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## Standing Committee on Official Languages

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**Tuesday, March 11, 2008**

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**Chair**

Mr. Steven Blaney

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Tuesday, March 11, 2008

• (0905)

[Translation]

**The Chair (Mr. Steven Blaney (Lévis—Bellechasse, CPC)):** Good morning and welcome to this 20th meeting of the Standing Committee on Official Languages. Welcome to committee members, to our witness this morning, and to all those people who contribute to the work this committee does. This morning, we are embarking upon a new stage in this committee's business as we completed and adopted, at the last meeting, the report on the Official Languages Action Plan, more specifically the public service and language industry components.

Mr. Corbeil, I would like to thank you for having accepted the committee's last-minute invitation.

Before going any further, I simply want to inform members of the committee as to the substance of the last meeting of our steering committee, which took place last Thursday. I'm going to call on the clerk to distribute the proposed schedule for the upcoming meetings. Our committee has made plans covering the next 21 meetings, which would take us to the end of the spring parliamentary session, in other words right up to summer. If you have any questions or comments, we can deal with those later because we have a witness before us this morning.

For the time being, I'd simply like to give you the broad brush strokes. Basically, the committee decided on two major subjects for consideration over the upcoming weeks: first, the Canada-Communities Agreements, and then a study on youth and post-secondary education. Our agreed-upon approach will be to slot in a number of meetings on specific issues, such as the one we are dealing with this morning concerning Statistics Canada, and any other topics which appear on the proposed schedule.

Before starting, Mr. Bélanger has a comment to make. Then I'd like us to move on to a dialogue with our witness. This morning, we are fortunate to have before us Mr. Corbeil who is a senior specialist in the Language Statistics Section and he is going to give us a long-awaited overview. I think we had invited you last fall and you weren't available, but this morning, you're here with us in the flesh, and I'm sure that committee members will have several questions to ask you.

But to begin with, we'll hear from Mr. Bélanger.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger (Ottawa—Vanier, Lib.):** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have taken a look at the proposed schedule and noted that Mr. Bernard Lord's name isn't there, despite the fact that I thought we had suggested inviting him to appear before the

committee. Could you tell us a little about what is happening, Mr. Chairman?

**The Chair:** I spoke briefly with the clerk this morning. I've been told that Mr. Lord was invited, but that for the time being, he hasn't indicated when he'll be available. I'll consult with the clerk on this and get back to you with more precise information on Thursday.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** The clerk told me that Mr. Lord declined our invitation. I wanted to check if that was indeed the case and, if it is, I may have a proposal to make with respect to this.

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

**Mr. Daniel Petit (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC):** I'd like to know why the clerk is communicating directly with my colleague Mr. Mauril Bélanger—although I have nothing against that—and why I am not aware of this. He said that he already knows that Mr. Lord does not want to come. I didn't even know this. Why wasn't the committee told about this?

I'm not blaming you, Mr. Bélanger, I just want to know why you know his response.

**The Chair:** That's a point of order. It's a procedural matter; so we will clarify that. I imagine that the clerk informs the committee members of any developments.

What's the usual procedure, Mr. Clerk?

• (0910)

**The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Graeme Truelove):** If a member asks me a question in committee, I will answer him. And that is what happened this morning in Mr. Bélanger's case before the meeting started.

**The Chair:** I see. I think that clears things up.

Mr. Petit?

**Mr. Daniel Petit:** I thought the clerk would provide everyone with the response. Under the circumstances, I may have reacted in the same way as Mr. Bélanger.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** That's why I asked the question, and everybody got to hear the answer.

**Mr. Daniel Petit:** If, in the future, he gives answers in private, then I'll make arrangements with him. But it's not right.

**The Chair:** It's preferable that all committee members be informed at the same time of any decisions relating to invitations.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** Could you start by answering my question?

**The Chair:** As I said earlier, when I met with Mr. Graeme this morning, after you, he told me that Mr. Lord had not communicated his availability to come and testify before the committee. That's why his name does not appear in the orders of the day.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** Mr. Chair, I asked the clerk, who is seated beside me, if he'd received a response, and I'd like the clerk to share this response with everyone. In fact, Mr. Lord declined the invitation.

Am I correct, or not, in thinking that?

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, CPC):** On a point of order, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** What is it, Mr. Lemieux?

Mr. Mulcair, you're still on my list.

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux:** Who decided to invite him?

**The Chair:** The steering committee.

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux:** Normally, recommendations from the steering committee need to be approved by the full committee. The steering committee cannot issue an invitation by itself. That is my point of order. The steering committee needs to present a report to the committee, which discusses and may accept any recommendations. The invitation extended to Mr. Lord, or to Statistics Canada, today, for that matter, is not really in order because the committee did not agree to proceed in this fashion.

I don't agree with the current process whereby the steering committee decides upon future business and determines who the witnesses will be. The committee must discuss such matters.

**The Chair:** I accept your point of order because the steering committee is comprised of members of the committee, and it is therefore customary for the steering committee to have its decisions approved by the committee.

I'll now hear from Mr. Mulcair.

So, in closing, Mr. Bélanger, I will revisit this issue. I was thinking of possibly setting aside some time to take a look at the agenda and the invitations that have been issued.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** Mr. Chair, I didn't get an answer to my question. The clerk told me, and I'd like him to confirm this, that Mr. Lord declined our invitation.

