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# **Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security**

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**EVIDENCE**

**Tuesday, June 2, 2015**

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**Chair**

**Mr. Daryl Kramp**



## Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security

Tuesday, June 2, 2015

•(0845)

[English]

**The Chair (Mr. Daryl Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings, CPC)):** Colleagues, welcome to the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security. This is meeting 74. Pursuant to the order of reference from May 6, we are doing clause by clause of Bill C-637, an act to amend the Criminal Code (firearms storage and transportation).

This is obviously a very brief bill. It's the chair's intention to go through the clause by clause on this and then go to committee business to discuss items that are outstanding and/or to see what we'll do with an agenda for either following actions and/or deliberations by the committee.

**Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.):** Mr. Chair, I would pull up my motion, which is on the—

**The Chair:** Yes, Mr. Easter.

**Hon. Wayne Easter:** Mr. Chair, I will move my motion. I think the clerk has copies. I was going to move it during the last three meetings, but I didn't want to take the time of the committee. It is an important motion.

My motion is as follows:

That the committee urgently invite Suzanne Legault, Information Commissioner of Canada, Bob Paulson, Commissioner of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, and the Honourable Steven Blaney, Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, to discuss the special report to Parliament by the Information Commissioner, tabled in Parliament on May 14, 2015, entitled An Investigation into an access to information request for the Long-gun Registry, and that the meeting be televised.

I move the motion, Mr. Chair. It would be really nice to have this motion on the table for our 75th meeting of this committee.

The reason for the motion is straightforward. The Information Commissioner has presented a case in which the government, through the Minister of Public Safety's office, and through the chain of command of the RCMP, committed a crime by way of destruction of government documents.

The key questions that have to be resolved are as follows. One, who within the Minister of Public Safety's office, Public Safety Canada, or the RCMP gave an—

**The Chair:** There's a point of order.

**Ms. Roxanne James (Scarborough Centre, CPC):** Sorry, I just put my hand up in order to be put on the speakers list. Thank you.

**The Chair:** Oh. Excuse me. My apologies.

Carry on, Mr. Easter.

**Hon. Wayne Easter:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Who within the Minister of Public Safety's office, Public Safety Canada, or the RCMP gave and who received any instructions and orders to destroy the documents in question between May 2, 2012, the day the former Public Safety minister gave his assurance records would be retained, and October 25, 2012, the date the destruction of government documents commenced? It's clear, Mr. Chair, that this is a violation within the law.

The second question is, was the Office of the Commissioner of the RCMP aware of the commitment made by the previous minister of Public Safety in a letter to the Information Commissioner that "the RCMP will abide by the right of access described in section 4 of the Act and its obligations in that regard"? If so, if they were aware, why were the documents destroyed?

The other question would be—really, I think you could call it a "firewall"—was the firewall between political involvement and RCMP day-to-day operations broken?

The Information Commissioner stated the following, which I want to be placed on the record of this committee, in a letter submitted by the Information Commissioner to the Speakers of both chambers of Parliament on May 13, 2015. In a quote from that letter, her concerns were put directly:

On April 13, 2012, I wrote to the then Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, the Honourable Vic Toews, to inform him that any records for which a request had been received under the Act were subject to the right of access and could not be destroyed until a response had been provided under the Act and any related investigation and court proceedings were concluded. Minister Toews responded on May 2, 2012 providing assurances that the RCMP would abide by the right of access described in section 4 of the Act.

...I also concluded that the RCMP destroyed records responsive to the request with the knowledge that these records were subject to the right of access guaranteed by subsection 4(1) of the Act. As a result, as well on March 26, 2015, I referred the matter to the Attorney General of Canada for possible obstruction of the right of access under section 67.1 of the Act. I have not received a response to this letter of referral.

In order to preserve the rights of the complainant, pursuant to section 42 of the Act, I will also file a court application before the Federal Court.

She goes on to conclude by saying:

The proposed changes in Bill C-59 will deny the right of access of the complainant, it will deny the complainant's recourse in court and it will render null and void any potential liability against the Crown.

