



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage

CHPC • NUMBER 011 • 2nd SESSION • 41st PARLIAMENT

EVIDENCE

Tuesday, February 11, 2014

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Chair

Mr. Gordon Brown

Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage

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•(1100)

[English]

The Chair (Mr. Gordon Brown (Leeds—Grenville, CPC)):
Good morning, everyone.

We're going to call meeting 11 of the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage to order.

The order of the day today is BillC-501, An Act respecting a National Hunting, Trapping and Fishing Heritage Day.

We have the sponsor of that bill, member of Parliament Rick Norlock, with us today. Mr. Norlock will have up to 10 minutes to make a presentation.

Mr. Norlock, you have the floor.

[Translation]

Mr. Rick Norlock: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

My thanks to the committee for this invitation to appear.

[English]

This is my second time before the heritage committee with a bill. The first was almost identical to this bill, the former Parliament BillC-465, which is now C-501. What a pleasure it is for me to be here, Mr. Chair, to talk to you about Bill C-501 and my reasons for choosing this particular subject as my private member's bill.

I'll begin by saying that I looked for a bill that meant something to this country, that meant something to me personally, and that crossed the breadth and width and length of this great country. Hunting, trapping, and fishing are more than pastimes, they are the way that the first people who inhabited our continent—our aboriginal brothers and sisters—basically lived, because they had subsistence living.

This bill encompasses all of that, right up until modern day, and I hope I can go into it a little bit further with you later on.

As I explained, the first people who were engaged in hunting, trapping, and fishing were our aboriginal brothers and sisters. When the first western Europeans came to this country, one of the first experiences they had was explained.... I think if you look back, or I can remember in my history classes seeing prints and etchings of when John Cabot first came to North America in 1497. I can vividly remember a print of John Cabot's men lowering a bucket over the side of a boat and scooping up quantities of cod. Of course, we've mismanaged that pretty well as a society, and we're doing our best. But I think the western European's first experiences in North America had to do with fishing.

I could give you a quote but, having grown up in the Upper Ottawa Valley, I'll skip right along to my favourite person, Samuel de Champlain, who is credited with many of the discoveries along the Ottawa River and its tributaries. In many of his journals he describes—and this goes back to the 1600s—how he and his men would not have survived had it not been for some of the wildlife that the aboriginal communities along the way, primarily the Algonquins, provided, giving them some meat and some sustenance.

My grandfather, Narcisse Viens, who came from Aylmer but who worked in northern Ontario both as a filer in the sawmill and a trapper, related to me some of the ways that the first nations were able to take various bits of bark...I can remember as a child my grandfather sending us, during flu season, little packets from what he called the local shaman up in northern Ontario. And none of us got the flu that was going around because of this terrible-tasting tea that was made by fellow trappers he knew from some of the reserves in northern Ontario.

Of course we know that Cartier, in 1534, described his experiences in trading fur with aboriginals. It is from that, that our country was actually founded, and it was the fur trade that began not only the trade with our aboriginal brothers and sisters, but actually the exploration of our country through the North West Company and the Hudson's Bay Company.

One of the impacts that we have in our country now—and I'm going to cut right to the heart of the whole reason that I brought this bill forward—is, the reason we continue to have an abundance of wildlife in our country...and that goes directly to the people engaged in the occupations of hunting, trapping, and fishing.

•(1105)

Just as an addendum, because you may know we are talking about free trade, here is a little item that I picked up in doing some research: one of Ontario's top items in dollar value that we trade with South Korea is farmed mink. Most people don't know that.

Hunting, trapping, and fishing account for approximately \$10 billion a year in commercial value. Fishing alone is somewhere... you're going to have a witness here later from the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters who will have the numbers at his fingertips. He's a man I know fairly well. If you take a look at commercial fishing in this country, you'll find that as a contribution to our gross domestic product, it is slightly under \$2 billion yet angling accounts for approximately \$7 to \$8 billion per year toward the gross domestic product in our country. That doesn't include trapping, which is on the rise.

Just before Christmas I sat with a group of trappers who formed their own company. Their business in the last three to four years has increased some 200%, much of it with China, some in North America, a little in Europe. They said that, Montreal being one of the centres of our fur processors, they tan the hides or the furs. They process them to where they're ready to be made into clothing. Some of it is sent to China and then shipped back here. Some of it is sold there. But he said the Chinese prefer the jackets that are sewn in Canada. So we see a growing population looking at our fur industry which accounts for, off the top of my head, I think \$200 to \$400 million a year.

One of the other major reasons we have an abundance of wildlife in Canada is the organizations hunters and fishers belong to. I'll list a few. I belong to an organization that has reintroduced elk into the province of Ontario, and we have what is called a "limited draw hunt". The other organization is called the Quinte Elk Restoration Committee. It's an offshoot of the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, which is North American. It rehabilitates mainly in the United States, but as an offshoot of rehabilitating certain areas, we've begun bringing them back to their natural state in Canada. There the elk tend to do very well. I also belong to Safari Club International. It consists primarily of hunters who go around the world and hunt species in developing countries. This assists those countries in preserving those rare animals. So does Delta Waterfowl. I'm also a member of the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters. Their conservation efforts in the province of Ontario are world class. Many others are responsible for the conservation and maintenance of our wildlife species, not only fish. I've also been engaged with the reintroduction of Atlantic salmon into Lake Ontario.

In my riding, there's a creek near the town of Cobourg called Cobourg Creek. When the first farmers from Great Britain came here, some of the letters that were written to England said you could walk across Cobourg Creek on the backs of the salmon at certain times of the year. We know what happened to the Atlantic salmon in Lake Ontario. For various reasons, both overfishing and pollution, they became extinct. Then salmon were introduced, unfortunately, as far as I'm concerned. This is an argument in the outdoors world I come from. There's an argument as to whether it's good or bad but most of the salmon in Lake Ontario are Pacific salmon species. They do well because of the temperature of the water and they're resistant to certain chemicals.

• (1110)

But there's an organization of which the OFAH is a partner, and the Liquor Control Board of Ontario. It was actually started by a company called Banrock wines from Australia. Their corporate policy is that no matter what country they go into, they're engaged in a conservation effort. So they've teamed up with a group and we're now reintroducing Atlantic salmon into the Great Lakes, and we hope that's very successful.

So I've just given you a taste of some of the reasons why this bill is important to me. I believe it's important to Canada, and I believe it's important to every region in Canada, including our aboriginal brothers and sisters.

Mr. Chair, I'm more than anxious to answer any questions the committee may have.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. Norlock.

We're now going to move to the questioning. We have the first round, and it will be seven minutes.

We will go to Mr. Boughen first.

Mr. Ray Boughen (Palliser, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thanks to Mr. Norlock for taking time out of his busy schedule to meet with us and discuss this bill.

Rick, I'm looking at a couple of questions here. To start with, do you see some natural tourism benefits resulting from this bill?

Mr. Rick Norlock: Absolutely, I do. One of the reasons I drafted this bill, and specifically the dates in question is, while it is not exactly the same as a date in the United States and, I believe, three or four other provinces, when we first drafted this bill in the previous Parliament, there were three provinces that had passed a similar provincial piece of legislation, most of which were at different times of the year.

What really prompted me to choose the third Saturday in September was its alignment with the United States. I'm not sure about the province of Quebec, but I do some fly-in fishing and hunting in northeastern and northwestern Ontario. The outfitters there tell me that the decline in American tourists is significant for some of their businesses. Now, these are people who will pay \$5,000 to \$6,000 per week to come up to Canada and take part in fishing, and I'm almost positive of the same experience in Quebec. I'm not sure about Saskatchewan and Manitoba, but my gut feeling is that it's the same right across this country.

