



House of Commons
CANADA

Standing Committee on Public Accounts

PACP • NUMBER 032 • 1st SESSION • 38th PARLIAMENT

EVIDENCE

Monday, May 2, 2005

—
Chair

Mr. John Williams

All parliamentary publications are available on the
"Parliamentary Internet Parlementaire" at the following address:

<http://www.parl.gc.ca>

Standing Committee on Public Accounts

Monday, May 2, 2005

•(1535)

[English]

The Chair (Mr. John Williams (Edmonton—St. Albert, CPC)): Good afternoon, everybody. The orders of the day are committee business, and we have some notices of motions to deal with. After that, pursuant to Standing Order 108(3)(g), it is chapter 5, “Management of Public Opinion Research” of the November 2003 report of the Auditor General of Canada, referred to the committee on February 10, 2004—

Mr. Brian Fitzpatrick (Prince Albert, CPC): I have a point of order, Mr. Chair. It seemed to me that my motion, which is on the back page, was made first—

The Chair: We'll get to that in a minute, Mr. Fitzpatrick. I'm just doing the orders of the day, and then we'll get to motions.

Witnesses called from the Office of the Auditor General of Canada are Jean Ste-Marie, Assistant Auditor General, and Ms. Louise Bertrand, Principal. As individuals we have Mr. Allan Cutler, Mr. Peter Daniel, Mr. David Herle, Mr. Warren Kinsella, and Ms. Terrie O'Leary.

Those are the orders of the day, and before we get going, as I said, motions are the first thing. The first motion we received was from you, Mr. Fitzpatrick, that pursuant to Standing Order 108(3)(g), chapter 5 of the November 2003 report of the Auditor General, the committee requests all electronic and written material exchanged between the office of the Minister of Finance and David Herle and/or Earncliffe for the years 1999-2003.

Are you moving that motion, Mr. Fitzpatrick?

Mr. Brian Fitzpatrick: My understanding is the motion that's been brought first would be the one on the back page. It's the first motion.

The Chair: It seems to me...we're just doing it in the order received.

Mr. Brian Fitzpatrick: Okay. Well, it's amended, I guess, so....

The Chair: Are you moving that motion?

Mr. Brian Fitzpatrick: Yes, I'll move that motion.

The Chair: Okay. Are you speaking to the motion?

Mr. Brian Fitzpatrick: Yes. I would certainly like to receive that information. The information I've looked through with Mr. Kinsella.... I've looked at the cabinet guidelines. I've looked at the Treasury Board rules. They were in effect in early 1994. There's lots of documentation in there to show there was sole-source contracting when it wasn't supposed to be taking place. There was possible

rigging of contracts; there was splitting of contracts; there were amendments made to contracts; and there are too many contracts to keep track of. It amounts to a heck of a lot of money, and it's documentation that was made at that time. It involved the Prime Minister's office.

Mr. Kinsella said he even had six or seven phone calls at home from the finance minister at that time, Paul Martin, which he refused to answer because this whole thing was getting out of control, and so on. I'd definitely like to have a look at that. It's my recollection that the chief of staff and Mr. Herle denied these conversations took place. They were under oath; they said the Prime Minister had nothing to do with trying to interfere with public works, and so on. If there's electronic tape that shows Paul Martin was phoning Mr. Kinsella at that time, I think it would prove who's telling the truth here.

•(1540)

The Chair: Okay. Is there debate?

Do you have a point of order, Mr. Carr?

Mr. Gary Carr (Halton, Lib.): Which one is it?

The Chair: It's the first one, dated Monday, April 19.

Yes, Mr. Lastewka.

Hon. Walt Lastewka (St. Catharines, Lib.): Just for clarification, it's actually Tuesday, April 19.

Mr. Brian Fitzpatrick: I just noticed the wording of it isn't correct either; it's from 1990 to 2003.

The Chair: There are two things. Mr. Lastewka, we don't normally meet on Tuesdays. Are you saying April 19 was a Tuesday?

Hon. Walt Lastewka: Well, if it was on Monday, then it would be the 18th. Somebody's going to look at it down the road—

The Chair: Mr. Fitzpatrick, the clerk has advised me she talked to your office, and because your reference was to chapter 5 of the November 2003 report, it has to be for the years 1999-2003.

Mr. Brian Fitzpatrick: The background leading into that I think is very relevant. I'd like to have the tapes that relate to the testimony we heard in this committee, or there's no merit to it.

But we have a right. It's like going to a movie. If you see the last 15 minutes of the movie and you haven't seen what went on before, the last 15 minutes don't amount to a whole lot.

I think it's 1993.

The Chair: There is a technicality issue here, Mr. Fitzpatrick. Chapter 5 deals with the years 1999-2003. The clerk advises me you cannot have it 1990-2003.

Therefore, my recommendation would be that you continue with this motion and introduce a subsequent one wherein we can work with you to cover off the years you've planned. You would like it from 1990 onwards—

Mr. Brian Fitzpatrick: No, 1993.

The Chair: Sorry, 1993 onwards. Then we can sit down and have the clerk work with you to come up with a motion that is acceptable to the chair.

Mr. Brian Fitzpatrick: But let me make my position perfectly clear on this procedurally. I know it's from 1999-2003, but if there is background and preliminary information that lead into the polling work the Auditor General did in that period of time, to me it's perfectly relevant—perfectly relevant—and it's background information. Any court of law in this country would rule this to be relevant and pertinent to the issue in question, so procedurally, I don't see where the problem would lie.

The Chair: Well, first of all, we deal with matters concerning the Auditor General that have been referred to this committee and then of course the reports referred to this committee. These come under Standing Order 108(3)(g). The clerk, who checks these things out and is a fount of all knowledge, advises me that at this point in time we can't go back to 1993.

Standing Order 108(3)(g) says:

Public Accounts shall include, among other matters, review of and report on the Public Accounts of Canada and all reports of the Auditor General of Canada, which shall be severally deemed permanently referred to the Committee immediately after they are laid upon the Table.

The key of course would be “among other matters”.

The clerk tells me her advice is the motion is out of order, but because it says “Public Accounts shall include, among other matters”, which is not defined, I will allow the motion to go back to 1993.

Mr. Brian Fitzpatrick: Okay.

The Chair: So it was editorially amended to be 1999. Am I correct, Madam Clerk?

The motion, on the basis of my ruling, shall be that it's for the years 1993-2003.

Mr. Murphy.

• (1545)

Hon. Shawn Murphy (Charlottetown, Lib.): Can I make an amendment that it go back to 1984?

The Chair: Back to 1984? Yes, I guess you can make an amendment to go back to 1984.

Hon. Shawn Murphy: I move that amendment.

The Chair: It's moved that it go back to 1984, to amend from 1993 to 2003 to read 1984 to 2003.

(Amendment negatived)

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: We're moving on to the next one, again moved by Mr. Fitzpatrick, that pursuant to Standing Order 108(3)(g) and chapter 5 of the November 2003 report of the Auditor General, the committee request all electronic and written materials of the minister's office, including the minister, Ms. O'Leary, Karl Littler, and others, relating to the retail debt program as well as all electronic and written materials pertaining to Groupe Everest in the minister's office. This should include regional offices as well, particularly Montreal.

But you haven't said which minister, Mr. Fitzpatrick.

Mr. Brian Fitzpatrick: It's the Minister of Finance.

The Chair: So is that an editorial change?

Mr. Brian Fitzpatrick: Yes.

Hon. Walt Lastewka: When you say “and others”, what does that mean? I thought you said you had excluded that earlier.

The Chair: Yes, “and others” is too vague, Mr. Fitzpatrick. We can't just say “and others”.

Mr. Brian Fitzpatrick: I'll say “Mr. Dingwall” instead of “and others”.

The Chair: I don't like too many editorial changes.

Mr. Brian Fitzpatrick: It gets rid of “and others” and puts one name in.

The Chair: If you want to delete “and others” and substitute “Mr. Dingwall”, I'll treat that as an editorial change. So it's “...the minister, Ms. O'Leary, Karl Littler, and Mr. Dingwall, relating to the debt retail program”.

Is there any discussion?

Mr. Fitzpatrick.

Hon. Shawn Murphy: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order, I want to just go back to the first motion. I assume you're going to follow the same practice. We got into this last year or back in January or February, and we did have the assistance of legal counsel at that time. You made the ruling that, among other things, it would relate to the chapter we were studying. It has to relate to the chapter written by the Auditor General.

The Chair: That's correct, Mr. Murphy. We are dealing with chapter 5. Because it said “other matters” in Standing Order 108(3)(g), it did allow latitude. Therefore, I allowed the date change.

• (1550)

Hon. Shawn Murphy: The clerk, with the benefit of legal counsel, will consult with the minister's office or whomever and make the determination that it does or does not relate to this chapter we're supposed to be studying. Correct?

The Chair: I think that's correct, Mr. Murphy. We can't just have all electronic and written materials, because that's not our investigation. Our investigation is chapter 5 and the content of chapter 5, so yes, by definition it is constrained to the issue of chapter 5.

Now, are you on this same point, Mr. Fitzpatrick?

Mr. Brian Fitzpatrick: Yes, and it's for the same reasons as with the first motion, where we went from 1993 to 2003 in light of the testimony that was given by Mr. Kinsella and Mr. Cotler, which brought Groupe Everest into the documentation. I would say we would confine that motion to the period 1993 to 2003 with the same rationale as for the first motion.

The Chair: I'm dealing with Mr. Murphy's point of order. The first point was a clarification for him. I said that while there was no specific restriction on the electronic and written material requested, because your motion is in reference to chapter 5, it's to be only electronic and written material pertaining to the contents of chapter 5. There may be mountains of information exchanged on issues that are of no relevance to our investigation, and therefore they should not be brought forward.

