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Wednesday, May 3, 2017

The Honourable GEORGE J. FUREY
Speaker

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THE SENATE

Wednesday, May 3, 2017

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

Prayers.

SENATORS' STATEMENTS

MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH

Hon. Nancy Hartling: Honourable senators, I rise today to remind you that this week, May 1 to 7, is Mental Health Awareness Week. Current statistics indicate that at least one in five Canadians live with mental health issues each year, making it very likely that you or someone you know lives with mental illness. Mental illnesses include a wide range of mental health conditions, such as anxiety, depression, eating disorders, personality disorders and PTSD.

Recently I met and had a lengthy discussion with Louise Bradley, President and CEO of the Mental Health Commission of Canada. The commission's work was mandated by the Government of Canada in response to a 2006 Senate report entitled *Out of the Shadows at Last*. The commission has created a Mental Health Strategy for Canada entitled "Changing Directions, Changing Lives," and it provides an opportunity for all Canadians to help bring about change and create a mental health system that truly meets the needs of all people living with mental health issues, including their families.

Mental illness does not discriminate. It can and does affect men, women and children of all ages and socio-economic spheres across Canada. Recently, CBC highlighted the latest spike of suicides in the Moncton area, where I live, in New Brunswick. In 2016, 40 people died from suicide, a significant increase when compared to the 22 cases reported the previous year.

Dr. Albert Cyr, Chair of the Mental Health Community Advisory Committee for Vitalité Health Network stated in the CBC interview that he is advocating for further examination of this increase in suicides, particularly considering the wait times that can be from 6 to 12 months. I believe that when a fellow Canadian, perhaps a family member or friend, is in their darkest days and actually reaches out for support it is unacceptable and thoroughly heartbreaking to know that this cry for help goes unanswered for that long.

This year's awareness campaign is using the hashtag #GetLoud and intends to encourage all of us to speak up against the stigma and discrimination surrounding mental health. As we get loud, let us not forget those who have lost their battle with mental illness and those who are still struggling every day. We need to continue this discussion in their honour, working together to intervene earlier and more effectively in mental health care. It is a matter of justice for all, as mental illness does affect all of us, directly or indirectly at some point in our lives.

MATERNAL, NEWBORN AND CHILD HEALTH WEEK

Hon. Norman E. Doyle: Honourable senators, some time ago Parliament voted to designate the second week in May of each year as International Maternal, Newborn and Child Health Week. Accordingly, I thought it might be important to take note of the passing of the fourth anniversary of the MNCH Week designation. There will be a reception later today to further mark the occasion.

The motion asking for the Maternal, Newborn and Child Health Week designation came from our former colleague Senator Asha Seth. Dr. Seth was more than just the mover of the motion; her 38 years in the practice of obstetrics and gynecology made her uniquely qualified to take the lead on this important issue. As a matter of fact, she's in the gallery today. This year, I will again be joining her in hosting the reception on Parliament Hill, and I would encourage my colleagues to join us at the reception after we adjourn today.

The designation of the second week in May as Maternal, Newborn and Child Health Week is designed to enable the various stakeholders in the field to synchronize resources and make a more meaningful impact on this very important problem, because it is a problem of monumental proportions.

In her many speeches on the issue, Dr. Seth has often mentioned the United Nations reports that a woman dies every two minutes as a result of pregnancy-related complications, the vast majority of which are preventable by cost-effective, evidence-based interventions.

I've heard her say on many occasions that 12 children under the age of 5 still die every minute from mostly preventable causes. In the year 2012, 6.6 million children around the world died before they could celebrate their fifth birthday, which means that during the next 10 minutes, 120 children will die, mainly in the Third World.

However, these days Canada is helping the less fortunate around the world. By providing billions of dollars in support of MNCH, Canada has been able to mobilize several billion dollars from our international partners. Thanks to these efforts, worldwide maternal mortality has fallen from 543,000 deaths in 1990 to 287,000 deaths in 2013. During the same period, the number of children dying before reaching the age of 5 has dropped from more than 12 million in 1990 to the earlier mentioned 6.6 million today.

Colleagues, in addition to the foregoing, Canada has been very active in the Micronutrient Initiative, an international not-for-profit organization dedicated to the elimination of vitamin and mineral deficiencies.

Today, the guest speaker at the reception will be Dr. Levente L. Diosady, a bioengineer.

DISTINGUISHED VISITOR IN THE GALLERY

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I wish to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of our former colleague, the Honourable Dr. Asha Seth. She is accompanied by her husband, Dr. Arun Seth.

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

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

[Translation]

VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I wish to draw to your attention the presence in the gallery of Mélanie Carpentier, founder of La Maison de Mélanie, Anouk-Michelle Grégoire, who organized a march with the theme of protecting our children from human trafficking, and Éric Hauptman. They are the guests of the Honourable Senator Boisvenu.

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

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

• (1410)

HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Hon. Pierre-Hugues Boisvenu: Honourable senators, today, almost two years to the day that the Senate passed Bill C-452 on human trafficking, a group of stakeholders and volunteers marched on Parliament Hill to make the government aware of the urgent need to do something about this terrible problem. Over 40 per cent of the victims of this crime are minors.

The march was organized by Anouk-Michelle Grégoire, who is in the gallery today.

Demonstrators were invited to participate in the event by La Maison de Mélanie, which was founded by Mélanie Carpentier, the executive director. This organization provides a temporary housing service for victims of human trafficking for the purposes of sexual exploitation, in order to keep them safe and provide for their basic needs.

The organization also provides victims with a listening ear. It offers them psychological support, as well as education and advisory services to help them learn about their rights and reintegrate into society in the aftermath of victimization.

La Maison de Mélanie also delivers education and outreach programs to make people aware of the problem of human trafficking for the purposes of sexual exploitation and of the

many impacts this can have on victims, through training workshops, conferences and public communications.

Today, the march organized by La Maison de Mélanie delivered an urgent message to the government, urging it to take action given how widespread and serious the problem of human trafficking is across Canada, and particularly in Quebec, the province that has seen the largest increase in crime in recent years.

Honourable senators, we all want to protect children and young adolescents from this terrible crime, this new form of slavery. All the stakeholders who work with these victims feel that it is urgent that we take action. This problem is growing. This crime is being committed before our very eyes, in our cities, and that is unacceptable.

All the invaluable people involved in rehabilitating these young minors feel hampered by the lack of resources available for dealing with this crime.

Obviously, honourable senators, something has to change. Far too many Canadian families are distressed to see their young daughters being led against their will into the cruel world of prostitution. We must help them by providing adequate support. It is our fundamental responsibility here in the Senate.

Honourable senators, in closing, I want to acknowledge the exceptional work of the people of La Maison Mélanie in removing young girls from the grip of street gangs. I want to thank them from the bottom of my heart on behalf of all Canadian parents for the rehabilitation work they do to give these young victims hope and the will to achieve their potential as future responsible adults.

