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(HANSARD)

Tuesday, November 24, 2026

The Honourable RAYMONDE GAGNÉ,
Speaker

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THE SENATE

Tuesday, November 24, 2026

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

Prayers.

SENATORS' STATEMENTS

HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY IN WINNIPEG

Hon. Flordeliz (Gigi) Osler: Honourable senators, recently, in conversation with a Manitoba stakeholder, I was asked what gives me hope for the future. I answered that it is Budget 2026's $1 billion in federal funding to create conditions to end homelessness in Winnipeg.

Across Canada, homelessness remains a growing challenge. According to End Homelessness Winnipeg's 2024 Winnipeg Street Census, over 2,400 people were experiencing homelessness. Nearly 80% identified as Indigenous, and almost 68% were experiencing chronic homelessness.

The health data is equally concerning. Among the people surveyed, 71% reported substance use challenges, 56% reported mental health challenges, and over 50% had visited an emergency department and/or had been hospitalized in the past year. Following hospitalization, only 11.8% of people were in permanent housing.

Front-line organizations are also facing considerable demand. In 2025, Siloam Mission provided more than 50,000 shelter nights, served over 550,000 meals and recorded more than 15,000 visits to its health centre.

At the November announcement in Winnipeg, I was heartened to learn about the involvement of four levels of government — federal, provincial, municipal and Indigenous — alongside community organizations, private-sector partners and philanthropists. The investment includes up to $800 million to construct more than 2,000 supportive and transitional homes and over $200 million for a new Winnipeg centre for mental health and addictions.

These investments are intended to address not only housing shortages but also the underlying health and social challenges associated with homelessness.

The centre will bring together acute and outpatient care, permanent housing and support services. The province will cover half of the centre's construction costs, operate the facility and housing units, and provide ongoing support to residents. This builds on the work of local organizations, such as End Homelessness Winnipeg, Siloam Mission and the Southern Chiefs' Organization. That is essential because ending homelessness depends on more than construction. It requires sustained operational funding, health care staffing, accessible mental health and addiction treatment, culturally appropriate services, permanent affordable housing and much more.

Having spent more than two decades caring for patients in Manitoba, I recognize that achieving real health must address the social determinants: the non-medical conditions in which people are born, grow, live and work. That is why this initiative has the potential to profoundly change lives and should give us all hope for the future.

Thank you, *meegwetch*.

EQUAL VOICE

Hon. Farah Mohamed: Honourable senators, consider this building, the portraits on the walls and the history they represent. For generations, women would look at institutions like this and see little of themselves. The message was clear: Political power belonged elsewhere.

Twenty-five years ago, a group of women from across Canada's political spectrum decided that this was no longer acceptable. They founded Equal Voice, with the conviction that democracy is stronger when women have an equal opportunity to participate, shape and lead. Among its co-founders was our former colleague the Honourable Donna Dasko.

For the past 25 years, Equal Voice has turned that conviction into action. Through campaign schools, mentoring and national networks, it equips women with the skills, connections and confidence to seek elected office. Through initiatives such as Daughters of the Vote, it brings young women from every federal riding to Parliament Hill, helping them to see themselves as participants in our democracy.

There has been progress: Women now hold approximately 55% of the seats in this chamber. However, the pipeline remains a challenge. In the 2025 federal election, women represented just over 30% of candidates, with only 102 out of 596 female candidates elected.

Young women remain particularly under-represented in elected office. Encouraging the next generation to see politics as a place where they belong is essential to building a more representative democracy.

Representation is only part of the challenge. Online harassment, financial barriers and the demands of public life continue to discourage women from entering politics and make it harder for them to stay. This matters because democracy is stronger when decision making reflects the full breadth of our society. No policy area, from national security to economic development, should be shaped without women's perspectives and experiences.

It is my hope that in the next 25 years we will no longer need organizations such as Equal Voice to convince women that they belong in politics or to help them overcome the barriers. Instead, we will have built a political culture where their leadership is expected, their voices are valued and their participation is simply part of what a healthy democracy looks like.

Thank you.

INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE

RULING ON MYANMAR

Hon. Salma Ataullahjan: Honourable senators, last Thursday, the world heard the International Court of Justice say what I had spent years asking people to confront: Myanmar committed genocide against the Rohingya. It was the first time in the court's history that it found a state responsible for committing genocide.

For me, the ruling brought back memories of the Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, or IPU, in Quebec in 2013, when the Burmese delegation requested a meeting. They wanted to know what made Canada work as a country. I spoke about respect for everyone, the freedom to practise our faith and our equal standing as Canadians.

Fast forward to 2017 at a dinner with the Burmese delegation when Aung San Suu Kyi visited Canada. When I tried to raise the Rohingya crisis, her spokesperson simply said, "No Rohingya." I cannot forget how unsettling it was to hear two words shut down the conversation about an entire people. It was especially disheartening for me, since I had been working on this file since 2012.

Colleagues, you may remember that in 2017, as Rohingya families fled to Bangladesh, I moved a motion calling on Canada to urge Myanmar to end the violence, which this chamber unanimously adopted. I also proposed that our Human Rights Committee study the crisis. We heard what people had endured, and we considered what Canada could do to help hold those responsible to account.

Over the years, I have continued to raise the Rohingya issue with relevant entities and organizations. Last year, I visited Bangladesh and saw the conditions facing the Rohingya refugees. At the time, students in the camps could study only up to Grade 10. I raised the issue with the then-government officials whom I met. Thanks to sustained advocacy by many groups and individuals, they can now continue through to Grade 12.

• (1410)

Some of those students are growing up in the same camps their families fled to in 2017. I thought about those families when I attended a Rohingya community fundraising event in Toronto last week. I thought of them again when I read the court's judgment, which orders Myanmar to make it possible for displaced Rohingya to return home safely, voluntarily and with dignity.

I am grateful that Gambia brought this case to the court and that Canada intervened in the case. Now we must work with our international partners to see that Myanmar carries out the judgment while continuing to support the refugees and the countries that have given them shelter.

After so long, it means a great deal to hear the court put Myanmar's responsibility on the record. I hope to see the day when the families I met in the camps can go home. They deserve the freedom to decide whether to return and the assurance that, if they do, their children can grow up in safety.

Thank you.

VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I wish to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of The Men of the Deeps. They are the guests of the Honourable Senators Cuzner and MacDonald.

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

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

THE MEN OF THE DEEPS

Hon. Rodger Cuzner: Honourable senators, I rise today to recognize the sixtieth anniversary of The Men of the Deeps, North America's only coal miners' chorus. Made up entirely of men who have worked underground, this iconic group has represented Cape Breton and Canada on stages all around the world.

Founded in 1966, the chorus set out to preserve Cape Breton's mining culture through songs and stories from those who actually lived it.

Over the years, 114 men have proudly worn the signature crested coveralls of the group, and today 28 members carry on that tradition.

They performed at Expo 67 in Montreal and Expo 86 in Vancouver. In 1976, they became the first Canadian performing group to tour the People's Republic of China. Their travels have taken them from the Northwest Territories to Arizona, Alabama, Florida and Kosovo. They have sung at the coalfields of Kentucky, Virginia and Pennsylvania and at major mining conventions in Cincinnati and Denver. They have even wowed audiences in Las Vegas.

Their concerts, recordings and television appearances have brought them together with the likes of Rita MacNeil, Anne Murray, Jim Cuddy, Kris Kristofferson, Roger Whittaker and The Rankin Family.

However, honourable senators, their impact goes well beyond the stage. For generations, these Cape Breton coal miners have travelled miles beneath the ocean floor. They worked in harsh and dangerous conditions, relying on one another for their safety and survival. Above ground, families faced the uncertainty of

every shift and the heartbreak of losing fathers and sons, those who never came home. These experiences forged a culture of resilience, loyalty, humour and community. And for 60 years, the singing miners have preserved that heritage.

Through story and song, the chorus reminds their audience of the days when their toil provided heat for their homes in the Atlantic provinces, fired the factories of Upper Canada during a time of incredible industrial development and, likewise, powered the flotillas of naval and merchant marine vessels in support of our soldiers through two world wars.

Though the collieries are gone, The Men of the Deeps continue to light the way. Emerging from darkness with their cap lamps shining, they form an immediate and profound connection with their audiences, sharing songs and stories of miners whose lives and culture helped build this great country.

Honourable senators, please join me in congratulating Cape Breton's The Men of the Deeps on 60 extraordinary years and in thanking the 114 members, past and present, for their contribution to Canadian culture and heritage.

Thank you.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

VISITOR IN THE GALLERY

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I wish to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of Hannah Mahoney, Postdoctoral Fellow at the Vaccine and Infectious Disease Organization. She is the guest of the Honourable Senator Muggli.

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

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS

Hon. Bernadette Clement: Honourable senators, I rise today to celebrate the wins in Ontario's recent municipal election and to remind voters that casting their ballot matters.

Last night, I watched tearfully and joyfully as Cornwall's new city council was inaugurated. I was honoured to put the chain of office on my home community's new mayor, Sarah Good, Cornwall's second woman mayor. When you're the first, the stakes are so high: You don't want to be the last. As the first, your vocation is to not mess up. You want there to be a second and a third and for those who come after you to have a better and easier time. Once you've served on city council, you cannot forget the depth of the connection between municipal governments and the people they serve.

So many of us in this chamber have lived this: Senator Carignan, Senator Arnold, Senator Sorensen, Senator Black, Senator Forest and the late beloved Senator Lewis. When we're governing, legislating, building relationships and managing budgets, people are at the heart of our work, and it's joyful work so much of the time.

So it pains me that voter turnout doesn't respond to that level of connection. The Association of Municipalities of Ontario reported that turnout went up just a bit in October's election. Over 4 million of us in Ontario cast our vote in 2026, so our turnout this year was 36%, up 3% from 2022's municipal election. That's still not enough. We can do better.

Our work doesn't end after voting day. The folks taking office need continued support and mentorship — thank you, Equal Voice — and someone behind them saying, "I've got your back." I certainly needed that, and there's a multitude of firsts who will need it, too.

Let me say some of the names of the women who were elected. I'm thinking about Lori Lococo, Bea Kenny, Stephanie LeMay and Maggie Horsfield, who are the first female mayors of Niagara Falls, Port Colborne, Pembroke and North Bay. I'm also thinking about the all-female council in Merrickville-Wolford, led by Anne Barr.

I am still riding high on all the firsts elected during the U.S. midterms: Keisha Lance Bottoms, the first-ever female Governor of Georgia and the United States' first-ever female Black governor; Amy Acton, Ohio's first female governor; Deb Haaland, New Mexico's first Native American woman governor; and Gina Hinojosa, the first Hispanic person to be elected Governor of Texas. Say their names.

These firsts here at home and across the border will go on to govern, just like everyone else, but their impact as firsts is massive. The message they send is so powerful to those of us who don't see ourselves represented in politics often enough. That diversity is reflected in better policy that reflects everyone in society and takes care of all of us. The power of representation is so very positive. The joy and hope that it creates will lead to more women and diverse people running for office and people feeling more connected to elections.

Congratulations to everyone who ran for office last month.

[*Translation*]

Congratulations. Thank you. *Nia:wen*.

VISITOR IN THE GALLERY

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I wish to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of Gabrielle Bardall, a researcher at Université Sainte-Anne specializing in democratic resilience in the face of polarization, disinformation and foreign interference. She is the guest of the Honourable Senator Coyle.

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

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

FRANCOPHONIE SUMMIT

Hon. Allister Surette: Honourable senators, I had the great privilege of attending the twentieth Francophonie Summit from November 12 to 16 in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, where I

represented the Canadian branch of the Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie. Our colleague, Senator Gignac, was there too.

The Francophonie Summit is the supreme decision-making body of the Organisation internationale de la Francophonie. It is a meeting of the organization's 92 member states and governments that takes place every two years. It is the largest multilateral gathering in the French-speaking world.

• (1420)

This year, approximately 3,000 delegates from member states and governments, civil society, academia and the private sector met to discuss international cooperation and to strengthen ties within the Francophonie.

By way of example, at a seminar organized by the Royal Society of Canada, ACFAS, the University of Ottawa and Global Affairs Canada, representatives from around the world discussed how to strengthen ties between states and research communities in the international Francophonie.

Similarly, the francophone innovation fair FrancoTech brought together over 200 businesses to boost economic trade, promote technological progress and showcase entrepreneurial excellence within the Francophonie.

One thing that came up in nearly every discussion was the rise of artificial intelligence and the way the Francophonie should position itself in the face of this rapidly changing technology.

What made me most proud was to see the huge contribution that that all of Canada's French-speaking communities make to the international Francophonie. The vitality of our francophone communities was celebrated, particularly at the Village de la Francophonie, where Acadia and the Canadian francophonie captured the spotlight.

This year was also very special for the Canadian francophonie and the Franco-Manitoban community, as the province of Manitoba officially became an observer member of the Organisation internationale de la Francophonie, joining the ranks of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Quebec, Ontario and, of course, Canada.

Honourable senators, I will close by inviting you to experience the Francophonie Summit for yourselves, since the next edition will be held right here in Ottawa and Gatineau on September 7 and 8, 2028. This will be the third time Canada has hosted this important gathering, following Moncton in 1999 and Quebec City in 2008. I look forward to seeing you in 2028 at the twenty-first Francophonie Summit.

Thank you.

[*English*]

VISITOR IN THE GALLERY

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I wish to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of Lyndsay Hayhurst, Associate Professor in the School of Kinesiology and Health Science at York University and York Research Chair in Sport, Gender & Climate Mobility Justice and Digital Participatory Research. She is the guest of the Honourable Senator Deacon (*Ontario*).

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

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

[*Translation*]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

AUDITOR GENERAL

COMMISSIONER OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT—2026 ANNUAL REPORTS TABLED

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the 2026 Annual Reports of the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development to the Parliament of Canada, pursuant to the *Auditor General Act*, R.S.C. 1985, c. A-17, sbs. 23(5).

[*English*]

SERGEI MAGNITSKY INTERNATIONAL ANTI-CORRUPTION AND HUMAN RIGHTS BILL

BILL TO AMEND—SEVENTH REPORT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL TRADE COMMITTEE PRESENTED

Hon. Peter Harder, for Senator Boehm, Chair of the Standing Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade, presented the following report:

Tuesday, November 24, 2026

The Standing Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade has the honour to present its

SEVENTH REPORT

Your committee, to which was referred Bill C-219, An Act to amend the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Act, the Justice for Victims of Corrupt Foreign Officials Act (Sergei Magnitsky Law) and the Special Economic Measures Act, has, in obedience to the order of reference of November 3, 2026, examined the said bill and now reports the same without amendment.

