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—
Chair

The Honourable Diane Marleau

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• (0900)

[English]

The Chair (Hon. Diane Marleau (Sudbury, Lib.)): I call the committee to order.

I'll officially welcome our guest, Mr. Morgan.

Normally what happens here is that the guest is given five to ten minutes to give a summary of whatever it is they'd like to say. Then the opposition gets seven minutes, including answers. If the question is too long, you may not have to answer. It'll then go to two of the opposition parties, then Conservative, then NDP. I just thought I'd give you that heads up.

Please.

Mr. Gwyn Morgan (As an Individual): Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

Let me, first of all, thank the clerk and also the committee for their flexibility in scheduling this meeting. I know I was unavailable last week, unfortunately, because I was travelling through New York City and other places. I very much appreciate the invitation and your flexibility.

I'm going to discuss in my opening statement, Madam Chair, the Public Appointments Commission's mandate and also my nomination as its first chair. You have a copy, I believe, of the mandate of the commission before you.

The key objective of the commission will be to ensure that names forwarded for consideration as Governor in Council appointees possess the qualifications, background, experience, and personal attributes required for the position. In other words, the objective will be that merit determine appointments. The process will be transparent, and vacancies for Governor in Council appointments will appear in the newly created website.

I believe personally, Madam Chair, that developing the best possible public appointments process is very important to our country. Agencies of the Crown play important roles. Those who are appointed to leadership positions within them must not only be the best available for the job, they must also be seen to have been chosen by a process designed to ensure that they are.

Now I want to make a very important point. The commission is about how appointments are to be made; it is not about who is selected to serve on agencies, boards, commissions, and crowns. In other words—and this is my most important point of emphasis—the commission will neither select nor appoint anyone.

Madam Chair, I turn to why I have accepted the Prime Minister's nomination to chair the commission and what abilities and background I believe I bring to the role. You know from the information that has been provided that I dedicated half of my 60 years on this earth to building a successful Canadian-headquartered international company, a company that ranks among the largest corporations in the country, a company that prides itself in showing that Canadians can compete with the best in the world, a company that does its best to protect the environment and makes a positive difference in the community where we operate, and a company that employs Canadian representatives of our country's rich diversity of cultural backgrounds.

Of course I take pride in these things, and I am humbled by the personal awards and recognitions I have received over the months since I stepped down from the company. What I take the greatest pride in is EnCana's corporate constitution. I have always believed, Madam Chair, that true success can only be achieved by the disciplined adherence to a set of principles that stem from the best of Canadian values. These are enshrined in EnCana's corporate constitution. It is a document unique in the corporate world. I wrote it.

Madam Chair, I'm happy that copies have been made available to the committee today.

The constitution outlines shared principles, the first one being strong character. I'll read very briefly from that principle. People of strong character “lift one another up to greater success, we are determined...and disciplined, and we can be counted on”.

The second principle is ethical behaviour: “We function on the basis of trust, integrity, and respect. We are committed to benchmark practices in safety and environmental stewardship, ethical business conduct, and community responsibility.”

High performance: “We focus where we passionately believe we can be the best. We are accountable for delivering high-quality work that's continually enriched by...learning.”

Great expectations: “We have great expectations of one another. Living up to them will allow us to experience the fulfillment of being successful, and the pride of building a great company.”

I have longed believed, Madam Chair, that living by sound principles is the key to success of any organization. I am a passionate Canadian prepared to apply what I've learned to serving my country.

I accepted the Prime Minister's nomination because I bring two attributes that are well suited to service on the Public Appointments Commission. Firstly, my track record for principle-based leadership is there for all to see. I am gratified by the degree to which that has been recognized across the country.

Secondly, I've learned a great deal about sound private sector governance, much of which has applications to the agencies, crowns, boards, and commissions of government. I believe that if you look carefully at the mandate of the Public Appointments Commission, the specific mandate, you will see that the alignment is there between the skills needed and my experience.

• (0905)

I came from the private sector, I am not a politician, and reading media reports on some of my public speeches tell me I wouldn't be very good at it anyway. I must tell you, though, that after dedicating my life to building a sound reputation, it is painful for me and my family to see a couple of sentences taken out of context from one of my speeches leave such an untrue impression of my beliefs.

I emphasize once again that the commission will not make any appointments. In fact, the commission will not even be presented with the names of proposed public appointees. What the commission will do is to examine the process used in selecting proposed appointees to ensure that it follows the guidelines established by the commission, code of conduct types of guidelines, which will be based upon the principles of transparency and meritocracy.

I and the other members of the commission will need to completely avoid expressing views on any potential candidate for public appointment or, for that matter, any other political process or issue. We are about principles, process and governance; we are not about the selection of individuals. Madam Chair, I commit to your committee, and to all Canadians, that I will do everything I can to see that the process of making public appointments in this country is lifted to a level that is viewed as the highest standard among democracies in the world.

When I accepted this nomination, the Prime Minister and I agreed that five commission members should be spread across the regions of our country, and the commission should reflect a diversity of backgrounds. Now, Madam Chair, let me mention the other members of the commission, which was announced in yesterday's press release.

Starting from the west and moving east, we have Hassan Khosrowshahi. Hassan and his wife, Nezhat, came to our country as immigrants from Iran and founded and eventually sold the Future Shop. They are passionate Canadians who want to do everything they can to see that Canada continues to be one of the greatest places in the world, and they are stellar examples of the contribution that Canada's immigrant mosaic makes to our country.

From the prairie region, I humbly offer the services of this former farm boy from Alberta.

From Ontario, there's Roy McLaren. Roy McLaren has served this country as an MP, a cabinet minister, and as High Commissioner to the United Kingdom, among other things. I'm sure that his record, his abilities, his integrity need little explanation to the committee or, for that matter, to other Canadians.

From Quebec, there's Ms. Jacqueline Boutet, Order of Canada. Jacqueline was raised in Quebec City and now lives in Montreal. This French Canadian has a distinguished record both in business and in her service to her community and her country. She has served on both crown and private corporate boards and was first woman chair of Tennis Canada. I would be very proud to work with Ms. Boutet as we carry out the mandate of the commission.

Madam Chair, the fifth member of the commission will come from Atlantic Canada. I hope you can see the quality and diversity standards set by the names announced so far, and I know the Prime Minister will be proud to announce a commissioner from Atlantic Canada in due course.

Each person has agreed to work as a commissioner and is prepared to invest their time and bring their abilities and dedication to its mandate for one and only one reason, because we love our country and we want to help make it even better. That is why we have all asked that we not be paid any salary. That's not precisely true; we want to be paid \$1 per year. I'm excited about this because it recreates some great history under Minister C.D. Howe and, more recently, that great Canadian, Mitchell Sharp.

Madam Chair, with that opening statement, I'm now prepared to answer the committee's questions.

• (0910)

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Mr. Morgan, you're going to find that in this place there are many strong-willed, strong personalities, and they certainly don't always agree, nor do they always cooperate, and that can be quite a challenge. This is also a place where a few words can be taken out of context, and are on a daily basis. So welcome to this sport that we call politics, and it's a tough one.

I will now go on to our first questioner, Mr. Volpe.

Hon. Joseph Volpe (Eglinton—Lawrence, Lib.): *Merci, madame la présidente. Bonjour, monsieur Morgan.*

I would love to have that press release to which you made reference. We weren't supplied with it.

At any rate, compliments on your acceptance.

Notwithstanding the caution of the chair, I wonder, Mr. Morgan, whether you think this exercise is okay for you. We've had other people who, like yourself, have been in the public service. For example, last year—and I'm sure some of the members opposite will remember—we had an appointee by the Liberal government of the day, Mr. Murray. He was an accomplished public servant in a role that, by all other accounts, was one to which he was suitably matched. This kind of structure created some difficulties; I think you've alluded to them. You didn't want to be taken out of context, and I'm sure he didn't either.

You're okay with the system, though, where we get a chance to see what you're all about?

Mr. Gwyn Morgan: Yes, I am.

Hon. Joseph Volpe: Good.

That having been said, you talked about principles, process, and governance, because that's what you're about; that's all you're about. You're going to make sure that everybody who is going to be considered by the Government of Canada goes through those three items. Should it be our understanding that you think none of that has happened before?

Mr. Gwyn Morgan: Thank you for the question.

It's true that I haven't been in government before, so I don't know all of the ins and outs and processes here in Ottawa. But it's fair to say I believe that the people of the country are looking forward to some ways of doing things even better than they were done before.

• (0915)

Hon. Joseph Volpe: So, for example, in terms of selecting judges, you're probably aware there is a peer review that screens any potential candidate well before they come for the consideration of cabinet and the Prime Minister. Would you change that system, and if so, to what?

Mr. Gwyn Morgan: What I need to do today, Madam Chair, is to really stick to the mandate of the Public Appointments Commission. The Public Appointments Commission will have nothing to do with the appointment of judges. That will be another decision that is made by government policy, I suppose. We will not have an involvement in that.

Hon. Joseph Volpe: You did say in your introduction that, yes, you're not going to make any appointments but that you believe in strong character, ethical behaviour, and high performance as criteria for the other issue, which is meritocracy: meritocracy in the public service and meritocracy in all patronage appointments. Patronage appointments are the ones made by government of the day, presumably on the same high ethical standards.

Is there any one sector in which you believe there has not been a focus on meritocracy, or were you simply looking at some of the people who are going to be part of your commission; for example, Roy McLaren?

Mr. Gwyn Morgan: Madam Chair, the commission's mandate will not extend to the public service. But I must say that I've long tried to be a champion, if you like, in the private sector for the public service. I was a member of the board of the Public Policy Forum, and I co-chaired an awards dinner two years ago with Dalton McGuinty in Ontario for the Public Policy Forum.

I believe that one of the great advantages in our country has always been that we have an ethical, quality public service. I think that is a real advantage in our country, and at least for my purposes, I'm very satisfied. In fact, I think we need to do more to encourage our public servants.

Hon. Joseph Volpe: You can always reach higher and go faster; that's a function of our life and a function of any system. I wanted specifically to point out the places where it wasn't happening—where people weren't jumping, weren't running, weren't doing things according to merit.

Consistent with your own private sector approach to life, which is based on the principle of good solid leadership and presumes some research, and the private sector system of governance—in other words, bottom line, perform—when you accepted this job,

presumably you would have already considered those. I imagine, because I hold you in some regard, that you would have done that kind of pre-study beforehand and would be able to give us an indication of where we have been missing meritocracy and transparency.

