



# DEBATES OF THE SENATE

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## FEDERAL FRAMEWORK ON LYME DISEASE BILL

Second Reading of Bill C-442

Speech by:

The Honourable Larry W. Campbell

Tuesday, September 30, 2014

## THE SENATE

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### FEDERAL FRAMEWORK ON LYME DISEASE BILL

#### SECOND READING

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Johnson, seconded by the Honourable Senator Andreychuk, for the second reading of Bill C-442, An Act respecting a Federal Framework on Lyme Disease.

**Hon. Larry W. Campbell:** Honourable senators, I rise as the critic to Bill C-442, the national Lyme disease strategy act. As is often the case, I find that I have no criticism of this bill, and we on this side support the comments.

Lyme disease, as I believe everyone knows, is spread through contact with ticks that can travel on deer, birds and any other animals. They are especially prevalent where winters are milder, and I can assure you that in British Columbia, where the winters are milder, this disease is serious across the province.

Lyme disease is a problem for doctors because it quite often imitates the symptoms of other diseases, some of which are multiple sclerosis, rheumatoid arthritis, fibromyalgia, chronic

fatigue syndrome, lupus, Crohn's disease, HIV or other autoimmune and neurodegenerative diseases. Because of misdiagnosis, many of these people have been aggressively treated for other illnesses. Symptoms and signs can be non-specific and found in other conditions, and early recognition and treatment are critical.

Lyme disease has been a reportable disease in Canada since 2009, and in 2013 the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in the United States revised its estimate of diagnoses of Lyme disease in the United States from 30,000 to 300,000. It is strongly believed that even these numbers are underdiagnosed. Early treatment with antibiotics can treat the disease quickly and effectively.

From a monetary point of view — which also has to be of concern to us, not only the health benefits — the cost of early versus late diagnosis rises from \$8 million annually when treated early to \$338 million for late treatment. Clearly this is a disease that requires a national strategy.

The bill has received support from all parties in the other place, and it is my sincere hope that this bill can be dealt with expeditiously by us in this place.

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