So I wanted a date that somewhat mirrored theirs, and there's a reason for it. The current president of the United States has made some statements in that regard and hints towards tourism, but primarily for conservation, and I could read that to you a little bit later. So the alignment was designed to replicate provincial legislation, as well as mirror the legislation from the United States, recognizing those traditions and their importance to our heritage.

• (1115)

Mr. Ray Boughen: Well this being budget day, I'm sure everyone is glad to hear that monetary number \$5,000 for folks coming into Canada to hunt, fish, and trap.

Mr. Rick Norlock: That could be the high end, but it's between \$3,000 to \$5,000. Quite frankly, out in British Columbia where I've hunted a little and where my son lives, people will pay about \$35,000 for a certain species of Rocky Mountain sheep. For instance—I will use his name—Ryan Leef, the member of Parliament for the Yukon, used to be a guide. For a 60-inch moose—that's the spread of a moose antler—it was very common practice when he was involved in guiding, especially for the company he worked for that concentrated on hunters from Germany, Spain, and some other European countries, to pay \$35,000 per animal. That includes the guide and the food. So this is large money, and that money is used by the provinces and put right back into other conservation efforts.

I can give you a little breakdown. This information comes from Gary Mauser. The report was filed back in 1997 or 1998, I believe. I'll just read you the beginning to show you the importance of hunters, fishers, and trappers. The beginning of the study indicates:

A recently completed study of Canadian hunting licence fees compiled by Gary Mauser, Vice President of the B.C. Wildlife Federation, shows that hunters in Canada pay to the government, on average, almost \$70 million per year in hunting licences and fees. This equates to what the provinces spend to manage their wildlife populations.

You can see how the people who are actually engaged in those occupations and pastimes are actually the people who contribute to the maintenance of the species that they hunt. It is estimated in the United States that there are far more white-tailed deer in North America now than when the white man first came to North America. That's for various reasons: habitat, and the ability of white-tailed deer and other wildlife species to adapt to encroachment in their areas, and also because of the conservation efforts of the very people who hunt them.

Mr. Ray Boughen: Mr. Chair, how much time do we have?

The Chair: You have about two minutes and 15 seconds—lots of time.

Mr. Ray Boughen: Give or take a second or two, I'm sure.

Rick, who do you see this bill pertaining to in terms of the general population?

Mr. Rick Norlock: I don't have the exact numbers, but let me just say this. It's estimated that at least 45% to 50% of Canadians, the way I understand it—and I think I'm being very small-c conservative with those numbers—are engaged in some form of those activities, primarily angling.

Also part of my rationale for this bill is this: new Canadians. Part of my riding is, of course, Lake Ontario, and Rice Lake and parts of the Trent-Severn, as well as other small creeks and rivers. If you go there at any time, and especially during the spring, summer, and early fall, you'll find that a lot of new Canadians are engaged in that pastime of fishing offshore, of renting boats, and going out. This is a pastime that a lot of new Canadians are involved in. It helps them to become part of the Canadian mosaic, because these are the pastimes that Canadians have been engaged in since time immemorial, and I include in that our first nations aboriginal brothers and sisters.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. Boughen.

We'll move to Mr. Nantel for seven minutes.

I understand that you're going to share your time with your colleagues.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Nantel (Longueuil—Pierre-Boucher, NDP): Thank you, Mr. Chair. You understood perfectly.

Thank you for being here this morning, Mr. Norlock. You must be proud that you have brought your bill this far and I congratulate you for it. It is a subject that reflects the Canadian-ness that we here at the Canadian heritage committee have to build.

We on this side are also very aware of the importance of the environmental information that hunters and anglers can pass along just from their day-to-day observations, whether it is about the

prevalence, or otherwise, of certain species or about anything else. The information is quite pertinent.

Right from the outset, your bill talks about the history and the importance of Aboriginal peoples. Of course, there was also the arrival of settlers from Europe. Is it your impression that First Nations welcome your bill?

• (1120)

Mr. Rick Norlock: Yes, I am sure it is positively received.

[*English*]

I say that because many of our first nations brothers and sisters, both in northern Quebec and across the reaches of this country, are now becoming engaged in the business of tourism and are operating more and more camps. If you take a look at government initiatives, you'll find some of the things that the ministers of aboriginal affairs in both the previous Liberal government and our current government have encouraged our first nations brothers and sisters to get involved in.

One of the figures I can recall off the top of my head for northern...and when I refer to northern, I'm talking about the real farther reaches of the north. We have somewhere in the vicinity of 400,000 visitors a year going to our north. That's not just for hunting, fishing, and trapping. What we have now is ecotourism. I think your former member, who's now a member of the Green Party, Mr. Hyer, and his business—I know it's at arm's-length—now have switched from hunting and fishing. He's more involved in ecotourism, which in and of itself is a great boon to the economy.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Nantel: I will pass the floor to my colleague.

[*English*]

Ms. Irene Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Merci.

Thank you for being here, Mr. Norlock. I have a couple of questions.

In the bill, you talk about the millions of Canadians who participate in hunting and fishing. Do you have an exact number? How many are there? Is it increasing? We heard some time ago that it was on the decline. Is it experiencing a renaissance?

Mr. Rick Norlock: Actually, in certain parts of the country....

For instance, in the upper Ottawa Valley—not far from here, maybe 60 kilometres or so—my family has hunted white-tailed deer on a piece of crown land. We have what's referred to as a pole camp.

I can tell you that the numbers of young hunters are going down. Why? Well, I think one of the major reasons is demographics. I come from a family of six. I'm the eldest of six kids. Most people are having one or two children. Really it's the demographics.

That said, it was one of your members of Parliament, Madam Moore, who indicated during debate at second reading that she is part of a growing number of women who are now engaged. I can give you a personal anecdote as an example of that. In our hunting group, which just tends to be family and friends—it changes from year to year, with the availability of people for holidays—it was strictly male. Last year two young ladies hunted with us, because they were very much interested, and one of them even got a taste of field dressing her first animal.

It is growing, but angling is definitely on the increase. As I mentioned to you, this is especially with regard to new Canadians. They can come from areas in certain parts of the world where there really are no fish because of pollution and other reasons. Fish that we consider to be coarse fish.... I call them sunfish, or rock bass. I've sat with many people from Caribbean regions who come in family groups along the Trent-Severn Waterway.

So angling is on the increase, and I think hunting is holding its own. It's growing in certain areas, and in other areas there is some reduction.

Ms. Irene Mathysen: Okay.

I believe Monsieur Lapointe had some questions.

[*Translation*]

Mr. François Lapointe (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, NDP): Thank you, Ms. Mathysen.

Good morning, Mr. Norlock. Thank you for joining us to talk about your private member's bill. As you have guessed, this bill stands a good chance of being supported by all the members here. It is going to turn out very well.

You mentioned that, in the 18th century, people remarked on the great abundance they found in Canada. It was the same in New France. Frenchmen visiting New France said that one only had to put a line in the water for three minutes to catch a salmon. Our ancestors lived like kings in that extremely bountiful environment.

The situation has fluctuated since, of course. The little information I have comes from friends and hunting associations. They are the people who are able to tell me, for example, that the moose population in the Chaudière-Appalaches region has decreased, but that it is very large in the Matane region. That is why Americans who are able to go there to hunt pay a fortune to do so because their chances of killing an animal are very good. But the moose population has decreased in some parts of the Chaudière-Appalaches region.

I was wondering how you view the day itself. You are talking about an official day, I know. People will be made aware that, for a long time, trappers and hunters have been playing a major role, that they are part of our heritage, and that they help to maintain the inventory of our natural riches.

