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—
Chair

Mr. James Bezan

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•(0905)

[Translation]

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.)): Good morning and welcome, colleagues.

Welcome, Ms. Deschamps, to the Environment Committee.

To begin, I would like us to accept a request made by Minister Prentice. He would like to correct some mistakes contained in his presentation before the committee, which reads as follows. I will read it in English.

[English]

The emissions in North America, in the United States specifically, from coal-burning plants are 70 times the size of the emissions that come from the Canadian oil sands. The total emissions from the Canadian oil sands amount to .005% of the emissions of greenhouse gases from the United States.

That's the relative situation of which we're speaking.

[Translation]

Unless I'm mistaken, he was responding to a question asked by Mr. Bigras.

[English]

So he would like to correct that to say that the correct amount is 60 times the size of the emissions that come from Canadian oil sands, and the total emissions from the Canadian oil sands amount to 0.5% of the emissions of GHGs from the U.S.

If we can accept that, we can get on with our discussion of future business.

Yes, Mr. Warawa.

Mr. Mark Warawa (Langley, CPC): Did you want a motion to that effect?

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia): Yes, please.

Mr. Mark Warawa: I move that the correction be made.

[Translation]

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia): Is everyone in agreement?

Ms. Duncan.

[English]

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona, NDP): With all due respect, that would not be a correct statement. If you're simply comparing the coal-fired of the U.S. with the tar sands perhaps, but one cannot compare the total Canadian to the U.S., because we're not including the Canadian coal-fired then.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia): Well, that.... Are there any comments on that?

Monsieur Bigras.

[Translation]

Mr. Bernard Bigras (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, BQ): Although it was a reply to my question, I agree with the changes. I believe that the issue raised by Ms. Duncan is relevant. If the minister believes that the blues should be corrected, we'll do so. This happens often in the House of Commons. However, if we don't agree with what the minister said, we can debate that later on. But for now, the right thing to do is to correct the situation. Everybody makes mistakes.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia): If the minister reads the transcripts of our committee's proceedings—something he probably does every day, I imagine—and decides he wants to add something, he can write to us. Thank you.

So today, I think everyone agrees that we should work on future business. Unless you disagree, I would like us to—

[English]

Mr. Mark Warawa: Point of order.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia): Do we need a formal vote?

Mr. Jeff Watson (Essex, CPC): Well, you asked for a motion.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia): Okay, well let's vote. Everyone in favour?

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

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia): Thank you, Mr. Warawa, for your guidance. It's my first experience chairing a committee, and maybe I'm cutting corners here, so thank you.

[Translation]

This morning, I was hoping we could generally discuss future business without entering into the details, that is, without dotting the i's and crossing the t's. Indeed, the steering committee will do that when it meets next Monday, March 2.

So as far as future business is concerned, my first question is what should we do next Thursday. Since the chair is not here and I will chair that meeting, and because I have a breakfast meeting before that, I would like to ask the committee that the meeting begin at 9:30 or 9:15 rather than 9:00 a.m. That would give me enough time to get here. In any case, the meeting won't last more than an hour. Is that a problem? Fine, thank you.

On the agenda for Thursday's meeting is the order-in-council review of Mr. Bob Hamilton's nomination to the position of Associate Deputy Minister for the Environment. Are there any comments with regard to Thursday's meeting than? No? That's fine.

The second point concerns water and oil sands, that is, the study proposed in a motion several weeks ago. I would like to remind you to give the clerk the names of witnesses you would like to hear so we can discuss them on Monday at the steering committee. Are there any comments on that issue?

I know that Mr. Warawa wanted to talk about committee travel. There was some talk of visiting the oil sands. I propose—and please let me know if you agree—that we discuss the matter at the steering committee—

• (0910)

[English]

Ms. Linda Duncan: Mr. Chair, on a small point of order, I haven't been advised that there's a Monday steering committee meeting. Is there a meeting set that I've not been informed of?

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia): Yes, we spoke about it in general terms at the last meeting, in the very dying minutes of the last meeting. The notice will go out today, but you will recall that we discussed it—

Ms. Linda Duncan: I agree that we need to have a meeting. I just wasn't aware of the date that has apparently been picked.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia): We discussed it very quickly at the end of the meeting on the afternoon of March 2, I believe. But you're right, it hasn't really been formally announced yet.

Is that okay? Does that work for you?

Ms. Linda Duncan: What time will it be on March 2?

