as the work of the Special Senate Committee on Senate Modernization and, most recently, the Standing Committee on Rules, Procedures and the Rights of Parliament, which, unfortunately, did not provide an actionable recommendation, though so much of this motion actually reflects the overwhelming consensus on that committee from all but one group.

You are right that the question of non-affiliated senators was not addressed either in the Parliament of Canada Act or in the committee studies that I referred to, and it is not referred to in this motion. It is an omission that is not to be swept under the table.

That is why I have made a commitment — publicly now, but privately before — that I will bring forward a government motion to ask the Senate to refer to the Standing Committee on Rules, Procedures and the Rights of Parliament a proper and full study on the rights and privileges of non-affiliated senators.

It has not been studied adequately or fulsomely enough for us to feel that, in the context of this package — which is trying to align it with the Parliament of Canada Act — it was appropriate to bring it forward at this time. It needs to be studied further and should be studied further.

Senators, there are a number of other ideas floating around about how to make the Senate work better. There is just not a sufficient consensus among senators for it to crystallize. I regret that. I wish that the Senate would continue to engage in serious questions about how we function in the 21st century. There are many issues. Consensus needs to emerge. Perhaps that can emerge, I hope, in a Rules Committee study regarding non-affiliated senators, or in any other process that is brought forward, but we have to ensure that there is at least sufficient consensus — and I believe there is in this package — in order to bring it forward.

We have not disenfranchised the non-affiliated senators. They have been at a disadvantage ever since there was the creation of caucuses and groups, and I thank the opposition and other groups for whatever privileges they've extended. Non-affiliated senators shouldn't have to go hat in hand every time they want to ask a

question or obtain a seat on a committee. That is something that I hope the Senate will take seriously. We want to do our part in the government to encourage that study, and we hope that it will be done soon.

Senator Housakos: I have the utmost respect for Senator Saint-Germain, and she knows that. But to have a Trudeau government-appointed senator get on her feet to ask the Trudeau government-appointed leader — who is moving procedural and rule changes in this chamber — about what could possibly be so egregious and unacceptable to the opposition is disingenuous. With all respect to Senator Saint-Germain, if the question was based on integrity and sincerity, save that question for when the leader of the official opposition speaks to this motion so that he can actually highlight what exactly it is that we find so offensive about these rule changes.

Senator Cardozo, a government-appointed senator, got on his feet in order to ask, again, the government-appointed leader — who is moving procedural changes in the Senate — about what could possibly be wrong. These are the kinds of things we expect in terms of lack of robust debate in places like Beijing, Iran and North Korea, but not in this institution.

Senator Cardozo, with all due respect, you had your say; I will have mine. Senator Cardozo, in your utopian state of existence — where it is an anathema for senators to raise money, do outreach, participate in our political process, go to nomination meetings and actually help the democratic process — somehow we should embrace Justin Trudeau's recommendation that we should limit those rights and privileges in our democracy. Do you know what the outcome would be? It's a government that is not challenged, and a government that will accept no robust debate in a parliamentary institution.

The Hon. the Speaker: Senator Housakos, are you asking a question of Senator Gold?

Senator Housakos: Your Honour, we have had a long tradition in this chamber that when we have question-and-answer sessions on debates, the same amount of leeway and consideration is provided to the person who is answering the question as it was to the person who posed it.

The Hon. the Speaker: Are you asking the question? Senator Housakos, please.

An Hon. Senator: Order, order.

Senator Housakos: You are not the Speaker.

The Hon. the Speaker: Senator Housakos, I was just wondering if you could ask Senator Gold the question.

Senator Housakos: Senator Gold, you also mentioned that this place has a long history of non-partisanship and was created by the founders to be a non-partisan institution. May I remind you, Senator Gold, that in 1867, when Sir John A. Macdonald created this institution, he named Conservatives and Liberals in order to have a robust debate to hold the government to account.

You also said, Senator Gold, that you believe in the role of the opposition. You do not always agree with our tone or — very often — the direction of the debate. Why would you? You represent the government. We respect that. We don't always agree with you. You don't always agree with us. Again, that is called robust debate in a democratic process.

My specific question is an easy one, Senator Gold. You have now tabled these changes to the Rules. Are you doing this on your own initiative — as you highlighted — with the support of Senator Lankin, Senator Greene and other independent senators in this institution, or are you doing it at the behest of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, the Prime Minister's Office and the government? Which of the two is it?