Bill C-59 sets a perilous precedent against Canadians' quasi-constitutional right to know.

In the report itself, the Information Commissioner states the following, concluding with a specific course of action her office has taken:

The information and evidence obtained during the Information Commissioner's investigation has led her to conclude that the RCMP destroyed records responsive to the request with the knowledge that these records were subject to the right of access guaranteed by subsection 4(1) of the Act. In particular...that factual information relates to the elements of the offence set out in paragraph 67.1(1)(a)....

I'll not take the time to go through that, but to save time, Mr. Chair, I think that, simply put, the RCMP destroyed these records with the knowledge that they related to the outstanding access request as well as an ongoing investigation. The RCMP destroyed these records despite the Information Commissioner's letter dated April 13, 2012, to the Minister of Public Safety, copying the Commissioner of the RCMP, which clearly stated that these records are subject to the right of access guaranteed by the Access to Information Act and may not be destroyed until a response has been provided to the complainant and any related investigation and court proceedings are completed.

Based on the information that the Office of the Information Commissioner has gathered in the context of this investigation, the Information Commissioner is of the opinion that there is a possibility that an offence in contravention of section 67 of the act has been committed. As I said earlier, she has referred that matter to the Honourable Peter MacKay, Attorney General of Canada.

● (0850)

Mr. Chair, the government or law enforcement can't pick and choose the laws they want to enforce. The law is the law, as people on this committee would know.

I will close, Mr. Chair, by adding the following from Ms. Legault's testimony before the access to information, privacy and ethics committee on May 25. In response to a question as to whether the retroactive application being used in the budget implementation act could be applied to make the \$90,000 alleged bribe to Mike Duffy retroactively legal, the Information Commissioner stated the following:

I think that this retroactive application and the retroactive stripping of the application of the Access To Information Act is a perilous precedent. I think it could be used in any other file, of course.

There are two issues here, and we can't deal with one at this committee. One is the budget implementation act, in that it makes legal what was illegal at the time and takes that whole issue away by the retroactive amending of a law. As we are the public safety committee, I think it's important to us that the Information Commissioner, an officer of parliament, has alleged that the RCMP, our national police force, has violated the law.

Could there be political influence? I think possibly so. However, I would hope not, because there is supposed to be a firewall between day-to-day operations within the public safety minister's office and the RCMP.

However, Mr. Chair, the only way we can find that out is to invite the Information Commissioner of Canada, Suzanne Legault; Bob Paulson, the Commissioner of the RCMP; and Mr. Blaney, the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness to come before this committee and explain what happened. They're the ones who would be in the know. They're the ones between whom the conversations took place, if they did take place.

In any event, we do know that the information was destroyed. It's alleged to be a violation of the law, and I think we have a responsibility as the public safety committee to hear from those three folks and find out the facts.

I therefore move the motion.

Thank you very much.

● (0855)

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr. Easter.

Is there any further comment?

Ms. James.

**Ms. Roxanne James:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We were aware of this motion coming to this committee. Of course, we reject any claim that the RCMP did anything wrong by getting rid of the long-gun registry. That was what parliament had voted for; it was this Conservative government that passed that legislation. To imply that the RCMP did anything wrong by following the will of parliament, I think is absolutely outrageous, for one thing.

Secondly, the public safety committee, this committee, was forwarded two pieces of the budget implementation act by the finance committee to study, which we did. The issue at hand, which Mr. Easter is referring to, is actually being studied in the finance committee.

I believe that the Information Commissioner is appearing at the finance committee today. I see that Mr. McCallum from the Liberal party might be here to replace Mr. Easter, and I'm assuming that Mr. Easter is probably going to head over to the finance committee to ask those very same questions. That is the appropriate place to do that because that committee is responsible for that portion of the budget implementation act.

I understand that the RCMP will also be appearing at the finance committee, so perhaps Mr. Easter can ask the RCMP why it followed the will of parliament. We are the body that legislates, enacts laws and measures, and the RCMP followed those. I think that's the appropriate place for Mr. Easter to head over to, and I assume that because Mr. McCallum is here, that will be occurring very shortly.

