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**Chair**

**Mr. Merv Tweed**

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## Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities

Wednesday, May 9, 2007

• (1535)

[English]

**The Chair (Mr. Merv Tweed (Brandon—Souris, CPC)):** Thank you and good afternoon, everyone. Welcome to the Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, meeting 50.

The orders of the day, pursuant to Standing Order 108—

**Mr. Brian Jean (Fort McMurray—Athabasca, CPC):** I have a point of order.

**The Chair:** Mr. Jean.

**Mr. Brian Jean:** Mr. Chair, I'd like to move that as first order of business today the committee deal with Mr. Fast's motion and Mr. Volpe's amendment to the motion. I ask this on the basis that Mr. Fast, who has been very patient with the committee and I think on three or four separate occasions has agreed to put his matter to the end or to another meeting, has another commitment he has to go to. As such, I would ask that we deal with this forthwith.

**The Chair:** Monsieur Laframboise.

[Translation]

**Mr. Mario Laframboise (Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, BQ):** Mr. Chairman, out of respect for the witnesses we have invited to appear today, we should have them speak during the first hour. We have received an agenda. Our witnesses arrived for the meeting at 3:30 p.m. They have taken their places. I hope we will show respect for them and have them speak at the time we agreed upon. We will have sufficient time afterwards to debate Mr. Fast's motion.

[English]

**The Chair:** Mr. Julian.

**Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP):** Yes, Mr. Chair, I'm speaking in the same sense as Monsieur Laframboise. This is a very complex issue. We have a court case decision that was rendered yesterday, as you well know, so this is not something that's going to take five minutes to discuss. It would be inappropriate to have our witnesses wait an hour or an hour and a half as we work through what is a very complex motion on a very complex subject.

**The Chair:** Mr. Volpe.

**Hon. Joseph Volpe (Eglinton—Lawrence, Lib.):** Well, I don't have any problems with the motion, provided that our witnesses are comfortable with the fact that they might have to wait an hour. We had only given them an hour, at any rate, so I'm cognizant of the committee's obligations to everybody.

Not to be necessarily supportive of Mr. Fast's agenda, but I want to reinforce something I said a week ago, which is that we wanted to deal with this and we were going to take only a half hour to do it. Now we're putting in an hour. So if Mr. Fast, as I understand it, has other parliamentary duties in about an hour, if our witnesses are okay, I think we should deal with it.

**The Chair:** Are there any other comments?

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Mr. Chair, we should just proceed as per the agenda.

**The Chair:** Well, I do have a motion before us, so I know we would have to deal with that motion by Mr. Jean.

Mr. Bell.

**Mr. Don Bell (North Vancouver, Lib.):** When I said I'd like to hear from the witnesses, I meant—Obviously, I want to hear from the witnesses, but I'd like to hear from the witnesses whether, if we were to take a half an hour at this point—

What is your schedule? We invited you here for this time. Are you able to wait a half an hour? Do you have other—?

**The Chair:** Mr. Winter.

**Mr. Brock Winter (Senior Vice-President, Operations, Canadian Pacific Railway):** We can meet your schedule, whatever you feel.

**The Chair:** So the motion on the floor by Mr. Jean is that we refer back to the motion by Mr. Fast, and the amendment that would be on the floor by Mr. Volpe.

(Motion agreed to)

**The Chair:** With that, I will refer to Mr. Volpe, who had the floor on this issue at the time of the last adjournment, with his amendment.

I apologize to the witnesses. You're welcome to stay and visit. We'll be as quick as the committee can do it.

Mr. Volpe.

**Hon. Joseph Volpe:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

You have before you, as per my distribution, an amendment to Mr. Fast's motion, in both official languages. I'm not going to read it for you.

The intent of that amendment to Mr. Fast's motion is to give some pretty specific indications about what the minister can do and ought to do if this committee were to accept the motion. Specifically, it says: (1) that the minister has to present a directive for a change in the regulations in order to find consistency in the language that ensures a definition of "letter" is consistent; and (2) that the exclusive privilege relates to domestic letters; it does not deal with international remailers.

I too have read the judgment of the other day. I think the reason we're in a position where we're reading these judgments is precisely because we have not asked the government, the minister, to act in a way that is available for him to act.

So while Mr. Fast says he would like the committee to give the minister some direction, I wanted to narrow it down and say, well, we've also done a little bit of homework, and this is the only way he can act in order to prevent the kinds of decisions on injunctions presented by the decision yesterday from putting all these businesses out of business and all of their employees out on the street.

If this committee is going to deliver a message, then it can do it in a prescriptive fashion, and that's the intent of my amendment. I'm hoping that Mr. Fast will accept this as a friendly amendment.

**The Chair:** We'll go to Monsieur Laframboise.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Mario Laframboise:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I have a great deal of difficulty with the message the committee is trying to send. I had the same problems during preceding discussions on Mr. Fast's motion, and I find I am having them again today with respect to the amendment tabled by Mr. Volpe.

We need to provide a brief background of the committee's business. I tabled a motion to have Canada Post, the Canadian Union of Postal Workers and International Remailers appear before the committee. You asked me not to put any questions on cases that were before the courts, and I agreed not to. You asked me not to put questions on negotiations in connection with the collective agreement between the Canadian Union of Postal Workers and Canada Post, and I agreed not to. I told you that if we had to discuss Mr. Fast's motion, I would like to have remailers' representatives and Canada Post representatives appear before the committee again so that I could put the questions I wanted to put during the discussions on my motion, which was debated in committee.

Today, every means possible are being brought to bear to change the agenda. According to the agenda, Canadian Pacific was to appear before Mr. Fast's motion is tabled. Mr. Chairman, I am trying to follow, but I have a great deal of difficulty when I find myself forced into a position where I cannot get to the bottom of things. You will therefore understand that I will vote against the amendment tabled by Mr. Volpe, and against the motion tabled by Mr. Fast.

Colleagues, I don't know whether this is the attitude you plan to have. I told you last time that I would not be obstructive, and I'm trying very hard not to be obstructive and not to stretch my comments out until 5:30. For those who don't know me, I should point out that I have already done so in a different Parliament. I can talk for hours and hours on a motion without ever repeating myself. It's fun for me. I'm not doing it today, but I hope you do understand

that I have a great deal of difficulty with the fact that you're trying every way you can to distort the agenda and force me to accept things I do not wish to accept.

I have had the same goal from the very start, to engage in transparent debate. That is why I would have liked Canada Post and the remailers' representatives to appear. I will stop here this time, but I hope you don't make a habit of this.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

●(1540)

[*English*]

**The Chair:** We'll have Mr. Julian.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Mr. Chairman, I'm very disappointed that the Conservatives have tried to change the agenda. It has often been said, every time Mr. Fast brought the issue back, that we hadn't done our homework. Mr. Laframboise said that Canada Post and the remailers' representatives should come back before the committee comes to a decision.

There is no rationale for changing the agenda without respect for committee procedure and committee members, who have clearly indicated they need more information and wish to ask more questions before making the decision.

[*English*]

To have the agenda thrown aside, as the Conservatives have done today, doesn't augur well, quite frankly, Mr. Chair, for future committee work. If that's the attitude this government is going to take towards members of the opposition who are simply trying to do their due diligence, it really speaks to how little respect and what little regard this government has for other members of the committee. We'll see how that plays out in the future.

Here we have, very clearly, a motion that was drafted prior to a court decision that came down yesterday, which I don't believe any members of the Conservative government have actually read, that has an impact on the decisions we make today. We haven't done the due diligence. We haven't invited witnesses to come back before the committee to look at the implications of this motion.

I know that Mr. Volpe is trying to be helpful with his amendments, but we don't know what the implications are. And now we're going to try to race forward and ram this through without any due regard for what the implication is for universal postal service and for postal service in rural areas.

If members of the Conservative Party are ready to sacrifice their own constituents, without understanding the implications of their gesture, that's their decision. I do not believe that this is a helpful precedent at all. I think, Mr. Chair, that this turns the committee from one in which we've had, up until now, a relationship of cooperation, generally, to one in which we will have a relationship of confrontation. If the Conservatives want to change how this committee works, they're going to have to understand that there are consequences that come from changing how the committee works.

This is completely unacceptable, Mr. Chair. It is irresponsible, I believe. The requests from Mr. Laframboise and me have been modest but important and responsible. For the Conservatives on this committee to simply sweep that aside is signalling what I fear is going to be a real degradation in the working relationships we have around this table.

**The Chair:** Mr. Jean.

**Mr. Brian Jean:** Mr. Fast put this motion forward more than six meetings ago and has agreed by himself to put it back and deal with it. This is not about tricks. This motion was going to come forward in an hour anyway. Mr. Fast has said he is not able to do it in an hour, which means it would be seven meetings. This motion at the very most keeps the situation the same way it has been for the last 20 to 30 years. That is all this motion does—it keeps the status quo.

That's all I would like to say.

• (1545)

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Court decision.

**Mr. Brian Jean:** I read it.

**The Chair:** Monsieur Bélanger.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger (Ottawa—Vanier, Lib.):** I would not have supported the swap if I had been here. I thought I'd have a chance to collect my thoughts before addressing this, but since I haven't had that chance I will attempt to do so.

I have said in the past that I thought this motion was premature at best, in the sense that we've had very cursory discussions on the rather significant extent and impact of the motion before us. We asked only a few questions of some people who came here representing remailers. We barely had a chance to ask Canada Post some questions on this. Here we are tampering with a principle that has been entrenched in law for well over 25 years.

Governments in the past—whether they were Conservative or Liberal—have supported the exclusive privilege of Canada Post for very obvious reasons that are stated in law and have been interpreted as such by tribunals time and again. Now, on a whim it seems, the government is asking opposition to give carte blanche or sign a blank cheque to tamper with the privilege that has been invested in Canada Post so it also carries out its universal obligation of delivering letters.

We have heard many times from postal workers, tribunals, elected representatives, and Canada Post administrators that the two are linked. There is the universal obligation of Canada Post to deliver a letter. Whether it be from downtown Yellowknife to Halifax, or across the street in Toronto or Hamilton or Ottawa, there must be a uniformity of service accessibility throughout the country. Here we're trying to tamper with the privilege they have, the exclusivity, but we've given no consideration to and have had no discussion or debate whatsoever on what the effect of that might be on the universal obligation.

I don't represent a rural riding. I represent an urban riding, and it would probably be much better for the constituents I represent if there wasn't this universal obligation. We could probably cut a deal with Canada Post if they didn't have to carry out this universal obligation. We could have Canada Post deliver mail from across the street at a much lower rate than 53¢ a stamp. But is that the kind of

country we want to build? Previous governments have said no, time and again. We'll be tampering with that if we accept this motion, and I just can't.

If we're even going to consider that, we as responsible parliamentarians have to give it due consideration, have people present the pros and cons of the case, have a chance to kick the tires, if you will, and ask questions so we can have a determination and not a blank cheque, as we're being asked for.

I think anyone who represents a rural riding here has to give their head a shake to see whether or not they know what they're doing if we approve this motion.

There are other of factors that we need to know. John McKay asked the minister over a year ago what he intended to do about remailers. John McKay quoted the answer of the minister in the official report of *Hansard* on May 16, 2006. He said:

—it is a very important subject. I have received representation not only from members opposite but also members from our political party. We are looking at the issue now and we will be taking note not only of that issue, but we will be advising the House as to what we want to do in the coming days.

It's now a year later, and we're still waiting to hear what the minister intends to do.

I believe Monsieur Laframboise asked the minister a similar question in the fall last year and the answer was somewhat similar: that we'll get an indication of what the government intends to do some time in December, before the year end.

We're now well beyond that, in May 2007, and we still have no indication. The closest we got on what the minister intends to do was last Monday, when he appeared before us for estimates. I don't know how many people were aware that he might be planning a review of Canada Post. He said that the government has not ruled it out and is still considering a review of Canada Post. He did not indicate in any way, shape, or form how he intended to deal with the remailers issue, and whether or not that has an impact on the universal obligation of Canada Post and its exclusive privilege.

• (1550)

So these are all things that we have to consider. If you look at the decisions of the Ontario Court of Appeal, and some of the argumentation being presented by Mr. Fast, in terms of there being some confusion between English and French, well, as a francophone, I don't think there's any confusion, Mr. Chairman.

The precedents of law and the jurisprudence in this country are quite clear. If one text, whether English or French, is clearer than the other, that's where we go. And the French text is very clear about exclusivity. It's not exclusivity for the whole thing; there's exclusivity for Canada Post in the pickup of mail and in the transport and delivering of it in the country.

When we say that, we get this letter waved at us, which my leader has signed, saying, well, there's confusion. There is no confusion, because Canada Post has exclusivity today for the delivery of mail, yet uses private contractors for the delivery of mail.

Correct, Mr. Chairman? I believe everyone would agree with that. So why could it not do the same thing for collection and therefore deal with the remailers?

Respecting the exclusive privilege of Canada Post and therefore maintaining its universal obligation does not mean, ipso facto, that remailers will be out of business. It's just that they'll have to deal with the one who has the exclusive privilege. That's something they've not been wanting to do.

I'm quite prepared to quote the Ontario Court of Appeal decision on this very issue. I hope that every member who has been asked to vote on this will have a chance to read this, because it is quite revealing, Mr. Chairman.

The other thing is the declarations made in the House by the minister's parliamentary secretary. They're quite revealing. I believe they might have been made at the adjournment debate. Basically, the parliamentary secretary here today was criticizing my colleague Mr. McKay for daring to question the courts. He asked repeatedly if we were not questioning the courts. No, we were not. But it seems like the government might be doing that here with this motion, because the courts—the judges—have repeatedly recognized the link between the exclusive privilege and the universal obligation of delivery. And if we tamper with that, we may wake up to the fact that rural mail service is not as good as and a hell of a lot more expensive than it is today. I don't want to wear that, Mr. Chairman, because that is not the country I'm trying to build.

Yes, some people may think I'm being a little bit far-flung when talking about building a country, but you build a country bit by bit. Treating our rural citizens as fairly and equitably as citizens who live in the urban centres is part of building a society and a country I respect.

So it is that significant, what we're being asked to do here. I hope my colleagues will vote against this. It is not the time; it is premature, and we've not done our homework.

I'm not opposed, as a responsible member of Parliament, to listening to both sides, but let's do that. We haven't right now.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Mr. Volpe.

**Hon. Joseph Volpe:** Parliament is a wonderful place, because all of us can share differing opinions and have an opportunity to disagree.

I'm assuming that Mr. Fast is accepting my motion as a friendly amendment.

**Mr. Ed Fast:** It's a friendly amendment.

**Hon. Joseph Volpe:** Thank you.

I want to address a couple of issues.

I think the question of the courts and their interpretation of what exclusive privilege might mean is not a hindrance to the government

making decisions about what can be done and what should not be done.

I've indicated in other questions here in this committee that the Government of Canada is obligated to ensure that the postal delivery system functions in all parts of the country. The exclusive privilege is not necessarily tied to the commercial viability of Canada Post to deliver a letter either in Nunavut or in downtown Toronto. If there's a shortfall, it is the obligation of the Government of Canada to ensure the service is provided.

Secondly, yes, the courts have pronounced on what those words mean in either of the two languages, but it does not preclude the government from taking action. It says this is what the language, in our opinion, means under these circumstances. This does not infringe on the obligation to appropriately govern.

My amendment seeks to draw this debate to a focus. Aside from making the necessary partisan political statements that we know are part and parcel of the democratic process, because they get debate going, it says what the minister ought to be doing if he or she wants to discharge the responsibility that the law or the legislation imposes. The minister would have the support of this committee if he or she did that. It's really what my amendment says.

I'm pleased the government members accept it as a friendly amendment. I think it's consistent with what my colleague from Ottawa—Vanier has indicated about trying to build a country. My focus is to ensure the government conducts its duties responsibly, and I want to hold them to task.

With respect to whether or not Canada Post is a commercially viable entity, and whether or not that prevents Canada Post from doing its job in a fashion that we think is appropriate in a modern environment, I know you've handed this out already, Mr. Chairman, in French and in English. It's a letter from CUPW urging Canada Post to invest profits in public postal service and safety. I think the first and second lines are instructive. It's very revealing about where our debates might take us. If you'll bear with me, I'll read it to you. It says:

Canada Post's annual report announced record volumes and \$119 million in net profits in 2006, its twelfth consecutive year of making millions and its twenty-fifth year of providing universal, affordable public postal service.

I don't think that the commercial issue or the viability of the commercial practices have been called into question.

For 20 years, yes, we heard whatever evidence we heard. Some would say it was not enough, and some would say it was too much. We have heard uncontested evidence that remailers have been in the business for 20 years.

Before it was interpreted, the legislation was not a problem for Canada Post. It wasn't a problem for the discharge of the responsibilities of government. It became an issue of commercial competitiveness. If that's all it is, then we can address this immediately.

My motion does not tell Canada Post that it must do X, Y, or Z. It says that in order for the minister to act, the minister has to give a consultative directive to Canada Post to amend its regulations, which have to be discussed by their board of directors. They have to be approved by Parliament. Canada Post is responsible to Parliament. We're asking the minister to take specific action.

•(1555)

Remember here, we're talking about a practice. We're not talking about the law. We're not talking about an interpretation of an item. We're not asking a judge or a court to intervene. We're asking that the minister discharge his responsibilities and his duties with a corporation that comes under his administrative overview and say to that administrative executive, "This is what the Government of Canada intends. Go to your council and put forward the appropriate regulations. If it doesn't meet with Parliament's approval, that's a different story, but at this stage of the game you are to cease and desist from putting these people out of business." And there are three ways: you can exercise an option, you can discontinue, you can withdraw or you can consent. Okay, so fine, nobody's prescribing that some one specific thing be done.

My colleague from Ottawa-Vanier says we can still do subcontracting. Well, fine, nothing prevents Canada Post from engaging in that practice. What it does do is it delivers two messages. One message is we want the minister to act. The second one is we want Canada Post to stop doing what it's doing and to seek cooperation until such time as the minister's prescription is taken into consideration and works its way through the Canada Post Corporation.

Otherwise, we're asking the courts to do all of the commercial dealings that would normally be accomplished by negotiations. We're asking the courts to reverse 20 years of acceptable commercial activity and we're asking the courts to do the bidding of members of Parliament when they put businesses and people out of business and out of jobs.

