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Wednesday, November 20, 2024

The Honourable RAYMONDE GAGNÉ,  
Speaker

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## THE SENATE

Wednesday, November 20, 2024

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

Prayers.

### SENATORS' STATEMENTS

#### ANTIMICROBIAL RESISTANCE AWARENESS WEEK

**Hon. Mohamed-Iqbal Ravalia:** Honourable senators, I rise today during World Antimicrobial Resistance Awareness Week to bring attention to a growing global public health crisis that is also of significant concern for us here in Canada.

Antimicrobial resistance, or AMR, occurs when bacteria, viruses, fungi and parasites no longer respond to the medications designed to treat them. This resistance renders antimicrobials and other critical treatments less effective, making infections harder or sometimes even impossible to treat. As a result, the risk of disease-spread, severe illness and death increases significantly.

Here in Canada, the impact of AMR is already being felt. It is estimated that one in four infections in our country is now resistant to first-line treatment. Common infections like bacterial pneumonia, gonorrhoea and urinary tract infections are becoming increasingly difficult to treat. The implications are profound. Without effective antimicrobials, routine surgeries, cancer treatments and even childbirth could become far riskier with patients facing life-threatening complications from infections that were once easily treatable.

In 2018 alone, AMR directly contributed to 5,400 deaths in Canada, with the financial toll on our health care system and economy exceeding \$3.4 billion. AMR is a complex, multi-faceted issue that threatens human and animal health, disrupts food production and impacts our environment. Drug-resistant pathogens pose a risk to everyone everywhere, yet much more can be done to raise awareness among the public and stakeholders. This year's theme for World AMR Awareness Week is "Educate. Advocate. Act now." This calls on all of us to raise awareness, push for strong commitments and take concrete steps to combat this threat.

The upcoming 2024 UN General Assembly High-Level Meeting on antimicrobial resistance provides a crucial opportunity to secure the political will and resources needed to protect the effectiveness of our medications.

Honourable colleagues, AMR is a challenge that knows no borders and our response must be just as united. Practically speaking, simple measures like washing hands, covering your cough or sneeze and not taking or prescribing antibiotics for viral infections like the common cold or influenza are ways to help combat AMR. Let us use this week and beyond to inspire action and collaboration, ensuring that life-saving treatments remain effective for future generations.

Thank you, *meegwetch*.

#### VISITOR IN THE GALLERY

**The Hon. the Speaker:** Honourable senators, I wish to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of Margaret Eaton, National Chief Executive Officer of the Canadian Mental Health Association. She is the guest of the Honourable Senator Burey.

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

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

[*Translation*]

#### MARGARET EATON

**Hon. Sharon Burey:** Honourable senators, yesterday, I had the honour of marking the release of the Canadian Mental Health Association's landmark report entitled *The State of Mental Health in Canada 2024*. This groundbreaking report provides a sobering picture of our mental health care system, with all its flaws and the challenges it faces, and describes the realities facing Canadians across the country. It also outlines some of the policy and legislative pathways that would make it possible to provide mental health, addiction and substance use care for everyone, regardless of where they live or work or their social situation.

Honourable senators, I invite you to read this innovative report.

[*English*]

I also have the honour of recognizing the work of Ms. Margaret Eaton, who has been the CEO of the Canadian Mental Health Association, or CMHA, since 2020. As CEO of the Canadian Mental Health Association, Ms. Eaton has been a driving force in advancing mental health advocacy across Canada. She has championed the principle of mental health parity, demanding that mental health care receive the same attention and investment as physical health care. Under her visionary leadership, the CMHA has launched transformative initiatives such as the Act for Mental Health campaign, which calls for universal mental health care for all Canadians.

Ms. Eaton has also been an advocate for truth and reconciliation and was key in developing a federation-wide working group to promote the decolonization and indigenization of Canadian Mental Health Associations.

Prior to joining the CMHA, Ms. Eaton served for seven years as Executive Director of the Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council, spearheading innovative, collaborative efforts to integrate immigrants into the Greater Toronto Area's workforce.

In 2012 she was awarded the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal for her work in literacy and culture.

Ms. Eaton leaves the CMHA better aligned and more capable than ever to advocate for the mental well-being of all Canadians. As she begins a new chapter, I thank her on behalf of all senators and Canadians for her dedication and impact on mental health, substance abuse and addiction care across Canada.

Thank you, *meegwetch*.

[*Translation*]

#### VISITOR IN THE GALLERY

**The Hon. the Speaker:** Honourable senators, I wish to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of Chloé Lubin, the Honourable Senator Youance's daughter.

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

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

• (1410)

#### ARTWORK AND HERITAGE ADVISORY WORKING GROUP

**Hon. Andrew Cardozo:** Honourable senators, as the chair of the Artwork and Heritage Advisory Working Group, I have the privilege of informing you of some of the work we are doing to preserve and showcase the Senate's rich cultural history and heritage. As you know, the other members of the working group are Senators Ataullahjan, Burey and Moodie.

[*English*]

I have three short updates. I am particularly excited about the display of a well-crafted wooden chair from the original Senate Chamber as part of the Collection Spotlight program, one floor up from the lobby of the chamber.

This historic artifact comes from the Centre Block that burnt down in the fire of 1916. To the best of our knowledge, it is the only chair that survived the fire and, indeed, is one of the very few pieces of furniture from the original Centre Block dating back to Confederation.

I also want to let you know that the portrait of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II by Liliás Newton, née Torrance, which currently hangs in the entrance of the Senate of Canada Building, will be moving shortly. It's owned by the National Capital Commission, and their plan is to move it to Rideau Hall to hang alongside a portrait of Prince Philip painted by the same artist.

I want to highlight that it will be replaced by another fine portrait of Her Majesty during the upcoming winter. There will be more on the new portrait shortly, once the loan agreement is finalized. But for those of you who have a fondness for the current painting, and I know that many of you do, the next few months is the time to get a picture of it before it is moved.

[*Translation*]

I'm also pleased to announce that the Senate has accepted a new addition to its heritage collection, namely, a wooden sculpture carved in 1997 by the talented artist Jean-Baptiste Dubé. This outstanding work of art was gifted to the Senate by Senator Dagenais in view of his upcoming retirement. Senator Dagenais, thank you so very much for your extremely generous gift.

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

[*English*]

#### VISITOR IN THE GALLERY

**The Hon. the Speaker:** Honourable senators, I wish to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of Karen McCarthy, Vice President of Communications and Government relations for Fortis Inc. She is the guest of the Honourable Senator Petten.

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

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

#### THE LATE ELEXIS SCHLOSS, C.M.

**Hon. Paula Simons:** Honourable senators, Elexis Schloss first encountered anti-Semitism as a child growing up in Medicine Hat, Alberta. In an interview, years later, Elexis recalled how shocked she'd been when a childhood friend told her they couldn't play together anymore because Elexis had killed Jesus. She said, "It wasn't me, I don't even know Jesus! It must have been my brother Lionel, he's always in trouble. . . ."

She told that story with a giggle, and she brought a similar optimistic energy to her lifetime of work as a champion of human rights, interfaith tolerance and artistic beauty.

