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**BILL TO AMEND THE PUBLIC SERVICE LABOUR
RELATIONS ACT, THE PUBLIC SERVICE LABOUR
RELATIONS AND EMPLOYMENT BOARD ACT
AND OTHER ACTS AND TO PROVIDE FOR
CERTAIN OTHER MEASURES**

MESSAGE FROM COMMONS—MOTION FOR CONCURRENCE
IN COMMONS AMENDMENTS AND NON-INSISTENCE UPON
SENATE AMENDMENTS—DEBATE CONTINUED

Speech by:

The Honourable Larry W. Campbell

Thursday, June 1, 2017

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MESSAGE FROM COMMONS—MOTION FOR CONCURRENCE IN COMMONS AMENDMENTS AND NON-INSISTENCE UPON SENATE AMENDMENTS—
DEBATE CONTINUED

Hon. Larry W. Campbell: Honourable senators, I rise to speak to Bill C-7, as amended by the other place. Today, we are giving thoughtful consideration to the response to the amendments proposed here in this place. I am reminded that we are the chamber of sober second thought, not the chamber of sober second decision.

In accepting the amendment to remove the restrictions on what may be included in collective agreements and arbitral awards that are specific to the RCMP, the other place demonstrated its support for the dedicated and proud members of Canada's national police force. It addresses the concerns of over 18,000 RCMP members and reservists who work in 680 detachments across Canada.

This amendment ensures that the employer or any future RCMP member bargaining agent can engage in meaningful discussions in good faith on topics of importance to RCMP members and reservists, and it increases the scope of the issues that can be discussed at the bargaining table. Issues now include transfers and appraisals, and matters commonly associated with harassment and general aspects of workplace wellness, such as the promotion of a respectful workplace and early conflict resolution.

Additionally, the other place also accepted with some modifications the amendment to include a management rights clause as part of the new labour relations regime for RCMP members and reservists. The bill respects the commissioner's authority to manage the RCMP and to ensure the operational integrity of the police force. Consistent with the courts' interpretation, management rights clauses aim to protect the public interest.

With these two measures alone I am confident that the motion before us today addresses the key concerns expressed by senators and, by extension, expressed to senators by members of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police across Canada.

The other place respectfully disagreed with the amendment requiring a secret ballot vote to certify a bargaining agent to represent RCMP members and reservists. The requirement for a secret ballot vote, rather than a specified number of union membership cards duly signed by employees, would make it more difficult for RCMP members and reservists to organize and bargain collectively, should they choose to do so. Instead there is a need to ensure that these members can organize freely and bargain collectively in good faith.

The requirement of a secret ballot vote would also conflict with the provisions of Bill C-4.

Honourable senators, it would be more appropriate that an organization wanting to represent RCMP members should be subject to the same certification processes as other organizations under federal labour relations legislation.

The other place also cannot assent to the expansion of the Public Service Labour Relations and Employment Board's mandate. Expanding this mandate to include all matters pertaining to terms and conditions of employment would result in two different grievance processes that might lead to conflicting decisions.

The RCMP Act already establishes processes to deal with a number of workplace grievances. Allowing the Public Service Labour Relations and Employment Board to hear similar matters would be duplicitous and confusing. I want to state publicly that I do not believe that the Royal Canadian Mounted Police should be under the Public Service Labour Relations Act, but that will be up to them to address.

Honourable senators, the RCMP asks us for respect, and through the hard work of the Defence Committee, Senator Lang and Senator White, I believe their issues were heard.

I won't quote again that "you can't always get what you want," but this is another instance of it.

Members of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police have helped shape this nation, and many have given their lives in service to it. The response to the amendments to Bill C-7 respects that. The response continues to respect the 2015 Supreme Court decision by providing Royal Canadian Mounted Police members and reservists with the ability to pursue their interests through collective bargaining, if they so choose. That case made it clear that RCMP members should also enjoy collective bargaining rights. The response also strengthens Bill C-7 and enshrines these rights in law.

Honourable senators, members of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police work with the goal of serving Canada and protecting Canadians. These are the people who protect the Governor General, the Prime Minister and other ministers of the Crown, visiting royalty, dignitaries and diplomatic missions. These are the people who participate in international policing efforts, who safeguard the integrity of our borders and provide counterterrorism and domestic security. They are the people who enforce our federal laws against commercial crime, counterfeiting, drug trafficking and organized crime.

This bill is to benefit those who protect us.

Honourable senators, I urge you to support this bill and allow Bill C-7 to go forward for Royal Assent.