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# Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development

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## Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development

Thursday, June 14, 2007

•(1110)

[English]

**The Chair (Mr. Bob Mills (Red Deer, CPC)):** I call the meeting to order.

I would like to welcome our guests. As members can see, we have the order of business....

Mr. McGuinty.

**Mr. David McGuinty (Ottawa South, Lib.):** I have a point of order, Mr. Chair. Thank you very much for acknowledging me. I would like to move immediately that the committee reverse the order of business and begin today with the consideration of my motion as tabled.

That's a point of order. It's about what comes first on the order paper.

**The Chair:** Mr. McGuinty, the clerk advises me you can't move a motion on a point of order.

**Mr. David McGuinty:** So could you please explain how we can continue with this order of the day when the motion put to the committee today calls for a major change in the way we're going to conduct today's business?

**The Chair:** As I understand it, you can make a motion to switch the order, but that wouldn't be a point of order on your part.

**Mr. David McGuinty:** Then I'd like to move that the committee reverse the order of business and begin today with consideration of my motion. I'm prepared to move the motion, as written on the agenda, immediately.

**The Chair:** Mr. Warawa.

**Mr. Mark Warawa (Langley, CPC):** I am quite shocked at the attempt by Mr. McGuinty to not hear from witnesses. I don't know if he's aware that there was a smog alert in Windsor yesterday, and there's a smog alert today in Windsor and Toronto. The topic for today is smog, and we have the witnesses here. Now to tell these witnesses who have come ready to share with the committee about smog...I'm shocked.

Chair, maybe you could share the reason why we have the witnesses here. You have the discretion. I could go through Marleau and Montpetit and share information on the authority you have. The chair and the clerk have the authority to arrange meetings, and now we have the witnesses here. To change this and tell the witnesses after they've come here that we're not going to hear from them....

There is a very disturbing pattern here. I've asked this committee and I've asked Mr. McGuinty numerous times that we deal with

solutions on the environment. We see these silly games being played by the Liberals, and it's very disturbing.

Canadians want us to work on the environment. They want us to work on solutions. We have people here to talk about solutions and how to deal with smog. Now to say we're not going to deal with solutions is very disturbing.

Maybe you could share with the committee why we have people here today to talk about smog.

**The Chair:** Mr. Warawa, I will answer that question and explain exactly what happened and why we are dealing with smog today. But first I would like to hear from members.

Mr. Vellacott.

**Mr. Maurice Vellacott (Saskatoon—Wanuskewin, CPC):** I find this a rather disturbing pattern too. I'd just say to the honourable member that some of us actually want to get some work together. We're amenable to your ideas, or ideas from members from the Bloc or the NDP. Nathan has some good stuff that comes forward as well.

But if this is constantly done for no particularly good reason, it certainly poisons the atmosphere in a committee. I understand from past history around this place that Mr. McGuinty was a little more agreeable to working on things. He has somehow taken this great responsibility now as the lead critic for the Liberals, and all of a sudden there is a change of personality, it would almost seem.

I have a problem with his constantly bringing these kinds of things forward. We're running this committee by motions that McGuinty puts forward pretty much on an everyday basis, and I don't find value in that. If you're ever interested in hearing from a colleague who means the best for you at this point, you could maybe get some of your things accomplished and put forward if you had a little less of a chippy attitude in always bringing stuff forward in this manner. I don't think there's any particular gain in it for you or your party—even for partisan purposes here.

We have witnesses here. I have come prepared to listen to them on a pretty crucial issue, yet we have this kind of silliness going on again and again.

I don't see Mr. Godfrey or Anthony doing it, but Mr. McGuinty somehow feels he has a pit bull kind of responsibility to do this. I don't really see, in all sincerity, David, the need to do this all the time. If you carry on with this, you're not going to get the cooperation you want when maybe you could. I don't like this.

**Mr. David McGuinty:** On a point of order, what are we debating now, Mr. Chair?

**The Chair:** Mr. McGuinty, we are debating your motion. I have interpreted that you have made a motion and that your motion is that we switch the order of business from two to one. We are now debating that motion, and we'll vote on that motion.

I believe Mr. Cullen is next.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP):** I just have some initial comments on what we are now engaged in as a committee. Perhaps it's because the issue of the environment is at such a critical point right now with the Canadian public and there's pressure on all members of this committee to defend their party's interest or their citizens' interests. But it seems to ramp up quite quickly.

I think the politics of the personal attack are not warranted in today's discussion. I don't think that helps any of us in establishing what's going on here, and I'd urge members to resist the temptation. I think it distracts us from our responsibility, which is to deal with the actual issue at hand, and it will ensure that there is discord again at this committee. And since we've had a previous history of working quite well together on a number of difficult issues, I would again ask members to resist that temptation.

My main concern today with Mr. McGuinty's motion and the process that was used here is that I feel, because the issue of the G-8 and various government plans to deal with climate change is of such a contentious nature and of such a timely nature, as the House winds down before summer... I do have concerns about the process used. I've expressed those to you, Chair, and I want committee members to know that you and I have had that discussion.

I think in the context of previous actions by the government whip in terms of committee chairs and the attempt to bend committees in a certain direction, which is not an accusation I'm making of you, Chair... This is the context in which we are operating. And I think it's important.

This committee is charged with one of the most fundamental responsibilities in this Parliament: dealing with Canada's position on the environment and ensuring that it's the best position possible. We have to take that seriously and find a way beyond the partisanship to actually establish a good process so that there's constant confidence in the process we're using. I think confidence has been shaken. I think we need to re-establish ourselves with credibility as a committee that actually performs its tasks well and gets the job done with the least amount of partisan bickering possible.

I'll leave my comments at that for now.

**The Chair:** Mr. Cullen, I could have given that same speech. That's my sentiment exactly.

We'll go to Mr. Bigras.

•(1115)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Bernard Bigras (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, BQ):** Mr. Chairman, the government says that it is shocked today by Mr. McGuinty's attitude, but what shocks me this morning is our agenda. That is what is shocking.

Mr. Chairman, you will have to explain in a few minutes why you decided to change the agenda despite the decision made by the committee on June 7, which is clearly indicated in the minutes. That decision was as follows:

That, on June 14, 2007, the Committee proceeds to the study of a post G8 debrief on climate change developments and Canada's position within the broader international context.

That is what we decided. What is shocking is not the opposition's attitude, but the fact that the government has decided to undertake a study of smog. That is an important issue, of course, but the agenda cannot be changed without consulting us.

Mr. Chairman, unless I am mistaken, we never received a call from you.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** A point of order, Mr. Bigras.

Yes, Mr. Warawa.

**Mr. Mark Warawa:** Chair, the government did not interfere with any decision. Mr. Bigras has said the chair and the government—

**The Chair:** We'll explain that, Mr. Bigras.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Bernard Bigras:** I simply said that, from what I understand, the government wants to begin a study today of an issue that was not mentioned in the June 7<sup>th</sup> decision. The government should at the very least admit that we need to comply with the June 7<sup>th</sup> decision, which was agreed to by a majority vote in this committee.

Mr. Chairman, I am therefore expecting a clear explanation from you and a commitment that we will proceed in accordance with the June 7<sup>th</sup> decision.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** I think everyone's had an opportunity. Let me explain, and let me assure you that this was not under any government pressure. I'll go through some of the history.

First, let me quote from the meeting of June 7, where I said in answer to a number of questions:

...I believe this group should be centred around the sherpa, who has been working for months and months on the negotiations. So you centre it around him and you put people, basically, on the economic side of it, the scientific side of it, the environmental side of it, and we have a round table, literally, at which everyone gets an opportunity to ask these people the questions they want about what happens. That's the intention of this meeting.

I went on further to say, in answer to another question:

Definitely we will try to achieve the balanced approach. That to me is the only successful way of doing this. We don't need just one side of any issue. So we've tried to live with that throughout all of our meetings, and I would intend to do that again.

So that was stated very clearly, and I think everyone agreed and nodded and said yes, that's certainly how we've operated.

Then, further on in that statement, names were put forward. Mr. McGuinty put forward people like Don Drummond, someone from the Pembina Institute, and later, Mark Jaccard. Mr. Warawa suggested Mr. Kirton, Mr. Myers, and Mr. Drexhage. I suggested David Mulrone, who was the sherpa who had been working on this all the time.

So between the clerk and I, we started to work on this, starting with the sherpa, the centre point, which I think everyone understood.

Mr. Mulroney was contacted a number of times by the clerk, with no result. I then personally tried to contact him, ultimately going through many circles, and by about seven at night I was told I would have an answer by the next morning. This is now Tuesday of this week.

David Mulroney was contacted and was unavailable throughout that day. Don Drummond was unavailable totally. Matthew Bramley was available. Don Drexhage was not available. John Kirton from the University of Toronto was not available. Jayson Myers was not available. David Keith was not available. Lorne Johnson was not available, and Finn Poschmann from the C.D. Howe Institute was available.

So that's where we started making these phone calls and finding out who was available for Thursday, which is what the committee wanted to have happen.

Finally, when I did get hold of Mr. Mulroney, the sherpa, he said, "Well, I would love to come before the committee and explain what happened at the G-8 through all stages of development of the process." That is what I understood Mr. McGuinty wanted to have happen—to understand our position, what happened, from people who were actually there.

• (1120)

**Mr. David McGuinty:** Mr. Chair, may I interrupt for a second? I really need to. It is a point of order.

**The Chair:** No.

**Mr. David McGuinty:** It's a point of order.

**The Chair:** No, I need to explain this.

**Mr. David McGuinty:** I know you do.

**The Chair:** I've been asked by every member.

**An hon. member:** And he's the chair.

**Mr. David McGuinty:** But I'd like to call the vote on the first motion put, please—

**An hon. member:** No.

**Mr. David McGuinty:** —so we can get on, because you're debating my motion, which is fine—I'm prepared to get into that debate—but can we actually move on?

**The Chair:** Well, Mr. McGuinty, I was asked by Mr. Bigras, by Mr. Cullen—

**Mr. David McGuinty:** I'm calling for the vote. I'm calling for the vote on a motion that's on the table. Thank you. I'm calling for the vote.

