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• (1640)

[English]

The Chair (Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.)): I call this meeting to order.

I see that we have quorum. I thank you for your attendance after the votes.

Colleagues, our first hour is devoted to our witness, Laurie Ogilvie. I anticipate doing some work with the committee in the second hour.

I take note that there are three motions that are potentially debatable today. Before you introduce your motion, I would ask you to do a courtesy to the clerk and to the chair by waiting until we advise you what is currently on the agenda with the committee. That way, when we have debate on the motions—if we have debate on the motions—it will at least be informed by what our commitments and our opportunities are at this point.

Could you do that, as a courtesy? The clerk works very hard to try to get us all together.

I just want to offer an apology, which might even be sincere.

An hon. member: That's so unlike you.

The Chair: Yes. It's so unlike me. That's right.

As you know, I hate to cancel meetings, but I've had to cancel two in a row. For the last one, we had witnesses lined up on Thursday afternoon, and by Friday afternoon we didn't, so we had no ability to replace the witnesses. I think the one before that was on votes, and we ran out of time on the votes, so that went sideways as well.

All of this is to say that we're already starting to run out of runway in this committee. In the context not only of the outstanding motions but also of the opportunities and scheduling issues we have, I'll ask you for the courtesy of sharing with you what we have at this point.

Meanwhile, we'll turn to our witness, Ms. Ogilvie.

I appreciate your patience and your attendance. I'm sure the clerk has briefed you on the five minutes of presentation. After that, members will ask questions.

We look forward to what you have to say.

Ms. Laurie Ogilvie (Senior Vice President, Military Family Services, Canadian Forces Morale and Welfare Services): Thank you very much, Chair.

Good afternoon. My name is Laurie Ogilvie, and I am the senior vice-president of military family services. Thank you for this invitation to come back to address this committee.

As I've mentioned in previous appearances, military family services is an operational division of Canadian Forces Morale and Welfare Services. We contribute to the well-being of the Canadian Armed Forces community directly through the military family services program, the veteran family program and Support Our Troops. Family-centric programs and services are delivered directly by military family services or through not-for-profit provincially incorporated charitable and non-defence organizations, namely military family resource centres.

In addressing the topic for today—housing and relocation—I can speak only to the relocation supports that are provided through military family services.

While Canadian research findings suggest that the majority of military families are supported and resilient within a healthy Canadian Armed Forces community, relocation is a challenge faced by military families more than by most Canadians. It is estimated that around 10,000 families relocate every year, with the average posting duration being about three to five years. We have analyzed extensive research into issues facing military families. These include frequent absences of the Canadian Armed Forces member, transitions through the military journey and, of course—the reason I'm here today—relocations.

In 2020, the military family services program was modernized to reflect a more contemporary understanding of the composition of families and their needs. Within this process, emphasis was placed on going beyond the three known military lifestyle challenges to include three familial or personal challenges, namely, mental wellness, financial health and interpersonal connection.

When a Canadian Armed Forces member relocates, their family can be impacted financially and often feel disconnected from their established social support networks.

Today we deliver programming for military families in the areas of relocation preparedness, financial resilience, personal and family health, and community involvement. To do so, we engage with and steward military family resource centres in Canada for the delivery of the military family services program, including through service outlets in Europe, the United States and the rest of the world; tailored programming for our special operations families; and a virtual military family resource centre.

Some programming examples include emergency family care assistance, mental health counselling in person and virtually, family and intimate partner violence support, a 24-7 crisis and referral line, emergency grants and loans, telemedicine, children and youth mental health counselling, augmented educational supports and counselling, employment initiatives, extended outreach to remote families and non-clinical psychosocial supports.

Beyond providing direct delivery, military family services engages with national stakeholders to expand our capacity for access to services to enhance family resilience throughout relocation. These include a spousal employment network; virtual career fairs and the recently released Career Coach+; health care provided virtually through Maple telemedicine; a relocation family guide, which is a consolidation of an information package to prepare families for relocation, the Military Family Doctor Network through Calian; a dedicated crisis text service with Kids Help Phone; and Support our Troops summer camps and scholarship programs.

Although a number of initiatives have been put in place over the past few years to provide more robust support to military families, the reality is that several of the most significant challenges that military families face as a result of frequent relocations are beyond the control and jurisdiction of the Department of National Defence and the federal government.

The transferability of professional credentials, access to child care and health care, and children's educational continuity, to name a few, remain of great concern for military families when relocating.

My organization works closely with Seamless Canada to raise awareness by provinces and territories to the unique challenges military families face, especially when relocating. Families often need additional support accessing community and provincial systems of care to develop their resilience in order to manage the transition within Canadian Armed Forces operational requirements.

We work to leverage all resources, especially as they continually evolve to improve their innovative support programs.

Thank you very much for your time. I look forward to answering your questions.

• (1645)

The Chair: Thank you very much.

We'll go to the six-minute round.

Mrs. Gallant, you have six minutes.

Mrs. Shelby Kramp-Neuman (Hastings—Lennox and Addington, CPC): Actually, I'll take it.

The Chair: I'm looking at the wrong side. There we go.

Go ahead, Mrs. Kramp-Neuman.

Mrs. Shelby Kramp-Neuman: Thank you.

Thank you, Ms. Ogilvie, for being here today.

I think there's no question that our military families are facing unique and intense challenges. I have a number of questions, and we'll try to get through them as expeditiously as we can.

Have you been hearing from CAF members about the government's PLD, CFHD and PPLD changes to the housing benefit with regard to the post-living differential, etc.? How have these affected members—both those starting off in their careers and those in the middle to later stages of their careers?

Ms. Laurie Ogilvie: In my role, I do not hear from members around any of those items. What we have conducted in the past is research around military families and the impact of relocation on the military families themselves. The points you have raised do not get raised to us during the research we do with families.

Mrs. Shelby Kramp-Neuman: Do you believe it's realistic for the government to expect that someone starting off in the CAF at 18, for example, making way less than \$100,000 a year, would be able to afford a house in Halifax or Esquimalt by the age of 25?

Ms. Laurie Ogilvie: Again, that's outside of the scope of my responsibility.

We do hear from families that there is a financial strain during relocation, especially around seeking and securing accommodations that are appropriate. That does impact their interest or their ability to relocate, so families will go to an imposed restriction to offset it.

Mrs. Shelby Kramp-Neuman: Thank you.

Further to that, are you concerned about the abysmal lack of up-front funding that has been shared for this program, with only \$7 million going into CAF housing over the next five years and zero funding over the next two years?

I'm trying to figure out how struggling CAF members can afford to wait five years before there's meaningful action on housing.

Ms. Laurie Ogilvie: Again, it's outside of the scope of my responsibility, as housing does not fall anywhere in my portfolio.

Mrs. Shelby Kramp-Neuman: You did touch on this in your opening remarks: We have heard numerous times at this committee that one of the biggest quality-of-life issues facing our troops, especially when they move from area to area, is access to medical care, like getting a doctor, for example. Unfortunately, this was very much absent in the DPU, the defence policy update .

Can you speak to what steps can be taken to ensure that troops moving across provincial boundaries can get timely access to medical care?

Ms. Laurie Ogilvie: I cannot speak to military members accessing health care. I can speak to families accessing health care during relocation, which is why we introduced the telemedicine service for relocating military families.

In the last year, over 7,300 patients accessed the telemedicine service. That is providing a level of support so military families can re-establish or establish health care when they move to a new community.

Mrs. Shelby Kramp-Neuman: Excellent. Thank you.

Additionally, one thing the DPU did mention was access to child care. You mentioned this in your opening remarks as well.

Do you have any concerns that access to child care may fall victim to the same issue that interprovincially relocated troops are currently experiencing with medical care? What can we do to avoid the same mistakes happening again?

Ms. Laurie Ogilvie: As I mentioned in my remarks, there are a number of concerns or situations that military families face because of going through different provincial jurisdictions that are outside the scope of the Department of National Defence and outside the scope of the federal government.

What we try to do in military family services is put programs in place to support the families within the communities that they're moving to.

For example, with child care, we work closely with the military family resource centres, which do provide child care for military families in some communities. As well, we have a product called emergency family care assistance, so that if a family is in need of child care, they can come to us and we will provide either support or funding to offset an emergency they may be having around child care.

Mrs. Shelby Kramp-Neuman: Perfect.

Do you track or are you able to estimate approximately how many CAF members or their families have used food banks in the last year?

Ms. Laurie Ogilvie: No, I do not have any of that information. I'm sorry.