Mr. Gwyn Morgan: Thank you again for the question.

Madam Chair, I talked about the public service. The area in which I do have a concern personally, and have had for some time, and I think many Canadians have, is patronage appointments. I have had experience talking to people who have been on government boards and agencies, and I've found that sometimes people are selected without what they believe to be a process that determines who is best for the job. In many cases, some of the openings that have been available, potentially available, have been advertised in the *Canada Gazette*, and someone said to me, "All five people who read that know about it."

Generally, there hasn't been a—

Hon. Joseph Volpe: But it does point out, Mr. Morgan, that there is a process in place. And I'm just wondering which aspect of the process you didn't like. You've said you didn't know very much about the judicial appointment process. Are you familiar with another one of the issues that's related to some of the statements you claim have been taken out of context? The issue of selecting members to the Immigration and Refugee Board, commissions, or maybe citizenship arbitrators—are you familiar with some of the processes that go towards choosing people who sit part-time on boards for CPP or for the employment commission?

Mr. Gwyn Morgan: Yes, I am.

Hon. Joseph Volpe: You're aware there is a process, that it's a very rigorous process, and that it involves examination, transparency, and meritocracy.

Mr. Gwyn Morgan: Could I answer—

• (0920)

The Chair: I regret, Mr. Volpe, your time is up.

Sir, you can answer that later as part of another question, if that's your wish.

[Translation]

Ms. Thibault, go ahead.

Ms. Louise Thibault (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ): Thank you, Madam Chair.

Mr. Morgan, thank you for being here this morning.

In your presentation, you alluded to the principles you set out for your company and to the underlying issue of transparency. The Conservative government often refers to it. I am having some difficulty reconciling the notion of transparency with the fact that the Prime Minister—and I'm not referring to the fact that he chose you personally—chose a chair and commission members while Bill C-2 is being considered by the legislative committee. This shows that the government, arrogantly—it isn't a sign of self-assurance so much as a sign of arrogance towards parliamentarians—carried out this entire process ahead of time. Moreover, you assure us that the process started by this commission will be absolutely exemplary. How can you reconcile these two things?

How can you—and I won't mention commission members, who are absent—accept a nomination to a position which has not yet been created?

[English]

Mr. Gwyn Morgan: Madam, honourable member, if you will, thank you very much for your question.

Madam Chair, as I said earlier, I am a person from the private sector who has been asked by the Prime Minister to do a job. All of the processes of Bill C-2 and of clause 228 of it, which specifically refers to a Public Appointments Commission, are things that are part of public policy and part of the acts of government.

When the Prime Minister asked me to do this job I had enough confidence that the House would pass the bill to say it was worth my while getting started and accepting the position. Of course, should that not happen, then we all know the commission will not actually take place.

There is a lot of history in Parliament, and I have some understanding of this history. With new government initiatives, at times things are started to get things going, and that is not a precedent.

[Translation]

Ms. Louise Thibault: I don't know if the information I have here is correct. It was published in the *The Hill Times*. Apparently, you are so confident that you have appointed a director, Peter Harrison. Is that true or false?

[English]

Mr. Gwyn Morgan: Madam Chair, I think the same answer applies, that we are trying to get this commission going. We know a lot of appointments are pending and some will have to be made before the commission is operating, so the Prime Minister, under his own portfolio, has taken that initiative. It hasn't been my initiative; it's been his initiative to get things going on the basis that we need to be ready when the bill is passed.

[Translation]

Ms. Louise Thibault: Thank you for your answer, but being ready and starting ahead of time are not the same thing.

Under the current process of which you are an example, governor-in-council appointees are invited to testify before the committee and generally do so. Because we have a number of questions, you may answer yes or no. Will this process be enshrined in the commission's procedures?

[English]

Mr. Gwyn Morgan: Madam Chair, I can't quite give a yes or no, but I'll give a very quick answer.

The procedures of the commission will be reflective of the procedures the government puts forward for various appointments. We will not have even any say on which goes to committee and which doesn't. What we will have a say in is the process of selection, to make sure, as much as possible, that it's transparent and based on meritocracy.

[Translation]

Ms. Louise Thibault: On page 4 of the French version of your presentation, you referred to a couple of sentences being taken out of context and leaving such an untrue impression of your beliefs.

I'll read you this in English, because obviously, your presentation is in English:

● (0925)

[English]

It's fair to say that most immigrants who abuse our society have come in as refugee claimants rather than "economic immigrants". This not only means they are more likely to have violent tendencies, but also much less likely to have the skills, training and attitude necessary to contribute to our society.

[Translation]

Do you not consider these to be racist comments?

[English]

Mr. Gwyn Morgan: No, I do not. But I must respond, Madam Chair, in the context of what I said earlier, which is that these are a couple of sentences taken out of context of the whole speech. I will add a few things from exactly the same speech, and this won't take me very long.

Here I quote from the speech:

Right at the outset, let me state my bias. I am in favour of a strong immigration program. As baby boomers like me prepare to sail off into retirement, our country needs more productive, competent workers. ...

[Let's] cut the red tape and expedite the processing of these future contributors to our society. Color, race, religion should continue to be irrelevant in the selection process.

...when we get them here? Here again there are some very obvious symptoms that tell us we are failing to take advantage of the potential of our immigrants. How many times have you been in a taxi driven by an engineer or seen a well qualified medical specialist acting as an orderly in a hospital? These are good, decent people who came to Canada for a better life. For a combination of reasons—partly the failure of our professional associations and partly because of failure by governments to provide the early stage support, and training required both to obtain employment and to fit into their new lives [in our country].

[Translation]

Ms. Louise Thibault: Thank you, I read that. What you're saying here is that some immigrants will not develop... That's a value judgment. If that is what you meant to say, you don't believe in rehabilitation.

In this case you're targeting one group, and towards the end of your speech, you virulently attack the Bloc Québécois, thereby not recognizing the legitimacy of Quebecers' democratic choice.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Thibault. Your time is up. Mr. Moore, you now have the floor.

[English]

Mr. James Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam, CPC): Thank you very much.

In your opening statement you discussed a number of things with regard to the position, with regard to the commission itself, and the makeup of the other members of the commission. I think it should be noted that the commission, as you said, is well balanced regionally. I suspect if we had Mr. McLaren here we would have people dissecting past speeches, looking for internal conspiracies and things we may agree or disagree with. But the reality is, the position you have is in fact not a political one; it's one of true public service, for a dollar a year.

As you know, of course, if you've read the papers over the weekend, one member of this committee has already decided that you're not qualified for this position, even though she has not yet in fact ever met you. So I was wondering if you would just take a minute—because you kind of glossed over it in the short time you had at the beginning—to tell us frankly a little bit about yourself as an individual. We will be voting in about an hour and a half's time on a motion that says you're not qualified for this post. I was wondering if you can tell us a little bit more about your professional past, where you were born, where you went to school, where you've travelled, and so on.

Mr. Gwyn Morgan: Thank you, honourable member.

Madam Chair, I've never been very good at, as some people call it, blowing my own horn, so I'll have to do my best here.

I was born on a farm in Alberta with what you might call a very low start in terms of economic position, but, I believe, a high start in terms of ethical standards that I was taught by my parents. Through my whole life I have believed in principles, and I have loved my country.

I took engineering and ended up in the oil and gas industry. I was able to join a company in 1975 that was Canadian headquartered. That was in fact very important to me, and the reason that I left a non-Canadian-headquartered company was to do so.

One of my greatest pleasures, having built that company to the point of being one of the largest energy companies in the country and also internationally, was to combine it with another very large company to create EnCana in the year 2002.

My wife and I actually came up with the name EnCana to represent energy Canada, to show our pride in this country. One of the reasons I brought that company together and created EnCana was that we were losing head offices in this country, and I believed very strongly that Canadian head offices are very important to the country.

I'm very humbled to say that I was recognized by 250 CEOs across the country as the most respected chief executive in the country last year, and also by another group as chief executive of the year.

All of these things are far beyond what I could ever have dreamed of in pursuing my career, and now that I have stepped down, I'm willing to put whatever I can and whatever abilities and effort and enthusiasm I have into this role.

● (0930)

Mr. James Moore: Obviously when the Prime Minister calls, people often feel compelled to enter public life. But at what point was it that you decided you wanted to contribute to public life rather than continue on in the corporate world? What draws you to this service?

Mr. Gwyn Morgan: I'm not sure, actually, but I think there came a time in my life when, in the case of the company and the corporate world, I'd done more than I had ever expected to and it was time to move on and pass the torch to the next generation, if you like.

I've always had a great interest in policy and government and have worked, in fact, with both Liberal and Conservative governments—more Liberal governments in recent times—on things like policy and have done my best in that regard.

The way the Prime Minister presented it to me was that the Public Appointments Commission isn't about the Conservative government; the Public Appointments Commission is about creating a new way of making patronage appointments, if you like, or maybe about de-patronizing appointments, which is the way I put it. It's something that, if we do it right, if we set it up so that it has the support of everyone, not only in the House but in the country, it can make a real difference for the long-term future, and that's why I accepted the Prime Minister's nomination.

Mr. James Moore: How much time do I have?

The Chair: You have two and a half minutes.

Mr. James Moore: Mr. Volpe mentioned Glen Murray, the former mayor of Winnipeg, who was appointed and then scrutinized very heavily and perhaps in an overly partisan way at a committee. One may make that argument.

But the truth is that the creation of this commission, or frankly, the appointment of you and this very regionally balanced and very politically balanced commission to examine the process—not the actual individual appointees, but the process—to ensure that there is a fair approach to this is in fact, in my judgment, and I sit on the Bill C-2 legislative committee, an effort by this government to frankly rejuvenate the appointments process, not necessarily the individuals, to ensure that there is a fair and balanced arm's-length process and that the process itself is being scrutinized at arm's-length, so that those who step forward and are being considered for very important appointments aren't tainted by the partisanship associated with making important appointments to public offices.

I think that's essentially what's crucial here. Is that how you view the importance of this new policy?

Mr. Gwyn Morgan: Madam Chair, it is how I view it, and I was very keen—and I made this known to the Prime Minister—on having commission members selected who represented different political backgrounds, different ethnic backgrounds, and different genders of course. We have one yet to come, and I think the Prime Minister will do a good job on that too.

I believe that it's all about the process, and that what we need to do as commissioners is to remove ourselves from whatever backgrounds we may have had, but use the skills that we've learned and the experience we've built in our lives towards making this work.

Mr. James Moore: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.

Ms. Nash.

