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Chair: Mr. René Arseneault



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• (1535)

[*Translation*]

The Clerk of the Committee (Ms. Nancy Vohl): Good afternoon, my dear committee members. I see a quorum.

I must inform you that the clerk of the committee can only receive motions for the election of the Chair. The clerk cannot receive other types of motions, entertain points of order, or participate in debates.

[*English*]

We can now proceed to the election of the chair.

Pursuant to Standing Order 106(2), the chair must be a member of the government party.

[*Translation*]

I am now prepared to receive nominations for the Chair.

Mr. Drouin, the floor is yours.

Mr. Francis Drouin (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, Lib.): I nominate my distinguished colleague René Arseneault for the position of Chair.

The Clerk: It has been moved by Mr. Drouin that Mr. Arseneault be elected Chair of the committee.

Are there any further motions?

The motion passed by the House specifies that I must conduct a recorded vote, unless the committee clearly gives its consent that the motion be carried.

Is it the pleasure of the committee that Mr. Arseneault be elected to the position of Chair of the committee?

(Motion agreed to)

The Clerk: I declare the motion carried and Mr. Arseneault duly elected Chair of the committee.

Some hon. members: Hear, Hear!

The Clerk: I now invite Mr. Arseneault to take the chair.

The Chair (Mr. René Arseneault (Madawaska—Restigouche, Lib.)): First of all, thank you very much for this unanimous appointment and for your welcome.

I have been on the Standing Committee for Official Languages for six years. I will try to measure up to our previous chair, Mr. Dubourg. I have big shoes to fill because he did great work.

We can now proceed to the election of the vice-chairs.

We will start with the vice-chair from the official opposition.

Mr. Gourde, the floor is yours.

• (1540)

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC): Mr. Chair, I would like to nominate a worthy man, my Conservative colleague, Joël Godin, for the position of first vice chair.

The Chair: Are there any further motions?

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): No. I know that these motions do not need seconders, but I just wanted to say that he will be an excellent vice-chair.

The Chair: Mr. Godin, if you were nominated, would you accept?

Mr. Joël Godin (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, CPC): I would be pleased to accept, Mr. Chair. I want to be on your team.

The Chair: Do we have to hold a vote or do we have unanimous consent?

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: Congratulations, Mr. Vice-Chair.

The Clerk: Mr. Chair, normally, as the clerk, I receive motions for the election of the vice-chairs.

The Chair: Excuse me, Madam Clerk. This is my first time.

Go ahead

The Clerk: Pursuant to Standing Order 106(2), the second vice-chair must be a member of an opposition party other than the official opposition.

I am ready to receive motions for the election of the second vice-chair.

Mr. Dalton, you have the floor.

Mr. Marc Dalton (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge, CPC): I nominate Mr. Beaulieu, from the Bloc Québécois, for the position of second vice-chair.

The Clerk: Mr. Dalton is nominating Mr. Beaulieu.

Are there any further motions?

(Motion agreed to)

The Clerk: I declare the motion carried and Mr. Beaulieu duly elected second vice-chair of the committee.

Some hon. members: Hear, Hear!

The Chair: Congratulations, everyone. Welcome to this wonderful committee.

After six years here, I can indeed say that it is a truly wonderful committee. It is here, in my opinion, that the most unifying values of our great Canada shine the brightest.

Madam Clerk, is there anything else you would like me to talk about? Do you want me to talk about the division bell? It could start ringing at any moment.

The Clerk: That's possible, but it is not ringing now

Mr. Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ): I'd like to make a comment: we have no representative from the NDP.

The Chair: Now we can hear the bell. So we have 30 minutes before we go and vote.

Do we have unanimous consent for the committee to continue to sit for at least 20 minutes?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

• (1545)

The Chair: So let's start with the formalities.

Welcome to meeting 1 of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Official Languages. Today's meeting is taking place in a hybrid format.

Pursuant to the House Order of November 25, 2021, some members are attending the meeting in person in the room and others are participating remotely using the Zoom application. Regarding the speaking list, the committee clerk and I will do the best we can to maintain a consolidated order of speaking for all members, whether they are participating virtually or in person.

I would like to take this opportunity to remind all participants to this meeting that taking screenshots or photos of your screen is not permitted.

The proceedings will be made available via the House of Commons website.

Given the ongoing pandemic situation and in light of the recommendations from public health authorities, as well as the directive of the Board of Internal Economy on October 19, 2021, the following is recommended for all those attending the meeting in person, in order to remain healthy and safe.

