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Monday, March 3, 2008

—
Chair

Mr. Norman Doyle

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Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration

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• (1530)

[English]

The Chair (Mr. Norman Doyle (St. John's East, CPC)): I call this meeting to order.

We have two items on the agenda. We generally have notices of motion after we do planning for future business, but we'll go to notices of motions first of all, which is public, and then we'll go in camera for the planning of future business.

We have three motions. We'll skip Mr. Karygiannis' motion, as he's not here. We can probably do his if he shows up afterwards.

First we'll go to a motion by Olivia Chow:

That the committee recommend that the government allow any applicant (unless they have serious criminality) who has filed an in-Canada spousal or common law sponsorship application to be entitled to an automatic stay of removal until a decision is rendered on their application; that the committee adopt this recommendation as a report to the House; and that, pursuant to Standing order 108(1), the Chair present it to the House.

Ms. Chow, would you like to talk about that a little bit? Then we can go to discussion if need be.

Ms. Olivia Chow (Trinity—Spadina, NDP): Mr. Chair, thank you very much for allowing this motion to stand and for having a discussion about this.

Right now the majority of Canadian applicants, if they are married to someone who is visiting or someone who is in Canada, are allowed to apply for the spouse in Canada. After all, we don't want a couple to be separated, especially in their newly married life. Sometimes we have noticed that the couple have a child. It is especially difficult with a Canadian or a person who's being sponsored, if they are pregnant or if they have a newborn baby, that they get sent back home, only to be sponsored to come back into Canada eventually.

So a few years ago, in 2005, the immigration regulations changed to allow those people to apply in Canada. Unfortunately, there is one little section of people who are now not allowed to do so. What is happening now is that there are probably over a thousand cases—we don't know the number exactly—where a Canadian would sponsor a person.... There was a person who came to my attention who was sponsored by a Canadian wife and the application has taken eight months. He has now overstayed his legal status by about two weeks. He is being deported. The irony of it is if he goes back to his home country, the entire application process has to start all over again. This means that it's going to be very costly for Canada to pay for his deportation to get him out of the country, and then he would have to apply and all the work that the Canadian government has done to

review his file and all the work that he and his wife have done in Canada will completely go to waste. He'll get deported back to a place like China and then he will line up just to have his entire application reviewed again.

It is costly both for the applicants and the Canadians in Canada. It's also costly for the Canadian government. So it makes no sense.

This motion in front of you is in fact to allow all in-Canada spousal sponsorship to be done in Canada so that you do not remove a person, which I believe is the intention anyway. What's happening is the Canada Immigration Centre said yes, we will fast-track these cases, but CBSA in the meantime said they were going to proceed with their removal. What needs to take place is CBSA saying let's not deport while CIC is processing the application.

Mr. Telegdi has a brilliant amendment, which is in front of you as a motion that's coming up next. It's to allow that applicant to work in Canada. It makes absolute sense. While the applicant is in Canada, why should this person have to go on welfare or something of that nature if that person is fully entitled to work, as I believe is the case for refugee applicants.

• (1535)

The Chair: So you're saying the applicant could possibly be deported from Canada before his application is dealt with.

Ms. Olivia Chow: Exactly.

What's happening is that while the application is going on.... If the application is turned down, deport the person. Absolutely. But I'm talking about while they are processing the application. Sometimes it takes eight months, sometimes a year. If in the last month or so of the determination process a person were to get booted out to their own country, that would make absolutely no sense. It would create financial hardship for the couple. It would also create tremendous emotional hardship.

The reason why having a work permit also makes a lot of sense is.... I know of a recent case of a couple, and the wife is a Canadian, born in Canada, and she has a brain tumour. You may have seen this; it's in Sault Ste. Marie. She's dying of cancer. She has a husband here in Canada who's going through the application process. Her husband is not able to work. As a result, this couple is in desperate financial means.

In Sault Ste. Marie local residents have come together to support this couple, as she cannot work, obviously, because she is very sick. Her husband wants to work, but because he's being sponsored he's not allowed to work.

In these kinds of cases it makes no sense for us not to allow them to work if they are capable of contributing to Canada through their taxes and through working. Why not allow them to work?

The Chair: So you agree with Mr. Telegdi's amendment.

Ms. Olivia Chow: Yes, it's totally friendly. It makes eminent sense for it to come together.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Chow.

Mr. Telegdi.