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia): It will be at 1 p.m.

Ms. Linda Duncan: At 1 p.m., March 2. Hopefully I can be there.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia): Thank you, Ms. Duncan.

[Translation]

So do you agree that we not discuss water and oil sands today and that the matter be discussed in detail at the steering committee? Any objections?

Mr. Warawa.

[English]

Mr. Mark Warawa: Chair, the plan at the steering committee is to agree on the list of witnesses or to review them to see if there are any objections. My understanding is that it was going to be left up to the chair and the clerk. Each would submit their list, and then it would be for the chair and the clerk to say who was coming when.

What is the purpose of the steering committee? Are we going to look at the scope...? Are we going to look at travel? Are we going to critique the list of witnesses? What is the purpose of that meeting?

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia): My understanding, and I speak as a member of the steering committee, was that everyone would submit their list of suggested witnesses and that the

subcommittee as a whole would look at those and make decisions and talk about travel and scope and themes. We could discuss those things among the four of us—I guess we're four—and have a good working discussion, as opposed to trying to sort out all of this here at this larger meeting, which I think could mean.... First of all, we don't have the lists of suggested witnesses. And secondly, I think there's a chance we could just get bogged down.

So that's what I would suggest.

Mr. Mark Warawa: Thank you for that clarification.

Further to that, would it be possible to get the list of witnesses so that it could be distributed to each of the...? Could we get that no later than Friday? Thursday of this week would be even better.

The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Normand Radford): You'll get the lists I have this afternoon.

Mr. Mark Warawa: Has everybody submitted a list?

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia): I haven't submitted mine, actually. It's a work in progress, but I can get it in this afternoon, easily, yes.

Ms. Linda Duncan: The same for me. I can get it in by this afternoon.

[Translation]

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia): Mr. Bigras.

Mr. Bernard Bigras: I have already submitted my list.

I'd like to ask a question. The committee has not indicated any timelines. How much time do we want to spend on that issue?

Members may put forward hundreds of names of witnesses, but the steering committee has to have some guidance with regard to the amount of time we would like to spend on the matter. To my knowledge, the motion did not say when a report should be produced. This means that we could study the matter indefinitely. I think that we should set a deadline for the report. Otherwise, the steering committee will decide.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia): You are absolutely right, Mr. Bigras. In fact, as far as I'm concerned, that is the point of today's meeting: to go over the list of subjects we want to study and determine the deadlines for each issue. As you say, this will give us an idea with regard to how much time is necessary to study water and oil sands.

So you are absolutely right. That is more or less the point of today's meeting.

• (0915)

[English]

Unless there are other questions or comments, that brings us to potential future business, item number three, which is main estimates and the supplementary estimates C. I open the floor for that discussion.

Go ahead, Mr. Warawa.

Mr. Mark Warawa: Mr. Chair, the minister was here a couple of weeks ago to address the committee and answer questions on supplementary estimates B. At that time, I mentioned that it's not common to see all ministers make themselves available to the committees, but that happened. I would expect an invitation from the committee for the main estimates. Again, for supplementary estimates C, I wouldn't expect an invitation. If the committee wants to send an invitation, it would be fine, and that would be passed on to the minister, but I would expect an invitation on the mains.

[Translation]

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia): Mr. Bigras.

Mr. Bernard Bigras: First, I am pleased that the minister will make himself available for the review of the main estimates. However, we mustn't forget that what often happens when the main estimates are reviewed, is that a two-hour meeting is set aside, and a minister might stay for two hours, although that is usually not the case. The last time we studied the estimates, the minister only stayed for an hour. Only the representatives from the department, whom I highly respect, were available for the second half of the meeting.

Given the fact that the minister only stayed for one hour instead of two, I think that this time he should stay longer. As far as I know, the minister is open to appearing before the committee for the review of the main estimates.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia): If I understand you correctly, you would like the minister to stay for two hours for the main estimates.

Mr. Bernard Bigras: No, not necessarily. If the minister is willing, he could stay for the whole two hours when we review the main estimates, but he should at least stay an hour. I think that would be the absolute minimum.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia): So should we forget about reviewing the Supplementary Estimates (C) to focus on the main estimates?

Mr. Bernard Bigras: That is not what I'm saying. I am saying that the minister should appear before the committee for the main estimates, but is it possible for him to stay an extra hour?

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia): We could ask him.

Mr. Warawa.

