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(HANSARD)

Wednesday, November 18, 2026

The Honourable RAYMONDE GAGNÉ,
Speaker

CONTENTS

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

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THE SENATE

Wednesday, November 18, 2026

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

Prayers.

SENATORS' STATEMENTS

ARTWORK AND HERITAGE COLLECTION

THE LATE HONOURABLE JAMES GLADSTONE

Hon. Brian Francis: Honourable senators, as some of you may know, the Senate of Canada curates a collection of more than 6,000 works of art, ceremonial objects and heritage pieces. This sprawling collection helps us remember and honour the important people and events that have played a central role in shaping our country.

Today, I want to spotlight the bronze portrait bust of the Honourable James Gladstone, who made history when he became the very first First Nations senator. This year marks 25 years since this statue was first unveiled and 55 years since Senator Gladstone died.

To mark these significant milestones, the bust was recently moved from the Senate's antechamber to the building entrance for all to see. I would like to thank the Artwork and Heritage Advisory Working Group for leading this important initiative, including Chair, Senator Cardozo, and members, Senators Ataullahjan, Black, Cormier and Karetak-Lindell.

Born in 1887, James Gladstone was connected to the Blood Tribe, or Kainai Nation, part of the Blackfoot Confederacy. There he attended the Anglican St. Paul's Residential School and later St. Dunstan's Industrial School near Calgary. He later returned to the Blood Tribe, where he married and raised a family.

Yet, despite his lifelong ties, it was not until 1920, after a decade-long battle, that Gladstone was formally adopted by the Blood Tribe and granted Indian status.

In a striking irony, when Prime Minister Diefenbaker appointed him to the Senate in 1958, First Nations with Indian status such as himself still did not have an unconditional right to vote in federal elections. Senator Gladstone helped secure that right two years later, a long and hard-fought battle that paved the way for a more equitable and inclusive democracy in Canada.

Over the course of his 13-year tenure in the Senate, Senator Gladstone continued to be an advocate for Indigenous Peoples, serving on the then Joint Committee on Indian Affairs and others.

Colleagues, the commemorative bust now stands proudly in the foyer, amongst English and French monarchical artwork and flags, displaying full Blackfoot ceremonial regalia. Sculpted by Rosemary Breault-Landry, it masterfully captures the quiet authority yet gentle demeanour of Senator Gladstone.

I am proud to follow in the footsteps of Senator Gladstone and other Indigenous trailblazers, and I look forward to more people having an opportunity to learn more about his life and legacy. May he continue to remind us of how far we have come, but also of the work that remains to secure a brighter future for all in Canada.

Wela'lin, thank you.

THE LATE ROSE ADLER

Hon. Charles S. Adler: Honourable senators, a week ago today, on November 11, I broke a promise to Canada's veterans. I had committed to attending a Remembrance Day ceremony and to lay a wreath for the fallen. I did it last year, and I promised to do it every year as long as I'm privileged to represent this country. However, on this day, my wreath-laying hands were holding a shovel, burying my mother.

Eighty-two years earlier, in 1944, when the Nazi noose was hanging the Jews of Hungary, a 10-year-old girl named Rose, living in the Jewish ghetto of Budapest, removed the Star of David badge, worn by 1.5 million Jewish children marched into the ovens of Adolf Hitler's empire.

Rose removed her symbol of racial inferiority, snuck out of the ghetto, boarded a bus to a place where she got her hands on forged documents, brought them back to the ghetto and delivered them to other Jewish children. I don't know how many times she rode that bus, how many documents she delivered and how many lives she spared.

Rose Adler took her last breath at 3 a.m., four days before November 11. She took her secret heroism to the grave. It survived the hands of time.

My Yiddishe Mame is buried in Canadian soil because this country gave her refuge when she wanted to rescue one more child, this time from communism. She strapped her two-year-old son to his father's back because he was too young to run with them for their lives. My mother rescued me and raised me in the Adler family's promised land, where she said no child would ever be forced to wear the devil's badge.

Two years ago in this chamber, this son of Holocaust survivors swore an oath. My mother was then 90, unable to get to the Senate gallery to see her son with his hand on the Bible. Days later, she saw the video and said her husband, Mike the tailor, would have liked the suit I was wearing. I had had my shovel at my father's grave 10 years earlier.

Rose Adler died on November 7, 2026, but I believe that today, without any mobility issues, she is with me here, asking all of us to protect the children of Canada — all of them.

All of my conversations with my mother were in Hungarian. And all of them ended with:

[*Editor's Note: Senator Adler spoke in Hungarian*.]

My sweet mother, I love you. Thank you for my life, Rose. Thank you to the Canadian Forces for rescuing Rose, and thank you, Canada, for allowing us to live in Rose Adler's promised land.

Thank you, *meegwetch*.

VISITOR IN THE GALLERY

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I wish to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of Dr. Amol Verma, co-lead of the Vital and GEMINI health data platforms led by Unity Health Toronto. He is the guest of the Honourable Senator Hay.

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

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

THE HONOURABLE LEO HOUSAKOS

CONGRATULATIONS ON B'NAI BRITH CANADA AWARD OF MERIT

Hon. Yonah Martin (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Senator Adler, may your beloved mother rest in peace.

[*Translation*]

Honourable senators, I rise today to pay tribute to someone I am very proud to consider a dear friend and esteemed colleague: the Leader of the Opposition in the Senate and former Speaker of this chamber, the Honourable Leo Housakos.

[*English*]

I am thrilled to congratulate him on receiving the prestigious 2026 Award of Merit from the B'nai Brith of Canada Foundation, presented in Montreal last week. This is a deeply meaningful honour recognizing a lifetime of standing against anti-Semitism, defending Israel and building bridges across communities.

• (1410)

As former prime minister Stephen Harper noted in a special video tribute that evening, Leo's public life has had a lasting impact on our nation.

For Leo, his advocacy is personal. The son of Greek immigrants in Montreal, he has often spoken of the kindness and opportunity his family received from members of the Jewish community, shaping a lifelong belief in solidarity and mutual respect. Throughout his career, Senator Housakos has been a fearless, unwavering voice. Whether standing up for the security of Jewish Canadians, affirming Israel's right to live in peace, participating in the Walk with Israel or helping lead the Senate's landmark study on anti-Semitism, Leo has always chosen meaningful action over mere words.

Yet his parliamentary leadership extends far beyond any singular issue or community. As a prominent voice on foreign affairs, he has championed freedom, from Iran to Hong Kong, Taiwan and Cuba. Domestically, his legislative record is profound, including successfully championing Canada's first national autism strategy in 2023 and tirelessly fighting for first responders, victims of crime and the protection of children.

Honourable senators, at a time when intolerance challenges our shared values, Leo Housakos has never wavered. He is a true champion of the Jewish community, a dedicated parliamentarian and a pillar of our Senate.

Leo, as your friend and Senate colleague, from our swearing-in ceremony as senators to this day, thank you for your leadership, your integrity and your friendship.

[*Translation*]

Honourable senators, I invite you to join me in congratulating our colleague on this impressive and well-deserved accolade.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

[*English*]

VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I wish to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of members of UNICEF Canada's youth network who are here in honour of National Child Day. They are the guests of the Honourable Senator Moodie.

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

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN

Hon. Rosemary Moodie: Honourable senators, Friday, November 20 is National Child Day, marking the anniversary of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. It is a day to celebrate Canada's children and to reflect on whether we are doing right by them. Canada has much to be proud of, but when it comes to our children, the answer is currently "no."