Senator Gold: It is an initiative of the Government Representative Office in the Senate. It has been a long-standing commitment of this office from the time of my predecessor and through me. I have said that on many occasions, and I will continue to do so. Those are the facts.

• (1720)

I have answered your question, and I will continue to answer your questions for as long as my strength allows, but I would ask senators to ask me questions and not to — and I encourage you to enter into debate — that is fantastic. I will try to be more brief in my answers if that will give more questioners time to ask their questions rather than debate.

But you are asking me serious questions, and I'm trying to answer seriously.

Senator Housakos: Senator Gold, that was a very serious answer. You finally gave us an answer. I appreciate that. The answer is that this is at the behest of the Leader of the Government and the Prime Minister's Office.

Senator Gold: That is not what I said.

Senator Housakos: Can you clarify, please?

Your Honour, I asked my first question. I would like —

The Hon. the Speaker: Order. Senator Housakos, could you ask your question?

Senator Housakos: My question is simple: Was it at the behest of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau that you tabled the rules changes or is it an independent initiative of Senator Gold? It is simple.

Senator Gold: I answered the question: This is an initiative of the Government Representative Office in the Senate. It is not an initiative of the Prime Minister's Office, period.

The Hon. the Speaker: Senator Housakos, you had two questions. I will come back to you.

Senator Housakos: Your Honour, I didn't get my supplementary. He clarified something. I would like my supplementary.

[Senator Housakos]

The Hon. the Speaker: I will come back to you, Senator Housakos.

Senator Quinn: Senator Gold, can you provide another clarification for me? The rules changes are proposing that, in relation to a bill, every group may have a designated senator who will have additional speaking time. Will that designated senator also have the privilege of having additional briefing materials that are provided to sponsors and critics so that they can do their jobs more robustly?

Senator Gold: Thank you.

The idea of a designated senator emerged in discussions at the Rules Committee, as those who participated will recall. It reflects the fact that the leaders of groups do not speak for their members. We believe groups ought to have the ability for them to choose one of the senators not to represent the views of the group but, based upon whatever criteria the group decides — expertise, interests or some combination — that someone be given additional time to weigh in on matters of public policy and government bills.

The Government Representative's Office is always open to working with individual senators to facilitate their access to information. I can't make a commitment because no thought was given procedurally to whether — and that is not, quite frankly, fitting for the rules. This is simply giving speaking time. Then, whomever represents the government or leads the government of the day for so long as these rules are in place will make decisions. I can tell you that we have always and will continue to make sure that all senators, regardless of their role, have access to proper and full materials so they can make decisions.

Senator Quinn: Thank you, Senator Gold.

I raised that question because during the committee work on Bill C-11, I raised the question about briefing books being made available to members of that committee. A number of my Senate colleagues weren't aware that such materials existed. It created a rumble, if you will, in that committee. But those materials do exist, and they are very important in helping to better understand the nuances and directions the bills are going in. They are from the department that creates those bills.

I raise this question only because if a senator is going to be speaking on behalf of himself, herself or the group, then they should be awarded the same privilege of having that additional understanding and interaction with the department. Would you agree with that?

Senator Gold: Again, thank you.

If this motion passes, then for so long as I am in this office, I commit to working with any senator who approaches and seeks additional information. I cannot go further than that. I am making a commitment to work with whomever requests information. Dependent upon the nature of the request and the circumstance, I will certainly do my best to accommodate.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Claude Carignan: Ever since the debate began, I've heard you say over and over that the amendment to the Rules has been studied for six or seven years. Why is there such a rush to pass these amendments by April 30? Could the reason for this haste have anything to do with the recent polls announcing the imminent defeat of the Trudeau government, which you represent here?

Senator Gold: All I've done, honourable senator, is move a motion for debate and discussion. I don't deny the importance of effectively discussing, debating and voting on the matter. The government and my office consider it very important that this be done. I didn't mention a date. No date for the final vote was given, either in the motion or in my speech. I explained why the motion is important and why the subject has been dragging on for several years without making headway. Now is the right time. That's why we moved the motion now.

Hon. Jean-Guy Dagenais: I was here when the government was defeated in 2015 and I witnessed the forcible expulsion of the Liberal caucus, the Liberal senators. It was done through a simple email from Prime Minister Trudeau. We witnessed a new way of appointing senators.