Mr. Chairman and colleagues, I recognize all of us have difficulties with all of this. I recognize that. I'm delighted the government members accepted my motion as a friendly amendment, because yes, to quote Mr. Julian, I am trying to be helpful for everybody around the table. I hope everybody takes that in the spirit, because we are all here, I think, to do what my colleague from Ottawa-Vanier says, and that is, to build a society and a country. I can't see that not being done by giving the minister an opportunity to accomplish what he must.

•(1600)

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

I will just advise the committee members that although there has been an indication that the amendment is agreeable by the government side, we are still debating that amendment.

Mr. Julian.

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Mr. Chair, we're just getting into the arguments. I would propose that we table this discussion and hear our witnesses.

I move to table.

**The Chair:** I'm advised that it's not an admissible motion. The question I would ask you is this. Are you moving to adjourn debate?

**Mr. Peter Julian:** No, I'm moving to table. It is—

**The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Mark D'Amore):** It doesn't exist in Canadian parliamentary procedure.

**Mr. Peter Julian:** We've used it at this committee.

**The Chair:** We adjourn debate.

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Okay, Mr. Chair, if Mr. Fast is not willing to withdraw the motion—he seems hell-bent on ramming it through, regardless of what the implications are for rural Canada—I'd like to then speak to the amendment.

As I stated earlier, Mr. Volpe is trying to be helpful, but—

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** Mr. Chairman, I have a point of order. Have you ruled that the amendment to Mr. Fast's motion to defer is no longer under consideration? You may recall that the last time we dealt with this, Mr. Fast had moved that it be deferred until a subsequent meeting, to which I proposed an amendment that it be deferred until the minister had tabled the promised response to the remailers matter.

Have you ruled that this is no longer under consideration?

**The Chair:** The subcommittee agreed to put it on today's agenda, and as the meeting started, there was a motion to move it to the front of the agenda.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** I understand that, but what was under discussion, Mr. Chairman—and I don't believe the subcommittee has the authority to decide for the full committee—was a motion to defer this until such time as the minister had responded, as promised, to the matter of remailers. Where is that?

**The Chair:** It's been explained to me that the amendment you put forward was to defer it to the following Wednesday, which passed. Am I correct?

**A voice:** No.

**The Chair:** I'm sorry, from Mr. Fast, which just passed.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** No, it didn't pass

**The Chair:** No, the date passed.

This brings us back to the original motion with the amendment that has been proposed by Mr. Volpe.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** The motion was that this be deferred until such time as the minister responded, as promised, to the matter of remailers. That has not passed, Mr. Chairman. Therefore, I would submit to you that this motion has to be disposed of first.

•(1605)

**The Chair:** Mr. Julian, on a point of order.

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Mr. Chair, I believe Mr. Bélanger is absolutely correct. I seconded his motion, and it was not that way.

**The Chair:** If the committee will be patient for one minute, I will get a ruling with some assistance from the clerk.

I'm going to suspend for a couple of minutes to get the information.

- \_\_\_\_\_ (Pause) \_\_\_\_\_
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**The Chair:** I might need your undivided attention on this one, committee members, so that we have a full understanding of it.

On April 30, Mr. Fast moved that the consideration of his motion be moved to Wednesday, May 2. At that time, Mr. Bélanger amended this by replacing the words “to the meeting on Wednesday, May 2” with the words “until such time as the Minister has come forward with his report on the matter of remailers”.

Because the timeframe has moved past May 2, it makes both Mr. Fast's motion and Mr. Bélanger's amendment moot.

If you're interested, what you can do is make—Would it be an amendment to the motion? It would be a dilatory motion with the same words.

Basically the time has moved past the dates that were set out and established by the motion and the amendment; therefore the motion and the amendment are no longer valid.

Mr. Bélanger.

- (1610)

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** To clarify, I gather that you've accepted the motion from Mr. Volpe as an amendment.

**The Chair:** We are debating Mr. Volpe's amendment.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** I would argue that the amendment that I put forward to Mr. Fast's motion to defer was in order at the time. Was it not?

**The Chair:** Yes.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** The time has not passed for that amendment, because the minister has still not reported.

**The Chair:** The motion and the amendment were made on April 30, and the date passed on May 2. I know you have amended it and taken that out, but if I understand it correctly, neither the motion nor the amendment are valid because of the timeline. You would have to make a motion.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** I understand that, and I can do that—a motion to defer is fairly well in order all the time—but I have to understand your reasoning here.

Given that the time has passed, I can understand that the motion is no longer in order—absolutely. Otherwise we'd be going back in time, which is not feasible, at least not that we're aware of. However, the other one has not passed. The minister has not yet reported. The amendment did not have a date. It said until such time as the minister has reported. How can you declare that *caduque*? It's still very much in play.

**The Chair:** Again, it is my understanding that because Mr. Fast's motion of April 30 has passed that date, the motion and the amendment are no longer valid. If there's no motion, then the amendment also becomes moot.

Mr. Julian.

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Mr. Chair, the motion very clearly called for a date—a reporting back by the minister—which has not been

superseded by events. So Mr. Bélanger is absolutely right that the motion is in order. That is what is still to be discussed.

If the motion were defeated, you're right in saying that the main motion would have been superseded by the date change. But that presumes that the committee has turned down the amendment. The committee has not made that decision yet. Mr. Bélanger is absolutely right in maintaining that the amendment is still on the floor and still subject to discussion. That's where we were when we left off debate on this point. Monsieur Bélanger is absolutely correct on that.

**The Chair:** Well, the chair would disagree with you, Mr. Julian. I would suggest that the motion Mr. Fast made became obsolete, therefore making the amendment obsolete.

You do have the ability to challenge the ruling of the chair, but I'm relying on experience and also on some direction from the clerk.

Mr. Jean.

**Mr. Brian Jean:** I was going to make that point. We have a ruling from the chair. Mr. Julian has the prerogative to challenge that if he wishes to do so, and to deal with the consequences, but we had a motion to deal with this particular issue and we want to, as a committee. I think the ruling of the chair would stand.

**The Chair:** Mr. Bélanger, I will suggest that you have the ability to make a dilatory motion.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** Mr. Chairman, I'll accept your argument that since the main motion is no longer able to be considered the amendment will lapse as well. I'll buy into that. There may be some fine points that would challenge it, but I won't.

Nonetheless, I think it is something the committee ought to consider. I'm prepared to move that Mr. Fast's motion and the amendment be deferred until such time as the minister has reported, as promised, on the matter of remailers.

**The Chair:** Mr. Julian.

**Mr. Peter Julian:** I second that motion, Mr. Chair, for the even more compelling reason that we now have a court judgment from yesterday that has been added to the mix and the discussion on this issue, since the original motion was moved and since the amendment was moved.

This committee has to take into consideration that court document, which talks very specifically about the impact in rural areas, and talks about the relatively low cost of providing universal postal services to the urban population, the population that lives within 150 kilometres of the southern border with the United States, and that issue offsetting services that are of a higher cost to more remote communities, like those that members of the Conservative Party represent.

There are very clear impacts on rural communities. So rather than running forward, hell-bent, to adopt a motion when the due diligence has not been done, when the responsibility has not been shown, and when legitimate questions have been raised by Mr. Bélanger as well as by Monsieur Laframboise, Monsieur Carrier, and myself, those issues of what the impact of this decision would be should be taken into consideration.



Very clearly, when you had a court decision yesterday, this Conservative push to try to ram the motion through doesn't make sense. We raised it. We said very clearly that we needed more information, that the Conservatives were not aware of the implications of what they were trying to do and that there were questions that needed to be asked of Canada Post and remailers, and the Conservatives have consistently refused to do the due diligence, consistently refused to have those witnesses brought back so that the committee could make a decision that's based on substance and on actually understanding the impact.

Now, no member of the Conservative Party has actually raised the court judgment and what the impact of that would be. One member said that he had read the judgment. That's wonderful. That should raise questions in his mind, as it should raise questions in all of our minds, that it is premature to ram this motion through and it is premature to try to push forward with a motion that has implications, potentially, for rural communities across the country. We need to do that due diligence.

Mr. Bélanger's motion, I think, is a very effective one, allowing this committee to do its due diligence before it starts running after motions that have what could be considered to be perverse impacts, Mr. Chair. A perverse impact is an impact that is unforeseen. A perverse impact is one that members may not have considered when they pushed this forward. And since they're not aware of what the possible implications are and not aware of the possible implications of this extensive court judgment that refers specifically to rural postal delivery, it makes sense that the committee would take the time to do the due diligence and give it the consideration it needs.

We also have our witnesses before us today. We warned members of the Conservative Party that it would be better to hear the witnesses first. My hope is that we would simply adopt this motion and move on to hearing our witnesses on this important railway inquiry that Mr. Bell initiated. We're now losing half of this allotted timeframe around this motion. I'm sure Mr. Bell is as concerned as I am that we are spending time considering a motion without having done our due diligence, when we should be looking at the railway inquiry and the implications, particularly for British Columbia. I know Mr. Bell shares my concern about that. That's why he initiated this inquiry.

I'm hoping, Mr. Chair, that we will defer this and take the time to do the due diligence that has been requested by members from three parties around this table, so that the eventual decision we take will be the right one.

• (1615)

**The Chair:** Monsieur Carrier.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Robert Carrier (Alfred-Pellan, BQ):** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I want to join in with those who say that our parliamentary privilege is obviously violated when we are presented with a motion about which we are not adequately informed. We avoided questioning witnesses from Canada Post or from the postal workers' union about this issue, because of the labour dispute going on at the time. We had no clear idea of the consequences of the decision that we would have to make.

I would like the remailers to describe the impact of a decision that we might have to make due to this motion. I would also like to know what Canada Post intends to do with legislation that grants it exclusive privileges, as confirmed by the Ontario Court of Appeal. I know that this is not the Quebec Court of Appeal, but I think that the Ontario Court is equally important. Given all this, I can hardly go along with a motion that goes against a decision made by the Court of Appeal. I think that we could reasonably delay adopting the motion so that we can hear witnesses and clarify the issue.

Let me raise another issue. Earlier, it was suggested that we should hear the witnesses a half an hour later than scheduled. I note that we have been discussing for nearly an hour. I think that we should wrap up the discussion and make our decision later after taking time to reflect.

• (1620)

[*English*]

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

Mr. Bell.

**Mr. Don Bell:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'd like to get now, as soon as possible, to the CP Rail witnesses; that's how we were to start this meeting, and its purpose. But on this issue I have to say—and I may have a difference of opinion here with some of my colleagues—that I have supported the issue. I believe, having listened to the material—

I have read the court decision. I have read the letter from CUPW. Generally I have a record of supporting legislation that protects the right of workers. But I don't see this issue as being about the rights of workers. I see it as being about the rights of Canada Post, in this case the question of who delivers what part of the mail. And I understand there's a difference in the definition and the wording between the English and French versions as to exclusive privilege and what that means.

Having looked at the issue and the facts behind it, that for 17 years, by court acknowledgment, since 1990, CP was aware of this situation—for at least 15 of those years, it looks like, they took no action on it—my belief is that before we stand back and allow the court decisions to in fact allow existing private remailers to be put out of business, we should express an opinion.

I understand the rulings and the explanation here, that by allowing Canada Post to have the more profitable business it allows it to subsidize the less profitable business. But it's already making a good profit, and this is something that has been happening for years.

You know, the recent court judgments may precipitate—My concern is Canada Post taking immediate action against the remailer now. I'm prepared to have a full discussion on the remailer issue, as I hear from my colleagues, but I don't want to practically have irreversible action taken—because once the company is dismantled, it's not going to rebuild—that would adversely affect a situation that CP has known about, as they've acknowledged, since at least 1990.

I think it's premature to ram through a change, if you want to call it that, in the remailing structure that's been there for 20-plus years. The perverse impact that's referred to would be to change the current reality or the current status quo by not indicating our possible position, in this case my position, to the minister, to Canada Post, and to the government regarding private remailers.

So I am prepared to support the amendment, and the amended motion that would come, in Mr. Volpe's motion. In doing so I think we would maintain the current status quo and then we could still get the report from the minister and have a subsequent report if we wanted to change that position. But by passing the motion where it is now, we allow the current situation to carry on.

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

Just for clarification, the motion that Monsieur Bélanger has put forward—please correct me if I have it wrong—is that the matter before us, dealing with the past motion and amendments, be deferred until such time as the minister has come forward with this report on the matter of remailers. Is that correct? I'm just talking about your original motion.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** I did say in there “as promised”, I believe.

**The Chair:** Well, if you did, I'll add it. I want to make sure the committee is clear what the question is.

Mr. Jean.

**Mr. Brian Jean:** I don't know what Mr. Bélanger is referring to as a report that was promised. My understanding is that the minister confirmed he was going to look into the matter and make a decision on the matter. Unless he has it in front of him, I'd like to hear what exactly he says and if he refers to a report, and in what instance he's referring to it.

**The Chair:** Monsieur Bélanger.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** Mr. Chairman, before I do that, I think we need to understand that the profitability of Canada Post is not in question here, but the ability of Canada Post to use these profits to subsidize first-class mail is. The cross-subsidization that Canada Post is allowed to do is restricted, limited; therefore, if the profits come from non-mail business, it may not be allowed to use those profits to subsidize first-class mail and vice versa.

There are some severe and strict restrictions imposed on Canada Post by the Government of Canada regarding how it can use profits driven by certain profit centres and apply them to other services it is obliged to deliver. So we have to be very careful there, because there are a number of court cases going on in that. I believe United Parcel Service has been trying to rake Canada Post over the coals on this one, because they believe their parcel division is being cross-subsidized and so forth.

So for my colleague, Mr. Bell, I think we have to be very careful here when we—as I thought he was doing—claim that Canada Post's profitability can be a reason why we don't have to worry about the universal obligation of delivering first-class mail at a similar cost across the country.

But in answer to Mr. Jean's question, here are the words of the minister as reported in *Hansard* of May 16. This is what I was referring to when I first spoke. I'd have to go back to the very day of the question and the answer of the minister to get the precise question and total answer, but here is what Mr. McKay says the minister gave as an answer to his question:

It is a very important subject. I have received representation not only from members opposite but also members of our political party. We are looking at the issue now and we will be taking note not only of the issue, but we will be advising the House as to what we want to do in the coming days.

Therefore, there's a commitment from the minister to advise the House as to what it is the government is intending to do with remailers. I can't quote—

• (1625)

**The Chair:** Mr. Storseth, on a point of order.

**Mr. Brian Storseth (Westlock—St. Paul, CPC):** Sorry, I don't mean to interrupt, Mr. Bélanger. I just want to clarify for myself that this is something that Mr. McKay said that the minister—

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** No, it's something Mr. McKay is quoting the minister as having said in answer to a question.

**Mr. Ed Fast:** Oh, it's hearsay. It's not a point of order.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** No, it's not hearsay. It is—

**Mr. Ed Fast:** It's hearsay.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** Well, then, I'll read the entire report of *Hansard* of Tuesday, May 16, if you wish, Mr. Fast, so that you'll see it's not hearsay, because it's the only one I have here. I'll read this.

This is Mr. McKay speaking:

Mr. Speaker, a couple of weeks ago I asked the following question of the Minister of Transport:

Mr. Speaker, the minister will know that Canada Post is pursuing injunctions against a number of small Canadian businesses that are in the business of international remailing, some of which have been in the business for 20 years. Thousands of employees will lose their jobs, hundreds of businesses will close and Canada will lose \$150 million in business.

What will it be: monopolistic abuses by Canada Post or vigorous competition from small business? Will the minister use his authority under the Financial Administration Act and tell Canada Post to withdraw its assault on small business?

The answer was as follows:

—it is a very important subject. I have received representation not only from members opposite but also members of our political party. We are looking at the issue now and we will be taking note not only of the issue, but we will be advising the House as to what we want to do in the coming days.

He goes on.

Let me quote Mr. Brian Jean.

**A voice:** Excellent.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** Yes, I thought so too.

Mr. Chair, this is also on May 16, 2006, in the adjournment debate.

**Hon. Joseph Volpe:** May I interrupt on a point of order, just to keep me on track here, please?

We are still discussing Mr. Bélanger's motion—is that it? We're not talking about my motion?

**The Chair:** We're talking about a dilatory motion put forward by Mr. Bélanger that says the matter currently dealing with the past motion and amendment be deferred until such time as the minister has come forward with his report on the matter of remailers, as promised.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** So, this is Mr. Brian Jean on May 16, 2006, in response to the comments from Mr. McKay, member from Scarborough—Guildwood:

Mr. Speaker, I am wondering why the member, when he was sitting on the government side just months ago, did not do something about this issue. The Ontario Court of Appeal came out with a judgment over a year ago. I am wondering why, if he had the opportunity to do so, he did not.

I currently own three small businesses. I have run three or four others in the past, and I can tell the member that there are competing interests. We are taking this seriously because it is a very important issue.

On another point, I can assure the House that we are not going to take any lessons at all from the Liberals on how to run a business or how to run a government effectively in the best interests of Canadians. I am hopeful the member is not suggesting that we ignore the court decisions that have been rendered, including the Ontario Court of Appeal. I am certain it is not his wish that this government should ignore the courts.

I am happy to rise today on the issue of international remailing. I can assure everyone that this is a very important issue to this government. That is why we were taking some time to make an appropriate decision which will be in the best interests of Canadians, having regard to the universal postal service that all Canadians have come to love and enjoy.

Canadians receive and send mail all over the country for a mere 51¢, whether it be one block or 1,000 miles, by ferry or by other means of transportation. This government cares about rural, urban, and remote Canadian communities. That is why the minister will make a decision that is in the best interests of Canadians.

Canada's geography, low population density, outlying isolated communities, populations and climate provide, quite frankly, a larger challenge to Canada Post than other countries. In fact, I suggest that we have more challenges than any other nation's post office both in relation to delivery and also in regard to the environment, and other issues that are hot topics today.

Despite these challenges, Canada Post, an arm's-length corporation, which means in essence that we are not supposed to deal with its day-to-day operations, has a 96% on-time delivery of mail. What a great record to brag about for Canada Post.

Indeed, when we look at the entire world, Canada has one of the lowest domestic rates for any mail in the world. That speaks volumes about the quality of service. We do this without receiving any tax benefits or funding from Canadian taxpayers. This is done on a profitable basis. As a result, we have to take a look at what takes place.

Most importantly, we have a universal delivery service, which means that we cannot always deliver for 51¢. Obviously, a letter from here to Fort Chipewyan is going to cost more than 51¢ to deliver.