Mr. Brian Fitzpatrick: My point was it does provide some certainty if we put it to the 1993 and 2003—

The Chair: The 1993 was done, but it's constrained to the issue of chapter 5.

Mr. Brian Fitzpatrick: Well, this is asking for something different.

The Chair: Now we're on your second motion. Again, you're requesting all electronic and written material from the minister's office. Again, because of reference to chapter 5, we'll only deal with issues pertaining to chapter 5 and not any other subject dealt with by the minister. It's not relevant to our investigation. We don't want all correspondence and electronic written materials, only these pertaining to our investigation.

Mr. Brian Fitzpatrick: With all due respect, Mr. Chair, it says "relating to the retail debt program", which I think makes the motion a lot more specific. It isn't all documentation. The retail debt program came up in our last session, which we asked questions on. That took place in 1994 and 1995. I think it's quite specific. The only problem is we don't have a period of time. I say 1993 to 2003 and then we've got the problem licked.

Are there other matters?

The Chair: The motion is not well drafted, Mr. Fitzpatrick. Why did you include the retail debt program? There was discussion last time around regarding the advertising of the retail debt programs. That's contained in chapter 5. If it is regarding the size of the retail debt program, or the interest rate to be charged on the retail debt program, I don't think that's germane to our investigation.

Therefore, you're dealing with the polling and the advertising and the contracts pertaining to the retail debt program, but you're not talking about the retail debt program itself.

Mr. Brian Fitzpatrick: No, it's the advertising, the communication, the polling.

The Chair: That's correct, which was within the chapter 5 area.

Is there any other clarification on the motion? Is there any debate on the motion? Is there any question on the motion? All those in favour of the motion as amended to delete "and others", replaced by "Mr. Dingwall" and to mention the minister being the Minister of Finance. And you're saying 1993 to 2003. With these editorial changes I'll call the question.

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: Mr. Christopherson, we're on to your motion, which is that in accordance with Standing Order 108(3)(g) and chapter 5 of the November 2005 report of the Auditor General of Canada, Mr. Warren Kinsella provide a copy of the answering machine tape he referred to during his April 18, 2005, testimony.

Do you want to speak to that, Mr. Christopherson?

Mr. David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Thank you, Chair.

Members will recall during the testimony of Mr. Kinsella that he mentioned tapes. I'll just put it in context. This is speaking from the Hansard of the committee.

Mr. Kinsella: ...where Mr. Martin was attempting to reach me at my home and was leaving messages through the Prime Minister's Office switchboard, I think—I urge you to check that—demanding to speak with me.

The Chair: You said "the Prime Minister's Office". Are you talking about Jean Chrétien the Prime Minister or Paul Martin the Prime Minister?

Mr. Kinsella: He was Minister of Finance at the time, ten years ago, and he... Ministers usually—

The Chair: Okay, I just wanted to clarify who you were talking about.

Mr. Kinsella: I'm not sure about that. My wife and I played the messages over again. We remember receiving phone calls.

It could be read as something they did in the past or it could be very current. I was taking it to be current. Then by virtue of this motion the committee would be requesting a copy of that tape.

• (1555)

The Chair: Is there any discussion on this? Those in favour?

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: Moving on to the next one: Mr. Fitzpatrick, April 20, moves that in reference to chapters 3, 4, and 5 of the November 2003 report of the Auditor General, it was brought to the attention of the Canadian public that there appears to be widespread and systemic corruption at the highest levels of the Liberal government spanning many years. Now that this has all been revealed by the Gomery commission, this committee should report to the House that in its opinion the government should immediately resign.

Mr. Fitzpatrick.

Mr. Brian Fitzpatrick: In support of the motion, I have three points I'd like to make.

First, we have heard evidence from Mr. Kinsella and Mr. Cutler that suggests something was wrong way back in 1994 or 1995. This points the finger not only at the Minister of Finance, but also at various other ministers, including the Minister of Agriculture at the time, who is now Minister of Finance. We have clear-cut examples of improper sole-source contracting, breaking the rules. We have pretty strong evidence of wired competitive bidding. We have documents being backdated to bring about retroactive payments for work that may not have been done, or that was done without approval.

The list is quite lengthy and well documented, with lots of correspondence. So it fits well within the motion. We have evidence of widespread, systematic corruption going back many years, with many rules being broken. The evidence is supported not only by Mr. Kinsella's documentation; it's also supported by Mr. Cutler's testimony.

Second, the elder statesman in our House not long ago said that because of this systematic corruption, the Prime Minister and the government have lost their moral authority to govern. This was Mr. Broadbent, whom I consider the elder statesman of this House of Commons. He's been around here for a long time. When he says the government has lost its moral authority to govern, I listen to him.

There are many other questions surrounding Earncliffe, David Herle, related organizations, and the chief of staff. I see a picture of a chief of staff who's a partner with Mr. Herle.

Mr. Herle is the chief political strategist for Paul Martin, going back many years, his political go-to man. Then Mr. Herle changes his hat and sits in on the Prime Minister's meetings to plot out communications strategies for researching, polling, and so on. Terrie O'Leary claims to be unmindful of all this. She's got a Chinese wall between all these contacts going to Mr. Herle from Mr. Martin's office. The documentation, however, doesn't support her story. It flies in the face of it. It looks like one huge conflict of interest to the umpteenth degree.

This has been going on for a long time. If the evidence of Mr. Kinsella and Mr. Cutler is to be believed, the office was bypassing the rules of cabinet and Treasury Board's contracting guidelines in funnelling contracts to Earncliffe or other organizations friendly to them. In some cases, these organizations were secret partners with other contract bidders—in violation of the splitting rules.

Mr. Herle was the Minister of Finance's chief political adviser. He ran the Liberal election campaign last year. He ran the leadership campaign for Paul Martin—the successful one. I understand he was instrumental in the campaign that failed in 1990. He was his political go-to man. His spouse was the chief of staff. And we have all these contracts being awarded from Finance to Earncliffe and Earncliffe-friendly organizations. If somebody can't see a conflict of interest there, I'm scratching my head.

Every rule I know about conflict of interest went right out the window. Even the Ethics Commissioner at the time thought the matter serious enough to report on.

• (1600)

Mr. Kinsella has provided a lot of damaging information. I know people will attack Mr. Kinsella, but the documentation is there to support his position. I didn't see anything from Mr. Herle or from Terrie O'Leary in the way of documentation that would refute anything Mr. Kinsella provided. The only witness there who didn't have an axe to grind with anybody, the professional civil servant who gained a lot of respect as being a legitimate whistle-blower in this country, Mr. Cutler, supports the concerns raised by Mr. Kinsella.

Is there any doubt here? I see a bunch of people disagreeing on the evidence. I'll go to the professional, whistle-blowing public servant

to make my judgment of who's telling the truth, and that's Mr. Cutler. To me there's lots of evidence to support this motion.

And I'll go right back to my major point too. Mr. Broadbent, who's been here a long time in this House, who is an elder statesman of this House, a very well-respected member of this House, has clearly stated in the House that this government has lost its moral authority to govern. The evidence is just mounting day by day.

I think the report we heard from Mr. Kinsella, another one, just confirmed the whole argument on this government and this Prime Minister.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Fitzpatrick.

Mr. Murphy, Mr. Lastewka, Mr. Wrzesnewskij, and Madam Boivin.

Hon. Shawn Murphy: Mr. Chairman, my submission here is going to be that the motion is entirely out of order. The motion is in reference, as is stated, to chapters 3, 4, and 5 of the November 2003 report of the Auditor General.

Mr. Chairman, as you're aware, insofar as chapters 3 and 4 are concerned, you and I, and the committee—although quite differently constituted—spent a considerable part of our lives on those two chapters. I think we had about 87 days of testimony. We've heard from a lot of witnesses. Unfortunately, Mr. Fitzpatrick was not part of those deliberations. We did write a report on that, Mr. Chairman. I understand that report has been tabled in the House by you. It would be my understanding that the government now has 90 days in which to respond.

The Chair: They have 150.

A voice: They have 120 days.

Hon. Shawn Murphy: Oh, 120 days to respond.

Mr. Chairman, we did our report. It was a serious issue, there's no question about that. We've seen evidence of a small department within the Department of Public Works and Government Services established outside of what I consider to be normal Treasury Board guidelines. The provisions of the Financial Administration Act were not adhered to. There was, I considered, unnecessary political influence by the minister of the day. There was a perfect storm. The deputy minister of the day did not, in my opinion anyway, do his job in looking after the interests of the taxpayers of Canada, and things were allowed to happen that ought not to have happened.

However, we did have a very lengthy hearing, and we wrote a report.

As we know from previous events, the program has been cancelled. There's been a whole host of changes made in the whole accountancy of government. I think we're generally pleased with the response so far by the government in dealing with this issue.

Insofar as chapters 3 and 4 are concerned, I don't know how we could possibly go back a year or a year and a half before that and deal with some kind of motion.

Chapter 5, Mr. Chairman, is basically a clean report. I've read chapter 5 from the Auditor General. She does point out a few minor instances. These are in no way at all related to the transgressions that we've seen in chapters 3 and 4. Chapter 5, in summary, was basically a clean report. There could be some improvements made in the contracting for the advertising, but it was basically in accordance with Treasury Board guidelines and in accordance with the provisions of the Financial Administration Act.

We are, as a committee, obligated to review that report, hear witnesses, and write a report—although I do sympathize with the researchers writing the report, from the witnesses we've heard so far. It'll be interesting to see what report they do. But that is our job.