Ms. Peggy Nash (Parkdale—High Park, NDP): Thank you, Madam Chair.

Thank you, Mr. Morgan, for coming before the committee.

It's very good to hear your comments, and you have probably read some of my comments in the press. I suppose I've been your loudest critic since I heard about your appointment. I have to be clear with you that I have some real concerns about your appointment. Given what I've read about your views on some issues, we may not be the best of friends at the end of this or agree on much. That said, this is a respectful forum, and I appreciate your ability to come here and be questioned, as we're doing.

Of course, this is not about the others who are being appointed to the proposed commission; this is about you and your qualifications. In a speech you gave recently in a Fraser Institute forum, you attacked my party, social programs, unions, low-wage workers—a number of things I believe in—and I'm here to represent my constituents and beliefs on these issues.

I want to ask you questions about three different areas: first, the comments that I found deeply offensive in this speech regarding Jamaican immigrants in Toronto and their propensity for violence; second, the fact that you, your wife, and your business interests are major financial contributors to the Conservative Party and its previous incarnations; and third, your qualifications for the job.

In a speech you made at a Fraser Institute forum, you talked about believing in a strong immigration policy, and you've reiterated that here. You even end the section of your speech, as you've read, indicating you think that colour, race, and religion should be irrelevant in the selection process. You have talked here about meritocracy. In the speech, however, you also seem to say that race and country of origin are in fact very relevant when it comes to determining how violent a person is. You said, and I quote: "The social side is all too evident with the runaway violence driven mainly by Jamaican immigrants in Toronto, or the all too frequent violence between Asian and other ethnic gangs right here in Calgary."

On what basis do you make the claim that Jamaican immigrants are the driving force behind violence in Toronto?

● (0935)

Mr. Gwyn Morgan: Thank you for the question, member Nash.

First of all, I would say that if I had to rewrite the words of that specific section of the speech—and reading those words on their own without the rest of the context—I would gladly rewrite them in a way that reflects my own beliefs more clearly.

Let me tell you what they really are. When it comes to Jamaicans, my wife and I spend a great deal of time in the Caribbean, at least as much as we can. Hopefully we'll have time to spend a little more now. Basically we love the Caribbean people. We attend their churches; in fact, in January we were at an all-black church. And these are some of the most wonderful people in the world.

But do you know what? They are also very concerned about the Caribbean drug trade. They're concerned about the same kinds of

issues that people in Canada or in Toronto are concerned with. We heard that loud and clear from them.

Member Volpe, we can talk about the Sicilian Mafia, which used to be what we talked about when we talked about organized crime. We don't seem to talk about that anymore because there's Russian organized crime, Chinese, and others.

Hon. Joseph Volpe: They are pretty good and well organized.

Ms. Peggy Nash: Madam Chair, can we have order?

Mr. Gwyn Morgan: The point I'm making is that it's about behaviour, not race. When we talked about the Sicilians, we weren't talking about being against Italian immigrants. In fact, how can you not love Italians? My wife and I love the Caribbeans.

Ms. Peggy Nash: Let me be a little more precise then. What do you think are other contributing factors that might lead to crimes in a city like Toronto? You've talked about Jamaicans and about drugs. What else do you think might lead to crime in my city?

Mr. Gwyn Morgan: I really believe strongly—I guess I tried to say this in my speech, and I regret not saying it as well as I could have—that we have to do a better job of screening immigrants who have violent tendencies. I don't know how you do that, but if someone has a police record, for example, in another country, that should be really clearly brought forward. Sometimes it's missed.

When people come to our country and commit crimes against Canadians, the process of getting them out of the country should be more expeditious. Sometimes it takes ten years and goes on and on.

Those are the kinds of things I'm talking about.

The last thing I want to say is that Jamaicans, Caribbeans, or any other people from any other part of the world, are the wrong people to have here. What I'm really talking about is being honest and straightforward about what's really happening. The Caribbean drug trade and gangs in our cities are happening, and we need to talk about them.

● (0940)

Ms. Peggy Nash: Thank you for that.

Let me just ask you then, given the comments you did make, do you think that an immigrant to Canada from Jamaica is more likely to be violent than an immigrant, say, from Britain?

Mr. Gwyn Morgan: I would say not. But, Madam Chair, I'm not going to be making any decisions about immigration or anything else in this position. I am going to be setting up a process, and that's what it's all about.

The Chair: You have 30 seconds.

Ms. Peggy Nash: I don't feel I've really gotten the answer here, but I will just say that you, your wife, and your business interests have contributed large sums of money to the Conservative Party of Canada in its previous incarnations, correct?

The Chair: Madam Nash, political affiliation doesn't play any role in this. It is well known, and unfortunately you're out of time. But if you can rephrase your question in some other way if you get another turn, feel free.

Ms. Peggy Nash: Thank you, Madam Chair.

The Chair: I'll go now to Mr. Alhabra.

Mr. Omar Alhabra (Mississauga—Erindale, Lib.): Thank you, Madam Chair.

Good morning, Mr. Morgan. Thank you for coming here today. You're well known as an accomplished corporate manager, but by accepting to take on this commissioner role, you will obviously give us the opportunity to talk to you, as we have been doing today, to understand your views and your principles, and how you're going to express them throughout this appointment.

I want to build on something that was said earlier today. I want to preface it by saying I acknowledge the fact that you favour strong economic immigration, but I want to go back to the sentence that Ms. Nash has just read.

The quote is: "The social side is all too evident with the runaway violence driven mainly by Jamaican immigrants in Toronto, or the all too frequent violence between Asian and other ethnic gangs right here in Calgary."

I'm just curious. Could you share with the committee the type of exposure or experience, or any scientific data you have that has led you to make that statement?

Mr. Gwyn Morgan: Thank you for the question.

You know, in answer to your question, what I was saying was not something I created, but I suppose repeating something that was already in police reports was in some way as if I had created it. That's the part I really regret.

But there is a report that I referred to, coming out of the Alberta police reports. There is a special group in Alberta that's set up to liaise with other police forces across the country. There are about five different sections of the report, one of which has to do with Asian gangs. They were specifically talking about the Asian gang problem in Calgary, which is a difficult one. Once again, if I had to word it again I would say it differently, but it's a very well-known fact, and it happens very frequently in Calgary. It's a big concern to Calgarians, as I'm sure what's happening in Toronto is affecting people there.

But in any case, I want to reiterate that I believe we should worry about behaviour and not race, colour, or religion. That's my whole point.

Mr. Omar Alhabra: Mr. Morgan, thank you.

You see, this is the problem that most visible minorities are facing—the fact that some imaginary or fictitious statements are being perpetuated by others as facts. You just stated that if you had the opportunity to reword that sentence you would. So would you help me give Canadians a sense of comfort and maybe apologize for that statement?

Mr. Gwyn Morgan: Well, I don't think an apology would be the appropriate thing. As I said, I had based it on some very great

concerns about the gang problem in our cities. But if I had to do it over again, I would never have mentioned any one group, because I think that was the unfair part.

Mr. Omar Alhabra: There's another statement here that says it's fair to say that most immigrants who abuse our society have come here as refugee claimants rather than economic immigrants. This again plays into perpetuating a myth that refugees—and your statement is that it's the majority of refugees—abuse our system. Do you have any scientific evidence or data that you've collected to reach that conclusion?

● (0945)

Mr. Gwyn Morgan: The main point is that economic immigrants, as they're called, have to go through a very significant screening process, and refugees do not. It's just a fact. Things like records of violence in their countries are therefore not recorded to the same degree or considered to the same degree. It's only a fact of process; it's all about the process, and it's not about the individual.

Mr. Omar Alhabra: You obviously know there's actually an IRB board that is appointed by the federal government, by the way, which you will oversee.

Mr. Gwyn Morgan: I will not oversee it.

Mr. Omar Alhabra: You'll oversee the process in appointing the IRB judges.

Again, this type of statement is really not comforting to many Canadians who are watching and hearing it come from an individual who will be overseeing the processes of these appointments. Do you regret saying this type of statement or would you want to clarify it some more?

Mr. Gwyn Morgan: I hope, Madam Chair, that I've made my position very clear. I've said that out of the hundreds of speeches I've given, if I had the opportunity to rewrite this one and those words, I would do so.

I only want to reiterate that you aren't going to find very many Canadians who are as strongly non-racist as I am, who feel the importance of immigrants, and who travel the world. My wife and I just came back from Indochina. The people there are wonderful. We heard about the difficulties they had in escaping the violence in their country. There is not an ounce of feeling in my blood against immigrants or any race.

Mr. Omar Alhabra: The question I have for you is this. There are approximately 4,000 appointments that the federal government is responsible for. Do you feel that visible minorities and women are under-represented? If so, what do you think your role or the government role is for doing something about it?

Mr. Gwyn Morgan: Madam Chair, it is a question that I hope we might be able to have some influence on. Our mandate is limited only to the process of appointments. We have nothing to do with the selection of any individuals, as I said before.

Mr. Omar Alhabra: But they think the process should take that into account.

Mr. Gwyn Morgan: I believe that in putting together their code of conduct and guidelines, the commission would encourage the Government of Canada to do their best on a kind of a global basis.

We can't look at each individual thing, but at the end of the year, I think it would be a good idea to ask this: what kind of balance do we have? What kind of gender balance, regional balance, and ethnic balance do we have in these 4,000 appointments? It seems to me that it should be considered. We're working on it.

Mr. Omar Alghabra: It would be part of the merit process.

Mr. Gwyn Morgan: Exactly. I think it's something that should be an objective. There's no reason why that has to interfere with merit, because there are a lot of great people of every type in the mosaic of Canada.

The Chair: Thank you.

Ms. Ablonczy.

Ms. Diane Ablonczy (Calgary—Nose Hill, CPC): Thank you, Madam Chair. I haven't had a chance to offer congratulations on your election to this important committee.

Mr. Morgan, thank you for being here. Of course you are here because our Prime Minister has pledged to Canadians that not only will there be a change in some ways government operates, but it will be a change Canadians can see. It will be transparent; it will be open; it will be open to examination. Your job, sir, will be ensure that fairness in the appointments process is not only done but is seen to be done. That's a big challenge.

I was struck by the constitution you wrote for your company, where you say that your vision is "to create a truly great company—one where quality work is the norm; where we stretch and strive to be the best we can; and where great things are accomplished". You say that "principles grace every decision and punctuate every interaction along our journey", and you define the principles as strong character, ethical behaviour, high performance, and great expectations. I think Canadians would be delighted to see this vision and these principles built into the selection of individuals who serve our country in a myriad of appointed capacities.

