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# Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration

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EVIDENCE

**Monday, June 2, 2014**

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**Chair**

**Mr. David Tilson**



## Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration

Monday, June 2, 2014

• (1530)

[English]

**The Chair (Mr. David Tilson (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC)):** Good afternoon.

This is the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration, meeting number 30. Today's meeting is televised.

We are in clause-by-clause discussion of Bill C-24, which is an act to amend the Citizenship Act.

Before we start the process, we have four individuals before us.

We have Nicole Girard, director general of the citizenship and multiculturalism branch. Good afternoon to you.

Next is Alexandra Hiles. Is that correct?

**Ms. Alexandra Hiles (Acting Director, Citizenship Program Delivery and Promotion, Department of Citizenship and Immigration):** It's Hiles.

**The Chair:** You're the acting director of citizenship program delivery and promotion.

Karen Hamilton is a lawyer from the Privy Council Office—

**Ms. Karen Hamilton (Counsel, Legal Services, Department of Citizenship and Immigration):** Sorry, I'm from the Department of Justice for CIC.

**The Chair:** Okay.

Also, we have Mary-Ann Hubers, a senior policy analyst.

Members of the committee, these ladies are here to answer any technical questions you may have.

I guess we'll just start at the beginning and see how we do today. We will leave the short title, which is clause 1, until the end, pursuant to Standing Order 75(1), which says we should do that.

(On clause 2)

**The Chair:** We move to clause 2, and we have a proposed amendment by the New Democratic Party.

Madam Blanchette-Lamothe, you have the floor.

[Translation]

**Ms. Lysane Blanchette-Lamothe (Pierrefonds—Dollard, NDP):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We have indeed proposed an amendment to clause 2 of the bill. It deals with the citizenship of second-generation individuals. The

legislation passed in 2009 eliminated these people's ability to access Canadian citizenship. And the NDP has been opposed to the measure ever since.

Bill C-24 on citizenship—

[English]

**The Chair:** I'm sorry. I was remiss.

I think the procedure I'd like to follow when amendments are made is to actually have them read. I think most members have the amendment in front of them. This is a public meeting, and I think we should do that before you start into your rationale for the amendment. That was my fault, so could you read the amendment?

[Translation]

**Ms. Lysane Blanchette-Lamothe:** No problem.

The amendment reads as follows:

That Bill C-24, in Clause 2, be amended

(a) by adding after line 13 on page 1 the following:

“(1.1) Subparagraph 3(1)(f)(iii) of the Act is repealed.

(1.2) The portion of paragraph 3(1)(i) of the Act before subparagraph (i) is replaced by the following:

(i) the person had been a citizen other than by way of grant, ceased to be a citizen for a reason other than the reasons referred to in subparagraphs (f)(i) and (ii), was subsequently granted citizenship before the coming into force of this paragraph under any of the following provisions and, if it was required, he or she took the oath of citizenship:”

(b) by deleting line 36 on page 5 to line 25 on page 8.

(c) by adding after line 16 on page 9 the following:

“(15.1) The portion of paragraph 3(7)(a) of the Act before subparagraph (i) is replaced by the following:

(a) a person referred to in paragraph (1)(c) who was, before the coming into force of this subsection, granted citizenship under any of the following provisions after ceasing to be a citizen by way of grant for any reason other than the reasons referred to in subparagraphs (1)(f)(i) and (ii) is deemed to be a citizen under paragraph 1(c) from the time that he or she ceased to be a citizen:”

Now I will explain the rationale behind my proposed amendment.

Although it may sound a bit dry, the amendment, in a nutshell, is intended to give Canadian citizenship to second-generation children, a right they lost when the 2009 legislation came into force.

Since then, the NDP has viewed the measure as an injustice and believes that Bill C-24 can rectify the situation. So we are proposing an amendment to right the wrong done in 2009, whereby second-generation children lost the right to have Canadian citizenship passed down from their parents.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

• (1535)

[English]

**The Chair:** Debate.

Mr. McCallum.

**Hon. John McCallum (Markham—Unionville, Lib.):** Mr. Chair, we support the NDP amendment because we think it represents an improvement.

We also support the overall clause on lost Canadians, but would just caution that work is not totally done there. There are still some quirky cases that have not been resolved, but it's certainly an improvement.

**The Chair:** Mr. Menegakis.

**Mr. Costas Menegakis (Richmond Hill, CPC):** Mr. Chair, this amendment would provide citizenship to more individuals who currently do not meet the requirements for citizenship, including to persons born abroad beyond the first generation, and it would remove the first-generation limit.

The government does not support this amendment because it would extend citizenship to persons born beyond the first generation who do not necessarily have a closer attachment to Canada. This prevents the passing on of Canadian citizenship to those with little or no attachment to Canada—the original clause—so we would prefer to keep it that way.

The provision in the bill addresses most cases of lost Canadians. Any remaining exceptional cases will be examined on a case-by-case basis, and there may be a case on occasion for a discretionary grant of citizenship under the Citizenship Act.

For those reasons, we cannot support this amendment.

**The Chair:** All those in favour of the amendment?

**An hon. member:** A recorded vote, please.

(Amendment negated: nays 5; yeas 4)

(Clause 2 agreed to on division)

(On clause 3)

**The Chair:** We have a Liberal amendment, LIB-1.

Mr. McCallum.

**Hon. John McCallum:** Mr. Chair, the technical amendment is:

That Bill C-24, in Clause 3, be amended

(a) by deleting lines 7 to 22 on page 11

(b) by deleting lines 31 and 32 on page 14.

In general, we oppose the government on eligibility requirements for citizenship. We think that by increasing the barriers to citizenship the government is devaluing citizenship and sending a message to prospective new Canadians that they are not welcome here.

On the specific amendment, we delete the intent to reside provisions of clause 3. We're opposed to these provisions because this committee has been repeatedly warned by lawyers that these provisions are almost certainly unconstitutional.

Minister Alexander has effectively told us that these would be for show and nothing more, but he was later contradicted by his own officials, so it's not clear that the government itself understands these provisions, and we don't think they should be in the bill. That's the foundation of our proposed amendment.

• (1540)

**The Chair:** Madam Blanchette-Lamothe.

[Translation]

**Ms. Lysane Blanchette-Lamothe:** On the subject of the declaration of intent to reside in the country, I agree that Bill C-24 contains a flaw. A tremendous number of witnesses said they were against the declaration of intent to reside.