Again, I come back to my statement that we are dealing with chapter 5, a relatively clean report from the Auditor General, as she has told us on many, many occasions.

Now, Mr. Chairman, it would bring Parliament, the House of Commons, and this committee into disrepute if the committee were to consider a motion like this on chapters 3, 4, and 5 after what we have gone through. There's no way any relation can be established whatsoever. It's way off base.

If there are other mechanisms...if he wants to bring a non-confidence motion before Parliament, I think there are mechanisms to do that. I can't help him, but I'm sure there are people in the House. Maybe Mr. Broadbent will help him.

But this committee, Mr. Chairman, ought to stay focused. We've put a lot of time, a lot of effort, and a lot of energy into chapters 3, 4, and 5. I think we wrote a very good report, and I think we made some very bold recommendations. Unfortunately, I'm not so sure everyone has read the report. That's one concern I do have. I don't know if Mr. Fitzpatrick has read it or not.

Anyway, Mr. Chairman, that concludes my remarks. I think you have the gist of my submission, that this motion in no way, shape, or form is related to chapters 3, 4, and 5, and it ought to be ruled out of order by you.

•(1605)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Murphy. You're asking for my opinion as to whether the motion is in order.

There are two things I would say. As I mentioned, the Auditor General's reports "shall be severally deemed permanently referred to the Committee immediately after they are laid upon the Table", so even if they're 10 years old, they're still before the committee. We're not required or constrained to only one report per investigation; in fact, I think we had about four, five, or six reports going into the House on an interim basis last year, calling for the payment of legal fees for people, and so on. As you know, we intend, if possible, to bring down another report yet. So we're not constrained to only one report per investigation.

And since the Standing Orders say, "permanently referred to the Committee", I have to rule the motion in order. It can be defeated if the committee feels like Mr. Murphy, but that's for the wish of the committee. I believe the motion is in order.

Mr. Lastewka, Mr. Wrzesnewskyj, Madame Boivin, Mr. Fitzpatrick, and Mr. Sauvageau.

Hon. Walt Lastewka: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I too find this motion, from my standpoint, out of order, because of the work that was done last year—under some constrained conditions, but we did get through it. As you know, the recommendations were delayed from coming out of our committee for one reason or another, but we made 29 recommendations, and I know the government has worked solidly on 16 of them and are reviewing another 12.

This is another attempt to get us off the purpose of this committee. Mr. Chairman, the Auditor General has referred 41 chapters to us and all we've done is 9. Even the sections of priority among the sections of the Auditor General's report we've not attempted to do.

This is just another tactic—another sleazy way, as far as I'm concerned—to take the public accounts committee off the mission it stands for. To have a motion like this and then try to set up almost an investigation parallel to the Gomery one I find totally offensive and way out of whack.

We have work to do. There's a lot of work to do. The Auditor General has been here a number of times. Many times she has been delayed and not been able to come forward because of motions. I've said this before: this is another way of creating the circus of public accounts rather than doing the proper work the public accounts committee should be doing.

It's very easy to say—and there are a lot of innuendoes and personal attacks, but I have faith that the Gomery commission will look at all sides in a non-political way to make recommendations to Parliament and that Parliament will then act on them. To take pieces of testimony, to make all the innuendoes, is very good fodder for an election, if that's what they want, but really it's the work of the commission and the work of this committee that the people of Canada want us to do. They want us to make government more efficient, more effective, and not with innuendoes.

And so with all the others, for Mr. Kinsella and then against Mr. Kinsella. I've not known Mr. Kinsella, but I know quite a lot now about his reputation. I think there are other people whose reputations are being questioned. We had a chance, or we were supposed to have, as I believe Mr. Christopherson has mentioned earlier... We were supposed to hear from Mr. Schiller and Mr. Kinsella on who said what, because there were more interpretations and more accusations, and things that as far as I'm concerned just delay and delay.

To add this motion—here's a good example—during a chapter where the Auditor General gave a very favourable amount of comments and made some suggestions, and to wrap it in under chapters 3, 4, and 5 just to be able to put the motion through, I think is wrong. It's taking away from the public accounts committee. It's making a circus of it, or a movie—I guess that's the next thing—and I'm very disappointed that this motion is coming forward. I feel personally, Mr. Chairman, that it should have been ruled out of order and that the committee should be focusing on the things of the day, and that's chapter 5 and all those other chapters.

•(1610)

If we can't do 41 chapters, then do the sections the Auditor General referred us to, the priority ones, and look at the chapters in a proper way. It's wrong to continue to have this back and forth debate and try to really pull the rug out from Gomery and its reporting system and whatever recommendations are made in the fall, or when they report. I believe strongly that this motion is way out of order.

The Chair: I think we have a point of order here.

A point of order, Mr. Sauvageau, s'il vous plait.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Benoît Sauvageau (Repentigny, BQ): I am sorry to interrupt you, Mr. Lastewka, but I need to tell you that, in answer to that question, Justice Gomery said that this was not part of his mandate.

[*English*]

The Chair: I think we're getting into debate. That is not a point of order.

Mr. Lastewka, you have the floor.

Hon. Walt Lastewka: I'll conclude, because other people want to speak.

This motion is a good example of taking away from the purpose of public accounts, where public accounts should be looking at those chapters. The Auditor General has taken the time and effort with her people to be here with us on many occasions. We should be doing the follow-up, and we're not. We're adding to the circus, or now to the film production.

The Chair: Next is Mr. Wrzesnewskyj, followed by Madame Boivin, Mr. Fitzpatrick, Mr. Sauvageau, and Mr. Christopherson.

•(1615)

Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj (Etobicoke Centre, Lib.): Thank you.

Mr. Fitzpatrick has quite a few motions before us today—three—but there seems to be a logical and rational disconnect between his first two and his third. While arguing for his first two—and I noted some of the things he was saying—he said that it was important to try to get more evidence in reference to chapter 5 because there was a lot of, in his words, “disagreeing on evidence”.

Yet when he spoke to his third motion, he said there was lots of evidence to support it. So in fact he's saying one thing on his first two motions, where he's asking and requesting that we bring more information forward because, as he said, there's disagreement on evidence—we don't seem to have enough evidence, we don't really know—and then he's jumped to a third motion where all of a sudden he does have enough evidence. Is it the same Mr. Fitzpatrick?

In fact, what's interesting and quite telling is that when he tabled the motion and walked out into a press scrum—the third motion, Mr. Fitzpatrick's motion—he didn't even know the wording of it when the press asked him. Then he admitted to the press that it in fact wasn't his motion; it was passed on to him by the Conservative Party. What we see is a party, for partisan purposes, hijacking the important work of this committee.

Mr. Chair, Mr. Fitzpatrick had said there was a heck of a lot of money involved, and there certainly was. There were a lot of

resources, as Mr. Murphy said, dedicated to chapters 3 and 4. We came up with 29 recommendations. Right now it appears that—I'm not calling this the Fitzpatrick motion; in fact, truthfully, I should call it the Conservative election motion, so let's throw the others out of the window. There's no real intent to work on Mr. Fitzpatrick's real motions. It's this third motion that the Conservative Party is dictating. What they're trying to do is hijack the work of our committee.

What's really troubling about this is that the motion mentions the Gomery inquiry. I remember discussing with some of my colleagues, Mr. Chair, back in December, the cost of Gomery. Some were saying, what a huge cost; \$100 million, perhaps, is what it will cost. There was real disappointment about the cost of the inquiry.

I was actually at that time saying that it was an investment in the future, to make sure these sorts of things never happen again, just as those 29 recommendations that we unanimously agreed to table in the House were a tremendous investment of our resources and our time. What's fascinating is that, all of a sudden, there is a real love of this inquiry. In fact, never mind the \$100 million cost of the inquiry; what we want is a \$250 million election, a \$250 million Conservative election.

Then Mr. Fitzpatrick raises the whole question of morality. I think there is a sense of what's right and what's not right. There is a sense out there that we need to get to the bottom of this. We need Justice Gomery to finish his work. We need him to come out with his report. There's a sense of fair play.

On the topic of morality that was raised by Mr. Fitzpatrick, the leader who in fact passed this motion on and tried to hijack our committee's work was talking about our “deal with the devil”, the fact that we had a deal with the NDP. What devilish designs, helping post-secondary students with their tuitions. What hellish stuff, an extra cent for public transit for cities. It's quite interesting that we would raise this issue of morality.

•(1620)

What's really immoral and wrong is for us to be passing a motion that will cost the taxpayers a quarter of a billion dollars after we've invested \$100 million into this inquiry. In fact, this whole motion is a fraud because it's not Mr. Fitzpatrick's motion—and he admitted to the press that it was given to him to table here—it's the quarter-billion-dollar Conservative election motion.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Wrzesnewskyj.

I have Madame Boivin, Mr. Fitzpatrick, Monsieur Sauvageau, Mr. Christopherson, Mr. Allison, and then Mr. Murphy.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Françoise Boivin (Gatineau, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

[*English*]

It's my turn now.

The Chair: Please make your comments to the chair.

Ms. Françoise Boivin: I was talking to you, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Okay.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Françoise Boivin: Mr. Chair, I do not know what saddens me more, Mr. Fitzpatrick's motion or the fact that, as we speak, thousands of Canadians are watching us. In watching this circus, they are wondering whether there is anyone in this historic place that has not completely lost their marbles.

I like to point out that I am a new member. I came here with a lot of illusions, which were very quickly shattered. Last year before the election campaign, I, like all those Canadians across the country that are listening to us now, tuned in to the proceedings of this committee. Although, I had a lot of partisan feelings, I also felt the desire to get the facts and find out what actually happened. This is what almost all the parties around the table, including the Liberals, are endeavouring to do.