I invite you to join me in thanking my guests who are here today: Mélanie Carpentier, Anouk-Michelle Grégoire, Maïa Grégoire-Mayer, Laetitia Agnès, Josée Cantin, Éric Hauptman and Nicolas Lemieux.

Thank you very much.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

[English]

THE LATE LEONE BAGNALL, C.M., O.P.E.I.

Hon. Michael Duffy: Honourable senators, I rise today to pay tribute to former P.E.I. MLA and cabinet minister Leone Bagnall who passed away on the weekend.

As my Island Senate colleagues will attest, Ms. Bagnall was a remarkable woman who left a lasting mark on our Island. She was first elected to the Legislative Assembly of P.E.I. in the 1979 provincial election. She was elected three more times, leaving public life in 1993.

In those days, P.E.I. had dual ridings. In 1st Queens, Ms. Bagnall's running mate was Marion Reid, herself a distinguished Islander who later went on to serve as P.E.I.'s lieutenant governor. They were a powerful team, working tirelessly to help the poor and expand the role of women in Island society.

Ms. Bagnall was truly a pioneering figure, becoming the first female PC cabinet minister in Island history when she was appointed Minister of Education in 1982. She was the first female minister responsible for the status of women and served as the first female opposition leader from 1986 to 1993.

In 1994, Ms. Bagnall was made a member of the Order of Canada. She was awarded the Order of Prince Edward Island in 2005.

Honourable senators, Leone Bagnall was an outstanding Islander and a dedicated public servant. Prince Edward Island is a better place for her service.

[Translation]

THE HONOURABLE RAYMONDE SAINT-GERMAIN

Hon. Paul E. McIntyre: Honourable senators, as we as senators all know, it is important for our conduct to be above reproach.

That being said, sometimes our individual or collective actions are an admirable reflection of such conduct and deserve to be acknowledged.

Take for example a recent gesture by one of our colleagues, Senator Raymonde Saint-Germain, which moved me immensely.

Before she was appointed to the Senate, she was a senior public servant with the Government of Quebec for years, during which time she held a number of positions, including Quebec Ombudsperson. After her second consecutive five-year term, she left the Ombudsperson position on November 14, 2016, and was sworn into the Senate two weeks later on December 1, 2016.

Upon leaving her job, she was entitled to substantial severance pay. Not only did she decline the money because she had been appointed to the Senate, but she also asked the Government of Quebec to change senior public servants' entitlements.

What a profoundly ethical and noble gesture on her part, a gesture that is truly a rare exception to the rule. Congratulations Senator Saint-Germain! By making that choice, you helped restore the reputation of our great institution and set a wonderful example.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

THE SENATE

NOTICE OF MOTION TO AFFECT QUESTION PERIOD ON MAY 9, 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, May 9, 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.

ADJOURNMENT

NOTICE OF MOTION

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 when the Senate next adjourns after the adoption of this motion, it do stand adjourned until Monday, May 8, 2017 at 6 p.m.;

That committees of the Senate scheduled to meet on Monday, May 8, 2017 be authorized to sit even though the Senate may then be sitting and that rule 12-18(1) be suspended in relation thereto; and

That rule 3-3(1) be suspended on that day.

• (1420)

BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION BILL, 2017, NO. 1

NOTICE OF MOTION TO AUTHORIZE CERTAIN COMMITTEES TO STUDY SUBJECT MATTER

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 accordance with rule 10-11(1), the Standing Senate Committee on National Finance be authorized to examine the subject matter of all of Bill C-44, An Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 22, 2017 and other measures, introduced in the House of Commons on April 11, 2017, in advance of the said bill coming before the Senate;

That the Standing Senate Committee on National Finance be authorized to meet for the purposes of its study of the subject matter of Bill C-44 even though the Senate may then be sitting, with the application of rule 12-18(1) being suspended in relation thereto;

That, in addition, and notwithstanding any normal practice:

1. The following committees be separately authorized to examine the subject matter of the following elements contained in Bill C-44 in advance of it coming before the Senate:
 - (a) the Standing Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade: those elements contained in the Division 1 of Part 4;
 - (b) the Standing Senate Committee on Banking, Trade and Commerce: those elements contained in Divisions 3, 8 and 20 of Part 4;
 - (c) the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology: those elements contained in Divisions 5, 9, 11, 13, 14 and 16 of Part 4;
 - (d) the Standing Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs: those elements contained in Divisions 10 and 17 of Part 4; and
 - (e) the Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence: those elements contained in Divisions 12 and 19 of Part 4;
2. The various committees listed in point one that are authorized to examine the subject matter of particular elements of Bill C-44 be authorized to meet for the

purposes of their studies of those elements even though the Senate may then be sitting, with the application of rule 12-18(1) being suspended in relation thereto;

3. The various committees listed in point one that are authorized to examine the subject matter of particular elements of Bill C-44 submit their final reports to the Senate no later than June 7, 2017;
4. As the reports from the various committees authorized to examine the subject matter of particular elements of Bill C-44 are tabled in the Senate, they be placed on the Orders of the Day for consideration at the next sitting; and
5. The Standing Senate Committee on National Finance be simultaneously authorized to take any reports tabled under point four into consideration during its study of the subject matter of all of Bill C-44.

[English]

THE SENATE

NOTICE OF MOTION TO STRIKE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON THE CHARITABLE SECTOR

Hon. Terry M. Mercer: Honourable senators, I give notice that, at the next sitting of the Senate, I will move:

That a Special Committee on the Charitable Sector be appointed to examine the impact of federal and provincial laws and policies governing charities, nonprofit organizations, foundations, and other similar groups; and to examine the impact of the voluntary sector in Canada;

That the committee be composed of eight members, to be nominated by the Committee of Selection, and that four members constitute a quorum;

That the committee have the power to send for persons, papers and records; to examine witnesses; and to publish such papers and evidence from day to day as may be ordered by the committee;

That, notwithstanding rule 12-18(2)(b)(i), the committee have the power to sit from Monday to Friday, even though the Senate may then be adjourned for a period exceeding one week; and

That the committee be empowered to report from time to time and to submit its final report no later than September 28, 2018, and retain all powers necessary to publicize its findings until 60 days after the tabling of the final report.

“SOBER SECOND THINKING” PROPOSAL

NOTICE OF INQUIRY

Hon. Pamela Wallin: Honourable senators, I give notice that, two days hence:

I will call to the attention of the Senate to the proposal put forward by Senator Harder, titled “Sober Second Thinking”, which reviews the Senate’s performance since the appointment of independent senators, and recommends the creation of a Senate business committee.

VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I wish to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of the Honourable Anne Warner, Labor Member of Queensland Parliament from 1983 to 1995, and former Minister of Family Services and Aboriginal and Islander Affairs. She is joined by her spouse, Ian Warner. They are visiting us from Brisbane, Australia, and are the guests of the Honourable Senator Pate.

