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# **Standing Committee on Human Resources, Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities**

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**Thursday, May 31, 2007**

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**Chair**

**Mr. Dean Allison**

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## Standing Committee on Human Resources, Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities

Thursday, May 31, 2007

• (1535)

[English]

**The Chair (Mr. Dean Allison (Niagara West—Glanbrook, CPC)):** Pursuant to clause 108 of the Standing Orders, the committee will now resume its debate on Mr. Savage's motion.

Mr. Savage, I know that when we ended the last meeting we said we would get right back to your motion before we looked at going clause by clause. So why don't we look at your motion right now?

**Mr. Michael Savage (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, Lib.):** Thank you, Chair.

I think we had begun debate on the motion, and the motion has been stated. My reasons I stated last Thursday, and I'm prepared to listen to whatever discussion takes place and then hopefully have a vote or any amendments. Obviously the timing on the motion was May 31, and we're going to have to deal with that.

**The Chair:** Okay.

I don't know if there was a suggestion to...

**Mr. Michael Savage:** Well, I would change my motion, just the last part of my motion, from May 31 to June....

**The Chair:** How about June 7?

**Mr. Michael Savage:** Yes.

**The Chair:** Okay.

We have an amendment now, "that those officials be called upon to appear on an emergency basis on June 7, 2007".

Is that okay?

**Mr. Mike Lake (Edmonton—Mill Woods—Beaumont, CPC):** Are we voting on the amendment? How does that work? Does he have to have unanimous consent to even make an amendment?

**The Chair:** No. That's the amendment. We will vote on the amendment before we vote on the main motion.

Is there any discussion on the date of that amendment?

**Mrs. Lynne Yelich (Blackstrap, CPC):** No discussion.

Most importantly, I hope he has taken into consideration that perhaps the officials have better things to do than to come before us; perhaps they're busy trying to put the program out. We don't agree with having them come forward right now because we're busy trying to get the employability study and some of the other important issues before us. However he wants to write it, it's fine with us for June 7.

**The Chair:** Sure.

I think he's taken that into consideration, by giving them a week to get ready.

**Mrs. Lynne Yelich:** Okay. Good.

**The Chair:** Okay.

If there is no other discussion on the amendment, I'll call the vote on the amendment.

(Amendment agreed to)

**The Chair:** Now let's go to the main motion. Is there any more discussion on the main motion?

Mr. Lake.

**Mr. Mike Lake:** I'd just like to suggest that it seems as if every single time we've come in here over the last little while we have a new motion from Mr. Savage on this. I would respectfully suggest that when he goes away for the weekend, he think about all the different things he might want to bring up on this issue and put them into one comprehensive motion, as opposed to waking up every morning and thinking "I'd like to do this now". It does seem rather ridiculous.

We have a lot of things to discuss on this committee—some very important things. Our employability study has been pushed back and pushed back in terms of all the different things over and over again, and obviously we have other legislation coming forward. Hopefully this will be the last motion, but if there are any more, maybe we can actually get them put into one thing.

**The Chair:** I'm sure this will be the last motion until the next motion. I'm pretty confident about that.

As there's no more discussion, I'll call the vote on this particular item, the motion as amended.

(Motion as amended agreed to)

• (1540)

**The Chair:** My next discussion is—and I'll just throw this out to the committee—that we are supposed to look at the employability study next week and start going through the recommendations. It's a fairly lengthy document, I can assure you. I was wondering if we could have our meetings on Tuesday and Thursday mornings. We should carve out an hour for Mr. Savage before we get into that. Then we could see how our schedules go from there, and it would free up Thursday afternoon.

Mr. Silva.

**Mr. Mario Silva (Davenport, Lib.):** I mentioned to you already, Mr. Chair, that Tuesday mornings and sometimes Thursday mornings I have the human rights committee at 11 o'clock. If you want to have it from 9 to 11, that's another story. Then I'm available, but certainly after 11 it becomes a problem.

**The Chair:** Okay.

Ms. Yelich.

**Mrs. Lynne Yelich:** We don't accommodate everybody's other meetings because we have a draft here, so I can't.

**The Chair:** I understand that, and that's the challenge.

I'm just putting it out there. One of the suggestions I have is that maybe we meet with....

