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—
Chair

Mr. Guy Lauzon

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• (0940)

[Translation]

The Chair (Mr. Guy Lauzon): The meeting resumed in public.

Ms. Folco, we will now discuss your motion.

Ms. Raymonde Folco (Laval—Les Îles, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

My motion reads as follows:

Pursuant to Standing Order 108(1), that the Standing Committee on Official Languages invite the Commissioner of Official Languages, Mr. Graham Fraser, followed at a later date by the Hon. Josée Verner, Minister responsible for La Francophonie and Official Languages, to appear before the Standing Committee on Official Languages to discuss the 2007-2008 estimates and Part III of the Report on Plans and Priorities.

Mr. Chairman, the motion was received two weeks ago, and I believe that it is important to discuss it. However, according to the work plan you have just circulated, it has been suggested that during week 22, on May 29, we invite the Official Languages Commissioner. I believe that the Commissioner is currently holding various briefing sessions with ministers. If the motion is adopted, I would suggest that we push up the date to meet with the Commissioner.

I am suggesting that we summon the Commissioner before hearing from the minister so that the Commissioner can provide us with some information. There are certain issues with which he may or may not agree. Hearing from him first will then allow us to ask the minister questions. We would be able to convey to her what opinions the Commissioner holds, and then ask her what she herself thinks of them. If we invited the Commissioner first, followed by the minister, we would receive a more solid opinion.

The Chair: The reason why we suggested that the Commissioner appear on the 29th is because—

The Clerk of the Committee (Ms. Danielle Béliste): The reason is that there is not a lot of money. The Commissioner will be tabling his annual report on May 15. By that date, people will not have had enough time to go through the report thoroughly, and prepare questions. The same applies for the May 17. Unfortunately, we are not sitting during the week following. The Commissioner is available, and his appearance has already been confirmed for the 29th. It has already been accounted for in the budget. The deadline for the budget is either the 29th or the 30th, because we have to report by the 31st. After this, the research analyst has suggested inviting the minister. That is why the dates have been chosen as such. It is up to the committee to decide.

The Chair: Mrs. Boucher.

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher (Beauport—Limoilou, CPC): You are talking about the annual report, which is not what the motion is about.

The Clerk: No, I know, but we are dealing with two things in one.

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: I agree in part with Ms. Folco's motion. However, I do not see why Minister Verner would come to talk about this blue document we have here before us, when it's not even her report. It is a report dealing strictly with the expenditures made by Graham Fraser.

The Chair: Ms. Folco.

Ms. Raymonde Folco (Laval—Les Îles, Lib.): From what I gather—

The Chair: Mrs. Boucher.

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: The Commissioner of Official Languages is an officer of Parliament. He is the one who produced the report, therefore it is up to him to appear before us and explain it. This report has been prepared by the Commissioner's Office. We have all read it. Personally, I do not see why Ms. Verner would come talk about this document. She can talk about a different subject.

The Chair: Mr. Rodriguez.

Mr. Pablo Rodriguez (Honoré-Mercier, Lib.): Mr. Chairman, since I served as chair of this committee last year, I understand that this is statutory, and it is completely normal for the minister to comment on the annual report, every year, before the deadline.

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: Of the report.

Mr. Jean-Rodrigue Paré (Committee Researcher): This is normally true, when it concerns the department. However, in this case, it concerns the Commissioner's Office. The Commissioner is responsible for tabling his own budgetary needs for the upcoming year. In this case, it is the Commissioner himself who must justify these demands. We therefore can ask him questions if he has the resources he needs to carry out his duties.

• (0945)

Mr. Pablo Rodriguez: The Commissioner tables the document, but is it approved by the minister?

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: No, not that one.

Mr. Jean-Rodrigue Paré: No, it is not approved by the minister; it is approved by the Treasury Board.

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: Therefore, if it is approved by the Treasury Board, I do not see why the minister would come to talk about it. These are expenditures set out for Mr. Fraser, overseen by the Treasury Board. Ms. Verner has nothing to do with the estimates.