If the committee is serious about the study that was done and the expert testimony heard, it cannot turn a blind eye to the major flaws tied to the declaration of intent to reside. One concern the experts raised was that citizenship could be revoked if someone declared their intent to reside and then, owing to an unforeseen circumstance in the future, had to leave the country after obtaining their citizenship.

The minister said that the current wording of the bill wasn't intended for that purpose and that he didn't view the declaration of intent to reside in that way. According to experts, however, including Canadian Bar Association representatives, regardless of what the minister intended, the bill in its current form could result in someone's citizenship being revoked, precisely because of the declaration of intent to reside.

[English]

**The Chair:** Debate.

Mr. Menegakis.

**Mr. Costas Menegakis:** Mr. Chair, the amendment would seek to remove the intent to reside requirement from citizenship grant applicants. It would also remove the minister's ability to waive the intent to reside in Canada requirement in the case of minors.

Mr. Chair, the government does not support this amendment because the requirement in the bill sends a strong signal that citizenship is for those who intend to make Canada their home, which would help deepen their attachment to the country and deter citizens of convenience. Once newcomers become citizens, Mr. Chair, we all know that they enjoy all the rights of citizenship common to all Canadians.

For those reasons, we will be opposing this amendment.

(Amendment negated: nays 5; yeas 4)

**The Chair:** Ms. May, hello.

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Hello, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** You have a proposed amendment. We do allow for that, as you know, and I'll just clarify it. I know you've appeared in other committees as an independent member—

**Ms. Elizabeth May:** As the Green Party member, that is.

**The Chair:** —and I'm not going to read our Standing Order 12, except the last paragraph. You are allowed to make the amendment; in fact, it's deemed to have been made. This is for other members:

(c) during the clause-by-clause consideration of a Bill, the Chair shall allow a Member who filed suggested amendments, pursuant to paragraph (a), an opportunity to make brief representations in support of them.

That's always an interesting question, what brief means. This whole process of clause-by-clause consideration of Bill C-24 is time-allocated. That's essentially what the motion that was passed said. So I'm going to allow for an amendment.

You're allowed a minute to make representations to the committee, Madam.

• (1545)

**Ms. Elizabeth May:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I see nothing but friends around this table, but I do want to put on the record once again that I'm here not because the committee has allowed me as much as that somebody on high passed the same motion for every committee, to require that, should I want to make amendments, I'm no longer permitted to make them at report stage, and any MP in my position, either representing a smaller party or serving as an independent, must report to committee on the timetable we receive from the committee.

I will be brief. I'm getting used to this rule now—60 seconds per amendment—and I'm using up my time, so let me move on to the amendment itself. I put on the record that I don't like this process very much, but I'm here, and I hope it won't be unpleasant for any of the rest of you, because you're all my friends.

I'm trying again—as previous amendments have tried to do—to clarify the intent to reside section of the bill. We don't want to put a permanent resident who wishes to stay as a citizen in a position where they have the burden of proof of intent to reside. Therefore, my amendment is very straightforward. It's based on a suggestion from the Canadian Association of Refugee Lawyers. It is a marginal improvement only, to change the language that says “intends, if granted citizenship” to “has expressed the intention, if granted citizenship”. This will make it much clearer and it will not require the minister to divine the individual permanent resident's intentions. It is consistent with what the minister said before committee in response to a number of members' questions. I would hope that this might be accepted as a clarification consistent with the minister's testimony before this committee.

**The Chair:** You got a minute and three quarters, there. That's all right.

Debate.

Mr. Menegakis.

**Mr. Costas Menegakis:** Mr. Chair, the government does not support this amendment because, as I said earlier, the requirement in the bill sends a strong signal that citizenship is for those who intend to make Canada their home. We want to deter those seeking to become citizens of convenience, while at the same time not affect the mobility rights, of course, that all Canadian citizens enjoy today.

**The Chair:** Mr. McCallum.

**Hon. John McCallum:** Mr. Chair, I would support the amendment. I'd rather see this clause gone altogether, and I think my colleague would as well. However, I think it is an improvement. I think the government's position is illogical, because they seem to be

saying that the minister and the parliamentary secretary both said that once you become a citizen, you have full rights of citizenship, in which case it doesn't apply.

We've gone through this before. I guess a majority government has the right to be illogical, so I will support the amendment.

**The Chair:** Mr. Menegakis.

**Mr. Costas Menegakis:** Mr. Chair, we've heard repeatedly from Canadians that citizenship should be granted to those who intend to live in this country. Canadians are not illogical. We represent them here.

**The Chair:** All those in favour of the amendment?

No, Ms. May, you don't get to vote.

**Ms. Elizabeth May:** I know. I'm just hoping it gets counted.

**The Chair:** Nice try.

(Amendment negatived [See *Minutes of Proceedings*])

**The Chair:** Madam Blanchette-Lamothe, I'm going to change my mind about reading the amendments. You're right; they are boring. I think that everyone making a speech will say what the amendment is. We all have copies, so I'm going to change my mind, which I do from time to time.

The next amendment is from Mr. McCallum, LIB-2.

**Hon. John McCallum:** Mr. Chair, I'm glad that I don't have to read it, because it's very simple. We propose returning the language testing requirements to the status quo, which is ages 18 to 55. In particular, we think it's unnecessary and somewhat mean-spirited to impose language tests on those aged 55 to 64 because they could be just as good citizens as anyone else. For those of that age coming from a certain country, whose English may not be the best, it's likely their children and grandchildren will speak perfect English.

We object to this as yet another unnecessary barrier to citizenship.

• (1550)

**The Chair:** Madam Blanchette-Lamothe.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Lysane Blanchette-Lamothe:** I'd like to discuss the age at which the language and knowledge testing is administered. Most of those who appeared before the committee talked about the problems that could arise in that connection. For that reason, I am going to support the amendment.

Later, you will see that the NDP has proposed an amendment to that end, and for more or less the same reasons.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Mr. Menegakis.

**Mr. Costas Menegakis:** Mr. Chair, this amendment proposes to decrease the upper age limit from 65 to 55 for applicants to demonstrate adequate knowledge of one of our two official languages in this country. We really cannot support it. The government will not be supporting the amendment.

