



House of Commons
CANADA

Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Technology

INDU • NUMBER 026 • 2nd SESSION • 39th PARLIAMENT

EVIDENCE

Tuesday, March 11, 2008

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Chair

Mr. James Rajotte

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•(1110)

[English]

The Chair (Mr. James Rajotte (Edmonton—Leduc, CPC)): Members, I'll call to order the 26th meeting of the Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Technology.

We have two items on the agenda today. First of all, in our committee business, we have a motion from Ms. Nash. Secondly, pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), we will continue our review of Canada's service sector and consideration of a draft report. We will start with the motion from Ms. Nash.

Ms. Nash, everyone has a copy of the motion. You can read the motion or simply provide the rationale, but I'd ask you to provide the rationale for your motion.

Ms. Peggy Nash (Parkdale—High Park, NDP): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'll read the motion. It says:

In light of testimony provided at the March 5th meeting of the Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Technology, and taking into account the demonstrated impact of the proposed sale of MacDonal, Dettwiler and Associates Ltd. (MDA) on more than one government ministry; the Committee request that a representative of MDA, the Minister of Justice/Solicitor General, Minister of Foreign Affairs, and Minister of National Defence appear before the Committee to provide testimony in regards to the proposed sale of MDA to Alliant Techsystems, before a decision concerning the sale is rendered under the Investment Canada Act.

My rationale for proposing this motion is that, first of all, as you know, the clerk did contact MDA to have someone appear. It was a late request and they were not able to appear before the committee. But it seems only fair that they would have the opportunity to do so.

Secondly, we have heard from the testimony on March 5 that the potential sale could impact other ministries in the federal government, and especially, it was outlined under the former Bill C-25 how this could impact Foreign Affairs; Defence as it pertains to national security and Arctic sovereignty; and the Solicitor General, under law enforcement. So I think it would be important to hear from these ministers as to how they view a potential sale and what would be the impact for Canadians on their responsibilities as ministers.

The Chair: Thank you.

Just to clarify, then, you want the ministers themselves rather than department officials or representatives.

Ms. Peggy Nash: Well, the act does identify the ministers. They do have delegated authority, so I guess if they have delegated their authority to someone else, it would be appropriate for us to hear from them.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Brison.

Hon. Scott Brison (Kings—Hants, Lib.): Mr. Chair, constructively I would suggest that we ask for the ministers, not for representatives of the ministers. If the ministers are here, they would have public servants with them who could inform their comments. But I think on something like this we would want the actual ministers here.

Ms. Nash, would you agree to that?

I'm sorry, I read that as "representatives of". We're on the same page, then.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Hanger, and then Mr. Carrie.

Mr. Art Hanger (Calgary Northeast, CPC): Of interest, of course, is the data acquired through RADARSAT-1, and also the potential for RADARSAT-2. I guess my thought is about who the main users of this data are, what departments.

We talk about Canadian sovereignty; that's an issue. Of course, this has been brought forward numerous times by the Prime Minister. But there are also environmental issues, transport issues. I'm hoping that this motion isn't going to restrict us, as noted here, if other expert witnesses are needed for those other departments, that it would be open-ended to allow for witnesses to appear in those other areas.

You know, we're moving off into another age here when it comes to, if you want, the three environments. You have land; certain things can be picked up on land. Certain evaluations can be made through vessels or whatever that deal with sovereignty issues—the Northwest Passage is one. But space is something that I believe rounds out the portfolio of examination, that gives you the full picture. There are a lot of users now in those areas, transport as well as environment.

So I have a question about the extent of the motion. Will it include such other departments if necessary?

•(1115)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Hanger.

Mr. Carrie.

Mr. Colin Carrie (Oshawa, CPC): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I want to suggest a friendly amendment, Madam Nash, and the rationale behind the amendment.

First of all, Mr. Chair, my amendment would be that we delete “the Minister of Justice/Solicitor General”, because I don't really see the rationale of having that minister here. We would replace it basically, so that the sentence from the beginning would read:

In light of testimony provided at the March 5th meeting of the Standing Committee of Industry, Science and Technology, and taking into account the demonstrated impact of the proposed sale of MacDonald, Dettwiler and Associates Ltd (MDA) on more than one government ministry; the Committee request that a representative of MDA

And then I would say “department officials from Foreign Affairs and National Defence and other expert witnesses appear before the Committee to provide”. Then I would say “technical knowledge and testimony in regards to the proposed sale of MDA to Alliant Techsystems.”

The ministers would not be able to provide technical data due to the agreement that was signed under the Liberals.

If we look at the timeline we're dealing with, Madam Nash, there's a mandatory 45-day review, a proposed sale under the Investment Canada Act, and the 45-day review began on February 6, 2008, and it will expire on March 22, 2008, which really is only 16 days from now. Because of our schedule, we basically have today, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and then there's the break for the two weeks.

Announcement of the sale was January 8, 2008. The committee is only now beginning to undertake a study 12 days before the review process is scheduled to be finished.

Furthermore, the government members agreed with the opposition that the minister and last Wednesday's witnesses appear, and we are having the minister on Thursday. This committee will be hearing from the Minister of Industry. He is the minister responsible for the Investment Canada Act, and he will receive a recommendation from the department and he will decide to approve, reject, or ask for more time. He has until March 22 and then he's going to make one of those three decisions.

Under the Investment Canada Act, the minister has exclusive purview to extend the review of a sale for an additional 30 days, which would bring it to April 22, 2008. To tie the motion to the deadline that will pass next weekend would make the committee look ridiculous, in my opinion, because it's only 12 days away.

Department officials will be able to provide detailed technical knowledge about the history of MDA's relationship with the Government of Canada and contractual and licensing agreements that were signed by the previous Liberal government. Again, the Minister of Justice is not relevant to the review or the sale or the contractual obligations with the Government of Canada.

That would be the rationale for the friendly amendment. I don't think there's been any contact with the other ministers' offices up to this date, but my own opinion would be that to get three ministers in front of us, with the short period of time—considering what they have going on—it's going to be, in my opinion, a bit of a challenge, maybe not impossible. We could certainly try, if you'd like. We basically have three more sitting days, and I think we could get these officials in quite quickly.

Do you want me to repeat that friendly amendment?

• (1120)

The Chair: Did everyone get the friendly amendment?

If you could just repeat from “the committee request”. You're not changing anything before that, are you?

