



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

Standing Committee on Finance

FINA • NUMBER 060 • 2nd SESSION • 41st PARLIAMENT

EVIDENCE

Monday, November 24, 2014

Chair

Mr. James Rajotte

Standing Committee on Finance

Monday, November 24, 2014

• (1530)

[English]

The Chair (Mr. James Rajotte (Edmonton—Leduc, CPC)): I call to order meeting number 60 of the Standing Committee on Finance.

Before I get into orders of the day, I understand, Mr. Cullen, you just wanted to make note of something for members of the committee.

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Thank you, Chair.

This is to give notice to the government that we'll be making notice of motion for the committee to request the Minister of State for Finance and the Minister of National Revenue to appear sometime around December 4. We're looking at that for the supplementary estimates that are assigned to this committee for review. We haven't yet slotted in a date for this, but it's something we're keen on.

We're going through those supplementary estimates right now, to be honest, to find out the different issues and topics. Those two ministers seem to be the most appropriate. Committee members will get notice, and maybe through Mr. Saxton and Mr. Keddy we can work on the ministers' schedules to see if that's possible.

The Chair: Thank you.

Colleagues, perhaps we can talk about this tomorrow morning at 11 o'clock, at our meeting then.

Mr. Nathan Cullen: Okay.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Cullen.

Our orders of the day, pursuant to the order of reference of Monday, November 3, 2014, are to continue our study of Bill C-43, a second act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on February 11, 2014, and other measures.

We have seven witnesses, four with us here in Ottawa and three by video conference.

First of all, we have Professor Steven Hoffman. He's from the University of Ottawa, Faculty of Law. We have, from the Canadian Public Health Association, the executive director, Mr. Ian Culbert. From l'Initiative citoyenne de vigilance du Port de Québec, we have Véronique Lalande, *la porte-parole*. From the Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada, we have Privacy Commissioner Daniel Therrien.

By video conference, first of all we have from Nunavut Ms. Elizabeth Kingston. By video conference from Whitehorse, we have the director of the Cold Climate Innovation centre from Yukon College, Mr. Stephen Mooney. Also by video conference, from Winnipeg, Manitoba, we have Professor Joel Kettner from the University of Manitoba.

Welcome to all of you, both here in Ottawa and by video conference. You each have five minutes maximum for your opening statement, and then we'll have questions by members.

We'll start with Mr. Hoffman, please.

Mr. Steven Hoffman (Assistant Professor, Faculty of Law, University of Ottawa, As an Individual): Mr. Chair and committee members, thank you for inviting me to make submissions about Bill C-43 concerning changes to the Public Health Agency of Canada Act.

By way of background, I'm an assistant professor of law and director of the global strategy lab at the University of Ottawa. My research focuses on global health governance and institutional design.

Based on my research, it's clear that our chief public health officer needs an independent voice and the ability to speak scientific truth to members of the public and to those in power. This bill, in splitting the chief public health officer's role in two—one part technical, one part administrative—removes the little independence this position once offered. This bill achieves this effect by demoting the chief public health officer from his current deputy minister rank, by removing his direct line to the minister, by making him subservient to a bureaucratic agency president, and by eliminating reimbursement for his public activities.

Any loss of independence matters because it erodes the trust that we can all place in our chief public health officer of Canada. In reviewing this bill, it seems to me that we've forgotten the harsh lessons of SARS. It was just 11 years ago, in 2003, when the World Health Organization slapped Toronto with a travel advisory, costing that city \$2 billion and 28,000 jobs. That's a lot of money and a lot of jobs. This loss was not because of the number of SARS cases. Singapore had a similar number. The loss was because the federal government did not have a trusted public health leader who could effectively coordinate with the provinces and communicate the outbreak status with other countries.

SARS shone a light on the hurdles that Canada's version of federalism places before effective pandemic responses. Significant changes followed, including the creation of the Public Health Agency of Canada and its chief public health officer. The big idea behind all of this was that we needed to build trust. Provinces and their public health departments needed a guarantee that the federal government's public health pronouncements were based on scientific principles, rather than political talking points. Unfortunately, this guarantee was never realized. The chief public health officer was made an officer of government instead of an officer of Parliament, thereby preventing him from exercising full independence, as our Auditor General or Privacy Commissioner would have. Let there be no doubt about this: in my mind that was a mistake.

But this bill takes us even further away from where we need to be. At least the original legislation gave the chief public health officer some independent powers to speak and be reimbursed for those public activities. This encouraged the provinces to buy into a nationally directed system. The removal of these limited independent powers is not helpful. On this basis, demotion and politicization of the chief public health officer is undoubtedly a wrong-headed move. With an Ebola outbreak raging in West Africa, it seems that this isn't the right time to be weakening our national public health infrastructure. This change would make us less prepared for Ebola and other diseases like it.

I understand that last week this committee heard contradicting testimony from the new chief public health officer. I understand he said that shrugging off managerial oversight of the agency would free him to focus on providing scientific advice. He might win back some of his time, but I think we all need to ask this question. After his demotion, will anybody be listening to him? Will his bureaucratic boss even allow him to speak?

Ultimately, if this change really must go forward, I would suggest two very small revisions that would lessen its harm.

The first is to add a provision granting scientific independence to the chief public health officer and legislatively allowing him to speak without political interference.

The second is to just drop section 258 that would remove the reimbursement for the chief public health officer in performing his public duties.

These two small changes would ensure that the chief public health officer could serve that interprovincial coordination function that was shown to be so important in SARS, and ultimately be trusted by all Canadians.

I would have suggested a third small revision, to maintain the chief public health officer's deputy minister rank, which is important for him to access federal decision-making tables, but I think I'm already pushing my luck by suggesting any changes at all.

Just to conclude, in coming here today my only hope is that we won't need another SARS or Ebola in Canada to make us realize the harm that the proposed changes would cause. I implore you to do whatever you can to minimize the bill's damage. We would all be less safe with these proposed changes, and we're all going to suffer the consequences if the committee allows them to pass.

Thank you.

• (1535)

The Chair: Thank you for your presentation.

We'll now hear from Mr. Culbert, please.

Mr. Ian Culbert (Executive Director, Canadian Public Health Association): Thank you, Mr. Chair and committee members, for the invitation to present to you today.

I would like to be clear, first and foremost, that my comments and those contained in our written brief are not intended as a reflection upon any current or former employees of the Public Health Agency of Canada. We have only the greatest respect for all of them.

It is the position of the Canadian Public Health Association that the chief public health officer should continue to be the deputy head of the Public Health Agency of Canada and continue to operate at the deputy minister level. As such, we recommend to this committee that the amendments to the Public Health Agency of Canada Act proposed in Bill C-43 be withdrawn and that the consequential amendment to the Financial Administration Act also be withdrawn.

While we agree that there should be a division of roles and responsibilities between the administrative and professional sides of the agency, we feel strongly that the titular head of the agency must be a public health professional. The current structure was established based on the recommendations of the Naylor committee after the 2003 SARS outbreak. That committee was very specific in its recommendation that the agency should be headed by the CPHO and that the CPHO report directly to the federal Minister of Health. The Naylor committee reviewed the organizational structures in place for a number of different jurisdictions and felt that its recommendations represented the best option for Canada's national public health body.

In 2010 the position of executive vice-president and chief operating officer was created to provide administrative support to the CPHO. This change formally split the administrative and professional responsibilities of the CPHO while leaving the CPHO as the deputy head of the agency. Since that time that structure has served the agency and Canadians well.

Our concerns for the proposed amendments are as follows.

First, while the CPHO has the responsibility to promote and protect the health of Canadians, in the proposed structure the position would retain responsibility but have no authority to mobilize resources.

Second, the country's public health priorities must take precedence over bureaucratic priorities, but this does not preclude the executive vice-president and chief operating officer from being responsible for day-to-day operational and administrative duties.

Third, it is essential that the CPHO work closely with fellow deputy ministers at the federal and provincial/territorial levels. Under the current structure the CPHO has a seat at those tables by right of his or her position. Under the proposed amendments the CPHO could only be invited to those discussions, and only as an adviser so that he or she would not be taking part in the decision-making process.

At the end of the day, rank matters and these amendments will essentially strip the position of CPHO of its current rank.

Our final and possibly most troubling concern is that the new model would give both the CPHO and the president of the agency direct access to the minister. In the unfortunate situation where agreement cannot be reached between the CPHO and the president, the minister could be faced with contradictory policy advice and left in the role of arbiter. This model is not considered good practice in a modern bureaucracy and should be avoided.

During a public health emergency such as a pandemic of H1N1 or Ebola, the importance of evidence-based advice from the CPHO is clear. This advice, however, is important at all times as Canadians are increasingly concerned about the sustainability of their publicly funded health care system. Public health has at its foundation the protection and improvement of health and well-being of Canadians and, as such, its policies, programs, and initiatives are focused on keeping people out of hospitals and doctors' offices. If the CPHO does not have the necessary authority to direct agency staff and marshal its resources, his or her advice may not be worth the paper on which it is written.

The structure of the agency with the CPHO at its helm has been effective for the first decade of its existence, and there is no clear evidence that the proposed changes are needed.

Thank you.

• (1540)

The Chair: Thank you very much for your presentation.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Lalonde, you may go ahead. You have five minutes.

Ms. Véronique Lalonde (Spokesperson, Initiative citoyenne de vigilance du Port de Québec): Mr. Chair, members of the committee, for more than two years now, Initiative citoyenne de vigilance du Port de Québec has made it its mission to compile and distribute information on the environmental impacts of industrial activities at Quebec City's port. This is not a battle we chose; it was dropped on us, literally. What we did choose, however, was to come together as ordinary citizens to assert our most basic right: the right to raise our families in an environment where our health and quality of life are not at risk on a daily basis because one of our neighbours is unable to behave responsibly.

Today, we have more than 450 members, as well as 1,000 supporters, who are also involved in a variety of grassroots movements right across the country. We are united in our pursuit of one goal: requiring port authorities to dutifully respect their mandate of running a profitable operation while respecting the environment and surrounding communities. In response to all those who have all too often argued that ports, and thus the problem, are under federal jurisdiction, I have said time and time again what a tremendous step forward that would be, were it only true. The fact of the matter is that ports seem to be less and less under federal jurisdiction and more and more under self-control.

