HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

44th PARLIAMENT, 1st SESSION

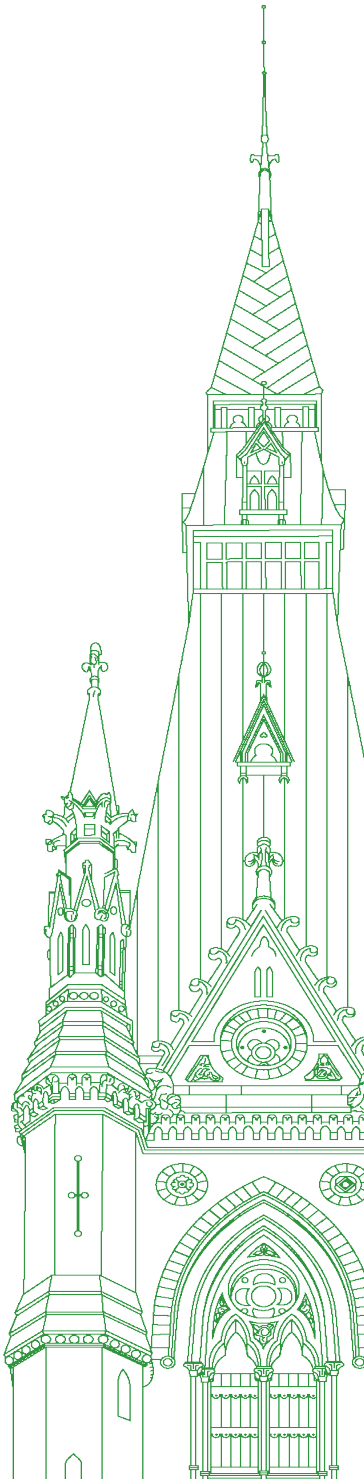
Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates

EVIDENCE

NUMBER 103

PUBLIC PART ONLY - PARTIE PUBLIQUE SEULEMENT

Tuesday, February 20, 2024



Chair: Mr. Kelly McCauley

Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates

Tuesday, February 20, 2024

● (1410)

[*English*]

The Chair (Mr. Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC)): Thank you, everyone. We are back in session.

Before we start, I want to give personal thanks to our clerks, who have been filling in for the last couple of months beside our valued analysts Ryan and Olivier. The clerks we've had have done just an amazing job, each and every one of them, even though some of them have been here for only one day. They have put through a strong work ethic and have treated this committee as if they were the permanent clerk.

Thank you very much to all the clerks who have filled in for the last months. We look forward to March and having our permanent clerk assigned to us.

Very quickly, we mentioned that we'd get to the budgets for the ships. We've separated them into two different ones. There's the Halifax and Quebec City trip, and then Vancouver and Victoria. The Vancouver and Victoria budget is particularly high. It has planned for an extra day in case we get caught because of weather. Do not ask why we would expect Vancouver or Victoria to be caught with weather, but that's just it.

I'm just looking for thumbs-up. This is only to submit this to Liaison to start the process for our visits to the four shipyards. This has been sent out to everyone. Halifax is $79,612—that's up too. I've looked at the budget, and it seems a bit high. That covers every contingency. For Vancouver and Victoria, it's $95,255, and there's the same issue.

Are we fine for that? It's not setting dates or anything. It's just for us to send it to the Liaison Committee for their approval if we can get it.

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Chair: Wonderful.

I see you, Mr. Scheer. You have your hand up, sir.

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Regina—Qu'Appelle, CPC): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I'd like to move a motion. I'll provide a bit of context before I move it.

Here's a bit of a recap of what brings us here today, to the motion I'd like to propose. It has to do with the ArriveScam app and some of the shocking revelations we've heard from the Auditor General on her findings.

To back up, during the pandemic, the government decided to bring in an app forcing Canadians to use this app to document crossing the border into Canada. It should have cost just around $80,000. Instead, so far, the Auditor General has concluded that at least $60 million in costs are attributed to that, and that's based on what she can find—

Mr. Irek Kusmierczyk (Windsor—Tecumseh, Lib.): I have a point of order, Mr. Chair. I would appreciate it if my honourable colleague would ground his statement in fact, not fiction—

An hon. member: That's not a point of order.

Mr. Irek Kusmierczyk: —and exaggeration. Again, I think it's important that we ground our discussions here. I know he's new to this committee, but I'd appreciate it if he would ground his arguments and interventions in fact.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Kusmierczyk.

Is your hand up on this point of order, Mr. Genuis, or can we proceed?

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): No. I was raising it to be added to the speaking list.

This is really not a point of order. It's just a dilatory tactic, so—

The Chair: Thank you.

We'll go back to Mr. Scheer, please.

Hon. Andrew Scheer: Let the record show that the Liberal MPs are now calling the findings of the Auditor General “fiction”. That's new to me, Mr. Chair, but that's what I heard.

Mr. Irek Kusmierczyk: I have a point of order, Mr. Chair. I don't appreciate my colleague ascribing to me statements that I do not hold, and I would ask that he retract—

Hon. Andrew Scheer: You just said it.

Mr. Irek Kusmierczyk: I said that you should stick to facts and not fiction—not the Auditor General, whose recommendations and rulings I respect.

Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC): I have a point of order on that point of order, Chair.

Chair, wants and feelings.... I'm just wondering if we can point to those in the Standing Orders or if these are indeed dilatory tactics. Liberal members should restrain themselves.

The Chair: We will ask everyone to please maintain some decorum.

Mr. Scheer, we'll go back to you.

Hon. Andrew Scheer: Just for the record I was quoting the Auditor General from her appearance just this morning. Basically what we're dealing with is $20 million worth of contracts going to GC Strategies. The Auditor General has told us and told committees that there was not documentation around decision-making, and that there was a non-competitive process that was pursued. There was an accountability void and these costs clearly ballooned from $80,000 to $60 million. This is a company that's gotten $250 million worth of government contracts since Justin Trudeau became Prime Minister. This committee has tried to get answers from the directors at GC Strategies. They have ignored two summons.

This committee has summoned them to come and testify. This committee has similar powers to that of a court of law and parliamentarians are entrusted to provide answers and transparency on behalf of Canadians, especially when it comes to tax dollars. When the government forcibly takes dollars out of the pockets of Canadians and decides to spend them, taxpayers have a fundamental right to know where the money went, why it was spent and whether or not all of the rules were followed. The Auditor General has raised major red flags. Her report and her testimony today in committee aren't just findings of sloppiness or some i's not dotted or t's not crossed. She has exposed monumental levels of mismanagement on this.

I would like to propose the following motion. Given the seriousness of the fact that the summons have been ignored, that these officials at GC Strategies have not come to answer on what they did with taxpayers' money, how invoices were accumulated, who signed off on these types of expenses, and whether or not the work was actually done, these are important questions that Canadians absolutely have a right to know.