Anyone with symptoms must participate by Zoom, and not attend the meeting in person. Everyone must maintain two-metre physical distancing, whether seated or standing. Everyone must wear a non-medical mask when circulating in the room. It is recommended in the strongest possible terms that members wear their masks at all times, including when seated. Non-medical masks, which provide better clarity of sound, are available in the room.

Everyone present must maintain proper hand hygiene by using the hand sanitizer at the room entrance. Committee rooms are cleaned before and after each meeting. To maintain this, everyone is encouraged to clean surfaces such as the desk, chair and micro-

phone with the disinfectant wipes provided when vacating or taking a seat.

As the Chair, I will be enforcing these measures for the duration of the meeting and I thank members in advance for their cooperation.

Let's now go through the routine motions.

Mr. Francis Drouin: I have made enough copies of the routine motions for all my colleagues in the room. I can distribute them, although I feel that we are all quite familiar with the motions.

I first want to make sure that the interpreters can hear me properly when I am speaking with my mask. They are signalling that they can, so that's great.

• (1550)

I will read the motions. I propose that we adopt a motion to pass them all at the same time. Does that suit everyone?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Francis Drouin: The first routine motion is about the services of analysts:

That the committee retain, as needed and at the discretion of the Chair, the services of one or more analysts from the Library of Parliament to assist it in its work.

The second motion is about the subcommittee on agenda and procedure. Of course, this motion applies only if we decide to have a subcommittee. The motion reads:

That the Subcommittee on Agenda and Procedure be established and be composed of [insert number] members; the Chair and one member from each recognized party; and that the subcommittee work in a spirit of collaboration.

The third motion is about meetings without a quorum:

That the Chair be authorized to hold meetings to receive evidence and to have that evidence published when a quorum is not present, provided that at least four members are present, including two members of the opposition parties and two members of the government party, but when travelling outside the Parliamentary Precinct, that the meeting begin after 15 minutes, regardless of members present.

The fourth motion is about the time for opening remarks and questioning of witnesses:

That witnesses be given five minutes for their opening statement; that whenever possible, witnesses provide the committee with their opening statement 72 hours in advance; that at the discretion of the Chair, during the questioning of witnesses, there be allocated six minutes for the first questioner of each party as follows for the first round:

Conservative Party;

Liberal Party;

Bloc Québécois;

New Democratic Party;

For the second and subsequent rounds, the order and time for questioning be as follows:

Conservative Party, five minutes;

Liberal Party, five minutes;

Bloc Québécois, two and a half minutes;

New Democratic Party, two and a half minutes;

Conservative Party, five minutes;

Liberal Party, five minutes.

The fifth motion is about document distribution:

That only the clerk of the committee be authorized to distribute documents to members of the committee provided the documents are in both official languages, and that the witnesses be advised accordingly.

The sixth motion is about working meals:

That the clerk of the committee, at the discretion of the Chair, be authorized to make the necessary arrangements to provide working meals for the committee and its subcommittees.

The seventh motion is about travel, accommodation and living expenses of witnesses:

That, if requested, reasonable travel, accommodation and living expenses be reimbursed to witnesses not exceeding two representatives per organization; and that in exceptional circumstances, payment for more representatives be made at the discretion of the Chair.

The eighth motion is about access to in camera meetings:

That, unless otherwise ordered, each committee member be allowed to be accompanied by one staff member at in camera meetings and that one additional person from each House officer's office be allowed to be present.

The ninth motion is about transcripts of in camera meetings:

That one copy of the transcript of each in camera meeting be kept in the committee clerk's office for consultation by members of the committee or by their staff; and that the analysts assigned to the committee also have access to the in camera transcripts.

The tenth motion is about notices of motion:

That a 48-hour notice, interpreted as two nights, be required for any substantive motion to be moved in committee, unless the substantive motion relates directly to business then under consideration, provided that: (a) the notice be filed with the clerk of the committee no later than 4:00 p.m. from Monday to Friday; (b) the motion be distributed to Members and the offices of the whips of each recognized party in both official languages by the clerk on the same day the said notice was transmitted if it was received no later than the deadline hour; (c) notices received after the deadline hour or on non-business days be deemed to have been received during the next business day; and that when the committee is holding meetings outside the Parliamentary Precinct, no substantive motion may be moved.