We believe that an adequate knowledge of one of Canada's official languages, as well as knowledge of Canada and the responsibilities and privileges of Canadian citizenship, helps immigrants to successfully integrate into Canadian society. It makes them better prepared as they assume their responsibilities of citizenship, and provides a better opportunity for more successful outcomes for them.

By increasing the age limit at the upper end to 64, the act better reflects the age limit of working Canadians, Mr. Chair, and helps ensure that immigrants are able to find employment to support themselves and their families.

This amendment would go against the objective of the act, which is to reinforce the value of Canadian citizenship. The government will be opposing this amendment.

(Amendment negated [See *Minutes of Proceedings*])

**The Chair:** Next is New Democratic Party amendment NDP-2.

Madam Blanchette-Lamothe.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Lysane Blanchette-Lamothe:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

As I mentioned earlier, according to all the input we heard from experts and those on the ground working with citizenship applicants and newcomers, the only conclusion that can be drawn is that the age for the testing requirement is entirely arbitrary.

My colleague just said we need to make sure that immigrants are able to integrate into Canadian society. If that is indeed the goal of this provision, it has been completely lost. This has nothing to do with immigrants, but people who have been living in Canada for a number of years and are seeking Canadian citizenship. So this isn't directly tied to integration.

My amendment proposes that the age limit for the language requirement remain at 55, instead of being raised to 65, as the Conservatives are proposing in Bill C-24.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Ms. Sitsabaiesan.

**Ms. Rathika Sitsabaiesan (Scarborough—Rouge River, NDP):** Mr. Chair, we're talking about amendment NDP-2. I will be supporting the NDP amendment, because we've had witness after witness after witness.... I think this is the one where I was doing a poll of many of our witnesses who came before this committee. This is about the value of permanent residents in this country and the value of the time of people in their pre-PR time in this country.

We've had many people testify that international students, for example, who come in through the Canada experience class program of immigration, spend at least four years here as international students doing their undergraduate degree, let's say, and usually they are working here and paying taxes. They're integrating and learning life as Canadians in our universities or in our colleges. Bill C-24 is saying that those people don't have any value and that their time spent here in Canada doesn't have any value.

This amendment actually makes it so that their time during their pre-PR time is valued. We need to make sure of that for people who are coming in through the experience class, such as the international

students, or even the live-in caregivers, who, depending on their arrangement with their employer and their work permit, are spending years here raising our children in this country. Yet we're telling them that their time here in Canada—the taxes they pay to this country, their integration with our society, whether they're volunteering in our communities, our hospitals, or our nursing homes, whatever it might be—has no value. That's not right. That's why I will be supporting amendment NDP-2, which says that all of these people do have value and that their time spent in Canada does have value in their pre-PR time.

• (1555)

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Sitsabaiesan.

Mr. McCallum.

**Hon. John McCallum:** Well, I think my colleague might have actually been speaking about amendment LIB-3, which has to do with permanent resident time while in Canada. I think this NDP amendment has to do with giving time to permanent residents working for Canadian companies overseas. We had a Liberal amendment very similar to this, which is superseded by the NDP one, so we will be supporting this NDP amendment.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. McCallum.

The bells are ringing...*For Me and My Gal*.... I think it's a half-hour bell. We will return after the vote. I don't know whether it's one vote or more.

**Mr. Costas Menegakis:** Let's deal with this amendment.

**The Chair:** Well, we'll try it.

Is there unanimous consent?

**An hon. member:** For what, Mr. Chair?

**The Chair:** It's to finish this amendment.

Do I have unanimous consent? I have to have it to proceed.

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Chair:** Mr. Menegakis.

**Mr. Costas Menegakis:** I was a little perplexed with the explanation of the members from the NDP, particularly Ms. Blanchette-Lamothe, because I don't think she was describing this particular amendment.

As I read amendment NDP-2 before me, Mr. Chair, the amendment would allow time spent outside of the country by permanent residents for professional reasons to count towards residency requirements. That's the amendment NDP-2 I have before me. If that's the amendment we're discussing here and not the explanation I heard, the government will not be supporting the amendment.

We believe that a six-year window to accumulate four years of physical presence provides flexibility to accommodate applicants whose work or personal circumstances from time to time require them to travel outside of the country. All applicants will be able to accumulate absences of up to two years within the qualifying period. We believe the bill provides enough flexibility for that, and therefore, we will not be supporting amendment NDP-2.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Lysane Blanchette-Lamothe:** As my colleague mentioned, I was talking about the wrong amendment. There are so many I got confused. My apologies.

The amendment currently before the committee would amend how the amount of time spent in Canada is calculated for individuals who travel outside the country for professional reasons. That would include airplane pilots or salespeople who travel abroad for work.

Many permanent residents have to travel for work, and it is extremely beneficial to Canadians for them to do so, especially in the case of airplane pilots. But, in its current form, Bill C-24 would penalize these individuals for time spent outside Canada, even for professional reasons. The NDP finds that unacceptable and believes the situation has to be rectified. These are working individuals who are doing what is expected of them as future citizens, and they shouldn't be penalized for that.

Thank you for giving me a chance to correct myself.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** I enjoyed both presentations.

Is there any further debate?

Madame Clerk, could we have a recorded vote on New Democratic Party amendment number NDP-2.

(Amendment negatived: nays 5; yeas 4 [See *Minutes of Proceedings*])

•(1600)

**The Chair:** When we return, we will proceed with Mr. McCallum's Liberal amendment LIB-3.

We will suspend.

• \_\_\_\_\_ (Pause) \_\_\_\_\_

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•(1640)

**The Chair:** Ladies and gentlemen, we're back at it again.

We finished with the New Democratic Party amendment NDP-2, and we now have Liberal amendment LIB-3.

Mr. McCallum has the floor.

**Hon. John McCallum:** Mr. Chair, this is the one area where I think the government might conceivably give a little bit of ground, but we shall soon find out.

This amendment has to do with the time put towards becoming citizens that is credited to international students or temporary foreign workers before they become permanent residents.

Up until now they have been given 50% credit. I think this law would take away all of that credit. I think we could agree that international students in particular represent very good prospects for Canadian citizenship in the sense that they're well educated; they've been in Canada for a while; they have often worked in Canada; and there are many other countries competing for them. This becomes a competitive disadvantage if we make them less welcome.

Our proposal is to keep the status quo, whereby they get 50% credit for their time in Canada as pre-permanent residents as a partial credit to their time before they can become citizens.