Based on the statements of MPs of all parties in the House I believe that this should be a very straightforward motion that we should be able to accept very quickly because it touches on the collective rights of parliamentarians, not for ourselves, not as individuals, but with the responsibility entrusted to us from Canadians. Therefore, I believe that we should all support this common-sense motion to ensure that, when a parliamentary committee demands somebody come and testify how they spent Canadians' tax dollars, those summons are respected, the law is followed, and the proper process and protocols are adhered to.

Mr. Chair, I would like to move:

> That the Committee report to the House that, given that,
>
> (i) GC Strategies' owners, Kristian Firth and Darren Anthony, were issued summonses on November 2, 2023, compelling their appearance before the committee on December 5, 2023, and refused to testify, and new summonses were issued for them to appear by February 9, 2024, and again GC Strategies' owners refused to testify before the committee,
>
> (ii) The Auditor General revealed that GC Strategies received nearly $20 million in government contracts on ArriveCAN alone, double what was originally projected,
>
> (iii) The Government of Canada has $250 million in contracts with GC Strategies listed on its website, but claims they cannot confirm the accuracy of this amount as the website is prone to error, casting further doubt on how much this two-person IT company has received since the company formed in 2015, and
>
> (iv) The RCMP is investigating contracting links to ArriveCAN and has met with the Auditor General concerning her findings in the ArriveCAN audit,
>
> The Committee recommend that an Order of the House do issue requiring Kristian Firth and Darren Anthony each to appear before the Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates at dates and times determined by the Chair of the Committee, but within fourteen days of the adoption of this Order, provided that, if the Chair of the Committee informs the Speaker and the Sergeant-at-Arms in writing that one or both have failed to appear as ordered,
>
> (a) the Sergeant-at-Arms shall take Kristian Firth, Darren Anthony or both of them, as the case may be, into his custody for the purposes of enforcing their attendance before the Committee at dates and times determined by the Chair of the Committee, for which the Speaker shall issue his warrant accordingly;
>
> (b) the Sergeant-at-Arms shall discharge from his custody a witness taken into his custody, pursuant to paragraph (a), upon (i) a decision of the Committee releasing the witness from further attendance, or (ii) a further Order of the House to that effect; and

● (1415)

> (c) the Speaker shall inform the House, at the earliest opportunity, of developments in this regard.

● (1420)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Scheer.

It has been distributed to everyone's P9.

I have a speaking list. I see Mr. Genuis and then Mr. Jowhari. I have reviewed it and do believe it is a case of privilege.

We will start with Mr. Genuis and then go to Mr. Jowhari, please.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Thank you very much, Chair.

I want to affirm and agree with everything that my colleague has said.

I want to just make a couple of comments about the general principle here. What are we actually talking about in terms of the powers of Parliament?

We have a massive, breaking scandal that has clearly gripped the attention of Canadians. This is the ArriveScam scandal.

As part of that unfolding scandal, we at the government operations committee have been trying to get to the bottom of what happened and who was responsible by calling witnesses and putting direct, challenging questions to them. We've been able to proceed I think fairly effectively with this investigation for a number of months. We've been hearing different witnesses and uncovering critical information as part of this scandal. Now, the level of public interest and engagement with this has significantly grown after the reports of the procurement ombudsman and the Auditor General, with even more devastating information.

We believe that in this scandal, or in any scandal, it's important for parliamentary committees to be able to do their work and get to the bottom of what happened.

Now we have this problem. The problem is that a number of witnesses are showing flagrant disregard for the critical role and the rights of parliamentary committees. We're not just here as individuals. We're here on behalf of the Canadians who sent us here and who want us to investigate this scandal and be able to undertake other investigations of other matters.

In order to do our job, we have to be able to bring witnesses before us—witnesses who may not be that keen on testifying because they have things that we might want to ask them about that are actually embarrassing for them. The principle has to be that parliamentary committees are able to do their work on behalf of Canadians and that means being able to bring witnesses.

When we have two separate instances of summons being sent to the same individuals and they refuse to testify, the committee must use its powers to insist that those individuals appear. This is really where the rubber hits the road and where members of all other parties have to consider whether they believe that we should be able to actually hear from the witnesses we need to hear from and get to the bottom of this or not.

The only way that this committee can enforce its insistence on hearing from these witnesses is adopting this motion, which will have the effect of enforcing the committee's demand that these individuals appear.

Darren Anthony, one of the two partners at GC Strategies, has never appeared before this committee. In all the time this has gone on, we have never heard from Mr. Anthony. We've heard once from Mr. Firth, but there was so much obvious trouble with his testimony and so many obvious gaps. He effectively admitted under questioning, actually from a colleague across the way, to a process that involved the forging of résumés, altering résumés and then seeing if the changes were okay.

We need to hear from these individuals who are at the centre of this scandal. I understand that they may not want to appear. Their company got $20 million, as far as we know, according to the Auditor General's report, for the ArriveCAN app. They essentially got the contracts and subcontracted them without doing any work. They got $20 million as a company simply for looking on LinkedIn and passing contacts and résumés on to the government, in many cases, as we now know, with alterations made to those résumés. These two guys have a lot to answer for and we need to hear from them.

Moreover, Chair, we cannot abide the principle that people at the centre of a massive national scandal can simply blow off a parliamentary committee. If we take our jobs seriously and if we take the integrity of the parliamentary process seriously, then we must insist that people who are told that they have to appear before a committee are actually made to appear before that committee, particularly when these are the individuals who are at the very centre of the scandal.

These two partners at GC Strategies are the ones who got the ArriveCAN contract. They're the ones who made the money. They're the ones who had the relationships within government and the public service. They're the ones who can actually shed some light on this.

● (1425)

It's up to committee members now to ask, “Do we take our jobs seriously? Do we take our role seriously? Are we willing to do what is required to get to the bottom of this?”, or are we going to establish a precedent so that any time there's a scandal and someone says, “I don't want to appear,” and comes up with some excuse for it, we just let them get away with it?

Conservatives say we don't let them get away with that. Conservatives say any party that's serious about investigating the ArriveScam scandal and getting to the bottom of what happened needs to support this motion.

The Chair: Thank you.

We'll have Mr. Jowhari and then Mrs. Vignola.

Mr. Majid Jowhari (Richmond Hill, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

On our side, we would like to ask to suspend the discussion on this motion.

The reason is we would like to validate whether the Sergeant-at-Arms can actually take witnesses into custody. Will he be going out of his jurisdiction to be able to do that, and what are the consequences and impact of that?

We need some time. It's not that we disagree with finding a way to be able to call the witnesses in to come and answer. We're all for transparency and we support it; we just want to make sure that we are doing it right procedurally.

This is the first time we've seen this motion. It would have been good to know that this motion had been prepared. We should have had it before we had the first hour of the meeting so that we could have asked such questions. We probably should have asked and we didn't. So be it. We have the opportunity to do that.