Hon. Andrew Telegdi (Kitchener—Waterloo, Lib.): Mr. Chair, the whole motion plus the amendment makes a lot of sense.

We have to be mindful of the fact that we have a backlog of about a million people. Really, we have to look to the department to start streamlining their operations. I'd much rather have them utilize their time by working on the backlog than by making work for themselves. This makes a whole lot of sense.

In terms of the amendment to allow them to have a work permit, I have an example right now in my riding. We had a couple who got married. The wife, who actually went to Wilfrid Laurier University and then went back to Guyana, is back here now. She isn't going to be able to work even though her skills are in great demand, which doesn't make any sense.

We need all the workers we can possibly get. Having people in a position of being able to work and wanting to work and having a bureaucratic rule that's stopping them from working is very counterproductive. It's unjustifiable to anybody.

I think both the motion and the amendment would assist in streamlining the process and would result in less bureaucratic time spent on it. It would assist the Canadian economy, because obviously we'd have people working and contributing to the economy. We have a shortage of workers everywhere across this country.

• (1540)

The Chair: Is there any further discussion?

Mr. Komarnicki.

Mr. Ed Komarnicki (Souris—Moose Mountain, CPC): I always have a difficulty, Mr. Chair, with our reporting a motion to the House without calling specific evidence before us to see what the implications of the motion are. I know we're in the habit of doing that, and I'm always in the habit of opposing that.

It would seem to me, as a very minimal requirement, that if you're going to have a report in any sense of the word, you ought to base it on something that's before us as a committee and not just have a singular motion that comes to a conclusion and gets reported to the House as a conclusion. We should have had a departmental official or officials here to say what the present existing measures are, what some of the shortfalls are with the motion being proposed, and the implications of what you're proposing.

We haven't had that, and, quite frankly, as I understand it, there are existing measures that enable spouses and common-law partners who are already in Canada to apply for permanent residence from within Canada in the spouse or common-law partner in Canada class. These individuals may apply to maintain their temporary status during processing, which includes applying for study and open work permits once approval in principle is given to the permanent resident status.

There is a public policy in effect since 2005, I understand, whereby applicants who do not have legal status in Canada may also be processed as members of the spouse or common-law partner in Canada class. Of course, there is some reasoning behind that. It also provides for a 60-day administrative deferral of removal, but in certain cases removal does continue.

I understand there are some programming integrity challenges with proceeding with the stay as requested in this motion. Some of those include the following.

Allowing automatic stays of removal could cause serious program integrity issues where individuals have exhausted all their other options and would have the opportunity to file a spousal sponsorship application for the delay of the removal, without assessment of their relationship or admissibility.

In addition, allowing a stay upon application to this category would likely lead to an increase in applications in the spouse or common-law partner in Canada class from individuals whose relationship may not be legitimate. And there are other reasons.

Also, granting the ability to obtain work or study permits and a deferral of removal prior to the assessment of the eligibility criteria could allow those who are not in legitimate relationships the opportunity to stay and work or study in Canada.

Restricting access to a state of removal until after approval in principle is obtained prevents applicants from using the spouse or common-law partner in Canada class as an avenue to circumvent legitimate immigration processes and preserves the ability to remove individuals who are inadmissible for serious reasons.

There may be a variety of other reasons why it wouldn't make good judicial sense or good judgment to proceed with a wide and expansive motion, as Ms. Chow or Mr. Telegdi expanded on, and report it to the House asking the House to take action.

I don't think we're doing our due diligence or our duty to the House without first satisfying ourselves of what the underpinnings of this report are. I have always objected to a report going in by a motion on its own without evidence being presented before this committee, and I always will. I feel it's my responsibility to be satisfied and knowledgeable in what I'm doing, and we have nothing to base that on. I would oppose this motion for those reasons.

The Chair: Thank you.

Ms. Sgro, Mr. Telegdi, and then Mr. St-Cyr.

Hon. Judy Sgro (York West, Lib.): All of us know the problems in our ridings and the problems in the past. All of us try to find better ways of making the system better. Clearly, our immigration is still a huge challenge. I recognize the intent, and I am actually supportive of the intent of the motion. The problem is that there are a million other problems that go with this motion.

I apologize that I'm just popping in today to fill in, but I would suggest we have the minister and departmental officials come to the committee and continue to raise how important this is. It puts huge pressure on the minister to have to intervene in various cases. We need to find ways of enabling the bureaucracy to deal with them in a much more expedient way.