Mr. Colin Carrie: No, no. Not at all.

In the English version it's line four. It reads: “...the Committee request that a representative of MDA” and then I would scratch out “the Minister of Justice/Solicitor General”, and then add “department officials from Foreign Affairs and National Defence and other expert witnesses”. As Mr. Hanger was saying, for example, Environment Canada is one of the biggest purchasers of RADARSAT-1, for those things. So you would get “other expert witnesses”, whoever we would like, “to appear before the Committee to provide”, and then I would say “technical knowledge and testimony”. And then I would just say “in regards to the proposed sale of MDA to Alliant Techsystems.”

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Carrie.

I have Mr. Stanton, Mr. Simard, Madame Brunelle, Mr. Brison, and Mr. Hanger speaking to the amendment.

Mr. Bruce Stanton (Simcoe North, CPC): I'll pass for now, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Mr. Stanton will pass.

We'll go to Mr. Simard, on the amendment.

Hon. Raymond Simard (Saint Boniface, Lib.): Mr. Chair, I guess that meeting we had last week brought up a lot of unanswered questions.

I think the mention of the Avro Arrow probably hit us all. Anybody who has seen that movie knows we lost a lot of possibilities down the road.

I do think we have to take our time on this. Having said that, we know that leaves us under a certain amount of pressure. I don't think it's going to be possible to see three ministers from now to Thursday evening. I can't see that happening. I would like expert testimony. I also would not like the minister to decide this before we've had a chance to look at it.

We are the industry committee. He has the final say on this. It seems to me that the 30-day extension is something we should be looking at.

The Chair: Thank you.

We'll go to Madame Brunelle.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Paule Brunelle (Trois-Rivières, BQ): Mr. Chairman, I share Mr. Simard's concern. I think that we should carry out an in-depth study of this matter but you are telling us that the deadline is 16 days from now. I know it is possible for the Minister to extend this deadline, and we may ask him to. We might also add another amendment to this one, requesting that the Industry Minister not authorize the sale before the committee has produced its report. Otherwise, we will have done a very long study that will be useless because the minister will already have decided. That is my concern, Mr. Chairman.

[English]

The Chair: My understanding, Madame Brunelle, is that the 45 days expires on March 22, at which time, or before then, the minister can ask for 30 days. There can be a maximum of 75 days. My understanding, and we can ask for the researcher's comment, is that the committee cannot force an extension past the 75-day period.

The committee may want to respond to that. The committee can request an extension, but the committee cannot force a decision later than a 75-day period.

[Translation]

Ms. Paule Brunelle: Correct, Mr. Chairman. We would ask the Minister to extend the period to 45 days which would give us enough time to carry out our study. As you said, this might be added to the amendment. Otherwise, do you believe it would be better to submit another one? From what I understand, if the minister does not request an extension, we will not have 45 days but only 16 for our study.

• (1125)

[English]

The Chair: You're asking that there be a subamendment for the 30 days' extension, until April 22, 2008.

[Translation]

Ms. Paule Brunelle: That is correct.

[English]

The Chair: Are you moving that subamendment?

[Translation]

Ms. Paule Brunelle: Yes, I so move, Mr. Chairman.

[English]

The Chair: Okay. Can you identify where you would put that? Would that be at the end of the motion?

[Translation]

Ms. Paule Brunelle: Maybe. I leave it up to you.

[English]

The Chair: It's your amendment, not mine.

I have more speakers. If you want, Madame Brunelle, we can continue on the amendment and you can write something down and decide exactly where you want to put it.

Mr. Brison.

Hon. Scott Brison: Madame Brunelle, while you were speaking, I jotted down a few notes. I think we're on the same page.

The amendment would be something to this effect:

and that the Committee strongly recommend that the Industry Minister exercise his right to extend the current forty-five (45) days period of the Investment Canada Act review by thirty (30) days in order to enable a more thorough evaluation of the transaction in terms of the net benefit test to Canada.

[Translation]

Ms. Paule Brunelle: I support the motion drafted by Mr. Brison. Great minds think alike.

[English]

The Chair: Could you just read it again, Mr. Brison?

[Translation]

Hon. Scott Brison: In French or English?

The Chair: In French, please.

Some members: Oh!

Hon. Scott Brison: That is not a problem. It is important for Mrs. Brunelle to have a chance to practice her English.

Ms. Paule Brunelle: You can read it in English.

[English]

Hon. Scott Brison: and that the Committee strongly recommend the Industry Minister exercise his right to extend the current forty-five (45) day period of the Investment Canada review of the transaction by thirty (30) days

The committee can help in terms of the verbiage around the Investment Canada Act review, that part of it.

Should I start again?

The Chair: Yes.

This is at the end of the motion.

Hon. Scott Brison: and that the Committee strongly recommend the Industry Minister exercise his right to extend the current forty-five (45) days period of the Investment Canada Act review

—that's where I may need your help, in terms of the exact verbiage

by an additional thirty (30) days in order to enable a more thorough evaluation of the transaction in terms of the net benefit test to Canada.

Mr. Dan Shaw (Committee Researcher): Why not just stop at "30 days"? It's obvious why you want it, is it not?

Hon. Scott Brison: After 11 years in this business, to me nothing is obvious anymore.

I like the clarification, but if it's just as strong without, I'm fine either way. That would make Madam Nash's motion more realistic, given the timelines, as well.

• (1130)

The Chair: That subamendment is in order, so we'll now speak to the subamendment.

We'll start with Mr. Hanger.

Mr. Art Hanger: I guess my comments would reflect on both the subamendment and the amendment.

Going to this one point of the extension, I'm trusting that the extension will allow for the point that was brought up in the amendment, where departmental officials—and this is the rationale put forward by my colleague Mr. Carrie—would be able to provide detailed technical knowledge about the history of MDA's relationship with the Government of Canada.

Nowhere has there been any mention in the original motion, amendment, or subamendment of CSA's involvement. It has a history that probably should be defined somewhere in the evaluation that's before the committee. I think there's an issue of past, present, and future where CSA plays a role.

I'm curious as to why CSA does not appear in the motion, amendment, or subamendment—a briefing or some expert information coming from that agency.

Hon. Scott Brison: The Canadian Space Agency. That's a very constructive amendment.

The Chair: We have not heard from anyone from CSA currently. We've heard from Marc Garneau, former president, but we haven't heard from anyone....