This is Mr. Jean speaking here, still:

As a result of that, we have to look at universal delivery, which includes what the courts have put forward as a jurisdiction that is within Canada Post's mandate. That jurisdiction means that it has the right for not only domestic mail but also international mail.

I think it's worth repeating that sentence:

That jurisdiction means that it has the right for not only domestic mail but also international mail. The court has found that, and I am certain my friend does not want this government to ignore our courts.

We are aware, and many Canadians do not know this, that these international remailers are actually subsidiaries or associated with large foreign postal services.

I have to reread this one:

We are aware, and many Canadians do not know this, that these international remailers are actually subsidiaries or associated with large foreign postal services. Indeed, these remailers employ Canadians, but Canada Post, of course, as everybody in the House knows, is the sixth largest employer of Canadians in Canada. These remailers actually collect the mail in bulk, ship it out of the country and then mail it locally at cheaper rates because there are cheaper rates available to them through foreign post offices. These—

And then the Deputy Speaker interrupted, a most eloquent interruption:

I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member, but his four minutes have expired. The hon. member for Scarborough—Guildwood.

Shall I continue, Mr. Chair?

• (1630)

**Hon. Joseph Volpe:** I think we get the point.

**The Chair:** Mr. Bell, on a point of order.

**An hon. member:** Shame on you, Mauril.

**Mr. Don Bell:** Mr. Chair, whatever steps we need to take to listen to CP Rail, we should do so now. We've given over an hour to this. I do not agree. I want to go to CP Rail now.

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Defer it.

**An hon. member:** Your guy's filibustering this.

**Mr. Don Bell:** Excuse me. I'm simply saying, Mr. Chair, we've invited these witnesses here, they've kindly deferred their time for one hour, and we should now proceed with them. Does that require a motion of some kind from me? I'm prepared to make it, whatever it is. Do you want a motion to defer it for one week? I'm not going to wait for the minister to report, but I'll agree for a deferral for a week.

**The Chair:** We are actually debating a motion right now to defer.

**Mr. Don Bell:** Can I call for the question on that motion?

**The Chair:** No, you can't call the vote, but I'm hoping—

**Mr. Don Bell:** Can I suggest that we interrupt the debate on the motion and start hearing our witnesses?

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** Mr. Chairman, I may have a suggestion. If you seek it, you might find unanimous consent to proceed to hearing our witnesses. You may or you may not, but if you sought it, you might find it. In terms of willingness to cooperate, I certainly would agree to that.

• (1635)

**Mr. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC):** Are you prepared to do so upon the condition that with five minutes left to go, we'll vote on this motion?

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** No.

**Mr. Ed Fast:** Of course not; you just want to filibuster.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** No, I don't want to filibuster.

**Mr. Ed Fast:** You're anti-democratic, that's what you are. You just don't want the will of this committee to prevail.

**The Chair:** Mr. Volpe has a point of order.

**Hon. Joseph Volpe:** I think everybody understands where we want to go on this. I'm not for taunting anybody to do anything. We have a motion on the floor; it's a dilatory motion. I'm going to ask you to find ways to deal with it as expeditiously as possible and then I'm going to ask you to find ways as expeditiously as possible to vote on my motion, because I would like to see what the will of the committee might be on it. I'd like you to move along with the committee's business.

There are going to be occasions on which people disagree, and that's fine, but disagreement shouldn't stand in the way of our getting on with our jobs.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** Mr. Chairman, if there's unanimous will, I am prepared to accept flipping this around and going to our witnesses right now. I thought we were going to hear our witnesses first, and I'm quite prepared to do that if it's the will of the committee. That shows some good will; but if it's only if the will of others is accepted, then we may have a difference of opinion.

**The Chair:** The motion on the floor to defer, Mr. Bélanger, is a debatable motion until debate ends. At that point I will call a vote. If the debate has terminated, I will call a vote to defer; if not, the floor is open. If there's no one else left to speak on this, I will call the question; if not, the floor is open.

Go ahead, Mr. Julian.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** On a point of order, I was hoping you could perhaps seek unanimous consent to move on immediately to hear witnesses and leave this whole thing in abeyance right now.

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Mr. Bélanger hasn't finished.

**Mr. Brian Storseth:** Excuse me, Mr. Chair, I have a point of order. I don't understand how Mr. Bélanger, who has the floor, can call a point of order on himself. He's either calling a motion or he's not, but he can't call a point of order to interject on himself.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** I don't have the floor. Mr. Julian has the floor.

**The Chair:** The motion by Mr. Bélanger is on the floor. As long as there is debate on this motion, the floor will remain open, and we will debate it until the committee decides they no longer want to debate it and vote on the motion. There is no procedural interference that I can come forward with to prevent that from happening. The floor is open. If there is no more debate, I'll call the question.

Go ahead, Mr. Jean.

**Mr. Brian Jean:** I have a question to clarify, Mr. Chair.

Once this particular motion is dealt with by way of a vote, either yea or nay, do we then get on to the point of again debating Mr. Volpe's motion?

**The Chair:** We refer back to Mr. Volpe's amendment.

**Mr. Brian Jean:** We have three kicks at it.

**The Chair:** Seeing no further debate—

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** To vote to defer it—you're not seeking if there's unanimous consent, are you?

**The Chair:** I can ask.

Is there unanimous consent to hear the witnesses and defer the debate?

Let me be clear. I'm asking if there's unanimous consent to defer debate to hear the witnesses for one hour, and then we will come back to this debate until the debate is finalized or until there's a motion that's acceptable unanimously to adjourn.

Mr. Volpe has a comment.

**Hon. Joseph Volpe:** You know that we're going to be called to votes in 40 minutes. So unless everybody around the table is prepared to skip those votes, this is not a tenable position.

I'm cognizant of the fact that the people from Canadian Pacific—I think they still have the word “Canadian” in their system—have come here and have been patient, but they've now had their time reduced by at least ten minutes and are likely to get it reduced even more.

Short of being inhospitable, I guess I'm going to say that we either deal with this—This is the second time I've brought this motion forward. I want my motion dealt with, so I want to move in the direction that gets to it.

We've dealt with this motion to defer and to reverse. We did that with a vote at the beginning of the meeting. I don't want to be a party to decisions that ask for the same vote in different ways. So we're already dealing with this. We're dealing with Mr. Bélanger's motion to defer to whenever. So I'm going to go back to what I said earlier: deal with that motion and find a way to have us vote on it, because it's going to come to a vote. Then I'd like to deal with my motion.

● (1640)

**The Chair:** Well, I would advise the committee again that if there's no further debate, we will call the vote on Mr. Bélanger's motion. The current rule that exists is that as long as that motion is open and on the floor, it supersedes the bell call for the vote in the House and we stay here until such time as it is determined, unless we have unanimous consent of the committee to adjourn debate.

**Hon. Joseph Volpe:** Well, I can't give it to you.

**The Chair:** And I can't either.

Go ahead, Mr. Julian.

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Mr. Chair, I believe that you did get unanimous consent to move to our witnesses.

**The Chair:** I was asking the question, and Mr. Volpe brought in a point of order. I will ask the question again.

Is there unanimous consent to defer? Seeing none, the floor is open. Is there further debate?

Mr. Julian.

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Mr. Chair, this is absolutely absurd, because the Conservatives aren't aware of the implications of what they're putting forward. They are not aware of the implications of the motion they're putting forward, and they compound it now by switching off our witnesses—

**The Chair:** Mr. Julian, I have to advise you that we are still debating Mr. Bélanger's motion to defer.

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Yes, and, Mr. Chair, the motion of deferral is the only way out of this. We defer the discussion. If Mr. Fast is really concerned about the motion, really concerned about having due appreciation, he can put forward the witnesses. And I'm sure that at all four corners of this table you have support to get those witnesses here so we can ask them the appropriate questions about what the impact is on rural service delivery and what the impact is of the court judgment yesterday.

So all the Conservatives have to do, if they want to have this motion discussed responsibly, is put forward the witness list. We've been waiting for six weeks, and they refuse to do that. All they have to do is do their due diligence, put forward the witness list so we can do the appropriate due diligence, the appropriate homework, and then have consideration of the motion. But they're putting the cart before the horse. They want the motion to go through, regardless of what the implications are.

The facts, as established by the Ontario Court of Appeal, are pretty compelling. The facts as established state that Canada Post is a crown corporation—

**The Chair:** Mr. Fast, on a point of order.

**Mr. Ed Fast:** Is Mr. Julian debating his own point of order? I believe he said point of order. Is he debating Mr. Bélanger's deferral motion, a dilatory motion? What is he speaking to, for clarification?

**Mr. Peter Julian:** I'm on the speakers list speaking to Mr. Bélanger's motion.

**The Chair:** Mr. Julian is on the floor speaking to Mr. Bélanger's motion to defer. And I would just ask all committee members to be as on target as possible with the issue we're discussing.

**Mr. Peter Julian:** The Ontario Court of Appeal decision states that:

Canada Post is a Crown corporation established to provide universal mail service in Canada—a lightly populated, but geographically vast country. CP is required to provide mail service to all points in Canada, however remote, at reasonable cost, but in a financially viable way. CP charges a uniform rate for its various classes of service. This uniform rate has been a tradition of the Canadian postal administration since it began and remains a core component of CP's system.

**The Chair:** Mr. Jean, on a point of order.

**Mr. Brian Jean:** We are discussing the deferral motion, and I think I would just ask that you refer to it in your comments to make it relevant.

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The relevancy is this decision from yesterday. Obviously it provides an additional reason for this committee to defer this discussion, because we have implications of the court decision and implications of messing with the system without having done our due diligence and trying to ram through a motion if this deferral motion is defeated.

• (1645)

**The Chair:** Mr. Jean, on a point of order.

**Mr. Brian Jean:** On the same point of order, Mr. Chair, I would suggest that the relevance would be in relation to the amendment, not the deferral. If he wants to argue about the deferral, let's get on with the vote Mr. Bélanger has called and deal with the relevance under the relevance section it should be dealt with, which is not this.

**The Chair:** Again, I will just advise all committee members that we are discussing the motion to defer.

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Yes. Mr. Chair, as Mr. Jean well knows, I'm speaking very directly to that.

**The Chair:** Again, I will advise all to speak on the motion of deferral, not on the amendment to the motion or the main motion. We are talking about the deferral of the current amendment.

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

So we need to defer this discussion because of the implications. I will read three paragraphs. I'm almost finished one, and if Mr. Jean stops interrupting me I'll be able to finish those three paragraphs and complete my point.

“This uniform rate has been a tradition of the Canadian postal administration since it began, and remains a core component of Canada Post”—

**The Chair:** Mr. Jean, on a point of order.

**Mr. Brian Jean:** Marleau and Montpetit are very clear that the chair has discretion in relation to relevance, and this is not relevant to a deferral motion. It is relevant, and I would agree with you it would be relevant, to the issue of the amendments themselves.

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** I am going to ask Mr. Julian to please speak directly to the deferral motion. Whether it's a point of order or not, I do think that you have to speak directly to the deferral motion, not to the amendment or the original motion.

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Mr. Chair, I am speaking very directly to the deferral motion. What I am doing is indicating what the possible consequences would be of taking action without doing due diligence. Since there are consequences to taking action on rural service delivery, for example, as the Ontario Court of Appeal has pointed out, by taking action that is not responsible, not providing for due diligence, not having the witnesses before us who we have requested, not providing for a deferral means that we are taking a hasty decision that has potentially perverse consequences.

I will continue to read this. If Mr. Jean would prefer to hear my voice rather than the court documents, that is his choice, but please allow me to read the two other paragraphs.

**Mr. Ed Fast:** Point of order, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** Mr. Fast, on a point of order.

**Mr. Ed Fast:** Just to expedite the process here, perhaps we could release the witnesses. It's clear Mr. Julian is intent on filibustering my motion and the amendment that Mr. Volpe has made. So since he's so intent on filibustering, why don't we just let the witnesses go? I'd like to hear the witnesses for a full hour when we have a fulsome opportunity to ask questions of them. And given the fact that this fairly straightforward motion, which will protect thousands of jobs, appears to have run into some obstacles on Mr. Julian's part and he's intent on filibustering, let's just extend a courtesy to the witnesses and let them go. We'll bring them back another day.

**Mr. Brian Jean:** On the same point of order, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** Mr. Jean.

**Mr. Brian Jean:** I would just like to inform the committee that the government side would be prepared to reconvene at a time that would be convenient for these gentlemen to hear their testimony. I think that would be fair in the circumstances.

**The Chair:** Mr. Laframboise, on the same point of order.

[Translation]

**Mr. Mario Laframboise:** Regarding the same point of order, I just want the witnesses to know that we have scheduled them for the first hour. The Conservatives were the ones who decided to table a motion to delay hearing the witnesses. I think that it would be fair to dismiss the witnesses and invite them to come back at another meeting, if only to show them due respect.

[English]

**The Chair:** Mr. Bell.

**Mr. Don Bell:** I asked my staff just to speak with the witnesses to find out if they would be available, for example, next week, and I understand they're not. We need to get on with this rail safety before we end up closing for the summer and to be in a position to report. So I'm prepared to have an extra meeting if that's necessary at a time convenient to them. It could be next Thursday, for example; it could be next Tuesday. I don't know what our schedule is, but perhaps the chair could organize something if the committee is agreeable to that. If they're not available Wednesday, is there another day?

Mr. Chairman, just to give notice, on Monday I'm going to be in Vancouver as an observer at the rail panel hearing that's taking place in Vancouver. So other than Monday, I would be available.

●(1650)

**The Chair:** Well, in the fact that we had originally talked about an hour to interview our guests today, I would regretfully say that we're not going to get that hour today.

Through my office and through the clerk, we will accommodate your schedule, if possible, to attend. On behalf of the committee, I apologize for bringing you here and being unable to hear your testimony on a very important issue to Canadians.

So I do regret that, but we will work with your schedule for the next meeting. It will be a request of the committee to ask you to tell us when you can attend, and I do apologize.

**Mr. Brock Winter:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** Mr. Julian.

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

It's very, very unfortunate that the Conservatives have basically shut down this hearing of the Canadian Pacific. We would like to have asked our guests questions.

They made the choice to try to ram through what they knew was a divisive motion. They made the choice to try to push something through when the due diligence had not been done, despite opposition requests to have simply put into place a couple of—

**Mr. Ed Fast:** On a point of order, Mr. Chair, again Mr. Julian is not relevant here. The motion on the floor is a deferral motion. Would he please restrict his remarks to that issue?

**The Chair:** I would ask you, Mr. Julian, to stay on the deferral motion.

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Mr. Chair, I'm going to continue reading the two other paragraphs that I have the intention of reading, because they are very clearly linked to the whole issue of deferral—very clearly.

The reality is, when you have a court decision from yesterday that speaks specifically to rural mail delivery, we have to take into consideration what the implications are of ramming through a motion without due diligence and without calling the appropriate witnesses back.

Here are the paragraphs the Conservatives are taking such objection to, and they're taking objection to it because it points to the fact that they haven't done their due diligence:

However, many Canadian communities cannot be served economically. Hence, Canada Post needs to engage in the lucrative letter mail business and Parliament has granted it an exclusive privilege respecting the collection, transmission and delivery of letters. As the respondent notes, the exclusive privilege granted to Canada Post enables it to provide ordinary mail service throughout the country at the uniform rate despite its many geographical challenges. This is because the relatively low cost of providing services to the 80% of the population that lives largely in dense urban centres within one hundred and fifty kilometres of the southern border with the United States offsets the relatively high cost of providing such services to the remaining 20% of the population that lives throughout the more remote parts of Canada.

Spring is ultimately owned by the postal administrations of the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, and Singapore. It carries on the business of collecting, transmitting and delivering international mail, including letters, from senders in Canada to overseas locations.

**Mr. Ed Fast:** On a point of order, Mr. Chair, he is not relevant. He is continuing on the same type of speech-making that he's been doing for the last ten minutes, and it's inappropriate, because he's wasting this committee's time.

Really, Mr. Julian, I implore you to respect this committee. Don't abuse the privileges you have as a member of Parliament to have input into something as important as remailers. To simply delay and delay and delay and to actually disregard the chairman's rulings that you need to restrict your comments to the point at question, which is a deferral motion, really shows disrespect to the whole committee. So please stay on point.

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

Although it is not a point of order, and I believe I have been giving the member as much latitude as I possibly can, I do sense that to some degree you're discussing the motion, not the motion to defer—

**Mr. Peter Julian:** No, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** —so I would ask you to just keep your comments within the parameters of the motion to defer.

**Mr. Peter Julian:** I have three sentences left, Mr. Chair. It is, as you know, very relevant and pertinent. Over the last 15 minutes, we've spent 10 minutes listening to the Conservatives with their points of order, wasting committee time. To read three paragraphs takes about four minutes, Mr. Chair, and that is the amount of time that I needed.

So on the deferral motion, again, to avoid hasty, irresponsible action, we look to the court decision yesterday, which states:

Spring's operations focus on the largest corporate and institutional mailers in Canada, who reside in the more densely populated and easily serviceable areas of the country. Spring does not serve the more remote areas of Canada where the costs are high in relation to the revenue generated. Unlike Canada Post, Spring is not required to bear the high cost of providing services to the more remote regions of Canada.

Mr. Chair, there it is, very clearly, in the court judgment: the relationship between universal provision for postal service and rural postal delivery.

So rather than making a hasty decision, despite the Conservatives stonewalling and refusing to hear some of the important aspects of information that has come forth since this motion was tabled, it is important for this committee to defer this discussion, get the witnesses in that Monsieur Laframboise, Mr. Bélanger, and I have been calling for, get their due diligence done, do their homework, and then we can proceed to a discussion on the motion that is honest and where we've done our due diligence.

• (1655)

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

Monsieur Bélanger.

[*Translation*]

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I think that we must remember some important facts. I have been here for quite a few years, and I have always tried to be respectful toward Parliament, toward my colleagues and toward the procedures that we have refined over the decades as we resolved various conflicts and confrontations. All that was done to enable parliamentarians here today to work in conditions of mutual respect. You said that Mr. Julian's comments must be clearly relevant to the subject at hand. Mr. Chairman, I have a few points to make about this important issue.