That said, how do you actually see things? For example, will it mean that associations will be able to take advantage of a day that is turned over to them? Will they be able to provide Canadians with more information? I like knowing the little I know, but I learned it because of them. I had to go and meet them. It is information that we hear very little about in public, in the media, and so on.

Do you see the day making it possible for the skills that our hunting and fishing associations have to become better known?

• (1125)

[*English*]

Mr. Rick Norlock: Let me answer your question this way. One of the reasons we're before the heritage committee is that these occupations are part of our Canadian heritage. It doesn't matter what part of Canada you come from, whether you come from Quebec or whether you come from Saskatchewan or British Columbia, they're all part of our heritage.

It is not up to somebody else to do something, sir. It is up to you and me to do something. So I'm going to give you a challenge. It looks to me like this will receive royal assent in this Parliament. Wouldn't it be a good idea, especially for those of us members from rural ridings? I have to say, though, that we have members in the GTA. There are a lot of fishing outfitters embedded in our bigger cities, because Lake Ontario is full of very good species of fish. You name it, Lake Ontario pretty well has it, and the same goes for Quebec.

So isn't it up to you and me, as members of Parliament, to make sure we carry on those traditions, to encourage them in our ridings, and to contact those institutions and those clubs that are engaged in that process?

You know, what I—

The Chair: Mr. Norlock, we're going to have to move along to Monsieur Dion. I'm sure you'll get a chance to expand on that again.

Thank you.

Monsieur Dion, go ahead for seven minutes.

Hon. Stéphane Dion (Saint-Laurent—Cartierville, Lib.): Merci, Monsieur le président.

I'll continue in the same vein.

Mr. Norlock, I fully understand where you're coming from with this bill. Indeed Canada, at least in its European reality, was built on beaver trapping. If not for beaver trapping, the country may never have existed as we know it. So I fully understand why we need to have a day to celebrate that.

But the second step is that we trapped the beavers so much that they almost disappeared. The third step is that now there are so few trappers in some regions, at least in my province, that we have too many beavers and dams. So I understand why you are proposing that, and I agree, but I would like to ask why the second part of this story has not been mentioned anywhere in your bill, and that is that we need hunting, fishing, and trapping that are sustainable. We have learned to do that, but we have a lot more to learn, and the people involved in these activities may be a great help as part of the solution. In the past we have not been careful enough and we have been part of the problem. In my province, for example, and in other places in North America—

[Translation]

There was a bird, not at all a timid one, that people liked to eat—the passenger pigeon. Because of the use of poles, the passenger pigeon was exterminated. It no longer exists. The bison almost disappeared too. That is part of our history.

That is why I would have liked a mention somewhere in the bill that the day would be used to promote...

[English]

sustainable trapping, hunting and fishing.

• (1130)

Mr. Rick Norlock: With all due respect, Mr. Dion, they are going to be sustainable. Do you know why they're going to be sustainable? It is because of the people who are engaged in those activities that they're going to be sustainable. It is the hunters, the fishers, and the trappers who want to ensure that not only for themselves.... In my case, it's not only for myself and for my two sons, but for my grandchildren, one of whom, my granddaughter, received a .22 rifle for Christmas because her dad wants to take her hunting in British Columbia when she reaches the age of 10. I was surprised that in B. C. you can hunt accompanied from 10 years old. In Ontario, I believe it's around 16 and I think in Quebec it's the same thing.

Mr. Dion, every single wildlife federation or group across this country was contacted in my first iteration, and we made sure that they're still in favour of this bill. Let me give you an example. I was about to say to the previous questioner that when I was engaged in the reintroduction of salmon into Lake Ontario, we were out with some high school children and we were rehabilitating the Cobourg Creek in certain areas in a safe manner. So we collected the bicycles and tires out of the water so that the fish could properly... Then, of course, the salmon were released and we planted trees along the bank because salmon like to have a shaded area in order to spawn.

As I told the high school students, there are two kinds of conservationists out there. There are the conservationists who grab a sign and march up and down the streets of our cities, towns, and villages demanding somebody do something about conservation. Then there are the people who actually roll up their sleeves and do something about it. I said, "You are people who roll up your sleeves and do something about it." The wildlife federations, the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters, the Sierra Club: the principal aim of all these wildlife organizations is to ensure conservation. So it is the very people who are engaged in these activities who will ensure....

With regard to the beaver, I'm going to tell you something else that we MPs need to do. We need to tell those people who think it's terrible to wear a beaver coat.... I purposely bought my wife one, because my grandpa told me a long-haired beaver is the longest-wearing coat, so if I was going to spend some money, I'd make sure that I bought one that would last. If we want to do something good for our hunters and our trappers, particularly our aboriginal trappers, and if we really care about our aboriginals, we'll wear sealskin coats; we'll buy our wives fur coats; and we'll wear fur coats. That's how we will sustain those species, because the trappers will not trap them into extinction.

Mr. Dion, in the past we did some of the things because we didn't understand conservation. We didn't understand that these things didn't miraculously happen and that, as an intelligent species, man had to manage those species. So as members of Parliament, the guys should be buying their wives fur coats and the wives should be buying their husbands fur coats if we really want to help sustain our aboriginal brothers and sisters, because these are their traditional things.

Just anecdotally speaking, when I visited Canada's largest penitentiary, Warkworth Institution, which is in my riding—and I forget the name of the program for the aboriginals to bring back pride in who they are—one of the things they were beginning to learn how to do was to properly skin and prepare muskrats and other animals in order to engage in traditional activities. It's up to us to help them.

Hon. Stéphane Dion: Mr. Norlock, I like your passion very much. I would like to ask a second question.

What, concretely, do you hope to have as activities during these annual days? What—concretely—will we do?

Mr. Rick Norlock: What I hope, what I'm going to do, and what I hope each and every one of you do, and you pass on to your confreres and your various caucuses as members of Parliament.... We can do something from our offices, can't we? We can meet the local fish and game clubs—this is good politics too—and encourage them to encourage some of the young folks.

You can ask one of the witnesses coming up.... The Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters put on a family fishing day, and they encouraged parents to teach their children to get engaged in angling.

Here's what I tell folks when they come to me and say they're all stressed out. "Don't bother taking that medication to reduce your stress that you went to see your doctor about. Park your rear end in a boat with a fishing rod in your hand, or sit at the end of the dock, or on the banks of a river, stream, or lake, and put that line in the water. You'll find pretty darn soon that most of your troubles will go away."

My most relaxing moments are when I'm sitting in the woods, waiting for, as I always say—I suppose I'm going to be criticized for this—a suicidal deer to run by, or for a fish that wants to hang itself on my hook. I don't care about getting either one of those, I just enjoy being where I am, because it's relaxing and I'm engaged in something that I love.

• (1135)

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. Norlock. We're all very relaxed now.

We'll move along to Mr. Hillyer, for seven minutes.

Mr. Jim Hillyer (Lethbridge, CPC): Thank you.

You've addressed why hunting and fishing are important, how they're important to conservation and how they are a major part of our heritage. The bill doesn't change any laws pertaining to hunting and fishing; there are no added regulations or limitations or expanded freedoms.

What's the point of a national day? How does it affect public attitudes, and by extension, could it influence legislators in the future?

Mr. Rick Norlock: You know, there's an old saying: keep it simple, stupid—referring to me, of course.

As I said, these occupations are traditions in this country. So it's our heritage. As I previously said, it's up to us to build on this. This is not designed to just be, as one of our members of Parliament told me, a hot dog day—as in everybody wants a day for everything.

If you just think about it—and by looking at your facial expressions, I think most of you do get it—this is about the very nature of our country. This is about why we are, about who we are. It is those occupations—hunting, fishing, and trapping—that actually are the Canadian reality today. It's up to us. I'm hoping this is the beginning, that it stimulates conversation, stimulates us as legislators. Because it has happened provincially. Most of the regulatory regimes around these occupations are provincially mandated. I think what I, as a federal legislator, have done is recognize that importance. Provincial legislatures have already done so. I believe now we have four provinces—and it could be going on to five—that have a similar day.