Obviously, there have been a lot of studies on Senate modernization. Oddly, nine years later, perhaps sensing the defeat of the current government, it seems to be in a rush to make absolutely sure we carry out this modernization because obviously something is going to happen in a few months.

I wonder. Today, I am listening to a lot of debate. Obviously there is a lot of talk about democracy. I have known both forms of the Senate. Again, I wonder: What's the rush? You said that April 30 may not be the deadline, but I was told that it would be important for all of this to be resolved by April 30, even though we've been studying this issue for six or seven years now.

Senator Gold: Thank you, colleague. There's no reason to delay. There's no reason our basic rules shouldn't be consistent with the legal statute or the Parliament of Canada Act. It is unacceptable that this has dragged on for so long, regardless of what's in this motion.

The unfairness that our current rules impose and create for those who aren't members of either the opposition or the Government Representative Office in the Senate is unacceptable and unjustified. That's why we chose to proceed this way to put an end to this inequity and to bring our rules into line with the reality of this chamber and the other place. We want to give every opportunity not just to the leaders, but also to those who are part of a group, to play a role in making decisions about the procedures surrounding bills, motions and the work of the Senate.

• (1730)

[*English*]

Hon. Krista Ross: Thank you very much, Senator Gold. Thank you, Senator Lankin. Thanks to those who have worked on the recommendations on the Rules Committee and to my colleague, Senator Greene, who was around in the early iterations of changes or recommendations for the Rules.

I take exception to the characterization that I have heard here today that, as a senator who is not affiliated with a political party, I do not represent anyone. I represent the people of New Brunswick. I was appointed to represent them, I take that job seriously and I am proud to be a senator who is non-partisan, regardless of who appointed me. I represent the people of my province, and I believe that we, as senators, should be equal to represent the people, the provinces, the regions and the territories we were appointed to represent. It seems to me these changes are not taking power away from anyone, but simply allowing all of us to be equal in representing the people who live in our provinces.

Senator Gold, do you believe that senators are equal or do you believe that, although we have multiple groups, some who are affiliated with political parties should have additional or special powers?

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

Senator Gold: That is a very good question, and thank you for the question. I'm going to allow myself a rather nuanced but honest answer. I believe that all senators are equal — that's for sure — and our Rules reflect that. They reflect that. But it is also the case that the work of the Senate requires some organization, and that was historically done in the duopoly situation where there were only two groups.

It was Conservatives and Liberals. They would toggle back and forth depending on elections. It made life, in a way, perhaps interesting rhetorically, but behind closed doors, often rather easy because everyone knew what their job was and they knew that what sauce is for the goose is sauce for the gander.

It is not easy now. It does, as I said earlier, put non-affiliated senators at a real disadvantage because the fact is that it is hard to organize the work. It has required consultation, discussion and negotiation, which I do with my counterparts at Senate scrolls. We haven't figured out a way to do it that doesn't rely upon groups organizing themselves and mandating those to represent them.

How the Senate organizes itself and whether it requires this system versus another is what I hope the Rules Committee may look at when it takes a look at the question of rights and privileges of unaffiliated senators. Again, I'm not trying to put any of my colleagues on the spot, but I remember in my days in the Independent Senators Group, or ISG, when we debated all kinds of other ways in which the Senate work could be done. You may be surprised to hear it — these documents were leaked a long time ago from the ISG to the opposition — but I was

involved with a group, some of whom are still here, and it was a brainstorming exercise. Can we have a truly independent Senate without government or opposition?

The ISG actually agreed at the time. In 2017, when we asked ourselves that question and debated it, we came to the conclusion that it didn't seem possible. But we also looked seriously at different models of organizing the work, and some of them are public. Senator Harder has put forward a very interesting thought piece, now some years' old but still very relevant. I can't remember the term you used, Senator Harder — and I'm not asking you to comment — for a committee that the Senate would constitute. A business committee or a super scrolls committee — I'm looking at Senator Greene because I think that also came out of the Senate Modernization Committee or input from there.

All questions are serious. I'm giving this question, I think —

The Hon. the Speaker: Please let Senator Gold answer his question.

Senator Gold: I am answering the question. I think all senators are equal. I think the work of the Senate requires organization. We have adapted the old model to the new model of different groups out of fairness to the groups, but it has consequences for those who have chosen not to be in groups. All I'm saying is that if this motion is passed and we move forward to at least have our rules aligned with the Parliament of Canada Act, there is really important work to be done.