The eleventh motion is about orders of reference from the House respecting bills:

That in relation to orders of reference from the House respecting Bills,

(a) The clerk of the committee shall, upon the committee receiving such an order of reference, write to each member who is not a member of a caucus represented on the committee to invite those members to file with the clerk of the committee, in both official languages, any amendments to the bill, which is the subject of the said Order, which they would suggest that the committee consider;

(b) Suggested amendments filed, pursuant to paragraph (a), at least 48 hours prior to the start of clause-by-clause consideration of the bill to which the amendments relate shall be deemed to be proposed during the said consideration, provided that the committee may, by motion, vary this deadline in respect of a given bill;

and (c) During the clause-by-clause consideration of a bill, the Chair shall allow a member who filed suggested amendments, pursuant to paragraph (a), an opportunity to make brief representations in support of them.

The twelfth motion is about technical tests for witnesses:

That the clerk inform each witness who is to appear before the committee that the House administration support team must conduct technical tests [to check] the connectivity and the equipment used to ensure the best possible sound quality; and that the Chair advise the committee, at the start of each meeting, of any witness who did not perform the required technical tests.

The thirteenth motion is about linguistic review:

That all documents submitted for committee business that do not come from a federal department, members' offices, or that have not been translated by the Translation Bureau be sent for prior linguistic review by the Translation Bureau before being distributed to members.

Mr. Chair, I have some good news. I have finished.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Drouin.

I have three small points to bring up before we continue.

First, we strongly recommend wearing a mask even when people are seated. The interpreters can still hear us.

Second, Ms. Ashton, can you hear us now? We lost you earlier.

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, NDP): Yes, I am here and I can hear you.

The Chair: Okay, that's great.

Before we move to vote on the motions, either by voting or by carrying them unanimously, I believe that some people want to comment. I saw some hands up just now, specifically Marc Serré and Ms. Lattanzio.

Do you want to make a comment? No? Okay.

I believe that Madam Clerk wants to comment.

The Clerk: Thank you Mr. Chair.

The text of the motion on the subcommittee has the words “five members”. When Mr. Drouin read it, I don't think he said a number. Usually, the subcommittee is made up of five members. I do not know if he has a different intention.

Mr. Francis Drouin: I had no other intention; my intentions are noble.

The Chair: Mr. Godin, did you have a comment?

Mr. Joël Godin: Yes, the comment is more or less along the same lines.

In the motion on technical tests for witnesses, Mr. Drouin said in French that the House team must conduct technical tests “avant de vérifier la connectivité ...”. In the document, I see “afin”, but he said “avant”.

The Chair: Yes, it is “afin”, for sure.

Mr. Joël Godin: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Is everyone fine with that?

So the subcommittee has five members, as has just been pointed out.

Do we have unanimous consent on the routine motions?

(Motions agreed to)

• (1555)

The Chair: How many minutes left before the vote, Madam Clerk?

The Clerk: On the screen here, it says 17 minutes left. However, I think that is ParlVU and there is always a little delay. So you probably have 15 minutes.

The Chair: Mr. Beaulieu, did you want to comment?

Mr. Mario Beaulieu: I don't know whether this is a good time, but I wanted to introduce two motions about resuming the committee's studies.

The Chair: Ms. Lattanzio already had her hand up.

Mr. Mario Beaulieu: That's fine.

The Chair: In view of the time we have left before the vote, are we comfortable continuing for a few minutes? Earlier, the committee gave unanimous consent to continue the session through the bells, but we did not specify for how long.

So up to how many minutes before the vote do we want to continue the session?

Mr. Joël Godin: I propose 10 minutes before, because we have to leave.

Mr. Jacques Gourde: I propose another seven minutes.

Mr. Mario Beaulieu: We can also vote through the app.

The Chair: Perfect.

Actually, I prefer to play it safe, given the delay. I prefer that we suspend the meeting now to go vote. After voting in the House, we can return to committee if you wish.

I will take down the names of those who asked to speak, in order. Ms. Lattanzio will be first, and then it will be Mr. Beaulieu's turn.

Do you agree with that?

Mr. Joël Godin: You can add my name after Mr. Beaulieu.

The Chair: All right. Is that okay with you?

Ms. Ashton, would you like to add your name?

Ms. Niki Ashton: Yes, thank you.

The Chair: So it will be Ms. Lattanzio, Mr. Beaulieu, Mr. Godin and Ms. Ashton.

We will now suspend the meeting and resume after the vote.

• (1555) _____ (Pause) _____

• (1635)

The Chair: We will now resume the meeting.

Following the order in which committee members raised their hands to speak, Ms. Lattanzio now has the floor.