At the end of October, the federal government declined to advance the idea of a national strategy for children and youth. It remains committed to its old approach: one-off programs and initiatives with no national coordination.

Bill S-212 unanimously passed in this chamber in March. Thank you, colleagues, for all the work that you did to improve this bill. It is unfortunate that the bill has now died on the Order Paper in the House of Commons without ever having been debated.

Honourable senators, UNICEF ranks Canada 22 out of 37 peer countries on child well-being. This is not good enough. There is no road map, no shared plan and no urgency. A child who is hungry, waiting for mental health supports and growing up in poverty does not have time to wait.

This morning, I co-hosted a National Child Day Senate breakfast alongside Senators Ataullahjan, Clement, Ince, Martin, McBean, M. Deacon, Pate, Petitclerc, Quinn and Senior, with the support of UNICEF Canada and Campaign 2000. At the breakfast, we heard from an incredible group of young leaders and advocates who understand the urgency around children's rights and well-being and are interested in working with the government to shape a national strategy.

Did you know that this year also marks 80 years of UNICEF's work to advance the rights and well-being of children around the world? I am grateful today to have the young advocates from the UNICEF Canada youth network here with us in the gallery. Many of them have travelled from across the country to advocate for issues that matter most to young people, including education, youth mental health, digital safety and gender equality. Their presence is a reminder of the importance of listening to young people and ensuring their voices are reflected in the decisions that shape the future.

This National Child Day, let us recommit. Let us keep fighting for a plan, for accountability and for results until every child in this country has the start that they deserve. Thank you. *Meegwetch*.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I wish to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of Yvonne Jones, former member of Parliament. She is accompanied by a delegation from Western Canada. They are the guests of the Honourable Senator White.

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

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

ACTIONS INTERCULTURELLES CANADA

Hon. Tony Loffreda: Honourable senators, I recently had the privilege of participating in a special celebration here at the Senate of Canada honouring 12 outstanding Muslim women whose achievements have contributed to our country's diversity, prosperity and success.

Hosted by our very own Senator Salma Ataullahjan; attended by General Jennie Carignan, Chief of the Defence Staff and the first woman to lead the Canadian Armed Forces; and organized by Intercultural Actions Canada, this event recognized women whose leadership, dedication and accomplishments deserve to be celebrated.

I was honoured to be in attendance. Senator Ataullahjan asked me to help present the awards to these remarkable women, and I was deeply impressed by their achievements and the many ways they have made a difference in their communities and beyond. Through their contributions across a range of fields — including education, health care, arts and culture, human rights and law — they have strengthened our institutions, enriched our communities and helped build a better Canada.

I thank Intercultural Actions Canada for its important work in fostering intercultural understanding and for recognizing these women and ensuring their stories receive the recognition they deserve.

This celebration was particularly meaningful during Canadian Islamic History Month, when we reflect on the contributions of Muslim Canadians and their place in our national story.

The story of Muslims in Canada is also the story of Canada itself. Diversity is part of our DNA and an integral part of our nation's history. The contributions of Muslim Canadians have helped shape the country we know today. By celebrating these 12 women, we recognize their achievements while strengthening our collective sense of belonging.

Their stories also carry a powerful message for the next generation. For our youth — particularly young girls, who may not always see themselves represented in positions of leadership — these women offer inspiring examples of what is possible. Their accomplishments demonstrate how determination, talent and hard work can overcome barriers, open doors and create opportunities for others.

When we recognize women from diverse backgrounds, we do more than honour individual achievements; we help young people envision their own potential and build a Canada where everyone feels they have an opportunity to contribute.

Honourable senators, please join me in congratulating Senator Ataullahjan and all 12 award recipients and in thanking everyone who made this celebration possible, especially Senator Ataullahjan. I was honoured that you asked me to present the awards. Thank you for that.

Their stories remind us that our diversity is one of our greatest strengths and that Canada is stronger when we recognize, celebrate and learn from one another.

Thank you. *Meegwetch*.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

• (1420)

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

NATIONAL SECURITY, DEFENCE AND VETERANS AFFAIRS

NOTICE OF MOTION TO AUTHORIZE COMMITTEE TO MEET DURING SITTINGS AND ADJOURNMENT OF THE SENATE

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, for the purposes of its study of Bill C-22, An Act respecting lawful access, as authorized by the Senate on October 22, 2026, the Standing Senate Committee on National Security, Defence and Veterans Affairs be authorized to meet even though the Senate may then be sitting or adjourned, with the application of rules 12-18(1) and 12-18(2) being suspended in relation thereto.

THE SENATE

NOTICE OF MOTION TO AUTHORIZE SUBCOMMITTEES ON AGENDA AND PROCEDURE TO MEET REMOTELY

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:

1. the Senate recognize that Subcommittees on Agenda and Procedure of Senate committees have historically conducted business and made decisions by telephone, email and other electronic means, reflecting their longstanding informal and flexible practices, predating the temporary procedural measures adopted during the COVID-19 pandemic;

2. all Subcommittees on Agenda and Procedure be authorized to meet, deliberate and make decisions within the authority delegated to them by their respective committee, whether:

   (a) in person;

   (b) by telephone or teleconference;

   (c) by videoconference;

   (d) a combination of points 2(a), 2(b) and/or 2(c); or

   (e) by email or other digital or electronic means of communication approved for Senate business; and

3. nothing in this order authorize other subcommittees or Senate committees to meet other than in person, unless expressly authorized by the Senate in accordance with its Rules, usual practices and previous orders.

ADJOURNMENT

NOTICE OF MOTION

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

That, when the Senate next adjourns after the adoption of this motion, it do stand adjourned until Tuesday, November 24, 2026, at 2 p.m.

ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

WINTER MEETING, FEBRUARY 19-20, 2026—REPORT TABLED

Hon. Peter M. Boehm: Honourable senators, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the report of the Canadian Delegation to the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe Parliamentary Assembly concerning the Twenty-fifth Winter Meeting, held in Vienna, Austria, on February 19 and 20, 2026.

ANNUAL SESSION, JULY 4-8, 2026—REPORT TABLED

Hon. Peter M. Boehm: Honourable senators, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the report of the Canadian Delegation to the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe Parliamentary Assembly concerning the Thirty-third Annual Session, held in The Hague, Netherlands, from July 4 to 8, 2026.

ELECTION OBSERVATION MISSION, APRIL 10-13, 2026—REPORT TABLED

Hon. Peter M. Boehm: Honourable senators, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the report of the Canadian Delegation to the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe Parliamentary Assembly concerning the Election Observation Mission, held in Hungary, from April 10 to 13, 2026.

AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY

NOTICE OF MOTION TO AUTHORIZE COMMITTEE TO STUDY THE LOSS AND CONVERSION OF AGRICULTURAL LAND

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

That the Standing Senate Committee on Agriculture and Forestry be authorized to examine and report on the ongoing loss of agricultural land and its permanent conversion to non-agricultural uses in Canada, with a view to identifying measures that support the long-term prosperity of agricultural producers and safeguard Canada's capacity to produce agricultural and agri-food products;

That, in particular, the committee examine:

(a) the status and extent of agricultural land in Canada;

(b) factors that influence the loss and conversion of agricultural land, including federally owned and regulated land;

(c) federal measures currently in place to address the loss and conversion of agricultural land;

(d) potential improvements to federal measures to support continued agricultural land use; and

(e) how other countries protect land for agricultural use;

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 December 31, 2027, and that the committee retain all powers necessary to publicize its findings for 180 days after the tabling of the final report.