No doubt when Parliament created independent federal agencies to manage port sites and operations, its intention was to improve their management. Clearly, the powerful lobbies of the marine

industry, and related mining and oil and gas industries have repeatedly argued that fewer restrictions and more authority are essential to develop a marine industry that will ultimately benefit all.

Although we do not deny that ports generate economic benefits, a number of studies have downplayed those benefits, especially when it comes to handling and bulk storage activities. It is also troubling to note that the costs to the community are never taken into account when the real benefit is being worked out. In my community, this particular legal framework has led to major environmental lapses, lapses that are still happening as we speak.

In Canada, the average amount of nickel in the ambient air is approximately 1 nanogram per cubic metre of air, and 2 nanograms is the level considered safe. In Limoilou, however, residents have, for years, been exposed to levels hovering around 52 nanograms, with event-driven peaks of 1,670 nanograms. Regardless, no one has been able to do anything about it, or wanted to.

Although we have worked tirelessly in the past few years to bring to light an environmental disgrace, measurable progress remains less than stellar. I should point out that, as we speak, the port facilities are emitting fugitive particulate made up of an assortment of toxic substances. These contaminants are emitted into the environment, affecting people's health and significantly diminishing the quality of life of thousands.

The level of nickel in the ambient air in my neighbourhood is always well above the threshold considered safe. Quebec City's port authority still refuses to acknowledge or assume its responsibilities, even though a major project to expand the Beauport terminal is about to get under way. Despite being the project proponent, the Quebec City port authority will be in charge of defining the criteria and environmental studies, overseeing the evaluation process and eventually issuing the necessary permits. Nevertheless, over the past two years, the ministers responsible have continued to tell us that the Quebec City port authority has complete authority, that it has the situation under control and that they have total confidence in the members of the port authority's administration.

Like many communities around the country, we, as residents, have lost almost all trust in our port authority. Rightfully, we are calling on the government to tighten up the framework governing all port authorities to put an end to these lapses once and for all. And yet, the amendments to the Canada Marine Act currently being considered are intended to increase, yet again, the powers held by port authorities.

In conclusion, I must remind you that the first duty of elected representatives is, as I see it, to protect society's most vulnerable and ensure that everyone has the right to live in a safe environment. I urge you to consider the message that rewarding a delinquent industry with more powers would send to thousands of men, women and children who live close to port facilities and lack the industry's resources to plead their case. You would be telling them that, regardless of the consequences, it is acceptable to exclude certain industries from the proper legislative regime, favouring a specific regulatory framework for the sake of the bottom line. You would be telling them that it is absolutely fine for an organization to regulate itself, overseeing the enforcement of the very laws that are supposed to govern it. Not only that, but you would be telling them that ports are entities outside space and time, devoid of any ties to the communities they call home, and therefore, it is appropriate for the Canada Marine Act to be the only applicable legislation.

•(1545)

I humbly ask that you reconsider the proposed amendments in favour of measures that would subject Canada's 18 port authorities to stricter control, transparency and accountability.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you for your presentation.

Mr. Therrien, you may go ahead.

Mr. Daniel Therrien (Privacy Commissioner of Canada, Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada): Good afternoon, Mr. Chair and members of the committee.

Thank you for the invitation to present my views on the possible privacy implications of Part IV of Bill C-43. I have provided written submissions on various parts of the bill and would like to summarize my comments for you today.

With respect to division 17, which contains amendments to the DNA Identification Act, I agree that society is well served by intensifying humanitarian efforts to locate missing persons and identify human remains.

Creating a DNA databank is a reasonable way of achieving these objectives. However, I have some reservations about the extent to which the bill permits the cross matching of the proposed new indices for these humanitarian purposes with the existing crime scene index, or CSI, and convicted offender index, or COI, which serve law enforcement purposes.

When families provide the personal effects of the missing person or their own biological samples, they are doing so to find their missing loved one or to achieve a sense of closure. While the bill recognizes that the profiles of relatives can only be compared to the missing persons and human remains indices for these purposes, the profiles of missing persons should likewise be similarly restricted and not linked to the CSI and COI to serve law enforcement purposes.

If, however, the profiles of missing persons are to be matched against the CSI or COI, and any resulting matches to be used for law enforcement purposes, the relative who provided the personal effects of the missing person should be informed of, and consent to, this matching.

I am also concerned about provisions that would increase information sharing with foreign states. This again involves the cross matching of missing persons profiles with domestic and foreign crime scene profiles, potentially leading to the investigation of an offence in a foreign state that may not be one under Canadian law.

I would therefore recommend that these provisions to increase such sharing be removed from the bill.

•(1550)

[English]

Regarding division 24 concerning amendments to the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act and the temporary foreign worker program, I'm primarily concerned with expanded use and sharing of the social insurance number, or SIN, and enhanced authority for information sharing with the provinces. While it is appropriate for Employment and Social Development Canada to use the SIN for employment-related purposes, the bill is vague on the specifics of how the SIN will be handled, and it is not clear whether the SIN could be collected and shared beyond the employment context.

I would wish to be consulted on the content of the regulations, which will include details on the use of the SIN and enhanced authority to share information with provincial governments. I would also recommend that any SIN-related privacy issues be identified in comprehensive privacy impact assessments, and that any associated privacy risks be mitigated to the extent possible.

In terms of divisions 6, 10, and 11, in my view there do not appear to be significant privacy issues of concern raised in these sections. Indeed, one amendment would allow the CRTC to impose conditions to protect the privacy of persons using those services on persons who provide telecommunications services, other than Canadian carriers. I view this as a positive move from a privacy perspective.

Finally, divisions 9, 18, 27, and 28 appear to implicate some personal information. However, it is not evident that they raise any significant privacy issues.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Thank you very much for your presentation.

We'll now go to Ms. Kingston, please, for your five-minute presentation.

Ms. Elizabeth Kingston (General Manager, Nunavut, North West Territories and Nunavut Chamber of Mines): Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman.

On behalf of the NWT and Nunavut Chamber of Mines thank you for the invitation to speak to you today in relation to Bill C-43.

The Chamber of Mines is the industry association and leading advocate for responsible and sustainable mineral exploration and development in the Northwest Territories and Nunavut. We support the merging of CHARS and the Canadian Polar Commission as an appropriate efficiency measure that will assist in achieving the goals of the northern strategy.

We are eager to do our part to support this institution and help shape Canada's future through the advancement of Arctic science. The chamber could be a helpful broker in identifying those of our members who might be interested in partnering with the science and technology program to advance new knowledge creation in areas of mutual priority.

We have been a member of the CHARS advisory panel since 2011 and we're pleased to participate in the development of the science and technology blueprint. During its development we recommended that CHARS' research priorities focus on three key areas that affect our industry. The first is marine shipping. Virtually all new mines in the Arctic regions of Nunavut and the NWT will rely on marine shipping. We believe that new research in this area will show that responsible marine shipping is not harmful to the environment.

We like to think our industry helped Canada set a leadership role in Arctic shipping back in the 1970s when Canada joined with industry to support Arctic mining and marine shipping development. At that time the federal government took an 18% ownership share in the Nanisivik mine, supplying transportation and community infrastructure for the most northerly mining operation in Canadian history. It was that government that invested in the technological creation of the world's most advanced ice-breaking cargo ship, the *MVArctic*, to service the Nanisivik and Polaris mines.

It is that *MVArctic* technology that was the foundation of the latest advancement in Canadian Arctic marine shipping, the much larger and more sophisticated *MV Nunavik*, which recently successfully took a load of mineral concentrate from Arctic Quebec through the Northwest Passage to China. We hope that CHARS' work will help remove barriers to mining development, the goal being that years from now we will have determined that marine shipping to support mining is not environmentally significant.

Our second key area of interest is improved community health. We would like to see research with appropriate indicators that provide scientific evidence to support mining's contributions to healthier communities. Training and capacity building that has arisen from the CHARS project in and of itself supports resource development. For example the Nunavut Arctic College has developed an environmental technologies foundations program primarily to develop technicians for CHARS. However, some of these future potential graduates could also consider environmental management positions with mining projects.

Science literacy amongst the public is another mutual objective. With active research programs under way in the north involving community participation, it is more likely that the general public will have a greater knowledge of scientific methods and be better able to understand the assessment and monitoring results of mining projects.

A third key research priority for our industry involves improving baseline wildlife data for environmental assessment. CHARS has an

important role in supporting our advancing potential mines in filling the gaps in knowledge in environmental data. This data, particularly with respect to marine and terrestrial wildlife, will assist resource development companies in completing their environmental studies.

● (1555)

To conclude, we are pleased with a number of the legislative changes proposed by Bill C-43 in division 3, part 4, and expect they will be an incentive for increased mineral investment in the north. The chamber looks forward to future dialogue with the federal government as the CHARS institute is established.

That concludes my presentation. Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much for your presentation.

We'll now go to Mr. Mooney, please.

Mr. Stephen Mooney (Director, Cold Climate Innovation Centre, Yukon College, Yukon Research Centre): Thank you for inviting me today to share my perspective, opportunities, and interests regarding the Canadian High Arctic research station.

The Yukon Research Centre, located at Yukon College in Whitehorse, Yukon, is Canada's largest research and innovation facility north of 60. The YRC provides a broad array of programs and services with multi-year public and private financing. The Yukon Research Centre is a partner of CHARS now and is poised to be a key partner of CHARS well into the future.

The YRC integrates itself into all aspects of the pursuit of resources and sustainable development in the Yukon and the Arctic region. We are involved in information communication technology, mining, alternative energies, food security, cold climate housing construction, industrial applications, transportation systems, permafrost engineering, waste reduction, and synthetic fuels. In essence, the YRC initiative can be pursued in a manner that improves the health and well-being of people who deliver northern economies.

A recent example is our resources and sustainable development for the Arctic program, or ReSDA. This program looks at the social economy of northern communities to find ways to ensure that a larger share of the benefits of resource development in the Arctic stay in the region with fewer costs to northern communities.

For the past 14 years, the YRC's Northern Climate ExChange has been a leader in the north, building the capacity of northern communities to identify risks associated with a changing climate and to help prepare for those risks. Several rural communities in the Yukon have benefited from these reports related to climate change, and the city council of Whitehorse has adapted these findings within their community development plan.