(Amendment negatived [See *Minutes of Proceedings*])

**The Chair:** We're on Liberal amendment LIB-4.

Mr. McCallum.

•(1645)

**Hon. John McCallum:** I believe that's the same as NDP amendment NDP-2, but if you want to vote on it, I'll just repeat it and say it's the same as amendment NDP-2.

I don't know if we are there. Are we?

**The Chair:** We're at Liberal amendment LIB-4.

**Hon. John McCallum:** I believe, Mr. Chair, that Liberal amendment LIB-4 is the same as NDP amendment NDP-2, which has to do with people outside Canada employed by a Canadian company being credited with time towards permanent residency. The government has already voted against amendment NDP-2, and this is effectively the same thing.

**The Chair:** It's close. I'm declaring it in order.

**Hon. John McCallum:** Okay.

(Amendment negatived [See *Minutes of Proceedings*])

**The Chair:** Ms. May, you have an amendment, private member's amendment PV-2.

**Ms. Elizabeth May:** Yes.

Actually, the PV, interestingly enough, stands for *Parti vert*. There is a lot of confusion about my status, and I love to clarify it for people, that—

**The Chair:** Okay, you're going to use up your minute.

**Ms. Elizabeth May:** Am I starting my minute? Well let me go quickly, then.

**The Chair:** Well, I'm going to say that I've looked at your amendment, and I'll call you whatever you want me to call you.

**Ms. Elizabeth May:** Green Party, *Parti vert*...

**The Chair:** Green Party it is.

We're talking about Green Party amendments PV-2 and PV-3. I've looked at them and I'm going to rule them inadmissible. I believe, Mr. Méla, the legislative clerk, has spoken to you.

For the record, I happen to agree with the legislative clerk. One of the goals of clause 3 of Bill C-24 is to provide faster access to Canadian citizenship for permanent residents who are enrolled in or attached to or seconded by the Canadian Armed Forces. The amendment speaks about permanent residents who are not part of the Canadian Armed Forces, and therefore it goes beyond the scope of the bill. In that case, we refer to the procedure book of O'Brien and Bosc, page 766, which says:

An amendment to a bill that was referred to a committee after second reading is out of order if it is beyond the scope and principle of the bill.

I make the same ruling for Green Party amendment PV-3, and therefore I declare that the Green Party amendments PV-2 and PV-3 are inadmissible.

We now move to Liberal amendment LIB-5.

**Ms. Lysane Blanchette-Lamothe:** Mr. Chair, on a point of order, I have an amendment, which you don't have in your hands now, that might go before the Liberal amendment. It's for page 14, lines 5 to 14. I wonder if I should present it now or if you want me to wait until later on.

**The Chair:** Do all members of the committee have it?

**Ms. Lysane Blanchette-Lamothe:** They will.

• (1650)

**The Chair:** They will have it.

I'm going to suspend for a moment to let all members digest your proposal, and then we'll continue.

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\_\_\_\_\_ (Pause) \_\_\_\_\_

**The Chair:** I understand you are going to be proposing three amendments.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Lysane Blanchette-Lamothe:** Precisely.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** For the record, we will describe the first one as NDP-A6631874. This will be your first amendment. I think all members have copies of it, so you can tell us what you want.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Lysane Blanchette-Lamothe:** Mr. Chair, I'll keep it brief for this amendment since I talked a bit about it earlier.

The amendment would delete lines 23 to 26 on page 11, which pertain to the age limit under which people are subjected to the language and knowledge tests.

As I said earlier, Bill C-24 seeks to raise the age limit for the testing requirement to 65. For the reasons I mentioned earlier, my amendment seeks to keep the age limit where it currently stands, at 55.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Debate.

Mr. Menegakis.

**Mr. Costas Menegakis:** Mr. Chair, as I read this, the amendment would repeal completely the requirement to demonstrate knowledge of one of the two official languages, or some ability to speak one of the two official languages, for adults. This amendment is totally in contrast to what we're trying to accomplish in this bill, which is to give people the opportunity to obtain a certain proficiency in one of the two official languages so that they can be better integrated as newcomers into Canadian society.

I don't believe that there's any way we can support this particular amendment, so we will not be supporting it.

**The Chair:** Mr. McCallum.

**Hon. John McCallum:** Well, in listening to the NDP, I thought it was very similar to our amendment, which opposed the raising of the age and recommended the status quo, but if it is, as Mr. Menegakis

says, to have no language tests for anyone, then I would agree and I would oppose it. But I don't know if that is the case or not.

**The Chair:** We'll vote on amendment NDP-A6631874.

**An hon. member:** A recorded vote.

**The Chair:** It's a recorded vote, Madam Clerk.

(Amendment negated: nays 6; yeas 3 [See *Minutes of Proceedings*])

**The Chair:** Madam Blanchette-Lamothe, you have a second amendment, which we will call NDP-B6635060.

You have the floor.

• (1655)

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Lysane Blanchette-Lamothe:** Thank you.

Along the same lines as the previous one, this amendment deals with the knowledge and language testing that Bill C-24 would impose on youth between 14 and 18 years of age.

The committee heard from a number of experts who voiced their concerns and opposition to this part of the clause, for very obvious reasons. Even department officials weren't able to tell us what would happen to children who failed the test, but whose parents had passed it. The only answer we were given was that it would be a rare occurrence.

It may be a rare occurrence, but it could happen. And the committee did not receive a satisfactory answer regarding what would happen to these children in this case. If a child in a family doesn't receive citizenship but their siblings and parents do, will the family have more trouble at the border when leaving Canada for a trip?

UNICEF representatives were among witnesses who voiced those types of concerns to the committee. They objected to imposing language testing on 14 to 18 year olds. A number of other groups and organizations were also opposed to the measure, including the Metro Toronto Chinese and Southeast Asian Legal Clinic, the Inter-Clinic Immigration Working Group, the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community of Canada, the Canadian Council for Refugees and OCASI. All of these witnesses appearing before the committee denounced the measure in Bill C-24 targeting 14 to 18 year olds.

There is a long list of people who object to the provision. And that is why the NDP wants to propose an amendment to prevent children in that age range from being subjected to the testing; if they do not pass, they will be denied citizenship, while their siblings and parents could receive it.

That is my amendment.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Ms. Sitsabaiesan.