When I read the motion as it's been prepared, there are statements that I want to go back to validate, such as, “The RCMP is investigating contracting links to ArriveCAN and has met with the Auditor General concerning the findings in the ArriveCAN audit.”

I'm not sure whether the RCMP is actually doing an ArriveCAN audit. We've just heard from one of our colleagues that we don't know what the RCMP is doing and we don't know whether it's investigating complaints as they relate to Botler AI or ArriveCAN.

There are statements in here that, if we agree to them, may have an implication, and I'd like to go back to our team to have that conversation. This is not a 10-minute conversation for which I can ask for a suspension. We are not in the same room, so naturally, we need to set it up procedurally for us to get together and have that conversation.

My ask is for a suspension of this conversation. We will pick it up at the next meeting we have, whether on Wednesday or Thursday, and have this conversation, but we really need to get clarification around the jurisdiction of the Sergeant-at-Arms.

Is this doable? What kind of precedent does it set? How do they take these witnesses into custody and bring them to the committee?

I'm not sure whether the Sergeant-at-Arms has the right to make an arrest.

I'm probably reading it the wrong way, but this is my suggestion. It is in support of making sure that the motion we are putting to the House and to the Sergeant-at-Arms is the right motion, that it's actionable and legal, and that we understand the implications.

The Chair: Thanks.

I'm not sure I have the will of the committee to wait until tomorrow, but we have a speaking list, Mr. Jowhari. If it's okay with you, we'll continue on with the speaking list and then we can address it.

We have Mrs. Vignola, Mr. Scheer and then Mr. Green, and then perhaps we can get back to you, Mr. Jowhari.

Mrs. Vignola.

● (1430)

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoilou, BQ): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

This is a very extreme motion. To be sure, some people have said they had health issues that made them unable or unwilling to testify before the committee. Initially it was five; now it's three.

The teacher in me would like to point out to my colleague Mr. Genuis that Mr. Firth has testified before the committee not once, but twice. He testified on November 2, 2023, as well as on October 20, 2022. In fact, he came to testify twice.

We have three witnesses who are not feeling well for various reasons. We've asked them many times to come before the committee. There are options. However, as I recall, we were not very keen on the option of holding meetings in camera. Before resorting to the nuclear option, I would consider other alternatives.

Based on what Mr. Bédard said earlier, I wonder whether we shouldn't be taking baby steps instead. We can first report to the House by raising a question of privilege. The Speaker will then make a ruling. Afterwards, we can compel the witnesses to appear before the committee. If they still refuse, we will have to make it clear to them that they have been summoned to appear, so they have no choice.

Before going nuclear, we need to take it one step at a time. I know letters have been sent. I want to see them appear too. It's not that I don't want to see them or that I want to put a lid on it. Nothing of the kind. I do want to see them, but I also don't want to potentially make a situation worse.

These people tell us they have mental health issues. Is that true or not? I haven't seen the doctor's note. The lawyers may have seen it. Anyone who has worked with people with mental health issues knows that every little thing feels like climbing a mountain. We're bringing the mountain. I would proceed with caution. Maybe I am being too careful. Maybe I am coddling them. It's possible. That's on me, but I don't want the actions that someone may take out of desperation on my conscience.

I think we should start with small steps—the ones the law clerk mentioned to us, including reporting to the House—before issuing summonses to appear.

I am not fundamentally opposed to the motion, but there are other things we could do first.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Julie Vignola: I also agree with suspending the meeting, so that we can think all this through together and discuss it.

[*English*]

The Chair: I do have Mr. Sousa, Mr. Genuis, Mr. Kusmierczyk, and Mrs. Vignola on the speaking list.

Colleagues, I apologize. I have to suspend just for a couple seconds to fill everyone in on one thing quickly.

● (1430)

_____(Pause)_____

● (1430)

The Chair: We are back in session.

We're going to Mr. Scheer.

● (1435)

Hon. Andrew Scheer: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I would respectfully disagree with the connation that this motion would aggravate a situation. We find ourselves in a situation that's already been aggravated.

When a committee sends a summons, we expect that to be respected. We are the court of Parliament. We have the same constitutional rights and privileges in many ways that courts of law have to compel people and papers to be before this committee.

It's not as if we invited the folks at GC Strategies a couple of weeks ago and we just haven't heard back from them yet. There were two official summons with timelines attached to them that have been completely ignored. That is an affront to the role that Parliament plays in holding governments to account on behalf of Canadians, especially on behalf of taxpayers, when we're talking about what the government has done with the money that they forcibly remove from the hands of hard-working Canadians.

When Canadians have questions about why costs went from $80,000 to $60 million, why proper protocols weren't followed and why decisions were made with no oversight and what the Auditor General has described as an accountability void, then it's up to us to dig into that. It's not just something that we can choose to do; this is our obligation. This is the responsibility that we have as parliamentarians.

There are many examples of the House of Commons using precisely this tool, the power to take someone into custody with the purpose of compelling testimony. It doesn't happen every other day. There are no routine proceedings for it, because it doesn't usually happen. Usually people comply, whether they're government officials, stakeholders or literally anybody.

I can read some into the record. I have half a dozen or so examples. Most recently, Speaker Milliken, my predecessor—some of us served under Speaker Milliken—was presented with a situation where there was a witness in an investigation, and it was not clear whether or not they were going to come. The initial request was not honoured, so the Speaker issued a warrant for that witness to appear. That was in 2007.

There's an example in 1913 where a witness who had refused to answer questions before the public accounts committee was ordered to appear at the bar of the House and was taken into custody for his failure.

What we're talking about here are not penalties. It's not necessarily with the view of punishment for failing to apply. It's simply just to get the witnesses to appear so that these questions can be answered and information provided to Canadians.

As for doing this in multiple steps, I really do believe that this has been going on for quite some time. Again I go back to the point that we're not just proposing this because of events or decisions or the lack of appearances one or two weeks ago. Alarm bells were raised around this app, around the ArriveScam program, some time ago. We've had testimony going back months. We had an Auditor General's report that was delivered last week, and we've had now since December these two individuals refusing to appear.

We could have skipped the first part about a third invitation. We could have gone right to the ordering of the Sergeant-at-Arms, because we already know that they've ignored the request, but we want to have one more invitation, and we want these individuals to come within 14 days of the adoption of this order.

This is, to me, the perfect time to do this in this way to ensure that there is a deadline for them to appear with an automatic triggering of a process should they not. This committee has a right, parliamentarians have a right, for their summons to be respected and honoured. These two individuals haven't. They have already ignored those requests. What we're saying is, let's give them 14 days from the adoption of this order to show up and answer these questions, and if not, let's immediately move into the part of the process where we exercise our right on behalf of the Canadians, on behalf of taxpayers, to ensure the presence of people who have been paid by government dollars, by taxpayers' money, who have submitted invoices.