Respectfully submitted,

PETER M. BOEHM

Chair

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

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

STRENGTHENING CANADA'S DEFENCE SECTOR BILL

NOTICE OF MOTION TO AUTHORIZE NATIONAL SECURITY, DEFENCE AND VETERANS AFFAIRS COMMITTEE TO STUDY SUBJECT MATTER

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

That, notwithstanding any provision of the Rules, previous order or usual practice:

1. pursuant to rule 10-11(1), the Standing Senate Committee on National Security, Defence and Veterans Affairs be authorized to examine the subject matter of Bill C-40, An Act respecting production, procurement and investment in relation to national defence and national security, introduced in the House of Commons on October 6, 2026, in advance of the said bill coming before the Senate;

2. if and when the bill is adopted at second reading, it stand referred to the committee; and

3. for the purposes of its examination of the subject matter and its study of the bill, the committee 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.

[*Translation*]

THE SENATE

NOTICE OF MOTION TO RESOLVE INTO COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE TO CONSIDER SUBJECT MATTER OF BILL C-42

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

That, notwithstanding any provision of the Rules, usual practice or previous order, and without affecting progress in relation to Bill C-42, An Act respecting certain measures related to affordability and housing:

1. at 3 p.m. on Thursday, December 3, 2026, the Senate resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole on the subject matter of the bill;

2. the Committee of the Whole receive the Honourable François-Philippe Champagne, P.C., M.P., Minister of Finance and National Revenue, and the Honourable Gregor Robertson, P.C., M.P., Minister of Housing and Infrastructure and Minister responsible for Pacific Economic Development Canada, accompanied by at most two officials each;

3. the committee rise no later than 70 minutes after it begins, excluding the chair's introductory remarks or any suspensions;

4. the ministers' introductory remarks be limited to a maximum of five minutes each;

5. if, during the Committee of the Whole, a senator does not use the entire period of 10 minutes for debate provided under rule 12-31(3)(d), including the responses of the witnesses, that senator may yield the balance of time to another senator;

6. if the bells are ringing for a vote at the time the committee is to meet, they be interrupted for the Committee of the Whole at that time, and resume once the committee has completed its work for the balance of any time remaining;

7. for greater certainty, all witnesses appear in person; and

8. for greater certainty, committees scheduled to meet on that day be authorized to meet, even though the Senate may then be sitting, with rule 12-18(1) being suspended in relation thereto.

GROCERY AND HOUSING AFFORDABILITY BILL

FIRST READING

The Hon. the Speaker informed the Senate that a message had been received from the House of Commons with Bill C-42, An Act respecting certain measures related to affordability and housing.

(Bill read first time.)

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

(On motion of Senator Moreau, bill placed on the Orders of the Day for second reading two days hence.)

• (1430)

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

NOTICE OF MOTION TO AUTHORIZE COMMITTEE TO EXTEND DATE OF FINAL REPORT ON STUDY OF THE STRENGTHENING OF FEDERAL INSTITUTIONS' ARTS, CULTURE AND HERITAGE RESPONSIBILITIES

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

> That, notwithstanding the order of the Senate adopted on Wednesday, October 29, 2025, the date for the final report of the Standing Senate Committee on Official Languages in relation to its study on the strengthening of federal institutions' arts, culture and heritage responsibilities in official language minority communities and in Canada be extended from March 31, 2027, to June 30, 2027; 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.

[*English*]

MODERNIZATION OF THE EMPLOYMENT EQUITY ACT

NOTICE OF INQUIRY

Hon. Wanda Thomas Bernard: Honourable senators, I give notice that, two days hence:

> I will call the attention of the Senate to the modernization of the *Employment Equity Act*.

QUESTION PERIOD

NATIONAL DEFENCE

UNDERWATER SURVEILLANCE

Hon. Yonah Martin (Acting Leader of the Opposition): Government leader, a recent CBC report revealed that, while Canadian companies Kraken Robotics and Cellula Robotics are selling advanced underwater surveillance drones to our NATO allies, Canada has yet to acquire these technologies, despite acknowledged gaps in our own maritime surveillance capabilities. Experts warn that these shortcomings leave our vast coastline and critical underwater infrastructure vulnerable to foreign interference and sabotage.

Given the growing threats facing Canada and our allies, why is your government failing to leverage proven Canadian-made technology to strengthen our underwater surveillance and protect Canada's sovereignty?

Hon. Pierre Moreau (Government Representative in the Senate): I disagree with the premise of your question, Senator Martin. Defence spending by this government is at a level unprecedented in Canadian history. The government is rebuilding, rearming and reinvesting in the Canadian Armed Forces to defend Canada, strengthen sovereignty and support our allies. Canada achieved NATO's 2% defence spending target five years ahead of the previous target. Budget 2025 committed $81.8 billion over five years to strengthen our military capability, infrastructure and personnel.

I think we're doing our fair share, and we intend to invest more because, along with our NATO allies, we are trying to reach the 5% investment goal.

Senator Martin: What is also unprecedented is that your government has already granted itself unparalleled authority to accelerate defence procurement and is now seeking even more powers through Bill C-40. If these measures are working as you say they are, why is your government still failing to deliver the capabilities our navy needs? Why should Canadians have confidence that more power in your hands will produce better results?

Senator Moreau: Since we are still in the pre-study stage of Bill C-40, there is no result yet because the bill has not yet been adopted. However, we're moving quite fast with investments to ensure that the Canadian Armed Forces receive the technology and all the equipment they need to ensure not only our sovereignty but the safety of all Canadians.

This is our government's commitment, and I can't remember any Conservative government ever going as far as this government has.

PRIVY COUNCIL OFFICE

MAJOR PROJECTS OFFICE

Hon. Jim Quinn: Senator Moreau, we learned today that Northcliff Resources has dropped a value-added plant from its New Brunswick tungsten Sisson Mine plans, its CEO stating that there isn't a current demand. An updated feasibility study from Northcliff drops an on-site ammonium paratungstate plant, stating that market conditions now favour selling the majority of tungsten concentrate directly to the United States.

Two months ago, the United States Department of War announced a $450-million investment to accelerate the manufacturing capabilities of Elmet Technologies. This includes investments in Elmet's operations in Maine, Michigan and Ohio, which manufacture and process tungsten, along with other advanced materials and components.

Given that the Building Canada Act lists as a factor for designating a project of national interest that it "strengthens Canada's autonomy, resilience and security," does today's news hinder the designation of such a project?

Hon. Pierre Moreau (Government Representative in the Senate): Canada's critical minerals and strategic assets are essential to our economic and national security, defence capability and competitiveness of our industry. The Sisson Mine represents an opportunity for re-establishing Canada's domestic production of tungsten and position Canada as a reliable supplier of critical minerals to the global market.

As you rightly pointed out, strengthening Canada's autonomy, resilience and security is one of several factors that might be considered when determining whether a project is of national interest. While I will not prejudge any decision regarding the designation of this project, the government's objectives remain unchanged: Develop Canada's natural resources, diversify our trading relationship and strengthen our domestic industrial capabilities.

Senator Quinn: Senator Moreau, I understand this is a decision of the proponent and not the government, but could this change the Government of Canada's analysis when balancing Canadian autonomy and diversification from the United States when compared to economic considerations?

Senator Moreau: Senator Quinn, that is precisely why, through Budget 2026, the government is investing in expanding both domestic critical mineral production and processing capabilities while building the infrastructure necessary to bring our resources to the global market. The government recognizes that developing commercially viable projects and building domestic value-added capacities are both important to Canada's long-term economic resilience.

GLOBAL AFFAIRS

CANADA INVESTMENT SUMMIT

Hon. Tony Loffreda: My question is for the Government Representative in the Senate.

The Canada Investment Summit in Toronto brought together investors from nearly 30 countries and generated close to $500 billion in new investment commitments. That is great news for Canada. Budget 2026 proposes $181.4 million to expand and invest in Canada's role in attracting global capital, which includes adding specialized financial-sector expertise and establishing a presence in key global markets.

Can the government provide details on how this investment will be spent?

Hon. Pierre Moreau (Government Representative in the Senate): The government is committed to attracting $1 trillion in investment by introducing the Productivity Mega Deduction and signing Foreign Investment Promotion and Protection Agreements with the United Arab Emirates. The Prime Minister convened the first Canada Investment Summit, which brought investors from 30 countries managing over $100 trillion in assets to invest here. It has already resulted in nearly $500 billion in new investment commitments to Canada — all because of that summit.

The government is now introducing the Productivity Mega Deduction, which will cut more than half the marginal tax rate on new business investments from 13% to 6.4%. That will bring investments into Canada because it will be the lowest rate in the G7.

Senator Loffreda: Thank you for that answer, Senator Moreau.

Budget 2026 also confirms that Invest in Canada will deliver future investment summits. When can we expect the next summit, and how will future events build on Toronto's momentum?

Also, given the government's ambition to attract an additional $500 billion in new private-sector investment over five years, what milestones will it establish to ensure that announced commitments translate into actual investments and help Canada progress?

• (1440)

Senator Moreau: I cannot give you a date for the next summit. I hope it will be as soon as possible. We understand that, with the mega deduction, the government is helping all businesses, big and small, and it will also help to attract investment because, as I said earlier, it will be the lowest rate among the G7 and probably half the one we see now in the United States. So it is very important.

EXPORT OF CANNABIS

Hon. Tony Dean: Senator Moreau, I'm following up on my recent question about Canada's successful exporters of medical cannabis. Of course, they are not allowed to export recreational cannabis, but they are among our largest exporters — $1 billion in exports this year; $2 billion expected next year. Germany and Australia are our largest customers. Yet, these exporters do not have access to the trade missions that the federal government periodically launches around the globe. That would, I'm sure, include Germany and Australia.

Can you tell us when the door will open to government supports and, in particular, access to trade missions for one of our most successful producers and exporters?

Hon. Pierre Moreau (Government Representative in the Senate): Well, let me first thank you, Senator Dean, for your continued advocacy on behalf of Canadian medical cannabis producers and exporters, a growing industry that is contributing to our economy, creating jobs and establishing a strong Canadian presence in the international markets.

I am pleased to clarify that licensed Canadian medical cannabis companies with the appropriate Health Canada authorization are eligible to receive support through the Trade Commissioner Service, including identifying market opportunities, establishing commercial relationships and navigating international markets. Eligible companies may also apply for financial support through the CanExport SMEs program. With respect to Team Canada Trade Missions, I want to reassure you, senator, that nothing precludes Canadian medical cannabis companies from applying to participate.

In my discussion with the minister's office, they expressed a willingness to engage directly with you on this matter to see how we can help our industry more.

Senator Dean: I am taking Senator Moreau up on his offer to put me in touch with the appropriate officials, and I'll take it up with them. I'm heartened by the response, and I look forward to this support being extended to our successful exporters.

Senator Moreau: I hope I will be helping you have that conversation directly with the minister. I think you're the best person to have that direct conversation with the minister, and it will be helpful for the Canadian industry.

[*Translation*]

HEALTH

HEALTH PRODUCTS SURVEILLANCE

Hon. Danièle Henkel: Senator Moreau, women undergoing hormone treatment with Prometrium are reporting that symptoms such as loss of sleep and even heavy bleeding are returning.

As of November 13, Health Canada had received 40 reports in 2026, almost as many as in the previous five years combined. Even so, Health Canada, which is responsible for drug surveillance, has not announced a recall.

Canadian women are entitled to more than an investigation conducted by the manufacturer itself.

How many more reports must there be before Health Canada intervenes directly? Will Health Canada carry out its own independent analyses and commit to publishing the results promptly?

Hon. Pierre Moreau (Government Representative in the Senate): I thank the honourable senator for her question.

I have some information to share with you. Most of the 40 complaints were received after November 6, and the minister is currently assessing the information recently received about Prometrium to determine whether it raises concerns about the product's quality, safety, efficacy or compliance and whether additional measures are necessary.

As with all health products, compliance monitoring involves a combination of regulatory requirements and monitoring activities based on the risks involved and on reports from various sources. If Health Canada identifies new information likely to affect the quality, safety or efficacy of a drug, the department will take appropriate action and share any relevant information with health professionals and the public as it deems necessary.

Senator Henkel: Senator Moreau, without a recall, patients who find that their treatment is no longer effective may have to purchase new capsules at their own expense, with no guarantee of being refunded.

Is it acceptable for women to pay twice for a drug whose quality is in question? When does Health Canada intend to ask the manufacturer to recall the affected batches?

Senator Moreau: In order for affected batches to be recalled, some form of non-compliance must be established. The department then takes action in accordance with its compliance and enforcement policy, which can include a recall, a stop of sale or even the seizure of products that remain available to the public.

My understanding is that checks are under way.

[*English*]

PHARMACEUTICAL DRUGS

Hon. Flordeliz (Gigi) Osler: My question is for the Government Representative in the Senate. In terms of dollars, Manitoba's top export to the United States is pharmaceuticals, worth about $2.9 billion annually. On November 3, Pfizer announced it would permanently discontinue its estrogen products in Canada — Premarin cream and tablets — for business reasons.

Pfizer's facility in Brandon supports family-owned ranches across Manitoba and Saskatchewan and currently produces the entire global supply of the active ingredient for Premarin. Yet, even as Pfizer discontinues the sale of Premarin in Canada, citing commercial unsustainability, the company's investing hundreds of millions of dollars into a new U.S. manufacturing facility. Prairie ranchers, Brandon workers and their families are facing uncertainty about the future of their livelihoods.

Has the government had conversations with Pfizer, and what assurances has it secured regarding its Manitoba plant and partnerships?

Hon. Pierre Moreau (Government Representative in the Senate): I cannot confirm that there are discussions going on, but I will certainly raise that question and bring it to the attention of the department and the minister herself. I will get back to you to see whether or not there are discussions going on, but, at this moment, I don't have that information.

Senator Osler: Thank you very much, Senator Moreau.

Canadian patients are losing access to medications made from a Manitoba ingredient, leaving many to face out-of-pocket costs or gaps in treatment. What immediate steps is the government taking to protect patient access to these medications, and will the government raise this issue through Health Canada's Multi-Stakeholder Steering Committee on Drug Shortages to coordinate formulary coverage for alternatives?

