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Tuesday, November 18, 2025

The Honourable RAYMONDE GAGNÉ,
Speaker

CONTENTS

(Daily index of proceedings appears at back of this issue).

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THE SENATE

Tuesday, November 18, 2025

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

[*Translation*]

Prayers.

Louis Riel is a great figure who inspires me to be courageous. He is one of those people who inspire us to always act for the good of our communities and our country.

[*Translation*]

Maarsi. Thank you.

SENATORS' STATEMENTS

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

LOUIS RIEL

[*English*]

ONE HUNDRED AND FORTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF DEATH

SASKATCHEWAN ROUGHRIDERS

CONGRATULATIONS ON GREY CUP WIN

Hon. Raymonde Gagné: Honourable senators, I rise to pay tribute to Louis Riel, Métis political leader, ardent defender of the French language, poet and founder of my province of Manitoba. November 16 marked the one hundred and fortieth anniversary of his execution, a dark event in our history that still resonates deeply in our collective memory.

Hon. Denise Batters: Honourable senators, there is jubilation throughout “Rider Nation” today. As a proud member of “Rider Nation,” I am thrilled to rise to celebrate the 2025 Grey Cup champions, the Saskatchewan Roughriders.

Today, Louis Riel remains much more than a historical figure. His legacy is the very heart of our culture and identity. He dedicated his life to creating real opportunities for the people around him. During the Red River Resistance, his goal was clear: to enable the Métis, as well as all the inhabitants of the region, to shape their own destiny. We know that this period surrounding Manitoba’s entry into Confederation is fraught with misunderstandings and very painful events. It was an extremely difficult time. Nevertheless, we now recognize the crucial role that Riel played in our history. Although he won three federal elections, Louis Riel was prevented from taking his seat in the other place.

The Riders led the Canadian Football League this season. Our “Green Machine” clinched first place in the West and a home playoff game for the CFL Western Final, with weeks left in the season. Head coach Corey Mace led the Roughriders’ culture of excellence, which permeated the entire organization all year. Our beloved Riders were inspired to do whatever it took to win.

[*English*]

I was ecstatic to attend the Western Final at a jam-packed Mosaic Stadium in Regina, frigid temperatures notwithstanding. This game featured a heart-stopping miracle at Mosaic, ending when Rider receiver Tommy Nield caught the game-winning touchdown pass with only 11 seconds left. So, despite the -15 degrees Celsius conditions, the crowd of Roughrider faithfuls dispersed with very warm hearts after that huge victory.

First elected in 1873 and later re-elected twice, he was nevertheless denied his rightful seat. Even after swearing allegiance to Queen Victoria and signing the parliamentary register, political pressures kept him from ever taking his place.

Yet the Saskatchewan team’s attitude was remarkable in its discipline. They didn’t even touch the West Division trophy that night, saying, “The job’s not done. We must finish the job.” The Roughriders’ goal was not to participate in the Grey Cup; their sole goal all year was to win that beautiful Grey Cup trophy. With that wonderful dream firmly in mind, last week, huge numbers of “Rider Nation” members made the several-hour drive east on Highway 1 to Winnipeg for the one hundred and twelfth Grey Cup.

For me, as a senator from Manitoba, and probably for all of us who serve as parliamentarians, this remains difficult to reconcile with our understanding of democracy.

Today, we can only imagine the contributions he might have made as an MP: the voice that was never heard, the leadership that never guided our debates and the vision that might have shaped our nation.

For the Saskatchewan Roughriders to potentially win the Grey Cup in Winnipeg — the home of the CFL Blue Bombers, the Riders’ archrivals — is glorious on another level. What a game we saw on Sunday. The Riders’ very tough opponent was the Montreal Alouettes, led by the formidable quarterback Davis Alexander. The Alouettes really gave it their all until the very end, so the Grey Cup match was yet another heart-stopping game from the Roughriders. Couldn’t they occasionally make it a little easier on us fans this year?

As we continue our work in Parliament, we’re reminded of what was taken from him, and we’re inspired by the values he stood for — values that push us to ensure every voice in our democracy is heard.

Luckily, the ferocious “Big Rider D” came through in the clutch. Marcus Sayles, with his game-saving goal line play, will never have to buy himself a drink in Saskatchewan again. As the last few seconds ticked down, “Rider Nation” and all of Saskatchewan erupted in celebration. Just as Coach Mace had promised, green and white confetti rained down as the Saskatchewan Roughriders were crowned Grey Cup champions.

Trevor Harris, our wily 39-year-old veteran quarterback, was named Grey Cup MVP. His stellar 85% completion rate that game was a CFL record. Rider receiver Sam Emilus won the Most Outstanding Canadian Award. What a celebration — there were fireworks on the street and people climbing lamp poles, and it is still going.

Gainer the Gopher will lead the Grey Cup parade down Regina’s “Green Mile” this afternoon. Saskatchewanians’ inherent love of the Riders binds our province together: We believe, and we bleed green. Our wonderful Roughrider team understood this right from the beginning. Similar to the Blue Jays, the whole team loves one another. This spirit led the Riders to accomplished heights as a team that they could not reach individually.

From a grateful “Rider Nation” — thank you to the entire Roughrider organization. They are Grey Cup champions. Go, Riders, go!

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

[*Translation*]

VISITOR IN THE GALLERY

The Hon. the Speaker pro tempore: Honourable senators, I wish to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of Rémi Quirion, Chief Scientist of Quebec. He is the guest of the Honourable Senators Oudar and Gignac.

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

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

RÉMI QUIRION

Hon. Manuelle Oudar: Honourable senators, today, as part of the Science Meets Parliament program, we are tremendously honoured to highlight the work of Rémi Quirion, an exceptional man who has made his mark on scientific research and policy in Quebec, in Canada and internationally. Dr. Quirion will be retiring in 2026.

• (1410)

He is Quebec’s first chief scientist. This key position was created as a result of an extraordinary initiative led by our colleague, Senator Clément Gignac, when he was Quebec’s minister of economic development, innovation and export. It was created as part of a new vision for science in Quebec.

Our world is undergoing profound upheaval. Political leaders in other countries are going after researchers and undermining scientists’ findings. It is therefore reassuring to see that there is still a broad consensus in Canada around keeping research independent from political power and recognizing the importance of having a chief scientist.

As Quebec’s chief scientist, Rémi Quirion has been responsible for science management for 14 years. He has advocated for projects to support the next generation of scientists, rallied researchers around major issues and made many connections between research and society. His work has been so impactful that he received the Institut d’administration publique du Québec’s lifetime achievement award in 2024.

He gained his expertise over the course of a stellar academic and professional career, initially in education as a professor at McGill University and as senior director at the Douglas Mental Health University Institute. He went on to become the first director of the Institute of Neurosciences, Mental Health and Addiction and now leads the International Collaborative Research Strategy for Alzheimer Disease. He is also president of the International Network for Governmental Science Advice. He promotes Canadian expertise internationally.

His career is a testament to his humility, resilience and commitment. Rémi Quirion reminds us that science must serve society first and that its real impact starts at the local level, where the people live. It must be underpinned by integrity, collaboration and international openness to strengthen the collective good and support government decision making.

The same thinking drives our duty to pursue this essential dialogue.

Rémi Quirion, on behalf of the Senate, I want to thank you for your clear and unmistakably forward-looking vision.

Thank you, honourable colleagues. *Meegwetch.*

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

[*English*]

VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

The Hon. the Speaker pro tempore: Honourable senators, I wish to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of His Excellency Kaspars Ozoliņš, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Latvia to Canada. He is accompanied by his wife, Ina Ozolina. They are the guests of the Honourable Senator Patterson.

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

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

PROCLAMATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF LATVIA

Hon. Rebecca Patterson: Honourable senators, on behalf of me and Senator Ravalia, I rise to mark the one hundred and seventh anniversary of the Proclamation Day of the Republic of Latvia.

For generations, foreign powers have tried to bend the Latvian people to their will, including German crusaders, Polish kings, Swedish monarchs — not the ones who are here today — Russian czars and later, in the 20th century, during World War II, Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union.

All attempted to take Latvia's sovereignty, lands, culture and identity and break its spirit. None succeeded. Latvians stayed brave, resilient and determined to live freely.

In 1918, at the end of the First World War, Latvia proclaimed itself an independent republic. The following decades brought two of the harshest occupations Europe had ever experienced, by Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union. Deportations, repression and efforts to erase Latvian identity left lasting scars. Nevertheless, the Latvian spirit persisted.

In 1991, Latvia regained its independence and rejoined the democratic community, eventually joining NATO as well.

Canada was proud to be the first G7 nation to acknowledge Latvia's renewed sovereignty and, later, the first to ratify its NATO accession. Latvia, in turn, has been a steadfast partner and a model ally to us.

Today, the Canadian-led NATO Multinational Brigade in Latvia is our largest overseas military deployment. Nearly 2,000 members of the Canadian Armed Forces serve there on rotation, and some are even accompanied by their families. Our Canadian Armed Forces work daily alongside the Latvian forces and 12 other NATO allies to strengthen collective defence and deter potential future Russian aggression.

Our countries are connected by more than just agreements. We share democratic values, a dedication to peace and security, and a friendship built on decades of mutual trust.

And let me be clear: If Latvia is ever threatened with invasion again, especially from Russia, Canada will stand shoulder to shoulder with the Latvian people and fight alongside them to defend the rules-based international order and defend all of our freedoms.

On this one hundred and seventh anniversary of Latvia's Independence Day, Senator Ravalia and I invite all senators to join us in honouring a brave nation that has never been defeated in spirit. In the presence of His Excellency Ambassador Ozoliņš, his wife and representatives from the embassy, please join me in reaffirming Canada's enduring friendship with the Republic of Latvia.

Thank you.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

The Hon. the Speaker pro tempore: Honourable senators, I wish to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of Harry and Randi Gross. They are the guests of the Honourable Senator Fridhandler.

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

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

HARRY AND RANDI GROSS

Hon. Daryl Fridhandler: Honourable senators, it gives me great pleasure to welcome to the Senate today my friends Harry and Randi Gross, joining us from Lethbridge, Alberta. Harry is a well-known businessman of Lethbridge across sectors including real estate, irrigation, and as a professional CPA, or Chartered Professional Accountant. In 2018, Harry was president of the Lethbridge Chamber of Commerce.

The Grosses were the point people in Lethbridge during our valuable Senate familiarization tour of southern Alberta this past summer. For me, the most enlightening aspect of the visit was the magnitude and importance of agriculture.

Our visit began with a reception hosted at the Lethbridge Trade & Convention Centre, with local leaders eager to engage us on the potential of their region. Attendees included the Mayors of Lethbridge, Taber and Coaldale; the Reeves of surrounding counties; local MLAs, or members of the Legislative Assembly; and industry and economic development leadership.

The main themes of the night were twofold. The first was the potential of renewable energy in southern Alberta, driven largely by wind and solar resources. The second was Canada's Premier Food Corridor, or CPFC, a collaborative economic development initiative comprising five southern Alberta municipalities. The CPFC is home to superior irrigation and growing conditions, currently hosting 65-plus specialty crops grown over 900,000-plus acres of irrigated land and generating \$5 billion annually in agri-food production while creating thousands of jobs in farming, food processing and logistics.

The following morning, Harry Gross and Sandra Dufresne, the latter from Economic Development Lethbridge, accompanied us on our stops through the region.

First up was the Cavendish Farms potato-processing facility. In 2024, the facility processed almost 450 million pounds of locally grown potatoes. We ended our early morning tour with a fresh feast of french fries at 8 a.m., not my usual start to a day.

Our next stop was at the Hillridge Hutterite Colony, where we were warmly welcomed, briefed on the background of Hutterites in Canada and advised on the colony's agriculture, cattle and pig-farming operations.

Our agricultural adventure ended with a visit to Big Marble Farms. Big Marble encompasses approximately 8,000 acres of greenhouses, its own co-gen facility and a year-round harvest of almost all of the cucumbers and tomatoes for the Western provinces.

So let me say, although I am not quite ready to join the Agriculture and Forestry Committee, my knowledge of agriculture in Alberta has been broadened. In my books, agriculture is now right up there with Alberta's energy in terms of importance to Alberta and importance to Canada. I still have lots to learn.

I look forward to seeing what the future holds as the southern Alberta agriculture and renewable energy sectors continue to innovate and grow.

Harry and Randi Gross, Lethbridge and the broader southern Alberta region are lucky to have such strong advocates like you. Thank you. *Meegwetch.*

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

The Hon. the Speaker pro tempore: Honourable senators, I wish to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of visiting researchers participating in this year's Science Meets Parliament Federal Program. They are the guests of the Honourable Senators Kutcher, Ravalia and Deacon (*Nova Scotia*).

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

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

• (1420)

SCIENCE MEETS PARLIAMENT

Hon. Stan Kutcher: Honourable senators, yesterday and today, parliamentarians have had opportunities to meet with some of the young scientists doing the work that will help lead to a better future for us all. The Science Meets Parliament Federal Program is sponsored by The Canadian Science Policy Centre and the Office of the Chief Science Advisor. Parliamentarians have a chance to meet young Canadian science researchers, learn about the work they're doing and use this information not only to better understand the importance of scientific research to the health and wealth of Canada but also to better understand how important it is to use the best available scientific evidence in our deliberations, policy-making and legislation.

The program provides an opportunity for young scientists to better understand how we work and how we choose to apply the best available scientific evidence in our policies and in our legislation — or not.

The objective of the intervention is to strengthen the connections between Canadian scientists and federal parliamentarians. It's not meant to be an advocacy exercise — and some of the young scientists are with us today.

I know many senators are participating in this experience, and I hope you find it enjoyable.

I want to acknowledge the hard work of two very important people: Dr. Mehrdad Hariri, the CEO and President of the Canadian Science Policy Centre, and Dr. Mona Nemer, the Chief Science Advisor of Canada.

While this program specifically does not advocate for science and research, I can, and I will. Friends, there are two concepts that we must consider. One is using science and research for policy-making, and the other is creating a science and research policy for Canada. Both are very important, but we have not done either well.

We lack a national science and research policy, and we have no minister responsible for delivering on science and research. Our Senate does not have a dedicated science and research committee. The House of Commons does, but it was only established in 2021.

Friends, science and research have been with us a long time and are the foundation for developing the health and wealth of our nation. So what can we do about it here in the Senate? Well, we can focus on what is under our control. Let's create a science and research committee and task it with the important work that needs to be done so that we can better support the innovative activities of these young scientists who are with us today and the thousands of others who are not with us.

Thank you. *Meegwetch.*

VISITOR IN THE GALLERY

The Hon. the Speaker pro tempore: Honourable senators, I wish to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of Rod Jeddore, Director of Education at Miawpukek First Nation. He is the guest of the Honourable Senator White.

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

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

AUDITOR GENERAL

COMMENTARY ON THE 2024-25 FINANCIAL AUDITS—
SPECIAL REPORT TABLED

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the Special Report of the Auditor General of Canada to the Parliament of Canada, entitled *Commentary on the 2024-25 Financial Audits*, pursuant to the *Auditor General Act*, R.S.C. 1985, c. A-17, sbs. 8(2).

[Translation]

PARLIAMENTARY BUDGET OFFICER

RESPONSE OF THE COMPTROLLER GENERAL—
COPY OF LETTER TABLED

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, a copy of a letter from the Parliamentary Budget Officer concerning a response from the Comptroller General of Canada.

[English]

JUSTICE

CHARTER STATEMENT IN RELATION TO BILL S-3—
DOCUMENT TABLED

Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate): Honourable senators, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, a Charter Statement prepared by the Minister of Justice in relation to Bill S-3, An Act to amend the Weights and Measures Act, the Electricity and Gas Inspection Act, the Weights and Measures Regulations and the Electricity and Gas Inspection Regulations, pursuant to the *Department of Justice Act*, R.S.C. 1985, c. J-2, sbs. 4.2(1).

