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The Honourable GEORGE J. FUREY,
Speaker

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THE SENATE

Wednesday, February 27, 2019

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

[Translation]

Prayers.

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

SENATORS' STATEMENTS

PINK SHIRT DAY

Hon. Jane Cordy: Honourable senators, I rise today in recognition of Pink Shirt Day, February 27, when Canadians across the country and many here in Parliament wear pink shirts to work and school to create awareness about the impact of bullying.

A little more than 10 years ago, in Berwick, Nova Scotia, the duo of David Shepherd and Travis Price came together in support of a ninth-grade student teased and bullied for wearing a pink shirt to school. Wanting to take a stand against bullying, David and Travis bought 50 pink shirts and handed them out at school for all the boys to wear. Honourable senators, the pink shirt became a symbol against bullying. Now Canadians across the country wear pink shirts on February 27 to support anti-bullying efforts.

In this day and age with social media and modern technology, people are vulnerable to bullying 24 hours a day and almost anywhere they go. It is for this reason that the focus of the initiative's 2019 awareness day is cyberbullying. Bullying in any form can cause serious detriment to a person's mental well-being. It can destroy confidence and one's sense of self. The repercussions are numerous, and it can have an impact that lasts a lifetime.

For these reasons, I applaud people like David Shepherd and Travis Price, and indeed anyone, who stands up and takes action against bullying. With their seemingly small act, they have made it easier for people all over Canada to stand together.

Pink Shirt Day, while supporting anti-bullying efforts also makes allies visible. Honourable senators, join me in being an ally. Should you find yourself without something pink in your wardrobe, the Pink Shirt Day initiative encourages you to combat hate online by being kind and saying something nice to someone on Instagram, Facebook or Twitter. The hashtag #PinkItForward can be used to encourage kindness and, by using this hashtag, one dollar will be donated by Coastal Capital in support of bullying prevention programs.

Honourable senators, let us celebrate Pink Shirt Day and stand up to bullying together and let's #PinkItForward. Thank you.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

Hon. Paul E. McIntyre: Honourable senators, as you know, this month is Black History Month, and in Nova Scotia, it's African Heritage Month as well. What's more, the international community has proclaimed 2015 to 2024 the International Decade for People of African Descent, with the theme "People of African descent: recognition, justice and development."

I just want to thank Senator Bernard for raising this important subject with her inquiry into anti-Black racism and giving us a chance to debate this issue. I also want to thank the other senators who expressed their support during this inquiry and contributed to the debate.

There are so many inspiring stories about the incredibly brave heroes who have stood up to anti-Black racism in Canada, but I want to focus on one in particular, a woman whose name is familiar to us all, Viola Desmond.

She was a successful Black business woman and civil rights pioneer from Halifax, Nova Scotia, who made the courageous decision to defy authority and refuse to give up her seat in the Whites-only section of a movie theatre where she was trying to see the film *Dark Mirror* in 1946. As someone who was not only a woman, but a Black woman, she carried a double burden. Sadly, this burden continues to weigh on women of colour to this day. She was a hero who courageously challenged racial segregation. She is the first Canadian woman and the first woman of colour to be featured on a regularly circulating banknote.

This year, New Brunswick is celebrating Black History Month in an extremely interesting and educational way. We can thank the Beaverbrook Art Gallery, the New Brunswick Black History Society, St. Thomas University and especially an artist by the name of Ivan Crowell.

Ivan Crowell wove nine remarkable tapestries depicting the history of African Canadians in New Brunswick. His magnificent works will be on display at the gallery until March 24. They tell the story of the Black Loyalists' arrival in the region, the remarkable exploits of Thomas Peters, one of the founding fathers of Sierra Leone, who travelled to London to defend Black rights and petition the government on behalf of free Blacks, and Willie O'Ree, the hockey player who broke the National Hockey League's colour barrier.

Many more heroes have followed and continue to follow in their footsteps, fighting the many forms of injustice, inequality, marginalization and racism that plague African Canadians.

I join my colleagues who spoke before me in strongly supporting the inquiry launched by our colleague, Senator Bernard, and in acknowledging Black History Month, because it is high time to eradicate the scourge of racism once and for all. Thank you.

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 students from Franco-Cité catholic secondary school. They are the guests of the Honourable Senator Mégie.

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

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

[English]

THE LATE DAVID DOWNHAM

Hon. Gwen Boniface: Honourable senators, last month our beautiful city of Orillia lost a humanitarian and philanthropist, Dr. David Downham. Originally from England, Dr. Downham immigrated to Canada and settled in Orillia where he founded the area's first urology service.

Having retired after 25 years of practice, he and his wife Cathy were travelling in Thailand and met Dr. Cynthia Maung of the Mae Tao Clinic, which is situated on the Thai-Burma border, and were inspired to help the refugees of the region's brutal military regime.

The Downhams founded Project Umbrella Burma, or PUB, an Orillia-based charitable organization which provides financial support and direct aid to the clinic and its students living at a hostel in the refugee camp.

They, along with Mr. Saw Kshakalu, founded and continue to support the Kaw Tha Blay Learning Centre for Ethnic Karen students from Burma/Myanmar.

Over the course of 10 years, they spent six months a year in Burma — David mentoring younger physicians, and Cathy teaching English to medics and children of refugees and migrant workers. When back in Canada, the Downhams would fundraise, educate others about the plight of the Karen people and inspire others throughout our community to join their efforts. It was a great honour for me to bestow a Senate 150 commemorative medal to the Downhams and Project Umbrella Burma at a ceremony held in Orillia in 2017.

• (1410)

As our community mourns the loss of a great man, it is my hope that, by honouring him and sharing his story, others will be inspired to follow his example. Thank you.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

THE HONOURABLE LINDA FRUM

CONGRATULATIONS ON HONORARY DOCTORATE FROM THE HEBREW UNIVERSITY OF JERUSALEM

Hon. Leo Housakos: Honourable colleagues, my passion for current affairs and political discourse dates back to when I was a child. I've spoken before in this chamber about how my interest in civic engagement was passed to me from my father.

At the time I was a child, it didn't matter where you were in Canada; you couldn't be interested in such things and not know who Barbara Frum was. I recall listening to her dulcet but authoritative and informed tone on the radio or sitting in front of the television and being captivated by her presence.

Barbara Frum was a broadcasting pioneer and a trailblazer for women. But beyond her work as an award-winning journalist, there are many words that can be used to describe her. She exemplified courage and tenacity. She was fearless and relentless, tough but respectful.

As I've come to realize, much like my dad passed some of his traits on to me, Barbara passed many of her traits on to her children. I know that because, over the past decade, I've had the immense pleasure and honour of getting to know one of her children very well.

When I was summoned to this place and realized my seatmate was going to be Barbara's daughter, Linda, I had to pinch myself. Since that time, I've come to value Linda's intellect and thoughtful perspective on many subjects, and I often find myself seeking her sage advice.

Ten years on, and that giddiness has been replaced with a deep, warm respect and admiration for Senator Linda Frum, for many of the same attributes that made me so admire her mother. And I am certainly not alone. This coming June, Senator Frum will be in Israel to receive an Honorary Doctorate from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

In announcing this honour earlier this month, the university said it awards honorary degrees to people who have distinguished themselves by academic or creative achievement, who have rendered outstanding service to the university, or whose activities have been of notable benefit to humanity, Israel or the Jewish people.

Like her mother, Linda enjoyed a successful career as an award-winning journalist. While the similarities don't end there, Linda has carried on the Frum legacy thoughtfully and elegantly, making her own name for herself as a dedicated public servant.

Linda's philanthropic work is vast and varied and runs the gamut of committing time, energy, reputation and resources for many great causes and initiatives.

As a parliamentarian, she has led the charge against foreign influence in Canadian elections. She has been a fierce and vocal critic of human rights violations in Iran and has stared down some of the most personal attacks as a result.

Quite simply, colleagues, Linda Frum is more than deserving of this recognition. She is a leader and role model. She exemplifies courage and tenacity. She is fearless and relentless but tough and respectful. She is her mother's daughter, without a doubt. But of all the words that can describe Linda Frum, my favourite is "a dear friend."

Congratulations, Linda, and I wish you continued success.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

VISITOR IN THE GALLERY

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I wish to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of Hilary Pearson, President of Philanthropic Foundations Canada and daughter of former Senator Landon Pearson. She is the guest of the Honourable Senators Coyle and Omidvar.

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

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Hon. Patricia Bovey: Honourable senators, today I pay tribute to Black History Month, honouring contributions of Canada's Black visual artists. Too little is known about them and their work; far too little is exhibited.

Canada's Black artists do, and have done, excellent work — steeped in insights and honesty. Their probing of their realities, identities and roots, expressed in every visual medium — painting, film, sculpture, prints, textiles and ceramics — is critically important and has been for well over 100 years. I salute their integrity, their vision and the substance of their work.

Do you know that one of the first trained professional resident artists in British Columbia was Black? Grafton Tyler Brown arrived in Victoria from the West Coast of the U.S. in 1882 and lived there until 1884, before returning to the U.S. His depictions of Esquimalt Harbour and B.C.'s Interior were exhibited in Victoria in 1883 and sold then. They command impressive dollars at auction today.

