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CANADIAN COMMISSION ON MENTAL HEALTH AND JUSTICE BILL

Second Reading of Bill S-208—
Debate Continued

Question by:

The Honourable Diane Bellemare

Thursday, February 13, 2014

THE SENATE

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[*Translation*]

CANADIAN COMMISSION ON MENTAL HEALTH AND JUSTICE BILL

SECOND READING—DEBATE CONTINUED

Hon. Diane Bellemare: Senator Cowan, what you just said sort of shows the magnitude of the problem. I was wondering whether there were any existing institutions, such as the Public Health Agency of Canada, that could have prevention mandates to address this issue.

Could you tell me whether you have any existing agencies in mind that could incorporate this mission? The issue is obviously very important. Thank you.

[*English*]

Senator Cowan: Thank you, senator, that is a very good question. I have met with the officials of the Mental Health

Commission and had discussions with them about the proposals here. I would hope that they would come; I'm sure they would come and give their point of view as to how they could fit into it. There are many agencies out there trying to do their best. What I've tried to suggest here is what we need because of the magnitude of the problem, and not in any way to denigrate the good work that other agencies are doing, but to demonstrate our commitment as parliamentarians to deal with this problem.

We need a specific vehicle established with legislative underpinning, with a legislative mandate to deal with it. I think that this may not be the perfect vehicle, and there may be a variation of it that will do it. We may be able to adapt the mandate of an existing agency to cover this, but no agency has the precise focus that I am suggesting in this bill. That's the reason I'm bringing it forward.

(On motion of Senator Martin, debate adjourned.)