Four years ago, under my leadership, Cold Climate Innovation, CCI, was established through the financial support of the Yukon government's economic development branch. We are focused on the development, commercialization, and export of sustainable cold climate technologies and related solutions for northern regions around the world. The CCI supports the partnership among applied scientific researchers, industry, and government dedicated to addressing cold climate and technology issues affecting northerners. The mandate of the CCI is to stimulate economic development in the Yukon through cold climate innovation and technology. We focus on these two statements to build an economy in the north, by the north, and for the north.

I've come to understand that the CCI business model and the innovation sector that I represent today do not fit into the traditional or standard definition of economic development in the Yukon. In building the CCI, I've come to believe that innovation is the biggest opportunity space in the northern economies.

Over the last two years, the YRC has offered support to CHARS through four separate initiatives, including the following. Using our proven methodology to conduct a community energy audit in Yukon communities, the YRC conducted and completed a comprehensive baseline on the energy usage within Cambridge Bay. Now CHARS has a baseline of energy usage for the community that will allow comparative measurements into the future.

Other initiatives include new techniques for wind power installation in remote communities, wind and solar monitoring, and also a very important heat recovery ventilation, HRV, study that will place up to 10 HRVs from three Canadian manufacturers in various communities in Canada's north. Six of these 10 HRVs are presently installed in homes in Cambridge Bay. The project goal is to develop the specifications for the most effective and efficient HRV and challenge Canadian HRV manufacturers to build the best-of-class HRV. These HRVs will be used in the new CHARS residential facilities and sold globally.

The Chair: You have one minute remaining.

Mr. Stephen Mooney: Thank you.

I also want to commend the numerous CHARS staff members I've dealt with over the last four years. Starting with the minister and his support staff in Ottawa and going on to the hard-working staff on the ground in Cambridge Bay, each and every person I've worked with has been professional and has demonstrated their passion to deliver the CHARS mandate. I would like to share a story with you that exemplifies this.

• (1600)

I was recently on a flight from Vancouver to Whitehorse and sat next to a man from Cambridge Bay who told me that he was impressed with the CHARS team during the community consultation process. He then went on to say that the CHARS blueprint was showing an exercise room and a daycare built within the facility. Then he questioned why CHARS would build this, since the community had an exercise room in the recreation centre, and that a daycare already existed. He was later impressed to see that these two items were removed from the design. They thanked him for bringing the suggestion forward, and told him that his suggestion was

appreciated and it was a great way for CHARS employees to become more engaged as community members.

I've also learned that the new—

The Chair: Could I just ask you to conclude, please, sir?

Mr. Stephen Mooney: In closing, I want to share that the YRC can help showcase Canadian expertise and collaborate in the exchange of tools and technologies with other northerners in circumpolar communities, and that innovation is the opportunity space that is the untapped northern economies.

The YRC is here to help make CHARS successful by delivering on every project we participate in, and we look forward to our continued partnership.

Thank you. *Masi Cho.*

The Chair: Thank you very much for that presentation.

We'll now go to Professor Kettner, please.

Dr. Joel Kettner (Assistant Professor, College of Medicine, Faculty of Health Sciences, University of Manitoba, As an Individual): Hello, Mr. Chairman, and thank you.

I'll very briefly say thank you for the opportunity to present at this hearing. I'm going to speak as an individual, although I'm affiliated with the university and with other organizations that I won't take the time to describe at this moment. I'm going to speak mostly from my experience as a provincial chief public health officer in Manitoba, which I was for 12 years, and from my work in public health in general.

I'm going to approach the changes proposed to the Public Health Agency of Canada Act from the perspective of how I think they might have impacts on the effectiveness of the chief public health officer in particular, but more broadly on the ability of the Public Health Agency of Canada to fulfill its roles and mission. I think many important points have been raised by previous witnesses, and I look forward to the question and answer period, where we can go into more of those in some detail.

I believe there are pros and cons in these changes, so I'm going to go through what I think are the most important ones, and I'm going to frame it on what I'm going to call "six functions" of the chief public health officer. I will look at each one and how they may be affected by the way the act is written now, and with the changes that have been proposed.

The first function is that of adviser to the minister, and of course in this case it's the Minister of Health. The old act specified that the role was to assist the minister and to be "the lead health professional" within the Government of Canada. I believe that has not changed. Specifically, there is now a clause that says the role is to advise the minister and in addition the president—this is the new role—of the Public Health Agency and that it should be "on a scientific basis". I think it could be a good thing to have made that more clear, because that is the role of the chief public health officer with respect to government, particularly through the minister to the government.

The second function is that of communicator to the public, a very important role that others have spoken about, because the act allows the chief public health officer to prepare and publish a report on any issue related to public health. That has not changed. I do not believe that the ability of the chief public health officer to communicate to the public freely and without direction by the minister—or now by the president of the agency, as proposed—should be changed. I certainly hope that it isn't changed. I'm also hopeful that the interpretation of "reports" is broad, and that includes all communications to the public and to anyone else that the chief public health officer feels he or she needs to communicate with.

With regard to the leadership of the agency itself, I think there are many models that exist across this country in the provinces and also around the world and, frankly, I'm not sure which is the best. However, I don't think this model that's being proposed necessarily diminishes the ability of the chief public health officer to continue to provide advice to government and also to influence the leadership and decisions in a collaborative way with the lead administrator, who has the deputy head status. As I think was pointed out, if the two of them can't figure it out together, they must have it resolved by the minister. That's actually the way it goes in public health departments of governments anyway, because in the act, as is the case in most provinces, it is the minister who is really responsible for government public health practice. That's I think mostly as it should be, because the political decisions that are most important in public health need to be made by elected officials and their governments.

As far as collaborating with other chief public health officers goes, I think that being a deputy minister potentially could be—and has been—a difficulty there, because other chief public health officers are not at that level. The ability to be equal collaborators and then bring advice through the conference of deputy ministers to the ministers in a collaborative way can be limited by having one of them designated as a deputy minister. Also, my observation and experience, without reference to individuals, is that being at the deputy minister level makes it even more difficult to speak freely and independently to the public.

•(1605)

Finally, I would like to just say this about the act itself. Where it needs most strengthening, or at least most use, is to recognize that regulations can be brought in to collect and analyze data across the country that so far has not been used. The agency itself has not had the power to coordinate and collect information, when needed, on a national basis to deal with a national issue.

I'll make one last point around the capacity of the chief public health officer within the agency. Whether this is written into the law or just understood as policy, I think it's very important for there to be a strong office for the chief public health officer, with a deputy chief officer and a staff including research assistants, communications people, and others who can ensure that those functions of the chief public health officer are preserved, no matter what.

•(1610)

The Chair: Thank you very much for your presentation.

We'll now move to members' questions.

We'll start with Mr. Cullen. You have seven minutes, please.

Mr. Nathan Cullen: Thank you, Chair.

First of all, thank you to our witnesses.

I think we should all agree, as committee members, that this outrageous headline in *The Hill Times* about our chair at the committee should read, "The Most Friendly Person to Meet With on the Hill" because he's meeting with everybody, apparently. We are all shamed, as committee members, that we don't meet with as many constituents and lobby groups as our—

The Chair: I will send more of them to your office.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Nathan Cullen: Oh, that's not exactly the intention of my intervention.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Gerald Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's, CPC): He'll send them with goodie bags.

Mr. Nathan Cullen: No, no goodie bags; the Ethics Commissioner wouldn't like that.

On a much more serious note, thank you to all of you.

To Mr. Therrien, I'm trying to understand exactly your concerns about this sharing of information, particularly the cross-matching that goes on, as imagined under this omnibus bill.

First of all, describe these if you can. I need these in scenarios. It's hard for me to contemplate these in the abstract. Who is it we're talking about here? Whose information would be shared? Are these criminals? Are these people suspected of criminal activity here in Canada, or outside of Canada? Are these people who have not been charged with anything? Who are we talking about?

Then I'll ask you about what kind of information we're going to be sharing with other countries.

Mr. Daniel Therrien: We're essentially talking about the DNA of missing persons, whether they be alive or dead. The proposal is to add a few indices to the existing DNA data bank, which currently relates to criminals, for the purpose of identifying human remains or locating missing persons.

Mr. Nathan Cullen: Why would we be concerned with this? This is something we as the opposition have called for, for many years, the DNA data bank for missing people. Why is this a privacy concern that you raise?

Mr. Daniel Therrien: I support the idea of having a DNA data bank to locate missing persons or unidentified human remains. The concern is in the cross-matching of various indices, some of which are for the humanitarian purpose of finding missing persons, back to other indices that deal with criminality, such that the DNA of a missing person provided by, say, a relative to identify the person in question could be cross-matched to criminal indices and thereby lead to law enforcement actions.

Mr. Nathan Cullen: You're supportive in broad terms of the DNA database for missing people. Your concern is that when DNA has been provided by a family member to the government, say, it is somehow then connected.... I'm sorry. I must have just missed the link here between that and the use of that DNA further to some other criminal activity. The person is missing.

Mr. Daniel Therrien: The bank is constituted of several indices, some of which deal with either convicted offenders or DNA collected at crime scenes. Other indices would now deal with the DNA of missing persons or persons who may be dead. All of this is put into, globally, a DNA data bank. The government would be able to cross-match the DNA in question.

Maybe to be clearer, there's a provision in the bill, which is proposed new subsection 5.5(2), which would actually limit the matching of DNA information provided by a relative so that it could be used only for the purpose of identifying a missing person. The provision explicitly says that the DNA of the relative of the missing person cannot be matched against the crime scene index or the criminal offender index. In that way, the distinction between the humanitarian purpose and the law enforcement purpose is made clear in that provision with respect to the DNA of a relative of a missing person.

What I'm suggesting is that the rule should also apply to the DNA of the missing person himself or herself.

•(1615)

Mr. Nathan Cullen: Again, forgive me for not being remotely close to an expert in your field, but the concern is that the DNA collected for one purpose gets used for another purpose.

Mr. Daniel Therrien: Exactly.

Mr. Nathan Cullen: Even if the purpose is to attempt to find a criminal who committed a crime, if some DNA was collected at a scene and it's cross-matched to DNA that was supplied by a relative, then it's an inappropriate use of what is private information.

Mr. Daniel Therrien: That is my contention, yes.

Mr. Nathan Cullen: Do you come forward to this committee with a recommendation that would create that greater certainty, i.e., that information collected for one purpose cannot be used for another?