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

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

[Translation]

QUESTION PERIOD

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

SOFTWOOD LUMBER NEGOTIATIONS

Hon. Ghislain Maltais: My question is for the Government Representative in the Senate. I have asked some very well-intentioned questions five or six times. As time goes on, it has become clear that plan A presented by the Government Representative in the Senate failed miserably. The negotiators were outmanoeuvred by the Americans. This is a complete debacle. We are talking about \$8.5 billion in exports, or twenty per cent of Canadian exports that are blocked at the border. This crisis is affecting 200,000 workers and another 100,000 jobs.

How many families will be hurt by this disaster in a few days’ time? How many children? Let us not forget that when we were all sworn in this place we swore on the Bible that we would defend the interests of our province, our sectors, and our districts in Quebec.

Today, 300,000 people are telling the Senate that the government’s plan A has failed. When the government talks about help for workers, what help exactly are they talking about? As far as help for modernizing businesses is concerned, what does that help look like exactly? The government is talking about diversifying markets. That is what it is offering 300,000 Canadians today.

I am not sure whether Senator Harder is familiar with the mechanisms on offer to businesses, but getting a federal government subsidy takes about as much as time as it takes for a seedling to mature to a full grown spruce tree.

The Hon. the Speaker: Excuse me, Senator Maltais, do you have a question?

Senator Maltais: I am getting to it, Mr. Speaker, but I simply want to know what the government’s plan B is on this file.

[English]

Hon. Peter Harder (Government Representative in the Senate): I want to congratulate the honourable senator on his discourse. This is a very serious matter. Obviously, it’s one that has preoccupied him and other senators, indeed all senators, particularly those with strong connections to the forestry in your hometowns and in your divisions.

The Government of Canada, as I’ve said before, disagrees strongly with the position taken by the American administration and has conveyed that view directly and continuously, both with the previous administration and the present administration.

• (1430)

In that regard, the minister responsible has established a very strong relationship with the provinces, particularly where provincial negotiators are in place, to ensure a coordinated Canadian approach as we move forward. This is a matter that we have some history with as a country in terms of how the USTR, the Commerce Department and, indeed, the Congress of the United States act in these matters when we have had previous experience.

It will be a difficult negotiation. Obviously, preference for the Government of Canada is a negotiation, but we will vigorously defend the Government of Canada and the workers and the industry involved in the various fora in which we have repeatedly won, whether it’s WTO or NAFTA.

Having said that, the honourable senator in his comments spoke to Minister Champagne’s reference to the need for the diversification of markets. That is a message not just for this sector but for so many of Canada’s export-oriented companies. As the recent experience with our most important trade market would suggest, we need to continue to be resolute in finding new markets to help balance the relationship of our export sectors.

The government looks forward to continuing to vigorously engage with our American friends on this, and I look forward to reporting progress to this house as it takes place.

[Translation]

Senator Maltais: Words, words, words. Words won't put food on the table for those workers. I expect concrete action.

You talk about diversifying our markets, but 75 per cent of Canadian wood is sold to the United States. Exports to China, Japan, and other countries add up to just \$1.1 billion. That is a \$7.7-billion shortfall. We don't need an accountant to figure that out, and we sure don't need the Auditor General.

Two weeks from now, half of those businesses will be closed. We need action right now. We don't need grand speeches about taking action. Here is what the answer should sound like: Yes, we commit to helping workers, producers and exporters within 30 days.

The question is very clear, so I want a very clear answer, not a delicately worded one. That, I can do myself.

[English]

Senator Harder: I thank the senator for providing the broader context to this issue.

The Government of Canada is working with the industry to move forward in these difficult circumstances as best we can.

You will be aware of actions that have been taken in terms of the engagement with the industry. I will certainly bring to the attention of the ministers concerned and most active in this the ongoing concerns and interests of this chamber and, as I said earlier, look forward to reporting on this matter as progress is made.

[Translation]

Senator Maltais: I just want Senator Harder to know that he is not out of the woods with me yet. Too many Canadian workers are affected by this.

[English]

Hon. Larry W. Smith (Leader of the Opposition): My question is for the Leader of the Government in the Senate. In March 2016, 14 months ago, the Prime Minister promised a softwood lumber deal with the United States within 100 days. Over 400 days later, we still don't have a deal, and now the Trump administration is imposing a 20 per cent tariff on our softwood exports.

Mr. Michael Froman served as the U.S. Trade Representative under President Obama from 2013 until January of this year. Last week, Mr. Froman gave an interview to CBC in which he claimed that a deal between our countries was almost achieved last year but that the Canadian side felt they could get a better deal under President Trump.

Could the government leader please tell us the government's response to this claim from a former U.S. Trade Representative? Did the Government of Canada walk away from a deal last year?

Senator Harder: I thank the honourable senator for his question. Again, this is an important matter and one, as I've said earlier and will repeat, that has been highly contested in negotiations both with the previous administration and this administration. The claims made by those involved in the previous administration are not shared by the Government of Canada.

Senator Smith: Thank you for the explanation, which leads right into my supplementary question.

Budget 2017 did not provide funding to support the softwood lumber industry. The budget only mentions that Canada will continue to work towards a new softwood lumber agreement with the United States. This is one of the largest export sectors of our economy, and the forestry industry is one of Canada's largest employers. The government is certainly aware of the situation it is facing, and yet the government did not see fit to include it in this year's budget.

In the absence of a deal with the United States, where is the government's plan to support communities across our country dependent on the forestry sector? Why weren't they included in the federal budget?

Senator Harder: Again I thank the honourable senator for his question. Clearly it was and remains the government's view that a negotiated agreement is the preferred way of moving forward. The Government of Canada, through the responsible ministers, are working with the territorial and provincial governments and their named negotiators, where they are in place, to ensure a coordinated approach both in our negotiations and the remedies that governments are examining as we move forward.

Senator Smith: This leads me into my third supplementary. What's important here is that we really need your help to get the answers. The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Chrystia Freeland, was given the lead in trade relations between our country and the United States. However, her mandate letter from the Prime Minister does not mention the softwood lumber dispute, which is arguably the number one trade irritant between our two countries.

Could the government leader please explain the oversight? Why isn't reaching an agreement with the U.S. on softwood lumber mentioned in the minister's mandate letter? We need your help because this is a critical issue for us. We need answers. We need you to force some answers out of your group, and I know how tough it is.

Senator Harder: Again I thank the honourable senator for his question and appreciate his and all senators' insistence that this issue be top of mind in the Government of Canada. It is.

As Minister Freeland indicated when she was here for Senate Question Period, she spoke extensively in response to questions with respect to the priority given to softwood lumber, the state of negotiations at that time, and has updated the other chamber and the public of Canada on the process as it has unfolded with the statements made and the actions taken by the Trump administration.