**The Chair:** Mr. Bélanger, I told you that as things stand this morning, Mr. Lord's name does not appear on the list. However, this list will have to be approved by the committee. Thursday morning, first thing, we will have an opportunity to approve the committee's future business. This morning, we have set aside time to listen to our witness.

Does that answer your question, Mr. Bélanger, yes or no?

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** No, it doesn't.

**The Chair:** Well, that's how I want to proceed because I don't want to have our witness wait any longer.

Mr. Mulcair, the floor is yours.

**Mr. Thomas Mulcair (Outremont, , NDP):** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

What a pleasure it is to have the floor after several people have already spoken. I simply wanted to support my colleague Mr. Bélanger's reaction. I am stunned that Mr. Lord has responded in this way and, unlike your Conservative colleagues who won't stop questioning your authority, I am going to back you up, because I was actually at the meeting when the decision was made to invite Mr. Lord. It was a decision made legally by the body in question.

In any event, if some members do want to address the matter immediately, I would strongly suggest that we do this, because I find it outrageous that Bernard Lord would submit the first draft of his report to the government, undoubtedly for editorial purposes, and that he would refuse to come before elected representatives. He is not an elected member of the House of Commons. He should, at the very least, have had little respect for this parliamentary institution.

On behalf of the NDP, I insist that Mr. Lord must appear before this committee. And in this regard, I am confirming a decision which was made here legally last week.

●(0915)

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

At the end of this meeting, if you recall, we talked about the possibility of discussing the proposed schedule, and I suggested that the members of the steering committee allocate some time to a discussion of the agenda. And that is what we're going to do. Unfortunately, it won't be possible this morning because we have to hear from a witness. This question is not, therefore, on the orders of the day, but on Thursday morning, in the first hour, we'll have an opportunity to discuss current business and to outline our schedule.

Without further ado, I'm going to hear your point of order. Then, I'd like to hear from our witness. As you're aware, Mr. Corbeil has important information he'd like to share with us. Right up until yesterday, we were not even sure he would be appearing. We'll set aside some time on Thursday morning. So in 48 hours, we'll revisit this issue and address the matter of witnesses, invitations, etc.

We'll now hear Mr. Bélanger's point of order. Then, I'd like us to welcome our witness.

Mr. Bélanger, you have the floor.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** I don't make this a habit, Mr. Chairman.

You said that Mr. Lemieux was right, and that the committee must first approve the schedule proposal and that Mr. Corbeil, with all due respect to him, is not necessarily a witness we should be hearing from, because his appearance is in fact unauthorized. That's what Mr. Lemieux said, and you told him he was right. It is my opinion that we should discuss the proposed schedule, and that would include Mr. Lord's appearance.

I absolutely must have an answer to my question. The clerk told me this, Mr. Chairman. Out of courtesy and politeness, this information should be shared with everyone. He said to me—and I'm sorry to put you in a delicate situation; it's certainly not my intention to do so—that Mr. Lord declined our invitation, and not that he simply did not give a date when he would be available. He declined. And if that's true, the committee should, in my opinion, act. Did he decline the invitation, or didn't he?

**The Chair:** If I've understood correctly, that is what he has done initially. As Chairman, I want to make sure with the clerk that all necessary steps will have been taken once our schedule is established because I know the committee will want to hear from certain witnesses.

I haven't had any time to see my clerk. I arrived last night at 9:00 p.m., because of the storm. So I will come back to this on Thursday morning in our first hour.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** Can we let him speak?

**The Chair:** That's what he told me, it's straightforward.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** Can we hear what he has to say?

**An hon. member:** You said it was okay, Mr. Chairman.

**The Chair:** It's straightforward. He said that Mr. Lord, initially, did not appear to have indicated when he'd be available, then he apparently declined the invitation.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** No.

**A voice:** No, no.

**The Chair:** Is that right, Mr. Clerk?

**A voice:** Let him speak please.

**A voice:** Mr. Chairman?

**The Chairman:** Hold on a second. I don't want this to fall apart. I think we're getting off topic.

**A voice:** It's simple, we want to know...

**The Chairman:** Go ahead, Mr. Clerk.

**Mr. Daniel Petit:** We're currently discussing something which should be discussed in camera. Either we sit in camera, or the debate is public. If the debate remains public, I'd ask that the clerk not testify from his seat. He'll have to go and testify over there because what he said is serious. Don't forget they want to send a subpoena, and as a result, his testimony would become the very basis for summoning Mr. Bernard Lord to testify. That's what I want to know. There's a big difference between saying that you decline an invitation and indicating that you don't have any availability. The NDP wants to have him appear. We're no longer talking about the same thing.

**The Chair:** I will authorize one final comment. I'm going to ask the clerk...

I'll accept two comments, from Mr. Lemieux and Mr. Nadeau. Now, Mr. Clerk, do you have anything to add? Can you talk about the invitations in public or does this have to be done in camera?

The clerk has informed me that to discuss these things, we must be sitting in camera. So I have my answer.

Without further ado, since we're not sitting in camera, we'll proceed with hearing from our witness. On Thursday morning, we will take up where we left off in camera. If you like, we can take a break. I want us to proceed with hearing from our witness.