QUESTION PERIOD

PUBLIC SAFETY

CANADA BORDER SERVICES AGENCY

Hon. Yonah Martin (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Government leader, according to one of the recent reports by the Auditor General, the Canada Border Services Agency's $800-million CBSA Assessment and Revenue Management customs system, CARM for short, remains plagued by critical inefficiencies two years after its launch. CBSA agents have been forced to rely on manual workarounds, including the very systems CARM was supposed to replace, consuming an estimated 92,000 hours of employee time each year.

Senator Moreau, when will your government provide a clear timeline to fully fix CARM and eliminate these costly workarounds?

Hon. Pierre Moreau (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for the question, Senator Martin. The CBSA welcomed the Auditor General's report that examined the CBSA's collection of customs, duties and taxes on commercial goods using the Assessment and Revenue Management system, which you call CARM.

As the Auditor General noted, CARM effectively calculates duties and taxes on commercial imports, which is very important because this means revenue for the government, and supports timely refunds and accurate duty calculations for hundreds of thousands of businesses using the system.

That being said, the CBSA agrees with the recommendation and is committed to implementing performance indicators to increase transparency and ensure benefits for Canadians. However, this is a good system. It works. It has to be improved, and the CBSA is committed to doing that.

Senator Martin: It may be a good system, but we're not sure about the value for money for taxpayers. The Auditor General also found that the CBSA cannot even determine whether Canadians are receiving value for money from this project, after spending nearly $1 billion. Why is your government still unable to deliver a customs system that works and provides the value that taxpayers deserve?

Senator Moreau: As I mentioned in my first answer, the system is working. As a matter of fact, it supports timely refunds and accurate duty calculations, with hundreds of thousands of businesses using the system. It's a good system. It has to be improved. We agree, and we will work on it.

NATURAL RESOURCES

OFFSHORE WIND ENERGY

Hon. Michael L. MacDonald: Senator Moreau, the federal government recently committed $100 million to advance offshore wind development off the coast of Nova Scotia through the Wind West initiative.

While the government promotes the economic potential of offshore wind, the Maritime Fishermen's Union has raised serious concerns about the potential impacts of these developments on established fishing grounds, marine ecosystems and the livelihoods of coastal communities. In particular, fishermen are concerned about the installation of offshore turbines and underwater transmission cables. The government cannot pursue the development of one industry at the expense of another, which has sustained Atlantic Canadian communities for generations.

Will the government commit to conducting independent assessments of the potential economic and environmental impacts on the fishing industry and ensure that affected harvesters have a meaningful say in decisions that could threaten their livelihoods?

Hon. Pierre Moreau (Government Representative in the Senate): Senator MacDonald, thank you for the question. My understanding is that this kind of project must have an environmental assessment.

As a matter of fact, the government is willing to protect the fishing industry and the Canadians who make their living from the fishing industry all across Canada, not only in Nova Scotia or in the Maritimes but everywhere in Canada, including in Quebec and on the West Coast.

That being said, it's certain that this kind of project will have to be monitored closely, and the government is committed to doing that.

Senator MacDonald: I'm from a fishing community, and they are concerned. Senator Moreau, the concerns that have been raised by fishermen are not simply about consultation. They are about whether the government has a clear understanding of the consequences these projects could have for fishing grounds, access to traditional harvesting areas and the long-term viability of the industry.

Will the government commit to ensuring that no offshore wind projects proceed in areas where it could cause unacceptable harm to commercial fisheries and that the concerns of affected fishing communities are addressed before development decisions are made —

• (1430)

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

Senator Moreau: The government is well aware that we have to take care of the fishery industry in Canada because it is a very important industry. Many Canadians live off fisheries, not only in your region but everywhere in Canada.

The government is committed to taking into consideration whatever impact that kind of project may have on the fishery industry.

JUSTICE

DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION

Hon. Bernadette Clement: Earlier this month, Senator Pate raised questions around the government's *Guide on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Terminology*. Respected experts and equality rights organizations are concerned that the guide's definitions of equality and equity undermine the meaning of the right to equality that has been established in Canadian law. More than 100 individuals and organizations signed a letter addressed to the Minister of Justice, including the Women's Legal Education and Action Fund. Were those groups consulted during the guide's development? If they were, how was their expert advice included in the guide?

Hon. Pierre Moreau (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you, Senator Clement, for your question. While I cannot comment on whether those organizations that reached out directly to the minister were consulted in the guide's development, I can confirm that the government remains committed to protecting Charter rights and eliminating systemic discrimination. I understand that the guide was developed through three rounds of consultation over more than 12 months involving experts, individuals with lived experience and representatives from across the federal government.

More than 2,000 comments were received and considered throughout that process. Importantly, the guide itself recognizes that our understanding of equity and inclusion continues to evolve and that no single document can replace the knowledge and experiences of communities it seeks to represent. That is why the guide is intended to be regularly updated as language and understanding evolve.

[*Translation*]

Senator Clement: Thank you, Senator Moreau.

[*English*]

I understand the government has consulted with experts, as you've just explained, and I appreciate that efforts are being made to remove systemic barriers to equal opportunities. Can you tell me which groups representing Black and racialized Canadians were included in that consultation?

Senator Moreau: I understand your concern. While I cannot confirm the specific organizations that participated, I can assure you that the government recognizes the importance of hearing directly from Black and racialized communities to develop policies that affect them. This is reflected through tools like the Gender-based Analysis Plus, where the government works to ensure that federal policies and programs take into account the different experiences of Canadians and address systemic inequalities.

[*Translation*]

EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

CANADA DISABILITY BENEFIT

Hon. Chantal Petitclerc: Senator Moreau, Budget 2026 encourages us to be masters of our destiny. However, this budget fails to allocate any long-term funding for the government's employment strategy, which has already contributed to over 6,500 placements for people with disabilities.

The Canada Disability Benefit still provides less than $7 a day, leaving one million people with disabilities below the poverty line.

With such inadequate measures, how can the government claim to be empowering people with disabilities to take their future into their own hands?

Hon. Pierre Moreau (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you very much, Senator Petitclerc. The government recognizes that too many Canadians with disabilities continue to face significant financial challenges. I understand that some were disappointed not to see additional measures. However, the government remains committed to improving the financial security of Canadians with disabilities. That is why, in the 2025 Budget, the government is providing up to $2,400 for low-income Canadians with disabilities who qualify for the Canada Disability Benefit.

I know the government is also continuing its efforts to improve accessibility, remove barriers and promote the financial well-being and inclusion of Canadians with disabilities. At the same time, I recognize that more remains to be done, and the government shares that view.

Senator Petitclerc: Senator Moreau, $2,400 a year is still less than $7 a day.

Inclusion Canada is calling for this benefit to be increased to $1,393 a month. Disability Without Poverty is calling for the government to allow automatic eligibility for individuals already receiving provincial disability benefits. Is the government listening to these organizations and accepting their recommendations?

Senator Moreau: Senator Petitclerc, you speak with a lot of authority on topics related to persons with disabilities, and I'm sure that the government pays careful attention to the questions you ask on this issue. The minister acknowledges that work remains to be accomplished, and she is committed to building a Canada where persons with disabilities have the financial security and support they deserve.

