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OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Wednesday, April 5, 2017

The Honourable GEORGE J. FUREY
Speaker

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

Debates Services: D'Arcy McPherson, National Press Building, Room 906, Tel. 613-995-5756
Publications Centre: Kim Laughren, National Press Building, Room 926, Tel. 613-947-0609

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THE SENATE

Wednesday, April 5, 2017

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

Prayers.

Inuktitut, whether we work with our hands or our minds, whether we enjoy hockey or baseball, whether we are old or young, we are citizens of the greatest country in the world, and that country is in the process of renewal and redefinition.

SENATORS' STATEMENTS

THE LATE HONOURABLE BILL ROMPKEY, P.C.

Hon. Joseph A. Day (Leader of the Senate Liberals): Honourable senators, it is with great sadness that I rise today to pay tribute to one of our former colleagues, the Honourable Bill Rompkey, who passed away on March 21 at the age of 80.

Senator Rompkey spent nearly half of his life, over 38 years, representing the good people of Newfoundland and Labrador in Canada's Parliament. First elected to the other place in 1972 for the riding of Grand Falls—White Bay—Labrador, he won seven subsequent elections before being appointed to the Senate in 1995. He served in a variety of roles during his time on Parliament Hill, including Minister of National Revenue, Government Whip in the Senate and Deputy Leader of the Government in the Senate.

Well respected by politicians of all stripes, Senator Rompkey was dedicated not only to the work of representing his constituents but, like so many public servants, he was committed to working hard for all Canadians.

Those in our caucus are certain to remember Senator Rompkey's other position, as a key member of the "Singing Senators." Though he lost his spot as piano player in our group once Tommy Banks was appointed to the Senate, he never lost his status as a composer. Senator Rompkey was acclaimed for his ability to take a well-known song and rework the lyrics to fit the particular occasion. Then he would call on the "Singing Senators" to present it on that particular occasion.

That being said, he never wasted an opportunity to remind us that he wasn't born a Canadian. He was 13 when Newfoundland and Labrador joined Canada, and it wasn't until he joined the Royal Canadian Navy Reserve at the age of 18 that he finally met other Canadians and learned that, despite their "funny accents," Canadians were just like him.

A champion of his first home country of Newfoundland and Labrador, Senator Rompkey displayed that same enthusiasm for his new country of Canada and even used his maiden speech in this chamber to elaborate on his love of his country, Canada. He ended that speech with these words:

. . . whether we live in small or large communities, whether we live on the Atlantic, the Pacific or the Arctic Ocean, from sea to sea to sea, whether we speak French, English or

VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I wish to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of the Right Honourable Ken Macintosh, M.S.P., Presiding Officer of the Scottish Parliament, who is accompanied by Clare Adamson, M.S.P., and Edward Mountain, M.S.P., of the Scottish Parliament.

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

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

ST. LAWRENCE SEAWAY

Hon. Bob Runciman: Honourable senators, the St. Lawrence Seaway opened for its fifty-ninth season on March 20, and commercial freighters are now plying the St. Lawrence River on their way to and from the continent's busiest inland ports.

On their way, these giant freighters pass through the beautiful and environmentally sensitive Thousand Islands. The environmental benefits of shipping by water can be significant, but so are the risks. Those who boat in this region are very much aware of the proliferation of shoals and the extreme narrowness in some areas of the shipping channel. That combination raises legitimate questions and concerns about what would happen if a serious accident occurred. Those concerns are centred on the ability of the Canadian Coast Guard to respond in a timely and effective manner to a spill of petroleum products or other hazardous substances.

Unfortunately, the St. Lawrence River Coast Guard base at Prescott, Ontario, just east of the Thousand Islands, appears to have lost much of its capability to respond to a spill, with the workforce reduced from 120 people to about 40. Many of the jobs were in trades that made them well suited to respond in cases of a spill. They were mechanics, heavy equipment operators and drivers. They were trained to save lives, to deal with hazardous materials, to work on the water, to use the emergency radios. They knew how to deploy a boom. Those positions are now long gone.

The *Simcoe*, a vessel formerly docked at the base that was ideal for coping with spills, is no longer in service, and the two helicopters formerly located there are also gone.

A change in command structure for the Coast Guard has diffused decision-making between two different government departments and several regional offices. The Coast Guard now has multiple reporting lines and a lack of connection between decision-makers in regional offices and the front-line workers, and a serious lack of resources where they are needed most.

In the last nine years there have been more than 40 shipping incidents, spills, groundings or mechanical failure along the river between Montreal and Lake Ontario, according to the environmental group Save The River.

I think it's important to note that Great Lakes freighters older than 50 years are not uncommon. The consequences even in cases without hazardous cargo could be disastrous. These giant freighters carry up to 400,000 litres of diesel fuel in their tanks.

The environmental and economic implications of a major spill in this region cannot be overstated. It's time for the government to address this very real concern.

[Translation]

BOMBARDIER INC.

EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION

Hon. Diane Bellemare (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate): Honourable senators, I rise today both as a senator and a Quebecer to add my voice to that of my fellow Quebecers who are outraged over the nearly 50 per cent salary increase for Bombardier's senior executives.

Colleagues, this public sentiment comes as no surprise when we see such a jewel of Quebec industry grant a pay increase of about \$32.6 million to six of its senior executives despite the fact that the company is having financial difficulties, that it cut 14,500 jobs in Quebec and around the world, and that it got envelopes of \$1.3 billion from the Government of Quebec and roughly \$2 billion from the Caisse de dépôt et placement, as well as a \$372.5-million loan from the federal government.

On Thursday, March 30, the Premier of Quebec acknowledged that the message that Bombardier was sending might be shocking, while the executive director of the Institute for Governance, Michel Nadeau, described Bombardier's decision as "indefensible."

On Sunday, April 2, several hundred Quebecers demonstrated in front of Bombardier's head office in Montreal, in a rally that included public figures from all parties and covered the full spectrum of the province, from Éric Duhaime from FM93 to Manon Massé from Québec solidaire.

• (1410)

A Léger-TVA *Nouvelles-Le Journal de Montréal* survey published on Saturday, April 1, revealed a rare consensus

[Senator Runciman]

among Quebecers: 93 per cent of those surveyed disagreed with the decision made by Bombardier's board of directors.

These reactions prompted the company to defer handing over half of the compensation in the form of stock options to 2020 rather than 2019.

Nevertheless, Bombardier CEO Alain Bellemare said, and I quote:

Compensation has to be competitive globally, not locally.

I would add that, if it's not, the entire province of Quebec could lose out in terms of jobs and revenue.

That said, it is obvious that corporate executives are handsomely paid. Economic journalist Gérard Fillion pointed out that the average compensation of the 100 highest-paid CEOs in Canada is 193 times higher than the average salary, which means that the gap between executive incomes and middle-class incomes continues to widen.

Honourable senators, we have to listen to what the people are saying. If we want to keep corporations in Canada, they have to offer competitive compensation packages to their executives, but that compensation still has to be socially acceptable.

The Senate is in a good position to examine the compensation of senior executives in publicly traded companies. That is why I will soon be moving a motion that I hope will enable us to undertake a rational and constructive debate on this issue.

[English]

KRAFT HOCKEYVILLE CONTEST 2017

CONGRATULATIONS TO O'LEARY, PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

Hon. Michael Duffy: Honourable senators, this past weekend, O'Leary, the pride of Prince County, P.E.I., won top prize in the Kraft Hockeyville contest.

The O'Leary Community Sports Centre is the heartbeat of the community, but after 26 years the rink needs roof repairs, a modern accessible entrance and a family eating area.

Now, with the Kraft Hockeyville \$100,000 first prize, the building will soon get those upgrades and a lot more. O'Leary is the first P.E.I. community to win this honour. Their outstanding community spirit is typical of what you will find across P.E.I. from tip to tip. O'Leary's passion for hockey is documented in Wayne Wright's excellent book *HockeyTown PEI*.

Hats are off to O'Leary's Della Sweet, the driving force behind this project. She was supported by a lot of local people, including Jo-Anne Wallace and the rink manager Sandi Smallman. Della Sweet wrote in the community's official application:

Passion for hockey in our community is not about a single moment, a single event, a championship team or even hosting a NHL training camp

. . . Our passion is about how hockey has shaped us, our connections, relationships, our actions, a desire to do better, to be better people, to have fun, to play together, and to be there for each other.

What could be more Canadian?

My friend Senator Pamela Wallin reminds me that second place in the Kraft Hockeyville competition went to another great small town, the community of Ituna, Saskatchewan. Like O'Leary, Ituna will receive \$100,000 to improve their local arena.

O'Leary, by the way, also boasts another connection to the Senate of Canada. Senator Pate's father was from O'Leary.

On behalf of all senators, congratulations to Della Sweet and the people of O'Leary, the people of Ituna and the people of small-town Canada for their outstanding displays of community service.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I wish to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of a group of families who live daily with autism and are the guests of the Honourable Senator Munson.

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

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

WORLD AUTISM AWARENESS DAY

Hon. Jim Munson: Honourable senators, we have all these notes and prepared speeches in front of us, but sometimes you have to speak straight from the heart.

The last three days have been an incredibly emotional journey dealing with Autism Awareness Day. We heard wonderful remarks from Senator Housakos and Senator Bernard, adding to the team of senators who are building towards getting a national autism strategy, and we are going to get it.