[English]

Mr. Mark Warawa: Chair, I would expect an invitation from the committee for that. Again, it would be according to his availability, but I look forward to an invitation for him.

[Translation]

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia): So we will invite the minister to appear for two hours and we will see what he says.

I have a question for the clerk. When the minister appears for the main estimates, could we also discuss the Supplementary Estimates (C), or does it have to be one or the other?

The Clerk: It depends on whether the main estimates have already been adopted. If the minister appears after March 26, the estimates—

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia): Yes, I understand. If it's after March 26, we don't have a choice.

The Clerk: We don't have a choice because they will already have been adopted by the House.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia): And if he appears before March 26, we can discuss basically anything, as we have done in the past.

The Clerk: As with the estimates.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia): Perfect. So we will invite the minister to come for two hours.

Mr. McGuinty.

[English]

Mr. David McGuinty (Ottawa South, Lib.): I think Mr. Warawa was clear that he could not, of course, speak for the minister, and there's no guarantee the minister could come for two hours. It would help just to get a sense, in the context of this decision...and I know that it speaks to point 6, "Other Matters".

This question speaks to the appearance of a minister, generally speaking, and it's a question for Mr. Warawa and the government members.

Does the government have any intention of tabling any environmental legislation in the sitting of this Parliament? There's absolutely no legislation, there's nothing, to my knowledge, on the order paper. I'm not sure if there's anything forthcoming.

If there's something forthcoming, it might compel the appearance of the minister to speak to us about new legislation, but so far, in the meeting I've had with the minister, there's been absolutely no discussion of any legislation of any kind. I'm just trying to get a sense of whether we are going to see legislation. And if we do, will the minister be coming forward to speak to it?

• (0920)

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia): Mr. Warawa.

Mr. Mark Warawa: I want to thank Mr. McGuinty for that question. That was one of the items I was going to be bringing up under other business.

During the last election we promised as a priority legislation for environmental enforcement. I can't provide details, but I'm hoping the committee will agree to have a discussion on environmental enforcement as part of the plan for future business.

The other thing is that we have a legislative requirement to deal with species at risk, which is item four. But specifically to your question on legislation from the government, I would expect environmental enforcement to be presented in the near future, so I'd like to see that as part of our agenda.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia): Ms. Duncan.

Ms. Linda Duncan: Mr. Chair, following on Mr. McGuinty's question, it's my understanding that there's also a legislative obligation in CEAA, and I understand that CEAA's been referred to CCME rather than to the parliamentary committee. I'm wondering if we could be advised on what the government is planning to do with the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act and whether that will be coming before a committee.

The act actually requires that it be reviewed by either this committee or a Senate committee.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia): Mr. Warawa, do you have any...?

Mr. Mark Warawa: I could report back to committee. At this time I have nothing to report on that.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia): Mr. Woodworth.

Mr. Stephen Woodworth (Kitchener Centre, CPC): Thank you very much.

Further to Mr. Warawa's comments about the environmental enforcement issue, it was a 2007 election platform commitment to strengthen and consolidate enforcement and penalty provisions in a number of different existing environmental bills, and it seems to me appropriate that when that is tabled, the committee hold hearings to thoroughly review the amendments required in order to strengthen the enforcement of environmental laws in Canada.

I would like to suggest that although that's not on our draft agenda, it should be a matter for future consideration by this committee, that we do hold hearings when that legislation is introduced in order to thoroughly review it.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia): Is that a motion, Mr. Woodworth?

Mr. Stephen Woodworth: I don't think it requires a motion from us this morning. My general impression is that our procedures that we've adopted at our organizing meeting would allow us this once legislation is tabled. If, as Mr. Warawa says, it is likely to be, it should be part of our agenda.

I am really only mentioning it today for planning purposes so that we can take it into account. I hope everyone will agree that hearings will be a good idea for a review of that legislation as and when it's introduced. We should make some allowance for that in our work.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia): I think you're right. Of course, when it's introduced we'll have no choice but to visit the legislation, but it is something that we need to keep in the back of our minds as we plan the way forward.

Mr. McGuinty, did you have a comment?

[*Translation*]

Mr. David McGuinty: My colleague Mr. Bigras raised his hand before I did.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia): Mr. Bigras.

Mr. Bernard Bigras: Mr. Chairman, I think we should come back to the agenda. Some issues should be studied more closely based on what Mr. Woodworth and Mr. Warawa just said.