Mrs. Shelby Kramp-Neuman: It's a staggering number. We're hearing every day different reports and different testimonies of people accessing and needing to use food banks. It's not just military members themselves, but their families. It's extraordinarily disturbing.

Next, aside from digitizing medical records, what other steps can be taken to improve the quality, efficacy and efficiency of medical care being delivered to our troops and their families?

• (1650)

Ms. Laurie Ogilvie: Again, I can't speak to medical care access or provision to military members.

Family members are receiving their medical care in the provincial system of care, so we don't have any jurisdiction over the medical care provided to families in the provincial system. What we try to do is provide those bridges for families to access services as they're relocating to new jurisdictions.

Mrs. Shelby Kramp-Neuman: Thank you.

Could you speak about how the lack of CAF members and families in related trades is affecting the ability of the CAF to effectively administer and deliver programs under bodies such as yours? I recognize that the military families.... You do a tremendous amount of work, and obviously we're grateful for that.

If you could speak about that, it would be appreciated.

Ms. Laurie Ogilvie: Again, I can't speak on the lack of Canadian Armed Forces members. What I can speak about is engagement with military families as they're moving across the country, the supports we're providing, what we're hearing back from them about what their needs are and the continued evolution of our programming to support what the modern military family looks like versus what the military family looked like 25 years ago.

Mrs. Shelby Kramp-Neuman: It certainly has changed.

The Chair: Thank you, Mrs. Kramp-Neuman.

Mr. Collins, you have six minutes.

Mr. Chad Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, Lib.): Thanks, Mr. Chair.

Thanks, Ms. Ogilvie, for attending today.

Brigadier-General Tattersall was here and talked about the challenges members face in relocating and some of the stresses this places on members and their families. It's not just an issue of availability and affordability of housing. There are all kinds of other spinning plates, so to speak, that follow our members, in terms of what they do with their personal vehicles or selling their houses. I was very impressed with the housing checklist you referenced in terms of trying to assist members.

We're looking for recommendations here today on how to improve the situation. How do we make that process less stressful for our members? It's not just about budgets; it's about policies and about finding partners to help in that process.

Can you provide recommendations in that regard, in terms of how we make it less stressful?

Ms. Laurie Ogilvie: Absolutely.

Two years ago, we introduced a family relocation guide. In that guide is a very comprehensive compilation of all the steps family members can take during relocation, even to the point when you're moving of considering whether you have a pet or whatever it happens to be.

We worked with military families who have experienced relocation and asked them what their stress points were and what they would have preferred to have when they were relocating. The guide is a living document, so it continually evolves as policies change or as more services become available.

Mr. Chad Collins: You mentioned child care services.

It's a challenge for everyone across the country. That's one of the reasons we implemented a program for \$10-a-day day care. You highlighted that it's not a government service; it's one provided by the non-profit and for-profit sectors, largely administered through the provincial governments. It's an arm's-length situation for us, from a government perspective.

Can I ask how important it is to get to the point where the provincial governments build capacity in that sector, where there are no wait-lists, and where there's an ability to walk in a door in whatever region you happen to be in the country and be assured that when you need that service, it's there for you?

Ms. Laurie Ogilvie: Absolutely. That is the work we're doing with Seamless Canada. We meet twice a year with Seamless Canada, and there are three main topics: employment, education and, under education, access to child care.

We have been meeting frequently with them on the topic of child care and how provinces and territories can work with the Canadian Armed Forces to increase access for military families, especially when they're newly relocated to a community.

Mr. Chad Collins: Thanks for that.

Something I'm dealing with at another committee is the provincial governments. Some are more committed to that plan than others.

Can I ask what the average wait-list is for members trying to secure child care? I know it will be different in different parts of the country, but you have a housing wait-list, and we know the numbers there from previous testimony. Do you have any information to share in terms of how long families wait to secure a child care spot?

• (1655)

Ms. Laurie Ogilvie: I do. Unfortunately, I don't have it with me right now, but I'm happy to provide it after.

We have just concluded what's called a "community profile". We've gone to every community where the larger Canadian Armed Forces groups and their families are located. We assessed what the actual usage is, what the delta is and what is available through the military family resource centres and in the community.

Mr. Chad Collins: That's great.

I'll switch gears to the relocation process at Brookfield.

We've heard in some previous testimony about how that process works. We had a representative here, if memory serves me right, from the company. I asked whether they undertake client satisfaction surveys after the moves, and their answer was no.

Do you feel that it would be useful to gauge the success of the service we offer to members and their families? Do you have any recommendations on how we can improve the service they provide to members, knowing it can be a bit of a touchy subject with those who have utilized it?

Ms. Laurie Ogilvie: I can't speak on behalf of Brookfield, but I can say that for the relocation study we conducted in 2018, we had almost 700 respondents. Through that survey, we were able to develop the relocation guide.

I can only speak on behalf of my organization, but I find that the work we do in getting the feedback from the actual users to then improve the services going forward is an incredibly helpful step.

Mr. Chad Collins: Mr. Chair, do I have one more minute?

Can I ask about recommendations, then, for Brookfield? If it's back in front of us on another study, is there something we should be pressing it on in terms of improving its service?

We are purchasing those services. It's a private entity. It's not part of the government.

Can I ask you for recommendations in that regard?

Ms. Laurie Ogilvie: I'd feel uncomfortable providing recommendations for another service provider.

Mr. Chad Collins: That's fair enough.

Ms. Laurie Ogilvie: I'm sorry.

Mr. Chad Collins: That's okay.

My last question is about the supports that are provided by others outside of the government to our members. It's a broad network. You mentioned Support Our Troops as an example.

Are there others that provide assistance, and can you talk about their value in assisting members?

Ms. Laurie Ogilvie: Absolutely.

We work very closely with True Patriot Love in the provision of the supports they provide through their avenues. I also oversee Support Our Troops.

We try to connect with as many organizations as we possibly can to be able to expand the network of support for military and veteran families.

Mr. Chad Collins: Thanks, Ms. Ogilvie.

The Chair: Thank you.

[Translation]

Ms. Normandin, you have the floor for six minutes.

Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Ms. Ogilvie, thank you for being with us.

I want to start with the issue of transfers. I agree that it's not up to you to decide whether a soldier should be transferred or not, but I'd still like to hear your thoughts on the consequences you would face if, for example, there were fewer transfers or they happened less frequently.

To what extent would having fewer services to provide give you some breathing room? Would you see a positive impact in terms of the services required when military personnel are transferred, and what would be the order of magnitude in terms of the number of transfers?

[English]

Ms. Laurie Ogilvie: I think I fully understood your question. If I missed something, please let me know.

I'm going back to reference the relocation study that we did with military families. What military families told us during that relocation survey was that the longer the time they are in a particular community, the more they can establish those networks of care that are required and the more they can build equity in products.

I can't speak on behalf of the Canadian Armed Forces and I can't speak on the duration or frequency of postings, but what I can say is what military families have told us—and again, this is one study—which is that the longer you can be in a community, the better, because it's about establishing...

I can give one example, if that's okay. It's around access to child care and the length of time on a wait-list. Quite often, families will get to a community, put their name on a wait-list for child care access and actually have to leave the community before they've been provided access.

[Translation]

Ms. Christine Normandin: Thank you.

I'd like to know if Canadian Forces Morale and Welfare Services, or CFMWS, has done any studies or collected data on such things as the unemployment rate among military spouses by region or access to medical care.

Do we know how many family members may or may not have access to medical care? Has CFMWS collected and compiled any data on that?

• (1700)

[English]

Ms. Laurie Ogilvie: Yes. We collect the data. The way we work with the military family resource centres is that we've put in place metrics for them to provide information back. They feed that back to us. We do it in different ways.

We also conduct community needs assessments to understand what the community needs are. With the MFRCs, we ask them to tell us where their biggest issues are placed so that we can adjust funding based on what their particular needs are.

For example, in some communities, we'll provide access to funding to support medical travel if it's a very long distance from where the family is located. We'll provide it to that community, whereas if it's not an issue in other communities, that funding won't be provided there.

It's a matter of looking at the unique characteristics of each community and then adjusting how we're providing the support to each community.

[Translation]

Ms. Christine Normandin: Thank you very much.

We know that it's not easy to get medical care and child care services. Access to schooling in a family's mother tongue can sometimes be a problem.

I'd like to hear what you have to say about military families outside Quebec.

Have you received any complaints or are you aware of any complaints filed anywhere, perhaps with the ombud, involving francophone children whose parents are outside Quebec?

For example, it's so complicated to find a French-language school that children are simply sent to an English-language school. Is that a comment you often hear? Do you have any statistics on that?