Go ahead.

**Mr. Mario Silva:** I'll say that's a bit of an unfair comment, Mr. Chair. The fact is that there was a schedule for this committee, and then I was also put on another committee that had a different schedule. Now you're asking to change this schedule that is in conflict with another one. Certainly when I joined this committee and the other one, there was no problem of conflict.

**The Chair:** That's a fair comment, and that's why we want to get the will of the committee as we move forward on that.

Mr. Lessard, followed by Mr. Lake.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Yves Lessard (Chambly—Borduas, BQ):** Mr. Chairman, I have always been in favour of adding more time to allow us to move forward with our work. We have a fairly heavy workload.

I would also like to know what is happening with our motion in which we asked to receive the lists of applications and grants under the federal Summer Jobs program by June 1, which happens to be tomorrow. I expect that we will receive this list today, so that we can take it with us and to review it.

Has there been any response to our motion?

[*English*]

**The Chair:** I believe, from what I understand—I could be wrong—that the information will be forwarded to the clerk on the 1st, as discussed. So it will be ready when it was requested.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Yves Lessard:** Mr. Chairman, do you know if we are going to receive, as we requested, last year's and this year's lists for each riding?

[*English*]

**The Chair:** I don't know what's going to be provided. My understanding of the request, as to what they can accommodate, is that it will be available to the clerk tomorrow, and then the clerk will send that information out to each of us.

I am not suggesting we add two additional meetings. I just want to clarify again, and I appreciate Mr. Silva's concern, that my concern was, as Mr. Lessard had said, if we're going to meet from 10 until 1, we could meet the first hour with the department officials and then

spend the next two hours dealing with that issue. That would free us up on Thursday evening. I don't know whether we can get out of here early on Thursday. I never make any assumptions there, but it would deal with the information we have before us.

Employability, as I said, we are not going to get done in the next week or two.

We're going to need to move forward. I do have a couple of other people on the list.

Mr. Lake, and then Ms. Yelich.

**Mr. Mike Lake:** I just want to get some clarification of what you were talking about. What times would we meet on Tuesday and Thursday?

**The Chair:** The suggestion was from 10 until noon on Tuesday and 10 until 1 on Thursday.

**Mr. Mike Lake:** And these would replace....

**The Chair:** These would replace the other two afternoon meetings.

**Mr. Mike Lake:** The meetings in the afternoon, okay.

And why are we doing that, as opposed to just meeting at our normal time? It's just to clarify.

**The Chair:** I would not like to lose any time on the employability issue, so it gives us an hour.

**Mr. Mike Lake:** This gives us that one hour extra.

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

**Mr. Mike Lake:** But why wouldn't we just meet on Tuesday, at our normal time, for another two hours?

**The Chair:** We've got a subcommittee meeting that we have to deal with as well. I was hoping we could do that on Tuesday afternoon and then bring forward any recommendations to Thursday's meeting.

**Mr. Mike Lake:** Okay.

In regard to Mr. Silva's comment, I can relate to that. Many of us are on two committees as well. I think having a discussion, at least, to say if seven of us all have meetings at that time, it doesn't make much sense for us to—

**The Chair:** Sure, and that's a great point, Mr. Lake.

Do we want to leave Tuesday's meeting as is and then just move Thursday's meeting?

**Mr. Mike Lake:** I think that would make sense.

**The Chair:** That would be helpful to Mr. Silva, so I'll make the suggestion, then, that we look at leaving Tuesday's meeting the same, which means the subcommittee will probably need to meet in the morning, which is fine. And if it's okay with the committee, on Thursday we could move the meeting from 10 until 1.

**Mr. Mike Lake:** That does work for me, personally.

**The Chair:** Mr. Savage, and then we'll go back to Ms. Yelich.

**Mr. Michael Savage:** I just wonder, where there's a conflict with other committees that would usually start at 11, could we go from 9 to 11, as opposed to...?

**The Chair:** Most definitely. Sure.

**Mr. Michael Savage:** But even so, if there's overlapping—

**The Chair:** Yes, that would give people a chance to sub in and out.

Thank you.