I'm sensing the will of the committee is that this would be acceptable.

Ms. Nash.

Ms. Peggy Nash: I'd like a clarification. We're dealing with a subamendment put forward by Mr. Brison on an amendment put forward by Mr. Carrie.

I would like clarification of that, because one could support the subamendment but be opposed to the amendment. I think it's important to clarify exactly what piece we are discussing at this point in time. That will affect what remarks I make.

The Chair: It's a good point, Ms. Nash.

Technically we can consider Mr. Brison's subamendment as a subamendment of Mr. Carrie's amendment, but my view and I think the view of the clerk is that perhaps we should deal with the two of them separately.

Is that okay with the committee, that we deal with one amendment? Let's consider it an amendment. Let's deal with Mr. Carrie's amendment first and either approve it or not. Then we'll move to Mr. Brison's amendment. They've both been accepted by the chair.

So we'll deal with Mr. Carrie's amendment, then we'll deal with Mr. Brison's amendment, and then we'll deal with the main motion.

I have Mr. Carrie.

Mr. Colin Carrie: Mr. Chair, I was wondering whether we could clarify a couple of things.

When the former Liberal PS for industry, Mr. Cannis, was here a while ago, he said that really the committee has no role in reviewing the actual sale. I was wondering what we are going to be doing exactly with these witnesses here. What is the overall agenda? Are we just receiving information from them?

Also, could you clarify when we would recommend doing this? Is this going to be a study? Is it going to take a couple of meetings? When would you like to do it?

I would remind the members that under the Investment Canada Act, the minister has the exclusive purview to extend the review of the sale for an additional 30 days. That is exclusively his obligation to do.

Given that we have 16 days before this, could you clarify what...? Mr. Cannis mentioned that we really don't have a role to review the sale, but when would we even want to do this? Is it going to be a couple of meetings? Do you want to do a study on it? What exactly is the intent here, so that we could know as a committee?

• (1135)

The Chair: Thank you.

I'll just make a comment as the chair, and Mr. Carrie may want to come back after a few comments.

Whether we take out "before a decision concerning the sale is rendered under the Investment Canada Act" or leave it in, it is helpful to the chair and the clerk to have some timing in a motion, such that I know and the clerk knows when the committee wants to do it. Whether the committee decides to go with this wording or another wording, it is helpful to us to identify some timeline as to when the committee wants to study this.

I have Mr. Hanger, Ms. Nash, and then Mr. Stanton.

Mr. Art Hanger: In reference to the deadlines, should the committee not request that the minister extend this review? Or is it a given that the committee is going to approach the minister in reference to...?

The Chair: That's Mr. Brison's amendment. I think we'll deal with that after we deal with this amendment.

Mr. Art Hanger: Okay.

The Chair: He's putting forward that the committee should request that.

Mr. Art Hanger: Going to my previous point as to whether or not it's considered a friendly amendment to include the officials from the Canadian Space Agency, would it be an acceptable friendly amendment?

The Chair: Basically that would be included either in Mr. Carrie's amendment or in the main motion.

I sense there is support for it. I'm not sensing opposition. Okay?

Mr. Art Hanger: I think we should specify, as Mr. Brison says, the president "or a designated individual". As Mr. Brison noted, nothing is for sure around here until it's noted.

The Chair: I think we can add either departmental officials or a representative from the Canadian Space Agency. Is there any objection to that? Okay.

I have Ms. Nash.

Ms. Peggy Nash: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I want to note that very shortly after the announced sale of MDA, I raised this with the committee, and it was the will of the committee that we would not hear from the minister until a period of between four and six weeks after I had raised the issue. When I proposed that we hear from witnesses, at the time we felt that one session of testimony would be adequate, but as I said in the motion and in my explanation of my original motion, the reason for wanting further hearings was based on the testimony that we heard from those initial witnesses. I have no problem in hearing from people at the Canadian Space Agency, but as I say, I think we should hear from the company.

The reason I proposed hearing directly from the ministers themselves is that under the act governing the operation of remote sensing space systems, it's very clear that it is the ministers involved who have responsibilities concerning licences of these satellites. It's very clear that it's the Minister of Foreign Affairs, for example, who can suspend a licence if he or she is convinced the operation is likely to be harmful to national security, defence, or the conduct of international relations, or is likely to be inconsistent with international obligations.

I'm quoting from the act. It says that the Minister of National Defence may order a licensee to restrict or interrupt any operation for a specified period of time if that minister believes that continuation of the operation would harm national defence interest.

The act also says:

The Solicitor General of Canada may order a licensee to provide any service

- (a) to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) that the Solicitor General believes is desirable for the fulfilment of the RCMP's responsibilities under subsection 6(1) of the Security Offences Act;
- (b) to the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) that the Solicitor General believes is desirable for the fulfilment of its responsibilities under the Canadian Security Intelligence Service Act; or
- (c) to the Government of Canada that the Solicitor General believes is desirable for critical infrastructure protection or emergency preparedness.

These are very specific and wide-ranging powers that the ministers have. These were put in here for a reason, and the reason was that there was concern about this technology slipping out of Canadian control and that there were specific important national interests that this bill was designed to protect. Even at the time, the point was raised at the foreign affairs committee by the NDP that in fact there were not enough protections for the national interest. Now I think these concerns are coming once again to the forefront.

It's nice to have people from the department come and give us their opinions, but the legal responsibilities are held by the ministers. That's why in my motion I listed the ministers responsible. It is because these powers and responsibilities are quite significant, and from the testimony we heard, the key here is who holds the licences for these images. These are questions that we need answered. We need to know the consequences from the people who have political responsibility on the part of the Government of Canada.

I just wanted to raise that in reference to the amendment put forward by Mr. Carrie.

• (1140)

I do want to say, while I have the floor, that I recognize the concern that time is running out, which is why I raised these concerns early on, and I appreciate that the committee has much other business that it wants to complete. Therefore, I do want to use this opportunity, while I have the floor, to support the call for an extension of the time allotted to the industry minister before he makes his final decision. Obviously it is the minister himself who has the power and the responsibility to take the decision on this, but I believe this committee should recommend that he take the additional time at his disposal so that we can fully explore the impact of the sale for Canadians.