● (1440)

The Auditor General has major questions around it. She told the committee this morning that documents around the decision-making process either didn't exist or were destroyed. That's unbelievable. We need to find out this part of the story. We need to have this information for us to know who is to be held responsible for that, and these two individuals are key to this. They are key central players from the main company that contracted this out.

I respectfully disagree with the connotation that this is some kind of a massive escalation. We are here because of an escalation and twice ignoring of committee summonses. It is time that we move very quickly to get these individuals before this committee. I believe that automatically triggering a process in the House saves this committee time, it saves the House time and it will allow us to get to the answers much more quickly.

The Chair: Thanks.

Before we go to Mr. Green, Mrs. Vignola had stated a desire for a path forward, and Mr. Scheer was suggesting a different one. I'm going to partially fulfill Mr. Jowhari's request for a suspension. I'm thinking maybe we could suspend for 10 minutes for the parties to chat among themselves to see if they can come up with a path forward. If not, we will get to Mr. Green.

We will suspend for 10 minutes.

● (1440)

_____(Pause)_____

● (1505)

The Chair: We are back in session, everyone. I appreciate everyone's patience.

Mr. Green, thank you for waiting. You're next on the list. Please go ahead, sir.

Mr. Matthew Green (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Thank you very much.

I had hoped that perhaps there could have been some consultations and agreements found around the room. Since we're back to this discussion at this time in the meeting, I do feel compelled to indulge my friend from the Liberal side on what our powers are as a committee. I think it's important that we recognize that indeed there is a precedent, and it's not just for the powers of our committee. I'm actually concerned about the precedent in which indulging this type of dismissal from attending to our committees might present to future people who want to seek to elude accountability to the Canadian public, and ultimately to our committee.

I would say this to the benefit of those who may not be familiar with our *House of Commons Procedure and Practice* under Bosc and Gagnon. If you look at chapter 20 in “Committees”, there is a specific reference to “Committee Powers”. In that section there is a subsection that specifically covers “To Send for Persons”. You can reference that online.

For the people who are watching the committee and are interested in what Parliament has the power to do, I would send them to this section, “To Send for Persons”.

I will, for the indulgence of this committee, just reference that:

> Standing committees often need the collaboration, expertise and knowledge of a variety of individuals to assist them in their studies and investigations. Usually these [people] appear willingly before committees when invited to do so. But situations may arise where an individual does not agree to appear and give evidence. If the committee considers that this evidence is essential to its study, it has the power to summon such a person to appear.

In that opening paragraph under “Committees”, subsection “Committee Powers”, under the heading “To Send for Persons”, there's footnote 151. It says:

> This power, delegated to standing committees by the House, is part of the privileges, rights and immunities which the House of Commons inherited when it was created. They were considered essential to its functions as a legislative body, so that it could investigate, debate and legislate, and are constitutional in origin.

This notion that we don't have the ability to do this I think undermines our power and would potentially set a dangerous precedent. I know that we've had many examples. I've had my staff messaging me at times when this had occurred, referencing back to the WE scandal and previous parliaments when we were trying to provide this type of oversight.

There are multiple paragraphs to the effect of which I've just quoted out of the Bosc and Gagnon. I would encourage all committee members to get themselves a copy and, in a very non-partisan way, uphold and protect the privileges that we have as committees.

If we're going to start making appearance before our committees optional—and I can assure you not just this committee—I could think about the impacts this would have on ethics and on many other committees. People who are inside the physical boundaries of this country are inherently under the constitutional powers that we have here to send for them. This doesn't just limit it to actually having them come and appear before the House.

We also have an unlimited ability, as set out in the Standing Orders, to send for papers and records. This is a government—unfortunately a Liberal government—that, in my opinion, has been negligent in this kind of "open by default" rhetoric that they use, where they also refuse, in many instances, to provide basic records that would provide accountability to the Canadian public, and indeed to our Parliament.

For those who are perhaps unfamiliar with the principles that New Democrats hold on this, know that we will be supporting, I would suggest, not just the ability to send for people, but also for papers and records as they relate to this. It is an important aspect, and one that is deeply protected by constitutional precedence going back to the founding principles, laws and governing orders of this House of Commons.

I'll spare you the other six paragraphs related to that section. I would call on not just our clerk but members of this committee to refer to Bosc and Gagnon, should they ever have any questions about what kinds of powers they have here at committee.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

● (1510)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Green.

Mr. Sousa.

Mr. Charles Sousa (Mississauga—Lakeshore, Lib.): This is putting us all in a rather precarious position because there are matters of confidence within in camera discussions. We don't want to break those rules. We're not here to make public some of the issues that we have been advised of in camera or by legal teams that have also written to us with regard to these matters. In terms of some of the witnesses who are being called before us, without giving them the opportunity to provide.... How should I say this? Again, without breaking the integrity of the in camera discussions that we've had, we're not giving them the opportunity to actually to show us or validate the reasons why they're not able to attend. Then, of course, the RCMP may or may not be reviewing this case and looking for whatever criminality or admissibility that there may be.

Will we, then, as a result of doing some of what we're doing here...not be admissible thereafter? That concerns me, too.

Then we have an investigation under way, which we're trying to complete. We want to be able to use every opportunity that exists for the investigator to take appropriate action. Does this, then, preclude it or prejudice that outcome? Possibly.

I'm just worried about the public confidence that we're possibly compromising because there's certain information that the committee has been made aware of. There are certain advisements, recommendations and suggestions that have been given to us in camera. Now, the opposition members from the Conservative Party have taken it upon themselves to reach out to certain witnesses, have obtained matters of confidentiality before them and have divulged it thereafter in the questioning of other witnesses, compromising again the confidentiality matter and then being put on notice by those matters. Individuals have taken it upon themselves to go forward on things that will compromise, I believe, the integrity of the investigation that we're trying to get to the bottom of.

Even today, members of the committee have been told that there are certain witnesses who are going to be coming to see us this week. We don't know anything about it. However, somehow this information is being shared with the Conservative Party. Nobody else on the committee is being advised of that. That, in itself, is a problem.

This motion was obviously well prepared ahead of the activities today because it was taken upon discretion to proceed on something even before we had our in camera meeting today. Again, that's disturbing.

It is important, I think, that we take a pause and suspend this issue until we have greater understanding, even from the RCMP, in terms of the implications of what may be put forward here today. It's important for us to suspend because I know that people want to make possible amendments to this motion to provide greater understanding, clarity and protection for certain witnesses. They have that right. We should be providing them every opportunity to be protected while we, at the same time, protect the government and the committee members.

We have a duty to ensure that we get to the truth. We have a duty to ensure that we understand everything that's occurred. I would—

● (1515)

Hon. Andrew Scheer: I have a point of order, Mr. Chair.