Senator Moreau: I can't answer the technical part of your question, but I will raise the question with the minister, and she will probably know where to ask questions if questions must be asked.

INDIGENOUS SERVICES

INDIAN ACT

Hon. Mary Jane McCallum: Senator Moreau, today I ask a question on behalf of the Southern Chiefs' Organization in relation to the delay by this government to pass Bill S-2, as amended by the Senate of Canada to eliminate discrimination and remove the second-generation cut-off without further delay. Will the Government of Canada commit to prioritizing Bill S-2 and provide a timeline to get it back on track at the House of Commons Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs? First Nations members in southern Manitoba and across Canada can no longer wait.

Hon. Pierre Moreau (Government Representative in the Senate): The government is now reviewing Bill S-2 as amended by the Senate. I cannot confirm whether or not the bill will be adopted with the amendment that the Senate brought to the bill, but it is well known that Minister Gull-Masty — and she repeated it many times publicly — is working on a solution for the second-generation cut-off. Will this be included in Bill S-2 or in a stand-alone bill? I cannot confirm that. It is for the government to decide it, and this decision has not been made at this time.

Senator McCallum: The continued impact of discriminatory provisions within the Indian Act, specifically the second-generation cut-off rule under section 6(2), continues the 150-year-old policy of eliminating "the Indian problem" by assimilating First Nations people into the non-Indigenous population. This policy undermines our right to self-determination and our integrity and dignity as a people, and it threatens our very existence. Do you agree?

• (1450)

Senator Moreau: What I agree with is that the Indian Act has a long history of paternalism and racism, which still harms communities. As we work to move beyond the Indian Act, reform must be guided by First Nations themselves. I know that First Nations are not on the same page concerning these reforms, like any other community in Canada.

In the immediate term, the government is taking action to address long-standing inequities by implementing the *Nicholas* decision and advancing federal legislative reform.

PUBLIC SAFETY

SEIZURE OF GOODS PRODUCED BY FORCED LABOUR

Hon. Salma Ataullahjan: Government leader, in 2021, your government pledged to eradicate forced labour from Canada's supply chains and ensure that Canadian businesses do not contribute to human rights abuses abroad. However, newly released records provided in response to a written question from MP Arnold Viersen revealed that, over the past decade, the Canada Border Services Agency has not intercepted a single shipment of goods suspected of being produced through forced labour outside of China. Meanwhile, experts continue to warn that products linked to forced labour are reaching Canadian consumers.

Senator Moreau, how can Canadians have confidence in your government's commitment to combat forced labour when enforcement has produced virtually no results?

Senator MacDonald: Good question.

Hon. Pierre Moreau (Government Representative in the Senate): Again, the commitment of the government is quite clear. We have increased the budget of the Canada Border Services Agency. We have increased the number of RCMP members hired by the government to make sure that our borders are safe. I cannot comment on whether or not goods were seized, but there is one thing that is sure: This government is investing to ensure that our borders remain safe, and once again, those investments are — like I said to Senator Martin in relation to the Canadian Armed Forces — unprecedented investments.

Senator Ataullahjan: Thank you for your response, Senator Moreau.

However, parliamentarians, human rights advocates and victims have raised concerns about forced labour imports for years, yet Canada has failed to intercept a single shipment linked to forced labour in a decade, while your government is deepening trade ties with countries accused of serious human rights abuses. How will your government restore credibility to Canada's commitment to human rights?

Senator Moreau: I had the opportunity to answer that question many times with Senator Housakos. Every time Canada is involved in discussions with other countries, whether we make trade agreements with them or not, we are raising the question of human rights. These are part of Canadian values. It is dear to the Prime Minister, the government and all Canadians.

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

BLENDED VISA OFFICE-REFERRED PROGRAM

Hon. Mary Coyle: Senator Moreau, this morning's *The Globe and Mail* reported that, in Budget 2026, the government quietly scrapped a popular and effective refugee program — the Blended Visa Office-Referred Program, or BVOR Program — which has given Canadians and their community organizations the chance to privately sponsor refugees who have been approved by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, or IRCC, since 2013. This program has helped thousands of refugees like Tareq Hadhad, the well-known founder of Peace by Chocolate from my community of Antigonish.

Senator Moreau, why did the government eliminate this program without warning the wide network of community-based refugee support organizations, especially given the remaining high demand for refugee resettlement?

Senator Moreau: I want to acknowledge the extraordinary work of community sponsors. Their commitment is real, and the stories of families who have built new lives in Canada through sponsorship are deeply meaningful.

The program required significant resources to support a small number of admissions. In 2025, the program admitted 82 people against a target of 100. The 2026 target was 50, and final figures are not yet available. I can also advise that all remaining applications will continue to be processed, and individuals already matched with sponsors will continue to arrive in Canada and receive support as intended.

I would like to add that Canada has international legal obligations with respect to asylum and respects due process.

Senator Coyle: According to Marie Thompson of the Open Harbour Refugee Association in Halifax, new arrivals succeed faster, find it easier to settle in and adapt to life in Canada with the kinds of community support provided through the now-discontinued BVOR Program.

Senator Moreau, will the government reconsider reinstating this successful program? If not, what will replace those effective supports provided by these groups?

Senator Moreau: Again, thank you for the question. While I cannot comment on reinstating the program, in Budget 2026, there is an additional $98-million investment for asylum processing. I want to assure you, senator, this is not Canada turning its back on asylum seekers or its obligations. We will continue to welcome them warmly.

GLOBAL AFFAIRS

INDO-PACIFIC STRATEGY

Hon. Yuen Pau Woo: Senator Moreau, Prime Minister Carney returned recently from a whirlwind tour of Asia, including the Philippines, Cambodia and Shenzhen, China. He made some important announcements, including the conclusion of negotiations on a free trade agreement with the Philippines and with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, or ASEAN, as well as tariff relief for Canadian exporters to China.

It seems like Prime Minister Carney is running ahead of official government policy on Asia, particularly the Indo-Pacific Strategy, which is now three or four years old. Can you tell us if the Indo-Pacific Strategy will be updated any time soon?

Hon. Pierre Moreau (Government Representative in the Senate): I have no information on whether or not it will be updated soon, but there is a real commitment from the Prime Minister to make sure that we are diversifying our trading partners, and this is a part of it.

Senator Woo: Yes, but our Asian friends are looking to the Indo-Pacific Strategy and wondering if it still reflects the current strategy — which is the right one, by the way. If, in fact, the strategy will be updated, can you find out if the government still considers, as it did in the original strategy, China as a disruptive power or if the government intends to name other countries as disruptive powers in the region?

Senator Moreau: As soon as I find out whether or not the strategy will be updated, I will get back to you with that answer.

[*Translation*]

INNOVATION, SCIENCE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

ONLINE ACCESS TO SEXUALLY EXPLICIT MATERIAL

Hon. Julie Miville-Dechêne: Senator Moreau, in a shocking investigation published yesterday, *La Presse* reported that pornographic AI deepfakes of some 30 Quebec public figures are circulating on the internet. Four of the victims have agreed to reveal their identities: MNA Ruba Ghazal and TV hosts Véronique Cloutier, Anick Dumontet, and Marie-Claude Savard. Ms. Savard had actually alerted the RCMP a few months ago, but she was told that there was really nothing that could be done, since it is not known where in the world these pornographic platforms are based. In short, she received no help.

My question is this: Bill C-16, passed in June, criminalizes deepfakes, but does Canada have the authority and, more importantly, the capacity to intervene outside its borders in order to get illegal material taken down off foreign platforms, as in this case?

Hon. Pierre Moreau (Government Representative in the Senate): Senator Miville-Dechêne, thank you for the question. My answer is somewhat technical, as it involves legal concepts. When an offence under a Canadian law is committed outside Canada but has a real and substantial connection to Canada, Canadian authorities may take action. In other words, the Canadian law can be enforced, which may require Canada to work with foreign authorities, depending on where enforcement action is needed. Where an offence is committed and has a substantial connection to Canada, the Canadian courts and the Attorney General have the necessary jurisdiction to take action.

Senator Miville-Dechêne: It would have been nice if the RCMP officer could have given this victim a slightly more courteous and helpful response.

Reddit, an American platform that is very popular in Canada, also hosted these disgusting deepfakes. Reddit removed them after being alerted by the journalist, but the images had already been shared without consent, causing harm to the victims and triggering a wave of abusive comments. Shouldn't we criminalize the possession and creation of these deepfakes, since no one —

The Hon. the Speaker: Thank you, Senator Miville-Dechêne.

• (1500)

Senator Moreau: The decision about whether to criminalize that must be made by parliamentarians. Currently, the protecting privacy and consumer data act, Bill C-36, will give Canadians a right to erasure, particularly to get deepfakes removed. AI developers and platforms must also prevent harm, and the government must continue to hold violators accountable for their actions. The government is committed to doing that —

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

[*English*]

ORDERS OF THE DAY

FOOD AND DRUGS ACT

THIRD READING NEGATIVED

On the Order:

> Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Brazeau, seconded by the Honourable Senator MacAdam, for the third reading of Bill S-202, An Act to amend the Food and Drugs Act (warning label on alcoholic beverages).

Hon. Peter Harder: Honourable senators, I would like to rise to say a few words about Bill S-202, which deals with alcohol warning labels. Before making any comments, let me commend Senator Brazeau for his work and dedication to this cause. I'd also like to acknowledge, with gratitude, the work of the standing committee that studied this bill and, indeed, the members of the Senate who have spoken at both second reading and third reading.

I want to share with you my concerns about this bill and why I will be voting against it. I do so very much recognizing the health issues that are raised in this bill. Indeed, the health experts who were heard in committee and quoted in this chamber make very valid health points. Public health issues related to alcohol consumption are serious and need to be taken seriously, but when it comes to public health issues that require legislation, it is my view that the arbiter of health interests needs to be within the public health sector, namely the Department of Health and its officials, who manage this process on our behalf, to hear all professional voices and make recommendations to the authorities who are responsible for public health legislation.

I want to be very clear. I'm not criticizing the health concerns that have been raised, but I am emphasizing the need to have health concerns balanced through the process that we have established as an act of Parliament with how the department exercises its responsibility for public health promotion and legislation with respect to the regulations around certain health products. I want to acknowledge the health concerns.

The second point I want to make is that it is very important, particularly when regulating sectors that are engaged in economic activity as well as health concerns, that the consultations be undertaken not just by a standing committee acting on its own. I know that the standing committee spoke in this chamber about the outreach it made to hear from the affected parties and, frankly, the lack of success in hearing from all of the groups that should be heard. Those groups themselves are used to the regulatory process and the consultations that are managed by third parties, not through Senate public bills in one chamber of Parliament. I want to speak to that because consultation is important for the credibility of action on public health matters.

The consultation process managed by Health Canada is, in fact, the kind of consultation process that has historically led to other sectors being subjected to either labelling or outright prohibition. That is the path that we should encourage a government to take if we believe that alcohol warning labels are important as a next step in this public health issue.

I want to focus a couple of remarks on the economic consequences for the group that is being targeted here. As you know, in a previous speech I spoke of my hometown, which has about 60 family-run wineries. These are small wineries, not big ones. Their margins are incredibly thin. The wine sector in Canada has undergone the Trump tariffs, which led the government just last week to announce a multi-million dollar support program to mitigate the effects of those tariffs. By the way, the beer sector has been negatively affected. I believe the consumption or export of Canadian beer is down 20% to 30%.

We're contemplating these measures in an environment that is not neutral in an economic sense. I believe it would be tone deaf for this chamber to act in a fashion that would have this significant economic impact, particularly at this point.

Colleagues, I would ask you to ask yourselves what the role of the Senate is in dealing with this matter at this time. Now, you can say, "Well, why didn't you speak at second reading?" At second reading, it was my hope that the committee itself might hear from the government, which would indicate its support for or against this measure, and that would inform it. That would be much like, if you recall, when Senator Nancy Greene Raine had a private member's bill that went to committee, and the government indicated its view on that measure and, in fact, supported it.

It is only at third reading that we can, in my sense, assess what the role of the Senate is. I have concluded that this measure is important as a public policy issue, but it is not appropriate to use the instrument of Senate public bills to conclude, at least in this chamber's view, that this measure should proceed without the usual consultation that one would expect from a measure that Parliament would adopt and without consideration of the economic consequences that the sector is facing at this time.

• (1510)

Colleagues, I invite you to vote against this bill if you believe that the process I've described is the preferable and usual process for governments to deal with these kinds of matters.

Hon. Jim Quinn: Senator Harder, will you take a question?

Senator Harder: Sure.

Senator Quinn: I am just wondering how this compares to the labelling on cigarette packages, which have been effective in reducing the number of smokers in the country and have possibly dissuaded young folks from smoking. Did it go through the Health Canada process, which seems to be the correct process?

Senator Harder: The tobacco industry is quite an interesting one because there was a period in which voluntary sector measures were adopted as early as 1972, I believe, but it was done through a legislative process, brought forward by a government bill. I believe it was Bill C-51 in 1988.

So it was done through a government process. Health Canada conducted that. It was highly contentious at the time, as you would expect, and it was the measure that first introduced labelling on cigarette packages. It was subsequently amended in 1997 to include vaping and other tobacco processes.

Your question raises a point that is very legitimate. There are opposing points of view on these issues, which need to be managed by the public health authorities within Health Canada. They need to engage the sectors affected, maybe not to satisfy their interests, but at least to give them a sense of having been heard in a fair setting, and the government should introduce a government bill, with the House of Commons leading the way.

Hon. Pat Duncan: Senator Harder, will you accept another question?

Senator Harder: Yes.

Senator Duncan: Senator Harder, as you're well aware, the Government of Yukon tried this. It put warning labels on alcohol bottles and suffered significant backlash from the industry. It was forced to take the labels off the bottles. How do you suggest that small governments proceed in bringing this sort of an issue to — as you said — the public health regulators?

Senator Harder: Senator, it's my view that this is the responsibility of the Government of Canada. If there are those who believe the Government of Canada should initiate this kind of process, they should speak to it and perhaps even do a study about it to engender a broader public debate.

The Senate public bill process is a very limited nail, and the Senate public bill is a particular hammer. I would suggest that those interested in advancing this cause engage stakeholders more broadly and, ultimately, secure a commitment from the government in the other place to advance legislation, just as they did with tobacco and other regulated health issues.