Mr. Carrie asked why we're doing this, given that we do not have the power to influence the decision; it is the minister who has the

power to make the decision. I think everyone here recognizes that it is the minister, but I also think we all recognize that we have a responsibility to Canadians to examine issues that are in the national interest of Canadians. Asking key questions, raising concerns, being able to ask the minister himself about some of the concerns we have, asking other ministers involved—those are all part of our responsibility. The future of our country's sovereignty, our role in future space projects—those are pretty important things for us to consider and to fully understand. I think it's an important obligation that the committee is undertaking.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.

You have presented three motions, Ms. Nash, and they were amended, but the two previous ones were adopted February 26 and January 29. I think there's been a general consensus at the committee to bring the minister forward on this issue, and a general consensus to have one meeting. I'm sensing there's general consensus to have, after the one meeting, at least one further meeting, or perhaps two; I don't know exactly how many.

So there's general consensus with respect to the motion. There are some...I would consider them differences, small or medium differences, with respect to whom to invite and the timing, but there seems to be a general consensus that we can work toward. I just want to make that point.

I have Mr. Stanton, and then Mr. Simard.

• (1145)

Mr. Bruce Stanton: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

One problem I see here is that we are under some restrictions time-wise. That's why I certainly support the first amendment to get officials here.

I'm also of the view that the nature of...and I agree with other committee members that, after having the one meeting, there are still many questions about this transaction. I too want to get to the bottom of this and understand better. I have a sense, though, that these are questions of a more technical nature as opposed to political.

I'm not ruling out the possibility of eventually having the ministers in front of us, but if we can expedite a meeting or two by getting answers to some of those technical questions, especially around this Remote Sensing Space Systems Act, which came up in fairly regular detail at our last meeting on this, by Mr. Garneau and others....

My concern here is that with the overlay of the Investment Canada Act, here you have a situation where you have a transaction that's before the minister. As all members have suggested and have agreed, he is the only one who can make the determination that the 30-day extension can be put, which we can certainly ask him about when he's here on Thursday, but only he can decide. As well, because the Investment Canada Act requires this commercial confidentiality, are we going to be under some constraints there in terms of hearing what we need to hear about this transaction? For example, can government officials...?

We're in a real quandary here, I think. We'd like to know more, but to what extent is this commercial confidentiality going to impair our committee's ability to look further into this?

Perhaps the analysts, through you, Mr. Chair, could speak to this.

The Chair: I don't know if the analysts want to comment.

Clearly, there are some provisions in the act, which they have mentioned before, that prohibit the minister or anyone else from talking about the specific proposed sale. But we can, as we did in the last meeting, ask general questions with regard to the background of the sale, to events leading up to the sale, and to Canada's space policy in general. Obviously if members ask a question and the minister or others say, "I can't answer that", I think members generally get that distinction. If they ask a question that can't be answered, the witnesses are free to say, "For reasons of the Investment Canada Act, I cannot answer that."

Mr. Bruce Stanton: In light of that, I certainly support the first amendment that was put forward here to make some of these changes, even if it's just to expedite the process here in the next short time we have. Insofar as putting a date, in fact making sure that we have this report and analysis and study done before an imminent decision on this transaction, I think it almost goes without saying that there's fairly good concurrence that we have to make this happen so there will still be time for us to report to the House, report to the minister our findings in this regard for his consideration in ultimately making the determination on this transaction.

So I don't know that you need that last statement, because I think it is more or less there. If the committee chooses to go that way, obviously that will be the case. But I think that's before us, and we all understand there is a deadline we're working under here.

• (1150)

The Chair: Thank you.

I'll go to Mr. Simard, please.

Hon. Raymond Simard: Thanks, Mr. Chair.

I think it would be fairly tragic if the minister were to make this decision while we're away on a break, when members of his committee, the industry committee, have expressed concerns—all parties actually have expressed concerns—given the first meeting.

It would seem to me that if we can get an undertaking from the minister on Thursday that he will extend the 30 days, then it would make sense for us to bring in the ministers, as proposed by Ms. Nash, and do it fairly quickly, even if we have to have extra meetings, so that we can submit something in writing to the minister. Obviously the final decision is his. It's his prerogative. At the same time, we are the industry committee, and I think it would be very worthwhile for us to come back with a report within two weeks after we come back, prior to his having to make his decision.

If he makes a decision on March 22 or 23, and we haven't had a chance to comment, I think it would be a very sad thing, after we've all expressed concern that this may not be in Canada's best interests. So I would say let's get an undertaking from the minister on Thursday to extend the 30 days, to give us some time to report to him. While we understand that in the end it's his decision to make, at

least let us report back to him and give him our preoccupations or our feedback on this deal.

The Chair: Thank you.

I have Monsieur Vincent next.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Robert Vincent (Shefford, BQ): About the time left to study this matter, we have been told that there are only 16 days left, plus an additional 30 days. We have been told that it is a deadline but that the Minister has the power to request an extension if he so wishes. So, we are not limited to 46 days. Over the next 30 days, if we want to continue, the Minister will be able to ask for an extension. He has that power under section 22 of the Canada Investment Act.

I fear that Mr. Carrie has misled us. If the government believes that we are not ready to go ahead with the sale under the Canada Investment Act, it can request an extension, which will be granted. If the 46 days are not sufficient and we need more time to carry out an in-depth study and put the matter to rest, we will go even further by asking the minister to suspend his decision and ask for another extension so that we can provide him with a report. I believe that would be the proper procedure considering the importance of this matter.

[*English*]

The Chair: Under the act, as I understand it.... I'll the ask the researcher to comment, because I may not be considered an expert. The 45-day period is March 22; the extension would take us until April 22.

Mark, do you want to address the specifics? This is important with respect to timing.

Mr. Mark Mahabir (Committee Researcher): Any additional extension beyond the 30 days requires the consent of the both parties to the transaction, ATK and MDA.

The Chair: Both have to.

Could you explain that a bit further?

Mr. Mark Mahabir: Any extension in addition to the 30 days requires the agreement of ATK and MDA; both have to agree to an additional extension.

The Chair: So the minister has the prerogative to extend it from March 22 to April 22, but to extend it beyond that requires the consent of both parties.

Is that clear?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Robert Vincent: Indeed, but section 22 allows him to say that the government is not ready and to ask both parties to agree for an extension. If both agree — and I do not see why they would not — we will have a longer deadline. That's all.