The Royal Ontario Museum presented an excellent exhibition last year of the work of contemporary Black artists, "Here We Are Here." I applaud the work of Concordia University being done with Black artists. In my view, Nova Scotia's filmmaker Sylvia Hamilton is a national treasure, her work constructively bearing witness to a dark part of Canada's history.

I could name many, but I will focus on two Manitoba artists: Yisa Akinbolaji and Ekene Maduka.

Yisa's message is rich, exploring his Nigerian roots, overlaid with Manitoba's culture, his home for 22 years. He calls us to understand and cherish our human history and natural environment. His painting *Stolen Identities* effectively ties these streams together; his portrait of Louis Riel in the centre, surrounded by Manitoba birch trees painted with colours and

patterns evoking the natural growth in Nigeria. The colours and patterning are rich, reflecting both his home and our northern lights.

In her self-representations, Ekene Maduka shares her personal experiences, thoughts and concerns. Inquisitive and strong, she is set to ensure creative diversity in a male, Western-dominated art world.

Senators, let's engage with the creative riches around us and learn from the lives and insights of others as we seek to make this place a better one. As Black History Month comes to its 2019 close, I thank and honour Canada's Black artists for the excellence and courage with which they have presented their concerns and stories. The poignancy and pride embedded in their art is a clarion call for greater understanding of who we are and for Canada's values. Their work is deserving of celebration. Thank you.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

[Translation]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

THE SENATE

NOTICE OF MOTION TO AFFECT QUESTION PERIOD ON MARCH 19, 2019

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, March 19, 2019, 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.

[English]

NOTICE OF MOTION TO AFFECT WEDNESDAY SITTINGS FOR
THE REMAINDER OF THE CURRENT SESSION

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, for the remainder of the current session, when the Senate sits on a Wednesday:

1. the provisions of the order of February 4, 2016, relating to the adjournment or suspension of the sitting at 4 p.m., only take effect at the later of 4 p.m., the end of Question Period, or the end of Government Business; and
2. notwithstanding the provisions of paragraph 1 of this order, the sitting not continue beyond the time otherwise provided in the Rules.

[Translation]

INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES BILL

NOTICE OF MOTION TO AUTHORIZE ABORIGINAL PEOPLES
COMMITTEE 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 Aboriginal Peoples be authorized to examine the subject matter of Bill C-91, An Act respecting Indigenous languages, introduced in the House of Commons on February 5, 2019, in advance of the said bill coming before the Senate; and

That the committee submit its final report to the Senate no later than April 30, 2019.

• (1420)

[English]

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, March 18, 2019, at 6 p.m.; and

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

TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS

NOTICE OF MOTION TO AUTHORIZE COMMITTEE TO TRAVEL

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

That the Standing Senate Committee on Transport and Communications have the power to travel within Canada, for the purpose of its examination and consideration of Bill C-48, An Act respecting the regulation of vessels that transport crude oil or persistent oil to or from ports or marine installations located along British Columbia's north coast.

[Translation]

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

NOTICE OF MOTION TO AUTHORIZE COMMITTEE TO MEET
DURING SITTING OF THE SENATE

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

That the Standing Senate Committee on Official Languages have the power to meet on Monday, March 18, 2019, even though the Senate may then be sitting, and that rule 12-18(1) be suspended in relation thereto.

[English]

QUESTION PERIOD

PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE

SNC-LAVALIN

Hon. Larry W. Smith (Leader of the Opposition): My question is for the Leader of the Government in the Senate.

Senator Harder, when the news broke of the allegations of political interference with a criminal prosecution of SNC-Lavalin earlier this month, the Prime Minister had carefully drawn-up legal talking points the very next morning. The Prime Minister insisted that there was not "direction" given to the former Attorney General with respect to the criminal prosecution.

After being called out on his legal talking points, he and his new Attorney General, David Lametti, changed the language from "directing" to "pressure."

While appearing before committee in the other place, the Clerk of the Privy Council, Michael Wernick, mentioned he spoke to Ms. Wilson-Raybould and conveyed to her that her colleagues were anxious about the SNC-Lavalin case, essentially admitting to applying pressure on behalf of the Prime Minister. Questions from Liberal members subsequently asked him if there was any “inappropriate pressure” applied to the former Attorney General.

Senator Harder, given Mr. Wernick’s stunning admissions that pressure was applied, what is the government’s definition of “inappropriate pressure?”

Hon. Peter Harder (Government Representative in the Senate): I thank the honourable senator for his question. I didn’t personally view Mr. Wernick’s testimony as stunning, but it was clear and compelling. It did indicate that it was, in the meetings to which he referred and was a party to, entirely appropriate for the then Minister of Justice and Attorney General to be made aware of the concerns that he and others have conveyed to her, and that those concerns were not expressed in a fashion that derogated from the minister’s responsibility to make the decision that is hers to make.

Senator Smith: Thank you very much for the feedback. It would appear that, through Mr. Wernick’s testimony, he admitted that there was pressure. The issue was, as he said: Did the minister at the time feel that it was undue pressure? So we ran into a definition of what is reasonable pressure.

The supplementary question I have to ask you is: Does the Prime Minister have legal authority to apply any amount of pressure with respect to a criminal prosecution?

Senator Harder: Again, I thank the honourable senator for his question. As all senators know, the former minister will be making some comments this afternoon in which she will undoubtedly express her point of view on this matter. But let me say, as a long-serving deputy minister having been close to 12 ministers and five Prime Ministers, politics is the game of pressure.

TRANSPORT

CHAMPLAIN BRIDGE

Hon. Leo Housakos: My question is for the government leader. Last week, in one of your answers, you mentioned that your government paid 238 million of taxpayers’ dollars to SNC-Lavalin for completion of the Samuel de Champlain Bridge. By the way, that taxpayer money was paid to them despite their inability to deliver the bridge on time. We still don’t know if your government will enforce the penalties against SNC-Lavalin for that late delivery in accordance with the contract that was judiciously put in place by the previous government because, of course, you have refused to confirm if those penalties have been or will be applied.

Also, you finally acknowledged something else you’ve previously refused to acknowledge, government leader: that Canadians will further be on the hook to SNC-Lavalin in the form of compensation for your leader’s political decision to remove tolls from the bridge.

Senator Harder, negotiations between the PMO and SNC-Lavalin to give them more taxpayers’ money are taking place as we speak in secret. Since your so-called transparent government refuses to be open about those talks while they’re ongoing, will your government commit to providing to Canadians and to Parliament all the information about a deal with SNC-Lavalin prior to the upcoming election in the fall?

Hon. Peter Harder (Government Representative in the Senate): I thank the honourable senator for his question. Let me take the occasion to remind him that in my previous answer I did speak to the view of the government that there ought to be consequences for the performance of the contract to which he refers.

With regard to the commitment he’s asking me to make, I will make inquiries.

Senator Housakos: Government leader, there are already consequences, and those consequences were negotiated in the original contract. The question simply is: Will those consequences be applied? The minister himself announced before Christmas that the penalties will be applied immediately as of December 21. I’ve asked, on a number of occasions here, for a confirmation that those penalties have been applied, and I’m not getting any satisfactory or clear answer.

Senator Harder, I’ll try another question, because I’m about ready to give up on the last one. Since your government seems to be open to negotiating compensation to big corporations to replace tolls on the bridge — and that’s based on your answer and the answers from the government — will you follow Senator Downe’s advice and abandon the tolls on the Confederation Bridge? If not, why the double standard in this country from one bridge to another?

Senator Harder: I thank the honourable senator for his supplication in this matter. Perhaps it is a position that his leader might take in the upcoming campaign.

INDIGENOUS AND NORTHERN AFFAIRS

INDIAN ACT—ELIMINATION OF SEX-BASED DISCRIMINATION

Hon. Lillian Eva Dyck: My question is for the Government Representative in the Senate.

Colleagues, on January 16, 2019, Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada launched an online survey as part of the collaborative process on Indian registration, band members and First Nations citizenship.

This survey was announced as part of the department's strategy to ensure that everyone has an opportunity to provide input into the collaborative process on the full implementation of Bill S-3. The first question of this survey asks: Do you think that the removal of the 1951 cut-off from the Indian Act is a positive or a negative thing for First Nations?

Senator Harder, this survey question is not consistent with what you said during your speech on November 7, 2017. You said:

Colleagues, let me be clear: These consultations are about how to remove the 1951 cut-off, not whether to do it. Consultations will be focused on identifying additional measures or resources required to do this right and working in partnership to develop a comprehensive implementation plan.

So, Senator Harder, could you please explain why this online survey is asking for views about whether removing the remaining sex-based discrimination from the Indian Act is a good or a bad thing, when this consultation is supposed to be determining how best to eliminate sex-based discrimination?

• (1430)

Hon. Peter Harder (Government Representative in the Senate): I thank the honourable senator for her question and for her vigilance on this matter. I obviously stand by the statements I made to which the honourable senator refers.

With respect to the online survey, I will make inquiries and seek a response from the appropriate minister.

Senator Dyck: The presence of this question on the survey creates serious doubts about the intention and goals of the consultation process and, of course, causes great concern to the people affected. Will you ask the government to amend the survey to remove the first question?