Mr. Jean-Rodrigue Paré: Monies attributed come from Privy Council budgets in order to avoid ministerial interference.

The Chair: Ms. Folco.

Ms. Raymonde Folco: Part III of the estimates is the Report on Plans and Priorities. As regards official languages in Canada, the Commissioner sets out the order of priorities and identifies any shortcomings. So he can say that he wants a budget of \$5 next year in order to make up for the shortfall. I believe that up until now, we all agree.

The reason why I feel it is important to invite the minister afterwards is because we need to ask her what has been planned in developing her program, since the Commissioner has identified shortcomings in specific areas. I would like to know what she intends to develop in order to overcome the gaps the Commissioner has identified.

The Chair: I'm going to ask the researcher to clarify the situation.

Mr. Jean-Rodrigue Paré: Fundamentally, there are two elements concerning plans and priorities. Minister Verner can appear and answer our questions regarding the plans and priorities of Heritage Canada with respect to official languages. With this blue book we can analyze the Report on Plans and Priorities of Heritage Canada and the segment which deals exclusively with official languages. At that point, the minister would be able to answer questions, because she has been delegated responsibility by Ms. Oda to do so. All this would be quite justified.

Ms. Raymonde Folco: Are you telling me that she can answer questions regarding Heritage Canada, but not official languages?

Mr. Jean-Rodrigue Paré: Not on the subject of the Commissioner's Office.

Ms. Raymonde Folco: No, I did not say that she would be answering questions about the Commission.

Mr. Jean-Rodrigue Paré: Then there's been a misunderstanding.

Ms. Raymonde Folco: It is not at all a matter of her saying whether or not the Commissioner is doing a good job. That does not fall within her purview. That does not fall within her responsibilities at all. That is not what I explained. I talked about programs. When the Commissioner says that he has plans and priorities and that he wants to use a part of his budget on a given priority, it is because in his view, there are shortcomings.

With respect to shortcomings in the area of official languages, which have been considered by this committee, we are asking the Minister responsible for Official Languages to tell us not what she thinks about the Commissioner—and if we weren't in public, I would tell you what I think—but rather if she has the intention of correcting shortcomings in the program? If so, how? If not, why not?

The Chair: Mr. Lemieux.

Mr. Pierre Lemieux (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, CPC): No, that's fine.

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: First of all, she is not going to be discussing the main estimates. This is about the Official Languages Commissioner and his office.

I know what you mean, but it may be better, in this case, to meet with the minister near the end of the meeting, after reading the

document and the other one, which I would imagine will be tabled on May 15, so that we can ask her where she is going. This is more important than discussing the main estimates.

Ms. Raymonde Folco: The minister received this document before we did. She has examined it with her staff and has an opinion about it. I would imagine that she had an opinion about this report before she even read it, but after analyzing it, she has an idea about what things are interesting in the report and how they tie into her program as a minister.

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: But we are not going to be discussing the budget. That is what I am trying to tell you.

Ms. Raymonde Folco: I'm not talking about the budget.

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: But that is what is written.

Ms. Raymonde Folco: I was talking about priorities, Ms. Boucher.

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: But in your motion, it is written: "[...] to discuss the main estimates [...]" We can change it then.

Ms. Raymonde Folco: I am prepared to amend my motion. I would ask that the minister come to talk about the priorities of this program.

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: Well that's something else.

Ms. Raymonde Folco: If you would like to amend my motion, suggest an amendment. I have no problem with that.

• (0950)

Mr. Luc Harvey (Louis-Hébert, CPC): A reasonable amendment, a friendly one.

The Chair: Mr. Lemieux.

Mr. Pierre Lemieux: I think that we are trying to do two different things at the same time. Perhaps we should hold two separate meetings.

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: Then we would need two different motions.