We have had good things come from the government, in terms of the previous government, on research and science and chairs of autism and being ready, willing and able to deal with employment for young adults with autism.

As I stand here today in front of you, 10 years after our report *Pay Now or Pay Later*, I'm glad the Scottish delegation is here, because three rows behind you is Molly MacDonald who has autism. She is here because she was on the Hill with Suzanne

Jacobsen. There were 500 people today on the Hill, all parties and everybody together thinking about a person like Molly MacDonald.

I'm also thinking of Wyatt Tuft from a school here, an 11-year-old advocate who got his school to talk about autism on his particular day. A young man came up to him, and he had coloured his hair blue to show empathy and what it means to be participating in this society.

Now let me get a little personal. When I started this journey, 10 or 11 years ago, little did I know that I, too, would find autism in my family, when I was at the school and invited by my second cousin, introduced again to my two third cousins, Tristin Mercer and Kirin Mercer. Can you imagine? And little Tristin, seven years old, kept looking at me saying, "Are you my cousin? Are you really my cousin?" I said, "I'm your cousin, and I'm also your advocate and friend." And I know we have a lot of friends inside the Senate as we push towards a national strategy.

The only thing that I will say here that is on a piece of paper — and I have about 18 pieces of paper here — is because of this week and because of this summit, it's a movement and we're working together and we're going to get there. All Canadians living with autism have the right to inclusion, understanding and acceptance, respect and dignity, full citizenship, equitable opportunities and access, personal autonomy and decision making.

At the end of the day, honourable senators, it is about those who live in the autism community having the same rights as you and I, and it is about human rights.

Thank you, honourable senators.

VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I wish to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of Nuralla Jeraj, husband of the Honourable Senator Jaffer, her sister Zenobia Jaffer and her brother-in-law Karim Hudda.

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

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

CANADA-U.S. TRADE

Hon. Pamela Wallin: First, let me say congratulations to O'Leary and go Ituna. We'll be back next year.

Your Honour, Saskatchewan Premier Brad Wall is in Washington this week to make the case for free trade.

Like many, he is concerned about potential U.S. protectionism, whether it's a border tax or Country of Origin Labelling. Saskatchewan has a lot at stake in the bilateral trade relationship.

Over 40 per cent of our exports, \$13 billion a year, go to the U.S. That's more than \$1,000 per Saskatchewan resident. These exports provide thousands of jobs in all major economic sectors, everything from oil and gas to potash, uranium, wheat, canola and the pulses. As Premier Brad Wall put it:

About 60% of the world's exports of lentils and peas are grown in Saskatchewan. We just can't eat it all.

Hence the importance of free trade. While the Asian markets are growing faster, the U.S. is and will remain our largest customer for many years to come. This puts a premium on getting it right in Canada-U.S. relations.

While there are many industries and regions that are vulnerable to U.S. protectionism, we need to remember the critical role that Saskatchewan's resource and agricultural exports play in generating wealth, jobs and taxes for all of Canada.

What historian Bartlet Brebner said decades ago still holds true:

Americans are benevolently ignorant about Canada, while Canadians are malevolently well-informed about the U.S.

• (1420)

I note with interest that the Prime Minister has recruited former Prime Minister Brian Mulroney, the father of the FTA and NAFTA, to advise cabinet and to use his connections with the Trump administration to make Canada's case forcefully.

As a Canadian political wit once said: They are our best friends whether we like it or not. We are their best friends whether they know it or not. Either way, we need to keep on building the relationship.

[Translation]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

CONVEYANCE PRESENTATION AND REPORTING REQUIREMENTS MODERNIZATION BILL

BILL TO AMEND—EIGHTH REPORT OF NATIONAL
SECURITY AND DEFENCE COMMITTEE
PRESENTED

Hon. Mobina S.B. Jaffer: Honourable senators, I have the honour to present the eighth report of the Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence, which deals with

Bill S-233, An Act to amend the Customs Act and the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (presentation and reporting requirements).

(For text of report, see today's Journals of the Senate, p. 1491.)

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, when shall this report be taken into consideration?

(On motion of Senator Jaffer, report placed on the Orders of the Day for consideration at the next sitting of the Senate.)

THE SENATE

NOTICE OF MOTION TO AFFECT QUESTION PERIOD ON APRIL 11, 2017

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

That, in order to allow the Senate to receive a Minister of the Crown during Question Period as authorized by the Senate on December 10, 2015, and notwithstanding rule 4-7, when the Senate sits on Tuesday, April 11, 2017, Question Period shall begin at 3:30 p.m., with any proceedings then before the Senate being interrupted until the end of Question Period, which shall last a maximum of 40 minutes;

That, if a standing vote would conflict with the holding of Question Period at 3:30 p.m. on that day, the vote be postponed until immediately after the conclusion of Question Period;

That, if the bells are ringing for a vote at 3:30 p.m. on that day, they be interrupted for Question Period at that time, and resume thereafter for the balance of any time remaining; and

That, if the Senate concludes its business before 3:30 p.m. on that day, the sitting be suspended until that time for the purpose of holding Question Period.

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

NOTICE OF MOTION TO AUTHORIZE COMMITTEE TO STUDY CANADIANS' VIEWS ABOUT MODERNIZING THE OFFICIAL LANGUAGES ACT

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

That the Standing Senate Committee on Official Languages be authorized to examine and report on Canadians' views about modernizing the *Official Languages Act*. Considering that the Act will be turning

[Senator Wallin]

50 in 2019 and that it affects various segments of the Canadian population, that the committee be authorized to:

- (a) Examine and report on young Canadians' views about the advancement of both official languages, how they identify with the languages and related cultures, the motivations for learning the other official language, the employment opportunities and future of bilingual youth, and what can be done to enhance federal support for linguistic duality;
- (b) Identify the concerns of official language minority communities — and their sector-based organizations (e.g., health, education, culture, immigration) — regarding the implementation of the *Official Languages Act*, and what can be done to enhance their vitality and to support and assist their development;
- (c) Examine and report on the views of stakeholders who have witnessed the evolution of the *Official Languages Act* since it was enacted 50 years ago, with a focus on success stories, its weaknesses, and what can be done to improve it;
- (d) Identify issues specific to the administration of justice in both official languages, potential shortcomings of the *Official Languages Act* in this regard, and what can be done to ensure respect for English and French as the official languages of Canada;
- (e) Identify issues specific to the powers, duties and functions of federal institutions with respect to the implementation of the *Official Languages Act* — particularly the roles of the departments responsible (e.g., Canadian Heritage, Treasury Board Secretariat, Department of Justice, Public Service Commission of Canada) and the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages — and what can be done to ensure the equality of both official languages in the institutions subject to the Act; and

That the committee submit interim reports on the aforementioned themes, that it submit its final report to the Senate no later than June 30, 2019, and that it retain all powers necessary to publicize its findings until 180 days after the tabling of the final report.

[English]

VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, before going to Question Period, I wish to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of Attorney Regina Evangelista, Office of the

Philippine Senate accompanied by Mr. Anthony S. Aguirre, Third Secretary and Vice Consul, Embassy of the Philippines. They are guests of the Honourable Senator Enverga.

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

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

QUESTION PERIOD

THE SENATE

PROGRESS OF LEGISLATION

Hon. Donald Neil Plett: Honourable senators, my question is a follow-up from yesterday. His Honour rightly didn't allow supplementary questions yesterday, so I want to follow up on that, and indeed my question is for the Leader of the Government in the Senate.

Leader, I read your report entitled *Sober Second Thinking* with interest. It is not often that I get to sit back and enjoy some good fiction.

The report consists of false allegations about the Conservative Party of Canada's leveraging of the Senate and its motivations in doing so, and it further misleads readers to follow this narrative you have created about delayed legislation. Specifically again you misled the public about this supposed delay on Bill C-16. The record has already been set straight on the timeline of Bill C-16 in this chamber. The fact is that it was not listed as one of your government's priorities before the Christmas break and that you, leader, spoke to the legislation only two days before I did.

In this report, leader, you state that Bill C-16 is in Senate limbo. Can you let this chamber know whether that in fact is true or is it in fact true that Bill C-16 was referred to the Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee over a month ago and that Bill C-37 has taken precedence at committee instead, as per your request, leader?

• (1430)

Hon. Peter Harder (Government Representative in the Senate): I thank my honourable colleague for his question.

I would like, with respect of the document that I tabled, to suggest that we all as colleagues reflect on how we can improve this chamber to adopt a more collaborative and deliberative approach to debate. It is in that spirit that I said it to the Honourable Senator McInnis, the Modernization Committee and to all senators so that we could have a debate about these issues as we move forward collectively.

With respect to the specific question on Bill C-16, it is certainly my view that this chamber has in previous Parliaments, and indeed in this Parliament, dealt with this issue but has not yet resolved it. It is urgent that we do so.

Senator Plett: Answer the question, please.

INNOVATION

BOMBARDIER—COMPENSATION OF EXECUTIVES

Hon. Leo Housakos: My question is for the Leader of the Government in the Senate.

People in my home province of Quebec and, indeed, people right across the country have been disturbed by the recent revelations that the compensation of Bombardier executives has risen nearly 50 per cent from last year, at a time when the company is receiving hundreds of millions of taxpayers' dollars, all the while cutting thousands of jobs at Bombardier.