Senator Harder: I thank the honourable senator for her question. I'm reluctant to make that commitment until I'm fully informed of the intentions that the government had in respect to the survey. I want to assure the honourable senator that I will remind the officials in the government, including the minister, of the commitments I made on behalf of the government to which the honourable senator has referred.

[Translation]

Hon. Marilou McPhedran: Honourable senators, my question is for the Leader of the Government in the Senate.

[English]

Senator Harder, in the recent ruling of the United Nations Human Rights Committee on the petition of Sharon McIvor and Jacob Grismer issued on January 11, 2019, the committee held that the sex-based hierarchy between sections 6(1)(a) and 6(1)(c) in the Indian Act, introduced by amendments in 1985 and continued by amendments in 2011 and 2017, violates the right to the equal protection of the law without discrimination based on

sex and violates the equal right of men and women to the enjoyment of Indigenous culture guaranteed by the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

Given the materials in the survey to which Senator Dyck has just referred, and the collaborative process as a whole established through the Crown-Indigenous Relations department's consultations as a result of Bill S-3, why is there no reference in the materials to eliminate all discrimination against the maternal line and to ensure that Indigenous women and their descendants born before April 17, 1985, are entitled to 6(1)(a) status on the same footing as their male counterparts?

Senator Harder: Again, I want to thank the honourable senator for her question and the honourable senator is among a number of senators who are very vigilant on this matter. As I said to the previous questioner, I'm happy to make inquiries of the minister responsible and to seek more specific answers to the questions she raises.

Senator McPhedran: Senator Harder, in terms of specific answers, could you please also ask the government to explain its intention now regarding the removal of the sex discrimination and its response to the United Nations Human Rights Committee?

Senator Harder: Yes, I will do so.

Senator McPhedran: Thank you.

Hon. Kim Pate: My question is for the Honourable Senator Harder.

In finding that sex-based hierarchies in the Indian Act violate Canada's international human rights obligations, the United Nations Human Rights Committee expressly rejected Canada's argument that sex-based distinctions between different categories of status is justified by the aim of preserving previously acquired rights. I quote: "... the State Party has not demonstrated how recognizing equal status for" Sharon McIvor, Jacob Grismer and similarly situated Indigenous women and their descendants "under section 6(1)(a) would adversely affect the acquired rights of others. The State Party therefore has failed to demonstrate that the stated aim is based on objective and reasonable grounds."

The Government of Canada has relied on this argument regarding acquired rights since at least 2011 to claim that there is no remaining sex discrimination in the Indian Act and that the government is under no obligation to remove the 1951 cut-off.

The UN committee's decision makes it clear that this is no longer a viable argument. Without the outstanding provisions in force, Bill S-3 violates international human rights law and, as Sharon McIvor has recently reiterated, the ongoing government consultation regarding the Bill S-3 cannot give Canada the right to discriminate.

Would the Honourable Senator Harder explain why the outstanding provisions of Bill S-3 should not be brought into force immediately?

Senator Harder: I thank the honourable senator for her question. She will know that it is appropriate for me to consult with the minister and respond as appropriate.

Senator Pate: When do you expect that response?

Senator Harder: As soon as possible.

[Translation]

JUSTICE

SNC-LAVALIN

Hon. Pierre-Hugues Boisvenu: Honourable senators, my question is for the Government Representative in the Senate.

On November 22, 2018, at a meeting of the Standing Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs on the subject of deferred prosecution agreements, which are covered in omnibus Bill C-86, I asked the Department of Justice a very specific question. I asked whether SNC-Lavalin had approached the Department of Justice in order to provide its opinion of the remediation agreement regime or whether the department had consulted SNC-Lavalin.

The answer we received from the Department of Justice on December 6, 2018, indicates the following, and I quote:

At a Transparency International conference on May 17, 2018, a participant who identified himself as being an employee of SNC-Lavalin approached a Department of Justice official and attempted to engage that official in a discussion about deferred prosecution agreements.

Senator Harder, could you ask the Department of Justice for the name of the SNC-Lavalin employee who approached a Justice Department official to discuss remediation agreements? Could you confirm whether it was an executive or an employee? That makes all the difference.

[English]

Hon. Peter Harder (Government Representative in the Senate): I thank the honourable senator for his question and I will take it under advisement.

[Translation]

Senator Boisvenu: I would like to ask a supplementary question, Senator Harder. Could you tell me why you didn't recommend that SNC-Lavalin appear as a witness before the Standing Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs when it examined Bill C-86, given that you were going to be meeting with lobbyists from that company?

[English]

Senator Harder: Senator, it is not my practice to direct committees to determine who they hear from. The meetings I referred to in terms of my own personal interaction with

company officials, which were registered under the lobby registration act, are completely apart from committee considerations.

Hon. Linda Frum: My question is for the Government Representative in the Senate.

Senator Harder, I would like to come back to the charges of corruption in Libya against SNC-Lavalin and some of its former employees. Since 2012, the RCMP have charged eight people tied to this alleged corruption scheme. Seven of those accused have had their cases tossed out of court due to delays or problems with evidence.

The RCMP and the Public Prosecution Service of Canada have yet to convict anyone from the company. Now the government is working feverishly to offer a deal to prevent the company itself from being convicted.

Senator Harder, how do you explain to Canadians the failure of our justice system to punish those involved in such a scandal? What is the message to corporations that would be tempted to bribe foreign officials to get more business for themselves?

Senator Harder: I thank the honourable senator for the question, and I'd like to make a couple of comments.

We have before us Bill C-75, which is a response to the *Jordan* case to deal with concerns broadly shared by the government and all legislators with respect to the consequences of delay in terms of prosecutions. I would encourage this place to adopt that bill quickly so that the improvements to our judicial processes in terms of expeditious justice are brought into place. That's an important point, but it is not the only point of the question.

I think it's also important for legislators, and all of us involved in public life, to assure Canadians that the criminal justice system of Canada has integrity. It does ensure the prosecution of wrongdoing as appropriate in our rule of law, that there are consequences for wrongdoers, both individual and corporate, and that those wrongdoers are subject to the provisions of the Criminal Code and the consequences thereof.

• (1440)

JUDICIAL APPOINTMENTS

Hon. Linda Frum: Everybody agrees that the shortage or delay in appointing judges is the problem here. You don't need Bill C-75 to correct that problem. Bill C-75 does not correct the problem. The problem is that your government will not appoint judges. Could you explain why not?

Hon. Peter Harder (Government Representative in the Senate): I thank the honourable senator for her question. I think it's a bit hyperbolic to suggest this government has not appointed judges. I do not have the precise number in front of me, but I think she will recognize that the government has appointed judges, whether or not at the pace the honourable senator would wish is a matter of debate.

However, the government is committed to ensuring an effective appointment process, and that the review and consequences of the appointment process ensure that the judiciary as a whole better reflects Canada. That is the policy objective of the government and one that it is now, after almost four years of government, seeing itself reflected in the appointments that have been made.

PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT

CANADA POST

Hon. Colin Deacon: Honourable senators, my question is for the Leader of the Government in the Senate. Senator Harder, it has now been three months since Bill C-89 was passed in this chamber to end the Canada Post rotating strikes. In our deliberations on that legislation, we heard testimony about the injury crisis at Canada Post.

We got very comforting words from the chair of the board of Canada Post and interim president and CEO that she viewed it as an “imperative” to address that issue. A lot of us took great comfort in that commitment from her.

Could the Leader of the Government in the Senate please provide the chamber with an update on the work that has been undertaken in the past three months by Canada Post to address this issue?

Hon. Peter Harder (Government Representative in the Senate): I thank the honourable senator for the question and I would be happy to provide an update to the chamber.

[Translation]

PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE

SNC-LAVALIN

Hon. Claude Carignan: Honourable senators, my question is for the Leader of the Government in the Senate. The former Justice Minister will soon be appearing before a House of Commons committee, and the Trudeau government has given her permission to talk about some, but not all, aspects of the SNC-Lavalin case. She is not permitted to talk about her conversations with Prime Minister Trudeau or his staff regarding her transfer to another department or her resignation. She allegedly had three private conversations with the Prime Minister before tendering her resignation, but she can't tell us what they discussed.

Why is your government muzzling Ms. Wilson-Raybould with regard to her conversations with the Prime Minister, particularly those that occurred in the days leading up to her resignation?

[English]

Hon. Peter Harder (Government Representative in the Senate): I thank the honourable senator for his question. It is the view of the Government of Canada that providing the waivers allows the minister to speak to the important issues that affect the

matters under discussion in the committee while protecting the criminal justice process itself and the important aspects of cabinet confidence.

[Translation]

Senator Carignan: Prime Minister Trudeau has already said that Ms. Wilson-Raybould told him the reasons for her resignation the day before the announcement was made. The Prime Minister said that he didn't understand her reasons. When will Canadians have an opportunity to judge the Prime Minister's level of comprehension for themselves?

[English]

Senator Harder: Again, I think it's important, senator, to acknowledge the extraordinary steps this government and the Prime Minister has taken with respect to allowing testimony to be made. Like the honourable senator, I look forward to perhaps not seeing it directly but to hearing reports of the testimony the former minister will make.