Senator Duncan: Just to follow up, Senator Harder, are you perhaps suggesting that a Senate public study, such as those we have heard referenced many times before, would have been a better route than a public bill? Is that what you're suggesting?

Senator Harder: I don't want to pronounce judgment on what others should be doing, but I would recommend to the Senate the example of the Kirby Report. If the Kirby Report had started with the statement, "I think we should do a bill, and we'll put in the bill everything that a bill should include," I don't think it would have had the kind of engagement of either the public or, frankly, the Government of Canada that led to the implementation of that report, some of which was legislative and some of which was simply budgetary. I would take inspiration from that.

Hon. David M. Wells: Thank you, Senator Harder, for your speech. You know that I'm the critic of this bill, so we're in alignment with the final outcome or the objectives of the final outcome of this bill.

I wanted to ask you about your question of whether this should be a Senate public bill or whether it should stay within the remit of the Public Health Agency of Canada or Health Canada. With respect to the bureaucracy that is the machinery of that operation, they may be medical professionals, but they may not be labelling professionals, alcohol professionals or addiction professionals. Whereas, when Senator Brazeau presented his bill, he had obviously done research, as all senators do when they present a bill or when they're the critic of a bill. I did more research than I ever thought I'd do on drinking and labelling. I talked to industry associations and people who were in favour of this as well. I accepted every call that came my way.

The fact that the sponsor did his research, the critic did his research and the committee did their research and brought in many people would, I think, be in the public interest because the public has a say in that. In the bureaucratic process, they probably have less of a say. What are your thoughts on that?

Senator Harder: Thank you for your question.

There's no doubt that Senate public bills and Senate studies evoke a certain level of research and informed debate among participating senators and witnesses who are called to testify.

I am referencing the mandate of the government when it contemplates regulatory matters that have such a huge economic impact on a sector and are responding to a particular health concern, which is a very legitimate process.

There are procedures of consultation of all the parties that have a view of being independent in their review of the issue. Ultimately, it's a cabinet decision being made with all the public health interests, economic interests and the agenda of the government, et cetera. It is that process of legislating that brings the parties affected or advocates, at least to a point where there's agreement that the process is open and fair, even if it doesn't result in the outcome that I would wish for, one way or the other.

It is a reputable and experienced way of dealing with these matters of contention, which is valid by its process. My view is that Senate public bills don't have that advantage.

Senator D. M. Wells: Wouldn't all those processes of public consultation happen in the regulatory process during the making of the bill?

Senator Harder: That's the problem because the regulatory process that would be consequential to this bill has already answered the question. It says, "There will be." So the regulatory process only determines the nature of the labelling. It doesn't ask the broader or primordial questions: "Is there a sufficient public health consensus? Is there a view that labelling is the way to go?"

That's the process that ultimately needs to be more broadly consulted on. Yes, the regulatory process does provide a framework for public engagement and the testing of stakeholders' views, but we're coming to a conclusion first and only then saying, "Now, let's consult." I don't think that's very credible.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Julie Miville-Dechêne: Would my dear neighbour take another question?

Senator Harder: Of course.

Senator Miville-Dechêne: I generally agree with the bill currently before the chamber, but I'm struggling to understand your reasoning. The very purpose of public bills is to tackle the government's blind spots, in other words, issues that have been overlooked.

In this case, Senator Brazeau garnered an extraordinary amount of publicity and media attention for such a technical issue. A lot of people took an interest, hence the public debate.

• (1520)

Here's what I don't understand: If Health Canada wanted to take action, nothing was stopping it then and nothing is stopping it now, so how —

The Hon. the Speaker: Senator Miville-Dechêne, the time allotted for debate has expired. Senator Harder, would you like more time to answer the question?

Senator Harder: Yes, please.

[*English*]

The Hon. the Speaker: Is leave granted for additional time?

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

[*Translation*]

Senator Miville-Dechêne: I don't see how this would prevent it from taking action. Why didn't Health Canada take action? That is a valid question. Perhaps the department was tied up with other matters. In any case, I think this is a good opportunity for Health Canada to launch one of those consultations you were talking about.

[*English*]

Senator Harder: Thank you very much.

There is no doubt that Senator Brazeau has succeeded in drawing public attention to this matter, and that's good, but what doesn't flow from that is that we should sign up for the bill. In my view, the process is flawed by its very nature and not by how it was conducted.

You asked about Health Canada. Health Canada is a department of experts and officials who follow the instructions of ministers, so they are not going to perform a consultation on a subject on their own flyer. This is an entirely political process. As a political chamber, we should — if it is the will of this chamber — find ways of conveying to government that this is a matter about which they should begin a broader consultation.

That is the way forward that balances the various competing interests of the public health community, of the economically affected groups and individuals and of the governance that is required to ensure that, whatever the decision of that process, it is viewed as legitimate and, therefore, in the public interest.

Hon. Pierrette Ringuette: I have one short question, senator. I appreciate what you're saying.

I've been told by some senators that putting labels on items has no impact. I look at the labelling of salt on products and particularly labelling for kids that says "beware of peanut butter."

Do you agree regarding the value and impact of labelling?

Senator Harder: Senator, I'd hate to get into my lack of attentiveness with respect to shopping, but let me answer what's behind your question.

All the labelling that you're referencing was labelling pursued by a government bill, debated in Parliament — in both houses — and adopted through a process of broad consultation, which led to legitimacy when it was imposed. This includes language labels on products.

The Hon. the Speaker: All those in favour of the motion will please say "yea."

Some Hon. Senators: Yea.

The Hon. the Speaker: All those opposed to the motion will please say "nay."

Some Hon. Senators: Nay.

The Hon. the Speaker: In my opinion the "nays" have it.

And two honourable senators having risen:

The Hon. the Speaker: I see two senators rising. Is there an agreement on the length of a bell?

I heard 15 minutes. I'm going to ask again: Is there an agreement on the length of a bell?

Some Hon. Senators: Thirty minutes.

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

The Hon. the Speaker: The vote will be held at 3:55 p.m. Call in the senators.

(The sitting of the Senate was suspended.)

(The sitting of the Senate was resumed.)

• (1550)

Motion negatived on the following division:

YEAS
THE HONOURABLE SENATORS

Arnold
Arnot
Ataullahjan
Aucoin
Audette
Batters
Boudreau
Brazeau
Burey
Cardozo
Clement
Coyle
Dean
Forest
Fridhandler
Gerba
Gignac
Henkel
Karetak-Lindell
MacAdam
McCallum
Miville-Dechêne
Moncion
Moodie
Oudar
Pate
Patterson
Senior
Simons
Woo
Youance—31

NAYS
THE HONOURABLE SENATORS

Adler
Boehm
Cuzner
Dalphond
Deacon (*Nova Scotia*)
Deacon (*Ontario*)
Dhillon
Duncan
Francis
Harder
Hébert
Housakos
Kingston
LaBoucane-Benson
Loffreda
MacDonald
Manning
Martin
McBean
McNair
Mohamed
Moreau
Muggli
Ouellette
Petten
Pupatello
Quinn
Ringuette
Robinson
Ross
Sorensen
Surette
Tucker
Varone
Verner
Wells (*Alberta*)
Wells (*Newfoundland and Labrador*)
Wilson
Yussuff—39

ABSTENTIONS
THE HONOURABLE SENATORS

Bernard
Cormier
Klyne
Osler
Ravalia
Tannas—6

• (1600)

CHIGNECTO ISTHMUS DYKELAND SYSTEM BILL

THIRD READING—DEBATE ADJOURNED

Hon. Jim Quinn moved third reading of Bill S-216, An Act to declare the Chignecto Isthmus Dykeland System and related works to be for the general advantage of Canada, as amended.

He said: Honourable senators, I rise with a renewed sense of optimism and resolve. I am hopeful for the Maritimes and the many who call it home as we approach what I hope is the finish line in the upper chamber on this bill, Bill S-216.

The second journey of this bill through the Senate has received extensive and exceptional analysis and scrutiny, and I believe that it's a testament to its ambitious aims, its complexity and quality but also to the work that we do here in the Senate of Canada as we, parliamentarians, labour to leave this country better for tomorrow than it is today.

My remarks today will mostly be a series of thanks and gratitude to those senators who have been involved in further study and scrutiny of the bill, as well as stakeholders — First Nations, Acadians and other Maritimers who have taken the time to speak out in continued support of this bill. Their firmness of purpose and due diligence have helped provide assurances to everyone here in the upper chamber that this bill is sound and, most importantly, constitutional.

Thank you to Senator McNair and Senator Ringuette, the latter of whom brought forward the idea of having clarity through the Standing Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs. Uncertainty resulting from the Nova Scotia court decision — that is, the court's decision to decline to provide an answer — provided a great deal of confusion for some senators, which has now been put to rest.

Thank you to the members of the Standing Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs. Their work on Bill S-216 was thorough, and their deliberations resulted in a report that affirmed, "This committee has found no legal reason for this bill to not proceed."

To further quote directly from the report:

> There was consensus from witnesses that it was within Parliament's power to declare a work "for the general advantage of Canada." The witnesses also indicated that the Nova Scotia Court of Appeal's decision to decline to answer the reference question pursuant to 92(10)(a) of the *Constitution Act, 1867* has no legal consequence on Parliament invoking the declaratory power.

The report reaffirmed the motions unanimously adopted by the legislative assemblies of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia and emphasized the importance of Indigenous rights and meaningful participation, which would be better addressed through a federal process with the passage of this bill, rather than the fragmented approach of dealing with two provinces.

I encourage all senators who have not read this report to do so.

Lastly, and in many ways most importantly, among my colleagues, thank you to Senator Arnold, whose amendment at the Standing Senate Committee on Transport and Communications during clause-by-clause consideration of the bill was well thought out and most welcome to firmly satisfy a remaining unease on one issue some of my colleagues have had, namely that Bill S-216 would somehow have an impact on the funding agreements signed by the Government of Canada and the two provinces.

The insertion of a "for greater certainty" clause has satisfied these concerns by making it clear as a matter of law that Bill S-216 cannot modify existing contractual agreements. That amendment reads:

> **6.1** For greater certainty, nothing in this Act affects the rights or obligations of the parties under an agreement entered into before the coming into force of this Act between His Majesty in right of Canada, the Government of Nova Scotia and the Government of New Brunswick respecting the design, construction or improvement of the Chignecto Isthmus Dykeland System or related works.

Again, thank you, Senator Arnold, for that.

Senators, I want to talk about what this bill does substantively for the Mi'kmaq peoples of the Maritimes and reconciliation in general.

According to Indigenous organizations Mi'gmawe'l Tplu'taqnn Inc., or MTI, which represents eight First Nations in New Brunswick, and Kwilmu'kw Maw-klusuaqn, or KMK, which represents the Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia, despite the shared view that the Chignecto dykeland system is already a federal work, the two provinces are treating it as two separate pieces of infrastructure for their environmental impact assessments and when discharging their duty to consult.

To quote Derek Simon from MTI:

> As I said, the Government of Nova Scotia is consulting with the Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia on what is happening on the Nova Scotia side of the isthmus, and the Government of New Brunswick is consulting with the New Brunswick Mi'kmaq on what is happening on the New Brunswick side of the isthmus. No one is taking the lead on a single unified impact assessment or consultation process that considers the isthmus as a unified whole, which is potentially where this bill comes in.
>
> When we talk about the provincial process, the New Brunswick environmental impact assessment process is quite dated, and I think the province would probably acknowledge that. They have attempted to shoehorn consultation and impact assessment on rights into that process but not really in a way that makes it very functional. There's no direct role for Indigenous knowledge in the process and no way in which it's directly considered. Unlike the federal process, the Indigenous groups and the Mi'kmaq, in particular, are not part of the technical review process, so they have no ability to make direct information requests of a proponent. They are represented on the technical review committee by the provincial Department of Indigenous Affairs, and there's no direct First Nations representative.

Senators, this bill has the potential to provide clarity and advance meaningful reconciliation at the same time. Why would we not seize this moment?

Separate from the use of the declaratory power, when responding to a question asked by Senator Batters at the Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee related to the opportunities created by the inclusion in the bill of Indigenous governing bodies and Indigenous organizations, Derek Simon from MTI said the following:

> In fact, the Mi'kmaq and MTI were engaged on the drafting of this bill and were involved in discussions that led to Indigenous governing bodies being included. It could allow for agreements to include Indigenous knowledge. It could allow for agreements that allow for shared decision making, with respect to certain aspects of how the work is conducted. It is very broadly drafted and provides a lot of opportunities for direct Indigenous involvement in this very important piece of work moving forward.
>
> As my friend Mr. Knockwood emphasized, the Mi'kmaq have a long history on this territory and, in fact, have lived through sea-level rise and climate shifts in this region. They have unique insights that they feel they could bring to this process in terms of dealing with climate change and how natural buffering and that sort of thing can contribute to climate change adaptation. It really opens the door, in our view, to a lot of opportunities to enter into agreements that would more directly involve the Mi'kmaq in these works moving forward.

• (1610)

Mr. Simon further added when responding to a question posed by Senator Prosper:

> I think Senator Batters also quite rightly pointed to the ability to enter into agreements directly with Indigenous groups. Our experience has been that, absent a piece of legislation, a policy or something that provides the federal government and federal bureaucrats with authority to enter into those types of agreements, they're very reluctant to do so. They usually need a cabinet mandate, specific legislative authority or a specific policy behind it, and no such mandate, legislative hook or policy exists with respect to the isthmus at the moment, as far as we know.

Even if senators disagree with the utility of the declaratory power, local Indigenous communities find that this bill is useful in that it has a practical purpose. We should listen and be responsive to these views. Thank you to the Société de l'Acadie du Nouveau-Brunswick, who passed a unanimous resolution in favour of the bill and who wrote to the committee and whose president, Gérald Arseneault, came to the Senate on the day of clause by clause at the Standing Senate Committee on Transport and Communications to reaffirm that support in its effort to protect this area of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. The presence of the Acadian people goes back to the 1600s, and for them, protecting this land of historic significance is paramount as well.

Municipalities directly adjacent to the area in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia continue to support this bill, as do the two provinces directly involved. Such widespread support gives me comfort as a senator from New Brunswick to proceed. After all, one of the roles of a senator is to represent their region, and it includes bringing forth issues that might otherwise not be heard. That same direction was given to me during the first passage of the bill in the Senate in the previous Parliament.