[English]

Ms. Laurie Ogilvie: That's absolutely what we hear.

About a year and a half ago, we stood up an education cell within military family services. In that education cell, we have guidance counsellors who provide navigation support for families as they are transitioning from community to community. It's especially for children and finding access to schooling in their primary language.

We also provide tutoring support for military children, especially around language training. We have access to second language training through our military family services program as well. That's through *Pour l'amour du français/For the Love of English* and Rosetta Stone, so families have access.

What we're finding most is that for francophone families who are moving to predominantly anglophone communities, and vice versa, our guidance counsellors will provide the navigational support to the families so that they can find the schools that best suit their needs.

[Translation]

Ms. Christine Normandin: I don't have much time left for my next question, but I'll ask it anyway.

You mentioned imposed restrictions. In some ridings, such as the one I represent, the amount military personnel receive for imposed restrictions has gone down. I was wondering if you had ever heard anyone talk about that.

Does that put more pressure on military personnel who also have a mortgage to pay?

Does that force some military personnel to choose less suitable housing, for example?

Have you ever heard such comments about imposed restrictions and how much they get?

[English]

Ms. Laurie Ogilvie: No. In my role, I don't hear that. What I do hear is around the financial impact on the military families themselves, but that's a very layered conversation, because it has to do more with the cost of housing and with spousal employment. It truly is about the family member giving up employment as they are moving across the country, which is why we introduced the military spousal employment network a few years ago. It is to help spouses be able to have more continuity of employment to offset those financial impacts.

[Translation]

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Normandin.

[English]

Ms. Mathysen, you have six minutes.

Ms. Lindsay Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

This study was started and reopened after we heard quite a lot of disturbing things coming out of Halifax with current CAF members experiencing homelessness. Of course, this has moved us all, and we're very concerned. My Bloc colleague and I wrote a joint letter to the minister to express those concerns.

From MFRC's area and the CAF, have you heard much about members experiencing homelessness or housing precarity in that regard, specifically around Halifax?

Ms. Laurie Ogilvie: I did check with all the MFRCs, and none of the MFRCs that have reported back to me have heard about any families that are permanently homeless. Quite often, the homelessness is during a relocation or a posting, and families are choosing to live in a trailer for a couple of months while they are waiting for their house to become available. Those are the only ones that we're hearing about.

When families are in any kind of financial distress, they come to Support Our Troops. Then we're able to provide loans or grants to those families who experience this situation, perhaps due to a relocation. If there's a loss in the sale of their home or whatever it happens to be, we then endeavour as much as possible to offset that, based on the individual situation that the family is in.

I haven't heard about any homeless families whatsoever, but it would be the choice of the family to choose to, for example, live in a trailer for a month while they're waiting for the house to become available.

• (1705)

Ms. Lindsay Mathysen: Thank you.

Obviously, a lot goes into the well-being of a family and the well-being of a CAF member. Around this table, we've talked about health care, child care and education. One of the services that are

provided for military families and members on base is around fitness training and the facilities on base.

Can you tell us about the importance of those fitness trainers on base for training our troops, for ensuring that they're mission-ready, for training special forces and for staying in good health?

Ms. Laurie Ogilvie: That, again, is outside the scope of my responsibilities. My focus is really on supporting military and veteran families, so I don't have any kind of line of sight into the fitness instructors. I know they're part of our organization, but I don't have any oversight responsibility, so I really can't comment on that right now.

Ms. Lindsay Mathysen: One of my concerns around this—and you spoke to it yourself as well—is in terms of that support, that spousal network, the support for military family members to work on base, and the importance of that as they deal with problems with employment and movement.

However, I bring up fitness trainers because they are often paid 37% to 63% less than fitness trainers performing duties similar to those in, say, the RCMP, which provides a very similar service. I want to know what the justification for CFMWS was to pay significantly less to those fitness trainers.

Ms. Laurie Ogilvie: Again, I can't answer that, because I'm not part of the compensation decisions within my organization.

Ms. Lindsay Mathysen: Have you heard that it's causing issues, however?

Ms. Laurie Ogilvie: I've heard that it's causing issues, but I'm not part of any of the discussions related to compensation.

Ms. Lindsay Mathysen: How have you heard that it greatly impacts the family members of CAF members and CAF members themselves?

Ms. Laurie Ogilvie: The fitness instructors...?

Ms. Lindsay Mathysen: I mean the fact that they're not being paid fair wages.

Ms. Laurie Ogilvie: Within my portfolio, because we work with the military family resource centres for the delivery of all the services to military families and the MFRC is a separate employer for the staff of the non-public funds, I don't have any responsibility or oversight into the support for the wages for military families.

I know that 14% of our workforce is military spouses. I do not receive any information or any feedback on what the rate of pay is.

What we do is work very closely within the military spousal employment network to help military family members receive or link to employment that would provide more opportunity for higher wages or for career advancement.

Just yesterday and today, we hosted virtual career fairs where we had hundreds of military spouses attend, seeking employment with the employers that were there. CFMWS is always one of the employers at those virtual career fairs as well.

Ms. Lindsay Mathysen: It is certainly important, and I'm glad that you referenced the non-public fund workers. They have been on strike for three months, demanding fair wages and fair treatment at the bargaining table.

In fact, on March 26 my Bloc colleague and I sent a joint letter to the Minister of National Defence, expressing solidarity with non-public fund workers. I have moved a motion in this committee on that, which I would like to call for today.

I don't know if I have to read it back into the record again, Mr. Chair. I'm quite happy to do so.

• (1710)

The Chair: That's why I gave the caution at the beginning of the meeting on whether we could do this in an orderly fashion with yours, plus three other motions that are properly before the committee.

My view is that we should be respectful of the witness, because her time is quite precious. We should fulfill one more round of questions and then we'll go to motions, because I think all of the motions before us are important motions.

Ms. Lindsay Mathysen: I think it's within order, so I would like to move that motion.

The Chair: You can move it.

I'm just talking in terms of orderliness and respect for colleagues and respect for witnesses, but it's—

Ms. Lindsay Mathysen: Well, I have waited. It was supposed to happen a couple of meetings ago—

The Chair: If you can make the House of Commons run more efficiently—

Ms. Lindsay Mathysen: —so respectfully, those workers have been waiting quite a long time.

The Chair: —I'll be very interested in that.

Ms. Lindsay Mathysen: I do hope so, and I know that many of us around this table are very supportive.

I would like to move my motion for the CFMWS workers.

The Chair: There is nothing I can do to stop you moving your motion. It's been tabled and it's in order.

Go ahead, Madame Lalonde.

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde (Orléans, Lib.): With all due respect, Mr. Chair, is there a way that we could just read the motion just so it can be on record and just to make sure we agree on the language?

The Chair: If you read it, then I'd have to open it up for debate.

Read it into the record.

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: I just don't want to waste....

The Chair: Yes. For the purposes of public understanding, my understanding is that we should at least have it read into the record so that we hear it.

Ms. Lindsay Mathysen: It states:

That, given that 40% of Canadian Forces Morale and Welfare Services (CFMWS) workers are members of a military family; given that the treatment of military families is a matter of national security; given that the CFMWS workers in Kingston, Petawawa, Ottawa, Valcartier, Montreal-St. Jean and Bagotville passed a 94% strike action mandate for fair wages, an equitable pay scale, and good, secure jobs; given that these workers have been on strike since January 15 and the employer has refused to return to the negotiation table with a fair offer; and given that the CFMWS has chosen to invest in replacement labour, private security officers and third party negotiation consultants instead of providing a fair offer, the committee express its solidarity with the UNDE's Non-Public Funds workers on strike and call on the Employer to bargain in good faith.

The Chair: I saw Mr. Kelly's hand first.

Mr. Pat Kelly (Calgary Rocky Ridge, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair. May I...?

The Chair: Yes.

Mr. Pat Kelly: I have a slight amendment that I'd like to make, and I believe staff have copies that we can circulate.

I'll move an amendment. The motion would read, "That, given that", and then I would insert the words "civilian military workers are a critical force multiplier that supports our brave men and women in uniform". I would insert those words. Then it's "40% of Canadian Forces Morale and Welfare Services (CFMWS) workers are members of a military family". I won't read the rest of that, but at the end, I have another insertion.

In the final phrase, where it says "the committee express its solidarity with the UNDE's Non-Public Funds workers on strike and call on the", delete the words "Employer to", and substitute "Minister of National Defence to" and insert "come to the table, bring an end to this strike and". Then leave the words "bargain in good faith" and add the words "with our civilian military workers".

The Chair: Okay. That motion is in order. Is there any other debate?