Elexis was an interior designer who for almost 20 years worked for Edmonton's Maclab Development Group before running her own design business. She was a serial entrepreneur who ran a gourmet chocolate truffle business and, later, a company that made designer hand-knit sweaters worn by everyone from Lady Diana, Princess of Wales, to the actress Victoria Principal.

Elexis was a watercolourist, a comic book artist, a gilder, a jewellery maker and a knitter who designed angora sweaters for the wealthy but also knit hundreds of hats, scarves and mittens for the homeless.

She was a member of the boards of more than two dozen Edmonton community organizations, from the Pilgrims Hospice Society and Compassion House Foundation to the Art Gallery of Alberta and the John Humphrey Centre for Peace and Human Rights. She was an indefatigable event planner who raised money for breast cancer care, cardiac care, animal welfare, HIV prevention and children who'd been sexually abused.

She was the most fashionable, fabulously dressed woman in Edmonton, but she wasn't just a society grande dame who organized galas.

She and her husband, the physician and philanthropist Eric Schloss, travelled to countries including Rwanda, Ghana, Kenya, Ethiopia and Haiti to provide medical care and do hands-on development work. Ever a model for interfaith relations, Elexis worked on rural development projects with evangelical Christian missionaries, raised funds for Catholic Social Services and befriended both Archbishop Desmond Tutu and Jehan Sadat, widow of the former Egyptian president Anwar Sadat. Elexis even invited Ms. Sadat to come to Edmonton to give the keynote address for the 1993 Jewish National Fund Negev Dinner, which Ms. Sadat did.

Elexis also designed the interior and exterior of Edmonton's striking Beth Israel Synagogue. Somehow, she still found time to serve as a citizenship judge.

Warm and charming, Elexis Schloss graced the entire Edmonton community with her infectious joy, boundless generosity and moral clarity and energy. Her recent death, at the age of 78, robbed our city of its most elegant and well-dressed champion. But the way she lived her life enriched us all. May her memory be for a blessing for her husband, Eric, their children and grandchildren, and all who knew and loved her.

### 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 Edmonton Police Service, the RCMP and the Office for the Prevention of Violence who specialize in hate crimes and violent extremism. They are the guests of the Honourable Senator Wells (*Alberta*).

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

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

### NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR'S SHED PARTY

**Hon. Fabian Manning:** Well, folks, it's that time of year again. Honourable senators, my Newfoundland colleagues here in the Senate of Canada and the House of Commons and I are going to bring Newfoundland and Labrador to the steps of Parliament Hill.

In just a few short hours, the doors will swing open at the John A. Macdonald Building, and all of you are welcome — many have RSVP'd already — to celebrate all our wonderful and beautiful province has to offer.

Tonight, we bring the shed party to Ottawa. Some people have asked, "What is a shed party?" In Newfoundland, a shed party is usually a little get-together in somebody's backyard in a little shed where a few people have a chat, yarn and have something to eat, a little refreshment and a bit of music, but tonight's shed party is much bigger.

Prizes will be drawn for airline tickets from Air Canada, WestJet and provincial airlines. I hope the winners travel to Newfoundland and Labrador.

There will be a great Newfoundland food selection provided by Ocean Choice International and Clearwater Seafoods, and the world-renowned, award-winning Fogo Island Inn chef will be in town, from one of only two Canadian hotels to receive the Three Key recognition from the Michelin Guide. Famous guests have visited there, including Barack Obama, Oprah Winfrey, basketball star Michael Jordan and Canadian senator Mohamed Ravalia.

Refreshments will be provided by several of our local companies. One is the Newfoundland Distillery Company. One of their spirits is called Gunpowder & Rose. Try that and then see what your dancing shoes are like. The music will be provided by drummers from Labrador and singers from the west coast. Our house band is the award-winning Juno nominee Rum Ragged. I may be biased there; my son is one of the lead singers.

There will be something for everybody. Senator Gold loves the music, Senator MacDonald loves the fish and Senator Cuzner, well, he loves a party.

This is our fourth shed party, and I want to thank all our sponsors, who helped us make this bigger and better than ever. I hope you can all make it this evening. Come one and all, because a shed party, as I said, is a special place, a special gathering, where there are no strangers — only friends you haven't met.

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[*Translation*]

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

### CITIZENSHIP ACT

BILL TO AMEND—NOTICE OF MOTION TO AUTHORIZE  
SOCIAL AFFAIRS, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY  
COMMITTEE TO STUDY SUBJECT MATTER

**Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate):** Honourable senators, I give notice that, at the next sitting of the Senate, I will move:

That, in accordance with rule 10-11(1), the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology be authorized to examine the subject matter of Bill C-71, An Act to amend the Citizenship Act (2024), introduced in the House of Commons on May 23, 2024, in advance of the said bill coming before the Senate; and

That the committee submit its final report to the Senate no later than December 10, 2024.

• (1420)

[English]

## ADJOURNMENT

### NOTICE OF MOTION

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

That, when the Senate next adjourns after the adoption of this motion, it do stand adjourned until Tuesday, November 26, 2024, at 2 p.m.

## THE HONOURABLE STEPHEN GREENE

### NOTICE OF INQUIRY

**Hon. Rebecca Patterson:** Honourable senators, I give notice that, two days hence:

I will call the attention of the Senate to the career of the Honourable Stephen Greene.

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## QUESTION PERIOD

### PUBLIC SAFETY

#### PAROLE BOARD OF CANADA

**Hon. Donald Neil Plett (Leader of the Opposition):** Leader, multiple media outlets have reported today that the families of Kristen French and Leslie Mahaffy are once again being victimized by our justice system. The French and Mahaffy families are being denied the right to appear in person at Paul Bernardo's parole hearing next week. They want to give their victim impact statements in front of the man who kidnapped, raped and killed their young daughters in one of the most horrific crimes that our country has ever known.

Their lawyer, Tim Danson, has represented the families from the start, and he calls this decision appalling, leader.

How is this possible, leader? Will your government ensure that this awful decision is overturned?

**Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate):** Thank you for your question and for reminding us of the horrors that those families lived through and continue to live through.

The decision by the Parole Board of Canada is one that Minister Blair disagrees with, as does the Government of Canada. However, the Parole Board of Canada operates, and has always operated, independent of government.

My sympathies are with the families whose loved ones were taken so brutally by Paul Bernardo. I know that I speak for the government in that respect, as well.

**Senator Plett:** Leader, our justice system gave this sadistic murderer two life sentences and declared him a dangerous offender, yet, last year, he was moved to a medium-security prison. The Prime Minister pretended to be shocked when the jail transfer became public, and yet his staff knew for months beforehand.

This government also sought court costs from the French and Mahaffy families back in 2021.

Did the minister disagree with that, leader? When will these families and all victims of crime be treated with the respect they deserve?

**Senator Gold:** Again, thank you for your question.

I can only repeat this: What the families have gone through is horrific and unimaginable. Our thoughts are with those families.

The decisions of the Parole Board of Canada are independent of government; they always have been and, indeed, should be in a democracy. Regardless, the pain to the families is unimaginable and tragic.