Mr. Pierre Lemieux: Yes. We will hear from two important individuals who will talk about different things at the same time. It is better to hold one meeting with the Commissioner regarding his budget, priorities, and what he would like to do, and then, if we wish to hear from the minister, we could invite her.

Ms. Raymonde Folco: That is precisely what I am saying.

Mr. Pierre Lemieux: No, your motion does not say that. Your motion—

Ms. Raymonde Folco: I asked for an amendment. Ms. Boucher criticized. I said that I was prepared to accept an amendment so that it wouldn't be too ambiguous. I have no problem with that. What you have just said, Mr. Lemieux, is very similar to what I have just said.

Mr. Pierre Lemieux: We need at least two separate meetings, instead of one.

Ms. Raymonde Folco: I never said that this was just one meeting. The motion says: "[...] invite the Commissioner of Official Languages—

Mr. Pierre Lemieux: Fine.

Ms. Raymonde Folco: —and the Honourable [...]. That doesn't mean that they are to be together at the same time. That means first one, and then the other. I have no objection in having them appear at two separate meetings. That's what I had in mind myself.

Mr. Pierre Lemieux: I think it is better like that.

Ms. Raymonde Folco: I never thought that we would ask them questions at the same time.

The Chair: In English, it's clear.

Ms. Raymonde Folco: Exactly, Mr. Chairman, it says "at a later date" in English.

The Chair: Mr. Rodriguez.

Mr. Pablo Rodriguez: Let's set aside the motion for a brief moment. It is crucial that the Commissioner appear immediately after he has tabled his report. This is a tradition. The most important aspect pertains to his views on what has been done and what needs to be improved. This is just as important as hearing from the minister immediately afterwards. We've always done that. This is an examination of her department in order to see how things are done, how things could be improved, etc.

In that context, we can discuss this issue. After all, the report on the main estimates is not the subject of lengthy discussion. I want to make sure that, soon after the report is tabled, we invite Mr. Fraser and then Ms. Verner. Then we can ask them some questions.

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: We simply need to change the motion.

Ms. Raymonde Folco: Ms. Boucher, suggest an amendment.

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: I'm trying to think of one. Could we come back to your motion later so that we could suggest an amendment?

Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours (Madawaska—Restigouche, Lib.): How about we take five minutes?

The Chair: Is that your suggestion?

Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours: If people want to go back to this issue.

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: The current wording of the motion—

The Chair: Fine. We will suspend the meeting for five minutes.

• _____ (Pause) _____

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• (0955)

The Chair: You can present your motion, Ms. Folco.

Ms. Raymonde Folco: Our researcher has just read a motion in French that I accept. I have no problem with it.

Mr. Pablo Rodriguez: Could you read it?

Mr. Jean-Rodrigue Paré: Fine.

In accordance with Standing Order 108(1), that the Standing Committee on Official Languages invite, as soon as possible, the Commissioner of Official Languages, Mr. Graham Fraser, followed by the Hon. Josée Verner, Minister responsible for the La Francophonie and Official Languages, to appear before the Standing Committee on Official Languages to discuss their results and respective priorities.

The Chair: Is there any further discussion? Do all committee members agree with the motion?

(The motion was adopted.)

The Chair: Mr. Malo has another motion.

Would you read it, Mr. Malo?

Mr. Luc Malo (Verchères—Les Patriotes, BQ): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

That the House of Commons Standing Committee on Official Languages summon the representatives of Hockey Canada and Sport Canada to appear before the Committee to explain their decision to name Shane Doan captain of Team Canada at the World Championships, given that he faces serious allegations of making racist comments to French-speaking officials.

Mr. Chairman, although I do not want to presume anything, this motion should not be the subject of much discussion, since it is straightforward. The wording states very clearly what I would like to say.

Thank you.

The Chair: Mr. Chong.

Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC): I agree with the motion. I have no difficulty summoning representatives from Sport Canada to appear before the committee. However, this was not a decision made by Sport Canada, but by Hockey Canada. However, the motion states that it is a decision made by Hockey Canada and Sport Canada.