• (0920)

**Mr. Richard Nadeau (Gatineau, BQ):** Mr. Chairman, I understand your wish and I'm sorry—

**The Chair:** The steering committee invited the witness.

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** It's the committee. That is a subcommittee of the committee—

**The Chair:** Mr. Nadeau, your name is on my list of speakers; I'll recognize you. Then I would urge committee members to be smart about this and welcome our witness. We're lucky to have him here today. On Thursday morning, we'll discuss all that in camera. And we'll ask the clerk all the questions you wish.

Mr. Nadeau, the floor is yours.

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** Mr. Chairman, I would like to move a motion. My motion is quite simply that the committee invite Mr. Bernard Lord again...

**A voice:** We're off topic.

**The Chair:** Mr. Nadeau.

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** Can I continue?

**The Chair:** Yes, you can.

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** I move that the committee invite Mr. Bernard Lord back to sit before the committee to answer the committee's questions. So there you have it.

**The Chair:** Mr. Nadeau, since we don't have any current business this morning and since this period has been set aside to listen to a witness, I'm willing to accept your motion, but I'm going to ask you for 48 hours' notice.

We'll take a five-minute break. When we get back, we'll hear from the witness. Thank you.

- \_\_\_\_\_ (Pause) \_\_\_\_\_
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- (0925)

**The Chair:** Welcome back, everyone. Without further ado, we'll hear from our witness, Mr. Corbeil.

Mr. Bélanger, on a point of order.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** Mr. Chairman, I understand you wanting to listen to the witness, and we have time to do that this morning. However, the logic is flawed. Mr. Lemieux said that we were not entitled to hear from the witness this morning because the proposed schedule has not been agreed to. So, I'm going to propose that—

**The Chair:** Mr. Bélanger, your point of order is denied because the steering committee and the Chairman are within their rights to call witnesses. And the witness is here, so, we'll hear from him. Thank you.

Mr. Corbeil, the floor is yours.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** No, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** Mr. Bélanger, we have a witness. I refuse your point of order.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** Mr. Chair, I'm going to have to appeal your ruling. Unfortunately, you're forcing us into this. We're trying to get through this and get information. You have forbidden the clerk from giving us an answer, after he was attacked by Mr. Petit. So, under the circumstances, I'm going to have to challenge your ruling.

**The Chair:** Mr. Bélanger, to begin with, the clerk told me that he cannot comment on business during a public meeting, because this is a matter to be dealt with in camera.

This is the first time this has happened to me. I'm fine with this, Mr. Bélanger, but I don't know how this works. Is this the kind of thing that is going to make us waste time and mean that we won't get to hear from our witness?

• (0930)

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** No, Mr. Chair, it isn't.

**The Chair:** Since this is the first time this has happened to me, I'm going to call on Graeme to explain the procedure.

[*English*]

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux:** On a point of order, you can only challenge a ruling. There hasn't been a ruling. I didn't hear him say "I rule..."; I didn't hear him say "I give a ruling". I heard him say that the order of the day was to have Statistics Canada as a witness. We have Statistics Canada as a witness. He is simply proceeding with the order of the day; it's not a ruling, and you can't challenge something that's not a ruling.

Chair, I would say that you're within your rights. We have a witness; let's listen to the witness. You've already identified Thursday morning as when we're going to talk about committee business. Any motions dealing with committee business are out of order today. You need 48 hours to put forward a motion, because that is not the order of the day. The order of the day is not committee business; the order of the day is Statistics Canada, whether they like it or not. That's what's printed. That's what's in front of each one of us today.

You're quite right to say that we should proceed with the witness, and so we should. If we're going to break into a battle, I suggest that we go in camera so that we can discuss this properly as a committee. But if we're not going in camera, then we should commence with the witness. We've asked the witness to come. We have a witness in front of us and this is the order of the day. It's the business of the day.

[*Translation*]

**The Chair:** I'm going to ask for the clerk's opinion because I do not know what the procedure is. I want to remind committee members that there is a witness on today's agenda. He's been waiting for 30 minutes to testify. We still have an hour and a half left, and we can still deal with this issue from all angles. As I said earlier, this isn't a promise, but I don't see anything wrong with setting aside some time on Thursday to debate the committee business in camera. In any event, this is what we would normally do, because we want to plan the next 21 meetings; so we have to have some kind of discussion.

I'm going to ask the clerk's opinion because I'm a bit at a loss as to what the procedure is. We can debate this for an hour and a half, but I think it would be a pity to miss out on hearing from our witness.

**Mr. Thomas Mulcair:** He just challenged your authority. You have to call a vote.

**The Chair:** We'll ask the clerk if this proposal is actually in order, because I am not aware of what to do under the circumstances.

Mr. Clerk, the floor is yours.

[*English*]

**The Clerk:** A motion to challenge a ruling of the chair is put automatically, without debate or amendment.

[*Translation*]

**The Chair:** So, there is no debate.

[*English*]

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux:** He's proceeding with the order of the day; that's not a ruling.

[*Translation*]

**The Chair:** Hold on a second, the clerk is trying to explain the procedure. Please, can we avoid multiple discussions? We already have enough work as it is. I'd ask you to show a little discipline.