I wonder if you could help us understand how this vision and these principles that you have worked with for so many years can in fact be incorporated into the appointments process and into the way we choose people to serve our country.

• (0950)

Mr. Gwyn Morgan: Thank you very much for that question.

I believe, as the constitution says and as you have just read, that where you have to start to build all strong foundations, including corporate foundations and country foundations, is through a set of sound principles.

This great country has a Constitution, and what we as Canadians are doing is building on that Constitution. I decided that a company should have a constitution and you should build a company on a sound foundation. Some of the principles that are in that can be applied to all walks of life, both personal and corporate and government. To the extent that we can find ways and that the other commissioners believe it appropriate, we'll try our best to put principles in place for the commission that will be shared by all Canadians and reflect the best of Canadian values.

That's the vision I hope to achieve as chair, and in talking to the commissioners who have been appointed so far, I believe they share it.

Ms. Diane Ablonczy: Mr. Morgan, as you know, one member of this committee, Ms. Nash, has already judged you and found you wanting, without having heard what you had to say. But I was struck by something she said. She said you, Mr. Morgan, "probably don't believe in the things I believe in". She also mentioned as a negative the fact that you had made a contribution to a political party. It happens to be the party I belong to as well.

Ms. Peggy Nash: Madam Chair, I'm not the person being put forward.

The Chair: Please.

Ms. Diane Ablonczy: This is what this person...*[Inaudible—Editor]*...we have in this appointments process. The concern that has been raised is that appointments are made on the basis of these kinds of criteria: whether somebody has the same political philosophy, or what their political involvement may or may not have been in the past.

I wonder how the process you envision can deal with this, how it can move appointments away from these kinds of philosophical criteria and into the kinds of principles you talked about in your constitution—strong character, ethical behaviour, high performance, and great expectations—rather than political activity.

Mr. Gwyn Morgan: Madam Chair, many Canadians are either members of political parties or have contributed to political parties or have been part of the political process or have even been politicians themselves. None of those Canadians should be excluded from public appointment. The important thing, I believe, is that the process of appointing those Canadians consider several, or in many cases many, potential candidates; that their record, their experience for the job, be carefully considered; and that there be a really meritocracy-based analysis of who is the best person for the job.

What the commission will do.... Basically, we'll not even, as I said, know the names of people who are put forward. But after it's all done, after an appointment is coming forward for recommendation to Governor in Council and the Prime Minister actually accepts it, we'll be doing a review to ensure that the process we've set up and the guidelines we've put up actually led to considering multiple candidates and doing their very best to select the best one, rather than some sort of political decision at the last minute around a candidate who may be well connected.

This isn't going to be easy. I believe we have some great challenges to get this all working the way it should. But I think there are ways of improving the system, and we're going to work very hard on that.

Ms. Diane Ablonczy: Thank you, Madam Chair.

The Chair: I will now go to Mr. Volpe.

This round is five minutes for questions and answers, so it's even shorter.

Hon. Joseph Volpe: Mr. Morgan, as I hear you explain the job description you've been given by the Prime Minister, who appointed you outside of this process, you are going to examine all the potential candidates for any appointment, judge them on meritocracy, and submit the list to the Prime Minister for his political consideration. Then you are going to re-examine the decision he makes on the basis of the criteria that you've just laid out for this committee. Is that what you think you're going to be doing?

● (0955)

Mr. Gwyn Morgan: Let me explain it better, because I obviously haven't quite hit the mark.

As I said in my opening remarks, the committee will not make any appointments. The committee will not even see the names of potential appointees until after they are appointed.

The process that exists today, as you said earlier, the process of the potential appointee coming up through the responsible minister and then being recommended ultimately for Governor in Council appointment, will continue, but there are a few things that will impact on that on behalf of the commission.

First of all, the process of selecting names will be changed, because there will be a code of conduct that's significantly different from today.

I can't prejudice all the commissioners. When we get together, our first job will be to put this code of conduct and these guidelines in place, but I would expect that we will enshrine in the guidelines the principle of multiple candidates, advertising, transparency, and, as much as possible, selection of the very best names to—

Hon. Joseph Volpe: So you're not going to weigh in on the thinking that the Prime Minister engages in either before or after he's made his announcement.

Mr. Gwyn Morgan: Or the responsible minister.

Hon. Joseph Volpe: You'll forgive anybody else who's been here and understands something about smoke and mirrors if they get confused about just exactly what it is you're going to do that's different from today.

Today, for all of the appointments that I enumerated beforehand, there is a very broad consultation process that's followed by an examination of qualifications, examination of security and criminal investigation, and then another process, called a peer review process, that's arm's-length from any minister, before anything gets presented up to the minister, and indeed before it goes up to the Prime Minister. So why is it that I would have to have more confidence in someone who has—and I'm going to give you an opportunity to correct your record—these kinds of views that impact on potential meritocracy?

For example, “It has been demonstrated time and again that private sector unionization eventually leads to an uncompetitive business”, thereby, I guess eliminating anybody who's in that environment from having merit; or the issue of “teamwork, honesty, innovation, flexibility and meritocracy-based financial rewards... unfortunately...are found [absent]”—that's my word—“in unionized organizations.”

Or even further, “The curse of the Maritimes is perpetual equalization combined with an unemployment insurance system that acts as an unemployment assurance system.”

How would any people who come from a union system or Atlantic Canada pass your test of meritocracy?

Mr. Gwyn Morgan: First of all, I must again repeat that I will not be making any appointments or see the name of any appointees, and neither will any of the other commissioners. We're all about process and governance; that's what we bring to the table, and that's my expertise.

With regard to my own personal views that I expressed there, your own party, I must say and remind you, put forward at an earlier point a plan to change the unemployment insurance system that would put more incentive in it, and that would include the Maritimes and other parts of this country, and that was not done.

Hon. Joseph Volpe: Thank you for acknowledging that we put the plan forward.

Mr. Gwyn Morgan: So I think you were recognizing that.

● (1000)

Hon. Joseph Volpe: Let me go on a little bit further here, Mr. Morgan, because I think colleagues opposite wanted us to get a better sense of who you are.

You have said some fairly inflammatory things, and my colleague Mr. Alghabra asked you if you wanted to apologize. I don't want to put you in that position. I just wondered whether you'd select different words to reflect your true approach to this, because, Mr. Morgan, this is a country that's in constant change and evolution, and if you really do adhere to these words: that “most immigrants who abuse our society have come in as refugee claimants” and “This... means they are more likely to have”—

The Chair: Your time is up, Mr. Volpe, unfortunately.

Hon. Joseph Volpe: Are you familiar with the refugee determination system?

The Chair: Mr. Volpe, it is now Madame St-Hilaire's turn.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Caroline St-Hilaire (Longueuil—Pierre-Boucher, BQ): Thank you, Madam Chair.

This morning, you missed a great opportunity not so much to apologize, but rather to clarify your views. It would have been important to do so because it is possible that you may be given this important position.

Earlier on, you told my colleague that you were not racist. With all due respect, Mr. Morgan, I would say that the comments you've made were racist. The fact that a person travels abroad does not mean he isn't racist. What is even more shocking to me is that you state that you were quoted out of context and yet this morning you have been unable to really explain why you made these comments about immigrants. And as a parliamentarian, I am even more shocked by the comments you have made regarding sovereignists and the Bloc Québécois.

I don't know what exactly your opinion is on the sovereignist movement. In 1995, you were part of the Canadian Unity Council. I would like to hear your comments on that and to give you another opportunity to clarify your remarks regarding Quebecers, if not to apologize.

[English]

Mr. Gwyn Morgan: Madam Chair, I must first of all say that I had resigned from the Canadian Unity Council well before the last election. I won't give my reasons for that, but I did resign.

I make no apologies for being a strong advocate of the unity of Canada and I will always express those views. Having said that, I think it's very important that we recognize that when the people of Quebec send other members, when they send non-unity members to this Parliament, we recognize and respect their views. So we can agree to disagree on lots of things. We have other members on the commission who will disagree with me, and we have all kinds of different views representative of the commission, and they will all be together making decisions together.

One thing I must again say is that none of my views, none of the things I may have said in the past about politics or government policy or immigration or anything else will have anything to do with the work of the commission. The work of the commission will be specifically related to putting together a code of conduct and process, and reviewing that code of conduct annually through an audit process, and tabling in the House how well the government has followed the process of the commission they set up.

It seems to me, if I were a member in the opposition, I would probably be looking forward to that report, because it's certainly going to be interesting to see how well they perform.

[Translation]

Ms. Caroline St-Hilaire: Mr. Morgan, you said earlier on that no Canadian would be excluded. Do you think that a sovereignist or a person who was once a member of the Bloc Québécois could be appointed to this type of position? Do you think that is not a good idea?

[English]

Mr. Gwyn Morgan: Excuse me, Madam Chair. I don't believe I ever said that. I can't imagine why I would have.

[Translation]

Ms. Caroline St-Hilaire: You're not sure?

[English]

Mr. Gwyn Morgan: The fact is that I will have nothing to do with who has access to positions. I keep saying it over and over again. What I bring to the table is a distinguished record, I believe, of business experience and governance, and ethical values that have been well known across the country. Who is chosen for positions we'll have nothing to do with. I don't see any reason why the full mosaic of Quebec shouldn't be considered, and their views, for appointments, just as the full mosaic of all other Canadians should be considered for appointments.

[Translation]

Ms. Caroline St-Hilaire: I realize your French is not yet perfect, but as you may hold this position, do you think that it would be good

to have a bit of a francophone touch within your organization? You did mention that a French-Canadian woman had been appointed, who may be a Quebecer. Will there be a specific focus on that? You must be aware of the fact that your Canada is bilingual as well.

•(1005)

[English]

Mr. Gwyn Morgan: Thank you for the question.

The work of the commission, because we will not be selecting appointees or even be consulted about appointees, is all about putting together a code of conduct in governance, and then making sure it is followed, to the best of our abilities. So I don't think we'll have any problem communicating among the commission members and among the staff of the commission, with my inadequate high school French that I haven't had the opportunity to use very much, being raised in the west.

The Chair: *Merci.*

Mr. Kenney, go ahead, please.

Mr. Jason Kenney (Calgary Southeast, CPC): Thanks very much, Madam Chair. Congratulations to you, as well, on your election.