Mr. Luc Malo: What is your amendment?

[English]

Hon. Michael Chong: It's to summon representatives of Sport Canada to explain Hockey Canada's decision to name Shane Doan.

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Malo: Perfect.

The Chair: Mr. Lemieux.

Mr. Pierre Lemieux: It is alleged that Mr. Doan made some comments. This matter is now before the courts, and no decision has been made yet. So, if someone were to testify on behalf of Hockey Canada, that is probably what this person will say, namely, that the judge has not rendered his decision.

I'm afraid that we might find ourselves in a situation that is not clear. We may ask why this decision was made, but an individual is presumed innocent until proven guilty.

• (1000)

The Chair: Alright.

Mr. Pierre Lemieux: That's all that I wanted to say.

The Chair: Mr. Rodriguez.

Mr. Pablo Rodriguez: The official's report we obtained a copy of clearly indicates what Mr. Doan said. It will be up to the judge to decide. I am not sure exactly what the process is, but the official's report is very clear as to the comments made by Mr. Doan. In my view, the allegations are so serious that they alone are reason enough to not appoint him captain. Had he made racist allegations or comments about anglophones, Jews, blacks, etc., I don't think he would have been named captain. There is no acceptable kind of discrimination. All forms of discrimination are unacceptable.

Mr. Pierre Lemieux: If he is found guilty, you will have been right, but if he isn't, that will be difficult.

Mr. Pablo Rodriguez: I assure you that the linesman's report states that he made those comments.

Mr. Pierre Lemieux: This case is before the courts. It is therefore hard to say whether he is guilty or not. But if he is found guilty, that changes everything.

The Chair: Mr. D'Amours, you have the floor.

Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

We are not asking that Mr. Doan appear before the Standing Committee on Official Languages. The problem is between Mr. Doan and others.

Consider Mr. Chong's example. According to his amendment, we are asking those people to appear before the Standing Committee on Official Languages so that they explain the reason why they made that controversial decision. The amendment refers to the controversy, not something that is before the court.

We are not asking him to appear. We are calling on representatives of Hockey Canada and Sport Canada to come before the committee and explain why they made such a decision. They must have known that by adding fuel to the fire they would only trigger more negative reactions. And that is exactly what has happened.

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: We therefore want to hear from Hockey Canada.

Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours: That is why they should come and explain the reason for that decision. I think that is what Mr. Malo intended with his motion.

Isn't that so, Mr. Malo? Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Godin, you have the floor.

Mr. Yvon Godin (Acadie—Bathurst, NDP): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I recommend we pass the motion. The case before the court and the questions we are raising here in Parliament are two different things. The representatives of Hockey Canada must appear before us to explain their decision. Such an appointment is a real affront. Giving either side the benefit of the doubt just won't do.

I recall that, during the sponsorship scandal, the Conservatives said that we had to send for everyone involved and question them, regardless of court cases and the work of the commission. And we did so. As parliamentarians, we have to assume our responsibilities. We have every right to send for those people.

If we do not ask representatives of Hockey Canada to appear because the case is before the court, that may suggest that whenever something unclear happens and a person is summoned before the court, appointments can be made without us being able to consider them for two or three years. That is not right. That is why I support the motion.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Nadeau, you may proceed.

•(1005)

Mr. Richard Nadeau (Gatineau, BQ): Mr. Chairman, in light of Mr. Lemieux's remarks and given that this controversy is causing a stir in Quebec and Canada, how can this individual have been appointed captain? They should have felt slightly embarrassed and shown some restraint.

We therefore have to ask that the people responsible for the team come and explain the reasons that led them to make their decision, which is an affront to all Canadian francophones.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Harvey, you have the floor.

