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## Standing Committee on Official Languages

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Thursday, May 31, 2007

•(0905)

[Translation]

**The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Graeme Truelove):** Honourable committee members, I see a quorum.

Pursuant to Standing Order 106, the committee can now proceed to elect a chair. I am ready to receive motions for the election of the chair.

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, CPC):** I would like to move that Steven Blaney do take the chair.

**The Clerk:** Mr. Lemieux moves that Mr. Blaney take the chair.

Are there other motions?

**Mr. Luc Harvey (Louis-Hébert, CPC):** I second the motion.

**The Clerk:** Are there any other motions?

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

(Motion agreed to)

**The Clerk:** I declare Mr. Blaney duly elected chair of the committee.

**The Chair (Mr. Steven Blaney (Lévis—Bellechasse, CPC):** Good morning to you all.

First of all, I would like to thank you for placing your trust in me. Wouldn't it be nice if everything were done so simply, both here and in our ridings?

I am pleased to be here with you this morning. I had the opportunity to take part in the committee's work out West with members such as Mr. Simard, Mr. Murphy and Mr. Godin. I believe that those were productive consultations. I think that the committee has done some good work up until now. I was told that the Air Canada bill was at second reading. That project comes from one of the committee's recommendations. As well, a report by the committee is making its way to communities, where it is apparently being well received.

My role will be to ensure that we continue our work for the communities. I think that everyone around this table wants to help advance the cause of language communities across the country.

If I may, without further delay, I will ask the clerk what the committee's next step will be, unless someone would like to make any comments.

Mr. Clerk, can you tell us where our committee is at in its work?

**The Clerk:** Two motions were passed by the committee on May 1<sup>st</sup>.

The first one, moved by Ms. Folco, is an invitation for the Commissioner of Official Languages, Mr. Graham Fraser, and the Honourable Josée Verner, Minister of the Francophonie and Official Languages, to appear as soon as possible in order to discuss their respective priorities and records.

**Ms. Raymonde Folco (Laval—Les Îles, Lib.):** I apologize, but the motion was not passed; it was tabled.

**The Clerk:** It was passed on May 1<sup>st</sup>.

The second motion, which was also passed on May 1<sup>st</sup>, was a request by the committee for Hockey Canada officials to appear on May 3<sup>rd</sup>, which they did.

During the upcoming meetings, we will hear from witnesses on the Court Challenges Program, the 2010 Olympic Games and the Canada-communities agreements.

**The Chair:** Very well.

I was told that a motion was moved and passed. Normally, it is the clerk who follows up with the minister and the Official Languages Commissioner. There are also three issues that a smaller committee could discuss to draw up lists of witnesses.

Do you have any information regarding the date of the minister's visit?

•(0910)

**The Clerk:** No dates have been confirmed for any of the witnesses on that list.

**The Chair:** Ms. Folco.

**Ms. Raymonde Folco:** I suggest that we pursue the work that had been agreed on by the committee before the events we know about i. e., that we hear from witnesses on the cancelled Court Challenges Program.

I suggest also that we start right away, that is next Tuesday morning at 9:00 a.m. Other members might have witnesses they would like to hear from. However, I earnestly recommend that, on Tuesday morning, we pursue the work we were supposed to do a few weeks ago.

**The Chair:** You are proposing to continue the work that had been scheduled. Is that correct? Very well, we will continue to hear from witnesses.

**An hon. member:** Is that a motion?

**Ms. Raymonde Folco:** For the time being, it is not a motion. I would like us to discuss this.

**The Chair:** We are having a discussion.

**Ms. Raymonde Folco:** I might then move a motion, depending on how other committee members will react.

**The Chair:** Very well.

Mr. Rodriguez.

**Mr. Pablo Rodriguez (Honoré-Mercier, Lib.):** I am all for the idea of immediately working on the issue of the Court Challenges Program. I think that it is something that has to be on the agenda. Furthermore, Mr. Chairman, you mentioned the fact that a smaller committee could discuss the list of witnesses. However, members of the Standing Committee on Official Languages are not used to work in a smaller committee, isn't that so? Correct me if I am wrong, but that is something the whole committee does.

I would recommend that the same people appear, i.e., those who appeared the last time before the committee. I am referring to Ms. Lalonde, from SOS Montfort, and the officials responsible for the Court Challenges Program.

**The Chair:** Very well.

Mr. Godin.

**Mr. Yvon Godin (Acadie—Bathurst, NDP):** First of all, Mr. Blaney, I want to congratulate you on your election as chair this morning. I hope that in doing so we have turned a page. I also hope that we will truly dedicate ourselves to the well-being of Canadian francophone and anglophone communities. That is the mandate of the Standing Committee on Official Languages. It is a very important mandate and I do hope we will respect it. I want to wish you all the best. I already know you and I think that things will go well.

I also agree that we have to continue examining the issue of the Court Challenges Program, to carry out our mandate. I think that the people who were supposed to appear should be the first ones invited back, so that they have the opportunity to testify. In fact, the committee has now regained its legitimacy. We can also submit a list of witnesses. Some witnesses are very important and have to be heard. This is a discussion we should perhaps have.

We could also consider inviting the Commissioner of Official Languages to explain his report and answer our questions. I think we could hear from him while dealing with the Court Challenges Program. Those are some issues that are of great concern to us.

I would also like to examine the issue of Radio-Canada. This has become a real problem. The Société Nationale de l'Acadie, or SNA, is currently attacking Radio-Canada. For example, the Atlantic region is not getting its fair share. Since Radio-Canada dropped its *RDI en direct/Atlantique* program, we honestly have lost our place. Radio-Canada officials said they wanted to be more active on the ground, that there would be more live broadcasts, among other things. Very often, when people from RDI call us, it is just to record a broadcast.

I have often joked that when a cat is run over on St. Catherine Street in Montreal, news from the Atlantic is preempted to broadcast the story of the cat. You understand what I'm saying? In the past, you

could file a complaint, but now, that is not even possible. We no longer know where the cutbacks are made. In fact, they broadcast our programs when they so wish. The papers this morning talk about a convention that will be held here on the weekend. It is mentioned that the SNA is waging war on against Radio-Canada, RDI and the like. Radio-Canada's behaviour, as a national public television broadcaster, is unacceptable.

I would simply like for that issue to be placed on agenda so that we can deal with it eventually. This is not the first time that issue has come up, but it is something we have to address.

Thank you.

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

Before handing the floor over to Mr. Harvey—

● (0915)

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher (Beauport—Limoilou, CPC):** Mr. Nadeau also wishes to speak.

**The Chair:** Very well. Both Mr. Nadeau and Mr. Harvey are on the list.

I am told that four meetings have been scheduled for the issue of the Court Challenges Program. This is what is on the agenda. It can be moved by one of the members of the committee.