There were good reasons, at the outset, for providing the option of deferring a debate or a motion. The procedure was then refined over the years. Someone might have tried to "pull a fast one", or someone might have tried to have used his majority position, or someone might have tried to have a motion adopted more or less blindly, without sufficient debate or proper information. Mr. Chairman, at such times, members must have recourse to procedures that were

traditionally handed down to us, and that is what is happening here today. I do not really know why my colleagues opposite are laughing—perhaps there was an error in translation—but, Mr. Chairman they can laugh as much as they want.

We are seized with a motion that the government is trying to ram through. This motion could have very important consequences for the Canadian public. There seems to be some inability, or even worse, some unwillingness to ask for the information that we could use before making a decision.

This is the reason why motions like the one I tabled two weeks ago and that I am tabling again today have an important role in parliamentary debate.

One should not try to fool one's colleagues. Once again, there is an attempt to table a motion without giving us the information that we need in order to debate it. Those who believe, as I do, that we might be mistaken in adopting such a motion have the right to get information, to hear witnesses and to ask our researchers to provide the historical background of the issues at hand.

Let me emphasize that I have only dealt with procedure. I have not even mentioned the substantive issue. I think that everyone understands what I am driving at. As responsible parliamentarians, I think that it is our duty to hear witnesses. If we don't take the time to do so, what are the remaining alternatives available to opposition members? We can only table a motion like the one we are tabling today and defer the debate until the minister has done what he promised to do or until we get the information that we need to make the decision. Mr. Chairman, that is not the case.

As long as I am under pressure to swallow a pill that I do not want and do not know, as long as I do not have all the information that I need to understand why certain measures should be taken, I will continue behaving in this way. I think that I am behaving just as responsibly as are my colleagues opposite who want to adopt a motion immediately without any opportunity to hear witnesses from Canada Post, who are the experts in this field, and without understanding why they did not put up more a fierce opposition to remailers over so many years. I want to have answers. What would be the impact of such measures on first class mail? This is what is really at stake. If we really want to serve the Canadian public—

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Mr. Storseth, on a point of order.

**Mr. Brian Storseth:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'm not sure I believe that I'm actually doing this and sticking up for Mr. Volpe here.

I think there must be something wrong with my translation, Mr. Chair, because I continuously hear Mr. Bélanger refer to the government doing this and our side doing this.

We are debating a motion put forward by the honourable opposition critic. I only want to clarify that and put it on the record, Mr. Chair.

•(1700)

**The Chair:** We're actually debating a motion put forward by Monsieur Bélanger. It's not a point of order.

Mr. Bélanger.

[*Translation*]

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** As long as people continue to interrupt us, there is no reason for us to stop.

Mr. Chairman, I hope everyone recognizes what triggered this debate in the first place. It was the fact that the government party—for some kind of reason we will explore to understand why they did it—proposed dealing with Mr. Fast's motion immediately, despite the fact that witnesses were present.

Why did they do so? For several reasons perhaps. Was it to pressure opposition members into adopting it? I must admit that it is not very dignified to engage in this type of behaviour before the people we asked to appear today. However, when the government attempts to impose this type of situation on us, we must stand our ground, even though we remain in our seats to do so. This is not the way the Canadian Parliament should function. We have rights, we have the right to be heard and we especially have the right to make informed decisions.

What explains the fascination and the urgency for the government to get a blank cheque when the minister promised over a year ago to address the issue of remailing—those were his words—in the House? He has not done so. I believe that my colleague Mr. Laframboise asked a similar question of the minister in the fall—I don't have the specific date, but I could find out—and he received a similar answer. At the time, the minister did not talk about a couple of days; but he did say "soon". It seems to me that he said it would be before the end of the year.

Because of the government's inaction, we are now faced with the following situation: our courts have stated very clearly that Canada Post's exclusive privilege had to be protected because it had the universal obligation to deliver first class mail. But for one reason or another, the minister still has not had the time to tell us about his plans, or he has not wanted to do so. Then the government members on the committee propose a motion, as did the original one presented by Mr. Fast, to amend the act in a way which would restrict, remove or amputate Canada Post's privilege, without the committee first hearing from witnesses or receiving additional information.

I must admit, Mr. Chairman, that I can neither understand nor accept this. We are accountable to our citizens. I've discussed the matter with my colleagues, and I might even discuss it with the members opposite who represent rural ridings. In light of the pressure to deal with this motion immediately, I would respond that any decision should perhaps be postponed. We will certainly not make a decision without first finding out what the minister has worked on. He said that he has worked on the issue of exclusive privilege and people who work for remailers for over a year now.

This is a very legitimate issue, Mr. Chairman, I don't deny it. However, as I said a few moments ago, there are other solutions rather than restricting, amputating or destroying the exclusive privilege of the Canada Post Corporation. As my colleague suggested, we could try to convince Canada Post to talk with the

remailers to get them to work together, as was done for rural mail delivery, urban mail delivery and in other areas as well.

If the government presents a motion to rescind the exclusive privilege without discussing the consequences such as a decision would have, I cannot support it. I am therefore only doing what a responsible member of Parliament must do, that is, using the tools available to us and which were developed over decades and centuries. We can go back to the Magna Carta, if you wish. That is basically the kind of situation we are dealing with.

I could go on indefinitely, Mr. Chairman. In fact, I would like to point out that the record should show that I was willing to hear witnesses immediately, but the government members refused. That should not be forgotten.

•(1705)

When the time comes for the public to judge this meeting—and I expect that it will—and when both sides are accused of having violated democratic principles, let us not forget that the Conservative members of the committee were the ones who requested a change in the previously-scheduled agenda. They were also the ones who refused to give unanimous consent for hearing the witnesses. Considering their refusal, I hope that my colleagues opposite will feel somewhat embarrassed about making outrageous allegations. As a matter of fact, I would be happy to see them do so because I think that this is a substantive issue that deserves public debate.

Why should they insist on amputating or abolishing an exclusive privilege currently enjoyed by Canada Post for a very specific reason? This universal commitment should not be subject to any debate. Why should we not call witnesses from rural Canada who are probably the ones that are most threatened by this? This is a very legitimate question. I hope that when they begin to attack, as I expect them to, my colleagues will take the time to explain to the Canadian public why they want, at any price, to abolish this privilege and why they do not think that it is important for mail distribution in rural or isolated regions to continue as before.

Mr. Chairman, I think that you will agree with me that the substantive debate must be held before deciding on an issue that could have a very substantial impact on many citizens that each one of us is expected to represent.

I have said what I had to say, and let me conclude with these words, without any shame or any bitterness. I think that I know what would happen if we voted today. Beyond doubt, members will have to vote without having the facts that they need to make an informed decision.

**The Chair:** Mr. Laframboise.

**Mr. Mario Laframboise:** Mr. Chairman, I'll try and explain to you why I am going to support Mr. Bélanger's motion.

Perhaps it's even more serious. The minister may have a reason for not tabling his report or his comments. Perhaps the act needs to be amended. Perhaps he thought he could do what he is doing by way of regulation. He didn't need to come and see us and ask for a motion like Mr. Fast's.



If that is the case, imagine the time the remailers wasted believing the government. If a legislative amendment is needed and the minister realized this and we are not aware of it because he did not submit his report, we will have to start all over again. When you're dealing with legislation, you have to hear from witnesses.

I don't know what the minister was thinking and if he came to the conclusion that a legislative amendment was necessary following the Appeal Court's decision. Regardless, I have trouble with the fact that we have to start the work all over again and that we've wasted over a year because people did not want to hear from witnesses. I'm less and less inclined to support the government, especially in delaying the real discussions, because in any event, we'll have to start them from scratch.

Mr. Bélanger's motion today is extremely important. We should wait until we get the minister's report. He has probably done his analysis. He should table this before the committee as quickly as possible. And if an amendment to the act is required, then he needs to introduce a bill. Sometimes ministers introduce draft bills for discussion purposes. If he wants there to be a discussion of this nature, then he should table a draft bill and we'll discuss it.

If that is the solution or the recommendation that he was ready to make but does not want to make because he feels trapped because he should have made it directly to the remailers— I understand the remailers. They are in a tough spot. They have jobs, and the recent decision went against them. If the ultimate solution is to amend the act, Mr. Fast's recommendation won't achieve anything. The act needs to be amended, a bill needs to be introduced, and it needs to be debated.

Legislation cannot be enacted without hearing from Canada Post's remailers. That is unthinkable. If that is the direction that the government wants to take, then they should tell us. It's quite unrealistic to think that Canada Post's exclusive privilege, which is statutory, would be bypassed and that every party would agree to have the bill fast-tracked. Just by listening to us, you can tell that we won't be giving the go-ahead to any fast track.

I'd like my colleagues to think carefully about this. Mr. Bélanger's motion is quite useful. The Conservatives should go back and see the minister and tell him that Mr. Bélanger may have been right. His report must surely be ready. He promised we'd have it, and there were speeches made about it. The parliamentary secretary knows what I'm referring to. The minister must have a reason for not submitting the report. Perhaps the findings aren't palpable in the sense that the act requires amendment. If that's the case then he should introduce draft legislation or table a report.

We're prepared to help him. I'm the one who moved the initial motion to have them appear. I'm keen to discuss this on the proviso that I have enough time to ask all the questions that need to be asked, which is something you didn't give me the opportunity to do. That's why I keep coming back to my original point. I asked you for some time. You called on me to follow the rules set by the committee. So that is what I did, and that is why I still have questions to ask before such an important change is made, because it may have an impact on rural mail. I'm a member for a rural riding. There are many rural ridings across Quebec. We want to ensure that any government

decision doesn't jeopardize rural mail services. There are questions that need to be asked, and we'll see what happens after that.

If, in the recommendation or the document that the minister was supposed to produce, the only solution is to amend the act, imagine the time we wasted trying to move a motion to influence the government. All the government will do is table another bill. And if that happens, we won't have had time to hear from witnesses. We'll have to call all these witnesses back, and we'll have wasted time.

I hope the Conservatives are aware of this. I don't want to attribute blame, but you wasted the Canadian Pacific witnesses' time today. I hope that you didn't waste too much of the remailers' time. If the solution is to amend the act, we should wait for the minister's recommendations. And that's why I'm going to support Mr. Bélanger's motion.

• (1710)

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Mr. Julian.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Mr. Chairman, I don't for the life of me understand why the Conservatives are refusing Mr. Bélanger's motion to have the discussion deferred. It's as if they were afraid to hear from the witnesses and to know what the impact will be on the rural regions. We saw how the Conservatives tried to prevent three paragraphs of the Ontario Appeals Court decision from being read. It took me 15 minutes to read those three paragraphs because every 60 seconds the Conservatives tried to stop me from reading a decision which greatly affects Mr. Bélanger's motion. The motion is to postpone discussion on a motion and an amendment which will, in all likelihood, have an impact on the postal services in rural areas.

I don't understand the Conservatives' reaction. They refuse to take responsibility, to do their duty, and to understand the ramifications of not deferring the discussions. If the discussions were to be pushed back, there would be no major impact and the committee members representing the Conservative Party would at least have the opportunity to read the decision and understand the impact it will have on the rural services.

Postponing the discussion is a sensible and responsible option. It's our duty. Any rushed decision would be irresponsible given the Court of Appeal's ruling and would have an impact on the rural regions.

There are Conservative members of Parliament who represent rural regions in northern Alberta and they don't seem to be sensitive to what may occur if a decision was to be made in haste. They refuse to support Mr. Bélanger's motion. His motion is sensible and will help the representatives of rural regions to do their duty. They refuse to shoulder their own responsibilities, and to review a court decision affecting the rural regions. They refuse to hear from witnesses and to have a discussion on the impact on the rural regions. That's what I don't understand, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Bélanger and Mr. Laframboise both said that they don't understand why the Conservatives are in such a rush to make a decision which may have an unforeseen impact on their own ridings. That's what I find surprising. I think it's irresponsible. Mr. Bélanger's motion is appropriate. He wants deliberations delayed until we get the minister's report, a report, I might add, we've been waiting on for almost six months.

It doesn't take six months to write a report on these issues. The minister promised we would have the report late last year. And still we don't have it. The Conservatives tell themselves that they've heard the court's decision and that this is enough to justify ignoring the impact this may have on our own ridings. They just want the motion to be passed, regardless of the consequences. It's irresponsible.

Adopting Mr. Bélanger's motion would be a responsible thing to do as it would mean postponing the discussions. I'm sure Mr. Laframboise and Mr. Carrier will also support any motion to summon the witnesses we've been waiting to hear from for a number of weeks. Had this suggestion been made, we would have heard from witnesses from Canadian Pacific and had a discussion on rail network security. All they had to do was to agree to hear from witnesses and listen to them talk about the repercussions before debating this other motion.

Mr. Bélanger is sensible. He wants the deliberations to be put off until we've got the minister's response. If I've understood correctly, the Conservatives are telling us that the minister will never do his duty. That's the only thing we can take away from their rushed and irresponsible decision. The committee has the power to decide to hear from witnesses, that is its prerogative.

● (1715)

The Conservatives have never made an attempt to deal with the issue of witnesses appearing. I don't understand why they haven't. Nor do I understand why they're afraid of having the three paragraphs of the decision read out as it refers specifically to service in the rural areas. They were afraid Canadians would find out about the Appeals Court's decision. Why is that? That's difficult to explain. I'd like the Conservatives to explain themselves. Why are they so afraid of having these three paragraphs read into the record from today's meeting?

I don't understand why the Conservatives are in such a rush and why they fail to see the common sense behind Mr. Bélanger's motion. Every question Mr. Bélanger, Mr. Laframboise, and Mr. Carrier asked is valid. We want to be able to discuss this issue with witnesses who understand the matter and know about the impact these decisions may have. It's normal as parliamentarians to meet this responsibility. The court's decision affects the Conservative representatives' rural regions and yet they don't want to hear of it. They don't even want the decision to be read to the committee. I just don't get it.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Mr. Bell.

**Mr. Don Bell:** I've been listening to the debate, and it doesn't seem to have changed much.

My concern is that if we—I think that we should get the minister's report—

**Mr. Brian Jean:** On a point of order, Mr. Chair, there is no report. We've had referrals from the other side: report, report. There is no referral of a report. The issue is going to be looked at. There's nothing about a report. It's about getting back to the House. There are many different ways to get back to the House. One is a report. There is no reference to a report.

**The Chair:** It is not a point of order, but it's—

**Mr. Don Bell:** My point is, whether it's a report or whether it's comment, or whatever, that followed suit from the comments that were apparently made by the minister, my concern in delaying it is if we don't get the commitment, nothing is going to happen in the meantime. It's like seeking to have a decision considered for somebody who's sitting on death row. If you don't actually hold off the action, the person will be executed while you're going through the process. That's my concern.

I've read the e-mail that came from somebody in CUPW to provide information, Katherine Steinhoff, which I presume everybody has. It says:

Please also note that Spring, which is a very large business—can appeal this decision. Therefore, no one is really at risk in the near future. There is time to investigate this issue.

Rather than having Spring go through another appeal they've obviously lost here, my preference would be to have Canada Post know the minister's position that no action be taken while there is an opportunity for a third discussion. If that's not going to happen, then I'm against the delay. But if we can get that, then I would like to see the minister tell us what his thoughts are on this. If there is a position that's coming out of this from the previous discussion, I think we should know that and resolve this issue.

● (1720)

**The Chair:** Mr. Jean, and Mr. Bélanger after.

**Mr. Brian Jean:** I have five points that I want to put on the record, Mr. Chair.

The first thing we're asking is that—The only thing the motion makes reference to, and is supported by some of the Liberal members and by the government, is that we keep things as they are and as they have been for the last 28 years.

The second point is that the time wasted here is by other members. I would invite all Canadians to read the record and see which members are wasting time and what they're saying, because there is, quite frankly, no logic, no reference, and no relevance to the issue itself.

The third point is that there is no report. As I have mentioned, the minister did not say he was going to provide a report to the House. He said he was going to study the issue.

The fourth issue is that we keep hearing rule, rule, rule. With respect to Mr. Laframboise, who does represent a rural riding, I am not referring to him in this comment. I'm referring to Mr. Julian, who does not have anything to do with a rural riding as far as I'm aware; he certainly does not represent any rural members such as three of the members on this side of the House do. We understand the issue with Canada Post.

Fifth, this House, these members, make the laws. The judge's job is to interpret those laws. That's why we're discussing changing the law, at least on an interim basis, so that these Canadians are not put out of work in places such as Toronto, Vancouver, and people who work in unions in different places. We want to keep the status quo, Mr. Chair. That's all we want to do. We want to protect the situation as it is, so that moms and dads and Canadian families are not put out on the street. That is what this government wants to do at this time, keep the situation as it is, in control.

**The Chair:** Monsieur Bélanger.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I hope that after what we've just heard from Mr. Jean, any further questioning of relevance will be immediately discarded. Because some of these things are about as relevant as he was claiming a moment ago that others were not.

For instance, on the matter of no report, I've quoted the minister's words often enough, and I'll do so again. The last sentence there says, "but we"—as in the royal we for the government—"will be advising the House as to what we want to do in the coming days". This was in reference to the remailing matter.

That is a commitment on behalf of the government to come back to the House, in whichever way—in a speech, in a report, in an announcement—as to what it intends to do, in the coming days, and that was a year ago. So when we hear that there is no report, that may be accurate, but there is a commitment to advise the House.

Then what happened is that we got a motion coming from a government member to amend the law—to cut, change, modify, amputate the privilege—without having had the benefit of whatever it is the government has been doing in that past year.

Furthermore, on Monday, at this very committee, we found out that the minister and the government are thinking of a review of Canada Post, and not just on the remailers, but I believe—and I'd have to verify the committee Hansard—the minister may have mentioned that the matter of remailers might be included in that review. I'd have to verify if my recollection is accurate in terms of what the minister actually specified; he listed two or three things that he would do. But the fact that the minister and the government are considering a review would delay this even longer if he's planning to use the review, with whatever format it might take, before dealing with the remailers matter.

So we've had a situation here for a year in which the government, the minister, having given a commitment to come back to the House advising the House as to what we want to do in the coming days—for a year now—and having reconfirmed that in the fall through another question in the House—And we still don't have that. And now, all of a sudden, we may be facing a review of Canada Post, which may take—We'll all agree, I would hope, that these things take months, if not years. But certainly it's not done in a matter of days or weeks, especially since the review, if it's going to happen, has not even been triggered yet.

In the meantime, my colleagues—and rightfully so—are concerned about what might happen to remailers if Canada Post insists on having its privilege respected, as the courts have ruled in the past months.