Mr. Morgan, it's good to see you here in Ottawa. Of course, we're both from Calgary, so I have known you for a long time, mainly by reputation, and not very closely personally. But I can say to the committee that I think that those who know him most closely know him best. In Calgary, Mr. Morgan has, I think, a sterling reputation. I've never heard, in any quarter of opinion, anything but praise directed at Mr. Morgan and his support for many community endeavours and charitable endeavours. And I think the fact that you're willing to take this on and sit through this process here for a dollar a day is evidence of public spirit.

One thing perhaps we could reflect on here is how difficult it is to attract people with your kind of background—you have been chosen by your peers as the leading business leader in Canada—to either elected office or the public service. For instance, when I was on my way into this building I was walking past the leader of the NDP, Mrs. Nash's leader, and I overheard him saying to a colleague, "Peggy is going to tear that guy apart today".

Ms. Peggy Nash: Excuse me, Madam Chair. The NDP is not on trial here. I really take offence to these partisan attacks on my party. I'm not the person who's being challenged.

The Chair: Order, please.

Mr. Jason Kenney: I hope that won't be taken out of my time, Madam Chair.

The Chair: Yes, it is taken out of your time. Mr. Kenney, please keep going.

Mr. Jason Kenney: Thank you.

I just wondered if you would reflect on how difficult it is to attract people to public service, given the fact that this is a transparent process and that that kind of prejudging of your background and your capability, even though you've been voted the top business leader in Canada, should be motivating this kind of process. Does the government's ability to attract people to serve in the kinds of roles and the process that you'll be overseeing concern you?

Mr. Gwyn Morgan: Thank you for that question.

Let me put it this way. One of the reasons I considered and accepted the nomination of the Prime Minister was that I hoped we could start a trend of having people who have been successful in all different walks of life, be they business or any other walk of life, saying at some point, "I can do something for my country, and this particular thing that has become available can meet what I'm good at, and I can put aside all of my views and all of my everything else and say this is the thing that really fits me; and I'm prepared to do this for service for our country and put in the time and effort and go through all kinds of processes to see that I can contribute."

I would hope that many other business leaders, other leaders in different walks of life in the country, at a point in their life when they're in a position to do so, as I am, will do this. I hope that will be encouraged, and it's actually one of the biggest reasons for my accepting this nomination.

Mr. Jason Kenney: Mr. Morgan, the questions of partisanship and your record of donations to my party have been raised by some members here. Isn't it true that you have been a contributor as well to other political parties?

Mr. Gwyn Morgan: Let me give you the record, because it was also commented, Madam Chair, about the—

The Chair: To be honest, Mr. Morgan, this really has no relevance to this committee. We've already decided that your political affiliation, which we know, is not part of what we're here to examine.

•(1010)

Mr. Jason Kenney: I accept that ruling, Madam Chair. I just wish that it had been—

The Chair: I just don't think that it's necessary.

Mr. Jason Kenney: That's fine, but it had been entered as evidence, and I think it's important—

The Chair: I don't think it changes anything.

Mr. Jason Kenney: —that Mr. Morgan has been a donor to the Liberal Party.

The Chair: I wish you'd withdraw that question, because I don't think it has anything to do with what we're doing here today.

Mr. Jason Kenney: All right. I'm sorry that the previous questions weren't asked to be withdrawn as well. But in any event—

The Chair: They were, sir. I did not allow them.

Thank you.

Mr. Jason Kenney: Okay.

Mr. Morgan, how many speeches would you estimate you've given in public venues or forums over your professional career? In the range of magnitude—over a hundred?

Mr. Gwyn Morgan: Over a hundred, yes.

Mr. Jason Kenney: We've heard, I think, two or three lines from one of those over 100 speeches that you've pronounced in your professional career. Are there any other public utterances that you've made, public opinions that have been expressed, in your adult life, professional life, that have drawn similar controversy, to your knowledge?

Mr. Gwyn Morgan: No.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Your five minutes is up, Mr. Kenney.

Mr. Alghabra, you have five minutes. Please remember that it's for both for question and answer.

Mr. Omar Alghabra: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Mr. Morgan, I know you are trying to minimize the fact that this commission is not going to be heavily involved in the actual appointments, but the fact of the matter is the buck stops at this commission when it comes to federal government appointments. The commission's role is to oversee the processes and how the government is conducting its appointments, so it's very important for Canadians to get a sense of comfort in evaluating who the chair of that commission will be. That is why we're conducting this interview today; it's very important for us, for Canadians, to feel out your views, your principles, and your values, and learn how you are going to express them, consciously or subconsciously, throughout your conduct in this commission.

We've talked about a couple of statements that were made in one speech. In fact, there were more than just two statements, and all of them were in one speech.

Mr. Kenney just asked you a question about other speeches. I have a speech here that was made on February 22 to the Empire Club. This is a different speech. I am going to quote: "Recent riots in France and Australia are timely and troubling examples. It seems as if multiculturalism in these countries has created subcultures bearing little relation to the mainstream culture and values of the country."

That also is troubling, as we try to get a sense of your opinion on multiculturalism. Is that in fact your opinion on multiculturalism? Would you like to clarify that statement?

Mr. Gwyn Morgan: Madam Chair, that was a lead-in to a quote from Australian articles that were commenting on the difficulties in Australia. The point here—and again, this was not my invention, but the view in Australia that was coming forward—was that the country had set up what they called multiculturalism, but what that really meant was isolationism. They were bringing people—

Mr. Omar Alghabra: What about multiculturalism in Canada? I'm more interested in how you see multiculturalism in Canada.

Mr. Gwyn Morgan: Well, I'm answering the question in the context of the speech, which is the way in which you asked it.

They had put immigrants in places in such a way that they weren't being integrated into society. They called that multiculturalism. What it really was, in the eyes of a lot of people in Australia, was isolationism.

What I was calling for in Canada was for us to do a better job of integrating all our immigrants and all our ethnic groups together, in accordance with what Canadians believe. That was a very strong call, and one I believe very strongly in. It had nothing to do with racism; it had everything to do with doing a better job of how we integrate and treat and support our immigrants.

Mr. Omar Alhabra: Perhaps that's why the Conservative government has cancelled the ministry of multiculturalism.

My question to you is how many misstatements do you think the Canadian public...? What is the threshold it can absorb and still feel comfortable with your appointment to the appointments commission?

Mr. Gwyn Morgan: Let me put it this way. My speeches have been widely circulated, and I have had a lot of support for a lot of things, including the issue you just mentioned. What it amounts to is that I believe you need to be totally honest with each other in the country, and one of my main points was that we aren't going to solve the root causes by always looking at political correctness rather than by being honest with one another. Unfortunately, I guess I'm an example of being so honest in terms of some of the issues we have to deal with that it's interpreted as being negative towards certain groups of people. Nothing could be further from the truth.

• (1015)

Mr. Omar Alhabra: But you understand, again, that Canadians need to make sure the individual who is in charge of this commission does not have too many controversial views, especially ones that might be directed against them, so there is a concern here about the pattern of statements and what you refer to as honesty.

I agree with you—your candour has been helpful to us, at least to evaluate your views and your principles. Thank you.

Mr. Gwyn Morgan: All I can say, Madam Chair, is that I urge the full context of that speech at the Empire Club be read by the members. Sure, I was partisan. I didn't expect to be called by the Prime Minister, and I was partisan about certain things. The point was that I was calling for a way in which we could unite all Canadians from all backgrounds around a set of Canadian values, and to integrate people better together around Canadian values. I stand by that absolutely, and I do not believe, if you read the speech, that you will find it at all offensive.

The Chair: Mr. Kramp.

Mr. Daryl Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings, CPC): Thank you, Madam Chair.

Mr. Morgan, welcome to life in this fish bowl here.

The one thing that concerns me a little bit is the direction of some of the questions here today. Of course we understand it's important to delve into the type of individual we are interviewing, the character, the capacity, the intelligence, the relative experience. Might I suggest that we could possibly even take some guidance from a past member of this committee who, in our last government operations meeting—Mr. Szabo, a member of the opposition right across from us—said that when we interview Mr. Gwyn Morgan we should understand that what's really, really important is sticking to the facts, the capability, the competence, and the ability to do the job. I thought he hit it right on the money. That really is what really matters to me.

With a non-partisan approach to this, this is our job, ladies and gentlemen, to ensure, sir, that you have the capacity, you have the capability, you have the intelligence, you have the experience, you have the dedication, you have the commitment to Canada.

I was very fortunate a short while ago to sit on the review committee for Chief Justice Rothstein, in which we had a similar process. Quite frankly, I see some striking parallels here with good questions, but considerate, fair and honest. The similarity I find, of course, is in the response, sir, with the greatest respect—honest, maybe even to a fault, but what a wonderful, wonderful asset to have. I think that clearly has been almost a mantra for your success in private life in the corporate world, because with that honesty you earn the respect of so many other people.

As you carry forward with this appointment process, I'm really pleased that you separated the responsibilities, the fact that you are responsible for process, not on actually picking people.

If I were to ask you the three most important assets that you bring to this process, so that we could judge your capacity and capability, what would those three most important assets be?

Mr. Gwyn Morgan: Madam Chair, I believe they start with an ethical value base that is well established and well known across the country, and certainly well known not only to the business community but elsewhere. So honesty and ethics in the foundation discussed earlier would be number one.

Number two would be the things I've learned about governance, about trying to put in place processes that will result in meritocracy. I understand that it's only a question of improvement from where it's been, but I think everything can be improved, and I will work strongly toward that. The skills I have and what I've learned in business and elsewhere will hopefully help that.

The third thing is that I have learned some of the skills of leadership, so I hope to be able to work with the committee members in an effective way. We will be oriented toward the bottom line—that's what I've learned, of course, in business—and the bottom line is to create a process that works for Canadians. I continue to reiterate that I call for honesty in everyone here in terms of how we actually portray the commission, because one of the biggest challenges of the commission—and we've already seen this in the media and elsewhere—will be to help to understand that this commission will not be selecting people. This commission will not even see the names of people. The commission will not even comment on the names of people, before or after—of course, we'll not know them before and we won't comment after. What we will do, though, is set up a governance process that is intended to scrutinize the process, then to go back and ask, did they follow it? If they didn't, that will be reported to members of Parliament. I think that's it, that's all we do. But I think it's important.

• (1020)

The Chair: Thank you.

Madame Thibault.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Louise Thibault: Thank you, Madam Chair.

You stated that what you may have said in the past would have no effect on the commission's work. Earlier on, my colleague stated that we are to assess the abilities, skills and experience of possible candidates. But regardless of the commission to which a person is appointed, and its mandate, we have to assess whether the candidate has all of the values expected of him or her. When I refer to values, I'm referring to human values, be they held by Canadians, Quebecers or persons of another origin.