RECEIVER GENERAL

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS OF CANADA—2024-25 REPORT TABLED

Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate): Honourable senators, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the Public Accounts of Canada for the fiscal year ended March 31, 2025, entitled (1) Volume I — Summary Report and Consolidated Financial Statements, (2) Volume II — Details of Expenses and Revenues, (3) Volume III — Additional Information and Analyses, pursuant to the *Financial Administration Act*, R.S.C. 1985, c. F-11, sbs. 64(1).

TREASURY BOARD

2024-25 DEPARTMENTAL RESULTS REPORTS TABLED

Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate): Honourable senators, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the Departmental Results Reports for the fiscal year ended March 31, 2025.

THE ESTIMATES, 2025-26

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES (B) TABLED

Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate): Honourable senators, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the Supplementary Estimates (B), 2025-26.

CITIZENSHIP ACT

BILL TO AMEND—SECOND REPORT OF SOCIAL AFFAIRS, SCIENCE
AND TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE PRESENTED

Hon. Rosemary Moodie, Chair of the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, presented the following report:

Tuesday, November 18, 2025

The Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology has the honour to present its

SECOND REPORT

Your committee, to which was referred Bill C-3, An Act to amend the Citizenship Act (2025), has, in obedience to the order of reference of Thursday, November 6, 2025, examined the said bill and now reports the same without amendment but with certain observations, which are appended to this report.

Respectfully submitted,

ROSEMARY MOODIE

Chair

(For text of observations, see today's Journals of the Senate, p. 407.)

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

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

THE ESTIMATES, 2025-26*[English]*NOTICE OF MOTION TO AUTHORIZE NATIONAL FINANCE
COMMITTEE TO STUDY SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES (B)

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 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, 2026; and

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.

*[Translation]***BANKING, COMMERCE AND THE ECONOMY**NOTICE OF MOTION TO AUTHORIZE COMMITTEE TO STUDY
ACCESS TO CREDIT AND CAPITAL MARKETS FOR SMALL-
AND MEDIUM-SIZED ENTERPRISES

Hon. Clément Gignac: Honourable senators, I give notice that, at the next sitting of the Senate, I will move:

That the Standing Senate Committee on Banking, Commerce and the Economy be authorized to examine and report on access to credit and capital markets for small- and medium-sized enterprises as the basis for growth and improved productivity in the Canadian economy;

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

That the committee submit its final report to the Senate no later than June 30, 2026, and that the committee retain all powers necessary to publicize its findings until 180 days after the tabling of the final report.

QUESTION PERIOD**FINANCE**

FISCAL ANCHORS

Hon. Leo Housakos (Leader of the Opposition): My question is for the government leader in the Senate. Leader, within days of the budget being tabled, Canada was warned by Fitch Ratings that our credit rating could be headed for a downgrade.

- (1430)

They outline three concerns: First, there is a deficit of 1.2% of the GDP, which is double the pre-pandemic average; second, the level of gross general government debt is projected to hit 111% of the GDP by 2026, far above the AA median of 45%; and third, the government has not put forward any path for fiscal normalcy.

Government leader, will the government acknowledge that these are serious concerns, and will the government establish fiscal anchors that will give us some financial security?

Hon. Pierre Moreau (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you, Senator Housakos. I have a few things to say on that.

First, inflation in Canada has been down 2.2% for almost two years. It has been running within the Bank of Canada's target. It is a good month. Unemployment is down again, and jobs are up again. Canada is in a very good fiscal position.

It is not only us, and it is not only the government, who says that. I will quote the International Monetary Fund, which has said that Canada is focused strategically on investments that are pro-growth and projects Canada to have the second-strongest growth in the G7 in 2026.

This is a very responsible budget, and this is a very responsible standing point for the government.

Senator Housakos: The government always has a rosy view of things, but every economist in Canada uses the word "fragile" to describe our current economy.

Leader, a lower credit rating not only demonstrates irresponsible fiscal management but will also mean higher borrowing costs for Canadians. Since your government has no plan to balance the budget and no plan to pay down the debt, these interest payments will be a perpetual burden imposed on many future generations of Canadians.

Will you acknowledge the truth and explain why your government refuses to put into place a fiscal anchor so that we can get rid of the fragility in the economy?

Senator Moreau: Let me remind you what I said two weeks ago, Senator Housakos. Canada has the lowest net debt-to-GDP ratio in the G7 at 13.3%, with Germany coming in second. Do you know Germany's ratio? It is 48.7%.

Senator Housakos: Net.

Senator Moreau: Yes, I know. Canada also has one of the lowest deficit-to-GDP ratios in the G7, second only to Japan, 2.5%, falling at 1.5% —

The Hon. the Speaker: Thank you, Senator Moreau.

BUDGET 2025

Hon. Yonah Martin (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Government leader, we have now learned that your government has quietly reduced the savings targets for a number of federal departments and agencies from the mandated 15% reduction in operating spending down to just 2%, yet Veterans Affairs Canada remains subject to some of the largest cuts in government.

Senator Housakos: Shame.

Senator Martin: During the very week when Canadians honour our veterans, it was revealed that, within the more than \$4 billion your government is cutting from Veterans Affairs, RCMP veterans on disability benefits are facing reassessments that will leave many of them worse off.

Leader, why is your government pretending to balance its fiscally imprudent budget with the dollars of RCMP veterans who have already sacrificed in service to Canadians?

Hon. Pierre Moreau (Government Representative in the Senate): The government has invested in the RCMP more than at any time in the past. As a matter of fact, the RCMP will increase their force by 1,000 new agents because of the investment of the government. The government is investing in the security of all Canadians, whether it is the Armed Forces, the RCMP or the police. At the same time, it is spending less and investing more in our economy to provide Canadians with a strong economy and security in their environment. That's the reason why we are investing in the RCMP.

Senator Martin: That's different from the money that is being cut from RCMP veterans on disability. Leader, your Minister of Veterans Affairs insists that these cuts will come entirely from reducing Canada's reimbursement costs. However, last year's spending on medical marijuana was \$245 million, nowhere near the \$4.4 billion that is expected savings over the next four years.

Senator Moreau, perhaps you can tell Canadians what your minister cannot: What precisely is your government really cutting —

The Hon. the Speaker: Thank you, senator.

Senator Moreau: Again, what the government is doing constitutes a very responsible way of handling the economy of our country. What we have to do sometimes is to make very challenging decisions about the economy, but what the

government is aiming at is to increase the growth of the economy and to secure all Canadians — retirees, active workers and families as well.

[*Translation*]

IMMIGRATION, CITIZENSHIP AND REFUGEES

TEMPORARY FOREIGN WORKERS

Hon. Martine Hébert: My question is for the Leader of the Government in the Senate.

The government's budget, which passed yesterday, shows that Canada has taken an enviable path in terms of deficit and debt-to-GDP ratio among G7 countries. The budget also includes significant investments in a number of sectors. These investments will require Canadian businesses to increase production, so they will need more workers. Additional infrastructure and various projects will have to be developed, which will also increase the need for workers.

On page 96 of the budget, it is revealed that beginning this year, Canadian businesses will lose 300,000 workers as a result of changes to policies relating to temporary foreign workers. My question is this: What workforce measures will the government put in place to ensure that we achieve the —

The Hon. the Speaker: Thank you, Senator Hébert.

Hon. Pierre Moreau (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for the question, Senator Hébert. I know that you're very concerned about this issue. You asked a similar question in the Senate before.

Let me provide a bit of context regarding the Temporary Foreign Worker Program. The purpose of the program is to meet Canadian businesses' labour needs. However, Canadian businesses must make every effort to hire Canadian workers before turning to the Temporary Foreign Worker Program. I think that is a prudent approach that is good for Canada.

I want to thank you for drawing senators' attention to the significant infrastructure investments that the Government of Canada will be making because they will create jobs for Canadians. When the need becomes apparent, businesses will be able to turn to foreign workers.

Senator Hébert: Thank you.

Businesses are using the Temporary Foreign Worker Program because they are unable to find workers to fill the job vacancies in their regions. I would respectfully point out that a recent Deloitte study shows that, if we want to meet the government's targets, the construction industry will need an additional 400,000 to 500,000 workers. I will ask my question again. What initiatives will the government put in place to ensure that businesses have the workers they need?

Senator Moreau: Senator Hébert, I believe you have met with people from the construction industry. I'm sure that, after listening to what they had to say, you realized that these people strongly support the initiatives that were put forward in the federal budget to boost infrastructure construction. These companies want the government to generate investments, create jobs and attract private capital. The government will, of course, remain in close contact with businesses to ensure —

The Hon. the Speaker: Thank you, Senator Moreau.

[English]

WOMEN AND GENDER EQUALITY

BUDGET 2025

Hon. Paulette Senior: My question is for the Government Representative. As someone who has worked in and led organizations doing social justice and equality work, you will not be surprised that I commend the government's decision to fund women and gender equality, which was announced prior to, and confirmed in, the budget.

Can you share with us more details about the funding, and how it will advance gender equality in Canada?

Hon. Pierre Moreau (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for the question. Unfortunately, you are just behind me, so I will face the microphone, but I will try to answer your question.

. . . Budget 2025 proposes to provide WAGE with new funding:

\$382.5 million over five years, starting in 2026-27, with \$76.5 million ongoing, to revitalise and stabilise efforts to advance women's equality in Canada.

\$54.6 million over five years, starting in 2026-27, with \$10.9 million ongoing, to support the 2SLGBTQI+ community sector. This includes \$7.5 million over five years, with \$1.5 million ongoing, for Pride Security.

\$223.4 million over five years, starting in 2026-27, with \$44.7 million ongoing, to strengthen federal action on gender-based violence.

• (1440)

Senator Senior: While I applaud greater support for the gender-equality sector, I'm gravely concerned about the budget cuts to international assistance by \$2.7 billion over four years.

Senator Moreau, can you explain this decision and how it will impact Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy, or FIAP, a policy that has successfully focused on gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls? Is this a change in direction away from the FIAP?

Senator Moreau: Thank you for the question.

The Canadian government has been elected, as you know, on a clear mandate to spend less so it can invest more. To do that, the government must make responsible choices and cut spending. In this case, the budget proposed a reduction in development funding where Canada's contribution has grown disproportionately relative to other similar economies. Those decisions have been taken very seriously.

PRIVY COUNCIL OFFICE

REPORT OF PARLIAMENTARY BUDGET OFFICER

Hon. Pamela Wallin: To the government leader, I have a question about the letter from the Parliamentary Budget Officer, or PBO, that was just tabled moments ago by the Speaker. To my mind, that is unprecedented and a bit shocking. What he seems to be asking for is our support to do his job, and, in turn, his work enables us to do ours. Given that parliamentarians, including those in this chamber, will be asked to vote on the fiscal plan, on the budget in the days and weeks ahead, he needs the information, as do we.

What do you suggest is our next step? Should we invite the Parliamentary Budget Officer here to a Committee of the Whole? Should we reference this issue to a committee? This is shocking.

Hon. Pierre Moreau (Government Representative in the Senate): You know as well as I do that the Senate is free to invite the Parliamentary Budget Officer. The Parliamentary Budget Officer recognized at some point that the government is also doing an important thing with the tabling of that budget. The government thanks the PBO for their work; however, the government notes that their reports ignore the dynamic aspects of Budget 2025 and its measures to strengthen and grow the Canadian economy. The government investments will bring private and provincial investments. The experts agree on the path that has been followed by the government concerning the budget.

As to the invitation of the PBO, it is up to the Senate to invite them and ask them the questions senators think should be asked of the PBO.

Senator Wallin: Government leader, he is seeking information from specific government departments. They have deadlines that they are required to meet. They provided reasons why they could not meet them, such as management-union relationships impacting employee performance and time to review decisions. Those are not eligible grounds for refusing to disclose information.

What is the government's response to this letter?

Senator Moreau: I am confident, senator, that the government is willing to work with the PBO. It did not happen only this year; it happens that sometimes it is impossible to follow the deadlines that have been implemented.

That being said, I am confident that the government is looking forward to working with the PBO to answer his important questions. He understands that he has a very important mandate, as well.

NATURAL RESOURCES

PROJECTS OF NATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE

Hon. Marty Klyne: Senator Moreau, congratulations to the government on referring the second group of projects to the Major Projects Office: the LNG facility in B.C., the Iqaluit hydroelectric project, the Sisson mine in New Brunswick, the Crawford nickel mine, the North Coast Transmission Line and Nouveau Monde Graphite's mine. I believe Canadians want to see such prosperity-building initiatives move forward. However, these projects don't cross provincial boundaries and don't appear to require the interprovincial coordination we might associate with the robust federalism. I'm aware of the criteria for national interest projects in Bill C-5, such as the likelihood of success and contributing to clean growth.

To confirm this is not picking winners and losers but fair criteria, can you tell us more about the thresholds that must be met and how these projects do so?

Hon. Pierre Moreau (Government Representative in the Senate): Yes, thank you for the question.

The Major Projects Office works with provinces, territories, Indigenous Peoples and industry to identify and evaluate projects that would offer the greatest benefits for Canadians. A project is determined to be of national significance based upon the five factors that are outlined in the Building Canada Act, including the extent to which the project can strengthen Canada's autonomy, resilience and security; provide economic or other benefits to Canada; have a high likelihood of successful execution; advance the interests of Indigenous Peoples; and contribute to clean growth and to Canada's objectives with respect to climate change.

Those are the major factors that are taken into consideration for a national project to go forward.

Senator Klyne: Thank you.

Several of these projects faced delays in the past, whether from regulatory or funding hurdles, Indigenous consultations or other challenges. Canadians want to understand what made the difference this time. Can you please share which of these projects have previously been held up, what the key roadblocks were and how referral to the Major Projects Office will help clear those hurdles?

Senator Moreau: It is difficult, in one minute, to list all of the issues these projects have faced. I will highlight an example, the Crawford Nickel Project.

There are still several permitting processes that this project is running through, and the Major Projects Office is working to come up with processes where the project can run all the permitting in parallel so that it is not being done sequentially.

CANADIAN HERITAGE

CANADIAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION

Hon. Salma Atallahjan: Leader, a few weeks ago, one of my colleagues asked you about the CBC spending taxpayer dollars to fight a court battle against the Information Commissioner — all to avoid transparency. Now we learn that secrecy pays off, as the broadcaster has been awarded another \$150 million from your government, allegedly to strengthen its mandate and protect Canadian identity. Yet, somehow, your government believes that the best way to promote sovereign Canadian content is by joining the European television competition Eurovision Song Contest.

Leader, how does subsidizing European content, while rewarding secrecy and incompetence, amount to defending Canadian culture and sovereignty?

Senator Batters: Great question.

Hon. Pierre Moreau (Government Representative in the Senate): As to the CBC, the government knows it is time to reinforce CBC/Radio-Canada. CBC/Radio-Canada is a vital source of news and entertainment for Canadians nationwide and is the only outlet that delivers news in English, French, eight Indigenous languages and seven other languages. The government promised Canadians a strong public broadcaster and better access to local news. It is what they expect from the government, and that's what the government is going to deliver.

It is crucial that Canadians from coast to coast to coast can rely upon a trustworthy source of information and entertainment made right here at home.

FINANCE

COST OF LIVING

Hon. Salma Atallahjan: Senator Moreau, while your government subsidizes European television and adds \$10 million to the national debt every hour, Canadians are struggling. Food bank usage is at an all-time high, youth unemployment has surged, and home ownership has become a distant dream for most families.

Leader, has the Liberal government simply abandoned the promises it made to Canadians six months ago, or were those promises never meant to be kept in the first place?

Senator Batters: Good question.

Hon. Pierre Moreau (Government Representative in the Senate): Senator, when the government has a plan to build the strongest economy in the G7, including by investing in productivity, innovation and bringing more Canadians into the workforce, it keeps its promises, which are to grow the economy,

to provide good jobs for Canadians, to secure families, to invest in housing, to invest in our future and to invest in our youth. I think the Canadian government has delivered with the 2025-26 Budget.

[Translation]

FISCAL ANCHORS

Hon. Leo Housakos (Leader of the Opposition): Leader, with Budget 2025, the government has no real fiscal anchors left. Rather than committing to reducing the debt-to-GDP ratio, it's now focusing on a declining deficit-to-GDP ratio.