Can the government act? Yes, the government can act. Does the government need the permission or even the prompting of a committee? Hopefully it shouldn't. And it can. The minister has every ability in the law to take action to talk to Canada Post, but not by seeking this committee's endorsement for amendments to the law.

That's where this whole thing started, because the initial motion that is on the floor is Mr. Fast's motion. So let's keep that in mind when we're talking about what we're addressing here.

As a matter of fact, I might ask, as a bit of a procedural matter here, would it not have been different, Mr. Chairman, if the motion introduced by my colleague Mr. Volpe had been ruled as a substitute motion instead of an amendment? Because, in effect, that's really what it is. I don't know if we—

● (1725)

**Mr. Ed Fast:** On a point of order, Mr. Chair, we're talking about something that's already a moot point. We've moved on. It's totally irrelevant to our discussion here.

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

**Mr. Ed Fast:** Mr. Chair, if I could just finish that thought, Mr. Bélanger had referred to his concern that somehow the minister wasn't acting. In fact, those who know the minister know he's someone who enjoys consulting before making important decisions. He has indicated to us, as members of the government, that he wants to know the views of this committee. That is the process we're going through right now at this committee.

Mr. Chair, for Mr. Bélanger's clarification, this is all about consulting with the very members that Mr. Bélanger seems to be criticizing.

**The Chair:** Mr. Fast, thank you. It's not a point of order. It is a point of debate—

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** I like these points of order.

**The Chair:**—and I will advise Monsieur Bélanger that it's not the position of the chair to comment on what-ifs.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** That's fair enough, Mr. Chairman.

I enjoy these points of order, because they feed the comments we can make. So keep making them, gentlemen.

If the minister truly enjoys consulting, I don't recall him telling us in any format, on this side of the House, that was his wish. He may have told his own caucus members, and that's fine. But if I were asked I would certainly say I agree, but let's not just consult members of Parliament; let's consult the people who actually deliver the mail, the remailers, and the people who receive the mail. That is the extent of what Mr. Fast's motion asks us to do. We go to the very heart of Canada Post—the universal obligation—to bind this country together. Without having done any consultation, which the minister apparently wishes, would we agree to that? I see some inherent contradictions there.

I too enjoy consulting, but real consultation, not just consultations. I will give an example of which Mr. Fast is very much aware. In another committee where we had to deal with another matter, I supported the government when they insisted we hear witnesses from all sides of the issue.

**Mr. Ed Fast:** Point of order, Mr. Chair. Is this relevant to the motion to defer? We have a dilatory motion on the table and we're wandering way off.

**The Chair:** That is not a point of order, and again I'll ask all committee members to try to stay relevant to the deferral motion.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** It is very relevant, Mr. Chairman. A procedural motion to defer until such time can be dilatory, as you've said. It can also be a very necessary procedural amendment, because we have not had consultations and the committee is being asked to make a decision of significant importance to amend an act that's been standing now for a long time. This matter of universal privilege—

• (1730)

**The Chair:** If you'll allow me to interrupt—

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** By all means—you're the chair.

**The Chair:** We hear the bells ringing. We had a ruling today, the clerk has advised me, that we are able to suspend this committee to vote. I'm not sure what group makes that decision. Oh, it's the House of Commons—a fine group, I'm told. I suggest we suspend and reconvene 15 minutes after the last vote.

Mr. Volpe.

**Hon. Joseph Volpe:** It's not a suggestion. If you suspend we do come back.

**The Chair:** Absolutely.

**Hon. Joseph Volpe:** A quorum is how many people?

**The Chair:** It's 50% plus one.

**Hon. Joseph Volpe:** So it's seven.

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Mr. Chair, I move an adjournment.

(Motion negatived)

**The Chair:** We will reconvene 15 minutes after the final vote. It's not debatable.

• \_\_\_\_\_ (Pause) \_\_\_\_\_

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• (1840)

**The Chair:** Welcome back. Thanks to everyone for your timely return.

We're continuing to debate the motion put forward by Monsieur Bélanger.

I'll defer to Mr. Volpe.

**Hon. Joseph Volpe:** During our brief recess some of us got together and discussed a possible direction for this committee—the other members on this side of the table, and perhaps on the other side as well. If a motion is required—I think one will be forthcoming—we should suspend the hearing until Monday, when we will dispose of the motions that are before the committee.

• (1845)

**The Chair:** Mr. Jean.

**Mr. Brian Jean:** My understanding was that we would be dealing with the motion by Mr. Bélanger today.

**The Chair:** Mr. Volpe.

**Hon. Joseph Volpe:** Mr. Bélanger's motion has been characterized by some as a dilatory motion. It might be a long evening discussing that motion before we get to the substantive motion.

I don't speak for any other member, but I think there is a willingness to suspend the meeting so we don't have to start all over again. That suspension will end on Monday when the meeting resumes. At that time the dilatory motion will be dealt with, as will a substantive motion. It won't happen right at that instant, but we won't be spending the next three months dealing with a dilatory motion. I think that was where we were headed. We want to deal with things.

**The Chair:** Mr. Volpe, you're suggesting we suspend today's meeting, resume on Monday at our regular scheduled meeting, and that the dilatory motion before us now, the amendment, and the motion be dealt with on Monday.

Monsieur Bélanger.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** We shouldn't have any illusions here. We can carry on tonight, and who knows how long it will go and what we'll achieve. I don't know. I'm not in the habit of doing that, and I'd rather try to be constructive.

My colleague suggested we suspend the meeting as it is until 3:30 on Monday. Those who have a keen interest in this—from all sides or not—could find out if there's a common ground. Give the goodwill around this table time to find a common ground, and if there's no common ground we'll continue. Or we can carry on tonight, but I have a funny feeling that tonight might be long and might not breed a lot of goodwill—it might eat up a lot of goodwill.

So I am hoping—and I'm quite prepared to move it—that we can suspend the sitting until 3:30 on Monday. In the interim, hopefully there will be enough discussion among some parties and some members of the same party that some common ground can be found to move ahead.

It's a leap of good faith. Perhaps some members are not prepared to make it, and I respect that. It involves essentially no commitment beyond the fact that—I'm quite prepared to proceed on Monday, but I'm hopeful that between now and then there can be enough noggins used and efforts expended to come up with some common ground that can be acceptable to all.

**The Chair:** Mr. Jean.

**Mr. Brian Jean:** In the spirit of cooperation, I would certainly move a motion.

**The Chair:** Are you moving a motion right now?

**Mr. Brian Jean:** I'm discussing the possibility of moving a motion.

**The Chair:** Okay, please continue.

**Mr. Brian Jean:** I would like to discuss the possibility of moving the following motion: that we move the dilatory motion, plus the other two substantive motions, to Monday for the first hour of debate; at the end of that hour, a vote will be called on all three motions—the dilatory motion, as well as the two substantive motions—and at that time the will of the committee will prevail.

If we're going to adjourn this matter and take up more committee business, I would suggest that we have some methodology for how to end this, or have some sort of exit plan and exit strategy.

My proposal, Mr. Chair, would be on that basis and a first step in moving towards that. If, in the meantime, we find some other wording—though I've not been approached with it—or any other part of the motion that would be acceptable to the other members, or we could find some other way to move forward, certainly I think it would be a reasonable compromise.

I think Mr. Bélanger is correct; I don't think anything's going to be gained by going on and on and on. But at the same time, from the government's perspective, there's a lot to be lost; that is, we will lose the agenda on Monday, we will lose the agenda on Wednesday, and we will continue to lose the agenda until this matter is dealt with.

I would suggest this would be a good and fair compromise.

• (1850)

**The Chair:** We have Monsieur Bélanger, Mr. Fast, and Mr. Julian.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** The only difficulty I can see if such a motion were moved, Mr. Chairman, is that we'd be locking ourselves into what's already there. Who knows, there may be enough creative capacity around the table and between various staff and so forth to come up with something that everyone would maybe agree with. If such a motion were approved, we would lock ourselves in. That's what I would hesitate to do.

Perhaps this wish is a loser here, but I think there's enough goodwill around—and I'm trying to display some—to give this an honest shot at coming up with something everyone can live with. And if not, then we can resume the debate from where it's left tonight, if there is a motion tonight to suspend until Monday at 3:30. I certainly would take the committee's will to do that, and I would not take it lightly. My interventions at that time will be significantly different from what they might be if we carry on today.

So I just want to give all of us a bit of time here. I hesitate to go on, because then we're getting back into debate.

**The Chair:** Just for the information of the committee, once we deal with the dilatory motion before us, we do have the ability to vote on the amendments and the motion. And if there is agreement among the committee members to bring forward another motion that would maybe address the compromise we're all looking for, or a subamendment could be offered to correct that—

I'll go to Mr. Fast.

**Mr. Ed Fast:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

First of all, I'm not as optimistic as my colleague over there that we're going to come to any compromise. The issue of the remailers, to me at least, is pretty black and white: either Canada Post asserts its exclusive privilege, or the remailers continue on with their business as they have before. That one's pretty clear. I don't see where you find compromise in that position.

Be that as it may, I am aware of a comment that Mr. Bell made, and I took note of the fact that he apparently will not be here on Monday. That concerns me. He made his views known very forcefully and has taken a pretty strong position in favour of the remailers and the employees they support. That would be my concern if we suspend or adjourn until Monday. I would love to hear from Mr. Bell before I make any decision on that.

**The Chair:** Mr. Julian.

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Mr. Chair, I think we had a compromise that was offered by Mr. Volpe and supported by Mr. Bélanger. The government can choose to refuse that. Of course, if the government chooses to refuse it, the opposition parties can choose to adjourn this meeting. So the Conservative members of this committee should be cognizant of the fact that they can't impose additional conditions on a compromise that has been offered and reached; they can't impose a shutdown of the witnesses. We already have witnesses scheduled for Monday, and they are scheduled for one hour. The first hour of committee business on Monday will have to be for the witnesses. So we wouldn't be displacing the witnesses.

Secondly, I don't believe it's appropriate at all to impose closure. As Mr. Bélanger stated, something may come out of these discussions that will be different from the motions before us now.

So I think the Conservatives have a choice to make: they can either accept adjournment, or they can accept the compromise. But they can't impose their point of view on the rest of the committee. What was offered was a suspension of this committee so that we can come back to this issue on Monday. That's a compromise, and certainly something that some of us have difficulty with, but which we are willing to accept in the interests of the committee's work as a whole. I don't believe Conservative members are in a position to try to impose their will.

• (1855)

**The Chair:** If I may, I want to advise the committee that Monday's agenda, although drawn up, has not been distributed and may be subject to change.

I have Monsieur Laframboise next.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Mario Laframboise:** Mr. Chairman, I'm going to support Mr. Volpe and Mr. Bélanger's motion. I'm trying to understand what the government is doing, but I'm having trouble.

You made a proposal which might give you the opportunity to rally—

**The Chair:** Mr. Laframboise, excuse me, but

[*English*]

I want to confirm with the committee that we're not really discussing a motion at this time. I think there was some back and forth to try to find a compromise motion, but please continue.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Mario Laframboise:** I accept the proposal that has been made. It's not a motion, but rather a proposal from Mr. Volpe and Mr. Bélanger, and I'm going to support it. What we're telling you and what we're telling the government is that over time things might end up changing in relation to this matter.

If I were you, I'd agree. I'm trying to understand why you don't want this file to move forward. With this dilatory motion, we could be discussing this until the end of the meeting, based on the standing orders. We could end up discussing it tonight, and keep discussing it until tomorrow morning.

I've already told you that I don't intend to filibuster, but if you want to play that game, we'll be here all night and all day tomorrow. I have nothing else I have to do. Right from the word go, I've been trying to understand you. Some things needs to be debated, so why don't you want to take the time to do this? If you push too hard, you're going to walk away with nothing.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Mr. Jean.

**Mr. Brian Jean:** First, I'd like to respond to Mr. Laframboise. I've found him to be very courteous and very much a gentleman in the past, but we're not playing the game; that side or a portion of that side is playing the game. We're not filibustering. We want the will of the committee to go forward. If we lose the will of the committee on the basis of the question, then we lose it and we would respect that. But the game is not being played by us. The game is being played by that side of the table. It's not being played by you, Mr. Laframboise. You've been very clear, and I respect that, and you're a man of honour. But it has been played by other people.

I find it distasteful, but this isn't a compromise position that has been put forward by the other side. The compromise is we're trying to filibuster—From our perspective, from the government side, that side is trying to filibuster, and now we're going to agree to a five-day filibuster with nothing given back on our side. The only thing we're giving is the ability for the filibuster to maintain itself for five days, with no ability to interfere in the meantime. It's the only thing we're giving up.

The reality is we're in the same position today that we're going to be in on Monday. That's not a compromise. That's not good faith, that's not trying to do anything. We're only asking for an exit strategy, whether it be that some members are not present on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, or whatever the case may be, or whether or not other members are convinced. We want a decision made. We want the opportunity to have this motion heard.

Mr. Fast, with respect, has waited for six different meetings. It's been three weeks. We're suggesting that we find a common ground while we can find an end to it and have the will of the committee come forward.

Whatever that time may be, let's find a compromise. There's no compromise position put forward by anybody on that side, because that side's trying to filibuster.

**The Chair:** Mr. Julian.

**Mr. Peter Julian:** I actually wasn't on the list.

**The Chair:** Okay. Mr. Bagnell.

**Hon. Larry Bagnell (Yukon, Lib.):** I move that we adjourn the meeting.

**The Chair:** We have a motion in front of us to adjourn the meeting. If the motion stands, we'll start on Monday with a clean slate, with no motions before the committee, and with the committee business at hand. We would need to have an introduction of new notices of motion to move forward on this issue.

Mr. Jean, it has to be a point of order.

● (1900)

**Mr. Brian Jean:** It is a point of order and a point of clarification, Mr. Chair, in relation to what you've decreed.

What happens to the existing motion? It has not been debated. The debate has not finished on it.

**The Chair:** A notice of motion defeats all the motions, amendments, and dilatory motions that are before us now. We have a motion to adjourn in front of us.

I will ask the committee. It's non-debatable.

Mr. Bell, on a point of clarification.

**Mr. Don Bell:** Thank you.

The difference between a motion to suspend, which was what we were discussing, and a motion to adjourn is that a motion to adjourn in effect ends the discussion of the day and the motions would have to be re-entered. If you have a motion to suspend, then those items that are on the table return.

If I can clarify for the chair and any of the members who want to know, I will not be here Monday, but I will be here Wednesday.

**The Chair:** Okay

**Mr. Brian Jean:** I have a point of order.

**The Chair:** The last one.

**Mr. Brian Jean:** I would like to offer a few minutes to talk to the other side. I'd like to take a three-minute recess.

**The Chair:** I would need consent from the entire committee for that.

**Mr. Brian Jean:** I have a compromise position I'd like to put forward—that is why.

**The Chair:** It's not a point of order, so I'll defer to Mr. Volpe.

**Hon. Joseph Volpe:** Mr. Chairman, the reason I made the suggestion I made, and I'm sorry Mr. Bagnell was not here at the earlier part of the meeting, is that it was precisely to avoid an adjournment motion, which puts us back to square one. A suspension would give us an opportunity to engage in some discussions to attempt to arrive at a position with which most people could feel comfortable. I will not support a motion that prevents me from coming back. That's all.

**The Chair:** I regret we can't have any more debate. I will call the question. A motion has been forwarded by Mr. Bagnell.

**Hon. Larry Bagnell:** We'll agree with the three minutes if that's unanimous.

**The Chair:** I need unanimous consent to recess for three minutes. Do I have the unanimous consent of the committee?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Chair:** We will recess for three minutes. When we come back we will make a decision on the motion and then move forward. We still have to deal with the motion.

- \_\_\_\_\_ (Pause) \_\_\_\_\_
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- (1930)

**The Chair:** The meeting is now back in order.

Mr. Bagnell.

**Hon. Larry Bagnell:** I'd like to ask unanimous consent to withdraw my motion to adjourn.

**The Chair:** Do we have unanimous consent?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Chair:** Yes, we have unanimous consent.

(Motion withdrawn)

**Hon. Joseph Volpe:** I want to resume the proposal I was suggesting earlier. After discussion with some members on this side of the table, following up on discussions that included Mr. Jean, I'm proposing that we entertain a motion to suspend debate until Wednesday while we work toward a motion that will satisfy the concerns of members on both sides of the House.

**The Chair:** Is that a motion?

**Hon. Joseph Volpe:** I put that as a motion, yes.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** Is that 3:30 Wednesday?

**The Chair:** For the record, Mr. Volpe has moved that we suspend tonight's meeting, adjourn the debate until Wednesday—

**An hon. member:** Suspend the meeting.

**The Chair:** He said suspend, so I'm going to use that terminology.

Mr. Volpe has moved that we suspend tonight's meeting, to be resumed Wednesday at 3:30 p.m.

Mr. Jean.

**Mr. Brian Jean:** I'd like to make an amendment to that motion, Mr. Chair. My amendment would be that all three motions—and I'm speaking specifically on the record of the dilatory motion as well as Mr. Volpe's amendment and the original motion—will be voted on prior to the meeting stopping, ceasing, or whatever word you want, before 5:30 on Wednesday.

**The Chair:** Before I recognize Mr. Volpe, there's been an amendment proposed by Mr. Jean that would suspend tonight's meeting until Wednesday at 3:30, and the amendment would continue: that all three motions will be voted on by 5:30.

Mr. Volpe.

**Hon. Joseph Volpe:** I appreciated the parliamentary secretary's intervention as a positive indication of the government's side wanting to bring this to a head and a productive conclusion. So what I'm going to say is to be taken in that spirit.

I would perhaps in another time probably support Mr. Jean's motion, but I think that motion presumes the outcome of what will happen during the suspended hearings. The intention of my motion is to bring a decision forward on a position that may emerge over the course of the next several days, and such position may make all of those motions redundant. To insist on voting on motions that may be

superseded by one that finds the kind of common ground—which in a very few short minutes, when Mr. Jean was with us, included all parties around the table—would seem to be unnecessary.

I am going to ask Mr. Jean to go back to my preamble, and that is that in the spirit of cooperation we're going to suspend discussions because we really do want to arrive at something that is acceptable to everybody around the table. We've made a commitment in private, all of us, including representatives from members on the other side of the table, to cooperate over the course of the next several days. That will probably, I think, essentially do away with the motions that are currently on the table, and that's why we want to suspend.