Mr. Luc Harvey: I agree with the motion in principle. I have one single concern. As Pierre said, Hockey Canada representatives could simply tell us that the matter is before the court and that they cannot answer our questions. If the meeting were in camera, would we not be able to get some answers? In other words, information given by Hockey Canada could be used against Mr. Doan when he appears in court.

As well, everyone is innocent until proven guilty. Until a decision is rendered, even if there are allegations, he is still innocent. That said, Hockey Canada was clearly not at the top of its game when it appointed Mr. Doan captain, I will grant you that. It would be good to understand what really happened.

I wonder whether they will be able to speak, given that the case is before the courts. If they say that it was a bad decision, could that not be used against Mr. Doan in court? That is not our objective. We have to establish whether it was appropriate to appoint that person captain of the Canadian team.

The Chair: Thank you.

Ms. Folco.

Ms. Raymonde Folco: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I agree with the majority of my colleagues. If others wish, we could perhaps add that it is without prejudice to Mr. Doan. We definitely can ask Hockey Canada whether appointing someone against whom a lawsuit has been filed to represent all Canadians, including francophones and anglophones, shows a lack of sensitivity toward Canadian francophones.

I do not know whether Mr. Malo would agree, but we could add that this would be without prejudice to Mr. Doan. Even if the judge finds Mr. Doan innocent, there is, and was when Mr. Doan was appointed, a huge cloud hanging over his head. This shows a blatant lack of sensitivity by Hockey Canada.

The Chair: Mr. Malo.

Mr. Luc Malo: Ms. Folco is absolutely correct. The goal of the hearing is not for Hockey Canada to come and say whether Mr. Doan is guilty or not and to judge him. Simply put, the goal is for them to explain why, in the current context, they chose him to represent Canada at the World Ice Hockey Championship. It's as simple as that.

The Chair: Mrs. Boucher.

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: As a francophone and a Quebecker, I agree with Mr. Malo. In the motion that I am reading, we should remove the reference to Sport Canada, which has nothing to do with this.

• (1010)

Mr. Luc Malo: No, that is not what I said. The motion is intended to summon the representatives of Hockey Canada and Sport Canada to appear before the committee to explain their decision to name Shane Doan captain of the team.

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: That is their choice. You do not want to know whether he is guilty or not.

Mr. Luc Malo: Not at all.

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: We want to know how come, given the nature of the allegations, he can represent a Canadian team. That is basically what we want to know.

Ms. Raymonde Folco: Mr. Chairman, I ask that we call the vote.

The Chair: Mr. Lemieux.

[English]

Mr. Pierre Lemieux: I'm thinking through how this possibly happened. You have Hockey Canada, and their goal is to win hockey, so they pick the best guy to be captain of their team. There are responsibilities and decisions that he has to make. They picked a captain for a reason. You can bet that they discussed this, because hockey affects *les francophones et les anglophones*. I'm sure Hockey Canada had this discussion about the impact it would have on fans, particularly *les Québécois et les francophones*. So they had that discussion and they knew of the allegations, obviously, but they made their decision. My concern is that we're a federal committee, dealing with important federal matters, and here we are jumping into the middle of a hockey decision over allegations that have not been proven yet.

When the witnesses sit there, I can hear what they're going to say already. They're going to say, "Our job is to win. We picked the best captain possible. Yes, there are allegations against him, but he is not yet guilty."

If he were guilty it would change absolutely everything, but right now it's just going to become a discussion of opinion. Their opinion is that he's the best captain and he's not guilty. Your opinion might be that he may not be the best captain and there are allegations. It will just become a discussion of opinion.

My worry is that as a parliamentary committee working at the federal government level, we're injecting ourselves into something over what are right now allegations that have not been proven. That's where I'm coming from.

[Translation]

The Chair: Mr. Godin.

[English]

Mr. Yvon Godin: I totally disagree with Mr. Lemieux, Mr. Chair. This is the symbol of our country. Given that the allegation is there, proven or not, how do you think the people will feel when they go there? We have a responsibility.