Could the Leader of the Government in the Senate please enquire and tell us what terms and conditions, if any, were attached to the federal government's loan to Bombardier? And also, will the government leader stand here and support my motion to send an emergency study to the Standing Senate Committee on Transportation and Communications to look into the matter on behalf of taxpayers?

Hon. Peter Harder (Government Representative in the Senate): I want to thank the honourable senator for his question. Obviously, this is one that has as animated a fair amount of public commentary, as the question itself suggests, and Senator Bellemare has also spoken on this in statements.

Let me make two points. One is that we should all be proud of Bombardier as an international player in a very competitive field. We would also note that governments over the years have supported this sector as a strategic investment for Canadians.

The issues you raised are important, and the issues that have been in the public domain have been ones that the company itself has redressed in its recent decision to withdraw from the planned payments. But you raise a very important question, and it is one that your inquiry should animate and deliberate on.

As to whether or not I support it, let's get to deliberation first.

[Senator Harder]

THE SENATE

PROGRESS OF LEGISLATION

Hon. Joseph A. Day (Leader of the Senate Liberals): My question is for the Leader of the Government in the Senate as well, and it relates to some concerns, leader, that you have been widely expressing.

Senator, you have been very public about your concerns regarding the pace of our study of some government legislation, and in this instance I refer to Bill C-6 concerning citizenship. Your paper, which you distributed to all honourable senators last week, noted that "Bill C-6 has remained in Senate limbo since June of last year." I would note that we did not actually begin our study of that bill until the end of September, when we returned from our summer break, and we have been, slowly at times but steadily, making progress.

I would like to draw your attention to another bill, Bill C-7, concerning RCMP unionization. This was a piece of legislation on which I think you'll agree that our chamber dealt with expeditiously and reasonably. Bill C-7 had only four sitting days of debate in the chamber but has been languishing in the other place since June of last year, when a message was sent there with the Senate's amendments to Bill C-7. We have now been waiting over nine months for the government's response.

An Hon. Senator: Limbo.

Senator Day: Perhaps I have missed it, but I have seen no public comment from you, leader, in relation to this particular bill, as we have heard from you with respect to Bill C-6. Could you tell us whether you have brought our concerns and your concerns, presumably, to cabinet regarding the pace with which they have dealt with our message and amendments relating to Bill C-7?

Hon. Peter Harder (Government Representative in the Senate): I thank the honourable senator for his question, and it's a good one because clearly it has to work both ways. I have said in this chamber, and I will repeat, that I view myself as a representative of the chamber to the government as well as a representative of the government to the chamber, and I want to assure you that I have indeed raised the issue of Bill C-7 and its return here as recently as this morning.

Senator Day: Do you have any answer?

[Translation]

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

SOFTWOOD LUMBER

Hon. Ghislain Maltais: Honourable senators, my question is for the Leader of the Government in the Senate and has to do with the softwood lumber file. As we know, the federal government has

struck a committee with the provinces. We also know that, in 19 days, softwood lumber will be subject to a surtax at the border. Negotiations are progressing very slowly, and some forestry companies in Quebec, Ontario and the Maritimes have already forecast that this will cost them up to \$40 million.

Nearly 100,000 people work in these mills, including those in the home province of His Honour the Speaker. These are hard-working people who all have families to provide for. These delays in responding are not at all reassuring.

For instance, sawmills have classifiers who classify the wood by category, a little like in the Senate, except that they are not paid as much as senators are. They are very worried about the April 24 deadline, and they are imploring the federal government to help them by offering their businesses loan guarantees. No one is talking about subsidies. Do you think that this measure could help limit the closure of sawmills?

[English]

Hon. Peter Harder (Government Representative in the Senate): I thank the honourable senator for his questions, for his ongoing interest in this subject matter and for his advice on how best to respond to questions that we have a conversation about recently.

Clearly, softwood lumber is an issue of high importance to the Government of Canada and to all legislators. The government is taking every action available in the context of the changing administration and, indeed, the softwood agreement expiring to achieve the best interests of Canada.

You reference the committee that's in place; it's very important. Earlier there had been statements made with respect to the outreach and the consultation the government is having, and getting the best advice possible, including from former prime ministers and former ambassadors. This is a case — the Canada-U.S. file — where we are not parties and not former and present leadership; we are all on the side of Canada.

Softwood is a complicating factor in this, and I acknowledge that, because of the timing of the agreement and the expiry alongside the change in administration and the fact that the Senate has yet to confirm some of the very important actors on this file.

The government is well-seized of the issue that you have raised with respect to compensation. I'm not now in a position to indicate how the government will respond, but I want to assure you and, through you, all the workers who are involved in this sector that this is very top of mind.

[Translation]

The Hon. the Speaker: Senator Maltais, supplementary questions are not allowed, except for the Leader of the Opposition.

[English]

PRIVY COUNCIL OFFICE

PRIME MINISTER'S TRAVEL— TOUR TECHNICIAN

Hon. David Tkachuk: Senator Harder, last week I asked about the expenses of various bureaucrats who travelled with the Prime Minister, a millionaire, during his vacation on the private island of the Aga Khan, who is a billionaire.

• (1440)

One of these questions was about the per diems charged by the tour technician. I had no answers from you to my questions. In fact, the CBC has done a better job of getting answers from the PMO than you have.

They learned that the tour technician's per diems were paid directly to the billionaire owner of the private island. They amounted to \$1,604 in expenses, to be precise.

Some Hon. Senators: Oh, oh!

Senator Tkachuk: Can you tell me why one individual, staying on a private island, would be required to reimburse a billionaire owner and a friend of the Prime Minister for things like meals that were provided free of charge to the millionaire Prime Minister and his friends, and was the payment based on an invoice from the Aga Khan?

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

Hon. Peter Harder (Government Representative in the Senate): I thank the honourable senator for his question. Let me say that the issue of the Prime Minister's Christmas vacation is one that is being dealt with by the appropriate officers of Parliament in terms of asking questions, and he has indicated he is prepared to answer those questions.

With respect to the specific question that the honourable senator has asked, I will enquire.

Senator Tkachuk: I have a supplementary.

The Hon. the Speaker: Sorry, there are no supplementary questions, except for the Leader of the Opposition.

Senator Tkachuk: When did this start?

The Hon. the Speaker: This is an agreement between the leadership on all sides.

PUBLIC SAFETY

RCMP—COMPENSATION OF OFFICERS

Hon. Colin Kenny: Honourable senators and government leader, last week, following a meeting with the Commissioner of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and the Deputy Commissioner Responsible for Human Resources, the National Security and Defence Committee received a survey from the RCMP that compared the base pay for 82 police services across the country. The survey showed that pay for first-class constables ranked number 72 out of a total of 82 for major police services. This means that a first-class constable in the RCMP makes close to \$20,000 a year less than first-class constables in the top five police services.

This is particularly egregious given the fact that RCMP members, unlike any other police service in Canada, are obligated to accept postings anywhere in the country. This sort of uprooting can be incredibly difficult for a spouse's job or for kids in school. Sometimes these postings can be to detachments where the cost of living is significantly higher, without any adjustment to offset the change.

Poor compensation is having a direct impact on the ability of the RCMP ability to recruit and retain regular members, who are leaving in droves to better-paying police services. The force's contract expired over three years ago and it will now take a 25 per cent increase just to match other top police services that are regularly hiring away experienced and fully trained Mounties.

When I asked the commissioner about the status of contract negotiations, he said that the government told him "to stand by." Senator Harder, how long will the government make the RCMP "stand by"? And when will the government give these regular members their much-deserved raise?

Hon. Peter Harder (Government Representative in the Senate): I thank the honourable senator for his question. The question he raised is one that senators have raised in the past, both privately and during Question Period. It's an important one.

The RCMP is a national resource and an important organization. The erosion to which you speak in terms of salary competitiveness has taken years to get to the situation we are in. It is one that the government is well seized of, and while I can make no announcements on behalf of the government as to when, it is one that is very top of mind in the government so that the consequences of the erosion to which you speak can be, at least, adjusted as we move forward in the years ahead. It's very important.

NATURAL RESOURCES

NUNAVUT—CARBON TAX

Hon. Dennis Glen Patterson: I have a question for Senator Harder.

I've just come back from the Nunavut Mining Symposium, where a great Canadian gold company headquartered in Toronto, Agnico Eagle, gave a welcome announcement of a further investment in gold mining operations in Nunavut of a significant \$1.5 billion, which will increase their northern workforce from 1,100 to 2,000 in this region of highest unemployment in Canada.

But the president of Agnico Eagle told the symposium that while the company wants to reduce the burning of fossil fuels and understands the importance of the imposition of a carbon price in Canada designed to encourage the use of alternative energy sources like natural gas, solar, wind or hydro-power-generated clean electricity, he told the symposium, "If you say I'm going to penalize you for using fossil fuels where there is no alternative, that's not a policy. That's a tax." He said that the carbon tax, as proposed, would cost the company \$20 million a year by 2023, which would jeopardize the viability of this mine in a remote area with no infrastructure and high operating costs.