PRIVY COUNCIL OFFICE

VETERANS AFFAIRS

Hon. Yonah Martin (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, my question is also for the Leader of the Government in the Senate. Following the resignation of Jody Wilson-Raybould as Minister of Veterans Affairs, the Prime Minister asked the Minister of National Defence to take on the Veterans Affairs portfolio on an interim basis. Our veterans deserve our immediate attention and should be a priority for this government.

Our veterans are the true Canadian heroes who have made sacrifices and defended freedom and peace around the world in various wars and peacekeeping missions.

Senator Harder, would you please tell us how long is Minister Sajjan expected to be the minister responsible for Veterans Affairs Canada? Is he going to be a placeholder or take on the role and support our veterans in a meaningful way? Does the Prime Minister intend to name a permanent Minister of Veterans Affairs and if so, when?

Hon. Peter Harder (Government Representative in the Senate): I thank the honourable senator for her question. She'll know, because she is an experienced politician, that it would be entirely inappropriate for me to respond or even know what is in the mind of Prime Minister as he contemplates his cabinet, except to report to this chamber what he has said: Minister Sajjan is an informed and active interim Minister of Veterans Affairs.

I should also point out that the Deputy Minister of Veterans Affairs has served in that position for five years and provides a good deal of continuity from the previous government to this government, and is a person of distinction.

The Prime Minister will be making announcements with respect to a permanent appointment as he sees fit.

Senator Martin: You are the government leader and I'm asking because we get news of the death of veterans, and I'm speaking about the Korean War veterans. When the former Veterans Affairs Minister Mr. O'Regan was first appointed, he did face illness and was not able to assume his role right away.

As a result, last year on the sixtieth anniversary of the Korean War, no plans had been made and we had to scramble. In all honesty, I didn't say this to the veterans who had been forgotten for 60 years. We need a Veterans Affairs Minister to take on the role full-time and to serve our veterans. That is my question. Can we expect a new Veterans Affairs Minister soon?

Senator Harder: I thank the honourable senator for her repeating of the question. Let me simply give her the same answer, which is to say that the Prime Minister will make the appropriate appointment at the appropriate time.

ENERGY, THE ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES

BUSINESS OF COMMITTEE

Hon. Marilou McPhedran: Honourable senators, my question is to Senator Galvez in relation to Motion No. 441, and it is a question about the times of the proposed travel of the Energy Committee.

I note from the calendar that we have only three of the next eight weeks when we will be in this chamber. Could you tell us, please, whether the committee is planning to use the five weeks when we are not going to be in this chamber for the proposed travel?

Hon. Rosa Galvez: There have been some discussions about the travel plan. We have not yet agreed on the dates. We have a preliminary list of places the committee wants to go.

[Senator Harder]

JUSTICE

JUDICIAL APPOINTMENTS

Hon. Linda Frum: Senator Harder, I want to return back to the previous conversation we were having about judicial appointments. There are currently 60 judicial vacancies. There was a report recently in *The Globe and Mail* that potentially one of roadblocks to filling those vacancies was the need for the candidates to be vetted by the PMO, which would be completely inappropriate, for the candidates' political orientation. Can you please explain if that is a true or false report?

Hon. Peter Harder (Government Representative in the Senate): I wouldn't for a moment suggest everything in *The Globe and Mail* is absolutely accurate on this matter or other matters. Let me simply reassure the honourable senator that there is a long-standing judicial appointments process that has been respected by this government and by previous governments.

[Translation]

PRIVY COUNCIL OFFICE

VETERANS AFFAIRS

Hon. Claude Carignan: Leader, I would like to come back to Senator Martin's question about veterans. What we've learned from the demotion of the former Justice Minister is that being appointed to the Veterans Affairs portfolio is a punishment meted out to a minister for not listening. I find that very insulting to Canada's veterans.

Does the Prime Minister intend to apologize to veterans for treating Veterans Affairs as a punishment?

[English]

Hon. Peter Harder (Government Representative in the Senate): The rhetoric of the question is completely out of line. Being a member of cabinet is not a demotion.

Being the Minister of Veterans Affairs is not a demotion, certainly not to the many veterans and Canadians who are concerned with veterans' issues. I hope that goes for those in this chamber, as well. To suggest otherwise is to, yourself, get into a hierarchy of importance, which the government has sought to avoid. That is why all ministers in this government are treated the same with respect to their status, budgets and compensation.

• (1450)

I take offence to the preamble of the question. I want to assure the honourable senator that all ministers of this government are viewed as important ministers. The appointment the Prime Minister will make to fill this vacancy on a permanent basis is one that will be made with pride and distinction.

The Hon. the Speaker: The time for Question Period has expired.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ENERGY, THE ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES

MOTION TO AUTHORIZE COMMITTEE TO TRAVEL—DEBATE

Leave having been given to proceed to Motions, Order No. 441:

Hon. Rosa Galvez, pursuant to notice of February 21, 2019, moved:

That the Standing Senate Committee on Energy, the Environment and Natural Resources have the power to travel within Canada, for the purpose of its examination and consideration of Bill C-69, An Act to enact the Impact Assessment Act and the Canadian Energy Regulator Act, to amend the Navigation Protection Act and to make consequential amendments to other Acts.

She said: Honourable senators, I want to share with you my concerns and my thoughts on this matter.

First of all, I want to say that I do this because I want to hear as many Canadians as possible from all regions. Second, I want taxpayer money to be used efficiently. Third, I don't want potential travel to be used for publicity or political reasons.

Here are my thoughts and reflections.

There is no precedent for a committee to travel. I note only one exception, in 2014, when the Legal Committee visited Brockville for a one-day fact-finding trip. Also, they did not conduct any public hearings. The potential travel, which has been discussed in our committee, is new, much more expensive and is a very new approach to study bills.

The cost of this travel could easily reach half a million dollars, based on previous trips and estimates. I recall recently an interview by Senator Carignan, commenting in the media that our budget has increased 38 per cent and this expansion was unjustified. Then how can we justify spending taxpayer money on travel when we could hear most, if not all, witnesses in Ottawa?

This Senate building is equipped with technology to hear from Canadians from all over. For example, we could hear from a selection of 3,572 municipalities, 712 towns and 513 villages.

The Hon. the Speaker: Excuse me, Senator Galvez.

Senator Martin, on a point of order?

Hon. Yonah Martin (Deputy Leader of the Opposition):

Yes, Your Honour, on a point of order. I'm looking at Motion No. 441. As chair of the committee, I'm wondering whether what the honourable senator is saying — she said she wanted to share her reflections, but as chair of the committee, she has a responsibility to consult with the steering committee as well as the full committee. I know there were a lot of meetings yesterday. There were some very robust discussions and questions at committee. I'm concerned that what she is expressing at this time — her personal reflection — is not reflective of the committee.

I just wanted to make sure that's where we're heading at this time.

The Hon. the Speaker: As honourable senators will know, when senators enter debate on motions, a fair amount of leeway is always given in terms of debate. I understand Senator Galvez to be, of course, expressing some of her views as well as — perhaps, if we hear her out — some of the committee's. Right now, I believe that her comments are in order.

Senator Galvez.

Senator Galvez: Thank you.

As I was saying, we can hear from 3,572 municipalities, 712 towns and 513 villages via video conference.

There are 12 government bills at various stages in the Senate at the moment. Senators, we have only 12 weeks of sitting time to finish our work. Wasting precious paid hours waiting for votes is counterproductive.

In the committee, we have a preliminary list of 160 witness groups that want to come and testify in front of us. This list is increasing, and time is getting shorter.

We have received a number of aggressive pieces of mail regarding this bill, as I'm sure many of you have. The rhetoric surrounding discussion of this bill is becoming increasingly hostile. I'm deeply concerned for the safety and security of senators and staff if we were to travel for public hearings.

Some Hon. Senators: Oh, oh!

Senator Galvez: I want to remind senators that we have our own means to travel to our own regions to meet with stakeholders and members of public, and to report and share any information we have collected with other senators. Proponents of committee travel who do not themselves sit on the committee can use these means to meet with Canadians in their regions and discuss the bill independent of the committee's study. The more we delay, the less time we have to plan a trip, to schedule witnesses and to allow them to prepare adequately to provide testimony.

I recognize that projects are in remote areas and those are where the impacts occur. Visiting small communities make sense. For example, in northern Alberta, there is this need to meet with impacted communities. However, we are not really going to small cities; we are going to the big cities, the capital of provinces.

Senators, we have insufficient time to plan for a trip of this magnitude. The expert panels have already travelled across Canada to conduct hearings on Bill C-69. Twenty-one cities, 75 meetings; part 2: 10 cities, 24 meetings; part 3: six cities, 35 meetings.

By travelling as part of the Senate in study of this bill, would we not be duplicating the work of the expert panel?

I have asked members of committees, especially those who support travel, to hear testimony on Bill C-69 to provide the committee with their availability for travel, as well as a list of groups they wish to meet. However, until today, this list was not complete.

Likewise, some senators have expressed that they will only travel if certain conditions are met; for example, if certain destinations will be visited, if travel occurs during break weeks or sitting breaks. Also, some others have expressed that they will travel only if this doesn't impact other bills.

Senators, like many of you, I have spoken with many stakeholders from all horizons. I have asked them whether they prefer if the committee travelled or remains in Ottawa and works on the study of the potential amendments. So far, we have 40 amendments. Those whom I have asked have unanimously said that they wish the committee to work on the amendments to improve the bill.