**Ms. Rathika Sitsabaiesan:** Mr. Chair, I want to add to what my colleague has mentioned. She outlined how many of the witnesses spoke to how this is unfair. I want to go through a bit of what UNICEF mentioned, because we are signatories to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and by creating this situation through Bill C-24, we are creating a situation whereby children may be separated from their parents.

If parents here in Canada don't pass the test and are not able to become citizens, but the child passes it, or vice versa, then we are effectively separating a child from its parents. According to all definitions that I am aware of, "under 18" is the definition of a child, and in this bill, this government is effectively trying to say that children 14 and above are actually not being considered as children and not being treated as children and given that special treatment.

We need to make sure that we have a child rights-based approach to the legislation that we are putting forth and the changes we are making, because we are a state party to the convention. UNICEF clearly outlined that in their presentation and in their brief they sent to us. The changes being proposed here are actually in contravention of quite a number of the articles of the convention that we are engaged in.

In UNICEF's brief, they talk about article 1, which talks about the definition of the child, and that's the age piece we're in breach of with this bill. Article 2 is on equality and non-discrimination for children, which we're in breach of. Article 3 is on the best interests of the child, which we're not looking out for. Article 5 is on the integrity of the family, which we are in breach of. Article 6 is on the survival and development of the child, which we are in breach of. Article 7 addresses birth registration, nationality, and protection from statelessness, and we are creating a situation whereby these children might become stateless. Article 8 relates to family relations. Article 9 is the protection from arbitrary separation from their parents, which we would be in breach of. Finally, there is article 10, which is family reunification.

I'm of the understanding that because we are a party to the convention these are all issues that are important, and they are really fundamental to who we are as Canadians, which is that we look out for the protection of our children. There are far too many articles of the convention that we are in contravention of with the changes that Bill C-24 creates. That's why I will be supporting the NDP amendment, which protects the rights of the child through citizenship. We're trying to ensure that there's a child rights-based approach to Canadian citizenship.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

• (1700)

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Mr. Menegakis.

**Mr. Costas Menegakis:** Mr. Chair, I listened carefully to what the members of the NDP had to say on this issue. The amendment, in effect, would remove the new requirement for minors—at pages 14 and 17—to meet a language requirement before they can apply for Canadian citizenship. These are youngsters who would have been in this country for potentially four out of the last six years, and in the four of the last six years the opposition would have us believe that

they would not have obtained a level of some proficiency in English or French.

I would suggest, in addition, that it would repeal the minister's ability to waive the requirement for minors. Minors who are in this country for four years would have a proficiency level in one of the two official languages that would be considerably higher than the minimum requirement under the bill.

Primarily for the fact that we do believe it will help those 14-year-old to 17-year-old youngsters moving forward to better integrate into society, they should have a level of knowledge of English or French for them to do better in their studies in school and work. Moving forward in their lives, they need to be able to speak an elementary level of either of Canada's two official languages.

We will not be supporting this amendment.

**The Chair:** Madam Blanchette-Lamothe.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Lysane Blanchette-Lamothe:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I want to thank my colleague for making that argument, which I was referring to earlier. In his opinion, children should have acquired the minimum language skills needed, so he doesn't understand our objection to the testing.

It's important to consider the issue from the opposite perspective. It is true that, after having lived in Canada for a number of years, minors who would have attended school in one of the two official languages should, under normal circumstances, have attained a certain level of language proficiency; I don't disagree with that. But what will happen to those who don't? That is the problem.

When a major organization like UNICEF raises concerns that Canada could be in violation of a convention it has signed, they cannot be taken lightly. That is cause for serious reflection.

Even though the vast majority of minors will already have the proficiency level needed to pass the test, we still need to ask what will come of the small minority who don't, either because of stress, a difficult family situation, an undiagnosed learning disability or any other reason. A 14-year-old should not have to bear that burden. And the opposition party isn't the only one who feels that way, so too, do the people at UNICEF. It's absolutely appalling for Canada not to take these concerns seriously.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Ms. Sitsabaiesan, and then Mr. Menegakis.

**Ms. Rathika Sitsabaiesan:** Mr. Chair, I spoke of the UNICEF brief earlier. There are recommendations that are clearly outlined by UNICEF in their brief, and I'm going to read recommendation number three for the committee so that everybody is aware of it. The recommendation is as follows:

That the proposed amendments requiring children aged 14 to 18 to successfully complete both language and knowledge testing be removed altogether or, at a minimum, that testing be adjusted in a manner appropriate to such children's age and/or experience.

That's very clear. That is what UNICEF is recommending, and we're not doing that in Bill C-24. This amendment proposed by the NDP, amendment B as we're calling it, actually does that. We're listening to what the witnesses have had to say.

I know that Madam Blanchette-Lamothe went over the other agencies who suggested the same thing, such as the Metro Toronto Chinese and Southeast Asian Legal Clinic, and OCASI. I think the Canadian Association of Refugee Lawyers might have also. I don't remember off the top of my head; there are a lot of briefs that have come to this committee.

We're also not taking into account the migratory paths that these children may have taken before they came to Canada. If you were a child of war, or of many precarious situations that these children may have come through, they may take more than the four years that a child who hasn't had a more precarious, or more of a—I don't want to say that one situation is better or worse than the other. We have to be looking at the fact that these are children, and these children's minds and lives are impacted in different ways than those of adults.

It seems the government is going to oppose NDP amendment B, which would protect these children. It just doesn't make sense. We're saying that it doesn't matter how this young child's mind is impacted by their migratory path; we're saying that it's the same requirements for them as for all adults who come into this country. We're trying to get them citizenship, and it's just not fair.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

• (1705)

**The Chair:** Mr. Menegakis.

**Mr. Costas Menegakis:** Mr. Chair, I think the members opposite are discounting the fact that language requirements can always be waived on humanitarian and compassionate grounds. If they're referring to those few cases where there are humanitarian and compassionate grounds, there's a provision for that in the bill, for sure.

Mr. Chair, the overwhelming majority of 57,000 students who participated in writing the citizenship test based on the "Discover Canada" guide in 2014 passed the test. Actually, adequate knowledge of either English or French has been a requirement for citizenship since the Citizenship Act was first introduced in 1947. We don't think it's too much to ask that a 14-year-old, 15-year-old, 16-year-old, 17-year-old, have a basic language skill in either English or French.

As I said before, the opposition's arguments have not convinced us to change our minds, and we are not going to be supporting the amendment.