I can assure you that I will personally pass on the questions you raised in this place today to the minister.

ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

UNITED NATIONS CLIMATE CHANGE CONFERENCE

Hon. Julie Miville-Dechêne: Senator Moreau, COP 31 dealt a hard blow to Canada's reputation as far as climate change goes. Our Prime Minister received a satirical award.

Just before heading to Türkiye, Julie Dabrusin, the Minister of Environment, Climate Change and Nature, said during an interview that Canada is absolutely committed to its Paris Agreement targets and to achieving net zero by 2050, adding that we are even seen as leaders. Former minister Steven Guilbeault called this statement disingenuous and added that Canada had practically given up the fight against climate change at home. His predecessor, Catherine McKenna, said Minister Dabrusin's remarks were factually untrue.

What is the truth?

Hon. Pierre Moreau (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for your question, Senator Miville-Dechêne. If you take a look at Budget 2026, you will see that the government is taking a comprehensive approach to climate change and that it is fully committed to meeting the 2050 targets. How is the government doing that? It is taking action at the individual level, in its relationships with the provinces and at the international level.

For individuals, the government has allocated $50 billion in the 2026 fiscal year for heat pumps. When it comes to the provinces, the government has played a key role in major projects, particularly those involving power lines, which deliver clean and renewable energy. At the international level, the government is increasing tax credits for the export of liquefied natural gas, which is an energy transition tool that reduces carbon consumption —

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

Senator Miville-Dechêne: Speaking of liquefied natural gas, there is another controversy there. At a meeting with civil society groups, Minister Dabrusin revealed that she had discussed the sale of liquefied natural gas — which I would remind you is still a fossil fuel — with the EU commissioner at COP.

That caused an outcry from environmentalists, who are wondering why the minister is using climate negotiations as a platform for selling more gas. How does the government intend to make up for this faux pas?

Senator Moreau: Thank you for the question. I served as the environment minister in the Quebec government, and I can tell you that LNG is a transitional energy source that helps reduce greenhouse gases caused by coal, for example. Greenhouse gas emissions know no borders. When Canada exports LNG, it is helping other countries reduce their greenhouse gas emissions.

This is how Canada must work to help others —

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

CANADIAN HERITAGE

PARKS CANADA

Hon. Réjean Aucoin: Government Representative, Parks Canada is planning budget cuts totalling approximately $145 million over three years, which could result in hundreds of job cuts and reduced service to the public.

These cuts are of particular concern to the Atlantic provinces, where national parks and historic sites are vital economic drivers for rural and coastal communities and help preserve our heritage. Places like Cape Breton Highlands National Park, the Fortress of Louisbourg and Grand-Pré attract visitors from all over the world.

Can the government clarify the impact these cuts will have on sites in the region and guarantee that they will not lead to reductions in opening hours, visitor services and conservation activities?

• (1440)

Hon. Pierre Moreau (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for the question, Senator Aucoin. I believe the impact of the workforce adjustment will vary by organization and region. Additional information will be available once the workforce adjustment process is complete. This is an ongoing process at this time.

That said, the government's adjustments are not just about responsible spending — the reduction is intended to cut spending — but also about the protection, preservation, and accessibility of heritage sites. To answer your question directly, the government is committed to ensuring that visitors can continue to discover Canada's history through approaches tailored to local realities and resources, while respecting the importance of the sites affected by the budget cuts.

Senator Aucoin: Thank you. We have learned that Parks Canada is also closing at least 13 warden detachments across the country, including in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, as well as elsewhere. Wardens play a vital role in keeping visitors safe and protecting wildlife and our ecosystems.

Can the government guarantee that these closures won't compromise these responsibilities? Will it commit to disclosing the specific impacts these changes will have on each of the Atlantic provinces?

Senator Moreau: Thank you again for the question. I have been assured that, when it comes to optimizing expenditures, the protection of Canada's natural heritage, environmental stewardship and emergency preparedness, which are some of the responsibilities of the wardens you mentioned, will continue to be fundamental responsibilities and will not be compromised by the changes that are being made. The government wants to preserve this capacity and strengthen the systems that Canadians count on when they visit our national parks.

[*English*]

INTERNAL ECONOMY, BUDGETS AND ADMINISTRATION

BUSINESS OF THE COMMITTEE

Hon. Denise Batters: My question is for Senator Loffreda, Chair of the Standing Senate Committee on Internal Economy, Budgets and Administration. The Senate's Internal Economy Committee approved switching all the phones in senators' offices from our regular land line to the Voice over Internet Protocol, or VoIP, Microsoft Teams platform. This is scheduled to happen before the end of this year.

The Senate Administration claims it will save $62,000, which is a tiny amount when considered in the context of the Senate budget of $141 million. The House of Commons MP offices have already made the switch. I understand from many of my MP colleagues that the new Teams phone software has been a disaster. Calls can take 90 seconds to connect.

Last week, there was a global outage of Microsoft products, including Outlook email and Teams phone and video. This affected users all over Parliament Hill. It left some parliamentary offices without email or phones. This was a problem for constituents who could not contact their MP's office, and it was a safety issue for parliamentarians and staff.

Senator Loffreda, given all this, will the Senate's Internal Economy Committee reconsider forcing senators to switch our land-line phones to Microsoft Teams?

Hon. Tony Loffreda: Thank you, honourable senator, for the question. All of our decisions are taken collectively. We do have a committee meeting scheduled for tomorrow morning.

We are in a dynamic environment; it is not static. Decisions are not written in stone. We are always there to learn and to listen, which is more important. As I always say, every call is 80% listening, and we do that. I hear your question, and I invite the senator in your caucus to raise the issue before the committee.

I am the chair. I have that privilege and honour — the greatest honour of my life — but all of our decisions are made collectively. We will address that with steering and the Internal Economy Committee, and we will make the best possible decision for the Senate and for all Canadians.

Senator Batters: That's good to hear. I ask you to bring it up tomorrow then.

Due to the sizable number of complaints with the Microsoft Teams phone system, I understand from my MP caucus colleagues that the Board of Internal Economy of the House of Commons is now allowing MPs to keep their existing telephone systems in their office, as long as they pay for them out of the MP's office budget and not the central budget.

Senator Loffreda will the Senate's Internal Economy Committee do the same?

Senator Loffreda: That's a great question. I cannot speak for the steering committee nor the Internal Economy Committee as a whole. As I mentioned, I have the honour and privilege of chairing the committee, but those decisions are made collectively.

Tomorrow is a big day. I invite senators who are concerned with the issue to raise it before the committee. We will consider it. I will consult with my colleagues, and we will make the proper decision. Thank you.

PUBLIC SAFETY

DIGITAL SOVEREIGNTY

Hon. Yonah Martin (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Government leader, a report in today's *The Globe and Mail* is raising the alarm about the potential takeover of Canada's largest payment processing company, Moneris, by the controversial U.S. private equity fund Francisco Partners. National security experts are calling on your government to conduct a national security review of the deal, given its potential implications for the sovereignty of sensitive Canadian financial data.

Senator Moreau, at a time when we are witnessing network vulnerabilities in vital systems south of the border, does it seem wise to allow this deal to go through without any national security considerations by your government?

Hon. Pierre Moreau (Government Representative in the Senate): Senator Martin, you would have to agree that this is a very hypothetical question. We don't know if the deal will happen. The government is committed to ensuring our national sovereignty for every deal made in Canada. I'm sure that if this were to happen, it would be under government scrutiny.