- (1935)

**The Chair:** Mr. Jean.

**Mr. Brian Jean:** Mr. Chair, I'm prepared to amend the motion that I put forward to any hour, to 6:30, 7:30, 8:30, 9:30, 10:30, 11:30, 12:30, or any time the next morning, as long as there is an end to it. And if it is not necessary, then why would they not agree?

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

**Mr. Peter Julian:** I'm speaking against the amendment, Mr. Chair.

I certainly wouldn't support the amendment for the simple reason that it's a blank cheque to the government. It lets them reimpose something that obviously meets with differing degrees of opposition around the table.

Mr. Volpe's motion is the compromise motion. It's to suspend the discussion. We would come back to that next Wednesday. It would give the opportunity to have the consultations that should have taken place before the Conservatives moved to rip up the agenda earlier tonight—this afternoon, actually; it was four hours ago. They ripped up the agenda and left us without having to complete our railway inquiry. That lack of consultation has put us in the position we're in now.

Mr. Volpe is offering a compromise that allows all parties to be consulted and perhaps to come up with something parties around the table could support, and the Conservatives continue to try to sabotage those discussions and that compromise. I just do not understand what the Conservatives don't get about cooperation and establishing consensus.

There seems to be a filibuster going on from the Conservatives. They're just going to keep throwing in amendments and motions and trying to screw around with what has consensus. The reality is, Mr. Chair, if they want to keep playing around with this, ultimately the meeting will be adjourned.

They can take the compromise or they can play around, but I would suggest to them that they withdraw that amendment, allow Mr. Volpe's motion to go forward unimpeded, and allow us to complete the meeting and get on to committee business that we would be discussing next Wednesday.

**The Chair:** Before I recognize Monsieur Laframboise, there is a motion on the floor and there is an amendment proposed. That is what we are debating.

Please go ahead, Monsieur Laframboise.

[Translation]

**Mr. Mario Laframboise:** Mr. Chairman, I've never been a game player and I don't intend to become one.

Mr. Jean has moved an interesting motion. However, I need time to discuss it. That's all I'm asking for. The government is the one who changed today's agenda. I was here to listen to witnesses and participate in the discussion. You asked me to refrain from asking questions about labour relations and legal action, and I kept my word. What I am asking the government to do today has nothing to do with game playing, let alone with setting a trap. What we're offering you, in a spirit of cooperation, is the opportunity to postpone discussion on this issue because we think we'll be able to come to an agreement before then. If I were you, I'd agree to this proposal, because it's not a trap, at least as far as the Bloc Québécois is concerned.

When interesting proposals are made, I have to discuss them with the powers-that-be in my party. Right from the word go, I told you that I didn't intend to filibuster. And look, the agenda is being tipped on its head, and I'm not being given the opportunity to question witnesses on issues I consider important, and now you're making me a proposal that you don't want me to discuss with the powers-that-be in my party.

I'm trying to understand you. As I said before, we're holding an olive branch out here. Take it, you won't regret it. That's the message I'm trying to get across to you.

• (1940)

[English]

**The Chair:** Monsieur Bélanger, would you like to comment?

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** I'll pass, Mr. Chairman, for now.

**The Chair:** Mr. Jean is next.

**Mr. Brian Jean:** I just want to respond, and it's the same issue. I haven't heard why we couldn't limit debate. Why is there a problem limiting debate on issues?

Monsieur Laframboise, you addressed the matter of the agenda. As far as the agenda goes, what we did was change the start to the end and the end to the start. It was still going to be debated today. It was still going to be discussed and voted on today; it's just taken an extra hour because of the filibuster of some members here who don't agree that they don't want it to come before the committee.

All we want is the vote, so that the will of the committee can be put forward. We have tried to find the lowest common denominator so that there's a stay of enforcement or a message of stay of enforcement to Canada Post. We put that forward as the lowest common denominator, and it was refused. Now what we're suggesting is that if we're going to go back to the same situation we're in today, we should just have a limit to it, whatever that limit is. I've been very clear that we are prepared to do a five-hour limit—even a 12-hour limit was one of the terms I suggested—but two hours would be appropriate.

I'm just suggesting that whatever the time period is, it needs some end to it, and I don't understand what the compromise would be. I'd like to hear from Mr. Laframboise in relation to that.

**The Chair:** Mr. Laframboise, to reply.

[Translation]

**Mr. Mario Laframboise:** If we can manage to agree on this, you won't need to draw out the debate, but if we don't agree, at the start of the next meeting you'll have the support you need to limit the number of hours. You don't need to do this today. In fact, if we can agree, the debate won't be drawn out at all. If we can't agree on this, and you have a majority, at the beginning of the next meeting you'll be able to set a meeting adjournment time. I can't see where the problem is.

All I need is to get the sense that we're all going to cooperate. I'm not trying to hide anything here, I have no intention of having the next meeting last longer. This is a motion which specifically sets out what you proposed. But I need to see it in writing and I need to have an opportunity to talk about it with my colleagues. As for everything else, if we can agree on the motion, there won't be a debate, and the issue will be settled.

[English]

**The Chair:** Mr. Jean.

**Mr. Brian Jean:** The motion to limit can be debated, and Mr. Laframboise, I believe you at your word, but I haven't heard from every other member across the table that they're not going to filibuster this, or indeed that a substitute won't come in to filibuster this. I'm suggesting that we put a limit on it, only because there's no need not to.

If indeed we have an agreement, *c'est la vie, c'est parfait*. But if we don't have an agreement, we'll be in the same position we are right now, at this very moment, except that it will be five days later and Canada Post could have taken enforcement action against them. That is the worry we have. We are only asking for a stay of execution, a stay of enforcement, so that the Canadians in Toronto, in Montreal, and in Vancouver can keep their job and know where their bread is going to come from in the next month or two months, and that Canada Post will not take enforcement proceedings against them. That is what we are asking.

We want the debate to come to an end at some time. Whatever that time period may be, we believe it would be fair to come to an end, just an end date. I believe you at your word, Mr. Laframboise, but we need some sort of limit or we might as well just continue now. And let's be frank, nobody wants to. Nobody wants to continue, but we indeed need some sort of time period to end this or else we'll be in exactly the same position on Wednesday as we are right now, except that in the meantime we will have taken apart all the committee business that is relevant to the needs of Canadians, such as rail safety.

**The Chair:** Monsieur Laframboise.

[Translation]

**Mr. Mario Laframboise:** All that I'm saying to the parliamentary secretary is that at the start of next Wednesday's meeting he is going to have the opportunity anyway to move a motion to set a time limit. If we can't reach an agreement by Wednesday, he'll be backed up by the Liberals and other parties. I'm having troubling seeing where the problem lies.

[English]

**The Chair:** I have a list here. Monsieur Bélanger.



[*Translation*]

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** Mr. Chairman, one of the positive aspects of a minority government—and I'm speaking from experience on two previous occasions—is that nobody can really lay down the law and limit debate. Nobody can use the guillotine to do this. As a parliamentarian, I find that to be one of the most interesting aspects resulting from a minority government situation.

After voting, we put forward an approach that my colleague Mr. Volpe qualified, and rightly so, as constructive. We said that we'd look for some sort of middle ground in order to reach our common objectives. And that is still our wish on this side. The fact that the government is bent on railroading this process will jeopardize what is supposed to be a constructive approach.

I want the parliamentary secretary to put an end to this, to withdraw the amendment, and to support the motion to suspend our business until next Wednesday. This would give this constructive approach a chance at satisfying everybody's needs. If we can't do this, in all likelihood the debate will drag on throughout the evening and night, and we'll end up wasting a whole lot of energy, and that certainly wouldn't be constructive.

I'd appeal to the good faith of everyone around this table to give this constructive approach a chance.

● (1945)

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Mr. Fast.

**Mr. Ed Fast:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Bélanger made reference to goodwill. I think anyone watching the proceedings here today knows there is very little goodwill left because there are agendas at play.

I refer specifically to positions taken by Mr. Julian. As all of you know, my motion was brought forward several weeks ago. Over the last six weeks, every time I made an attempt to have it discussed here it was put off to the next meeting and the next meeting and the next meeting.

Quite frankly, I'm not surprised, because Mr. Julian has his agenda at play. I don't think any of us are under any illusions what that agenda might be.

At least Mr. Bélanger was fairly clear. He went on for quite a long time with his monologue.

Mr. Bélanger, you said that a minority Parliament is a situation where no one party can impose its will. That's true, but when you try to arrive at a consensus around a table like this, the majority still prevails.

Unfortunately, there's an element within our system called the filibuster, which we've seen today at this table from a number of members, and that filibuster allows individual members to drag on proceedings to ensure that any decision is delayed. Clearly, that's been the experience around this table today. Anyone who is watching these proceedings will know it for what it is.

I think we need to focus on the real issue we're dealing with. It is not a matter of doing all kinds of studies about the relationship

between rural mail delivery and remailers. That issue was brought up by one witness, and it was CUPW when they were here, Deborah Bourque.

The issue that faces us is existing employees, Canadians who have employment in the remailing industry, thousands of employees who may be out of a job tomorrow or the next day because we are not acting.

I know Mr. Julian is quite happy with that position. He would like to see Canadian workers lose their jobs because he is hoping somebody else will be able to hire them.

**The Chair:** Mr. Julian, on a point of order.

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Mr. Chair, on a point of order, not only is this not relevant, it's personally insulting and degrading. If the Conservatives are reduced to that point, they should just go home. This is absolutely inappropriate commentary.

**The Chair:** It's not a point of order, but I will ask Mr. Fast to stay relevant to the motion we're debating, which is that the amendment of all three motions be voted on by 5:30 p.m. on Wednesday.

**Mr. Ed Fast:** Well, Mr. Chair, I will be as relevant as Mr. Julian was in the proceedings about an hour ago when you reminded him, on probably at least ten occasions, to stay on topic. He never did. I will do my best to stay on topic.

It has never been my attempt to be degrading in my comments. I just want to paint the picture as it really is. This is clearly a situation of where we have the interests of the remailers and their employees pitted against Canada Post. That's clearly the issue here.

Canada Post has the legal upper hand, but the policy hand is held by government. That's not only the minister, that's all of us. We're part of that process. It's a democratic process. It's a process that should not be subject to a filibustering situation, where the will of this particular body is frustrated by those who can't stand the thought of the majority prevailing.

I understand that Mr. Volpe is supportive of suspending this matter without an exit strategy. What we're doing is simply postponing what we're already into, which is a fulsome debate on the issue. Quite frankly, if we're talking about a suspension of debate until Wednesday, with no prospect of there being an exit strategy or closure to this debate, I can't support that.

Mr. Jean has just made a constructive proposal: let's cool our heads a bit and we'll suspend these proceedings until Wednesday at 3:30. However, at that point in time, based on the supposed goodwill that has been referred to at this table, we will agree that at a fixed time, all three motions—the dilatory motion as well as the main motion with its amendment—will be dealt with. That's reasonable. It's certainly supported on this side, and given other circumstances it might be supported on that side.

What concerns me is that we're playing with the lives—the welfare—of workers in the remaining industry. That's my concern. The sooner we resolve this, the sooner those workers in the industry have some certainty in their lives. Every day we drag this on and on with these motions and deferrals, the more we do a disservice to the very people who elected us to represent them at this table. Now we're attempting to defer that decision for another three or four or five days while there's some supposed compromise that will be worked out.

I would again encourage the other members of this committee to consider what's at stake here. It's the status quo. We already have an existing situation where remainders have jobs. That industry has been there for some 20 years, without interference from Canada Post.

This is clearly a black and white issue, and I'm not sure it merits deferral or suspension. I'll support suspension, but there has to be an exit strategy. There has to be a fixed time when we actually put this matter to a vote.

●(1950)

**The Chair:** Mr. Volpe.

**Hon. Joseph Volpe:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Colleagues around the table, I know it's getting late, because I can see the goodwill that was developing is in danger of being dissipated. I don't want to engage in that particular exercise.

When I proposed my motion, I had the exit strategy that I thought everybody would be looking for very much in my mind.

Mr. Fast may be surprised, but I don't think he will be surprised to find that people on this side of the table were genuinely pleased to find common ground with members on that side of the table in off-the-table discussions about the directions we would pursue. The common ground was the genesis of the directions that prompted my motion.

In other words, the exit strategy would be the solution that Mr. Fast is looking for. I applaud him for his concern for all people. He shares our concern.

We're not going to engage in partisanship that might say you're in government and you do this, and we're in committee and we do that. It's an easy tack to take, but we really are genuinely in the mode of ensuring that whatever motion comes out of this committee is unanimous, rather than a majority vote.

I'm going to repeat it again, and I think in this I speak for everybody on this side of the table, including the other two parties. We were genuinely impressed with the suggestion put forward by Mr. Jean in off-the-table discussions.

The point of the suspension is because the exit strategy is inherent in the motion that must come forward. There is a sense by all members on this side that the matter needs to be dealt with. Nobody wants to be tied to a decision that may or may not emerge. Certainly no one wants to be moved in a direction in which he or she doesn't want to go. But we agreed we would dedicate all of our energies and resources to getting to the end spot.

I don't know if it would make Mr. Fast happy, but I think it might make him at least pleased. But I don't want to predict what will happen, because I've committed to talking with my colleagues from

all three parties on this side and indeed on the other side, the government side, over the course of the next few days.

This may sound naive, but for us it isn't a question of delaying yet again. As Mr. Fast will know, I wasn't anxious to have this debate today; I was anxious to have it a week or two weeks ago.

I think we're eating up some goodwill that developed among us this evening by insisting that we predict what will and will not happen.

I think Monsieur Laframboise said it correctly, and I say this particularly to the government members. You can move the amendment that Mr. Jean proposed to my motion. You can move it as a motion on Wednesday, when we resume, if you see the discussion is not going in the direction in which it should be going. But because we've committed ourselves off the table to a collaborative approach to this, I don't see why we would want to do it.

I appeal to all four members of the government side to go forward with what I've suggested and what I've proposed. I have a sense that if we continue the discussion on the amendment to my motion, we would probably lapse into what is entirely too common in this place, when people have been around the table for an extended period of time, by saying some things that we'd like to withdraw.

I don't want to withdraw my motion to suspend, because I think it's an important approach to keeping the discussion on the table. As I said to some of the members, if we adjourn, it means we have to start the whole process over again.

●(1955)

As far as I'm concerned, we're halfway through the solution. The only reason we're talking about Wednesday and not Monday is that at least one member on this side of the House, who has a very important dedication to this issue, at least as significant as Mr. Fast's—I don't mean that with any disrespect—can't be here Monday.

**Mr. Ed Fast:** We've acknowledged that.

**Hon. Joseph Volpe:** No, but that's why we've gone to Wednesday. We're looking for a solution, we're not looking for disruption.

Colleagues around the table, we can continue to discuss this, but I'm sure everybody's going to say the same thing over and over again. I'm imploring the government members to withdraw the amendment and to just simply say that we should go unanimously with the motion that I have put forward.

**The Chair:** Mr. Bell.

**Mr. Don Bell:** I'll say I agree, or *te amo*...or not *te amo*, that's the wrong thing; I mean *yo también*, which is Spanish for "I agree". *Te amo* is "I love you".

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

●(2000)

**Hon. Joseph Volpe:** Well thank you.

**Mr. Don Bell:** I got the wrong one.

**An hon. member:** Not that there's anything wrong with it.

**Mr. Don Bell:** Yes, not that there's anything wrong with it. I feel a lot of love in this room right now.

What I want to say is that I was pleased to see this side agree to hold off until Wednesday so that I can be here and express my opinion on this.

I would make just a technical comment, I think.

Mr. Fast, we're not government. Government is the Prime Minister and the cabinet. We are members of the government process, maybe, or members of Parliament. From a simplistic point of view, I guess if the government—the government—felt really strongly about this, they could take action; they don't have to come to this committee. But it's been explained to us by Mr. Jean that, in his understanding, the minister wants to have the advice of this committee. I accept that.

We have diverse interests on this side of the table. I think suspending until Wednesday is being done in a good spirit. I'm very optimistic that we'll arrive at an outcome. From my point of view—not necessarily *with* my point of view—I believe we'll arrive at an outcome, because I see goodwill among this side.

**The Chair:** Mr. Jean.

**Mr. Brian Jean:** I'm going to go back to the same question, the question that I haven't had answered yet. If it's such good faith, and it's such a good thing to do, and we're working cooperatively, and we're going to work together to find a solution because we're going to have one on Wednesday, then let's put a time limit on it. I've suggested a 12-hour time limit. I've suggested a two-hour time limit. I've suggested lots of things. I haven't found one good reason why they won't agree to it. If they're acting in good faith, why wouldn't they agree to it?

I would like to read Mr. Volpe's motion, but I'm going to wait until another time, maybe another five minutes or so, because I really want to repeat it twice, as Mr. Julian did a couple of times.

Why will you not agree to a time limit to limit debate?

I will make another amendment, Mr. Chair. Or can I indeed do that?

**The Chair:** It's a subamendment to the amendment?

**Mr. Brian Jean:** Can I make one, or does it have to be another member?

**The Chair:** Yes, Mr. Jean, if there is a subamendment, someone else has to make it.

We're still dealing with your amendment.

**Mr. Brian Jean:** Well, I would like to propose the option of providing another amendment, which would be an amendment that would follow that, with:

to be voted on prior to 5:30 or such other motion as may, by unanimous agreement, be put forward to substitute any of the motions that are currently before the committee.

So indeed if we find another motion that comes forward, and there's unanimous consent to do so, we substitute that for the motions that you're afraid to have a limit on.

I mean, we're prepared to do anything, as long as it has an exit strategy. We're not prepared to continue on in the same filibuster that we've had all day today.

**The Chair:** Mr. Volpe, for clarification.

**Hon. Joseph Volpe:** I'm not sure whether I would be misquoting Mr. Jean on this, but I thought I heard him say that if there is a motion presented to the committee that receives unanimous consent, then it would supersede every other motion, and that he would like to be able to put that on the record as an amendment to my motion.

Is that what I heard Mr. Jean say?

**The Chair:** Just for clarification, it would have to be a subamendment to Mr. Jean's amendment, and it would have to be made by another member of any party.

Mr. Jean, is that the intent? Are you saying that if, between now and 5:30 on Wednesday, an alternative motion comes forward that receives unanimous consent, we would forgo all the other motions on the table? Am I correct on what you're saying?