I know that Nunavut has agreed under the pan-Canadian climate strategy to accept carbon pricing, which would otherwise be imposed, but there were commitments to try to accommodate Nunavut's and the territories' unique needs in designing a revenue-neutral carbon pricing system.

I would like to ask the Government Representative in the Senate: The carbon tax is set to come into place in 2018. Territorial legislation will be required. Nunavut is in its last year before a territorial election in the fall. What is the status of discussions between Canada and Nunavut on accommodating Nunavut's unique needs, and is consideration being given to delaying the imposition of a carbon tax if progress is slow, as I understand is the case in discussions between officials? Also, is the exemption of emission-intensive jobs-creating industries like mining, where no alternative energy options are available, being considered as an option?

Hon. Peter Harder (Government Representative in the Senate): I thank the honourable senator for his question. As his question indicates, the Government of Nunavut is a signatory to the agreement. Appropriately, specific circumstances of the North need to be discussed and agreed upon between the Government of Canada and the Government of Nunavut.

I'm not aware the specific project you refer to, but I would be happy to update the house and the honourable senator with respect to both the state of negotiations and whether and how the specific company to which he refers is being looked at.

FISHERIES AND OCEANS

FISHING QUOTAS

Hon. Fabian Manning: For more than 500 years, men and women of my home province of Newfoundland and Labrador have depended upon the fishing industry for their livelihoods. The repercussions of the cod moratorium of 1992 can be seen vividly throughout our province, even today, 25 years later.

Recent announcements by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans have sent shockwaves through the people and communities of our province.

My question today is for the Leader of the Government in the Senate. On March 31, DFO announced a cut of 63 per cent in this year's northern shrimp quota in Area 6, which covers stocks off Newfoundland's northeast coast and Labrador's south coast. This announcement has been widely described in the province as devastating, with the Fish, Food and Allied Workers Union president Keith Sullivan saying, "... these cuts are the nail in the coffin of the inshore shrimp fishery."

This past Monday, DFO announced that the snow crab quota for the province this year is just under 35,000 tonnes, a 22 per cent decrease over last year's quota.

I understand the Premier Dwight Ball and the provincial minister Steve Crocker had a telephone conversation with Minister Dominic LeBlanc on Monday night, and the premier indicated he is eager for a face-to-face meeting.

Government leader, can you tell us when Minister LeBlanc will be sitting down to discuss this important issue with Premier Ball and Minister Crocker? Also, could the government leader make inquiries and tell us what factors Fisheries and Oceans Canada took into consideration when setting the total allowable catch for the snow crab fishery in Newfoundland and Labrador? Specifically, did they consider changes in the entire marine ecosystem when making this important decision?

• (1450)

Hon. Peter Harder (Government Representative in the Senate): I thank the honourable senator for his question. The reference to the cod fishery is germane because, unfortunately, in the past, not all decisions were based on evidence-based scientific knowledge. That is the basis on which the government made its recent announcement, and, as the honourable senator indicated, there has been a significant decline in snow crabs, which are now at, I understand, a 20-year low in terms of the fishery. The management plan for Newfoundland and Labrador includes an allowable catch of 35,419 tonnes. This, as the senator has indicated, represents an overall quota-level decrease of about 23 per cent from 2016. Very significant. I want to underscore, though, that this decision was based on scientific evidence and made in consultation with the industry and other stakeholders to conserve and protect this important resource for the future. The amount of new crabs that are official size is at an all-time low and will likely be declining in the coming years as well. The results of the stock assessment were discussed at the Snow Crab Advisory Committee meeting that was held from March 6 to 14, and recommendations were made to management for the measures that have been announced.

With respect to the face-to-face meeting that the senator is asking me to bring to the attention of the minister, I'd be happy to. I cannot respond precisely to the request for a time, but I can assure the honourable senator that I will bring this to the attention of Minister LeBlanc, who is a very attentive Minister of Fisheries and Oceans.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

CHINA—FREE TRADE NEGOTIATIONS— HUMAN RIGHTS

Hon. Thanh Hai Ngo: My question is for the Leader of the Government in the Senate.

Last week, I asked a question about including human rights and security concerns in our trade talks with China, even though the Ambassador of China dismissed such talk as protectionism. Today, I would like to ask you a follow-up question on the same topic.

In an interview with the Canadian Press on March 29, our Ambassador to China, John McCallum, stated that he is keen to pursue deeper economic ties with China but not at the expense of human rights. In fact, he said that any free trade agreement with China would be progressive and would include human rights and labour standards. This is confusing, Mr. Leader, because, on Monday, the *Globe and Mail* reported comments made by Ambassador McCallum during another interview. He is saying that he agrees with his Chinese counterpart about not including human rights:

... it is not clear to me that human rights, per se, are a part of a free-trade agreement.

Ambassador McCallum immediately contradicted himself again by stating:

The human-rights component of our foreign policy is fundamental. ... And I don't think we're going to sacrifice that for economic reasons.

Last week, I asked you a question on this very subject. You stated that an ambassador's comments reflect the perspective of the government they represent. Beginning talks on such ambitious trade deals with contradictory statements is not helpful.

My question is: Which of the ambassador's statements should Canadians believe, and which one reflects the government's position?

Hon. Peter Harder (Government Representative in the Senate): Let me, first of all, thank you, honourable senator, for your ongoing interest in these issues. The Government of Canada is seeking a broad engagement with China. That engagement obviously includes an economic component to build on the growth, over the last number of years, of the investment, trade and economic relationship between our two countries. That relationship has benefited Canadians significantly, and there is great opportunity for Canada to expand further in China and in Asia more broadly. In that context, the Government of Canada and the Government of the China have indicated a willingness to engage in at least preliminary discussions with respect to how to strengthen that economic relationship. At the same time, the ambassador is very clearly stating that the Government of Canada has a more than economic relationship with China in its sights, and that includes a relationship on people-to-people issues, on education and on security policy, military and other aspects of the relationship. That obviously also includes human

rights. Matters of human rights have been and continue to be very high on the list of priorities of the Government of Canada and reflect themselves well in the work of our ambassador.

[Translation]

AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

CANADIAN FOOD INSPECTION AGENCY— FOOD IMPORTS

Hon. Claude Carignan: My question is for the Leader of the Government in the Senate. Yesterday and today, international experts met in Quebec City to discuss ways to detect and combat a serious problem that is eroding public confidence.

According to an article in today's edition of *La Presse*, 20 per cent of imported foods are fraudulent. The article states the following:

In the 2015-16 fiscal year, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) tested 3,601 foods imported at a Quebec entry point; 20 per cent of them were non-compliant. . . .

According to the CFIA, the most common non-compliant foods are meats, dairy products (mainly milk) and plant products.

The article also states that fines are very rarely imposed in Canada. What is the government going to do to combat this phenomenon and protect Canadians' health with respect to imported goods?

[English]

Hon. Peter Harder (Government Representative in the Senate): I thank the honourable senator for his question. I was almost missing you, so I appreciate that you took the opportunity to raise this important matter.

First of all, I want to assure senators and all Canadians that the health and well-being of our food protection system, particularly the CFIA work, is very important for the integrity of the food supply but also for the confidence that Canadians have for imports and exports.

The work being done in the agency is one of constantly seeking to improve to determine what the risks are. With respect to the specific question that you raise with regard to the issues of the conference in Quebec City, I would be happy to take note and respond.

VISITOR IN THE GALLERY

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, the time for Question Period has expired. Before going to Orders of the Day, I wish to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of Dr. Roz Roach, the founder of Dr. Roz's Healing Place for

families escaping domestic violence and the Changa House, dedicated to children and youth caught in the cycle of violence. She is the guest of the Honourable Senator McPhedran.

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

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

ANSWERS TO ORDER PAPER QUESTIONS TABLED

VETERANS AFFAIRS—SENIOR MANAGEMENT POSITIONS

Hon. Peter Harder (Government Representative in the Senate) tabled the answer to Question No. 19 on the Order Paper by Senator Downe.

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP— SYRIAN REFUGEES

Hon. Peter Harder (Government Representative in the Senate) tabled the answer to Question No. 35 on the Order Paper by Senator Carignan.

PARKS CANADA—PHOENIX SYSTEM

Hon. Peter Harder (Government Representative in the Senate) tabled the answer to Question No. 39 on the Order Paper by Senator Griffin.

PUBLIC SAFETY AND EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS— GOODS IN TRANSIT

Hon. Peter Harder (Government Representative in the Senate) tabled the answer to Question No. 41 on the Order Paper by Senator Downe.

INFRASTRUCTURE AND COMMUNITIES—GORDIE HOWE INTERNATIONAL BRIDGE

Hon. Peter Harder (Government Representative in the Senate) tabled the answer to Question No. 43 on the Order Paper by Senator Downe.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

CANADA LABOUR CODE

BILL TO AMEND—THIRD READING—MOTION IN AMENDMENT—DEBATE CONTINUED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Bellemare, seconded by the Honourable Senator Harder, P.C., for the third reading of Bill C-4, An Act to

[Senator Harder]

amend the Canada Labour Code, the Parliamentary Employment and Staff Relations Act, the Public Service Labour Relations Act and the Income Tax Act.