If they want to come here and just sit and say they're not going to talk, that will be their problem, not ours. If they want to tell

Canadians they want to shut up because they feel they have chosen the best person, given what our nation is all about, that will be their choice. It will be their choice, and Canadians will know it is their choice.

I think it's our responsibility now. I'll say it again: I'll be supporting their coming here, and if they want to just come here and shut up, that will be their problem, not mine, but I have the right as a parliamentarian to raise this question to them. To know what was going on, to know what people feel about it, and in response say, "I'm going to appoint that person" is like saying "I just don't care about the rest of Canada".

I want them to come and tell us that, if that's what they feel about it.

[Translation]

The Chair: Ms. Folco.

Ms. Raymonde Folco: I find your comments quite unacceptable, Mr. Lemieux. Furthermore, they have been recorded.

The reputation—

[English]

Mr. Pierre Lemieux: I haven't made a proposal, by the way.

Ms. Raymonde Folco: Yes. I'm just telling you what I think of it.

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Lemieux: Yes, and that is incredible. I have not made a proposal; for the time being we are just talking.

Ms. Raymonde Folco: Let me finish, Mr. Lemieux. I let you speak, even though I can tell you I wanted to interrupt.

First of all, if Canada has a national sport, it is certainly hockey. It is not volleyball, it is hockey. For Canadians generally and for French Canadians particularly, hockey is *the* sport. For Quebeckers and francophones elsewhere in the country, this sport allows people to become national heroes. It is a sport with which Canadians identify. In fact, when we ask people across the country what distinguishes us from the English or from Americans, for example, they mention hockey. Americans play hockey, but it does not have the same importance for them. For us, it is important. I would like to remind everyone that hockey is what has enabled French Canadians—and I am using the term on purpose—to become known and to overcome many of the problems they faced.

Second, Canada has a world-wide reputation. We all recognize that Canada does not accept discrimination, that it reacts against it. We are talking here about the World Championships. We are told that the best individual is chosen, regardless of his ideas and remarks, but at issue here is a game in a sport that is almost the most precious symbol Canadians and French Canadians have, with the exception of the Charter of Rights. I have a great deal of difficulty accepting the fact that internationally, the captain of the Canadian team could have said what it is claimed he said—and here I am giving him the benefit of the doubt. Whether he made the remarks or not, the fact remains that the people who decided to choose him as captain showed a flagrant lack of sensitivity, in light of what hockey represents and the effect that this individual's remarks had. This is totally unacceptable.

We do not want to know what he said or did not say. The courts will decide that. As others before me have said, I would just like to emphasize that we are talking about an important symbol of our country, and as committee members charged with monitoring the progress made by official language minority communities, we cannot let this comment go or the decision that followed it. I think this is absolutely fundamental.

•(1015)

The Chair: Mr. Malo.

Mr. Luc Malo: Mr. Lemieux, you were saying earlier that regardless of what people are like, their athletic ability should take priority. So we are talking about the best guy for the job. A captain of a team is suppose to show leadership, motivate the team and be a role model. In this case, whether or not this person made the remark that has been attributed to him, he is hardly a unifying role model for Quebecers and francophones elsewhere in Canada.

The Chair: Mr. D'Amours.

Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Could Mr. Lemieux wait for his turn, please? Could he please let me speak? I would appreciate it if everyone had a turn, particularly since I haven't said a word so far. You may say whatever you like, Mr. Lemieux, to defend what you said a few moments ago, but the fact remains that you did say it.

Whether we are talking about Hockey Canada or Sport Canada, a person is not automatically chosen captain because he is the best athlete. Some individuals are thrown out or disciplined for less. We have to take the situation into account, since this is the Official Languages Committee, and its job is to do everything it can to ensure that the official languages, both English and French, are respected in this country.

In light of such negative comments about one of the two communities, we have to do our job and be big enough people to tell this individual that he is going to have to sit on the bench, no matter how good an athlete he may be. It is really too bad. The prestige of being the team captain will go to people who do not have this type of ambiguous attitude.