Colleagues, I will conclude with the reminder that the declaratory power is a valid constitutional tool, which can be used by Parliament to transfer works which would otherwise be provincial jurisdiction into federally regulated works. It has been used to clarify works that are clearly interprovincial or international and, therefore, within federal jurisdiction. Most recently, Bill C-15, which became law earlier this year, contained the High-Speed Rail Network Act, and it invoked the declaratory power via section 4.

Thank you all for your hard work, time and attentiveness to this issue. I urge you to send this bill to the House of Commons for the second time — and hopefully the last time — where our elected colleagues in the lower chamber will finally have their opportunity to deliberate and decide its fate once and for all. Thank you, colleagues.

(On motion of Senator Kingston, debate adjourned.)

CHRISTIAN HERITAGE MONTH BILL

SECOND READING—DEBATE CONTINUED

On the Order:

> Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Housakos, seconded by the Honourable Senator Martin, for the second reading of Bill S-249, An Act respecting Christian Heritage Month.

Hon. Wanda Thomas Bernard: Honourable senators, I rise today to speak to Bill S-249, An Act respecting Christian Heritage Month. First, full disclosure: I am a Christian. I am an active member of an African Baptist Church — the East Preston United Baptist Church. I'm sure that's not surprising. My spirituality and my faith have guided me through every challenging moment of my life, as well as the good times.

When I first heard about this bill, I admit that I questioned why we need a Christian heritage month. In many ways, Christianity already occupies a prominent place in our public life, our calendar, our institutions and our history. At times, it can feel as though every month is Christian heritage month. I always thought of heritage months as an opportunity for marginalized groups to be centred for a change, if only for that month. This is an idea I support wholeheartedly.

However, since this is the place of sober second thought, I listened carefully to the speeches of both the sponsor and the critic of this bill. Senator Housakos and Senator Fridhandler clearly articulated thoughtful reasons for recognizing the contributions of Christian communities to our country. They spoke about faith-inspired service, community building, compassion, charity, education and social justice. They also acknowledged difficult aspects of that history, noting the role Christianity played in residential schools and the profound harms experienced by Indigenous Peoples. That acknowledgement is important, and I fully agree with their reflections.

However, if we are to create a Christian heritage month, I believe we have a responsibility to tell the whole story. Absent from this discussion so far has been the role that Christian institutions and Christian theology played in anti-Black racism, the transatlantic slave trade and systems of legal racial segregation.

For centuries, passages of scripture were used to justify the buying and selling of African peoples. Churches in Europe and North America often stood silent in the face of slavery, and some actively defended it. While many courageous Christians fought for the abolition of enslavement, we must also acknowledge that Christian institutions were deeply entangled in systems that dehumanized Black people.

For example, in my home province of Nova Scotia, the church was not always a place of inclusion. Black people and communities faced exclusion and discrimination in places that preached love and human dignity. Racial segregation was a feature of schools — educational institutions. In fact, colleagues, I went to a segregated school until Grade 8. Racial segregation was also present in public institutions, including religious spaces

and practices. In some communities, Black people could not worship as equals. They had to sit in the balcony. Our ancestors could not bury our dead in the same cemeteries as White Christians. In fact, Black Nova Scotians eventually formed their own churches when they grew tired of segregated worship.

Richard Preston, an escaped slave from Virginia — who found his mother in East Preston, not far from where I live — organized the African United Baptist Association of Nova Scotia in 1854 to create space and opportunity for Black churches and communities to come together. Many scholars, including myself, have written that the survival of African people in Nova Scotia was because of their faith and Christianity. It is interesting to note that, despite the horror inflicted on them in the name of Christianity, they found peace, comfort and self-determination through their own Christian beliefs.

Honourable senators, these are difficult truths, but they are truths. If we are serious about making December Christian heritage month, we must make room for these truths to be heard.

• (1620)

We must also acknowledge the pain experienced by members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community. For many people, churches have been places of spiritual comfort and belonging. However, for many members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community, they have been places where they have experienced rejection, judgment, violence, discrimination, homophobia and transphobia. We cannot forget the history of church-led conversion therapy to "pray the gay away." Survivors recount the horrors of this unethical practice. Still to this day, many couples cannot access marriage equality in many churches. Many Christian 2SLGBTQIA+ people do not find acceptance within their church of choice and are forced to seek spiritual guidance elsewhere. Those experiences cannot simply be dismissed as historical footnotes. Some are still ongoing, and their harmful effects continue to be felt today.

As a Christian, I do not fear an honest accounting of our history. In fact, my faith calls me toward truth, repentance, humility and justice. The Christian story includes extraordinary acts of compassion, sacrifice and liberation. However, it also includes moments when Christians failed to live up to the values they professed. A heritage month cannot be a celebration without reflection. It should be an opportunity to learn, to remember and to commit to not repeating the mistakes of the past and to fighting for equality today.

Honourable colleagues, if Christian Heritage Month is to have meaning, it should not simply commemorate Christian influence. It should invite us to examine how that influence shaped our society, for better and for worse. It should honour the Christians who stood against slavery, racism, segregation, residential schools and discrimination and hatred. However, it should also acknowledge the institutions and individuals who helped to sustain those systems.

Honourable senators, we cannot erase this history, nor can we romanticize it. However, we can and must learn from it. Christian Heritage Month should be a month grounded, not only in celebration, but also in truth. Perhaps it can be a time to recognize contributions, confront harms and recommit ourselves to the values of justice, inclusion, dignity and love that many Christians believe are at the heart of their faith.

Colleagues, I initially had discomfort with this legislation, and I decided to let that discomfort lead my reflection and introspection. My reflection led me to the truths I have shared publicly today. I hope my decision to talk through my process inspires my colleagues to think critically about their own position on this bill.

Asante. Thank you.

Hon. Yonah Martin (Acting Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, "Let all that you do be done in love." That is I Corinthians 16:14.

These words capture, for me, the very essence of Christianity: love, compassion, humility, service and the responsibility to bring light, hope and healing into the lives of others.

I rise today with deep conviction and gratitude to express my wholehearted support for Bill S-249, An Act respecting Christian Heritage Month, sponsored by our colleague Senator Leo Housakos. This bill proposes that December be designated Christian Heritage Month in Canada.

Christianity is woven into the fabric of Canada's history. Its influence can be found in our institutions, schools, hospitals, charitable organizations, communities and, above all, the countless acts of kindness and service performed by generations of Canadians inspired by their faith.

Recognizing that heritage does not diminish the contributions of other faiths or those who hold no religious beliefs, nor does it suggest that one faith is more deserving of respect than another.

On the contrary, I believe that recognizing our Christian heritage reinforces the importance of religious freedom, a freedom that is fundamental to the Canadian identity and one we must never take for granted.

We are blessed to live in a country where Canadians are free to worship God, practise their faith and observe their traditions, or choose not to practise a religion at all. Our Charter of Rights and Freedoms protects freedom of conscience and religion. This freedom belongs equally to everyone.

As a Christian parliamentarian, my religion informs my values, guides my decisions and reminds me that public service is ultimately about serving others with integrity, humility and love.

Micah 6:8 reminds us:

> . . . what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.

These are values that transcend the walls of any church. They are values that strengthen families, communities and nations.

Honourable senators, my support for this bill is profoundly personal. I am sitting in the Senate of Canada in no small measure because of the service and sacrifice of Canadian missionaries and scholars who, more than a century ago, left the comfort and familiarity of their homeland to serve people they had never met, in a country they barely knew called Korea, then referred to as "the Hermit Kingdom" by the outside world.

On December 12, 1888, the young Canadian missionary and scholar James Scarth Gale was the first Canadian to set foot on Korean soil.

Sent by the University College YMCA at the University of Toronto, Dr. Gale would become one of the most influential Canadian figures in Korean education, language and Christian history. He devoted his life to learning the Korean language and culture, doing many good works and helping build bridges between two very different worlds. Among his many contributions, he compiled an important Korean-English dictionary and contributed to the beautiful and poetic translation of the King James Bible in Korean.

A decade later, in 1898, the Presbyterian Church in Canada formally established its mission in Korea. In the early 20th century, Canadian missionaries, Dr. Gale among them, helped establish Western-style schools where young Korean boys and girls could learn English and other subjects.

This is where the history of those missionaries becomes the history of my own family.

My father, Lee Sung Kim, was born in 1932 in the southern region of Pyongan Province in northern Korea, when it was one country, as it had been for millennia. He attended one of the Western-style schools established by Canadian missionaries. There, he discovered the English language and fell in love with it immediately, just as he would, decades later, fall in love at first sight with my mother.

At 13, my father dreamed of studying abroad. Imagine that: A young boy growing up in northern Korea in the 1940s, under the oppressive control of Japanese colonization, dreaming of one day studying in English overseas. He went on to become part of the first graduating class of Soongsil University, originally established in northern Korea. In 1954, just one year after the signing of the Korean War Armistice Agreement, he graduated with an undergraduate degree in Shakespearean literature.

• (1630)

It still amazes me that the seeds planted by Canadian missionaries decades earlier helped inspire my father's lifelong love of English, literature and learning.

His dream of studying abroad was eventually realized when he received a scholarship to pursue his master's degree in Chicago, Illinois. I was just 4 years old when he left Korea. Three years later, on my seventh birthday, we were reunited at Vancouver International Airport.

My father's journey, from his beloved northern Korea to our new home in Canada, was indeed a dream come true.

My father's most prized possessions were his Korean-English Bible and his well-worn Korean-English dictionary, both associated with the remarkable work of Dr. James Scarth Gale. They were always within reach in our living room. My father turned to them in his daily rituals of reflection, prayer, reading and writing.

He loved words, and he loved poetry. Even when he was resting, I would sometimes see him moving his finger through the air, as though writing with an invisible pen.

It is no surprise that my brother, my sister and I inherited his love of literature and his poet's heart. I spent 21 years teaching literature and poetry to thousands of students. My younger sister graduated with an Honours English degree and a minor in French from the University of British Columbia, or UBC. My brother has recently created a new form of poetry, and we are preparing a collection for publication in an anthology marking his sixtieth birthday.

Honourable colleagues, think about the extraordinary legacy of a single Canadian missionary who answered a call to serve in northern Korea — a Bible, a dictionary, a school, a young Korean boy inspired to learn English and a dream — and, generations later, a family whose lives were profoundly shaped by that encounter.

That is what legacy looks like. That is what the work of faith can accomplish.

My father was a Christian from birth. He passed away on March 29, 2008, a few weeks after his seventy-sixth birthday. He served as an elder of the Korean United Church, alongside my mother, Kye Soon Kwon, who served as an eldress. They served God and their church with humility, unwavering faith and extraordinary love.

At my father's funeral, Reverend John Woo shared a story that has stayed with me. One evening, while preparing his first sermon for the following day, he heard noises coming from the church sanctuary. Startled, he wondered whether someone had broken into the church. As he cautiously went to investigate, he discovered my parents cleaning the pews and preparing the sanctuary for Sunday worship. The church was operating on a tight budget and did not have a full-time custodian, so my parents had quietly taken it upon themselves to clean the church, week after week.

Reverend Woo described them as humble servants of God who served without recognition and without expectation of thanks. He became emotional as he recounted that story.

I understood why.

My parents did not serve because anyone was watching. They served because they believed that serving God's house and God's people was an expression of their love for God.

As Galatians 5:22-23 teaches us, the fruit of the Spirit is "love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control." That was the Christianity I witnessed growing up and the Christianity I experienced as an adult. I'm now part of an amazing community at Coastal Church, which was co-founded by Pastors David and Cheryl Koop in the heart of downtown Vancouver, at my home campus in Pitt Meadows.

Honourable senators, the church also played an extraordinary role in helping my family find a home in Canada. When we first immigrated, before discovering the Korean United Church in Vancouver, our family found a Baptist church near our home. From my earliest memories, we were the only Asian family at the church, but they welcomed us with open arms. It was a bit like that movie *Minari*, where a Korean family moves to the U.S. Midwest and goes to a church.

I didn't understand any English at that time, but I remember the first Canadian winter of 1972 and spending Christmas in the home of an elderly couple from that church. We were invited to share a traditional turkey dinner, something entirely unfamiliar to our young immigrant family. Our family received the most beautiful gift that year: Christmas ornaments made from decorated eggs, with the baby Jesus in a manger, shepherds with their sheep, angels and other Christmas scenes. My mother treasured those ornaments for most of her life in Canada.

That simple act of welcome meant more than those kind people could ever know. It was the church saying to a new immigrant family: You belong here; you are welcome; you are not alone.

Within a year or two, the Korean church that our family attended for decades thereafter became much more than a place of worship; as it did for generations of Korean Canadians, it became the heart of the community. It welcomed newcomers, helped families through difficult times, brought people together in moments of celebration and sorrow and provided practical support when it was needed most.

I have many fond memories of helping my mother prepare food for weddings, funerals, birthdays and other occasions when the church family gathered. In many ways, the church provided at the community level what government programs alone could never fully provide.

That is another important part of Canada's Christian heritage: the quiet, often unseen work of churches and faith communities in building stronger, more compassionate communities.

These good works have not been confined to Canada. Canadian missionaries, educators, medical professionals and church communities have served across the world, bringing education, health care, humanitarian assistance and spiritual hope to people in need.

Honourable senators, December is a particularly meaningful month to recognize this legacy. For Christians around the world, December is the season of Advent and the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ on Christmas Day. It is a time when we reflect on the greatest expression of God's love for humanity. The birth of Jesus represents hope, peace, love and the promise of salvation. It reminds us that, even in the darkest circumstances, there is light; even in times of suffering, there is hope; and even among strangers, there is the possibility of love and compassion.

That message is as relevant today as it was more than 2,000 years ago.

Bill S-249 gives us an opportunity to recognize the contributions of Christian Canadians throughout our history: missionaries, educators, health care workers, clergy, volunteers, charitable organizations and ordinary people whose faith inspired extraordinary acts of service and love. It also gives us an opportunity to reflect on the importance of religious freedom and to reaffirm our commitment to protecting it for every Canadian. We must never take that freedom for granted.

As someone born in South Korea, whose father was born in northern Korea before the Korean War, I am profoundly conscious of the extraordinary circumstances that brought my family to Canada. I see God's providence in the journey that brought me here. I see it in the missionaries who travelled to Korea, in the education my father received, in the faith my parents lived, in the generosity of the Canadian families who welcomed us and the —

• (1640)

The Hon. the Speaker pro tempore: Senator Martin, I am sorry to interrupt, but the time for your speech has expired. Are you asking for five more minutes to conclude?