• (1450)

The problem is that this is not an anchor at all, since it allows the government to increase the deficit every year while claiming that it's staying within the limits. In fact, your government could rack up nearly half a billion dollars in additional debt over the next five years and still meet its target. If the government wants Canadians to believe that it will be fiscally responsible, then why did it introduce a fiscal anchor that allows for infinitely expanding deficits?

Hon. Pierre Moreau (Government Representative in the Senate): I disagree with the premise of your question, Senator Housakos. The two fiscal anchors put forward by the government are, one, to balance day-to-day operations while reducing spending for 2028-29 and to translate these savings into investments, and two, to maintain a declining deficit-to-GDP ratio to ensure that future generations don't have to bear the burden of debt. So it's inaccurate to say that this ratio will keep increasing or that the budget has no fiscal anchors; quite the contrary.

Senator Housakos: Only a Liberal can invest and cut at the same time. Explain that to Canadians.

Government Representative, even Fitch Ratings says that Canada lacks a clear fiscal anchor.

The Parliamentary Budget Officer also said there's only a 7.5% chance the government will meet its target for the deficit-to-GDP ratio. Why isn't the government taking this seriously? Something must be done, and soon.

Senator Moreau: Senator Housakos, I suggested this to you in English two weeks ago. I'll reiterate it in French. The government's goal is to spend less and invest more. What part of that statement do you disagree with? Certain Conservative leaders did much more damage to the Canadian economy while you were in government.

With respect to the Parliamentary Budget Officer's conclusion, the International Monetary Fund says that the government is on the right track at this point in time.

[English]

GLOBAL AFFAIRS

EXPORTS TO ISRAEL

Hon. Yuen Pau Woo: Senator Moreau, good afternoon.

In July of this year, 33 senators issued a statement expressing dismay that Canadian companies are exporting arms and military materiel to Israel in spite of a prohibition on the part of the Government of Canada to do so. It has been four months, and we haven't received a response from the Minister of Foreign Affairs on why this is the case. Can you procure an answer for us or give us the answer today?

Hon. Pierre Moreau (Government Representative in the Senate): That is a very important question. As the government has stated numerous times, Canada has not approved any new permits for items to Israel that could be used in the current conflict in Gaza since January 8, 2024. The government will continue to send items that are purely defensive, such as components for Israel's Iron Dome.

In 2024 Canada also suspended approximately 30 export permits for items destined to Israel that could have been incorporated into items used in Gaza. All permits suspended in 2024 remain suspended and cannot be used to export to Israel.

A list of valid permits issued prior to January 8, 2024, has been provided to the House Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development and is accessible on their website.

Senator Woo: Thank you for your answer, but it doesn't address the information that was found in the report, which suggested, in fact, that offensive materials and materials used for the training of Israeli forces are being exported in spite of the ban.

In addition, we saw just two days ago a new report suggesting that there are military exports from Canada to Israel via the United States. Can you add that to your list of questions to the Minister of Foreign Affairs?

Senator Moreau: I will certainly raise the issue with the minister, and I will get back to you with an answer. My understanding is that nothing has been exported since January 8, 2024, but I'll get back to you with a more precise answer, if I have one.

[Translation]

FINANCE

REGISTERED RETIREMENT INCOME FUNDS

Hon. Lucie Moncion: Senator Moreau, during the election campaign, the Liberals promised to provide temporary relief for retirees by reducing mandatory registered retirement income fund, or RRIF, withdrawals by 25%. In an interview with *The Globe and Mail* in August, the Secretary of State for Seniors, the

Honourable Stephanie McLean, confirmed that the government planned to follow through on this measure. However, it's nowhere to be found in the most recent federal budget.

Since many Canadians have to make important financial decisions for their future, they need the government to be clear and reliable. Can the government clarify the status of the promised policy and the proposed time frame for applying the 25% reduction in mandatory RRIF withdrawals?

Hon. Pierre Moreau (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for the question, Senator Moncion. Indeed, the Secretary of State for Seniors said in August that a temporary reduction of mandatory RRIF withdrawals would be put in place to help our seniors during difficult times. I'm confident that the government will follow through on these promises, but I can't speculate on future plans. The policy in question could be implemented outside the budget. That's my understanding.

However, it's important to mention that the budget aims to implement many affordability measures for our seniors, such as the New Horizons for Seniors program, with an annual budget of \$70 million, or the National Anti-Fraud Strategy, which seeks to better protect our seniors from fraud, since they are disproportionately affected by fraud.

Senator Moncion: Thank you.

There's not much time left, Senator Moreau, since December 31 is right around the corner, and that's the end of the fiscal year for Canadians. If the measure is supposed to be for 2025, could you tell us whether any efforts are being made to have it in place by December 31, 2025?

Senator Moreau: I don't have any specific information. I'll raise the issue with the minister and the secretary of state and get back to you on this. In any case, I believe that the government still intends to fulfill the commitment made by the secretary of state.

[*English*]

INNOVATION, SCIENCE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

CANADIAN INNOVATION

Hon. Colin Deacon: Senator Moreau, Canada doesn't suffer from a lack of innovation, but we do suffer from a lack of investment in derisking new technologies and accelerating the growth of new businesses.

Budget 2025 identified new strategies and funds primarily focused on existing financing mechanisms managed by public servants. With the exception of later-stage venture capital funding, there was no new investment directed towards organizations with proven private-sector expertise at a seed level. For example, we have globally leading incubators and accelerators that have pulled together the skills needed to grow highly innovative and globally competitive companies, but we have limited investment at this early stage, particularly in businesses building Canada's low-carbon economy.

[Senator Moncion]

What is the strategy for ensuring that Canada catalyzes investment in future waves of innovative companies? Specifically, how is the federal government proposing to derisk private sector investment to grow Canada's low-carbon economy?

Hon. Pierre Moreau (Government Representative in the Senate): I will give you an example. The Major Projects Office will allow the government to advance regulatory approval and coordinate financing to supercharge major project development in Canada.

Just last week, the government made announcements about the Ksi Lisims LNG project in B.C., which will become one of the world's lowest-emission LNG operations when fully electrified, with emissions 94% below the global average. LNG is a key source of energy in the global energy transition, especially for trading partners who currently rely on coal — specifically for Germany, I have been told. The project is expected to attract nearly \$30 billion in investment, create thousands of skilled careers and strengthen Canada's position as a global LNG exporter.

Senator C. Deacon: Thank you. Your answer, Senator Moreau, actually made my point. There are some great things happening at the major project level, but I'm talking about the next generation of Canadian companies.

What steps is the government taking to ensure that early-stage, low-carbon technology companies can access the pre-seed and seed capital money to get growing and become venture capital ready? It's that early-stage innovation that we need to support.

• (1500)

Senator Moreau: The government is committed to innovation in the field of low-carbon-emission energy, and those major investments made in major projects will probably bring that innovation to small companies as well because, along the way, they will be providers for those major projects that will come from small- and medium-sized enterprises.

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 June 4, 2025, I would like to inform the Senate that Question Period with the Honourable Sean Fraser, P.C., M.P., Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada and Minister responsible for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, will take place on Wednesday, November 19, 2025, at 2:30 p.m.

SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

MOTION FOR ADDRESS IN REPLY—DEBATE CONTINUED

On the Order:

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

That the following Address be presented to His Majesty the King:

To His Most Excellent Majesty Charles the Third, by the Grace of God King of Canada and His other Realms and Territories, Head of the Commonwealth.

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR MAJESTY:

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

Hon. Dawn Arnold: Honourable senators, it is with profound gratitude, humility and a deep sense of responsibility that I rise today to offer my response to the Speech from the Throne.

For any Canadian, standing here is an extraordinary experience. For someone who has spent much of her career at the municipal level — close to the ground, people and everyday realities of community life — this moment carries a special meaning.

[*Translation*]

The Senate of Canada was designed to broaden perspectives and to bring regional, sectoral and experiential depth to the national conversation.

I stand here as a Canadian woman from the Atlantic region, a municipal leader, a bilingual New Brunswicker, a lifelong learner, a lover of ideas, and someone who has spent the last 13 years immersed in the complex, hopeful, frustrating, inspiring and deeply human work of city-building.

[*English*]

I come from Moncton, New Brunswick, a community that grew faster than any other census metropolitan area in the country for two years running and whose story in many ways reflects the story of Canada: It is resilient, diverse, determined and full of possibility. I come from a city that also embodies Canada's greatest challenge and, I believe, its greatest opportunity: housing.

In the King's Speech from the Throne, His Majesty underscored what every mayor, social worker and family already knows: Canada cannot succeed if Canadians cannot find a safe and sustainable place to live. Housing is the foundation upon which every other national ambition rests: economic growth, immigration, innovation, family stability, climate resilience and

social cohesion. The recent federal budget echoed this priority. It affirmed plainly that solving the housing crisis is central to Canada's future prosperity and that the federal government must be an active partner — not an observer — in this work. I welcome this direction.

However, I also know from hard experience that we will not solve this crisis by speaking in generalities. We solve it through clarity, courage, partnership and sustained action.

[*Translation*]

Housing is not simply a market commodity. It is the infrastructure of opportunity. It determines whether workers can take jobs, whether students can complete their studies, whether families can thrive, whether seniors can live with dignity and whether newcomers — who are so vital to our future — can put down roots.

[*English*]

When Moncton grew at unprecedented speed, we saw the best of what growth can bring: new businesses, renewed energy downtown, more diversity and a profound pride of place.

We also saw what happens when the supply of homes does not keep up with the needs of people. Like cities across the country, Moncton faced rising homelessness, an acute shortage of affordable units, challenges in mental health, addictions and increasing pressure on community services.

We saw seniors displaced by renovictions. We saw young workers sharing spaces never meant for living. We saw employers unable to fill positions because their employees had nowhere to live.

As mayor, I could not simply observe these trends. I had to act. Despite housing being strictly a provincial responsibility in New Brunswick, my council and I made the unprecedented decision to invest \$6 million of municipal funds into deeply affordable housing. That was leveraged to \$15.4 million.

That decision was bold, controversial to a number of people and absolutely necessary. It worked. It created homes for people who had none, stabilized families and protected dignity. It taught me something simple but profound: Housing solutions require everyone to be at the table.

[*Translation*]

This is why I believe the Senate has a critical role to play, not in building housing, but in building coherence by examining federal programs to ensure they truly meet the needs of communities, by scrutinizing legislation so that dollars flow where they are most effective and by pushing for evidence-based design and long-term thinking, not short-term fixes.

[*English*]

We cannot have a country where one level of government speaks of great ambition while another lacks the tools to act. We cannot have a country where we call on municipalities to deliver solutions without giving them the resources to do so.

We cannot have a country where housing is treated as an afterthought rather than the foundation of national resilience. The impact we made in Moncton was important, but challenges remain. The growing number of people who remain unhoused across this country needs our collective attention.

Housing is a national imperative, not only because it is a crisis but because it is an opportunity. Our responsibility is to ensure we are growing wisely, inclusively and sustainably.

Playing a significant role in housing is not new to the federal government. In 1974, 51 short years ago, more than 20% of all housing in Canada was non-market affordable housing. Today, that number is less than 4%. This 16% delta goes a long way toward explaining what cities across Canada are seeing on their streets.

My path to this chamber was not linear. Before politics, my world was books and ideas. I began my career in publishing, working to bring knowledge to young readers with books about dinosaurs, amphibians, bugs and skeletons — stories about the world and our place within it.

That passion for learning followed me to the Canadian Museum of Nature and ultimately to Moncton, where, earlier in my life as a young mother, I was part of founding an international, bilingual literary festival: the Frye Festival. This festival celebrates New Brunswick's extraordinary French and English voices and encourages thousands of students to read, write and think critically.

[*Translation*]

However, my journey to elected office began in 2012, when a 30-second news clip on American television shook me enough to say, "I need to step up." I ran for municipal council because I believe that we make better decisions when there is a diversity of voices around decision-making tables.

[*English*]

After four years on council, I ran for mayor because I wanted to not just react to change but to shape it. For two terms, spanning nine years, I had the extraordinary privilege of being Moncton's first woman mayor.

I welcomed newcomers, advocated to provincial and federal partners, developed urban growth strategies, marched in Pride parades, danced at Navratri, cycled our trails, balanced budgets,

meaningfully engaged with youth and celebrated graduations and anniversaries. Throughout it all, I aimed to be as open, accessible and transparent as possible.

• (1510)

To build trust, I have learned: You must first build understanding.

Moncton's success is inseparable from its multiculturalism: successfully implemented immigration strategies, neighbours sponsoring newcomer families and an open and welcoming community that is inclusive.

Immigration is not simply an economic tool. It is a community-building force. It enriches culture, strengthens the labour force and expands the horizon of what a city — and a country — can become. The Throne Speech recognizes this, affirming that newcomers are essential to Canada's prosperity. But it also implicitly acknowledges an important truth: Immigration succeeds only when housing, transit, health care and community supports succeed alongside it. That is why I believe housing must remain at the heart of Canada's national strategy.

[*Translation*]

As a cyclist, I have always believed that the way we build our cities is important not only for quality of life, but also for our climate commitments. Dense, walkable, transit-oriented cities are the most environmentally responsible form of growth.

[*English*]

When we protect our urban boundaries, invest in public transit and design communities where people can live, work and play without long commutes, we reduce emissions dramatically. The Avenir Centre — Moncton's \$113-million sports and entertainment facility built on time and on budget — helped catalyze densification downtown. That densification is not just good policy; it is also good climate action.

The federal budget's investments in housing tied to climate-friendly construction and zoning reform are steps in the right direction, but the Senate can help ensure these investments translate into real, on-the-ground results.

[*Translation*]

I have been asked on several occasions to run for partisan office, for nearly every party in this country. I have always declined, not because party politics is negative, but because I knew my strengths, my temperament and my convictions were better suited to collaboration across party lines. At the municipal level, we work with whoever we must to get the job done. Partisan victories are not the goal; community outcomes are.

[English]

I bring that same spirit here. I believe deeply that more unites us as Canadians than divides us. The Senate is proof of that principle. I believe full-heartedly in the independence of this chamber.

Honourable senators, I stand here today because I love my community and my country. I love its diversity, its complexity, its ambitions and its endless capacity to reinvent itself. But I also stand here because I am worried. I worry about social inequity. I worry about growing cynicism. I worry about the erosion of respect in public life and the fragility of democratic institutions. And I worry that if we do not get housing right — if we do not build homes for the next generation of Canadians — we will undermine the very promise that has defined this country for more than a century.

But I am also hopeful because I believe in the power of partnership. I believe in evidence, in transparency, in data and in dialogue. I believe in newcomers who choose Canada, in young people who spark big ideas, in cities that adapt and grow and in federal institutions that rise to meet the moment.

As I begin my work here, it is my commitment to bring the full weight of my experience, my convictions and my optimism to the national stage in order to contribute thoughtfully, to collaborate generously and to help ensure that every Canadian — no matter their age, background, income or postal code — has a safe, affordable and dignified place to call home.

Thank you to my fellow senators for the extremely warm welcome. To my seatmate Farah Mohamed — and her crazy glue — I'm already loving the adventure we are on together. To my team of Lili-Anne Delage Larson, formerly of the Government Representative's Office, and former Senate page Mira Gillis, thank you for guiding me.

When the Prime Minister asked me to take on this role, he asked me to be a bulwark against populism, and that will help guide my work here. For 13 years, I worked to solve problems at the municipal level — one street, one neighbourhood and one family at a time. I come to this chamber to help solve them at the national level with the same urgency, the same partnership and the same conviction that we are capable of so much more than we have yet delivered.

It is my honour to serve with you. Thank you. *Meegwetch.*

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

(On motion of Senator LaBoucane-Benson, debate adjourned.)