**The Chair:** The clerk has advised me that in the House you can do that but here you cannot. I've ruled that we're debating this motion. I have a right, I believe, to explain to the members exactly what happened, which I intend to do.

So anyway, when I finally did talk to Mr. Mulroney, he said he was not available on Thursday but could come on Tuesday. He was leaving town. He asked if I wanted him to come or didn't want him to come. He could bring a deputy minister, who was with him, from

Environment Canada, who was there at the meetings attending the G-8 and was part of the whole development of the statement by Canada. So both of them could come for a meeting on Tuesday.

After all these phone calls and finally being able to talk to him, I made the decision that, hey, Tuesday's better than never. So yes, I said to come on Tuesday.

So now what do we do? Well, it would seem logical that the meeting on the G-8 could be.... If he's there—he's the centre, which has been stated—we could now build a very successful meeting around the sherpa who was there, and other people, on both sides, who were not there but had comments about it.

So that decision had to be made. It was made by me. I felt that I had the ability to make that on behalf of the committee. So what do we do on Thursday, today? Obviously, we were planning to do the whole smog issue on Tuesday, so I said let's just flip them. And that's what I did.

I have to add as well, when I read the last part of the motion today, which we're going to be flipping.... I've been here 14 years. I've been on committees with such people as Bill Graham for seven years. I was with Charles Caccia for a number of years, whom lots of you know. There was Mr. Tonks. They switched meetings.

You know, we've never had so many motions, so much hassle about procedure, as we've seen in this committee, much as Mr. Cullen pointed out. That's not the way we deal with the issues Canadians are interested in. They don't care about procedure as much as they care about the issues. I do find it offensive to be asked to apologize for doing what I thought was right.

There was no pressure from the government, absolutely none, Mr. McGuinty. I can assure you of that. Mr. McGuinty, I made this decision on the telephone. You can shake your head all you want, but I'm telling you that was how it was.

I go to the members then. That's my explanation of how it happened. That was a decision I made, and I take 100% responsibility for making that change.

We'll have Mr. Cullen, Mr. Warawa, and Mr. Bigras.

• (1125)

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** Thank you for the explanation, Chair.

I think it somewhat unfortunate that the question being put today has become one, obviously, of a personal nature for you and one of a question of integrity. As you said, Canadians are less interested in procedure than in the issues being dealt with. I was comfortable with the story up to the point of the decision to switch, because in this case it's not an order versus an issue; the order is the issue, with Parliament winding down and with a decision that was ten to zero taken by this committee.

All members said we would conduct ourselves on Thursday in this way. I understand the conundrum you faced with what you saw as the key witness not being available but other witnesses being available. I think having been given the choice, following a ten to zero decision to deal with this issue prior to the threat of Parliament recessing, which is the point, we would have taken anything we could have gotten to dive into the government's climate change plan and what happened at the G-8.

That is the part of the story I regret, because if given a chance for input into that decision, after such a unanimous call by the committee to deal with the issue, and with the likelihood of our capacity to actually deal with the issue at all on Tuesday under some threat as we see this House winding down, I think the order is critical. I think that's why there are such sensitivities.

I understand your reason for emotion or for feeling that this motion is a direct attack on your integrity. I'm not sure that you'd use those particular words. I think in general you've been a fair chair and have tried to do what you do. I take you on your word in terms of the pressure, unless there's other evidence that Mr. McGuinty would like to offer. It's unfortunate that we get to this point on this issue at this time. I still believe, with Tuesday being under a cloud of uncertainty as to whether we'll meet at all, that we needed to deal today, as best we could, with the government's actions at the G-8 and the connection to the government's plans. So I'll leave it at that.

**The Chair:** I guess my only comment would be this. I've certainly been told we will be here on Tuesday. In making the decision I had 100% confidence that we'd be here on Tuesday.

Mr. Warawa.

**Mr. Mark Warawa:** Mr. Chair, I appreciate your explanation.

I have two things.

At the meeting of June 7, I made it very clear that we wanted to have a balanced dialogue. The policy book by Marleau and Montpetit very clearly guides the committees to have a balanced approach to witnesses. The agreement was that we were going to have a balanced approach, a balanced list of witnesses to deal with post-G-8.

The sherpa was the main person, as you explained. I appreciate your explanation.

The motion before us now on the table, which is what we're discussing, deals with two issues—

**Hon. John Godfrey (Don Valley West, Lib.):** I have a point of order.

**The Chair:** Yes, Mr. Godfrey.

**Hon. John Godfrey:** Mr. Chair, we're not discussing the motion. We're discussing reversing the order of business today so that we can discuss the motion. We haven't reached that point yet.

**Mr. Mark Warawa:** Thank you for the clarification.

Mr. Godfrey is quite right. I appreciate the explanation.

**The Chair:** Mr. Godfrey, the clerk advises me that is incorrect. We are now debating the motion by Mr. McGuinty to reverse the order.

Go ahead, Mr. Warawa.

**Mr. Mark Warawa:** The motion we're dealing with right now is to reverse the agenda. I'm speaking to that.

You've given a good explanation. We have witnesses here. I believe we need to hear from the witnesses.

If we go to this motion and reverse the agenda, then I have some comments on that motion. At this point, I think we need to get down to business and listen to the witnesses.

• (1130)

**The Chair:** I would hope we could vote, first of all, on the motion we have on reversing the order and then get to the debate on the actual motion itself. I think it would make things much easier if we could proceed that way.

Mr. Bigras, you're next on my list.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Bernard Bigras:** Mr. Chairman, that is the very least we need to do, in my opinion. We will support the Liberal motion, simply because it is aimed at having a calm debate about the issue that was decided on on June the 7<sup>th</sup>. We need to have that debate.

Frankly, you have to admit that you have a responsibility, which is to apply the decisions that are made through a majority vote in the committee. That is your responsibility. I understand the arguments from Marleau-Montpetit quoted by my colleague, the parliamentary secretary, to the effect that there needs to be a balance at every committee meeting. However, what is even clearer and more important is that decisions made need to be complied with. It seems to me that there has been a major breach in the implementation of the committee's decisions. In that context, I do not see why we would move ahead with a study of this issue, even though witnesses are here, when a decision was made on June 7<sup>th</sup>.

I want us to have this discussion to basically reverse the debate. I hope that we can listen to one another without having to vote on Mr. McGuinty's motion. I think that it is still possible. This is a key point. We cannot go ahead and study this issue without having discussed the agenda.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Mr. Bigras, I agree with you. It's the very point I'm making. We should get to the first thing of reversing the order. Basically, everybody is now debating the other motion, Mr. McGuinty's motion, and not switching the order.

I'd really like to make that decision. Are we going to switch the order and then debate the actual motion itself?

I'm going to call the question. Shall we switch the order from one to two?

Mr. Vellacott.

**Mr. Maurice Vellacott:** I have a question on background information that I think might be helpful to all of us in terms of being able to do this logistically.

You have a motion here to flip the order and to have these people in. I don't see them in the room here: Mr. Bramley, Mr. Jaccard, and to deal with....

**An hon. member:** That's by video.

**Mr. Maurice Vellacott:** I understand it's a video conference thing.

My question is simply this. Is this already set up by the clerk, by the chair? Is this already in place?

**The Chair:** Again, let's not deal with the motion; let's deal with the switching first. Then we can deal with your question, Mr. Vellacott.

We'll check the feasibility once we make the decision on whether we're switching or not. If not, we'll hear our witnesses who are here and carry on.

So, first of all, who is in favour of switching the order?

(Motion agreed to)

**The Chair:** We're now talking about the notice of motion.

I believe at this point—I'll check with the clerk—we'll ask you to stay to see what happens with the motion.

Yes, Mr. Warawa.

**Mr. Mark Warawa:** So, Chair, we're now dealing with the motion—

**The Chair:** Mr. McGuinty's motion.

**Mr. Mark Warawa:** —that is on the table.

**The Chair:** Okay. Put the motion, Mr. McGuinty, please.

**Mr. David McGuinty:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Let me put this motion formally and make some comments about the notice of motion itself.

Partly in response to your comments, Mr. Chair, partly in response to some of the comments made by all colleagues at this table, let me first say that I am very disturbed by the fact that I had to bring this motion. I'm going to make my remarks short. First of all, let me read from the notice of motion, which says:

That, this committee immediately resume its agenda—as democratically adopted by the committee on Thursday, June 7, 2007 by a vote of 10 to 0—on the study of a post G8 debrief on climate change developments and Canada's position within the broader international context, and immediately bring witnesses Matthew Bramley (Pembina Institute) and Mark Jaccard, (Simon Fraser University) to testify, by video or teleconference if necessary; and, this committee call upon the chair to apologize to the committee for unilaterally rewriting today's agenda in a manner contradicting the expressed will of the committee.

As I say, I'm very disappointed in having to deal with this, but as a responsible member of Parliament, I have no choice. I have no other choice. Let me make it perfectly clear for everyone, and for Canadians who will listen or read or see reports about this meeting, that it is not about you, Mr. Chair, personally. This is about something larger. This is about a principle that is at stake, which is the independence of standing committees of the House of Commons. But it's also more than just that. It's about majority rule, which is the cornerstone of our democracy. We are supposed to be masters of our own destiny, as members of standing committees. For at least the second time this spring, the agenda has been overruled by the PMO after the committee expressed its specific will in a vote.

Let me put three basic facts to all. One week ago, on Thursday, June 7, in this committee, the parliamentary secretary representing

the minister proposed that we consider clean air and smog today. The record shows that was put to a vote: yeas 4; nays 7. It was defeated. My colleague, Mr. Regan, who's not here this morning, put another motion: to consider the government's climate change plan in light of the government's performance at the G-8. That was adopted by this committee unanimously, 10 to 0.

Until two days ago I was in discussion with your office, Chair, and the clerk's office about witnesses for today's meeting. You informed me, and the clerk informed me, that two witnesses were scheduled for today's meeting: one, Finn Poschmann from the C.D. Howe Institute, hardly a witness who would come and testify for the opposition; and secondly, Matthew Bramley from the Pembina Institute, who I don't think speaks for anybody at this table, except for his own views and his own concerns. I then suggested to you two days ago, Chair, that Dr. Mark Jaccard, nobody's fool, who has just co-authored a paper that I think is equally disparaging of our record and the government's new plan—and I mentioned that to you verbally—might also be available and then found out later that of course he confirmed his availability.