Senator Martin: I ask for two minutes.

The Hon. the Speaker pro tempore: Is leave granted?

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

Senator Martin: I see it in the opportunities this country has afforded me, my siblings and our children.

I stand in this chamber with immense gratitude — to God, to Canada and to those generations of Canadians who came before me and served with faith and courage.

May we never lose sight of the blessings of religious freedom, the importance of faith, the power of service and the enduring value of love.

May we continue to build a Canada where every person — whatever their faith or beliefs — can live with dignity, worship freely and contribute to the common good without fear.

For all these reasons, I wholeheartedly support Bill S-249. I hope — perhaps as soon as Thursday, when we will hear more speeches — that we may support its passage to send it to committee and have it returned sooner rather than later, as December is just around the corner. I appreciate all the speeches that have been made and the painful past that we all recognize.

Thank you, senators, for giving me the extra minutes to share my personal journey to Canada through the grace of God.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

Hon. Mohamed-Iqbal Ravalia: Honourable senators, I rise today as the friendly critic of Bill S-249, the Christian heritage month act, which proposes to designate December as Christian heritage month across Canada.

I want to begin by thanking our colleague Senator Housakos for introducing this bill and encouraging us to reflect upon the significant contributions of Christian communities to Canada's history, culture and development.

Canada is a country enriched by diverse cultures, traditions and faiths. Over the years, Parliament has recognized several heritage months, honouring communities that have helped shape our national identity, including Sikh Heritage Month, Jewish Heritage Month, Islamic History Month and, more recently, Arab Heritage Month. These occasions provide opportunities to celebrate cultural traditions, deepen public understanding and recognize the contributions of different communities to Canadian society.

Christianity has played a significant role in Canada's development. Its influence can be seen in many of our institutions, charitable organizations and cultural traditions. In particular, Christian organizations have made enduring contributions to health care, education and social services. Religious orders have established hospitals and provided care to vulnerable populations, often in communities where formal services were limited. In my home province of Newfoundland and Labrador, this tradition of service continues through organizations such as The Gathering Place in St. John's, which provides food, health care and support to some of our most vulnerable citizens.

Colleagues, let me emphasize that these very principles have also been shaped by Indigenous traditions, other faith communities and secular thought. Recognizing Christianity's historical influence need not diminish these contributions nor our commitment to religious freedom and pluralism.

As Senator Housakos emphasized during his speech, recognizing religious heritage does not require the state to favour one religion over another. Rather, it offers an opportunity to deepen our understanding of the many traditions that have contributed to our shared national identity.

The choice of December is particularly meaningful for Christians, as Christmas is a time of spiritual significance, reflection and gathering. Traditions of generosity and goodwill also resonate with many Canadians during this time, regardless of religious affiliation.

As we consider this proposed designation, I believe it is worth reflecting on how Christian heritage month can contribute to greater public understanding and interfaith dialogue, while ensuring that Canadians of all faiths and those of no religious affiliation feel equally respected and represented.

Colleagues, we must also recognize that Canada's Christian heritage is not without complexity. We must acknowledge the role of Christian churches and religious organizations in running residential schools and the profound and lasting harms inflicted upon Indigenous children, families and communities.

I was particularly struck by Senator Varone's reflections on his conversation with Pope Francis and Senator Fridhandler's emphasis on understanding our history in its entirety. I thank Senator Bernard for a very thoughtful and reflective statement today. Senator Martin, thank you for your deep sense of spirituality, which is an example to all of us.

All your remarks remind us that meaningful recognition of our heritage requires us to acknowledge both its contributions and its more difficult chapters, with honesty, humility and a continued commitment to reconciliation.

When approached thoughtfully, Bill S-249 offers an opportunity to recognize the contributions of Christian communities while fostering mutual respect and a deeper appreciation of our shared history. Ultimately, recognizing our diverse heritage should strengthen not only our appreciation for what distinguishes our communities, but also the common values of compassion, understanding and respect that unite us as Canadians.

On a personal note, this bill resonates with me in a very profound way. I arrived on the Twillingate Islands as a new Canadian in 1984, the only Muslim in a sea of 5 Catholics and 3,200 Protestants. At the risk of this sounding like a Netflix series, I gingerly observed my surroundings, somewhat hesitant and a little nervous.

Guess what? Nothing happened.

The community embraced me, respected my faith and helped to shape my ongoing trajectory. My wife, Dianne Collins, is a deeply spiritual lady who is very engaged in her Christian faith. Through her and through the community that surrounds us, I have seen first-hand the quiet strength, practical compassion and steady moral compass that faith can provide in daily life.

That same spirit of compassion and service extended into my professional life, where the unwavering support of the ecumenical community helped shape my career as a physician.

In the demanding years of practice, it was often colleagues, mentors, chaplains and patients who modelled a deeper spiritual understanding of healing, one that treats not only the body but also the whole person. Their examples of service, perseverance and care for the most vulnerable shaped the kind of physician I became and the values I carried into every clinical decision. That lived experience leaves me with deep respect for the contributions that are reflected in human dignity, compassion, justice and the common good.

In my darkest moments — a crib death, the loss of a child to cancer, a motor vehicle accident with three individuals who were killed, a suicide, a pregnancy death — I turned to my friend Reverend Brian, whose spirituality helped me to wake up the next morning and go back to work. For that infusion of kindness, generosity and faith, I will forever be grateful.

Honourable senators, I thank Senator Housakos for bringing this bill forward. It evokes emotions in all of us — emotions that are variable and that reflect the complexity of religion — but I look forward to its further consideration and expeditious passage.

Thank you. *Meegwetch*. God bless.

(On motion of Senator Ataullahjan, debate adjourned.)

• (1650)

[*Translation*]

CRIMINAL CODE
INDIAN ACT

BILL TO AMEND—FIFTH REPORT OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES COMMITTEE ON SUBJECT MATTER—DEBATE POSTPONED

On Other Business, Reports of Committees, Other, Order No. 30:

> Consideration of the fifth report of the Standing Senate Committee on Indigenous Peoples (*Subject matter of Bill S-241, An Act to amend the Criminal Code and the Indian Act*), tabled in the Senate on May 27, 2026.

Hon. Michèle Audette: Honourable senators, I note that this item is at day 15. Therefore, with leave of the Senate, I ask that consideration of this item be postponed until the next sitting of the Senate.

The Hon. the Speaker pro tempore: Honourable senators, is leave granted?

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

(Debate postponed until the next sitting of the Senate.)

[*English*]

LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

BUDGET—STUDY ON LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS GENERALLY—SIXTEENTH REPORT OF COMMITTEE ADOPTED

The Senate proceeded to consideration of the sixteenth report of the Standing Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs (*Budget—examine and report on such issues as may arise relating to legal and constitutional matters generally*), presented in the Senate on November 19, 2026.

Hon. David M. Arnot moved the adoption of the report.

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to and report adopted.)

NATION-BUILDING VALUE OF TOURISM

INQUIRY—DEBATE CONTINUED

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. Tony Loffreda: Honourable senators, I rise to speak to Inquiry No. 8, which calls the attention of the Senate to the nation-building value of tourism in Canada.

I want to thank Senator Sorensen for initiating this inquiry and giving us an opportunity to highlight the importance of tourism to our regions. It also gives me an opportunity to showcase the natural beauty, European charm and cultural appeal of my hometown, Montreal. Today, I would like to take you on a seasonal journey through Montreal and its surrounding region.

Many of my friends associate the four seasons with Frankie Valli and his legendary band — we are giving away our ages here — but when it comes to Montreal, I would argue that we have perfected our own version of four distinct seasons, each with its own attractions and, certainly, no shortage of memorable performances.

First, let's talk numbers.

[*Translation*]

Tourism is much more than just a hospitality and entertainment industry. It is a true pillar of our economy, contributing to the vitality of our regions, supporting thousands of businesses and generating considerable economic spinoffs.

According to data from the department of tourism, Quebec welcomed 63.3 million visitors in 2025, including nearly 28 million tourists who spent at least one night in the province.

Tourism spending reached $16.8 billion, while total tourism revenue, as defined by the department, was just under $19 billion, an all-time high and a 4.8% increase over 2024.

The tourism industry also represents a significant source of jobs and businesses. According to some studies, in 2025, sectors associated with tourism accounted for more than 421,000 jobs and nearly 24,000 businesses across Quebec.

Quebec attracts visitors from far beyond our borders. International tourists spent $4.7 billion in the province in 2025.

At the heart of this success lies Montreal, our metropolis, which continues to shine on the international stage.

[*English*]

In 2025, Montreal welcomed nearly 11.9 million visitors — a 7.3% increase from the previous year. These visitors generated some $5.8 billion in tourism spending. This represents a significant economic impact for our hotels, restaurants, retail businesses, entertainment venues and, of course, our workers.

And 2026 looks even more promising. According to Tourisme Montréal, the city is on track to welcome a record 12.5 million visitors. Between May and July alone, hotel occupancy rates reached 82%, a 7-point increase from last year.

The diversity of our clientele also reflects our growing influence. The number of visitors from the United States increased by 7%, those from other Canadian provinces by 5%, and international markets also saw growth. Essentially, as Frankie Valli would say, people just can't take their eyes off us.

The city is also reaffirming its status as an international destination for business and major events. In June and July alone, it hosted 70 groups representing more than 50,000 delegates.

[*Translation*]

Before my appointment to the Senate, I had the privilege of serving on the board of directors of Montréal International, an organization that plays a vital role in the economic development of Greater Montreal by attracting foreign investment, international organizations, businesses and talent from all over the world.

Since its creation in 1996, Montréal International has helped elevate our city's international profile. In just a quarter century, from 2000 to 2025, the organization played a decisive role in diversifying the economy of Greater Montreal.

Its achievements include $38 billion in foreign investment, 1,400 investment initiatives, nearly 126,000 jobs created or retained, and support for more than 60 international organizations setting up and expanding in Montreal.

The organization's work serves as a reminder that a city's influence and appeal are not just about its tourist attractions, but also about its ability to attract the people, ideas, businesses and events that drive its growth.

All these numbers remind us that Montreal is a world-class destination. Plus, unlike some destinations that experience a brief peak season, Montreal has an undeniable advantage: It attracts visitors all year long, season after season.

• (1700)

[*English*]

Perhaps I'm a little biased, having been born and raised in Montreal. I love our city and all it has to offer, all year-round. I suspect anyone who has had the pleasure of visiting will understand why. On that note, I would now like to take you on that seasonal journey.

In Montreal, our appeal and charm, as I mentioned, run all year long. It is a four-season affair. Let's start with the fall. Montreal's spectacular autumn colours are a painter's delight. The Laurentians, just north of the city, offer the perfect backdrop for outdoor adventures. There are also the Eastern Townships. Closer to home, Parc du Mont-Royal remains one of our most iconic outdoor attractions, offering breathtaking panoramic views of the downtown skyline. Autumn also marks the beginning of another beloved Montreal tradition: hockey season. We all know that the Montreal Canadiens are practically a religion in Quebec. This year, the Habs are giving fans plenty of reasons for optimism, inching their way closer to the top of their division. Let's not forget our Montreal Alouettes, who have played for the Grey Cup for the past three years. They have won it eight times in franchise history.

But even as the leaves fall and the snow arrives, Montreal's four-season show is far from over. The city lights up with festive cheer as we prepare for the holidays with the Great Christmas Market and the Montreal Christmas Village. Late December, whether back in 1963 or today, is always a very special time for me. Old Montreal, with its cobblestone streets and European charm, is the perfect spot for some Christmas shopping.

Of course, winter brings visitors from around the world to the Laurentians for world-class skiing, just two hours north of Montreal. Resorts like Mont-Tremblant offer something for everyone, from outdoor adventures to fine dining, shopping and five-star accommodations. Tremblant welcomes approximately 2.5 million visitors annually. While many come for the day, roughly 40% to 45% stay overnight, providing an important boost to the local economy. With one in five visitors coming from abroad, Tremblant has established itself as an international destination. Senator Sorensen may feel Banff is home to the best slopes in Canada, but the Laurentians — or even the Eastern Townships, also a few hours from Montreal — can compete with the Rockies any day of the week, at least going by my skiing ability. After experiencing winter in the Laurentians, you'll be begging to come back for more.

Then comes spring, a season of renewal and excitement — and in Montreal, a little horsepower. Unlike the Four Seasons, who sang about watching the flowers grow, springtime in Montreal is about much more than blossoming flowers and beautiful green spaces, although we certainly have plenty of those. The Jardin botanique at Olympic Park comes to mind. Perhaps the biggest international draw is the Formula 1 Canadian Grand Prix in June. Canada is fortunate to have a place on the F1 calendar, and Montreal certainly knows how to welcome the world. Actually, I was president of the Formula 1 gala before being nominated to the Senate, and it attracted visitors from all over the world and from all sectors and industries. It was amazing. I was never more amazed by Montreal and by whom we can attract through our activities than I was that year. It has so much to offer.

Each year, approximately 350,000 people attend the race and its surrounding festivities. In 2025, Tourisme Montréal estimated the event's economic impact at approximately $162 million, including $110 million generated by visitors from outside Quebec.

And, of course, spring also means playoff hockey — most years. We can only hope that spring 2027 will bring something truly special: a Stanley Cup parade down Sainte-Catherine Street. What a night that would be.

[*Translation*]

Of course, with spring comes one of Montreal's biggest cultural events: the Francos de Montréal. Since 1989, this festival has become one of the most important French-language music events in the world. Year after year, it attracts internationally acclaimed artists and showcases new talent from here and abroad.

From free shows to major productions, from intimate performances to full-scale concerts, this festival draws visitors from across the French-speaking world and celebrates the richness and vitality of French-language music. It's held in mid-June, which means it sets the tone for what our metropolis is really famous for: festival season.

[*English*]

Then, honourable senators, comes summer, when Montreal really turns up the volume. Summer in Montreal is all about festivals, music and night life. Hundreds of thousands of concertgoers descend on the city, and whatever your taste, we have a festival for you.

Jazz? We have it. Comedy and stand-up? We have it; Just for Laughs has you covered. African, Caribbean and Latin music? Absolutely. And if you prefer jugglers, clowns and acrobats, Montreal Complètement Cirque takes over the city every July.

In August, Parc Jean-Drapeau, on Saint Helen's Island — itself a major attraction, with La Ronde and the Montreal international fireworks competition — becomes the stage for three consecutive weekends of spectacular music: Osheaga, LASSO and ÎLESONIQ have become must-attend events for music lovers from across Canada and beyond.