[English]

The Chair: As deadlines, we have March 22 and we have April 22 as the 75 days. I don't know whether we want to count on both parties agreeing to an extension beyond that. My suggestion would be to try to do something. By the 45-day period, it will very tough for the committee, but certainly by the 75-day period the committee should be able to have one or two more meetings or to do whatever it decides to do.

• (1155)

[Translation]

Mr. Robert Vincent: But, in those circumstances, I suppose that some reports have already been prepared and have been given to the Minister of Industry. I hope that officials in his department have already studied the proposed sale of MDA. Are those documents available? Could we get them in order to see what their conclusions were? No? All right. Could we get them through an access to information request? What is the title of that report?

He is sitting behind the member and is signaling that it is not possible but is he the one to make the decision? Let them stop his facial contortions. If he wants to sit here, let him be elected. It is not up to him to tell the chairman or the members of the committee if they are entitled or not to have those documents. There are people in this room who can answer this question responsibly.

[English]

The Chair: I was actually looking to the researcher.

We have the act here, and members can review it, but my understanding is that anything relating to the commercial transaction itself cannot be commented on by anybody while the transaction is being reviewed by the minister. That's my understanding.

[Translation]

Mr. Robert Vincent: I understand that the people can get what they want from the reports. I'm not referring to the investment. I want to know if it is better for Canada to sell that company or to keep it. I'm not asking what the price is or what the money would be used for. That is not my concern. I only want to know if Canada is making the right decision or is making a big mistake. That is the most important issue here. It is not a matter of business, money or transaction. Those things are not my concern. I want to know if people in the department have told the Minister that this would be a good transaction or not. If he has a report about this, it must be available.

[English]

The Chair: Well, that's a question. The minister will be here on Thursday. I don't want to suggest a question, but you may want to ask that of the minister, and the minister can describe what he can and cannot comment on.

With respect to your general comments about whether or not this is a good sale for Canada, obviously there's a lot of public information that can be accessed and asked about.

In terms of what specifically falls within the confidential commercial transaction and what falls outside of it in terms of public discourse on whether or not the sale is good, I can't say exactly where the line is on each and every question. That's why I

said there are a lot of legitimate questions with respect to the general issue of whether or not this is a good sale in the long-term interests of Canada. That's a legitimate public policy question that members can ask of many witnesses.

In terms of the specific commercial transaction, the minister and other witnesses will then have the discretion to say they cannot answer a specific question, because it delves too much into the specifics of a commercial transaction. On another question, they may be able to answer.

Does that answer your concern?

[Translation]

Mr. Robert Vincent: I would rather have another answer but I will make do with that one.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you.

We'll go to Mr. Carrie, please.

Mr. Colin Carrie: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'd like to comment. Mr. Vincent suggested that I might be evasive on this. I find that's a little dramatic and offensive at this stage of the game.

If you look at the timeline, Mr. Vincent, the announcement of the sale was January 8, which was a couple of months ago. There is a specific process in the Investment Canada Act, and if you don't like that process, that's something you may want to look at. But understand that it was announced on January 8, and I believe it was on February 6 that the 45 days started. So we have from February 6 until March 22. To make it clear, the minister is required, by law, to make a decision at the end of that period. He has to. His decision is either yes, no, or extend it for another 30 days. There's nothing evasive in that. That's the process he has to follow.

To go back, Mr. Cannis originally asked this committee what its role is. He said that we really didn't have a role in this. Madam Nash made a good point. Perhaps we should be kicking this over to foreign affairs to take a look at.

I'd like to clarify that there is not a sale yet; it's a proposed sale. Madam Nash, you said "the sale of". There is no sale yet. The minister hasn't made a decision. We can't even get to the confidentiality part of the agreement on the net benefits. They're not allowed to discuss that. If they do, it's a criminal offence. This is the law and the process with the Investment Canada Act, which I think has been going on for the last 30 years.

Getting three ministers here within the next 16 days could be possible. We could ask. Reasonably speaking, I think we could get officials here quite quickly. I would like some clarification on when we would like to do this, because the reality is that the deadline for him to make a decision is March 22.

Today is Tuesday. We have Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and then there's a break. I think it would be interesting if we could come up with some substantial things that we can do here. We can ask if, when, and but, but the minister is going to be here on Thursday; we could ask him these questions.

If we want more information, it behooves the committee to actually sit down and ask when we want to do this. Do we want to do it tomorrow? Do we want to do it on Thursday or Friday? Are we going to come back during the break period, to get the members to reconvene? From a practical standpoint, do we have some ideas here?

● (1200)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Carrie.

I have Mr. Brison.

Hon. Scott Brison: I agree with Ms. Nash in that only the ministers in these respective portfolios have the capacity to make the pertinent decisions. The public servants don't have that responsibility vested in them. They can make a recommendation to the minister, but ultimately the minister will make the decision based on a range of political and public policy inputs.

The ministers' accountability is to Parliament and, as such, to parliamentary committees. We have a responsibility to help uphold that accountability. In doing anything less, we're not actually doing our job.

I think it's a very reasonable request that the minister extend it by 30 days, given the gravity of this transaction. He has that power to do that. That would afford us the capacity to function effectively as a committee and to demand that accountability.

We're very close to where we ought to move to votes. I guess we'd start with...which amendment?

The Chair: We would start with Mr. Carrie's amendment, and then we would go to discussion of your amendment.

Hon. Scott Brison: Okay.

The Chair: But I do have two more speakers.

Hon. Scott Brison: Okay, certainly. Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Brison.

I have Ms. Nash. Ms. Nash passes.

I have Mr. Stanton.

Mr. Bruce Stanton: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

One of the questions that come to mind—and this is not so much a statement, but more a fact-finding question—is about another act here, the Remote Sensing Space Systems Act, which also has requirements and obligations that appear to apply to the sale of this company. Which act takes precedence when the two of them contradict in terms of timelines—the Investment Canada Act and the Remote Sensing Space Systems Act?

Clearly, when we looked at some of the requirements of the acts, one of which we understand to be more in the realm of foreign affairs, we have the Investment Canada Act imposing a very specific timeline and certain requirements of confidentiality, but at the same time we have another act of Parliament requiring that certain things be satisfied before a transaction of this sort can proceed.

So my question would be, does one take precedence over the other, and how could we look at this question of timelines with consideration to this Remote Sensing Space Systems Act as well? As I understand it, Mr. Chair, the Remote Sensing Space Systems Act

was passed in accord with the development of RADARSAT-1 and RADARSAT-2. I stand to be corrected on that.