Again I would assure all senators that the Government of Canada strongly disagrees with the actions of the United States government. It will defend Canada's interests in whichever fora this action proceeds, and it will be vigilant in seeking every opportunity to have a negotiated settlement but defend Canadian interests in other fora should they be before us.

Senator Smith: Sir, we really need answers based on the three questions that have been asked. Maybe there is a way we need to work together to get it. We need some answers because if there is a 20 per cent duty on us right now, then that affects families, as Senator Maltais says. These families will begin to suffer immediately, yet there will be a need for cash. What can we do to get the government to move? Negotiations are one thing, but to do something for the families is another thing. We need that help now. This is what we are here for. Can you help us?

Senator Harder: Again, I take very seriously the concerns of the honourable senator and all senators on this matter and will take the specific question with respect to assistance to those affected Canadian families to the minister and will be happy to report back or seek other opportunities, formal or informal, to speak with honourable senators on this matter.

• (1440)

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

VEGREVILLE CASE PROCESSING CENTRE

Hon. Elaine McCoy: My question is also to the Honourable Government Representative in the Senate.

I was delighted to hear yesterday that you had a role in bringing the Case Processing Centre to Vegreville, Alberta, 23 years ago, and I appreciate the great value it has had to the people of Vegreville all these years. Unfortunately, as we know, we don't have the opportunity to ask supplementaries of ministers, so I am here today to ask you the supplementaries. If you would be so good as to ask him and give us his answers, I would greatly appreciate that.

The point of the matter is, however, closing this CPC, as we call it, is going to devastate Vegreville. Fifteen per cent of the municipal revenues will be gone if this centre is closed down. House prices are going to decline another 30 per cent, it is predicted, on top of the 17 per cent decline that has been caused by the global decline in oil prices.

The Town of Vegreville has been working very hard and has, in fact, come up with solutions to all of the challenges that the government has identified in their CPC. My question to this minister, through you, is: What is his department doing precisely? Are they working with the representatives from Vegreville, and what exactly are they doing with those representatives?

Hon. Peter Harder (Government Representative in the Senate): I thank the honourable senator for her question, and I will happy to convey the specific question to the minister concerned and report back.

[Translation]

FRANCOPHONE IMMIGRATION—APTITUDE TESTING

Hon. René Cormier: My question is for the Leader of the Government in the Senate. It is actually for the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, but since we ran out of time yesterday, I am asking you the question, with the hope that you can pass it along to the minister.

As you know, we can't underestimate how much the richness of our identity hinges on our two official languages and our linguistic communities' ability to attract future potential immigrants.

That being said, many francophone organizations, including the Fédération des communautés francophones et acadiennes du Canada and the Assemblée de la Francophonie de l'Ontario, as well as various MPs who sit on the House of Commons Standing Committee on Official Languages and the former Commissioner of Official Languages, Graham Fraser, have all repeatedly denounced how hard it is to access the French aptitude tests required to immigrate to Canada. Those tests are administered less frequently, are less accessible across the country, and are more costly. For instance, in areas like Moncton, New Brunswick, and Edmonton, Alberta, the fee for a French aptitude test can be as high as \$490, when the same test for English costs only \$265.

In light of this problem, given the government's commitments to ensure compliance with the Official Languages Act and in order to ensure that minority communities and candidates for francophone immigration in Canada are not penalized, what meaningful action does the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship plan to take to guarantee more equitable access to French language aptitude tests to the men and women who want to make Canada their home?

[English]

Hon. Peter Harder (Government Representative in the Senate): I thank the honourable senator for raising this important matter. I wish he had had the time yesterday to do so. I will be happy to both bring his question to the attention of the minister and facilitate an answer as soon as possible.

FAMILIES, CHILDREN AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

SUPPORT FOR WORKERS IN SOFTWOOD LUMBER INDUSTRY

Hon. Yonah Martin (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): I, too, rise with great concern regarding the softwood lumber issue, which is now a crisis because it impacts so many families. In response to the news of high tariffs being imposed on our softwood exports to the United States, provinces have been stepping forward to show support for their industries.

As you may know, the Province of Quebec will provide between \$200 million and \$300 million to support its softwood lumber industry. In my home province, the Premier of British Columbia — who is currently fighting an election — has recently stated,

“We will stand up for B.C. forest workers and communities by fighting this unjustified U.S. trade action with every tool at our disposal.”

Leader, you said this is top of mind. In this chamber, I think we have heard enough and we all feel the urgency. A federal program where assistance is received after lumber companies have laid off their workers or closed their doors is too late. Will the Liberal government provide emergency assistance for these businesses and workers now?

Hon. Peter Harder (Government Representative in the Senate): I thank the honourable senator for her question and concerns. They are broadly shared by so many senators.

I do want to again point to the cooperation between the provinces and the Government of Canada with respect to ensuring that all of the efforts being made by all jurisdictions are well coordinated. I would reference the very recent meeting Minister Carr had with his counterparts. Coming out of that, I want to reference the key items that were discussed with respect to coordinating programs amongst the federal and provincial governments. They include ensuring companies are aware of and have access to existing financial initiatives under the BDC and EDC, which offer a range of financial services to Canadian businesses on commercial terms, including loans.

Second, promoting the use of Canadian wood right here at home. Budget 2017, as members will know, provided \$40 million for increased wood use in Canada.

Third, ensuring that any workers who may be negatively affected are aware of and take advantage of Employment and Social Development Canada programs to support them and their families. These include Employment Insurance career counselling, as well as retraining and skills development programs.

Of course, all authorities, federal and provincial, continue to monitor and make adjustments to these initiatives to meet the needs of workers and their communities as the situation evolves.

Senator Martin: Yes, I can appreciate the kinds of support that will be given and whether it's BDC or EDC loans, which will take time in processing. My question is specifically about emergency assistance and what the federal government is planning to do now rather than eventually.

Senator Harder: The initiatives I described are not “eventually”; they are now.

[Translation]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

UNITED NATIONS—ELECTION OF SAUDI ARABIA TO THE COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

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

On April 21, Saudi Arabia was elected to serve on the UN Commission on the Status of Women. According to Human Rights Watch, Saudi Arabia is a country that violates women's

fundamental rights, even going so far as to require women to have the approval of a male guardian to travel abroad, get married or get out of prison. They may be required to provide guardian consent in order to work or access health care. Women in Saudi Arabia are also banned from driving cars.

Could the Government Representative tell us what the Government of Canada's response was to Saudi Arabia's election to the UN Commission on the Status of Women?

[English]

Hon. Peter Harder (Government Representative in the Senate): I thank the honourable senator for his question and, indeed, the statement made by the Honourable Senator Verner yesterday with respect to this matter.

I want to assure all senators that the Government of Canada will not hesitate to defend human rights — and women's rights especially — and the promotion of gender equality in the world wherever these issues need to be raised.