There's not a thing wrong with allowing people to work while this process is going on, and they shouldn't have to be going to ministers and bureaucracies for it to happen. If we're going to allow them to be sponsored in Canada, they should be allowed, at a minimum, to be able to work. Certainly, there's lots of work out there.

The whole issue of the automatic stay of removal, and a few other issues that are there, is not as simple as it looks. I don't think adopting the motion and sending it to the House, with all due respect to my colleagues, will achieve what many of us who care about immigration would like to see it achieve.

A suggestion is to have the departmental officials come in and address the motion and then move forward with something. You need to continue to put pressure on this whole issue, so that people have a better understanding of it and so that the kinds of changes that have to be done long-term in our immigration get done. Adopting the motion and tabling it in the House may sound fine, but nothing is going to happen, because the minister is under no obligation to do anything.

A suggestion might be to have the departmental officials come in and address the motion.

•(1545)

The Chair: It sounds as though that would be sensible.

Mr. Telegdi.

Hon. Andrew Telegdi: I don't think the concept is all that difficult. You have the application filed, and what happens now is that you get a stay. You get to stay, I think it is, six months, at which point in time you have to go and apply for an extension until they render a decision. The department can easily render a decision within that six months or before. What we don't want to see happen is somebody getting to stay for six months and then the department being slow doing its work because it has backlogs everywhere else so now they have to get an extension. And before they get the extension, they end up being removed, and in the meantime they cannot work.

If the department has any grounds to say that this relationship is not legitimate, then they would do that by coming to a decision and saying this application is a bogus application, at which point you can remove the person. But I just don't see why we would allow somebody to be able to stay for six months and then get into having

to apply to extend that stay, and in the meantime they are deported when the department has not made a decision.

Put the onus on the department. If they think this situation is not legitimate, then they can issue that report and deny it. But if it's legitimate, it doesn't make any sense. The department has the ability to come up with the report and deny the application by saying this is not a legitimate situation. In that sense, I don't see what the problem is.

I do know that right now it's a real pain for people who have to go through the process. And also, to make it worse, these people are now not allowed to work.

When you have young people who just got married, they're out of school, and God knows they're carrying a debt, you want them working, because you don't want to create financial hardships right at the start of their life together. It doesn't make any sense.

If there is something illegitimate going on, all the department has to do is say this is not a legitimate relationship and turn it down. And the onus will be on them to do the work and not on getting the people here caught up in a timeline.

The Chair: I think this is good advice that the former minister just gave us—and I certainly don't want to influence the outcome of the motion—that maybe it's not as simple as it looks, and maybe we should have some departmental official come in first to comment upon the motion. I'm just asking, from my own point of view, would it not be more beneficial to all in making a decision on the motion to have a departmental official come in first to talk about the motion, to look at the motion, and to say this is a good motion that makes a lot of good sense, or no, it's not a good motion, or whatever? Maybe we could hold on to the motion for a few days until we have the official come in to have a look at it.

Mr. St-Cyr, and then Madam Chow.

•(1550)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Thierry St-Cyr (Jeanne-Le Ber, BQ): Yes, that is what I propose. Actually, the motion is interesting and I rather agree with the principle. It would be interesting at least to have some testimony from officials in Citizenship and Immigration Canada. So I propose that we wait to table this motion until a little later. But I would like to meet the officials before we adjourn. That gives us three meetings. We should meet the minister's officials at one of them. We could divide that meeting into two and set aside a little time to deal more specifically with this matter.

[*English*]

The Chair: I know Ms. Chow had her hand up next.

Would you agree with an approach like that, Ms. Chow? We would not kill your motion here, but we would let departmental officials come in first and have a go at it. Then we could redo your motion at another date, if you still felt strongly about doing it that way. It's totally up to you now. We're just trying to satisfy everyone here. Mr. St-Cyr makes a good point as well.

Ms. Olivia Chow: Mr. Chair, my understanding is that next Monday there will be a department discussion on safe third country, and someone from the department will be coming in to speak about the issue, on that motion.

Am I correct in that, Mr. Chair?

The Chair: No. I think the clerk is telling me...what?

The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Andrew Chaplin): I received a letter addressed to Mr. Doyle this morning from the department to the effect that—

The Chair: It's in French; that's why I couldn't read it. You have the English copy.

The Clerk: —given that the matter is before the court, they're asking the committee to postpone any hearing on the safe third country until after the matter before the court has been concluded.