[Translation]

THE SENATE

MOTION TO AMEND THE *RULES OF THE SENATE* ADOPTED

Hon. Pierre Moreau (Government Representative in the Senate): Honourable senators, with leave of the Senate, I move, seconded by the Honourable Senators Housakos, Saint-Germain, Tannas and Francis:

That the *Rules of the Senate* be modified:

1. by renumbering current rule 3-4 as rule 3-4(1);
2. by adding the following new rule 3-4(2):

“Sitting on day of death of a Senator
3-4. (2) If a Senator dies on a day the Senate sits, either before or during the sitting, the Speaker shall advise the Senate of the death as soon as practicable during the sitting. The Speaker shall then observe a minute of silence in honour of the deceased Senator. The Senate should then normally adjourn, as soon as practicable, following the adoption of a motion that would be moved pursuant to regular procedures. For greater certainty, this normal practice does not, in the absence of leave, take precedence over any other provisions of these Rules.”;

3. in rule 12-18(1), by replacing the words “Except as otherwise ordered by the Senate” by the words “Except as provided in subsection (4), or as otherwise ordered by the Senate”;
4. in rule 12-18(2), by replacing the words “in subsection (3)” by the words “in subsections (3) and (4)”;
5. in rule 12-18(3), by replacing the words “The Standing Committee on Audit and Oversight” by the words “Except as provided in subsection (4), the Standing Committee on Audit and Oversight”;
6. by adding the following new rules 12-18(4) and (5):

“Death of a Senator
12-18. (4) Except as provided in subsection (5), if the Senate follows normal practice and adjourns after being informed of the death of a Senator, as outlined in rule 3-4(2), and the motion to adjourn mentions that rule or the senator moving the motion notes that it is moved pursuant to that rule, the Clerk of the Senate shall cause all subsequent committee meetings scheduled that day that have not yet started to be cancelled. The Clerk shall also advise the chair of any committee then meeting of the death, whereupon the chair shall advise the committee, which shall observe a minute of silence in honour of the deceased Senator, after which the chair shall immediately adjourn the

meeting. No other committee meetings shall be scheduled to take place on the day the Senate is informed of the Senator's death.

Committee meeting if a Senator dies

12-18. (5) The provisions of subsection (4) shall not apply:

(a) if 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, or their designates, unanimously agree that it is in the public interest that a committee meeting either continue or take place, provided, for greater certainty, that if such a meeting was cancelled pursuant to subsection (4) before this determination, the meeting may be called again for that day; or

(b) if the committee is meeting outside the parliamentary precinct pursuant to previous authority granted by the Senate.”; and

7. in rule 12-28:

(a) by replacing the words “The committee” by the words “Except as otherwise provided, the committee”; and

(b) by adding, at the end of the rule, an exception referring to new rule 12-18(4).

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.)

[*English*]

NATIONAL FRAMEWORK ON SICKLE CELL DISEASE BILL

THIRD READING

Hon. Tony Ince moved third reading of Bill S-201, An Act respecting a national framework on sickle cell disease.

He said: Honourable senators, I rise today to speak to third reading of Bill S-201, An Act respecting a national framework on sickle cell disease. I'll start by thanking my colleagues on the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology and their chair, Senator Moodie, for a thorough study of this bill and for advancing it unamended.

[Senator Moreau]

I also want to take a moment to share some brief history. Pardon the flurry of bill numbers and dates, but I think it's important to highlight the winding road of legislation that has preceded this moment.

The journey began 15 years ago. In December 2010, former MP and associate professor of health studies Dr. Kirsty Duncan tabled Bill C-605, calling for a national strategy and recognition of a sickle cell awareness day. The bill didn't get past first reading. It was reintroduced six months later as Bill C-221. Again, it didn't get past first reading.

In 2015, the Honourable Jane Cordy introduced Bill S-211 to create the National Sickle Cell Awareness Day. It received Royal Assent in December 2017.

• (1520)

Five years later, on November 9, 2023, I had the honour of introducing legislation that created the Sickle Cell Awareness Day Act in Nova Scotia. Meanwhile, here in Ottawa, just two days earlier, the Honourable Dr. Marie-Françoise Mégie introduced Bill S-280. It reached second reading in June 2024, but then died on the Order Paper this past January.

Dr. Mégie reintroduced the bill as Bill S-201 in May of this year. She got it through second reading and on its way to committee before her retirement in September. I am honoured that Dr. Mégie placed her confidence in me to take this bill the rest of the way through this chamber. But, as you can see, a lot of people did a lot of work on this bill long before my arrival.

Many thanks to the experts and witnesses who have shared their professional and personal experiences at various stages of this bill's development and with committee members last month. Special thanks to Biba Tinga, a caregiver and volunteer president of the Sickle Cell Disease Association of Canada.

I also want to acknowledge Senator Ravalia and Senator Gerba, who spoke to this bill in June. Their eloquent words of support will soon be joined by those of Senator Burey. And thanks go to Senator Ataullahjan. As critic of this bill, her support is greatly appreciated. I was pleased to see that the bill led to her learning that sickle cell disease is prevalent in the Pakistani community.

Senator Ataullahjan summed up this bill very nicely when she said:

... we are not simply dealing with a piece of legislation. We are bringing to light a matter of human rights, social justice and human dignity.

Yes, we are.

People living with sickle cell disease deserve to be treated with compassion and dignity.

Honourable colleagues, if your schedule allowed you to hear just one of these speeches — just one — you now know more about sickle cell disease than the average emergency room nurse or doctor in Canada. That's a shocking reality. Admittedly, health practitioners in major cities are more aware of it, but in

rural and less diverse parts of Canada, very little is known about it. It is a significant challenge. Unfortunately, it's just one of many, which is why this bill is so important and so broad.

I am proud of Bill S-201. Congratulations to Dr. Mégie, her office staff, other Senate staff and the Library of Parliament for doing good work on this bill and for listening to the sickle cell community. The vast majority of Canadians have no idea how bad sickle cell disease is or how many long-standing inequities exist.

First, the disease. Approximately 6,500 Canadians live with sickle cell disease, which is linked to ancestry from regions like West Africa, the Caribbean, the Middle East and South Asia. It disproportionately affects the Black community. People with sickle cell disease have red blood cells shaped like crescents or sickles, which causes them to stick together and block the flow of blood. This can lead to extreme pain and starve the body of oxygen. These pain crises can be triggered by extreme temperatures, dehydration, stress and infection. They can also lead to complications that include stroke, organ damage and serious bacterial infections. Treatment frequently involves blood transfusions, and patients often require long hospital stays. Life expectancy is between 50 and 55 years of age.

Now I will briefly highlight the inequities. As mentioned, health care providers outside of major centres don't know how to properly treat these patients. They are often ignored, labelled as drug addicts and left to suffer excruciating pain and permanent organ damage.

Bill S-201 presents a nine-point plan that includes addressing a lack of knowledge about this disease among health care professionals by requiring better training, as well as improved disease management through the creation of a national registry and a national research network.

People living with sickle cell disease are also denied financial supports that are available to other Canadians. This bill aims to make the disease eligible for disability benefits, tax credits and public drug insurance plans. The bill also identifies, among other things, the need for a more diverse blood supply. As mentioned, patients frequently require blood transfusions. The most compatible blood comes from donors with similar ethnic backgrounds. However, in 2023 only 1% of blood donors in Canada were Black, despite making up 4.3% of the population. This discrepancy is linked to anti-Black discriminatory practices in the Canadian blood products system from 1997 to 2018. Work is under way to repair cultural damage and rebuild trust, but much more needs to be done.

Given that this disease has been the subject of a legislative process spanning 15 years, and given the inequities people with sickle cell face because of systemic racism and cruel neglect, they have every right to be angry. I was expecting it, but something different happened in committee. It was when Ulysse Guerrier testified. Mr. Guerrier is president of the Sickle Cell Association of Ontario. He also lives with sickle cell disease. At just 49 years of age, Mr. Guerrier has outlived two of his siblings. He misses about five days a month from his job — or more when he has complications. Mr. Guerrier has experienced all of the inequities I've mentioned here today. Anger and

frustration would be entirely justified, but he brought something very different to the committee hearing. Mr. Guerrier referenced the bill, calling it “. . . an act of hope.”

I admire Mr. Guerrier. People with less strength would be discouraged and demoralized, but he dedicates precious time to — in his own words — speaking “. . . for thousands of Canadians whose voices go unheard every day.” I very much hope the chamber will honour Mr. Guerrier's devotion by supporting this bill.

Before I close, I have one more personal story to share. It's about Val and Cyrus O'Neale and their son Tyler. Val is my cousin, though she's more like a sister in many ways. Tyler has sickle cell disease. I wish you all could meet this family. They are wonderful people.

• (1530)

If you ask Val to talk about sickle cell, she will tell you about Tyler's first crisis at the age of 2 and how terrified she was. She will also talk about how she and Cyrus raised Tyler to accept the disease as part of his body but not let it define him as a person.

Val will share a couple of more memorable moments, but she will also spend most of the conversation talking about her gratitude for Dr. Michael Zeidman for empowering her to be an active part of Tyler's care team and for always being there when needed, and for the nurses and the volunteers at the Credit Valley Hospital in Mississauga who went above and beyond to make a scared little boy feel special the year he spent Christmas there.

I am happy to report that Tyler is doing well. He is 34 years old. He is an engineer. He is very athletic, and he has not had a crisis in several years. That doesn't necessarily negate the issue of life expectancy, but if the discussion turned toward the very difficult topic, as it did recently, Val would still express her gratitude. In fact, I'll close with her words:

I don't know what the future holds. But I do know, when I get up in the morning, I say, “We are blessed to have another day. Enjoy it. Do your best. And be kind.”

Thank you. *Meegwetch. Wela'lin. Shukran.*

Hon. Sharon Burey: Honourable senators, today I feel a deep sense of pride in Canada and to be a Canadian. As I stand and speak today in support of Bill S-201, An Act respecting a national framework on sickle cell disease, at third reading, I wish to begin by acknowledging that we are gathered on the unceded territory of the Algonquin Anishinaabe Nation.

[*Translation*]

This bill was previously introduced during the Forty-fourth Parliament as Bill S-280. Incidentally, I had the honour of serving as that bill's critic. Although it had been sent to committee, its progress was interrupted by the dissolution of Parliament.

Today, the bill is back in a renewed form as Bill S-201. It includes updated provisions that reflect continued advocacy efforts and new developments in our understanding of sickle cell disease. I salute Senator Ince for taking up the torch and continuing this essential work.

[English]

I would also like to thank former Senator Mégie and her team for introducing this important bill and for allowing us, as the Senate of Canada, to truly implement and bring to life the principles enshrined in our Constitution and in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, by creating an inclusive Canada where every citizen has the opportunity to fully achieve their potential.

The committee's investigation and scrutiny of this bill showed how when we come together as Canadians, we can do great work. We can work together across provinces, research and the academic community.

I want to salute the work of the Black Creek Community Health Centre and their pivotal participatory research. Driven and shaped by the people most affected, I want to salute the work of the various organizations, the consultations and the work already taking place at the provincial level, especially in Ontario and Quebec.

I want to salute the work of Health Quality Ontario and the development of standards and best practices that will not only save lives and improve the quality and dignity of the lives of persons and families living with sickle cell disease, but also reduce health care costs and lead to a strong Canada, a more prosperous and a more inclusive Canada, a Canada where democracy stands strong.

But there is still much more work to be done to ensure that best practices and evidence-based standards are available to Canadians from coast to coast to coast, and hence the need for Bill S-201.

If you are still wondering why it is essential to raise awareness and establish a national framework for sickle cell disease, consider the following. My dear colleague Senator Ince spoke about them, so I'm not going to go over those details. I will just say the lack of awareness contributes to persistent health inequities and the stigma that continues to surround the condition.

In committee, we had the privilege of hearing powerful and insightful testimony from individuals with lived experience, advocacy organizations, members of the research and academic community, clinicians and subject-matter experts. Their contributions provided valuable analysis of the economic, financial, educational and psychological impacts of sickle cell disease.

One point of consensus among all these stakeholders is the urgent need to raise awareness of the economic burden borne by patients and families, as well as the acute-on-chronic disability that many endure.

[Senator Burey]

Mr. Ulysse Guerrier, a patient living with sickle cell disease, shared the following eloquent and moving testimony:

The pain is constant and the damage is permanent. Yet I'm still here when two of my siblings are not. Every morning, before I can stand, I need powerful narcotics — oxycodone, OxyNEO, and even a fentanyl patch — just to function. I miss four to five days of work each month for treatments, and I lose even more when complications arise, and because this disease is invisible, many don't understand the toll it takes. But the man-made inequities make it worse. Sickle cell is not recognized as a disability in Canada, meaning we are denied the Disability Tax Credit. There is little to no research funding, and doctors are pushed toward oncology, leaving the University Health Network's Red Blood Cell Clinic — the only sickle cell centre in Canada — understaffed and underfunded.

Dr. Smita Pakhalé, professor and Senior Clinician Scientist at the University of Ottawa and The Ottawa Hospital, also spoke to the disparity in research funding. She stated:

. . . . cystic fibrosis . . . which is a parallel disease because it is also a multi-system disease — not to take anything away from people with cystic fibrosis. I'm a lung doctor. I see cystic fibrosis very closely. It is also an inherited disease, a multi-system disease and a life-limiting disease. However, Canada spends more than 10 times the amount of money in clinical care and research on cystic fibrosis compared to sickle cell, and that's a very conservative estimate.

Dear colleagues, this lack of investment in research has a direct impact on data collection, a patient registry, public awareness and, ultimately, the quality of care available to patients.

In my previous speech as critic, I raised a question for committee consideration: Why does this bill focus specifically on sickle cell disease, rather than encompassing hemoglobinopathies more broadly, including both sickle cell disease and thalassemia?

During committee meetings, Dr. Alan Tinmouth, physician and Director of The Ottawa Hospital Hemoglobinopathy Program and representative of the Canadian Hemoglobinopathy Association, provided important clarification. He stated:

. . . . thalassemia is a hemoglobinopathy, and sickle cell disease is a hemoglobinopathy, but thalassemia is not encompassed within sickle cell disease.

There is certainly a need for the treatment, as Dr. Klaassen said, with gene therapy for that population, but they have a very different set of complications. They're not routinely hospitalized. They do have decreased life expectancy, but they don't have severe episodes of pain. It's a very different disease. It just happens to be that the curative therapy is the same.

• (1540)

This testimony helped underscore the importance of maintaining a focused scope for the bill, while also recognizing the broader context of hemoglobinopathies and the need for tailored approaches to care and research.

What stood out most for me during the testimonies was Canada's restrictive policy on blood donation, especially the malaria deferral. Red blood cell transfusions are a life-saving therapy for individuals living with sickle cell disease. Most patients will require transfusions at some point and may rely on them regularly. According to BC Children's Hospital, chronic transfusion therapy typically involves one to three units of blood every four to six weeks. Can you imagine that, colleagues? These transfusions improve oxygen delivery and help mitigate the effects of vaso-occlusion, thereby reducing the risk of severe complications such as stroke.

As the Canadian Blood Services website states:

The most well-known blood group is ABO (which includes blood types A, B, AB and O), but in fact there are more than 33 blood groups. A person's type within each group determines the combination of more than 300 markers on that person's red blood cells, all of which are inherited from their ancestors.

This complexity makes it essential to find well-matched donors, particularly for patients from racialized communities.

However, Canada's current blood donation policy permanently excludes individuals who have lived in or contracted malaria in endemic regions. This restriction significantly reduces the donor pool, especially among communities most likely to carry compatible blood types for sickle cell patients. In contrast, countries such as France, the United States and the United Kingdom have adopted more flexible, risk-based approaches to malaria deferral.

This is a complex issue, colleagues, involving risk-based analyses, testing and behavioural change. At the end of the day, however, this policy limits the availability of compatible blood and increases the risk of complications due to mismatched transfusions.

Bill S-201, through its new provisions on safe transfusion practices, offers hope that Canada may begin to address this policy and move toward a more equitable, inclusive and evidence-based approach to blood donation.

Let's build a strong Canada where all Canadians matter, feel included in every aspect of life and can succeed — no matter their ancestry.