Mr. Daniel Therrien: The simplest way to do this, I believe, would be to take that provision, proposed subsection 5.5(2), which applies to the DNA of the relative of a missing person, and apply the same rule to the DNA of the missing person himself or herself.

Mr. Nathan Cullen: Right. So if it's good enough for DNA that's been supplied by a relative, then the same protection—

Mr. Daniel Therrien: Should apply to the missing person.

Mr. Nathan Cullen: I see. Okay. So we'll look at a recommendation that....

What's challenging for us, just so our witnesses understand, is that the way the process has gone with this very large bill—it's 460 pages—we have begun already to submit amendments, and we're operating on a deadline that's already essentially passed. There may be a bit of a scramble to try to incorporate some of the challenges you've put forward.

The second question you have is with regard to the attempt to improve the temporary foreign worker program. You're concerned about the allowance of SINs being cast about. The government's trying to clean up a mess. There's been a problem with this program, as has been widely identified in terms of abuses.

Will any of the recommendations you're making to us today, in terms of amendments, weaken any attempt to make this badly misused program any better and more accountable to Canadians?

Mr. Daniel Therrien: I do not believe so. I'm not suggesting, actually, any amendments to the bill itself here. What I'm signalling is that there's a lack of detail as to the use of the SIN beyond the employment program. I'm signalling that future rules to be enacted in regulations or procedures may speak to uses of the SIN beyond the employment program.

I think there should be proper consideration of privacy issues for these secondary uses, but I acknowledge that it is reasonable to use the SIN for employment purposes.

Mr. Nathan Cullen: Okay.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Cullen.

Mr. Saxton, seven minutes.

Mr. Andrew Saxton (North Vancouver, CPC): Thank you, Chair.

Thanks to our witnesses for being here today.

My first questions are for the Privacy Commissioner, Monsieur Therrien.

Could you explain how Employment and Skills Development Canada, ESDC, is working with your office to ensure that the temporary foreign worker program respects the privacy rights of these workers while in Canada?

Mr. Daniel Therrien: You probably are referring to the fact that ESDC approached my office in 2013 to discuss the privacy issues related to this program. We acknowledge that there have been consultations by ESDC. However, what we're signalling today is that the bill speaks to regulations that provide for the sharing of information with provinces, for instance. We believe there's also sharing of information between federal departments, for instance, with Citizenship and Immigration, of course, and with the Border Services Agency. We would like to see a multi-departmental privacy impact assessment, not only one conducted by ESDC for the purposes of its own programs.

Mr. Andrew Saxton: Thank you.

Would you be able to explain some of the specific reforms our government is engaged in currently with the temporary foreign worker program to ensure that we always respect the privacy rights of workers?

Mr. Daniel Therrien: Well, as I say, there had been consultations in 2013 about the privacy issues related to these amendments.

Mr. Andrew Saxton: Perhaps you could explain to the committee what a privacy impact assessment is.

Mr. Daniel Therrien: A privacy impact assessment is an exercise whereby a department proposing a change to policies or procedures tries to determine the privacy implications of these changes to programs. This is a process whereby these questions are to be considered. Normally the department in question consults with my office to ensure that these considerations are complete.

It is ultimately for the department in question proposing to change a program or procedure to determine how to mitigate any privacy issues raised by the change in program or procedure.

• (1620)

Mr. Andrew Saxton: Does your office assist the federal government in completing these assessments?

Mr. Daniel Therrien: We provide advice to departments based on the information provided by the departments to us on the scope of the changes in question.

Mr. Andrew Saxton: Thank you very much.

My next question is for Ms. Kingston.

You're a member of the CHARS management committee. Why do you feel it's important for industry to be part of a government research initiative such as this one?

Ms. Elizabeth Kingston: We believe that the CHARS institute provides an excellent opportunity for partnering opportunities with industry. We share the common goals of economic development, protection of communities, and the enhancement of the capacity of communities to participate in our projects. We believe that research projects for shared mutual priorities can only benefit our projects and ultimately the communities of the north.

Mr. Andrew Saxton: Thank you.

Natural resource development is a growing industry in the north. Could you speak to the extent this business sector will have on the local economies...?

Ms. Elizabeth Kingston: I'll speak specifically to Nunavut. At this stage, the mining sector in Nunavut represents between 18% to 20% of the gross domestic product for the territory. That translates into potentially thousands of jobs in the coming years. The more we can do to enhance these projects and allow these projects to move forward through environmental assessment, the more mines and projects we can get rolling in various communities throughout the territories. That will allow previously unemployed people access to good and sustainable jobs in their communities and near their communities.

The most we can do to move projects through environmental assessment, with the research work that CHARS will conduct to help us do it, will ensure that our projects get off the ground. Therefore, we can employ more people, which we believe will add to the health and prosperity of communities.

Mr. Andrew Saxton: Thank you very much.

My next questions are for you, Mr. Mooney. How will the establishment of the Canadian High Arctic research station, or CHARS, as a year-round hub benefit northerners and other northern-based research centres like your facility?

Mr. Stephen Mooney: I think there's a multitude of ways. Number one is being able to test products out in Cambridge Bay in more extreme climates, and bringing international researchers together who can deal with northern issues, for more of "a pool of brains", I could call it.

CHARS isn't going to happen just in Cambridge Bay. There's going to be a lot of research that is going to be spun across the north. I think that is going to see a lot of economic development and stimulation in other communities.

Mr. Andrew Saxton: Very quickly, Mr. Mooney, how could the CHARS project strengthen Canada's leadership in Arctic science, technology, and innovation?

The Chair: Very briefly, Mr. Mooney, please. I'm sure we'll come back to it in later rounds.

Mr. Stephen Mooney: Sure.

This is a great step internationally. In Canada, this is going to be a world-class facility. One thing Canada needs is a presence in the Arctic, and this is what CHARS will deliver on.

The Chair: Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Saxton.

Mr. Brison, you have seven minutes.

Hon. Scott Brison (Kings—Hants, Lib.): Thanks to each of you for your interventions today.

You may be wondering in fact why we're talking about public health as part of a budget implementation act. If it makes you feel any better, we're wondering about the same question.

Mr. Cullen mentioned the challenge we have with budget implementation acts that are so massive in terms of the material covered. I think there is a consensus among the members on this side of the table that we would prefer to see measures related strictly to the fiscal framework of government and budgets as part of this. It would enable members of Parliament with even greater expertise than ours to engage directly with experts such as you on issues that are of great importance in terms of public policy but are not issues with which we necessarily have a great depth of experience, such as the area of public health.

That being the case, Mr. Hoffman, have you considered these changes to the governance over the chief public health officer's role in the broader sense of what some have called the muzzling of scientific voices within this government, not just in this instance but more broadly within government departments and agencies?

• (1625)

Mr. Steven Hoffman: Certainly that's what many of my colleagues have been talking about. Whatever the motivations for this bill and these changes are, concerns about that situation are deepened. We have a situation here in which the chief public health officer will no longer be able to exercise the same level of independence he once had. So in some respects whether the intention is to muzzle, the effect is that the chief public health officer as the chief public health scientist will no longer be able to speak.

My comments were really to highlight the fact that the demotion means he is less likely to be heard when he does speak. Of course now he reports to a bureaucratic agency president, which means that even if he wants to speak, he might not be allowed to. That's a big problem when we have a federal model in which not only does the federal government receive advice from the chief public health officer—of course that's an important part of it—but also our provinces need to have trust in him. The provinces have the majority of health responsibilities in Canada, and if they can't trust that the chief public health officer is basing his advice and public statements on scientific principles rather than political talking points, that's a big problem.

Hon. Scott Brison: Mr. Culbert, Mr. Hoffman talked about the potential politicization of the role. Do you think there is a risk of that for the future in terms of some of the changes we're making to the role? Will there be a heightened risk of politicization around issues in the future?

Mr. Ian Culbert: At the end of the day the CPHO was and will continue to be a civil servant, so there are challenges around that. In our form of government, politicians have the final say, and ministers have the final say on decisions. So to say that a position will become more or less politicized, you're talking about shades of grey, I would say.

When the Naylor committee made its recommendation, as Mr. Hoffman said, one of the options was to create a parliamentary officer, like the Parliamentary Budget Officer. But then once again you have a great spokesperson who is independent but lacks the ability to do anything. They could criticize or support or encourage, but they don't have the authority to actually make something happen.

There is no ideal situation, but the Naylor commission recommendation, and what we've been working with for the past 10 years with a public health professional as the deputy head of the agency with the appropriate bureaucratic support, is what we feel is the best solution if not a perfect solution.

Hon. Scott Brison: How does the governance structure proposed in this legislation for the chief public health officer compare with that of governing chief public health officers in other countries, for instance, in the United States? What would you say is the delta between how it's structured there and what is being proposed here?

• (1630)

Mr. Ian Culbert: The United States is a prime example. The head of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta, Georgia is both the professional head and the administrative head of CDC, with appropriate bureaucratic supports to ensure that the administrative responsibilities are taken care of. If you look at the British model, it is different. The chief public health officer there is simply an adviser. The same is true for Australia.

Practically every jurisdiction has come up with a unique model, which is somewhat indicative of public health. We develop models that are suitable to the environment in which we find ourselves.

Hon. Scott Brison: Mr. Kettner, you've stated, and I would agree, that in general of course there's ministerial accountability, ultimately, in terms of broad policy decisions. Is there also benefit to a very independent chief public health officer having a direct dialogue with

Canadians on issues, including potential pandemics and other areas of national health threats?

Dr. Joel Kettner: Yes, there's a very important benefit, and I don't see that the changes to the Public Health Agency of Canada Act that are being proposed alter that in any way. The chief public health officer can issue a report, is required to issue a report every year, and can issue any report on any public health issue at any time.

By the language, as I interpret it, it means that the independent views of the chief public health officer are not to be vetted by, directed by, or controlled by either the new president of the agency or the minister. That hasn't changed, to my understanding. It's important to keep that independent ability there.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Brison.

We'll go to Mr. Keddy, please.

Mr. Gerald Keddy: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Welcome to our witnesses.

Mr. Therrien, two questions that I'm looking for a bit more clarity on were ones that Mr. Cullen raised but I don't think was quite finished working on.

The first one is the temporary foreign worker program. You had some concerns about the sharing of social insurance numbers with the provinces. I'm just trying to think of why. We share information with the provinces on a regular basis. They have the majority of control and the regulatory regime over workers. We share it not just with provincial officials but with unions and other people interested in labour market agreements. Why the concern on the SIN in particular?