However, a leopard can never change its spots. As soon as there is political hay to be made, partisan politics resurface. That makes me sad because I had thought that we would take advantage of the minority government situation to move forward. Once again, motions like this one prove that old habits are hard to break.

If I had been told last year that I would be sitting on the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, I would have felt very proud. I would like you all to know that when I was asked to replace Mr. Holland, if this issue had not been so interesting... No one wants to sit on this committee, because it is a big joke. I will not repeat what Mr. Wrzesnewskij said earlier but you only have to look at the motion on the table to understand what I mean. Fortunately, I am convinced that Canadians are not fooled by this type of rhetoric. You cannot on the one hand be clamouring for the facts and then on the other hand decide that you already know enough to table a motion of non-confidence.

My colleagues across the way might want to afford the other witnesses the same benefit of the doubt and credibility that they seem to give to a certain Mr. Kinsella. They do not have all the facts and are asking for more, yet they believe one person and not the others. I am not getting sucked into that game. I almost did not get into politics because of Mr. Kinsella's book, "Kicking Ass in Canadian Politics". I thought that if that is how politics in this country works, it would be too disheartening to get involved. Seriously though, it is shameful to table this type of motion and to claim that you are doing it for your constituents. People, young and old alike, women from all over Canada are listening to us and they are hearing statements like: "wide-ranging systemic corruption at the highest levels of the Liberal Government". Who does he think he is, Mr. Chair, to make affirmations like that? Justice Gomery has yet to render his verdict on this issue.

I think that we are all here to get to the truth. Let's stop playing these silly little games, which do not get us anywhere. Just think that tomorrow we are going to be debating the way democracy works in Canada and the role that members of Parliament play in it. These

sorts of outrages do not make me proud to be a member of the Parliament of Canada.

[*English*]

The Chair: Merci beaucoup.

The order is Mr. Fitzpatrick, Monsieur Sauvageau, Mr. Christopher, Mr. Allison, and Mr. Murphy.

Mr. Brian Fitzpatrick: I don't want to have to get into history—

The Chair: Mr. Fitzpatrick, you address the chair.

Mr. Brian Fitzpatrick: Mr. Chair, regarding history lessons, last June, three and a half years into an administration, we had an election. The election could have been held in November 2005. The public accounts committee was shut down. We could get into arguments about what was going on, but it shut down when the election was called, and we could have gone into Mr. Boulay's testimony and other people's testimony, but that wouldn't have been really good to have. Gomery could maybe have had his report wound up and completed. We could have had a fall election, but the government of the day decided, no, we've got to have an election before we've heard from Mr. Gomery or heard from public accounts.

I just want to bring that up so it's on the record, because we are pointing out deficiencies in one another's arguments. Those are two big deficiencies for the other side. I'd remind members as well that Mr. Justice Gomery said he had no jurisdiction over chapter 5 items. What we heard the week before we adjourned was chapter 5 evidence dealing with polling research and communications research. It was fairly compelling evidence.

I have one last point. We had a motion in the House—I believe it was the Bloc that presented it—that said the money in dispute, the money that was earmarked for the Liberal government... We can dispute whether that's right or wrong, or whatever, but there was certainly evidence about that, and everyone in the House voted in favour of having that money set aside as a safeguard, in a trust account, until this matter had been sorted out. The government didn't vote for it, but the NDP voted for it, the Bloc voted for it, and the Conservatives voted for it. That's the majority in the House. The government has decided, in its wisdom, to ignore that; they say that would be prejudging Gomery.

The best argument I've heard in the House on that very issue is an NDP member who said the government has already prejudged Gomery because they're going after the advertising agencies for \$4.1 million; they've started court actions against them to recover it. It seems to me a very logical argument, Mr. Chair, that the government itself has brought its own indictment against itself. It acknowledges that the advertising agencies were involved in a corrupt activity. What they won't acknowledge is the evidence coming back that \$2.2 million, at a bare minimum, was being kicked back to the Liberal Party. The NDP argument in the House on that was quite compelling, very persuasive. If I had any doubt in my mind, it disappeared after I heard NDP members make very good arguments about that, and I think that was the pretext for Mr. Broadbent's statement that the government had lost its moral authority to govern.

That would be my point. It's more than just Gomery; it's what we heard in here on chapter 5, which is new information, and I think fairly persuasive, damaging information for the Minister of Finance today, and also for the current Prime Minister when he was Minister of Finance back in the 1990s.

• (1625)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Fitzpatrick.

Mr. Sauvageau, please. Then Mr. Christopherson, Mr. Allison, Mr. Murphy, Mr. Wrzesnewskyj, Mr. Kramp, and Mr. Lastewka.

Mr. Sauvageau.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Benoît Sauvageau: Several of our colleagues appear interested in talking about this issue. I would like to address some of the arguments put forward by the Liberals before speaking to the new evidence and the motion per se.

I find it difficult to see how terms such as circus, irresponsible, silliness, disreputable individual and so on can be used in the same breath as commitment to democracy. The majority of members of a committee voting in favour of an issue is just like a majority of constituents voting for a particular political candidate. One could say that constituents are happy imbeciles for four years at a stretch but that would be disrespectful of democracy. Before engaging in political partisanship, we must respect democracy. Claiming that it is ridiculous, silly and disrespectful to have voted by a margin of six to five in favour of a motion—the NDP having stood with us on that occasion—is somewhat worrying for democracy. Does the imbecility extend to the journalists and their 42 columns the day after Mr. Kinsella, Mr. Cutler and so on testified before this committee? It was so silly in fact that if you do a basic search on “cyberpresse,” you come up with over forty newspaper articles on this matter. Therefore, are we tarring reporters with the same brush? We might want to put that question to Ms. Boivin. I am sure that she would be only too pleased to answer.

Mr. Borys has said that this motion is a Conservative tactic designed to force an election. The Prime Minister made an address to the nation, in which he pledged to call an election 30 days after Justice Gomery has tabled his report. Would that election be less expensive than one held now? I wonder. I do not know whether the Prime Minister asked people to ignore the Conservatives and their attempts to bring down the Government and to allow the Liberals to call an election on their own timetable instead, since it would be less expensive. We might want to ask that question.

They claim that they want the truth. It would have been nice to have the truth right at the outset but we now have documents in our possession. Mr. Lastewka mentioned that neither the Auditor General nor Mr. Murphy pointed to any irregularities in Chapter 5. Section 5.17 of the Auditor General's report states that only verbal reports had been received. This contravened guidelines since reports must be submitted in written format. This short little section sheds light on irregularities, unorthodox practices and non-compliance at several departments, including Finance, Agriculture, Justice and Industry. That led to what I would somewhat flippantly call a “parallel mini sponsorship scandal” since these departments only dealt with a single public relations firm: Earncliffe Strategy Group. Groupaction and the other agencies were shut out.

Given that we are trying to get at the truth, Mr. Chair, I think that you will allow me to read a letter from Mr. Kinsella to Ms. O'Leary on 25 November 1994. Mr. Kinsella read out an extract himself when he appeared before us.

Are we on the eight-minute round?

A voice: No.

Mr. Benoît Sauvageau: No? Fine.

He read part of this letter during his testimony to the committee, but I would like to read the rest of that letter now just to demonstrate that, even if we are accused of being silly, it was quite appropriate to hear witnesses on Chapter 5 and to endeavour to get to the bottom of the matter. Indeed, even if we did not manage to get all the facts, the issues that did come out were sufficiently serious to warrant our support for this motion. I would like to read you the fourth paragraph of a letter—which I have given to the interpreters—from Mr. Kinsella dated 25 November 1994, in which he states:

As you know, Earncliffe Strategy Group and Anderson Strategic Research provided communications advice and public opinion research services under the previous government. In December 1993, your department awarded a single source contract to Anderson Strategic Research for the organization of focus groups [...]. Bruce Anderson, who, if I am not mistaken, is now associated with Earncliffe Strategy Group, was awarded a further single-source contract worth approximately \$29,000 in May 1994 [...]

In the following paragraph, he goes on to say:

In August 1994, as we both know, Finance asked my department to organize a call-for-tenders process for the selection of a communication and public opinion research consultant. Payment was to be an advance on fees of \$180,000 per year. There was also an option to renew for a further two years.

• (1630)

Mr. Kinsella goes on to say: Our main concern, however, was the fact that the terms and conditions were designed in such a way that only one or two firms, which had previously worked for Finance, could meet the requirements. There were also other complaints from within the industry [...]

[*English*]

The Chair: Mr. Sauvageau.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Benoît Sauvageau: Yes.

[*English*]

The Chair: Are you reading the entire letter?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Benoît Sauvageau: No.

• (1635)

[*English*]

The Chair: Okay. Carry on.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Benoît Sauvageau: On 17 October, we were asked to post the call-for-tender on the MERX Website. As planned, only Earncliffe Strategy Group tendered a bid. The potential value of the contract was up to \$540,000.

Now we come to the part he read in his explosive testimony: Terrie, this raises problems, as you are aware. The competition was irregular, payments were excessive and the work was probably pointless. It is to be expected that the research industry will raise the alarm and point to “political” ties.

The question was asked as to how we could lend credibility to this particular witness and not to others. In fact, they were not credible since they lied to the committee under oath. For instance, David Herle asserted that he had submitted all reports in written form, but section 5.17 of the Auditor General's report states that there were eight verbal reports, of which we have no evidence. This witness lied under oath. He told us that all the reports he submitted were in written form. He contravened Treasury Board rules. I do not think that we can give the slightest credibility to anyone who lies under oath.