**The Chair:** Mr. McCallum.

**Hon. John McCallum:** Mr. Chair, my understanding is that humanitarian and compassionate grounds appeals succeed maybe 2%, 3%, 4% of the time, so I don't think it's prudent to put the fate of these children in the hands of a mechanism that hardly ever works. Therefore, I will be voting with the NDP.

**An hon. member:** Of course.

**Hon. John McCallum:** No, I didn't last time, but I am this time.

**The Chair:** We're voting on NDP-B6635060.

(Amendment negatived: nays 5; yeas 4 [See *Minutes of Proceedings*])

**The Chair:** Madam Blanchette-Lamothe, we have a third amendment, which you have put on notice. We're going to call it NDP-C6631911.

You have the floor.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Lysane Blanchette-Lamothe:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We drafted this amendment based on the testimony of two witness groups we heard from in committee—the Canadian Council for Refugees and the Inter-Clinic Immigration Working Group. According to those two groups of experts we invited to this committee, the minister should not have the discretionary power to grant an exemption on humanitarian grounds. That exemption should rather be granted automatically when there is evidence of compassionate grounds or under human rights obligations.

In a way, this amendment proposes to reduce the minister's discretion to decide whether to get involved or not. We propose instead that language and knowledge tests be automatically waived on valid compassionate grounds or under human rights obligations.

This is very important to us. The representatives of the two organizations I mentioned made very compelling presentations to this effect. They are very knowledgeable about human rights advocacy and are very familiar with compassionate grounds. We have faith in their expertise in this area. That is why we are proposing an amendment that is in line with those experts' testimony and recommendations.

• (1710)

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Mr. Menegakis.

**Mr. Costas Menegakis:** Mr. Chair, this amendment appears to attempt to make a waiver by the minister mandatory. They're using the word "shall" where there are compassionate grounds, human rights obligations. Our analysis is that compassionate grounds are already assessed on a case-by-case basis. Therefore, this amendment is unnecessary, as far as we're concerned, and we're not going to be supporting it.

**The Chair:** Mr. McCallum.

**Hon. John McCallum:** Mr. Chair, my impression is that, over time, more and more of the department is becoming increasingly the fiefdom of the minister, who has the power, without regulation, for his office to change just about any immigration category and to run the whole system, but with very few checks and balances.

This amendment serves to reduce that discretion, and I certainly think that is a good move.

**The Chair:** We're voting on New Democratic Party amendment NDP-C6631911, and yes, it will be a recorded vote.

(Amendment negatived: nays 5; yeas 4 [See *Minutes of Proceedings*])

**The Chair:** Mr. McCallum, on Liberal amendment LIB-5.

**Hon. John McCallum:** Mr. Chair, this is what you might call a technical amendment which flows from our position to remove the intent to reside provision on which we've already voted, but there's another part of the bill which we had to amend in order to remove that provision. This is just part 2 of our effort to remove the intent to reside provision from the bill.

(Amendment negatived [See *Minutes of Proceedings*])

**The Chair:** Next is New Democratic Party amendment NDP-3.

Madam Blanchette-Lamothe.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Lysane Blanchette-Lamothe:** I think that amendment NDP-3 is related to amendment NDP-1. Since amendment NDP-1 was not adopted, I will not move amendment NDP-3.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Okay, it's withdrawn.

(Amendment withdrawn)

**The Chair:** I'm going to try something and see how we go here.

Shall clause 3 carry?

**An hon. member:** No, debate.

**The Chair:** We will have debate on clause 3.

Madam Blanchette-Lamothe, you have the floor.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Lysane Blanchette-Lamothe:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We have finished the consideration of the amendments to clause 3. However, clause 3 is huge and contains a number of changes, as you have seen. A variety of amendments have been proposed to clause 3.

I want to begin by saying that the NDP supports several elements of clause 3. For instance, we agree that access to citizenship should be facilitated for permanent residents who have served in the Canadian Armed Forces. We have agreed with that aspect since the bill was introduced, at first reading, and we still agree with it.

We also support the fact that the bill makes certain clarifications regarding the length of residence. Indicating the number of days helps people who apply for citizenship be aware of the eligibility criteria in terms of residence. The NDP also agrees with that.

Those are just two examples. Clause 3 is broad. I just wanted to point out that the NDP supports several aspects of that provision.

Unfortunately, as we debated earlier when the amendments were put forward, clause 3 has many shortcomings. Consequently, the NDP cannot vote in favour of that provision, despite some of its worthy elements.

One of the most significant shortcomings or aberrations, if I may say so, is the declaration of intent to reside in Canada. I would like to mention a few groups that expressed their disagreement with that aspect of Bill C-24.

Representatives of the Canadian Council for Refugees appeared before us and presented their brief. They said they were against the declaration of intent to reside. OCACI, the Ontario Council of

Agencies Serving Immigrants, and the Canadian Association of Refugee Lawyers also said they were against that requirement, as did the Inter-Clinic Immigration Working Group and Parkdale Community Legal Services. The Metro Toronto Chinese and Southeast Asian Legal Clinic and the Canadian Bar Association were of the same opinion.

I will not list all of them. However, you will understand that the vast majority of the witnesses who have appeared to speak to Bill C-24 expressed explicit disagreement with this element regarding the declaration of intent to reside.

Moreover, lawyer groups, such as the Canadian Bar Association, questioned the constitutionality of this aspect of the bill's clause 3.

When the minister appeared before us to discuss this bill, he answered some questions specifically about this element. He said it was not his intention to use the declaration of intent to reside to revoke the citizenship of someone who would no longer reside in Canada after becoming a citizen. So it is not the minister's intention to use this element in such a way. However, can we rely solely on a minister's intention and good faith to gauge the worthiness of a bill's provision? The answer is clearly no.

If that is the minister's intention, we have to make sure that the bill's wording reflects it appropriately. The current wording makes it seem like, if someone must declare their intent to reside in Canada, they could have their citizenship revoked under the pretext of having obtained it by making a false statement. This is not only the opinion of the NDP, but also of a number of experts I mentioned earlier.

A door is being left partially open, and that is very dangerous. This requirement could be unconstitutional.

Let's consider the following case. Members of a family have obtained their citizenship. Before becoming citizens, they had to declare their intent to reside in Canada. However, a few months after they obtained their citizenship, a relative living abroad became very ill. Some family members had to go to the other country to take care of the sick relative, as we know perfectly well Canada is unlikely to allow an ill relative to come live here. So those individuals, who may have made the declaration in good faith, could be forced to leave the country. In addition, owing to the bill's wording, those individuals could have their citizenship revoked.