What I'm suggesting is Tuesday's meeting will remain the same and Thursday's meeting would be 9 until 12.

• (1545)

**Mr. Michael Savage:** With the officials at 9?

**The Chair:** In the first hour, yes.

**Mrs. Lynne Yelich:** What are the dates?

**The Chair:** Tuesday is June 5 and Thursday is June 7.

Did you have a comment, Ms. Yelich?

**Mrs. Lynne Yelich:** Not anymore, thanks.

**The Chair:** Okay.

Are there any other comments on that? Are we okay with that before we go to clause-by-clause?

Mr. Temelkovski.

**Mr. Lui Temelkovski (Oak Ridges—Markham, Lib.):** I was just going to suggest that maybe you defer this to the fall, because it looks like we're going home any time. Schedules may be changed in the fall, as it is already. So changing it now—

**The Chair:** Do I have unanimous consent to defer Mr. Savage's motion?

No, never mind. I don't think I'll go there.

The scheduling is okay, we've dealt with the motion, so now let us get into clause-by-clause.

Pursuant to the order of reference of Wednesday, November 22, 2006, Bill C-284, An Act to amend the Canada Student Financial Assistance Act (Canada access grants), we will now look at going clause by clause.

I'll take a list here. Mr. Brown, Mr. Lessard, and then Madame Savoie.

**Mr. Patrick Brown (Barrie, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

At the close of the last meeting there appeared to be a bit of confusion on how Quebec would suffer financially under this bill. I thought maybe the officials could shed some information for us on how this bill affects alternative payment systems.

At the last meeting I suggested that Quebec could lose up to \$5.4 million under this. How are Quebec and the two territories that received alternative payments going to be affected by this proposal?

**The Chair:** Mr. Leduc.

**Mr. Luc Leduc (Senior Counsel and Group Head, Legal Services, Department of Human Resources and Social Development):** Mr. Chair, I'll take the question. I'm with the Department of Justice. I just have to say that I can't provide legal advice to the committee, but I am pleased to provide my comprehension of the bill and the effect on the transfer payments.

The way Bill C-284 operates, there would no longer be the possibility of provinces opting out and getting compensation. It's a very technical reason, because the act presently lists all of the various programs from which provinces can opt out. It's very specific in section 14 of the Canada Student Financial Assistance Act. Right now, these particular programs are listed as regulations made under paragraph 15(p). That's a general enabling authority to make these particular programs or *subventions*. Bill C-284 takes the regulations made under paragraph 15(p), repeals them, and then enshrines them in the legislation as section 14, I think. By doing so, these new programs, or the programs brought into the legislation, are no longer listed in section 14 and cannot be used technically for the opting out formula. It's as simple as that. It's just a question of a cross-reference not having been made.

The net result is that clearly the amounts of money—and the officials can speak—for the province of Quebec for that particular program...they have one going right now where they're getting the transfer payments, but it would no longer operate. And if they made a program for low-income families in the future, they couldn't get the transfer payments.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Brown.

Thank you, Mr. Leduc, for the clarification.

On the list I have Mr. Lessard, followed by Madame Savoie.

Mr. Lessard.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Yves Lessard:** Mr. Chairman, it is very appropriate that we are starting off with this question because at last Tuesday's sitting, Mr. Brown voiced his concerns about section 14. If references to the regulations were not included in Bill C-284, two regulatory provisions would be excluded de facto, resulting in a loss of rights not only in Quebec but in other provinces as well in so far as the withdrawal clause is concerned.

Meanwhile, we have done some research with the help, naturally, of departmental officials. They provided us with the information to complete our assessment of the matter. We now know that the concerns expressed by Mr. Brown last Tuesday are very real and must therefore be taken into consideration. We thought about moving an amendment. In order for it to be admissible and useful, it would have to apply to section 14 of the act. The problem here—and the clerk can either confirm and refute our contention—is that Bill C-284 does not affect section 14. Therefore we cannot amend this provision. We came to the conclusion that an amendment would be ruled out of order.