## PRIVY COUNCIL

### MINISTERIAL ACCOUNTABILITY

**Hon. Leo Housakos:** Senator Gold, instead of removing Randy Boissonnault from cabinet, your government removes opposition members from the chamber for calling out Boissonnault's fraud. Randy Boissonnault has shown his incompetence as the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Official Languages, incapable of delivering anything meaningful. He should be fired just for that.

Randy Boissonnault was involved in the private company receiving money from the government while he was a minister. He should be fired for that.

Randy Boissonnault's company had a partnership with a cocaine dealer. He should be fired for that.

Randy Boissonnault is a "pretendian," fraudulently claiming to be Cree one day, then Métis the next and then White. He certainly should be fired for that.

Of course, Senator Gold, we know he was just fired for all that, but the question is the following: Why did it take so long? Why does the Prime Minister not have any integrity, and why did he not do the right thing sooner than today or a few minutes ago? Is it because the Prime Minister knows there are other members of his government who are also masquerading around, pretending that they are something they are not?

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

The allegations against Mr. Boissonnault are allegations. He has answered and spoken to them openly. I will not repeat what he said. My understanding from the news story that just recently broke is that he and the Prime Minister agreed that he would step aside from cabinet as he continues to focus on clearing his name.

All the other insinuations in your questions — including your statements that he committed fraud and that he was in partnership — are allegations that are not founded in facts. Again, although I cannot persuade you, Senator Housakos, and some of your colleagues to show respect in this chamber when you ask questions, please have respect for the facts.

**Senator Housakos:** I am saying the fact is that, finally, the Prime Minister did the right thing and asked him to leave; that's the fact. The fact is that this former minister was running around pretending he was Indigenous when he is not.

That should also not surprise anyone because this is a government with a Prime Minister who has also used blackface, pretending to be a Black man when he is not.

Senator Gold, the question is the following: Why does this Prime Minister kick out of caucus a Black woman and an Indigenous woman, but he doesn't kick himself out of government for doing the most deplorable thing, which is pretending he is Black when he is not?

**Senator Gold:** I do my best to answer questions, but this one does not dignify a response. Honestly, Senator Housakos, you're scraping the bottom of the barrel here.

## FINANCE

### CANADA PENSION PLAN

**Hon. Paula Simons:** My question is for the Government Representative.

On November 7, the Alberta government fired all 10 members of the board of directors of AIMCo, the investment fund that manages Alberta's public service pensions as well as Alberta's famous Heritage Savings Trust Fund. It was done, in part, over concerns that the fund managers were too keen to consider environmental, social and governance metrics in making their investment decisions.

Today, the province named former Conservative Prime Minister Stephen Harper as chair of the AIMCo board.

In light of these developments and in light of the Alberta government's continuing commitment to withdraw from the Canada Pension Plan, or CPP, and create an Alberta-run pension plan, could you tell us when the government expects to receive the report of the Chief Actuary on the consequences of that pension pullout, which was promised sometime this fall?

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

I do not know when that report will be available or submitted, but I'll certainly make inquiries of the minister.

**Senator Simons:** I have another question. Shall I ask it now?

**The Hon. the Speaker:** I'm sorry, no.

## PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

**Hon. Krista Ross:** Senator Gold, I appreciate you answering both my questions and the questions from my colleagues on the National Finance Committee regarding the Public Accounts of Canada three weeks ago. In response to your answer that day, I can confirm that we are aware that the reporting deadline is December 31, or within 15 days thereafter, but my concern is about timely access to financial documents and not legislated dates.

The public accounts are the government's year-end financial reports that show what money the government collected and spent in the last fiscal year. We're now eight months into the next fiscal year, and, as of yesterday, the Supplementary Estimates (B) have now been referred to the National Finance Committee, but we still don't have the public accounts to compare requested funding for the fiscal year with what was actually spent the previous year.

• (1430)

Nearly a month later, my question is still this: Have the public accounts been signed yet?

**Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate):** Thank you for the question and for following up, senator. I will have to make inquiries, because I don't have the answer today. I'm sorry.

**Senator Ross:** Thank you. Three weeks ago you stated that the Treasury Board has committed to tabling the public accounts by October 15 beginning next year. It is not clear to me why they haven't been signed this year.

On October 23, the Auditor General told the National Finance Committee that there were accounting issues to be resolved. Can you give me a sense of what type of accounting errors the government is attempting to reconcile and for which departments?

**Senator Gold:** Again, senator, I will make inquiries with the minister in an effort to get the answers to your question.



## WOMEN AND GENDER EQUALITY

### FEDERAL 2SLGBTQI+ ACTION PLAN

**Hon. Wanda Thomas Bernard:** Senator Gold, today, on the Transgender Day of Remembrance we honour the lives lost to anti-trans violence. We have seen the human rights of transgender, non-binary and gender-nonconforming people become a topic of debate south of the border.

According to the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, the threat of violence is increasing in Canada.

Two years into the Federal 2SLGBTQI+ Action Plan, what concrete actions are being taken to protect transgender Canadians?

**Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate):** Thank you for your question. At the outset, the position of this government is that it and our legal protections are there for all Canadians, regardless of their gender expression or orientation, no matter who they are in Canada. Rights are rights. The government will always stand up for 2SLGBTQI+ communities.

As we know — let me highlight this for senators who may not have been here at the time — the government has passed legislation to ban conversion therapy for transgender and gender-diverse Canadians.

With regard to the action plan to which you have referred, the government is providing emergency resources to help cover security costs at Pride events, which have been a target of concern. This is in addition to providing over \$100 million over five years —

**The Hon. the Speaker:** Senator Bernard.

**Senator Bernard:** Senator Gold, are you able to offer some information on specific milestones the action plan has already reached in these two years?

**Senator Gold:** Thank you. A number of things come to mind. An anti-stigma awareness campaign has been launched. A research plan has been established that involves new national data collection and community-led research.

There is work being done to create a new designated employment equity group for those communities and to provide increased support to combat hate in all its forms.

## AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

### FOOD SECURITY

**Hon. Salma Atallahjan:** Senator Gold, Canadians are struggling under your government. A recent report released by the Daily Bread Food Bank and the North York Harvest Food Bank paints a very grim picture of the city of Toronto.

From April of last year to March 2024, the number of client visits to Toronto food banks reached a staggering 3.5 million, and 23% of their clients are children and youth.

I was shocked when the same report points out that it took 38 years to exceed 1 million food bank visits, then only two years to surpass 2 million and just one year to reach 3 million. In the face of such a disaster, what concrete steps is your government taking to end the rapidly growing food insecurity in Canada's major cities?

**Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate):** The government is aware that far too many Canadians are having a difficult time affording groceries. That's why the government has been assisting Canadians through targeted social programs and income supplements like the Canada Child Benefit, or CCB, and the grocery rebate. The government has also made funding available to food banks and other charities.

Indeed, the cost of food is one important element in what is making life difficult for Canadians. The government has delivered on the \$10-a-day child care plan. It is already saving families thousands of dollars per year — up to \$8,500 in annual savings for families in Ontario.

