



# DEBATES OF THE SENATE

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## **SENATE MODERNIZATION**

Third Report of Special Committee—  
Debate Adjourned

Question by:

The Honourable Diane Bellemare

Thursday, October 6, 2016

## THE SENATE

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[Translation]

### SENATE MODERNIZATION

THIRD REPORT OF SPECIAL COMMITTEE—  
DEBATE ADJOURNED

**Hon. Diane Bellemare (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate):** Will the Honourable Senator Eggleton take a question?

I read the recommendations carefully. The report sets out the key principles, including the principle of proportionality, which is very clear in this motion. However, the definition of the Government Representative or his team does not appear anywhere in the report.

You alluded to it when describing the steps that the Senate Committee of Selection must follow. When I read the French version, I noticed some confusion regarding the word “group.” This word did not seem to be associated with the Government Representative’s group, because, in another recommendation, a recognized caucus is defined as a group of nine people, while the Government Representative’s team is made up of only three.

The reason for my question is that I do not see the agendas for the committees that will examine the bills in your committee selection model. How will this way of doing things ensure that there will be a balance between those presenting government bills in committee and those testifying? Do we not need to ensure that we have a fair and equitable procedure so that all views are represented?

[English]

**The Hon. the Speaker:** Senator Eggleton, your extended time has expired.

**Senator Eggleton:** Could I get more time, so I can answer these questions?

**Some Hon. Senators:** Agreed.

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

**Hon. Senators:** Agreed.

**The Hon. the Speaker:** Senator Eggleton.

**Senator Eggleton:** You raise an excellent point. When we started into this exercise in drafting up this resolution, what we understood to be the status of the three of you was that you were part of the independents. You classified yourself and I’ve heard you say that you’re an independent. In terms of your membership in the Senate, you are government representatives, yes, but also independent as senators. Read the website. That’s what it says.

Now at the time the independents, in which Senator McCoy is the facilitator, were in fact meeting with a larger number of people than what they meet with today. As of a week or so ago, they did more clearly identify a group of 15 people who are part of the Independent Senators Group. They’ve actually given it a title, a capital letter title. So it’s evolved. Because initially our understanding was that the independent senators were all meeting together. Maybe that was never the case.

It’s now a situation that perhaps has evolved in a different way and needs to be considered differently. Certainly, the part of it that deals with the ex officio involvement in the process of dealing with government legislation in committees would allow for Senator Harder as the Government Representative, or you, or whoever else of your three-member team to be present, but it doesn’t provide for it being a separate group of membership.

I’m open to hearing what you have to say about this, what your own thoughts are about this, and perhaps there will need to be some change in this to accommodate that. Like a lot of this, it evolves; it evolves very rapidly.