We can encourage new Canadians. This is about the changing face of Canada, and having new Canadians also become part of that great Canadian story of western Europeans. Now we have people from all around the world who are Canadian. I look around this room. Most of us in this room don't represent the reality of Canada. Canada is changing. The people who come to our country are here because of those traditions that are of value to Canadians—hunting, fishing, and trapping; enjoying the outdoors.

We have such a huge country. Again, as I tell high school students, the population of Canada and the gross domestic product of Canada, the second-largest country in the world land-wise, is equal to the state of California. We've lots of room to grow, but we have lots of opportunities to protect our wildlife and to make sure it's there for new Canadians, as well as our children and our grandchildren. This heritage day is designed to wake us up to that reality and allow legislators like you and me to do something more about it. I don't want this to die. I don't want this to be just a day that's buried in some parliamentary...where the only people who remember it are the people in this room who dealt with it as part of our careers as politicians. It's up to us to do something about it.

I'm doing my part. I belong to organizations that are conservation-minded. As I said in debate at second reading, hunting, fishing, and trapping are embedded in my family's DNA. I have first nations in my blood. I'm so proud of that. I represent a true Canadian family. My mom's French Canadian; my dad is fourth-generation Polish Canadian. We're enjoying those things.

We all have a part to play in this. This is just the beginning, Jim, of what I think we can do. Or we can simply say it's a nice day to celebrate our heritage, and forget about it. But it's up to you and me to do something more. If you ask me what more can we do, I'm going to suggest what more can you do, what more can we all do to make sure that those things we have of value...? This is a family occupation to me; this is important to me personally. That's why I chose this. I said, how can I do something that will unite? Everything

about this place is politically driven. We all know that. But how can I unite us all into one thing that means something to each of us, that crosses party lines, crosses racial lines, religious lines?

It just makes a lot of common sense, doesn't it?

• (1140)

Mr. Jim Hillyer: Do I have any more time?

The Chair: You have about two minutes.

Mr. Jim Hillyer: I want to ask the question in a different way. I think you've addressed well how this can increase people's awareness and understanding of the importance of hunting and fishing, and get people more involved in hunting and fishing, including new Canadians. I come from a pretty rural riding, and even among the people who live in the big city of 85,000 people there are a lot of hunters and fishers. But Canada is more urban. I grew up in a small town where almost everyone hunted and fished, but I didn't. I don't have the patience for fishing. What about those who probably will never hunt, probably will never fish? How can this still be important to them? What I think about is how important hockey is to this country. There are a lot of people who don't play hockey, yet Hockey Day in Canada isn't a national day but it's still a day in the minds of a lot of people. It's still a big deal for people who don't play hockey and don't even watch hockey. How can this day be important to those who will never hunt or fish?

Mr. Rick Norlock: I won't necessarily talk about the day, but let's deal with the occupation. You don't want to hunt and fish? Then go up and see Mr. Hyer or someone like him who does ecotourism. Why do people want to go on ecotourism? To look at spruce trees and pine trees? Partly, but they want to see that wild deer run by. They want to see the various species of birds. They want to see that majestic moose sitting in the water as they paddle their canoe by. They don't want to shoot or hunt or fish anything, but they want to see that animal. That animal wouldn't be there if it wasn't for the people who hunt and fish because we are the people who drive the conservation. I just read to you a report done by Mr. Gary Mauser, who used to be the vice-president of the B.C. Wildlife Federation. So don't hunt, don't fish, but go on a hike.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Norlock.

We're going to move to Monsieur Lapointe for *cinq minutes*.

[*Translation*]

Mr. François Lapointe: Mr. Norlock, I am going to take a few minutes to ask you a question about the bill that has nothing to do with its fundamentals. I want to talk about the choice of the third Saturday in September.

I have checked hunting season schedules. For moose, hunting season in a number of regions in Quebec starts on September 7, September 13, and so on. For white-tailed deer, the season starts a little later. Here is the advantage I see. The date coincides almost exactly with the week when people are starting their hunting season or are making their final preparations for it. But you suggested earlier that federal members of Parliament could take the initiative of getting their hunting and fishing clubs together on that date. Personally, I can tell you that, if hunters are getting ready to go hunting, they are not going to come to their MP's office to take part in a special event. That week will be the last thing on their minds.

Let me try this idea on you. Could we consider putting the week earlier in the season, at the beginning of September perhaps? I will ask the question and you are perfectly free to give me all the arguments that led you to choose this particular date. If the week were set earlier in the season, those in my constituency who are most interested, the hunters, could join me in a regional campaign because they would not yet be deep in the Appalachians enjoying their hunting season.

• (1145)

[English]

Mr. Rick Norlock: I thought of this. I've gone hunting mountain caribou and sheep as well as mountain goat, in British Columbia. Their hunting season starts in August, so you have between August—and you can deer hunt in most provinces, at least Ontario and Quebec—right through until just before Christmas, roughly. So there really isn't a perfect time, but early fall, which is mid-September, to me, was a good time.

The driver here was strictly to try to align it with the United States. I'm just going to read to you a little bit.

Mr. François Lapointe: If I'm not mistaken, it's aligned, but not exactly—

Mr. Rick Norlock: Not exactly, because in the United States it's September 26.

Mr. François Lapointe: So what brings you to that decision?

Mr. Rick Norlock: I didn't want this to be a floating date that could interfere with, perhaps, the pink ribbon...or the Terry Fox Run, or something else like that. I tried to be the least intrusive possible, yet align it with something I love to do, which is hunt deer. Deer season in Ontario and Quebec generally is the first and second week of November. Yes, you can moose hunt, but in the northern regions you moose hunt earlier. If you go down to the area where I used to work, in Hearst, Ontario, which is northern Ontario, it's usually around the first week in October.

So there was no perfect day. I had to choose some day, and quite frankly what I tried to do was align it with the United States. As I said at the beginning to one of the questioners, I tried to align it as closely as possible with the U.S. to attract those valuable tourist dollars, because the tourism industry is one of the best things, right? It doesn't cause pollution, etc., and it helps build a whole bunch of other stuff.

For instance, last weekend in Las Vegas the Safari Club International held a huge international show, so all the outfitters from around the world were going there. Wouldn't it be good if we could align with our American confreres and attract more American hunters and fishers up here?

That was my basic reasoning, as flawed as it is. It's based on a hunting season as big as we have across our country.

Mr. François Lapointe: Do I still have a minute or two?

The Chair: You have 30 seconds.

Ms. Irene Mathysen: Thank you again.

You talked about the explosion of white-tailed deer, and I can tell you there are lots of white-tailed deer where I live. I wondered if part of that was also due to the extinction of predators. Are the groups

you work with working at all toward bringing back some of those desirable predators, such as wolves, and the animals that would keep the populations from becoming excessive?

Mr. Rick Norlock: If you talk to people where I live, basically southeastern Ontario, not too far from the 401.... Right here in the city of Ottawa you have had moose, deer, coyotes, foxes running along Highway 417, the Queensway. These animals are becoming more and more accustomed to man, as are moose.

Michigan, for instance, traded us some turkeys. I think you're aware of the reintroduction of wolves there, the timber wolves, the bigger wolves. Coyotes will take down a small deer. I think what you'll find, and what my solution to this is.... Yes, we need to have that natural balance, but what we can also do is increase the bag limit on animals, provided we do so with good science and good conservation. I think the witnesses coming up will talk about good science and good conservation.