So let's come back to the agenda. I think we are at item three. I would like us to immediately put under "other matters" government

legislative planning. I understand what Mr. Woodworth said. That goes without saying. When a bill is tabled, the committee makes it its priority.

In order to help the committee and the subcommittee plan its work, we have to know what the government's timelines are. We need to be able to plan our work. If the review of standards which was contained in the 2007 electoral platform is to take place next spring, that is less of a problem than if the government announced that it would table a bill within the next two weeks. I would like to ask the government if it is working with us, the members of the committee, and if so, that it give us some indication to help us plan our work.

Let me just repeat that on the issue of the oil sands, no date nor deadline was mentioned. So the study could be carried on indefinitely.

If we want to have a good work plan, produce a good study and in particular a good report, we have to know what the government intends to come up with over the next few months.

• (0925)

[*English*]

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia): Mr. Warawa, is this something you can speak to today or would you have more details at the steering committee?

Mr. Mark Warawa: I think we should wait for the steering committee to give those kinds of details.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia): The idea is a good one, I think. We are going to need to know what's coming down the pipeline, as it were.

Mr. Mark Warawa: Sure. As we go to other items, as I said in my comments about five minutes ago, I'll be raising environmental enforcement as an item that we should have on our future agenda.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia): Okay.

Ms. Duncan.

Ms. Linda Duncan: I concur that we need to have a plan of action, because once we start setting up witnesses to come in on the tar sands water issues, we won't want to be continually rescheduling, so it would be good to know the statutory obligations.

I would also like to add to the request for the parliamentary secretary. Could he advise us of what matters are coming forward on international obligations? It is my understanding that there is a report due on the biodiversity convention. Presumably, that would also come to this committee. It would be helpful to this committee if we could have a report both on the statutory obligations for review of the statutes and also on any international obligations to be reporting within this coming fiscal year.

I understand the biodiversity one is due at any moment. It would be good to have that come before this committee, possibly at the same time that we review SARA.

I understand there are potential Fisheries Act amendments coming forward, some of which might go to fisheries committee and some of which would come here. If they are to do with deleterious substances, Environment Canada enforces those provisions. It would be helpful if we had a broad array of various legislative reforms that are coming forward.

I would like to put forward a motion which relates to the agreement that the enforcement and compliance amendments to CEPA come before this committee. I would like to move that when those amendments are tabled before this committee the department also table any revised enforcement compliance policy.

I am raising this because when CEPA was originally enacted, the Conservative government tabled at the same time a very momentous document, and that was the first ever official enforcement compliance policy. That triggered enforcement compliance policies across the provinces.

Since that time, that has not been the practice of government, and I think it is very incumbent on government, particularly if we are going to be reviewing amendments to the statute dealing with more effective enforcement. More important is what the enforcement compliance policy is, the official policy of the department, and how they are going to be gearing up for applying these mechanisms.

So my motion is that at the same time that those amendments would come before this committee, the department would also table their enforcement compliance policy and any changes thereto.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia): That's a very good point, Ms. Duncan.

My sense is that when the legislation does come forward normally the first witnesses we hear are the minister and/or the departmental officials. I think what you're suggesting would be a very good entry point into the whole discussion, so I would hope—and we can pass a motion to make sure that it happens—that when the legislation does come through we start the hearings with an overview of enforcement and compliance policy.

Is that more or less what you're getting at?

● (0930)

Ms. Linda Duncan: Yes. And it would be very important that we receive in advance not only the proposed statutory amendments but also the enforcement compliance policy, and any changes thereto.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia): Would you like to propose that?

Yes, Mr. Warawa.

Mr. Mark Warawa: I'm just stating that she's made a motion. The recommendation of Mr. Bigras was that we follow the agenda. I think we're bouncing all over the place here. To provide some organizational framework here, I'd request that she remove that motion and reintroduce it when we go into other business. At this point we're bouncing all over.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia): Just to answer that point, Mr. Warawa, I'm actually trying to stay on track here. This is a motherhood sort of motion. Maybe we could just agree that we ask formally that the departmental officials discuss this when we start looking at the legislation. We could have a motion, a very simple

motion, and just be done with it, or we could ask the clerk to write to the department to suggest that when they come they start with an overview of enforcement and compliance policy.

I agree with you, I don't think we need to spend too much time on this point. It seems to me pretty straightforward. But if you want to ask that the motion be withdrawn, that's, of course, your right.