The Canada Child Benefit sends families up to \$7,787 per child under the age of 6 and \$6,570 per child between ages 6 and 7 to help with the cost of groceries. Add to that the National School Food Program, which will serve 400,000 more kids the healthy meals they need at school. These are concrete solutions for families and children in need.

**Senator Atallahjan:** Senator Gold, your government released a Poverty Reduction Strategy in 2015 that came into effect in 2019. Unfortunately, the gains it achieved in the first couple of years have not been sustained. Poverty rates are now trending in the wrong direction with child poverty rates rising to 18.1% from 2021 to 2022. What measures will your government implement to stop and reverse this trend? Does the government have any plans?

**Senator Gold:** The government continues to address the challenges of poverty with programs such as the ones I have mentioned. I won't repeat them.

The government is continuing to move forward with other programs to help families, especially those in need, whether in terms of health care costs, dental care and the like. These are tangible measures the government has invested in for the benefit of Canadians.

## JUSTICE

### MANDATORY MINIMUM PENALTIES

**Hon. Yonah Martin (Deputy Leader of the Opposition):** Leader, on this National Child Day, my question concerns an incredibly disturbing ruling issued by the Supreme Court of Canada a year ago which found that mandatory minimum penalties for child luring were unconstitutional. The court ruled that mandatory jail time of six months on a summary conviction

and one year for an indictment amounted to cruel and unusual punishment. Canadians were understandably appalled by this decision.

After the ruling was handed down, a spokesperson said the Minister of Justice was reviewing the decision closely.

Leader, why have Canadians heard nothing since then from your government about this ruling?

**Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate):** The Government of Canada has enormous respect for our Constitution and the independent institutions, like our courts, that interpret it.

The review of any legislation that a court rules unconstitutional is a serious process that this government engages in. If and when there are proposed changes to laws, they will be announced. I have nothing to announce at this juncture.

**Senator Martin:** The NDP-Liberals have failed to say or do anything about this over the past year. Vulnerable children who are victims of child luring deserve to have a government and a justice system they can trust to protect them. Common-sense Conservatives believe this, leader. If your government does as well, then what are you doing in response to this ruling?

**Senator Gold:** Senator, as you know, when the Supreme Court, the highest court in our land, rules that a law is unconstitutional, there are not many options available to a government. Of course, it could — although no federal government ever has — use a “notwithstanding” clause to oust the application of the Charter. It is not the position of this government that that is an appropriate step.

Other than that, I have nothing to add to my previous answer.

## PRIVY COUNCIL

### SOCIAL MEDIA

**Hon. Paula Simons:** My question is for the Government Representative. Several years ago when Twitter became a widely used social media platform, many of our government departments took to using Twitter to share important information with Canadians.

Now Twitter has turned into X. Its owner, Elon Musk, has removed any of the guardrails that once made the site a little safer and more reliable, turning it instead into a platform that gleefully promotes racism, transphobia, misogyny and Russian propaganda.

Is the government giving any consideration to joining the millions of people leaving X, rather than continuing to give its endorsement and imprimatur to the site?

[ Senator Martin ]

**Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate):** I’m not aware of any decision to that end. I can assure this chamber that the government monitors carefully and consistently the social media platforms that it uses to ensure that it is present where appropriate and using platforms and tools that are in the best interests of Canadians.

• (1440)

**Senator Simons:** I ask because, of course, the government has already been extremely proactive in telling government departments and representatives not to be involved with TikTok. We have gone so far as to shut down TikTok’s operations in Canada. Given all of the corporations that are leaving X because of concern about what staying there means for their corporate brand, is the government concerned about what staying on X means for Canada’s national brand?

**Senator Gold:** Thank you for your question. I’m not in a position to comment on the government’s thinking in this regard, but I will certainly raise the question of the impact on the government’s brand with the appropriate ministers.

## IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

### GRANTING OF TEMPORARY VISAS

**Hon. Yuen Pau Woo:** Senator Gold, three months into Israel’s assault and siege of Gaza, the government put in place a special temporary resident visa program for Gazans who have family in Canada. Can you tell us if that special program has resulted in the relocation of any Gazans to our country?

**Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate):** Thank you for your question. I don’t have the information at hand, Senator Woo, with regard to the success or the statistics around that program. The challenges for those living in Gaza are enormous, as you well know. Leaving Gaza is not always an easy task for those who try to leave for reasons I assume you know as well. I will certainly make inquiries with the minister so that I’m updated on the status of this program.

**Senator Woo:** I would be grateful for an answer, but this is what 40 civil society groups have said about the program:

Anti-Arab, and specifically anti-Palestinian racism, saturates every aspect of the Special Measures program: Palestinians are denied access to financial or other forms of government support. . . .

The letter goes on and on.

Senator Gold, you are the original sponsor of the Arab Heritage Month Bill. How do you respond to that accusation?

**Senator Gold:** There are many accusations that are being made in the context of this tragic war that is being fought not only in Gaza but on seven fronts, largely by forces who have been very clear of their intent. In that regard, I can only deplore the situation that people living in this war zone, innocent civilians, experience, and I hope that a measure of peace is returned to them.

## TRANSPORT

### HIGH-SPEED RAIL

**Hon. Andrew Cardozo:** My question is for the Government Representative. It has been reported that the federal and provincial governments are planning to build high-speed rail between Quebec City and Toronto. This will be a welcome addition to our infrastructure that will cut journey times, improve productivity, allow us to build more housing along the transit corridor and help us meet our climate goals. As a senator from Ontario and, indeed, from Ottawa, I want to ask if the plan is to include high-speed rail that will come to Ottawa, given that it both is a government town and has a strong high-tech sector.

**Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate):** Thank you for your question, although I don't know the answer. I would hope that high-speed rail service would be available to those coming to or from Ottawa, as I will look forward to it being in place for other communities along the corridor. I just don't know exactly what stage the planning is at, senator.

**Senator Cardozo:** Thank you. My supplementary question is regarding the manufacturing and the building of this railway. I was wanting to ask whether the trains and tracks and other components will be built by Canadian companies or companies in Canada, supporting Canadian jobs and the Canadian economy, and, from what we learned from the Ottawa LRT, whether the trains will actually function in cold weather. While that would have been my question, my request is that you put these issues to the ministers concerned and that these issues be addressed.

**Senator Gold:** Duly noted. I would be happy to do so.

## IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

### IMMIGRATION SYSTEM

**Hon. Leo Housakos:** Senator Gold, over the weekend, Justin Trudeau released a video to address the mess he created with immigration in Canada. Far from offering a *mea culpa*, the Prime Minister did what he always does: He blamed someone else. The truth is the Trudeau government was directly warned by officials in June of 2022 that its immigration targets were dramatically outstripping housing availability. Under Trudeau, Canada has seen the fastest population growth since 1957, which has led directly to a record-high housing cost that Canadians are

now facing. This was a direct consequence of Trudeau giving out a million student visas without paying any attention to how this would affect the country.

Senator Gold, how can Justin Trudeau continue to blame external forces, when his own decisions and mismanagement have directly led to the housing and infrastructure pressure that so many Canadians are facing coast to coast?

**Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate):** Thank you for your question. First of all, the Prime Minister was candid in acknowledging that the government that he leads was slow to respond to the growing issues surrounding immigration. But for some time now, as we all know, serious measures have been taken to find the right balance between our need for and desire for new immigrants under many different categories, including the economic needs of our businesses for such workers, and our ability to properly welcome, absorb them and house them.

It is, however, not a question of blaming. You are very good at asking about blame, and that's your prerogative. The truth is that it is not immigration that is the cause of our housing shortfall. There are so many other forces, market forces —

**The Hon. the Speaker:** Senator Housakos.

**Senator Housakos:** We in opposition actually believe accountability in Parliament is important, so yes, when the government screws up, we blame you. The problem is we have been blaming you for far more things than you're taking accountability for. Mr. Trudeau was warned about these consequences about immigration targets by his own ministry, by his own officials. Even his university buddy and groomsmen, now immigration minister, Marc Miller can see it. But it has been nine years that it took the Prime Minister to wake up and see the calamity of this problem. So how can he claim the system is out of control and be taken seriously when he has been warned for years that —

**Senator Gold:** Senator Housakos, the government has taken measures to re-establish our targets and our goals. It has caused no small measure of discomfort amongst our universities, amongst our small businesses and our agricultural sector. It happens to be the right thing to do. This government will continue to do its best to address the challenges that it faces and act where it can, within its control, in the best interests of Canadians.

[Translation]

**Hon. Claude Carignan:** Leader, yesterday I spoke to you about your government's plan to reduce the number of temporary immigrants; today I'm going to talk about your immigration targets.

Last month, your government announced that it would increase its francophone immigration targets outside Quebec to 8.5% in 2025, 9.5% in 2026 and 10% in 2027. However, a report published this week by the Conference Board of Canada revealed that Canada is losing 35% of its francophone immigrants, a trend that is particularly pronounced in Quebec and Ontario.

When your government set francophone immigration targets for 2025, 2026 and 2027, did it take into account this 35% loss of francophone immigrants? In other words, for the year 2025, should we count the 8.5% increase before or after the 35% loss?

**Senator Gold:** Thank you for the question. Francophone immigration plays an important role in achieving Canada's goal of maintaining the vitality of its French-language communities, whether in Quebec or elsewhere in the country.

• (1450)

I'm not aware of the reasons behind the loss that you mentioned, but I am sure that the government is doing everything it can, as your colleague just said, in the context of our immigration challenges, to strike a fair balance. This involves not only the number of immigrants, but also linguistic diversity, sets of skills and other criteria that are needed for Canada's well being.

**Senator Carignan:** That is not a reassuring answer.

The Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Marc Miller, believes that integration is everyone's business, whether we're talking about individuals, cities, provinces, territories or Canada. Quite honestly, leader, we get the impression that the immigration file has taken a confrontational approach pitting your government against the provincial governments.

What specific integration efforts is your government making to align its actions with the provinces?

**Senator Gold:** The Government of Canada is working closely with the provinces on shared jurisdiction issues, including immigration.

Concerning integration in a broader sense, whether in terms of day care spaces, schools, hospitals or even housing, the constitutional and practical responsibilities of the provinces and municipalities in this regard also need to be recognized.

[English]

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### BUSINESS OF THE SENATE

**Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate):** Honourable senators, pursuant to the order adopted December 7, 2021, I would like to inform the Senate that Question Period with the Honourable Gary Anandasangaree, P.C., M.P., Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, will take place on Tuesday, November 26, 2024, at 4:45 p.m.

[ Senator Carignan ]

[Translation]

### THE ESTIMATES, 2024-25

NATIONAL FINANCE COMMITTEE AUTHORIZED TO  
STUDY SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES (B)

**Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate),** pursuant to notice of November 19, 2024, moved:

That the Standing Senate Committee on National Finance be authorized to examine and report upon the expenditures set out in the Supplementary Estimates (B) for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2025;

That, for the purpose of this study, the committee have the power to meet, even though the Senate may then be sitting or adjourned, and that rules 12-18(1) and 12-18(2) be suspended in relation thereto; and

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

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

**Hon. Senators:** Agreed.

(Motion agreed to.)

[English]

### THE SENATE

MOTION TO SALUTE THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE HONOURABLE IRWIN COTLER TO THE DEFENCE OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE FIGHT AGAINST RACISM AND ANTI-SEMITISM ADOPTED

Leave having been given to proceed to Motions, Order No. 236:

**Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate),** pursuant to notice of November 19, 2024, moved:

That the Senate:

- salute the contribution of the Honourable Irwin Cotler, P.C., to the defence of human rights and the fight against racism and anti-Semitism;
- recall his political contribution as Attorney General and Minister of Justice from 2003 to 2006; and
- condemn the death threats against him orchestrated by agents of a foreign regime.

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

**Hon. Senators:** Agreed.

(Motion agreed to.)

[*Translation*]

## CORRECTIONS AND CONDITIONAL RELEASE ACT

### BILL TO AMEND—POINT OF ORDER—SPEAKER'S RULING

**The Hon. the Speaker:** Honourable senators, I am prepared to rule on the point of order raised by Senator Carignan on October 24, 2024, in relation to Bill S-230, An Act to amend the Corrections and Conditional Release Act. The concern relates to whether the bill requires a Royal Recommendation. If it does, the bill cannot originate in the Senate. It would, instead, have to start in the House of Commons, and be recommended to that house by the Governor General.

The issue of the Royal Recommendation has been reviewed in detail recently, both during consideration of this point of order and in the one concerning Bill S-15. Arguments on the point of order concerning Bill S-15 were heard on September 25 and 26, and a ruling delivered, and sustained by the Senate, on October 2. Rather than repeating the detailed background on the Royal Recommendation, I encourage colleagues to review the relevant pages of the *Debates of the Senate*. Honourable senators will also be interested in reading the analysis of related issues found at pages 152 to 158 of *Senate Procedure in Practice*, including the quotes from the ruling of February 24, 2009, outlining many of the key factors guiding analysis of this topic.

For background on this particular point of order, I encourage colleagues to review the arguments presented by Senator Carignan, Senator Pate, who is the sponsor of Bill S-230, as well as other colleagues. I should also note that much of the commentary presented during argument on the point of order was informed by the analysis of the bill prepared by the Parliamentary Budget Officer, at the request of the Standing Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs. The online version of the committee's twenty-ninth report, dealing with Bill S-230, contains a link to the Parliamentary Budget Officer's report.

Senator Carignan identified three key points of concern. First, he argued that clause 4 of Bill S-230, which would require that the transfer of detained individuals to a hospital be authorized in certain circumstances, could require new expenses to be effective. The Parliamentary Budget Officer suggested that the amounts involved might range from nothing to as much as two billion dollars. Second, Senator Carignan argued that clause 5, which would require that confinement in a structured intervention unit be limited to 48 hours unless an extension were authorized by a superior court, would require new expenditures not already authorized by law. This would be because of factors such as the need to prepare for legal proceedings and to move individuals who are in custody. He also suggested that clause 11, which would allow applications for reductions in sentences on the basis of unfairness in the administration of the sentence,

would incur similar expenses. The analysis by the Parliamentary Budget Officer suggests that these two latter provisions might incur expenditures that are difficult to estimate, but could be in the range of \$6.8 million.