And on the motion in amendment of the Honourable Senator Tannas, seconded by the Honourable Senator Unger:

That Bill C-4 be not now read a third time, but that it be amended:

- (a) by deleting clause 1, on page 1;
- (b) by deleting clause 2, on pages 1 and 2;
- (c) by deleting clause 3, on page 2;
- (d) in clause 4,
 - (i) on page 2, by replacing lines 30 to 36 with the following:

“4 Section 39 of the *Canada Labour Code* is replaced by the following:

39 (1) If, on receipt of an application for an order made under subsection 38(1) or (3) in respect of a bargaining agent for a bargaining unit, the Board is”, and
 - (ii) on page 3, by replacing line 1 with the following:

“satisfied, on the basis of the results of a secret ballot representation vote, that a majority of the employees in the bargain-”;
- (e) by deleting clause 5, on page 3;
- (f) by deleting clause 6, on page 4;
- (g) by deleting clause 7, on pages 4 and 5;
- (h) on page 5, by adding after the heading “Public Service Labour Relations Act” after clause 7, the following:

“7.1 Paragraph 39(d) of the *Public Service Labour Relations Act* is replaced by the following:

(d) the authority vested in a council of employee organizations that is to be considered the appropriate authority within the meaning of paragraph 64(1.1)(c);”;
- (i) by deleting clause 8, on pages 5 and 6;
- (j) by deleting clauses 9 to 11, on page 6;
- (k) on page 6, by adding after line 35 the following:

“11.1 Subsection 100(1) of the Act is replaced by the following:

100 (1) The Board must revoke the certification of a council of employee organizations that has been certified as a bargaining agent if the Board is satisfied, on application by the employer or an employee organization that forms or has formed part of the council, that the council no longer meets the condition for certification set out in paragraph 64(1.1)(c) for a council of employee organizations.”;

(l) by deleting clauses 14 and 15, on page 7; and

(m) by deleting clause 16, on pages 7 and 8.

Hon. Frances Lankin: I'm pleased to have the opportunity to speak on debate on this amendment put forward by Senator Tannas yesterday.

I had the opportunity to ask a question of Senator Tannas, and I want to expand on that a little today. But, before I move to that, I want to talk about the content of the bill and the principle that has been put forward.

• (1500)

Senator Tannas spoke to it with conviction yesterday, and to his believe of the importance of a secret ballot vote in union certification campaigns. He spoke to experiences of colleagues and why he thought that was important, why he thought it was the democratic option. I don't at all dispute his belief in that. I want for a moment to present an opposite point of view that comes from personal history as well.

Some of my colleagues may well know that for a period of time I worked as a union negotiator and organizer, and I had a fair amount of experience in union certification drives. During those drives, the experience was often very different depending on the sector that you're in.

Honourable senators, I think it's important for us to acknowledge that when we speak about these things, there aren't broad generalities. There really are specific instances. Those specific instances brand an experience on the people who live through them. Those experiences are real, no matter what side of the debate you're on and no matter what side of the issue you experience.

I will tell you about circumstances where there was a secret ballot vote mandate in place at the time, and where once notification of the ballot had been given, tremendous intimidation and pressure was brought upon employees of the company that was the subject of the unionization drive. It was fear and intimidation that threatened jobs and livelihoods, and it was very significant in the outcome of the vote. We have to understand that the experiences are relevant to specific circumstances and that there have been abuses, let's say, on both sides of the experience.

Perhaps what we need to understand is that for years there has been an attempt, through a tripartite relationship of business and labour and government, to strike a balance in these measures and

procedures of how things should go forward. This is one of the sectors where I think there is the most well-established practice of a tripartite table coming together to work through solutions.

Quite frankly, in management-labour relations, there is a strong history of negotiating, of understanding the interest to both parties and where common interests can be found. You will often see that through the process of collective agreement negotiations. You will also see it through interest negotiations and arbitrations that have to do with workplace conditions, health and safety, a range of things.

The practice of seeking balance and of finding mechanisms that work in all circumstances — and the safeguards when those mechanisms don't work — is long and well-established. What we have seen through the labour boards that have been created at the provincial and at the federal levels has been that mechanism for an exception where something goes wrong.

Where there is a card certification process in place, there is a mechanism as well. If evidence is presented to the board by the employer or an individual that there has been intimidation, something has been wrong in the process, a vote can and has been ordered to take place. So there is a safeguard. That's part of the balance that has been arrived at in the agreements that have been reached by management and labour, and I think that should inform people's discussions as they look at this.

I don't think it will necessarily make up any individual's mind about the right way to go. There is something incredibly democratic about the sounding of a secret ballot vote because we use that in our electoral system, and it's very easy for us to relate to. It doesn't relate well to the practice of dealing with parties who, until they form a relationship, until they begin bargaining, until they see the value that each other brings to the workplace and the productivity and the progress and therefore the benefits, livelihood, the well-being of all of the corporation and employees, start off in a very confrontational place.

I would speak to the content of your motion by saying it tells one side of the story. There's a very different side of the story. The parties have spoken to these two sides of the stories and have arrived at a balance. It is, with respect, outliers and not the mainstream in the labour-management world that speaks to extremes in changes, like bringing about a secret ballot vote.

I will also address the point you make about provincial jurisdictions. I appreciated your historical presentation, but much like what has happened here, it has been driven by a partisan and ideological approach to these issues, and that exists on both sides as well. We know that. We can be frank about that. It has not been driven by the balance and the desires of the parties themselves to these agreements and to this legislative structure.

However, I also want to address the issue I raised yesterday about the job of the Senate with respect to reviewing legislation that comes from the House of Commons. I made mention yesterday of the Salisbury Convention and the fact that as we often speak about it in this chamber, we speak about a situation where a commitment has been made as part of a political party's manifesto or election campaign documentation. If that party then forms government, there's an expectation, when that comes

through from the House of Commons to the Senate, we will neither block that nor amend it substantially from the principle of the bill.

There was an interesting meeting today of the Modernization Committee. I want to take a moment to share with you that we had some very interesting guests with us via video conferencing. We had the Right Honourable The Lord Wakeham and Lord Norton of Louth from the House of Lords, and Meg Russell, Director of the Constitutional Unit of the Department of Political Sciences, University College London. They were speaking about the relationship between the House of Commons and the House of Lords in the mother of the Westminster system, as it has been born and then exported and changed in many other jurisdictions.

They spoke to the Salisbury Convention and said that the way in which I described it, about an election manifesto, is the way in which it began. It began post-war in the situation where there was a vast majority of Conservatives within the House of Lords and to the left of that government, and they had to figure out how to make this work and not defeat every government initiative that came through from a government that had been duly elected.

They're very deferential to the fact there is a chamber that has been elected and has an elected mandate. That's where this convention came from.

However, as they spoke today, they talked about the fact that it has evolved. In fact, as it is practised today, they believe that it is not the place of the upper chamber to stop a bill in principle if it has both been brought through the election campaign, but more to the point now, has received a majority of the elected members in the House of Commons so that there is a mandate from the House of Commons.

They go on to say that the job of the Senate is to consider — the House of Lords in their case — to consider that bill and to make it better, but within the principle of the bill as it has been sent forward.

In the case before us, adoption at second reading of the principle of a bill, in the part that you're referring to, which was 525, the principle is to repeal the provision of a secret ballot vote. In fact, what your amendment does, as I said yesterday, is gut that provision.

There was a very interesting quote from the Right Honourable The Lord Wakeham today in which he said, "We make amendments not to destroy" what they — the House of Commons that has voted and sent the bill through — want to do but to improve it.

By that standard, it is up to the members of this house whether that's a standard we ascribe to, and I would suggest that we have traditionally, as I have read and heard from speakers in all parts of this chamber. Ascribing to that standard, this amendment is not a proper amendment for us to be considering. It guts the intent of what the House of Commons sent forward. It is contrary to the principle of the bill that was adopted, which is a repeal bill, and this would undo the repeal. It is also true that it was part of a manifesto or an election commitment.

• (1510)

I think if we were doing our job as a Senate and understanding where we weigh in and on what conditions and how we work to improve a bill or to assure ourselves that a bill is constitutional, or that there is not an impact differentially on parts of regions or minority groups of the country, that range of things that we often talk about that flow from our own understanding and the Supreme Court decision, again, this falls outside of that.

Whether we agree with the content and the philosophical underpinning of the amendment you put forward or whether we disagree with it, because that will often be the case in legislation that we have come forward, we respect the fact that it comes from the House of Commons, a duly elected body. It was passed by a large majority and then came through to us. It was a commitment made in the campaign, and your amendment is one that arguably should not have been brought forward and should not be supported by the full Senate in doing its job.

I hope we will continue to have discussions about the nature of our job. I have noted to a certain degree that the arrival of more independents in some way has allowed for a more partisan demonstration on votes of the differences in positions on things

I'm sorry; I didn't hear what you said, Senator Plett.

I'm not being critical. I'm being genuine in that I think it has at times been evident that there is a position on a bill in which certain members in the Senate are able to vote on what their ideological position is as opposed to what the job of the Senate may be. At some point we have to wrestle with that — maybe today and this bill isn't the place to do that, but I would argue that it is. That would lead me to argue against your amendment, as much as I understand the conviction and the reasons why you bring it forward. I would argue against it, and I would urge members in our role as senators and scrutiny to in fact defeat this amendment.

Hon. Scott Tannas: Would you accept a question?

Senator Lankin: Absolutely.