With respect to the United Nations Economic and Social Council choosing the members, they choose the members of the Commission on the Status of Women. Canada is not, at this time, a member of the UN Economic and Social Council and, therefore, could not vote in these elections, but the government's view on this matter is very clear.

[Translation]

Senator Ngo: Why haven't we heard anything about this from the Minister of Foreign Affairs?

[English]

Senator Harder: Perhaps it wasn't asked in the other chamber.

• (1450)

DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS

FOREIGN ELECTION DONATIONS

Hon. Linda Frum: My question is for the Leader of the Government in the Senate. The Commissioner of Elections Canada, Yves Côté, recently appeared before the Standing Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs. Mr. Côté confirmed that it is legal for a Canadian-registered third party to receive unlimited sums of money from a foreign contributor to use during an election. Furthermore, if the funds are received at least six months plus one day before the writ drops, there is no requirement to disclose the origin of any foreign funds. Mr. Côté said:

If the money was received before the six months, it becomes mingled into the funds of a third party and the third party, under the regime that we have now, is free to use that money.

The question about closing this loophole surrounding foreign influence in our elections law, the Minister of Democratic Institutions said on February 14 during Senate Question Period

[Senator Martin]

that this is something she would look into and would definitely consider.

My question, leader, is: Has Minister Gould looked into this matter since her appearance in February, and if so, how does she intend to close this serious loophole in the Canada Elections Act?

Hon. Peter Harder (Government Representative in the Senate): I thank the honourable senator for raising this matter yet again. I have not discussed the follow-up subject with the minister but will be happy to do so and report back.

BREAKFAST FOR PUBLIC SERVANTS

Hon. David Tkachuk: Senator Harder, the Liberal government promised during the election campaign of 2015 that it would be the last time Canadians would go to the polls in a first-past-the-post electoral system. Once in office, they wasted \$4.1 million of taxpayers' money in an effort to look like they were pursuing that promise.

Part of the wasted \$4.1 million was \$1,578 expensed by then-Democratic Institutions Minister Maryam Monsef for a breakfast at the Parliamentary Restaurant with stakeholders on reforming Canada's democratic institutions. The breakfast took place on January 26, 2016, and included 74 stakeholders, all Government of Canada employees, and zero guests.

Senator Harder, can you provide a list of the names of the 74 Government of Canada employees, including where they are from and what department they work for, and can you tell me why they were identified as "stakeholders"?

Hon. Peter Harder (Government Representative in the Senate): I would be happy to raise the honourable senator's question with the minister concerned.

DELAYED ANSWERS TO ORAL QUESTIONS

Hon. Peter Harder (Government Representative in the Senate): Honourable senators, I have the honour to table the following delayed answers to oral questions raised by Senator Maltais on October 19, 2016, concerning softwood lumber negotiation; and by Senator Carignan on March 29, 2016, concerning the Champlain Bridge.

NATURAL RESOURCES

SOFTWOOD LUMBER NEGOTIATIONS

(Response to question raised by the Honourable Ghislain Maltais on October 19, 2016)

The Government of Canada recognizes the importance of softwood lumber and how predictable access to U.S. markets is essential to the industry. The Government has made the Softwood Lumber Industry a priority since taking office last November. The Prime Minister has taken leadership through his June 29th, 2016 Joint Statement

with President Obama, by identifying key features of a new agreement. The Minister of International Trade, the Parliamentary Secretary, and Ambassador MacNaughton have also been heavily involved in advancing the file with the U.S. Together they have been personally engaged in the file, holding numerous meetings with stakeholders throughout the country.

This October the Government prepared a comprehensive response to the Standing Committee on International Trade's report on softwood lumber. To ensure that Canada's position reflects the full range of interests involved, more than 60 face-to-face consultations, complemented by extensive formal and informal calls, were held with stakeholders from around the country. Numerous additional engagements by the Minister of International Trade have taken place including engagements with her provincial and territorial counterparts and industry stakeholders. The consultations are on-going. Additionally, Global Affairs Canada officials have maintained an intensive negotiation pace with their U.S. counterparts and will continue to do so. The Government of Canada is committed to securing an agreement that is in the vested interest of both the industry and the country as a whole.

TRANSPORT

CHAMPLAIN BRIDGE

(Response to question raised by the Honourable Claude Carignan on March 29, 2017)

The Government of Canada is delivering on its commitment to a new, toll-free Champlain Bridge that will support economic growth for the Greater Montreal region and ensure that people and goods can travel safely and smoothly. We are also committed to ensuring the safety of Champlain Bridge users and the sound management of public funds.

The New Champlain Bridge construction site is one of the largest in North America and, like all infrastructure projects of this size, certain technical issues can arise during the construction period. However, we have mechanisms within our contract to ensure issues of this type can be effectively resolved.

The December 1, 2018 delivery of the new Champlain Bridge remains the objective.

[Translation]

CONTROLLED DRUGS AND SUBSTANCES ACT

BILL TO AMEND—MESSAGE FROM COMMONS— SENATE AMENDMENTS CONCURRED IN

The Hon. the Speaker informed the Senate that a message had been received from the House of Commons returning Bill C-224, An Act to amend the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act

(assistance - drug overdose), and acquainting the Senate that they have agreed to the amendments made by the Senate to this bill without further amendment.

[English]

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ETHICS AND CONFLICT OF INTEREST FOR SENATORS

SECOND REPORT OF COMMITTEE— DEBATE CONTINUED

Leave having been given to proceed to Other Business, Reports of Committees, Other, Order No. 32:

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Andreychuk, seconded by the Honourable Senator Carignan, P.C., for the adoption of the second report of the Standing Committee on Ethics and Conflict of Interest for Senators, entitled *Consideration of an Inquiry Report from the Senate Ethics Officer*, presented in the Senate on May 2, 2017.

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, pursuant to rule 12-30 (2), a decision cannot be taken on this report, as yet. Debate on the report, unless some other senator wishes to adjourn the matter, will be deemed adjourned until the next sitting of the Senate.

Is that agreed, honourable senators?

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

(Debate continued.)

[Translation]

BUSINESS OF THE SENATE

Hon. Diane Bellemare (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate): Honourable senators, pursuant to rule 4-13(3), I would like to inform the Senate that, as we proceed with Government Business, the Senate will address the items in the following order: Motion No. 91, followed by all remaining items in the order that they appear on the Order Paper.

[The Hon. the Speaker]

THE SENATE

MOTION TO EXTEND TODAY'S SITTING AND AUTHORIZE COMMITTEES TO MEET DURING SITTING OF THE SENATE ADOPTED

Hon. Diane Bellemare (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate), pursuant to notice of May 2, 2017, moved:

That, notwithstanding the order adopted by the Senate on February 4, 2016, the Senate continue sitting on Wednesday, May 3, 2017, pursuant to the provisions of the Rules;

That committees of the Senate scheduled to meet on that day be authorized to sit after 4 p.m. even though the Senate may then be sitting, and that rule 12-18(1) be suspended in relation thereto; and

That the provisions of rule 3-3(1) be suspended on that day.