At this point, I have two things to say on behalf of my party. We still feel that the aim of this bill is laudable as well as desirable. However, the wording has the opposite affect, not only for Quebec but for the provinces in general. For that very reason, we would be compelled to vote against it if it is not amended.

Because we consider this bill to be a laudable initiative, I would like to propose to my colleagues on this committee that, in a spirit of constructive cooperation, we spend a little time considering whether the committee would like to bring in some amendments. If so, we need to look at how we could do this while at the same time honouring our procedural obligations.

•(1550)

[English]

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Lessard.

Madame Savoie is next.

[Translation]

**Ms. Denise Savoie (Victoria, NDP):** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

We are also wondering if, in a spirit of cooperation, it might be possible to defer our consideration of this bill. We support the proposed legislation, although we would have worded it differently. Besides, this exemption was an integral component of our bill on early childhood education and day cares. For the sake of cooperation, we are wondering if consideration of the bill could be deferred to give us time to look into possible amendments that could help to solve this problem.

[English]

**The Chair:** Thank you, Madame Savoie.

I have Mr. Savage and Ms. Yelich on the list. Sorry, did you...?

[Translation]

**Ms. Denise Savoie:** I also had several amendments to table. I had discussed them with my colleagues. However, I think I will wait until this matter has been resolved before I move them. Alright?

[English]

**The Chair:** Thank you. Let's hear from everybody first.

Next is Mr. Savage, and then I've got Ms. Yelich on the list.

**Mr. Michael Savage:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We have a situation here that we obviously have to deal with. Mr. Brown made a good point the other day; it caught us all off guard, but I commend him for doing that. Clearly the situation is that we have a bill that people want to support, but we have some technical amendments now that have to be made in order for the Bloc to support it.

What options are open to us as committee members to get more time to make this happen?

**The Chair:** I know the clerk is working on that right now as we speak. We'll go to Ms. Yelich and then we'll have something for you.

Next is Ms. Yelich, followed by Mr. Lake.

**Mrs. Lynne Yelich:** Because this is not a bill we can support, I would like to ask the officials, wouldn't you say this is what is fundamentally wrong with this, that it is legislation and a bill and this kind of thing could have been done through regulation? Would you say this is why we should probably not have this as legislation but in fact leave this program or any expansion or...?

Would you agree, or do you care to comment?

[Translation]

**Mr. Luc Leduc:** I am not sure I understood correctly.

[English]

If I understood the question, it's asking whether this piece of legislation takes regulation and puts it in the act, whereas it should be more properly left in the regulations.

**Mrs. Lynne Yelich:** Yes.

**Mr. Luc Leduc:** It's a choice for the committee. Leaving it in the regulations obviously gives more flexibility, and you wouldn't have that particular—

•(1555)

**Mrs. Lynne Yelich:** I think that's what I'd like you to expand on. That's why this bill...these kinds of programs are delivered through regulations, which is how it should rightfully be done. Would you agree that it would be better not to have legislation for this, because it already is handled through regulations and we don't need legislation?

**Ms. Rosaline Frith (Director General, Canada Student Loans Program, Department of Human Resources and Social Development):** Normally, in the current legislation framework we have, all our particulars with respect to grants and loans are laid out clearly in the regulations, and we're able to make changes as appropriate with a fair degree of flexibility; one can make an adjustment as needed vis-à-vis interest rates, cost of living, or other such issues.

Putting it in the legislation will simply make it take a longer time to make any changes that would be necessary to this particular grant, and it would make this particular grant dealt with in a manner that is completely different from any other grants or loans the program is responsible for.

**The Chair:** Mr. Lake, did you have some comments?

**Mr. Mike Lake:** I'm not sure exactly what Ms. Savoie was asking. Was it whether we would just adjourn the meeting and come back some other time? What was the request? We're sitting here; we're supposed to be doing clause-by-clause consideration on this, and it seems that there is a pretty major issue.

I would note that we have many very important things we should be doing as a committee, and this is the third time we have been dealing with a bill that has some serious issues associated with it. We had the Bloc's Bill C-257. We had the NDP's Bill C-304. Now we have the Liberals' Bill C-284. All of them had things in them that were clearly not completely thought out before they came here. In every case there is an urgency for discussing these bills.