I just want to make sure I heard that correctly.

Mr. Sousa just said that the role of this committee is to protect the government. I absolutely reject that. The role of this committee is to find out what happened to taxpayers' money.

The Chair: I appreciate that. It's not a point of order.

Go ahead, Mr. Sousa.

Mr. Charles Sousa: Now that it's coming forward, it's important to distinguish that we absolutely have a duty and responsibility to taxpayers, and we represent the taxpayers. We're here to represent Canadians. We're here to ensure that all Canadians have due process and that we uncover any actions or things that have not been done appropriately.

The Auditor General and the ombudsman have come out with reports. We have an internal investigation that's also coming forward, but I'm suggesting that there are certain members of the committee on the Conservative side who have taken actions on their own accord, which jeopardizes this very issue. It's they who I'm suggesting need protection, because we have to make certain that the parliamentary procedure and the supremacy of parliamentary procedure is not that of individuals but of committees.

All of us in this committee have a responsibility to ensure the positive outcome and success of uncovering these allegations and ensuring that we determine what has occurred and that we do so with integrity. I'm concerned that without more time to put forward appropriate amendments to the motion, and without possibly considering the implications of what is being put forward, we are actually doing an injustice, possibly, by bringing forward certain individuals who have..... Again, I'm cautious, because we are being advised to be sensitive to what we say here in public, and that very issue is at stake.

In certain respects, some of this should be done in camera too. I would caution that if we're dealing with some degree of illness or health or whatever it may be, people need to be protected, and we need to have confirmation before we proceed to demand or to hold someone in contempt or arrest—whatever—without having proper consideration, and that hasn't been provided here.

In this motion, there's nothing that says the witnesses deserve to provide confirmation of their situation. I understand that we want them to appear before us. I believe we all want to understand what has taken place and we already have quite a bit of information to that effect. We also have, as I said, a number of investigations still under way, and we don't want to compromise that activity. We talked at length today about the admissibility of some of the situations that may be before us and that may be compromised as a result of what this motion puts forward and, of course, there's the issue of confidentiality and privacy that's at risk here, too, by bringing forward some of this without taking proper precautions ahead of issuing that call.

We want them here. We want everybody to appear. We don't want to set a precedent that would provide people an opportunity not to, but we have to affirm the situation and make certain that it doesn't then compromise both the witnesses and the stakeholders, nor the investigation that is under way.

I would respectfully request that we suspend this discussion until we obtain greater insight and understanding of what this means, maybe even asking the RCMP or others in terms of what is being proposed here, and if it's being done too expeditiously, maybe it's going to create greater harm. I will leave it at that.

Mr. Chair, I request that we suspend.

● (1520)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Sousa. I don't take that as a formal motion. We're almost out of time, anyway.

I have Mr. Genuis, then Mr. Kusmierczyk and then Mr. Bains.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Much of what Mr. Sousa said doesn't make any sense. I have a couple of points on that.

Number one, Mr. Sousa is very familiar with instances of government scandal. He was part of a government in Ontario during which a gas plant scandal occurred in which people went to jail. I think he should appreciate the importance of parliamentary committees being able to do their work and get to the bottom of what happens. He let the mask slip a little bit when he said that he thinks the committee should be working to “protect the government”. That is not the role of parliamentary committees. The role of parliamentary committees is to—

Mr. Charles Sousa: I have a point of order, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: I suspect this will not be a real point of order.

Mr. Charles Sousa: It's a point of order.

The Chair: Go ahead, Mr. Sousa, on your point of order.

Mr. Charles Sousa: Just to correct the record, I did not say that we were—

Mr. Garnett Genuis: No, that's not a point of order. Correcting the record and expressing an opinion is not—

The Chair: I will decide that, Mr. Genuis.

Thanks for your comment, Mr. Sousa, but it's not a point of order.

Mr. Genuis, go ahead. Let's be cognizant of our time, please, sir.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Thank you, Chair.

Before I go any further, I want to put forward an amendment. My understanding is that this will help us move forward. There have been discussions going on among the parties, and I hope this will help us get to a result.

We want to maintain the integrity of the process and allow committees to do their work, so I move that the motion be amended by adding, immediately after the words “dates and times determined by the chair of the committee,” in both places where they appear, the following, “and with such accessibility accommodations which the witnesses may require”—

The Chair: I'm sorry, could you just slow down a bit in reading that?

Mr. Garnett Genuis: I can, but I did provide it by email to the clerk.

I'll read it again:

> That the motion be amended
>
> a) by adding, immediately after the words "dates and times determined by the Chair of the Committee,", in both places where they appear, the following: "and with such accessibility accommodations which the witnesses may request and the Chair agrees to provide,"; and (b) by replacing the word "fourteen" with "21".

That is the amendment. It has been sent to the clerk in writing in one of the two official languages, so I gather that it will be a few minutes before it can be distributed.

This is about trying to work collaboratively on aspects of the process, but the main point, Chair, remains—as I think Mr. Green very ably put it—that this committee, all parliamentary committees, have important powers that they can exercise and, in this case, the committee must exercise those powers in order to get to the truth.

Comments have been made by other members about possible reasons or excuses that various witnesses have made. We've had multiple witnesses make excuses, not just one. We've had various instances of these excuses being made.

These two people, Kristian Firth and Mr. Anthony, are at the centre of this scandal. Their testimony is vitally necessary for this committee to be able to do its work. No excuse has been supported by any kind of evidence or documentation. It's time to stop this charade of more excuses and more asks and to insist that they appear.

The other point I'll make is that this motion is not punitive. This motion insists that the will of the committee be followed. If the people who are summoned comply with this motion, there will be no further consequences. This doesn't propose, for example, to imprison them for six months regardless of whether or not they appear. It simply proposes to use all of the tools we have to insist that they appear and then, after they appear, any consequences associated with this motion disappear. It is just a motion that applies the necessary corrective measure to get the result that we all need so that parliamentary committees can properly do their job.

I'll leave it there.

● (1525)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Genuis.

We just have a short bit of time left before we lose resources, but I have Mrs. Vignola and then I have Mr. Kusmierczyk on the amendment.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Julie Vignola: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I'll be brief. I agree with what my colleague has proposed, but I would like to add some clarifications.

I will read from the French version and let the translation experts draft the English version.

Right after “in the ArriveCAN audit,” I would like to add, “In order to see the witnesses in committee to testify, those steps are suggested:”.

My goal is to make it clear that we aren't doing everything all at once, but rather, on a step-by-step basis.

It would therefore read as follows:

> In order to see the witnesses in committee to testify, those steps are suggested:
>
> First step
>
> The Committee recommend…within twenty-one days…and with such accessibility accommodations the witnesses may request.

The paragraph stays the same, then.

After that, we would add, “Second step:”.