Through this process, no doubt was ever expressed about this meeting going ahead. The subcommittee, which was struck to deal with this, was never advised. It was never even called. Yesterday, at 1:51 p.m., we all received notice of today's agenda. To my shock, the agenda read “smog”. I thought it was a mistake. I recall that Mr. Warawa's motion was defeated. But then I spoke with you, Chair, and there was no mistake.

My first reaction, in the heat of the moment, was that this is almost Stalinist. This is like our votes had been erased. And the parliamentary secretary laughs about it. When someone unilaterally writes the agenda and the chair capitulates, he acts as the long arm, in my view, of the Prime Minister's Office.

• (1135)

Frankly, I think a lot of parliamentarians from all sides of the House, including the government, are getting sick and tired of how Stephen Harper's dream world works. It flies in the face of Canadian parliamentary tradition and makes a mockery of democracy. We saw it at Queen's Park, under another regime, and we see it now.

What does it say—

**The Chair:** Excuse me.

Mr. Harvey.

• (1140)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Luc Harvey (Louis-Hébert, CPC):** Mr. Chairman, I have a point of order.

The chairman has said that it was his personal decision. I do not see why people are talking about Stephen Harper. The chairman has explained the situation, and it would be helpful to stay on topic, Mr. McGuinty.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Mr. McGuinty.

**Mr. David McGuinty:** Sorry, I didn't see a point of order. Can you help me understand how this is a point of order?

**The Chair:** He's just saying that the attack on Mr. Harper is certainly not part of our debate right now.

**Mr. David McGuinty:** Let me move on then, Mr. Chair.

What does it say if we vote to do something and then we get a BlackBerry, probably to a staffer sitting by the wall over there, who taps the chair's shoulder, maybe taps the parliamentary secretary's shoulder, and our votes are erased, are evaporated? It means that the elections in Ottawa South, Halifax West, Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, and Skeena—Bulkley Valley don't count. Apparently they just don't count.

It's my duty to move this motion. I would be remiss if I didn't move this motion. I pity, I really do pity, my colleagues from the government who are I think under pressure, huge pressure, to try to stand down debate precisely on what we're talking about.

Let me also just go to the transcripts—

**The Chair:** Just a moment.

Mr. Vellacott.

**Mr. Maurice Vellacott:** Mr. Chair, on a point of order, Mr. McGuinty can very well speak for himself, for his colleagues, or for whoever else he chooses, but he dare not speak for me. I don't feel any pressure at this point. I believe, and I take it as a point of principle....

The chair relayed to us what happened and I believe it. That's accepting his record of it as the truth. I have no reason to believe otherwise. There was no pressure on me or for that matter on any of my colleagues.

So, Mr. McGuinty, you can well speak for yourself, but don't presume to speak for me.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** Mr. McGuinty.

**Mr. David McGuinty:** Interesting, coming from a member who just presumed to speak for me 20 minutes ago.

I'd like to go back to the transcripts that you quoted yourself, Mr. Chair, in the last meeting. They make it very clear that the topic today includes a thorough assessment of the government's climate change plan.

You know, it's interesting. As the originator of the idea to have this meeting today, it struck me as quite interesting that we've not heard yet a single witness testify at this committee about the government's climate change plan who doesn't work for the government. It's fascinating. It's an interesting coincidence.

Let me quote what I said, Mr. Chair, in the meeting of last Thursday, June 7:

As the mover of the original idea for a G8 discussion, I just wanted for us, as a committee, to be clear. In the motion I put forward, which we're not discussing right now, the idea was to invite three or four independent parties, third parties, not contingent upon the single sherpa....

Let me read that again:

...not contingent upon the single sherpa, and have those three or four parties come in and give us some help in understanding the implications of the government's Turning the Corner plan—the interface between the government's Turning the Corner plan and any G8 outcomes, and what in fact took place at the G8, because there is no public messaging or information made available to Canadians now. What we are negotiating we will know, I guess, after the fact. An economist, along the lines of Don Drummond, an environmental group along the lines of the Pembina Institute, and some other—

At that point I was cut off by yet another point of order from the parliamentary secretary of the kind he used to cut off Mr. Bigras just moments ago. I'm not sure if it's in the government's 200-page manual about how to disrupt proceedings, but it's also interesting to note that neither Matthew Bramley nor Mark Jaccard are available for next Tuesday's meeting.

You know, Mr. Chair, you may have been here a lot longer than I have and you may have worked with some fine colleagues, but when you look at the actual chronology of events that underlie this motion, on Wednesday, June 6, we recommended two meetings post-G-8. The government blocked any discussion of the plan, no consensus was reached, and we reported it back on Thursday, June 7.

Mr. Warawa moved a motion. It was defeated. Mr. Regan moved a motion. It was supported ten to zero. Every member of the government's caucus voted in favour of it—every single one.

On Friday, June 8, I sent you an e-mail asking you if by Monday noon you could advise all members of the committee where we were, which witnesses were being scheduled for the Thursday, June 14, meeting.

On Tuesday, June 12, I recommended to you twice that Mark Jaccard be called for the Thursday meeting and I confirmed with your office that Mark Jaccard was available for the meeting, via e-mail copied to all members of this committee.

You advised me on Tuesday, June 12, two days ago, that both Mr. Bramley and Finn Poschmann are available for Thursday. You suggested that you would continue to seek to have David Mulrone attend, but said nothing about making his participation a condition precedent for the meeting going forward.

Yesterday, at 1:51, we heard that you had betrayed the will of the committee. You scheduled a different topic, and all witnesses had changed.

If I'm spending time, as we all do, in a grade 5 civics class, or receiving grade 8 students or grade 12 students about the role of procedure and how it interfaces with policy, as my colleague from the NDP said, this is about getting to crucial questions. And frankly, as one parliamentarian...there's a pattern. Mr. Warawa speaks of a pattern. There's a pattern at the official languages committee. There's a pattern at the international trade committee. There's a pattern in the release by a Conservative chairman of the 200-page manual to disrupt proceedings. There's a pattern here.

So it's my duty to move this motion. It's my obligation to move this motion. I move it, and I look forward to the comments of my colleagues.



•(1145)

**The Chair:** All I can say, Mr. McGuinty, is that you have made a few assumptions that are totally incorrect. Obviously you're implying that pressure was put on. I can assure you that I didn't check with anybody. I made a decision based on my feeling that someone who was at the meetings was the best person to come and tell us exactly what happened, someone who had worked for months, and who had worked under the Liberal government for years and was very competent. They would be the anchor to what happened. That's the very person you'd want to hear from, if you're sincere at all about getting to environmental issues and hearing about what happened at the G-8.

Maybe we should have just cancelled the meeting today—that would have been fair enough—and then got all of the people. But some of the people you suggested, the Don Drummonds, etc., weren't available; they just weren't. So you're implying something that is totally untrue. You're implying that I went to somebody and asked them what I should do; I didn't do that. I made a decision. It's my decision. You're saying it's the wrong decision. Fair enough; we won't always agree on things.

The fact is you're implying I was a puppet, but I never thought that of Mr. Caccia. He changed meetings. We'd come in here not really knowing whom we were going to be seeing, even though we had asked to see this person, this person, this person; that's how it is. In the ideal world you live in, maybe it's different, but there's reality too. The reality is that we should listen to somebody who was there and then listen to the opinions on the other side.

Anyway, let's go to the speaking order.

Mr. Warawa.

**Mr. Mark Warawa:** Thank you, Chair,

It was mentioned a number of times, ten to zero. We did, as members of the government...there was consensus achieved. And how did we achieve that consensus?

I would like to back up a little. I shared with the committee my concern that I did not think it was realistic to have the witnesses who would be talking post-G-8, witnesses who were at the G-8 and able to advise the committee what happened, so that we could, as a committee discuss...and hear post-G-8. Those were the points that I made, and I moved a motion that we would then hear from them at a later time, about four days later, instead of on a Thursday, on a Tuesday.

Mr. McGuinty is quite right. That motion was not supported, but the point was made and there was a clear agreement, a clear consensus, I thought, and that's why we supported it, that it was going to be a balanced approach. It was focusing on the sherpa who was involved there, and that's why we supported it. The sherpa was going to be involved. We were assured of that, and I was assured by members of this committee, Mr. McGuinty being one, that these people would be able to come at short notice.

I would just like to read from what happened on the 7th. It reads:

**The Chair:** I did try to find out when the sherpa would be back from the meeting, and I was told probably not until Sunday at the earliest.

He was referring to the G-8. He continued, "Of course, that was something to be discussed and considered as well."

A little later the chair—you—said:

As I mentioned, just to answer Mr. Warawa's question, I believe this group should be centred around the sherpa, who has been working for months and months on the negotiations. So you centre it around him and you put people, basically, on the economic side of it, the scientific side of it, the environmental side of it, and we have a round table, literally, at which everyone gets an opportunity to ask these people the questions they want about what happens. That's the intention of this meeting.

So clearly the sherpa is the focus.

You went on to say:

Can we get all of those desirable people by Thursday? I don't know. I know that the sherpa, I've been told, will return on Sunday. So that's all I know at this point, in answer to that question.

He was answering my question.

I asked a question then. I said:

A point of order. My understanding is that we were going to allow you and a group to bring a balanced approach, and what's being proposed is not a balanced approach.

I was referring to Mr. McGuinty when he mentioned Matthew Bramley.

It reads further:

**The Chair:** Definitely we will try to achieve the balanced approach. That to me is the only successful way of doing this. We don't need just one side of any issue. So we've tried to live with that throughout all of our meetings, and I would intend to do that again.

I can't tell you today who's available next Thursday and who isn't. We obviously will go after the very best we can get, because I hope we're here to further our understanding of the G8 process and what's going to happen.

So I'm not exactly sure what that means, but I think that's very positive for all of us. We need to hear that from experts who can interpret what in fact has been agreed to.