**Mr. Richard Nadeau (Gatineau, BQ):** Mr. Chairman, I agree on holding four meetings on the Court Challenges Program, but is there also a possibility to add a meeting with the Commissioner of Official Languages, in such a way that not all four meetings are held back-to-back? We agree on this.

**The Chair:** Absolutely.

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** In fact, when this committee was sitting previously, I raised the matter of the Canada-community agreements. I would like this topic to be placed on the agenda, but not necessarily for the end of June of course. I would like for this motion to be accepted so that by the fall, when we return, we can start the process of how the Canada-community agreements are being applied in each of the provinces and territories. The object would be to determine whether or not improvements are needed.

My colleague Mr. Godin said that he had a list of possible witnesses to talk about the Court Challenges Program, in addition to my list. I will give it to you. I have no objection to Mr. Godin's list being placed before mine.

I will therefore move that we hold four meetings on the Court Challenges Program, and in between we could hold an additional meeting with the Official Languages Commissioner to hear him talk to us about the report he tabled last May. We will also make sure that we will deal with the Canada-community agreements by the fall, in addition to the SNA and Radio-Canada issue in the Atlantic region.

Thank you.

**Ms. Raymonde Folco:** I did not understand my colleague's motion.

**The Chair:** Could you please draft this? Mr. Nadeau is moving that we hold four of our next meetings on the Court Challenges Program, followed by the other subjects. While he writes up his motion, we will hear comments from committee members on the proposal they will have to deal with.

Mr. Harvey.

**Mr. Luc Harvey:** If we're not mistaken, theoretically, the House may adjourn on June 8. This means that we can hold meetings next Tuesday and Thursday.

With respect to the Court Challenges Program, we conducted consultations throughout Canada. We met with people from British Columbia to New Brunswick. The Commissioner of Official Languages produced a report and talked about this matter. We have two meetings remaining. Earlier, Mr. Godin talked about meeting with representatives from Radio-Canada. He also talked about meeting with the minister and the commissioner to talk about the commissioner's report. We only have two meetings left. I don't know what we can add to what has already been said. If we keep constantly repeating the same thing, I'm not sure if this will necessarily advance the Court Challenges Program issue.

We know that the government is taking action, and assessing what can be done. We can set this matter aside—I'm not saying that we should ignore it or stop talking about it—until the month of October, and if nothing has happened then, we will take up this issue once again. However, if the Nonetheless, if the goal is to continue making this a political subject, go ahead. Some matters have to be dealt with, whether it is the Air Canada or Radio-Canada issues. The Official Languages Commissioner's report was made public. We haven't even met with him yet, and we are talking about summoning other witnesses to talk about the Court Challenges Program, when we only have two meetings left. Later on, we will meet again in September. That is my opinion. I'm not saying that we have better things to do. I simply believe that everything pertaining to this subject has already been said. We held a consultation that lasted four weeks all across Canada. This has been done.

We are talking about starting up the entire process once again when there are other priorities. The Court Challenges Program is not the only matter to be dealt with. Other topics have to be raised. If Mr. Godin, or any other member of this committee wishes to add new information that has not already been mentioned, let's move ahead. Otherwise, I believe that we have priorities, among which is meeting with the Official Languages Commissioner to listen to what he has to say. He has tabled a report and we have not met with him yet. If we invite him, we will have one meeting remaining. And yet, we're saying that we want to hold four more meetings on the Court Challenges Program.

I have a question for you. I would like for you to convince me that, indeed, certain things have not already been said on the subject. I would very much like to hear what you have to say. Otherwise, let's move on with the other priorities. There isn't just a single one, there are several. We mentioned them, and I would like us to be able to discuss them.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

● (0920)

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

Ms. Boucher.

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher:** We also talked about meeting with representatives from the Vancouver 2010 Olympic Games. I believe it's important to meet with these people. I really wish we can meet them. We also talked about a topic that is of particular interest to this committee, the subject of young people, young francophones outside Quebec, schools, and so on. I think it is important to meet with those who represent our future. We have gone part of the way. Young people are the ones who are going to inherit what we pass on to them. I think it's very important to talk about young francophones living outside Quebec. I hope that we'll be able to work as a team. That's all I have to say for now.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Boucher.

Ms. Folco.

**Ms. Raymonde Folco:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I have several points to raise. Firstly, what I suggested was to continue with our agenda. We are not about to launch new initiatives. We are suggesting that the agenda which was agreed upon by all members of this committee a few weeks, be respected. From the very beginning, we have been asking for this: that we abide by the committee's decision to hold meetings on the Court Challenges Program.

Secondly, we obviously do not know when the House is going to adjourn. There are rumours that it might be next week. We do not know this. We have to rely on the calendar we were provided with. Therefore, there would still be four meetings ahead of us. What I would then propose is that the commissioner be invited alongside other witnesses, so that we can hold a meeting and have several witnesses at once, and progress as quickly as possible. I would suggest that the commissioner be invited to meet us no later than next Thursday. That is the second point.

Thirdly, I insist that this committee hear from anglophone witnesses. Within the committee and elsewhere, there is a perception that this committee is concerned only with French language minority rights, and this is a good thing. But it must also be concerned with the rights of English-speaking minorities in Quebec, and give the public the impression that it is also concerned with the situation of anglophone minorities. I strongly hope that anglophone witnesses from Quebec also be invited to the committee to speak about the Court Challenges Program.

I would have a suggestion which might not please everyone but Mr. Nadeau has shown me a report, —which he cannot table because it is drafted in only one language, — on the testimonies heard last week by members of the opposition only. I insist on this. Last week, we did not sit as a Standing Committee of the House of Commons, far from it. However, in keeping with my colleague, Mr. Luc Harvey's reasoning, if we do not want to hear from the same witnesses again, which is a possibility that I would like government members to entertain—we should read the document once Mr. Nadeau has tabled it in both official languages. Government members should read the summary and inform us as to whether they wish to re-invite the same witnesses and have them repeat what has already been said, or accept this report as an official version. This is a friendly suggestion that I am making to my Conservative colleagues.

Lastly, I would very much like to talk about young people. Obviously this is important. It is a pity that Ms. Boucher is not here, since this was her suggestion. I would very much like to talk about young people, but if there is no Court Challenges Program, young people will have nothing to stand on, and the meeting would be useless. If currently adults aren't able to exercise their rights under the Charter, it would be pointless to talk about the situation of young people 10 and 15 years of age. This would just muddy the waters.

Thank you.

• (0925)

[English]

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

I will now pass the microphone to Mr. Nadeau.