She said: Honourable senators, for your information, this motion will allow us to continue our work after 4:00 p.m., while authorizing Senate committees to meet while the Senate is sitting.

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

Hon Senators: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to.)

[English]

CITIZENSHIP ACT

BILL TO AMEND—THIRD READING

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. Tobias C. Enverga, Jr.: Honourable senators, I rise to speak to third reading of Bill C-6, An Act to amend the Citizenship Act and to make consequential amendments to another Act. I rise today as one who has been and can be affected by the act, and I encourage you, my colleagues, to keep this in mind.

Keep in mind that I came to Canada to make a better life for myself, keep in mind that I have worked tirelessly to contribute to Canada, and keep in mind that I made a pledge to Her Majesty

Queen Elizabeth II to uphold all the laws of this land. That was the deal I made with Canada's Sovereign in return for citizenship being bestowed upon me.

Honourable senators, I was a member of the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology when it studied Bill C-24, which Bill C-6 largely repeals. There were several concerns raised by witnesses and members, but many concerns were not well-founded and, therefore, do not deserve to be repealed.

I also want to add that I am intrigued by the government leadership's constant push to rush legislation through the Senate. I recall the days when another government was under fire by the opposition for the same alleged transgression.

Honourable senators, the first two issues I want to deal with are the intent of a person applying to citizenship to live in Canada and the related issue of the competency test for persons of certain ages. I say "related" because, as a country, Canada needs immigrants to contribute to our economy, our cultural heritage and our civic life; it needs those who will have the intent to reside in our country and who have sufficient knowledge of one of our two official languages to be able to contribute to our society while residing in it.

The issue of intent to reside in Canada once citizenship is obtained is one of the basic expectations that we should have of a person who has asked to become one of us. Not only does this have to do with contributions to Canada, but it has to do with the value of citizenship, both domestically and internationally.

I am mystified why this is contentious.

• (1500)

Honourable senators, in no testimony that I heard during the committee's study of Bill C-24 did this actually represent a prevention of a citizenship application, nor did it seem to be likely that a citizenship would be revoked because of someone leaving Canada to take a job abroad, or any other scenario.

The crux of the matter is that at the time of application, an applicant should intend to live in Canada. If life happens, which it does, and it is not possible to stay, the intent has still been declared in good faith. If an applicant, upon receiving a Canadian passport, takes the first available flight out of the country never to return, then it is a different matter. Then the applicant may have misrepresented his or her intent.

Honourable senators, Canada's international standing may be affected by this. A country that hands out passports to anyone who can qualify after six years, soon to be reduced to five years, but without any intention to stay beyond that, may find its reputation weakened. Essentially, a passport means that a country vouches for this person in some way or another. Once we allow for citizenships of convenience, as it is called now, how can Canada, as a responsible member of the international community, vouch for such persons?

Citizenship of convenience entails that it is very practical to have a Canadian passport. Canadians need no visas for many countries. It is easier to take connecting flights through other

countries, like the U.S. and the U.K., without needing several visas from several foreign missions that may entail travelling to Ottawa and so on. It is convenient.

If this bill passes in this chamber, we, Canada's senators, endorse Canadian citizenship as a citizenship of convenience. I did not take my oath of citizenship to support this; on the contrary.

Honourable senators, regarding adequate knowledge of one of our two official languages, and the age when a person needs testing or not, I am again puzzled. As I said, we admit persons to this country to contribute to it. The standard expected retirement age in Canada is 65 years of age. A person who has come to Canada, lived in Canada for at least five years and is now, at the age of 55, applying for a citizenship to stay — we would hope — and contribute to our country, has an expected 10 years left to make contributions, to earn a living and be part of the government tax base.

To expect such a person — and I repeat — after at least five years in Canada not to be able to communicate in English or French is beyond me. It would be more difficult to learn a new language once a certain age has been reached, but you are still expected to be able to communicate, not only with members of one's community but with various levels of government bureaucracy, even just taking part in elections.

Can a person truly participate in the democratic process if that person does not understand what the issues are, what promises are being made and which candidate is best suited as one's representative municipally, provincially or federally? I would argue no. I want to thank Senator Griffin for her brilliant speech on this very matter, and all I can really do is echo her sentiments and concerns.

Honourable senators, I also want to touch upon what seems to be the most contentious element of this bill: The revocation of citizenship. My main point of concern is the notion of second-class citizens. I understand the views expressed, but as an immigrant, I do not agree that Bill C-24 created a second class of citizens. When I proudly gave my oath at the citizenship ceremony, I swore allegiance to our sovereign, Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II. I also swore to faithfully observe the laws of Canada. Certain heinous acts, like terrorism, go against this oath. The agreement made between a new citizen and Canada is one that should not be broken. It should not be broken. By committing an act of terrorism, that agreement is broken and the basis for it is no longer there. In simple terms, I consider it to be a breach of contract. Once a contract is breached by one party, the other party should be able to retract the commitment made. In this case, it would be the citizenship, with all the rights and freedoms it entails, that should be retracted.

Honourable senators, during the committee's study of Bill C-24, there were several witnesses who raised alarms over the new law causing a number of persons being rendered stateless. This would be in contravention of Canada's international obligations and the committee was assured that this would not happen. The issue of citizenship revocation is therefore not about Canada creating second-class citizens; it is those with dual citizenships who created this situation for themselves.

I am a Canadian, and Canadian only. Yes, I have Filipino heritage, but not citizenship. Our colleague Senator Lang has

listed several countries that do not accept dual citizenship. Such countries do not let their citizens show anything but a full commitment to them and their laws. The logic is that all of the citizens of such a country are the same class and they cannot have their citizenship revoked.

One can argue that a country that allows for dual citizenship actively creates classes of citizens. It is not the revocation sections in a country's laws that lead to second-class citizens; it is the choice of those who maintain more than one citizenship. Should a dual citizen commit terrorist acts, that person has made not only one but two choices that are well deserving of citizenship revocation.

Honourable senators, my second and related point is that of misrepresentation, or fraud simply put, and it leading to citizenship revocation and inadmissibility to the country. I am convinced that should a person lie in order to gain citizenship, that person does not deserve that privilege. As an immigrant, I receive many calls from persons who experience problems with their immigration processes. Some have had their applications denied because of various reasons like lying about previous marriages, criminal records, number of children and so on. Some we may consider minor, but many are not minor at all.

Once you have obtained something through deception, then you do not deserve to keep it. This is especially true if a citizenship application would have been denied had all facts been disclosed appropriately. If Canada does not revoke citizenship that is fraudulently obtained and order the person at fault to leave the country, what would the consequence be? Essentially, there would be very little consequence. Let us remember that fraud is a crime that is punishable in a court of law. Our successful system of immigration has to be selective to welcome those who contribute to our society and uphold our laws.