This is again referring to the G-8.

So, Chair, the record shows it was very clear, and just in response to Mr. Bigras, we need to respect the decision of June 7. I agree, we need to respect that decision, and that decision focused around having a balanced group of witnesses, which included the sherpa.

What we've heard now from you, Chair, is clearly that it was not possible to have it today.

I don't want to waste time. I could go through Marleau and Montpetit. It is in there.

Mr. Chair, you have that authority, along with the clerk, to have adjourned that meeting because you could not get those witnesses. But instead of adjourning the meeting, you've gone ahead and provided the other topic, which was discussed, and I think that suggested topic came from Mr. Cullen. So I think you've done that in good faith.

• (1150)

The point I want to make is that the motion has two things. First of all, should we be hearing from two identified witnesses, not as normal policy and the normal understanding of June 7, a balanced approach, but having just two people suggested by Mr. McGuinty and to hear from them immediately. That's the first half of the motion.

The second half of the motion asking for an apology I interpreted as a vicious attack on your integrity. I consider it a confidence issue in you, Mr. Chair. The normal procedure is that we accept the word of a fellow parliamentarian, a chair, as a statement of fact. That is the protocol here and that's the accepted rule. Mr. McGuinty is alleging that's the chair's statement to this committee; my understanding is that he's indicating that your statement is false. I consider that a direct attack against you and your integrity. I definitely don't agree with that, and that's how I'm interpreting it. Mr. McGuinty, you can clarify that if it's not an attack.

Definitely, there are two different issues here, Chair. I'd like to move, as an amendment, that they be dealt with separately, that the motion be divided into two parts and that we deal, first of all, with the issue of a demand for an apology from you. I don't think it's warranted. I'm quite opposed to that, but to deal with it fairly, it should be divided in two, so I move as an amendment that it be dealt with separately.

• (1155)

**The Chair:** If we can suspend for one minute, the clerk needs clarity as to whether we can divide this motion or not. We'll see what his response is, and then we'll go to Mr. Vellacott, Mr. Bigras, Mr. Godfrey, and Mr. Cullen.

• \_\_\_\_\_ (Pause) \_\_\_\_\_  
•

**The Chair:** I don't believe you need me to read the section, but it says when there are two parts, or deemed to be two parts, a motion can be accepted, and whether to allow it to be split is my decision. Obviously, I can read this to you, if you want to hear it, but I believe it's pretty clear that Mr. Warawa's motion is in order and it would allow us to split that into two parts.

So now we will debate Mr. Warawa's motion and then vote on it. Are there comments on that motion?

Mr. Cullen.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** I suppose this is a question I was trying to get in earlier that we can do now. It's a question to you, Chair. Do you consider this part that Mr. Warawa has cited here about the apology a motion of confidence?

**The Chair:** Yes, I do, because I did exactly what I felt was the thing to do without any coercion or guidance. Obviously, if I don't have that ability to make decisions when I have the gentleman I've been trying for 14 hours to get hold of, why have a chair?

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** There are two thoughts to that. One is I don't—

**The Chair:** Yes, Mr. Bigras.

[Translation]

**Mr. Bernard Bigras:** Mr. Chairman, you have indicated that this a confidence motion. Nevertheless, I would like the clerk to confirm that the motion that is before us is a confidence motion.

What is the basis for deciding that this is a confidence motion? Our view is that it is not a confidence motion.

• (1200)

[English]

**The Chair:** Again, it's my interpretation that is the one that counts. I was quite surprised....The first part of the motion I can understand; the second part of the motion I did take personally, so that's the answer, Mr. Bigras.

Mr. Cullen.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** We're talking about this motion now.

**The Chair:** Yes, we're talking about Mr. Warawa's motion.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** First allow me to say that I think that's regrettable. While I believe in the efforts you made in order to arrange this meeting, I still contend that part of that decision could have been returned to at least the subcommittee.

Marleau and Montpetit talks about the role of the chair. One of the main aspects is as follows:

Chairs of standing and special committees also often assume a leadership role in planning and co-ordinating the committee's work and in conducting its investigations.

I think given the context, and given the to and fro we had with the parliamentary secretary at subcommittee—and we then had a to and fro at the committee—and how important this was as a topic to committee members, and I know you realize this, I think a mistake was made. When a mistake is made, I think apologies are in order.

I actually don't see this as a confidence motion. I respect that you do see it that way. I wish you wouldn't, because while I believe in correcting that mistake and perhaps learning from it, and changing some of the processes that we use around really contentious issues—I'm not talking about everyday things, but this was important—it's a good thing for us as a committee to learn and for you as a chair to adapt. But to raise the stakes up to an issue of confidence—and in our day-to-day interactions, you know I have confidence in your chairmanship—I think overinflates the severity of what's going on.

**The Chair:** Mr. Vellacott.

**Mr. Maurice Vellacott:** With respect to and actually in considerable agreement with what Mr. Cullen said, particularly the last part, I do appreciate the personal offence that this is to you, Mr. Chair, and I feel for you, because I do believe you. I've worked with you a long time. I was not contacted by anybody, by you or others. I believe you're a man of integrity, and this is the true record of it. But I do want to ask you to maybe kind of take to heart some of the counsel from members, to at least consider it. You may need to get some input from others as well. Maybe it is a confidence thing.

I don't know if you should pronounce definitively at this point. You know, it's a very serious thing; there's no question about that. As to whether it's a confidence thing, I would encourage you to get some input and some advice through the clerk or through others, or however you choose to do that. But for me—no question—this is a very serious matter, and a very serious allegation has been made against you, without doubt, in the latter part of this particular motion before us.

Frankly, I will be in favour of splitting it, because I think we should defeat that and do away with that. I think it serves no particular good for this committee. I think Mr. Cullen has it right. Nor do I believe—and maybe this is where I would disagree with Mr. Cullen and my colleagues—an apology is in order in this circumstance. If there was some malicious intent, or nefarious kind of plotting and planning being done, yes, then you should. But that's not my understanding of what took place here, so I would respectfully differ with Mr. Cullen with respect to whether an apology is required.

I would humbly and gently encourage you, Mr. Chair, before you pronounce definitively on whether it's a confidence matter or not, that you would be better advised to get some input from others and listen to what you colleagues have to say about whether they think it is or not.

**The Chair:** Well, I appreciate that, Mr. Vellacott.

Again, the clerk advises that it has been split, that the decision has been made, and we will now vote on it.

Shall I read this so that it's clear? It reads:

When a complicated motion comes before the House (for example, a motion containing two or more parts each capable of standing on its own)

—which this is—

the Speaker has the authority to modify it and thereby facilitate decision-making for the House. When any Member objects to a motion that contains two or more distinct propositions, he or she may request that the motion be divided and that each proposition be debated and voted on separately. The final decision, however, rests with the Chair. On a related matter, the Speaker has ruled that the practice of dividing substantive motions has never been extended to bills and that the Chair has no authority to do so.

Basically it says that I make the decision as to whether it's split or not—and I make the decision it is split. So now we will deal with each of the two sides, as I understand it, and then we'll have a vote on each in that sequence. We would vote on the first part of it and then we would vote on the second part. I don't think we need to debate this, as that decision has been made.

Do you have a point of order or...?

•(1205)

**Mr. Mark Warawa:** No. I believe I'm next in line.

**The Chair:** I think Mr. Godfrey was, but maybe not.

Okay, Mr. Warawa.

**Mr. Mark Warawa:** Just for clarification, you have now moved that.... So we are now dealing with it as split. Mr. Chair, I would ask that we have a five-minute recess. We're talking now about a confidence motion in your chairship, and I would ask, Chair, that we have a five-minute recess to allow members to contact their whips. This is a very serious matter.

**The Chair:** [*Inaudible—Editor*]...dispose of the first part and then we could go to the second part. If you would like to do it that way, we can then move on.

Yes, Mr. Cullen.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** I see no need for a recess to contact whips. I appreciate this is a serious matter, but we've given this an hour and ten minutes of consideration already, and I have no need to talk to my whip. I think we should move to the vote on the first part, which I think is less contentious, and then we can simply have our conversation about the second one, which is more contentious.

**The Chair:** Okay.

I believe the first part is not where the contention lies.

Mr. Warawa, I believe the first part is not as contentious, and then with the second part, there is the suggestion that that would give everyone the opportunity to...[*Inaudible—Editor*]

Mr. Godfrey, I believe you certainly were somewhere in our mix.

**Hon. John Godfrey:** In a way, it is difficult to separate out the two, because one flows from the other. In other words, the question of what it is that we agreed on June 7 is what's at stake here.

The problem with the position you've outlined, Mr. Chair, is that it suggests there would have been a round table and at the centre of the round table would have been the sherpa, and on the various sides the other witnesses, who collectively would have constituted some kind of balance. Right?

The problem with the scenario you described is that the sherpa has not accepted it. I gather the sherpa has indicated to you that he does not wish to be part of a round table, and that's why we have the format we have; he wishes to stand alone as a free-standing witness, and that's why he was scheduled as such. Therefore, in other words, the round table is severable, that is to say, we're not going to get them in the same space at the same time—at the request of the sherpa, who didn't feel it was appropriate to be—

**An hon. member:** [*Inaudible—Editor*]

**Hon. John Godfrey:** Well, I'm just describing what I understood the situation to be.

**Mr. Maurice Vellacott:** On a point of order, I have a question.

Was it in the motion? Was a round table mentioned? Is it specifically what was said in the motion?

**The Chair:** I mentioned that, yes. But there was no motion that it's how it would be.

**Hon. John Godfrey:** You described how you saw it at that point in time.

**The Chair:** It's how I saw it at that point in time, yes.

**Hon. John Godfrey:** What has happened since then is the sherpa has indicated, as is his right, that he did not wish to be part of a round table. He wished to be here by himself to make the point.

**Mr. Maurice Vellacott:** On a point of order, I want to clarify this.

John, there is no mention of a round table here. With respect to "centred around", there may be some differing points of view here.

• (1210)

**Hon. John Godfrey:** The whole logic for delaying the meeting from today until Tuesday was that the sherpa would be a central part of a round table. We now discover the sherpa can be severed; that is to say, the sherpa will appear by himself.