Regardless of what happens in the next election, whenever that election will be, most of you will still be here. As masters of our own house, you will have the opportunity and responsibility to move those ideas forward, and I really hope you do it. I'll be watching. I'll be holding you to account from whatever perch I manage to occupy once I leave here. The fact is that there is much more — this is not the end of the process, this is the beginning. This is really a subset of the first step. We amended the Parliament of Canada Act. We need to do this so that it is coherent, and then there is lots more to do. I hope it gets addressed.

Hon. Marilou McPhedran: I have a question for you, Senator Gold. But before I ask my question, I want to say thank you to Senator Batters for her acknowledgement of the exclusion of unaffiliated senators, and I want to thank Senator Patterson for ensuring that my name was finally recognized. I'm often amazed, for such a large-bodied woman, how I manage to be invisible so much of the time in this chamber.

My question is based on a dream that I have had since the second day I came into the Senate. I dreamt that at some point there would be a sufficient number of feminists, regardless of gender, who decided that they actually wanted to be a group.

After seven years here, I don't dream about this nearly as often as I used to, but my question is: Should that happen, do I understand correctly that the results of this motion, as adopted, would foreclose the possibility forever for a new group with equal status to the existing groups to form and flourish?

Senator Gold: The answer is no. There is nothing in this motion that in any way inhibits the Senate from following the rules for what is required for a recognized group. I believe the rule requires nine members to be recognized in the chamber. We don't touch that rule.

What we have done in most, but not all, cases — I can't remember which cases, but in most cases so as not to be misleading — we have cleaved somewhat to the provisions of the Parliament of Canada Act, which limited the extension of certain rights and privileges to the leaders, facilitators, deputies and so on of the three largest groups. But nothing in this motion precludes new groups from forming. Depending on how many members they may or may not attract, they may very well find themselves ranked in the top three or not.

Senator, on that question, unlike the question on non-affiliated senators, which I have already addressed, that is something that I think — again, these Rules — nothing is set in stone and nothing lasts forever. Legislation is changed, and rules can be, have been and may be changed in the future. This is one step forward. If new groups emerge and the Senate then, in its judgment, decides to adjust the Rules to take account of that new reality, in whatever direction the Senate so chooses, then the Senate is free to do that. I would look forward to that discussion happening at the appropriate time.

Senator McPhedran: I have a very quick supplementary. My initial question included reference to a new group flourishing, not just functioning or existing. So, just to make sure that I understand your answer, if that group were to flourish and attain the resources needed to do that, would it need enough members to surpass existing groups to reach the top echelon?

• (1740)

Senator Gold: No. For example, senator, as you know, this motion doesn't at all touch our processes through the Committee on Internal Economy, Budgets and Administration for providing resources to recognized groups. That is simply not the point.

If this motion passes, then yes, the Rules do give a privileged position — at least in one case — to the facilitator of the largest group other than government, and in many other respects to the leaders or facilitators — and through them, their members — of three groups. That's the way it stands now.

If a fourth group emerges, and it is still fourth in terms of numbers, then as long as the Rules stay that way, they will be disadvantaged compared to the other three, unless and until the Rules are changed. If there is a willingness or desire to change the Rules, then they will.

Again, we were trying to bring this into line with the Parliament of Canada Act. We were also trying, in a responsible way, as a government, to not go beyond what had been well established in this chamber through the Parliament of Canada Act, which gave certain privileges to the three largest groups, but also that which had emerged consensually through the various studies to which I've referred. Again, this is an evolutionary, ongoing process for which we, senators, have a responsibility to continue to move forward, regardless of what happens with this motion.

[Translation]

Senator Carignan: I have another technical question, and it builds on one I asked earlier.

You said that if we didn't get an answer to the written question, the answer would be sent to the Rules Committee. What powers does the committee have to force the government to respond?

Senator Gold: I think our committees have powers under the *Rules of the Senate* and in our parliamentary traditions. Nothing in this motion changes that. It is meant to enhance accountability and transparency. The idea is that if the government doesn't fulfill its obligation to respond in accordance with the law, there will be an opportunity for senators to hold it accountable—

[English]

— to hold them responsible —

[Translation]

—and to shed light on the lack of respect for the Senate. This is an appropriate role for the Senate and our committees.