**Mr. Brian Jean:** Absolutely.

**Hon. Joseph Volpe:** I hope we don't have to wait until 5:30.

**Mr. Brian Jean:** I would hope not, too. Absolutely. In fact, I'm prepared to set aside time for meetings on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and even on Saturday and Sunday. I will cancel my plans and stay here, and I'm sure that all the other members of the government will do the same to find a resolution. But we need to find.... We have to have the clock stop sometime.

**Hon. Joseph Volpe:** My point, Mr. Chair, and this is why I was seeking clarification, is that if Mr. Jean foresees the possibility of having a motion that receives unanimous support around the table because of discussions that will have taken place prior to that meeting, then really, there's no need for any other motion.

**Mr. Ed Fast:** Accept his amendment.

**Hon. Joseph Volpe:** No, I'm sorry. The reason I asked for a clarification is that I thought I heard him say that, and I wasn't sure whether it was the time that was playing tricks on my ears or whether I was misreading Mr. Jean's intentions.

**The Chair:** I understand that it would have to be a subamendment. Therefore, we would have to vote on the subamendment, on the amendment by Mr. Jean, and then on the original motion. It doesn't require unanimous consent; it requires a majority.

• (2005)

**Mr. Brian Jean:** Unless I put that in the motion.

**The Chair:** Unless you put that in the motion.

**Mr. Brian Jean:** That was my intention, to put it in the motion.

**The Chair:** I have a list here. We'll go to Mr. Storseth.

**Mr. Brian Storseth:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I just have to say that I thought we had a lot of goodwill around the committee table. We sat down, everybody took a chance, we had an opportunity to discuss what our position was, and we tried to come to a mutual resolution.

**Mr. Peter Julian:** And you just keep upping the ante.

**Mr. Brian Storseth:** But unfortunately, I don't see where the hesitation on Mr. Jean's amendment is, because all he is saying is that when we sit down on Wednesday, we are going to come to a conclusion of this resolution on Wednesday. He has already said that he doesn't care if it's four o'clock or six o'clock or if you want it to be when debate collapses. All of us should have the opportunity to speak our points. But beyond that, you are clearly just filibustering this and you don't want to have a resolution to this at any point in time.

Mr. Jean's amendment is very reasonable when he says that at some point on Wednesday we have to come to a conclusion on this. It gives Mr. Laframboise the opportunity to do the consultations he's looking for. It gives all sides an opportunity to come to a resolution on this. I don't see how that is lacking in reason at all.

I also, Mr. Chair, would ask for a ruling from you, but I don't believe that we can put a motion on Wednesday to limit debate on this on Wednesday. It has to be done now, does it not?

**The Chair:** Technically, we can't put limitations on through a suspension unless there is consent of the committee to do so, if we were to resume.

**Mr. Brian Storseth:** We would have to do that at this point in time, when the motion is being brought forward. We cannot do it afterwards.

**The Chair:** It can be done, again, with the consent of the committee.

**Mr. Brian Storseth:** Is that with unanimous consent?

**The Chair:** It is with consent.

**Mr. Brian Jean:** But it is not majority rules. It has to be unanimous, unless it's part of the motion today. We can't limit the debate in the future. Any one member can continue debate forever if we don't put it as part of the motion.

**The Chair:** It would be wise, I would think, to put it as part of the motion, but it doesn't need unanimous consent.

**Mr. Brian Storseth:** And that's why we are moving that it gets done today as part of this motion. It's a very reasonable request. It is just ensuring that at some point on Wednesday there's a resolution to this. You know what? If you want to sit here at midnight on Wednesday still debating that, that's fine.

Anyway, that's my point, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** Monsieur Laframboise.

**Mr. Mario Laframboise:** That's okay.

**The Chair:** One minute.

Mr. Julian.

**Mr. Peter Julian:** I'll pass for the moment, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** Mr. Fast.

**Mr. Ed Fast:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'm following up on some of the comments I made earlier. I sense there's some frustration on the part of Mr. Volpe because I believe he is acting in good faith trying to bring this to resolution.

I don't understand what he believes we will be able to achieve by simply suspending these proceedings, because we've already spent

well over two hours debating this particular issue, and I think he will agree with me that at this point there's no prospect of our being able to bring this matter to closure. Now, I know he articulated some optimism in terms of over the weekend, and perhaps early next week some compromise could be reached. Quite frankly, Mr. Volpe, I don't see a compromise. As I said earlier, this is an issue that is very clearly black and white. You're either with the remainers or you're with Canada Post. There's no middle ground, there's no grey area. And I'm sure most people understand that. So the only compromise I can imagine is that we agree on some new process for bringing closure to this issue.

Quite frankly, I think now is the time for us to discuss that. Let's talk about closure. I've come to appreciate the members of the Bloc quite a bit over my year and a half on Parliament Hill simply because they make decisions that often appear to be free of ideology. They try to cooperate as a part of this committee, so I hope they don't see my remarks and my position on this as being somehow antagonistic toward them. I sense there's a much greater agenda at play with Mr. Julian. And I know Mr. Bélanger also has a lot of pressure in his riding, and I understand that, and he's been very passionate about speaking on behalf of Canada Post.

However, that doesn't get us to a resolution of this issue. I want to see this matter brought to closure. My colleague Mr. Jean has put forward what I believe is reasonable; it's fair. We're giving the committee until Wednesday at 3:30 to come up with whatever compromise they may think possible. But the bottom line is we will be here whether we continue tonight or whether we continue on Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday trying to bring this matter to closure, and ultimately I'm not sure we're ever going to change each other's minds on the merits of the issue at play here, which is the remaining issue.

I've sensed from Mr. Julian that he continues to want to drag this on and on and on, and the longer it drags on, of course, the more opportunity there is for Canada Post to step in and enforce their injunctive relief and put thousands of remailer employees out of business. He thinks that's a great idea. Mr. Chair, I don't. I feel for those people who have been employed—

• (2010)

**Mr. Peter Julian:** A point of order, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** Mr. Julian, on a point of order.

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Again, Mr. Fast is letting his emotions get the better of him. He is making comments that are unacceptable and he is straying from discussion of the business at hand.

**The Chair:** Not a point of order, but I would again ask Mr. Fast to maintain relevancy to the amendment.

**Mr. Ed Fast:** I'll certainly do that.

If Mr. Julian is suggesting that I'm emotional, well, when it comes to the well-being of workers in Canada, especially those who presently have jobs, you bet I'm emotional. Mr. Julian may want to take the emotion out of that process. I'm not that person. I'm going to stand up for those who have employment right now. I'm going to stand up for those in the remaining business who relied for 20 years on the fact that Canada Post itself interpreted the legislation as not providing them with an exclusive privilege.

Somehow they had a smart lawyer who found this inconsistency between the French and the English and who was able to exploit it. Now we have a situation where these companies that have done business for 20 years and have relied on the Canada Post position—that they accepted competition in the marketplace—are going to have the tables turned on them, and thousands of employees in Canada are going to be losing their jobs.

Does suspending this particular meeting until Wednesday at 3:30 help us in trying to bring it to closure if in fact we don't have a firm process in place where we'll be voting on the actual motions that are on the table, which is my motion and Mr. Volpe's amendment? I think not. I think what we have to look at is the substance of what we're trying to do here.

Yes, Mr. Julian, you may disagree. And Mr. Bélanger, you obviously disagree as well.

Bringing in more and more witnesses, while other employees in the remaining industry lose their jobs, isn't the way to go about doing it. Quite frankly, I have enough information for myself to make an informed decision. I suspect you do too. You're no dumb bunny. You've done your research on this. You have spoken to the unions. I'm sure you've even spoken to the remailers. I'm just encouraging you. Do what the electors of this country asked you to do, accept the democratic will of this committee. Let's move forward. Let's make the decision one way or another.

Quite frankly, if I'm out-voted on the remailer issue, I can go home and I can say that I did my very best for the industry, I did my very best for the employees; however, the democratic process was served. Tonight it's not being served well through the filibustering that's gone on here.

I would suggest to all of us, let's put our minds together as to what kind of a process can bring this meeting and the motions to closure.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** Monsieur Laframboise.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Mario Laframboise:** Mr. Chairman, in addition to the ideas, we also have to consider how the committee operates. I have a hard time following my colleague Mr. Fast, for whom I have a lot of respect. He thinks that we had systematically filibustered the committee earlier, but that was not the case. Three colleagues, each from different parties, disagreed and shared their speaking time. Each of us spoke for five minutes. You cannot say that speaking for 10 or 15 minutes amounts to filibustering.

Opposition members are now asking you to give them until Wednesday to find common ground. The parliamentary secretary himself has suggested such a timeframe. You have already won support from the Liberals and are in a position to pass the motion. Colleagues are also telling you that if we do not reach an agreement by the start of next Wednesday's meeting, you can set a time limit for debate. It is as simple as that. I checked with the clerk: it can be done on Wednesday. At the start of the meeting, you can table a motion to limit debate to three or four hours, as you wish, with the support of your Liberal colleagues. That would be in order.

I fail to understand why you do not trust people who are reaching out to you. If we were all opposed to you I would understand, but that is not the case. Some colleagues are supporting you and proposing a solution, which you dismissed. The worst thing that can happen today is that we pass a motion to suspend debate. If that were to occur, you would have only yourself to blame. The problem is you do not control the committee. In one way or another, you have to negotiate with your colleagues.

Earlier, Mr. Bélanger talked about the fact that minority governments change. Today, the opposition is reaching out to the government, but it is not taking up the offer. I learn new things every day. Allow me to say that I am thoroughly enjoying myself with you today.

• (2015)

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Mr. Jean.

**Mr. Brian Jean:** I have just a point of clarification for Mr. Laframboise, because I think we are making progress here.

My understanding is that a closure motion or a motion to limit debate time cannot be moved once debate has started. I would like clarification from the clerk.

**The Chair:** Mr. Jean, you are correct on that. When we resume debate on Wednesday, if it is the will of the committee to recess and resume, the first item of business will have to be to impose timelines if that's the will of the committee. If the debate begins, then there is no end period.

Mr. Jean.

**Mr. Brian Jean:** I am prepared to amend my motion. Let's just pretend we're in a fantasy world where there are no rules.

**The Chair:** I would talk about what you might like to do, and not necessarily make it an amendment.

**Mr. Brian Jean:** In my fantasy world I would amend my motion to have no time limit. It would be confirmed that this committee would not rise, and the chair would not see the clock at any time. We would continue to debate or come to a decision—or some wording such as that—that the committee would not rise until such time as each of these motions had been dealt with.

**The Chair:** Mr. Volpe.

**Hon. Joseph Volpe:** Mr. Chairman, I know that what we're going to do is keep this up. If we thought we had a little bit of a solution, we're going to keep this up forever.

I share the opinion that I think this matter could be dealt with by whenever we rise on Wednesday, and I don't know when that will be. I'm not sure that is a universally held position, so I apologize to my friend if I conveyed that it might be universally held. I didn't think I said that, but I thought it might be a good way to get to this.

What I'm concerned about, and I must take some umbrage with Mr. Fast on this, is that we will lose the optimism that I tried to share with everybody around the table. I realize that in the partisan world that's very easy to do.

I note some frustration on this side of the table because there was an expectation that in going forward with a suspension and working on the genesis of the motion that was proposed out of the discussion off-table we were headed in the right direction. We seem to have steered away from that a little bit because the government members want some sense of certainty.

Regrettably, that sense of certainty they're looking for increases the level of uncertainty on this side of the table. When members on this side of the table agreed with my suggestion, it was because they wanted to deal as colleagues around the table, with all sincerity, to get things done.

Since all of this is on the record, I think we have already said what everybody would want to say in order to defend a position and the interest of constituents. So what remains for us is really to think in terms of how we could work on the wording of what will be acceptable to all of us in order to defend the interests that we've all outlined.

I don't want to be the peacemaker, because peacemakers usually get the shaft in a partisan environment, but I think this is one case where there is genuine desire on the part of members on this side of the table, all three parties, to reach a positive, productive conclusion.

It strikes me as a little ironic that while we debated, before we came back, the desirability of dilatory motions, we now have the government members engaging in a debate that could be construed to be the same. My view, when I went out for a coffee and met one of the members on the government side, was that we are essentially squandering some of the time and some of the energy by continuing in this venue.

So perhaps the idea of not seeing the clock on Wednesday might be a good solution. I say "might" now, because in the course of the last hour we have muddied the waters considerably, in my view. I don't think anybody loses by having a suspension of the debate, just as I proposed it.

I don't think the government members will lose any of their positioning if we come back on Wednesday with a motion that reflects what I thought we had gotten out of off-table discussions. Speaking, if I might, purely for the Liberal members, a motion was given some consideration, and I think you know that Mr. Laframboise and Mr. Carrier—even the Bloc members—and Mr. Julian as well, came a long way. I think that's a fair assessment.

● (2020)

I would have thought that would have been received very warmly by the government side for this one reason, and I know I'm repeating myself.

The message to Canada Post right now, because all of these are recorded debates, is that the committee is in the process of entertaining a motion that will ensure remainders are not put to the stake. That's really what we're proposing, so if Canada Post is going to move, I would think that at the very least they would await the outcome of this committee's deliberations.

I might be dreaming, but the fact of the matter is that they would be in contempt of Parliament, because we're an extension of Parliament. If there are those around the table who think I'm

dreaming in technicolor, I can say, having been a minister, that the minister gets up tomorrow morning, walks over to Canada Post, and says, "This is what you shall do." He doesn't need this committee to get up and do that tomorrow morning.

What the committee has been asked to do is to provide greater authority to the minister's actions. Surely this is a very minor concession on the part of the government that will allow us to buttress the minister's actions with the authority of the committee, assuming that he values it. If he doesn't, we've just wasted five hours.

**Mr. Brian Jean:** Why would we even be discussing it, then?

**Hon. Joe Volpe:** Obviously if all of this is an accurate reflection of where the government could be and where the minister would be, then we can end the discussion now, accept the suspension, and say we're working on something, because we haven't done anything else; we've just suspended the discussion. We haven't adjourned. We don't have to come back to restart the engine all over again. We're just suspending the discussion as we did an hour ago, when we asked for about three minutes and went on for about 15. Let's go on for a little bit longer, and this time let's come back with something definitive.

That's all that's being asked. We don't need to put preconditions on anything, which, with all due respect, is what those amendments suggest. I know that there's a healthy skepticism and suspicion, and that's good, but we've talked this out quite a bit and eventually we're going to have to have a vote. We could have it right now; we could have it right now, but there's no need for it. All you have to do is say you accept this suspension of the discussion.

● (2025)

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

**Mr. Laurie Hawn (Edmonton Centre, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I have been quiet for the last five hours. I can't tell you how much I've enjoyed this, and how much—

**Hon. Joseph Volpe:** Don't break that habit, whatever you do.

**Mr. Laurie Hawn:** —Jeff Watson owes me.

Actually, I must be a masochist, because I have actually enjoyed it to an extent. It was a good study in committee dynamics, or lack thereof.

I think Mr. Volpe hit something on the head a little while ago when he said the positions are pretty entrenched in terms of Mr. Bélanger and Mr. Julian and Mr. Fast—and, frankly, this side—about support to remainders or not. That is my sense also.

My sense is that we will come back on Wednesday, and Mr. Watson will come back on Wednesday in my place, and this will go on forever. It has no end. I would support what Mr. Volpe said just a moment ago: we could do the vote right now, because I don't think anybody's position is going to change.

For what it's worth—We've said on this side that the vote is whatever it is, and that's democracy. We accept the outcome of the democratic process. I, for one, haven't said anything on the whole thing, obviously, and maybe that's a good thing, but I just don't see anybody's position changing from what's been expressed here for the last five hours. From my point of view, let's get on with the vote and accept the results.

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

**Mr. Ed Fast:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Volpe referred to some healthy skepticism on this side. Yes, I'm a skeptic. Although I'm new to this job, I've been around politics for a long time. I know people's positions sometimes are driven by agendas that are beyond what we might understand at face value.

I want to follow up on what Mr. Hawn said. Mr. Volpe, you said yes, we could vote now. Why don't we? Most of us don't need a whole lot more information. And what we are suggesting, what we're agreeing with, is we're saying we're prepared to put off this decision until Wednesday.

There are those on the other side of this table who may need to get more information. It's possible that Mr. Laframboise needs to go to CUPW to get some information, maybe Mr. Julian needs more information from the remailers, right? I don't know what information they're looking for, but they have an opportunity over the next few days to do so, actually go and do the work that they feel is necessary to be done.

There are a lot of us at this table who understand the issue. It does come down to jobs. It does come down to supporting businesses that have been around for 20 years, that have relied on Canada Post's interpretation on exclusive privilege. So am I skeptical? Yes, you bet I'm skeptical. Quite frankly, there's nothing you, on the other side of this table, have put on this table that would move us to accept. There's really nothing there for us, because you're not suggesting any way of bringing closure to this debate.

So if there's no prospect of closure on Wednesday, why would we postpone the inevitable? Let's deal with the issue right here and now. And you know we do so, on this side of the table, at the risk of perhaps losing support on that side. I wish we didn't have to be here debating this matter. I wish we could have dealt with this in the first hour that we debated. That's my frustration.

• (2030)

**The Chair:** Mr. Volpe, on a point of clarification.

**Hon. Joseph Volpe:** Is Mr. Fast is suggesting that we vote on the amendment to my motion now?

**Mr. Ed Fast:** Yes.

**Hon. Joseph Volpe:** Go ahead—

**Mr. Ed Fast:** I'd love to vote on all the motions that are on the table right now, including—

**Hon. Joseph Volpe:** No, we have two on the table, let's—

**Mr. Ed Fast:** We have two, and then I understood that Mr. Bélanger still has his motion to—

**Mr. Peter Julian:** And we have a suspension.

**Mr. Ed Fast:** That's on the table as well.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** There are five motions on the table, perhaps six, depending on the subamendment.

**The Chair:** We have five motions on the table.

**Mr. Ed Fast:** If everyone would agree to deal with them right now, other than—Of course, we're also dealing with the suspension motion—

**The Chair:** And that is the first motion we deal with.

**Mr. Ed Fast:** Exactly, and that's the problem. Someone would have to withdraw that, because that suspension motion does nothing. It places nothing on the table for us as government. Because you know what our position is on the remailer issue, and we feel very strongly about it. We want to protect Canadian jobs. That's the bottom line. We want to protect Canadian businesses, and simply to say we'll suspend this until Wednesday and hopefully something comes up where everybody changes their mind—it's not going to happen, folks.