I will not be supporting Mr. Easter's motion for those reasons.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

Mr. Garrison.

**Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, NDP):** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I think what we're presented with here is the problem of omnibus budget bills and the provisions dealing with the access to information and the long-gun registry. It probably should have been in a separate piece of legislation, which could have come to this committee for full study with full witnesses. Unfortunately, that's not the case, so I do agree with the parliamentary secretary that the government has chosen to send this through the finance committee, and that that is where the issue will be discussed. Nevertheless, I think it's still a useful motion because we all know that the finance committee does not have the expertise nor the time to give full consideration to this.

That brings us to the question of time. There are many things that we New Democrats think need to have been studied in this committee, and I can make a long list of things we could have brought forward today—the use of solitary confinement, the treatment of women and transgender and gender variant Canadians in corrections facilities, PTSD in the RCMP and the shocking rate of suicide among law enforcement officials, the problem of harassment in the RCMP—a whole list of things we could study. However, we have a process in this committee that gives priority to legislation. So unfortunately, or fortunately, we followed that process, and the legislative burden has kept this committee quite busy and didn't allow us to get to a lot of things we might have otherwise studied in this committee.

Again, I think this would be a useful session for us to have, but we recognize that there are many things this committee was not able to get to because of the legislative burden, and I think this is yet another example of those.

We will be supporting the motion.

• (0900)

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

Mr. Norlock.

**Mr. Rick Norlock (Northumberland—Quinte West, CPC):** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

This is nothing but an obviously puerile, pathetic political move. What it's designed to do, quite frankly, is the following. As we approach an election, of course, somebody is trying to usurp the very important work this committee has to do, and that is to review legislation. This is parliamentary tradition in this country. This is the way this committee is set up.

My friend across the way says there are lots of other things we could study. There's no end to things we could study, but we are very much time limited in this Parliament, and I think what we need to do is get on with this.

Mr. Easter is great. He's been here 20-some years. He really knows how to pull political strings. He knows how to garner the limelight and how to get things in the limelight and to make accusations.

This committee is not a court. The Information Commissioner has done what she thinks is appropriate. He uses the right words when he says "alleges". Every time somebody alleges something, if we're going to be sucked up into some kind of political move just to placate some people who want to score some points because they

may not be doing well in the polls or something else, that's too bad. That's sad. But I won't be part of a political game.

We have legislation before this committee. Let's get on with it, and if we have time to study things appropriately before the end of the 41st Parliament, let's do it. But let's get on with the job at hand, and let Mr. Easter scurry over to the finance committee and do his tricks. Maybe the cameras will be on. He'll get a few minutes on the nightly news, to make an allegation that in the end will be moot, because the Supreme Court of Canada has said that Parliament is supreme. Parliament said destroy the records. The records are destroyed. End of story.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

Ms. Ablonczy.

**Hon. Diane Ablonczy (Calgary—Nose Hill, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I was hoping that Mr. Norlock would say what he really thinks today.

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**Hon. Diane Ablonczy:** But I have to say I cannot disagree with anything he says and I won't be supporting this motion.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

Is there any further comment?

All in favour of the motion.

**Hon. Wayne Easter:** I'd ask for a recorded vote, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** Recorded vote, please.

(Motion negatived: nays 5; yeas 4)

**The Chair:** Colleagues, we will now move to clause-by-clause consideration of Bill C-637.

Point of order, Mr. Easter.

**Hon. Wayne Easter:** I am going to run over to the finance committee—

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**Hon. Wayne Easter:**—because, obviously, the public safety committee doesn't want to deal with the issue, I'll have to go over there.

Seeing that we're not going to deal with this motion at the next meeting, which would be the 75th meeting, I do want to say that there are going to be several members who will not back after the next election, and because those of us who are here don't know whether we'll be here or not, I do want to say that while it's not always a pleasure at this committee, it has been a good experience working with all the people on this committee, and I don't want to leave without saying that.