Other senators did not accept this analysis and its possible consequences. In relation to the first point, it was noted that the changes in clause 4 do not mandate expenditures, since all that is required is an authorization to transfer an individual to a hospital, not that the transfer actually occur. While there might be pressure for the allocation of additional funds to finance transfers, that would be distinct from, although consequential to, the actual requirements imposed by the bill. In relation to the second and third points, it was noted that the possible expenses related to legal proceedings are significantly less than one per cent of the total expenses of the Correctional Services of Canada. Although the report of the Parliamentary Budget Officer itself calls these the "direct cost of the bill", it then clarifies that "this does not mean that the bill authorizes any additional spending. Rather the direct cost of the bill represents an opportunity cost — the resources which would be needed to comply with the new obligations, and which may no longer be available for other responsibilities."

Before advancing further, I do wish to address the issue of potential cost savings that may occur if a bill is adopted, even if some of its provisions could require novel expenditures. This issue came up a number of times during consideration of the point of order. It was suggested that potential savings consequent to the adoption of Bill S-230 could allow the Senate to sidestep concerns about novel expenditures the bill might require. However, the twenty-fifth edition of Erskine May, at page 891, notes that "[c]ounter-balancing reductions in expenditures purposes provided for elsewhere in the bill are disregarded, as are statements in the explanatory notes accompanying the bill to the effect that costs will be met from within existing financial resources or that no overall increase in public expenditure is expected to result from the bill." If some element of the bill would require novel expenditures for purposes not already authorized in law or would broaden the purpose of a previously authorized expenditure, the bill would need a Royal Recommendation, even if it would result in a net saving to the public purse.

I must also remind colleagues that in the Senate our general presumption is that a matter is in order, if a reasonable argument can be made to that effect. The argument that an item is in order need not be stronger than the counterargument, it must only be reasonable. This is a deliberate bias in favour of allowing debate to continue, if reasonably possible, so that honourable senators have the broadest latitude reasonably possible in their legislative work.

In terms of the concerns about clause 4, which deals with authorization for transfer to a hospital, a strict reading of the clause would be that it only requires authorization, not that the transfer actually occur. Senators will no doubt wish to consider carefully whether such an approach is desirable, recognizing that the provision might create pressure to incur costs that might be required to make the authorization effective. The clause does not, however, itself appear to compel expenditures for novel purposes.

In relation to the concerns about clauses 5 and 11, which deal with expenses required for possible judicial review, I would again refer to the most recent edition of Erskine May, at page 892, where it is noted that the Crown's recommendation is not required if "proposals may have the incidental consequence of increasing the costs of the administration of justice." In this context, incidental does not refer to a specific amount of money, but instead to whether the charge on the public purse is merely a consequence of the legislative measure affecting the range of issues with which the court must deal. As a general principle, measures that could widen the jurisdiction of a court, as well as those creating new offences, do not, therefore, require a Royal Recommendation.

Separate from this issue, in relation to clause 5, it can be noted that section 33 of the *Corrections and Conditional Release Act* already requires that "[a]n inmate's confinement in a structured intervention unit is to end as soon as possible." The proposed new wording contained in Bill S-230 can thus be reasonably understood as structuring a requirement that already exists in law, by reducing the level of discretion enjoyed by the Correctional Service of Canada.

On balance, it does thus appear that a reasonable case can be made that debate on Bill S-230 should be allowed to continue. Honourable senators will no doubt wish to reflect on the possible broader effects of the bill and the issues raised in the point of order. I wish to thank Senator Carignan for his attention to an important matter, which helped ensure a more fulsome appreciation of the possible effects of the bill.

• (1500)

[English]

BILL TO AMEND—THIRD READING—DEBATE CONTINUED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Pate, seconded by the Honourable Senator Boehm, for the third reading of Bill S-230, An Act to amend the Corrections and Conditional Release Act.

(On motion of Senator Pate, debate adjourned.)

• (1510)

**DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, TRADE  
AND DEVELOPMENT ACT**

BILL TO AMEND—FIFTEENTH REPORT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS  
AND INTERNATIONAL TRADE COMMITTEE—  
DEBATE CONTINUED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Boehm, seconded by the Honourable Senator Moodie, for the adoption of the fifteenth report of the Standing Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade (*Bill C-282, An Act to amend the*

*Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Act (supply management), with an amendment and observations*), presented in the Senate on November 7, 2024.

**Hon. Marty Deacon:** Honourable senators, I rise to speak to the report of the Standing Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade on Bill C-282. We heard a great deal of debate on this yesterday, and I commend my colleagues for their passionate and articulate arguments. It is not my intention to rehash what was said yesterday, so I will be comparatively brief.

This report comes to us after a great deal of study in what I have to say was one of the more balanced studies I have had the pleasure of being a part of thus far in my seven years at the Senate.

I want to take this opportunity to first thank our committee leadership, staff and the sponsor and critic of this legislation who did an admirable job in seeing to it that it received appropriate review, all while dealing with more outside noise than many of us are accustomed to.

This report brings with it an important amendment and observation. On the former, I support Senator Harder's amendment. As we heard, it would "de-risk" this legislation.

For reasons of which I will wait until third reading to elaborate on, I do not support this bill and think it will do more harm than good.

However, with this amendment, I believe some of those harms can be mitigated, at least in the short-term. It's hard to argue that this amendment isn't an appropriate step for the Senate to take. In my time here, this chamber hasn't hesitated to amend legislation from the other place. I've seen a great deal of legislation sent back with amendments, both private member's bills and government legislation. It's wholly appropriate for this chamber to look at the bill before us and see areas for improvement. In fact, it's our job, and that's what this amendment does.

It improves this legislation by at least mitigating some of the damage it would do in the short-term, especially when it comes to the Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement, or CUSMA, as our colleague Senator Coyle elaborated on quite well in her remarks yesterday.

This report also comes with an observation. As I was the one to bring this observation forward, I think it is quite appropriate. During our hearings, some of the more animated exchanges veered from the aims of this bill and instead turned to a debate around the policy of supply management. As this observation makes clear, whatever the fate of this legislation, the policy of supply management will remain unchanged.

If this bill passes, supply management will carry on as it did the day before. If this bill is defeated, our supply managed sectors will not be offered up at the trade table on a silver platter; no one is proposing that.

In our ensuing debate at third reading, it is crucial that we focus our thoughts and comments on whether this is a good piece of trade policy or not and that we will think about what such a

step means for free trade and our Canadian economy as a whole — not just for our supply managed sectors, but also for the other 98% of our gross domestic product. This observation makes that clear.

Thank you colleagues, and I look forward to further discussion, debate and speaking at third reading.

(On motion of Senator Clement, debate adjourned.)