There is a balance, you're right. But I think what's happening is what Mother Nature intended. We are a species. We are a very highly evolved species, but animals are becoming accustomed to our houses and our traffic, etc. We're going to have to use science and good conservation to figure out ways that we can adapt to their adaptation to us.

• (1150)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Norlock.

We have about 30 seconds left, and Mr. Falk would like to get one question in, and then that will be it.

Mr. Ted Falk (Provencher, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I won't go into a huge preamble. I'd like to build a little bit on Mr. Dion's question.

Mr. Norlock, thank you very much for your bill. I do think it's very important, and I could speak a lot in favour of the bill, but I would like to know how you envision celebration of this day. It's a descriptive act; it's not prescriptive. How do you envision celebrations happening?

Mr. Rick Norlock: Again, I go back to what I said before. I've begun to do my part in bringing this to the attention of Canada and to the federal legislators of Canada. Again, that's up to you and me. It's up to you and me through our communication skills that we have with our constituents to let them know about this bill, to talk about the heritage, and to begin to have celebrations celebrating our heritage.

We celebrate Canada Day, which is totally appropriate, and we celebrate a lot of other days that mean something to our heritage, so I thought we should have a day not only for people who are engaged in those traditions of hunting, fishing, and trapping, but also to encourage others to take up those activities.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. Norlock.

We're going to briefly suspend so we can bring in our panel.

• (1150)

(Pause)

• (1150)

The Chair: I will call the meeting back to order.

Welcome to our witnesses.

First, we have with us Jim Brennan, director, government affairs, Ducks Unlimited Canada. Second, we have Greg Farrant, manager, government affairs and policy, the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters. From the Fédération québécoise des chasseurs et pêcheurs, we have with us Pierre Latraverse, president.

You have five minutes each. We will start with Mr. Brennan.

Mr. Jim Brennan (Director, Government Affairs, Ducks Unlimited Canada): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen of the committee. Thank you for inviting me to join you here today and for the opportunity to share some thoughts on behalf of Ducks Unlimited Canada about the significance of Canada's hunting, trapping, and fishing traditions.

When people think about Canada, images of vast landscapes and diverse wildlife often come to mind. We're extremely fortunate and also very proud to have some of the most incredible natural areas in the world. Encouraging people to respect, enjoy, and use these resources responsibly is a cornerstone of Ducks Unlimited Canada's conservation mission. That's because people who have a strong connection to nature and the outdoors also have a strong conservation ethic.

Hunting, trapping, and fishing are a means by which Canadians can experience first-hand the multitude and diversity of valuable natural areas that, as a whole, make up the vast geography of our country. The hunting, fishing, and trapping pursuits they support have a tremendous historical significance and are thus worthy of our respect and celebration, as is proposed in Bill C-501. These activities are part of Canada's cultural fabric. They sustained indigenous peoples for centuries and laid the foundations for this nation. And while there is no disputing their significance from an historical and a natural heritage perspective, these activities remain a very real and relevant part of our environmental and social well-being.

Ducks Unlimited Canada was established 75 years ago by a group of passionate conservation-minded waterfowl hunters who were determined to find solutions to protect and restore vital wetland habitats at a time when waterfowl populations were being devastated in the 1930s. Though the many benefits of wetland conservation have attracted a diversity of supporters for our work today, waterfowl hunters remain among our most passionate and dedicated supporters and are among our most active volunteers.

In recent years, the number of waterfowl hunters in Canada has declined; however, we're starting to witness a new-found interest and appreciation for harvesting your own food that is leading new audiences to take up hunting. Recent media reports are now covering society's growing interest in organic food. Canadians' affinity for eating local products is prompting non-hunters to find out what it's like to take a trip afield rather than a trip to the supermarket.

Trends are showing that more of the younger, environmentally motivated urbanites, as well as women, are now discovering outdoor heritage activities for the first time. In turn, they are becoming more aware of the need for conservation, while personally benefiting from the social and spiritual aspects of connecting with the outdoors. Canadians who participate in hunting, fishing, and trapping contribute to a conservation legacy of which we can be very proud.

In addition, these people are contributing millions of dollars to the national economy and supporting thousands of jobs through these pursuits.

As outlined in Bill C-501, by designating every third Saturday in September as national hunting, trapping, and fishing day, we can celebrate the important role these pursuits play in our past, present, and future. We can continue the traditions of our predecessors and carry forward their ideals about conservation and the environment.

In the province of Ontario in particular, this annual event will likely coincide with Environment Canada's annual youth waterfowling heritage day, and we can think of no better way to recognize hunting, fishing, and trapping than by taking a new young hunter out to the duck blind to experience the thrill of waterfowl hunting for the first time.

For some, learning to hunt may be an intimidating undertaking. Regulations, licensing, equipment, locations, and how-to can all add up to a sense of frustration and confusion. Ducks Unlimited Canada attempts to alleviate this sense of uncertainty through our mentored hunt program. Here, youth and new adult hunters are educated about hunting, and then mentored on actual duck and goose hunts with experienced hunters.

A national hunting, trapping and fishing heritage day would go a long way in supporting our efforts to make these activities more accessible and familiar to all Canadians. Ducks Unlimited Canada is proud to support the parliamentary outdoor caucus and, more recently, to serve on the government's hunting and angling advisory panel. We're committed to working with all levels of government to conserve, manage, and restore our natural areas such as wetlands, while encouraging Canadians to take an active role as well.

Bill C-501 is an important way to honour our past by introducing someone new to hunting, fishing, or trapping. These people are our future conservationists. Engaging them in the outdoors is important to ensure a bright future for all Canadians.

Thank you for your time today. I would be happy to answer any questions.

• (1155)

The Chair: Thank you very much. That was right on the money. It was five minutes exactly.

We'll move to Mr. Latraverse, for five minutes.

Mr. Pierre Latraverse (President, Fédération québécoise des chasseurs et pêcheurs): I would like to say thank you to the committee for hearing the opinion of the Fédération québécoise des chasseurs et pêcheurs.

[Translation]

In Quebec, we are currently enjoying some of the most beautiful years for hunting, fishing and trapping. That is because game and fish are abundant, of course, but it is also because hunting, fishing and trapping are protected by the Act respecting the conservation and development of wildlife, which came into effect in 2002.

Under the act, practising these activities is a right; no one may knowingly hinder a person who is hunting, fishing or trapping from carrying on that recreational activity. In a sense, the act makes it clear in everyone's mind that it is lawful in Quebec to hunt, fish and trap and to allow all hunting, fishing and trapping enthusiasts in Quebec to carry on those activities with pride.

By establishing a national hunting, trapping and fishing heritage day, the federal government is also indicating to all Canadians that harvesting wildlife is part of who we are and that it is perfectly legitimate to do so. Such a message will have a significant effect across the country in all contexts. The role that harvesting game and fish has played in a number of aspects of Canadian history no longer has to be demonstrated. But we must go beyond a simple embracing of the historical role and show that hunting, fishing and trapping still figure among Canadian values.

The national hunting, trapping and fishing heritage day will allow us to declare that the activities are still relevant, that they provide Canada with many benefits, and that they allow communities to live, people to work, businesses to grow and all Canadians who practice these sports to live an active life close to nature and to wildlife.

With this initiative, the Government of Canada also recognizes the benefits to our society of wildlife harvesting activities in both economic and wellness terms. The values that the activities impart, including community spirit, respect for others, respect for the outdoors and its wildlife, and the sustainable development of natural resources, are also values that provide Canada with one of the highest standards of living in the world.

In addition, those who practice hunting, fishing and trapping are in a position to appreciate Canada's natural riches and to understand the diversity and richness of the natural characteristics that make up our country. They are often the ones at the origins of the most significant conservation measures.