Ms. Patricia Lattanzio (Saint-Léonard—Saint-Michel, Lib.): Good afternoon, Mr. Chair. First of all, I'd like to congratulate you on being elected as Chair of the committee.

I'd also like to thank you all for electing the committee's vice-chairs.

I'm happy to see some of our colleagues from the previous session and to meet the new committee members.

Right off the bat, I'd like to introduce four motions related to topics that the committee may wish to study. If I may, I will read out only the titles to give you an idea of what the motions are about or their substance. Then, as is the custom, I will see to sending them to Madam Clerk.

The first motion relates to Air Canada, and it aims to have the committee review Air Canada's obligation to provide service in both official languages.

• (1640)

The Chair: One moment, Ms. Lattanzio. Would it be possible for you to send them all to the clerk at the same time?

Ms. Patricia Lattanzio: Yes, I will do that.

Actually, do you want me to just say the titles of the motions or do an advance reading of them until she receives them?

The Chair: You can read out the first one. It's the Air Canada one, right?

Ms. Patricia Lattanzio: Yes. The first motion is as follows:

That, pursuant to Standing Order 108(3)(f), the committee undertake a study on Air Canada and its obligations under the Official Languages Act (OLA); that, in the context of this study, the Committee:

- a) examine Air Canada's obligation to provide service in both official languages;
- b) study measures Air Canada could take to ensure their full compliance with the Official Languages Act;
- c) invite Air Canada to discuss the measures Air Canada is taking to ensure bilingual customer service and work environments;
- d) invite the Commissioner of Official Languages to discuss the historical compliance issues with the OLA at Air Canada.

That the committee devote a minimum of two meetings to this study.

That the Committee report its findings to the House; and that pursuant to Standing Order 109, the Committee request a government response to its report.

The second motion is about Francophone immigration:

That, pursuant to Standing Order 108(3)(f), the committee undertake a study on Francophone immigration to Canada to ensure the Government of Canada lives up to its duty to attract and facilitate Francophone immigration outside of Quebec; that, as part of this study, the Committee:

- a) examine why the target of 4.4% of total immigration set in 2003 in the Strategic Framework to Foster Immigration to Francophone Minority Communities was not met—

The Chair: Ms. Lattanzio, pardon me for interrupting you, I feel rude for doing it, but I am starting my job as chair and I'm told we should only put forward one motion at a time and debate it.

Ms. Patricia Lattanzio: All right, then I submit the first motion to the committee.

The Chair: Actually, do you want to put forward the motions or just give notice of them?

Ms. Patricia Lattanzio: Mr. Chair, I wanted to put forward all four, but if you tell me we must deal with them one at a time, I submit to the will of the committee and the rules and regulations.

The Chair: Okay, just a moment.

Ms. Patricia Lattanzio: Mr. Chair, I want to be clear: what I am doing now is giving notice of these motions.

The Chair: That's fine, Ms. Lattanzio. It's just that things got confused earlier: I thought you wanted to put them forward. Now I understand that you are giving notice of these motions. I apologize for interrupting you.

Please continue reading the second motion, which deals with Francophone immigration.

Ms. Patricia Lattanzio: I will pick up where I left off:

a) examine why the target of 4.4% of total immigration set in 2003 in the Strategic Framework to Foster Immigration to Francophone Minority communities was not met;

b) review the November 2021 report from the Commissioner of Official Languages on French immigration;

c) explore how the Government can work to maintain or increase the demographic weight of Francophone minority communities;

d) provide recommendations for addressing the shortage of French-language teachers in Canada, particularly outside of Quebec, as well as how the Government can increase opportunities for newcomers to learn French, while respecting the powers of other jurisdictions and existing agreements; that the committee allocate a minimum of six meetings to this study; that the committee report its findings and recommendations to the House and; that, pursuant to Standing Order 109, the Government table a comprehensive response.

The third motion is about the decline of French:

That, pursuant to Standing Order 108(3)(f), the committee undertake a study on the measures that the Government of Canada can take to fulfill its responsibility, as set out in the Speech from the Throne, to protect and promote French not only outside Quebec but also within Quebec; that as part of this study, the Committee:

a) provide an objective and detailed portrait of the situation of English and French Quebec, as well as of francophone and Acadian communities; based on key linguistic indicators, such as French as the mother tongue, main language spoken at home, language shifts, main language of work, and so on;

b) evaluate the effectiveness of the government's language policies with respect to the objective of protecting and promoting French as well as the impact of these policies on provincial legislative measures to protect and promote French;

c) Examine all the tools available to the government, as well as consider possible amendments to the Official Languages Act, to harmonize the government's commitment to protect and promote both official languages of Canada; that the committee include testimony given to the Standing Committee on Official Languages during the 43rd Parliament, 2nd Session in its study of the same topic; that the committee allocate a minimum of six meetings to this study; that the committee report its findings and recommendations to the House, and; that, pursuant to Standing Order 109, the Government table a comprehensive response.