I'll defer to my clerk's opinion. He's telling me that Mr. Bélanger is challenging the chair's ruling to hear the witness. So we'll put it to a vote. This is not debatable.

Is it the will of members of the committee that the ruling to hear the witness this morning be upheld? Those for? Those against?

(The chair's ruling is overturned)

**The Chair:** I don't want to have the witness sitting twiddling his thumbs for nothing. I'm prepared to accept your challenge, but I think that the witness wants to get moving.

So what are we doing?

Mr. Nadeau, you have the floor.

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** I'll let Mr. Bélanger speak.

**The Chair:** I have Mr. Nadeau on my list, then Mr. Mulcair and Mr. Harvey. If you have anything to say, please let the clerk know.

Go ahead, Mr. Nadeau.

• (0935)

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** Mr. Chair, I just want to make sure, as far as the steering committee's proposed schedule is concerned, that this will be addressed, and that you will invite Mr. Bernard Lord again to testify before the committee.

So, I'd like to move a motion, and I'd like you to report back on this on Thursday, in two days.

**The Chair:** Mr. Lemieux wants to raise a point of order.

[*English*]

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux:** The point of order is that Statistics Canada is the order of today; it's not committee business.

It's fine for Monsieur Nadeau to make a motion, as we all like to make motions, but his motion is not acceptable, because we need 48 hours' notice for a motion like his, as we are not discussing committee business today. It's fine that Monsieur Nadeau wants to make the motion. Give us 48 hours' notice, put it in both official languages, and then we can discuss your motion at the next meeting.

The order of today is Statistics Canada, not committee business. If you want to have committee business, it's already been made clear, *monsieur le président*, that committee business will be discussed on Thursday. That gives Monsieur Nadeau his 48 hours' notice to put forward a motion.

I'm getting a little fed up with the way this committee works, in making up its own rules as it goes along.

[*Translation*]

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

I accept Mr. Lemieux's point of order.

Mr. Nadeau, what I was trying to say to you earlier, is that today, in the orders of the day, we had planned on hearing from a witness. And this won't happen. I understand your position. At the steering committee's meeting, all the committee members said they wanted to meet with Mr. Lord, as I explained right from the outset this morning. I was counting on committee members' good faith because, indeed, initially, Mr. Lord did not seem to indicate his availability. I'll remind you that I prefer to discuss certain matters in camera. And that's true of the agenda for future business. Furthermore, I said that I was going to check with my clerk and get back to you on Thursday. Our in camera meeting will give us an opportunity to clear things up and work out the 21 meetings ahead of us.

I'll entertain your motion, but I'd ask you for 48 hours' notice.

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** Mr. Chair...

**The Chair:** There you have it. Is that clear, Mr. Nadeau? Are you following me?

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** No, it is not clear because a couple of minutes ago, we voted on a motion to uphold your proposal to hear immediately from the witness. But that motion was defeated. So I would like to suggest something new, and that is that the committee focus forthwith on a matter it has entrusted you with, and that is to have you represent the committee and invite Mr. Lord again to take part in our future business.

What Mr. Lemieux is saying doesn't make any sense, since the proposal was defeated earlier.

**The Chair:** It is an unusual procedural matter. So, while the witness has an opportunity to reflect on our committee business, I'll call on the clerk to give me some clarification on this matter.

I've been told, Mr. Nadeau, that there's no need for notice to determine what the committee is going to do. For the moment, the committee still has not decided what it is going to do. All it has decided, for now, is that it is not going to hear from the witness we have before us, Mr. Corbeil, whom I would like to thank for having accepted our invitation. If it's the will of committee members, we won't be hearing from the witness this morning, but we will not have him sit here twiddling his thumbs for no reason, either.

• (0940)

[*English*]

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux:** On a point of order, if we're going to get into committee business, we should be moving in camera—it's that simple.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** Mr. Chair, it would really be very simple for us to put this to a vote, and get back to the business at hand.

**The Chair:** Mr. Nadeau, there are a lot of people speaking at once, and the chair can't hear anything.

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** My microphone was on. So, I thought it was okay to speak, so I'll repeat what I had to say now.

I move that the motion be put to a vote, which will give us some direction as to what to do then we can get back to the task at hand, which includes listening to Mr. Corbeil.

**The Chair:** Usually, you entertain points of order.

So, I'll hand the floor over to Mr. Harvey.

**Mr. Luc Harvey (Louis-Hébert, CPC):** Mr. Chair, it's quite simple. When a motion is moved, the motion must deal with the subject being dealt with on that day. Otherwise, there is a requirement for 48 hours' notice for the motion to be in order. Now, the topic in the orders of the day is an analysis of the 2006 census. Therefore, a 48-hour notice is required for any other motion which does not deal with this subject. Now, I'm referring to the rules that we adopted in the first meeting of our official languages committee.

So, quite simply, the motion is out of order. Let's now turn to the orders of the day. You said that we'd come back to the official languages committee's proposed schedule on Thursday morning. And that's it.

Mr. Mulcair, you're interrupting my point of order.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** He has the microphone, Mr. Mulcair.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Thomas Mulcair:** Mr. Chairman, I would like to raise a procedural question. I should have been able to speak before the two others. I demand that you give me the floor.