Senators, as the hours pass and we don't move forward on our study on this bill, I ask you: Is it realistic that we travel? We haven't had a date where we are supposed to bring forward the clause by clause. There is a long list of steps that must be fulfilled, like passing this motion, a draft budget, Internal Economy approvals and committee approvals in order to travel.

• (1500)

Should we not focus our energy on hearing witnesses in Ottawa, in person or via teleconference, and working on thoughtful amendments in order to improve this legislation? Thank you.

Hon. Donald Neil Plett: I would like to ask Senator Galvez a question.

The Hon. the Speaker: Senator Galvez, will you take a question?

Senator Galvez: Of course.

Senator Plett: First of all, I find it strange that you make a motion and then spend 10 minutes speaking against your own motion. Usually when you present something, you support it.

Once I ask one of you a question, you can answer. Right now I'm asking Senator Galvez a question, if you don't mind.

Senator Galvez, I'm not done with my question. Did the committee vote and agree to travel?

Senator Galvez: There was a motion for travel that was not supported unanimously.

Senator Plett: Let me repeat the question: Did the committee vote on it, and was it agreed and adopted to travel?

Hon. David Tkachuk: I have a question. I've never seen this before; so this is a very strange thing about getting up and making a motion and then arguing against your own motion.

You talk about other senators travelling around and listening to people, which we all do, but isn't the whole point of the committee to gather testimony? Which means people have to appear before the committee and testimony is put on paper, and then we use that as evidence for our decision-making.

We don't sit around a campfire and talk and make decisions that way; we try and gather testimony. How are we going to get testimony when you say people are going to wander around the country and just talk to people?

Senator Galvez: As I mentioned, I have three principles. The first is to hear as many Canadians as possible. We have means to hear — I don't know — 3, 4, maybe 10 times more Canadians by video conference than by a trip.

Second, I said I'm also worried about expending taxpayer money. In the Transport Committee, where I sit, there was an initial proposal to go to Norway, to go to Finland, to gather information. I don't think that's the way to be efficient in gathering important information to make decisions.

Hon. Denise Batters: Will you take a question, Senator Galvez?

Senator Galvez: Yes.

Senator Batters: First of all, when you are dealing with costs, you need to keep in mind the \$100 billion that the oil industry in Alberta and Western Canada is suffering because of policies like this.

I'm wondering where you got your totally incorrect facts from about committee travel; they are totally outdated. You didn't reference the fact that the Finance Committee recently travelled across Canada to many communities about the tax changes, and the Legal Committee, you referenced one stop in 2014. We travelled to many different cities across Canada for a court delay study a couple years ago.

Where did you get those incorrect facts from?

Senator Galvez: The travel you mentioned is regarding pre-studies, not bill studies. I started my speech by saying that I want to hear from communities in northern Alberta.

The Hon. the Speaker: Senator McCallum, a question or on debate?

Hon. Mary Jane McCallum: I have a question for the honourable senator.

Senator Galvez, in the proposed travel, will there be a balance between witnesses from the industry and First Nations, Metis communities who have been left with environmental disasters and increased levels of cancer due to these projects? We need to hear these voices as well.

When we were at committee, I raised this issue. For example, if SaskPower came, we needed to hear the voices of the Indigenous communities that were involved with SaskPower. There needs to be a balance.

I want to comment on Senator Tkachuk with his sitting around the campfire because that was a custom where many decisions were made with sober second thought. That is why we are here. I really need to — okay. Will there be a balance between —

The Hon. the Speaker: Order, please.

Senator McCallum, you're asking a question of Senator Galvez. If there is another issue you wish to raise, you can raise it as a point of order, or you can speak to it in debate. Your question for Senator Galvez, please.

Senator McCallum: Thank you.

Senator Galvez: That is one of the issues because the committee seems to be thrown in between going to small communities or big cities.

The issues that have been brought up is there is consensus to say — Senator Plett, I'm talking.

Senator Plett: Go ahead. I'm talking to her. Just continue.

Some Hon. Senators: Oh, oh.

The Hon. the Speaker: Senator Galvez has the floor. Order, please.

Senator Galvez: I think there is consensus to say that impacts occur in the remote areas, and that the big projects — the mining, pipeline and oil projects — occur in the north of the provinces, and that we should be travelling there and meeting with the remote communities that don't have the availability for video conference. I think there is a consensus to go to these places.

Unfortunately, there is no appetite to go to these places. There are a lot of obstacles. We don't have permission to go into these communities, or there is no transport facility.

I agree with you that there is an imbalance, and we will be going to big cities where we will be meeting with people whom we could have very easily contacted by video conference.

Hon. Carolyn Stewart Olsen: I have a question for the honourable senator.

The Hon. the Speaker: Senator Galvez, your time has expired. I know there are a number of honourable senators who wish to ask questions. Are you asking for five more minutes to answer questions?

Senator Galvez: No.

The Hon. the Speaker: On debate, Senator Simons.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Paula Simons: Honourable senators, I am rising today to support the motion moved by my colleague, Senator Galvez. Some of you already know that I moved this motion, which would give our committee the power to travel, at one of our meetings. I realize that my proposal was somewhat unorthodox and that the Senate committee travels only rarely to study a bill.

[*English*]

But for me, as a senator from Alberta, this seemed to be the right time to break with precedent.

In Alberta there is a great deal of concern — might I say fear — about the impact of Bill C-69 on our energy industry. You saw some of that fear made manifest in last week's convoy protest on Parliament Hill.

I can tell you, as a rookie senator, that not everyone outside of Parliament Hill understands the role of the Senate, much less the role of our public hearings. I passionately believe if we took our show on the road, if we lifted the veil of mystery and held public hearings outside of Ottawa, it could go a long way not just to informing the debate on Bill C-69 but in reducing suspicion and cynicism about the Senate itself.

There is no doubt that Bill C-69 is a complex and important bill. There's no doubt in my mind that the bill requires substantive and substantial amendments.

We will be able to make better, smarter, more practical amendments if we don't just stay in Ottawa and listen to industry and environmental lobbyists.

On this bill we cannot just round up the usual suspects. We will have a better visceral and technical understanding of the bill if we travel to communities that will be deeply affected by it. We need to hear from resource communities where people are frustrated and angry about the current project approval process, and where they fear that Bill C-69 will only make existing problems worse.

• (1510)

But we also need to hear from communities, particularly Indigenous communities, that are worried about their way of life and about the integrity of the environment around them.

I know that some environmental NGOs have pushed back against the idea of travel. Some of my Senate colleagues have, too. But I want to assure them and you that, for my part at least, the purpose of moving some of our hearings outside of Ottawa isn't just to hear from people working in the oil and gas sector. It's also to hear first-hand from First Nations and Metis settlements, and as a resident of Treaty 6 territory myself, I take that duty to consult very seriously. Our trip may also give us the chance to see the consequences of potential environmental development gone awry.

Nor is it enough for us to travel, in a targeted way, simply to Alberta and British Columbia. Indeed, one of the ugliest and most unfortunate parts of the Bill C-69 debate is that it has been framed by so many as a fight between Alberta and British Columbia or, even worse, a fight between Alberta and the rest of Canada — a fight about pipelines. But Bill C-69 is not a pipeline bill. At least, it's not just a pipeline bill. It's not even primarily a pipeline bill.

Now, I understand perfectly well why pipelines are top of mind in Alberta right now, especially while we wait to learn the government's final decision on TMX. But let me make this clear: the new impact assessment act will apply to all major infrastructure that falls under federal jurisdiction, and that includes other low-carbon energy projects — everything from offshore wind farms to hydroelectric dams.

It also includes all sorts of other significant infrastructure, including airports, sea ports, interprovincial rail lines, canals, diamond mines, irrigation dams and even really big bridges that might have an impact on river flow.

[*Translation*]

In other words, this bill will have an impact on all provinces and on all of our country's nation-building projects. That is why we must get it right. This isn't just a burden for Alberta, and this issue doesn't just affect the oil industry. We need an impact assessment protocol that will protect the environment, respect Indigenous rights and foster constructive dialogue.

We must work together to set clear, fair and simple rules that will respect the sovereignty of the provinces. Otherwise, we will not be able to build anything, at least not within a reasonable time frame.

[*English*]

That, too, has environmental consequences. We don't just need investment in our oil and gas sector. If we have any hope of doing our part to combat climate change, we also need investment in new, lower carbon energy tech, things like large-scale wind farms, tidal power and run-of-river hydro.

And we need major investments in new, state-of-the-art power lines to green our grid. And if investors are worried that they won't be able to get dams and transmission lines approved in a timely manner, that won't help us transition to a lower-carbon economy, either.

[Senator Simons]

We must not let Bill C-69 pit region against region. We all need to work together to craft amendments that make this legislation practical and transparent, because we all need an impact assessment protocol that legitimately protects our ecosystem and human communities without trapping us in a legal quagmire from which no good project can emerge.

I am an independent senator, and for me, this is a non-partisan issue. I have the greatest respect for my fellow members of the Standing Senate Committee on Energy, the Environment and Natural Resources, and I think we have already found much common ground in our committee meetings.