Senator Tannas: I have several questions. I suppose I could fire them all off at once.

First, can you comment on why you believe that the card check system is not inherently intimidating? There is the fact that people come to your house on a weekend and say, "Hey, we're getting up a union; you're co-workers, and we want you to sign this card." Or when you go to the hotel and you are an airline pilot for WestJet, someone is there and your co-pilot is a big union supporter and you're not, and someone embraces you in the hotel lobby to say, "We're getting up a union; come on, let's sign." Those situations strike me as inherent in their intimidation, but it never gets talked about on the other side. We only hear about the idea that before a vote, the employer gets a chance to speak and that that intimidation ruins everything.

Second, could you comment on Bill C-7? We included here, in our wisdom, a secret ballot vote for the RCMP. The government on the other side has been carefully considering this now for many

months. How stupid will we look if after many months we follow the Salisbury Convention and the bill comes back allowing a secret ballot for the RCMP?

Finally, if I recall my history lessons correctly, one thing we are meant to consider is the obvious will of the people, and we had compelling evidence in committee that the obvious will of the unionized people was to keep the secret ballot.

The Hon. the Speaker: Senator Lankin, before you begin, you will not have time to answer the question, so are you going to ask for five more minutes to respond to the question?

Senator Lankin: Yes, I will. Thank you.

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

Senator Lankin: I will try and move through these. There were three questions.

The first was with respect to card check. I think you make a point that whether it is an employer speaking to an employee or a co-worker speaking to an employee, there is a certain amount of convincing that is going on and urging action. The question is: Where is the power and where is it coercive? I suggest that where the employer has the power over your livelihood, that is a very different situation than a co-worker.

You see many times in situations, in certain sectors, where there are strikes and some co-workers cross the line. People will do what they believe is right for them to do. I see the level and the ability of coercion for the most part to be very imbalanced where the employer has more power. I would say there are sectors where the experience has been the opposite with respect to threats, but it is a very small part of the unionized world.

With respect to Bill C-7, I think that's a good point, so I am going to admit that as this bill came forward in my early days here, I did not see and did not understand that this chamber was moving to put in place a secret ballot vote. It was done in the context of support. I supported the bill in the context of supporting the right of unionization, and when I saw that — so my fault — I asked a number of senators and not everybody got that. I think, honestly, it got slipped through in a way, but that's not an accusation. It is an admission of my own lack of attention to understand that piece.

I would hope that one of the things taking so long to give consideration to in bringing Bill C-7 back is that the government in fact will not accept that amendment from us. I think that if the government does accept that amendment, it will be the government that looks stupid for having sent a bill here to repeal a secret ballot vote, and then to accept that with respect to Bill C-7 that came from this chamber.

As for the obvious will of the people, I keep hearing about the emails that members of the committee received. I'm telling you, maybe it's because of my background, but I got a lot of emails in support of the card check system. I've had calls from labour leaders and calls from people on both sides recently.

I received another communication recently. You mentioned WestJet. The issue for them about a secret ballot doesn't have anything to do with intimidation. They are worried that a competitor organization will utilize the card check and may get the bargaining rights for those pilots instead of the WestJet Pilots' Association. I have told them that I support Bill C-4 and I do not support, with respect, the amendment you have put forward.

Again, I come back to the circumstances in each case and what motivates people to take one position or the other. They're real circumstances and they need to be respected. But, with respect, I come back to what our job is as a Senate, and it is not to change the will of the elected majority if it doesn't fall within improving the bill or many of the other categories that we often talk about, which is our purview. It is not in our purview to in fact amend a bill in such a way as to gut the attempt or to reverse the principle of the bill, which in this case is a repeal bill, and I suggest that your amendment does that.

Senator Tannas: If I could just ask for clarity on Bill C-7, would it would be wise, then, if there are people here who may withhold their vote specifically because of what you have explained as the Salisbury principle, but otherwise would vote for secret ballot if the RCMP is granted that, that we should perhaps wait for Bill C-7 to come to us before we make a decision?

Senator Lankin: No.

Hon. Kelvin Kenneth Ogilvie: Would the senator accept another question?

Senator Lankin: Yes.

Senator Ogilvie: Senator Lankin, during your response to Senator Tannas, you referred to the power of the employer over the employee. I spent much of my career in academic environments, which are, in Canada, heavily unionized. Indeed, within an academic union, the power lies entirely within the members of the union — control over tenure, control over promotion — none of which resides in the hands of the employer at all. Indeed, throughout my career, I saw a great deal of intimidation within academic unions as a result of this issue and the importance of secret ballot with regard to important decisions within the union.

I would submit to you, Senator Lankin, that the issue is not one of simply employer dominance over employees but dominance of union leadership over its members in many situations.

The Hon. the Speaker: Again, your time is expired. Are you asking for more time?

Senator Lankin: Just one minute.

The Hon. the Speaker: One minute to answer the question.

Is leave granted, senators?

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

[Senator Lankin]

• (1520)

Senator Lankin: I'm smiling and saying that I heard the question because, of course, that was a statement. What I was trying to convey is that in different circumstances and sectors, there are differences. I have never seen anything like that in the direct public sector; I have in the educational sector. I have not seen it in the auto sector; I have in the dock workers sector.

Again, the economic power is different than the power of isolation or not including people. But the bottom line is that a balance has been struck over the years, and that balance has been worked out by management, labour and government. I suspect, outside of the Salisbury reasons for not supporting this, that there is a strong reason to say we should respect that balance.

(On motion of Senator Ringuette, debate adjourned.)

CITIZENSHIP ACT

BILL TO AMEND—THIRD READING— DEBATE

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Omidvar, seconded by the Honourable Senator Gagné, for the third reading of Bill C-6, An Act to amend the Citizenship Act and to make consequential amendments to another Act, as amended.

Hon. Carolyn Stewart Olsen: Honourable senators, I rise today to speak to third reading of Bill C-6, An Act to amend the Citizenship Act and to make consequential amendments to another Act.

The legislation before us makes a number of changes to the Citizenship Act dealing with residency and language requirements. What I will focus on today are clauses 3, 5 and 26 or, rather, the provisions relating to revoking the citizenship of Canadian terrorists.

Like some of the other legislation which has come from the government, Bill C-6 is chiefly concerned with nullifying our existing laws. It repeals and replaces much of what was enacted in 2014 under Bill C-24, an act known by its short title as the "Strengthening Canadian Citizenship Act."

I feel it is important to note this distinction because Bill C-6 functionally devalues our citizenship by stripping the government's ability to permanently expel terrorists who live among us.

The government argues that all Canadian citizens, whether by birth or application, are equal under the law and should face equal treatment under the Canadian justice system. When defending this bill, the government is fond of repeating this phrase: A Canadian is a Canadian is a Canadian.

If we are to consider this as an argument, we must ask ourselves what a Canadian is and what our citizenship stands for. What rights do Canadians have, and more important, what obligations come with taking the citizenship oath?

Citizenship is not just a piece of paper you fill out to get a passport and a medicare card. It is an unbreakable bond between someone and this country, an agreement that you are now part of our community and share our identity.

You do not need citizenship to visit Canada or even to live and work here permanently. We have visas of all sorts for anyone who wants to do that. Citizenship comes with privileges, but it also comes with duties.

Citizenship is one of the oldest and most sacred Western ideals. It was first expressed in the ancient Greek city states. They believed that the rights of citizens include the chance to speak and vote in their political assembly, to run for elections, to serve as jurors and to receive the full protection of the law.

In return, citizenship required that one honour the law and obey it, serve in the military or in some capacity if the community goes to war, and to never act in a way that would compromise people's shared interests.

In the British understanding of citizenship, from which we inherit our legal principles, this link between rights and responsibilities or, rather, between responsibilities and protections, is maintained.

When debating the Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act of 2002, Earl Russell in the British House of Lords described it as follows:

... the responsibility that closed up the whole arch of government was people's allegiance to their sovereign, which arose from their citizenship. In return for that allegiance, they had a right to protection from their sovereign. That link between allegiance and protection was absolutely fundamental to political thinking.

Bill C-24 recognized the essential link between rights and duties by empowering the government to revoke the citizenship of dual nationals who are convicted of terrorism, treason, espionage and taking up arms against our country. Further, it barred anyone guilty of this, who by some accident resides here as a permanent resident, from even applying for citizenship.

Critics of Bill C-24 painted these provisions as coming from small-mindedness or a government intending to build a two-tiered citizenship structure.

In fact, we have learned here that these provisions are the law of the land in 22 European countries. Britain, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Spain, Switzerland and the Netherlands all have legal provisions to strip citizenship from terrorists.

The United Kingdom went a step further than those countries and Bill C-24 in expanding its powers to allow the government to revoke the citizenship, even if it renders an individual stateless.

An unnamed individual from Sudan who had his citizenship revoked challenged this law at the European Court of Human Rights. The judgment, which was delivered last month, was a unanimous decision confirming that stripping terrorists of their citizenship is indeed lawful. The decision noted:

Having regard [for] ... the SIAC's clear findings concerning the extent of his terrorism related activities, the Court does not consider that the decision to exclude the applicant from the United Kingdom was disproportionate to the legitimate aim pursued: namely, the protection of the public from the threat of terrorism.