Mr. Mark Warawa: Chair, I have no problem discussing the motion; it's just that we just discussed estimates, and the next item was a species at risk review. I was ready to speak on that, and now suddenly we're dealing with other business, which is item six.

I would prefer that we stay with the agenda, which is item number four. If you want to deal with this motion, I'll be moving a deferral until the end of the meeting.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia): Ms. Duncan, would you like to move your motion at the end, or would you like to not move your motion at the end.? What would you like to do?

Ms. Linda Duncan: Mr. Chair, with all due respect, as I recall, the government members themselves raised this at the beginning of the meeting. What I'm saying is there is no common sense to discussing amendments to legislation that deals with enforcement unless we are also simultaneously dealing with the enforcement and compliance strategy.

I'm not raising new business, I'm speaking to one of the many items that they're suggesting are going to come before us into the future. I'm simply trying to give fair advance notice to the department that when they bring forward those amendments we would also like to hear from them on the enforcement compliance policy.

So I don't understand why I would withdraw the motion. We can vote against the motion, but I don't see it as any different from any other motion brought before the committee.

Mr. Mark Warawa: Chair, I move deferral until this be discussed under other business, and deferral is non-debatable.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia): Would you like to discuss it under other business?

Ms. Linda Duncan: That's fine, so long as it is discussed.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia): Yes, we'll deal with it at the end of the meeting. Thank you for your cooperation.

Mr. McGuinty.

Mr. David McGuinty: I'm sorry to have opened a can of worms under point three under estimates, but that's why I opened it up, because it's very important to know each one of these, as Monsieur Bigras has pointed out.

I don't know whether we can take to the bank what we've just heard about the government's agenda. If the government's legislative agenda is the single item called environmental enforcement, okay. Then we had better design our pathway in a more elaborate way to deal with these subjects. For example, I would expect the minister would be appearing. That's why I originally opened this. Whether the minister comes for two hours for the main estimates, if he doesn't come for supplementary estimates C, I thought it had a bearing if he showed up for this environmental enforcement legislation on how often and how long he would come for estimates. That's why I asked the question.

But now I'm hearing, Mr. Chair, that the government has a solitary item in its legislative agenda for this Parliament and I haven't heard anything on water, on climate change, on energy, or biodiversity. Yes, there's a mandatory SARA review. That's not legislative. New legislation is a mandated review for this committee, and we're six months over time now for that. I understand that. But each one of these areas, the estimates we're still on here, point three.... Now that we know the government is bringing forward only one proposed piece of legislation, I think we should spend more time on the estimates.

My view is that if the minister can come for two hours, great, but I just don't think we're doing justice to a \$1.1 billion total departmental spending for the Department of the Environment in a two-hour meeting. I go back to an argument I made in this committee several weeks ago about the fact that I think the estimates process is not being properly treated in this committee. I learned from our normal chair that up until 1955 the process of estimates was conducted in the full House of Commons in committee of the whole.

I think we ought to examine the possibility on point three, estimates, to have more than a single meeting to deal with a \$1.1 billion budget. So that's why I want to come back to.... Now having heard there is no other legislative agenda, which surprised me, because it was the government's own proposed motion when we were setting up the rules for this committee.... They said they wanted to make sure that government legislation would supersede other work of the committee, so I assumed there would be a volume of legislative changes coming forward, but now we learn there's not.

So I don't know how far we can go as a committee in terms of planning things if we find in a month that the government's changed its mind, which it has the right to do, and other legislation is coming forward. If we're going to roll out on this agenda, I would suggest we spend more time on the estimates. The water and oil sands study in itself, as Monsieur Bigras has rightly pointed out....

• (0935)

[Translation]

If we don't know how many hours, meetings or days we will spend on this study, how can we call witnesses, plan a trip or do what the government might suggest? That would be very difficult. If we take for granted that the government is only interested in a bill on environmental enforcement, we can go ahead with that. But I think that we should focus on the main estimates. I suggest that we let the subcommittee decide and present the main committee with a work schedule. So the issue is how many weeks we will spend studying

water and the oil sands, and how many meetings do we want to spend reviewing the main estimates.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia): If I understood correctly, Mr. McGuinty, you are suggesting that we spend two whole meetings studying the main estimates.

Mr. David McGuinty: Yes.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia): But we would be spending two hours with the minister.

Mr. David McGuinty: Yes.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia): We would not invite him twice.

Mr. Bigras.