Mr. Daniel Therrien: The concern I'm raising is not related to the use of the SIN for the unemployment program but with the open-ended nature of the authority to make regulations, to share information with provincial governments for cooperation between the federal government and the provinces. That could be good, but depending on the scope of the regulations that would be made, that could lead to a problematic sharing of information.

I don't know whether the rules in question will be problematic or not. I'm just saying that the bill leaves a lot of discretion in the making of regulations. In the spirit of working with the relevant departments to ensure that privacy considerations are borne in mind, I'm asking to be consulted in future stages of the development of the program.

Mr. Gerald Keddy: I appreciate that, but you would agree that social insurance numbers in particular are shared now. I would think that information would be in the best interests of the worker vis-à-vis working with provincial authorities, labour groups, and anyone interested in the temporary foreign worker program. That information is fairly available.

Mr. Daniel Therrien: If the use is for the employment program in question, I would not have a problem, but again, the regulations could speak to any number of purposes not necessarily employment-related.

• (1635)

Mr. Gerald Keddy: Thank you for that.

The other question was on the profile of a relative's DNA when we're searching for missing persons. Your concern specifically is with the cross-matching of missing persons in foreign jurisdictions. Why, specifically? If that sharing of information led to the uncovering of another crime that had been committed, why not find that out?

Mr. Daniel Therrien: To be clear, my concern is not with respect to the exchange in a foreign context. My concern is with mixing the provision of certain information for humanitarian purposes with using information for law enforcement purposes, whether that is done domestically in Canada or whether it is done by sharing information with another government. The location doesn't really matter. There are provisions in the bill for inter-jurisdictional sharing. My concern is with mixing humanitarian uses with criminal law enforcement purposes, whether in Canada or internationally.

Mr. Gerald Keddy: I appreciate that. I would just question on missing persons—sometimes it's strictly a humanitarian case, but very often the criminal element is involved in that, so therein comes the sticking point.

Mr. Daniel Therrien: What I'm saying, though, is that I would put the missing person himself or herself in the same position as the relative. There is a provision already that recognizes that the DNA of a relative cannot be used, cannot be matched against criminal indices, presumably on the basis that information is provided for humanitarian purposes. I'm saying the same should go for the DNA of the missing person himself or herself.

Mr. Gerald Keddy: Thank you.

My next question is for Elizabeth Kingston with the Chamber of Mines. You talked a little bit about marine shipping and, especially with the advent of climate change and the lack of multi-winter sea ice in the Arctic region, the increase in shipping in the Arctic and the fact that we can continue shipping products throughout the Arctic in an environmentally friendly way with a very small environmental footprint. Can you just talk about that a little bit vis-à-vis the amount of ocean mapping that's done, where the shipping lanes would go, and if your group has been working with CHARS and other groups on that?

Ms. Elizabeth Kingston: Thank you. I'll answer the second part of the question first.

With respect to Arctic ocean mapping, that is actually one of the areas for which we would be looking to groups like CHARS and other research agencies, to help fill in some of those gaps. There are a lot of gaps with mapping in general in the north. It's largely an under-mapped or unmapped region of the country, so we would be looking for additional support and projects specific to that kind of research.

In terms of the shipping itself, the fact is that the waters will be open for longer periods of time, whether due to climate change or a warming climate or what have you. The fact remains that there will be more shipping activity that's going to be required as part and parcel of what our projects will need, to get our ore to market, but our ships and our processes are held to very high environmental standards, so we would like to have research that would support this belief. Our records have indicated that we generally ship using safe

mechanisms, and we would be looking for research that would support that initiative.

The Chair: Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Keddy.

We will go to Mr. Rankin, and colleagues, we'll continue with the seven-minute rounds. We should have time.

Mr. Murray Rankin (Victoria, NDP): Thanks, Chair.

Thank you to all of our witnesses.

I'd like to start with Professor Hoffman. We had the benefit last week of having the chief public health officer here, Dr. Taylor, who was excellent. We're very fortunate, as Canadians, to have such a talented individual before us. I suppose, like you, as a lawyer, I looked at this and had a very different understanding from the one he provided, in which he seemed to think there was no issue with independence. When I read it, I had exactly the same perspective as you did.

Your point about loss of independence as regards the old bill was something that caught my eye as well. The devil is in the detail in drafting, and I thought that Dr. Kettner made the same point very well when he said the chief public health officer has the ability to make reports and he hopes it's broad enough to do the big communication. Well, so do I, and that's the problem with the drafting of this bill. There's no communication responsibility. You have a person who is now subordinate to a CEO who is an official, and our model doesn't seem to provide that ability to go forth and speak.

Do I have the gist of what you're saying is wrong with this?

• (1640)

Mr. Steven Hoffman: I think that's exactly right. That's exactly my concern. I think it's particularly important in the context of a Canadian federal model like we have.

Mr. Murray Rankin: Yes. Your colleague Mr. Culbert, from the Canadian Public Health Association, put it well, I think, when he said that “rank matters”—being equal at the table or something—given this role we're supposed to create for this national figure.

I thought you also did an excellent job of reminding Canadians of the importance of this, of the health costs and of the SARS example, and why we want to improve things going forward. As my colleague Mr. Brison said, it's bizarre that we're talking about this in the finance committee in dealing with a budget bill, but there you go.

You talk about “demotion and politicization”. Those are very serious accusations. Could you elaborate a bit on why you say those are accurate characterizations?

Mr. Steven Hoffman: Well, it's clear that the proposed bill would mean that the chief public health officer is no longer the agency head, so that's a clear demotion. Even in the way that the current chief public health officer was hired, it's clear that it was meant to be a lesser role than what the previous chief public health officer had.

In terms of politicization, I wouldn't say that's happened yet. I'm not sure. But it's clear that the opportunity for it is there, certainly with the visa restrictions that were enacted on October 31 against West Africans interested in coming to Canada or, more recently, quarantine regulations against people, including Canadians who had been there or who intended to be there within a three-month period. That's something where we didn't see the chief public health officer making a statement, even though we had the World Health Organization and other countries criticizing Canada on the basis of public health.

Mr. Murray Rankin: Mr. Culbert, you made another similar comment in the context of the fact that these two people—the president and the CPHO—both appear before the minister and may have different views. You've pointed out, I think accurately, that Public Administration 101 says that you don't have two people, you have a hierarchy. Yet if such a dispute were to occur in the future in good faith between these two individuals, it would be for the minister to resolve.

You were careful and I think you appropriately said that it's the minister who has to take political responsibility in our system. I agree, but what if the chief medical officer of Canada thinks we have a bigger crisis than the bureaucrat and the politician think? Essentially, it's the politician who gets to decide whether SARS is a big deal or not a big deal at a moment in time, when maybe no one really knows. Is that not the concern?

Mr. Ian Culbert: I would say that's exactly the concern. Quite honestly, I'm less concerned about it during an emergency situation, at which point scientific advice is ignored at the peril of anyone who chooses to ignore it. It's during ordinary times that it is of greatest concern.

If I can speak directly to the question about public communication and the end report of the CPHO, while the CPHO will still have that report, the CPHO will no longer be deciding how many resources are allocated towards the writing of reports. If the CPHO has to write his annual report by himself, it's a report that's very different from what we've seen for the last 10 years.

Mr. Murray Rankin: On the point of communication, I know, and Mr. Therrien may also know, that there's been a big debate within the Office of the Information Commissioner of Canada about whether the language in their statutory mandate allows public communication. They still fight about it. They don't have it in their law and it's not been inferred because apparently the legal advice in the past has been that we can't publicize Canadians' rights of access. That's their advice.

We don't have anything in here that talks about the ability to publicize, not a single word, just reports, which, as Dr. Kettner says, we hope will be broad enough. It's really quite a scathing indictment.

I'd like to, if I may, ask you another question about the Naylor committee, Mr. Culbert. You talked about how the Naylor committee said that the chief public health officer should be the head and should have the responsibility to promote public health. We got half of that, I suppose, right? We did not get the head, but we have a person with responsibility. I'm trying to marry that up with the point about resources that Professor Hoffman mentioned.

You said they're dropping section 258, as they've done in division 20, and this doesn't allow for "reimbursement". Could you elaborate a bit on what you meant by that?

• (1645)

Mr. Steven Hoffman: There's a provision in the Public Health Agency of Canada Act that says the public activities of the chief public health officer will be reimbursed. It gives the language to make sure that this public mandate is able to be funded. For section 258, there's the removal of that provision. There's language about the chief public health officer being allowed to report but not necessarily to be reimbursed. Hopefully, they'll be reimbursed, but—

Mr. Murray Rankin: As a matter of statutory interpretation, when you specifically repeal something that used to exist, one can infer, in interpreting that statute, that you no longer want there to be that reimbursement. It doubles the problem that they're silent on, that they repealed. Would you agree?

Mr. Steven Hoffman: I would agree that it's definitely sending that signal.

The Chair: Thank you.

We'll go to Mr. Allen, please.

Mr. Mike Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac, CPC): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Thank you to our witnesses for being here.

Mr. Kettner, in your role as the chief public health officer in Manitoba, you made a few comments as you went through the pros and cons of the change in legislation. You also indicated that you didn't see the broad reporting capability diminishing. In fact, you saw the deputy minister being less free-speaking. So in some ways, it might remove the shackles, if it were that way.

You also talked about regulations. I wonder if you could elaborate on the regulations that supported your role as a public health officer in Manitoba. Do you see that role you had in Manitoba being very similar to this one being laid out today?

Dr. Joel Kettner: In a couple of ways it's similar; in a couple of ways it's different.

First of all, there's no province that I know of where the chief public health officer is at the deputy minister level. Some of them have assistant deputy minister level and functions; most of them report to a deputy minister and have the ability to advise the minister directly. That was the situation for me.

The ability to speak to the public and the ability to speak to anyone within the province was clarified in The Public Health Act of Manitoba as an expectation. I believe that's also clarified in the federal Public Health Agency of Canada Act. It's clear in subsection 12(4) that the chief public health officer issues a.... Anyway, there's a point where it says very clearly that the role of the chief public health officer is to communicate to the public, and that is very important.