At the moment, the main challenge facing the federation—and it is also probably the case for all those involved in wildlife management—is training the next generation to be active. In this context, a national hunting, trapping and fishing heritage day will certainly be a very useful tool. If we want our sector to remain a major economic lever for Canada as a whole, if we want millions of Canadians to continue reaping the benefits that come from being close to nature and to wildlife, if we want hunting, fishing and trapping to continue as an essential economic engine for some communities, we must take advantage of actions like this.

Our federation has created many innovative projects designed to maintain the interest in hunting, fishing and trapping at the highest level. The projects include online tools such as Zone Chasse and allonspecher.com or the very recent mentoring site. A day like this is very timely for us. It will certainly become the starting point for one or more major new promotion projects.

Hunting, fishing and trapping have a unique status in Quebec. From now on, the activities will also have a distinct status all over Canada. The federation is convinced that, with this action, the Government of Canada will give new impetus to the promotion and consolidation of wildlife harvesting activities all over Canada.

On behalf of all those committed to wildlife in Quebec and of our colleagues in the other provinces and territories, please accept my thanks.

• (1205)

[English]

The Chair: Merci.

Mr. Farrant, you have five minutes.

Mr. Greg Farrant (Manager, Government Affairs and Policy, Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Good afternoon to you and the members of the committee. On behalf of the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters, which is celebrating its 86th anniversary this year, our 100,000 members, and our 710 member clubs across Ontario, we appreciate the opportunity to appear before you today in support of Bill C-501.

Canada was built on the staples economy. To use a more pedestrian expression, this nation was founded by people who were hewers of wood and drawers of water. A large part of that early staples economy was based upon hunting, fishing, and trapping, which have all been part of our history and the fabric of this country predating the arrival of the first non-aboriginal explorers and colonists on our shores.

As the member for Winnipeg North noted during debate on this bill in the House, one of our most venerable and largest retail institutions, the Hudson's Bay Company, was founded in the late 1600s largely on the basis of the trade in furs, which led to the opening of the Northwest Passage and other northern routes on the backs of hunters and trappers.

Today millions of Canadians across this country engage in recreational sport fishing and hunting, while for tens of thousands more these activities are a way of life, a means of making a living, a ceremonial or treaty right, or a means of putting food on the table. For all of the above, these activities are second nature.

Mr. Norlock referenced earlier other provinces that had passed similar legislation. That number is now eight that have either passed or are in the process of passing legislation that recognizes the cultural and heritage value of these activities and the right of Canadians to participate in those activities according to the law. The provinces of Alberta and Manitoba have also established special days that recognize the importance of hunting. Ontario was one of the first provinces to formally recognize these activities by passing the Heritage Hunting and Fishing Act in 2002.

As Mr. Norlock also indicated during his testimony, Bill C-501 is an inherently simple piece of legislation, but underlying its simplicity is the fact that the activities that the bill speaks to are critical not only in terms of our heritage but also in terms of the impact they have on the conservation of our fish and wildlife populations and the contributions made by anglers, hunters, and trappers to that conservation, and indeed to our national economy. The bill mimics similar legislation in the U.S., which has celebrated a national hunting and fishing day since 1972.

Dating back to the 19th century, anglers, hunters, and trappers were the earliest proponents of conservation and scientific wildlife management in this country. They were the first to recognize that rapid development and unregulated uses of fish or wildlife were threatening the future of many species. Led by Teddy Roosevelt, Sir Wilfrid Laurier, and a host of sportsmen on both sides of the border, early conservationists helped create the first laws restricting unfettered use of wildlife. They worked in support of sustainable use of fish and wildlife, and helped to create a licensing system for those who engage in these activities. This eventually resulted in the creation of the North American wildlife conservation model, the underpinning for most fish and wildlife programs in existence on this continent today and a tribute to the legacy left by earlier generations of anglers and hunters.

I am pleased today to provide each member of the committee, through the clerk, with a DVD produced by us several years ago. It traces the important contributions made over the last 120 years by anglers, hunters, and trappers to the health and welfare of our fish and wildlife populations in both Canada and the U.S. Hunting, fishing, and trapping in Canada combined contribute over \$13 billion annually to the Canadian economy.

In 1995 the Province of Ontario set up what still exists and is known as the “special purpose account”, the money from which is used to fund all fish and wildlife programs in the province. The money comes from two sources. The first is revenue generated by anglers and hunters in their hunting and fishing licences. The second is the province's consolidated revenue fund. For 2012 and 2013, anglers and hunters in Ontario contributed \$72.3 million of the \$105 million that was spent on fish and wildlife in Ontario.

In Manitoba hundreds of acres of wetlands have been permanently protected thanks to grants generated by waterfowl hunters. The money from the migratory game hunting permit is directed to a fund administered by Wildlife Habitat Canada to support hundreds of conservation projects across the country.

Ducks Unlimited, Delta Waterfowl, Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation, and dozens of other national, provincial, and local conservation-based hunting, fishing, and trapping organizations have also contributed millions to the protection and restoration of our natural resources or the purchase of valuable wetlands to keep them from development.

In 2012 OFAH along with our colleagues on both sides of the border, including the organizations represented here today, hosted the National Fish and Wildlife Conservation Congress here in Ottawa. This brought together hundreds of fish and wildlife experts from across North America and Australia to discuss the future of fish and wildlife, and the programs to sustain them.

● (1210)

During second reading debate on Bill C-501, there was clearly strong support for the bill from all sides of the House. It was also clear that the bill enjoys broad support across party lines, and that for some, like the members from Dauphin—Swan River—Marquette, and Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, they have personal experiences themselves that have given them an innate understanding and appreciation of why fishing, hunting, and trapping are vitally important to millions of Canadians. The member for Portneuf—

Jacques-Cartier raised an important point that is often overlooked in debates. She noted the tangible economic benefits that angling, hunting, and trapping bring to areas across the country through tourism, through licence sales, and the purchase of other goods and services that ultimately create jobs.

The last point that I will raise was actually made during debate on a previous version of this bill in 2010. Madame Lavallée, who was at the time the member for Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert, but who's no longer in this place, spoke of the important role that hunting, in particular, plays in wildlife management and the control of populations. She noted that wildlife managers she had spoken to told her that if recreational hunting and trapping were ever abandoned, wildlife management budgets could never be increased enough to pick up the slack, and both wildlife and public safety would suffer as a result.

This bill is an important step toward the recognition of the important heritage of hunting and fishing in Canada and the contribution that anglers, hunters, and trappers make to the conservation of our natural resources.

We commend Mr. Norlock for introducing this bill. We're proud to support it, and we appreciate the opportunity to appear here today.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. Farrant.

We're now going to go to some questioning.

For seven minutes, Mr. Falk.

Mr. Ted Falk: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I think not only is hunting and trapping and fishing the activity that our country was probably founded on, but it's also an activity today that people still use as their livelihood and are involved in. But, primarily, I think people use it as a recreational day. Certainly, most people do consume what they harvest, and I think that's good.

I get pretty excited listening to my three-year-old granddaughter, who, together with her five-year-old brother, get up in the wee hours of the morning and spend a couple of hours with their father in a blind, doing some pre-season scouting for white-tailed deer. What a wonderful time that is for the three of them, not only to spend time with each other, but also to learn about nature, to learn about wildlife, to learn about conservation and just to observe the beauty that we have here in Canada.

In my former life, prior to politics, which I'm still involved in— heavy construction and gravel—we own a bunch of properties. It's interesting, on the weekend that fishing begins in the province of Manitoba, and also on the first day of white-tailed deer hunting, we have a disproportionate number of employees who are sick and are unavailable for work.