Senator Carignan: In your proposed changes to the Rules, you are suggesting that some leaders become *ex officio* members of committees. Some will have the right to vote, while others won't. Right now, two senators have the right to vote: the government leader and the Leader of the Opposition.

The usual practice has been that, as a matter of courtesy, if one of the leaders intends to be present, they advise the other so that the votes cancel each other out. However, you are proposing that a third person be given the right to vote, namely, the leader of the largest group. It is written in the Rules. Can you find that for me? Where is that written?

Senator Gold: With all due respect, Senator Carignan, I'll give you a technical answer.

Only the Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of the Government will have the right to vote. This was discussed in detail at the Rules Committee. Maybe you got things mixed up? The only thing the leader of the largest group gets is unlimited speaking time. That's the only change. Apart from that, I don't think any additional privilege is given to the leader of the largest group, just the right to speak. This is due to the fact that the largest group has a diversity of views. That's what justifies this privilege. Senator, we respect and have respected the fact that not only . . .

We did this for two reasons. Often, but not always, the government and the opposition have opposing views, especially on government bills. This is because of their opposing roles, of course. Under such circumstances, it's fair for those on both sides of a government bill to be there so other members of the committee can decide. That's why only the Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of the Government get the right to vote.

[English]

Hon. Rebecca Patterson: Senator Gold, this has been a really robust debate and I'm learning as I go. We've had a lot of talk about legitimacy of appointment depending on who appointed you to the role of senator. I'd like to understand where exactly the democratic authority of senators comes from. I'm under the impression it's the Constitution as opposed to the elected people, so democracy has more than one way of dealing with this, and we're talking about constitutional democratic legitimacy.

If we're looking at the foundation for having independent senators in this new group, my question to you is this: What does the Constitution say about whom senators must belong to in order to execute their role as senators?

Senator Gold: Well, the Constitution is silent about whom they have to belong to. The Constitution provides that senators are appointed by the Governor General on the advice of the Prime Minister, and that reflects the convention in British constitutional tradition that the Governor General will only act on the advice of his or her Prime Minister.

When the Senate was first being discussed and brought into force, the organization of electoral politics was somewhat different than it is now. There were political parties, but it was really only in that era that the political parties became so dominant and entrenched, and that explains, to some degree, a lot of the evolution in the Senate.

To your question, we are appointed to represent our regions and to serve Canadians by providing a longer-range, critical perspective on legislation so that we are free from having to worry about the short-term, electoral and partisan consequences of our decisions. This was the genius of the founders — John A. MacDonald and others — who recognized the importance of freeing the second chamber from the exigencies of worrying about re-election and the like. That does not mean that we do not take our representative roles seriously; however, we define the constituencies that we represent.

The point that the opposition is trying to make is one worth taking seriously. If one purports to speak for the government, there should be a link to the government because I represent a government that was elected and represents.

• (1750)

The Conservative senators stand up and say, "We speak for 6 million" — whatever the number of Canadians who voted for them was — and they are right to say that because there is a link there. When they say, "I speak for Canadians," they represent a party that does.

In the future, as the Senate grapples with how to organize itself and if it chooses to grapple with the question of the role of an opposition, if this government is replaced by another government who takes a different view, then there are going to be serious questions for senators to ask themselves as to how we do this if we are not necessarily linked electorally.

The academic in me revels in questions like this, but they are tough questions, and I have confidence in the Senate. Let's face it, we're not the smartest people in the world, but we are a diverse, experienced and responsible body, and I have every confidence that these and other questions about how we perform our role can be addressed if we address them seriously, soberly and collegially.

There are different points of view that need to be somehow meshed, but we have the legitimacy that the Constitution imposes upon us. We have a job to do that the Constitution demands of us. We have a job that Canadians expect us to do, and I think we're doing a good one. And I hope that we can bring our Rules into line with reality and give ourselves the opportunity to move on and address government legislation, non-government legislation, policy studies that our committees are so justly renowned for or whatever further issues — and there are many — that arise in making the Senate an even better place to serve Canadians.

Senator Patterson: As a follow-up question, what does it say about independence within the Constitution, because that word gets thrown around and has what seems to be a fairly ambiguous meaning? What does the Constitution define as “independence” in terms of their role within the Senate?

Senator Gold: The constitutional texts provide a certain framework, which is then understood and elaborated upon by judicial decisions, conventions, practices and the like. Our Constitution has never been exclusively — in fact, it was never largely — a written Constitution.