Go ahead, Ms. Lalonde.

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: I would like to ask for a suspension to read this amendment and discuss it with my colleagues.

The Chair: Do we want to suspend?

Mr. Pat Kelly: Let's make it quick, Chair.

The Chair: All right. We'll suspend for two minutes.

• (1710)

(Pause)

• (1715)

The Chair: Okay, folks. Our two minutes are up. We're back on.

Let's get going here. I don't like to see witnesses abused.

Madam Lambropoulos, I have you as our first speaker.

Ms. Emmanuella Lambropoulos (Saint-Laurent, Lib.): I wasn't going to speak on the amendment.

The Chair: Okay.

Is there any further debate?

Go ahead, Ms. Mathysen.

Ms. Lindsay Mathysen: I have a couple of concerns here.

I'm fine with the first part of the amendment. My concern is with the second part of “and call on” and taking out “the Employer”.

The Non-Public Funds workers are in a bit of an interesting situation: The employer isn't necessarily directly the minister, but the minister does direct the employer.

If there's a way to reword that so that it's in order to say that the committee expresses its solidarity, etc., and calls on the Minister of National Defence to instruct the Employer to bring an end to this strike, that would be more appropriate, because ultimately it involves the minister—as it should, because there's a responsibility there—but it's directing the minister to the employer, who is the direct negotiator.

The Chair: Okay. That's an amendment on the amendment.

Ms. Lalonde, do you want to speak?

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: Yes, Mr. Chair.

For me, to argue about or to debate language for a long time, when we have a wonderful witness here.... Finally, we have a witness at this table whose recommendations we could all listen to on something that, to my understanding, is something that we're trying to push forward and that is also very important—the housing study.

I'm just wondering how comfortable we are here. I very much am aware, as I think every member here is, that when asked a question in the House, the minister did mention that he had spoken with both sides. Is there a way in which we could call on both sides to come to the table so that we're not singling out a minister but are just generalizing a call on both sides? Is there a way in which we could do this?

• (1720)

The Chair: Well, there's a way to do it, but there has to be a will, and I don't see a lot of will here.

There's the motion, there's the amendment, and then there's the amendment to the amendment. There's nothing else, at this point.

Is there any other debate?

Seeing none, the first vote is on the subamendment, which is that the Minister of National Defence is to instruct the employer.

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

The Chair: Now we're on the amendment as amended.

Do I need to read into the record the amendment as amended, or does everybody understand what we're voting on?

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: I would like clarification. Maybe we could read the entire motion with the amendment, please.

The Chair: Okay.

Mr. Clerk, you can do it or I can do it.

The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Andrew Wilson): I'm happy to do it, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: I think this is why you get the big money.

Voices: Oh, oh!

The Clerk: I think for the ease of everyone, I'll read the full motion with the amendments included. That includes the subamendment that was just agreed to.

The motion would read as follows:

That, given that civilian military workers are a critical force multiplier that supports our brave men and women in uniform; given that 40% of Canadian Forces Morale and Welfare Services (CFMWS) workers are members of a military family; given that the treatment of military families is a matter of national security; given that the CFMWS workers in Kingston, Petawawa, Ottawa, Valcartier, Montreal-St. Jean and Bagotville passed a 94% strike action mandate for fair wages, an equitable pay scale, and good, secure jobs; given that these workers have been on strike since January 15 and the employer has refused to return to the negotiation table with a fair offer; and given that the CFMWS has chosen to invest in replacement labour, private security officers and third party negotiation consultants instead of providing a fair offer, the committee express its solidarity with the UNDE's Non-Public Funds workers on strike and call on the Minister of National Defence to instruct the Employer to come to the table, bring an end to this strike, and bargain in good faith with our civilian military workers.

The Chair: Is there any debate?

Go ahead, Mr. Fisher.

Mr. Darren Fisher (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, Lib.): What about asking the Minister of National Defence to come to the table and encourage fair bargaining? I don't think we want a situation in which the minister says, “Solve this.”

The Chair: Go ahead, Ms. Mathysen.

Ms. Lindsay Mathysen: While I appreciate that Ms. Lalonde actually said to not have the minister come to the table, this has the minister instructing the employer to come to the table to bargain fairly, so you're actually contradicting—

Mr. Darren Fisher: That's not the wording that I heard, though—to come to the table and work toward a fair bargaining agreement.

The Chair: No, the—

Mr. Darren Fisher: It's to bring an end to the strike.

Ms. Lindsay Mathysen: Yes. It's to bargain in good faith.

Mr. Darren Fisher: To bargain in good faith and to encourage both sides to work towards that is language that I think I could live with, but I don't think the wording, as it sits right now, is something that....

The Chair: Is there any other debate?

Mr. Fillmore, please go ahead.

Mr. Andy Fillmore (Halifax, Lib.): Could Ms. Mathysen tell the committee members in what way Mr. Kelly's amendment improves her intent? Maybe we could go through those items one at a time and understand why we're fussing around with this amendment.

The Chair: Ms. Mathysen, do you want to respond to that?

Ms. Lindsay Mathysen: While I'm sure Mr. Kelly could talk about it himself, it's my belief that, yes, the employer is the direct negotiator, which is why I asked for that subamendment. Ultimately, at the end of the day, the minister is responsible for those employees and they fall under the minister's purview. Therefore, he is responsible.

I'm sure Mr. Kelly could add to that if he wishes.

• (1725)

Mr. Andy Fillmore: Then I'll switch to Mr. Kelly.

For example, Mr. Kelly, in the very first highlighted yellow section, you've inserted a long sentence discussing "civilian military workers", and later in that same passage, CFMWS is referenced. It doesn't just seem redundant; it is redundant. Maybe you could help us understand the intention of that particular part of your amendment.

Mr. Pat Kelly: I think the amendments all pretty much speak for themselves. I wasn't planning to debate this at length. I'm prepared to allow this to go to a vote and let the chips fall where they may. If he doesn't like the amendment, he's welcome to vote against it, and we'll vote for it unamended.

Just as Ms. Mathysen said, the point is that the Minister of National Defence is the person ultimately responsible, and he should be named in this motion. That's why I proposed the amendment. Again, if he thinks the first part of the amendment is redundant or if he doesn't agree with that portion of the sentence, he's welcome to vote against it on that basis.

That's why we added it. We believe that civilian military workers are a critical force multiplier and should be recognized in this motion. We think the Minister of National Defence is ultimately responsible for this dispute due to his failure to solve it in the time that has already passed.

The Chair: Is there any other commentary?

Ms. Lalonde, please go ahead.

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: Mr. Chair, I was wondering if we could consider a language change to the words—

The Chair: If we change the language, it's an amendment.

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: I would first like to propose a small amendment to see how my colleagues would feel.

Instead of "to instruct", could we say, "to encourage"?

The Chair: We already voted on this amendment, but it's still in order to, in effect, move "to encourage" as a subamendment on the subamendment.

Are you moving that, Ms. Lalonde?

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: Yes, I am.

The Chair: Is there any debate on that point?

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

The Chair: We're coming back to the subamendment on the amendment.

Oh, no; we've done the subamendment, so we're on your amendment as amended.

Mrs. Shelby Kramp-Neuman: Chair, out of respect for the witness, might it be prudent of us to excuse her if she—

Mr. Pat Kelly: We might get back to her.

Mrs. Shelby Kramp-Neuman: Okay, good. We can carry on.

The Chair: I do wish members had thought about their concern for the witness before we started this—not that the chair mentioned it at the beginning of the meeting.

Anyway, if I am correct that we are at the point of no further debate on the subamendment, then we are asking for a vote.

Those in favour of the subamendment—

Mr. Pat Kelly: It's the amendment.

The Chair: It's the amendment to the amendment.

An hon. member: It's the amended motion.

All those in favour—

The Clerk: The subamendment amended the amendment, so now we're just on the amendment as amended.

The Chair: Oh, it's the amendment as amended.

Hang on. The subamendment passed, but that doesn't mean that the amendment passed.

The Clerk: That's correct, so the vote is on the amendment.

The Chair: That's my point; we're talking about the same thing.

I'll let the clerk call the vote—not necessarily call a vote. We can still do a hand vote.

Do you want a recorded vote?

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: No, I just would like to know this: When we vote on this particular amendment, we would be voting on the amendment that has been amended. Can we bring a new amendment?

• (1730)

The Chair: You can bring amendments all day.

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: Perfect. We will do that. Thank you.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): You can bring amendments all day, as I'm sure you will.

The Chair: I don't see anything on the floor. I'm calling for the vote on the amendment to the motion.