It's an important part of many of my employees' lives, hunting and fishing. In fact, we have some gravel pits that we intentionally stock with rainbow trout and we make available to our employees for fishing. One of the big activities is ice fishing. I observed just last weekend my employees out on the ice with their shacks, with their tents, harvesting rainbow trout. I think it's an important part of our culture. Certainly in my riding it is. We also have a lineup of employees who try to get their dubs on our properties for black bear hunting and white-tailed deer hunting, and lay stake to the claim that they may have exclusive rights to hunt on those properties.

I think it's an important activity. I'm very pleased to support the bill. What I'm curious about is the same question that I asked the presenter of the bill. It's not a prescriptive act; it's going to be descriptive. It's going to be a national hunting, trapping and fishing heritage day. How do you think your organizations could use that day to promote the mandate and the vision that your organizations have?

•(1215)

Mr. Greg Farrant: I'll certainly give it a go, Mr. Falk.

The OFAH already does outreach on a regular basis. One of the outreach programs that we're most proud of is our new Canadians program. This bill would help focus some real attention on these particular pastimes, these recreational pursuits, that would also help us draw new Canadians into these cultural and heritage activities. We host new Canadians days every year where we have new Canadians, mostly from the GTA, coming to the OFAH in Peterborough.

They spend the day fishing. They spend the day at our Heritage Hunting and Fishing Centre next door, which has dioramas, fish aquariums, and things like that. They spend the day with the teachers, who are employed there, who teach provincial curriculum, and it's the same thing with the thousands of school kids who come each year.

This focuses the activities that we're talking about here today on a larger plane, on a national plane. We all individually, provincially, have certain heritage days or certain heritage recognition for these activities. But by bringing this into the national fold, I think it exposes people who don't hunt and fish, who don't understand that anglers and hunters are the leading conservationists. It gives us an opportunity to talk about it and it certainly gives us a chance to expose to new Canadians coming to this country just exactly how important these heritage activities are to us.

The Chair: Mr. Brennan.

Mr. Jim Brennan: Certainly, I can sympathize with the problem that Mr. Falk has with his company because we have exactly the same human resources issue at the start of the hunting and fishing seasons in our organization.

That being said, certainly there are an awful lot of activities that are going on across Canada right now that really we would use this to draw significantly greater attention to, particularly in our organization, with our mentored hunting program. Just to give you an example of the success of these programs, we surveyed—along with out Manitoba partners—the participants who went through the mentored hunt programs between 2004 and 2010. The survey respondents said that 76% of the participants continued hunting after

going through the mentored hunt program and 58% reported recruiting somebody new to hunting as a result of that.

By bringing national attention to the importance of fishing, trapping, and hunting, it would certainly help us to demonstrate or raise awareness of the programming that is available right now through us and through other organizations like OFAH, and other organizations around the country. Certainly, it would be an awareness boost, we think, for these heritage activities.

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Latraverse: In Quebec, we already hold a number of activities to promote hunting and fishing. We have produced several videos that have been translated at the request of our colleagues in other provinces. They are called "Why Hunt?" They show, for example, a girl about 13 or 14 years old going hunting with her father. They also show a forty-something realtor, a woman, a Quebecker from Lebanon who now knows about hunting and who gives cooking demonstrations. They were all very, very well received.

We have also built bridges to First Nations through hunting days. We have learned how First Nations people hunt and fish. We have had retriever dog demonstrations to show how dogs can help us to hunt. People have to know that dogs are not just pets; they also like to work. You can take those dogs and get them to show how they retrieve ducks or tree raccoons. We showed different ways in which the animals can be used. There were even bowhunting demonstrations in places where old-fashioned bows are still used. In Quebec, we have specific seasons for bowhunting.

This is important information, because it shows that the activities are permitted in Canada. I have seen people from some cultural communities refrain from going fishing because they think that the activity is not allowed in Canada. People must be educated about the riches that Canada has.

•(1220)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Latraverse.

Mr. Nantel, Mr. Lapointe, you have seven minutes.

Mr. François Lapointe: Good morning, gentlemen. Thank you for joining us.

Good morning, Mr. Latraverse. Let us have our discussion in French. In Ottawa, that our basic right and you have no need to apologize for it.

A part of your testimony astonished me. I was thinking about my winter coat, which was made in L'Islet. I represent the constituency of Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup where there are many, many hunters. The collar of my coat is made from natural fur, not synthetic. Just this week, some city friends touched the collar and pointed out that it was not synthetic. They asked me how I could wear a collar like that. At that point, I really let them have it for a long time. I told them about Frank Pelletier, a trapper in my constituency, who traps over a really wide area. I have only met him two or three times but he showed me a whole bunch of things. One of the things I learned was that he is a very major figure in terms of our knowledge of the area and the wildlife in the Chaudière-Appalaches region.

You said earlier that it was lawful to practice hunting, fishing and trapping in Canada. In your opinion, will this national day help to promote that? How difficult do you think it is to make city folk understand that it is extremely healthy and extremely important to become involved in these activities as we are doing now, in the 21st century?

Mr. Pierre Latraverse: That difficulty can be resolved by major communication activities. We have created major communication programs in Quebec and they have been picked up all across Canada. The Fédération québécoise des chasseurs et pêcheurs is a leader in many areas.

As an example, take allonspecher.com. The application works on all smartphones and tablets. It lists all the places in Quebec where you can put a boat in the water, by administrative region. You can even check to see whether there is a guide or an outfitter on this lake or that lake, in whichever administrative region you are. You can see which kinds of fish you can catch there or find out when fishing is permitted. We have the same kind of thing for hunting, called allonschasser.com.

Last year, Quebec hosted Game Fair, an event from France. The Italians, the French, the Germans and the Brits were amazed to see the modern digital tools for hunting and fishing that are available in Quebec. We made a presentation to the Canadian Wildlife Federation. A lot of people from other provinces like what we are doing. It goes hand in hand with education. We do it very well.

Mr. François Lapointe: How do you reach out to city people like the ones who patted the collar of my coat and told me that they could not believe how I could wear a little bit of fur that was not synthetic? How can we use this official day to set the record straight and reach out to people like that who are so far removed from the rural reality of hunters and anglers?

Mr. Pierre Latraverse: In Quebec, city people can take part in Fishing Fest. In Montreal's Rapids Park, we have organized fishing days. Everyone received a fishing rod so that they could go fishing. The water had been stocked with fish. Fishing licences were not necessary on that day. The event was so popular that it is now held over three days. People also get the information they need. With the government's help, we have even translated the principal hunting and fishing regulations into several languages so that people who do not speak French or English can do the activities without running the risk of being charged or prosecuted because they are not familiar with the law.

To those activities, we add retriever dog demonstrations, bowhunting, modern trapping methods and the new kinds of traps in use. We also wanted to show people that an old fur or animal-skin coat left in the woods would disappear in a few months, whereas a coat made of synthetic material, nylon, for example, would still be there 40, 50 or 100 years later.

• (1225)

Mr. François Lapointe: That is a very good argument.

In passing, my two children have twice taken part in these fishing days in Montmagny. I made sure we were among the people in attendance. It was a great success. There were a lot of people there.

We also have goose hunting, which gave rise to the Montmagny snow goose festival. It is a major tourist attraction. The festival is named after a hunting tradition.

I would like to talk about something a little more sensitive. If I remember correctly, something unfortunate happened three years ago. Someone completely lacking in judgment set up on highway 132 to shoot geese. There were blinds, and a hunter got shot. I was stunned. I don't hunt geese, but I know very well that you don't set up on highway 132 and shoot everywhere. How irresponsible!

As I said, could an official day also be used—first and foremost—to ensure that all Canadians understand the importance of hunting, fishing and trapping, and to what extent the way these activities are practised now is good for the environment? Could it also be used to remind people of some of the basic safety rules? Do you think that would be appropriate?