Mr. Bernard Bigras: I agree with Mr. McGuinty's suggestion, all the more because it might address the concerns of Ms. Duncan regarding the application of standards and the legislation.

In my opinion, in light of the budget, this would allow Ms. Duncan, as an elected representative, to ask her questions before the government tables its bill or its amendments. That way, we could debate the budget, which is huge and which certainly merits closer scrutiny.

I would even be willing to present a motion whereby we would spend two meetings on the main estimates. That would give us a good indication. We don't have any hidden intentions. We are putting everything on the table. We want to discuss the matter, but we also need to know which direction the government is headed in. In my view, we should spend two meetings on the main estimates and then we could spend two hours with the minister.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia): We could also take advantage of the occasion by asking Ms. Duncan's question regarding government policy...

Mr. Bigras, you have presented a motion...

Yes, Ms. Duncan.

[English]

Ms. Linda Duncan: Can I speak to that motion?

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia): Yes.

Ms. Linda Duncan: I would concur with that motion. I would hope that we have at least a full meeting with the officials in addition to a full meeting with the minister. That's a hefty agenda to try to deal with in one meeting. I found the time in our last session with the officials far too short, and for the main budget there's a lot to cover.

I am not a minimal. I will not be able to raise all of my questions about enforcement compliance on the budget because I will not have tabled the strategy yet. However, I do concur that it would be useful to have, in advance of the meeting with the administering officials on the main estimates, an idea of what the coming agenda is for the government.

● (0940)

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia): Just so that I can better understand where we're at, Mr. Bigras has a motion that we have four hours on the main estimates—

[*Translation*]

Mr. Bernard Bigras: Mr. Chairman, I did not officially propose a motion, but the process has begun. Unless the clerk is mistaken, I did not formally make a motion. We would first like to know what the government thinks of it.

Will the government be open to spending two meetings on the main estimates? The parliamentary secretary has not said anything about this so far.

[*English*]

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia): Okay. Monsieur Woodworth.

Mr. Stephen Woodworth: Thank you very much.

I'm not sure now whether we have a motion on the floor. I'm going to accept Mr. Bigras' comment that we do not have a motion on the floor. I'd like to suggest that a motion to try to define in advance how many meetings we're going to have on any particular subject would probably not be a prudent course anyway. The ebb and flow of our questioning and answering will determine, I suppose, on a day-to-day basis, how long we're going to spend and if we want to spend more time on an issue, rather than trying to predetermine in advance that we're going to take two meetings, no more and no less.

Apart from that, though, one of the gaps I find about this conversation is that, as a new member, I'm a bit at sea as to the timeframe over which we are attempting to plan. In my experience in the three short months I've been on the Hill, things change daily. So I'm wondering: are we planning from now until Christmas, from now until June, or from now until 2012?

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia): Essentially, I would think to start from now until June. However, getting back to the comments I made at the beginning of the meeting, we're not necessarily trying to cross all the t's and dot all the i's today. We're trying to give direction to the steering committee. It seems clear to me at this point, without a motion but just following the discussion, that we would like to have two meetings on the estimates, with the minister coming for two hours if possible.

That seems to be the general consensus. It will be up to the steering committee to work out the details, the dates, and so on and so forth. However, that's my general understanding.

Mr. Stephen Woodworth: If the consensus isn't unanimous, that may be the case, but I myself don't share the notion that we have to have two meetings on the estimates.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia): Your point is taken.

Mr. Jean.

Mr. Brian Jean (Fort McMurray—Athabasca, CPC): Are we on the agenda now?

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia): I'm sorry, Mr. Jean.

Mr. Brian Jean: I noticed we were bouncing around; I wasn't sure if I was still on the agenda.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia): My apologies.

Mr. Brian Jean: No, that's fine, Mr. Scarpaleggia. Thank you very much.

I want to point out something that Ms. Duncan brought up, and that's the Fort Chipewyan water study. I'm not a regular member of this committee, so I want to make sure it is on the record that there are three particular chiefs who should be invited to give witness testimony. I want to make sure they are given that opportunity. They're chiefs from the Fort Chipewyan area. In particular, the Mikisew Cree Band and also the leader of the Athabaska Tribal Council should be invited. I have those names and addresses. I wanted to make sure it got on the record.

I've been following this water file for about three years—

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia): That's a good suggestion. Would you mind having your office send that information?

Mr. Brian Jean: Absolutely not.