● (1645)

Mr. Marc Dalton: Mr. Chair, I have a point of order.

Shouldn't we have these motions in both official languages, so we can read them? Is there a way to handle that?

The Chair: Mr. Dalton, I'm going to have to take a break due to a technical issue with my device, unfortunately. We're going to suspend the meeting, and when we get that resolved, we will come back to your point of order.

Ms. Patricia Lattanzio: Mr. Chair, I just wanted to confirm that the motions have been sent to Madam Clerk in both official languages. I know my colleague would like to hear the interpretation of what I said as I read out the motions, but I assure you that the motions were submitted in both official languages.

The Chair: Thank you.

We're going to suspend the meeting for a few moments.

● (1645)

(Pause)

● (1650)

The Chair: We are back in session.

For those watching at home, I remind you that before the break, Mr. Dalton raised a point of order regarding the presentation of no-

tices of motion in both official languages. The clerk has just informed us that she received the documents from Ms. Lattanzio.

[*English*]

It's already in your P9s, for everyone who is listening.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Lattanzio, you may resume the presentation of your notices of motion.

Ms. Patricia Lattanzio: I am on my fourth notice of motion, which is about linguistic security:

That, pursuant to Standing Order 108(3)(f), the committee undertake a study on linguistic security; that, as part of this study, the Committee:

a) consider the impact of declining linguistic security on official language minority groups, particularly among youth;

b) study how the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated issues of linguistic security for Canadians;

c) invite the Commissioner of Official Languages to share his findings on linguistic security in the federal public service;

d) examine methods to alleviating linguistic security; that the committee allocate a minimum of five meetings to this study; that the committee report its findings and recommendations to the House, and; that, pursuant to Standing Order 109, the Government table a comprehensive response.

Thank you.

The Chair: Ms. Lattanzio, thank you for these notices of motion, which have been received in our respective P9 email accounts.

Mr. Beaulieu, you have the floor.

Mr. Mario Beaulieu: I too would like to present two notices of motion. You will shortly receive my notices of motion in both official languages. Madam Clerk has already received them.

My first notice of motion is very similar to one of the motions that Ms. Lattanzio read:

That, pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), the committee undertake a study on the measures the Government of Canada can take, as stated in the Speech from the Throne, to fulfil its responsibility to protect and promote French not only outside Quebec, but also within Quebec,

and that the testimony and documents obtained by the committee during the 2nd session of the 43rd Parliament regarding the study be considered by the committee during the current session, and that the committee resume the witness schedule set out in the original work plan;

and that, as part of this study, the committee: (a) Draw an objective and detailed picture of the situation of the English and French languages in Quebec, as well as the francophone and Acadian communities, based on the main linguistic indicators, including French as a mother tongue, main language spoken at home, language substitutions, main language of work, etc.; (b) Evaluate the effectiveness of the government's language policies, and the current role of provincial and federal legislation in protecting and promoting the French language, as well as the impact of these policies on provincial legislative measures to protect and promote the French language (in particular the Charter of the French Language in Quebec); (c) Evaluate possible amendments to the Official Languages Act to align the government's will to protect the French language with provincial legislation;

That, in order to conduct this study, the committee allocate a minimum of three (3) meetings and that these be completed no later than June 1, 2022; that the committee report on its findings and recommendations to the House; and that, pursuant to Standing Order 109, the government table a comprehensive response.

In fact, we had already started this study during the last session. There were two and a half meetings left to devote to this study. So it would be a matter of resuming this study according to the timetable that was already planned, in order to respect the balance with regard to the different witnesses proposed.

The second motion of which I give notice is to resume a study that had been started following a motion proposed by Mr. Boulerice:

That, pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), the committee undertake a study on the measures that the Government of Canada can take to administer federal funds and the positive measures taken by federal institutions regarding post-secondary education for official language minority communities;

That, as part of this study, the committee compare federal funding for English and French post-secondary minority institutions, as well as federal funding for French post-secondary teaching institutions in Quebec;

that the committee allocate a minimum of two (2) meetings for this purpose;

That the testimony and documents obtained by the committee during the 2nd session of the 43rd Parliament concerning the study be considered by the committee during the current session;

That the committee report on its observations and conclusions to the House; and that, pursuant to Standing Order 109, the government table a comprehensive response.