● (1205)

The Chair: Mr. Stanton, admittedly I'm not an expert on this, but my understanding is that the Investment Canada Act would take precedence. I think this is one of the issues or questions we would have for the ministers or officials, whoever we decide to call.

Mr. Bruce Stanton: Okay.

The Chair: Thank you.

I'll go to Mr. Carrie.

Mr. Colin Carrie: Respectfully, Mr. Chair, as I tried to outline, there is a process here. And Mr. Brison, I think everybody is aware of what you stated, but if you'd brought it up 30 days ago—I believe it was announced on January 8, as I said—we wouldn't be in this situation right now.

What I'm hearing from the committee is that it appears people in this committee want to hear the details. What I'm trying to convey is that those details are exactly what is privileged under the Investment Canada Act.

What's important or what we can look at, I think, is the actual contract signed by the Liberals in 1998. I think if the officials are here promptly, we could get some of that information. Realistically speaking, as I said, I'm not sure about getting three ministers here within that timeframe. I still haven't found out when you want to have all of this actually occur.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Carrie.

Concerning the timeframe in the motion, your amendment crosses out the words “before a decision concerning the sale is rendered under the Investment Canada Act”. That would result in a variable timeframe, depending on whether there's an extension or not. But as I said before, it does help the chair to have some timeframe for identification.

I have Monsieur Vincent, but I first want to read what everyone has been given by the researchers, in terms of what can be released or not:

As provided by the Act, all information received by the Minister, or their staff, from a Canadian or non-Canadian business during the review of a proposed transaction, is deemed privileged information which cannot be disclosed to the public through direct communication or by the inspection of documents. Further, there are only three types of information that may be released by the Minister without the written consent of MDA or ATK, a) publicly available information, b) information in an approval notice sent by the Minister, and c) information in a demand sent by the Minister.

So this is very clear in terms of what information we can get and what information we cannot get. I hope that's helpful in terms of clarification.

I have Monsieur Vincent.

[Translation]

Mr. Robert Vincent: My question is for Mr. Carrie.

Why is everyone so interested in this matter suddenly? Two weeks ago, we talked about getting witnesses here but, in fact, nothing was done, except by Ms. Nash. The government members did not seem very interested but, suddenly, when we start talking about inviting the ministers, they want to call other witnesses and experts. Why did Mr. Carrie and the Conservative members of the Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Technology suddenly change their minds? Suddenly, they want to start an inquiry about the sale of MDA whereas they did not seem to be too interested two weeks ago. They did not suggest any names of witnesses but, today, they want to extend the study.

That is all I want to know.

[English]

The Chair: As the chair, I should clarify that there were one or two witnesses suggested by Mr. Carrie, but they were unavailable to come that day, on March 5. I would point out that in my understanding, though they were amended, both motions passed the committee.

That may help to clarify some of it, Mr. Vincent.

• (1210)

[Translation]

Mr. Robert Vincent: For the Minister of Industry, there were no other witnesses. In her first motion, Ms. Nash wanted to have the Minister of Industry to appear before the committee. Then, the Minister of Foreign Affairs was mentioned but, in the beginning, we wanted to meet with the Minister of industry to question him about the sale of MDA.

[English]

The Chair: With respect to the meeting on March 5, we had Mr. Byers, Mr. Staples, Mr. Thompson, Mr. Garneau. There were two other witnesses whom we asked to appear—I don't have their biographies here, only their names—but they were unable to appear that day.

One of the reasons I'd like to add the phrase "and other expert witnesses" is that it allows me, as the chair, to not just limit it to ministers. If someone else who asks to appear is an expert, as Marc Garneau is, or someone else, or if a member of this committee submits a name to me of someone who is considered an expert in this field, I want the ability, as chair, to add them as a witness.

Ms. Nash.

Ms. Peggy Nash: Mr. Chair, on that, I've made the case about why I think we need to have the ministers here, and I'm not opposed to other expert witnesses. What I would raise caution around is that I think a key thing is to have these witnesses and the testimony before the minister makes his decision. And while it is the minister's decision to extend the period of review for an additional 30 days, I would like to have further testimony available to us as quickly as possible. I don't think anyone here is anticipating six months of hearings so that we can fully examine this and all become experts in space technology. We're rapidly trying to become as familiar as we can with as much as we can in order to fully understand the implications of this potential sale.

There is a balance to be struck in how many witnesses we call, so again I want to make the case that we should have ministers here. There may be other key experts that we want to have, but I want to underscore that we should have that testimony prior to the minister's making his decision, again, while recognizing that he is the one who decides if he will make the 30-day extension.

The Chair: I do want to get your feedback on this, because the challenge for the chair is that we are at March 11 today. Our meeting for Thursday is already set with the minister. Obviously we don't want to change that, because there are questions for him on this and other topics. So we have tomorrow. If we invite ministers for tomorrow, the chances of getting them are next to nil. We have next week, which is a break week. I don't know if members all want to come back next week. We can come back if we want. I won't be here, but members are free to be here.

I'm not sensing a strong desire to come back.

Let me finish, and I'll ask you to respond.

Before making a decision concerning it, the committee may actually want to identify a couple of days, maybe April 2 and 9, for discussion, for expert witnesses—whether they're ministers or their officials, that's up to the committee to decide—for hearings on this matter. That way, at the meeting on Thursday, obviously members are free to ask what they want. But clearly there is going to be some pressure on the minister to extend it to the 45-day period. If we have two hearings, say on April 2 and 9, that would be before April 22. It seems to me we can accomplish things that way. I think we can probably get an agreement around that.

Would that be okay with you, Ms. Nash?

• (1215)

Ms. Peggy Nash: Yes, it would, if we can get the witnesses in before April 22.

I believe we also have one hour on Thursday. The minister is only coming for one hour, as I understand it, and there is a second hour there, if there were other witnesses available. I know we had slotted that time for the service sector study, but it's something that's in camera and therefore flexible in terms of the timing.

The Chair: It is flexible, although I suspect, as usually happens with every minister meeting, that a member of the opposition will ask the minister to stay longer. So I always like to leave a bit of leeway.

If the committee decides they want to finish with the minister promptly after one hour and go to this, that's up to the committee. Again, it's challenging in terms of it being two days' notice to get another minister here.

Anyway, those were all the speakers I had.

