



# DEBATES OF THE SENATE

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## **SENATE MODERNIZATION**

Second Report of Special Committee—  
Debate Continued

Speech by:

The Honourable Diane Bellemare

Thursday, February 9, 2017

## THE SENATE

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[Translation]

### SENATE MODERNIZATION

#### SECOND REPORT OF SPECIAL COMMITTEE— DEBATE CONTINUED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Wells, seconded by the Honourable Senator Enverga, for the adoption of the second report (interim) of the Special Senate Committee on Senate Modernization, entitled *Senate Modernization: Moving Forward (Omnibus Bills)*, presented in the Senate on October 4, 2016.

**Hon. Diane Bellemare (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate):** Honourable senators, I rise today to say a few words about the second report of the Special Senate Committee on Senate Modernization.

I agree with the recommendation in the report on omnibus bills. However, I want to make a few comments in order to point out to the newly appointed senators that this issue has already generated a good deal of commentary and been subject to much debate in both chambers. You should know that our Rules and procedures

do not include a clear definition for omnibus bills. There are no rules governing such bills.

According to research by the Library of Parliament, the first omnibus bill was introduced in 1868 and had to do with the railway. It wasn't until 1923 that the omnibus nature of a bill began to stir negative reactions.

As you know, omnibus bills have created tension at the other place as well as here in the Senate. In 2012, for example, Budget Implementation Bill C-38, entitled the Jobs, Growth and Long-Term Prosperity Act, an omnibus bill, triggered a marathon vote at the other place that lasted 22 hours.

The last time that the Senate studied this issue was in February 2014 following a point of order raised by the Honourable Senator Moore as to the acceptability of Bill C-43, which was also a budget implementation bill. The Honourable Senator Kinsella was the Speaker of the Senate at the time.

Omnibus bills can raise important questions about the exercising of our constitutional duties. As I have not completed my study of this matter and as I wish to provide a succinct explanation, I would like to adjourn the debate for the remainder of my time.

(On motion of Senator Bellemare, debate adjourned.)

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