[Translation]

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I simply want to clarify a few of the comments made by my colleague Mr. Harvey earlier on. News of the House adjourning next week are just rumours. I have not heard anything official. According to the calendar, the House may sit until June 22. Even if the House were to adjourn tomorrow morning, it remains nonetheless, Mr. Chairman, that this committee may continue to operate even if the House is not sitting. In this context, given the fact we are dealing with very important matters, we should perhaps consider that this committee may continue to work even if the House decides to adjourn. We have all witnessed the fuss that this matter has raised, and with reason. It was more than a fuss, political positions were taken on the issue of the Court Challenges Program.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** Before handing the floor over to someone else, Ms. Folco can you tell me if your earlier suggestion to have the Official Languages Commissioner appear was or was not part of an amendment?

**Ms. Raymonde Folco:** Yes.

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** In addition to the suggestion about English-speaking Quebecers.

**Ms. Raymonde Folco:** Mr. Nadeau, if you will, I would suggest that he appears no later than next Thursday. I know that there are

rumours about the House adjourning, you are entirely right, but I do not want to run the risk of missing him.

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** We would have to prepare the amendment.

**Ms. Raymonde Folco:** I would move the amendment according to which the commissioner be invited to appear no later than next Thursday, June 7.

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** We're talking about the Official Languages Commissioner.

**Ms. Raymonde Folco:** Yes.

**The Chair:** One moment please, there's a point of order.

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux:** I thought the committee had been dissolved, which means that all pending motions are null and void.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** No.

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux:** No? I'd like to have the clerk double check the process. You can table another motion, but I do not believe that we can resuscitate a motion that was tabled at the last meeting of the committee. This is a point of order.

Am I right or wrong?

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** You are asking if you are right on this particular point of order?

**The Chair:** The clerk has informed me that previous motions remain valid. For example, I refer to this committee's invitation to the Official Languages Commissioner and to the minister. This motion is still valid, therefore, the clerk can still call all the witnesses.

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux:** Very well, I just wanted to make sure.

**The Chair:** We are talking about—

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** Point of order.

**The Chair:** Firstly, I wish to clarify that we are currently talking about Mr. Nadeau's motion about our work schedule for the next meetings.

I will give you the floor and then ask our clerk to read the proposal to us.

Mr. Godin, do you wish to raise a point of order?

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** It must be pointed out that this committee was not dissolved, but that the chair resigned. Nothing in the records show that this committee was dissolved. A new chair was elected, and we are continuing our meetings. We did not dissolve the committee: the same members sit on this committee, and we have not elected a new vice-chair, etc. There was an interruption following the resignation of our chair. This morning, we have elected a new chair.

**The Chair:** I will now ask the clerk to read the proposal and then I will go through the list of speakers.

Mr. Truelove, will you read the proposal? Do you need help?

[English]

**The Clerk:** It's a bit tricky.

• (0930)

[*Translation*]

**The Chair:** Mr. Nadeau moves that the committee holds the next four meetings on the subject of the Court Challenges Program and he also reiterates the previous motion to the effect that the Commissioner of Official Languages meet with us as soon as possible. Is this right?

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** Yes.

**The Chair:** It is rather long. It is practically an entire agenda. Perhaps you can submit something more concise.

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** May I read it, Mr. Chair?

**The Chair:** Yes, go ahead and read it. It is quite the grocery list you have there, Mr. Nadeau.

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** Yes, but as you know, we have been waiting for a long time. That said, it has been suggested that we hold four more meetings, or more if needed, on the Court Challenges Program; that we meet with the Commissioner of Official Languages, Mr. Graham Fraser on June 7, at the latest; and that there be one meeting with the Société nationale de l'Acadie, the SNA, and the Société Radio-Canada, Atlantic region; that there be a meeting with Anglo-Quebec groups in the fall, and meetings on the Canada-community agreements with each one of the provinces and territories to see how these agreements can be improved.

In addition, my colleague has tabled a proposal to hear from witnesses on the Court Challenges Program. I will also be tabling the work that has already been done on this same subject.

**Ms. Raymonde Folco:** I did not understand this proposal on the witnesses.

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** It is a list of potential witnesses.

**Ms. Raymonde Folco:** Did you table it yourself?

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** I'm tabling it now. It is a list.

**The Chair:** You do not need to put the list of witnesses with—

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** No, but I'll give it to you any way, Mr. Chairman. I will be most pleased to do so.

**The Chair:** In order, the next speakers are Mr. Godin, Mr. D'Amours, Mr. Lemieux, Mr. Harvey, Mr. Boucher and Mr. Simard.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** First, Mr. Chairman, I would have preferred having Mr. Harvey here to listen to what I have to say.

We did not travel across Canada to obtain information on the Court Challenges Program, but rather to meet with communities. Throughout the country, we heard complaints about the cancellation of the program. We decided to undertake a study on this matter because of its importance for the entire country.

Because of partisan politics we have missed six meetings, and seven if we count today's meeting. Had this not occurred, we would have concluded discussions on the Court Challenges Program, and we would have already produced our report, which would have been tabled in the House of Commons. Mr. Chairman, we have missed seven meetings.

I think we should stop talking about partisan politics, get down to work, and review the Court Challenges Program, table a report in the House of Commons, and set up an agenda.

This is a pity, but whether we like it or not, I am a member of Parliament elected by my fellow citizens and I am a member of the NDP.

Mr. Harvey represents the Conservative Party, Ms. Folco represents the Liberal Party, and Mr. Nadeau represents the Bloc Québécois. Whether we like it or not, we're all members of political parties. It is not necessary to constantly remind ourselves that there are partisan considerations. I am here to defend causes to the best of my abilities.

The Court Challenges Program is probably not as important for those who are part of a majority group, but it is extremely important for those who are part of minority communities. In fact, Prince Edward Island was able to open certain schools because of the Court Challenges Program.

Our committee must get down to work. The government may take whatever decision it wishes, but we have the responsibility to make choices, do our work, and make recommendations to the government. We will not let ourselves be swayed by rumours about what the government is supposed to be preparing, Mr. Chairman.

The government must do what it has to do. If the government wants a Court Challenges Program, it can restore one today. We decided to launch a study and make recommendations to the Government of Canada. If the Government of Canada wants to drag its feet and leave communities behind by abandoning the Court Challenges Program, it is doing a very good job.

Recently, a community in New Brunswick filed a lawsuit against the RCMP. It won the case, but the Government of Canada decided to appeal it. Today, the Court Challenges Program no longer exists to help the community pay for related legal costs. This is a very difficult situation for people.

We have to encourage the government to re-establish the Court Challenges Program as soon as possible. It will improve the situation of communities throughout Canada, whether they be anglophone communities in Quebec or francophones living in the rest of Canada.