And, of course, one of my personal highlights is ItalfestMTL. For more than 30 years, Montrealers and visitors alike have gathered to celebrate Italian culture, food, music and heritage every August.

And just like that, our seasonal journey brings us full circle from summer back to the fall. If you haven't done so already, I hope you'll consider Montreal and its surrounding regions for your next Canadian getaway. Too often, Canadians look abroad before looking in their own backyard. Yet our country is vast, diverse and filled with extraordinary destinations. Thankfully, we've seen a growing appreciation for domestic travel in recent years, especially since the pandemic and amid ongoing uncertainty south of the border. That is encouraging news.

A recent bank report from last April showed that Canadians are spending more on travel at home than abroad, with domestic tourism spending increasing by 2.7%. Keeping more of those tourism dollars in Canada benefits our communities, supports local businesses and creates jobs.

Honourable senators, as you can see, while the Four Seasons may be a quartet from New Jersey that perfected the art of harmonies and unforgettable melodies, Montreal has perfected something equally impressive: putting on a spectacular show through every season.

Senator Sorensen's inquiry reminds us that every region of our country has something unique to offer. As Senators, we are proud ambassadors for our respective regions. However, I would argue that our best ambassadors are the visitors themselves. They are the ones who return home with stories to tell, photographs to share and memories that inspire others to follow in their footsteps.

So, my invitation to you is simple: Don't just listen to the music; come and experience the show. And remember, in Montreal, there's no such thing as an off-season.

In true Four Seasons fashion, I say, "Bye, Bye, Baby (Baby Goodbye)."

Thank you. *Meegwetch*.

Hon. Wanda Thomas Bernard: Honourable senators, I wish to thank Senator Loffreda for enticing us to Montreal. If this were a bit of a competition, I would say that now it is my turn to entice you to Nova Scotia.

I rise today to speak to the inquiry into the nation-building value of tourism. Thank you, Senator Sorensen, for introducing this inquiry. To all my colleagues who've spoken so far, you've really set the bar high. Thank you, senator, for encouraging us to think about tourism not simply as an industry, but also as a way of connecting people, places and stories.

When many people think of Nova Scotia tourism, they think of Peggy's Cove, the Halifax waterfront or enjoying a lobster roll while gazing out at the Atlantic Ocean — preferably near Lawrencetown Beach, which is a place for world-class surfing. Those are all wonderful experiences.

• (1710)

However, if I was planning the ultimate Nova Scotia tour to invite my honourable colleagues to, I would gently steer you away from those places, onto a bus operated by Kevin Brooks, owner of Ayomikun Bus Charters, and into a very full three-day immersion experience exploring African Nova Scotian history, culture and cuisine, organized by René Boudreau, owner of Elevate and Explore.

Now, while I consider myself to be a decent tour guide, these two African Nova Scotian business owners would provide you with a much better tourism experience. Their focus is simple: to promote Nova Scotia's rich Black history and culture while supporting Black-owned businesses.

I should warn you in advance that this tour involves very little free time and a considerable amount of eating. I should also disclose that both Kevin and René are from East Preston, and they are both my cousins. However, I promise that this three-day tour will be unforgettable.

African Nova Scotians have been helping build the province for more than 400 years, yet many of our stories remain among Nova Scotia's best-kept secrets.

When George and I travelled to England for the first time, everyone we met assumed we were Americans, and most were surprised to know that Black people actually lived in Nova Scotia and that we were born there. However, there has been growing awareness of the contributions of African Nova Scotians to tourism in our province for many decades now. George was a photographer and an artist. While serving on the Nova Scotia Volunteer Planning Board back in the 1990s, George contributed some of his photographs to tourism campaigns to help make promotional materials more reflective of the diversity of Nova Scotia.

More recently — have you heard this news? — *National Geographic* named Nova Scotia one of the best places in the world to visit in 2027. Did you know that? And they specifically highlighted our vibrant Mi'kmaw and African Nova Scotian heritage. I was so excited to see this news because it means that our contributions are finally being recognized. And today, dear colleagues, you get to explore some of that African Nova Scotian history with me.

The tourism industry in Nova Scotia would not be what it is without the dedication of small-business owners, and many African Nova Scotians contribute to tourism through entrepreneurship, like Kevin and René. Nova Scotia is home to more than 50 historic African Nova Scotian communities, with a heritage spanning over four centuries. This rich history attracts visitors from across Canada and around the world. We continue to welcome many visitors from the United States, even now, despite the trade war.

Colleagues, are you ready for an unforgettable tour? Let's board that bus. Our tour would begin close to my hometown of East Preston at the Black Cultural Centre for Nova Scotia in Cherry Brook. We would take our time exploring the permanent collections and learning about the many achievements of African Nova Scotians: church, politics, music, basket weaving and so many cultural artifacts. Visitors can also enjoy special exhibits, including one currently featuring George's photography. I admit to being a little biased, but I think that alone is worth the visit.

Then a short walk across the street brings us to Kinney Place for a tour of the business hub of Preston Township, owned and operated by Akoma Holdings. We would have lunch at the Opus Cafe in their cozy, family-centred space. Every successful tourism strategy eventually leads to food, and this tour is no exception.

After e enjoying lunch at the Opus Cafe, we would board the bus and head across the harbour to the Africville Museum in Halifax to visit the replica of the historic Africville church. There, visitors would learn about the forced relocation of Africville residents in the 1960s and the ongoing journey toward justice and reparations.

From there, we would visit the Delmore "Buddy" Daye Learning Institute, home to a beautiful community gathering space and a Black-owned bookstore. Then we would cross the street and visit the New Horizons Baptist Church, affectionately known in our community as the "Mother Church," founded by Richard Preston in 1832.

Then we would go up to Gottingen Street to visit the Viola Desmond beauty salon tribute, which sits on the street. From there, we would travel to the ferry to see the *Viola Desmond* ferry. And then we would stop for dinner at Mary's African Cuisine on Barrington Street. You might enjoy a plate of stewed oxtail on jollof rice, and that in itself would be an experience.

This, senators, brings day one of your immersion experience to an end, but then we need a good night's rest because we are preparing for our trip to New Glasgow and Cape Breton, replicating the trip that Viola Desmond took on that fateful day in 1946. A full day could easily be devoted to the legacy of Viola Desmond.

Day two of our journey would begin in New Glasgow at the Roseland Theatre, the site of her arrest in 1946. Then we would go to the Africentric Heritage Park for a lunch prepared by the women's auxiliary of the Second Baptist Church, the Black church in New Glasgow.

From there, we would continue on to the No. 2 Construction Battalion memorial in Pictou, honouring the brave Black soldiers who served Canada during World War I. By this point, senators, you may feel that you have learned enough history to face a final exam, but our tour is far from over.

We would go on to beautiful Cape Breton. That's where Viola Desmond was headed that day. No African Nova Scotian heritage tour would be complete without a stop at Melnick Hall in Sydney. This historic gathering place hosted Marcus Garvey during his 1937 visit to Nova Scotia. Standing in that space, senators, you would learn about Garvey's "back to Africa" movement, his message of Black pride, self-determination and economic empowerment and the influence that his ideas had on Black communities around the world, including here in Nova Scotia. We continue that work today.

If we have any energy left, we may pop over to the UNIA Hall in Glace Bay, where Garvey also spoke his powerful words about mental emancipation, which — did you know? — inspired Bob Marley's "Redemption Song." If I could sing and were allowed to, I would break into singing that song.

It is remarkable to think that, in the coal mining and steel plant communities of Cape Breton, people came to hear a global Black leader speak of dignity, possibility and hope. Senators, it is a reminder that African Nova Scotian history has always been connected to a much larger global story.

Of course, no tour guide would be worth their salt if they left Cape Breton without ensuring everyone enjoyed some local hospitality and cuisine. We might even stay overnight in Membertou before getting back on the bus and heading across Nova Scotia for day three of our trip.

Kevin and René would then take us to Shelburne County and the Black Loyalist Heritage Centre in Birchtown. This is one of the most significant Black historical sites in Canada. Here, visitors learn about the thousands of Black Loyalists who arrived in Nova Scotia after the American Revolution, seeking the freedom and opportunity they had been promised.

• (1720)

The centre tells an inspiring story of perseverance, but it also confronts difficult truths. You will learn about what is widely recognized as the first race riot in what is now Canada, a stark reminder that anti-Black racism has deep historical roots in this country. Walking through the replicas of the small huts many Black Loyalists called home is a haunting experience. These modest structures will help you understand the harsh realities faced by people who had escaped enslavement only to encounter discrimination and broken promises and to live through profound hardship.

It is not comfortable history, but it is essential history. It is part of our history. Tourism is at its best when it moves beyond postcards and picturesque landscapes, helping us to understand the people, struggles and stories that shaped a place. Sites like Birchtown help visitors better understand the roots of anti-Black racism in Canada while also witnessing the extraordinary resilience of those who built communities that continue to survive and thrive today. I'm grateful to stand on their shoulders.

After our trip to Shelburne, we head back to Halifax and stop at various monuments and heritage sites. You would learn about the Jamaican Maroons at Citadel Hill and the remarkable contributions of William Hall at the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic.

More recently, the development of community land trusts in African Nova Scotian communities has begun attracting attention from across Canada and the United States. Last month, my team and I had the opportunity to visit the Upper Hammonds Plains Community Land Trust, which is developing innovative cooperative-style housing. Similar initiatives are underway across Nova Scotia, in Weymouth Falls, Gibson Woods and North End Halifax. I'm sorry, senators, but we don't have time to visit all of them in three days. These projects demonstrate how communities can preserve their history, protect their land and create opportunities for future generations while welcoming visitors to learn from their experiences.

Nova Scotia has no shortage of extraordinary places to visit. Our coastlines are beautiful, our history is remarkable and our people are friendly and welcoming.

Honourable senators, I encourage you to put Nova Scotia on your list of places to visit in 2027. After all, *National Geographic* says it is one of the best places in the world to travel to in 2027. They highlighted our vibrant Mi'kmaw and African Nova Scotian heritage, and today, I have given you a little taste of what an immersion into African Nova Scotian heritage might offer. I guarantee that you will leave with a deeper understanding of Nova Scotia, a fuller appreciation of Canadian history, a renewed sense of the resilience of the human spirit and, probably, a fuller stomach.

Asante. Thank you.

(On motion of Senator Muggli, debate adjourned.)

FINAL REPORT OF THE CANADIAN YOUTH CLIMATE ASSEMBLY

INQUIRY—DEBATE CONCLUDED

On the Order:

> Resuming debate on the inquiry of the Honourable Senator Coyle, calling the attention of the Senate to the final report of the Canadian Youth Climate Assembly.

The Hon. the Speaker: I would like to inform the Senate that if the Honourable Senator Coyle speaks now, her speech will have the effect of closing the debate on this inquiry.

Hon. Mary Coyle: Honourable senators, I rise today on the unceded, unsurrendered lands of the Algonquin Anishinaabe Nation to exercise my right of final reply on Inquiry No. 11 on the final report of the Canadian Youth Climate Assembly.

Colleagues, in exercising my right of final reply, my intention is neither to end the discussion initiated by the members of the Canadian Youth Climate Assembly in presenting their final report to us, nor is it to have the final word on it in this Senate Chamber. That would be counterproductive, especially at this moment, when, just a couple of days ago, the nations of the world, including Canada, participating in COP31, the UN climate change conference, failed to reach an agreement.

We need more conversations leading to effective action on climate now more than ever.

My intention is to remind everyone of us about the main substance of the thoughtful work completed by the 33 members of the Canadian Youth Climate Assembly, work that is, today, more relevant than ever.

Before doing that, I want to first sincerely thank our Senate colleagues — the Honourable Rosa Galvez, the Honourable Marty Deacon, the Honourable Jim Quinn, the Honourable Tracy Muggli, the Honourable Pierrette Ringuette, the Honourable Jane MacAdam, the Honourable Katherine Hay, the Honourable Andrew Cardozo and the Honourable Joan Kingston — for their thoughtful and important interventions on Inquiry No. 11.

Your respect for, and engagement with, the work of the assembly members brought their efforts to life here in the Senate Chamber and helped elevate their contributions as important inputs on the critical public policy discussion on climate action. Thank you, colleagues, for your participation in this inquiry, and thank you to all colleagues who were present in the Senate Chamber for the assembly report presentation last fall, as well as

those who have participated in follow-up meetings with assembly members at committee, through our special Senators for Climate Solutions meeting and through your own individual efforts to follow up with assembly members.

Before I share the Canadian Youth Climate Assembly's recommendations from their final report and commit those to the permanent record of Senate proceedings, I just wanted to remind you of the purpose of, and basic information on, the Canadian Youth Climate Assembly.

Last year, Senators for Climate Solutions, in partnership with MASS LBP and Environmental Leadership Canada, helped design and carry out Canada's first citizen assembly on climate and the first in the world engaging 18- to 25-year-olds. We launched this historic effort in order to hear directly from young Canadians on the climate future they will inherit.

Speaker Gagné expressed it clearly when she addressed the Canadian Youth Climate Assembly members in this chamber.

She said:

> . . . your voices aren't optional. They are essential. And let's be clear — this is about more than consultation. It's about real participation. It's about bringing youth into the legislative process. Not just as advocates, but as partners. . . .

Citizen assemblies are an effective way of putting the public into public policy.

The 33 members of the assembly were chosen through a civic lottery process from the 700 who had applied in response to household mailings and social media calls. The goal was to have Canada in the room in terms of geography, diversity and representation; and we did, guided by a well-qualified advisory body, a solid curriculum involving 22 experts and a highly sophisticated deliberative process. These were designed. Assembly members met over the course of three months in four online sessions and five days here in Ottawa.

Making sure citizen assembly members are well informed is of central importance to the success of this deliberative democracy tool.

The youth came together to answer one critical question: What do young Canadians want Parliament to do to meet Canada's climate commitments in a way that reflects their values and priorities?