In the Supreme Court of Canada reference, to which much reference has been made over the years — and I encourage you to reread it — the Supreme Court of Canada does bring together a lot of understanding of what independence of the Senate means. It certainly means that it stands to not be a rival to the House of Commons but, rather, to provide a complementarity to it.

I also believe — at least in the eyes of this government — that it means the Senate and the government role in the Senate should not be controlled by the executive branch. Clearly, I represent the government in the Senate. I try to advance government legislation, and I try to explain it as best I can, but there is a difference between how the work of the government is done in this version of the Senate and the way it was done in the past, where there was a direct link of senators to their national caucus and a direct understanding amongst senators that they were taking directions from the Office of the Prime Minister, or PMO.

That is not how our office works. That's not how the Senate works, despite allegations to the contrary.

Again, I leave it to individual senators to define “independence,” because it's more than that. There is independence in how you vote; there are the criteria you apply. Again, I'm less and less well positioned to comment on that, given my role.

Senator Plett: Well, one thing is for sure, and that is that we are all encouraging Senator McPhedran to move forward with her efforts to get this caucus going.

It is sad to say that it probably won't happen until there is a new government, and then a lot of things will change, Senator McPhedran.

An Hon. Senator: Will you join?

Senator Plett: Even that might be more possible. I don't think I'll be the leader of that caucus, but nevertheless.

I also want to assure Senator Ross that I believe in independent senators, 100%. I always have. I always will. When I make my comments on this, I will further explain what I believe in about representing people, whom we represent and how we represent them. I believe in the independence of this chamber. I believe in the independence of every senator.

Senator Dagenais, to some extent, took away at least part of the question I was going to ask, and he is quite correct. Even Dominic LeBlanc is already coming forward and saying, “Enough of Trudeau,” and, “If he doesn't step aside, I'm going to run for leadership maybe before he is gone.” It'll be very interesting. That election could well be sooner rather than later.

The Trudeau government has had a majority in the Senate for seven years. Now this needs to be passed by April 30, Senator Dagenais says, and even I didn't know that. Clearly, as the Leader of the Opposition, I have been excluded from those discussions, but we are supposed to rush this through now.

These changes are urgent, Senator Gold says. Well, we have been working on them for six, seven, eight or nine years, yet Senator Lankin was only appointed to the position of doing this a few months ago. But somehow this has been worked on.

Now, in the sunset months — maybe a year — of this Parliament, we need to ram this through before the government changes, before Pierre Poilievre becomes the prime minister.

He has a 20-point lead in the polls, Senator Gold. Are you trying to entrench this ridiculous structure that Justin Trudeau has created in the Senate just before the election because you know the Liberals will be wiped out? Is this motion the first part of the plan to build a Senate that will try to stop the common-sense changes that Pierre Poilievre and his team will bring to Canada after the next election?

We all remember Brian Mulroney when he was the prime minister. Liberal senators tried to stop his agenda, including the U.S.-Canada Free Trade Agreement and the Goods and Services Tax. Is this the start of what you are going to do when Pierre Poilievre will be the prime minister?

You are a member of the Liberal government. It doesn't matter how you style yourself. Senator Lankin, your cohort in this particular fiasco used to be a New Democratic Party, or NDP, cabinet minister. Are these changes another result of an NDP-Liberal coalition?

What is the actual plan? Are you planning on moving this forward? What happens in the next election when this all falls apart, Senator Gold?

Have you evaluated the time wasted? Senator Lankin says we are wasting time. How much time has been wasted in the last seven years that would have been saved with these ridiculous changes to the Rules?

Senator Gold: I think all senators who have experience on different committees and different bills could probably weigh in better than I as to how the work has progressed.

Senator Plett, I can't answer some of your questions because your assumptions in the questions reveal such an image of what you think the Senate should be, even in using your talking points and slogans in these questions. I am going to try to answer your question, but I confess that I'm having a hard time. I will do my best.

This is not being rammed through. This is being presented to the Senate for debate.

Secondly, the Senate is the master of its own Rules, and whenever there is an election, and whatever the results of that election are, quite frankly — I know you take great pleasure in the polls, but I'm not here to worry about polls. I am here, and our office is here — can I tell a joke?

Here's who the GRO is. It is like a joke, and I'm going to allow you to call me a Liberal for the sake of the joke.

So, a Liberal, a New Democrat and a Progressive Conservative walk into a bar. That's who the GRO is.