I repeat, we are not wasting our time. According to the House calendar, we are to adjourn on June 22. If the government is truly interested in dealing with this problem, it should not rise. It should allow us to continue working. According to the calendar, working hours can be extended for two weeks. This means that we can work overtime. I think that everyone will be finished business on June 8. Personally, I do not want to adjourn on June 8, but on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of June in order to finish our work. We have to respect the calendar, and June 22 is the date that is marked. We have quite a bit of work to do. We are not in school, we are not out on June 8. People expect us to do our work. The Court Challenges Program is one of the most important programs. If we cannot defend our rights, we shouldn't be here. We have just passed Bill S-3, and this new piece of legislation will probably be challenged. Will the government respect the new law on federal institutions? There may be challenges. That is probably why the government decided to cancel the Court Challenges Program. Perhaps the government foresees something we are unaware of.

We have work to do, and I have spoken long enough. Therefore, we should move ahead.

• (0935)

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

We will now go to Mr. D'Amours.

**Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours (Madawaska—Restigouche, Lib.):** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

To begin with, Mr. Chairman, I do not have any problem with the motion by my colleague, Richard Nadeau. However, I am not quite clear on why there are concerns about this issue. I'm not talking about the motion, but rather the discussion. Why is there concern over the committee's future business? We already agreed, and more than agreed—the witnesses were here on May 15—that we were going to discuss and study the cancellation of the Court Challenges Program.

The committee cancelled the meeting two minutes before it was to start, but the witnesses were here. If they were here, it was because the issue was on the agenda. On that point certainly, I think we should stop basically wasting our time and agree that it was on the agenda. There is no difficulty in proving it. The people were there and they were waiting to be able to speak to the committee members.

I too think that young people, schools and all that are important, but they are important if we can give people tools to be able to speak, write and hear French. If the Court Challenges Program no longer exists, that will cause a serious problem. It is all very well to talk about young people. As I have already said in other discussions, it is fine to talk about young people, but if we do not give them the tools they need starting from birth and going on from there, it becomes difficult to really help these people when they are adults. So let us start when they are young and in school.

We know that some communities across the country have been faced with problems and have had to go to court to defend themselves. That has happened in Manitoba, Prince Edward Island, the Northwest Territories and various other regions. In fact, you could name any province or territory. If these problems had not

occurred, we might be able to say today that the Court Challenges Program was not necessary. But that is not the reality.

The reality is that there have been cutbacks everywhere, and the communities have had to defend themselves. They are not rich. They have had to defend themselves and in order to do that, they needed resources. In order to get those resources, they have practically had to get down on their knees and beg the federal government to help them through the Court Challenges Program. Thus, they were able to defend their rights in court.

The informal meeting by the members of the Advisory Committee on Official Languages with people indicated to us that the language aspect involved approximately a half million dollars. That is peanuts in the context of the federal budget. It is very unfair that there are people who thought that these communities were receiving huge amounts in order to defend themselves against governments. In reality, they were getting peanuts to help them defend their rights.

We will be voting on Mr. Nadeau's motion, but I hope that people have said what they had to say and we will do what we were supposed to do back on May 15 by moving ahead with our study of the Court Challenges Program.

• (0940)

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. D'Amours.

I will now give the floor to Mr. Lemieux.

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux:** Thank you very much.

[*English*]

I want to refer to some of the comments Monsieur Godin was making. I'm a little disappointed in the position he took, because I think he misunderstood Monsieur Harvey.

[*Translation*]

I think that Mr. Harvey was saying that we need to find a balance. The committee would like to work on a number of issues. You have raised important points, but everything is polarized, unfortunately. Our colleague has been wrongly interpreted, so people take a position and think that the two positions are far apart, when he is actually talking about striking a balance.

I think that Mr. Harvey is right. We can talk about the Court Challenges Program, but there are other things as well. I think that he really meant that if we had four meetings, we could also hear from the Commissioner of Official Languages and the minister.

In my riding, young people and culture are really important. We have talked about that. We have had major discussions about future business and we have talked about youth and culture. That is important as well, and we need to find a balance.

I would like us to work together, not in a polarized way, as we are right now. Yes, we would like to have the commissioner and the minister come before the committee, and we can start our work on the Court Challenges Program.



Mr. Harvey also raised a good point. It is true that we have travelled across Canada. We met with a lot of minority official language communities and spoke with many organizations. The Court Challenges Program came into the discussion every time because you asked the question when the organizations did not mention it. We talked about it at length when we were preparing our last report. I think it is an important issue, but there are other things to work on. We need to find a balance, and I think that four weeks is a bit too long.

**Ms. Raymonde Folco:** I would like you to finish your sentence; I did not want to interrupt you.

**Mr. Luc Harvey:** Is that a point of order?

**Ms. Raymonde Folco:** Yes, I have a point of order. I would like to ask the clerk, through you, Mr. Chairman, if we need another vote, given that the work plan had already been agreed to. We had already voted to have the Court Challenges Program as the next item on the agenda. The committee continued to exist, as you said yourself, even if it was unable to meet because there was no chairman. My question is for the clerk, regarding the fact that a decision was already made on this.

**Mr. Luc Harvey:** Point of order.

**The Chair:** One moment, please.

Ms. Folco, as I said earlier, the committee is carrying on its work from the last meeting. This morning, Mr. Nadeau introduced a motion, which is under discussion now. I believe that it goes in the direction that you are suggesting, but also [*Editor's note: technical difficulties*]. I can read it, if you like.

In order to clarify things, there are seven people on the speaker's list. After that, I would be interested in knowing the committee's position on the recommendation. According to my list and in this order, the speakers are Mr. Harvey, Ms. Boucher, Mr. Simard, Mr. Nadeau, Mr. Godin and, finally, Ms. Folco. I would propose that the committee hear from these people. I think that it is only reasonable. Then I think it would be useful to see what the committee's position is on the recommendation.

I will now go to Mr. Lemieux.

• (0945)

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux:** With respect to Mr. Nadeau's motion, I would like to say that this is not really the way we work in establishing our work plan. We normally hold an in-camera meeting. We do not start with a detailed motion about what the committee is going to do.

I would like to see us provide suggestions today and then discuss them. However, I would like us to hold a private meeting in order to decide on our future business. That is how we used to work, and it worked well. We do not need to change that process today.

I find the motion a bit problematic. There may be discussions on other issues, I do not know. When a motion is too detailed, like this one by Mr. Nadeau, it becomes too restrictive. If we pass it, it becomes difficult to change it and we need to undertake a new process. This is not how we usually work.

On the point brought up by Ms. Folco, we did talk about adopting... I don't know what words were used at those meetings. It was not a committee—

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher:** It was an advisory committee.