I see the chairman nodding.

**The Chair:** Yes.

**Hon. John Godfrey:** Okay. Let me continue on the logic, if I may.

If it is the case, there is then no reason the witnesses who were available today, notably, Mr. Bramley and Mr. Jaccard, could not have done so. They were going to be separate anyway. Isn't that right?

Whomever we picked, the totality of the two different sessions adds up to a balance. It doesn't add up to a round table, which was the original thing you said.

It's logical that once the sherpa had his own session, we could quite easily deal today with the witnesses who are available and on Tuesday with the sherpa who is available. Once you have decided to split them up, then they can be split up over days and not only back to back.

I don't think the actual mechanism is consistent with your vision. What we've put forward is consistent with the way things have turned out. We're going to lose the witnesses we wanted on Tuesday, and we were never going to have a round table on Tuesday anyway.

On my second point, I would simply add this. I realize I'm getting ahead of myself, but what we're talking about here is not a question of integrity and is not a question of confidence. It's a question of judgment.

I think it was basically unwise, Chair, to not have given a heads up to the people who sit on the subcommittee by simply saying here's where we are, and not moving in a unilateral way to switch the witnesses. It's an unfortunate thing, and that's all.

We're not challenging your integrity and we're not asking for a vote of confidence. We're only saying we think it was a mistake. We'd like you to recognize it and to be more respectful and sensitive the next time.

**The Chair:** Yes. Again, as I explained, after an entire day of trying to get hold of him, when I finally did, I was at least able to nail him down to something.

I called Mr. McGuinty's office shortly after 12 yesterday, before the notices went out, when I intended to advise him. I didn't get a return phone call. I advised the clerk to send out the notices as we saw them.

Again, I see the second motion as questioning the fact that I did it and that in fact what I told you was true. It's why I see it as a confidence issue.

Mr. Bigras.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Bernard Bigras:** Mr. Chairman, the discussion we have had around this table makes me very sad. We have been colleagues for nearly 10 years and have worked together on the Standing Committee on the Environment and Sustainable Development for nearly 6 years. You were the official critic for your party. But we feel that this motion is your interpretation; it is not a confidence motion. If you decide to resign upon adoption of this motion, it will be your decision.

I am not questioning the fact that it has been difficult for you up to now to invite witnesses. Ensuring that as many witnesses as possible come before the committee is always a difficult task. On that score, I think that you have done what you could. It is not the witnesses that I want to focus on, but the agenda. That is the problem.

I would remind you that on page 855 Marleau and Montpetit, the following is stated:

Generally, the length of time to be devoted to a particular topic is a matter for the Committee to decide. This may be done formally, by adopting a work plan, or by simply allowing Committee members to discuss an issue until they are ready to make a decision.

To begin with, that decision was made on June 7<sup>th</sup>, and the work plan was determined the same day. Second, according to Marleau and Montpetit, page 856, your role is as follows:

The Chair presides over the deliberations in committee, recognizing speakers and ensuring that the deliberations adhere to established practices and rules, as well as to any particular requirements which the Committee may have imposed upon itself and its members.

Those particular requirements are, in fact, the work plan. Third, I would remind you of the following:

Where a committee has agreed to adjourn to the call of the Chair, the Chair instructs the clerk to send an amendment to the notice convening the members, informing them of the cancellation.

**That was done. However, it is also stated:** Where the meeting has been convened by order of the committee,

which was the case on June 7<sup>th</sup>,

the Chair consults with representatives of the various parties before sending the cancellation notice.

I have to tell you honestly, Mr. Chairman, I received neither—

• (1215)

[*English*]

**A voice:** It wasn't cancelled.

**Mr. Bernard Bigras:** Not cancelled.

**A voice:** It was changed.

[*Translation*]

It was a change. I would have liked you to call me directly, Mr. Chairman, or call my office to tell us that there was a change being made to the plan that was adopted unanimously by the committee. In my opinion, that is the rule that must be followed.

I maintain that if this motion is adopted and you decide to resign, it will be your decision. I do not want that to happen, as I said at the outset, when I first spoke. I said that we could most likely come to an agreement without voting on the motion, Mr. Chairman. However, it must be acknowledged that there was a breach in the process and that members should at least have been called before changes were made to the work plan established by the committee.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** I agree.

We'll have Mr. Warawa, Mr. Vellacott, and Mr. Scarpaleggia.

**Mr. Mark Warawa:** I appreciate the reading from Marleau and Montpetit. I'd like to turn to page 828, where it says:

The chairs of standing and special committees also often assume a leadership role in planning and co-ordinating the committee's work and in conducting its investigations.

On page 834 it says:

clerks discharge their duties and responsibilities with respect to the committee in consultation with the Chair.

That was very clearly the direction from this committee. It was unanimous that the discretion was given to the chair and the clerk to arrange the meeting today. Now there's the question of this being confidence or not.

I've been on the Hill for three years and I've never seen a motion asking for a chair to apologize. I don't imagine you have ever had a motion asking for you to apologize. You have that discretion. You have the authority to cancel a meeting, adjourn a meeting, and notify the members of the adjourning of a meeting. You have the discretion to arrange meetings. You took that discretion and tried to continue with the topics the committee had directed. One of those was smog.

Mr. Godfrey suggested that you could have had the sherpa and the other witnesses at two different meetings, because the sherpa had requested that he be at a separate meeting. Yet in the spirit of what the committee had directed, it was to be one meeting. So you had planned to have the sherpa for one hour and the other witnesses for another hour.

I think Mr. Godfrey is suggesting it would have been two separate meetings. That would have cut into the witnesses being here to speak to us on smog. But smog is important. So you've adjusted it. Why did you adjust the meetings? Using the discretion you had, you did that because the witnesses and the sherpa were not available on Thursday; they were available on Tuesday.

What you have now is a very unusual procedure of a motion being made that attacks your integrity and calls for an apology. Mr. Godfrey said it was unwise of you, Chair. I believe those were his words. To indicate that the chair is unwise crosses some lines.

I very definitely would not support calling for an apology, because I don't believe anything wrong was done.

On page 835 of Marleau it says, "Most committee meetings can be described as evidence-gathering meetings." Of course, that didn't happen at our last meeting. We had an eight-minute meeting. The Liberal-dominant Senate has their 43-second meetings; we had our eight-minute meeting where we had four opportunities to ask two-minute questions.

In Marleau and Montpetit on page 835 it continues:

They have traditionally commenced with presentations made by witnesses, followed by a question and answer period during which committee members have the opportunity to explore selected aspects of an issue in greater detail.

On page 837 it continues:

Committees may hold meetings to exchange ideas with panels of witnesses representing different points of views....

Chair, that is almost exactly what you said—different points of view. I expressed concern that if you have somebody with an extreme point of view, or even a witness who has political connections, I don't believe that provides a balanced point of view. But I think what you are proposing is to have a balanced point of view that would help guide the committee. To apologize for that I think is absurd.

• (1220)

I very definitely don't believe you need to provide an apology. I hope that members of the opposition will not ask for an apology, because you've done a good job, you've been fair, and I believe you will continue to be fair.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** Mr. Vellacott.

**Mr. Maurice Vellacott:** I was just going to reiterate only slightly here, because I think my colleague has very eloquently explained the sequence of events here. Mr. Godfrey, having heard that explanation...he's a decent person and has been good to work with over the past and is I think a little confused in terms of a possible two-meeting scenario.

I believe if you take that into account, you probably can see the fact that your intended ideal scenario would not work out. There would only be one meeting, and I guess we have a difference of opinion whether that meant a round table or witnesses at a point, sitting, and then you bring in the other group of witnesses, which is still centred around...but I don't constitute that as a round table, which is not anywhere in the records from the last meeting here.

I just thought it was good that that was clarified there. Mr. Chair, in view of the fact that you were restricted by this committee, you were following through in terms of not breaching anything that was decided at committee. We only had one meeting to deal with; that's all you had permission to work around. That being the case, you have to get your people there at the same time. It makes a lot of sense. While Mr. Godfrey's suggestion is well intended, it's not workable in view of the restraint you had by way of that motion that was passed unanimously, ten to zero, at the committee here.

I would say that I'm quite fine in hearing these two witnesses. Mr. Bramley, notwithstanding the fact that he has helped write a Liberal plan...I'm not so sure he is one of the most objective on the file here. They want to hear Mr. Mark Jaccard. He'd probably be an objective witness. So I have no difficulty with that.

But are you going to consume all of your time at one meeting doing it today, and then we're not going to hear from the sherpa? The commitment was to have only one meeting. I'm not sure what's assumed here. If we'd had those people meeting today, did we all of a sudden then have an agreement out of nowhere from the others to have them in at a subsequent date? The agreement was one meeting, not two meetings. I think my colleagues across the way are well aware of that, so I'm not sure what kind of a quandary that leaves the chair in.

For my part, I think it was an appropriate judgment. I disagree with colleagues across the way. I think you did the best in the circumstance: a one-meeting scenario whereby it was going to be done on Tuesday. I'm assuming the House will be sitting and we'll proceed full steam ahead on that.

You're going to have Mr. Bramley in, who is probably not the most objective on the file, but you'll have Mr. Jaccard in, you'll have the sherpa, you'll have them all at one meeting, unless all of a sudden we're having some ad hoc proposal of more than one meeting with these people today. That wasn't ever the original agreement. I think my colleagues will concede that, and an honest review of the Hansard records confirms that. So I wanted that on the record.

• (1225)

**The Chair:** Mr. Scarpaleggia.

**Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.):** I'll pass.

**The Chair:** Mr. Cullen.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** I think the opportunity is with us now to have the vote and move on with things.

**The Chair:** Mr. Vellacott.

**Mr. Maurice Vellacott:** Before we vote, I have some additional remarks to make at this point.

**The Chair:** You do have an opportunity to debate, but the vote will be on the first motion first and then on the second part of that, because it has been split.

Go ahead.