Dear colleagues, I believe the committee has conducted a thorough examination of Bill S-201 and provided Canadians with valuable context and insight into its importance. Therefore, I urge you to support this bill and vote in favour of sending it to the other place as soon as possible.

Meegwetch. Thank you.

Hon. Salma Atallahjan: Honourable senators, I rise as the friendly critic of Bill S-201 to voice my support for this piece of legislation.

Colleagues, Bill S-201 aims to give much-needed support to Canadians living with sickle cell disease. For far too long, affected families have shouldered the burden with limited resources and inconsistent care, but this legislation will change that.

I want to take this opportunity to once again thank former Senator Mégie for introducing this bill and Senator Ince for stepping forward to complete the task started by former Senator Mégie. By passing this bill, we affirm that health is a right, not a privilege. We affirm that no Canadian living with sickle cell disease should face preventable suffering because of geography, income or lack of awareness. We send a clear message that we choose coordinated action to improve lives, guided by the principles of equity, social justice and respect for human dignity. Thank you.

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to and bill read third time and passed.)

NATIONAL FRAMEWORK ON HEART FAILURE BILL

SECOND READING—DEBATE CONTINUED

Hon. Yonah Martin (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) moved second reading of Bill S-204, An Act to establish a national framework on heart failure.

She said: Honourable senators, I rise today as a sponsor of Bill S-204, an Act to establish a national framework on heart failure.

This legislation seeks to mobilize a comprehensive national response to heart failure, which has become an urgent epidemic in Canada. Heart failure is a chronic cardiovascular condition in which the heart cannot pump enough blood to meet the body's needs. It often develops after injury to the heart following a heart attack, long-standing high blood pressure or viral damage, and it leads to a cascade of health problems. Once it begins, heart failure is usually progressive and incurable, requiring lifelong management. While it can be managed and its progression slowed, it cannot yet be cured outright. Many Canadians are surprised to learn that heart failure is common, deadly and on the rise.

Over 750,000 Canadians are living with heart failure today, and there are more than 100,000 new cases each year. This means that roughly one in three Canadians will be directly touched by heart failure in their lifetime, either suffering from it themselves or caring for a family member with the condition. These numbers continue to grow every year, driven by our aging population and improved survival from heart attacks and other heart diseases. In fact, experts describe heart failure as an epidemic and one of the fastest-growing cardiovascular diseases worldwide. We can no longer view heart failure as a niche or end-stage problem; it is a present and pressing public health challenge.

The prognosis for heart failure can be as grim as — or even grimmer than — many forms of cancer. According to the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada, nearly half of all patients diagnosed with heart failure will die within five years. This five-year mortality rate is worse than that of several common cancers.

Heart failure is a leading cause of death in Canada. Among women, it ranks second only to cancer and ischemic heart disease as a cause of death. Living with heart failure also means enduring devastating symptoms such as chronic fatigue, shortness of breath, swelling and exercise intolerance, which drastically reduce quality of life. Patients often experience depression and anxiety as their health declines.

The condition places a heavy burden not only on those diagnosed, but also on their families and caregivers. Caring for a loved one with heart failure can require as much work as a full-time job. The toll on families is immense as they manage complex medication treatments, frequent medical appointments and repeated trips to the emergency department.

Heart failure is now one of the top reasons for hospitalization in Canada. In fact, it has been identified as the third-leading cause of hospital admissions nationwide after childbirth and COPD, or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. It is often referred to as a revolving-door condition because patients frequently end up back in the hospital shortly after being discharged. One in five heart failure patients is readmitted to hospital within 30 days of being sent home, and 20% of patients bounce back within a month, indicating that our system is struggling to provide adequate follow-up care or manage this illness optimally.

- (1550)

Each hospitalization is not only a health setback for the patient but also a significant cost to the system. The health care costs associated with heart failure are staggering and rising. Right now, managing heart failure — hospital stays, medications, outpatient care, long-term care, et cetera — costs Canada's health system on the order of hundreds of millions of dollars every year. Direct hospital care for heart failure alone consumes about \$575 million annually, and when we include all health services and lost productivity, the total cost is even higher.

If we do nothing, these costs will continue to grow. By 2030, heart failure is projected to cost \$2.8 billion per year in health care expenditures. This financial strain will impact every

provincial health care budget, and we simply cannot afford, economically or morally, to treat heart failure in an uncoordinated and merely responsive manner any longer.

Despite the best intentions of health care providers and policy-makers, Canadians with heart failure are falling through the cracks. We must confront the critical gaps, which this bill aims to address. Too many people are diagnosed with heart failure only when they land in an emergency room in crisis. Early signs, such as fatigue or mild shortness of breath, are often missed or attributed to aging or other conditions. Part of the problem is low awareness: 4 in 10 Canadians do not understand what heart failure is, and two thirds do not know that it has no cure. Even among health care professionals, there may be under-recognition of risk factors or early symptoms.

Unlike cancer screening or diabetes screening, there is no routine screening program for heart failure. This means patients often get diagnosed late, after irreversible damage has occurred.

We need better awareness and proactive detection so that patients can receive treatment earlier, which is when it is most effective.

Canada's geography and provincial differences also create inconsistencies in heart failure care. Where you live can determine the quality of care you receive and, in some cases, whether you survive. For instance, patients in urban centres may have access to specialized heart failure clinics; cardiologists; diagnostic tests, like echocardiograms or blood tests for heart failure markers; and the latest medications and devices.

But patients in rural or remote communities often lack access to cardiologists or key diagnostic tools. A recent inventory by Heart & Stroke found that 27% of hospitals do not have access to a crucial diagnostic test for heart failure — the natriuretic peptide blood test — and 16% of hospitals do not follow published heart failure care guidelines. This is alarming. It means many patients are not getting guideline-recommended diagnostics or therapies simply because of where they live or where they seek care.

Moreover, even when care is available, not all patients receive optimal therapy. According to the Canadian Cardiovascular Society, fewer than 70% of eligible Canadian heart failure patients are on all the recommended medications, and fewer than 30% are on the optimal doses of those medications.

We can and must do better at translating our medical knowledge into practice uniformly across the country. Every Canadian with heart failure deserves access to the best standard of care, no matter their province, region or community.

Beyond geography, other factors, like income, education and ethnicity, influence outcomes. Indigenous Peoples in Canada, for example, face higher rates of heart conditions. Indigenous individuals are about 50% more likely to have a heart condition than non-Indigenous Canadians. They may also face additional barriers in accessing care that is culturally safe and close to home.

We also know that women with heart failure can experience differences in care. Historically, cardiovascular research and clinical trials under-represented women, and women's symptoms are sometimes under-treated or misattributed.

Socio-economic status plays a role as well. Managing heart failure often requires frequent medical visits and costly medications or devices. Patients with financial constraints struggle more to adhere to treatment.

These disparities are unfair and avoidable. A national strategy needs to identify and address these gaps so that every patient has an equitable chance at a full life.

Honourable colleagues, we cannot improve what we don't measure. Currently, Canada does not have a national registry or a comprehensive data system for heart failure outcomes. This makes it hard to track progress or pinpoint where interventions are most needed. Canada has a vibrant, world-class heart failure research community, from national networks like the Canadian Heart Function Alliance to the University of Ottawa Heart Institute and many more. Yet major organizations, like Heart & Stroke and the Canadian Cardiovascular Society, still describe heart failure care as poorly integrated and siloed, with significant gaps and geographic variation in access and outcomes among provinces. This tells us that while the research is strong, the spread and implementation of best practices across Canada remain uneven.

We also lack consistent reporting on performance indicators, like hospital readmission rates, mortality rates by region or patient-reported outcomes, like quality of life. In short, we don't have a unified picture of how well or poorly we are doing in managing heart failure across the country. Without better data collection and coordination, high-level improvements will be difficult to achieve.

While dedicated health care professionals and organizations are doing their best, our current approach to heart failure is fragmented and falling short of what Canadians need. Patients encounter delays in diagnosis, variable care quality and a lack of support navigating their condition. The consequences are seen in avoidable hospitalizations, unnecessary suffering and lives cut short.

This is why a new approach is essential. We need to connect the dots through a national framework that brings coherence, resources and accountability to the fight against heart failure.

The case for a national framework on heart failure is compelling. Heart failure is a nationwide problem; it affects Canadians in every province and territory, and its impacts reverberate through our families, communities and economies. No single province or local health authority can tackle this challenge alone, especially given the wide disparities and systemic issues at play.

Federal leadership and coordination can add significant value here in several ways.

A national framework can establish consensus on what good care looks like for heart failure and set clear targets for improvement. It can provide a common policy direction to align efforts across provinces. With a framework, all jurisdictions and stakeholders would be working from the same playbook, guided by shared objectives and evidence-based strategies, rather than each reinventing the wheel. This doesn't mean one-size-fits-all solutions imposed on provinces but, rather, a coordinated approach through which successes in one region can be scaled and adopted in others and through which minimum standards of care are encouraged everywhere.

• (1600)

Health care in Canada is delivered provincially, but the federal government can act as a leader and collaborator. This national framework would bring together provincial and territorial health representatives, Indigenous health leaders, medical experts, patients and advocates at one table. By facilitating at least one national conference on heart failure within the year following the enactment of Bill S-204, the federal Minister of Health would enable the sharing of experiences and solutions across regions. This kind of convening power is something only a national government can effectively do. It also signals the importance of the issue, helping to elevate heart failure on the health policy agenda. Moreover, tackling heart failure isn't just the job of health ministries. It spans public health, education, research agencies and beyond. A framework process can engage all relevant departments and sectors in a coordinated effort.

A major goal of this bill — and any national health framework — is to amplify the voices of patients and caregivers in policymaking. Heart failure patients and their families know the shortcomings of the system firsthand. By formally consulting patient advocacy groups and people with lived experience, the framework will ensure that their perspectives shape the solutions. This patient-centric approach is crucial for identifying what support is truly needed day to day. Additionally, creating a national strategy will shine a spotlight on heart failure in the public sphere.

Just as the diabetes framework helped drive broader awareness of diabetes across Canada, we expect a heart failure framework to spur conversations about what heart failure is and how we can prevent and manage it. Raising awareness is not a trivial goal. It leads to more people recognizing symptoms earlier, seeking care and supporting necessary investments. Public awareness can also reduce stigma and misinformation, for instance, clearing up the misconception that heart failure is simply “old age” or that nothing can be done for it. Neither is true; much can be done to improve and prolong life with heart failure.

Writing a national strategy into law, as this bill does, creates accountability. It compels action on a defined timeline and requires follow-up reporting to Parliament. Without such a mandate, it’s easy for big, complex issues like heart failure to be overlooked or lost among competing priorities. The bill ensures that, within 18 months, a comprehensive framework must be developed and tabled in Parliament. This will concentrate the minds of health officials and stakeholders to produce a tangible plan. Furthermore, the requirement of a five-year report on the framework’s effectiveness means that we won’t just file this strategy away and forget it. The government of the day will have to come back and tell Parliament and Canadians what was achieved and what still needs improvement. That kind of reporting mechanism is crucial for transparency and for sustaining momentum beyond the initial launch of the framework.

In essence, a national framework is about leadership and coordination, providing the glue to bind together various efforts, fill the gaps and elevate the standard of care across Canada. Heart failure is precisely the kind of complex, widespread health challenge that benefits from a national strategy.

The Minister of Health must lead this effort in collaboration with others. The bill explicitly requires the minister to consult with provincial and territorial health representatives, Indigenous governing bodies, health professionals, researchers, patient groups, caregivers and other relevant stakeholders. To kickstart this, the minister must convene at least one national conference on heart failure within 12 months of the act coming into force. This conference would gather the experts and stakeholders to share knowledge and lay the groundwork for the strategy. The tight timeline — within one year — reflects the urgency of the issue.

The legislation outlines several core priority areas that the national framework must address. This ensures the framework is comprehensive and touches on all the major gaps we’ve identified. Bill S-204 includes measures to do the following.

One, promote early detection and diagnosis so that patients are identified and treated sooner. This means looking at ways to improve screening for those at risk and boosting awareness among both the public and health care providers about the early signs of heart failure. Equitable access to diagnostic tools across regions is part of this, so that a simple blood test or echocardiogram isn’t a luxury available only in certain hospitals.

Two, improve access to care and treatment to ensure all Canadians with heart failure have access to the guideline-directed therapies and specialized care they need. This includes encouraging the use of proven medications and devices, and

supporting multidisciplinary care teams and clinics that specialize in heart failure. Importantly, the framework will look at ways to integrate innovative and technological solutions, which can help patients in remote or underserved areas receive expert care. The goal is to standardize a high level of care across the country. No matter where a patient lives, they should have a pathway to access advanced heart failure treatments.

Three, enhance patient and caregiver education and support, recognizing that managing heart failure is not just a medical challenge but a daily life challenge for patients and their families. The framework will include measures to provide better education, resources and support to those living with heart failure. The bill even specifically highlights the inclusion of mental health resources as part of the support continuum. This is critical as depression and anxiety are common in heart failure patients and caregivers.

Four, address disparities in care by making sure the framework actively works to reduce inequities in heart failure outcomes for underserved groups. This means identifying where gaps exist — for example, in rural and remote communities or among Indigenous populations or other marginalized communities — and coming up with targeted strategies to close those gaps. It could involve training more specialists in remote areas, tailoring educational materials for different cultural groups or investing in community programs that improve heart health literacy. The framework will shine a light on these disparities and commit to action so that we don’t have a scenario where someone in a remote northern community is far more likely to die from heart failure than someone in a big city.

Five, strengthen data, research and performance measurement. In other words, fill the information gap and foster innovation. Bill S-204 mandates that the framework include measures to improve data collection on heart failure and to support research efforts. One very exciting aspect specified in the bill is the development of a national heart failure registry. A registry would be game changing. It could track patients’ journeys and outcomes across the country, allowing us to identify trends, successful interventions and areas needing improvement.

The bill also mentions leveraging existing data sources like the Canadian Community Health Survey and defining national performance indicators. By collecting and publicly reporting on these outcomes, we can hold the system accountable and continually adjust policies to improve care. Additionally, promoting research means the framework will likely encourage funding and collaboration in heart failure research, be it clinical trials for new therapies, studies on care delivery models or investigations into prevention. Canada already took a step in this direction with the recent creation of the Canadian Heart Function Alliance, a national research network on heart failure that the federal government helped fund. A national framework can complement such efforts by ensuring that research findings are translated into practice and by identifying further research priorities.

Honourable senators, Bill S-204 provides a roadmap for action and leaves flexibility for the exact details to be worked out in collaboration with stakeholders. It ensures the framework will cover all the critical areas and that it will be developed with input from those on the front lines and those most affected. By embedding this in legislation, we signal the enduring commitment of Parliament to tackling heart failure in a serious and structured way.

• (1610)

I find it compelling to note the strong parallel to a recent success story in our Parliament: the establishment of a national framework for diabetes, which I previously mentioned. In 2021, Bill C-237, the National Framework for Diabetes Act, was passed unanimously by both the House of Commons and the Senate. That effort was spearheaded by member of Parliament Sonia Sidhu in the other place, and I was pleased to serve as the Senate critic for the bill during its journey here. The diabetes framework initiative is a model of what we can achieve and is highly relevant to today's debate on heart failure.

Prior to Bill C-237, Canada did not have a comprehensive national diabetes strategy, even though millions of Canadians live with diabetes. The passage of that bill changed the landscape. It mandated the health minister to develop a national framework on diabetes, focusing on prevention, treatment, research and awareness in collaboration with provinces and stakeholders. Doesn't that sound familiar after what I just outlined? Notably, it required holding a national conference and set a one-year timeline for producing the framework — very similar to Bill S-204 and what it calls for on heart failure.

The diabetes framework has since moved from legislation to reality. The National Framework for Diabetes Act received Royal Assent on June 29, 2021, and within the required timeline, the government carried out extensive consultations across Canada. By late 2022, the Framework for Diabetes in Canada was released.

This framework provides a comprehensive road map for tackling diabetes, including raising public awareness, improving training for health professionals, promoting research and addressing health inequalities related to diabetes. It was built on broad engagement. The Public Health Agency of Canada hosted dialogues with experts, patients, Indigenous communities and provincial representatives to inform it. I assume territorial as well.