Of course, I understand that a private member's bill is never going to be perfect and there are always going to be things that you have to deal with in committee, but in each of these cases they had major flaws that probably should have been discovered by the parties sponsoring the bills.

It comes down to the fact that we have this employability thing that we're supposed to be doing. We have a poverty study that we're all on side with and want to get into. If we adjourn this meeting and then come back and have to have another meeting on this, it just seems like a crazy way to go about it.

I'm not sure what Ms. Savoie is talking about. Is that what your suggestion was, that we put this on the side and come back? If we do that, does it end the meeting and we waste another two hours?

**The Chair:** Let's hear from everybody. I have a couple of suggestions, but let's hear everybody out. We'll get some things on the table, and the committee will decide which direction we want to go.

I have Madame Savoie, and then Mr. Savage and Mr. Lessard.

**Ms. Denise Savoie:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We all appreciate that we have a lot of work to do on the employability study, and that's a very serious issue. In fact, this bill, if it were considered by the government, might help young people to overcome some major obstacles in accessing post-secondary education.

Mr. Lake referred to many of the bills that have been brought forward. I know it must be annoying for the government to have an opposition when it wants to act like a ruling party, but here we have opposition parties who are bringing proactive solutions to some issues we are facing and looking at this committee as a way of collaborating to find a solution to this technical issue.

I wasn't suggesting adjournment; I was exploring whether there are solutions other than just packing it in.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

I have Mr. Lessard and then Mr. Savage.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Yves Lessard:** With all due respect to Mr. Lake, just because he is opposed to a bill does not mean that it was ill conceived. Otherwise, it would mean that he has perfection on his side, something that we can not easily acknowledge. Each party works hard to ensure that the bills tabled are constructed in the best possible way.

In my opinion, these bills have considerable merit, especially since the House determined that they should be considered at second reading and possibly at third reading. That is already an acknowledgment of their considerable merit. The bills mentioned have much value and were not selected precisely because of political or ideological positions.

This is the kind of debate in which we are engaged, Mr. Chairman. I do not want to belabour the point, but this bill has considerable merit because its objective is to help people, particularly people in need of assistance, for example, disabled persons—like the ones here today—or persons on low incomes. The bill would provide them with the means to become as self-sufficient as they possibly can. Admittedly, Mr. Chairman, that is a very laudable objective.

We are facing a technical problem that can be resolved two ways. We could decide to stop right here and the government party could then proceed to throw everything out immediately. We are not the bill's sponsors. We could also get together the members of the support team, that is the clerk or other individuals, and one representative of each party to see if the will exists to put forward an amendment that could be debated and in the process, correct the bill's shortcoming. The fact is that some provisions will have the opposite effect of what the bill intended. That is a fact. The aim of the bill is not to take away from the provinces and from Quebec any rights in the area of compensation. That is not the objective.

Once we realize that, then we need to ask ourselves how the bill can be amended. It is not difficult. The first step, in my opinion, is to ask if the amendment can be debated. If the government party says that it wants nothing to do with the amendment, then I do not think we will be able to proceed much further. The clerk has indicated that we can suspend the sitting and discuss this amongst ourselves. That is what I suggested we do from the very beginning, Mr. Chairman.

• (1600)

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Lessard.

Mr. Savage.

**Mr. Michael Savage:** Thank you, Chair.

Mr. Lessard has a very gentlemanly, distinguished way of expressing his view. I agree with what he said.

Let's not malign the process. Mr. Regan worked with the legislative personnel, House of Parliament personnel, and the Library of Parliament in crafting this bill. The purpose of going through it at committee is to determine situations that may need to be rectified.

I'm not a technical expert; I'm not a wizard at this like you are, Mr. Chair, but is it not possible that we could begin clause-by-clause and suspend when we've finished everything else and come back and finish this? Perhaps it would only take two or three minutes on Tuesday morning or afternoon.

I'm just asking the question, if there's a way we can work through this.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** The way I understand it right now is that you have a couple of options.