Thank you very much.

**The Chair:** A bit of sugar on the Wheaties this morning.

**Hon. Wayne Easter:** With a little salt.

**The Chair:** Okay, colleagues, we're back on Bill C-637 now for clause-by-clause consideration. Shall clause 1 carry?

(Clause 1 agreed to on division)

**The Chair:** Shall the title pass?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Chair:** Shall the bill carry?

(Bill agreed to on division)

**The Chair:** Shall the chair report the bill to the House?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much colleagues. Of course, there is no reprint as there have been no amendments to this bill.

Colleagues, after having this completed now we will slip into committee business. We will now go in camera and suspend for one minute while we make arrangements for our meeting.

[*Proceedings continue in camera*]

• (0900) \_\_\_\_\_ (Pause) \_\_\_\_\_

• (0910)

[*Public proceedings Resume*]

**The Chair:** We're back in session.

Yes, Ms. Ablonczy, you had your name up.

**Hon. Diane Ablonczy:** Having thought about a few words, I just want to say that I really have enjoyed this committee. I didn't know if I would or not when I was asked to sit on it, but I really have.

Randall, you've just been a real pleasure to work with. You're a gentleman, and your reasonableness and your good nature puts me to shame sometimes. I've really enjoyed it. Plus, I can go to you if I get stuck on crossword clues.

Rosane, I didn't know you before but I've really enjoyed working with you as well.

Elaine, we haven't worked together too much because you're new to this, but it's been a good committee.

Wayne is my favourite—a kind of favourite punching bag. He also has a really good nature. I know it's due to John's good influence, but I've enjoyed that for my colleagues here. It's just been a great committee.

I would just say in seriousness that although we have different perspectives on issues, in my heart I really urge all of us who are coming back, which will not include me, to just think about what's best for our country. I know there's always this yin and yang between privacy and human rights and security and vigilance, but the balance is not a small thing. It's so important. I just shudder when I see it's happening around the world. I think we cannot afford to be either naive or complacent. I don't know who is going to be on this committee after the election, but I just think what we do here is critical for the peace, order, and good government that our country deserves.

So, thank you, Mr. Chair, you've been wonderful. I didn't know what to expect from you but I think you're one of the best, if not the best, chairs I've worked with—and I've worked with a few. I really compliment you on that. What can I say about my colleagues? I better not say too much. Rosane and I have very different approaches but we have really come to appreciate each other and I think to be a really good working team.

As for my quiet, soft-spoken friend Rick, I should say that at the very first meeting we had, not of this committee but of our side, Rick and I butted heads hugely on an issue that I have forgotten, and he probably has too. But afterwards he came to me and he said, "I hope this isn't going to affect our working relationship."

Do you remember that? I just said "Absolutely not. I think it's important that we have strong views and that we state them and that's the way we all get better." So Rick, you're special. I have to tell you that Rick is married, surprisingly enough, to this absolutely drop-dead, gorgeous redhead. Who knew?

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**Hon. Diane Ablonczy:** LaVar isn't coming back so I'll let him speak for himself, but you probably know he was put on a different committee for a while and he missed you all so much that he lobbied and hollered and screamed until he got back. It's been great to work with you.

Ted is quiet. Ted has a lot of depth. You're going to serve your country extremely well. You're very smart, very thoughtful. Because I'm such a motor-mouth, I always admire people who can actually hold their fire and wait until they really know what's going on and then they press forward. Ted, you have my highest respect.

So those are my few words. I appreciate the clerk and the analysts and all who help make up this committee. You're the unseen force behind this committee—just to know you are appreciated.

I'm going to miss you all but I will be watching. Don't let the country down.

• (0915)

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Ms. Ablonczy.

Yes, Mr. Payne.

**Mr. LaVar Payne (Medicine Hat, CPC):** Thank you, Chair.

It has been a real pleasure working on this committee, and Diane is right that I whined and cried and stomped my feet to get back on this committee. They put me on the ethics committee, saying that they needed somebody like me who was clean-cut and had no issues on that committee. Then I kind of gave them that "Oh, yes" look.