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

The Chair: Now we're on the motion itself.

Go ahead, Ms. Lalonde.

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: I would like to bring an amendment, Mr. Chair.

My rationale again goes back to say that I had the pleasure of meeting with individuals from my community who are impacted by the strike. I did share with them that I would raise their concerns, and I felt quite confident, as we had talked about it on the motion proposed by Ms. Mathysen. I thought it was genuine and that it served what we're trying to do, which is have both sides return to the table.

I know that the minister did meet with both sides, and for me, the language would be important, because as we determine negotiation, the government gave a mandate to go and negotiate at the table. I understand that. I am not disputing that, but I have somewhat of a situation in terms of suggesting the word “instruct”. I say this speaking generally.

Negotiation comes because we have people come to the table. Both parties have to be doing this in good faith. Both parties want to find resolution. As I said to the people who I have the pleasure of representing as the MP for Orléans, I was completely in support of Ms. Mathysen's motion and I believe that we need to go back to the table and negotiate in good faith.

I would reflect on the language that I think would still do what we're trying to do, which is, as a committee member, to acknowledge our true support for those men and women who have been on strike for too many days, relatively speaking. At the same time, I want to see if we could find a way, and as I mentioned, to change the language from “instruct” to “encourage”. I do believe that's a way that we would preserve somewhat the rationale going forward.

Mr. Chair, with this thought, I want to see if we could suspend for a few minutes again to reflect on how we could go forward.

Mrs. Shelby Kramp-Neuman: I have a point of order.

The Chair: Just before I speak to the point of order, we've already voted on the first suggestion, so then I can move to you. I've already made my point.

Unless you have—

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: Okay, I will bring an amendment, Mr. Chair.

My amendment will be to say that....

I don't have my glasses. That is why it has been a challenging two minutes, and I apologize to the member. I'm just trying to see....

I would say that we “encourage them to bargain in good faith and come to a fair resolution”.

I want to see where it would land, and that's why I was asking for a little pause. Can you just give me a second to suspend so I can write my words so I can make sense here, Mr. Chair?

• (1735)

The Chair: I won't suspend, but I will hold for 30 seconds while you write it out so that we all know what we're talking about.

Let's move along here, Mrs. Lalonde.

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: We would say, “and to urge them to bargain in good faith and come to a fair resolution.”

After “non-public funds workers on strike”, we would replace “urge them to bargain in good faith”, which is in the wording of Ms. Mathysen, “and come to a fair resolution”, which is, I think, what we all are aiming to do.

The Chair: The question is always is whether that is substantially different from the one that has just been voted on. My view is that it is, because you're not just changing a word; you're changing an entire phrasing—a couple of phrasings, actually.

That is what's now before the committee. Is there any debate on that?

Go ahead, Ms. Mathysen.

Mr. Pat Kelly: I have a point of order.

I would like it read back, because it was a little disjointed as we went through it. Could the clerk please read the sentence?

The Chair: Go ahead.

The Clerk: My understanding is—and please correct me if I'm wrong about this, Mrs. Lalonde—that in the last sentence, starting with the third line in English, it would be, “solidarity with the UNDE's Non-Public Funds workers on strike and to urge them to bargain in good faith and come to a fair resolution.”

Mr. Pat Kelly: I didn't hear her in making the amendment. I thought she was starting the amendment after the amendment we made, which included the Minister of National Defence, but she is in fact deleting that—

The Chair: I'm thinking that the clerk does not have it right.

I don't think you were deleting the phrasing on the Minister of National Defence.

The Clerk: Is this going after “the Minister of National Defence”?

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: It would be “urge”, and instead of “them”, we would say “the employer”.

Mr. Pat Kelly: It would be “call on our Minister of National Defence to urge the employer”. Is that where that goes?

The Chair: Let's go at that again.

Mrs. Shelby Kramp-Neuman: On a point of order, I'm not confident that this additional amendment is in order, because we have already voted on this amendment.

The Chair: No, we haven't.

Mr. Pat Kelly: It's “urge” versus “instruct”.

The Chair: The ruling I made as chair is that there is a substantial difference from the previous vote on the same phrasing. She has more phrasing in the amendment and therefore it is in order.

Let's make sure we all know what we're talking about. For the purpose of clarification, I'm going to ask Mrs. Lalonde to do it again so that the clerk and the ever so humble chair understand what we're talking about.

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: Give me a second.

We would say, "call on the Minister of National Defence to urge the employer to bargain in good faith and come to a fair resolution."

• (1740)

The Chair: Are we clear on that?

The Clerk: I think so. I apologize.

I have a question for Madame Lalonde. You're replacing everything that comes after "Minister of National Defence" with what you've read. Is that correct?

You're deleting "to come to the table, bring an end to this strike and bargain in good faith with our civilian military workers" and replacing it with "to urge the employer to bargain in good faith and come to a fair resolution".

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: Yes. It's "to bargain in good faith and come to a fair resolution."

The Clerk: Okay.

The Chair: We all seem to know what we're talking about here. We're all on the same page.

I saw Mr. Kelly's hand up first—

I'm sorry. You're right. I apologize. Mr. Fisher was first.

Mr. Darren Fisher: Thank you very much.

I say this to Ms. Mathyssen. When I heard about this motion, I was super-supportive, as all of us were on this side. We were supportive because we believe the best deals are made at the table.

However, asking a minister to interfere with collective bargaining sets a precedent. What happens if there's a change of government, and you have a government that doesn't believe in collective bargaining? Do you want that minister sitting down and instructing one way or the other?

I think this could potentially be dangerous, and it will set a precedent. I went from being super-supportive of your motion and appreciating the importance of what you were trying to accomplish to having great concern with the amended and subamended motion, to the point that I'm not even certain I can vote for the entire motion now. That would be really sad, because I support exactly what you are trying to do; I just don't support the interference.

Having a minister encourage returning to the table and having a minister encourage both sides to come together for collective bargaining and a fair bargaining agreement is exactly what I think you want to accomplish, but I honestly feel that having a minister interfere in this is not a good precedent for us to set.

The Chair: I have Mr. Kelly and then Ms. Mathyssen.

Mr. Pat Kelly: I'd simply say to Mr. Fisher that he's welcome to vote against it if he doesn't agree with the principle that we hold the

Minister of National Defence responsible for that, which is his responsibility as minister.

The Chair: Ms. Mathyssen is next.

Ms. Lindsay Mathyssen: Exactly to that point, ministers do instruct the employer within the public service, and there are many things they can do as part of the negotiations.

I would be sad if everyone didn't support this motion. Let's be honest: These people have been on strike for three months. They've undergone quite a lot of intimidation. They have not received a lot of respect on the picket line. It has been very difficult for already underpaid workers, who are doing incredible work.

We haven't seen any movement. The minister has already urged and encouraged them, and we haven't seen any movement. It is incumbent upon us—as I know we all agree—to push harder, and that's what I'm asking for.

We can't continue to hope that this will all work out without further pushing and a stronger stance on this. The workers in those positions deserve that.

The Chair: Is there any other debate?

Mr. Darren Fisher: Can we ask for a two-minute suspension?

The Chair: No—

Some hon. members: No.

Mr. Darren Fisher: You don't get to determine that. I asked the chair.

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: Mr. Chair, out of respect for what we're doing here today.... I do care. I really care about these workers, and it's interesting that we're debating this when we had a very good solution. We would not have wasted a witness's time again—

• (1745)

Mr. Pat Kelly: I have a point of order.

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: Can we just suspend for a couple of minutes so that we can find the language to agree on this motion?

Thank you.

Mr. Pat Kelly: I have a point of order, Chair.

The Chair: I'm sorry—

Mr. Pat Kelly: I have a point of order.

The Chair: I think somebody has a repetitive lisp here.

I will recognize your point of order.

Mr. Pat Kelly: Well, thank you, Mr. Chair.

My concern about the rules of order and their observance is whether you even gave Madame Lalonde the floor. I didn't see any indication of that.

The Chair: I asked whether there was any further debate.

Mr. Pat Kelly: That wasn't debate. She wasn't debating the motion. She was asking for a suspension.

The Chair: I already denied the suspension.

Mr. Pat Kelly: Then we move on to whoever is next in debate in order.

The Chair: I have so much help on this committee. It's just amazing. You're such a useful—

Mr. Pat Kelly: Chair, the rules matter.

The Chair: They do, and I'm adhering to them.

Mrs. Gallant, would you like to intervene on this point of order?

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: I wanted to speak to the motion that was before us.

The Chair: I see. We're still on debate, then.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Okay.