My predecessor was the chief of staff to Joe Clark. Members of your caucus left the Conservative caucus because they wanted to be more independent, and the Prime Minister has appointed people who have never voted for the government — despite my best efforts. But I digress. There is no master plan, sir.

• (1800)

Senator LaBoucane-Benson: And no purity test.

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, it is now six o'clock and pursuant to rule 3-3(1), I am obliged to leave the chair until eight o'clock, when we will resume, unless it is your wish, honourable senators, to not see the clock.

Is it agreed to not see the clock?

Some Hon. Senators: Agreed.

Some Hon. Senators: No.

The Hon. the Speaker: I hear a "no."

Honourable senators, leave was not granted. The sitting is, therefore, suspended, and I will leave the chair until eight o'clock.

(The sitting of the Senate was suspended.)

(The sitting of the Senate was resumed.)

• (2000)

(On motion of Senator Martin, debate adjourned.)

HAIDA NATION RECOGNITION BILL

THIRD READING—DEBATE ADJOURNED

Hon. Margo Greenwood moved third reading of Bill S-16, An Act respecting the recognition of the Haida Nation and the Council of the Haida Nation.

She said: Good evening, colleagues. I begin by acknowledging that we are on the traditional unceded territory of the Algonquin Anishinaabeg peoples. I am grateful to live and work on these lands.

I am honoured to rise as the sponsor of Bill S-16, an act respecting the recognition of the Haida Nation and the Council of the Haida Nation and to speak at third reading.

I must first acknowledge the strength and leadership of the Haida Nation in articulating and advocating for their vision of governance and self-determination. We would not be here today without their perseverance and determination.

I would like to thank everyone who has worked to get us to this point, including President Gaagwiis Jason Alsop, councillors, hereditary chiefs and staff, past and present, at the Council of the Haida Nation. Their work and perseverance made this bill a reality.

I would also like to thank the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, his team and department for helping to move reconciliation forward between Canada and the Haida Nation.

To the honourable senators who participated in the Standing Senate Committee on Indigenous Peoples' review of this bill, for your thoughtful contributions, thank you.

Bill S-16 was co-developed with the Haida Nation and introduced with their support. Honourable senators, this bill will accomplish two important actions. First, it will affirm the Government of Canada's recognition of the Haida Nation as a holder of inherent rights of governance and self-determination. Second, it will affirm the Council of the Haida Nation as the government of the Haida Nation with the capacity to exercise governing powers vested in it through the Haida Constitution.

I'll take a moment to summarize how we got here.

Since time immemorial, Haida people have occupied the Haida Gwaii archipelago off the north coast of British Columbia. Today, they make up about half of the 5,000 people living on these islands.

Fifty years ago, the Haida Nation formed its own national government, the Council of the Haida Nation. The proposed bill is a key component to implement Canada's recognition of the Council of the Haida Nation as the government of the Haida Nation.

At its core, Bill S-16 is a step in a renewed process to build a better future based on the recognition of Haida governance and governing structures that are inherent and self-determined.

Council of the Haida Nation President Gaagwiis Jason Alsop spoke directly to this concept in appearing before our committee on Bill S-16 stating that:

The bill before you today is an opportunity for the recognition of our governance developed by our people, our self-determination, and an opportunity to continue the work of . . . [reconciliation].

Reconciliation in Haida means good people working together to make things right. Senators, I look around and I know that we are good people and that we have an opportunity to make things right.

Foundational to this journey is the GayGahlda Changing Tide Framework Agreement for reconciliation signed by the Haida Nation, Canada and British Columbia in August of 2021. Through this framework, all three governments committed to an incremental process for negotiating reconciliation agreements that addressed Haida priorities based on the recognition of Haida title and rights.

One of the first priorities set out in the framework is for the Haida Nation to have their governance and governing structures legally recognized by British Columbia and Canada.

This priority is seen in the creation of the Nang K'uula Nang K'uulaas Recognition Agreement. This jointly designed agreement was signed and celebrated in July 2023. It is the first tripartite reconciliation agreement to be reached under the Changing Tide Framework. The legislation then before us today is a commitment that flows from this first agreement.

Both British Columbia and Canada agreed to develop and introduce legislation required to implement sections of this agreement. British Columbia unanimously adopted Bill 18, the Haida Nation Recognition Act, in May of 2023. Canada's Bill S-16 was introduced here in this chamber on February 8, 2024. It will fulfill Canada's commitment to implement the recognition agreement.