If we had continued to hear witnesses, Mr. Chair, Mr. Kinsella could have read and explained his journal, which, from 4 October to 11 December 1994, relates the concerns raised on a daily basis by Mr. Dingwall, Mr. Dominic LeBlanc, Mr. Jean Carle, Mr. Conrad Winn and others as to what was going on. Indeed, chapter 5 of the Auditor General's report refers to this.

Were there sufficient grounds to hear witnesses on this issue as the majority of the committee wished to do? I believe so. I think that the testimonies we heard last Monday, two weeks ago and these letters give us ample grounds.

Are there sufficient grounds to believe that there was widespread, systematic corruption at the highest levels of the Liberal government during those years? Given what has come to light at the Gomery Commission and what is happening here, I think there are. Consequently, for the reasons I have raised, I believe that we must support Mr. Fitzpatrick's motion. I also believe that endorsing this motion would be consistent with the positions taken by those members who have stated in the House of Commons that they were prepared to support a motion of non-confidence in the Government.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Sauvageau.

[*English*]

I have Mr. Christopherson, Mr. Allison, Mr. Murphy, Mr. Wrzesnewskyj, Mr. Kramp, and Mr. Lastewka.

Depending on how this debate goes, it may go on until about 5:30, but that's up to the members. If the debate seems to be going on, let's get a closing comment at 5, so that perhaps we can put the question by 5:30.

Mr. Christopherson, please.

Mr. David Christopherson: Thank you, Chair. I appreciate the opportunity to speak.

I came here, and my colleagues came here, to this Parliament to make the minority government work. The conduct of the caucus, the conduct of Jack Layton, as our leader, and I believe my conduct here on this committee support that this is what we've been trying to do. The idea of leaving here after 10 months and, arguably, achieving next to nothing is the antithesis of why New Democrats run to have a seat in the House of Commons.

As a result of the negotiations that took place last week, we now have an agreement with the Liberals resulting in an improved budget—a budget that's improved, that actually does something for people. It answers a number of the mandates that we ran on in the

last election. In order to see that budget come to life, it needs to pass through the House. We need to have a House sitting for it to pass through; therefore, it is our intention to ensure that budget gets through.

Don't mistake my comments. New Democrats, like Canadians from coast to coast to coast, are absolutely sickened at what we're seeing in the sponsorship scandal. This isn't a question of saying this is okay. That will be addressed. There will be an election at some point. I don't know how the governing Liberals can avoid that being a focal point of this election. People will pass judgment as to whether or not the Liberals deserve to be returned, and if not, who should be there instead.

That will come. But before we get there, we, in the NDP, desperately want to see more money going to protect our environment, more money to build affordable housing, more money for public transit, more money for municipal infrastructure, more money to address student debt. The new budget, the new improved budget, if you will, does that. I want to see something productive come out of these months in the House. I believe this would give us at least something to point to, certainly from an NDP point of view, that we achieved something positive, progressive, that makes life better for the people we represent.

My leader, Jack Layton, gave his word to Prime Minister Martin that we would take whatever steps are necessary to ensure that this new budget gets through the House. Therefore, it's my intention to honour the commitment we made, and I will be voting against the non-confidence motion to ensure that this new budget gets through the House and that the benefits people will receive will actually become a reality. Then we'll deal with the whole sponsorship scandal separate and apart from this.

Thank you, Chair.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. Christopherson.

Mr. Allison.

Mr. Dean Allison (Niagara West—Glanbrook, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I always find it somewhat interesting to hear Liberal righteous indignation. I find that somewhat amusing when we look at some of the things that have happened over this past year.

I think it's pretty fair to note that chapter 5 was left off the terms of reference in terms of Gomery. I think that in itself was one of the reasons we decided to bring it back and have a look at it.

It's fairly clear from our last meeting that all along the Prime Minister has been saying that not only was he not involved, but he did not know what was going on. I guess maybe the reason is that he was orchestrating his own contracts to make sure they went to his friendly firms—not only Liberal-friendly firms, but Paul Martin-friendly firms. We see the same thing happening, as was evidenced here last week: he was looking at contracts that were going through Chuck Guité to Earncliffe. That was raised over a year ago by Mr. Cutler, who said he was concerned with the way contracts were handled. We had someone come in who, some time after the fact, verified what Mr. Cutler had said all along and had said last year.

Mr. Murphy said there were certainly transgressions that happened in chapters 3 and 4. If you can call stolen money, election fraud, and some of these other things transgressions, that's probably the understatement of the year.

If we look at your comment that there are other options in governments, and why is this motion before us, it's pretty fair to say those other options have been removed from us, in terms of opposition days. If those were truly there, then we could look at that.

Another point we need to make is that probably some members on the other side are here today because of the lack of knowledge the people had when they went to the polls last time. If the people had any understanding of what was really going on, some of those members would not be here today, so I think they need to keep that in mind.

The last point I would like to raise is that Mr. Kinsella, when he was here last week, talked about some things we still need to dig a little deeper into and get some clarification on. I think that's why we should bring some of these witnesses back—to have the opportunity to explore some of these things a little bit further and find out what has gone on.

As I said last time, we've found out that our Prime Minister was funnelling...had influence to contracts through the firms that benefited not only his leadership but also the election. We saw that money, through chapters 3 and 4, helped in the previous three campaigns. It is for this reason I believe we should be taking this motion very seriously.

Thank you.

• (1640)

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Benoît Sauvageau): Monsieur Murphy.

Hon. Shawn Murphy: Mr. Chairman, thank you very much.

I just want to reiterate what I said previously. I'm disappointed the committee is debating this type of a motion. I'm disappointed the motion was received by the chair.

As Mr. Allison has just said, I have no problem in talking about chapter 5. That's a decision for this committee to make. We have an obligation to investigate chapter 5, report on it, issue a report, and go to the next chapter, but for a motion like this to allege corruption when we have a public inquiry going on, Mr. Chairman, sets a very bad precedent, because I haven't seen any evidence of it.

If Mr. Fitzpatrick wants to get into corruption, let's talk about his previous leader, Mr. Brian Mulroney. Let's talk about the cash in envelopes in hotel rooms after he left office. Now I know Mr. Fitzpatrick has no problem with this; in fact, I think he thinks it's all acceptable.

But if the precedent is set here, Mr. Chairman, to go into this kind of charade, then certainly you'll have no problem going down the road and having Mr. Mulroney and Mr. Karlheinz Schreiber, who passed the money to Mr. Mulroney in these hotel rooms, and Mr. Elmer MacKay, according to the author William Kaplan, who was with Mr. Mulroney and Mr. Karlheinz Schreiber on one of these occasions. We'd have to. We'd have no choice but to call these

individuals as witnesses and to receive their testimony before this committee, Mr. Chairman, and put it in a report.

I just mention this to you, Mr. Chairman. The precedent this committee is setting by going down this path is wrong. We shouldn't be on this path. We should be focused on what we're supposed to be doing. We should be investigating chapter 5, as we decided to do by motion, and we should be trying to write a report.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Murphy.

Mr. Wrzesnewskyj, please, Mr. Kramp, and Mr. Lastewka.

Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Allison mentioned the last election and the lack of knowledge in the electorate of all the things that went on, with some disappointment that the electorate really didn't have a full picture. Isn't that the case today? We still don't have a full picture. It almost seems Mr. Allison is arguing that the public has a right to know. The public has a right to expect that this inquiry will conclude, there will be a report, and based on that report it will make its decision.

I'd like to return to a couple of comments Mr. Sauvageau made. Mr. Sauvageau said that people were calling people here imbeciles—quoting one of my colleagues. That's actually incorrect. That should be corrected, because nobody used that sort of terminology. What was in fact said was that the work of this committee, arguably one of the most important parliamentary committees, was unfortunately being hijacked by the ambitions of Stephen Harper with this motion.

I understand Mr. Sauvageau was saying that whether the election is in the next month or eight months from now, the cost is the cost. I'm quite aware that the Bloc Québécois would love to see an election in this coming month, and again in some eight months, because it would demonstrate a lack of ability for our federal institutions to function. Every eight to twelve months another quarter billion dollars spent on an election—the Bloc would love to see the federal government being perceived as dysfunctional. It's fascinating.

We talked about what Stephen Harper said—a deal with the devil; the fact that we were working with the NDP on issues such as public transportation, tuition, early learning child care. They would actually look at putting together a deal with the Bloc, whose sole interest is to show that this institution cannot function, because it suits their ultimate goal of disassembling our federation.

Mr. Fitzpatrick also talked about the lessons of history, but once again he's not being very genuine. In fact, when Mr. Sauvageau said people used the term "imbeciles", I didn't hear that, and it should be corrected.

Mr. Brian Fitzpatrick: Point of order—

The Chair: Mr. Fitzpatrick, address the chair, please.

Mr. Brian Fitzpatrick: He's putting my character into question by questioning whether I'm genuine or not.

The Chair: You will address the chair with your concerns, Mr. Fitzpatrick, and I will deal with them.

Mr. Brian Fitzpatrick: I heard the member say that Mr. Fitzpatrick was not being genuine with his points, which implies I'm not being sincere or truthful about what I'm saying. I can assure the member opposite that I am, and I resent the implication that I'm being less than forthcoming on this debate.

I'm not going to make those comments about that member, and I don't suggest it serves anybody's purpose to start demeaning other members of this committee.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. Fitzpatrick.

When the political temperature rises, there's always a tendency to get a little personal; therefore, I ask all members to be judicious in their comments. It's fine to have a political perspective. It's fine to have a particular agenda that one wishes to push forward, but it's always better when we stay on agendas and issues and leave personal remarks out of it. That applies to all members.