Anyway, I've been on this committee for awhile and certainly for me it has been a real pleasure to work with all of our colleagues here.

I do have some kudos for Randall. We went on fact-finding trip in the U.S. and he was our lead on the trip. He did an outstanding job representing our government and I just want to thank him for that again.

My colleagues here, it's been a lot of fun and certainly we all have differences of opinions and sometimes those do come out and that's the way it should be. But I think we all have the same concern, which is to make sure that the country is safe and that we're moving forward to protect our citizens and do the best that we can for each and every one.

I will miss the committee. I will miss the colleagues, but there's a lot of stuff I won't miss I have to admit.

I want to thank the clerks, and the analysts, and all of those translators and everyone here who has helped to make this committee a great place to be and to work with.

I just want to say thanks to everybody and thank you, Chair.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr. Payne.

Are there any other comments?

Yes, Mr. Garrison.

**Mr. Randall Garrison:** I'll let Mr. Norlock go first.

**The Chair:** Go ahead, Mr. Norlock.

**Mr. Rick Norlock:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair, and to keep this appropriate and proper, through you to my fellow committee members, as was mentioned the people who really make this committee work, I call them the unsung heroes, are the Library of Parliament, our analysts, and the clerk.

I tell everyone I meet that the only non-political people, the people you can go to for a straight answer if you need one, the people who are always there to help you and not set little traps for you are those at Library of Parliament, the analysts and the clerks. These are the people who actually make this place work, the technicians, the folks who make sure we have enough to eat and drink, and see to our needs, like unplugging things and plugging things. And of course, there are the translators, who I think try to do their best to sometimes use the proper words when we can't find them.

After nine years on the committee and three parliaments, I must say that of the committees that I've sat on and been a part of during that time—of course, we sit in for our members—I always feel right at home at this committee. Despite my sparring with Mr. Easter, I respect every member of Parliament.

I was at a class of gifted students in three different grades and I always try to be somewhat apolitical. I tell them to talk to their parents, go on the Internet, find out who they are first, then see which political party best represents who they are and recognize, as I did, that you may change, that you may change your political views as time goes by.

Mr. Chair, when someone leaves this place—this is my second retirement—there's always some bitter sweetness and this is for sure is bittersweet. I have to say that in only one Parliament did this committee not work that well and it was a minority government, so things got pretty hairy. But, generally speaking, this is the best committee I've ever been on in both this and the last two Parliaments.

I must say, Randall, LaVar hit it right, when we went to another country, you represented yourself and us in the true style of what a

member of Parliament in another country should do. You made sure there were differences, because there are, but you did it in a way that if we all used....I must admit if I used your tact and your way, I'd be prouder of myself at times. You are a true gentleman. Your whole team has reflected well on your party.

I don't think we've ever said anything truly hurtful to each other at this committee. When I had my little tirade with Wayne, it was political in nature, it was not personal in nature, and I think he understands that. I think we all do.

Everybody sees us during question period and I call it a blight on our democracy because we should respect our political leaders, but that respect has to start with us. I always say that question period starts off with the question: "Why are you the worst government that ever existed? You're a bunch of liars and cheats, etc." Then we get up and respond: "We are the best government that ever was and you can blah, blah, blah". If we want people to respect us, we need to respect each other and we need to show that. I don't think that's ever going to stop with question period.

Behind the scenes, we have our political handlers, we have the people who feed us the questions, we have the things we're trying to say. Hopefully, someday, Randall, we'll adopt a kinder, gentler way, and I hope I'll see that, but I don't think I'll see it in my lifetime, but it may happen.

This is the time, when you're leaving, as Shakespeare said—of course, I'm not dead, but I'm referring to my political career—"The evil that men do lives after them; the good is oft interred with their bones". Let's just say I'm burying all the old bones, and I'll try to have nothing but good memories of this place.