Senator Martin: Senator Moreau, another concern about this company is their troubling human rights record. The firm has a history of owning companies that have faced U.S. government sanctions or restrictions over the sale of surveillance technologies to authoritarian regimes, including Belarus, Türkiye and Syria.

I heard what you said. Will you take this to the government and ensure that there is a full-security review of the transaction?

Senator Moreau: With your question, you are increasing public awareness about that company. I am sure the government is listening to our important work here in the Senate. If needed, I will bring this to the attention of the minister.

NATIONAL DEFENCE

CADET PROGRAM CUTS

Hon. Scott Tannas: Senator Moreau, Canada's Cadet Program has recently found itself defending its value against criticism on social media by a senior member of the U.S. administration. At a time when cadets should be receiving strong support and recognition for the leadership and life skills they develop, the program is now facing challenges closer to home.

The government has suspended enhanced Local Support Allocation funding and reduced Cadet Program activities midway through this fiscal year. As a result, local cadet corps and squadrons are forced to reduce, postpone or cancel activities. How does the government justify imposing midyear cuts on a program that has such a strong record of success in developing leadership and service amongst Canadian youth?

Hon. Pierre Moreau (Government Representative in the Senate): Senator Tannas, I totally agree with your earlier comment. What the U.S. has said about the Cadet Program is totally unacceptable. Many Americans recognize that as well. There is a difference between the American people and the American administration, and that is a good thing.

Through the Spring Economic Statement 2026, the government announced $195 million over five years, beginning in 2026-27, and $45 million annually thereafter under the new Team Canada Strong initiative to expand skilled trades training capacity through the Cadet and Junior Canadian Rangers programs.

Efforts are focused on reducing costs that do not directly support Cadet and Junior Canadian Rangers training activities and program delivery, with the goal of minimizing impacts on participants.

Senator Tannas: Thank you for your answer.

A recent government-sponsored study found that every dollar invested in the Cadet Program generates between $19 and $41 of benefit within the social system.

At a time when the government says that Canada must strengthen its defence capacity and spending to meet NATO commitments, what analysis supports the government's decision to reduce funding for one of the few defence-related programs that develops leadership and service amongst Canadian youth?

Senator Moreau: Again, Senator Tannas, you raise an important question. My understanding is that, through the Spring Economic Update, the government is still supporting the program.

However, I will certainly raise your question with the minister. I think that is the main objective of your question, and I will get back to you as soon as I can.

• (1450)

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 rule 4-12(3), I would like to inform the Senate that as we proceed with Government Business, the Senate will address the items in the following order: Motion No. 96, followed by Motion No. 97, followed by second reading of Bill S-7, followed by all remaining items in the order that they appear on the Order Paper.

THE ESTIMATES, 2026-27

NATIONAL FINANCE COMMITTEE AUTHORIZED TO STUDY SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES (B)

Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate), pursuant to notice of November 17, 2026, moved:

That the Standing Senate Committee on National Finance be authorized to examine and report upon the expenditures set out in the Supplementary Estimates (B) for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2027;

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

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to.)

BUILDING CANADA STRONG ACT

SPECIAL COMMITTEE AUTHORIZED TO EXTEND ITS DURATION AND STRIKE A SUBCOMMITTEE ON THE ALLEGED UNAUTHORIZED DISCLOSURE OF CONFIDENTIAL COMMITTEE DOCUMENTS AND PROCEEDINGS

Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate), pursuant to notice of November 17, 2026, moved:

That:

1. notwithstanding the order of the Senate adopted on Tuesday, October 6, 2026, the Special Senate Committee on the Building Canada Strong Act be authorized to continue its work, after the presentation of its final report on Bill C-39, An Act respecting certain measures to strengthen the economy, to complete its investigation and report to the Senate, pursuant to Appendix IV of the *Rules of the Senate*, on the circumstances surrounding the alleged unauthorized disclosure of confidential committee documents and proceedings, and the resulting harassment of one or more senators;

2. the committee expire following the tabling of its final report concerning the alleged leak, but no later than April 29, 2027;

3. a subcommittee be established to conduct an investigation into the circumstances surrounding the alleged unauthorized disclosure of confidential committee documents and proceedings, and the resulting harassment of one or more senators;

4. the subcommittee be composed of five members: the chair of the committee, two members from the Independent Senators Group, one member from the Progressive Senate Group and one member from the Canadian Senators Group;

5. the members of the subcommittee, other than the chair of the committee, be named by means of a notice signed by their respective leader or facilitator, or their respective designates, and filed with the Clerk of the Senate;

6. the subcommittee be chaired by the chair of the committee;

7. the provisions of rule 12-5 for membership changes apply to the subcommittee;

8. pursuant to the order of October 6, 2026, the committee's authority to send for persons, papers and records, whenever required, and to publish from day to day such papers and evidence as may be ordered by it, be conferred on the subcommittee;

9. the committee's authority, pursuant to paragraph 8(3)(a) of the Senators Attendance Policy, be conferred on the subcommittee; and

10. notwithstanding rule 12-12(6), the subcommittee be authorized to report to the Senate.

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to.)

CUTTING RED TAPE FOR ALL CANADIANS BILL

SECOND READING

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Petten, seconded by the Honourable Senator Moreau, P.C., for the second reading of Bill S-7, An Act to modernize certain regulatory and administrative processes.

Hon. Yonah Martin (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, I rise today at second reading of Bill S-7, An Act to modernize certain regulatory and administrative processes, also known as the cutting red tape for all Canadians act.

I would like to thank our colleague Senator Petten for her work as the sponsor of this bill. I also wish to acknowledge the contributions of honourable colleagues who have participated in the debate and raised important questions, as well as department officials who have provided briefings and clarification on the proposed measures.

As the critic of this bill, I want to begin by acknowledging the importance of its stated objective. Reducing unnecessary regulatory burdens, eliminating duplication and improving the efficiency of government are not simply worthwhile goals; they are principles that Conservatives have always championed. We understand that prosperity is not created by government. It is created by hard-working Canadians, entrepreneurs and job creators, who are too often held back by excessive regulation.

Canadians and businesses should not be required to navigate outdated procedures, excessive paperwork or unnecessary delays simply because our regulatory systems have not fully adapted to changing circumstances. For small- and medium-sized businesses in particular, which make up almost 100% of businesses in our country, these burdens can divert valuable time and resources from innovation, job creation and growth. Improving government efficiency should help create a more productive and competitive economy with better jobs and lower costs for the Canadians we serve.

However, reducing red tape must not become an end in itself. Regulations exist for important reasons, including protecting public health and safety, safeguarding the environment and ensuring fairness and accountability. The challenge is to distinguish requirements that genuinely serve the public interest from those that impose costs and delays without delivering meaningful benefits.

Bill S-7 proposes amendments to 31 pieces of federal legislation administered by 11 departments and agencies, spanning agriculture, environmental protection, telecommunications, transportation, border operations and business administration. Its scope is considerable, and while many of its proposals are administrative in nature, others introduce new powers and change how important regulatory decisions may be made.

During Senator Petten's second reading speech, I raised questions about the breadth of the proposed ministerial authorities and whether affected stakeholders would continue to have meaningful opportunities for consultation and input. These concerns remain central to my examination of this legislation.