One immediate outcome of the diabetes framework's passage was a federal funding commitment in Budget 2021. The Government of Canada allocated \$35 million over five years specifically for diabetes research, surveillance and prevention as well as the development of the framework. This demonstrates how getting a disease on the national radar can attract resources and political will.

This shows that national frameworks work. They rally stakeholders, focus government attention and catalyze concrete actions. Diabetes is, of course, a different disease with its own unique challenges, but the template of a national framework is

proving effective. It has raised the profile of diabetes on the policy agenda and set in motion collaborative efforts that simply were not happening in a coordinated way before.

Heart failure today is in a position much like diabetes was a few years ago: a common chronic condition that has lacked a unified national action plan. With Bill S-204, we will no longer leave heart failure solely to uncoordinated efforts. We are applying the same logic that Parliament applied to diabetes, dementia and other chronic conditions: bring people together, map out a strategy and make everyone accountable to it. The unanimous support that the diabetes framework bill received in Parliament speaks to our ability, across party lines and across chambers, to come together for the health of Canadians.

Today's passage of the sickle cell bill is in line with this exact concept of a national framework and the work we can do together if we put our attention and our hearts and minds to it.

I sincerely hope we can replicate that spirit of collaboration for heart failure because the Canadians suffering from this condition deserve nothing less.

One of the encouraging aspects in developing Bill S-204 has been the involvement and support of the heart health community: patients, clinicians, and organizations who have been raising alarms about heart failure for quite some time.

I want to acknowledge one of the main voices and advocates for heart failure: the HeartLife Foundation. The HeartLife Foundation stands out as a key inspiration for this bill. HeartLife is Canada's first and only national, patient-led heart failure organization. Founded and run by patients and caregivers, HeartLife has first-hand insights into the challenges of living with heart failure. They have taken those lived experiences and turned them into advocacy for change.

Drawing on those lived experiences, HeartLife helped develop the Canadian Heart Failure Patient and Caregiver Charter and, more recently, led the creation of the National Heart Failure Policy Framework, a practical action plan that calls for integrated systems of care, timely diagnosis, evidence-based treatment, smoother transitions between hospital and home and better support for caregivers. They have done the homework and shown what better care can look like. Bill S-204 builds on that work by asking the federal government to turn those patient-driven priorities into a national framework for action.

The numbers and facts about heart failure are compelling on their own, but at the core of this issue are people — people like Marc Bains, who was only 23 when he was diagnosed with heart failure and lived for years with constant questions in the back of his mind as he waited for a call that there was a heart for him. When he finally got that call, his words were, "Is this the one? I have to call my wife. Am I ready for this?"

Dr. Jillianne Code, who was 27 when she was diagnosed, has said that accepting the inevitable truth of heart failure if left untreated was simple — she could die — but what is complicated is living with it, figuring out how to live with it and what it could mean to face your own mortality. After receiving the gift of a new heart more than once, she describes waking each morning and greeting her mortality by saying, “Not today.”

Together, Marc and Jillianne co-founded the HeartLife Foundation and have become leaders and advocates for hundreds of thousands of people living with heart failure and their families across Canada. For every statistic I have cited, there are real Canadians and families living that reality, and the HeartLife Foundation has helped ensure that their voices are at the centre of this bill.

I also want to recognize my colleagues who share a commitment to this issue. Senator Osler has kindly agreed to act as the critic for this bill, and I look forward to her informed perspective and any constructive critiques she might offer. We are fortunate in this chamber to have many senators with health and medical expertise and many others with a passion for improving health outcomes. I hope you, honourable colleagues, will lend your voices to this debate at second or third reading. The more attention we bring to heart failure, the more momentum this effort will have.

Honourable senators, we have a duty as parliamentarians to respond to this kind of suffering with meaningful action. Bill S-204 gives us the mechanism to do so. It is not a bill asking for massive new spending or a bill that dictates provincial delivery of health care. Rather, it is about leadership and partnership. It’s about saying the federal government will take responsibility to bring everyone to the table, craft a plan and ensure accountability for progress. It is about ensuring that heart failure receives the level of attention its impact demands. It is about raising awareness, recognizing that when Parliament clearly says, “This issue matters,” it can profoundly shape public consciousness and help galvanize further action.

This framework will not suddenly cure heart failure or instantly fix all the issues, but as we saw with the diabetes framework and others, it lays the groundwork for accelerated improvements. It creates a virtuous cycle. A framework brings focus and resources, which lead to pilot programs and research, which yield new insights and successful interventions, which then can be shared and scaled up through the network the framework established. Over time, this can fundamentally change the trajectory of a disease in a country.

• (1620)

Before I conclude, I want to underscore that this is a timely initiative. Our health care system is under strain. We hear daily about crowded hospitals and clinician shortages. Addressing heart failure effectively could alleviate some of that strain by reducing avoidable hospital visits and optimizing use of specialist services. The sooner we act, the better positioned we will be to handle the growing burden as our population ages.

[Senator Martin]

Honourable senators, I ask for your support in sending Bill S-204 to committee for further study and, ultimately, in passing this much-needed legislation. Heart failure may not have had the profile of some other diseases in the past, but together we can change that.

Let us give hope to the 750,000, and counting, Canadians living with heart failure — hope that a better system of care is on the horizon. Let us also honour the memory of those hundreds of thousands who have lost their lives to this condition, by learning from our shortcomings and doing better for the next generation of patients.

Honourable colleagues, I urge you to join me in making the fight against heart failure a national priority. Thank you.

Hon. Denise Batters: Would Senator Martin take a couple of questions?

Senator Martin: Yes.

Senator Batters: First of all, as you were delivering this very-well-thought-out speech — thank you very much for that — it was making me recall my husband. Before he was a member of Parliament, he was a pharmaceutical rep, and cardiovascular medications were his specialty. I remember him telling me the alarming statistic that for an extremely high percentage of people their first heart attack is fatal. They are actually fortunate if it is not a fatality. I believe the number was somewhere around 50%, and this was several years ago. It may have changed since then. If it is not a fatality, then that is the time frame when they can actually receive excellent medication and perhaps surgical intervention and good care to work with that.

Maybe you or some of the physicians in this chamber might have some updated statistics on that. But is that exactly the kind of thing to which you are trying to alert people, having that knowledge out there so Canadians take it with the seriousness that it deserves?

Senator Martin: Thank you, Senator Batters, and for the work that your husband had done in the past in terms of raising awareness about some of these alarming statistics. I’m not an expert, but through meeting individuals like Marc and Jillianne at the HeartLife Foundation and in preparing for this speech, I realized that I myself have so much more awareness I can gain. This is something on which we need to focus.

One of the things the bill calls for is to raise awareness with education and to ensure that those who do suffer from other conditions that lead to heart failure know exactly the kinds of resources and medication and support they can receive. Depending on your geography, that doesn’t exist today. We need to ensure that we talk about this and bring the national framework into a reality so that we can help Canadians across the country. Thank you.

Senator Batters: I have one further question. I also thought it was very interesting in your speech that your bill proposes a national registry. Do any provinces have that sort of approach, and if not, where did you get the inspiration for that?

Senator Martin: That's one of the possibilities in the framework, a coordinated effort across the country to at least gather the data. That helps clinicians, hospitals and just Canadians in general to understand the widespread nature of this illness.

In terms of the provinces, I'm not aware. Maybe my critic might be able to address that in her speech. We do know there is nothing coordinated within Canada nationally. This is something that is treated in various regions depending on what's available. That, too, is one of the things that the minister could examine in the coordination of a meeting with provinces and territories, stakeholders, patients, et cetera: What are some of the key action items that could be undertaken by this framework?

Hon. Pat Duncan: Will Senator Martin take an additional question?

Senator Martin: Yes.

Senator Duncan: Senator Martin, this is a very interesting bill, and I listened very closely to your speech. I didn't hear any reference to the Canadian Institute for Health Information, or CIHI, to which every province and territory submits all kinds of information, by diagnosis, according to the ICD classification system. For example, the Yukon would submit the number of individuals who have been diagnosed with heart failure. Does the framework call for investigation or research with CIHI?

Senator Martin: The framework asks the minister to convene a meeting. I'm sure that various health agencies and entities would be part of that discussion. I don't have a list of all of them, and it wasn't mentioned in my speech. The minister would look at what is available, what exists, as well as meet with the stakeholders and the health agencies in the provinces and territories to really look at what needs to be done with heart failure on a national level.

Senator Duncan: That's what I'm suggesting: The Canadian Institute for Health Information should already have all the information that exists across the country. The problem with establishing a health registry, as Senator Batters has suggested, is that, for small communities, the health information protection acts prevent smaller communities from submitting that information because you are able to then pinpoint who has received a specific diagnosis.

That being said, perhaps the larger discussion is whether the Canadian Institute for Health Information is doing what it needs to do in bringing this to the public's attention nationally and in supplying this information. Perhaps in the discussion of this bill, when it gets to committee, that could be raised as a point.

Senator Martin: I was just going to say that this is something that could be carefully looked at by the committee, as to what the best approach would be and what could happen as a result of the passage of this bill.

Hon. Marnie McBean: Would Senator Martin take a question?

Senator Martin: Yes.

Senator McBean: Senator Martin, I don't know if your research got you this far: We live in a time when everyone has access to more of everything. It's pretty easy to go and find more of everything. In your research and your preparation for this speech, have you come across the answer to this question: How many hearts does each person have? It's an easy question. How many hearts?

Senator Martin: Only one.

Senator McBean: Is that your answer? My question is simply how many hearts does each person have?

Senator Martin: We each have one heart.

Senator McBean: Thank you very much. So you're saying it's important that we take care of our heart because we each only have one heart, and a framework would be essential?

Senator Martin: Yes. Absolutely.

(On motion of Senator Osler, debate adjourned.)

• (1630)

NATIONAL THANADELTHUR DAY BILL

SECOND READING—DEBATE CONTINUED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator McCallum, seconded by the Honourable Senator Martin, for the second reading of Bill S-225, An Act to establish National Thanadelthur Day.

(On motion of Senator Martin, debate adjourned.)

FISHERIES AND OCEANS

COMMITTEE AUTHORIZED TO STUDY THE INDEPENDENCE OF COMMERCIAL INSHORE FISHERIES IN ATLANTIC CANADA AND QUEBEC AND REFER PAPERS AND EVIDENCE FROM FIRST SESSION OF FORTY-FOURTH SESSION TO CURRENT SESSION

Hon. Colin Deacon, for Senator Manning, pursuant to notice of November 6, 2025, moved:

That the Standing Senate Committee on Fisheries and Oceans be authorized to examine and report on the independence of commercial inshore fisheries in Atlantic Canada and Quebec, and the policies and legislative tools used by the Government of Canada to preserve it, such as the Owner-Operator Policy;

That the papers and evidence received and taken and work accomplished by the committee during the First Session of the Forty-fourth Parliament as part of its study of issues relating to the management of Canada's fisheries and oceans be referred to the committee;

That the committee submit its final report to the Senate no later than December 31, 2026, and that the committee retain all powers necessary to publicize its findings for 180 days after the tabling of the final report; and

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

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to.)

COMMITTEE AUTHORIZED TO STUDY THE COMMERCIAL FISHERIES LICENSING REGIME ON THE PACIFIC COAST

Hon. Colin Deacon, for Senator Manning, pursuant to notice of November 6, 2025, moved:

That the Standing Senate Committee on Fisheries and Oceans be authorized to examine and report on the commercial fisheries licensing regime on Canada's Pacific Coast;

That the committee submit its final report to the Senate no later than December 31, 2026, and that the committee retain all powers necessary to publicize its findings for 180 days after the tabling of the final report; and

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

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to.)

THE HONOURABLE JUDITH G. SEIDMAN

INQUIRY—DEBATE ADJOURNED

Hon. Yonah Martin (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) rose pursuant to notice of June 18, 2025:

That she will call the attention of the Senate to the career of the Honourable Judith Seidman.

(On motion of Senator Martin, debate adjourned.)

NATION-BUILDING VALUE OF TOURISM

INQUIRY—DEBATE ADJOURNED

Hon. Karen Sorensen rose pursuant to notice of November 4, 2025:

That she will call the attention of the Senate to the nation-building value of tourism in Canada.

She said: Honourable Senators, I have risen many times in the chamber to speak about tourism, but today will be a little different.

I rise today to initiate a Senate inquiry into the nation-building value of tourism. This idea came about during a conversation with Darren Reeder, who is the president of the Tourism Industry Association of Alberta, about the need to keep tourism on the political agenda in Ottawa. It was Darren who raised the idea of launching an ongoing tourism awareness initiative through the Senate.

I'd also like to thank the Tourism Industry Association of Canada, Tourism HR Canada, Destination Canada, the Hotel Association of Canada, the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada and Meetings Mean Business Canada for keeping us up to date with information and regional data.

When you hear the word "tourism," you might think of cruises, ski chalets or big events like the Calgary Stampede. You may be aware of the tremendous economic impact of these attractions.

The Calgary Stampede, for example, generates over \$280 million in economic impact for Alberta alone. In one year, the cruise industry was responsible for \$5 billion in economic output and 23,700 jobs in Canada.

Campgrounds, resorts and chalets create well over 10,000 jobs across Canada, many of them in small, rural communities.

You may even think, "That's great, but we don't really have tourism in my region." Think again.

In your own community, you likely have a concert hall, a charming holiday market or a popular hiking trail that draws people from out of town. You might have a family member who travels around the country visiting local heritage sites or a friend who drove to see a concert in another city. All of that is tourism.

The outdoor enthusiasts who drive out to the country to fish, hunt and experience nature are tourists, as are the sightseers and shoppers who flock to Canada's vibrant cities.

Monuments and historical sites are tourist attractions, as are mountains, rivers and waterfalls. Farms across Canada offer agritourism activities and are the backbone of countless festivals and markets.

Business travel is tourism. Large events like conferences, tournaments, festivals and concerts are huge drivers of tourist activity.

The tourism ecosystem also includes performing arts venues, museums, galleries, restaurants and retailers that serve locals and visitors alike. These people aren't just generating income for the attraction they're visiting. They're bringing an influx of cash into the community itself.

A War of 1812 enthusiast visiting Fort St. Joseph in northern Ontario, or a Swiftie trekking to Toronto for a concert, will likely spend the rest of the day exploring the area, shopping at the local stores and eating at local restaurants.

According to Meetings Mean Business Canada, the average business traveller attending an out-of-town conference or event will spend \$900 in their host city. Keep in mind, events like the annual PDAC Convention in Toronto and the Global Energy Show in Calgary regularly attract tens of thousands of attendees. Many of them will extend their trip to do more sightseeing and, if they have a good experience, they'll likely return as tourists in the future.

Make no mistake, tourism is big business with high stakes. Tourism is uniquely vulnerable to outside events: natural disasters and economic downturns, rising costs and regulatory changes, public health concerns and political uncertainty.

Gondola operators in Banff could easily lose thousands of dollars from one day of fog. Imagine the impact of a years-long global pandemic, complete with travel bans and gathering restrictions. The industry was just starting to recover from COVID-19 when trade tensions with the U.S. kicked off a new wave of rising costs and economic anxiety, placing additional burdens on travellers and operators alike.

Climate change is another ongoing concern, with extreme weather events like fires and floods becoming more frequent, and temperature fluctuations adding wear and tear to our infrastructure.

Still, tourism is a vital economic driver with incredible, untapped potential. Canada's brand is strong. There is tremendous interest in what we have to offer, from our one-of-a-kind natural places to our unique culture.

Canada has the opportunity to be a major hub, not just for leisure tourism, but for conferences and large events. However, we'll fall short of that potential if we don't make a concerted effort to address the challenges facing this sector.

Labour shortages have had an impact on every segment of the tourism and hospitality industry, from mom-and-pop restaurants to major airports. A contributing factor is the housing shortage, which makes it difficult to recruit and retain seasonal workers.