Mr. Darren Fisher: You said no to my two-minute suspension.

The Chair: Yes.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: The point is that here we are. We are probably, as a nation and a world, closer to the edge of war than we have been since Afghanistan. The threat is high from several different angles. Our military has seen the greatest attrition in decades.

We are talking about whether or not to instruct the minister and require them to actually negotiate so that the people who are serving in the military are actually getting at least a little more above minimum wage. They're taking care of the kids because both parents work. Some of the spouses are having to stay home. The military guys, instead of doing what they're supposed to be doing, are taking care of the kids. They're leaving the military because they just can't afford to live on one income.

Let's cut to the chase here and think about what's important overall and why people need to be supported. Get them to the table. Get a fair negotiation, a fair wage and some job security across the board. Let's just get on with this instead of pinching pennies and splitting hairs.

The Chair: Mrs. Lalonde is next.

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: Mr. Chair, I rarely say this, but Mrs. Gallant is absolutely right in the sense that this is a non-binding motion. We wasted valuable time for our witness. I know it was part of my responsibility to bring my glasses to work today, but at the same time, we had an agreement on a motion that we collectively, I think, could have all passed. This is a non-binding motion. That's fair. Let's proceed.

The Chair: Is there any other debate?

We'll call the vote. So we know what we're calling the vote on, I will defer to my esteemed clerk.

The Clerk: The question is on the amendment, as proposed by Madame Lalonde, to replace everything after the words "Minister

of National Defence" with "to urge the employer to bargain in good faith and come to a fair resolution."

The Chair: Those in favour of the amendment, please indicate.

Is it carried?

Mr. Pat Kelly: No. You asked who's in favour. I saw one hand up. I don't know if—

The Chair: In some respects, I was assuming this was a unanimous vote.

Mr. Pat Kelly: We're voting on her amendment, and I oppose her amendment.

The Chair: I am confused. I apologize.

Give a show of hands. Those in favour of the amendment?

Those opposed?

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

The Chair: Now we're on the motion.

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

The Chair: We have 45 minutes left, as I counted. Do we want to complete a second round of questions?

When we left off, Ms. Mathysen had finished her six minutes. Now we're on the five-minute round.

Mrs. Gallant, you have five minutes.

• (1750)

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: To the witness, Mr. Chair, we're going on 100 days of this strike with these different bases. How is it affecting military readiness?

Ms. Laurie Ogilvie: I cannot answer that question. It's outside my area of responsibility.

What I can say is that all of the supports to military families have stayed completely intact. The employees of military family resource centres are not staffed with non-public funds, so there has been absolutely no impact to services to military families.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Okay. I went to military family services and they were already full to the brim with a waiting list of people long before this group went on strike. There is a shortage of day care and a shortage of many other things.

What has this strike cost CFMWS thus far, including flying managers across the country to fill in at the CANEX stores and that sort of thing? How much has it cost thus far?

Ms. Laurie Ogilvie: It's outside of my area of responsibility. I actually have no idea.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Okay.

Five or six different locals are being negotiated with right now. How many other sets of locals have to be negotiated with after this one?

Ms. Laurie Ogilvie: Again, that's outside of my area of responsibility. I'm not part of our HR department and I have absolutely no idea.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Is it more than one?

Ms. Laurie Ogilvie: I have no idea.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: You have no idea whether or not this is the only handful of locals that...

Ms. Laurie Ogilvie: I don't, because—

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Okay.

Many of your employees are married to military personnel, so they get posted from base to base as well. It's my understanding that when they get posted, it's not like they have a job at another base. They start applying when a job becomes available, but they get no standing whatsoever. They work their way up and maybe get above minimum wage over seven or eight years. Then their spouse gets transferred and they have to start all over at the bottom again at minimum wage.

Why isn't there something put out blanket-wide so there is some protection and so they know they have the possibility of a job—not losing their income because they don't have a job when their spouse is posted?

Ms. Laurie Ogilvie: That's exactly why we introduced the military spousal employment network. It's to allow military family members to access employment in advance of a posting—going to virtual career fairs, going to career coaches and all of that.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: All right.

The government has decided to hike the rent on our troops and increase the carbon tax by 23% in the same month.

Have our military families expressed concern about how they're going to afford these increased costs?

Ms. Laurie Ogilvie: Specific to those two things, I don't have any awareness.

However, I do know that military families access Support Our Troops when they are in financial distress. We are also working within CFMWS on financial literacy and financial counselling for military families to help them support themselves as they move through their military journey.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: When the spouses employed by your organization are posted and looking for work, it makes a difference in whether that family can even stay in the military if they don't have both incomes. This is impacting the forces' strength, which is diminishing every day. We're losing more soldiers than we're recruiting, and here we are in a very critical situation worldwide when we need our troops and forces.

With respect to housing, I was door knocking on Saturday in Petawawa. There were some empty homes, so I looked online to

see what they were worth, and they're starting at about half a million dollars.

When you look at an individual who is married and who is a lower rank, how important do you think it is that the employee has an opportunity for a job?

Before you answer that, I'd like to have Mr. Bezan ask a question. I am giving my last minute to Mr. Bezan.

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): I want to thank our witness for being here.

I want to move a motion I gave notice of on Monday:

Given that in January 2023, Canada announced it would donate a National Advanced Surface-to-Air Missile System (NASAMS) to Ukraine worth \$406 million; that on April 11, 2023, then defence minister Anita Anand said the NASAMS was en route to Ukraine; and that the NASAMS has not yet been delivered to Ukraine; that the committee invite the Minister of National Defence to provide a briefing on the current status of the NASAMS for Ukraine within 14 days.

I will speak to that motion.

As we know, Mr. Chair, Minister Anand made that statement on April 11, 2023, which was 12 months ago tomorrow. We know that in January of 2023, the government promised to send the NASAMS to help with air defence in Ukraine. Here we are, 15 months since that time, and Ukraine is fighting for its life.

It's reported today that Russian MiG fighters and Sukhoi bombers are flying unimpeded over the conflict area and bombing cities like Kharkiv, and it is unfortunate that we may be witnessing Kharkiv being razed to the ground the same way Russians pounded Mariupol.

It is unconscionable what the Russians are doing, but it is also an embarrassment for Canada to have promised to provide the defensive weapons that Ukraine needs and not deliver them. I think we need to have the minister come before us here to explain why the NASAMS hasn't been delivered, where the \$406 million has gone, and why the system, as far as we know and from what we can tell in open source media, is not even getting built.

If we're going to stand with Ukraine, if we're going to ensure Ukraine's safety and security, if we're going to honour the promises we make and stand by those promises, then, for the love of God, we have to find out why the NASAMS hasn't been delivered.

Ukraine is begging for support and help. We suggested back in January through our leader, Pierre Poilievre, that we have 83,000 CRV7 rockets collecting dust and dander in Saskatchewan at the CF base there. Those rockets were requested by Ukraine. Why they haven't been sent yet is beyond me. They will also help push back the Russian barbarians who are flowing over the borders, killing Ukrainians and occupying Ukrainian territory.

I believe that all members want to see Ukraine succeed. All members want to see Ukraine save their citizens and push back these Russian invaders. They can't do that with just empty promises.

I'd ask, Mr. Chair, that we pass this motion to ask the minister to come before committee to give us an update of where we are with the NASAMS delivery, which should be a game-changer for Ukraine in protecting their skies from things like the Iranian-made kamikaze Shahed drones. They can protect their airspace from hypersonic cruise missiles, cruise missiles and other ballistic missiles that are coming across Ukraine. Russian fighters and bombers are now freely flying into their airspace, never mind the proliferation of drones that are being used as well.

Everything we can do to help Ukraine win this war is not just about empty promises: It's about being timely, it's about being sincere, and it's about being a dependable partner.

Thank you.

• (1755)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Bezan.

I'll recognize Mr. Collins, then Ms. Gallant and then Ms. Lampropoulos after I repeat what I said at the beginning of the meeting: It would have been helpful, out of respect for the witness and respect for the clerk, who does a lot of work to try to put these meetings together, if we had gone about it in an orderly fashion; however, the committee has chosen to ignore that injunction.

May I first of all let the witness go?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Chair: I apologize for the abuse of your time.

I just want to say, colleagues, that it's a heck of a lot of work on the part of the clerk to put these meetings together, and we are having difficulties that the witnesses—the potential witnesses—have noticed. If you want this committee to function in the future, you'll proceed in an orderly fashion.

With that, go ahead, Mr. Collins.

• (1800)

Mr. James Bezan: Mr. Chair—

The Chair: I recognize Mr. Collins.