Relaxing certain aspects of the immigration process and the consequences of committing fraud do not support our system, but support those who are willing to take the risk and lie to the Government of Canada.

• (1510)

Honourable senators, I am a proud Canadian — very proud. I understand the hardships that many suffer in order to come here and make a better life for themselves. I also understand that once I have obtained the privilege of citizenship, it symbolizes the agreement between Canada and me. It is an agreement that should be cancelled if it is breached. It is an agreement that should be cancelled if it has been fraudulently obtained. It is an agreement that should be entered into once a person has shown the intent and ability to contribute to our society.

Honourable senators, this is why I am urging all of you not to support Bill C-6 as it stands now.

[Translation]

Hon. Raymonde Gagné: Honourable senators, today I am talking about the first two aspects of the bill, namely the removal of the national security grounds for the revocation of Canadian citizenship and the removal of the intent to reside provision

[Senator Enverga]

whereby applicants must declare their intent to continue to reside in Canada if granted citizenship. I am focusing on these two aspects because their objective is laudable and deserves our support: ensuring the equality of all Canadians before the law, regardless of country of origin. I will also briefly share my thoughts on the third aspect of the bill, which deals with knowledge of the official languages.

I closely followed the debate on repealing the national security grounds for Canadian citizenship revocation. Bill C-6 does not eliminate the government's authority to revoke citizenship when it is obtained fraudulently or through false representations. Canadians affected by this bill are full-fledged Canadians. If they are convicted of heinous crimes, the fact remains that they are still Canadians. Some may even be radicalized in Canada, which makes the problem a Canadian problem. Revoking citizenship will do nothing to improve our security. On the contrary, several of our colleagues explained why it is more dangerous to send these criminals away than to keep them here.

What would we accomplish? Some say that we would be sending a message, but what message? That we have two classes of citizens? I find that response counterproductive. The message I would like us to promote is the message in the bill that every Canadian who legitimately obtains Canadian citizenship is a Canadian for better or for worse. Think about it. Who do we want to send this message to, to terrorists?

I'm not so sure that the prospect of losing one's citizenship might convince a radicalized person to refrain from committing a terrorist act. The message is going out to our fellow citizens, to immigrants who are being told that no matter what, their status as citizens will always be different.

Craig Forcese, a professor in the faculty of law at the University of Ottawa, had this to say at the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology on February 16:

[English]

For those people who work on counter-violent extremism, and I'm a student of these people who do research in these areas, they raise concerns that that sort of narrative, saying "You're not quite one of us," is exactly the sort of narrative that is deeply detrimental to the integration and counter-radicalization effort that should be front and centre in terms of our efforts to stave off radicalization to violence.

You can see both sides of the coin, but the one I'm most sympathetic to is the concern that by singling out this subset of the population for this special peril, we're playing into a propaganda discourse that is detrimental to our ultimate security objectives.

[Translation]

Colleagues, that discourse is what I'm most concerned about. During the debate on the amendment, I heard Senator Lang's question about Canadians who keep dual citizenship and retain the benefits. Why shouldn't they have to face the drawbacks too?

On this matter, I agree with the sponsor of the bill in the Senate, Senator Omidvar, who explained that not all dual citizens are so by choice and that some countries, particularly ones not known for their stellar human rights records, have a “once a citizen, always a citizen” philosophy, no matter what the citizens themselves have to say about it.

Throughout this debate, I have been considering the bill from the perspective that any senator should adopt: Will this bill unduly restrict the rights of Canadians, including the right to equality? Lawmakers the world over have to grapple with the delicate balance between security and the rights and freedoms of the people. This is an issue we ourselves may have to contend with one of these days, and it will undoubtedly be hard work, but that is not the situation we are dealing with today. This aspect of the bill will improve security while reinforcing the equal status of all Canadians. It is not for the Senate to undermine that right to equality, and that is one of the reasons why I voted against Senator Lang’s amendment.

The answer to the question is even more obvious for the second element of the bill, removing the requirement for an applicant to intend to reside in Canada if granted citizenship. I find it impossible to reconcile this residency requirement with section 6 of the Charter, which reads as follows:

Every citizen of Canada has the right to enter, remain in and leave Canada.

I can understand that some may disagree with the idea of reducing the number of days that someone must reside in Canada before applying for citizenship. I do not agree with them, but I can understand their reasoning. I just cannot understand how we can give out second-class citizenship to some Canadians, and tell them that in the case of their citizenship, unlike that of their neighbours, friends and colleagues, the government is not required to comply with section 6 of the Charter.

I understand our honourable colleague, Senator Ngo, when he says that he views citizenship as a privilege. It is true that many immigrants and refugees are going to feel privileged and fortunate on the day they obtain their citizenship. It is a privilege to become a full Canadian citizen with all the ensuing rights and responsibilities, without exception.

[English]

I want to remind you, dear colleagues, that we are not studying a bill that could potentially violate the constitutional rights of Canadians in the name of security. That is a challenge and a difficult balancing act faced by many legislators around the world, including recently in Canada, and it is a challenge that we may have to face again in the future, near or distant. Today, however, we are studying a government bill that strengthens these constitutional rights.

Two amendments that were passed by the Senate also take the bill in the same direction. The first by Senator McCoy improved due process. The second by Senator Oh, which I also supported, extends and improves citizenship rights to children. As senators, we have to include these considerations in our analysis.

[Translation]

Finally, I would like to share some thoughts about a third amendment, which was moved by Senator Griffin. Unfortunately, I was not present for the vote on this amendment, but I support its intent. As you know, with Bill C-6, the government wants the requirements of knowledge of one of the official languages and knowledge of Canada to apply only to applicants aged 18 to 54. The amendment moved by Senator Griffin and passed by this chamber increases the age of exemption to 60.

• (1520)

Allow me to explain why I support the new exemption threshold as it was passed. I understand the intent and spirit of the government’s initiative. It does not want to deprive parents and grandparents who arrive in Canada and work hard to meet the needs of their family of the opportunity to be Canadians citizens like their children.

However, we must not lose sight of the fact that our country’s linguistic duality is one of its key characteristics. Learning one of our two official languages is vital to integration, and there is some wisdom in the idea of offering citizenship as a reward for learning one of those languages.

At the age of 55, people are usually still in the workforce, and the knowledge of one or both of our official languages is a major asset. We must prevent people from thinking that it is not all that important to know at least one of our official languages. More importantly, we must — and I know what I am talking about here — prevent the government from deciding that it can decrease the resources it allocates to official languages training for newcomers because the legislation is now more lax. On the contrary, the government must increase its efforts to encourage people to learn our official languages so that potential citizens who have the ability to learn them are not deprived of the opportunity to do so. Will the government now tend to try to save money in this area? We need to monitor that very closely.