The Chair: That's from the deputy minister. It reads:

I therefore request that you, as the Chair of the Committee, consider the "sub judice" rule and postpone the meeting until the matter before the Court has been concluded.

Anyway, that part of it is out of it.

You can continue, Ms. Chow.

Ms. Olivia Chow: One way or another, we have next Monday fairly free; it could be half free or maybe completely free.

• (1555)

The Chair: Right.

Ms. Olivia Chow: If we're going to go down that route, we absolutely have to bring the CBSA onboard.

I have in my hands a note, a memo, sent on March 4, 2005, where CIC basically said, please give all agency applications, especially spousal ones, a 60-day administrative deferral from removal. Then the department, CIC, said, hey, we have no problem, because the minister said we should not deport anyone that is on a spousal application. Then CBSA said, well, actually, we do not agree; once it has passed 60 days, or in those cases where CIC does not render a decision within 60 days, CBSA officers will proceed with removal.

So that is really quite arbitrary. If you're lucky and your case gets processed within 60 days, you're okay. If it takes 68 days, sorry, you have to go.

If the committee members feel more comfortable bringing in the CBSA to explain themselves—

The Chair: Yes, bringing in CBSA also.

Ms. Olivia Chow: —or why they would do this if applications take more than 60 days, that would be fine. I think if we did that it would review other problems where the right and left hand do not know what the other is doing.

So to make a long story short, if that brings people onboard and brings people closer to understanding the absurdity of what is in front of us, I would have no trouble dealing with it this coming Monday. But what I don't want to see—because there are quite a few heartbreaking cases of people about to be kicked out. But if we can deal with this as quickly as possible, that would be wonderful.

The Chair: Okay. That sounds good.

I have Mr. Telegdi and Mr. Bevilacqua.

Hon. Andrew Telegdi: Mr. Chair, the only thing I was wondering is if we should maybe bring in a couple of witnesses who are going through this. The only thing I'm trying to get a sense of is whether or not the committee agrees that if somebody is allowed to get the permit to be here, they should be able to work.

Does any member of the committee have any problem with that? I'd like to ascertain that, because if that's a problem, then maybe we should bring in a witness.

The Chair: To get the permit to work.

Hon. Andrew Telegdi: Yes, that they get a permit to work when they're.... That should be non-controversial.

The Chair: If they have a permit to work, obviously they can work. Right?

Hon. Andrew Telegdi: They should get a work permit, but they don't have a work permit. What happens is they're given a permit to stay while their application is being processed, but in the meantime they cannot work. That's not something we want to subject anybody to.

The Chair: It seems to me—

Hon. Andrew Telegdi: I'm just trying to see if the parliamentary secretary has a problem with that.

The Chair: It seems to me that we have some consensus here as a result of your intervention, Ms. Sgro, to bring in somebody from the CBSA and the CIC, to see what the exact story is on this before we get down to the business of dealing with the motion. That seems to be eminently sensible in my view.

Did you have something to say, Mr. Bevilacqua, on that?

Hon. Andrew Telegdi: Actually, I wasn't finished yet, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Oh, I'm sorry.

Hon. Andrew Telegdi: I mean, there are still questions that we're dealing with.

The Chair: Yes.

Hon. Andrew Telegdi: Is there any concern from anybody about people having a temporary work permit while they are here? That's what I'm trying to get a handle on. We don't need officials for that. Or do we need officials for that?

The Chair: I don't know if we can ascertain that or if it has any bearing on the fact that we're bringing officials in. I think it would be better to get the officials' opinion on it first. Then we can bring the motion back before the committee. It's irrelevant what the committee might think, at this stage, if we're going to just stand down the motion and bring in an official to have a talk about it.

Are you finished, Andrew?

Hon. Andrew Telegdi: Well, I don't see one and the same issue here. If it's an opportunity to bring up the fact that we have people who are here waiting on an application being processed and who are not allowed to work, if that's an issue as well, then we'd better get the appropriate officials to come and talk to that as well. If it's not an issue, and the committee is unanimous on it, then we can have that go ahead or have hearings on both of them. That's the question.

The Chair: I would think that we would try to get some opinion on both of them.

I have Mr. Bevilacqua first, and then you, Mr. Khan.

Hon. Maurizio Bevilacqua (Vaughan, Lib.): I think it's a proper way to proceed, Mr. Chairman.