At the beginning of what would become the next paragraph, it would read as follows:

> After those twenty-one days, if the Chair of the Committee informs the Speaker and the Sergeant at Arms in writing….

This is simply to show that this is not something that is done all at once and that all possibilities should be exhausted before we go with the nuclear option, as I was saying earlier.

If we make it clear now, we won't have to have the same discussion in three weeks. All the steps are already indicated. What we are asking for is predictable, planned and clear. Perhaps the fact that we are asking the chair to make the necessary accommodations so that the witnesses can testify without jeopardizing their health will make them willing to come before the committee and answer our questions, as long as we remain polite, respectful and civilized.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you, Mrs. Vignola.

We have a subamendment offered by you. Just to help us out, are you able to repeat the exact changes that you're offering up in your subamendment?

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Julie Vignola: After “in the ArriveCAN audit,” the paragraph would read as follows:

> In order to see the witnesses in committee to testify, those steps are suggested:
>
> First step:
>
> The Committee recommend that an Order of the House do issue requiring Kristian Firth and Darren Anthony each to appear before the Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates at dates and times determined by the Chair of the Committee, but within twenty-one (21) days of the adoption of this Order and with such accessibility accommodations the witnesses may request and the Chair agree to arrange.
>
> Second step:
>
> After those twenty-one (21) days, if the Chair of the Committee informs the Speaker and the Sergeant at Arms in writing that one or both have failed to appear as ordered,

The rest of it concerns the steps to be taken.

I believe I sent the text to the committee.

● (1530)

[*English*]

Hon. Andrew Scheer: Do we have time to put the question on the whole thing before we adjourn?

The Chair: Mr. Kusmierczyk, is your hand up for the subamendment or the amendment?

Mr. Irek Kusmierczyk: My hand is up for the subamendment.

The Chair: I had you up for the amendment as well, but let's go on Mrs. Vignola's subamendment, sir.

Mr. Irek Kusmierczyk: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I want to begin by stating that we have been studying this ArriveCAN issue now at committee for five months, and everybody around the table is committed to getting to the bottom of this important issue. You'll have to correct me if maybe it was longer than five months we've been studying this issue because it is important, and because Canadians expect us to do this work.

We've had requests for I believe millions of pages of documents related to ArriveCAN and other studies that we've had before this committee and we've agreed to those. Our side has agreed to those. We've had testimony from a wide range of witnesses here, which we welcome. Obviously we had most recently the testimony of the Auditor General, Ms. Hogan. We thanked her for her important work and welcomed those important recommendations that shed light on this issue of the ArriveCAN app.

We had the procurement ombudsman, Mr. Jeglic, as well here before this committee and we heard his important testimony and the results of his important study into this issue. And, of course, we had Mr. Lafleur, who is the CBSA integrity director. I guess that's what you call that position, executive director of professional integrity, testifying as well in terms of the internal CBSA investigation that's taking place. We welcomed that testimony. We absolutely support that testimony, and we took those recommendations to heart because they are important. They talk about a process that is in place that safeguards the integrity of the procurement process, but also safeguards the trust of Canadians in this process. It was really important to hear from all of those individuals.

Every step of the way we, the members of Parliament around this table, have supported every witness, every appearance, every production of documents required. It's important to highlight that every member of Parliament is united around this committee table to get to the bottom of this issue. I do take issue with some of the comments that are made by especially by some of the new members of committee, and some of the existing members of committee, who falsely talk about the lack of spirit of collaboration and co-operation around this table. The facts speak to the absolute opposite, which is that we have been working together.

Mr. Michael Barrett: I have a point of order, Chair.

I'm just wondering if you could poll the room because it looks like all members of the opposition are ready to work together and collaborate and pass the subamendment, the amendment, and the main motion and move this ahead.

Mr. Irek Kusmierczyk: That's not a point of order.

Mr. Michael Barrett: The member was talking about collaboration. It looks like a majority of the members of the committee are ready and it looks like the Liberals are blocking this motion from passing.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Barrett.

I see your point but it's not a point of order.

Mr. Kusmierczyk, you can proceed, sir.

Mr. Irek Kusmierczyk: Again, there are hundreds of thousands of pages that we all agreed needed to be produced to help provide facts and to help anchor our discussions and our investigations in facts because we are all committed to getting to the bottom of this important issue.

My colleagues have highlighted the incredible power of privilege for members of Parliament to produce documents and to call in witnesses to testify. We have availed ourselves of that power and of that privilege, and that power is absolute. However, if you actually read some of the rulings throughout history of Speakers Milliken, Fraser and Scheer, you will read cautions that we must use that power responsibly. You see that woven throughout history in the words that the speakers use.

We've never been shy about calling witnesses to testify here. What we're trying to do in this really unique situation that I have not encountered in my four years here and that I surmise Kelly, the chair, hasn't come across it in his 100 years here—

● (1535)

The Chair: I have a point of order.

It's 107 years, Mr. Kusmierczyk.

Mr. Irek Kusmierczyk: I just wanted to say that this is a unique situation. There really is no playbook for this. At least, I haven't seen it. I think that's why we're trying to work our way through this carefully.

We're trying to weigh the privilege—which is absolute—of members of Parliament to call witnesses. We're trying to weigh that privilege against our legitimate concern for the health of the witnesses. We're trying to find our way here.

The severity of those health concerns—specifically mental health concerns—that have been brought forward by the witnesses has been reported in The Globe and Mail. I think there is a deep concern among members of Parliament, and rightfully so, whenever someone brings forward mental health concerns. As members of Parliament, we are rightfully concerned with the mental health of folks, including when they walk through the doors of OGGO committee. We have to take that seriously, especially if someone has gone out of their way to communicate those mental health concerns directly with the committee. I don't think that we can simply dismiss that out of hand, nor can we attribute to it certain motivations or try to impugn certain motivations for that.

That's what I'm struggling with. We've heard from a lot of witnesses here. I want to hear from Mr. Firth and Mr. Anthony. I absolutely do. I think every member of this committee wants to do that.

Again, look at the past. We've shown that we have not been shy about calling witnesses to testify here or to produce papers. You name it; we've supported it.

There's a balance here that we're trying to strike.

It's important to also highlight that the patience and accommodation of this committee is not absolute. No one should be under any impression that we want to extend this courtesy and sensitivity infinitely or far out into the future. We do not. The patience and understanding of this committee has its limits. I don't believe we've reached those limits yet, for two reasons, I would say.

I do believe that the motion in front of us, as my colleague, MP Vignola, has pointed out, is a nuclear button. I believe that it misses a few important steps. I think some of it was alluded to by my colleague previously.

That step included, for example, requesting that the witnesses substantiate the expression of mental health or health concerns that they have. I think this is a reasonable request. I think it's fair to ask, for example, that there is substantiation with medical documentation or a letter of some sort that speaks to that. That is true of the other witnesses who have asked for consideration based on health concerns and health issues.