Shortly after its introduction, it passed second reading and was referred to committee for further study. I want to recognize and thank Senator Martin for her thoughtful and meaningful contribution to the second reading debate.

The Standing Senate Committee on Indigenous Peoples undertook a study of the bill. Committee members heard testimony from Gaagwiis Jason Alsop, President of the Council of the Haida Nation, as well as the Honourable Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations. Others were also invited to send written submissions. Committee members had an opportunity to learn more about who the Haida people are and how they've

chosen to govern themselves through a system that weaves together traditional structures and democratic governance, including democratically elected representatives, hereditary chiefs and village councils.

• (2010)

We learned about Haida mechanisms for decision making, resolving conflict and gaining consensus as outlined in the Haida Constitution. Gaagwiis explained how the Haida Nation operates on a three-quarter majority threshold when voting on important decisions and that ongoing dialogue with Haida citizens is critical to achieving this. For example, following the negotiation of the Nang K'uula • Nang K'uulaas Recognition Agreement, the Haida Nation followed an approval process consisting of community consultations — including information sharing, recommendations garnered from the Haida Lands and Title Committee and Hereditary Chiefs Council — and final approval of the Council of the Haida Nation.

During the committee's study, we also heard about the extensive work the Haida Nation has done with other governments — federal, provincial and municipal — as they enter into new agreements such as the Title Lands Agreement between the Haida Nation and British Columbia, signed on April 14, 2024.

While much has been done, there is much more work to come as both governments live up to their commitments. Honourable senators, the next step required from Canada is to pass this bill in order to support implementation of the Nang K'uula • Nang K'uulaas Recognition Agreement. In addition, collaboration with the Haida Nation in the development and implementation of this bill realizes Canada's commitment to recognize the inherent rights of self-determination and self-government under the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act.

On April 10, 2024, the committee referred Bill S-16 back to the Senate with no amendments, which leads us to today.

Honourable senators, the expeditious passage of Bill S-16 through committee is a reflection of the collaborative nature of the bill's development. It is the product of decades of extensive efforts on the part of the Haida Nation and multiple agreements signed with British Columbia and Canada, all of which have laid the groundwork for this bill.

Although it has taken time to get to this point, it is now our turn to ensure this bill proceeds in a timely manner. The Haida Nation supports this bill. They are already exercising their own form of governance in accordance with the Haida Constitution. The province supports this bill. They have already passed the provincial Haida Nation Recognition Act in British Columbia.

Now it is time to confirm the federal government's support of this bill. It will solidify recognition of the Haida Nation and the Council of the Haida Nation. It will support the Council of the Haida Nation in exercising its powers as a government. It will achieve objectives of the UN Declaration and those of the "Changing Tide" Framework for Reconciliation. It would also set the stage for future reconciliation agreements between the Haida Nation and the federal and provincial governments. This is the

beginning of an ongoing and incremental process. As the Haida Nation decides on the next priorities to pursue, we must continue to work together based on a recognition of rights, respect and partnership.

In closing, recognition of Haida governance and self-determination outlined in this bill is long overdue, and it is an important step on our path to reconciliation.

Honourable senators, I go back now to the Haida concept of reconciliation as articulated by Haida people in their own language: Good “people working together to make it right.”

Good people, let’s work together to send this bill to the other place. Thank you for joining me in supporting this bill. *Hiy hiy.*

(On motion of Senator Plett, debate adjourned.)

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION ADOPTED

Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate), pursuant to notice of April 17, 2024, moved:

That, when the Senate next adjourns after the adoption of this motion, it do stand adjourned until Tuesday, April 30, 2024, at 2 p.m.

The Hon. the Speaker: It is proposed by the Honourable Senator LaBoucane-Benson, seconded by Senator Gold, that when the Senate next adjourns, it stands adjourned until Tuesday, April 30, 2024, at 2 p.m.

Are honourable senators ready for the question?

Hon. Senators: Question.

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to.)

BUSINESS OF THE SENATE

Hon. Donald Neil Plett (Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, with leave of the Senate and notwithstanding rule 5-5(k), I move:

That the Senate do now adjourn.

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to.)

(At 8:16 p.m., pursuant to the order adopted by the Senate earlier this day, the Senate adjourned until Tuesday, April 30, 2024, at 2 p.m.)

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