This raises many concerns, in addition to creating instability in the plans of individuals who become Canadian citizens. That's a huge problem.

We cannot allow Bill C-24 to be passed as it is currently worded without ensuring that the minister's supposed intention is expressed properly. Legal experts who have testified before this committee are almost unanimous in saying that this is not the case.

For that reason, we will clearly not be able to support clause 3 of Bill C-24. There is reason for concern because, if the Conservatives support the bill as it is worded, precedent could be created. That would allow the minister to revoke the citizenship of an individual who, after obtaining their citizenship, may leave the country for potentially legitimate reasons.

That's only one example. I could go on about this for a long time. However, I have summarized the main reasons for the NDP's strong opposition to clause 3.

• (1720)

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Ms. Sitsabaiesan.

**Ms. Rathika Sitsabaiesan:** Mr. Chair, I don't want to repeat too many of the arguments that my colleague made, but I was just flipping through the bill and clause 3 is actually a giant clause. It's about five pages long. It touches many subject areas. It touches the residency requirement. We're talking about the physical presence of people since becoming a permanent resident before they can qualify for the citizenship application. It increases the presence to four years out of six years from three years, which is currently the requirement.

It talks about the eligibility, when a person becomes a permanent resident, the time to count, so the pre-PR time that I spoke about earlier. I will come back to that.

It also touches on tax returns and submitting tax returns.

It talks about the age and language requirements. It changes the age for the language requirement and the knowledge test. I've already spoken about the changing of the age, and how children are unfairly treated by this clause, but I didn't get a chance to speak about how older people in the community are also being unfairly treated. I don't have the study and the witness testimony in front of me to tell you off the top of my head, but there are many studies that show that later in life it is more difficult to acquire a language. Now the government is making it more difficult for people to qualify for their citizenship test based on increasing the age requirement for the language test.

Many changes have been requested and suggestions and recommendations have been made by many of our witnesses. Almost all of our witnesses who came before the committee at one point or another suggested a change to clause 3. Many of those changes were suggested by our expert witnesses, whether it's the Canadian Bar Association or OCASI, the Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants, or the Pre-PR Time Counts group, or local legal clinics.

I come from Toronto. The Metro Toronto Chinese and South Asian Legal Clinic mentioned the changes that they wanted to see happen. The South Asian Women's Centre, all of these organizations, and I know there's more, mentioned how they wanted to see these changes. We proposed these changes. Many of these changes were proposed by these community organizations, national boards like the Canadian Bar Association, and international organizations. Representatives of international organizations, like UNICEF and UNHCR, wanted to present before this committee but didn't have an opportunity. Amnesty International wanted to make a presentation before this committee, but didn't have an opportunity because the Conservative members on the committee didn't want to extend the time to see more witnesses.

We have local, small community organizations, provincial organizations like OCASI, national organizations like the Canadian Bar Association, and international organizations, all saying that this clause cannot be passed as is and needs to be amended. We proposed

those reasonable propositions. We're not just opposing the Conservatives' proposals that they're bringing forward in this bill. We are making reasonable propositions that are sound, and are supported by multiple organizations and multiple levels of organizations, yet the Conservatives have shot down all of them.

In good conscience, I cannot support this clause as is without any amendments. Mr. Chair, this is one of the many reasons I will be opposing clause 3, because it's not amended at all.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

• (1725)

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Mr. McCallum.

**Hon. John McCallum:** Mr. Chair, I wasn't aware that votes on clauses were supposed to be preceded by lengthy speeches of one's views, but since the NDP has given such a rendition, I will say a few words. I will be brief, perhaps as fitting for a member of the third party to not be too long.

Basically my objections to clause 3 come in two parts.

One, it is likely unconstitutional. The lawyers have told us that, particularly with respect to intent to reside. There are two options. Either it is meaningless, which would be the case for the version presented by the minister, where he says it's totally irrelevant the minute the person becomes a citizen, in which case it's probably not unconstitutional, but neither does it mean anything—it's totally redundant—or, in the interpretation of the minister's officials and most of the lawyers that we heard from, it is indeed likely to be unconstitutional. On either of those grounds, it should be opposed.

The second and arguably more fundamental point is that

[*Translation*]

we disagree with the government's assumption that, the more difficult it is to obtain a citizenship, the more valuable that citizenship becomes. No logical argument confirms that premise.

[*English*]

There's no evidence to think that the more you erect barriers to citizenship, the more valuable that citizenship becomes. We have no evidence that if people have to wait for years and do incredible feats to become a citizen, they will subsequently become better citizens than if they didn't have to do those things.

Indeed, I would say the opposite. When you give the minister dictatorial powers to remove a Canadian citizenship, you rather devalue the citizenship. You reduce the value of the citizenship because it can be so arbitrarily taken away. You reduce its value rather than increase its value as a consequence of this bill.

The erection of all these multiple barriers impedes the flow of people to become citizens. It's a disincentive for them to come to Canada and an incentive for them to go to Australia, the U.K., or the U.S.

Whether one is talking about barriers on language tests, barriers to totally exclude time spent here by international students as any kind of credit, the intent to reside provision, or the increasingly rigid definition of residency, not to mention the doubling of the waiting time to become a citizen, all of these things are barriers that are central to this clause which will favour other countries that are trying to obtain good-quality immigrants and will work to the detriment of Canada.

I think there's good reason to oppose this clause.

That is my brief statement on this subject.

**The Chair:** Mr. Menegakis.

**Mr. Costas Menegakis:** Mr. Chair, indeed clause 3 is a comprehensive clause, but we feel it deals with some very key points that are fundamental to citizenship of any country.

Regarding the intent to reside, I think all Canadians would expect that someone who is granted citizenship rights, the same as their rights, has an intention to reside in the country. I don't think it's asking an awful lot to ask someone to speak, at an elementary level, either of our two official languages. It's reasonable to ask someone to have a physical presence in the country as an expression of their intention to live here.

To look at these things as barriers, as some of the opposition members might have us believe, is bordering on the illogical, to use one of the terms they used earlier today. They don't even speak about the provisions in the bill for exemptions for family emergencies and so forth.

They do have the same mobility rights as all Canadians. They come and go as they please. We've given them flexibility here, in this particular clause in this bill. We want to ensure that new Canadians have a real connection to Canada.