We absolutely want to make sure that the issue of health or mental health is not used as an excuse to not appear before committee. We're very sensitive to that. We want to make sure that privilege is not abused. Again, having validation, confirmation and substantiation from a health care official is a vital step that I think we have not taken to date. I think it's one that is in our purview to ask for.

I do feel that we should put aside this amendment. We should put aside the original motion for now and, in its place, ask for substantiation and confirmation from health care professionals. At least we would have that documentation on record and in our pockets to be able to inform our decision on what our next steps will be.

● (1540)

I want to reassure the folks who are watching at home that this committee is being very careful with this. We've had meetings and discussions about this issue of how to proceed.

Again, we don't have a playbook on this. This is so unique. We want to make sure that we are able to move forward, that we are able to continue to get the hundreds of thousands of documents we're asking for and that we continue to bring witnesses here who are shedding light on this issue to make sure that we speak with facts not with fiction, as I've always highlighted. We want to make sure that this is what guides our conversations.

There is a balance that needs to be struck here. We're trying to take the need of this committee to get that information and hear the testimony, and balance it with the very real sensitivity with regard to someone who has stated clearly that they are not in a healthy space, that they are in a dark space, as has been reported in The Globe and Mail. I think we need to take that into serious consideration.

At the same time, I think what's really important to keep in mind, as well, is that we do have two ongoing investigations. We have one that we are certain about, and one where, obviously, we don't have a clear line of sight because, again, the RCMP doesn't exactly telegraph its investigation or the contents or direction of its investigation—and rightfully so. It doesn't want to undermine the integrity of the investigation, and it wants to make sure that it is a fulsome investigation that is able to proceed without any tampering, any obstruction and any sort of outside influence.

Again, possibly there's an RCMP investigation. We don't exactly know the entire scope of it, nor will we know the entire scope, because the RCMP is an independent organization. There is no political direction of the RCMP, and that's a good thing.

At the same time, we heard testimony from Mr. Lafleur that the CBSA is also conducting an investigation and that the CBSA has moved from what was a preliminary investigation, a preliminary study, to now a full study because there is evidence that is substantial enough to warrant a full investigation, which is taking place right now. We heard from President O'Gorman that this is taking place, confirming that the CBSA is indeed bringing this forward.

Obviously, the first element that we need to weigh is the health of the individual, but the second element is the integrity of the two investigations that are now taking place. There was some real concern that was vocalized, not just by the Liberal members of the OGGO committee but also by the opposition members, about making sure that we don't do anything here that compromises the integrity and effectiveness of both the RCMP and the CBSA investigations.

We've seen concerns with information being shared from the preliminary evidence of facts—part of which was made public even though it was a confidential document—before this committee actually determined that we wanted to share that information with committee members. I think that's really important because making sure that all of us have the information that we need in a timely fashion is important in terms of our own ability to question the witnesses and be prepared to question the witnesses.

Again, a perfect example of that was quite recently when we, as committee members, didn't have all the information in our hands.

● (1545)

The study, the preliminary study of facts, was not distributed to this committee. All of us were not in a position to ask the important questions of the CBSA executive director for procurement or integrity all the questions that we wanted to ask.

Process matters. I would state that process absolutely matters in this case, in how we go about studying the ArriveCAN app. We have to make sure that the process is also fair. Again, fundamentally here, we want to make sure that we are not in any way influencing the independent investigation by the RCMP. We've already heard about the tremendous, concerning gaps in the procurement process, the lack of documentation that the AG had so thoroughly outlined. There was the lack of documentation, and some of the checks and balances that were blatantly missing. We know that the process needs improvement and strengthening.

We want to make sure that we don't impact the independent investigation of the RCMP because they are digging deeper. They are looking at not just process issues, which is what the AG has found and what the procurement ombudsman has found, and what the CBSA integrity director is finding. It's not just about process, but it goes to something a lot more serious than that. We want to get to the bottom of it. We do not want to impact in any way the RCMP looking at the serious allegations.

Again, we have to be careful here. We want to balance the committee's absolute power and privilege to call anyone we want, to summon anyone we want to produce papers. Over the last five months we have done that. But we need to balance it in terms of protecting the independence of the RCMP investigation and the CBSA investigation, while at the same time, again, demonstrating concern for the health and well-being of individual witnesses.

At the same time, we've had meetings and discussions amongst ourselves. We want to make sure that, again, the issue of health and especially mental health is not being used as an excuse to avoid coming here to testify. Again, that's a very delicate balance here because we don't want to impugn any motives or assign any motives to those folks. I think it's important for us to take that into consideration.

I would say as well, when I look at the original motion.... I know we're speaking to the amendment here, but what the amendment here doesn't address—

● (1550)

The Chair: I'm going to interrupt you, Mr. Kusmierczyk.

It's on the subamendment to the amendment.

Mr. Irek Kusmierczyk: Yes, that's right. Pardon me.

One of the issues that I have here is that even in the motion, in the preamble, there are sentences here that state things as a matter of fact that are still being analyzed as we speak. I turn your attention specifically, for example, in the motion, to part (iii), that states,

> That the Committee report to the House that, given that,
>
> (iii) The Government of Canada has $250 million in contracts with GC Strategies listed on its website,

If we were to agree to that number we would be agreeing to that as established fact, which it's not at this point. We're still trying to figure out the number of contracts that the Government of Canada has entered into with GC Strategies. We've seen correspondence that states that some double counting may have occurred. We want to be sure that number is correct. At the same time, we know that we want to go further than just GC Strategies. We know GC Strategies was established in 2015. However, we know that the principals of that company were actually entering into contracts with the Government of Canada long before 2015.

One of the things that we asked for on the Liberal side is that we expand the scope of what we're interested in looking at.

Hon. Andrew Scheer: I have a point of order, Mr. Chair.

I have a procedural question for the chair, if you could help me understand something.

Mr. Kusmierczyk has had the floor for about 20 minutes now. Am I correct in understanding that if he continues talking this out until four o'clock, the meeting will be forced to come to an end, and therefore he is blocking this motion from coming to a vote today?

The Chair: I won't say everything that you've just said, but at 4 p.m., we are out of resources and will be adjourning.

Hon. Andrew Scheer: He is effectively blocking this motion from coming to a vote.

The Chair: At 4 p.m., we will be adjourning.

Mr. Kusmierczyk, the floor is back to you.

Mr. Irek Kusmierczyk: Thank you.

Again, I really do appreciate my colleague Mr. Scheer's joining us here at committee. We've had some important discussions and debates here and, of course, I very much appreciate his contribution to advancing this investigation and this discussion.

Going back to what I was saying, I again take issue with the preamble, because there are things in their sentences that are stated as a matter of fact, which again are still right now under investigation and consideration, and we want to get to the bottom of it, and—

Mr. Larry Brock: I have a point of order, Mr. Chair.