The 33 youths, from every region, who formed the Canadian Youth Climate Assembly are as follows:

Ajit Balasundaram, Brendan Muskaluk, Danah Tactay, Dylan Clark, Graham MacDonald, Hallie Robinson, Hargun Rekhi, Jessica Warren, Kelsey Green, Kessiena Kama, Lauren Jarvie, Liam Breckenridge, Lily Lloyd, Lister De Vitré, Louis Mercier, Lucas Sproule, Meena Thakur, Mohammad Akib Hossain, Natasha Teta, Nathan Perlman, Noel Ormita, Raphaël Boilard, Pearla Agbemelo Tsomafo, Rebecca Chakanza, Rebecca Chan, Sean Barnaby, Sebastian Krzyczewski, Stéphanie Belzile, Tari Wenzel, Toshibaa Govindaraj, Victoria Romero-Canjura, Wilfredo Cornejo and William Gosselin.

• (1730)

The young climate assembly members started the presentation of their final report in this chamber by saying:

> We are coming to you from the most rugged wilderness of the Northern Territories, the soaring mountains of the West, the golden fields of the Prairies, the rushing rivers of Quebec, the endless windy shores of the Atlantic provinces, and everything that's in between. We are all different, coming from diverse backgrounds, but we all call Canada home.

They continued:

> We hope that our time here today will cause change for all of us here and for future generations, and we hope that our recommendations go on to make an impact.

Together, these members of the Canadian Youth Climate Assembly developed an impressive, sophisticated and well-balanced report. Their 23 recommendations to parliamentarians — to us — are presented in three categories: preparing for climate risks, reducing emissions and transitioning from oil and gas, and strengthening climate accountability.

These are their recommendations on preparing for climate risks:

One, require an annual government-wide assessment of national climate risks and their economic implications.

Two, review agricultural policies with farmers and agricultural organizations and expand support for sustainable, resilient food systems.

Three, establish national standards and a federally led intergovernmental body to coordinate climate emergency planning and response.

Four, ensure long-term, accessible mental health supports for people and communities experiencing climate-related trauma and distress.

Five, expand incentives for deep retrofits and sustainable technologies in homes, businesses and public spaces.

Six, work with provinces and territories to rebuild climate-affected communities with durable, resilient and sustainable infrastructure.

All are very sensible.

Now here are the recommendations on reducing emissions in the oil and gas sector:

Seven, support transit-oriented development and frequent higher-speed electrified transit along existing corridors.

Eight, prioritize federal support for provincial and territorial projects that expand and electrify clean energy grids.

Nine, strengthen east-west and north-south electricity connections through interprovincial and interterritorial cooperation.

Ten, review industrial electrification initiatives and direct public investment toward technologies demonstrated to be reliable.

Eleven, advance Indigenous stewardship, land and resource management authority and leadership in renewable energy development.

Twelve, expand programs supporting sustainable, well-paid and secure employment, including opportunities specifically for young people.

Thirteen, protect vulnerable households from increased costs associated with the transition away from oil and gas.

Fourteen, support accessible, evidence-based information about energy and climate policy and counter misinformation.

Fifteen, reduce oil and gas subsidies and make any remaining support conditional on meeting established emissions targets.

Now here are the recommendations on climate accountability:

Sixteen, work with provinces and territories to introduce nature-based learning in schools.

Seventeen, strengthen access to reliable climate information by supporting independent local and community news and reviewing the operation of the Online News Act.

Eighteen, prioritize sustainable, local and lower-emission goods and services in federal procurement.

Nineteen, create a public reporting mechanism for transactions involving climate-related public funds.

Twenty, ensure Indigenous nations have equitable participation and decision-making authority in major projects, consistent with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, or UNDRIP.

Twenty-one, increase public awareness of the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development and strengthen the office's independence, visibility and public engagement.

Twenty-two, require major emitters, large corporations and public sector bodies to disclose Scope 1, 2 and 3 greenhouse gas emissions publicly.

Finally, and most importantly:

Twenty-three, engage young people early and meaningfully through inclusive, representative and accessible decision-making processes.

The assembly members concluded their oral report in this chamber by saying:

> Thank you for carefully considering our recommendations. We hope that our pleas are heard.
>
> We have our differences in regards to region, socio–economic standing, education, language, and indigeneity, but we found ourselves united by a common goal: to build a just, green, and sustainable future. We are ready for the challenge and eager to lead — with innovation, openness, and dialogue. This Assembly proved that youth are not only prepared to demand solutions, we are ready to be part of them.
>
> Lastly, we learned that parliamentarians are ordinary people who care about the future of Canada and are willing to go beyond partisan barriers to work for the common good.

With these words of the members of the Canadian Youth Climate Assembly, including their estimation of us, I would like to conclude with words from Senator Kingston's intervention on this inquiry:

> To the 33 members of the Canadian Youth Climate Assembly, I say thank you. You've done your part rigorously and gracefully. The task of restoring hope to your generation now rests where it should be, that is, with us.

Yes, Senator Kingston; yes, members of the Canadian Youth Climate Assembly; and yes, Senate colleagues, the responsibility for our climate future — the work for the common good — is in our hands.

Wela'lioq. Thank you.

(Debate concluded.)

SEVENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE KOREAN WAR YEARS

INQUIRY—DEBATE CONTINUED

On the Order:

> Resuming debate on the inquiry of the Honourable Senator Martin, calling the attention of the Senate to the milestone seventy-fifth anniversary of the Korean War years, from June 25, 1950, until the signing of the armistice agreement of July 27, 1953, the critical peacekeeping years that followed and the profound legacy of Canadians who served in the "Land of the Morning Calm" that endures to this day.

Hon. Marty Klyne: Honourable senators, I would like to thank Senator Martin for initiating this inquiry commemorating the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Korean War years. It provides an opportunity to revisit a chapter of our military history that, despite the sacrifices it demanded, does not always receive the recognition it deserves.

The Korean War is sometimes referred to as "The Forgotten War." For many Canadians, it followed so closely on the heels of the Second World War that its place in our collective memory has been overshadowed by the enormous sacrifices made

between 1939 and 1945. Yet, for the more than 26,000 Canadians who served in Korea, the 516 who lost their lives and the families and communities they left behind, it was anything but forgotten.

The conflict began on June 25, 1950, when North Korean forces invaded South Korea. In the aftermath of the Second World War, the Korean Peninsula had been divided along the thirty-eighth parallel, with Soviet forces in the north and American forces in the south. The withdrawal of those forces was followed by the establishment of separate governments and growing tensions, which ultimately erupted into open conflict.

The United Nations responded by authorizing a multinational military effort. Canada, as a member of the United Nations, joined 18 countries that contributed forces to the defence of South Korea. Canada's contribution was made across land, sea and air. Three Canadian destroyers were deployed in July 1950, beginning the naval contribution that would eventually involve eight warships. Their duties included protecting the United Nations fleet, blockading the coast, preventing enemy landings, bombarding targets and providing humanitarian assistance to isolated fishing villages.

• (1740)

Canada also played an important role in the air. The Royal Canadian Air Force's No. 426 Transport Squadron carried troops, supplies, freight and mail between North America and Asia. By the time its assignment ended in 1954, it had flown 600 round trips across the Pacific, carried more than 13,000 passengers and transported 3 million kilograms of freight and mail without loss.

Canadian airmen, serving alongside American forces, also participated in combat missions over Korea. On the ground, Canadian soldiers faced some of the most difficult conditions imaginable. They navigated mountainous terrain, valleys, rivers, swamps and rice paddies, as well as freezing winters and hot summers. Much of the conflict eventually became a war of patrols, raids and small engagements along entrenched front lines.

One of the most significant Canadian engagements came in April 1951, at the Battle of Kapyong. Canadian soldiers of the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry, alongside other Commonwealth and American forces, helped hold back a much larger Chinese and North Korean offensive. Their actions slowed the enemy advance, and the Canadians were awarded the United States Presidential Unit Citation for their gallantry.

The fighting continued for more than three years, until an armistice was signed on July 7, 1953.

Canada's commitment did not end there. Approximately 7,000 Canadian troops served in a peace support role after the armistice, with the last military forces deported in 1957. They came back for my birth.

While these contributions speak to Canada's role on the international stage, the Korean War is also a story of the communities across our country that sent their sons and daughters to serve. Saskatchewan was among them. Others were very young men joining the military when their communities faced economic hardship and limited opportunities.

For many Métis and First Nations men, military service represented a commitment to their country, despite the discrimination, poverty and social exclusion they experienced at home. To understand the significance of their service, we must also recognize the circumstances in which they lived. For many Métis people, enlisting was an expression of loyalty to Canada and a desire to support its allies. Military service also offered a path out of poverty, social exclusion and limited educational opportunities that shaped life for many in Saskatchewan.

Decades of marginalization had left many Métis families living on road allowances — they were often known as the "road allowance people" — without land or the security enjoyed by others. Poor health, including malnutrition and tuberculosis, also created barriers to enlistment for some.

Despite these circumstances, Métis men volunteered in large numbers for Canada's military conflicts, including the Korean War. The many stories preserved in *Métis Soldiers of Saskatchewan: 1914 to 1953* bring this contribution into sharper focus, revealing how military service was often a family affair. Brothers, cousins and uncles enlisted, and entire communities saw young men leave for war.

These accounts remind us that military service was not simply an individual decision but one woven into the lives of families and communities. Parents watched their children leave, siblings served alongside one another, and communities waited anxiously for news from the other side of the world.

Albert "Hap" Boyer was a Métis fiddler who joined the army in 1951. Wherever he was stationed, he entertained people with his music. In Korea, he formed a band, and an officer gave it a name: Hap Boyer and his Homesteaders. A stand made from painted wood and beer boxes carried that name. Through his music, Hap brought fellowship and a piece of home to those around him.

The experiences of Métis veterans are also part of a broader story of Indigenous service in Saskatchewan, one that includes First Nations veterans whose contributions deserve equal recognition. For example, Tony Cote was born on the Cote First Nation reserve in Kamsack, Saskatchewan, in 1935. After attending St. Philip's Residential School, he enlisted in the Canadian Army in 1952, at just 17 years of age. He served nearly six years as a bombardier in the 81st Field Regiment of the Royal Canadian Artillery, including 14 months fighting in Korea. He was released from service in 1958 and received the United Nations Korea Special Services Medal.

At an age when many young men are still finding their footing in life, Tony Cote was serving in a war on the other side of the world. His experience in the residential school system, followed by his military service, speaks to a life shaped by difficult circumstances and extraordinary resilience.

We also remember Wilf Anderson, a proud First Nations veteran from George Gordon First Nation in Saskatchewan, who served his country during the Korean War.

Courageous men served with courage and commitment while Indigenous Peoples continued to face profound inequalities in Canada. Yet, their challenges did not end when they returned home. Their contributions, like those of many Korean War veterans, went largely unrecognized for decades. The Korean War was long classified as a United Nations "police action" rather than a war. Veterans waited 40 years to receive formal recognition and medals for their service. This long delay underscores the importance of acknowledging their experiences, honouring their sacrifices and giving their stories the place they deserve in Canada's history.

Honourable senators, these stories of service and sacrifice are particularly meaningful to me because they're also part of my own family history. My mother was among the first to sign up for the Canadian Women's Army Corps. My father, Lawrence Klyne, enlisted in the Canadian Army on January 2, 1940, as a private in the Royal Canadian Army Service Corps. He served overseas during the Second World War in the United Kingdom, continental Europe and the central Mediterranean. He returned to Canada in August 1945.

After he was discharged in 1946, he struggled to find permanent civilian employment, so he re-enlisted in January 1948 and was promoted shortly thereafter to sergeant. Nearly six years after re-enlisting, on November 26, 1953, my father embarked for Korea, arriving on December 13. He served there until November 1954, when he returned to Canada and resumed his duties in Saskatchewan.

I have a photograph of him from that time, standing beside his Jeep in the South Korean countryside, with a sidearm strapped to his leg and at the ready. It brings those years of service into focus for me, not simply as a chapter in his military record but as the experience of a young man far from home, serving on the other side of the world.

His return to Saskatchewan marked the beginning of another decade: He spent approximately 10 years as an instructor and supervisor, much of that time at the Regina Armoury, at Camp Dundurn in Saskatchewan and at Camp Wainwright in Alberta. He briefly served at CFB Calgary, before returning to Regina, where he remained until his discharge in March 1966.

His military career spanned nearly 24 years. He served during the Second World War and in the Regular Force during the Korean War. His medals included the 1939-1945 Star, the Italy Star, the France and Germany Star, the Defence Medal, the Canadian Volunteer Service Medal, the United Nations Service Medal (Korea), the Korean Volunteer Service Medal and the Canadian Forces' Decoration. In all, he had a 10-medal set.

For me, these records tell the story of a lifetime of service. Beyond the dates, places and medals, they speak of a man who returned home, continued serving and spent years training and supervising others. My father's story is one Saskatchewan story among many. It connects the Second World War with the Korean War, and overseas service with the work of supporting Canada's military at home.

Behind every service record is a person, a family and a community shaped by that service. For those who served together, there were also bonds forged through demanding training and the hardships of life in the field, in the difficult terrain — rivers, swamps and rice paddies — of Korea. Those bonds, like the sacrifices themselves, remained long after they returned home. It's also in remembering those individual lives that we begin to appreciate the full cost of war. Of the 516 Canadians who died during the Korean War, some were killed in combat, some died of their wounds and others lost their lives in accidents or through illness. Many were buried where they fell, far from home, with families receiving news through telegrams. Their sacrifice was not confined to the battlefield; it was felt in communities across Canada, in Saskatchewan and elsewhere, by parents, spouses, children, siblings and friends.

• (1750)

Today, only a dwindling number of Korean War veterans remain. Their stories are an irreplaceable part of our history. We have a responsibility to preserve them, honour them and ensure future generations understand the sacrifices they made. It is recognizing the lives behind the uniform. It is acknowledging the courage of those who served, the sacrifices of their families and the strength of the communities that supported them. It is also an opportunity to reflect on the country we want to be: one that honours service, confronts its history honestly and recognizes the contributions of all who have helped shape it. Canada's involvement in Korea demonstrated the professionalism, capability and commitment of our Armed Forces across land, sea and air and remains an important part of our military heritage.

My father's service is part of that history, as are the many stories of Métis and First Nations veterans from Saskatchewan, whose contributions deserve to be remembered with respect and gratitude. Let us ensure that the Korean War is not forgotten, that the service of Saskatchewan's Korean War veterans is recognized and that the legacy of those who served continues to inspire generations of Canadians.

Thank you. *Hiy kitatamihin*.

(On motion of Senator Ataullahjan, debate adjourned.)

(*At 5:53 p.m., the Senate was continued until tomorrow at 2 p.m.*)

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