Mr. Chad Collins: Thanks, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Chair, I too apologize to the witness. I certainly take what you say into consideration. You referenced it at the beginning of the meeting.

I apologize that we're in the situation we're in now, but we are, because the motion has been put.

That last speech was a little hard to listen to, because when it comes to commitment to Ukraine, it was unanimous up until about a year ago. Since then, of course, we've seen the party opposite abandon Ukraine.

You'll know, Mr. Chair, that there was a meeting in Toronto with the Ukrainian community. Some of the members opposite were in that meeting. The community talked about the lack of support they're receiving from the official opposition. Members from the Ukrainian diaspora talked about being used as political pawns, as a wedge issue, here in Parliament. The Leader of the Opposition came to Hamilton as part of his "make Canada great again" tour, and he referenced all the support that the government provided and focused on this one issue, saying that we haven't delivered.

I have the list in front of me of everything that has been committed and has been delivered, and almost every single item on this page on the government's website, which is very current.... If you wanted to access it at any point in time today, from artillery to field equipment to clothing, infrastructure, individual meal packs, maritime items, tanks.... The list goes on, and we've delivered on almost every single thing that we've put through in our consecutive budgets over the last two years since this conflict has started.

Yes, we do have this outstanding issue, but I think it flies in the face of the narrative, the picture, that the member opposite tried to create here, which is that the government is not committed. If there is a party in Parliament that is not committed to Ukraine.... Of all the days to bring it up, we received word today that the free trade agreement they voted against was approved today. They're just without shame.

I couldn't believe it when the Leader of the Opposition showed up in Hamilton to speak to the Ukrainian community after he has let them down. That extends to other communities, not just in Hamilton but around the country. The Polish community is very concerned about what happens next and about the lack of support we're seeing from the official opposition. It is also in addition to the nonsense that we see south of the border in terms of what the Republicans are doing, which is exactly what our friends across the table here are doing as well. They're trying to wait this out. They're hoping that Trump does their dirty work and that they won't be forced to continue to oppose assistance to Ukraine.

It's hard to listen to that in this setting. It's hard to listen to it in Parliament when they talk about their support, when in fact we know it's quite the opposite with the votes. It's all on the public record. That's the beauty of the system we have here.

Also, the Ukrainian community is onto them, and the fact that when they had that meeting in Toronto they had to call them out in a private meeting that ended up being recorded, I think is proof in terms of where the Ukrainian community is. I thank the other parties for their continued support, because it should be unanimous, and unfortunately it isn't.

To the motion, Mr. Chair, I think the last part of this, the “within 14 days”, is unreasonable. I would move an amendment to strike that, and I would also seek the committee's concurrence in looking at revising the first part of this motion in terms of getting an update on what we have approved in our budgets, what has been delivered and what is outstanding.

There may be something in addition to what Mr. Bezan has referenced here today in his motion that is outstanding, and I'd like to know what those other items are, but I think that telling one side of the story without the other as it relates to what we have invested in supporting Ukraine and highlighting here at the committee when they made their way overseas.... Have they been utilized? What's outstanding? Also, of course, we have our budget that is going to be released next week, so we can add to that list.

I'm not going to belabour the point, but I think that at a minimum we need to remove the 14 days, and I would seek to propose an amendment that is all-encompassing and shows everything that's on the table as it relates to support for Ukraine. Then we can have the debate when the minister comes and talk about which parties are there for Ukraine and which ones are not.

• (1805)

The Chair: Just before I turn to Ms. Gallant, on the “within 14 days”, the deletion is clearly in order as an amendment, but the overall.... It has to be kind of framed, rather than just....

Mr. Chad Collins: We'll deal with the 14 days and I'll come back with wording on the first part.

The Chair: There's an amendment on the floor at this point.

Mrs. Gallant has the floor.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: I wanted to speak in favour of the motion.

About two and a half weeks ago I was able to receive briefings, together with colleagues from the NATO Parliamentary Assembly. The meeting was in the Baltics.

At that time, we were advised that the observations of troop movements and other actions taken by Putin and Russia indicate that they are planning for a full-scale invasion past Ukraine into parts of Europe.

If that happens.... The other parts of Europe are NATO members. We're all well versed with article 5, which says that an attack on one is considered an attack on us all.

The point is that if we can get this materiel—these NASAMS and all the other things that we've promised but that may not have

gotten to Ukraine—into their hands, they can fend them off in Ukraine.

If greater Europe becomes involved, that means our sons and daughters are going to be asked to go and fight. It's far better to keep the battle area constrained to where it is right now and give Ukraine what they need. That's why I am in favour of Mr. Bezan's motion.

The Chair: Ms. Lambropoulos is next.

Ms. Emmanuella Lambropoulos: I had a point of order to let the witness go, but you already did that.

The Chair: Go ahead, Mr. Bezan.

Mr. James Bezan: First, Mr. Chair, I want to comment on your statement.

We could have had a meeting on Monday. We didn't have any witnesses. We could have dealt with all of these motions at that point in time. To go and blame those who are moving these motions from multiple parties today is.... You know, your job is to direct traffic; you're not here to chastise those of us who believe we have serious issues we should be talking about.

Usually, you only have a witness sit at the end of this table for one hour, not two hours. To only have one witness show up today is disappointing, to say the least, because we have serious studies that we want to do and we need to have substantive discussions with witnesses on this. To have only one witness here for two hours is not a good use of everyone's time, compared with how you usually manage a meeting.

As a Ukrainian, I take personal offence to Mr. Collins' comments. For him to get up on his soapbox and try to suggest that I don't support Ukraine or that Conservatives don't support Ukraine is playing right into the hands of Putin himself. I think Mr. Collins should measure the words he uses instead of being hyperpartisan all the time.

I can also say this: One thing the Liberals have delivered is detonators for Russian landmines. They delivered gas turbines for Russian pipelines, putting money into Putin's war machine. They've delivered avionics for Russian drones—Shahed kamikaze drones that are being used to kill Ukrainians today.

They've delivered all of those. Now I can tell you what they haven't delivered.

They haven't delivered the NASAMS, as I said, which was promised back on January 10.

On November 24, 2022, they promised 11,000 assault rifles and machine guns with nine million rounds of small arms ammunition. They weren't delivered.

On September 22, 2022, they promised 35 high-resolution drone cameras valued at \$76 million. They're nowhere in sight.

On June 10, 2023, they promised 10,000 rounds of 105-millimetre artillery ammunition and 250 AIM-7 air defence missiles. They weren't delivered.

On September 22, 2023, they announced that Canada would expand its aid by adding 15 more Canadian armoured vehicles, worth about \$408 million, from London, Ontario. I can tell you that GDLS and Armatec have no signed contracts to deliver those armoured vehicles.

There was 25 million dollars' worth of winter clothing promised back on October 11, and 2,000 female uniforms. They weren't delivered, and—guess what?—winter is over. I guess they don't need them now until next winter.

They also promised, on October 11, 76-millimetre naval ammunition, 277 1,000-pound aircraft bombs, 955 155-millimetre artillery smoke rounds, 2,000 mortar smoke rounds and 2,600 gas masks. These were all promised right after President Zelenskyy was here, but not delivered. Again, Minister Blair keeps talking about increasing the production of 155-millimetre artillery shells. We have not increased the production of howitzer shells in this country by one iota, and this war has been going on now for over two years.

I'm not surprised that Mr. Collins and the Liberals want to delay the report from the minister on where the NASAMS delivery is at. I'm sure department officials can give him an update in 14 minutes, not 14 days. Meanwhile, Ukraine sits and languishes under daily attacks by the Russian barbarians. For us to sit here and say that 14 days is too quick, especially knowing we're only here for this week and next week....

We know the minister cancelled appearing at committee for the supplementary estimates. I believe it is time for him to appear to explain to us why the NASAMS hasn't been delivered.

I'm more than happy to go through this litany of stuff that wasn't delivered, which right now represents over 60% of the value of promises made to Ukraine. They remain unfulfilled.

• (1810)

The Chair: Mr. Kelly is next.

Mr. Pat Kelly: Mr. Bezan made the point I wanted to. I don't want to prolong this. I hope we can go to a vote.

I'll leave it at that.

The Chair: There's one amendment properly before the committee.

Mr. Chad Collins: We'll go with that one. I will have another one.

The Chair: Those in favour of the amendment as proposed....

Mr. Chad Collins: It's to strike the—

The Chair: It's to strike the 14 days.

Do you want a recorded vote?

(Amendment agreed to: yeas 7; nays 4 [*See Minutes of Proceedings*])

The Chair: We'll go to the main motion.