When it comes to the role of a deputy minister, it's clearer in my mind and in my experience that the deputy minister is expected to speak on behalf of the minister and to work at that level in the political system. Although there is an advantage, potentially, to sitting alongside deputy ministers as a chief public health officer, the problem that can occur is the chief public health officer is no longer playing the role at the level they should play, in my view, which is to bring advice and a position on behalf of public health and on behalf of the provincial, territorial, and federal public health officers to the conference of deputy ministers as a whole, and through them to the ministers.

With that split in function, the levels of authority and responsibility are potentially confusing. I think the ability of the chief public health officer to speak openly and to communicate with the public is potentially more difficult as a deputy minister than as an official, which I understand this change will make: the chief public health officer will be an official.

The other thing that I may need to be educated about in interpreting the bill—because I've heard this said by a couple of the other witnesses—is this view that the chief public health officer is subordinate to the CEO or president of the agency. I don't see that in the way this is worded. I see that the chief public health officer advises both the president and the minister, and is hired by the Governor in Council, as is the president. The chief public health officer is not hired by nor reports to the president. I think that's very important. If I'm misinterpreting that, then I think the concerns that have been raised need to be paid attention to, but it's not clear to me.

• (1650)

Mr. Mike Allen: Thank you very much for that because that's certainly consistent with the testimony that Dr. Taylor gave us the other day as well.

Mr. Therrien, you were talking about the temporary foreign worker program. A significant amount of information is shared, obviously, in the existing temporary foreign worker program today. We have situations whereby some of these temporary foreign workers go to provincial nominee programs, and lots of other things happen where information would get exchanged.

When you look at the information exchange either across federal departments or across provincial and federal departments, are there models for the regulatory environment that ensure that these workers are going to be protected? A lot of them will be under provincial jurisdiction, but then there's privacy, so sometimes they will clash, I'm assuming. What are the best models you have for regulation to ensure we protect the worker but at the same time maintain their privacy?

Mr. Daniel Therrien: We have a bill in front of us that provides for wide-ranging, regulation-making authority. The models that I think would be good models from a privacy perspective would be regulations that would authorize sharing of information between levels of government for employment-related programs. If the purpose was for other purposes, which may be relevant to a provincial government, then that would have to be looked at more closely. I readily agree that if the sharing is to administer

employment-related programs, this would be appropriate from a privacy perspective.

Mr. Mike Allen: I'm assuming a privacy impact assessment would have been done on some of those other information-sharing agreements that we have across departments now. Is that not right?

Mr. Daniel Therrien: As I've said, what we've seen is information from ESDC based on information it has provided us. We know that there is sharing between federal departments, and we have not been provided with information as to all the uses for which that sharing goes on. That is what we would like to look at through interdepartmental privacy impact assessments.

Mr. Mike Allen: Thank you very much.

Thank you, Chair.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Allen.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Caron, you may go ahead.

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Mr. Chair, is the committee amenable to my sharing my time with Mr. Côté?

[*English*]

The Chair: Can Mr. Caron share his time with Mr. Côté? Mr. Côté will not be able to vote.

Okay, that is agreeable.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Guy Caron: Thank you very much.

I will start with you, Mr. Hoffman.

What do you make of Mr. Kettner's comment about the chief public health officer not being subordinate to the president? Do you agree with that statement?

[*English*]

Mr. Steven Hoffman: I disagree with Professor Kettner. I think it's very clear that, when you have a deputy minister who is the head of an agency, subject to the minister, that person is the one in charge. So if you have a chief public health officer who is then, of course, reporting to the deputy minister, the head of the agency of course, then he or she can't exercise the same level of independence. I think we're already seeing that change. We're seeing that the chief public health officer is already not able to make statements that he feels need to be made. We are already starting to see it, unfortunately.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Guy Caron: Thank you kindly.

Ms. Lalonde, I think you may have been forgotten, so I am going to turn to you.

What you said about port authorities was very thought-provoking. You feel that port authorities, which are federally regulated, are not necessarily interested in dealing with local or community problems.

Whenever we ask questions about the nickel dust or other port authority related issues, the minister or parliamentary secretary always gives us this answer:

[English]

“It’s an arm’s-length organization.”

[Translation]

Since these organizations are quasi-independent of the government, the government cannot intervene in these matters. The government refuses to force port authorities like the Port de Québec to assume their responsibilities and comply with environmental legislation.

What would you like the federal government to do in situations like yours?

• (1655)

Ms. Véronique Lalande: We aren’t the only ones in this situation. Many citizens across the country are in the same boat.

I will use an analogy. It is as though someone owned a building and, because they owned many buildings, decided for the sake of efficiency, to hand over the operation of that building to a management company, giving it full authority. If I, as a building tenant or neighbour, have a problem related to the building’s occupancy, I have to be able to ask the owner to fix that problem. It’s not acceptable for the owner to repeatedly tell me that, even though my concerns are legitimate, he has handed over all his authority to a management company. The owner is still responsible for the building’s operation and property.

I believe that, as a citizen, I should be entitled to communicate my concerns directly to my government. I should not have to negotiate, for administrative reasons, with an administrative authority that always refuses to grant my access to information requests and to publicly disclose figures, an authority whose first mission is to develop the industry, not protect the public.

Mr. Guy Caron: I have one last question for you before I hand the floor over to Mr. Côté.

Ms. Véronique Lalande: Go ahead.

Mr. Guy Caron: Division 16 of the bill seeks to give port authorities, such as the Port de Québec, the ability to acquire federal property including other ports.

You have examined that division. What do you make of it?

Ms. Véronique Lalande: What we want to make clear in our remarks today is that a piecemeal approach is still being used to manage the specific needs of certain ports and port authorities. I am here today as the voice of the people. They are calling for a full review of this approach.

Allowing ports to acquire property, for instance, in British Columbia, for the purposes of a project and to manage those activities does not, in and of itself, pose a threat. Where the problem arises, however, is in the delegation of many such minor powers, which, when taken together, create an entity that falls outside the usual legislative scope. And that is what eventually gives rise to problems.

I will tie it back to the situation we are facing with the Port de Québec. The government is saying that ports need to be able to acquire property, but they can lease that property afterwards for the use that best suits their interests. If they become the owner, they can

sublease the property. In our case, the property belongs to the federal government, but the industry is also conducting operations there.

The transportation industry is under federal jurisdiction. So even if the port authority acquires a property that is no longer federal, it could always hide and lease it to a company. That’s what happened in our case. A company with no connection to the marine industry was cleaning up sites. With the help of our public health officials, we had to be extremely vocal to bring that to light.

But even then, will it happen? I do not know. But if the past is any indication, the government should be very cautious in its budget decision-making before giving port authorities greater powers without knowing exactly how those powers will be used.

The Chair: Mr. Côté, the floor is yours. You have a minute and a half.

Mr. Raymond Côté (Beauport—Limoilou, NDP): A minute and a half; that’s great.

I want to thank all the committee members for having me.

Ms. Lalande, thank you for setting aside a whole day and travelling from Quebec City to join us in Ottawa. I won’t hide the fact that I will probably try to use other opportunities to ask you questions.

I would like to begin by telling the committee about the huge amount of work you and your spouse, Louis Duchesne, have done. The constituents of Beauport-Limoilou owe you a debt of gratitude.

You talked about the Conservatives’ piecemeal approach. I should point out that you have been working on this for two years. We have been in touch over the last two years regarding this file.

What would you say about the government’s overly fragmented approach?

Ms. Véronique Lalande: We think that this piecemeal approach prevents us from having a comprehensive view of the marine industry and port management. That’s what causes problems. Ports compete with one another, and there is no integrated vision of the port industry.

For example, it is impossible to use port authorities’ powers to bring closer to urban centres port activities that are more appropriate to the proximity of densely populated areas and move those activities to ports further away from urban areas. A piecemeal approach makes it impossible to do that, since each administration becomes a business that wants to achieve maximum productivity.

There is another significant issue that should be pointed out. Harbour authority boards are mainly composed of users’ representatives—companies that do business in the harbour—and one representative for each level of government.

I want to remind you that, according to their statutes, harbour authorities’ mission is to ensure marine development, respect the three jurisdictions and take into account the community and the environment. So, why does no one on those boards represent these aspects?

• (1700)

[English]

The Chair: *Merci beaucoup.*

We'll go next to Mr. Adler, for seven minutes, please.

Mr. Mark Adler (York Centre, CPC): Thank you very much.

Thank you all for being here this afternoon and for your input into the BIA 2.

I want to come to you shortly, Ms. Lalande.

First, Mr. Mooney, you indicated earlier that Canada needs a presence in the north. Could you quickly elaborate on that for me?

Mr. Stephen Mooney: I think internationally...I've travelled to Scandinavia and I've seen research facilities over there and one thing that other circumpolar countries are doing is making a presence in the northern part of their countries. This CHARS facility will be a world-class facility that will bring Canada onto the map for international research, helping northerners in the north for the north.

Mr. Mark Adler: Thank you.

What role will the private sector play in all of this?

Mr. Stephen Mooney: I think the private sector is going to become involved on the economic development side. I'm an applied researcher. I work with industries to help get their products through to commercialization, and CHARS will be able to play a role in testing products in the north. I think a lot of communities across the north are going to benefit from this.

Mr. Mark Adler: Thank you very much.

Ms. Lalande, welcome. I want to ask you a couple of questions. I'm just curious: what is your ultimate goal? What do you hope to achieve ultimately?

Ms. Véronique Lalande: Ultimately, I would like the members of the committee to realize.... Maybe this is not the time, but I think you have very few occasions on which to hear from real citizens who come to speak just for themselves and just to bring you a concern that maybe authorities or professors don't have. It's that it's not time to give small powers one at a time to port authorities, but it's really time to look at the port activities as a whole and then to act and to restrain the powers you are giving to

[Translation]

independent federal agencies.

[English]

who use them as well as they can, but whose goal is to maintain profits and not to protect people, which is your role.

Mr. Mark Adler: Are you here speaking as an individual or as part of...?

Ms. Véronique Lalande: I'm here as the spokesperson of l'Initiative citoyenne de vigilance du Port de Québec, but l'Initiative citoyenne du Port de Québec is not chartered. We are just citizens who have gathered together to fight an aggression that we have every day in our community.

Mr. Mark Adler: Okay. I just want to read you some facts. There's \$53 million in private investments at the Quebec port; across

Canada 9,800 jobs are tied to the Quebec port; in 2012, \$20 billion in goods, which was 33 million tonnes, went through the port. You talk about people: for 9,800 jobs there are 9,800 families behind those jobs.