Mr. Fitzpatrick, I'll pass your point of order.

Mr. Wrzesnewskij and all members, please take that into consideration.

• (1645)

Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskij: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The reference was that this committee has unfortunately become somewhat of a circus. Nobody on this side has used terms like "imbecile". That was introduced by Mr. Sauvageau as he talked about the democratic process. Our committee has been hijacked. Some of the members are puppets on a string. We had a motion presented by one member in the name of another. It was passed to someone to put and table in front of us.

I'd like to return to Mr. Fitzpatrick. He talked about the lessons of history and his concern for those lessons. How does that match up with his conduct of a moment ago, when he disagreed with Mr. Murphy's friendly amendment to the effect that if we were to have all the evidence, to learn the lessons of history, we should go a little farther back in time? Perhaps it should have included Decima in that motion, with a timeframe extending back before 1993. If there's genuine concern for the lessons of history, how can we be selective about which part of history we want to hear?

There's one thing I'd like to pass on. Mr. Fitzpatrick will be attending an important meeting this evening—one that he said involved a heck of a lot of money. I'd like Mr. Fitzpatrick to pass on to his leader, Mr. Harper, who wants to spend one-quarter of a billion dollars of the taxpayers' money to be elected, that one-quarter of a billion dollars is a heck of a lot of money.

Thank you.

• (1650)

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Christopherson has given me notice of a point of order.

Mr. David Christopherson: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

There have been a few references to comments the Honourable Ed Broadbent may or may not have made on the floor of the House. I would like it noted that on April 13, during Question Period, Mr. Broadbent said the following:

Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has said that—

The Chair: Mr. Christopherson, I thought you said you were correcting comments you made earlier to this committee.

Mr. David Christopherson: No, I'm correcting the comments that somebody else made about my colleague, Mr. Broadbent. I want to make sure it's correct since they're using it as a cornerstone of their argument.

The Chair: But that's not a point of order. I thought it was comments you had made that you wished to correct and retract. Now you're getting into a debate about something somebody else said.

You can put yourself down as a speaker and you can make your point later.

Mr. Kramp, Mr. Lastewka, Mr. Sauvageau, and Mr. Christopherson.

Mr. Daryl Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Colleagues, I'll throw out two words for you that encapsulate my view of the situation: power and trust. I'm disturbed by what we've seen over the last while. We have a governing party that appears willing to do anything to perpetuate power. They'll prostitute values and principles; they'll outright lie; they will promise absolutely anything to anybody. Quite honestly, Mr. Christopherson, with the greatest respect—

The Chair: We have a point of order.

Madame Boivin.

Ms. Françoise Boivin: I've been accused of saying "imbecile", but if somebody calls me a liar, that is something I don't appreciate. You just asked us to refrain from being personal, and he calls us liars. I'm sick of it.

The Chair: Just one moment. The chair is in control here.

Mr. Kramp, you cannot use that language around here. I cautioned all members and I'd ask you to withdraw.

Mr. Daryl Kramp: I will withdraw it.

But I would also state, Mr. Chair, that it was directed at a party. The comment that was made here was not directed at members of the committee. These are attitudes and statements that have been made in context under parliamentary privilege in the House and by many other sources. I'm not talking about parliamentarians in committee here. That is not my purpose. But I am suggesting that it appears anything will be savaged for the pursuit of power.

As I mentioned, Mr. Chair, the honourable member of the NDP, the leader, made a deal with the Liberal Party. That's fine. We have the right to do that. But I say to myself, my goodness, I really, honestly believe, sir, and gentlemen, that you've been had.

I sat in the House when I heard the finance minister state unequivocally that this budget cannot be changed. This is the way it has to be. There can be no amendments. There can be no adjustments. Otherwise, it will all fall apart and it's useless.

Then a few days later, all of a sudden, if we have an electoral scare, it doesn't really matter what happens. I ask myself this question. If only the pursuit of power becomes the purpose, rather than the pursuit of principle and rather than the pursuit of purpose, then where are we going as a Parliament?

Quite honestly, ladies and gentlemen, that appears to be the situation. We have the inquiry by the Gomery commission going on. We have a multitude of criminal investigations under way. Where there's smoke, there's fire.

I am certainly not in a position to prejudge, nor would I, but I also have a great deal of faith in the ultimate judge. The ultimate judge is the Canadian people. To suggest to the Canadian people that they have no right to pass judgment I think is an insult to their intelligence and their capabilities. That's to suggest we are omnipotent. We know everything. We know all. We here in caucus, we here in Parliament, will make the ultimate decision.

The judgment has to eventually be made by the people. We're the custodians. That's all we are. We are not the people who decide the direction of this country. We do it in concert with their wishes. Should they wish to go to an election, should they wish not to go to an election, or should they wish to support this party or the other party, I certainly respect that.

Pardon?

• (1655)

The Chair: We will have no comments across the floor, please.

Mr. Daryl Kramp: I will respond to that, though.

The Chair: You will respond to the chair.

Mr. Daryl Kramp: Do you want to go to the polls? Do you want to go to the dentist? Well, my goodness, would I ever want to go to the dentist? No, but if you—

The Chair: Mr. Kramp, you have to start using “they” instead of “you”. You're speaking to the chair, and it raises the temperature of the room when you use the second person rather than the third person.

Mr. Daryl Kramp: Thank you very kindly.

I will respond to another point, though. Is an election costly? Heavens, yes. Do we want to go to an election and waste money? Absolutely no, but if we're spending a quarter of a billion dollars to do an election, whether it's now, six months from now, eight months from now, or ten months from now, it's a cost. But when I see a government spending almost that a day right now—\$200 million a day on average for this last two weeks—simply to buy a vote, to buy support, I say to myself, that literally is irresponsible. It is not leadership. That is not putting the interests of the public at heart; that is not caring for the direction of this country.

Mr. Chair, we have an obligation here to respond to the needs of the people, and it goes right back to the one word: trust. If there's no trust in a personal relationship, if there's no trust in your family, if there's no trust in your business... You have nothing if you do not have trust. Right now I am sensing in the Canadian public... As everybody says, “Do you want to buy swampland in Florida?” Well, every parliamentarian is being painted, with this entire process, in a negative fashion.

There are a lot of wonderful members in this House from all parties, and we are collectively bearing the brunt of a government that has been out of control in the pursuit of power. I don't think that's right. I don't think it's fair. I think we have to clean house. We have to come back and show the Canadian people that we are willing to earn their support, regardless of which particular party we represent. But that has to be based on trust and based on principle. If we are prepared to sacrifice any of that principle or any of that faith or that trust simply to short-circuit a process...

We have a circumstance right now—and you talk about procedure... This charade, if you wish to call this committee that right now—which is an embarrassment, quite frankly... We are embarrassing not only ourselves; we're embarrassing the House. We're embarrassing the actual Parliament. And we are embarrassing it for one particular reason: this particular party in government is absolutely throwing up roadblock after roadblock so that we cannot ensure that we can follow our democratic right.

We cannot just simply be a procedural roadblock, and this committee, unfortunately, like other committees, and as is the House... But it all starts with the top. It starts with leadership. It starts with a prime minister, and it starts with a government that recognizes the democratic will of Parliament.

How can we go on in the House and have a vote, where it is passed time and time again...? I can recall different members from different parties in this House voting, and what would happen? The government, only because they lost the vote, ignored the vote. I can recall the honourable member Bill Blaikie standing up and saying this is contempt of Parliament: “We didn't get our way, so therefore, too bad, we're not enacting it.” Well, Mr. Chair, that isn't how government works. They are short-circuiting the parliamentary process. We are losing the faith...

Quite honestly, are we at an impasse? Are we very close to having a dysfunctional government? Yes. But there's only one reason: there's no trust between the parties, because the leader and the governing party have not earned that trust.

Respect is never given, it's earned, and it has to be a two-way street. Right now this government appears to be saying two things: it's either my way or the highway, and/or we will govern only when we decide we will govern—nobody else has any rights in here, and we will use any tool at our disposal to circumvent the process so that the ultimate individual, the voter, the citizen, the taxpayer of this country, will have their rights short-circuited, because they will not have a say.

We all know how long this procedural delay will carry on. It'll carry on, if the governing party is able to pull it off, so that at some particular point—it could be in six months, it could be a year, it could be two years down the road... We've even had our supply days, from all of the parties, shortchanged, delayed. Never before in the history of Parliament has it happened, but this government would do it simply to short-circuit the process.

Let us not be afraid of the results of the people. I can live with them, I know my colleagues can live with them, and when that day comes, then that's fine.

•(1700)

I really look forward to being able to sit across from honourable members here and debate issues, having an issue we can deal with and not getting into this mechanization of politics. Our system is being abused, ladies and gentlemen, and I do not like being a party to it. I find it distasteful and repugnant.

But the most important situation we have to look at here is, if we do not allow Canadian citizens to have their say by way of the ballot, then we become nothing more than a tinpot dictatorship and a banana republic ourselves. So let's get off our high horse and recognize that if the Canadian public wants it, then the Canadian public should have it. We cannot deny them their right, and if we want to go into procedural roadblocks, then we have a problem—

Some hon. members: [*Inaudible: Editor*]

The Chair: No, we're not going to get comments across the floor.

Mr. Daryl Kramp: Mr. Chair, I have the greatest respect for a number of my colleagues in this House, colleagues of all parties, but as Madame Boivin said, I came here as a new member and I came here principled, knowing I wanted to make a difference. I'm prepared to make a difference. I'm prepared to give of my heart and my soul and my talent. Some might consider that minimal, but that's a debatable point.

But we came here not like flower children and not under pretences. We knew the reality of the House; we've been around the political situation long enough.