**The Chair:** Mr. Mulcair, other members have asked to speak and have raised points of order.

**Mr. Thomas Mulcair:** I also have a point of order.

**The Chair:** I have already agreed to hear from Mr. Harvey.

**Mr. Thomas Mulcair:** But according to what you had announced, I was supposed to speak before him.

**The Chair:** I will consult with the clerk and then suggest how to move forward.

As for the issue raised by Mr. Harvey, the committee—

**Mr. Luc Harvey:** I was still on my point of order, Mr. Chairman.

**The Chair:** I understand. I still want to consult with the clerk because I want to know where things stand. Okay?

[*English*]

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux:** If you're going to consult with the clerk, turn off your microphone.

[*Translation*]

**The Chair:** I would like committee members to listen to what I have to say; I think it could be of use.

I simply want to remind you that we have decided not to hear from our witness, but that we have no items on the agenda.

Is that so, Mr. Clerk?

[English]

**The Clerk:** My advice is that the effect of having overruled the decision of the chair meant that there wasn't immediately an order of the day, and therefore the floor would be open for a member to move to an order of the day.

To move to an order of the day or to move in camera are motions that don't require notice. They're non-debatable and non-amendable as well.

[Translation]

**The Chair:** Okay. Excuse me. Just a moment, Mr. Mulcair.

Does Mr. Nadeau's motion require a 48-hour notice?

**Some hon. members:** No, it is on the orders of the day.

**The Chair:** As the clerk has indicated to me, we would first have to determine what the committee wants to do and then come back to the work at hand.

**Mr. Luc Harvey:** Mr. Chairman, I had not finished my point of order.

I do want to point out that members from all parties on the steering committee agreed to meet with the Statistics Canada officials.

• (0945)

**The Chair:** Mr. Harvey, we already debated that issue. I cannot accept your point of order regarding the agenda because Statistics Canada is no longer on the orders of the day. We will not hear from the witness, and for the time being, there is no item on the orders of the day. The decision has just been overturned by committee members. Okay? If you have no other comments, I will give the floor to Mr. Lemieux. Let us try to move things forward.

We will hear from Mr. Lemieux, then Mr. Mulcair.

[English]

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux:** Yes. I have a couple of things to say.

The first is that the only thing you were overruled on was actually moving to listening to our witness when you said so. It doesn't mean that's no longer the order of the day. You were just overruled. You said "Let us move to the witness now", and you were overruled on moving to the witness now. That doesn't mean you cannot move to the witness in five minutes.

In fact, Monsieur Nadeau said the same thing. He said we could discuss this and then we could get back to the witness. So we have not changed the order of the day.

The second thing is that at the beginning of this year, as a committee, we said 48 hours' notice is required for motions not pertinent to the order of the day. You cannot in the middle of the meeting redefine the order of the day, because if you did, you'd never need 48 hours. You could always just change the order of the day, drop your motion on the table, and change the order of the day back again.

As far as I'm concerned, our committee today is in disorder. We're not even able to get out of the starting blocks. We've invited a witness. We have a witness in front of us. We cannot listen to him. You're being challenged on your.... It's not even a ruling. You're

being challenged to move in accordance with the order of the day. How can you be challenged on that? That's not a ruling.

A ruling would be if you said we're not moving with the orders of the day. Now that's a ruling. It's not a ruling of the day to say I'm going to follow the order of the day, because that is the order of the day. We have a witness, and it's the order of the day. So as far as I'm concerned, the whole challenging of the chair was out of order, because they're only challenging what's on the paper, which is the order of the day.

That's why I'm saying this meeting is in disorder right now. I think this whole meeting should be adjourned and we should pick it up again on Thursday, because we're not even in *huis-clos* and we're fighting about business. The opposition has moved this meeting into disorder. At the beginning of the meeting we had an order of the day and it was very clear: listen to a witness. That's all it was. Then they started discussing committee business not in *huis-clos*, not in camera, and they will not drop the subject. They overruled you on a ruling that you did not make, and now they're putting on more pressure, and we can't get anything done here.

This is extraordinary. I've never seen this on any other committee, and now they're saying in the middle of the meeting that they can actually overrule the order of the day, change the order of the day, so they can get around the 48-hour notice for motions. This is pandemonium, and the only reason they're able to get away with it is because there are seven of them against four. This is unheard of.

We're in disorder right now. We're not able to proceed. We're going against the actual written orders of the day. We should adjourn this meeting, and we should pick it up again on Thursday, when the order of the day will be to discuss committee business.

I'm sorry for the witness. We've called him here. He's taken time out of his schedule, but I think the witness sees we're unable—

**An hon. member:** Point of order.

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux:** No, I'm still on my point of order.

I think the witnesses can clearly see that this committee is not functioning today. I think anyone in this room can see that the committee is not functioning today.

[Translation]

**The Chair:** Mr. Lemieux, I will—

[English]

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux:** We should end the meeting and pull it back on Thursday. All the opposition wants to discuss is committee business; we can't discuss committee business because we're not in *huis clos*, and even if we were in *huis clos*, we cannot accept any motions without 48 hours' notice. That's what we decided as a committee. We voted on it in the very first meeting.

[Translation]

**The Chair:** Very well. Mr. Lemieux, I will accept your first point of order. You are correct. Mr. Lemieux is right about that issue, honourable colleagues; we decided not to hear from the witness just now, but that item is still on the orders of the day. It has been postponed. I would like to give you my understanding of the situation.