• (1705)

Ms. Véronique Lalande: Actually, the numbers that are given by the port are always very high.

Mr. Mark Adler: What do you say to the 9,800 people who are going to be out of work?

Ms. Véronique Lalande: Actually, when you look at all the ports, we are mainly focusing on the bulk industries, which are known as being very space-consuming.

[Translation]

That's not really a value-added activity if we compare it to ship building, for instance.

[English]

If you look at the jobs at the port of Quebec, most of them come from *la construction navale*.

[Translation]

If we look at the jobs created in bulk handling, the port is really just a passageway. Very little wealth is created for the community. The number of jobs is about 200. Concerning all the costs to the community, a number of studies indicate much lower economic benefits. In the Port of Quebec, the GDP value in terms of economic benefits of the bulk industry is less than 1% for the community. However, the studies indicate a very high level of inconvenience and problems for the constituents, and that is never taken into account when the port presents its figures. They always talk about jobs and benefits, but they never keep track of social, economic and health costs people have to assume collectively and individually.

[English]

Mr. Mark Adler: So is it fair to say, then, that your ultimate goal is to shut down the port? Would that be your preference? It would be fine if it is.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Ms. Véronique Lalande: No, no. We've said, I would say a million times, that our goal is not to shut down the port. We believe that things like recreation and port operations can all be parts of a community, but we want the port of Quebec to maintain.... Actually, we are the greatest supporters of the Port de Québec mission, which is to...

[Translation]

Again, the port's profitability must be ensured while respecting the environment and communities. If we had a transshipment system in Quebec City for handling all products, I would not be here talking to you. We actually think that those mechanisms would not only preserve jobs, but would also generate innovation that could bring much more....

[English]

Mr. Mark Adler: Let me just stop you for a second.

Ms. Véronique Lalande: They could bring a lot more wealth to our community.

Mr. Mark Adler: You are aware that there were other amendments to the Marine Act and there are other regulations that the government can apply when developing projects on port lands, essentially ensuring that projects do go through even further environmental scrutiny and assessment processes? You're aware of that?

Ms. Véronique Lalande: Yes, but the process—

Mr. Mark Adler: That's not satisfactory?

[Translation]

Ms. Véronique Lalande: We think that a process where the industry—which is the promoter—defines rules, handles the process and ultimately gives its approval does not meet the transparency criteria for projects that will have such an impact on the community.

[English]

Mr. Mark Adler: How do we compare to other jurisdictions around the world when it comes to...?

The Chair: Please give a brief response.

[Translation]

Ms. Véronique Lalande: We have instead documented the impact of port activities. As for jurisdictions, I would like to have much more time and be able to dedicate myself to those issues full time, but I have a job. I am probably the only person here who is not paid to participate in this meeting.

However, ours is one of the only countries with such a gap between federal and provincial jurisdictions. This makes alignment more difficult. Coexistence issues between ports and populations are noted around the world.

[English]

The Chair: Okay, thank you. Merci.

Thank you, Mr. Adler.

I'm going to take the next round as chair. I do want to clarify the position with respect to the chief public health officer.

We had the chief public health officer before our committee. I'm sure the three witnesses who've talked about it today have seen the testimony. I thought Dr. Taylor was very explicit in terms of what he wanted. Obviously, I take him at his word. I think we all do.

Just to follow up on few points, Mr. Culbert, you talked about the U.S. having a different kind of model, whereas the U.K. and Australia have a similar model to what's being proposed here. Am I correct in that?

Mr. Ian Culbert: That's my understanding, yes.

The Chair: It seems to me it's linked to the difference between a parliamentary-type system, in which you have ministerial responsibility and the executive resides within the legislative branch, and a congressional-type system or a complete separation of power in the U.S. Maybe a better question to ask is this. Is there a parliamentary system that has a different model from what is being used in the U.K. or Australia or being contemplated here in this legislation?

Mr. Ian Culbert: Unfortunately, I can't answer the question.

The Chair: Okay.

Then I want to follow up on the connection between the chief public health officer and the minister. You say that under the current legislation, the CPHO, as deputy head of the agency, reports directly to the Minister of Health, yet I think at least one of the witnesses said that the chief public health officer will not report directly to the minister. Did I hear any one of you say that?

Mr. Culbert or Mr. Hoffman, go ahead please.

• (1710)

Mr. Steven Hoffman: In the proposed bill, there's language saying how the chief public health officer would advise the president and the minister. So, yes, it's clear that there would be advice provided. But of course under the new system there would be an agency president. The CPHO would be reporting directly to the agency president. The CPHO job and performance reviews would be done by the agency president. So even if in the legislation it says that the chief public health officer will provide advice, it would go through the president of the agency, which then restricts that independence. There are problems there.

The Chair: Okay.

I don't read this legislation like that at all. It says:

The Chief Public Health Officer shall provide the Minister and the President with public health advice that is developed on a scientific basis.

It seems to state explicitly what you want, which is that the chief public health officer is to provide scientific advice directly to the Minister of Health.

Mr. Steven Hoffman: I hope that does happen, but in this case it's not just to the minister that matters. We're in a federal model, in which we need to make sure that the chief public health officer is able to communicate to Canadians, to the rest of the federation, knowing that the advice is based on science rather than based on political imperatives. There's the concern that—

The Chair: But I don't know how the government could be any more clear in its language:

The Chief Public Health Officer shall provide the Minister and the President with public health advice that is developed on a scientific basis.

I mean unless we're in some kind of a language game, I take legislation at its word. It seems to be that is saying that the chief public health officer shall provide advice on a scientific basis directly to the Minister of Health, which seems to address your concern. I know it doesn't go far enough, in terms of being an officer of Parliament. I take that point, but in terms of this, I'm not sure how this doesn't address your concern.

Mr. Steven Hoffman: The reality is that the chief public health officer would be reporting to an agency president; so, yes, I guess, the legislation says that advice would be transmitted to the minister, but there's—

The Chair: Okay. But how's the reality different from what the legislation says?

Mr. Steven Hoffman: It's because the chief public health officer's performance is based on that agency president. If the president is the one responsible for the agency, it means that the advice will be filtered. There's no mechanism for others outside of government to trust it.

The Chair: But where does it say that the advice will be filtered? Like, where are you getting this from?

Again, it says:

(1.1) The Chief Public Health Officer shall provide the Minister

—not “the Minister filtered advice” or “shall provide the President advice, who shall then provide the Minister advice”, but “shall provide the Minister”, first, before “the President”—

and the President with public health advice that is developed on a scientific basis.

So where are you getting this that it's filtered or that it's somehow not being provided directly to the minister?

Mr. Steven Hoffman: Well, I hope that's what ends up happening. My concern, as a law professor, is that there is the opportunity for the filtering to happen.

Again, it's not just the federal government where this matters, it's other actors. If the chief public health officer in the future is told by the agency president that they can't speak on this—for example, the visa restrictions that have recently happened—or they can't speak on other issues, then it becomes a matter of trust. That trust is important not just at the federal level but among the provinces as well.

The Chair: I have the Public Health Agency of Canada website open here. You're saying that the chief public health officer has been told he's not allowed to speak on certain matters?

Mr. Ian Culbert: I think the silence on the visa restrictions issue, on which countries around the world and the World Health Organization have criticized Canada, is deafening.

The Chair: He was told not to speak on those matters?

Mr. Steven Hoffman: Oh, I'm not sure, but it seems that many other health professionals, they're all going...and they're all criticizing it, so...

The Chair: But I think in a previous round you said that the chief public health officer is not able to make statements. If that's true, that's a very serious situation. So is that true? Do you know that to be true, or do you not know that to be true?

Mr. Steven Hoffman: What I mean is that under this legislation there is the opportunity for that to happen, and when looking at recent events, it appears that it may be the case. I don't have first-hand knowledge of what the minister has advised the chief public health officer.

The Chair: Okay.

I just want to clarify another point. I think Professor Kettner said it's a Governor in Council appointment in terms of who is the chief public health officer.

Mr. Culbert, I think you shook your head to indicate that this is not correct. Is that your understanding, that it's a Governor in Council appointment?

●(1715)

Mr. Ian Culbert: I was incorrect to shake my head. It was my initial reaction, quite honestly. When I reviewed the legislation, I saw that hasn't changed. It is still an order in council appointment.

The Chair: Okay.

I hope that clarifies some of the matters and I hope some of your concerns are addressed. I think perhaps we'll follow up with the chief public health officer to get his further reaction. When he was before the committee, I was very direct in my questions and he was very direct back, saying that he wanted to lessen his administrative load, that this made sense, and that this was something he asked for so that he could focus more on providing scientific advice directly to the minister. I thought he argued his case very well.

Professor Kettner, did you want to have a final word on that matter?

Dr. Joel Kettner: You know, the way the law is written, I don't know that it increases or decreases the ability of the chief public health officer to speak frankly to the minister or to the public or to their colleagues. I know from experience as a chief public health officer that there may be all sorts of pressures to limit what you decide to say publicly, or what you decide to share or can share about confidential advice to the minister. I think those are important issues for Canadians and governments to always be aware of, and to support the ability of the chief public health officer to do that.

Having said that, as I said earlier, I do not see in this change of legislation either an easing or a worsening of that ability. I think those are other issues that need to be addressed. But I don't see, in this legislation, that this is going to be clear.

The main issue that I think is important is that if not having direct control over the agency in terms of its budget and administration leads to a lessening of resources for the chief public health officer to carry out these functions, that's a problem. But according to the law, the chief public health officer can publicly say to his or her colleagues, or to anybody, what his or her concerns are. I hope that power will still be exercised if necessary.

The Chair: Thank you. I appreciate that.

Colleagues, I think we have time for three five-minute rounds.

[Translation]

We will now come back to Mr. Caron and Mr. Côté.

Mr. Guy Caron: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I would like to go back to Ms. Lalande's comments.

I am actually very happy about your answer. You do not want to shut down the Port of Quebec, but you would like to see more transparency and accountability from port authorities in general, including the Port of Quebec authorities.

Ms. Véronique Lalande: Our citizens' initiative is not about being against something. All we want is a healthier urban environment.

Mr. Guy Caron: Okay.

The bill contains elements that grant more powers to port authorities. The Port of Quebec, which is an independent entity, is unable to meet the community needs regarding a specific environmental situation.