But, Mr. Chair, I did expect the government would allow Parliament to work. The bottom line is, the government, not the opposition, is the obstacle at this particular point.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. Kramp.

As I said, I do intend to put the motion to a vote today.

•(1705)

Mr. Gary Carr: I have a point of order, Mr. Chair. What time are you going to do that?

The Chair: Either when debate collapses or at 5:30.

Mr. Gary Carr: I would assume the debate is not going to collapse. I just wanted to make sure we are going to get to it today.

The Chair: I don't think we're adding a great deal to the body of knowledge. We're getting lots of opinion, but people are entitled to express their opinion.

Mr. Gary Carr: But we will get to it today.

The Chair: I see no reason why we can't get to a vote.

Mr. Lastewka.

Hon. Walt Lastewka: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

I just want to touch base on a number of items that the members opposite have discussed. Mr. Fitzpatrick talked about his being genuine. I have known Mr. Fitzpatrick since I arrived here, and I've worked with him on a number of committees. I honestly believe in his genuineness. But I noticed during his spoken words he was very quick to name members of Parliament and the Prime Minister and make a lot of accusations.

I thought that was out of character, Mr. Fitzpatrick. I know the motion you have on the floor is not yours; it's part of the Conservative Party and the separatist party motion.

But let me review some of the items the Prime Minister did put forward. You know, when the Auditor General reported, the public accounts committee met starting that afternoon. We had a lot of discussion and a lot of debate in the springtime. We had much difficulty getting the recommendations out of committee, as you know, Mr. Chair, and you and I have had some words on that.

But eventually we got the recommendations out of committee on the mandate of this committee, and I know the government has already implemented 16 and is visiting 12 more, is having discussion on 12 more of those recommendations.

When the PACC committee reported and the government took action, that was one thing. Then the special financial counsel, who was given the mandate to follow the money, went into a lot of research and did a lot of things. The financial counsel finally reported and made recommendations. As a result of those recommendations, 19 individuals and companies now have a statement in court and will be going to court for their actions on that report.

I noticed nobody wants to talk about the financial counsel report and the recommendations, because the government has taken action on each one of those.

The problem we have today is that Gomery is doing its work, and the opposition does not want the recommendations of Gomery, because the opposition knows very clearly that the Prime Minister will act on those recommendations immediately.

So it could be said—and it is said—that the opposition don't want those recommendations because they know that this Prime Minister, who started all three of those initiatives, has acted on the first two and is waiting for the third one. They don't want to comment on that. They want to make other accusations under immunity in this committee and in the House.

Let's talk about chapter 5, where we said, Mr. Chairman—it was under your direction—that because of the comments of the Auditor General, we would have a one-day.... Then it was requested that maybe we should extend it—two hours wasn't enough; we should do three hours. That was done. And then everything went off the rails.

I noticed in the paper that Mr. Sauvageau commented immediately after.

Mr. Sauvageau, I understand the mandate of the party you belong to is to make this committee not work, or Parliament not work. That's the mandate of your party, and I totally—

The Chair: Mr. Lastewka, remarks to the chair.

Hon. Walt Lastewka: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chairman. I apologize. I get emotional on that.

I know his party and his mandate are totally opposite to mine. Ours is to build Canada and make a better Canada, while his is to tear Canada apart.

I want to remind Mr. Allison, when he talks about knowledge and information, that when this committee wanted to have Mr. Guité's earlier report made public and available to this committee, it was his party and the separatists who were against having the Guité report made public. Just remember that. You did not want Mr. Guité's information.

Unfortunately, Mr. Kramp is not here. He talked about power and trust and a number of other things. I want to remind him, I did a little survey in his riding, talking to a number of businesses and people—I happened to be in the area—and whether they were furniture salespeople, insurance people, health care providers, or in fact one of the media, each one of them said they didn't want an election; it would be the biggest waste of time, it was dangerous, a waste of money. I hope he represents his people.

I know Mr. Larry Miller has now gone off topic, because that's not what his party wants. Maybe it's power and thrust.

I'm only thinking about that, and I'm not sure that's too genuine, Mr. Fitzpatrick.

•(1710)

The Chair: Mr. Lastewka—

Hon. Walt Lastewka: I think the media and this committee and the people out there know that. That's why they're trusting in what the Prime Minister has done as to the special legal counsel on finances, following the money, getting their recommendation, and then taking them to court and let justice be served.

It will be the same thing when the Gomery commission reports. The Gomery commission will report and make recommendations, and the government will act on it. The opposition is afraid of those recommendations. They're afraid to have all the recommendations. It's proven very clearly to me. I know you're put into a very difficult position, being the chair, but you can't talk about abuse in one section and then go and do it yourself.

The media who are here and who are listening and the people who are here and listening know exactly what this is all up to. This is up to not having the Gomery report, because you know the government will act on it right away.

It's unfortunate. I don't like talking about a member who's not here—oh, he's over there and not listening anyway—but I heard very clearly from his riding last week exactly what they're saying. I'll be glad to share the information with him and a couple of our Conservative supporters.

Anyway, it's very easy to make allegations when you're in immunity in committee, and it's very convenient to do that. I'm proud of our recommendations as the PACP committee, and I'm following up to make sure that as many of those as possible are implemented. I'm proud of the financial counsel following the money, making the recommendations, and having 19 individuals and companies going to court now. Whoever did wrong should pay the price and pay it heavily.

It's the same thing when the Gomery commission reports—what?—to try to have all these innuendoes and all these accusations, and changing the focus of this committee from what it should be doing.

Mr. Chairman, you go to many conferences around the world on public accounts and on responsibilities and authorities and trying to make the government more effective. I believe very strongly that's exactly where we should be going, but doing that doesn't help the opposition, it helps Parliament, and they don't want to help Parliament. That's why they have that arrangement. I won't talk about that any further.

But I will say that I'm totally against this motion. I feel that it's opportunism, that it's strictly—and I understand that it's not Mr. Fitzpatrick, it's the Conservative Party and the arrangement with the separatists. We should be doing our work. The people of Canada voted in a minority government. It's not that often I agree with Mr. Christopherson, but every once in a while I do. Mr. Christopherson brought it. The people of Canada want minority government to work. It's give and take, and it's to do the work, and then the people will judge. I believe strongly that that's exactly what we should be doing.

To conclude, I want to thank you, Mr. Chairman, for allowing me to speak and maybe to be a little bit emotional. I apologize for that. Thank you very much.

•(1715)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Lastewka. One should never apologize for being emotional, especially on a motion of this magnitude that's before this committee. I've given people wide latitude because it is a motion of great significance. However, we are going to come to a vote, as I said, today.

We have Mr. Sauvageau, Mr. Christopherson, and Mr. Wrzesnewskyj, for about three minutes each, maximum, in order to bring this to a close—and no further speakers, okay?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Sauvageau, please.

Mr. Benoît Sauvageau: I had asked you to remove my name from the list, but since Mr. Lastewka directed his statement at me, I would like an opportunity to respond. I would ask him to listen carefully to what I am about to say.

We are often referred to as those nasty separatists, whose only goal here is to destroy the country. My party has been here since 1993. Ask the Library to report to you just how many times we have voted with the Liberals on various Bills and you will see that we have sided with you more than 60 % of the time. Sometimes, we do vote with the Conservatives though. If we were only here to break up the country, would I have bothered to table a private members' bill, C-277, to expand the Auditor General's powers? If we were only here to destroy the country, would we be consistent in our rigorous and active attendance of House Committees?

Arguments put forward in good faith allow for discussion, debate and counter arguments. I have no problem with that. However, hearing the same old song over and over again becomes a little wearing after a while, especially when you cannot prove any of what you say and when all the facts prove the contrary. We are a sovereignist party not a separatist party. We are the “Bloc québécois” not the “Parti séparatiste”. At the last election we were democratically elected by 49 p. 100 of Québeckers. You have to respect that. When legislation such as the Kyoto Protocol makes sense for federalists, sovereignists and those on the political right and left, the Bloc Québécois supports that legislation since it is in everybody’s interest. Our party advocates improvements to the employment insurance system, which would not only benefit Québec separatists but also Canadians. You have to be careful. I have not finished.

However, you are right on one point.

Ms. Françoise Boivin: A point of order. A colleague at a different committee told me that when one has the floor, one has to speak to the motion. I am enjoying the little history lesson about the Bloc, but it seems to me that we are here to address the motion. We are now...

[English]

The Chair: That’s very good, Madame Boivin, but I did say, due to the gravity of the motion, that I was giving a wide latitude for debate. No one has called irrelevance—perhaps you’re calling irrelevance—but I think that since we’re coming to the end of the discussion, and the issue has been wide-ranging....

Mr. Sauvageau, if you could, wrap up your comments, please.

[Translation]

Mr. Benoît Sauvageau: My Liberal colleagues are correct on one point. Perhaps it is true that the current Prime Minister and the Liberals will come up with solutions if we wait for the report. Let’s just imagine that a bank manager steals 100 million dollars. Would we ask that person to prove that they will never do it again? Would we ask that person to prove that his or her replacement will not steal either? I do not believe that it is up to those involved in the scandal to put things right. They will undoubtedly come up with solutions since they are the ones that had their hands in the cookie jar in the first place.

This is the only point on which I agree with Mr. Lastewka.

[English]

The Chair: Merci beaucoup, Mr. Sauvageau.

Mr. Christopherson and Mr. Wrzesnewskyj, and that’ll be it.

Mr. David Christopherson: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Two quick things, and I’ll keep to your time commitments. The first is an observation. After almost 20 years in elected office, at three levels of government, I’m now learning that Conservatives are not just worried about the socialist hoards and about union goons, but rather the big fear is flower children. I just want to inform my Conservative colleagues that I can confirm that there’s at least one former flower child currently in the House of Commons, and if that means the end of it, well, so be it.