The message that I would like this amendment to send to the government is not that the Senate does not want to integrate new immigrants into the Canadian family, but rather that we do not want to see the government use this exemption as an excuse for making cuts to resources that help ensure the linguistic integration of newcomers into this country where we hope they will be living for the next 20, 30 or 40 years.

Once again, I understand the humanitarian reasons behind this initiative. I also understand that the House of Commons must vote on this amendment and that we must draw the appropriate conclusions from their vote when it happens. However, I want to reiterate that there are equally valid humanitarian reasons to invest in linguistic integration for all newcomers. The government needs to propose a meaningful plan in that regard.

Honourable senators, I support this bill as amended by the Senate. It exemplifies the principles of openness and inclusiveness that define our country. Thank you.

[English]

The Hon. the Speaker: Are senators ready for the question?

Hon. Senators: Question.

The Hon. the Speaker: It was moved by the Honourable Senator Omidvar, seconded by the Honourable Senator Gagné, that the bill, as amended, be read a third time.

Is it your pleasure, honourable senators, to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Senators: Yes.

Some Hon. Senators: No.

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

Some Hon. Senators: Yea.

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

Some Hon. Senators: Nay.

The Hon. the Speaker: In my opinion, the “yeas” have it.

And two honourable senators having risen:

The Hon. the Speaker: The vote will take place at 3:53. Call in the senators.

• (1550)

Motion agreed to and bill, as amended, read third time and passed, on the following division:

YEAS THE HONOURABLE SENATORS

Baker	Jaffer
Bellemare	Joyal
Bernard	Lovelace Nicholas
Boniface	Marwah
Bovey	McCoy
Campbell	McPhedran
Christmas	Mégie
Cools	Mercer
Cordy	Mitchell
Cormier	Moncion
Dawson	Munson
Day	Omidvar
Dean	Pate
Downe	Petitclerc
Dupuis	Pratte
Dyck	Ringuette
Eggleton	Saint-Germain
Forest	Sinclair
Fraser	Tardif
Gagné	Watt

Gold
Harder
Hartling

Wetston
Woo—45

NAYS THE HONOURABLE SENATORS

Andreychuk
Batters
Beyak
Boisvenu
Carignan
Dagenais
Doyle
Eaton
Enverga
Frum
Housakos
Lang
Maltais
Manning
Marshall

Martin
McInnis
McIntyre
Ngo
Ogilvie
Plett
Runciman
Seidman
Smith
Stewart Olsen
Tkachuk
Unger
Verner
White—29

ABSTENTIONS THE HONOURABLE SENATORS

Nil

• (1600)

CONTROLLED DRUGS AND SUBSTANCES BILL

BILL TO AMEND—THIRD READING— DEBATE ADJOURNED

Hon. Larry W. Campbell moved third reading of Bill C-37, An Act to amend the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act and to make related amendments to other Acts, as amended.

He said: Honourable senators, I rise to speak to the third reading of Bill C-37, An Act to amend the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act and to make related amendments to other Acts, as amended.

I want to thank Senator Runciman and the members of the Standing Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs for their hard work and dedication in studying this bill. When there is a genuine crisis ongoing, it's sometimes difficult to see the forest for the trees. The committee accomplished this difficult task.

The proposals included in this bill will help to address the ongoing opioid crisis, as well as problematic substance use issues more generally. This is accomplished by equipping health and law enforcement officers with the tools they need to reduce the harms associated with drug and substance use.

Specifically this bill will streamline the application process to apply for an exemption to establish a supervised consumption site without compromising the health and safety of clients, staff or the surrounding community; prohibit the unregistered importation of

designated devices such as pill presses and encapsulators that can be used to produce illegal drugs such as counterfeit pharmaceuticals; remove the exemption in the Customs Act that prevents officers at the border from inspecting mail weighing 30 grams or less; and make a number of other amendments to the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act to modernize the legislative framework and enhance compliance and enforcement tools such as improving inspection authorities, and enabling the temporary scheduling of a new psychoactive substance where the minister has reasonable grounds to believe it poses a significant risk to public health and safety.

Ultimately, this bill supports a comprehensive, collaborative, compassionate and evidence-based approach to drug policy by ensuring that the new Canadian Drugs and Substances Strategy is supported by strong modernized and evidence-based legislation.

We are all aware of the context in which we are discussing this bill. Our country is currently experiencing an unprecedented number of drug overdose deaths. In British Columbia alone, there were over 900 overdose deaths in 2016, and so far this year the rate of drug overdose deaths shows no signs of decreasing. There were 120 suspected drug overdose deaths in March in British Columbia, which is averaging four a day. This is the third highest death toll on record in British Columbia for a month. In the midst of this ongoing opioid crisis, it is clear that we must take action to improve access to supervised consumption sites in order to save lives.

During its study of the bill, the Standing Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs amended this legislation. All of the amendments were described by Senator Runciman yesterday, and I will not delve into them now. I am certain that the government and the other place will carefully review the committee's changes.

I must say, however, that the amendment pertaining to the use of prescription opioids in supervised sites and other health venues is critical. For too long provinces and cities have been quick to accuse the federal government, both present and past, of not acting to stop or limit the opioid crisis that we are experiencing. The fact of the matter is this: The federal government has

continued to act in a number of ways to try and lessen this evil. The Good Samaritan bill, bills governing precursors and now this bill have been an appropriate response. The government is committed to putting in place any regulation that will allow the provincial health ministers to do their job.

There is a myth that the federal government is responsible for drug prescriptions as it applies to the disease we call addiction. This is false. Health care is a provincial jurisdiction; addiction is a health issue. Provinces already dispense opioids in the form of methadone to many of those people afflicted with this disease. One can only speculate on why provinces have been loath to offer other prescription opioid treatments. Numerous trials and studies of other jurisdictions currently use opioid prescriptions as one of many ways to prevent this disease.

Will this cost money? Of course. Will it prevent deaths? Yes. Is there a price we put on human life? There should not be.

I once ran for mayor on a platform that made it clear that there were no throwaway people in my world. We need to ensure that our politicians on all levels understand this principle and are prepared to abide by it. If not, we will continue to see friends and family die alone in alleys and bathrooms.

In summary, this bill has committed to a comprehensive, collaborative, compassionate and evidence-based approach to drug policy, which strikes an appropriate balance between public health and public safety when considering and addressing these issues. The proposals included in Bill C-37 support this aim and would help to address the ongoing crisis. With that in mind, I believe we have an obligation to Canadians to move Bill C-37 forward as quickly as possible.

Lastly, I want to thank Senator White for his hard work on this issue. As he has proven time and again, actions speak louder than words. Thank you.

(On motion of Senator Martin, debate adjourned.)

(The Senate adjourned until Thursday, May 4, 2017, at 1:30 p.m.)

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