**Mr. Maurice Vellacott:** I go back to my original questions that I interjected at an earlier point. I don't at all disagree with others around who put the point that it makes a whole lot of sense to have, on this very crucial matter, as Mr. Cullen and Mr. Bigras have made the point, people from the G-8. If you want to have people who were not there making their comment, critical or otherwise, with respect to what went on there...I think it's fundamental to have those who were at the G-8 before us instead of people just off at a remote distance.

My fundamental question is this, and I'll wait till the chair is ready here....

**The Chair:** Is there any other discussion?

Mr. Vellacott.

**Mr. Maurice Vellacott:** I was being respectful of the fact that you were deep in a conversation and I paused momentarily.

I'm a little baffled in terms of the viability of having these people before us at this point, because as we say, they're not in the room. The motion says to have them by video conference. In my ten years around this place.... What kind of conniving or plotting or whatever has gone on such that we might have these logistics set up, that we have things in place, not even knowing—talk about overriding democracy—what the outcome of this would be?

I need to ask you, Mr. Chair, and I guess the clerk as well, are we in a position to have these people video conferenced to us within the span of a few minutes? And if so, without wanting to.... My attempt, Mr. Chair—I have great respect for you—is not to embarrass you, but I would like to know how this may have been arranged and if we have a parallel operation going on whereby we could even do this today.

I need to know that before I can vote on this.

**The Chair:** The clerk advises me that he has no arrangements made, that he has no phone numbers where these gentlemen could be reached to do a teleconference. He is not aware, and I am not aware, of where they are, whether they are available, whether we should proceed with the half hour remaining.

Those are all questions we'd have to deal with after the vote.

**Mr. Maurice Vellacott:** I would suggest to the members opposite, who are going to vote—we hope intelligently—on this motion, that this is crucial information. It isn't even set up. What would be the point of passing this first motion? Nothing will occur.

I guess you have a pyrrhic or kind of hollow victory here, but it makes no sense. It makes absolutely no sense. I'm not sure why any member opposite would even support this when to my knowledge, or your information, and the clerk's as well, this is not even feasible to do.

What's the point of a groundless, hollow motion like this?

• (1230)

**The Chair:** Mr. Godfrey, I believe you're next.

**Hon. John Godfrey:** I just want to vote, thanks.

**The Chair:** Mr. Warawa.

**Mr. Mark Warawa:** Chair, I would agree with Mr. Vellacott.

I have a question. Has Mr. McGuinty arranged for these two witnesses? Are they standing by?

The motion reads, "That this committee immediately resume its agenda as democratically adopted by the committee on Thursday, June 7 by a vote of 10 to 0"—we were part of that, and again, that was a balanced approach—"on the study of a post G8 debrief on climate change developments and Canada's position within the broader international context", and then, "and immediately bring witnesses Matthew Bramley (Pembina Institute) and Mark Jaccard (Simon Fraser University) to testify, by video or teleconference if necessary...."

So has Mr. McGuinty arranged for those two people? Are they standing by? I think it's a very salient point.

**The Chair:** Mr. McGuinty, you're next on my list here.

**Mr. David McGuinty:** Mr. Chair, I'm anxious for the vote. Could we call the vote?

**The Chair:** The clerk has clarified for me that a video conference is impossible at this point in time. A teleconference, possibly, if they're available.... We could certainly attempt to do that, but we won't know until we try, and we aren't going to try until we have a motion voted on.

Mr. Warawa

**Mr. Mark Warawa:** Mr. Chair, you keep recognizing me when I'm about to take a bite....

**The Chair:** Sorry, wrong order. Finish your mouthful.

Mr. Allen.

**Mr. Mike Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac, CPC):** I'll take your spot while you finish your meal.

Mr. Chair, I haven't said anything in this whole debate, but this has been fascinating in terms of how this happens, and I wonder how we could run a business like this in Canada. It seems strange. Here we are with 27 minutes to go in this time allotted and we have these wonderful gentlemen who have been sitting here for an hour and a half—and I'm sure you've found this conversation very intriguing, as much as I have.

**A voice:** Bet they had other stuff to do.

**Mr. Mike Allen:** Yes, and we don't have anything else to do either.

The concern I have is...let's go back to the last meeting we had. Here we were in a meeting where we funnelled two sets of witnesses through. We had a two-minute question period and then we had a one-minute question period, and when I look at the validity of what we're going to be talking about, whether we're talking with these witnesses here today, Mr. Chair, or whether we're even able to get in contact with the people through teleconference or able to find phone numbers for them.... You look at a G-8 meeting, which was months and months and months in the planning, with tremendous execution issues and a tremendous number of lessons learned, and here we are going to try to bundle this all up in 25 minutes.

We're going to have some kind of testimony, and we'll probably allow them each 10 minutes to discuss it, and then we're going to have a concept where we're going to talk about the G-8 in a matter of 20 minutes. Mr. Chair, anybody on this committee I think would be irresponsible to think we would be able to come in with a qualified opinion on that issue in that period of time. I don't understand why we would even be entertaining that at this point in time, and that's why this motion is completely irresponsible for us to do as parliamentarians. I think what we're looking for here is quite frankly...Mr. McGuinty is looking for a one-minute sound bite that he can ask in question period this afternoon, and I think that's virtually what it is.

**A voice:** Absolutely.

**Mr. Mike Allen:** So, Mr. Chair, I think this is an irresponsible motion and I can't support it.

**The Chair:** Mr. Warawa.

**Mr. Mark Warawa:** Thank you, Chair. I think the record does show that I asked, through you, of Mr. McGuinty if he would share.... The motion calls for us to immediately hear from these two named witnesses, Mr. Bramley and Mr. Jaccard, and I asked Mr. McGuinty if they were available to immediately become witnesses and testify. So are they standing by? He did not answer that and called for the question.

I'd like to ask him another question, give him another opportunity, and maybe he would show the committee the courtesy of answering that first question also. I'm going to ask Mr. McGuinty, through you, why these specific two people? Why Matthew Bramley specifically? Why are you asking for Matthew Bramley? Hopefully I can get an answer.

He doesn't want to answer. Is that correct?

• (1235)

**The Chair:** That's correct.

**Mr. Mark Warawa:** Mr. McGuinty is continuing to call for the vote without answering the questions. That's an unhealthy pattern. Were these two witnesses at G-8 plus five? The motion is to do a post-G-8 plus five. Were these two witnesses at G-8 so that they can actually give us a post-G-8 plus five? Were they there? And the response from Mr. McGuinty is...?

**A voice:** "Call the vote".

**Mr. Mark Warawa:** "Call the vote".

I have one more question. Did Mr. Bramley help draft the Liberal plan? What connection is Mr. Bramley to the Liberal Party? Is there any connection? And the answer is...?

**A voice:** "Call the vote".

**Mr. Mark Warawa:** "Call the vote".

The record clearly shows, Chair, that we have an opposition, particularly Liberals, who do not want to hear the facts. As Mr. Allen said a moment ago, they appear to be looking for a sound bite and not interested in the environment.

Chair, Canadians want this committee to function. They want it to look at solutions to cleaning up the environment. I don't want to look back and start blaming who created the environmental mess, Chair, but the reality is that Canadians want action, they want solutions. That's what I would like to do.

Chair, there were numerous times in this committee, and also in the House, where I encouraged the whips to encourage their members to talk about solutions. I heard from the Bloc that, yes, they were very interested in the committee talking about solutions. The NDP wouldn't answer and the Liberals wouldn't answer.

I really believe the NDP supports looking at solutions, Chair, but I don't believe that anymore with the Liberals. They don't want to look at solutions. They want optics. And Chair, actually that is what the environment commissioner said in one of her reports, that there are a lot of big announcements and a lot of confetti, but they simply don't get it done. Chair, that's not what Canadians want. They want us moving forward, they want us dealing with solutions, and we have witnesses here today to talk about smog.

What we have on the table is a vicious attack against your integrity, against your character, and it's a disappointing day. I continue to encourage the members: please, let's work on solutions and quit the silly political games. This is gutter politics at its worst, Chair.

**The Chair:** Mr. Cullen.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** I have two small things to say, and then we can, I hope, proceed to the vote.

One is that this has been the enactment of a self-fulfilling prophecy on behalf of the government, talking about time being wasted as they go into long speeches quoting extensively from text.

The second is, in terms of the responsibility of this motion, if the government is unable to see the option of booking another meeting this afternoon as a possible solution, then no doubt their creativity is lacking in dealing with the issue of climate change. Of course, we can have these witnesses gathered. Of course, the committee has the power to actually hear this issue today. If they continue to persist that the only option is the one that's dead centre in front of them, I definitely regret the idea of them trying to handle a complicated issue like climate change. Let's move on and get it done.

**The Chair:** Is there any other debate?

We're going to vote then. So everyone knows exactly what we're doing, we're voting on the first part of that motion, ending at "if necessary and". That would be the first motion.

(Motion agreed to)

● (1240)

**The Chair:** We can now excuse our witnesses.

I'm sure you enjoyed the last hour and a half as much as I have. I apologize, and hopefully we'll have an opportunity to hear you again. Thank you.

Basically, the motion says that we have them immediately. Does the committee wish us to call these two people and get them on the telephone? That's all that's available. Does someone have the phone numbers for these two?

Yes, Mr. Warawa.

**Mr. Mark Warawa:** On a point of order, we have the second motion that needs to be dealt with now.

**The Chair:** We could at least get the clerk working on the phone numbers.

**Mr. Mark Warawa:** Again, on a point of order, procedurally we now have to deal with the second motion.

**The Chair:** The second motion, yes.

Mr. Warawa, what's going to happen is that I have instructed the clerk to get hold of the phone numbers. He'll report back to us if they're available. I mean, we are talking about a short time.

Let's go on to the second motion. That is now open for debate.

Mr. Cullen.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** I know there's been some discussion around this. I'm wondering if you could re-clarify, I suppose, your position.

Are you still viewing this as a motion of confidence for us?

**The Chair:** As explained, Mr. Cullen, I felt that I did what I was instructed to do, as best I could, when witnesses were not available. I felt that having the sherpa was extremely important. As someone who was there, who was part of the process for months, he could very clearly and concisely say this is what happened, this is the government's position, and this is the final statement. He was the guy literally writing it, and he could very clearly tell us where that was at. We could then get opinions on that, which is what I wanted to do.