What kind of a role should the federal government play? What should the legislation stipulate to enable the federal government to force port authorities to meet their obligations toward communities in the surrounding areas?

Ms. Véronique Lalande: There are a number of elements to consider.

When the October 26 incident took place, I was told that, since the port came under federal jurisdiction, nothing could be done. I called the federal authority, and I was told that the air contamination at my home clearly came under provincial jurisdiction.

I then wondered whether I was the only person to realize what a huge gap separates the two sides. On the one hand, the entity managing the territory and the activity taking place there does not have access to the data on the impact of those activities. On the other hand, the entity that has jurisdiction over the territory and should deal with the repercussions on the population does not have access to the source data.

Port authorities have to meet the highest standards, as stipulated in the Canada Marine Act. We do not think they should have the right to choose. The law should clearly indicate that port authorities have an obligation to respect three levels of legislation—federal, provincial and municipal, when applicable. That would already be a major step ahead.

For years, the Quebec Port Authority wanted to increase the tonnage capacity. That capacity went from tens of thousands of tonnes to 33 million tonnes without any questions being asked. We are going through this in our region, and so are the constituents of Fraser Valley, Sept-Îles, Belledune and Halifax.

Marine activities are booming, especially those with an environmental impact—in other words, those related to bulk product handling. Those activities should be managed by a higher authority and not by independent entities that have a mandate to ensure sound management, but that we do not think have an objective to protect the population.

• (1720)

Mr. Guy Caron: Thank you.

Mr. Côté, go ahead.

Mr. Raymond Côté: Thank you very much.

Ms. Lalande, you work with representatives of provincial and municipal organizations within advisory committees. You see how the Port of Quebec reports on its activities. Certain objectives were set in terms of transparency, and the Port of Quebec authorities agreed with them, at least initially.

How open has the Port of Quebec been toward those committees?

Ms. Véronique Lalande: Actions speak louder than words.

I can give you an example. The Port of Quebec became involved in an extensive process that was supposed to provide it with environmental certification thanks to the adoption of a sustainable development plan. Its representatives told to trust them because they had learned from their mistakes. However, here's what we noted last time we looked at the sustainable development plan.

Aside from the creation of a position related to sustainable development, the Port of Quebec committed to follow all other recommendations for summer and fall 2014. The port authority was supposed to publish all the information, such as the tonnage handled to which we had access until Statistics Canada stopped documenting this data in 2011. The official oversight committee must have access to that primary information on the quantity of products handled. Yet it is impossible to obtain that information, even though the port authority committed to a sustainable development process.

Once again, I like what I am hearing, but I am waiting for concrete action.

Mr. Raymond Côté: Okay.

In the early 1980s, an independent federal agency held public hearings to study a Port of Quebec expansion project. Among the proposed solutions were measures to mitigate dust particle emissions, which were already widespread at the time.

The Chair: Could you ask your question, please?

Mr. Raymond Côté: How much time do I have left, Mr. Chair?

The Chair: You have 20 seconds.

Mr. Raymond Côté: That's unfortunately too little time.

Those measures were not implemented. However, they were implemented at the wood pellet terminal. Significant investments were made in that area.

How can you explain this difference between the Port of Quebec and Quebec Stevedoring?

Ms. Véronique Lalande: The fugitive particle problem—and that is really what's at issue here—applies to all ports and even to the mining industry. Methods used to contain those particles are well documented. In the case of silos, we think that the main measures were taken because the substance reacts to the environment and particles must be contained. A lot of citizen-led action has been undertaken in that area.

I don't know why the same measures are not applied across the territory. I think the only explanation is that profitability takes precedence over human health.

[*English*]

The Chair: Merci.

We'll go to Mr. Van Kesteren for five minutes, please.

Mr. Dave Van Kesteren (Chatham-Kent—Essex, CPC): Thank you all for coming.

Mr. Mooney, I get excited about the things that are happening in the Arctic. I think we all do. Before and during this committee I served on the foreign affairs committee, and we spent a considerable amount of time on Canada's role in the High Arctic. You laid out for us pretty clearly why that's so important.

The chair and I both served on the industry committee years ago, and I remember one time we were talking to the forestry people and we asked where the forestry equipment was being made. Quite frankly, Sweden had the good sense to take that upon themselves. Everybody has trees, and they thought it would be a great idea to develop the equipment to harvest those trees.

We're so well positioned as a nation with the extent of the Arctic, with the expertise that we have that can contribute to that as well. Do you see areas in the development of the Arctic—and I'm thinking specifically now of the aboriginal population—where this is going to make a profound difference to their livelihood in future generations?

Maybe you could elaborate on that.

• (1725)

Mr. Stephen Mooney: The most impact the CHARS could have is on cold climate housing. That affects all nations across Canada and in the circumpolar area. If you focus on solving the housing issue, that will help solve a lot of other issues: education, poverty, and so on.

We know the housing stock in the north could be improved and technology and innovation could easily be used, and is being used, in the housing stock in northern Canada. This leads to the rest of the world. There is terrible housing in Russia. They are still using concrete walls. The energy efficiency of buildings here in the Yukon is much higher than in other places in Canada because we have to deal with it. Our systems and our building practices now are being taken across the north. There is a lot of opportunity just in the building sector.

The other one is food security. In the north, \$71 million goes into food subsidies. I think northerners can take control over that and start growing their own food in the north.

Would you like another example?

Mr. Dave Van Kesteren: Maybe elaborate—no, we can get another one. Talk to me a little about growing food. You need a certain amount of sunlight. Obviously they get a lot of that in a certain period of time, but you'd think the intensity wouldn't be there. Tell us a little more about that, and maybe you could go to the next example after that.

Mr. Stephen Mooney: In Whitehorse we have build a year-round greenhouse. We have used alternative energy. It's an off-grid greenhouse. Other people are working on them. We have aquaponics

and aeroponics, which use very little water and energy to grow food. The future of growing food in the north is in climate control, so you are not using the sun. When the sun is up, yes, take advantage of it, but in the north with LED lights and full spectrum LED growing lights, the cost to run those lights has dropped considerably. I think this is an opportunity for northern communities to take responsibility and grow fresh vegetables locally.

Mr. Dave Van Kesteren: I want to ask a question that begs to be asked. Are we leaders in this technology? Are there areas in which you see some clear advantages, where we are moving forward?

Mr. Stephen Mooney: Yes, there are areas, but the challenge is putting the entire package together. There is LED full spectrum lighting. Universities are studying that, but truly, I believe if you are going to solve the food security problem, you need to solve two things first: cold climate housing and alternative energies. We cannot continue to burn diesel in the north. It's too expensive. There are other mechanisms for alternative energy: wind, solar in some areas of the north, not the far North, but if you build a building efficiently so it requires very little heat, then you need very little energy to heat, and that is where we have to start.

The Chair: Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Van Kesteren.

On behalf of the entire committee, I want to thank all our witnesses, both here in Ottawa and by video conference, for participating in this.

[*Translation*]

I want to thank everyone.

[*English*]

Colleagues, I just need one minute. You have a budget in front of you for this current study, a very modest budget in my view. Can I get someone to move this?

Mr. Gerald Keddy: I so move.

• (1730)

The Chair: It is so moved by Mr. Keddy.

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: Thank you so much.

We will see you tomorrow. Please bring your draft reports to the meeting tomorrow morning at 11 a.m.

Thank you.

The meeting is adjourned.

Published under the authority of the Speaker of
the House of Commons

SPEAKER'S PERMISSION

Reproduction of the proceedings of the House of Commons and its Committees, in whole or in part and in any medium, is hereby permitted provided that the reproduction is accurate and is not presented as official. This permission does not extend to reproduction, distribution or use for commercial purpose of financial gain. Reproduction or use outside this permission or without authorization may be treated as copyright infringement in accordance with the *Copyright Act*. Authorization may be obtained on written application to the Office of the Speaker of the House of Commons.

Reproduction in accordance with this permission does not constitute publication under the authority of the House of Commons. The absolute privilege that applies to the proceedings of the House of Commons does not extend to these permitted reproductions. Where a reproduction includes briefs to a Committee of the House of Commons, authorization for reproduction may be required from the authors in accordance with the *Copyright Act*.

Nothing in this permission abrogates or derogates from the privileges, powers, immunities and rights of the House of Commons and its Committees. For greater certainty, this permission does not affect the prohibition against impeaching or questioning the proceedings of the House of Commons in courts or otherwise. The House of Commons retains the right and privilege to find users in contempt of Parliament if a reproduction or use is not in accordance with this permission.

Also available on the Parliament of Canada Web Site at the following address: <http://www.parl.gc.ca>

Publié en conformité de l'autorité
du Président de la Chambre des communes

PERMISSION DU PRÉSIDENT

Il est permis de reproduire les délibérations de la Chambre et de ses comités, en tout ou en partie, sur n'importe quel support, pourvu que la reproduction soit exacte et qu'elle ne soit pas présentée comme version officielle. Il n'est toutefois pas permis de reproduire, de distribuer ou d'utiliser les délibérations à des fins commerciales visant la réalisation d'un profit financier. Toute reproduction ou utilisation non permise ou non formellement autorisée peut être considérée comme une violation du droit d'auteur aux termes de la *Loi sur le droit d'auteur*. Une autorisation formelle peut être obtenue sur présentation d'une demande écrite au Bureau du Président de la Chambre.

La reproduction conforme à la présente permission ne constitue pas une publication sous l'autorité de la Chambre. Le privilège absolu qui s'applique aux délibérations de la Chambre ne s'étend pas aux reproductions permises. Lorsqu'une reproduction comprend des mémoires présentés à un comité de la Chambre, il peut être nécessaire d'obtenir de leurs auteurs l'autorisation de les reproduire, conformément à la *Loi sur le droit d'auteur*.

La présente permission ne porte pas atteinte aux privilèges, pouvoirs, immunités et droits de la Chambre et de ses comités. Il est entendu que cette permission ne touche pas l'interdiction de contester ou de mettre en cause les délibérations de la Chambre devant les tribunaux ou autrement. La Chambre conserve le droit et le privilège de déclarer l'utilisateur coupable d'outrage au Parlement lorsque la reproduction ou l'utilisation n'est pas conforme à la présente permission.

Aussi disponible sur le site Web du Parlement du Canada à l'adresse suivante : <http://www.parl.gc.ca>