There was a suggestion from Mr. Volpe that Canada Post has had notice of our deliberations. I believe Canada Post has had notice of our deliberations.

**Hon. Joseph Volpe:** No, I don't know whether any of those people are actually working for Canada Post. There are probably observers to this.

**Mr. Ed Fast:** I would imagine there are some remailers who would be paying attention as well.

But the point is Canada Post would not act on our deliberations here. Canada Post actually didn't act on the statement that the minister made in the House either. They continued on with their litigation and there were more court cases and more hearings and injunctive relief applied for and granted. So to rely on that I think is probably being a little bit idealistic and optimistic.

Finally, Mr. Laframboise, I do appreciate you as a member of this committee, because I think you do try to put the partisan aspect of this committee to the side when you are making decisions, but to suggest that there wasn't filibustering earlier on today I think is somewhat naive. We had long texts read into the record, for crying out loud. That's never happened since I've been on the committee.

Mr. Julian had three paragraphs. I believe Mr. Bélanger spent some 10 to 20 minutes reading written text into the record.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** It was four.

**Mr. Ed Fast:** Pages?

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** It was four minutes.

**Mr. Ed Fast:** Well, I've never seen him read anything that long into the public record.

Am I skeptical? Yes, I am. Do you know how you could solve the problem? It's very simple: tell me how we're going to bring closure to this and you'll see our side cooperate.

**The Chair:** Monsieur Laframboise.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Mario Laframboise:** I have to smile when Mr. Fast tells me that I am naive. There has been no filibustering today. Some colleagues, including Mr. Bélanger, have simply wanted to state their positions. Furthermore, you will have noticed that the Liberals were divided. Mr. Bélanger's opinion is different from that of his colleagues, and he is asking for more time to better consider the issue. A good suggestion is put to him, but he is not given enough time to take a position.

To me—and I am giving you my opinion, Mr. Chairman—regardless of what the government will do, if you do not amend the act, you will find yourself on the losing end in any case. I am convinced of that. You need a legislative amendment to clarify the section in both languages, because it is incorrect. If you do not do so and if Ms. Greene, the CEO, does not take position on behalf of Canada Post—because she was appointed by your government—you will see opposition from the union. You will not win.

This debate is very interesting, but I am convinced that you will need a legislative amendment. When you will request one, if you believe that you can avoid debate in the House of Commons or in committee when hearing witnesses, then you will have been duped by either the minister or your legal department. Mr. Fast, I realize you are a lawyer and it is a good thing that we are discussing this issue, but even if we pass the motion, nothing will be settled because you will have to amend the legislation. In that case, you will have to come back to the committee to hear witnesses.

I have been repeating for about three weeks now that we have to hear the witnesses. The risk is that we end up at the same point. I am not playing games, because I am convinced that what we can accomplish here will not change anything. You might be full of good intentions, but there will have to be a legislative amendment. If no one has told you so, ask around, because you have been taken for a ride by the minister's office for the past six months. I sincerely believe that you will absolutely need to have a legislative amendment. If I am mistaken, I will apologize. So I sincerely believe that because of the ruling, the act will have to be amended. And if that is the case, then you are now wasting time.

I agree with you. If the minister does not intend to table a motion to correct the section in both languages, then you are again wasting your time. It does not really matter to me whether this takes five more days or five fewer days. Reach out to those colleagues who might support you. Go ahead. We are trying to come to an agreement with you and to give you free reign to get a motion. What we are asking you for is to say that Canada Post's exclusive privilege should not be removed. That is what everyone appears to be saying. Mr. Jean seemed to agree to the tabling of a motion. We first have to see the text and to have it analyzed by our own services. All we are asking for is some time.

You are trying to have the motion adopted today. If it is easier to suspend the sitting in order to hold another meeting and to allow you to limit the number of hours of debate, then I am ready to work with you. We can suspend debate, but we will need to have a motion at the start of next Wednesday's meeting to avoid holding three-and-a-half hour debates. I do not see anyone objecting to that, but let's do it next week because, in the meantime, you seem to be saying that we

will not be able to come to an agreement. There is nothing more counter productive than that.

•(2035)

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Mr. Jean, on a point of order.

**Mr. Brian Jean:** Mr. Chair, we're getting conflicting information. I was told that we can't have a motion limiting the time. Now Mr. Laframboise believes we can. I would like a ruling from the clerk so we can deal with that. Right now we can't deal with it. I don't want to be under a misunderstanding, and I don't think Monsieur Laframboise wants to be under a misunderstanding. We need to know.

**The Chair:** As I stated earlier, before we call resumption of debate on Wednesday, we have to have a notice of motion dealt with that would set time limits. If not, we resume as we are tonight, with unlimited debate.

Mr. Jean.

**Mr. Brian Jean:** Is it true, Mr. Chair, that the motion to limit the debate can then be filibustered by one or more members—and I did look at Mr. Julian when I said that—forever?

**The Chair:** It is a debatable motion, absolutely.

**Mr. Brian Jean:** Exact enough. So indeed we will be in exactly the same place on Wednesday, even with the motion, if you support it, as we are today—exactly the same. That's the problem.

Even if we have it on Wednesday, we're no different from today. That's why there's nothing on the table for us, because we're in the same position today as one week from today.

**The Chair:** Monsieur Laframboise.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Mario Laframboise:** In any case, the motion that you will table next Wednesday will extend debate. You will therefore receive the support of the opposition parties. Some are already willing to support you. The motion that you will table will serve to extend debate until the end. That will be the purpose of the motion. You will decide that debate on the issue will end on that day. Whether we do so today or next Wednesday, you will say that we either discuss until the debate is over or try to limit debate. The fact of the matter is that that will not change anything. If it is the committee's will to end debate on the issue next Wednesday, then that is what will happen. It is as simple as that.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Mr. Jean.

**Mr. Brian Jean:** If it's the same today as it's going to be on Wednesday, then I would suggest we have it today, and indeed we don't need to limit it by hours. I would like to, if possible, pass it to Mr. Fast, as he has a friendly amendment in relation to my motion.



• (2040)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Mario Laframboise:** Today, however, I am not sure that you will prepare and table a motion that is similar to the one we have discussed. I would be satisfied with the motion that you discussed earlier while the sitting was suspended, but you have yet to table it. The problem is that if you impose debate today, what guarantees do I have that you will table a motion that we can support? All I hope is that you respect the idea we seemed to share, i.e., to table a motion we can all live with. Following that, I will not be extending debate. If someone does, we will wait for it to end.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Mr. Jean.

**Mr. Brian Jean:** Indeed, Monsieur Laframboise, to be blunt, I don't need to move that motion. Any member around the table can move the same motion that we've suggested, so indeed the motion can be moved on Wednesday. We can be defeated on any of the motions that we've put forward, and that motion can be carried.

It's the will of the committee. All I'm suggesting is that we need to find an end to the debate, whether it be this motion, whether it be the motion we discussed earlier in relation to a stay of enforcement, whatever it be. We just need an end, whatever that end is, even if the end is just that we will stay at this committee until finished. I believe Mr. Fast is coming forward with a friendly amendment that may be satisfactory to you, and then at that stage if one member wants to filibuster until three o'clock in the morning, that's fine. We would still continue and stay until it is finished. That is my point—in whatever that motion is.

**The Chair:** Mr. Julian.

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Mr. Chairman, I'm not going to speak long this time. The next time I come up I may be moving a motion of adjournment.

I think this is a textbook case of how government members could mishandle, in a minority Parliament, an offer from the opposition for a compromise position and for some discussions. It was offered over two hours ago. Ever since then we've had a filibuster from the Conservative side, and quite frankly, Mr. Chair, they are just destroying the goodwill that they would have had a couple of hours ago. So they can keep pushing, throwing in all kinds of motions and amendments. It is seven different things now that they've been asking of the opposition, when Mr. Volpe's compromise motion was simply giving them a guarantee that next Wednesday we would be resuming the debate on this discussion, a guarantee that they would have the discussion.

Now, because there's no closure, they have necessarily some impetus, some motivation, to working with the other parties to come up with a compromise. If they had closure, they would have no impetus and no motivation to work with the other parties. So what they have is an offer for a debate, a discussion that would take place next Wednesday. They've had that offer for two hours, and they are, quite frankly, frittering it away, because I for one am getting to the point where I think we should just be adjourning.

I will consult with my colleagues. I think, quite frankly, Mr. Chair, they should be just accepting Mr. Volpe's offer and his suggestion that we proceed to vote on the suspension.

They know that next Wednesday they will come back to the debate and the discussion on the issue and there will be motivation, I think, from all four corners of this table to work on something that might be in the interests of all four parties and might meet the test of what each of the four parties is looking for.

**The Chair:** Monsieur Bélanger.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** I tend to agree. In the last two hours it is the first time I've been in a situation where it's the government that's resisting moving forward. That's an interesting situation.

Mr. Chair, the situation will not be the same on Wednesday. There will have been a number of days that have gone by and serious attempts to find the common ground and wording that would reflect that, with which all parties, government included, would be comfortable.

This comes not from my imagination but from the words of the only person at this table who is authorized to speak for the government. His suggestion was the one that triggered quite a realistic possibility.

Therefore, I don't accept in the least the repeated comments that things will be the same on Wednesday next week. What would have happened then is a test of the goodwill—yes, absolutely—but also a test of the capacity to work constructively, which is what we are trying to do here. If there is absolutely no intent to accept that on the part of the government, we'll find out.

I suspect that they will be surprised. I'm getting to know Mr. Fast through the spaces that we have on various committees. He should know by now that I have demonstrated flexibility in the past and that I can demonstrate that again.

To say that I can't change is not accurate, Mr. Fast. One must be careful about that.

What I have difficulty with—and I've repeated this forever—on this debate is the exclusive privilege. I do not want to get into that, because I'll be called for irrelevance and so forth, or on some subamendment to an amendment to suspend.

But be careful when you attribute intentions or designs to anyone else, because you may find that they're not quite the reality.

Thank you.

• (2045)

**The Chair:** Mr. Fast.

**Mr. Ed Fast:** Mr. Chair, I don't enjoy being lectured, quite frankly.

Mr. Bélanger, I wasn't born yesterday. I understand what goes on at tables like this. I wasn't referring to you specifically. What I said was that I'm not optimistic that there's the ability to compromise or change on your side of the table.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** I am.

**Mr. Ed Fast:** First of all, we're making the assumption that today we haven't been able to resolve anything. In fact, today we haven't even been able to resolve the issue of closure.

Then you say to me, "but you know, Mr. Fast, you'll be surprised. I think you'll be surprised on Wednesday." You know—it's the layaway plan. "On Wednesday, I think you'll be surprised at how we'll change and compromise, and I think you'll be happy with the result."

**Mr. Peter Julian:** You're the ones who are stopping any progress, and that's exactly the problem.

**Mr. Ed Fast:** You're expecting me to take your word that there will actually be concrete action. I can't do that.

It is not that you're a dishonourable person. It's just that I'm dealing with six or seven other people on the other side of this table who haven't been able to see eye to eye with us on this side of the table today after four or five hours of debate. Yet you're asking me to assume this wonderful optimism, that somehow we're going to resolve this and that I'm going to be surprised at the result we have on Wednesday. I can't. I'm sorry. I'm just not at the point where I'm going to make those kinds of assumptions.

However, if you do surprise me, if we get through this and you do surprise me on Wednesday, kudos to you. But I'm not prepared to make that assumption.

Getting to the friendly amendment that my friend has reminded me of, here I'm going to go to the Bloc, because I sense that the members of the Bloc, Mr. Laframboise and Mr. Carrier, are saying that they do want to bring this to some sort of closure eventually.

You don't like the fixed times.

Mr. Jean had said one hour, or two hours, or five hours or twelve hours, whatever it was. I'm prepared to make a friendly amendment, Mr. Chair, a subamendment to Mr. Jean's.

**The Chair:** It would be a subamendment to the amendment

**Mr. Ed Fast:** Yes. The subamendment would be that in Mr. Jean's reference to fixed time—there was a range of times—replace 5:30 with reference to the fact that this committee would not rise on Wednesday until such time as my motion and Mr. Volpe's amendment had been voted on, unless there was unanimous consent of this committee.

**Mr. Brian Jean:** Or such other motion as may be brought forward by any of the members in relation to international remailers.

**Mr. Ed Fast:** Yes, but it would be unanimous. So in other words, this meeting would be suspended until Wednesday. Once we start that meeting, this committee won't rise until such time as we've made that decision on the main motion and Mr. Volpe's amendment or on such other motion as may be passed unanimously by this committee.

I believe that's reasonable, because what we're doing is saying that we want to bring closure to this, we want to bring this to an end, this discussion, and we'll spend whatever time it takes to get to that.

Now, if you refuse that friendly amendment—that subamendment to Mr. Jean's amendment—what you're telling us is that you're quite prepared to have this drag on and on and on. I don't think that's what Mr. Laframboise or Mr. Carrier want to do. I know that Mr. Volpe

doesn't want to do that. He'd like to deal with it tonight. As to the rest of you, I don't know. I'm hoping there's more goodwill here than I'm assuming.

● (2050)

**The Chair:** I'm just getting some advice from the clerk on this subamendment. Do you want to wait until I get it technically written out, Mr. Volpe?

**Hon. Joseph Volpe:** Mr. Chairman, I think we have gone on now for about two and a half hours on matters that have been under discussion.

I feel compelled, for me and for members on this side—I hope I'm not offending anybody on a partisan basis by saying this—to reinforce what I said earlier on as to the position of the members on this side of the table with respect to arriving at a solution. I think it's worth repeating that members from three different parties, who have different positions and different approaches, took the initiative presented to them by the parliamentary secretary in an off-table discussion and said, "We can work with this. Let's offer them the opportunity to deal with this matter as expeditiously as possible and cooperate with them in establishing a motion that would reflect that in wording that would be legally proper, procedurally correct, and satisfying to us." But the first two were the operative terms.

For three different parties and members of my party—who have positions that seem to be completely different—to come to this point was really quite something. So when I offered up a suspension of the debate—and I know I'm repeating this, it's at least the fourth time I've said it—it was because I felt that the motion that would come forward at the next sitting of this committee would reflect the input of the government members as well.

That, for me, would have been a motion that would have made all the others redundant and would have made everything else moot. I don't know where, in the last two and a half hours, we lost that train of thought. I hesitate to say that it was when there was an amendment to the motion, but—

**Mr. Brian Jean:** Point of order, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** Point of order, Mr. Jean.

**Mr. Brian Jean:** Just to be clear, Mr. Chair, this point of order deals with—Any offer made had an end to it, and we haven't heard the end. What's the end?

**The Chair:** That's not a point of order.

Continue, Mr. Volpe.

**Hon. Joseph Volpe:** As I said, we were trying to put parameters on it. We had had some discussions about whether we were going to be able to resume debate on Monday or whether we were going to do it on Wednesday in order to accommodate schedules. Members on this side are every bit as concerned about the livelihoods of people who work for remailers and the livelihoods of remailers themselves and about the viability of those corporations.

That's the spirit in which we entered this. I must say that I'm a little surprised that this wasn't the position that was accepted immediately. And I thank Mr. Fast for recognizing that I was willing to be very helpful on this issue on a position on which I thought we were pretty close. I mean, after all, I moved an amendment to his motion, and he accepted it as a friendly amendment. But I think we run the risk, Mr. Chairman, of losing all the opportunities we have developed over the course of the last couple of hours by continuing this discussion.

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

Just on Mr. Fast's subamendment, it can be in order if the committee agrees to set a time limit on itself. It's a debatable motion. Basically what Mr. Fast's subamendment is saying, on top of Mr. Jean's original motion that all three votes take place on or before 5:30, is that the committee shall not rise until all motions are disposed of at the end of business Wednesday. Now, that is open for debate.

Am I correct?

• (2055)

**Mr. Ed Fast:** Not on Wednesday; I never referred to Wednesday.

**The Chair:** Okay, I'm sorry.

**Mr. Ed Fast:** The committee shall not rise until the issue is disposed of.

And when we're talking about the issue, we're talking about—

**The Chair:** All of the motions, yes. So that would include Mr. Bélanger's motion, the amendment, and your motion.

**Mr. Ed Fast:** And include any further motions.

**The Chair:** Or any motion with unanimous consent—or just with consent? I'm just wanting the committee to be very clear on what we're debating here.

Is that understandable then? Does everyone understand what the subamendment is saying, that basically all motions and amendments on the floor today will be dealt with at the end of the Wednesday meeting, whatever time that happens to be? Or if there's an agreement on a separate motion by all members, it would supersede the motions and amendments we have before us.

**Mr. Brian Jean:** To be clear, it would be the motions that would be brought forward dealing with remainders. Those would not be unanimous motions, as I don't think we're going to find unanimity

anywhere in this. But the issue of remailing will be dealt with: we can only be pro or con on that, because those are the only two issues here.

**Mr. Ed Fast:** It cannot be superseded by any other motion to adjourn or to suspend.

**Mr. Brian Jean:** Then we'd be frustrating this. We're going to deal with it on Wednesday one way or another.

**The Chair:** It would be inadmissible to say that in a motion; we cannot put those kinds of limitations on that.

**Hon. Joseph Volpe:** We haven't even seen the motion.

**The Chair:** That motion, as understandable as it is, is open for debate.

Do you want me to continue with the conversation while we're drafting this?

I'd better check with Mr. Fast. Can we continue with debate, or would you want to wait until the subamendment is done?

**Mr. Ed Fast:** I'd like to wait until the subamendment is done.

• (2100)

**The Chair:** Then I'll read it into the record. Fair ball, because that will be what we're debating.

The original motion was that the committee suspend debate until Wednesday, and it was amended by Mr. Jean basically to the effect that all motions would be voted on by 5:30. That has been subamended by Mr. Fast, so that we replace Mr. Jean's amendment with, "and that the committee not rise until all existing motions and any new motions dealing with remainders are disposed of".

Does everyone understand that?

So we are now debating the subamendment.

Mr. Bagnell.

**Hon. Larry Bagnell:** I move that we adjourn the meeting.

**The Chair:** This is a non-debatable motion, which basically moves everything that has been moved or amended or subamended this afternoon off the table.

(Motion agreed to)

**The Chair:** The meeting is adjourned until Monday at 3:30.





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