So that's what I attempted to do. I can't apologize for that. I had to make a decision. This guy was not available to talk to again. He was leaving town, or that's what I was told. I had to make a decision. I didn't have time to call everybody.

I guess I find it offensive to be asked to apologize for making a decision. Really, a chairman has to sometimes make decisions. I felt we would accomplish both a Tuesday and a Thursday meeting.

So I do take offence at this motion, because it does call in.... We've heard it implied that in fact I was told that this is what I had to do, which is totally, 100% false.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** That was my question. But just to clarify on the distinction, there's being offended by something—and I can appreciate that—and then there's seeing it as a matter of confidence. It seems there's a bit of a gulf between the two.

I assume you can't be convinced.

**The Chair:** I don't feel I should be asked by this committee to apologize for doing what I thought was the right thing. Now, should I change how I would do it in the future? You're darn right. I can learn from that. I mean, I've gotten the message.

The point is that I'm not going to apologize for what I did. I didn't think I did anything incorrectly.

**An hon. member:** You just said you did.

**The Chair:** Well, no, I made a decision. I made a decision. You're questioning that decision. If that says that I made the wrong decision and you want me to apologize, I can't do that.

Mr. Rota.

**Mr. Anthony Rota (Nipissing—Timiskaming, Lib.):** Mr. Chair, I want to talk to the point that makes it a point of confidence.



As you mentioned, you did what you thought was right. I don't doubt that for one second, Mr. Chair. I think you did what you thought was in the best interest of this committee. However, I don't agree with you when you say it wasn't a mistake.

I think it was in conflict with most of the people here, which qualifies it as an error. The first time you do something, it's an error. If you do it repeatedly, a second or third time, then I'd begin to question you and say, okay, this is a confidence issue. But right now it's just something that was done and that didn't agree with everyone here. It was an error.

I would say an apology is not that far out of order. It's not about confidence in the chair. You were doing what you thought was right, and for that, I don't think it's confidence. But I do think it is a decision that is the chair's, whether it is confidence or not. It's not our decision, or we're not voting on a confidence issue.

So I just wanted to make that point. I don't think you should take it as a confidence issue. An error was made. I mean, the last time I checked, you were human. Humans make mistakes. You made an error. Just a simple "I'm sorry" is all it would take.

• (1245)

**The Chair:** Mr. McGuinty.

**Mr. David McGuinty:** Just for the record, Mr. Chair, as the mover of the motion, I would like to note that in the remarks I made earlier, I explicitly stated that it's not about you, personally. I have never spoken of this motion as a matter of confidence. In fact, every single member who has spoken about the confidence issue has disagreed with your own interpretation. I would implore that you not take this as a non-confidence issue. It's not. It was not put into the text of the motion.

Procedurally, if the official opposition were interested in pursuing such an outcome, other procedures would have been adopted. This is not what this notice of motion is about at all.

**The Chair:** Mr. Cullen.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** I have made my comments.

**The Chair:** Okay.

Mr. Warawa.

**Mr. Mark Warawa:** Mr. Chair, I have a question to you and then a comment.

Have you, in your time here on the Hill, ever been asked for an apology in the form of a formal motion?

**The Chair:** I've certainly never seen that happen in a committee before. In the House, certainly, that's a usual occurrence, and has been for all the years, but no, not in a committee.

**Mr. Mark Warawa:** Not in a committee setting. So this is very much out of the norm. You've provided an explanation of why you did it.

Again, my opinion is that I support it. It was ten to zero. There was unanimous support to have a balanced approach, and the sherpa was a major part of that. I don't want to waste time reading it into the record again: your testimony was very clear. The sherpa was part of it, and it was going to be a one-day thing. So what you proposed was

a Tuesday meeting with the sherpa in the first hour and with the other group in the second hour of the meeting.

That was at your discretion. It's very clear in the policy guide. And I've read that. I don't need to read that again. It's very clear that it's within your authority, along with the clerk's, and that decision was made.

So you've got a motion. We don't see this happening—that a committee would be asking for a motion. In the introduction of that motion, there were comments made that indicated that you were being manipulated by the PMO, which, again, was quite inappropriate.

I think there's been some backpedalling on that position, but clearly I think you've provided an explanation, and I think the appropriate measure is to remove this motion. I would ask the mover to remove this motion. You've shared that you're considering it a confidence motion—the appropriate measure—and I'd ask, through you, that Mr. McGuinty remove this motion.

**The Chair:** Mr. Bigras.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Bernard Bigras:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

As I indicated earlier, I am sorry to see us having to vote on this motion. I understand what the parliamentary secretary is telling us, but in order to have balance of the kind he would like to see in today's meeting, I would point out that, according to the decision made on June 7, we needed to be focusing on the G8. Mr. Chairman, you have taken the trouble in the past to get in touch with us on less important issues to indicate changes. However—and I do not want to have to quote Marleau and Montpetit because it is not necessary—you should at least have contacted me. I do not necessarily want us to use a motion here. If you at least had the humility to admit to having made a mistake...

I feel that this motion is not a confidence motion. However, I think that we cannot allow ourselves to accept the process that has been initiated. If we accept this, it means that we will find out about the agenda through the clerk and that votes taken by the committee will be called into question. You should at least have contacted me to ask me whether the agenda could be changed, given that it was difficult to get hold of witnesses and a number of them were not available. But that was not done.

I will therefore be obliged to vote in favour of this motion, which is not a confidence motion. I want you to know that if you step down, it will be your decision and we will interpret it as a resignation, which I hope will not happen, by the way. I am sorry, but we cannot stand by and say nothing when this kind of decision is made. But if you agree to acknowledge that a mistake was made, we can reconsider. Up to now, you continue to say that your decisions were right. We on this side cannot support that assessment.

•(1250)

[English]

**The Chair:** Mr. Bigras, I will repeat what I said before. It was at night. He required a decision; he was leaving town. I didn't have time to phone everybody that evening. I made that decision. As required, I felt he was critical. He was the only person we could get who was there, so that was the decision.

Would I have liked to have called everybody? Naturally. Obviously I would have. I'm telling you, this wasn't available. I spent all day trying to get a hold of this guy. I only received final confirmation the next morning at about 8:30, or whatever time it was. So those are the timelines, and that's what I'm telling you.

I feel that I'm being questioned about this. As in the past, under normal circumstances, would I want to call you? Naturally. I would have liked to have told you about the trouble we were having, but obviously that didn't happen this time. Will it happen again? I would certainly hope not. Have I learned from the process? Yes, but when I saw this in front of me, I took it as a confidence.

Mr. Vellacott.

**Mr. Maurice Vellacott:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I would say to Mr. Bigras, who just spoke, that what people are stuck on at this point is the fact that part of the motion is to have a particular meeting with respect to the G-8, and thereafter on a particular date.

Please also keep in mind, colleagues, that part of the motion was in terms of how that would be set up and done. It was about having the sherpa in, about having people who were actually there.

So you can play with the details and some minor point about the fact that you have a meeting happening on a certain date, but you miss the big picture. It was being set up in a particular way to have Mr. Bramley, if you choose, and Mr. Jaccard, but to have others as well.

So if you want to go bullheadedly ahead and have a meeting on a particular day, yes, you wanted one side of the motion, a particular part of the motion, but you're not honouring the full intent of the motion. The more important, bigger-picture part is to say that we want to get some balance here, some direct input from people who were at the G-8.

You can kind of proceed and say, well, we kind of—

**Mr. Bernard Bigras:** Why didn't he call me? He didn't call me.

**Mr. Maurice Vellacott:** He never called me either.

**The Chair:** Can I ask for the committee's indulgence for a minute? We have Mr. Jaccard on the line. Mr. Bramley is not quite on the line yet, but he has only a short time to talk to us; ten minutes was suggested. I need your guidance as to whether we go ahead. We have a motion that asks us to.

They're still trying to hook up, but is it your wish to have both of them, and then carry on with this?

•(1255)

**Mr. Mark Warawa:** We're debating a motion on the floor, and you have to have unanimous consent—

**The Chair:** You need unanimous consent to do that. I want to advise you of what's happening.

**Hon. John Godfrey:** In order for us to continue the meeting, whatever happens with the motion we're about to vote on, you're just asking for agreement that we continue—

**The Chair:** That we continue to get these guys on the line and that we are going to listen to them.

**Mr. Mark Warawa:** A point of order.

There is a very easy solution, Chair. If Mr. McGuinty removes this motion, then we can move on. To move forward is to try to bully you into making an apology, Chair, and it's not appropriate.

So I would again ask Mr. McGuinty to remove the motion, and then we can get on to the witnesses.

Would Mr. McGuinty remove the motion?

**The Chair:** It's now before the committee, so it's really not Mr. McGuinty who makes that decision. It would be the committee that would have to make that decision.

Obviously you could decide to do that. The point is, what's my guidance for these two gentlemen? Get them on the phone?

**An. hon. member:** Yes.

**The Chair:** Okay.

**An hon. member:** No.

**The Chair:** We'll carry on, but we have a motion to get hold of them, and that's what we're attempting to do.

**An hon. member:** We have a motion.

**The Chair:** Yes, we do.

Mr. Vellacott still has the floor.

**Mr. Maurice Vellacott:** As much as I, myself, have questions about whether this would truly and strictly be a confidence issue, I defer to you, Mr. Chair. As I said before, I seriously think you'd want to get some significant input from somebody else before you judge it such.

The kind of language that's written into this motion I think needs to be understood against the backdrop of what Mr. McGuinty said earlier.

Mr. Rota, I think you were here at the time.

Mr. McGuinty sketched a fairly interesting conspiracy theory, short of phone logs and whatever. He was pretty precise in impugning the integrity of the chair of the committee regarding how this happened: that it wasn't just an accident, that there was fairly malicious intent. That was the way he portrayed it. He got a call from the Prime Minister's Office, and so on. You can go back to the Hansard record and check it. That's the specific backdrop to the motion here.