• (1655)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu.

Mr. Godin, you have the floor.

Mr. Joël Godin: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'd like to speak on three different topics.

I want to move a motion first. This is not a notice of motion, but a motion about Air Canada. I move that the committee invite the president and CEO of Air Canada to a two-hour meeting to answer questions from parliamentarians on the place and importance of official languages at Air Canada. I suggest that this take place at the next meeting. The documents have been given to the clerk.

I also want to submit two notices of motion.

The first notice concerns the Commissioner of Official Languages:

That the committee invite the Commissioner of Official Languages for a two-hour meeting to brief the committee on pressing issues related to the application of the Official Languages Act in Canada.

The second notice relates to the Minister of Official Languages:

That the committee invite the Minister of Official Languages to discuss her mandate, priorities, and pressing issues related to her portfolio.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Godin.

I think the clerk is sending out the notices of motion. Then we will deal with the motion.

Mr. Godin has just moved a motion. It is not a notice of motion, it's a motion, and we need to debate it.

Ms. Lattanzio and Mr. Drouin raised their hands to speak.

Ms. Lattanzio, did you want to speak to this motion?

• (1700)

Ms. Patricia Lattanzio: Yes, Mr. Chair.

I understand my colleague Mr. Godin's motion, but since my notice of motion refers to the issue of official languages at Air Canada, I was wondering if you could deal with that when you meet as a subcommittee. We could, first of all, invite the person my colleague mentioned to come before the committee. I wouldn't mind if we started with this new study on Air Canada. Given that we could ask questions and do this study, in the interests of efficiency, could you manage this in subcommittee so that we start with this study topic?

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Lattanzio.

I must say, however, that this is a motion that we have to debate.

Mr. Godin, you have the floor.

Mr. Joël Godin: Mr. Chair, I thank my colleague for her proposal.

Indeed, I think we can combine my motion with hers. That said, I want to reiterate that my request is to have the president and CEO of Air Canada testify. So yes, we could discuss it in subcommittee, but what is important is that we agree to specifically mention the president and CEO of Air Canada as one of the witnesses who will appear in this study.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Drouin, the floor is yours.

Mr. Francis Drouin: It isn't that I want to insist on technicalities, but in principle, the notices of motion that Mr. Godin read are inadmissible because we should have debated the motion right away.

I'm sorry, Mr. Godin, but that's the rule: a motion that is proposed must be debated immediately. Yet you have continued by reading other motions, which are technically inadmissible.

The Chair: The clerk tells me that the other two mentions of Mr. Godin's motions were simple notices of motion. It's as if he sent them by email, except that he gave us verbal notice.

So we now have his motion before us, and we must debate it.

Mr. Godin, you have the floor.

Mr. Joël Godin: Actually, Mr. Chair, if I made a procedural error, I ask for unanimous consent for that error to be accepted.

You're confirming that it isn't an error, so we can proceed.

The Chair: Great.

Ms. Ashton, would you like to speak to this matter?

Ms. Niki Ashton: Yes, Mr. Chair.

Before this meeting, we also submitted a motion to the clerk regarding Air Canada. The motion recognizes that the events of this fall are of real concern, but also that this is a problem that has existed for some years.

I am prepared to support Mr. Godin's motion and to support Ms. Lattanzio's proposal to do a short study on this subject. However, I would like to propose an amendment so that we invite the Minister of Transport, the Minister of Official Languages, the current Commissioner of Official Languages, Raymond Thériault, as well as his predecessor, Graham Fraser, since Mr. Fraser presented a study on the situation of Air Canada a few years back.

We are prepared to support the proposal to hear testimony from the CEO of Air Canada, but we are also of the opinion that we could devote a few meetings to this study, perhaps four, in order to properly explore the subject and do an effective job. In my view, this work must be done with the co-operation of the ministers responsible for this issue.

• (1705)

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Ashton.

There was a lot of content in your speech. You would like to propose an amendment, but at the same time, you would like to conduct a study on Air Canada. I think that everyone wants to carry out such a study.

I would remind you that Mr. Godin's motion, which is currently being debated, is to invite the CEO to appear before the committee for two hours at the earliest opportunity. Mr. Godin can correct me if I am wrong.