**BILL TO AMEND THE CANADA ELECTIONS ACT  
AND THE REGULATION ADAPTING THE CANADA  
ELECTIONS ACT FOR THE PURPOSES OF  
A REFERENDUM (VOTING AGE)**

SECOND READING—DEBATE CONTINUED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator McPhedran, seconded by the Honourable Senator White, for the second reading of Bill S-201, An Act to amend the Canada Elections Act and the Regulation Adapting the Canada Elections Act for the Purposes of a Referendum (voting age).

**Hon. Yonah Martin (Deputy Leader of the Opposition):** Your Honour, I note that this item is at day 15. I would like to ask leave to adjourn for the balance of my time.

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

**Hon. Senators:** Agreed.

(Debate adjourned.)

**FEDERAL OMBUDSPERSON FOR VICTIMS  
OF CRIME BILL**

BILL TO AMEND—SECOND READING—DEBATE CONTINUED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Boisvenu, seconded by the Honourable Senator Martin, for the second reading of Bill S-265, An Act to enact the Federal Ombudsperson for Victims of Crime Act, to amend the Canadian Victims Bill of Rights and to establish a framework for implementing the rights of victims of crime.

**Hon. Bernadette Clement:** Honourable senators, I note this item is at day 15. I am not ready to speak at this time. Therefore, with leave of Senate and notwithstanding rule 4-14(3), I move adjournment of the debate for the balance of my time.

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

**Hon. Senators:** Agreed.

(Debate adjourned.)

**NATIONAL IMMIGRATION MONTH BILL**

SECOND READING—DEBATE CONTINUED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Gerba, seconded by the Honourable Senator White, for the second reading of Bill S-286, An Act respecting National Immigration Month.

**Hon. Krista Ross:** Honourable senators, I rise today to voice my support for Bill S-286, an Act respecting National Immigration Month.

I would like to recognize Senator Gerba for her advocacy on this bill and for her continued dedication to creating an inclusive environment for our country's newcomers.

As Canadians, we are lucky to have such a wonderfully diverse population, and a national immigration month would provide us an opportunity to both recognize and celebrate those who came to Canada from abroad as well as stand up to the ever-increasing rhetoric against immigration.

Here in Canada, immigration is and always has been a vital part of our country's history, and has shaped what it means to be Canadian from coast to coast to coast. From the Chinese immigrants in the West who worked on the Canadian Pacific Railway in risky environments to the Irish immigrants who helped build the Rideau Canal, right outside this chamber, under hazardous conditions to Pier 21, the Halifax seaport where nearly 1 million immigrants landed in Canada from 1928 to 1971. I name a few across our country, but examples are endless.

Today, immigrants make up a considerable portion of our population. Immigrants accounted for 23% of the population in 2021, which was the largest proportion in over 150 years. In Atlantic Canada alone, the share of recent newcomers settling in our provinces has almost tripled in 15 years, increasing threefold between 2006 and 2021.

In my home province of New Brunswick, it rose from nearly 7,500 in 2015 to over 37,600 in 2023. This is an indication of Canada's inclusive and welcoming spirit. I like to say, "Don't just be friendly, but be a friend." However, we still have work to do to reinforce our capacity to welcome and retain newcomers in our communities.

I share Senator Gerba's belief that national immigration month is of particular importance given our current climate. Recently, we have seen an increase of distrust towards immigrants, a surge of blame for our country's problems attributed to the immigrant population. This represents a very concerning trend, and one that merits our attention. I believe it is our collective responsibility to create a welcoming and supportive environment for newcomers to build their futures and to change the concerning narrative being aimed at immigrants.

It's also critical to our workforce and labour market to facilitate the integration of newcomers to our country. I'll use the example of my home province of New Brunswick. A 2023 New Brunswick jobs report on the labour market outlook

projected that between 2022 and 2032, the province is expected to see an 11.4% population growth. Labour force and employment are forecasted to grow by 9.1% and 9.6% respectively. That means over 98,000 individuals who are expected to retire will need to be replaced, and an additional 35,000 new jobs that are expected to result from growth will also need to be filled.

• (1520)

A significant portion of these openings are expected to be filled by young New Brunswickers, but this population alone will not be large enough to meet the future demand for labour, as New Brunswick is expected to experience negative natural population growth. Overall, young people entering the labour force for the first time are expected to fill only 54% of forecasted job openings, as projected by a New Brunswick job report. In order to bridge the gap between population growth and labour growth that is forecasted, the remaining 46% must be filled through a mix of immigration, workers from other provinces and increased rates of labour force participation.

In order to ensure the vitality of the workforce in my province and, more broadly, across the country, we must continue to solidify our commitment to inclusive practices. It's important for businesses, organizations, governments and communities to provide programming and opportunities for newcomers. I have long been an advocate for newcomers, working to understand the challenges they face and doing my best to help them overcome barriers.

While I was at the Fredericton Chamber of Commerce, we showed leadership by creating and running three different programs aimed at supporting newcomers. We ran the Business Immigrant Mentorship Program; The Hive, which was an incubator centre for newcomer entrepreneurs; and Succession Connect, which helped build connections between those in our community looking to transfer their business and newcomers who were looking to put down roots in the community and buy a business. Those programs were copied in other communities across the country.

I also volunteered with the Ignite Connector Program and Opportunities New Brunswick, helping mentor international students, recent grads and internationally educated newcomers, trying to connect them to people within my network. Someone new to a province or region may be unfamiliar with the landscape and how things work there. Their network is limited, and they might have challenges in terms of employment and community access. Providing connections and guidance helps them gain opportunities and experience they can turn into stepping stones for their future.

We have so many success stories in New Brunswick and in Fredericton of businesses led by newcomer entrepreneurs, from businesses in the service sector across the gamut to those in tech and innovation.

However, they need support to get there. All of us here today can provide that.

Overall, it might be easy to see immigrants as numbers or percentages instead of newcomers to our communities, but it's our collective responsibility to ensure we continue to approach immigration in a welcoming way and create a supportive environment for them to build their futures by being friends, not just friendly.

In my hometown of Fredericton, we have long celebrated our Immigration Month with events, celebrations and storytelling. I would love to see that implemented nationally so that we can all celebrate, from coast to coast to coast.

In closing, by supporting this bill, we not only recognize the valued contributions of immigrants to Canada's history but also reinforce our commitment to core values such as inclusion, diversity and economic prosperity. We also send a powerful message to Canadians and the international community that we continue to represent and defend those values.

I am proud to support Bill S-286 and sending it to committee for further study. I encourage my colleagues to do the same. Thank you. *Woliwon*.

**Hon. Mohamed-Iqbal Ravalia:** Honourable senators, I rise today in support of Bill S-286, An Act respecting National Immigration Month, introduced by my dear friend Senator Gerba. I thank her for her initiative in this regard.

This bill provides an opportunity to formally recognize the immense contributions immigrants have made to our country while also reflecting on the complexities and challenges that have shaped our immigration history. It invites us to acknowledge the obstacles many immigrants continue to face and to celebrate the indispensable role they play in enriching Canada's social, cultural and economic fabric.

Please allow me to share an aspect of this journey that is often overlooked: the impacts and historical context of first contact with the nations that lived and prospered on these lands as well as the vibrancy and rich spiritual heritage of our First Nations that were dismembered by waves of colonization, disease and displacement.