It's also very important to figure out, from a jurisdictional point of view, which agency is in fact responsible. Who's in charge? That essentially is what we want to get to the bottom of here.

The Chair: Yes.

Mr. Khan.

Mr. Wajid Khan (Mississauga—Streetsville, CPC): Mr. Chair, that's fine. Mr. Bevilacqua just covered what I was going to say.

The Chair: Okay.

Would you agree, Ms. Chow, to stand it down right now?

Ms. Olivia Chow: For Monday.

The Chair: We'll try to get the officials in and then we'll do it again.

Ms. Olivia Chow: Perhaps I can circulate for Monday, then, the memo that clearly shows the right hand not agreeing with the left hand—i.e., “You should do it within 60 days”, and “You should give a deferral.”

So I'll circulate that.

• (1600)

The Chair: That's fine.

This means we won't deal with Mr. Telegdi's motion, obviously, and we won't be dealing with Mr. Karygiannis' motion, because he's not here to talk about it.

Ms. Olivia Chow: On a separate issue, on the safe third country, now that we've dealt with this one, can we talk very briefly about the other motion? Or should we do this in camera? It's up to you.

The Chair: I don't think we'd do that now. We had three motions on. If we're going to discuss safe third country, I think we need some notice that we are going to discuss it. I would think we'll do that—

Ms. Olivia Chow: No, I don't mean actually discussing the issue itself; I'm talking about discussing the process where we would make the decision.

The Chair: Same thing; I think we'd wait on that.

Ms. Olivia Chow: Do you want to do it in camera?

The Chair: No, I don't think we'd do that now. It's not on the agenda, so I don't think people would want to do that.

Ms. Olivia Chow: It is on the agenda if we're going to discuss the scheduling.

The Chair: Well, the scheduling is another—

Ms. Olivia Chow: It's right in front of us, immediately after the motion.

The Chair: We'll go to the scheduling, and we will go in camera to do that.

The clerk can inform us when we're in camera.

Yes, Mr. Telegdi.

Hon. Andrew Telegdi: Just on that, Mr. Chair, when we have the officials in, do we have other people, those who are actually going through the process, coming in as witnesses? They can tell us—

The Chair: I think we said we could bring in one or two. I don't think we should belabour it too much.

An hon. member: Just one.

The Chair: Just one would be good enough. If we could find one, we could bring them in.

Hon. Maurizio Bevilacqua: Just make sure you don't exclude people who would want to be invited, because that opens up a whole different sort of issue: why me, why this person, why not the other? I just want you to know that you're going to open yourself up to that.

[*Proceedings continue in camera*]

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_____ (Pause) _____

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[*Public proceedings resume*]

• (1635)

The Chair: Before we do anything, let's clarify that third report. It says that “The Committee give the following priority to its studies” and “refugee issues” was marked in it, but it was specifically Iraqi refugees. That's understood by all, isn't it? It's “Iraqi refugees, temporary foreign workers, undocumented workers, and immigration consultants”.

We are no longer in camera and we are talking about supplementary estimates.

Where was I?

Mr. Ed Komarnicki: Bill C-17 needs to be put in there somewhere.

The Chair: Okay. It's understood too that we were going to talk about Bill C-17, possibly when we get back, or if there was a date available beforehand, we would be talking about Bill C-17 also.

We have a request in to bring the minister before our committee for supplementary estimates, and the news on that happens to be—

• (1640)

Hon. Jim Karygiannis: Mr. Chair, I was wondering for the public record if the clerk would give us, on record and in public, what has transpired since the request went in for the minister to come in front of this committee to give us the supplementary estimates and to go through them.

The Chair: Mr. Clerk.

The Clerk: Sir, I sent a request by e-mail last Wednesday, following the meeting of the subcommittee on agenda and procedure. The response to it has been that the minister can neither appear next Wednesday, the 6th, nor Monday the 11th. The request asked that if neither of those dates was feasible an alternate be proposed, and I've heard nothing back from the department on the idea of an alternate—

The Chair: An alternate date and time? Okay.

Hon. Jim Karygiannis: Mr. Chair, when is our deadline for those estimates?

The Chair: Supplementary estimates have to be reported next Monday, which would be what date?

The Clerk: It's the 11th, at the adjournment of the House.

The Chair: It's the 11th, at the adjournment of the House.

Hon. Jim Karygiannis: Let me understand this, Mr. Chair. There is unwillingness from the minister to come in front of this committee and pay respect to this committee with the supplementary estimates.