More to my serious point—

The Chair: You’re not suggesting they’re a dying breed, are you?

Mr. David Christopherson: You know what? The truth is they are. That’s what hurts.

Earlier, one of my colleagues raised the issue of comments by Mr. Broadbent in the House, and I appreciate him saying the respect he has, and I do believe everybody has that for statespeople who serve for that length of time. I just want to correct the record to put into Hansard exactly what the Honourable Ed Broadbent did say on the floor of the House of Commons, with regard to moral authority. It’s somewhat different than has been reported.

On April 13, Mr. Broadbent said the following in Question Period:

Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has said that he has the moral authority to speak out on issues. I want to say to him that when the Leader of the Opposition asks a question about corruption, and he replies with a question to the Leader of the Opposition about health care, he immediately undermines the office of the Prime Minister. He should check the moral authority.

Then on the supplementary:

Considering that the Liberals have broken promises on health care, child care, child poverty, and post-secondary education, when is the government going to understand that broken promises undermine moral authority also?

Those were the Honourable Ed Broadbent’s actual quotes vis-à-vis moral authority.

Thank you.

• (1720)

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Fitzpatrick has a point of order.

Mr. Brian Fitzpatrick: On a point of order, Mr. Chair, I still believe my comments are fair given that—

The Chair: That’s not a point of order, Mr. Fitzpatrick; it’s a point of debate.

Mr. Wrzesnewskyj has the floor.

Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I just wanted to reassure Mr. Kramp right off the top that none of us were under the illusion that, although he was of that particular generation, he was a member of the flower child contingent. But I did appreciate his truthfulness when he said that yes—and this is what he said—government is now dysfunctional. And when we take a look at when this committee’s work became dysfunctional, it seems to correspond to the point in time when Stephen Harper had a temporary jump in the polls.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Chair: Mr. Wrzesnewskyj has the floor.

Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj: When we take a look at functionality, the Prime Minister and our finance minister had a difficult task in this minority government to put a budget together. When the budget was presented, Stephen Harper, before the budget speech was even finished, walked out to the press to tell them he would support this budget. Lo and behold, when he had a slight jump in the polls, besides this committee work ceasing its functionality, all of a sudden, he wasn’t interested in cooperating and making this government functional.

The Prime Minister did the right thing. All of us have different opinions on what the most important parts of the budget are, but there was an expectation from the electorate that we would make this minority work. He did the right thing. He met with the leader of the NDP, and they put together changes to the budget that addressed real concerns of the electorate.

What's interesting is that Stephen Harper was very interested in that slight jump he had in the polls, but those same polls said that a majority of the people were not interested in an election. I think we do a great disservice to our democracy when we compare it to a trip to the dentist. Most people in this country love the fact that we're in a democratic country.

Mr. Daryl Kramp: Then let them vote.

The Chair: Mr. Kramp, please, Mr. Wrzesnewskij has the floor, and he's going to be wrapping up right away.

Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskij: To try to create a parallel, to talk about it and use the term "tinpot dictatorship", what a disservice that's doing to our democracy.

Mr. Chair, I agreed with Mr. Kramp when he started by saying we have no right to prejudge. We have no right to prejudge. Canadians believe in fairness. We should wait for the Gomery report to come out. We should also listen to Canadians when they say they don't want to be forced into an election.

When they say, we have to pay for that cost anyway, well, they shouldn't have to pay it every single year. There's an expectation that we're going to make this minority work. We're working with the NDP to try to make this minority work. Stephen Harper said he wanted to support this budget, saw a jump in the polls, and all of a sudden he wasn't interested and wants to spend a quarter of a billion dollars on an unnecessary election. Once again, it's a heck of a lot of money, Mr. Fitzpatrick.

•(1725)

The Chair: Please address your remarks to the chair.

Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskij: Mr. Chair, I'd like to tell Mr. Fitzpatrick to pass on to Stephen Harper that it's a heck of a lot of money, a quarter of a billion dollars, just to be prime minister.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Mr. Fitzpatrick, we've done fairly well all day. We're not going to degenerate now.

I hope everyone feels a lot better after getting a lot of things off their chests this afternoon.

The motion is as follows:

That in reference to Chapters 3, 4 and 5 of the November 2003 Report of the Auditor General, which has brought to the attention of the Canadian public that there appears to be wide spread and systemic corruption at the highest levels of the Liberal Government, spanning many years, and now that this has all been revealed at the Gomery Commission, this committee report to the House that in its opinion, the government should immediately resign.

There is the motion. All those in favour of the motion?

(Motion negatived)

The Chair: Mr. Lastewka has a point of order.

Hon. Walt Lastewka: Mr. Chairman, I believe that from the meeting that was held on April 18 we had a number of the witnesses who have been mentioned today.

The Chair: Are you talking about documentation, Mr...?

Hon. Walt Lastewka: There were a lot of questions, and there were some open—

The Chair: Before you go there, let me first of all say, Mr. Lastewka, that the binder Mr. Kinsella brought to the meeting has now been translated and has been distributed. I believe everybody has a copy of that now.

Also, we have distributed the following documents: first of all, the Earncliffe binder; a letter from David Herle dated April 28, 2005; a note to the chair provided from Warren Kinsella at the meeting, which was, of course, the name of Mr. Schiller; additional documents from Warren Kinsella dated April 20 and April 25; an extract from Warren Kinsella's web diary and documents; also, an introduction letter, a statement, and a November 25, 1994, secret letter by Kinsella to Terry O'Leary; an October 31, 1995, top secret memorandum to the Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada. I believe these are the documents that have all been distributed.

I see you have a stack of documents there, Mr. Lastewka. If I recall, I asked the clerk, if these are the documents that were referred by one of the witnesses, that they be either tabled or their reference be tabled. Am I correct?

Hon. Walt Lastewka: Correct, Mr. Chairman.

I'd like to table the fax and documents regarding the public accounts committee hearings dated April 18, 2005, from Ms. Terry O'Leary.

The Chair: Okay. Those will be deposited with the clerk. If anybody needs a copy...

Are they in one language or two, Mr. Lastewka?

Hon. Walt Lastewka: One.

The Chair: They're in one language, and therefore they will not be circulated unless they're translated.

Monsieur Sauvageau, do you have a point of order?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Benoît Sauvageau: Mr. Chair, I have the pleasure of tabling, with 48 hours' notice, a motion in both official languages as follows:

That the Committee ask that the Office of the Prime Minister provide a copy of the register of telephone calls between Mr. Paul Martin and the residence of Mr. Warren Kinsella that passed by the switchboard of the Prime Minister's Office between November 1994 and February 1996.

[*English*]

The Chair: Okay.

I would ask that anybody drafting motions pay particular attention to the drafting. When you say "the Prime Minister", do I presume you mean the one who was the Minister of Finance at the time? In "between Mr. Kinsella and" him, are you talking about Mr. Kinsella and Mr. Chrétien or Mr. Kinsella and Mr. Martin? They are both the Prime Minister.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Benoît Sauvageau: Mr. Chair, let's cast the net wide. We could refer to calls between the Office of the then Minister of Finance and... However, if there were calls made through... Fine, let's use the term Office of the Prime Minister.

[*English*]

The Chair: Well, it's not up to me to say how about this? That—

[*Translation*]

Mr. Benoît Sauvageau: We should refer to the Office of the Prime Minister, who at that time was Jean Chrétien. We should ask whether telephone calls were placed to Mr. Kinsella through the switchboard of the Office of the Prime Minister.

[*English*]

The Chair: Check with the clerk to make sure the motion does not require editorial change when it comes back for amendment.

There are a couple of other announcements. You may have noticed that I dismissed the witnesses because our meeting did not proceed. That issue will be referred to the steering committee.

Last week I met with Mr. Schiller; Ms. Kingston, the committee clerk; Mr. Rob Walsh, the law clerk of the House of Commons; and Mr. Tardi, his assistant. I will bring a letter. I expect to have that for the committee on Wednesday. I didn't have it ready for today. So that issue will come up on Wednesday.

On another piece of information, for those who were around in July 2002, which was a long time ago, we had two meetings, one with Mr. Guité and one with Mr. Tremblay. In fact, I think I read in the paper today or somewhere that we decided at that time to hold these meetings in camera, and the testimony would not be made public until three years had passed, or, if the people had been charged, after all criminal proceedings, including appeals, had been exhausted.

As we know, Mr. Tremblay has passed away; therefore, the testimony of his appearance at the public accounts committee of July 9, 2002, will be made public on July 9, 2005. You may recall that Mr. Guité's testimony was made public last year.

I think there's no further business to come before the committee.

The meeting is adjourned.

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

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

**Also available on the Parliamentary Internet Parlementaire at the following address:
Aussi disponible sur le réseau électronique « Parliamentary Internet Parlementaire » à l'adresse suivante :
<http://www.parl.gc.ca>**

The Speaker of the House hereby grants permission to reproduce this document, in whole or in part, for use in schools and for other purposes such as private study, research, criticism, review or newspaper summary. Any commercial or other use or reproduction of this publication requires the express prior written authorization of the Speaker of the House of Commons.

Le Président de la Chambre des communes accorde, par la présente, l'autorisation de reproduire la totalité ou une partie de ce document à des fins éducatives et à des fins d'étude privée, de recherche, de critique, de compte rendu ou en vue d'en préparer un résumé de journal. Toute reproduction de ce document à des fins commerciales ou autres nécessite l'obtention au préalable d'une autorisation écrite du Président.