• (0920)

To all of you from me, a very heartfelt thanks, and an apology if you felt hurt by anything I said. It was strictly political, and we know we all hold different views, but we all have—as Diane mentioned in her hope—the best interests of our country at hand. If we always remember that, I think this country will continue to be the best place on God's good earth to live, to raise a family, and to work.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr. Norlock, and we now have comment from Mr. Garrison.

**Mr. Randall Garrison:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I did want to make sure we had time to say a few words for those who are not coming back. As for rest of us, we're trying to come back and we'll see how we do with that.

This is the only committee I have served on, apart from substituting at others once in a while. I would have to say that we've had tough opponents on the other side, but we have never seen our political differences become personal differences away from the table. I thank everyone on this committee for that. I think democracy won't work if we get into the situation where those political differences become personal.

I had the chance when we did a tour with the committee to get to know LaVar and Rick better. I now count them as friends, and I will miss them. I think Parliament will miss their voices.

Diane and I have a peculiar relationship, in that because of the long flights we do, we both do crossword puzzles. That's where the conspiracy between Diane and me comes in, sharing clues on crosswords for that last one you can't get on the flight to Calgary. I will miss the advice on crosswords. I will not always miss Diane's sharp attacks, but I do appreciate that they were always political. I do agree that the one thing we have in common on this committee is that everybody has been here to deal with very important issues and do what we all think is best for the country. I'm sorry that Wayne couldn't be here because I've learned a lot from Wayne, with his previous experience being on the committee, and also with his ability to manoeuvre, I'll say, through committee.

I don't want to go on and on, but I do also want to echo the thanks to the committee staff. I said to the analyst this morning that they're like firefighters. We don't call them very often, but when we do they're there with the proper hose to put out the fire at that time. I appreciate the work they've done for this committee, and of course, to all the other support staff who make this work.

I want to conclude with my thanks to the chair, especially through Bill C-51, which was very difficult politically for all of us. I think the chair did his best to remain a neutral and fair chair. I've always had a good relationship with him, and I thank him for the work he has done in steering this committee.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Garrison.

Mr. McCallum.

• (0925)

**Hon. John McCallum (Markham—Unionville, Lib.):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'm a very temporary visitor to this place, but I also wanted to give my best wishes to those who will not be running in the next election. I will report back to Wayne the relatively nice things some of you have just said about him. That's quite something because since Mark Holland ceased to be a member of Parliament, Wayne is perhaps the Liberal that Conservatives most like not to like. I can say that publicly because Wayne wears that distinction as a badge of honour.

In any event, I know he wished you all well before he went off to the finance committee. I would like to echo that thought and wish everybody a good summer and a not so good, or possibly quite good, election coming up.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, John.

Ms. James again.

**Ms. Roxanne James:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'm very happy that Mr. Garrison suggested we go public so that my colleagues on this side of the table could say a few words.

Before being on this committee, I sat on the citizenship and immigration and status of women committees. When I was appointed the parliamentary secretary for public safety, I had not previously been on this committee, nor had I ever subbed here. It was a huge learning curve for me. I have to tell you without the

experience and knowledge of the three who are no longer going to sit here after the next election, I could not have fulfilled my duties as parliamentary secretary without their assistance.

LaVar, we're going to miss you.

Diane, we'll miss you as well, and also Rick. I've relied heavily on Rick in this committee, and I recognize the reasons you're leaving. You've obviously all been here a very long time and done tremendous work for this country, but at the same time on a personal level I'm going to miss you.

**Mr. Rick Norlock:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, colleagues.

The chair generally...oh, yes, Madame Doré Lefebvre.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Rosane Doré Lefebvre (Alfred-Pellan, NDP):** Thank you.

I would like to add a francophone touch to those beautiful words directed at my colleagues. I would like to thank my colleagues from all the parties, especially the three leaving.

You have always been extremely kind and cordial, especially with the new MPs, and I thank you for that. I have learned a lot from you. I have learned a great deal from the professional way in which you interact, and I can never thank you enough for that.