Just this week, the British Home Office exercised this power by stripping Sufiyan Mustafa of his passport. He is the son of Abu Hamza, a convicted terrorist and notorious hate speaker, and has spent several years fighting alongside the jihadists in Syria.

The concern about rendering an individual stateless has often been brought up in the public debate here and in other countries, but when it is talked about, it is expressed as a matter of international law rather than Canadian sovereignty.

According to Craig Forcece, a law professor at the University of Ottawa, "International law says very little about revocation; it lies principally in the hands of states."

I concur in that I believe our citizenship is a matter of Canadian sovereignty, senators, which ought to be adjudicated by our Parliament and the representatives of our people.

Citizenship revocation is hardly an alien concept for our country. When the government established the Canadian Citizenship Act in 1947, they maintained a process for citizenship revocation. Until 1977 citizenship could be stripped for fraud, treason or helping the enemy in times of war.

Another point often mentioned in the public discussion around Bill C-6 and Bill C-24 is the distinction between citizenship by birth and citizenship by naturalization. This distinction was never considered an issue in the past. Those who are born here are raised in our system of standards and adopt the Canadian identity through socialization. Those who naturalize receive citizenship through a contract, asserting that they recognize both the obligations and duties of what is rightfully considered a privilege conferred by our community onto others.

Diversity is our great strength and something all Canadians should be proud of. Our doors are open to all who would come to join our community and help us make this country even greater. Terrorists and those who fight against us are not — I repeat "are not" — in this category.

• (1530)

The government understands this distinction even if it does not state it. The idea that Canada has the right to decide who can and cannot be accepted as a citizen on the basis of conduct is not challenged by Bill C-6.

Before Bill C-24 became law, previous governments stripped Nazi war criminals of their citizenship. Most famously, as other senators have noted, Canada has been trying to revoke Helmut

Oberlander's citizenship since 1994. Mr. Oberlander was a member of the Nazi death squad and is listed by the Simon Wiesenthal Center as one of their most wanted war criminals. The types of people that Bill C-24 envisions stripping citizenship from are scarcely different from the war criminals of our past.

When we studied Bill C-6 at the Social Affairs Committee, I was appalled to hear the minister admit that they are working to restore the citizenship of a convicted terrorist. The minister did not name the individual, but media reports have revealed him to be Zakaria Amara, who is currently in prison for leading the so-called Toronto 18. Amara wanted to murder as many Canadians as he could. Like Zehaf-Bibeau in 2014, he planned to storm Parliament Hill and slaughter parliamentarians just like you and me. His associates wanted to execute numerous bombings and shootings in Toronto in a direct attack on our democracy and the people who live here. This terrorist was inspired by the same al Qaeda that murdered thousands of Americans in 2001 and which today under different names continues to murder thousands in Iraq and Syria in the hopes of building a cruel theocracy.

Sooner or later, Amar will be released from prison and then Canadians will have to hope that he will not return to the extremism that landed him in prison. We really do not know what sort of resentment or extremist views he harbours, but the possibilities are disturbing.

British citizen Jamal al-Harith was captured by the American army as he was fighting alongside the Taliban in Africa. After two years in Guantanamo Bay he was released to the U.K. and paid compensation for his time in prison. He received 1 million British pounds — almost 2 million Canadian dollars — and where is he now? Al-Harith was killed last month fighting alongside ISIS terrorists in Iraq.

Committing these terrible acts, getting involved in the planning of such atrocities and fighting against our country are all acts of treason and violate the citizenship contract between Canadians and our community.

Like any contract, citizenship when betrayed should become void. The government ran on this as a platform promise and as such Canadian voters should hold them responsible for the consequences.

I cannot support this bill and I urge other senators to think very carefully before they do.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

Hon. Diane Griffin: Honourable senators, today I rise to speak to Bill C-6. I want to propose an amendment to the bill, but first I want to give you my reasons why.

The age of 55 to demonstrate sufficient language proficiency is too low and should be increased. This is in part due to the fact that a permanent resident at age 49 to 50, after a five-year waiting period, could become a Canadian citizen at age 55 without any knowledge of either French or English.

I think an amendment to increase that level to 60 years of age is particularly important to people in Atlantic Canada, Quebec and rural Canada.

Note that I support a waiver on compassionate grounds. This is found in section 5(3) of the Citizenship Act. I respectfully disagree with routine waivers simply because an applicant is 55.

I am proposing age 60 due to the evidence-based recommendations by studies during the Brian Mulroney and Jean Chrétien governments. According to the Library of Parliament, the age of 55 for an exemption from the requirements is a more recent trend that was not decided at either the political or the senior departmental levels.

As well, the Library of Parliament analyst cannot find any record of age 55 being transmitted through ministerial instruction. The age of 55 appears to have been decided at a middle management level via an instrument of delegation.

The age exemptions for language and knowledge were never defined in statute prior to the Conservative government's changes to the Citizenship Act that legislatively set the age to 65.

Prior to this point, there was a requirement for all permanent residents who wished to acquire citizenship to satisfy the knowledge and language requirements, and individuals who could not fulfill these requirements had to request a waiver.

In the early 1980s, the criteria for a routine waiver was set at 65 and over. By 1994, the waiver was lowered to 60. At some point between 1994 and 2014, the waiver was again lowered, this time to 55. But these lowerings were never done at the political level.

Studies from the Mulroney and Chrétien eras recommended using 60 as the benchmark for waivers. In particular, in 1994, the House of Commons committee from the Chrétien government advocated against the routine waiving of language requirements for older applicants.

To paraphrase its report, the Immigration Committee felt that Canadians must be encouraged to obtain a degree of knowledge in one of the official languages. The committee viewed citizenship as a two-way street, and older immigrants should be encouraged to walk as far along that street as possible. The committee warned that routine waiving of language requirements is a form of misplaced passion that could ghettoize people and hinder participation in the broader Canadian mosaic.

The Salisbury-Addison Convention indicates that the Senate should generally not defeat major campaign platform commitments. Effectively, the Senate must defer to the wisdom of the electorate on major platform commitments. However, the lowering of the exemption age to 55 is not a campaign promise. The closest phrase is found in the background brief called "A New Plan for Canadian Immigration and Economic Opportunity" which states:

We will repeal the unfair elements of Bill C-24 that create second-class citizens and the elements that make it more

difficult for hard-working immigrants to become Canadian citizens.

With creativity and imagination, the government could claim that this promise implies the repeal of the age requirement in statute and a restoration of the traditional waiver system. It is clear that entrenchment in statute of age 55 is not contemplated in this promise.

At present, there is a paradox where middle management decision-makers have gradually lowered the age requirement while the lifespan of Canadians is increasing. Age 55 is quite young. I do note with a certain degree of irony that this issue is being debated in this chamber where our average age for a senator is 65.

I draw attention to the comment that former minister John McCallum made to the House of Commons Immigration Committee about the language requirements.

• (1540)

We did not have consultations specifically on the economic implications of returning to the 55 to 64, but I'm told neither did the previous government on the impact going the other way. So we are reverting to the status quo ante and our predecessors didn't consult our moving away from it.

The minister is incorrect in his statement. As discussed earlier, a return to the status quo ante implies not defining 55 in statute and there was no political or senior management direction supporting lowering the age to 55. I stress the lower age runs contrary to the evidence-based recommendations from the Mulroney and Chrétien eras.

One of the primary elements of citizenship is participation in the democratic process, and as a reflection of the smaller population in Atlantic Canada, elections and civic engagement are key elements to successfully integrating into the community.

For example, in Prince Edward Island, the average provincial riding size is about 4,000 people. In the case of my home riding, Vernon River—Stratford, in the last election, after a recount, the two top candidates were tied so the returning officer, according to law, flipped a coin to decide the winner.

Several other ridings were decided by fewer than 100 votes, so this highlights the point that every vote is important and new citizens do have a right to vote, whether or not they can understand the candidates. It is difficult in Eastern Canada for individuals to participate fully in society and in the democratic process without having a working knowledge of either French or English.

I note that a significant number of committee witnesses who spoke to Bill C-6 focused on the national security provisions of the legislation. With respect to age requirements, a cursory examination appears to show none of the witnesses were from Atlantic Canada and the vast majority were from Ontario.

In light of this, I'm putting forward this amendment to highlight that legislative amendments on Canadian citizenship

must involve more stakeholders than solely those from the larger population centres.

As well, I'll point out that in proposing this amendment I am fulfilling the Prime Minister's vision that senators examine and revise legislation while representing regional, provincial and minority interests.

MOTION IN AMENDMENT

Hon. Diane Griffin: Therefore, honourable senators, I move:

That Bill C-6, as amended, be not now read a third time, but that it be further amended in clause 1, on page 2,

(a) by replacing line 4 with the following:

“(d) if under 60 years of age at the date of his or her ap-”; and

(b) by replacing line 7 with the following:

“(e) if under 60 years of age at the date of his or her ap-”.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

The Hon. the Speaker: In amendment, it was moved by the Honourable Senator Griffin, seconded by the Honourable Senator Dean, that Bill C-6 — may I dispense?

Some Hon. Senators: Dispense.

Hon. Mobina S. B. Jaffer: May I ask a question?

The Hon. the Speaker: Will you answer a question, Senator Griffin?

Senator Griffin: Yes.