• (1640)

Hotel capacity is another major issue. We have state-of-the-art convention centres that can hold more visitors than nearby hotels can accommodate, which limits our ability to host large events.

International visitors are often deterred by cumbersome entry procedures and long wait times for tourist visas. Staffing issues and outdated processes have caused congestion and delays at our airports, and we struggle to offer the road and rail service needed to connect urban centres with smaller communities.

Canada's tourism industry has worked closely with the government to outline what needs to be done before we can realize our full potential as a destination. We must streamline the process of travelling to and within Canada so our visitors will remember the pleasant experiences they had rather than delays at the airport.

We need a multimodal transportation network to make more of Canada accessible to visitors, including our picturesque small towns and incredible natural landmarks. We need to upgrade our existing tourism assets while investing in new ones. That includes building hotel capacity to both provide a better experience for guests and increase our ability to attract large events and conventions.

We need to foster a tourism industry that's inclusive and sustainable, because it's the right thing to do, and because it will burnish Canada's international reputation for diversity, environmental stewardship and respect for human rights.

We need to work with Indigenous communities and entrepreneurs to grow the Indigenous tourism sector, with truth-telling stories advancing reconciliation while capitalizing on demand for authentic cultural experiences.

Also, we need to pursue a whole-of-government approach to developing Canada's tourism industry. Tourism touches nearly every federal ministerial file: Immigration, transportation, housing, labour and skill development are tourism issues, as are infrastructure, the environment, languages and heritage, agriculture, emergency response, economic development and trade. To address the many challenges the sector is facing, we need to stop working in silos.

Why should Canadians care about any of this? I've spoken a lot about the economic value of tourism. I'd like to spend some time talking about the cultural impact. Tourism is crucial in preserving our history, heritage and distinct Canadian culture. I'll give a few examples.

Our iconic Western Canadian rodeos commemorate our agricultural heritage, and the Canadian Tulip Festival in Ottawa educates thousands of visitors about Canada's heroism during World War II. Performing arts events like the Maritime Fiddle Festival, the Stratford Festival, Ottawa Bluesfest and Edmonton Fringe sustain traditional art forms while promoting the up-and-coming Canadian artists of today.

Indigenous tourism operations like Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump, Métis Crossing and Blackfoot Crossing in Alberta; Mādahōki Farm in Ottawa; and the Hôtel-Musée Premières Nations in Quebec use storytelling, performance and hands-on activities to educate guests about Indigenous cultures and history. Authentic Indigenous experiences are also vehicles for cultural revitalization, supporting traditional artists and Knowledge Keepers in keeping customs and languages alive.

Tourism allows us to celebrate diversity and promote Canadian values of inclusivity and human rights. For instance, pride celebrations draw LGBTQ2S+ people and allies from across the country and around the world, celebrating progress while opening avenues for continued advocacy.

Similarly, cultural events like the Caribana Toronto, the Ottawa Lebanese Festival, New Brunswick's Festival acadien de Caraquet and Edmonton's annual Sikh Parade, as well as celebrations of Diwali, Chinese New Year and other holidays, bring together diverse communities to share their traditions.

There are small towns across this country who are literally sustained by the local tourism and hospitality sector. There, jobs created by tourism — at lodges, campgrounds, restaurants and hotels or as outfitters and guides — are what allow the younger generation to stay home and build their own families in the places where they grew up. These are the kinds of stories I want to hear from my Senate colleagues. I want to hear about your communities, your workers and their families, your local landmarks, your beloved businesses and your regional cultures. Tell me what tourists discover when they visit your provinces and territories and what they contribute in turn.

It's my goal to hear from every province and territory over the course of this inquiry. If you need help getting started, my office is on hand to connect you with resources and data. Your local destination management and marketing organizations will also be a great resource for information, as well as TIAC — or the Tourism Industry Association of Canada — Tourism HR Canada, Destination Canada, the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada, the Hotel Association of Canada, Meetings Mean Business and many other national and regional industry associations.

I hope you'll join me in celebrating the power of tourism to bring people together, promote Canadian values and make us stronger as a nation.

Thank you.

Hon. Percy E. Downe: Would the senator take a question?

Senator Sorensen: Absolutely.

Senator Downe: Thank you. Like you, I come from a part of Canada where many jobs depend on our tourism industry. I am surprised about the backlash to tourism that seems to be growing around the world. We see the protests marchers in Europe. We have concerns in Canada. For example, in my province, there is growing concern about Airbnb, which is displacing residents living in communities for a very profitable short season. In

P.E.I., from mid-June to mid-September, you can make a lot of money — more than you can make over 12 months renting to a family — and then the properties are vacant.

You may not know the answer to this question, but perhaps you could find out: What is the tourism industry doing to address some of these concerns?

Senator Sorensen: Of course, I understand. There was a time in Banff when I was the mayor and would say that we didn't have a visitor problem; we had a vehicle problem because we had so much traffic congestion. Today, I would say that the number of visitors we are seeing on some weekends becomes quite overwhelming in the community. But to your point, it is seasonal. My experience of the destination marketing organizations is that everybody is working very hard just to expand the season, to try to look at things to do in the off-season and to draw people to the destinations throughout the course of the year. Again, thinking of my own backyard, everybody wants to see Lake Louise and Moraine Lake, but there are a lot of beautiful lakes in Banff National Park where there is not a lot of traffic.

Destination Canada would be the mothership of marketing in this country, and then every province has a provincial organization. Many destinations have even more local organizations. There is a real effort to try to promote less popular areas and prove that there are many things to see in the same destination.

Senator Downe: My question is really about balance around the prosperity tourism brings — and I benefited from that prosperity when I went to university. Though I was an unqualified bartender, I made a lot of money.

But I also hear continuing concerns, for example, about cruise ships. There is a different standard between the United States and Canada in what can be expelled from the ships into our waters. Fishermen are growing concerned about that. I guess the question is this: How do we balance the good things about tourism and what the tourism industry is doing to address concerns so we don't have a stronger backlash against a whole industry, which we're seeing in many countries around the world? Venice, for example, has put in place an additional tax. Others are trying to restrict how many people can come to their areas. We are nowhere near there yet, but if things progress, that's where we're heading. What can the tourism industry do to address these concerns before they become major problems?

Senator Sorensen: Sustainable tourism and ecotourism are ongoing conversations in the industry. You made a great comment about the cruise industry. That industry is working very hard to electrify the ships, though then, of course, we have a problem with the ports and who can plug in and how, et cetera. I would just say that that's an ongoing conversation in the industry. Air travel, again, is a big polluter.

In terms of the number of people, I agree with you. I can think of places where overtourism is a definite concern. Again, in my backyard, we are now very focused on visitor management. We certainly don't say that people can't come into the national park or the Town of Banff, but we are working on ways to manage the flow of vehicles and people.

The Hon. the Speaker: Senator Sorensen, there is another senator who would like to ask a question. I was wondering if you would like more time, because your time for debate has expired.

• (1650)

Therefore, senator, are you asking your honourable colleagues for more time?

Senator Sorensen: I would like more time for Senator Cuzner's question.

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

Hon. Rodger Cuzner: Thank you.

First of all, I want to thank you for bringing this forward. I look forward to making an intervention on behalf of my region of Cape Breton and Nova Scotia more broadly, because it does have tremendous impacts on our province.

There was a question asked during Question Period with regard to the available workforce being temporary foreign workers. By nature, tourism is seasonal in many regions, for the most part, and those workers are temporary.

Given the many stakeholders with whom you have spoken, could you elaborate upon some of the challenges that they are finding with access, especially in the rural areas where young people might not be year-round? What are some of the challenges that they are facing in providing services to those tourists?

Senator Sorensen: Thank you for the question.

I sit on the Standing Senate Committee on Agriculture and Forestry, so I now have a lot of meetings with people who are in agriculture. It is amazing how similar the conversations are around temporary foreign workers and workforces in rural areas.

I would just say that the intention of the Temporary Foreign Worker Program — when we go back to when that started — began with great intent, and it certainly served the industry incredibly well. As temporary foreign workers started to come to our country, destinations did not find themselves struggling. It is a path to permanent residency. Certainly, in Banff, it has worked that way.

But it continues to be a struggle. We can't paint every industry with the same brush. Agriculture and maybe fisheries have certain streams specifically, as tourism historically did. It does not any longer, and I would hope that tourism would be looked at seriously by the government in terms of temporary foreign workers and giving them a specific stream to bring temporary foreign workers to our destinations as needed.

(On motion of Senator Clement, debate adjourned.)

[*Translation*]

THE HONOURABLE PAUL J. MASSICOTTE

INQUIRY—DEBATE ADJOURNED

Hon. Raymonde Saint-Germain rose pursuant to notice of November 5, 2025:

That she will call the attention of the Senate to the career of former senator the Honourable Paul Massicotte.

She said: Honourable senators, I rise today to pay tribute to our esteemed and distinguished colleague, the Honourable Paul Massicotte, who I know is watching this Senate meeting.

Paul, your early departure from the Senate took us by surprise, but, in the end, it was in keeping with your character: decisive and effective.

Senator Massicotte was undoubtedly one of the greatest pioneers of and advocates for the modern Senate. Alongside Senator Stephen Greene, he chaired the Special Senate Committee on Senate Modernization. Through its rigorous work and innovative reports, that committee laid the foundations for how we operate today and continues to serve as a benchmark.

However, this work, which followed the reform that began in 2015, does not alone do justice to Senator Massicotte's vision and the courage he demonstrated in building an independent Senate.

In 2003, during his very first week as a senator, far from being intimidated by his new duties and the formality of the upper chamber, Senator Massicotte voted his conscience against his party. Many years later, the Liberal government leader at the time, the Honourable Sharon Carstairs, acknowledged the need for a non-partisan Senate and the soundness of Senator Massicotte's vision.

In 2013, Paul shared with future prime minister Justin Trudeau, then leader of the second opposition party, the idea that senators should no longer sit in their party caucuses in order to be able to fully carry out their duty of sober second thought, free from partisan considerations. That idea was subsequently taken up and implemented by his party leader, the Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, when he became the twenty-third Prime Minister of Canada.

[*English*]

Honourable Paul Massicotte, your efforts and leadership have greatly modernized and improved our work. You leave a remarkable legacy to this institution that is so dear to your heart and ours.

The achievements of Senator Massicotte — who, at the time of his departure, was one of this institution's most senior members — are naturally not limited to modernization. Notably, he chaired the Standing Senate Committee on Energy, the Environment and Natural Resources. He always brought to his parliamentary work his experience and expertise as an administrator, accountant and entrepreneur.

[*Translation*]

Proud of his Franco-Manitoban origins, Senator Massicotte represented Quebec with dignity and became one of the Senate's leading advocates for the Canadian francophonie and the international Francophonie.

Dear Paul, since you were one of the first senators to join the Independent Senators Group after its inception, on behalf of our group, I offer you our best wishes for a wonderful retirement in the sun, surrounded by your family and loved ones.

Thank you for your leadership and for being the quiet force that characterized your time in this chamber. All the best, and I hope to see you again soon.

[*English*]

Hon. Iris G. Petten: Honourable senators, I rise today on behalf of the Government Representative's Office to bid a warm farewell to our distinguished colleague the Honourable Paul Massicotte.

When I was first appointed to the Senate, Senator Massicotte came over to introduce himself and mentioned that some of his friends from the golf world had asked about me. It turns out we had a number of acquaintances, not the least of whom were Marc Courtois — brother of former senator Nicole Eaton — and John Peacock, whom I got to know from sitting on corporate boards.

I know many colleagues will speak about the influential role that Senator Massicotte played in the modernization of our chamber. Therefore, I will instead focus on where I had the privilege of working alongside Senator Massicotte.

The opportunity came during my sponsorship of Bill C-49, which modernized the Atlantic Accords to establish a regulatory framework for offshore renewable energy projects in the provinces of Newfoundland and Labrador and Nova Scotia. As chair, Senator Massicotte guided the Energy Committee's study of the bill with professionalism, fairness and an extraordinary depth of knowledge. While sitting in on the Energy Committee meetings during that study and while I was a member of the Banking Committee, I saw first-hand what colleagues across this chamber have long known: Senator Massicotte brings the full weight of his lived experience in business, governance and environmental stewardship to every file he touches. He has an ability to balance principle with pragmatism, and he approaches complex issues with thoughtful precision.

Of course, anyone who knows Senator Massicotte also knows that his expertise extends beyond legislation, and he possesses a well-earned reputation for curating exceptional things, whether it's a policy position, a committee process or a cellar full of wine bottles worth savouring. In fact, I've told him that whenever he

visits Ottawa or Newfoundland and Labrador, I'll handle the cooking but he'll be in charge of bringing the wine. Given his impeccable taste, I have no concerns about the pairing.

Senator Massicotte, thank you for your dedication, your discipline and your unfailing courtesy. Thank you for bringing a steady, seasoned voice to some of the most consequential issues of our time, and thank you for the warmth, humour and generosity that have made you not only a respected colleague but also a cherished one. On behalf of the Government Representative's Office, we wish you the very best in the years ahead. We will miss you, and I look forward to that dinner. Thank you.

• (1700)

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

Hon. Leo Housakos (Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, today, I'd like to take a few moments to reflect on the career of a colleague and friend, former senator Paul Massicotte, who resigned from the Senate this past September after more than two decades of service to this august chamber.

While I wasn't here when Paul first arrived in 2003, I had the privilege of working alongside him for many years, and, from the very beginning, it was clear that Paul came to this institution with a purpose, backed by an impressive wealth of experience in the private sector.

[*Translation*]

Senator Massicotte's journey extends from Western Canada to Quebec, where he established a solid reputation as a chartered accountant. His time with the Alexis Nihon group had a lasting impact on Montreal's real estate sector, and his role as the head of Attractions Hippiques only strengthened his influence within Quebec's business community. As a Montrealer, I can personally attest that Senator Massicotte remains a respected figure in Montreal's business circles.

However, Paul's contributions extend far beyond the business world. He has always shown a deep commitment to public service, particularly through his work with organizations like the Sainte-Anne-de-Beaupré hospital foundation and the YMCA foundation of Greater Montreal. His commitment to those causes is rooted in the same sense of duty that ultimately led him to this chamber.

[*English*]

When Paul joined the Senate, he brought that same spirit of service and a pragmatic approach to the issues we face. He was never afraid to challenge the status quo, especially when it came to making the Senate more effective, more accountable and more relevant.

Paul's financial expertise made him a valuable voice in discussions around Canada's economic policy, and his leadership on the Senate's Standing Committee on Energy, the Environment and Natural Resources helped shape our country's approach to energy for decades to come.

While we didn't always agree on every little — and sometimes even big — issue, I've always admired Paul's deep knowledge and his drive to find real, workable solutions through debate and differing perspectives, consistent with the beauty of the institution we serve, and he always did it with respect. But perhaps what I respected most about Senator Massicotte was his ability to balance fierce partisanship with a genuine commitment to reform in this institution.

In a chamber where we all come from different backgrounds and bring our own perspectives, it's not always easy to see past dividing lines, but Paul always made that effort with everyone.

He understood that for this institution to remain effective, we need to be constantly examining how we operate and how we can better serve Canadians. Beyond the respect this earned him among colleagues, it has also undoubtedly left a lasting imprint on this chamber and on our national dialogue more broadly.

Paul, as you move on to whatever comes next, I want to thank you for your years of service and the impact you've had on this institution. And he has been impactful.

Paul, of course, was born in Manitoba, adopted in Quebec and appointed by Prime Minister Chrétien, which brought him to Ottawa. He was always a fierce Liberal, a partisan Liberal who embraced the Independent Senators Group, but many of you don't know that Paul was a reformer — not a Preston Manning type of a reformer but pretty close — as most of the years I was in this institution, and he was a Liberal, and I was, and still am, a Conservative, he always talked about reform, right, Percy? He and Stephen Greene, who was a Conservative, were running around talking about reform. Paul, who would have thought I would call you one of the great reformers in the Parliament of Canada?