Ms. Ashton, do you want to make an amendment to this motion, or do you simply want to point out that the NDP would also like to do a more thorough, more detailed study on Air Canada?

Ms. Niki Ashton: We don't want to do a more detailed study, but I'm proposing by way of an amendment to add to that testimony the testimony of the ministers responsible, as well as the current Commissioner of Official Languages, Mr. Thériault, and the former commissioner, who studied this issue closely a few years ago.

The Chair: So an amendment has been proposed.

Mr. Beaulieu, do you wish to speak to this proposed amendment?

Mr. Mario Beaulieu: I agreed with the original proposal, but I'm not against including this in a study. We'll see what happens next.

The Chair: I don't want us to lose track.

There is a main motion to which an amendment has been proposed. However, I'm told that an amendment cannot be proposed that broadens the scope of the main motion. At least, that's my understanding.

Mr. Beaulieu, I'm not sure that I understood what you said about Ms. Ashton's amendment. You're not against it, but—

Mr. Mario Beaulieu: We're going to see what happens.

The Chair: So you're telling us that you prefer to stick to Mr. Godin's original motion. Is that correct?

Mr. Mario Beaulieu: I agree with the original motion. That said, if Mr. Godin wanted to include his proposal in a more global study, I wouldn't be against it either.

The Chair: Do you mean that you would agree if Mr. Godin wanted to do a broader study afterwards?

Mr. Mario Beaulieu: Yes. It's not necessarily contradictory.

The Chair: Now I'll give the floor to Mr. Drouin.

We are still discussing Ms. Ashton's amendment.

Mr. Luc Berthold: Actually, if the amendment is inadmissible, we can no longer discuss it.

Mr. Francis Drouin: Indeed.

The Chair: Order, dear committee members.

As you have understood, I'm not a rocket scientist, and we are well supported by our clerks.

Ms. Ashton, I'm told that the amendment as it stands is inadmissible unless there is unanimous consent.

This is an amendment to Mr. Godin's original motion, which is to issue an invitation as soon as possible for a two-hour appearance. Those are the parameters of the motion.

Go ahead, Mr. Godin.

Mr. Joël Godin: Mr. Chair, can we read Ms. Ashton's amendment again, so that we know what we are voting on?

The Chair: Sure.

Go ahead, Ms. Ashton.

Ms. Niki Ashton: Actually, now that I'm re-reading the amendment, I'm not sure whether it's still procedurally possible. In any event, our desire is to add to this testimony those of the two ministers responsible, the Minister of Official Languages and the Minister of Transport, as well as that of the current Commissioner of Official Languages, Mr. Théberge and his predecessor, Mr. Fraser, who examined Air Canada in one of his reports in 2016. The purpose of this report is to explore what happened this fall and the challenges facing Air Canada's French-language services. We want to find a mechanism that could resolve this situation.

• (1710)

The Chair: Although it isn't my role, as chair, I could propose something.

I think that what you're proposing is to do a study on this subject, a little like what Ms. Lattanzio proposed. Moreover, I imagine that others will want to make a similar proposal on this subject.

So we could stick to this motion, Everyone has heard about the media appearance by the president and CEO of Air Canada. We would have him here for two hours, and perhaps that would lead us to other avenues that could result in our doing a complete study like the one you have proposed or the one Ms. Lattanzio has proposed.

Is there unanimous consent to proceed in this manner?

Mr. Drouin, would you like to say something?

Mr. Francis Drouin: I just wanted to say that I'm prepared to support Mr. Godin's motion as it stands. As for all the other proposals for study, I think we had agreed to submit them to the subcommittee. I think Mr. Godin's intention was to fill the first two hours when we come back in January.

The Chair: Okay.

Mr. Serré, you have the floor.

Mr. Marc Serré (Nickel Belt, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I just wanted to reiterate what my colleague Mr. Drouin said. I support Mr. Godin's motion. As for all the other notices, they should be submitted to the subcommittee so that the subcommittee can decide on the studies that the committee will undertake afterwards.

The Chair: Is there unanimous consent to adopt Mr. Godin's motion?

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: After Mr. Godin, it was your turn to have the floor, Ms. Ashton. I believe it was on motions or notices of motions.

Ms. Niki Ashton: I would still like to put forward the motion I mentioned, because I think the Air Canada case is so serious that it needs a little more attention.