At its core, this bill reflects the values that define Canada: resilience, inclusivity and a recognition that immigration has been a driving force in shaping our nation's identity and success. By establishing National Immigration Month, we reaffirm that the strength of our country lies in the diversity and dynamism that immigrants bring to our communities.

My own journey to Canada in 1984 from Zimbabwe, formerly Rhodesia, was shaped by the harsh realities of political volatility and racial and tribal tensions. Immigration for me and many others was the path to hope and new beginnings.

The dislocation from the land of your birth, leaving behind all that you are familiar with — warts and all — is a particularly traumatic experience. Arriving in Canada brought a stark contrast. Canada has embraced diversity and welcomed immigrants from all walks of life, offering opportunities to those seeking a better future.



As a rural family doctor in Twillingate, Newfoundland and Labrador, I witnessed first-hand how vital immigrants are to sustaining and transforming local communities. When I arrived, this generous and loving community embraced my skills, and I was welcomed with warmth and gratitude. It was this sense of belonging that compelled me to build my life there. I will forever be grateful to my community for shaping my ideas and ideals and for embedding in me the values of altruism and kindness.

Newfoundland and Labrador, with its vast, remote landscapes, has always faced economic and population challenges. Immigrants have been and continue to be instrumental in addressing these issues. Our immigrants have contributed in essential roles, including as health care providers, academics, entrepreneurs and workers in critical industries like agriculture and fisheries. The presence of international health professionals, for instance, has bolstered health care in rural regions, where recruitment and retention of health care professionals are difficult.

Historically, the province has been shaped by waves of migration, including the Norse at L'Anse aux Meadows; the Irish, English and French settlers who built thriving fishing communities; and the Mennonite community that made a significant contribution to Labrador. Today's immigrants continue that legacy, revitalizing shrinking communities and contributing to the cultural and economic vibrancy of my province.

More recently, my province has recognized the ongoing importance of immigration through its 2022 Population Growth Strategy, which focuses on attracting newcomers to address labour shortages and support economic growth. Its goals are to attract and retain 5,100 newcomers annually by 2026. The strategy places emphasis on attracting skilled workers, international students and entrepreneurs with the hope that they will settle permanently in the province.

While immigration is vital to Canada's future, we must also confront the more challenging aspects of our immigration history, including policies like the Chinese head tax and the exclusion of Jewish refugees during World War II. Those serve as painful reminders that Canada's immigration system has not always lived up to the ideals of inclusivity. These examples are critical for us to remember. They must motivate us to ensure that the mistakes of the past are not repeated.

Bill S-286 is important because it recognizes the contributions that immigrants have made, but it also invites all Canadians to reflect on the broader historical and cultural significance of immigration. National Immigration Month will offer us the opportunity to acknowledge both the positive and challenging aspects of immigration as well as the benefits that have come through the years.

As Senators Gerba, Mégie and Miville-Dechéne have emphasized, immigration is central to who we are as a nation. It celebrates the richness that diversity brings and recognizes the power of our collective stories.

I proudly support this bill to ensure the stories and contributions of immigrants continue to be honoured and celebrated for years to come.

Let me conclude by quoting Her Excellency the former Governor General Adrienne Clarkson, from her induction speech in 1999:

As John Ralston Saul has written, the central quality of the Canadian state is its complexity. It is a strength and not a weakness that we are a “permanently incomplete experiment built on a triangular foundation—aboriginal, francophone and anglophone”. . . . It is an old experiment, complex and, in worldly terms, largely successful. Stumbling through darkness and racing through light, we have persisted in the creation of a Canadian civilization.

She continued:

There seem to be two kinds of societies in the world today. Perhaps there have always been only two kinds—punishing societies and forgiving societies. A society like Canada's, with its four centuries of give-and-take, compromise and acceptance, wrong-doing and redress, is basically a forgiving society. We try—we must try—to forgive what is past. . . .

Thank you. *Meegwetch.*

(On motion of Senator Ataullahjan, debate adjourned.)

• (1530)

[*Translation*]

## INHERITED BLOOD DISORDERS AWARENESS DAY BILL

### SECOND READING—DEBATE CONTINUED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Cordy, seconded by the Honourable Senator Klyne, for the second reading of Bill S-288, An Act respecting Inherited Blood Disorders Awareness Day.

**Hon. Marie-Françoise Mégie:** Honourable senators, I rise today at second reading to express my support for Bill S-288. This bill seeks to designate October 18 as hereditary blood disease awareness day.

As the Honourable Jane Cordy mentioned, the purpose of Bill S-288 is to highlight the realities and challenges faced by Canadians living with these diseases. Inherited blood disorders include a range of conditions such as sickle cell disease, thalassemia, hemophilia and other serious genetic disorders. These diseases affect not only the individuals themselves, but also their families and loved ones, who share with them the challenges of these conditions, such as painful seizures, chronic fatigue, absenteeism from school and work, and the list goes on.

As our population becomes more diverse, these disorders, which are particularly prevalent in African, Caribbean, Mediterranean and South Asian communities, are becoming increasingly pervasive. It is our responsibility to ensure that all Canadians with inherited blood disorders receive the support and attention they need.

One of the most dreaded of these diseases is sickle cell disease. It results in abnormally shaped red blood cells, which impede blood circulation and cause painful blockages in the blood vessels. For those who suffer from this disease, that means recurrent episodes of intense pain, frequent hospitalization, increased risk of serious complications, such as stroke at the age of 18 or 20, and often a reduced life expectancy.

In my speech on Bill S-280, which seeks to establish a national framework on sickle cell disease, I explained the devastating effects of this disease, particularly on our young people. Let me remind you of the touching story of Ismaël.

Ismaël is a young Canadian who grew up with sickle cell disease. Like so many others, he suffered from inexplicable pain from a very early age, pain that was so intense that he often had to be hospitalized. On top of all that, Ismaël and his family had to face another equally difficult challenge: the lack of awareness of this disease, not only among the general public and in his school and work environments, but also among health care providers. Imagine having to struggle not only against unbearable physical pain, but also against looks of doubt, stigmatization and incomprehension. People with this disease also have to face the fear of the unknown and an uncertain future. For Ismaël and all those fighting these blood diseases, every episode is not only a battle against pain, but also a reminder of the lack of awareness,

support and services. These people's loved ones also bear this burden, as they strive to support their sick family member as best they can, often with very limited resources.

To that end, Bills S-280 and S-288 work hand in hand to combat this ignorance. I fully support Bill S-288 as one more step toward recognizing these diseases.

In conclusion, Bill S-288, through this awareness day, paves the way to a better-informed, more united and more equitable society for everyone living with these hereditary blood disorders.

Honourable colleagues, I am counting on you to send Bill S-288 to committee as soon as possible. Thank you.

(On motion of Senator Martin, debate adjourned.)

#### BUSINESS OF THE SENATE

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

That the Senate do now adjourn.

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

**Hon. Senators:** Agreed.

(At 3:35 p.m., the Senate was continued until tomorrow at 2 p.m.)

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