In your December speech, you also addressed the issue of equalization. You said that the welfare state was creating dependency. I noticed that in this speech you decided to share some of your fundamental convictions. Allow me to say that that might lead people to wonder what your real motivation is, and in fact, you may be asking yourself the same question.

You say that you will not know the names of possible appointees, that you will not take part in anything at all, that you will establish a process and that, further to that, you will report to the Prime Minister, and therefore to the House. Is this very different from what existed previously? I imagine that before you accepted this nomination you looked into the current system. How can we know that this process is going to be better? What will the commission's status be? Will it really report to the Prime Minister's Office? How much do you need in terms of human and financial resources? Will you need three executive directors, a secretary, an assistant, three or four employees, a half a million dollars or \$3 million?

[English]

Mr. Gwyn Morgan: Thank you for that question.

I think it's an important question, Madam Chair. I know it's a little hard to imagine in one's mind exactly how all of this is going to work, but the key point is this. Placed on the desks of ministers and all people who are involved in the public appointment process—crown corporation boards, etc.—will be a code of conduct and guidelines that they're expected to follow before they bring any names forward. Then once their appointments are made, the commission will review...

Well, first of all, even during the process they have to bring forward something saying, here are no names, but here's the process we intend to follow. The commission approves the process as being consistent with the guidelines, and then they can go ahead and proceed.

Again, we'll have no names. We won't know who's being appointed until they're announced. But then at the end of the day, on a regular basis, we'll come back through the secretariat of the commission to review and see that they followed the guidelines they said they were going to follow. The extent to which they did will be reported to the Prime Minister and tabled in the House on an annual basis.

The reason this thing has some effectiveness, in my opinion, is that I don't think anyone will want that report to show that the guidelines and the code we put forward were not followed. That's all the influence we will have, but I think it will be a rather significant influence on the process—and not the names of those who are actually appointed.

The cost of the commission? I'm a bottom-line guy from the business sector. I'm very worried about cost. We start with the fact that the commissioners are going to be paid \$1 a year. That's a good start. We will not incur a lot of expenses for travel, because today's electronic conferencing and other ways of messaging will allow us to put things like a code of conduct together and have meetings through conferencing.

The secretariat in Ottawa will be small—I would guess no more than 20 people, perhaps a little smaller. They are going to be carefully selected, as career public servants and people who have expertise in what we're trying to achieve. I think there will be very good value for money from this commission.

• (1025)

[Translation]

The Chair: Ms. Nash.

[English]

Ms. Peggy Nash: Thank you, Madam Chair.

To summarize again, this morning's discussion is not about what you're being paid, and it's not about the qualifications of the other members of the commission. This is about your suitability, Mr. Morgan, to head up this proposed commission. This commission will oversee a process for political appointments—everything from the refugee board to the Canadian Race Relations Foundation—thousands and thousands of government appointments.

We have already heard about statements you made in a Fraser Institute speech—statements you've not retracted—and thanks to my colleague, we know about other statements you made in a speech to the Empire Club, in which you linked multiculturalism with riots in France and Australia. Although you do talk about the Australian example and say that multiculturalism has been a failure, you also say this is a view that many residents in Canadian cities will agree with.

Frankly, I think many people find these comments deeply offensive and in many ways really un-Canadian. So my question to you is, given that this appointment process won't even be in place until sometime this fall, what do you think qualifies you for this thinly defined position heading up this commission?

Mr. Gwyn Morgan: First of all, Madam Chair, again it saddens me terribly that these kinds of comments are taken out of context and not in the fullness of the speech. But I would say that I also had another quote in that speech, also from the Australians, that “multiracialism in Australia was a success”. What they define as multiculturalism in Australia was basically isolationism. So they said they had succeeded in their multiracialism but failed in how they integrated. That's what it was all about, and that's exactly what the speech was all about. I was only quoting from their experience and not from anything with regard to my own.

My own personal belief is that we have failed in Canada, too, in how well we integrate people who come to this country, expecting a better life. And so—

Ms. Peggy Nash: Mr. Morgan, thank you for that.

On this point, let me ask you, given that you'll be setting up the process for how these appointments are made, how do you intend to ensure there is a process for sifting through all these thousands of job descriptions for all these appointments for very varied boards and commissions? How do you intend to ensure that minorities are better represented on these boards, commissions, etc.? How do you intend to ensure that women and gays and lesbians are more represented? What would be the process that you're intending to set up for this?

• (1030)

Mr. Gwyn Morgan: First, Madam Chair, let me make it very clear once again that the commission will not be sifting through any resumé. There will not be any appointments—

Ms. Peggy Nash: Not resumé, but you will be sifting through job descriptions to set up the process.

Mr. Gwyn Morgan: We will not see job descriptions either.

Ms. Peggy Nash: Tell us how you're going to do this, then.

Mr. Gwyn Morgan: We'll place onus on those who are putting job descriptions together to set up a process to ensure that they have the right criteria for the job. In retrospect, once the appointments are made, we'll go back and make sure they did that. But it's very important that the commission members not know the names of people who are being considered, and that they stick to process and governance.

What I bring to this commission is all about process, ethics, and governance, and in no way will what I believe—or for that matter what any other member of the commission, who is going to have an equal say on this, believes—have anything to do with that. So that's the process—

Ms. Peggy Nash: So, Mr. Morgan, does this mean there will be nothing in place in terms of the process that would reach out to women, minorities, gays, lesbians to ensure that there is representation in these appointments?

Mr. Gwyn Morgan: Because we will not have direct control of that, all we can do—and I expect we will do, as I said earlier—is our best in recommending to the government that in their overall global process of making appointments, they try to strike balances between ethnic groups, inclusion—really within the mosaic of Canada: regionally, in an ethnic sense, and also of course in a gender sense.

Ms. Peggy Nash: Would that be through job descriptions?

Mr. Gwyn Morgan: It's very difficult on an individual job description to say this job should be for a female, an immigrant, or whomever. But one of the things that we will encourage the government to measure is how well it's doing overall—what's the balance?

Ms. Peggy Nash: So it would be after the fact, taking a snapshot then.

Mr. Gwyn Morgan: Not only after the fact, but actually in our guidelines we'll try to put something together. I would envision, at least I would recommend, and I hope the rest of the commission would agree, that there would be a recommendation that government constantly review the process from the point of view of the mosaic, including French-speaking people, of course. There are already jobs that are defined as bilingual, and so on, but those criteria will be set by the ministries and by the agencies. What we will do is try to encourage an overall global approach so at the end of the day they

can come forward and say, look, we have struck a balance, and we'll be keeping an eye on that.

Ms. Peggy Nash: So it'll be after the fact.

The Chair: Mr. Wallace.

Mr. Mike Wallace (Burlington, CPC): Thank you, Madam Chair, and thank you, Mr. Morgan, for being here today.

I'm also fairly new to this process. I clearly understand that the commission is about process and not about people and individual resumé and who gets appointed to where. It's about how that process works to make sure we do have the balance you're talking about. I was wondering if you, based on your business experience, can give us some examples of the kinds of guidelines or evaluation criteria that you foresee. I know you're only one person and it's a commission decision plus staff, but at this point, what kinds of things, tangible ones, are we talking about in terms of evaluation criteria on what makes a good process, and what will make a good document of code of ethics and principles?

Mr. Gwyn Morgan: First of all, as some of the other members have alluded to, it starts with, Madam Chair, a good set of really clear job descriptions. We won't set the description, but there has to be a really clear job description. Especially for any kind of important positions, more senior positions, it would be very important that they be widely advertised, and not just in the *Canada Gazette*. Transparency is very important.

We would expect that when a given board of, say, one of the crown corporations—this is just an example—comes forward with a set of names for a minister's decision, after going through a large process, and following the process, there would actually be a name selected from that list, rather than somebody plunked in by the minister himself based upon some other criteria. That has happened; I've had reports of this in recent times.

I think those are the kinds of things we'll look at, in addition to the other encouragements we give on things like gender, ethnic, regional, and linguistic balance.

• (1035)

Mr. Mike Wallace: I have a visionary question for you. People have described you as having great vision on things. You won't be the Commissioner of Public Appointments forever. At the end of the day, what's your long-term vision of the commission, and what would it take for you to look back and say, we were successful, we accomplished something? What is your thinking on that in terms of how you'd like the commission viewed by the public?

Mr. Gwyn Morgan: Madam Chair, the member is right; I don't expect to be doing this job forever. In fact, my commitment to the Prime Minister is that I'll do it as long as is required to make sure the system is up and operating well and that we've got some of the cultural change, some of the procedural change, and demonstrated effectiveness in place. That's why I'm offering my experience and background, because it's directly related to doing those things.

When I look back, what I would like to look back on, if I'm appointed to this role, is that the commission was viewed by all members of the House and Canadians in general as being a step forward, that it gave them more confidence, not only from the point of view of whether the right person or the best person was selected, but that the process that was followed was a fair and open one and that the effectiveness was truly embraced by everyone. I think that if we can do that, then we will have accomplished what I said in my opening remarks, and that is to try to lift the process of public appointments in this country to be respected around the world as being the best there is. That's our objective and that's what we'll work towards.

[Translation]

The Chair: Mr. Bonin.

Mr. Raymond Bonin (Nickel Belt, Lib.): Thank you, Madam Chair.

[English]

Welcome, Mr. Morgan. Thank you very much for your participation. I would suggest that you not spend your dollar all in the same place. I'm sure Revenue Canada is looking for ways of taxing that already.

We've heard many representations to ensure participation from minority groups, be it immigrants or linguistic. There is a group that is always forgotten and is always under-represented, and that's rural Canada. The proof of that is the appointment of your commission: four multimillionaires from Calgary, Vancouver, Toronto, and Montreal. I don't object to multimillionaires. They contribute, and I'd like to be one of them myself. But the Prime Minister has another appointment to make. I would hope that my colleagues would recommend someone from rural Canada.

I'm coming back to process. If your process cannot identify a way of ensuring that we will correct under-representation, what will change with your commission? The question has been put to you about different minority groups, or under-represented groups, and I am asking it about rural Canada because it's definitely clearly under-represented. As I said before, if you cannot recommend a process that will force the PMO to ensure proper representation, what does your commission change about the whole thing?