Call me naive — please do, it makes me feel young — but I really think it's possible that our committee is going to be able to craft and agree upon amendments that make significant improvements to the bill. But to do that, we need good data, and I believe that holding a limited number of hearings outside of Ottawa, in carefully targeted locations, will help.

Still, as the Thane of Cawdor said, albeit in somewhat bloodier circumstances:

If it were done when 'tis done, then 'twere well it were done quickly . . .

I was a journalist for more than 30 years and I know that nothing concentrates the mind so well as a firm deadline. And after some of the events of the last few days, I can't stress that enough. We can't afford to dawdle and we can't afford to try the patience of taxpayers with the appearance that we're planning an extended pleasure cruise.

There are huge economic consequences if we don't pass this bill with amendments in this session — and I think that I'll be proposing a lot of amendments. We need to give ourselves time after our trip to get that amendment work done. Because what will happen if this bill dies on the Order Paper? Either we revert to CEAA 2012, which everyone seems to agree was badly flawed legislation, or we start the legislative process all over again, which will create months — if not years — of further investor uncertainty. Canada can't afford that risk and Alberta should not be asked to stand for it.

So, yes, I'm asking the Senate today to give our committee its blessing to travel. That may mean travelling while the Senate is doing other important business and it may — indeed, I fear it must — mean travelling during break week periods. That won't be convenient for anyone, myself included. It will be hard work. But Albertans aren't afraid of hard work. Canadians aren't afraid of hard work. So let's show them that we're working just as hard for them in the Senate and on our committee.

Therefore, for those of you who are concerned about timelines and expenses and for those of you on the fence about this motion, I want to offer this amendment: An amendment to put reasonable and necessary parameters around our travel without rolling over anyone, and to give us the time we need to make the substantial amendments that this bill needs. Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

MOTION IN AMENDMENT

Hon. Paula Simons: Therefore, honourable senators, in amendment, I move:

That the motion be not now adopted, but that it be amended by adding the following immediately after the word "Acts":

“, and that the committee be instructed to report Bill C-69 to the Senate no later than Thursday, May 9, 2019”.

The Hon. the Speaker: Do honourable senators have questions?

Hon. Donald Neil Plett: Thank you, Senator Simons.

I certainly agreed with the majority of your speech. I'm not sure about the amendment, but certainly about most of everything else you said.

Indeed, I agree that we have a problem with some legislation here that does pit region against region in our country. We should try to do everything we can to become a cohesive unit from coast to coast to coast.

Travel on Bill C-69 is certainly necessary. Indeed, we have another bill in front of this chamber, in the Transport committee now, Bill C-48, a bill that bans tankers and, clearly, a bill that is pitting region against region.

I'm wondering, Senator Simons, why you have a different view on Bill C-69 than you do on Bill C-48, where you were as adamantly opposed to travel as you seem to be in favour of travel on this one?

Senator Simons: I confess I find myself very confused. I voted in favour in all of our committee discussions on Bill C-48, some of which were in camera, and I know you objected to making the in camera portions public, so I'm not sure what I'm allowed to reference in the chamber. But certainly my contributions to the committee on Bill C-48 were to stress that we ought to travel, particularly to parts of British Columbia. I did oppose the idea of travelling to Norway; I opposed the idea of travelling to The Netherlands; I opposed the idea of travelling to Mexico and I opposed the idea of travelling to Alaska.

So I thought about travelling to the affected regions of the area, because I frankly share, deeply, your concerns about Bill C-48, which would effectively trap Alberta oil from egress through 95 per cent of the British Columbia coast.

I agree we need to give very serious consideration to Bill C-48. As an Alberta senator who serves on the Transportation Committee as well as the Energy Committee, I am fully seized of the importance of studying Bill C-48. Though I have always thought *Song of Norway* was lovely, I didn't think it was prudent to spend taxpayers' dollars there.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

• (1520)

Senator Plett: Thank you for that answer on issues that are entirely irrelevant because at no time at committee was there a proposal to travel to Norway or Mexico. This had been a discussion that was held prior.

I was at the meeting where votes took place. There was no motion on travelling to any place outside of Canada. I think we were pretty much united. I, at least, was opposing travel out of our country. But there were motions about travelling to Saskatchewan. There were motions about travelling to Alberta, individual motions. There were motions about travelling to Newfoundland and Labrador. I may be wrong in this, but I think there was a motion about travelling to New Brunswick. Each of those — you're shaking your head; okay, maybe there wasn't, but there were other ones — were voted down at committee.

I don't know the relevance between travelling to Mexico and travelling to Alberta or Saskatchewan. I think they are vastly different. Would you comment on why these motions, one of which I made, were turned down?

Senator Simons: As Senator Plett may recall, I was unfortunately unable to be there for part of yesterday's meeting but —

Senator Plett: It didn't happen yesterday.

Senator Simons: Let us refocus. Let me get to the heart of your question. Why does Bill C-69 —

The Hon. the Speaker: Order, please.

Senator Simons: Why does Bill C-69 merit more intensive travel than Bill C-48? I'll tell you very specifically. Bill C-48 has a fundamental impact on a very particular part of Canada.

My whole argument about Bill C-69 is that it's not a bill about Alberta and British Columbia. It is a bill that affects every single province. It affects the capacity of Newfoundland to regulate development of its offshore and impinges upon the integrity of the offshore boards. It affects the sovereignty of Quebec to determine whether or not it can approve hydroelectric dams that are within its own jurisdiction. It impinges upon Saskatchewan's ability to make use of its uranium resources.

One of the things that I think is the most dangerous and terrifying to me, as an Albertan, about the debate about Bill C-69 is the way it has become polarized, particularly in my home province of Alberta, so that Albertans feel it's the rest of the country ganging up on them.

The essential point I wanted to make in my speech today and that I want to make in my answer to you is that Bill C-69 is not a bill about pipelines. It is a bill about every kind of major infrastructure that is part of nation building. How do we build hydroelectric lines that connect our country and green our grid if we don't have an impact assessment system that works?

That's why I think there is significant merit in travelling to more places on Bill C-69, whereas Bill C-48 is a much simpler bill, much shorter. It's basically an up/down decision. I think the place to make it is best informed by going to the place where the ban would be in effect.

The Hon. the Speaker: I am sorry, Senator Simons, but your time has expired. I know there are a number of senators rising who would like to ask more questions. Are you asking for five more minutes to answer questions?

Senator Simons: Sure. It would be nice if someone other than Senator Plett had a chance.

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

Senator Plett: Senator Simons, when you become the Speaker, you will decide who asks questions. Until you do, I think the Speaker will. And I, senator, have every right to ask you a question. There is no double standard. When I ask you a question, you answer.

Senator Simons, you talked about having not voted and talked about in camera. You voted against a motion to travel to Alberta. You voted against a motion to travel to Newfoundland and Labrador, and you voted against a motion to travel to Saskatchewan. They were all not in camera. Why is it not important to travel to your province of Alberta to talk about a tanker ban that will decimate your province?

And thank you, Senator Frances Lankin, for answering my question.

The Hon. the Speaker: Order, please.

Senator Simons: The question —

The Hon. the Speaker: Senator Simons, sorry; one moment, please.

Point of order, Senator Woo.

Hon. Yuen Pau Woo: Your Honour, I believe that this question is out of scope. It is clearly directed at a different bill, Bill C-48. We are debating here a motion on Bill C-69. With due respect, I would ask you to consider ruling this question and all questions on other bills out of order.

Hon. David Tkachuk: I'm sorry, but Senator Simons brought up Bill C-48. We didn't bring it up. In her remarks, she brought up Bill C-48. She brought up the travel that was discussed in Transport on Bill C-48 to other parts outside of the country. She was the one who raised Bill C-48. Therefore, she should answer questions on Bill C-48.

The Hon. the Speaker: Order, please.

Honourable colleagues will know that when we enter into debate on matters such as motions and amendments to motions, we have a fair amount of leeway in terms of how that debate unfolds.

Senator Woo makes a good point. There is a time when we stray too far from that, but I don't think we have done so in this particular case. Senator Simons herself has raised the issue, and I believe the question is worthy of an answer.

Senator Simons: I do want to clarify. Senator Tkachuk may not have caught it because sometimes Senator Plett's voice doesn't carry. It was Senator Plett who asked me specifically about Bill C-48, and that was why I responded as I did.

Let me give the answer again. I am a passionate Albertan, and I am fully aware of the challenge that Bill C-48 poses for my province. Let me explain to those of you who have not been as engaged with Bill C-48 as perhaps Senator Plett, Senator Tkachuk and I have.

Bill C-48 proposes to impose a moratorium which, as we learned in testimony, is not a moratorium; it is a ban. There is no end date. It proposes to impose a moratorium on all passage of heavy oil tankers across northern British Columbia, from the northern tip of Vancouver Island up to Alaska. This has serious ramifications for Alberta's energy industry because it would mean, effectively, that it's not just an oil tanker moratorium; it's a pipeline moratorium. It's a very serious problem, and this means that we are hanging on TMX in Alberta as our only clear chance right now to get oil to market.

Are there arguments that can be made about Bill C-48? Absolutely. I have questions I wish to ask of our witnesses in the future, for example, about dilbit, diluted bitumen, and whether or not it's possible for diluted bitumen to be exempted from the tanker ban. I have questions about whether it's possible to use different international regulations of sea protection to protect really important environmental areas of that coast of British Columbia and perhaps form some kind of corridor for heavy oil tankers.