Our responsibility is not simply to determine whether the objectives of Bill S-7 are beneficial but whether the mechanisms proposed to achieve them are necessary, proportionate, accompanied by appropriate safeguards and consistent with the authority that belongs to Parliament rather than to ministers alone.

In this regard, the bill contains several measures that offer promising opportunities to reduce unnecessary regulatory burdens and improve government efficiency.

In the agricultural sector, for example, Bill S-7 would repeal 162 existing federal orders and regulations and establish a more streamlined framework for provincial marketing boards. It would also simplify requirements under the Advance Payments Program, reducing administrative burdens for agricultural producers — the farmers who feed our country and sustain our rural communities.

The committee will also need to examine the transition to this new framework, including what happens to boards that do not publish replacement rules within the transition period and the fact that the minister may amend the new schedule of boards by order without any requirement to table that change before Parliament.

Similarly, proposed amendments to the Food and Drugs Act would eliminate overlapping requirements for foods manufactured solely for export. This could reduce unnecessary compliance costs and delays for Canadian exporters, including food producers and processors in British Columbia, while maintaining applicable food-safety protections.

The bill would also simplify bankruptcy and restructuring procedures for eligible small businesses, making it easier for those facing financial difficulties to navigate these processes. Other measures would modernize regulatory administration through greater use of digital services and automated decision making.

These are constructive proposals that respond to practical concerns raised by stakeholders. However, not every measure presented as regulatory modernization operates in the same way. Some eliminate unnecessary requirements, while others primarily allow government to make decisions quicker. Faster decisions can be valuable, but they are not necessarily the same as reducing red tape. Indeed, some measures may move in the opposite direction. Clause 16, for example, would transfer the listing of prohibited weed seeds from the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food to the Governor-in-Council, repealing the minister's existing order-making power and risking that urgent responses to newly detected invasive plants are placed on a slower regulatory track.

Granting a minister additional authority also raises vastly different questions about oversight and accountability than eliminating a duplicative filing requirement. There may be legitimate reasons for granting ministers greater flexibility, particularly when responding to emerging technologies, operational challenges or threats to public safety. However, the procedures being set aside also serve important purposes, including ensuring transparency, consultation and accountability.

Conservatives have long held that power concentrated in the hands of the executive must remain answerable to Parliament. When Parliament delegates additional authority to the executive, we must be satisfied that these powers are accompanied by appropriate limits and safeguards.

• (1500)

Consider clause 143, which would allow the Minister of Public Safety to grant temporary exemptions from certain requirements administered or enforced by the Canada Border Services Agency for periods of up to five years.

The bill establishes conditions for these exemptions, including that they must serve the public interest, that their benefits outweigh their risks and that the agency can monitor their implementation and assess their effects.

The government has explained that this authority would support regulatory sandboxes, allowing new technologies and procedures to be tested in controlled environments before permanent changes are considered. Officials have described, for example, a potential pilot project testing cross-border commercial drone deliveries, where the current customs framework, designed around trucks, vessels, rail and conventional aircraft, does not clearly indicate how such goods should be reported, cleared and inspected.

While this approach can encourage innovation, it also raises questions about oversight. Under clause 143, these exemptions would fall outside the Statutory Instruments Act, and the bill does not expressly require their publication in the *Canada Gazette* or their tabling before Parliament.

Officials have pointed to the government's Policy on Regulatory Sandboxes, which provides consultation, monitoring and public reporting. However, administrative policies do not provide the same statutory guarantees as legislation. We should, therefore, examine why clause 143 adopts a different approach from other provisions in this bill which do include express publication and tabling requirements.

How will affected Canadians and businesses know which requirements have been set aside and why? And how will the results of these exemptions be assessed and reported to Parliament, particularly when they may remain in effect for several years?

Similar considerations arise under clause 152, which would allow the Minister of Transport to issue interim orders concerning marine transportation security. Unlike clause 143, this provision expressly requires publication in the *Canada Gazette* within 23 days and tabling before both houses of Parliament within 15 days. These are critical safeguards, particularly given the need for timely responses to security risks.

Even so, the committee should examine whether the proposed limits, duration and oversight mechanisms are sufficient, especially where these orders may impose binding obligations and remain in effect beyond their initial period.

Honourable senators, I am not suggesting that urgent decisions should await the completion of the ordinary regulatory process. Ministers sometimes need flexibility to carry out their responsibilities quickly, but when Parliament delegates additional authority, it must ensure that appropriate safeguards are firmly established from the outset.

Another provision that warrants careful examination at committee is clause 191, concerning airport zoning under the Aeronautics Act. Perhaps it's because we live in airports a lot of the time — and I know that YVR is one of the airports being talked about for privatization — this definitely caught my attention.

The bill would authorize the Minister of Transport to make zoning orders restricting the use or development of lands near airports and aviation facilities where the minister considers those activities incompatible with airport operations, aviation safety or aeronautical communications.

I recognize the necessity of protecting aviation safety — thank goodness, we all do — especially where incompatible development could pose risks to airport operations and surrounding communities. As government officials have explained, the existing airport zoning process can be lengthy, potentially allowing incompatible development to proceed before necessary protections are in place.

The proposed ministerial orders are intended to provide interim protection while the ordinary regulatory process is completed. However, even temporary restrictions can have significant financial consequences for affected property owners. A landowner may have invested in property with the intention of developing it, only to find that a new zoning order restricts what may be built.

The bill provides protection for certain existing uses and developments that have already obtained the necessary approvals. It also requires zoning orders to be published in the *Canada Gazette* within 23 days. While these are important safeguards, clause 195 would also extend the Aeronautics Act's existing exclusion of compensation for losses resulting from these new ministerial zoning orders.

Furthermore, while the ordinary airport zoning regulation process provides interested persons with an opportunity to make representations, clause 191 does not expressly require comparable advance consultation before a ministerial zoning order takes effect. These orders may remain in force for up to three years, and the bill also allows one zoning order to be replaced by another.

This raises important questions about how affected property owners and municipalities will be consulted, whether the restrictions imposed will be proportionate to the risks identified and what opportunities will exist to challenge decisions.

When I specifically asked whether potentially affected private landowners had been consulted, the Treasury Board of Canada's response did not identify any direct consultation with them. Instead, it referred to airport authorities, pre-budget submissions and discussions with other levels of government. These are not a substitute for hearing from the landowners themselves. Protecting aviation safety is essential, but so is ensuring the fair treatment of those affected by government decisions.

Where ministerial orders can restrict the use of privately owned land and result in significant financial consequences, transparency, consultation and accountability must remain fundamental considerations.

Another important consideration is how the projected benefits of this legislation will be measured. Bill S-7 is projected to generate at least $264 million in combined savings to businesses and government over 10 years. That is a meaningful projection, and I welcome reductions in unnecessary costs of that magnitude, but projected savings and realized savings are not the same thing.

As Senator Batters raised during second reading debate, we need to understand how this estimate was calculated and what assumptions underlie it. I've also requested further details from officials, including which measures are expected to generate the greatest savings, how those savings would be distributed between businesses and government, and whether implementation costs have been accounted for.

The underlying calculations and detailed breakdowns remain outstanding in the responses we have received to date. These details are crucial because different kinds of administrative efficiencies produce different kinds of benefits. I ask the committee to further investigate so that I can, perhaps, receive the answers that I have not yet received at the time of this speech.

Reducing the time a business spends preparing an application may represent a real cost saving for that business. Allowing government employees to complete the same work more quickly may improve service delivery or free up resources for other responsibilities, but it does not necessarily translate into a corresponding reduction in government expenditures.