Go ahead, Mr. Collins.

Mr. Chad Collins: I would like to propose another amendment that comes back to the issue of being all-encompassing. I would replace the first part so that it would read, "Given that Canada has committed \$4 billion in military assistance to Ukraine, that the committee receive a comprehensive update on all military support provided to Ukraine", including the NASAMS issue that Mr. Bezan raised today.

That leaves it wide open for us to ask questions about what has, and what has not, been delivered. I move that amendment for the committee's consideration.

The Chair: I'm going to try to get the wording clear here. "Given that—"

Mr. Chad Collins: "Given that Canada has committed \$4 billion in military assistance to Ukraine, that the committee receive a comprehensive update on all military support provided to Ukraine, including NASAMS."

The Chair: Where does that fit in the substance of the motion? Where would you put that?

Mr. Chad Collins: It would go in the first part.

The Chair: Then would it read, "Given that...?"

Mr. Chad Collins: It would say "Given that", so I'm keeping that. I would strike "in January 2023", and I would keep "Canada", and then I would remove the remaining part, so it would read as follows: "Given that Canada has committed \$4 billion in military assistance to Ukraine, that the committee receive a comprehensive update on all military support provided to Ukraine, including NASAMS."

That's it. Leave it at that.

The Chair: That's a pretty substantial change.

• (1815)

Mr. Chad Collins: It leaves that issue on the table and it allows us to ask questions. The critique that you heard today is that we haven't delivered to Ukraine. That's the theme of the motion.

Where it's coming from makes it really hard to listen to. They can pretend that they're there to support Ukraine, but everything they're doing is in line with what's happening in the United States. We're seeing this conservative, alt-right movement that seeks to undermine Ukraine. My motion, Mr. Chair, goes beyond just the NASAMS issue.

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

Mr. Pat Kelly: My point of order is that the motion is not in order. It deletes almost the entire substance of the original motion. It deletes the words, "That the Committee invite the Minister of National Defence". It deletes the specific concern about the discrepancy in the announcement, wherein the minister said that the NASAMS were en route to Ukraine, which was a demonstrably false statement by that minister on April 11.

The amendment can't gut the original motion and remove everything of substance except for "NASAMS".

I urge you to find this amendment out of order. It's clearly out of order.

The Chair: I think you are right. I think it's out of order.

Mr. Chad Collins: Mr. Chair, I wasn't taking the last part out; I was revising the first paragraph. My intent is to keep the minister—

The Chair: I'm getting contradictory signals. I thought you were pretty well deleting everything else in the motion.

Mr. Chad Collins: No, I deleted "within 14 days" as part of the second sentence. Then I said I had an amendment to the first paragraph, and I've given you that amendment.

The Chair: Okay. Is the amendment leaving the substance of the motion in place? That's the question.

I think both the clerk and I misunderstood that. Let us try to read the motion back to you. I'll call upon my ever so competent clerk to see whether we have this correct, and then we can decide whether it's in order. As I understood it, and as I think Mr. Kelly understood it, it was not in order.

The Clerk: Mr. Collins, do you have a written copy? I would need to see it in order to be able to read it back.

Mr. Chad Collins: I can give you that in a second. It's scribbled here, and I've read it out verbally, so....

The Clerk: Sure.

• (1815) _____ (Pause) _____

• (1820)

The Chair: I'm sorry, folks. The clerk and the chair are having a minor disagreement here, so we're going to suspend.

• (1820) _____ (Pause) _____

• (1825)

The Chair: Okay. We're back on the record.

We have a few minutes left. This proposal of Mr. Collins creates difficulties for the chair and the clerk. It's the "given" part: "Given that Canada has committed \$4 billion", etc. That part is probably in

order, in that it's not part of the substantive motion, so it could live with the "given" that is in Mr. Bezan's motion.

The issue, then, is that Mr. Collins moves that the committee invite the Minister of National Defence to provide a briefing on the current status of all military support. In my view, that changes the substance of Mr. Bezan's motion quite dramatically, so that it's a far more expanded idea than just simply receiving a briefing on NASAMS.

In my view, regrettably, the amendment is not in order.

Mr. James Bezan: Can we have a vote on the motion as amended?

The Chair: This would be the motion as amended, with the reference to 14 days removed. Is there any other debate?

Go ahead, Ms. Mathysen.

Ms. Lindsay Mathysen: In an attempt to maybe come to a place where we could find consensus, I'll give it a shot.

I don't have the text of what Mr. Collins wrote because it has only been read out. Is there any way to say that yes, there are many things the government has in fact delivered, and yes, we would like a comprehensive list of what that is, and yes, we would like to talk about all of that with the minister, but that this specific thing, as laid out by the Conservative motion, has not been delivered?

Then it would say that the committee invites the minister to provide a briefing on the current status of the NASAMS for Ukraine and all other forms of aid. Then it's a combination of both, in the best intention we could possibly find.

The Chair: Go ahead, Mr. Kelly.

Mr. Pat Kelly: If you're continuing with debate and not making a specific ruling on that, I'll simply say that you would have exactly the same problem with what Ms. Mathysen is proposing. It would change the character of the motion entirely.

The Chair: I tend to agree that it broadens the scope out of existence. You can expand the scope a little and add, but this goes quite substantively beyond the original motion.

Is there any other debate?

Seeing none, the vote is on the original motion as amended, which deletes the reference to 14 days. We'll have a recorded vote.

(Motion agreed to: yeas 11; nays 0 [*See Minutes of Proceedings*])

The Chair: I do have to get through one thing.

I need a motion for \$3,750 for the budget for the study of consulting services.

Mr. Bezan moved it in a co-operative spirit and Mr. Collins seconded it, also in a co-operative spirit. I thank them for their co-operation. I don't think I need to call for a vote; I'm assuming everybody is voting in favour of that \$3,750 budget.

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The other thing I wanted to get to in an orderly fashion, but was not able to, is that there's an informal meeting of Ukrainian MPs on April 18 at 3:30. There will be a notice going out to all of you. That's in the works.

As well, on May 10, the Minister of Defence for Germany, Boris Pistorius, will be here. That's the Friday before the break week. I doubt many people are going to stay around, but nevertheless I alert you to that.

Do we want to have a meeting with the Minister of Defence for Germany?

• (1830)

Mr. James Bezan: What time will it be on Friday?

The Chair: We haven't set a time.

The Clerk: He's available on Friday morning.

As the chair mentioned, it is the Friday before a break week.

Mr. Pat Kelly: I was going to suggest something of minimal formality. Members whose travel schedules would allow for it could attend if they wished, but we'd manage expectations on the other end.

That would be my suggestion to you.

The Chair: If we have three or four people, we're doing well. We'll see what we can do about setting that up. Maybe you could let us know how committed people are.

Third, there will be a Latvian delegation here on Wednesday, May 29. Our suggestion is that we devote our Wednesday meeting, or at least part of it, to the Latvian delegation.

Go ahead, Cheryl.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: It's great that they're coming and that we can meet with them, but we've already had so many of our meetings hijacked by other situations. Is it possible that we could have a luncheon meeting on that day so that we're not taking away from our current work?

The Chair: We could look into it.

The Clerk: I could look into it.

The Chair: It's always getting translation and rooms that is the issue.

The Clerk: Yes.

I could look into it.

The Chair: We'll look into it.

On Monday, Minister Blair will be here.

Mr. James Bezan: Tell him to be prepared to talk about NASAMS.

The Chair: This is part of the reason I wanted you folks to [*Inaudible—Editor*]

On Monday, we have Minister Blair. April 17 is on transparency. I mentioned to you that on April 18 we have the Ukrainian MPs. We'd like to start the space defence study on April 29.

Mr. Pat Kelly: Mr. Chair, under which study or rubric is the minister appearing on Monday?

The committee has moved to see him on different topics. He did not appear for the estimates because the meeting at which he would have appeared for the estimates was cancelled, so we have many questions about the estimates. Also, we have just moved—

The Chair: The proposal is to talk about the DPU, the defence policy update.

Mr. Pat Kelly: He has asked for a meeting with the committee on the DPU.

The Chair: Yes, and I thought this was a good opportunity.

Given the difficulties of just getting a minister in the same room, I thought this was an opportunity for the committee that no one would object to.

Mr. Pat Kelly: Okay. Thank you.

The Chair: Okay. Is there anything else to talk about?

Mr. James Bezan: Is it for one hour or two hours?

The Chair: Well, we'll have the meeting for two hours. It will be in the usual format of an hour for the minister and an hour for the officials.

Here we go: The meeting is adjourned.

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