My dear friend, I'll tell you this: If there are characteristics that always come to mind when it comes to Paul Massicotte, they are class and integrity. Paul, on behalf of the Conservative Senate caucus, those who served with you in the past and current caucus, we wish you all the best, my friend. Goodbye. Thank you.

Hon. Scott Tannas: Honourable senators, there's a quote here that says, "There's no limits relative to what we can change."

This sounds like a quote from an inspirational poster on someone's wall, but it is in fact the 2015 rallying cry for change to this institution from former senator Paul Massicotte.

Senator Massicotte was part of the brave duo who brought to life the Working Sessions on Senate Modernization. I was fortunate to be among the few folks who attended those sessions, and I was asked by Senator Massicotte to help facilitate one of the workshops on that day.

It took courage to take on the topic of Senate reform at that time. The idea was unpopular with senators on both sides, and there were only two sides at the time. He accepted the challenge, and he was here long enough to see the seeds that he and former Senator Greene planted take root and bear the fruit we see today. We often reverently speak of those early meetings as the

"Greene-Massicotte sessions." It sounds like a jazz record. It is a testament to their daring initiative, their boldness and their steadfast resolve.

Senator Massicotte is a unique individual who bridged two divides. Born, raised and educated in Winnipeg, he became a Western Canadian business luminary in real estate construction and development. Then, he moved to Montreal and led in several fields including banking, urban development and entertainment. For those in the business world, he was at one time recognized as "the king of MURBs," or multi-unit residential buildings. He was an innovator. In fact, when I was in my teens, I worked on a number of construction projects for his company.

He was hugely successful in business, and it involved large, innovative, grand-scale kinds of projects. And he demonstrated a clear acumen for the management of complex financial matters. He should be very proud, and I'm sure he and his family are proud, of that track record.

He should be equally proud of his intense respect for taxpayers. He was a cheapskate when it came to spending money in his office budget. He was consistently at the bottom of the list for office expenses by senators, and he was relentless in reaching for value in every dollar that he spent on behalf of Canadians here in the Senate.

His national network brought him to the Senate, where we benefited from his expertise and from his example. We heard about his insights and solutions to climate change challenges as Chair of the Senate Committee on Energy, the Environment and Natural Resources. He built bridges across oceans, moved the needle on Canada-Asia relations and advocated for political institutional change, as we have talked about, in this chamber.

He came to the Senate not through, as he once described, "institutionalized partisanship" but by his competence, innovation, abilities and extraordinary contribution in his working life to the country.

We all know he is watching these tributes on his computer at home. On behalf of his past colleagues in the Canadian Senators Group, we wish him a happy retirement from the Senate.

All the best, Paul. We miss you already, but your voice and your actions will reverberate here for years to come.

Hon. Brian Francis: Honourable senators, I rise today on behalf of the Progressive Senate Group to pay tribute to the Honourable Paul Massicotte, a former seatmate of mine, who retired from the Senate this past September, on his seventy-fourth birthday.

As we have heard, Senator Massicotte served in this place for over 20 years and has certainly left his mark on our institution. Having been a long-time member of both the Banking Committee and the Energy Committee, it's no wonder that his work often focused on the economy, the environment and how these issues intersect.

• (1710)

As we heard, Senate modernization was also an important subject for Senator Massicotte. It was one he pursued from a truly bipartisan angle as a then-Liberal working together with then-Conservative Senator Greene. Though it may have seemed an unlikely pairing, the work achieved by this duo is truly to be commended.

In 2015, they circulated a questionnaire to all honourable senators to solicit feedback on ideas for Senate reform, hosted informal meetings to foster dialogue and, ultimately, served as two of the first witnesses before the Special Senate Committee on Senate Modernization. Senators Massicotte and Greene did not simply speak about the modernization of this institution — they took concrete steps to implement changes. I commend them for this important legacy.

I'll conclude by sharing a quote from Senator Massicotte's first speech in the Senate on the motion to adopt the Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne. Though delivered over 20 years ago, the topics he covered and advice he offered are still very much relevant today. He said:

Honourable senators, I consider myself somewhat privileged to have been born in this vast and rich land. I count myself fortunate to be able to live in a country so supportive of tolerance and social justice, a prime example of diversity and multiculturalism to the world.

Like most of you, I did not choose this country. I inherited it. I will keep my shoulder to the wheel so that our children and grandchildren can continue to shape the marvellous work in progress that is Canada.

Senator Massicotte, thank you for keeping your shoulder to the wheel. On behalf of the Progressive Senate Group, I wish you a wonderful and well-deserved retirement.

Wela'lin. Thank you.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Tony Loffreda: Honourable senators, I rise today to pay tribute to our former colleague, the Honourable Paul Massicotte. Our colleague Senator Ringuette was unable to be with us today, but she wanted to send him a message. Senator Massicotte, here is what Senator Ringuette wanted to share with you today:

Honourable senators,

It is with a heavy heart that I rise today to mark the retirement of our former colleague and friend, the Honourable Paul Massicotte.

Paul Massicotte was appointed to the Senate in 2003, shortly after my own appointment.

We served together in the Senate for 22 years, both in the Senate Liberal caucus and in the Independent Senators Group. Over the years, we developed a rare friendship and a unified way of thinking and acting.

[Senator Francis]

[*English*]

In fact, of those appointed by former prime minister Jean Chrétien, only Senator Downe and I remain — the old-timers.

This is Senator Ringuette, obviously. Well, I did say this is on behalf of Senator Ringuette, so I'm honoured to deliver that for her.

Throughout these years, we served together on the Banking, Commerce and the Economy Committee, the National Finance Committee and the Energy, the Environment and Natural Resources Committee. Time and again, Senator Massicotte demonstrated a deep understanding of the financial system and business affairs.

Devoted to public service, Senator Massicotte also served on the boards of directors of the Bank of Canada and the Canadian Chamber of Commerce as well as on the boards of charitable organizations, such as the Ste. Anne's Hospital Fund and the Greater Montreal YMCA Foundation.

In all these roles, Paul was principled, persuasive and intelligent yet always open to hearing other points of view. Insightful, resourceful and witty, it was always a pleasure to participate in debates with him.

The Honourable Paul Massicotte is a staunch defender of the Senate and the Constitution. His contributions to the Senate Modernization Committee were key to advancing our institution, championing non-partisanship to ensure that we fulfill our role as the chamber of sober second thought.

True to his convictions, to the Senate's role as the chamber of sober second thought and to our constitutional responsibility not to initiate spending, Paul consistently voted in favour of budgets, regardless of the government in power. He was, in every sense of the word, an honourable senator.

[*Translation*]

Hats off to you, dear Paul, and above all, thank you for your contributions to the Senate. I will miss you a lot.

With deep gratitude, I wish you many happy years in your well-deserved retirement.

Warmest regards,

From your colleague and dear friend, the Honourable Pierrette Ringuette.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

[*English*]

Senator Loffreda: Colleagues, that was from Senator Ringuette. Very emotional. I would be remiss if I didn't say a few words myself to honour our former colleague. I'll get two rounds of applause for this speech. We'll see if it happens.

Before I joined the Senate in 2019, who didn't know of Senator Massicotte? Everyone knew of him. He was an icon. We've all heard the tributes here today. He was admired by many, myself included, and he was always a mentor to younger executives like me. He was truly a model to follow.

We both reside in Montreal, we are both CPAs, or Chartered Professional Accountants, and we have both been heavily involved in the province's business community. Senator Massicotte's business experience and knowledge brought extreme value to the Senate. His interventions were never self-serving and were always focused on the public good. Whether the subject was economic competitiveness, responsible governance, financial literacy, housing or the environment, he consistently challenged us to aim higher and to think beyond the moment. That was important, to think beyond the moment and take the long-term view. His work on the modernization of the Senate was seminal.

But beyond the senator, there is the man — kind, fair, generous with his time and attentive to others, a colleague who built bridges rather than divisions. He was respected by all, and I certainly appreciated his kindness and our many discussions.

With his retirement, the Senate is losing a big piece, someone whose quiet leadership, political acumen, sage advice and intellectual brilliance will be sorely missed.

Thank you, Senator Massicotte, not only for what you've accomplished but also for how you accomplished it.

[*Translation*]

Happy retirement, dear Paul. May the years ahead be as memorable as the legacy you leave behind in the Parliament of Canada. Thank you.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

[*English*]

Hon. Percy E. Downe: Honourable senators, briefly, since I've been outed as the long-serving senator by Senator Ringuette, I wanted to mention that former Senator Massicotte and I were appointed on the same day, and Paul would well remember that. I know he's watching tonight.

Actually, there was a plan. Paul was a very well-known businessperson, and others have recounted all the contributions he has made in the community, particularly in Western Canada

and Quebec. For partisan purposes, he was an extremely successful fundraiser in Quebec. At the time, I was Chief of Staff to the Prime Minister. Knowing it would create quite the media firestorm if the two of us were appointed, I had arranged for an extremely prominent Canadian to be appointed at the same time who would draw all the media attention. Unfortunately for me and Paul, that person declined at the last minute, so Paul and I had a bit of a media firestorm, Paul mostly in Quebec and to a lesser degree in Manitoba, and I got the rest of the flak across the country.

I got to sit with Paul, of course, in the Liberal caucus at the time, and I was struck by how he quickly left that partisan life behind and how he focused on his responsibilities in the Senate. His business experience, his education and his CPA training served him extremely well. He was a very solid member of the Senate Liberal caucus, and he made a tremendous contribution — and Conservative senators will understand this — at the national Liberal caucus, where we would meet with members of Parliament every week. His input was highly valued at the time.

When he and Senator Greene started their Senate modernization project, like others, I was invited. Senator Tannas alluded to this. We were invited to little chats and working sessions. I remember leaving one session, thinking, "Wow, these guys are spinning their wheels. There is so much opposition to this in the Senate." People had put down very firm decisions, but Paul and Stephen Greene continued to raise awareness and continued to educate senators about what the chamber could be like as opposed to what it was like historically. For that, we all benefit. We benefit every day.

• (1720)

Others have alluded to this as well, and I want to highlight the fact that Senator Massicotte was a tremendous person in terms of his personal character and how he treated everyone. Senator Petten mentioned her involvement. We have all had similar experiences. He had the highest regard for other senators and other people in the community that he served. We will miss him greatly.

Paul, I wish you the very best going forward.

Thank you, colleagues.

(On motion of Senator Clement, debate adjourned.)

(*At 5:21 p.m., the Senate was continued until tomorrow at 2 p.m.*)

CONTENTS

Tuesday, November 18, 2025

	PAGE		PAGE			
SENATORS' STATEMENTS						
Louis Riel						
One Hundred and Fortieth Anniversary of Death	992	The Estimates, 2025-26				
Saskatchewan Roughriders						
Congratulations on Grey Cup Win		Supplementary Estimates (B) Tabled				
Hon. Denise Batters	992	Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson	996			
Visitor in the Gallery						
The Hon. the Speaker pro tempore.	993	Citizenship Act (Bill C-3)				
Rémi Quirion						
Hon. Manuelle Oudar	993	Bill to Amend—Second Report of Social Affairs, Science and Technology Committee Presented				
Visitors in the Gallery						
The Hon. the Speaker pro tempore.	993	Hon. Rosemary Moodie.	996			
Proclamation of the Republic of Latvia						
Hon. Rebecca Patterson.	994	The Estimates, 2025-26				
Visitors in the Gallery						
The Hon. the Speaker pro tempore.	994	Notice of Motion to Authorize National Finance Committee to Study Supplementary Estimates (B)				
Harry and Randi Gross						
Hon. Daryl Fridhandler	994	Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson	997			
Visitors in the Gallery						
The Hon. the Speaker pro tempore.	995	Banking, Commerce and the Economy				
Science Meets Parliament						
Hon. Stan Kutcher.	995	Notice of Motion to Authorize Committee to Study Access to Credit and Capital Markets for Small- and Medium-Sized Enterprises				
Visitor in the Gallery						
The Hon. the Speaker pro tempore.	995	Hon. Clément Gignac	997			
<hr/>						
ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS						
Auditor General						
<i>Commentary on the 2024-25 Financial Audits</i> —Special Report Tabled.	996	QUESTION PERIOD				
Parliamentary Budget Officer						
Response of the Comptroller General—Copy of Letter Tabled.	996	Finance				
Justice						
Charter Statement in Relation to Bill S-3—Document Tabled		Fiscal Anchors				
Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson	996	Hon. Leo Housakos	997			
Receiver General				Hon. Pierre Moreau	997	
Public Accounts of Canada—2024-25 Report Tabled		Budget 2025				
Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson	996	Hon. Yonah Martin	998			
Treasury Board				Hon. Pierre Moreau	998	
2024-25 Departmental Results Reports Tabled		Immigration, Citizenship and Refugees				
Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson	996	Temporary Foreign Workers				
Women and Gender Equality				Hon. Martine Hébert	998	
Budget 2025				Hon. Pierre Moreau	998	
Hon. Paulette Senior				999	Privy Council Office	
Hon. Pierre Moreau				999	Report of Parliamentary Budget Officer	
Natural Resources				Hon. Pamela Wallin	999	
Projects of National Significance				Hon. Pierre Moreau	999	
Hon. Marty Klyne				1000	Natural Resources	
Hon. Pierre Moreau				1000	Projects of National Significance	
Canadian Heritage				Hon. Marty Klyne	1000	
Canadian Broadcasting Corporation				Hon. Pierre Moreau	1000	
Hon. Salma Ataullahjan.				1000	Canadian Heritage	
Hon. Pierre Moreau				1000	Canadian Broadcasting Corporation	

CONTENTS

Tuesday, November 18, 2025

	PAGE		PAGE
Finance		Hon. Sharon Burey	1007
Cost of Living		Hon. Salma Ataullahjan	1009
Hon. Salma Ataullahjan	1000		
Hon. Pierre Moreau	1000	National Framework on Heart Failure Bill (Bill S-204)	
Fiscal Anchors		Second Reading—Debate Continued	
Hon. Leo Housakos	1001	Hon. Yonah Martin	1009
Hon. Pierre Moreau	1001	Hon. Denise Batters	1014
		Hon. Pat Duncan	1015
Global Affairs		Hon. Marnie McBean	1015
Exports to Israel			
Hon. Yuen Pau Woo	1001	National Thanadelthur Day Bill (Bill S-225)	
Hon. Pierre Moreau	1001	Second Reading—Debate Continued	1015
Finance		Fisheries and Oceans	
Registered Retirement Income Funds		Committee Authorized to Study the Independence of	
Hon. Lucie Moncion	1001	Commercial Inshore Fisheries in Atlantic Canada and	
Hon. Pierre Moreau	1002	Quebec and Refer Papers and Evidence from First Session	
		of Forty-fourth Session to Current Session	
Innovation, Science and Economic Development		Hon. Colin Deacon	1015
Canadian Innovation		Committee Authorized to Study the Commercial Fisheries	
Hon. Colin Deacon	1002	Licensing Regime on the Pacific Coast	
Hon. Pierre Moreau	1002	Hon. Colin Deacon	1016
		The Honourable Judith G. Seidman	
		Inquiry—Debate Adjourned	
		Hon. Yonah Martin	1016
ORDERS OF THE DAY		Nation-Building Value of Tourism	
		Inquiry—Debate Adjourned	
Business of the Senate		Hon. Karen Sorensen	1016
Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson	1002	Hon. Percy E. Downe	1018
		Hon. Rodger Cuzner	1019
Speech from the Throne			
Motion for Address in Reply—Debate Continued		The Honourable Paul J. Massicotte	
Hon. Dawn Arnold	1003	Inquiry—Debate Adjourned	
		Hon. Raymonde Saint-Germain	1019
The Senate		Hon. Iris G. Petten	1020
Motion to Amend the <i>Rules of the Senate</i> Adopted		Hon. Leo Housakos	1020
Hon. Pierre Moreau	1005	Hon. Scott Tannas	1021
		Hon. Brian Francis	1021
National Framework on Sickle Cell Disease Bill		Hon. Tony Loffreda	1022
(Bill S-201)		Hon. Percy E. Downe	1023
Third Reading			
Hon. Tony Ince	1006		