So, believe me, I am very seriously concerned about Bill C-48 and its ramifications for Alberta. I want to —

The Hon. the Speaker: Sorry, Senator Simons, for interrupting you. Your time has expired again.

I will remind senators of the point that Senator Woo has just made. We are debating an amendment to the motion on Bill C-69. I know we have a certain amount of leeway, but please let's get back to the focus of the amendment on Bill C-69.

Your time has expired again. Are you asking for another five minutes?

Some Hon. Senators: No.

Senator Simons: Okay. No, I guess not.

The Hon. the Speaker: There is no consent for another five minutes.

Do any other senators wish to enter debate?

Hon. Michael L. MacDonald: Honourable senators, I'd like to speak to a couple of matters I've arranged in this debate.

I found it interesting, Senator Simons, that you had a prepared speech ready, an amendment to the motion that came from Senator Galvez regarding the Energy Committee.

I'm the Deputy Chair of the Energy Committee. We had a steering committee meeting set up for three o'clock this afternoon. I was given no notice of this motion. I think I should have been given notice of this motion or a meeting today at three o'clock. I think it's inappropriate.

I also should put on the record, Senator Simons, that when the motion was amended — your motion to travel — we amended the motion. It was the Conservatives on the committee who amended the motion to travel to Atlantic Canada and Quebec and Manitoba. You failed to add that in your remarks.

I also think it's inappropriate to accuse senators of dawdling and going on extended pleasure cruises when they go on committee work.

• (1530)

I don't know why you think that's an appropriate thing to raise in this chamber.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

Senator MacDonald: I see a lot of concern being raised about taxpayers' money. We are all concerned about that. The Senate of Canada constitutes 0.04 per cent of 1 per cent of the total expenditures of the Government of Canada. It's interesting that when the Government of Canada was spending \$4.5 billion for a pipeline it didn't have to spend a cent for — and the Auditor General tells us they overspent by \$1 billion — there was nothing but silence from the other side on this issue. If you are concerned about expenditures there is a lot to look at besides Senate work.

Senator Galvez, the Energy Committee voted, agreed and supported travelling east and west to gather the thoughts of Canadians on this bill. And you get up and propose a motion against the Senate's decision.

Some Hon. Senators: No.

Senator MacDonald: I'm not asking you a question.

Senator Tkachuk: She proposed the motion to travel and spoke against it.

Senator MacDonald: You proposed the motion to travel. We supported the motion to travel yet you stand up and you speak against travelling. I think that's certainly inconsistent with the role of a chair of a committee.

The Hon. the Speaker: Order, please.

Senator MacDonald, order, please.

Honourable senators, this is a debating chamber. There is no question about that, but the debate takes place in this fashion: One senator speaks at a time and then another senator can ask a question or enter the debate. It is not a cross-talk show.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

Senator MacDonald: Last night before we left this place, or before we left this building.

An Hon. Senator: This morning.

Senator MacDonald: It was late last night, about quarter to 12. I spoke to Senator Galvez and let her know that we had agreed to put two weeks aside, as we previously agreed, to travel. One during the sitting week and one during a non-sitting week, which we agreed to do. It had been approved. We were going to discuss that this afternoon, and here we are 35 minutes past our set meeting time and we have not discussed it yet.

We gave the committee clearance to vote to sit for extended hours from 5 to 8 instead of 5 to 7 on Tuesday evenings, and from 8 to 11 instead of 8 to 10 on Thursday mornings. We also agreed to sit on Monday evenings if necessary. We also agreed to travel on one of our two weeks on a non-sitting week. We made all those concessions.

We certainly expect to get the bill back to the Senate in a reasonable period of time, particularly if we hold both of our committee meetings in April, and that's what we propose. I don't know why there are so many accusations going around about stalling, because we have lots of time. In terms of arguments about our sitting times in this chamber, it is the Government of Canada that determines the schedule for Parliament. It is the Government of Canada that has said we want to sit one week in March and two weeks in April. We don't determine that, our committee doesn't determine that and the Senate doesn't determine that. The government determines that. We know they don't want to sit, because they don't want to face the heat in the other place. That's their call.

We are ready to work on this bill. Canadians expect us to travel. In the committee last night we had proposals from the ISG not to travel to Winnipeg, to cut down our trip to Atlantic Canada to one city. Well, we are part of this country, too. We want to do more than just pay taxes. We want to participate and contribute and be part of the overall decision-making process in this country.

We're going to go east to Atlantic Canada. We're going to go west to listen to the people of Western Canada who have seen \$100 billion of investment pour out of this country in the last three years. There has to be a correlation. There has to be a reason for it.

Senator Galvez, I have never seen this sort of proposal in the Senate and a complete disregard for the decisions of your own committee. I'm preparing to leave here now and belatedly start our steering committee and keep the commitments I made to you last night to travel in the second week in April and the fourth full week in April to go to hear the opinions of Canadians.

We talked about the correspondence we have, I have never received so much correspondence. Particularly well-written individual pieces of correspondence, not cut and paste stuff that people send in, but correspondence from people who know what they are talking about. People who are knowledgeable. The engineers, the people who have been in the oil patch in the natural resources industry for 30 or 40 years. Yes, I think their opinion is worth something. I learn something from people like that. I'm not afraid of saying that. I do. We are ready to do that work. The stalling is coming from your side, not ours. We are ready to go to work. I say let's get out of here, go to steering and get this travel schedule set up.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

Hon. Elaine McCoy: Honourable senators, I want to take a deep breath. I'm hoping I'm interpreting the vivacity of debate around travel as a good sign. That we are all going to agree on travel for this committee and honour the committee's agreement.

I had not heard until this moment that there was a consensus between two members of steering that there would be travel on a break week as well as a sitting week. That's very good news and that's normally how we do things here.

I really do thank you, Senator Simons, for your eloquent remarks in favour of travel. I endorse those. I endorse travel because Bill C-69, as one of our senators said this morning, has become an icon. It's a symbol. A symbol that is causing people in my region a great deal of fear, which has turned into anger. It's fuelling talk of alienation and fuelling feelings that might lead to a breakup of national unity. I think, as senior legislators in this country, it is our responsibility to do everything we can to show respect to Canadians and go out and listen to them.

I spoke to representatives from three labour unions yesterday from Alberta and I asked them: What is your feeling about these bills? Do you think that we can indeed have resource development and good environmental laws or not? They said absolutely. They believe that the anger and the rhetoric, the violent talk, is by a very loud but very small minority. I have that confidence in Albertans. I have confidence that they will show respect to our senators if they are there.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

Senator McCoy: I have confidence in the people of Saskatchewan, B.C., Manitoba and every other region in this country. They will show the proper respect. It might be loud but it will be respectful. But only if you have the courage to go and talk to them. You need to have the courage to take responsibility for being nation builders.

Now, I won't say much more than that on travel, but I am going to say that I do not agree with the amendment.

• (1540)

We have only had four or five meetings so far. We ran out of time on our second meeting with industry representatives. I know the chair and steering committee members have tried very hard to expand the time for this committee, and they are succeeding. But there are seven sitting weeks between now and May 30 — seven sitting weeks. We brought in Bill C-45, the marijuana bill, to this chamber with amendments on May 30 last year. It got out the door after third reading, over to the House of Commons and back. If we can do that with that bill, we can do it with this bill, which has much more serious consequences than the marijuana bill. I have every confidence in us that we will do that.

I do not think we came to an agreement in this chamber as to the timing of when that report came back to the chamber or the way we structured the debate for third reading in this chamber until maybe April or early May. I'm not entirely sure, because I was not privy to the discussion, but that's my recollection.

We do not know enough about what the evidence is yet to even begin to predict how much more we need to learn.

I think that amendment is tantamount to closure. It's tantamount to what we call time allocation. We do not do that to our committees.

I am adamantly opposed to this amendment. I am adamantly opposed to pushing something forward prematurely and trying to force senators to vote on something that they will regret in due course, if they make that a habit. I take it that many of us will speak against the amendment but fully support the travel request. I thank you for your consideration of the western region and my province, in particular.

Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I have a list of senators and all three have just stood. Their name is on that list for debate. Are there any questions for Senator McCoy?

On debate, Senator Black, Alberta.

Hon. Douglas Black: I will be brief.

I want to say to my colleagues, as a senator from Alberta — and we have perhaps heard too much from senators from Alberta today, so I will keep it short and sweet. We all recognize we have a historic opportunity for Bill C-69 to get something right in this chamber that matters to Canadians. And you know what? We are going to get it right. We are going to get it right, because there is a commitment to do so. But we need to get to work. We have to get to work, because time is flying here.

I had the opportunity of being in Alberta yesterday and speaking to a very large gathering at lunch. They are saying to us, "We understand the need for amendments, but for goodness sake, stop the fooling around and get to work."

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

Senator D. Black: I arrived back today. I hear a motion from the chair of the Energy Committee to question the need for travel, when I sat in a meeting of the Energy Committee where I recall the vote was unanimous to travel. Fine. That's fine; we'll go through that. I don't know why we are wasting this kind of time on this.

Canadians expect us to consult with them where they live. We as senators should expect to consult with Canadians where they live, full stop.