Similarly, introducing new digital systems or changing compliance procedures may require initial investments before anticipated efficiencies can be realized. Without understanding these distinctions, it is difficult to assess the full economic impact of the measures before us in this bill.

There is also the question of who stands to benefit. If our objective is to reduce the burdens facing Canadian businesses, particularly small- and medium-sized enterprises, we should be able to demonstrate whether they are actually experiencing lower costs, fewer unnecessary requirements and more predictable processing times. This becomes especially important, as Bill S-7 is intended to be part of a recurring approach to regulatory modernization. This is the first of this kind of bill and process.

• (1510)

While the Treasury Board already coordinates government-wide red tape reduction efforts and federal departments have existing reporting responsibilities, Bill S-7 does not establish a consolidated reporting requirement to measure whether its projected savings and administrative improvements are ultimately achieved. I believe this deserves further consideration.

If Parliament examines successive packages of regulatory reforms, we should be able to examine previous measures and determine what worked, what did not and what should be improved. Otherwise, we risk measuring progress by the number of requirements amended or repealed rather than by the benefits actually delivered to Canadians.

Beyond the questions I have outlined, there are other provisions that would benefit from closer examination at committee. For example, Part 1 would allow Canada to recognize certain foreign regulatory systems relating to agricultural products, potentially reducing duplicative assessments and expediting access to products already approved abroad. Officials have explained that recognition would depend on whether these systems offer protections comparable to Canadian standards, with ongoing monitoring and the ability to suspend or end recognition. The committee should examine how these safeguards would be established in regulations and applied in practice.

The proposed amendments to the Explosives Act also deserve attention. They would introduce administrative monetary penalties while excluding due diligence and reasonable mistake of fact as defences to violations. Officials have explained that enforcement would be graduated, considering factors such as harm, compliance history and intent, and that review mechanisms would be available. The committee should nevertheless consider how inadvertent non-compliance would be treated and whether penalties would be applied fairly and proportionately.

The expansion of automated decision making also raises a practical question: How can affected individuals understand a decision and seek review if an error occurs?

These examples illustrate why Bill S-7 requires more than a general assessment of its stated objectives. The legislation brings together a broad range of changes affecting different sectors, regulators, businesses and communities, each with distinct considerations.

While I recognize that many of these proposals have been informed by stakeholder consultations, committee study will provide a valuable opportunity to hear directly from those affected and examine how these measures would operate in practice. Equally important is ensuring continued consultation and meaningful engagement with stakeholders as new ministerial powers are exercised and detailed regulations are developed.

Honourable senators, Bill S-7 contains practical reforms that could ease long-standing regulatory burdens on Canadian businesses. I recognize the value of these measures and the improvements that they may bring. At the same time, the broader implications of this legislation deserve equally careful consideration.

I look forward to careful examination at committee. I hope to attend when I can, although I have a competing committee at the same time. I trust the committee, which has done very good work to date, so I ask the committee members to whom this bill will be sent to really do their due diligence, which I know they will. I look forward to this bill's careful examination at committee, where the outstanding questions can be explored and the perspectives of those most directly affected can be considered.

Ultimately, the success of regulatory modernization should not be measured simply by how quickly decisions are made or how many requirements are eliminated but by whether these reforms deliver meaningful and lasting improvements for Canadians. Efficiency and accountability should not be competing objectives. Both are essential to good governance. As we work to modernize our regulatory system, we must ensure that efforts to reduce red tape never come at the expense of the fairness, transparency and public trust that Canadians have every right to expect from their government. That is the standard by which Conservatives will judge this bill at second reading and at every stage that follows.

I want to express my sincere thanks to the officials who undertook the effort to go through all of the pieces of legislation that were examined and the provisions that are in the bill, which touch upon all the acts and ministries I cited earlier. It must have been quite the job. I met the key manager or coordinator, and she was quite articulate and very well informed. We had a very good session at the technical briefing that I had.

It's a big bill. A lot of acts and sectors are impacted. I hope this will be successful so that we can continue this process and make lives easier for all of our businesses and Canadians who will be impacted by these changes.

Thank you.

The Hon. the Speaker: Are honourable senators ready for the question?

Hon. Senators: Question.

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to and bill read second time.)

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE

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

(On motion of Senator Petten, bill referred to the Standing Senate Committee on Banking, Commerce and the Economy.)

• (1520)

NATION-BUILDING VALUE OF TOURISM

INQUIRY—DEBATE CONTINUED

Leave having been given to proceed to Other Business, Inquiries, Order No. 8:

On the Order:

> Resuming debate on the inquiry of the Honourable Senator Sorensen, calling the attention of the Senate to the nation-building value of tourism in Canada.

Hon. Judy A. White: Honourable senators, I rise today to participate in the inquiry on the nation-building value of tourism, and I want to acknowledge the leadership of my colleague and friend Senator Sorensen in initiating this important conversation about one of Canada's most powerful forces for connection and economic growth.

Tourism is a major aspect of Canada's economy and a vital way of sharing and preserving our culture and history. It is a way of bringing people together and celebrating the immense natural beauty that Canada has to offer.

I would like to focus my remarks today on tourism in my home province of Newfoundland Labrador. Our stunning coastlines, sea life, historic sites and many parks make Newfoundland and Labrador a popular and beloved tourist destination.

I will begin by sharing some statistics about the vital role of tourism in my province. I will then highlight some of the most popular places that draw tourists, from the coastline of the farthest easterly point in North America to the Tablelands on the west coast of the island, to the spectacular mountains of Labrador. I will then conclude by sharing a little about Indigenous tourism and the work of the Newfoundland & Labrador Indigenous Tourism Association, which showcases Indigenous-owned businesses in the tourism sector.

Tourism in Newfoundland and Labrador has grown significantly over the past 15 years. While travellers most often visit our province for its beautiful scenery, landscapes and coastline, Tourism Newfoundland and Labrador found that 30% of visitors in 2023 said visiting Newfoundland and Labrador was on their bucket list. Visitors also come to experience our culture and history, go hiking, see icebergs and wildlife and visit our natural parks. In fact, it is perhaps no surprise that so many people return again and again.

Newfoundlanders and Labradorians have a reputation for making people feel at home. Many visitors arrive for a week's vacation, leaving after being invited to several kitchen parties, a shed party — if you're lucky — and after practically being adopted by a local family.

Tourists in Newfoundland and Labrador have exceptionally high satisfaction rates, with 87% saying they would return and 93% saying they would recommend the province to others. Tourism is also critical to our economy. In 2025, visitor spending reached a record $625.6 million.

So what attracts so many visitors to our province? Newfoundland and Labrador has more than 30 provincial parks, 4 national parks and dozens of provincial and federal historic sites. People come to enjoy nature reserves; see puffins, whales and icebergs; or explore the 336 kilometres of the East Coast Trail. We are one of the few places where visitors can spend the morning watching whales, the afternoon admiring icebergs, and the evening wondering why they didn't pack a heavier coat.

You can also take the East Coast Trail to Cape Spear, the easternmost point in North America. Standing there at sunrise, you can be the first person on the continent to greet a new day.

The capital city of St. John's attracts the largest number of visitors each season. I live on the coast with the most, opposite of this one. Visitors enjoy The Rooms, Signal Hill, the colourful Jellybean Row houses, local restaurants and a vibrant arts and music scene. The city is also home to beloved festivals such as the Royal St. John's Regatta, the Mummers Festival and the George Street Festival — not to be missed.