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux:** I am against that kind of meeting. We have a standing committee and we work in a parliamentary context. Minutes are prepared of our meetings. I find that quite irregular. I'm against meetings being held outside Parliament, outside the process, outside all the usual parameters. I was not there. This is too irregular for me, this—

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher:** It was an advisory committee of the opposition parties.

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** I have a point of order, Mr. Chairman.

**The Chair:** Yes.

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** This is my point. It was only an advisory committee. It has nothing to do with anything.

**The Chair:** Mr. Nadeau, that is not a point of order. It is a point of discussion.

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** I am going to make it anyway because I like him.

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux:** Wait a minute.

I think that this is a bad precedent. If committee members start to bring in minutes from other meetings held who knows where and who knows when and they are considered legitimate, I wonder where this will lead. It could happen in any given situation.

[*English*]

I find that highly irregular. I would encourage my colleagues to not support that idea. When the committee stopped functioning there was no committee work being done. These meetings took place outside of Parliament, and it was not a permanent standing committee. There was no official parliamentary record kept of those discussions.

I don't think it's appropriate that we should somehow give legitimacy to what happened there by bringing those minutes—I don't want to call them a record—into the committee and having the committee adopt them, or whatever we want to call that.

I wanted to comment on that because it was a point brought up by Madame Folco. I think it's highly irregular. It sets a dangerous precedent, a negative precedent, and we should move forward.

[*Translation*]

We would like to move forward on setting our agenda or identifying important issues. If we hold more meetings on the Court Challenges Program, it will not be necessary, given that we are going to restart our work as a committee. It is important to understand that.

Thank you very much.

• (0950)

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

I would simply remind members that if documents are to be provided to committee members, it must be done through the clerk in both official languages.

We will now go to Mr. Harvey.

**Mr. Luc Harvey:** At the beginning of the meeting, I asked what there was to add on the Court Challenges Program. I asked that question in all honesty, but not a single word has been said on that. I would also like to remind you that in our report on our Canada-wide consultations, there were 37 or 38 recommendations. So we set 37 or 38 priorities. The Court Challenges Program was one of them. That means that there are at least 36 other issues that should be priorities.

**Ms. Raymonde Folco:** It is time for the government to turn—

**Mr. Luc Harvey:** Moreover, if we are talking about making a recommendation or a proposal about the agenda, I would like us not to make any commitment for the next session. There could even be another meeting. The vice-chairs and the chair could come up with an agenda in September. I do not really agree with the idea of our setting an agenda right now, since we do not know what will be proposed by the government, among other things, and we might commit to holding discussions or dealing with issues without knowing what the priorities will be in September.

It would be fine to come up with a work plan until the end of the session, but I do not think that we should go further than that. We could give priority to these issues but not assign particular issues to particular meeting dates. In closing, I would like to mention to Mr. Godin that the House of Commons calendar has dates in green, yellow and orange. The green dates end on June 8.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** You are mistaken.

**Mr. Luc Harvey:** It was published yesterday.

**The Chair:** Order, please.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** Read what is said in the orange section.

**Mr. Luc Harvey:** Okay, it says—

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** At the bottom of the calendar.

**Mr. Luc Harvey:** It says "Possible extension".

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** No, it says "Possible extension of sitting hours".

**Mr. Luc Harvey:** Exactly.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** That means that we could be called upon to sit additional hours, to sit in the evening. The calendar provides for us to sit until June 22, with the option of having extended sitting hours in the last fortnight.

**The Chair:** Order, please. I want to hear from Mr. Harvey.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** I want to ask a question, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Harvey said that he has not been able to get an answer all morning. That is not my fault.

**The Chair:** Do you have something to add, Mr. Harvey.

**Mr. Luc Harvey:** No. I thought that orange indicated the days that we would sit if the session was extended.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** Orange is the NDP's colour.

**Mr. Luc Harvey:** Mr. Godin, I am new.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** You have been here for a year and a half.

**Mr. Luc Harvey:** I am delighted to have an expert explain the intricacies of the system to me. That was how I understood it, that is all.

**The Chair:** We are now going to give the floor to Ms. Boucher. I would remind you that there are still five names on the list.

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher:** You cannot limit the number of names on the list.

**Mr. Pablo Rodriguez:** No, but it would be nice to finish with this at some point.

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher:** In listening to what was said earlier, I got the impression that something was missing. A motion was tabled on May 11. It was on the agenda and now it has disappeared. I want to know why. It was Pierre Lemieux's motion. I have it here with me.

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux:** Yes, that is right.

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher:** Yes, I have it here.

**An hon. member:** Was it not adopted?

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux:** No.

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher:** Regardless, it was on the agenda. We have been talking about motions all morning. Could I please be allowed to continue?

**The Chair:** So—

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher:** The motion concerns the witnesses due to appear on the Court Challenges Program.

• (0955)

**The Chair:** What you are telling me is that Mr. Lemieux tabled—

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher:** He tabled the motion on May 11.

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux:** Excuse me, I have a point of order.

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher:** Go ahead.

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux:** My motion appeared on the agenda for our last official meeting. We debated Mr. Godin's motion and voted on it.

**The Chair:** The clerk tells me that it was a notice of motion. Is that correct?

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher:** I have the—

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux:** You are right.

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher:** The parliamentary committee—

**The Chair:** So we have established that it was a notice of motion. Perhaps our clerk could tell us the status of this notice of motion?

**The Clerk:** If there was no—

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher:** I just wanted to know. I know that notice was given.

[English]

**The Clerk:** If it was not moved, that means it's possible to move it at a certain point. But at this point we have another motion in front of us.

[Translation]

**The Chair:** The clerk tells me that we are currently dealing with the recommendation.

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher:** —table it.

**The Chair:** Afterwards, we can move on to the notice of motion.

Thank you, Ms. Boucher. With your indulgence, we will hold on to your notice of motion and come back to it once we have made a decision on Mr. Nadeau's recommendation.

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher:** Do you want me to read it now, or should I wait until we have finished with the recommendation?

**The Chair:** Yes.

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher:** It would have been a good idea to read it, because it is about the Court Challenges Program.

**The Chair:** You may read it if you wish.

**Ms. Raymonde Folco:** Mr. Chairman, could we finish one thing before we start another?

**The Chair:** All right. We will come back to that.

Mr. Simard.

**Hon. Raymond Simard (Saint Boniface, Lib.):** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am pleased to see you as our chair. I have worked with you in the past, and I think the committee is in excellent hands.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

**Hon. Raymond Simard:** I would like to talk about Mr. Nadeau's motion, with which I agree, but I would like to move some amendments to it.

I travelled with the committee on our study of the vitality of the official languages communities. They told us that the threat to their vitality today was the elimination of the Court Challenges Program. We did not go into details with the witnesses, but I can tell you that the Franco-Manitoban school representatives had to use that program. I think it is entirely relevant to hear from these witnesses, because there is an immediate threat to the communities. The committee is headed in the right direction.