I've listened very carefully to the words of Mr. Kusmierczyk. He's now repeating himself many times over. I just want to flag that because clearly his motive is to drag this out until the meeting is adjourned and therefore we will not get to a vote. Canadians are aware of his strategy.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Brock.

I'm sure Mr. Kusmierczyk is aware of what he's going through. We'll allow him to continue, please.

Mr. Kusmierczyk, please.

Mr. Irek Kusmierczyk: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Again, I definitely take my colleague's observation into consideration, and I very much appreciate his contributions to the discussion around this table and into our investigation of the ArriveCAN app.

Mr. Firth appeared before the committee in November, I believe, and I know there were additional summons that were brought forward. Again, the patience and understanding of this committee are not absolute. There is a limit, but I believe there are steps that need to be taken before we actually get to that limit.

The other thing I wanted to say is if you look at some of the points that are often made by my colleagues around the table, this was an app that was originally meant to cost $80,000. When you look at what the ArriveCAN app is actually about, the original ArriveCAN app was $80,000. If we want to speak factually and ground our discussion in the ArriveCAN app and facts, we have to look at the fact that—according to the CBSA in a document that it published on its website that breaks down the costs—yes, the $80,000 was for the original app, but what we're really talking about here are the additional costs that stemmed from the following.

For example, a Service Canada call centre was stood up and established to be able to receive calls and emails from travellers who were using the COVID health measures and the app. If they had questions for the Public Health Agency of Canada or the CBSA, they were able to contact this call centre. The actual cost of that, based on the March 31, 2023, document that was published, was $8.5 million.

There was data management for the Public Health Agency and the CBSA to collect data, report, monitor and ensure compliance. You have to keep in mind that the app was actually downloaded 18 million times over two years, if I'm not mistaken. There were something like 60 million users. There was a ton of sensitive information that was collected, so you needed to have a data centre that was able to gather that information, share it with all of the provincial health agencies and keep it confidential. That data management cost $7.9 million.

There were also data storage and cloud services to be able to store the data safely, because this was sensitive information. The data storage and cloud services cost $6.4 million.

I encourage the folks listening, including the journalists who are listening, to download what is called the “Border Public Health Measures Cost”. It's a document that's available on the CBSA website that breaks down all the costs of the ArriveCAN app.

In addition to the Service Canada call centre, in addition to data management and storage, there were additional systems on the back end that needed to be stood up and created in order for ArriveCAN to work.

I'll give you one example: cybersecurity. To ensure that all cybersecurity and security measures were met, an additional $2.4 million was spent on cybersecurity. Why is that important? When you're crossing over the border—let's say at the Ambassador Bridge in Windsor—and you're sharing your personal health information that you just filled out, you can be darn sure that Canadians want to make sure that information is secure, because it's sensitive information. You can't just treaty it willy-nilly. You need to make sure that when it is shared with the other provincial health agencies, it is secure. That cost $2.4 million—

● (1555)

The Chair: Mr. Kusmierczyk, I apologize for interrupting you.

First of all, thank you for mentioning the viewers on ParlVU—all three of them. My wife and two kids are probably watching.

We are out of time and, therefore—

Hon. Andrew Scheer: Is there a willingness to just put the question before we adjourn?

The Chair: We have no more resources.

Thank you very much, everyone.

The meeting is adjourned.

Published under the authority of the Speaker of the House of Commons

SPEAKER'S PERMISSION

The proceedings of the House of Commons and its committees are hereby made available to provide greater public access. The parliamentary privilege of the House of Commons to control the publication and broadcast of the proceedings of the House of Commons and its committees is nonetheless reserved. All copyrights therein are also reserved.

Reproduction of the proceedings of the House of Commons and its committees, in whole or in part and in any medium, is hereby permitted provided that the reproduction is accurate and is not presented as official. This permission does not extend to reproduction, distribution or use for commercial purpose of financial gain. Reproduction or use outside this permission or without authorization may be treated as copyright infringement in accordance with the Copyright Act. Authorization may be obtained on written application to the Office of the Speaker of the House of Commons.

Reproduction in accordance with this permission does not constitute publication under the authority of the House of Commons. The absolute privilege that applies to the proceedings of the House of Commons does not extend to these permitted reproductions. Where a reproduction includes briefs to a committee of the House of Commons, authorization for reproduction may be required from the authors in accordance with the Copyright Act.

Nothing in this permission abrogates or derogates from the privileges, powers, immunities and rights of the House of Commons and its committees. For greater certainty, this permission does not affect the prohibition against impeaching or questioning the proceedings of the House of Commons in courts or otherwise. The House of Commons retains the right and privilege to find users in contempt of Parliament if a reproduction or use is not in accordance with this permission.

Also available on the House of Commons website at the following address: https://www.ourcommons.ca

Publié en conformité de l'autorité du Président de la Chambre des communes

PERMISSION DU PRÉSIDENT

Les délibérations de la Chambre des communes et de ses comités sont mises à la disposition du public pour mieux le renseigner. La Chambre conserve néanmoins son privilège parlementaire de contrôler la publication et la diffusion des délibérations et elle possède tous les droits d'auteur sur celles-ci.

Il est permis de reproduire les délibérations de la Chambre et de ses comités, en tout ou en partie, sur n'importe quel support, pourvu que la reproduction soit exacte et qu'elle ne soit pas présentée comme version officielle. Il n'est toutefois pas permis de reproduire, de distribuer ou d'utiliser les délibérations à des fins commerciales visant la réalisation d'un profit financier. Toute reproduction ou utilisation non permise ou non formellement autorisée peut être considérée comme une violation du droit d'auteur aux termes de la Loi sur le droit d'auteur. Une autorisation formelle peut être obtenue sur présentation d'une demande écrite au Bureau du Président de la Chambre des communes.

La reproduction conforme à la présente permission ne constitue pas une publication sous l'autorité de la Chambre. Le privilège absolu qui s'applique aux délibérations de la Chambre ne s'étend pas aux reproductions permises. Lorsqu'une reproduction comprend des mémoires présentés à un comité de la Chambre, il peut être nécessaire d'obtenir de leurs auteurs l'autorisation de les reproduire, conformément à la Loi sur le droit d'auteur.

La présente permission ne porte pas atteinte aux privilèges, pouvoirs, immunités et droits de la Chambre et de ses comités. Il est entendu que cette permission ne touche pas l'interdiction de contester ou de mettre en cause les délibérations de la Chambre devant les tribunaux ou autrement. La Chambre conserve le droit et le privilège de déclarer l'utilisateur coupable d'outrage au Parlement lorsque la reproduction ou l'utilisation n'est pas conforme à la présente permission.

Aussi disponible sur le site Web de la Chambre des communes à l'adresse suivante : https://www.noscommunes.ca