Second, a 48-hour notice is required, Mr. Lemieux, for issues that are not related to the work at hand.

Third, you suggested that we adjourn the meeting, but that is up to committee members to decide.

There are two other points of order, one from Mr. Mulcair and the other from Mr. Bélanger. I would like to point out to members that if they are related to committee business, we should perhaps continue our discussion in camera.

**Mr. Thomas Mulcair:** Mr. Chairman, I do believe I am entitled to speak. Now that you have given so much time to one of your colleagues, I hope you will extend the same courtesy to me.

**Mr. Daniel Petit:** You can speak for an hour, if you wish to do so.

**Mr. Thomas Mulcair:** First of all, allow me to suggest that, from now on, instead of saying “*point d'ordre*,” which is an anglicism and a literal translation of *point of order*, we should rather use the term “*rappel au règlement*.” That would be a step in the right direction by our parliamentary committee. As well, rather than use the term “*comité*” in French, we should use the term “*commission*.” But that is something we could consider at a future date.

Furthermore, the agenda clearly states that: “Pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), study of the analysis of the 2006 census.” There are witnesses and that is the item on the orders of the day. The opposition side had a question from the outset. Things could have ended there; Mr. Bélanger asked a very simple question.

In passing, I apologize, on behalf of the NDP, that the clerk was used as a blunt instrument in a dispute between parliamentarians. The clerk does not take sides. We can rattle on all we like, but I find it unworthy of us to use a member of the standing committee staff, someone whom we are very proud of and on whom we depend, to settle our scores.

I would like to add that, at the start of the meeting, we simply tried to find out where Bernard Lord was. Where is Waldo? We only wanted to know whether he would appear, whether he was hiding out with Godot and whether we would see him or not. The answer was: “we don't know”, go figure. That is the bilingual answer we received. He drafted a report, which was first given to the minister. It has not been made public. The report is nowhere to be found, as is the case with the minister.

**A voice:** I have a point of order.

**Mr. Thomas Mulcair:** We are on my point of order. You allowed your colleague Mr. Lemieux to speak, so you will have to hear me out.

• (0950)

**The Chair:** I would please ask you to get to the gist of your point of order.

**Mr. Thomas Mulcair:** Very well. We will not be hearing from the witness who is scheduled to testify because you have just been told that we were not ready to hear from him today.

**The Chair:** We will therefore ask him to leave.

**Mr. Thomas Mulcair:** Indeed. You are right, the decision was made. According to today's agenda, we are to hear from a witness. I am therefore talking about the witnesses. The issue I am addressing

concerns our witnesses. I support the position of Messrs. Nadeau and Bélanger whereby under the rubric “Witnesses”—and we don't need a 48-hour notice to do this—we should find the name of Bernard Lord.

**The Chair:** What you are raising is a point of debate and is not a point of order, because, as you clearly indicated, we are dealing with the census. As the chairman, I do not see a link between the proposed witness and the census. I would like to remind you that on Thursday, that is in less than 48 hours, the committee will be meeting in camera to discuss committee business, and we will be able to discuss these issues at length, as is our custom.

Now, I would like to move on to Mr. Bélanger for a third point of order. Perhaps we will then be able to hear from our witness. Thank you.

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

With all due respect Mr. Chairman, at the start of the meeting, you had the clerk hand out two proposed timetables: one in French and one in English. It was once that information was handed out that questions were raised about Mr. Lord's appearance. All that committee members are asking for—on this side at least, I believe—is that Mr. Lord be invited again. I simply asked for some information from the clerk, and he confirmed that Mr. Lord had declined our invitation. Let's do that and then hear from our witness. It is as simple as that.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to point out that this is a follow-up to the proposed schedule you distributed. You did not distribute it in camera, but during a public meeting of our committee, as suggested by the steering committee. There is only one omission; the rest seems to be fine, Mr. Chairman. If we agreed to amend the proposed schedule and invite Mr. Lord back, we could quickly take a vote and would still have a full hour to hear from our witness this morning. I am doing this in all sincerity so that we can move committee business forward following your decision to hand out the proposed schedule. You made that decision, Mr. Chairman.

**The Chair:** There are many points of order.

What is your point?

• (0955)

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** You handed out the proposed schedule. However, committee members had asked for Mr. Lord to appear, and that invitation was not included in the schedule. Committee members on this side of the table are willing to support Mr. Nadeau's motion, that is to invite Mr. Lord again and continue committee work. It is as simple as that.

**The Chair:** Mr. Bélanger, I agree with you, except that today, committee business is not on the orders of the day. If I handed out the document, it was so that all committee members could read it and begin thinking about the next 21 meetings and, if everyone agrees, discuss that at our next meeting, which will be on committee business. Regarding your information on Mr. Lord... I would prefer discussing that in camera. That is all, Mr. Bélanger.

Are there any other points of order?

**Mr. Pablo Rodriguez (Honoré-Mercier, Lib.):** Yes, I have a point of order on that issue.

**The Chair:** I will ask the clerk where we are at with our points of order. There are points of order from Messrs. Rodriguez, Petit and Lemieux.

Mr. Rodriguez.