It would be a huge error not to have the Commissioner of Official Languages appear before us in the next few meetings. He has tabled his report, and we should listen to what he has to say. If we were to wait another three months, his recommendations would be weakened. I would also suggest that we hear from the minister regarding her reaction to the commissioner's report. These issues are complementary. We must try to include these people in our work on the Court Challenges Program.

If we invite representatives from the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, I would ask my colleague, Mr. Nadeau, not to restrict us to the Atlantic region. This is happening in my province as well. If we hear from Radio-Canada, I would like to ask them some questions about what is going on in Western Canada.

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** That's right.

**The Chair:** So, if I understand correctly, you are moving two friendly amendments.

**Hon. Raymond Simard:** That is correct.

**The Chair:** I would remind committee members that the motion already passed does provide that we would invite Minister Josée Verner to appear before us. If the mover of the motion agrees, we will add the Minister Josée Verner—

**Hon. Raymond Simard:** —as soon as possible.

**The Chair:** —when the Commissioner appears before us. You are also moving—

**Hon. Raymond Simard:** —that we not limit the Radio-Canada witnesses to the Atlantic region, but to include those from other regions as well.

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher:** You are talking about Radio-Canada outside Quebec, in the regions?

**Hon. Raymond Simard:** In the regions.

**The Chair:** Does the mover of the motion agree with these amendments?

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** Since we are talking about amendments, Mr. Chairman—

**Hon. Raymond Simard:** Yes.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** I want to make sure that next Tuesday we will have a meeting on the Court Challenges Program.

**Hon. Raymond Simard:** Absolutely.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** On Thursday, the committee will meet with the commissioner and will continue its work on the Court Challenges Program. It is preferable to have the commissioner appear for two hours.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

**Ms. Raymonde Folco:** No, the bell marks the beginning of the sitting day in the House.

**Mr. Pablo Rodriguez:** There will be a vote at 10:15 a.m.

**The Chair:** We will continue our discussion. Mr. Nadeau has the floor.

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** Mr. Chairman, I agree with my colleague that we should set aside two hours for Mr. Fraser and two hours for the minister immediately afterwards. If they can appear in June, so much the better. I agree with the recommendation regarding Radio-Canada and the issues that were raised.

• (1000)

**The Chair:** I would like to have a clarification. If Mr. Fraser could appear before us next week, would we postpone the court challenges study?

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** We are suggesting that there be four meetings on the Court Challenges Program. I have not written down any dates, with the exception of Mr. Fraser's appearance. I think we should hear from him by June 7 at the latest, because, otherwise, in the worst case scenario, the House could prorogue—

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher:** Parliament could adjourn.

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** Exactly. There could be three meetings, one or two before we meet Mr. Fraser, and we could hold four meetings. Read the motion carefully. If other meetings are required, we could hold other meetings. That is what it says.

**The Chair:** Okay. So the mover of the motion agrees with the suggested amendments?

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** Right, and that we hear from the commissioner by June 7 at the latest.

Mr. Chairman, in order to quite down the ruckus caused earlier when I tabled a document in good faith, let us start by inviting the people whose names appear on the document, namely, Ms. Lalonde, who's in Ottawa, Mr. Gratton, who is in Ottawa and who was Mr. Mulroney's press attaché at the time, and Ms. Gratton, who ran as a Conservative candidate in Ontario. This would set aside any suspicions regarding partisan considerations. We could also invite Mr. Matte, Mr. Badiou, and another woman whose name I have forgotten.

**Mr. Pablo Rodriguez:** That is what I suggested.

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** You already suggested that? Then I agree with my colleague, Mr. Rodriguez.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**The Chair:** I made a note of that.

I had your name on my list, Mr. Godin.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** I will not say much, because I think we are going on and on here for no good reason. In my opinion, the trip was not about the Court Challenges Program.

Mr. Harvey said that he is not getting an answer to his question, but the thing is that we cannot answer it because we want the witnesses to do that. That is why we are having them come here.

**The Chair:** Ms. Folco.

**Ms. Raymonde Folco:** I have nothing to add. I would like us to make a decision, Mr. Chairman.

**The Chair:** Very well.

So we have heard from everyone who wanted to speak. I would like to know the committee's position on Mr. Nadeau's recommendation. Do some of you want to vote on this?

**Ms. Raymonde Folco:** Could we have the motion read one more time, please?

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux:** May I move an amendment? I move that the motion be made a little shorter. Remind me what it says, because it is long.

**The Chair:** What we might do, Mr. Lemieux—

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux:** The thing is that if the motion is too long or too complicated, I would like to have a motion to—

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** Could we have the motion read, Mr. Chairman?

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux:** Yes, exactly.

**The Chair:** The situation is this: I have no more speakers on my list, and Mr. Nadeau's motion reads as follows:

That the Committee hold four meetings (or more, if needed) on the subject of the Court Challenges Program, one meeting with the Commissioner of Official Languages, Graham Fraser, to be held by June 7, 2007 at the latest...

We added Ms. Verner as well.

One meeting with the Société Nationale des Acadiens, and with the Société Radio-Canada.

**Ms. Raymonde Folco:** We should say "where we invite" the Acadian group. Is that not what you mean?

**Hon. Raymond Simard:** Not just the Acadians, but the representatives from other regions as well.

#### **The Chair:**

That the Committee hold a meeting with groups representing anglophone Quebecers and, in the fall, do a study of the Canada-community agreements in each province and territory in order to improve them.

That is how the motion reads.

**Ms. Christine Lafrance (Procedural Clerk):** The motion reads the Société nationale des Acadiens and other regions of the country.

**The Chair:** Ms. Folco, the motion refers to the Société nationale des Acadiens and other regions of the country.

Mr. Godin.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** The motion refers to the Société nationale de l'Acadie.

**The Chair:** The Société nationale de l'Acadie. We will clarify that with the clerk and make the correction.

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** Mr. Chairman.

**The Chair:** Yes?

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** You may strike out the reference to a study of the Canada-community agreements in my motion. That will simplify it, because I did say, "in the fall". This subject can be raised again in the fall when the steering committee meets, if my colleagues agree.

Do you see what I mean? I would strike out the word "fall".

• (1005)

**The Chair:** So we would remove the words "in the fall".

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** The reference to the fall and the—

**The Chair:** —a study on the Canada-communities agreements in each province and territory.

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** Yes, and we would refer this to the steering committee.

**The Chair:** I'm told that there is no such subcommittee here.

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** There isn't? Great! We'll discuss it again then in the fall.

**The Chair:** So it will be up to the committee—

**Ms. Raymonde Folco:** Could I ask you to read it one more time, Mr. Chairman?

**The Chair:** I will reread the motion.

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher:** I would like to take a break.