And I have other names. If the committee would like me to come to that meeting and provide those, I'll be happy to do so.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia): If you could submit the names to the steering committee, that would be really appreciated.

Ms. Duncan

Sorry, Mr. Warawa, did you—

Ms. Linda Duncan: I wanted to speak to his matter, but that's okay.

Mr. Mark Warawa: Go ahead.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia): Mr. Warawa has deferred to you, Ms. Duncan.

Ms. Linda Duncan: Mr. Jean, I assure you that that is exactly what I have on my list, and I will be forwarding that to the clerk today. In addition to those three chiefs, there are additional first nations that are directly interested. In fact I have all of those names on my list, and I certainly will be bringing them forward as well. I appreciate your support on that.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia): Thank you for the clarification, Ms. Duncan.

Mr. Jean

Mr. Brian Jean: If I may, I'm particularly interested in this because all of them are my constituents, not yours. I wanted to make sure it was brought to the attention of the committee. I'm not sure what happens normally at these meetings on that, but I wanted to make sure....

● (0945)

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia): We're open to witness suggestions, so, Mr. Jean, please have your office send those names and contact information if possible to the clerk. That will be discussed at the steering committee.

Mr. Warawa.

Mr. Mark Warawa: Speaking to the non-motion of Mr. Bigras, between now and the break in June we have approximately 22 meetings. In those 22 meetings we're going to be dealing with the species at risk review—the legislative requirement. We're going to be dealing with the main estimates and inviting the minister to attend. We're likely going to be dealing with environmental enforcement. We're likely going to be dealing with Bill C-377, a private member's bill that has been reintroduced—the impossible dream of Mr. Layton—and re-titled Bill C-311. Carbon capture and storage is a huge part of the government's plan. We should be reviewing that. And there are a number of other recommendations from committee members: biodiversity, CEPA enforcement....

It's a lot of work that this committee is going to undertake in a very short period of time. We have to be very careful with the 22 meetings we have. That's why it's important that the steering committee provide some guidance. We'll be doing that on Monday.

Specifically to the non-motion from Mr. Bigras, I think at this time we should plan on one meeting and not two. The norm is one meeting. If we deem, as a committee, that we should have additional meetings, we could make that decision. But at this time I think we should be considering one meeting.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia): I take your point, Mr. Warawa. I would suggest that this be discussed further at the steering committee meeting. It appears that the three opposition parties would like two meetings, and that will be represented at that steering committee meeting. We'll probably make the point again that we would like two meetings, and then I guess we'll take it from there.

For the record, my sense is that the majority of the committee would like two meetings. We'll discuss it further at the steering committee, if that's okay with you.

Unless you want a formal motion one way or the other, we could—

Mr. Mark Warawa: Chair, at this point we don't have a motion, so there's nothing on the record. If you want something on the record, the majority do not support that at this time.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia): Technically your point is well taken. There is no motion. It doesn't prevent somebody from presenting a motion.

I suggest that we take the general idea that's been discussed and bring it to the steering committee to see how it goes.

Mr. Mark Warawa: That's perfect.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia): That's unless somebody wants to present a motion. If not, we could move on, maybe, to point number four, the Species at Risk Act, which you touched on a moment ago.

Do we have any additional information as to when the order might come from the House of Commons to the committee to conduct the statutory review of the act?

Mr. Mark Warawa: Mr. Chair, this has been raised at the whips' level, and we need to plan for the review. It's a legislative requirement. I tabled a motion. I provided the clerk with a motion a couple of weeks ago, and the motion is that the Standing

Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development undertake the five-year legislative review of the Species at Risk Act as required in said act.

Again, at the steering committee, we could plug in to a plan for that. There is a legislative requirement for us to begin it. It's not clear on the scope or how long it would be, and the steering committee could provide that direction for the committee.

So it's going to be, actually, quite an in-depth meeting on Monday. We've scheduled one hour on Monday for the steering committee meeting. That may not be adequate. We may need to plan for two hours.

The Species at Risk Act we should be beginning, as pointed out by Mr. McGuinty. We are overdue in beginning that, and we need to start. That's a legislative requirement.

● (0950)

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia): My only question is a point of clarification, and maybe you can help us, Mr. Warawa.

You had a motion, which was not moved, but if we look at what's in the act itself, it seems to suggest that to get the committee started on this, we can't do so simply by a motion of the committee. We need to have, basically, an order from the House to conduct the study. There's a bit of confusion around this issue.