It is deplorable to have to hear comments of this type here at this committee. This is not Sport Canada or some language branch, but rather the Committee on Official Languages. Whether we are talking about Sport Canada, Hockey Canada or any other federal institution, we must defend the official languages and ensure that both communities are respected. That is what we should be working toward. We cannot behave as though the official languages are important some of the time and less important the rest of the time. They are important all of the time. We are supposed to be defending the official languages all the time, we are supposed to ensure that anglophones in Quebec are defended and that francophones living outside Quebec have their rightful place and are convinced that their government and their members of Parliament are defending them. We cannot pass the buck and say we accept this situation just because the person is a good athlete, regardless of his opinions, and regardless of what he may have said or the controversy that it caused.

As I was saying earlier, people have been disciplined or been benched or dismissed for less. Today we are talking about the World Ice Hockey Championships, at which the country is represented by men who are very good at their sport. One thing is certain: the captain of the team must deserve to hold that position. All Canadians, not just some, must be convinced that he deserves this honour. The allegations we are hearing at the moment raise enough doubts for people to conclude that the wrong decision was made. If at a future championship the ambiguity and doubt have disappeared, perhaps this person could be appointed captain. But what is going on at the moment is unacceptable, and it is unacceptable to hear the decisions made by the authorities being defended at the Official Languages Committee.

•(1020)

The Chair: Mr. Lemieux.

[*English*]

Mr. Pierre Lemieux: What I'd like to say is, if you want to attack me for what I've said, then put your BlackBerrys down, take note of what I said, and stop telling me what I said when I didn't say it.

I'm not defending Shane Doan. I'm not saying that I chose him as the best man for the team. I'm telling you what I think they will say. I was very clear about that: what I think they will say.

In sharing that, I think we should be able to have a discussion here. I'm not attacking any of you. I am simply discussing the motion, as we're supposed to be doing.

How do you respond? You get louder. You attack. You say things I didn't say, or you interpret them in ways I did not say them. To me that is not fruitful discussion. If you want to discuss a motion, then let's discuss the motion. I don't need a five-minute lecture on the official languages committee and what we do here. That's not what I was calling into question.

That's the point I want to make. Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Mr. Chong.

Hon. Michael Chong: I have a question for you, Mr. Chair, if anybody can answer it.

These are allegations. Are these allegations supported through a tape recording or some sort of recording? In other words, do we have proof that he has—

The Chair: It's apparently testimony, according to the researcher.

Mr. Jean-Rodrigue Paré: It's testimony from the officials affidavits.

The Chair: It's affidavits from the referees.

Hon. Michael Chong: But there's no tape, is there? I just wanted to clarify that.

Thank you.

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Mrs. Boucher.

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: I feel I have to say something here. As francophones, we want to know why they chose Mr. Doan. We know there are some very serious allegations against him, but this is first and foremost a question of perception. It is often said that in business and in politics, perception is very important. What we have here is a perception of a lack of respect for the francophone community.

I agree with the motion, and I would call for the vote.

• (1025)

The Chair: Mr. Godin.

Mr. Yvon Godin: I want to talk about perception and probability. Let us say that there are allegations about someone who works in a bank. That person is taken to court because he or she may have robbed the bank. The bank management, for its part, decides to remove the bank manager from his position at the same time.

Normally, the person is sidelined until a decision is made. But that is not what was done in this case.

The Chair: Thank you. I think all members have had an opportunity to express their views and discuss the issue. I will call the vote.

(The motion was carried.)

An hon. member: It is unanimous.

The Chair: We have plenty of time to discuss the committee's future business.

Mr. Nadeau.

Mr. Richard Nadeau: I will speak once you have finished, Mr. Chairman.

The Chair: We will take a two-minute break before we continue our business in camera.

[*The meeting continued in camera.*]

• _____ (Pause) _____

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