**Mr. Pablo Rodriguez:** With all due respect, Mr. Chairman, it is not you who decided to give us that list, it is the steering committee who mandated you to do so. You will recall, we met last week, agreed to do that and said that we would hand the document out to the committee. You are simply doing your work. You are following the directives of the Subcommittee on Agenda and Procedure of the Standing Committee on Official Languages. You have done what we asked you to do: you handed out the list.

It is our habit, Mr. Chairman, that we ratify the decisions of the subcommittee at the next full committee meeting. We therefore had to discuss that today.

**The Chair:** Mr. Rodriguez, it is interesting that you raise that point because I have just asked members of the steering committee to set aside half an hour to discuss that issue. You yourself told me that that was not necessary, because you thought that it would all be a formality. This morning, we are finding out that it is important to discuss this with committee members, although it was not scheduled on the orders of the day. We will be discussing this during the first hour of our meeting on Thursday.

Are there any other points of order?

**Mr. Pablo Rodriguez:** Yes.

**The Chairman:** What is your point of order?

**Mr. Pablo Rodriguez:** It is about the way the committee works, about what should be on the orders of the day.

**The Chair:** For the moment, we have a witness on our orders of the day. The orders of the day were sent out 48 hours ago.

**Mr. Pablo Rodriguez:** I said that we would not be discussing it for half an hour, because we do not need to discuss it so long. We met for an hour before to discuss this, otherwise, we can dissolve the committee. What I did say, however, is that we will be tabling that and informing committee members. So you did your job today. You did nothing special. You did what we asked you to do at the last meeting—namely to give members a copy of the decisions made by the steering committee. That has been done. That's it. We have been informed. If the gentleman is supposed to be here, he is supposed to be here, and that is all, but we did our job.

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

**Mr. Pablo Rodriguez:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**The Chairman:** Mr. Lemieux.

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux:** Thank you. I would like to put forward a motion that the committee hear from the witness.

[English]

I'm putting forward this motion because this is what is on the orders of the day. The 48 hours' notice is not required for this motion.

[Translation]

**The Chair:** That is not a point of order.

[English]

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux:** I didn't say it was a *rappel au Règlement*.

[Translation]

**The Chair:** Are there any other points of order?

[English]

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux:** There are none right now, so I'm next on the list.

What I'm saying is that I'm putting forward a motion that this committee proceed with its study of the statistics that were brought forth by Statistics Canada in the 2006 census. This is important, especially because in the past there have been reports in the media on what census 2006 had to say, particularly about official-language minority communities. We have a witness here who can share with us the results, the interpretation of the results, and the impact on official-language communities.

I find that this morning we are wasting our time arguing about future committee business. As I mentioned, first of all, we should be discussing future committee business in camera. Secondly, it's not on the orders of the day. Any motions related to committee business are out of order. Third is the fact that you have already mentioned that the order of the day for Thursday is going to be committee business. That's when these kinds of motions about future business can actually be put forward.

Today we have a witness in front of us. It's on the orders of the day, and I'm putting forward this motion so that we can listen to the witness. We have a witness here, and we have a number of different results from the 2006 census. For example, I'm looking at a sheet that has highlights on language of work in Canada. There are statistics that are related to which official languages are used in work. There are francophone workers outside of Quebec, immigrant workers in Quebec, allophone immigrant workers, anglophone workers, workers on the Island of Montreal, allophone workers in Canada as a whole. There is a whole range of different topics that we can discuss with our witness today.

We should be moving forward with our witness today. This is why we convened the meeting. The reason I have to bring forward this motion is that if the committee doesn't want to listen to the witness, then we should send the witness off, and adjourn the meeting. The meeting will be over.

The meeting was called for one purpose. The meeting was called to listen to Statistics Canada. That's why we have the *ordre du jour*, so that everybody knows what the committee business is today. We all know what the committee business is because we all have this sheet in front of us. We should proceed with the committee business, first, because that's the proper thing to do, and secondly, because it shows respect towards our witness, who has taken time out of his busy schedule to prepare—and I draw your attention to what he has submitted to us—information for us, as the committee of official languages, to look at, and we should look at it. We should ask our questions if we have questions regarding it.

Secondly, he has taken time out of his schedule today to be here with us, yet we're wasting his time and we're wasting our own time. That's why this particular motion is important. It does not require 48 hours because it's in accordance with the orders of the day. I think that's the only way we're going to bring this meeting back into order.

If we don't move ahead with the motion, if this motion is voted against by the opposition, then I think they're showing disdain for the orders of the day, and there's no need to proceed with the meeting because the meeting will be over. What is there left to discuss, particularly when you've identified that next Thursday will be when we discuss committee business? We will be discussing it in camera.

That's my motion. I move that this committee listen to the witness we brought before us, in accordance with the orders of the day.

• (1000)

[*Translation*]

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

In my opinion, your motion is in order and does not require 48 hours' notice, because the orders of the day state that we'll be studying the census. Our witness, Mr. Corbeil is with us this morning. We have only one hour left, but I do think we still have time to review the issue with our witness.

I'm ready to hear any comments or suggestions regarding Mr. Lemieux's motion. Otherwise, we will move to the vote.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** Before we vote on this motion, Mr. Chairman, I would like to move that the committee meet in camera for a few minutes and that we come back to Mr. Lemieux's motion immediately afterwards.