**The Chair:** I will read it one last time. Then we will take a break.

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher:** [*Editor's note: inaudible*] write it down.

**The Chair:** The motion reads as follows: It is moved by Richard Nadeau that the Committee hold four meetings (or more, if needed) on the subject of the Court Challenges Program: one to be held by June 7, 2007 at the latest with Graham Fraser, the Commissioner of Official Languages and one meeting with the Minister responsible for la Francophonie and Official Languages, Ms. Josée Verner; and one meeting with the Société nationale de l'Acadie and the other groups representing the regions in the country, and one meeting with la Société Radio-Canada; and a meeting with representatives of Anglophone organizations in Quebec.

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher:** Outside Montreal or in Montreal?

**Ms. Raymonde Folco:** Anglophones in Quebec.

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** They may be from Pontiac, which is just on the other side of the river.

**The Chair:** Would you care to make a comment as mover of the motion, Mr. Nadeau?

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** Yes. The meetings with Mr. Fraser and Ms. Verner would be separate, they would not necessarily be held on the same day.

**The Chair:** Fine, so there would be one meeting with Mr. Fraser and one meeting with Ms. Verner.

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux:** If possible.

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** We will invite them.

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux:** Yes, exactly. There is a problem, because the motion states: "by June 7, 2007".

**Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours:** For Mr. Fraser.

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux:** I do understand. Wait a minute!

If Ms. Verner is not available, we have a problem. Usually we would say: "as soon as possible". We will try to meet with her by June 7, but we cannot be specific about that. If she is not available, she is simply not available.

**The Chair:** Thank you. I think we have made a note of that, Mr. Lemieux.

I am also told that it is possible to have each party vote on the motion separately.

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux:** I would like to move an amendment, because the motion contains various subjects. There are meetings on the Court Challenges Program, and that is one subject. There are the appearances by the Commissioner and by the minister. That makes six meetings. We really do not know when the session will end. When we invite the representatives of Radio-Canada and the anglophone groups in Quebec, if we don't have a topic for them—

**Ms. Raymonde Folco:** Mr. Lemieux, the anglophone groups in Quebec are included in the discussions regarding court challenges. I explained that point. When I suggested that we invite the anglophone groups in Quebec, it is because we often have the impression that the Court Challenges Program applied to francophone Canadians only.

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux:** You're right, you did say that, but the motion states that this would be a meeting with anglophone Quebecers, and says nothing about the Court Challenges Program.

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher:** Yes.

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** Point of order, Mr. Chairman.

**The Chair:** Yes, Mr. Nadeau?

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** You can delete the reference to a meeting with anglophone Quebecers. That would make one fewer meeting for us. Anglophone Quebecers would be invited to appear at one of the four or more meetings dedicated to the Court Challenges Program.

Thank you for that clarification, Mr. Lemieux.

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** You are suggesting four or more meetings, if needed, on the Court Challenges Program, including a meeting with an anglophone Quebecer group.

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** The witnesses appearing at those meetings could include our anglophone Quebecer friends.

**The Chair:** We can leave it that way if you like, specifying that you would like to see anglophone Quebecers at one of those four meetings.

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** Perfect.

**Ms. Raymonde Folco:** There's a problem, because we are in the process of naming other groups, but we are not naming that group.

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** No.

**The Chair:** Ms. Folco.

**Ms. Raymonde Folco:** I would like to have that reread. I apologize for that, but there have been changes.

**The Chair:** Of course.

**Ms. Raymonde Folco:** I want to be sure about what I am voting on.

**The Chair:** That's fine. Mr. Richard Nadeau moved that the committee hold four meetings (or more, if needed) on the subject of the Court Challenges Program, including one meeting with anglophone organizations in Quebec, one meeting with the Commissioner of Official Languages, to be held by June 7—

•(1010)

**Ms. Raymonde Folco:** Forgive me, but what about saying "including" instead of "one meeting"?

**Hon. Raymond Simard:** Including witnesses.

**Ms. Raymonde Folco:** Because I don't see a meeting... If we said: "including witnesses representing the following organizations: anglophone Quebecers, Acadians, SOS Montfort, and so on". Then it becomes clear that they are all being seen under the same umbrella.

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** Mr. Chairman.

**The Chair:** He moved the motion, so it is his recommendation.

**Ms. Raymonde Folco:** No but all I'm doing is making a suggestion to my colleague.

**The Chair:** Yeah.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** Mr. Chairman, I think we are getting bogged down here. There will be four meetings on the Court Challenges Program, we will submit the names of witnesses to the clerk, and we will invite those witnesses. Never before have we expressly indicated that we would be inviting Jacques, Richard or any other specific persons. I have never seen that before. Where are we going with it? We are wasting time for no reason. We will have four meetings, or more, if necessary, on the Court Challenges Program. We will submit a list of our witnesses to the clerk, we will invite those witnesses, they will appear before us, and that will be that.

**The Chair:** Right, let's carry on.

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux:** That is why I wanted to move an amendment.

The other issue was on Radio-Canada, the French-language network of the CBC. There is a link with the Court Challenges Program and the minister. But Radio-Canada is a completely different issue. Since we do not know when the House will adjourn, I would like to move an amendment to withdraw this issue. There is enough work to do over the next few weeks, when we draw to the end of it, we can decide whether or not to continue. Will there be other meetings or not? My motion is intended to withdraw the Radio-Canada issue—

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher:** So that it can be reinstated in September.

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux:** No, just to withdraw it for now. We can decide on it later.

**The Chair:** You are therefore moving an amendment to the motion.

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux:** Yes, I'm moving an amendment—

**The Chair:** Just a moment. I want to make things clear.

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux:** —to withdraw—

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** It's an amendment.

**The Chair:** Fine.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** I would like to comment on that amendment. I am against it, and I will tell you why. We are looking at the agenda, as we have always done in the past. We are planning future business. If we cannot see witnesses on the CBC issue in June, what will the repercussion be? They will already have received a notice to appear at a public hearing, so we will see them later, in the fall. Perhaps between now and the fall—if the executives of the CBC listen to me—CBC will have changed its programming in some parts of the country. It is not assuming its responsibilities. The witnesses will therefore receive a new notice of appearance indicating that the CBC will be on the agenda of the Standing Committee on Official Languages. It is to be hoped they will not need to come, because we have other things to do. It is to be hoped that the CBC, which is funded by Canadian taxpayers' money...

I'm not talking about you, Mr. Lemieux. I'm talking about the directors of the CBC.

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher:** We were all aware of it.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** Mr. Chairman, I would like the CBC to get the message that we, just like communities in other parts of the country, refuse to accept certain things any more. As a francophone, as a Canadian and as an Acadian, I am eager to see something on the national news that does not just come from Montreal.