On the west coast of the island, Gros Morne National Park is both a world-famous park and a UNESCO World Heritage Site. It is home to the Tablelands, one of the few places on earth where you can walk on rock from the earth's mantle. As a Newfoundlander and Labradorian, I must acknowledge that we also have a story that NASA tested a Mars rover there because the landscape looked like Mars. It's just a story. It's not true, but I always thought that if any place in Canada could convince visitors that they had landed on another planet, it would definitely be the Tablelands. Scientists from both NASA and the Canadian Space Agency — this is true — have nevertheless studied the area because of its unique geological features.

Gros Morne is also home to the Western Brook Pond fjord, a spectacular freshwater fjord carved by glaciers during the last ice age. The nearby trail has recently been made universally accessible, ensuring more Canadians can enjoy one of our province's most breathtaking natural wonders. Further north is L'Anse aux Meadows, the only authenticated 11th-century Norse settlement in North America and another UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Moving on over to beautiful Labrador, we have the Torngat Mountains National Park, the homeland of Inuit, who have lived in the region for millennia. Parks Canada describes the area as a landscape of dramatic peaks, glacier-carved fjords and iceberg-filled waters.

We often joke that in Newfoundland and Labrador you can experience all four seasons in a single day. That is absolutely true, but no matter what the season is, the scenery is always worth it.

I would like to conclude by recognizing the many ways Indigenous people contribute to the tourism industry in Newfoundland Labrador. There are Indigenous-owned businesses across the province, offering everything from boat tours and accommodations to restaurants, cultural experiences, arts, festivals, museums and outdoor adventures. Visitors also have the opportunity to experience vibrant Indigenous cultural celebrations that have become highlights of the summer tourism season.

On the first weekend of July, Miawpukek First Nation in Conne River hosts its annual powwow, welcoming people from the province and beyond. It is a time of celebration, sharing and cultural pride, where visitors can experience traditional drumming, dancing, teachings and the warmth of Mi'kmaq hospitality.

The following weekend, the second weekend of July, a similar spirit comes alive in my home community of Flat Bay, where the Bay St. George Mi'kmaq Cultural Revival Committee hosts its annual powwow. For many of us, it is more than an event. It is a gathering of family and friends, a place where our community shares knowledge, where young people connect with their culture, and where visitors are welcomed as guests and leave as friends.

I have always appreciated seeing people from every background come together at these gatherings. Whether they arrive knowing a great deal about Mi'kmaq culture or are experiencing a powwow for the very first time, they leave with a deeper understanding of who we are as a people and the values that continue to guide our communities.

These powwows showcase living Mi'kmaq cultures while creating meaningful opportunities for cultural tourism. They remind us that some of the most memorable travel experiences are not found in landmarks or attractions but in the connections we make with one another. Indigenous tourism offers this. It offers us an opportunity not only to see our province but to better understand the people, histories and cultures that have shaped it for generations.

Colleagues, in conclusion, Newfoundland and Labrador has a rich history, extraordinary natural beauty and a thriving Indigenous tourism sector. Beyond its economic impact, tourism brings people together and creates lasting connections between communities, cultures and regions. Tourism is one of the few industries where people willingly travel thousands of kilometres, brave our wind, fog and occasional sideways rain, and then tell their friends they cannot wait to come back. That says something special about Newfoundland and Labrador, and certainly to the visitors who come.

Tourism helps preserve and shape our culture, our stories and our heritage. It builds understanding and appreciation for the places and peoples that make Canada unique. For many reasons, tourism has tremendous nation-building value, and nowhere is that more evident than in my province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Wela'lioq, thank you.

(On motion of Senator Francis, debate adjourned.)

BUSINESS OF THE SENATE

Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson: Honourable senators, with leave of the Senate and notwithstanding rule 5-13(2), I move:

That the Senate do now adjourn.

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

(*At 3:30 p.m., the Senate was continued until tomorrow at 1:30 p.m.*)

CONTENTS

Wednesday, November 18, 2026

PAGE

SENATORS' STATEMENTS

Artwork and Heritage Collection
The Late Honourable James Gladstone
Hon. Brian Francis 3217

The Late Rose Adler
Hon. Charles S. Adler 3217

Visitor in the Gallery
The Hon. the Speaker 3218

The Honourable Leo Housakos
Congratulations on B'nai Brith Canada Award of Merit
Hon. Yonah Martin 3218

Visitors in the Gallery
The Hon. the Speaker 3218

Support for Children
Hon. Rosemary Moodie 3218

Visitors in the Gallery
The Hon. the Speaker 3219

Actions interculturelles Canada
Hon. Tony Loffreda 3219

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

National Security, Defence and Veterans Affairs
Notice of Motion to Authorize Committee to Meet During Sittings and Adjournment of the Senate
Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson 3220

The Senate
Notice of Motion to Authorize Subcommittees on Agenda and Procedure to Meet Remotely
Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson 3220

Adjournment
Notice of Motion
Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson 3220

Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe Parliamentary Assembly
Winter Meeting, February 19-20, 2026—Report Tabled
Hon. Peter M. Boehm 3220
Annual Session, July 4-8, 2026—Report Tabled
Hon. Peter M. Boehm 3220
Election Observation Mission, April 10-13, 2026—Report Tabled
Hon. Peter M. Boehm 3220

Agriculture and Forestry
Notice of Motion to Authorize Committee to Study the Loss and Conversion of Agricultural Land
Hon. Mary Robinson 3221

QUESTION PERIOD

Public Safety
Canada Border Services Agency
Hon. Yonah Martin 3221
Hon. Pierre Moreau 3221

Natural Resources
Offshore Wind Energy
Hon. Michael L. MacDonald 3221
Hon. Pierre Moreau 3222

Justice
Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
Hon. Bernadette Clement 3222
Hon. Pierre Moreau 3222

Employment and Social Development
Canada Disability Benefit
Hon. Chantal Petitclerc 3222
Hon. Pierre Moreau 3223

Environment and Climate Change
United Nations Climate Change Conference
Hon. Julie Miville-Dechêne 3223
Hon. Pierre Moreau 3223

Canadian Heritage
Parks Canada
Hon. Réjean Aucoin 3223
Hon. Pierre Moreau 3224

Internal Economy, Budgets and Administration
Business of the Committee
Hon. Denise Batters 3224
Hon. Tony Loffreda 3224

Public Safety
Digital Sovereignty
Hon. Yonah Martin 3225
Hon. Pierre Moreau 3225

National Defence
Cadet Program Cuts
Hon. Scott Tannas 3225
Hon. Pierre Moreau 3225

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Business of the Senate
Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson 3225

The Estimates, 2026-27
National Finance Committee Authorized to Study Supplementary Estimates (B)
Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson 3226

CONTENTS

Wednesday, November 18, 2026

PAGE

Building Canada Strong Act
Special Committee Authorized to Extend its Duration and Strike a Subcommittee on the Alleged Unauthorized Disclosure of Confidential Committee Documents and Proceedings
Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson 3226

Cutting Red Tape for All Canadians Bill (Bill S-7)
Second Reading
Hon. Yonah Martin 3226

PAGE

Referred to Committee 3230

Nation-Building Value of Tourism
Inquiry—Debate Continued
Hon. Judy A. White 3230

Business of the Senate
Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson 3232