Mr. Pierre Latraverse: When we hold this kind of activity, we always provide all the necessary information. We indicate that hunting and fishing must be carried out in a regulated way. We provide booklets on the basic regulations. That is why Quebec has websites like zonechasse.com and allonspecher.com. All the regulations can also be accessed on smartphones and tablets. There are presentations on the regulations. We show people where they can get the regulations, how to comply with them, and we always invite a wildlife protection officer to be present during these festivities. We simply want to show that hunting and fishing is controlled in Quebec.

Mr. François Lapointe: Thank you very much, Mr. Latraverse.

A little earlier, we were wondering what activities might be typical for that day. Mr. Norlock said that members of Parliament could organize activities in their constituencies. How do you see that? What type of activities could we organize to help you—you and your organizations—to raise the public's awareness of the importance of what you do? What could we do to support you coherently and intelligently?

Mr. Pierre Latraverse: I remember going to Saint-Jacques-de-Leeds a few years ago with a group that was hunting white-tailed deer. The group paired farmers with hunters because there were problems with destruction. A hunting festival was organized at that point. All the activities were related to hunting because there was only hunting at the time.

Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean has a hunting festival in late August and early September...

• (1230)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Latraverse.

Mr. Dion, you have seven minutes.

Hon. Stéphane Dion: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.
[English]

Mr. Brennan, just to be clear and sure, Ducks Unlimited Canada supports this bill with no reservations?

Mr. Jim Brennan: We support the establishment of a day to recognize and celebrate hunting, fishing, and trapping, so, absolutely.

The core of our supporters are obviously conservationists but we have many supporters who are hunters, fishermen, and trappers.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Stéphane Dion: My question is for Mr. Latraverse and Mr. Farrant. It is purely intuitive, and I would like to hear what you have to say about it.

If I'm fishing with a friend on a magnificent lake in the Laurentians, maybe the Rouge-Matawin wildlife area or in the Maison-de-Pierre ZEC, and I see a small boat in the distance. I can tell with all certainty that there are two people on board. It might be a man and a woman, but usually it's two middle-aged old stock French-Canadians or English-Canadians. If they are immigrants, they will have been in Canada a long time. If they are immigrants, they are usually from Europe, like my father-in-law, who is from Austria. He hunted all his life in the Alps. When he arrived in Lac-Saint-Jean, he was very happy. He came to Canada because he had read Jack London, so you can just imagine.

Now, you are saying that you are making huge efforts to introduce the next generation and newcomers to these activities. In my riding of Saint-Laurent—Cartierville, which is quite multicultural, I have a lot of difficulty finding anyone who shares my passion for fishing, not to mention hunting and trapping.

What are you doing to attract new nature lovers to hunting, fishing and trapping and to diversify these activities so that they reflect the face of Canada today? If you speak to owners of outfitters and people with hunting and fishing stores, you'll see that they are concerned.

How successful have you been with this in Quebec and Ontario? Since we're running out of time, could you tell us how this additional day, a National Hunting, Trapping and Fishing Heritage Day, could be used to the utmost to achieve your goal?

[*English*]

Mr. Greg Farrant: Thank you, Monsieur Dion, for the question. I appreciate it.

We are coming up on the cusp of national family fishing week in the next short while. There is also an Ontario family fishing weekend, which brings thousands of people. For instance, just outside of Peterborough we host an event that last year had 2,300 parents and children out on the ice on Chemong Lake ice fishing.

We have two programs at the federation—TackleShare and Travelling TackleShare—that go to all the provincial parks in Ontario and, as our colleagues in Quebec do, provide people from urban centres who might not normally fish and hunt but who might be there with their families the opportunity to have fishing rods and reels. The programs show them how to use these and tell them about the rules and regulations.

The federation has a Get Outdoors program that has exposed thousands of children over the years to hunting, fishing, and shooting with firearms and bows and arrows and crossbows and such things, on a range. We have Get Outdoors camps every summer that are sold out in 33 minutes. Each summer now, we have had to put on three. They bring 600 kids to the Get Outdoors camps, where they learn about hunting and fishing, recreation, ATVing, and such things.

Our heritage centre, which opened three years ago, is a \$2-million heritage centre that last year brought through 6,700 school children from areas close to us, with their teachers. It is aligned with both the primary school and the secondary school curriculum in Ontario and teaches them about the heritage activities and tries to impart the love of hunting, fishing, and conservation to these kids.

In Ontario the OFAH provides, on behalf of the Province of Ontario, the hunter education courses. In 2001 we put through 5,000 students; last year we put through 27,000 students. Many of those were women and students under 18 years of age. There is definitely an increase in the interest in hunting and fishing among both young people and women.

In urban areas, we're working right now with the City of Toronto on an urban recreational fishing program that will involve all the municipal areas of the GTA in recreational fishing days and a recreational fishing component that will spread right across the waterfront in the GTA. A bill like this will fit beautifully within this kind of heritage activity in Ontario.

Those are some of the things we're doing to attract new Canadians and young Canadians and more women to hunting and fishing pursuits.

• (1235)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Latraverse: Quebec is similar to Ontario. I'll give you an example.

Last year, we gave firearm safety and handling courses. We gave over 20,000 people an introductory course on hunting with a firearm. The course is mandatory to get a hunting licence. According to the statistics, almost 25% of them were young people and women.

Our Fauniquement Femme PLUS program teaches women the basics of hunting and fishing. For example, we show them how to start an outboard motor, shoot, be it a gun or a bow, put bait on a hook, canoe, and so on. The program is very much appreciated. Women take the train in Montreal to an outfitter between La Tuque and Lac-Saint-Jean. They are in nature and can see animals and fish. These activities are very popular.

Every association in our federation that requests it will receive the funding they need to introduce the young and not-so-young to these activities. In our federation, we have expanded to include a new generation of people who have never been involved in these kinds of activities. It might be a friend or someone who has never hunted. We have programs for that. We do special fundraising so that young people can be involved in hunting and fishing activities. We are setting up a mentoring program, which will let middle-aged people—like me—to pass on their significant experience to young people so that they will continue to have a good relationship with nature.

In another part of my life, I am the vice-president of Stratégies Saint-Laurent, an environmental group. I can tell you...

[English]

The Chair: Merci, Monsieur Latraverse.

That will have to be the last word from our witnesses. *Merci*.

We'll briefly suspend and then we'll move to clause-by-clause. I know Mr. Norlock is anxiously awaiting that part of the meeting.

Thank you to our witnesses.

• (1235) _____ (Pause) _____

• (1240)

The Chair: I will call this meeting back to order.

Pursuant to Standing Order No. 75(1), consideration of the preamble and clause 1, the short title is postponed.

We will move to clause 2. Is there any debate?

(Clause 2 agreed to)

The Chair: Mr. Dykstra.

Mr. Rick Dykstra (St. Catharines, CPC): Could I have it noted that there was unanimous consent to clause 2?

The Chair: Absolutely.

Shall clause 3 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Clause 3 agreed to)

Mr. Rick Dykstra: Noted again....

The Chair: It is noted again that it passed unanimously.

Shall clause 1 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Rick Dykstra: Do you mean the short title?

The Chair: You wanted that to pass unanimously as well?

Mr. Rick Dykstra: Yes, please.

The Chair: Shall the preamble carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Rick Dykstra: Unanimously.

The Chair: Unanimously.

Shall the title carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Chair: Unanimously.

Shall the bill carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Chair: Unanimously.

Shall I report the bill to the House?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Chair: Unanimously.

Good work, committee.

Congratulations, Mr. Norlock. I think that's record time for a bill.

The meeting is adjourned.

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