Certainly, it has been indicated that section 14 does change that. The challenge we have with that is, regardless of what amendments I foresee being made, that's still going to happen. I'm going to rule him out of order and you guys can overrule me. I don't recommend it. You guys have done it before, but the Speaker has always upheld the recommendations we have.

The second suggestion is what Mr. Savage says, that we go through what we have here today and then we look at whether there are a few minutes we want to take to give some time.... The challenge is still the scope of the bill, and that's still an issue you're going have to wrestle with over the weekend and over the next couple of days.

I don't have any issue with that. Mr. Savage, I'd be happy to go through all that stuff, and then we could look at maybe just waiting until Tuesday to see if you can come up with anything that would be worthwhile, but certainly getting the bulk of this done at this point in time.

I'm going to ask the committee once again.

Mr. Lessard.

•(1605)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Yves Lessard:** I do not think that Mr. Savage's suggestion is very useful, because it would force us to vote against every single clause. Let me explain why. If by chance we were to vote in favour of each clause, then we would be assuming that section 14 would be amended in the process. However, that is not a given.

If, after all of the clauses have been adopted, the key provision that is causing the problem is not amended and a recommendation is made to refer the bill to the House, we will have helped to create a situation that is not in the interest of the provinces and Quebec. For that very reason, I suggest that we consider immediately dealing with section 14 in some way other than with a standard amendment.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Okay.

I have Mr. Lake, Mr. Savage, and Mr. Chong on the list.

**Mr. Mike Lake:** I want to respond to Ms. Savoie, and I guess partly to Mr. Lessard.

I agree with you, Ms. Savoie, when you talk about proactive ideas. I have no argument with our needing to come here with proactive ideas. It's part of our role as parliamentarians when it comes to private members' business. Obviously, there are some things we're going to agree on and some we're not. There's no contention on that at all.

In fact, I have respect for all three of the individuals who have brought forward the three bills I talked about—Mr. Nadeau, you, and Mr. Regan. My contention is that we're coming forward with bills that aren't well thought out collectively. Obviously, these are fairly political bills; they would have to do with more than just the individuals bringing them forward, when we're dealing with things that have been brought forward within the parties.

There are some major pieces missing in every one of them: essential services in the labour bill, the aboriginal community in the child care bill, and now this provincial issue with the Liberal bill. These are major issues that are causing some problems and causing us to be spinning our wheels a lot in this committee.

Just to respond to what you said, I'm all in favour of bringing forward proactive ideas based on what are strongly held beliefs, which may be different.

This is a committee that works very well together, I think. Based on what I'm hearing from other committees, we're doing a pretty good job here. I think it's really important that when we come to the committee we have our homework done to the best of our ability and that we deal with things in a logical and common sense manner, actually trying to accomplish things.

Everything we're talking about here is taking us away from accomplishing something in the area of employability and away from accomplishing things in the area of the poverty study that I know is very important to Mr. Martin—and to all of us, but obviously pushed by Mr. Martin in the first place.

That's the point I'm trying to make. With each of these things we've wasted a lot of time, not necessarily because of disagreement

or political philosophy, but just because homework hasn't been done ahead of time.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

I'm going to recommend that we break for five minutes to collect our thoughts and then determine, when we sit back here, how we're going to handle things.

I have Mr. Savage, followed by Mr. Chong, and then I'm going to suspend for about five minutes so that the parties can talk to each other for a moment.

**Mr. Michael Savage:** Just a word on Mr. Lake's comments about too much time. I'll remind him that we're in our second meeting on this bill. We've only had one meeting on it, so we haven't put a lot of time into it. It's a private member's bill. I don't think it's fair to suggest that we've wasted time on it.

I'm not sure whether Mr. Lessard fully understood what I was getting at; it could be because of my clumsiness with regulations around Parliament. What I was suggesting is, can we deal with everything else about this bill in clause-by-clause consideration and then suspend the meeting and come back next week to look at the amendments that we may be able to work out to satisfy the Bloc? That is what I was suggesting. If we were able to do that, it shouldn't take very long at the next meeting to go through it.

That's what I was wondering: first, whether it's possible, and second, whether it works. Or does the Bloc feel they have to amend a whole series of parts of the bill in order to make it satisfactory?