I wonder whether the clerk and you would examine.... We can certainly move our time schedule to fit the minister between now and Monday, for the minister to come in.

And if the minister does not come in, what does that say to the committee? Having a deputy minister here is fine and dandy, but certainly that's not the political arm; that's not who runs the department. Or if that's so, maybe Mr. Komarnicki can tell us that the minister is run by the deputy minister, and then we should call the deputy minister in here and have that set straight. But I don't think the minister has respect for this committee and what it is all about.

The Chair: Let's hear from the parliamentary secretary.

Do you have any information as to why the minister cannot make it on these dates? Can you get some information for us on that?

Mr. Ed Komarnicki: It's a proper question for the clerk. He's been communicating back and forth and he might indicate, if there were reasons given, what they were. There obviously must be some other obligations that are interfering, so it would be a question of working out a suitable date, and some effort should be made in that regard. But the clerk, if he's initiated them, should carry them through, and I certainly will pass information on to the minister that the request is there and that the committee would like to see her.

The Chair: Okay.

Mr. Telegdi and Madam Chow are next.

Hon. Andrew Telegdi: Mr. Chair, it really is the responsibility of the minister to show up to defend her estimates. There's no way that we want the minister starting to set a precedent. I have never had the situation where a minister did not come in to defend the supplementary estimates. I think that would be not just an insult to the committee but an insult to the House.

So I hope Mr. Komarnicki, the parliamentary secretary, will convey the message to the minister that this committee very much would like to have the minister here, and I will make that a motion, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Okay. I have to go to Madam Chow....

Oh, a motion?

Hon. Andrew Telegdi: I moved it as a motion.

Hon. Jim Karygiannis: We have a motion.

The Chair: Okay, we have a motion that the minister...what?

Hon. Andrew Telegdi: It's that we want the minister to appear.

The Chair: Well, we've already done that, haven't we?

Ms. Olivia Chow: Well, let's make it formal, Mr. Chair.

Just to make sure that the wording is correct, it would be:

That the committee repeat its request to the minister to come to the committee to defend her supplementary estimates prior to the report to the House of Commons on March 11.

The Chair: Okay, the motion is that the minister appear before the committee before March 11 to defend or discuss supplementary estimates.

Hon. Jim Karygiannis: Mr. Chair, if I could make a friendly amendment, we should also advise the minister that the committee is willing to suit her schedule.

The Chair: Okay, and that the committee will—

Hon. Jim Karygiannis: And that we, the members, be given 24 hours' notice of that.

The Chair: I don't think we need to discuss it any further. We can just vote on that.

• (1645)

Hon. Jim Karygiannis: Could we have a recorded vote, Chair?

The Chair: Okay, Mr. Clerk, record the vote.

(Motion agreed to [See *Minutes of Proceedings*])

Mr. Ed Komarnicki: I don't appreciate the methodology and I think there are other ways of doing it, so I abstain from this.

The Chair: Okay, the motion is carried.

Hon. Jim Karygiannis: Mr. Chair, on a point of clarification, can you ask the clerk if abstaining is something that gets recorded? Can we have that on the record, please, Mr. Chair?

The Chair: Does it get recorded, Mr. Clerk?

The Clerk: No, it doesn't get recorded.

Hon. Jim Karygiannis: Then, Mr. Chair, I guess the abstentions by the Conservative members would be out of order.

The Chair: I don't know.

Hon. Andrew Telegdi: No, it's not recorded. That's all.

The Chair: It's not recorded. It's not out of order.

A voice: This discussion is public, so I think we got the message.

The Chair: Where do we go from here, Mr. Clerk? What do we have? Our agenda is completed, is it not?

Is there any further business?

Ms. Olivia Chow: Just to be clear, some time before we have the adjournment, before March 13, we will have the opportunity for the

following things: first, hopefully, we will deal with the supplementary estimates; second, we would deal with the spousal applications and hear from the departments; and third, we would have the opportunity to debate both the appointments for the IRB plus the safe third country, those two motions. Those items are in front of us from now until March 13. Is that right?

That's my understanding. I just want to confirm that that is in fact the case.

Thank you.

The Chair: Yes, that was agreed to.

Mr. Karygiannis.

Hon. Jim Karygiannis: Mr. Chair, just to be clear, in that motion it was said that we will be given 24 hours before the minister does appear.

The Chair: Yes, that was there.

The meeting is adjourned.

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