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher:** [Editor's note: inaudible]

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** Not so long ago, Mr. Chairman, I was talking about Radio-Québec. I stopped talking about Radio-Québec, because a Quebecker told me that it wasn't Radio-Québec, but Radio-Montréal.

Radio-Canada, the French-language network of the CBC, has the word Canada in its name and all Canadian taxpayers fund it. Every so often, we'd like to see something in the national news about Caraquet, not just images of people burning boats in Shippagan and fish plants. We would like some good news as well, Mr. Chairman.

People are absolutely fed up. The Société nationale de l'Acadie is tired of seeing those reports, the Société des Acadiens et Acadiennes

du Nouveau-Brunswick is fed up with seeing those reports, and Mr. Simard, our friend from Saint-Boniface, has said it himself—there is a problem there. By putting this issue on the agenda, Radio-Canada might be kind enough to review its programming.

In my opinion, the corporation made a major error when it pulled the program *RDI en direct/L'Atlantique*. I've said it before so I won't say it again, it is already in our proceedings.

I would appreciate it if Mr. Lemieux would join us in sending a message to Radio-Canada.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Let's carry on with our list. Mr. Boucher and Mr. Lemieux—

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher:** You said "Mr. Boucher".

**The Chair:** Forgive me, madam parliamentary secretary.

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher:** If you could just get on—

**The Chair:** So in brief, we were discussing Mr. Lemieux's amendment, which withdraws the SRC issue.

Ms. Boucher, the floor is yours.

•(1015)

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher:** I would like—

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** Mr. Chairman, I should not have talked about his amendment, because his amendment has not yet been seconded.

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher:** No.

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux:** We are talking about the amendment, aren't we? Then we will vote on it.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** I would like him to—

**The Chair:** Mr. Godin.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** If an amendment has been moved, someone has to second it so that we can discuss it.

**Mr. Pablo Rodriguez:** So will someone second the amendment?

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher:** His remarks—

**Ms. Raymonde Folco:** The issue is now to determine whether the amendment is passed or rejected.

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux:** We are discussing it, aren't we?

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher:** Before, there is a point I wish to raise.

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux:** I would also like to raise a point on the amendment.

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher:** No, I would like to comment on what Mr. Yvon Godin said, and perhaps on the amendment as well. It's perhaps an idea, because everyone seems to find it too long.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** No.

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher:** Here's an idea. First, we draft a motion covering Mr. Fraser, the Court Challenges Program and Ms. Verner. Second, we draft a different motion to cover the rest of it, including Radio-Canada, to make sure it's not forgotten.

**The Chair:** I would like to point out that Mr. Lemieux's amendment is in order. It does not need to be seconded, Mr. Godin.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** Ms. Boucher has just spoken. Mr. Lemieux can now comment on his amendment.

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux:** Mr. Godin has polarized the issue again. I am not saying that the Radio-Canada issue is not important. At the beginning of the meeting, Mr. Nadeau pointed out that we should perhaps continue our hearings over the summer. I would certainly be prepared to do that if we were talking about a critical issue, but the Radio-Canada issue is not critical at this time. That is why I would like us to have the freedom of deciding further down the line whether it is a critical issue, and not be forced to decide that today. And the committee would sit during the summer.

I never said it wasn't important. But why should we add yet another issue to the agenda now, when Mr. Nadeau said that we may sit over the summer? Our schedule is already full. Could we discuss Radio-Canada again in one or two weeks? That is what my amendment is intended to achieve.

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

I would like to know whether the committee is ready for the question on the amendment.

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher:** I would like a couple of minutes to discuss it with my group, since it seems rather difficult to have a discussion together here today.

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux:** Agreed.

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher:** They are at the other end of the table.

**Hon. Raymond Simard:** A five-minute work plan.

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher:** Exactly.

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux:** We did that last time. We can suspend for a couple of minutes.

**The Chair:** I'm being asked to suspend the meeting for five minutes. Then, we can—

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** Two minutes.

**The Chair:** Agreed. Then, we can put the question.

**Mr. Pablo Rodriguez:** Would you agree to vote right after?

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher:** I won't say I'm not, but I would like to speak to my people first.

**Mr. Pablo Rodriguez:** We will have to vote after that.

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher:** I am a woman, so I would like—

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux:** We hope.

**Mr. Pablo Rodriguez:** A gentlemen's agreement, is that right?

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher:** For once, I will say yes to a gentlemen's agreement.

**The Chair:** Agreed. We have a women's agreement. I am suspending the meeting for several minutes.

• \_\_\_\_\_ (Pause) \_\_\_\_\_

•

•(1020)

**The Chair:** We are resuming our deliberations. So where are we?

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** We are voting on the amendment.

**The Chair:** Is the committee reading for the question on Mr. Lemieux's amendment?

**Some hon. members:** Yes.

**The Chair:** Is the committee ready?

We must now vote on the amendment.

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher:** Could you read the amendment?

**The Chair:** We will reread the amendment.

Mr. Lemieux moves that all words following "Acadie" be deleted from Mr. Nadeau's amendment.

(Amendment negatived)

**The Chair:** Is the committee ready to vote on Mr. Nadeau's motion, which reads as follows:

That the Committee hold four meetings (or more, if needed) on the subject of the Court Challenges Program, including representatives of Anglophone organizations in Quebec, one meeting with the Commissioner of Official Languages, to be held by June 7, 2007 at the latest, one meeting with the Minister responsible for la Francophonie and Official Languages, and one meeting with la Société Nationale de l'Acadie, and with the Société Radio-Canada.

(Motion carried unanimously)

•(1025)

**The Chair:** Bravo! Congratulations. There was—

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher:** No, it is all right.

**The Chair:** —a notice of motion—

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher:** Mr. so and so does not want it. What do you expect a girl do to?

**The Chair:** The clerk says that I can ask the committee members if they want to adjourn.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** First, I would like to know who next Tuesday's witnesses will be. I recommend that we invite the witnesses who were here on May 17 last. I would like them to come back.

**Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours:** That is what I recommended in the first place.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** Fantastic.

**Mr. Pablo Rodriguez:** I support the recommendation. What if they are not available?

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** We will try. I agree with the opposition.

**The Chair:** Mr. Chong.

[English]

**Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC):** I move that we adjourn the meeting, Mr. Chair.

[Translation]

**The Chair:** All right.

**Ms. Raymonde Folco:** I second the motion made by the Hon. Michael Chong.

**The Chair:** We will ask the clerk to be sure to summon the witnesses.

Mr. Chong, seconded by Ms. Folco, moves that this meeting be adjourned.

The meeting is adjourned.

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