In respect of the second point — that is to say, basically having closure as of May 9, I believe the date was — I completely align with my colleague and friend Senator McCoy: We don't know what we don't know yet. Let's get to work and find out what we need to know. Let's get to work and craft the amendments that need to be made to make this bill work for Canada, if it can. Don't be putting the sword over our heads. That's the wrong thing to do. I suspect those who know procedure better than I do would say there is virtually no precedent where this chamber would mandate that a committee have the work done by a certain date. Experts on that can talk about that.

We should defeat this amendment that is proposing we have the work done by May 9. This has nothing to do with dragging the puck. Believe me, I, perhaps more than most senators in this chamber, hear what Albertans and other Canadians are saying. They want this fixed. They want it fixed as soon as possible. We have a duty — potentially a historic duty — to get this right.

Without swords over or guns to our heads, we have to get to work. We need to dump all this negative rhetoric, this positioning and this drama. Canadians won't tolerate it. This is a real problem.

I would urge my colleagues to defeat the amendment. I would urge the chair of the committee — who is the chair — leaders must lead. Let's get to work.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

Senator Tkachuk: I have a question. I noted your comment that May 9 is a closure motion, and it is not. I think it comes from the fact that the government member who moved Bill C-69 thinks this side wants to kill the bill. It's not in our interests, nor is it in your interests, to kill the bill. We've heard from the industry. They don't want the bill killed; they want it changed — quite massively, actually. We're going to work toward changing the bill. Hopefully, the government, at the same time, understands that when it comes out of here, they agree to the changes. That's what we fear.

Senator Black, you might want to assure the members and the members of the ISG that it is not our intention. You and I have talked about this many times: We are not dragging the puck. We would like to have lots of hearings, finish the thing, know what is going on, get it back here and move it forward. That's what we want, but we do want amendments to the bill.

Senator D. Black: If that's a question, I would simply say I have no reason to doubt that. I'm working closely with many members of this chamber. I can assure you I'm looking closely with governments across this country, with industry associations, industries, environmental groups and First Nations groups. I'm endeavouring to do what I can — and I'm sure others are as well — to knit together a package of amendments that works. That's happening. The folks who are advancing that interest in the sincere hope that we can bridge this divide are saying to us, "We're doing our bit. Now for goodness sake, Senate of Canada, do yours."

Hon. Frances Lankin: I appreciate your comments. I want you to know that I completely associate myself with Senator McCoy, you and others on the need for appropriate travel and, most particularly, in understanding that this is really an issue of national unity and Western alienation, while it is important to many other parts of country as well.

I also think, however, it is important for us to be factual. I want to ask you if you are aware that there is not a lot of history and precedent for travel by committee on a study of a bill. I want us to travel on this one; I'm fine with that. You said it was a precedent to have a limit like this, but committees travel on studies and have limits all the time. Chairs have to come back here and ask for permission to extend, which is a possibility here as well.

I want us to keep these things not mixed and not blurred. I want to know if you are aware of that. But I assure you that I completely support the need for this travel.

Senator D. Black: Thank you, Senator Lankin. Frankly, I'm not sure I understand the question, but I sense we're aligned.

[Translation]

The Hon. the Speaker: Senator Dalphond, do you have a question?

• (1550)

[English]

Hon. Pierre J. Dalphond: Will the honourable senator accept a question?

Senator D. Black: Of course.

Senator Dalphond: You said this bill needs substantial amendments, and we certainly hear a lot about this, and maybe this is true. Does that not mean we should have a schedule of reporting to this house in order to vote on these substantial amendments and then give time to the other place to vote on the substantial amendments and make sure that, as you said, we fix things before the end of June? Do we not need a time frame?

Senator D. Black: Thank you, honourable senator, for that question. I don't believe we need a time frame. While my experience has only been a little over six years, I have never seen a circumstance where a Senate committee has not done the work required of it, regardless of the volume of the work, in the time assigned to it.

We all understand what has to happen here, and I have every reason to believe publicly and privately that people are working very hard to bridge the gap. I don't think it's helpful to set an arbitrary date. We will get this done and hopefully have it approved by the House of Commons with the amendment package we come up with.

Senator MacDonald: In terms of a time for the bill, for your information, last night I made it clear to ISG members on our Energy Committee that we were prepared to travel two weeks in April, and they were concerned about travel, and that would take care of the committee travel. When asked at that time when we could expect to get the bill back, I said that certainly I would think we would get it back around the middle of May, certainly before or by the break in May.

We're not even in March yet. Look at Bill C-45; it didn't come back until late May. I think that's enough time to manage this bill. I'm curious, in your experience, if we brought this bill back just before the break in May, that would give us about five weeks, do you think that would be enough time to deal with it?

Senator D. Black: It would be my hope, and I'm an optimist by nature. I think the answer is absolutely yes. The best case is that a package of amendments comes forward, which is accepted by the Senate committee because the balance is achieved that we are trying to achieve, and the Senate committee then reports to the Senate that we have a package of amendments that works, that industry, governments and First Nations are happy with. For my colleague Senator Galvez and her committee, it is a huge task, but it can be done.

My belief is that there will be a package of amendments which come forward sooner than later. I think the committee will do what it needs to do and come back here and say that this is our recommendation.

My hope and guess is that I, as a senator who does not sit on those committees, if that committee can do that work, I will recognize how complicated it's been, and I personally will breathe a sigh of relief to think it can get resolved in a satisfactory way, and I believe it can.

The magic, of course, is it has to go down the hall or down the road.

Hon. Marilou McPhedran: Let me begin by expressing very sincere appreciation to all honourable senators who have been addressing the question in their comments and questions in terms of the quality of the work we do here.

I'd like to suggest that the amendment needs to be measured through a lens of both effectiveness and efficiency. I'd like to also suggest that how we look at effectiveness and efficiency has something to do with cost and time and a great deal to do with

the fact that less than half of our calendar in the Senate has us in this chamber, and that the time we spend in this chamber is a priority when we have the opportunity.

Let me frame a couple of points along this theme of the lens of both efficiency and effectiveness and the related costs.

As I understand it, there are 14 members of the Energy Committee. The people of Canada are going to be paying for 14 people to travel to a number of different places in a relatively short period of time with, at this point, no guarantee that the voices that typically are not heard will be heard. No guarantee that the remote areas where many of those voices live will actually be visited.

What is it that the people of Canada are paying for, for 14 members of the Energy Committee to be travelling? With true and great respect to Senator McCoy, I question the use of the concept of courage to travel as perhaps distinct from courage to do our job here in the chamber and in committee when we are scheduled to be here.

In some ways, when I listen to Senator D. Black describe his activities, it seems to me he presents a very constructive model. As an individual senator, using his individual budget, he has reached out and been part of organizing — in Calgary, for example — large meetings with a good turnout, listening to voices, bringing messages back, different points of view. That is not something that gets added onto the cost of the committee doing its work.

The amount of pre-study — we just have to go back to the very precise information we were given by Senator Galvez in speaking to the motion, that what has already been done is extensive, substantial, and there is deep expertise that has already been harnessed and harvested.

As I understand it — and I stand to be corrected if this is not so — when we are here for less than half of the time we are paid overall to be senators every year, when we are here — in Ottawa, in chamber, in committee — much of that preliminary work has been done, and then we spend time calling for testimony to supplement the very substantial work that has already been done. That is true in this case as well.

When we are looking at the difference between identifying the voices that typically are not heard, and still have not been heard — to Senator McCallum's point — then why don't we invest in bringing those people here, to the extent that that's possible? We can figure out other ways. If the committee can't travel to their community, then maybe it can travel to a place closer to their community, and those voices can still be heard.

Going to large centres, where all of the technology that's needed to be able to be heard and listened to attentively through technology, or to travel, if people were to choose to do that, is entirely possible and already being done.

As I see this, in the next eight-week period, we are only here for three weeks, then we're back in April, and for one whole week we will not have senators here in this chamber or in committee working on Bill C-69.

Let me make a couple of closing points. I hear that this is not a precedent in the sense of the first time that this kind of travel has happened in the middle of the committee looking at the bill here as part of the established and agreed upon calendar. However, what is starting to develop would seem to me to be a custom that we need to look at very closely.

Committees travel in advance of the bill, generally speaking, for pre-study. If we are going to introduce into the budget of this Senate, and into the work of this committee, during the time when we said we were going to be here working in the chamber, and make that our priority, what is that doing to the quality of our deliberation here? What does that custom, if it emerges, due to the idea that it is when we are here and have a bill before committee, that that is when we are working together here and facilitating using our resources to bring additional testimony and expertise as part of that process?

• (1600)

It is far more cost-efficient and, frankly, we're not adding to our carbon footprint this way to nearly the extent of 14 people travelling versus a smaller number.

The Hon. the Speaker: I'm sorry to interrupt. I know you haven't completed your remarks. You will be given an opportunity at the next sitting to have the balance of your time. There are other senators as well who are on the list and wish to enter the debate.

It now being 4 p.m. and pursuant to the order adopted on February 4, 2016, I declare the session adjourned to Thursday, February 28, 2019, at 1:30 p.m.

(At 4 p.m., pursuant to the order adopted by the Senate on February 4, 2016, the Senate adjourned until 1:30 p.m., tomorrow.)

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