Mr. Gwyn Morgan: Madam Chair, that is a very interesting question. It especially hits home, given my origins as a farm boy who thought that people in the city never really cared about us anyway. Now I'm one of them, unfortunately.

I think it's a very interesting point, not only with regard to the makeup of the commission so far, but the whole issue of rural Canada and how we can better represent their interests. Again, given that we will not be selecting appointees, all we can do is encourage in our guidelines more diversity, including, now that you've mentioned it—I wouldn't have thought about it—the idea of rural and urban balance.

Many of the rural communities of Canada are dying. It's of great concern, and I'm even looking at my own hometown. It's a way of life that needs to be preserved. It's a thing we have to think a lot more about.

It's another thing I've given speeches about, by the way. It seems there are a lot of things. I think your point is very well taken.

• (1040)

The Chair: I will go to Mr. Kenney.

Mr. Jason Kenney: Thank you, Madam Chair.

By the way, what is your hometown in Alberta, Mr. Morgan?

Mr. Gwyn Morgan: No one would recognize it. It's called Carstairs.

Mr. Jason Kenney: So you are from rural Canada originally.

Mr. Gwyn Morgan: Yes, definitely.

Mr. Jason Kenney: Like a lot of us who end up moving into the cities. Mr. Morgan, much has been made of this section of the speech that you gave last year at a *Fraser Forum* event. I have a copy of a letter that you wrote to the editor of the *Calgary Herald* just shortly after that speech in which you said, and I quote:

Unfortunately, some felt I was negatively portraying ethnic groups. I regret creating this impression. My speech clearly stated our country needs a strong immigration program, and that colour, race or religion have no place in the selection process.

Does that sound like something you wrote to the *Calgary Herald* and what prompted you to do so quickly?

Mr. Gwyn Morgan: The reason was that there were local media reports that caused me some concern. One of the national newspapers actually published excerpts from the speech without the full text. So I was very concerned about that. I was also, quite frankly, as I've said earlier, looking at the words again, thinking that these could have been better chosen to really reflect my views, and I regret that.

Mr. Jason Kenney: Sir, you have heard here this morning some pretty colourful characterizations of your views on questions related to multiculturalism and immigration. Have you ever been accused of holding unacceptable views, to your knowledge, by anybody?

Mr. Gwyn Morgan: No.

Mr. Jason Kenney: So this is a new development for you?

Mr. Gwyn Morgan: Well, it's sad for me and for my family. I realize this is some of my own doing, but it's sad because what we really believe is so different from that. I was trying to point out that Canadians need to talk about problems and need to talk about issues, and there was nothing racist about it. It was all about behaviour. I believe no matter what your origin, what your colour, if you're behaving badly, we need to talk about it. What I was saying was that the immigrant screening process could be improved to try to make sure as much as possible that we bring in Canadians who can contribute.

Mr. Jason Kenney: But the negative attribution of motives is something you found disturbing?

Mr. Gwyn Morgan: Very disturbing.

Mr. Jason Kenney: Do you mind if I ask your age, Mr. Morgan?

Mr. Gwyn Morgan: I think I mentioned in the opening comments that half of my 60 years was building EnCana.

Mr. Jason Kenney: How long have you been a professional? Straight after university you moved into the professional world?

Mr. Gwyn Morgan: Yes.

Mr. Jason Kenney: So roughly 40 years of professional life?

Mr. Gwyn Morgan: Forty years, yes.

Mr. Jason Kenney: And at least over 100 public speeches and things of that nature. And to your knowledge, in that 40 years of professional life and probably over 100 speeches, this is the first time you've seen these kinds of accusations made, questioning your motives and regard for other people?

Mr. Gwyn Morgan: Yes, it is, and I must say, Madam Chair, that thinking back on this, of course, the whole title of the speech was "What Politicians Are Afraid to Say". I didn't expect to be sitting here in this role, but I could have said it much better. I do regret that I didn't.

• (1045)

The Chair: Do you want to add one more point? Very quickly, sir.

Mr. Jason Kenney: Yes, one more question in terms of the appointment process.

Do you believe you will be making recommendations in terms of parliamentary engagement on potential nominees for senior positions in the public service? Do you have any views on that?

Mr. Gwyn Morgan: Madam Chair, it's a little too early for me to express a view on that. All I've been able to do so far is understand the specific mandate of the commission that is set out in the act. My belief is that processes of Parliament and processes of judges and other things are not going to be the purview of the commission and we will be, as I understand it, strictly related to setting up the process intended to govern the appointments to government agencies.

The Chair: I believe we have one five-minute period to be split between the two of you, and that would be the end of it.

Please, Mr. Alhabra, followed by Mr. Volpe, or vice versa. Fine by me.

Hon. Joseph Volpe: Mr. Morgan, I think one of the precepts in business is value for money. When you have the courage to write a commission report indicating the process didn't meet your standards, what would the consequences be for the Prime Minister, aside from tabling the report in the House?

Mr. Gwyn Morgan: Madam Chair, I would say that probably our main influence in this process is going to be tabling a report.

Hon. Joseph Volpe: So how will your report differ from an expanded role for the Auditor General?

Mr. Gwyn Morgan: I think there is going to have to be an audit process for us to be able to make that report, and we haven't figured out yet...again, we have to get going here in terms of exactly how we do things, but we will have to have some auditors.

Hon. Joseph Volpe: Will the auditor then examine your statements in this committee that said essentially the five commissioners are going to get a dollar apiece, but you're going to have a secretariat of probably about 20 people making—well, you didn't say this part, but I would imagine if they take your statements these are going to be experts in the field—they're going to be making at least

\$50,000 plus benefits and overhead. That comes out to...well, I don't know, you're the guy in business, how many millions per year?

Mr. Gwyn Morgan: We haven't put a budget together yet.

Hon. Joseph Volpe: But it comes out at close to \$2 million, at least. Is that right?

They are going to write a report that might be tabled in the House. Will that be the extent of the business ethic; in other words, once you submit a report, you either promote or consolidate, i.e., fire?

Mr. Gwyn Morgan: Madam Chair, the process will be more extensive than that, because the code of conduct itself hasn't yet been put together. I've outlined a few comments or a few parts of it, but it will change the way things are done right at the grassroots. The report will check to see that those grassroots changes have in fact taken place.

Hon. Joseph Volpe: Let's take one specific example.

The Chair: Mr. Volpe, your time is up.

Hon. Joseph Volpe: Has it been five minutes?

The Chair: No, you're sharing five minutes.

Mr. Alhabra.

Mr. Omar Alhabra: Thank you, Madam Chair.

I want to re-emphasize the purpose of this exercise. This exercise is for us to understand your values, principles, and leadership, and how you're going to express them through this appointment. We're doing that throughout, examining your ideas, values, and speeches.

Mr. Kenney continues to help me out. He previously asked whether you had any other speech, and he asked you as well whether in a public forum, other than this one, you've ever been confronted about unacceptable views.

Yesterday I actually saw a documentary called *Between Midnight and the Rooster's Crow*, where, in a shareholders' meeting of EnCana, you were confronted with the consequences of the company in Ecuador, the negative environmental consequences, the social impact on farmers, etc. This was a documentary. It also documented the impact that it had, and you were also confronted in a public forum about unacceptable views that I think most Canadians would share. It's a very interesting documentary, and I found it very informative and valuable.

Thank you.

• (1050)

The Chair: Would you like to make a comment before we end this session?

Mr. Gwyn Morgan: I'll only make a quick comment.

The documentary is very extreme and shows a total distortion of the way the company operated in the country. The company actually received environmental awards and social awards for their work in the country. Everybody in the company is proud of the record of this company in Ecuador—the company I used to be with, I should say. I think you would find that, if you travelled there.

The Chair: There's only one good thing about chairing a meeting such as this, and it's that I get the last word.

I will say to you, sir, that if you are confirmed in this position, I would hope that you will have taken to heart what you've listened to and responded to here.

I happen to know that you sit on many boards across the country, and I've been on this committee for some time. I would hope that your guidelines would try to expand on what happens in the private sector.

I know that a lot of those boards in the private sector have the same white gentlemen of a certain age. Because this is a country, I hope your guidelines will reflect the diversity of this country and will try to break the glass ceiling that so many people can't seem to break, not because they don't merit it and not because they can't do the job. It's about ensuring that these people have a chance and that you have a policy of integration.

I wish you well if you are confirmed.

I thank you very much.

Mr. Gwyn Morgan: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Thank you to the committee.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. Morgan.

We have very little time left. We could go to motions or we could agree to deal with them on Thursday. Would you like to deal with them now?

I will interrupt for a minute, but I think there is another committee coming in after this one, so we may not have much time.

Madame Thibault has agreed that her motion can wait until next Thursday, but I believe we have another motion that Madame Nash put forward.

Ms. Peggy Nash: Yes, Madam Chair, I gave notice of the motion last week. I would like to make some minor changes or minor amendments to the motion, if that's possible at this time.

The Chair: You've given notice of a particular motion. We would have to have the agreement of the committee that you could amend this. Let's see what the amendment is.

You're amending your own motion is what you're doing.

Ms. Peggy Nash: Right, so it's a friendly amendment.

The Chair: It would have to be by someone else, honestly; otherwise, you have to give notice of that, as well.

Madame Thibault.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Louise Thibault: I suggest a friendly amendment to the motion introduced by Ms...

The Chair: Ms. Thibault, first she should start by moving her motion, and then you could move an amendment to it.

[*English*]

Would you make your proposal?

Ms. Peggy Nash: Yes, I'd like to move the motion that I gave notice of last week.

The Chair: Thank you.

Is there a seconder? Any seconder?

Yes, Madame Thibault.

•(1055)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Louise Thibault: I would like to move that in the English version, after the word “Morgan”, the words

[*English*]

“has insufficient qualifications and competence related to...”

[*Translation*]

be replaced by

[*English*]

“is unsuitable for...”

[*Translation*]

Everything else remains unchanged. Is that what you wanted, Madam?

[*English*]

The Chair: Okay. You're only changing that word.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Thibault, you're only changing that word?

Ms. Louise Thibault: That is correct. We are replacing the words between “Morgan” and “to”.

[*English*]

The Chair: Do we wish to debate this amendment?

(Amendment agreed to)

The Chair: Now I will ask for all those in favour of the motion as amended.

Would you like debate? Certainly.

Mr. James Moore: I will begin then, I guess.

I think there are a couple of things here that are quite telling. First of all, Ms. Nash moved this motion on Friday without ever having met Mr. Morgan, never having had the opportunity to actually have him appear before this committee.

Ms. Diane Ablonczy: Without due process.