Mr. Carrie.

Mr. Colin Carrie: I just want to clarify what Mr. Vincent said. He asked why I am changing my viewpoint now.

Well, the reality is that we haven't changed our viewpoint at all. As Mr. Cannis said before, the committee has no role to review this. I thought we had agreed. The real question is why he's waiting 12 days before the actual deadline to make this come up.

We've talked about this in the past. The minister is coming, as requested. He will be here on Thursday.

As Madam Nash just said, we have that second hour, and that's what I'm trying to say: why don't we get the officials here for the second hour, and we can actually start the process, if this is where we want to go with it, to hear what they have to say? I'm in agreement with that.

The Chair: Mr. Del Mastro, and then Mr. Brison.

Mr. Dean Del Mastro (Peterborough, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'm looking at the motion. I've listened to what the parliamentary secretary has had to say, and what we're really talking about is a contract that was entered into by the Government of Canada. I note that this motion talks about the impact of the proposed sale.

While I acknowledge that is something that should be considered, obviously the fundamentals of the original contract are something that the committee should know something about if it's going to render a decision over the sale or if it wants to conduct a study into the sale.

So I would strongly urge the members of the committee to get the departmental officials here to talk about the original contract so that we have a basis, moving forward, so that we can make an informed decision. I've been around an awful lot of contracts in my life, and I'll tell you, understanding the original basis of the contract is fundamental to making a decision about the terms and reference of that contract. I strongly urge committee members to do that.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Brison.

Hon. Scott Brison: Mr. Carrie asked the question why we didn't ask to extend this earlier. The fact is that last week's testimony, I think, created more questions than answers.

We had in fact invited the company to appear before the committee. They declined but were in fact in the room. They just didn't appear before our committee to demonstrate any respect for what we're doing here.

I think there are critical public policy considerations, and the question could be reversed as to why, after hearing what we heard last week, doesn't Mr. Carrie want the same level of scrutiny, process, and analysis that we do?

You can argue it both ways. The fact is that ministers do not appear before committees unaccompanied by public servants. The public servants will be with them. But it's the ministers and the ministers alone who really do have accountability to Parliament. So yes, we need the ministers, and yes, we need the time to afford and facilitate that. So yes, we need the 30 days.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Carrie.

Mr. Colin Carrie: I was just going to say that I didn't argue about this extension. You could have brought it up if this was a big issue. You had since January 8 to make it an issue. We could have called witnesses before yesterday to get people in front of the committee.

What we're dealing with now is an issue of timing. We have a deadline before us. It seems you're waiting to the very last minute, and it's not the role of the committee to ask for any type of extension or to tell the minister. We can ask for it, for sure. We can ask that he does that. But if we really wanted to get all these witnesses here, the ministers or their delegates, all I'm telling you is that from a logistics standpoint, for you to make the issue today, I just see that it is going to be difficult. I'm not saying it's impossible.

So maybe we can make an amendment. If you would like to insist on having the ministers, it may be difficult in the next couple of days to get them here, or during break week. We may not get any of them to be able to come. But if we say we'd have the ministers or their delegates come, I think there's quite a good possibility that we can have the delegates here quite promptly and at least get started with finding out the information that you would like before the deadline has expired.

• (1220)

The Chair: Wait. Mr. Carrie, can you clarify that?

Mr. Colin Carrie: Maybe we should make an amendment.

Madam Nash, I believe, is suggesting that we have the ministers here. All I'm saying is that from a logistics standpoint, before the deadline, which we know is the March 22, if we have this motion go forward and insist on ministers only, we may not get anyone here. But if we ask for ministers or their delegates, there is a good likelihood that we could get somebody here very quickly.

Madam Nash even pointed out that on Thursday the minister is coming here. We might even be able to get those delegates here who could actually give us the details on the original contract that was signed back in 1998, and at least get started with it, because this is a real timing issue. That's what the issue is, a very tight timeline that we're up against right now, respectfully.

The Chair: The proposal, then, is to use the second hour on Thursday to get officials from the relevant departments to start giving the committee some background for at least an hour.

Mr. Brison, did you want to respond to that?

Hon. Scott Brison: I think we're ready to have a vote.

The Chair: Ms. Nash.

Ms. Peggy Nash: I would rather just deal with the original motion that Mr. Carrie put forward, and depending where we end up with the final version of the motion, I would hope that the final version incorporates a request for an extension in order to be able to have the testimony of the witnesses we're calling for.

It may well be that it's possible in that second hour—if we decide we do want to have ministers—that there is a minister who's available.

The Chair: Can I ask a specific question? Where it says “the Minister of Justice/Solicitor General”, do you want that minister still included?

Ms. Peggy Nash: Well, I read the part under the Remote Sensing Space Systems Act that pertains to that minister, and that was my rationale for requesting that he come to the committee.

The Chair: Monsieur Vincent. No?

Mr. Stanton, do you want to speak to this?

Mr. Bruce Stanton: This is perhaps a subamendment to Mr. Carrie's suggestion, that the amendment be changed to continue to reflect the removal of the Minister of Justice, but to read "Minister of Foreign Affairs, and Minister of Defence or their delegates or representatives appear before the committee". So it's basically to stay as is but add "or their representatives".

The Chair: That would not be an amendment of Mr. Carrie's amendment, because his amendment strikes "Minister of Justice" and "Solicitor General", and it replaces wording in the original motion. I'm sorry, I can't rule that a subamendment.

• (1225)

Mr. Bruce Stanton: All right.

The Chair: We're ready for the question on the amendment by Mr. Carrie.

All those in favour?

(Amendment negatived)

The Chair: Mr. Carrie, go ahead.

Mr. Colin Carrie: Could I move a subamendment, as Mr. Stanton said, on that amendment?

The Chair: You can, but I did ask Mr. Brison to take his subamendment and we were going to deal with his amendment after yours. So you can move that.

Mr. Colin Carrie: I'll do it afterwards, okay.

The Chair: Yes.

So do you want to read Mr. Brison's amendment again? This would be at the end of the motion.

The Clerk of the Committee (Ms. Michelle Tittley): The amendment as proposed by Mr. Brison would follow in the last line, under the Investment Canada Act, and would continue:

and that the Committee strongly recommend that the Industry Minister exercise his right to extend the current forty-five (45) days period of the Investment Canada Act review by an additional thirty (30) days in order to enable a more thorough evaluation of the transaction particularly in terms of the net benefit test to Canada.