**The Chair:** Thank you.

I want to point out that should we be able to go through all clauses, we will probably have to come back to a section. We will need unanimous consent to do that. So once again, I think we could take five minutes to talk to all parties to determine whether that's the way we want to go.

We're going to go to Mr. Chong and then to Mr. Lessard, and once again, perhaps we could take a five-minute break after that to suspend temporarily.

Mr. Chong.

•(1610)

**Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We've now been at committee for about 40 minutes. I respectfully ask that we go immediately to clause-by-clause study. We are on the agenda to go to clause by clause. We've been debating this now for a substantial amount of time. We have departmental resources here. We have a full number of members of the committee present.

We have an agenda. I think we should follow the agenda. The agenda calls for clause-by-clause consideration of this bill, and I would respectfully ask that we move to clause-by-clause consideration.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Chong.

Mr. Lessard is next.



[*Translation*]

**Mr. Yves Lessard:** Mr. Chairman, you have summed up the situation very well. We need to look at how we can come up with an amendment with a predictable outcome. Otherwise, we may end up with a bill that the Bloc Québécois helped to pass, in terms of recommendations. However, the key component, namely section 14, may be missing.

The following scenario is very possible. Far be it for me to ascribe motives to the Conservative Party, but ultimately, voting in favour of the recommendation, without section 14, might be in their best interest. They did not side with us and vote in favour of all of the other clauses in the bill. They voted with the Liberals to send the bill back to the House of Commons. If we adopt all of the bill's clauses as currently worded and if ultimately, we cannot amend section 14, we will end up with a bill that will have the opposite effect of what Mr. Regan and his party were hoping for.

I am not willing to take that risk, Mr. Chairman.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Okay. I'm going to suspend for five minutes, and then we're going to come back and deal with this.

• (1610)

\_\_\_\_\_ (Pause) \_\_\_\_\_

• (1620)

**The Chair:** I have a couple of suggestions. I don't know if some of the opposition parties have some suggestions.

**Mr. Patrick Brown:** Mr. Chairman, I'd suggest we start the vote, clause by clause.

**Mrs. Lynne Yelich:** I'd second that.

Do the opposition really care about this bill? They've now been suspending this.... We've spent more time trying to get them to the table on their own bill, and now they're not even here to do clause-by-clause consideration, while we're an anxious government.

**The Chair:** It's good to see you guys have had a change of heart.

There are a couple of suggestions here, ladies and gentlemen, and we need to move forward.

One of the suggestions that was made to us earlier is that we look at going clause by clause on this and that some discussions ensue in the meantime between meetings, discussions in which we would look at trying to come to something we need to do. We would need unanimous consent to come back to that, to raise that.

We're here to deal with clause-by-clause consideration. If we decide not to do this today, we still have the issue that's here before us. This is a bill before our committee. You guys decide on the direction we want to go. If we don't deal with it today, it just means we put it off, and if we miss our deadline.... Our deadline to report it back is June 19; if we sit until June 22, then it would be reported back as is.

I was going to suggest that there are any number of ways we can move forward. We have clause-by-clause, and we can look at having the parties talk about trying to come up with an amenable motion or amendment to open up clause 14, but....

**Mrs. Lynne Yelich:** We'd like to go clause by clause, all four of us.

**The Chair:** The government would like to go clause by clause.

Do we have any suggestions here by the opposition? If there are none, then I'm going to suggest that we start going clause by clause.

Go ahead, Mr. Savage.

**Mr. Michael Savage:** Mr. Chair, if we go clause by clause, it doesn't necessarily mean we have to finish all amendments today. We could adjourn the meeting and come back and pick up where we left off at the next meeting.

**The Chair:** We could, if that's what the committee decides as a majority to do.

**Mrs. Lynne Yelich:** Let's go clause by clause. Let's go.

**The Chair:** Go ahead, Mr. Savage.

**Mr. Michael Savage:** I move to adjourn.

**The Chair:** This is non-debatable. We'll have to talk to you afterwards.

(Motion agreed to)

**The Chair:** The meeting is adjourned.





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