Mr. James Moore: Precisely, as Madam Ablonczy just said, without full due process.

Second of all, I think it's quite telling, the amendment that was just approved here by the opposition parties, and it's important to make note of it. What the opposition just did—the Liberals and the NDP with the Bloc—is strike the words “insufficient qualifications and competence related to the proposed appointment”. The original motion said, “That, due to the fact that Mr. Gwyn Morgan has insufficient qualifications and competence related to the proposed appointment as Chairperson”, he should not be appointed.

So they have conceded, in fact, that he does have sufficient qualifications, that he does have sufficient competence. But they're deciding that he's unsuitable clearly based on the questions that were raised here, clearly because of his personal and political views, views that have no relevance whatsoever to the position to which he is going to be appointed. This is pure partisanship. It's totally irresponsible, and the fact that you've just conceded the fact that he's qualified for this position makes this position that you are now taking irresponsible and partisan and precisely what Canadians are tired of in parliamentary committees.

Mr. Morgan is qualified for this position. He should be appointed, and this kind of reckless partisanship, started by the NDP and now supported, apparently, by the Liberals, is totally irresponsible.

The Chair: Mr. Volpe.

Hon. Joseph Volpe: Once Mr. Moore gets off his high horse, he'll recall that Mr. Morgan was unable—note the word “unable”—to address any question related to competence and knowledge of an appointments process. Nor was he capable of offering any systematic procedural approach to what he thinks he should be doing. And thirdly, he was unaware of the competence associated with any merit-based system.

So I think that Madam Nash, who decided not to call into question any other perceived notions about his abilities in the private sector, noted that the commentary around the table, reinforced by Mr. Moore and his colleagues, was that he is really quite unsuitable for making decisions and observations, let alone that he doesn't have the qualifications and competence for the procedure that he has yet to define.

I think that Madam Nash has actually done Mr. Morgan a favour by referring to his suitability and not his competence. That's not partisanship. I think that's a certain elegance and compassion on her part.

The Chair: Mr. Alghabra.

Mr. Omar Alghabra: Thank you, Madam Chair.

I think if there's any partisanship here today, it's on the opposite side. It's members of the Conservative Party, some of whom, I'm sure, are as uncomfortable as we are about some of the statements and views we've discussed today. Yet they are unwilling to support this motion. I challenge any member of the Conservative Party to defend the statements that were made by Mr. Morgan and tell us how they're not going to be influencing his decisions when and if he's ever confirmed as Public Appointments Commissioner.

The Chair: Thank you.

We'll go to Mr. Kenney.

Mr. Jason Kenney: Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

I'll just point out, to begin with, that Mr. Alghabra and Mr. Volpe seem to be contradicting each other. Mr. Volpe seems to suggest that Mr. Morgan is unsuitable for the position because the position itself has not been sufficiently defined; and Mr. Alghabra, on the other hand, seems to believe he's unsuitable because of a few lines in one speech he's given in a 40-year career and a 60-year life, much of it in the public eye.

Believe me, Madam Chair, I understand, as somebody who has been in opposition here for nine years, the duty of the opposition, the responsibility of the opposition to oppose, to be critical, to ask tough questions, and not to give the government or anybody proposed by the government an easy ride. I understand that. I understand the context, and I respect the obligation of opposition members to do that. I do, however, think it has to be done in a way that doesn't do permanent damage to our public institutions.

I'll admit that as a member of the opposition in the past, *mea culpa, mea culpa, mea maxima culpa*, I've been too aggressive on occasion, but I hope I never would have taken somebody with the status of the leading business person in Canada—

• (1100)

The Chair: It's a point of order that we're going to listen to.

[Translation]

Ms. Caroline St-Hilaire: I would like us to vote on the motion immediately, please.

[English]

The Chair: That's not a point of order, I think you have to wait until the debate is over. A point of order is not at calling the question.

Mr. Jason Kenney: I'm sorry the opposition doesn't even want to hear respectful intervention in this debate. It's clear, I guess, that the opposition prejudged this matter beforehand, as Madam Nash's disposition of the motion would indicate.

Once again, as I overheard Mr. Layton saying here on my way into the building this morning, and I was quite shocked, that Peggy Nash's quote is going to tear him apart—

The Chair: This is not before the committee.

Mr. Kramp also wanted to say something, and then I will go to the opposition.

Mr. Jason Kenney: But, Madam Chair, I'm sorry, it is before the committee. In the motion that's before the committee, it's my judgment that at least Madam Nash has prejudged this matter. She put this motion on notice last week—

Ms. Peggy Nash: Madam Chair, I don't know what that has to do with the actual motion that is before the committee.

The Chair: We are debating the motion. Let's try to squeeze it down, because we have another committee waiting to use this room. I'm sure they're going to give us a little bit time, because they're enjoying this as much as everybody else, but I think we should try to conclude our business.

Mr. Jason Kenney: I'm going to take a few minutes, Madam Chair, to make my point.

I haven't had 30 seconds yet, and I'm trying to speak respectfully.

The Chair: You've had more than that. I've been timing you.

Please continue.

Mr. Jason Kenney: Well, not 30 seconds without interruption, Madam Chair.

As I was saying, the motion before us was introduced last week, prior to the witness appearing before us. There's an old Jewish proverb that the judge who decides the case before having heard it is a fool. I hope we're not proven to be fools here today.

Madam Nash suggested in the media this weekend that it was simply a precautionary measure to put this motion before the committee before having heard Mr. Morgan and that she was acting in good faith and could just as easily withdraw the motion. I quite frankly question the veracity of that, having heard her leader today say before this meeting that she was going to "tear Mr. Morgan apart."

Madam Chair, this is precisely relevant to my argument, that we should be careful. I encourage the opposition members to do their job aggressively, to hold the government to account, and so on, but I would encourage them to do so in a way that does not do permanent damage to the institutions of public service.

We have before us today a man who's been recognized by his peers as the leading business leader in Canada, who is willing to leave, I'm sure, a very pleasant retirement and work in what is probably close to a full-time job for \$1 a year.

What we see here today, and I believe this is very significant, Madam Chair, is a 40-year career, reaching the height of Canadian business achievement, being characterized in the most vile terms possible—I think there are three members opposite who used the word "racist"—because of one line—

The Chair: You have actually talked out your time now.

Mr. Jason Kenney: I wasn't aware of any time allocation, Madam Chair.

The Chair: There are some limits to speaking. Five minutes is top, and you've been speaking for longer than that. I am the chair, sir, and five minutes is it. I will go on to Mr. Kramp. You spoke for longer than five minutes.

Mr. Jason Kenney: Madam Chair, where in the order...? I have a point of order, a point of order.

The Chair: Sir, I am the chair, and I am ruling on this.

• (1105)

Mr. Jason Kenney: It is a point of order, and you're obliged, as chair, to recognize a point of order.

The Chair: I'm recognizing your point of order.

Mr. Jason Kenney: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Where is it in the orders of the committee that there is time allocation on debate on motions?

The Chair: There is time allocation on this committee—

Mr. Jason Kenney: For questions of witnesses.

The Chair: On this committee, we start off with seven minutes, we go five minutes, and then afterwards, when we are in a time crunch, we limit the amount of debate on an issue. And I can do that.

Mr. Jason Kenney: Could I ask you to consult with the clerk? I'd just like to know what the motion is that we have adopted as this committee in terms of time allocation for debate on motions. It's news to me. I've only been around here for nine years.

The Chair: Why don't you challenge me, then, on the ruling?

Mr. Jason Kenney: I've only been around here for nine years, Madam Chair. I'm just asking for a point of information.

The Chair: We decide.

Sir, I understand what you're trying to do, and I am trying to move this along so that we can vacate the room for the next committee. Whether you like it or not, the course of events will follow—

Mr. Jason Kenney: I am trying to make a very serious point about a lynching of Canada's leading business leader in this committee that will cause people of serious public credibility to question seeking positions of public responsibility in the future. This is a serious matter, Madam Chair.

The Chair: I realize that, and you've made your point. Thank you very much.

I will go to the next speaker, who is Mr. Kramp, by the way—a Conservative.

Thank you.

Mr. Daryl Kramp: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Quite honestly, colleagues, I have a little bit of a heavy heart on this. I recall the first meeting of this government ops committee, at which the chair stated, "This is, thankfully, one of the least partisan committees on the Hill, and we hope to see it act that way."

For those members who obviously support this motion, if that is their strong personal opinion and their strong personal belief, I'm not comfortable with that, but I understand it and accept it. I think that's fair, that's democracy. But sadly, in my evaluation, I do believe that unfortunately too many people are playing politics with this issue, and it is such a serious issue. That is just from what we've heard here today and from the tone of comment. I don't believe it's consistent, and I'm not suggesting everybody is following that pattern; to those who are, I offer my apologies if I mischaracterize you on this statement, if you have that belief.

Just to touch on Mr. Kenney's remark, we have the credibility of people coming forward and we have a mandate. The mandate has not been followed by this motion in the committee. It's absolutely not relevant to the appointment process. It has absolutely no relevancy whatsoever. Competence, capability, ability to do the job, ability to deliver for the Canadian public, efficiencies—that's the mandate. When I see it being absolutely cast aside simply to mischaracterize an individual who has given 40 years of his life in the public service without a blemish, and to have this kind of mischaracterization...it is really a sad day.

I offer my personal apologies to Mr. Morgan for having to put up with this kind of mischaracterization. It's a sad day. I would recommend that our Prime Minister actually just do what is proper, do what is right, and appoint a gentleman who obviously is very deserving of this.

The Chair: Madame Nash.

Ms. Peggy Nash: Madam Chair, I'd like to move that the motion be put to a vote.

The Chair: Do you mean the motion as amended?

Ms. Peggy Nash: Yes, as amended.

Mr. James Moore: It's past 11 a.m. The transport committee is supposed to be have met at 11 a.m.

The Chair: I think this will take two minutes. The question has been called. All those in favour of the motion as amended?

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

Ms. Diane Ablonczy: Madam Chair, I didn't get a chance to speak to the motion.

The Chair: This is the end of the committee. By the way, we'll see you at 8 a.m. on Thursday. Thank you.

Yes?

Mr. James Moore: Madam Chair, I'd like to challenge the chair for your conduct at this meeting.

The Chair: I am sorry, that is out of order.

Mr. James Moore: Madam Chair, you are compelled to recognize me on a motion to challenge the chair.

The Chair: Out of order.

This is the end of it. Come and challenge me at the next meeting.

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