If that hadn't been loaded into the situation prematurely, well before we got into the actual discussion of it, maybe we would be at a different point here. But until Mr. McGuinty is prepared to either withdraw those remarks or apologize for the interesting conspiracy theory that he sketched at the very beginning to impugn the integrity of the chair.... That's why we have loaded into it that very full detailed chronology of events of Mr. McGuinty.

I am of the view that we should probably amend this motion to read, "That Mr. McGuinty apologize, make a fulsome apology, to the chair of the committee for impugning his integrity". That would be my offering or my suggestion, because I think you have some major problems with what's here. If you want to understand it in some stripped-down kind of version, which I'd even still have a problem with, I think I would want to move that Mr. McGuinty make an apology to the chair of the committee for impugning his integrity. That's the amendment to the motion I'm putting forward at this time.

**The Chair:** We have two gentlemen on the telephone holding for us, and we have a motion on the floor that we are debating. The only way we can proceed is to carry on debating the motion and leave the guys on the telephone, or we can have a motion to listen to these two gentlemen and come back to the motion. Or we can adjourn the meeting.

We still have people talking to the motion, and now we have an amendment. That'll be a separate motion when we get to it.

• (1300)

**Hon. John Godfrey:** I have a point of order.

**The Chair:** Yes.

**Hon. John Godfrey:** In order that we don't collapse at one o'clock—and we're not going to as long as this is being debated—what is it we need to do procedurally? We want some assurance that after we've voted on the motion we will be able to hear the witnesses. In other words, how do we extend our sitting?

**The Chair:** Mr. Vellacott, did you want to make an amendment to this motion? Is that what you were proposing?

**Mr. Maurice Vellacott:** I think he should apologize. I think the way he's carried on is despicable, absolutely.

**The Chair:** But as I said, Mr. Vellacott, are you going to make...?

**Mr. Maurice Vellacott:** Yes, I move it.

**The Chair:** Okay. The clerk will get the wording. We'll debate that motion, or that sub-motion. Now you see why the UN has so much fun.

I'm going to ask the clerk to read what Mr. Vellacott has put forward as his amendment.

**The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Justin Vaive):** That Mr. McGuinty apologize to the chair for impugning his integrity.

**The Chair:** Okay. Does everybody understand?

Mr. Bigras.

[Translation]

**Mr. Bernard Bigras:** I would like to have the clerk's opinion on this, but it seems to me that this amendment is out of order. It goes beyond the spirit of the original motion. Mr. Warawa could propose a

new motion, but I have questions as to whether the amendment is in order.

[English]

**The Chair:** What I'm advised, Mr. Vellacott, is that you can remove the word "chair", and put in the word "McGuinty".

**Voices:** Oh, oh!

**The Chair:** That's called a reverse whatever.

Our new ruling here from the chair is that we carry on with the original motion that we're discussing and that after that one passes or fails, we would then entertain a motion from Mr. Vellacott on the other item, as a separate motion.

• (1305)

**Mr. Maurice Vellacott:** So the other suggestion earlier that Mr. McGuinty apologize to him, because he is in fact the one who has unilaterally changed things here in terms of the intent of the motion.... They got their day, but they've changed it in terms of the full intent of it. Is that not in order, then, for Mr. McGuinty's name to be inserted at that point?

**The Chair:** I think I tend to agree with the clerk that we have two pretty fundamentally different issues here, so I think you would have to make a separate motion.

It sounds interesting, but I don't think we can follow that line.

**Mr. Maurice Vellacott:** Well, on the record then, I will not be putting a separate motion forward, but I certainly would be of the view either to amend or insert McGuinty's name insofar as he was the one who unilaterally changed the whole agenda for today by way of these motions.

**The Chair:** I think my ruling on that would be that we'd deal with that as a separate motion altogether.

I think on the main motion, which is what we're dealing with, Mr. Scarpaleggia, you were...?

**Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia:** No, I think I'll pass.

**The Chair:** Mr. Warawa.

**Mr. Mark Warawa:** We're about to vote on a motion and I'd like to read it:

that this committee call upon the chair to apologize to the committee for unilaterally rewriting today's agenda in a manner contradicting the expressed will of the committee.

Chair, you've very clearly shared the rationale why you made the decisions you did. You had the authority to do that. You did it in good faith. You shared that you were not influenced by anybody but you made those decisions. Chair, I have full confidence in you as chair but you've expressed this as a confidence motion.

I've asked Mr. McGuinty on two different occasions to please remove this. An analogy that I picture is a bully with his foot on your throat saying "Apologize".

I hope this committee will not force this, because you're considering this as a confidence motion. I have full confidence in you and would ask again for Mr. McGuinty to please remove this. I believe you've been very fair and will continue to be fair and...please do not bully the chair.

**The Chair:** Mr. McGuinty, you were on our list here at one point. I'm not sure if we....

**Mr. David McGuinty:** Call the vote.

**Mr. Maurice Vellacott:** I just have one question.

**Mr. David McGuinty:** Call the vote.

**The Chair:** Mr. Vellacott.

**Mr. Maurice Vellacott:** In the event that the chair, Mr. Mills, chooses not to follow through with this particular edict of Mr. McGuinty, what transpires at that point? That is the question.

**The Chair:** Again, the clerk advises me it's calling upon me. I think I've made more than clear what my position is and what I consider this as, so I can't be clearer.

Any other comments? Those in favour of the motion?

(Motion agreed to)

**The Chair:** Okay, I guess I'm finished.

• (1310)

**The Clerk:** Members of the committee, I'd just like to read this passage, on page 830, of Marleau and Montpetit. It says:

In the event of resignation or removal of the Chair from the committee, a new Chair must be elected before the committee can take up other business.

We'll be proceeding to that now.

As I said, we can now proceed to the election of the chair. I'm ready to receive motions to that effect.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** The standard practice at this committee is that the chair come from the Conservative benches. That's correct?

**The Clerk:** That is correct.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** Okay. So my question is, if we have no one moderating this meeting, which of the—

**The Clerk:** I don't have the authority to recognize anybody. You need to discuss amongst yourselves.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** Committee members, in order to proceed with any discussion on environmental topics, in order to hear our witnesses who are on the line today, I ask that one of the Conservative members step forward and assume the chair.

There's no recognition, Mark. You speak if you wish to.

**Mr. Mark Warawa:** I have full confidence in Bob Mills as the chair, and unfortunately he was voted against. But I disagreed with that motion, and I will be only supporting Bob Mills at this time.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** I understand that, Mark, but in order to proceed with the issues that are presented before us here at committee today, the tradition has been that the government assumes the chairmanship or chairwomanship of the committee.

I would implore one of the Conservative members here present to position themselves in the chair, at least for today, until we can sort this out, in order to hear the witnesses.

**Mr. Mark Warawa:** I consider the action taken as the action of a bully and I will not be nominated to the chair.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** So the question goes to your colleagues, then—Maurice, Luc, or Mike.

We've talked a great deal about time wasted. We've just been through two hours. We seek to have some sort of forward progress on the environment.

Will any of you take up the chair?

**Mr. Maurice Vellacott:** Nathan, I would respond to you that I have full confidence in Mr. Mills as the chair.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** He's resigned. Whether you have confidence in Mr. Mills or not, he's—

**Mr. Maurice Vellacott:** No. I can make a statement in respect of that.

For Mr. McGuinty to say that he has full confidence in the chair, what double-speak and hypocrisy is that? He's just expressed that in a—

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** Maurice, I understand that.

**An hon. member:** We vote for Bob Mills.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** In order to proceed today—

**Mr. Anthony Rota:** If I can interrupt for a second, I'd like to nominate Mike Allen. I think he would be a good, impartial chair, seeing that we don't have a chair anymore.

**Mr. Maurice Vellacott:** I have the floor. I still have the floor.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** There is no floor to be had. This is a discussion.

**The Clerk:** I do have a motion from Mr. Rota to the effect of nominating Mr. Mike Allen as chair.

**Mr. Mike Allen:** Can I comment on that?

**The Clerk:** It has been moved by Mr. Rota that Mr. Allen be elected as chair of the committee.

Are there any further motions to that effect?

**Mr. Mike Allen:** Can I comment on that?

The short or front-end answer to that is I decline the nomination.

I have known Bob Mills for 17 months and he's always been a man I respect. He's not a pawn, as he's been referred to by Mr. McGuinty.

You referred to him as a pawn.

**Mr. David McGuinty:** Did I use that word?

**An hon. member:** You did. Check your Hansard.

**Mr. Mike Allen:** Absolutely. Check your Hansard.

Having said that, why would anybody want to take the chair and put themselves in a position like Mr. Mills and be subjected to that?

From my perspective, he's a tremendous individual and has done a tremendous service to the environment and to this committee over a number of years, and he's the man for the job.

[*Translation*]

**The Clerk:** Do you want to nominate someone?

**Mr. Bernard Bigras:** Yes, I would like to nominate Mr. Luc Harvey for the position of chair.

[*English*]

**The Clerk:** It has been proposed by Monsieur Bernard Bigras that Mr. Luc Harvey be elected as chair of the committee.

Is it the pleasure of the committee to adopt this motion?

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Luc Harvey:** I am really pleased that my friend Bernard has thought of me, but given what has been said by our Chairman, Bob Mills, and the fact that I would have taken exactly the same action, that is, I would have made sure there were witnesses today and that the chairman's duties were fulfilled, I do not see how I could be chair of the committee. I therefore decline the nomination.

• (1315)

[*English*]

**The Clerk:** Mr. McGuinty.

**Mr. David McGuinty:** I don't have a motion, but just a question for the government members. Do they, as government, intend to propose anyone to sit as chair of the standing committee?

**An hon. member:** Bob Mills.

**Mr. Mark Warawa:** On Tuesday we could have a meeting, Clerk.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** Clerk, if I could suggest, as it doesn't seem we're proceeding today, could we at least let our witnesses on the phone go? I think there is some interest in not having them witness this debacle.

**The Clerk:** Just to clarify matters:

If no motion proposing a member for the position of Chair is adopted, no other business can be transacted. When an impasse is evident, the members disperse and [the meeting] must be reconvened by the clerk at a later time, with the election of a Chair remaining their first order of business.

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