In the first weeks after we arrived at Parliament, in 2011, after a hard day's work, I was shocked to see a minister, two NDP members and one Liberal member sharing a pizza and drinking beer on a patio on Sparks Street. That truly gave me faith in humanity and in our Parliament. As Rick mentioned, it is true that we attack each other a lot during question period, but outside work, we can all get along well. I have learned a lot from most of my colleagues from all the parties in the House.

I wish you a happy retirement and the best of luck in your future endeavours. I will always imagine that you are watching me when I rise in the House during question period. You will be there to watch me and I will try to do a good job.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, colleagues.

Maybe the chair will offer a few parting words, particularly to our members who will not be back here.

As chair I've had a bit of a philosophy on this, which may be from my sporting background, in that I was heavily involved in sports at a number of different levels. One thing I did realize very quickly is that the best official is the one you never hear from or see. The game is over, and people say that was a good game and it hasn't been dominated by the officials in any particular manner. They just facilitated it.

I took that advice from a number of my past chairs and colleagues, people like James Rajotte and others whom I've come to admire and respect in Parliament. So as chair I was certainly determined not to have a strong presence, not to dominate, but simply to accommodate.



I could not have done that without your cooperation. I've had that and I'm very much appreciative of the attitude here. They say that attitude is everything, and in many cases the attitude has been tremendous on this committee. In the competitive nature of Parliament we always have our challenging moments. But certainly, I won't talk about individuals because if I talk about individuals, we'll be here for the next hour and a half.

But I will say in particular, Diane, what a mentor you have been, wow. If most people can go through politics and make the contribution to life and our country that you have made, and leave with a smile on their face after all the adversity and the challenges and the difficulties, that to me says a lot. So I think that says a lot not only about you, but also about our parliamentary system, our process, our democracy, that we're not having fist fights, we're not going out afterwards and being violent on the street, and ending up in ways that we can't talk about our differences.

And of course I would like to thank all of the members who are leaving. LaVar, Rick, my good buddy next door, my neighbour. We might even have a sarsaparilla sometime after we leave here.

Of course, I certainly have to mention all my colleagues on all sides of the House. Randall, Rosane, you've just been a pleasure to work with, and I appreciate your honesty and integrity. Your word is your word. When I grew up, one's word was one's bond. When we made a commitment one way or the other, we were able to follow through with that whether or not we agreed, and that to me made for the smooth, efficient, and effective operation of this committee. So I thank you very much.

Élaine, as a relative newcomer to the committee, at times you tried my patience but the reality is that is the nature of Parliament. I certainly never took it personally and I hope you haven't as well.

I think we're moving forward. I'm tremendously proud of the work of this committee. All the time I've been here—only 11-plus years—

I've not been on a committee where the workload has been this heavy. It's not a question of work but that there was serious legislation to deal with and a lot of comprehensive work had to go on behind the scenes to prepare for what I consider to be the most important part of Parliament, which is the committee structure.

As Rick said, the charade sometimes at question period is almost embarrassing. But the real work at committee that goes on and the negotiations both publicly and behind the scenes that go on to be able to make Parliament work make me very proud. So to everybody leaving here today, I think you can all say in your own hearts, good job, well done.

Let me echo that our staff have been incredible, our analysts, our clerk, all the support staff here, even the interpreters who sometimes say they can't translate when we speak too fast. My apologies for when that happens. There are also all the support staff from all of our offices. We members present our case here, but we also know that behind us we have so many of our support staff who help us prepare. They give us information. They give us thoughtful direction that we sometimes follow and occasionally don't, but anyway that's all I'm going to say today.

The chair would like to offer sincere thanks to everyone who sat on this committee. May you have, as they say, a healthy, happy, and prosperous summer. If you're a golfer like me, hit the ball straight and don't three putt. If you're a gardener, get your hands dirty. It's wonderful. But most importantly, spend some time with family and friends.

● (0930)

God bless you all, thank you very much.

The meeting is adjourned.

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