This government is making it clear that citizenship is for those who intend to make Canada their home. I have an extensive list of witnesses, who appeared before us and who supported, in a big way, many elements in this bill.

I would refute the argument that the majority, or most, or so forth.... I don't want to highlight that in the interest of time. I guess I'm done with my explanation of why we are supporting this clause.

● (1730)

**The Chair:** Madam Blanchette-Lamothe.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Lysane Blanchette-Lamothe:** I will be brief, Mr. Chair.

My colleague said that a number of witnesses supported several elements of the bill. I also support several of them, but that's not the issue here. I would be curious to see whether my colleague can name ten or even five witnesses who would not want to make any changes to clause 3 of this bill. I'm not sure he could do that.

Should we vote according to the Conservatives' common sense or according to the opinion of the vast majority of the witnesses the committee has heard from? Sorry, but I will not base my vote on the Conservatives' common sense. I will rather vote based on what was said by the witnesses named earlier.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** We're going to vote whenever there is no more debate, and I see no requests for debate.

There has been a request for a recorded vote on clause 3.

(Clause 3 agreed to: yeas 5; nays 4)

**The Chair:** Shall clauses 4, 5, 6, and 7 carry?

**An hon. member:** No.

**The Chair:** Do you want to go one by one? We're on clause 4.

It's up to the committee whether you want to proceed with them individually.

**An hon. member:** It's 5:30.

**The Chair:** I don't hear a motion for adjournment, so I am prepared to continue for a little bit.

Shall clause 4 carry?

(Clauses 4, 5, 6 agreed to on division)

(On clause 7)

**The Chair:** Shall clause 7 carry?

**An hon. member:** No.

**Ms. Lysane Blanchette-Lamothe:** Mr. Chair, can we have debate?

**The Chair:** Of course you may. Madam Blanchette-Lamothe, you have the floor for debate on clause 7.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Lysane Blanchette-Lamothe:** The NDP is opposed to clause 7 because that provision once again has to do with the minister's right to revoke. Moreover, in the case of citizenship applications or revocation, proceedings can be stayed as the minister sees fit under this provision. That's another source of concern for us.

The minister's discretionary powers were discussed earlier. We are not necessarily opposed to all his discretionary powers. However, we see that the Conservatives have a marked tendency, in several areas and bills, to grant more and more discretionary powers to ministers. We are concerned by this state of the affairs, especially when it involves something as fundamental as the revocation of citizenship or the suspension of citizenship processing. This seems very worrisome to us, and that is why we are opposed to clause 7.

● (1735)

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Is there further debate on clause 7?

**An hon. member:** A recorded vote, please.

(Clause 7 agreed to: yeas 5; nays 4)

(On clause 8)

**The Chair:** Ms. May has an amendment, PV-4.

**Ms. Elizabeth May:** Mr. Chair, the amendment I propose is intended to remedy one of the most egregious parts of this bill, which has to do with the powers that are being proposed to strip citizenship from people who have been born in Canada or those who have otherwise shown no misrepresentation. Also my proposed new subsection 10(3.1) would ensure:

a person shall not cease to be a citizen nor shall the renunciation of citizenship by that person be deemed to have had no effect without having had access to a fair hearing before an independent decision-maker.

I know I don't have much time, Mr. Chair. I take the point of my friend Mr. McCallum that he is the third party. Well, we're the fifth party here. I don't want to take much time, except to say as clearly as I possibly can that what is happening with this bill is a retreat from the fundamental understanding of the nature of citizenship. It violates sections 7 and 15 of the charter, and essentially it amounts to, as this committee has heard from numerous witnesses.... I want to just quote briefly from the Canadian Association of Refugee Lawyers, the "deprivation of citizenship breaches security of the person under s. 7; citizenship, lawfully obtained, ceases to be a secure status and becomes contingent and insecure".

In face of that, Mr. Chair, my amendment would delete everything that appears between line 24 on page 20 and line 11 on page 25, and would replace it with confirmation that citizenship shall not be withdrawn from any person unless that person obtained, retained, renounced, or resumed citizenship under this act by false representation or fraud or by knowingly concealing material circumstances. Those would be the only grounds for deprivation of citizenship.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Is there any debate?

Mr. Menegakis.

**Mr. Costas Menegakis:** Mr. Chair, in effect, this particular amendment would eliminate the additional grounds and streamlined process for revocation and would add a new requirement for a hearing before an independent decision-maker. We cannot possibly support this amendment. Under the additional grounds contained in the bill, the government would be able to revoke citizenship from dual citizens who have served as members of an armed force or organized crime group engaged in armed conflict with Canada or from those convicted of terrorism, high treason, or spying, depending on the sentence imposed. These new grounds for

revocation would bring Canada in line with most other democratic nations. For example, the U.K. already has the power to strip citizenship. The new model for revocation will improve the efficiency of the process while still ensuring fairness and recourse mechanisms for affected individuals.

Under the new model, revocation decisions will be made by either the Federal Court or the minister. Revocation cases decided by the CIC minister or delegate would include those related to various types of fraud, which, had they been known about at the time of decision-making, would have prevented a grant of citizenship. Those include residence fraud, concealing criminal inadmissibility, and identity fraud. Decisions of the Federal Court would be subject to appeal. The Federal Court of Appeal of the Federal Court of Canada certifies a serious question of general importance.

There are a whole bunch of things we could say, but we definitely cannot support this amendment, because we believe that this particular clause is a very significant part of the bill.

I should add that treason was in the original Citizenship Act in 1947. Removal of citizenship was in the act of 1947 if someone perpetrated a crime against the Canadian Armed Forces or treason or terrorism against Canada. I think most Canadians would expect that those people don't respect the fact that they are Canadians and that we live in the most welcoming country in the world. We do not expect those who come here to obtain their citizenship fraudulently or to have partaken in or to partake in activities that are against the fundamental values and principles of our nation by attacking our armed forces or perpetrating treason against our country.

We will be opposing this amendment.

• (1740)

**The Chair:** I don't see any further debate.

(Amendment negated [See *Minutes of Proceedings*])

**The Chair:** Madam Blanchette-Lamothe.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Lysane Blanchette-Lamothe:** Some of my colleagues will have to leave. Can we adjourn the meeting and continue this discussion tomorrow?

[*English*]

**The Chair:** We're adjourned until 3:30 tomorrow.









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