The Chair: Okay.

Mr. Carrie, go ahead.

Mr. Colin Carrie: Because the committee doesn't have a role in this, I wanted to ask the clerk if that amendment is even in order. You're talking about net benefit, but I think I've been clear that nobody can really talk about those issues. I was wondering if I could ask the clerk if this is even in order.

The Chair: You can have the clerk respond, Mr. Carrie. But the committee can recommend or request what it wants. If it were to demand or explicitly state that the minister must.... Procedurally it's in order and substantively it's in order.

Is there any debate on the amendment by Mr. Brison?

Ms. Nash, go ahead.

Ms. Peggy Nash: I have a question with respect to that wording of "net benefit to Canada". I'd like to ask Mr. Brison whether his

interpretation of that is that discussion of the remote sensing space system is included in the net benefit to Canada.

The Chair: Mr. Brison, you may respond.

Hon. Scott Brison: Yes, it is. I mean "net benefit" broadly.

Again, if somebody other than I made the amendment more general and took that out, I would have no difficulty with that.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Carrie, do you have a comment?

Mr. Colin Carrie: I was wondering if I could add, as a friendly amendment to Mr. Brison, the president of the CSA as well as—

The Chair: We've already added that. We took that as a subamendment by Mr. Hanger, and I sensed no objection to that.

Mr. Colin Carrie: Could we add the ministers or their delegates? Do you just want the ministers? I'm just saying from a logistics standpoint.

The Chair: This is Mr. Brison's amendment. You can move that with respect to the main motion, after we deal with the amendment.

Mr. Colin Carrie: Okay.

The Chair: Okay, can we call the question, then, on the amendment of Mr. Brison?

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

• (1230)

The Chair: The discussion is now on the main motion as amended.

Mr. Carrie.

Mr. Colin Carrie: Could I have the clerk read out the motion as amended?

The Clerk: In order to please the committee, I'll read the motion in its entirety thus far, including the amendment of Mr. Brison:

In light of testimony provided at the March 5th meeting of the Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Technology, and taking into account the demonstrated impact of the proposed sale of MacDonald, Dettwiler and Associates Ltd. (MDA) on more than one government ministry; the Committee request that a representative of MDA, the Minister of Justice/Solicitor General, Minister of Foreign Affairs, and Minister of National Defence appear before the committee to provide testimony in regards to the proposed sale of MDA to Alliant Techsystems, before a decision concerning the sale is rendered under the Investment Canada Act, and that the Committee strongly recommend the Industry Minister exercise his right to extend the current forty-five (45) days period of the Investment Canada Act review by an additional thirty (30) days in order to enable more thorough evaluation of the transaction particularly terms of the net benefit test to Canada.

The Chair: Is that clear for everyone?

Is there any discussion on the motion?

Mr. Carrie.

Mr. Colin Carrie: I want to add, if possible, the ministers "or their delegates".

The Chair: You would add, "or their delegate", after each minister: the Minister of Justice/Solicitor General or their delegates.

Mr. Colin Carrie: It would be "or their delegates", yes. I don't whether we could say it after the group of them or after each one. Which would be grammatically correct?

The Chair: The intent is that the ministers or their delegates appear before the committee.

Mr. Colin Carrie: We have until the 22nd. Bearing in mind that we have three days before the break and there has been no agreement on whether we are going to reconvene during the break period, if we seriously want to get some information on this, my recommendation would be to add “or their delegates”.

The window of opportunity is either tomorrow afternoon or Thursday or perhaps Friday sometime to get the ministers here. We haven't contacted the ministers' offices—we have somebody here who was a minister in the past—and logistically I see getting them here within three days as a challenge. It's not impossible. If we leave it open to the delegates, I think we might be able to get those people here for the second hour on Thursday.

Whatever the committee would like to do, of course, is up to the committee, but that would be my recommendation.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Carrie.

I'm going to have the clerk read the amendment.

Mr. Colin Carrie: Thank you.

The Clerk: I'll begin on the fourth line of the English version, after the semi-colon:

the Committee request that a representative of MDA, the Minister of Justice/ Solicitor General, Minister of Foreign Affairs, and Minister of National Defence, or their delegates, appear before the committee....

Mr. Dean Del Mastro: Can you make that “and/or”?

The Clerk: Is that “and/or their delegates”?

The Chair: That was not Mr. Carrie's amendment.

Is it “and/or”, Mr. Carrie?

Mr. Colin Carrie: If that would be more inclusive, I would take that as a friendly suggestion.

The Chair: Okay, it is “and/or their delegates”.

Thank you.

Mr. Colin Carrie: Do we have the president of CSA somewhere in there? We do? Okay, I didn't hear that.

The Chair: Thank you.

We'll go to Ms. Nash.

Ms. Peggy Nash: I'll pass for the moment.

The Chair: Madame Brunelle.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Paule Brunelle: I wonder, Mr. Chairman, if this amendment is in order since it is quite similar to the one we have just voted down. It says that we would hear officials and representatives but not ministers. So, it is exactly the same thing, the point being that we would not hear the ministers. I believe that such a motion is not in order. We have already voted against that amendment and this one is the same.

•(1235)

[*English*]

The Chair: Well, they did put in “and/or their delegates”, and the amendment by Mr. Carrie included crossing out entirely “Minister of Justice”. It also included crossing out “before a decision concerning the sale is rendered under the Investment Canada Act”.

Perhaps those should have been three separate amendments, but there was more in Mr. Carrie's amendment than simply providing for delegates or witnesses from departments.

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

The Chair: Mr. Stanton.

Mr. Bruce Stanton: I have another amendment suggestion. Where it says “a representative of MDA”, I wonder if we could get somebody higher than a sales rep, like a senior officer or president—somebody with some standing. As it is, a representative could be anybody, in all honesty. I don't think you want the spin master here. Let's hear it from the president or a senior officer of MDA. I don't know the best terminology, but it should be....

The Chair: I'm sure if MDA appears before the committee they would send a senior representative. I don't want to nickel and dime the motion to death.

Mr. Bruce Stanton: Okay. I just want to make sure there's somebody here who can speak on their behalf.

The Chair: We can make that very clear in the e-mail we send to them.

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

The Chair: Now we have 20 minutes for the services sector.

Thank you.

[*Proceedings continue in camera*]-

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

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