I move that the committee go in camera.

**The Chair:** This is not a debatable motion. The clerk tells me that there must be unanimous consent regarding your suggestion to go in camera. We will listen carefully to the clerk's explanations regarding the procedure. Then we will all be on the same wavelength.

Please go ahead.

[*English*]

**The Clerk:** Mr. Lemieux moved that we proceed to the next order of business. That's a non-debatable motion. It gets put—

**An hon. member:** [*Inaudible—Editor*]

• (1005)

[*Translation*]

**The Chair:** Please, I would ask that you listen to the clerk.

[*English*]

**The Clerk:** A motion to go in camera is the same. It also can be put without notice, without debate.

His motion had just been moved, so to set aside his and do this one would require unanimous consent.

**The Chair:** Could you repeat that, please? I was distracted by some members.

**The Clerk:** A motion to proceed to the next order of the day—

**An hon. member:** To the order of the day, not the next one.

**The Clerk:** That's an order, and that gets put without debate or amendment.

He moved his motion that you proceed to a vote. To not do that, to do something else, would require unanimous consent.

**The Chair:** Just to understand, are you suggesting that the motion by Mr. Lemieux is non-debatable?

**The Clerk:** Yes, because it deals with the orders of the day.

**The Chair:** It deals with the orders of the day. That's it.

So I should not have taken Mr. Bélanger's comments. We should have proceeded to the vote right away. Is that what you're suggesting?

**The Clerk:** That's the normal procedure.

**The Chair:** Okay, we'll follow the normal procedure.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Lemieux, Mr. Nadeau is moving a point of order. He raised his hand and waited to be recognized by the chairman.

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I apologize to the clerk for interrupting him.

If I understand correctly, the clerk said that my motion was in order. Can the clerk tell me whether my motion is in order today?

**The Clerk:** In my opinion, a motion to discuss the orders of the day would be in order. However, if it were moved immediately, it would not be in order.

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** It is in order, but it could not be debated today. Is that correct?

**The Chair:** Yes, that is right.

[*English*]

Make it clear and simple, please, because I want to move on with the motion by Mr. Lemieux.

[*Translation*]

**The Clerk:** After the chairman's decision was overturned, in my opinion, the motions that were in order were those to move to another order of business to be specified in the motion, the motion to go in camera and the motion to adjourn. These motions do not require notice and can be moved.

**The Chair:** That means that his motion is not in order. We will go back to Mr. Lemieux's motion. We understood that it was not debatable. Consequently, we will move to the vote on the motion.

[*English*]

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux:** Point of order on myself.

**Mr. Thomas Mulcair:** He's filibustering himself.

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux:** No, I'm not.

First of all, it's your decision. You're the chair. Secondly, the clerk mentioned that the motion is non-debatable. Is that a fact? If so, why?

A five-second question is a filibuster? I'm seeking a clarification, Mr. Mulcair. That's a pretty short filibuster, five seconds.

[*Translation*]

**The Chair:** Our time for hearing the witness has expired. So following the motion, we will excuse our witness.

We will take a five-minute break.

- \_\_\_\_\_ (Pause) \_\_\_\_\_
- 
- (1020)

**The Chair:** Welcome to the third period of this meeting of the official languages committee.

**Mr. Luc Harvey:** Mr. Chairman, I think we missed a good opportunity to speak to the guest we invited to be here today.

**The Chair:** There have been a number of conversations and negotiations. For the third time, I would like to thank you for your patience, Mr. Corbeil. I would ask you to understand that sometimes committee discussions take longer. Nevertheless, we do some very good work. I would invite you to have a look at our two reports.

We have to plan our next 21 meetings. This will require some discussion between the committee and the steering committee. I may have made a mistake by not scheduling some time in camera to discuss committee business. That is why we had this discussion this morning.

That brings me to the orders of the day. A request has been made that we not hear our witness immediately. Mr. Lemieux moved a motion to hear the witness immediately. We could vote on this motion, and then I will take motions from committee members about the orders of the day or about adjourning.

With your permission, we're going to vote immediately on Mr. Lemieux's motion to hear from the witness from Statistics Canada. This will be a recorded vote.

(The motion is negatived)

**The Chair:** Thank you for coming here this morning, Mr. Corbeil. Despite appearances to the contrary, what you have to tell us is of great interest to us, and I hope we will be able to have you back for a full meeting. It is good that you gave us your paper. Committee members will now have an opportunity to review it. Thank you for coming, and I hope we did not upset your schedule too much.

Under the circumstances, I would be inclined to adjourn or to hear suggestions regarding the orders of the day.

Mr. Bélanger.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** I move that we meet in camera.

**The Chair:** That requires unanimous consent.

**Some hon. members:** No.

**The Chair:** We will therefore move to the vote.

[*English*]

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux:** As a point of clarification, why?

[*Translation*]

**The Chair:** I think this is a point of debate, Mr. Lemieux.

[*English*]

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux:** It's not unanimous consent? It's just a vote? Okay.

[*Translation*]

**The Chair:** That is correct. We will now vote on Mr. Bélanger's motion to continue our meeting in camera.

(The motion carried)

**The Chair:** We will continue in camera.

We will give the people in charge of facilities the time to switch over to an in camera meeting.

[*The meeting continued in camera.*]







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