Our first motion is as follows:

That, pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), following the events from the fall 2021 and the concern shared by Canadians regarding the respect of official languages by Air Canada, the Committee undertake a study on the measures adopted by the government and by Air Canada following the presentation of the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages, presented on June 7th 2016, On the road to increased compliance through an effective enforcement regime;

That the Committee invites the Minister of Transport, the Minister of Official Languages, and the Commissioner of Official Languages to lay out the steps needed to follow in order for Air Canada to respect its obligations to serve Canadians in both official languages;

That the Committee invites the President and Chief Executive Officer of Air Canada to testify on the importance of respecting the official languages and the measures taken by senior management so that Air Canada's culture reflects Canada's linguistic duality;

That the Committee holds no less than four (4) meetings on this study;

That the Committee report its findings and recommendations to the House; and that, pursuant to Standing Order 109, the Government table a comprehensive response.

As for our second motion, which we also sent a copy of to the clerk—

The Chair: Excuse me, Ms. Ashton. Is it a notice of motion or a motion?

Ms. Niki Ashton: We submitted it as a notice of motion.

The Chair: So that's just a notice of motion, too.

Ms. Niki Ashton: Yes.

The Chair: Thank you.

Ms. Niki Ashton: This is the second notice of motion:

That, pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), the Committee undertake a study on francophone immigration in language minority communities, surrounding the presentation of the Commissioner of Official Languages, Statistical analysis of the 4.4% immigration target for French-speaking immigrants in Francophone minority communities: Almost 20 years after setting the target, it is time to do more and do better;

That the Committee welcomes the Commissioner of Official Languages' testimony on this study;

That the Committee welcomes the Department of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada's testimony on this study;

That the Committee hears from representatives of francophone and Acadian communities on their experience with francophone immigration in their communities;

That the Committee holds no less than five (5) meetings on this study;

That the Committee report its findings and recommendations to the House; and that, pursuant to Standing Order 109, the Government table a comprehensive response.

• (1715)

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Ashton.

I think the notices of motion are already circulating, thanks to how efficient our beloved clerk is.

So we have plenty to get our teeth into for the first meeting.

Mr. Godin, do you have anything to add?

Mr. Joël Godin: Actually, Mr. Chair, I'm asking for unanimous consent that we consolidate all the notices of motion introduced today and send them to the subcommittee. This means that you would have a plan for us at the first meeting. I would suggest that we do this to speed up the process. It would give us a good understanding of all the requests. We could then better plan the committee's schedule and divide the studies according to the parties represented.

The Chair: That's great.

Ms. Lattanzio, do you have a comment?

Ms. Patricia Lattanzio: Actually, my colleague beat me to it by reading my mind. I was just going to say that we can see from the my colleagues' remarks that the first three notices of motion are similar or have points in common. So I think it will be up to the subcommittee to look at the proposed topics of study, Air Canada, francophone immigration and the decline of French, and sort it all out.

I would simply point out that the only topic that has not been the subject of a notice of motion by other colleagues is linguistic security. I think that notice will have to stand on its own.

Anyway, I was going to make exactly the same suggestion to you, Mr. Chair, that all of this be sorted out at the subcommittee.

The Chair: Mr. Beaulieu, you have the floor.

Mr. Mario Beaulieu: Yes, I think that is very important. As we may recall, two studies were not completed during the last session. So it is very important to take into account the timing and feasibility of the studies.

The Chair: Is there unanimous consent as requested?

Mr. Serré, do you wish to comment?

Mr. Marc Serré: I just want to clarify something with respect to the subcommittee. Clearly, you are on it, Mr. Chair, and the vice-chairs, Mr. Godin and Mr. Beaulieu, but Ms. Ashton and I are also on it.

I wanted to make that clear to Mr. Godin.

The Chair: That's great.

They're all good people. It will be a wonderful subcommittee.

Is there unanimous consent, as requested by Mr. Godin, for the subcommittee to meet to tidy up all these motions?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Chair: This is a good start, because there is no further debate.

Is there anything else you would like to bring forward, colleagues?

Mr. Joël Godin: Yes, Mr. Chair. I would like to say two things.

First, congratulations on your election as chair.

Second, I would like to use my last comments in this first meeting to wish you all, dear members of the committee, a very happy holiday season. Have a good time with your families, because we have a lot of work to do in the coming year, and we don't know what the world will look like in 2022.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

On that note, happy holidays, everyone. As Mr. Godin said, take some time for yourselves and with your families.

The meeting is adjourned.

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