Senator Jaffer: Senator Griffin, thank you for your amendment. I listened to you very attentively. I apologize because I have had only a few seconds to look at the amendment and I may have missed something. I heard you mention exceptions on compassionate grounds. Where would that be, and can you define what you mean by “compassionate”?

Senator Griffin: Yes, in the current legislation there is provision for compassionate grounds and I'm saying that I support that. I am not proposing to change the compassionate grounds, I just wanted to make the point that was made by previous government reports that it should not happen automatically just because someone is 55 years old. That's not really a compassionate ground. But a true compassionate ground is still covered under the current legislation and I'm not proposing to touch that because I agree with that.

Senator Jaffer: I would very much appreciate knowing how you would define “compassionate,” please. And then I have another question but it depends on the answer.

Senator Griffin: Well, I'm sorry but how I define compassionate is immaterial. It's already defined in the legislation and that's not

decided by anyone in this house; that's decided by staff in the government or by someone at the direction of the minister.

So it's what is currently in the legislation and I'm not proposing to touch that.

Senator Jaffer: Thank you, senator. I do understand. I'm not sure if you were at the hearings of the committee — I'm sorry, I don't remember — but one of the things that really struck me is that when Ms. Go came to speak at committee she explained why this age was so important, because those who come to Canada as independents and to work here all have to pass the language test in either English or French.

My understanding is that it's either refugees who have a language issue or older people who have joined their families. We heard a lot at committee about grandmothers who could not speak English and were left out of becoming citizens.

Do you not think that 55 covers those people who cannot speak English because they have arrived here at a later stage?

Senator Griffin: There is quite a lot in your statement.

Well, one the things I was most concerned about when looking at the age, even though I didn't emphasize it in my speech, was that in many cases it's women who are the ones who don't have the greatest chance. The children are going to learn the languages in school. I'm not worried about them. The people who go out and work in the workforce will learn the language.

It's the ones staying back looking after the families who are at a disadvantage and by simply waiving the requirement by age 55 to be able to speak English or French, even if they arrived here at age 49 and could have been able to learn it, I'm saying we're 65 here and some of us are taking language training in this chamber, so obviously we agree that people can still learn language, even though our average age is 65.

What I'm saying, in this case, is that these people need to be incentivized. You can do a number of things to do that. One is better language programs and trying to reach out to them in the community, and there was a lot of that done in communities and that's great. Probably, more funding for such programs would be a nice thing but I'm not getting into money.

Another incentive would be to require that they make an attempt to walk as far along the path of language training as they possibly can. As a female, I don't want to see females being ghettoized and unfortunately if we waive the requirements too young, that's exactly what we are doing.

Hon. Yonah Martin (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): I have a question for the senator.

The Hon. the Speaker: Senator Martin, I'm sorry, but Senator Griffin is out of time. Did you want to ask for more time to answer questions?

Senator Griffin: Yes, thank you.

[Senator Griffin]

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

Senator Martin: Senator, I think you raised some very important points, especially about the risk of ghettoization to women, if they are the ones who are potentially staying behind or staying at home.

I have a question regarding whether you came across any research or statistics about the elderly when they are in care facilities. My mother is currently in a care home and as I listened to what you were saying, I have noted that as people age they lose their language abilities. For instance, my mother came here when she was 33 and learned English — I remember her going to school. She has dementia but is still able to speak English. The vast majority of the workers would not speak Korean, which is her first language. So the fact she can speak English has been a huge advantage, whereas I have noted many other residents of ethnicity who do not speak English.

• (1550)

Have you come across research or statistics about what happens to these individuals when they get to the age where they may go into homes and language becomes an even greater factor for their survival?

Senator Griffin: That's a good point. I must admit I didn't research that. I was thinking more of the population that was mobile as opposed to the elderly or people in care. So that is an excellent point. Thank you for bringing it up.

By the way, I don't have an answer for you other than I didn't research it.

The Hon. the Speaker: Senator Omidvar, do you have a question or are you entering debate?

Hon. Ratna Omidvar: I have a question.

Senator Griffin, would you not agree that one person's incentive is another person's barrier?

Senator Griffin: That can apply to almost anything in life, but there is always the compassionate ground clause that's in the current legislation. But I still think we need to have a number of incentives. Like anything else, there are economic instruments at the provision of this government, and it also has regulatory instruments. The two should work in unison to effect good public policy.

In one case, one thing may be a disincentive, but working with the other can be an incentive. Different people react differently.

Hon. Jane Cordy: I was listening to Senator Martin. I remember being on the Special Senate Committee on Aging, and we heard that even when people have learned a second language, often when they get older, they revert to their first language. It has nothing to do with whether they have learned English or French; it is just a natural phenomenon when some people reach old age, they revert to their first language.

You referred to the fear of women being ghettoized, and you gave good reasons because they would not be out in the workforce and not going to school as their children do.

But my fear is that if we are going to refuse citizenship to these women, we are going to ghettoize them. I know specific cases in the Halifax region of refugees who have come from Syria. The parents are taking classes, but it's a challenge for them. They are older. But let me tell you that their children — one was trained as a teacher in Syria — are at language classes day and night, trying to improve. The parents' son who just arrived, who is trained as a lawyer, wants to get a job immediately and wants to start taking language training.

We are very fortunate in Halifax because our mayor, Mike Savage, is very supportive. There is language training and child care provided. The city also provides bus passes to refugees so they don't have the expense of getting back and forth to language lessons. Despite that, those who are older who are taking the bus every day to go to language training are speaking some English but in no way are they fluent.

My fear about raising this age is — and I wonder if you would agree with me — my fear is that they are doing all they can do to learn the language. It's a struggle. Their children are definitely going to be, and some of them are, fluently bilingual after being here for one year. They are taking every step to being productive citizens in Nova Scotia. Do you not agree that these parents — whose children may become Canadian citizens — but that the parents who cannot become citizens will be ghettoized because we have changed the age to above 55?

The Hon. the Speaker: Senator Griffin, your time has again expired. Are you asking for time to answer the question?

Senator Griffin: Yes.

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

Senator Griffin: The senator makes some really good points, and it's great to hear that Halifax is so progressive. I would have expected nothing less. My mother is from Nova Scotia.

In a case like that, where somebody has proven they've taken the classes and worked very hard to do it, in the current legislation, there is provision to give those people a pass. But they have proved that they've tried to walk as far along the path as they can.

Hon. Art Eggleton: You talk about the provision for the ministerial discretion on this matter, but when has that ever been used? When has the compassionate ground ever been used in a case like this — a language case?

Senator Griffin: I'll have to get back to you with that, to use a typical Senator Harder answer.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

[*Translation*]

Hon. Chantal Petitclerc: I have a question for the senator, if she is willing to take it.

[*English*]

I have to be honest and say that this was one of the things that concerned me. As a Quebecer, language is so important to me. Being in the committee and listening to the witnesses, there were many witnesses who pointed out the fact that being 55 does not have the same socio-economic meaning for everybody. Those witnesses really convinced me that being 55 is very different.

You mentioned the Senate a few times and all of us being 65 — not me — but this also brought out a point that many of my colleagues have told me in the last year how they intend to speak both official languages, yet they can't get to it. It really shows how tough it is to learn a language. To me, it means it's even tougher when you talk about the group of the 55-year-olds we're talking about. They are vulnerable and of different socio-economic backgrounds than we have.

My question and my concern, which also joins to Senator Jaffer's comments, is why would we want to make it more difficult for a group that is already very vulnerable? I tend to agree that the ghetto you are talking about will be for the ones who cannot make it to learn that language, and they will be penalized by that.

I don't know if you can expand on that.

Senator Griffin: I see we are all going to run out of time shortly.

The answer is: I'm proposing to lower the age. Right now, that age is 65. I'm proposing to lower it to 60, which is contrary to Bill C-6, which is proposing to lower it even further. I'm saying that I'm arguing that 60 is the right age for this. It's still lower than 65.

Senator Omidvar: I would speak on debate.

The Hon. the Speaker: It's nearing four o'clock. Rather than interrupt your debate, if Senator Griffin is willing, I will go to Senator Seidman for a question.

Hon. Judith Seidman: Actually, you are quite right. This was a subject that was debated in our committee, and it was quite an issue. From my point of view, I fully support what you are proposing. In fact, my question to you would be: According to Statistics Canada, since adults aged 55 to 64 currently comprise 36 per cent of our workforce, which is quite significant, why would we stop at 60? Why wouldn't you think that it should be 55 to 64 instead of just 55 to 60?

• (1600)

Senator Griffin: When someone comes into the country, they can be a landed immigrant or permanent resident for a number of years before they apply to become a citizen or are eligible to become a citizen.

What is the difference between someone being a permanent resident one day and a citizen the next? After the citizenship ceremony, they're able to vote. There's one big difference.

In our country, we're very fortunate. I think of Canada as a compassionate country. I still argue that if someone has made every effort to learn the language. I agree with you, our workforce is older and people are learning new skills all the time, or they drop out of the workforce. Seeing the current age range of our workforce, there are a lot of people not dropping out and coping

quite nicely, including learning to operate these little gadgets and much bigger gadgets that sit on the desk and make great doorstops.

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, pursuant to the order adopted February 4, 2016, I declare the Senate adjourned.

(The Senate adjourned until Thursday, April 6, 2017, at 1:30 p.m.)

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