Does the government plan to ask the committee to do this review? Why aren't we waiting for the government to ask us to do it? Why are we potentially going to have our own motion asking to do it? I'm a little confused about that.

Mr. Mark Warawa: As I said, this has been raised at the whips' level, and the whips are meeting.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia): It's in progress, then.

Mr. Mark Warawa: We're hoping that this would have been clarified by now. Hopefully, by the end of this meeting, we'll have direction on that.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia): That's perfect.

We'll go to Monsieur Bigras.

[Translation]

Mr. Bernard Bigras: I have just one question. Usually when we do the review, environmental groups get in touch with the committee clerk to say that they would like to appear before the committee as part of the review process.

Have some environmental groups expressed a desire to appear before the committee so far? That would give us some idea how urgent the review is.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia): I would like to ask the clerk whether any groups have been in touch with him.

The Clerk: Yes, several groups have contacted me.

Mr. Bernard Bigras: How many are we talking about: 2, 3, 10, 20, 30 or 50?

The Clerk: No, I would say there have been five.

Mr. Bernard Bigras: Thank you.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia): Are there any other comments on this? We will move on to item 6.

Ms. Duncan.

[English]

Ms. Linda Duncan: Mr. Chair, I'm just wondering if we can discuss my proposal from before, which was sidebarred, and that was that if at some point in time the Species at Risk Act comes before us, will we also be reviewing the government's obligations under the biodiversity convention, which I understand need to be reported on much sooner than the report on SARA? I have heard from organizations that are concerned about what's happening with that report.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia): Mr. Warawa's going to consult his advisers on that.

We'll have a fairly busy steering committee meeting on Monday. I have a feeling that we may not be done in one hour.

Go ahead, Mr. Warawa.

Mr. Mark Warawa: Specific to Ms. Duncan's question, I'll have to find out. I don't believe that the committee has dealt with that before. I don't know. Is that a requirement of the minister? Is it the norm that this committee get involved?

Again, we have approximately 22 meetings, and we have a lot to squeeze into them. We have legislative requirements. We have, likely, environmental enforcement and your concern that we have compliance policy attached to that. It's a lot to do in 22 meetings, so we have to be careful about what we can do. We have to be realistic about what we can accomplish.

I will get back to the committee on the biodiversity requirements.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia): Ms. Duncan.

Ms. Linda Duncan: Chair, if I could just follow up on that, SARA is the domestic tool whereby Canada implements its international obligations on biodiversity. So they're inextricably linked. Presumably whatever report the Government of Canada is giving to the biodiversity secretariat is consistent with what they are reporting as done under SARA, so it would seem appropriate to me that these two be linked together.

If at some point in time we look at the implementation of SARA, I would also like to review the enforcement compliance policy for SARA.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia): Are there comments or questions?

[Translation]

We're moving on to item 6, other business. One is: "ENVI review of the federal sustainable development strategy".

Did that one come from you, Mr. Warawa?

• (0955)

[English]

Mr. Mark Warawa: I don't believe it was.

[Translation]

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia): Who suggested it?

[English]

The Clerk: These were suggestions from the analysts.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia): From the analysts, okay.

It's a statutory requirement to do a review of the federal—

Mr. David McGuinty: No. In fact I think I might have made that suggestion in the past. It speaks to the Federal Sustainable Development Act, which was passed by the last Parliament. I think there are 16 to 17 months left for the government to deliver up a comprehensive sustainable development strategy for the country, which would, of course, have a huge bearing on sustainable development strategies, what the commissioner's reporting on—and if you go back to the SDA itself, it actually compels the government to do quite a bit.

The idea was to have the Environment Canada officials, perhaps even the minister, come and explain to us how the Government of Canada is going to arrive at a national sustainable development strategy, which is a huge, huge undertaking. So I suggested that it would be important to get a sense at the committee of where we're at with this strategy and with all of what the act compels the government to do.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia): Is that something, Mr. McGuinty, that...?

Yes, Mr. Warawa.

Mr. Mark Warawa: Chair, as Mr. McGuinty pointed out... I'm actually quite encouraged by his high expectations of this government. We do have a reputation for getting things done, and we actually worked with Mr. Godfrey to get Bill C-474 through. We are committed to accountability and sustainable development and a cleaner environment.

As for the requirement for reporting to be done by the government, should the committee at this point undertake a critique of that reporting, I think it would be premature. We have a Commissioner of the Environment who holds the government to account on that reporting. In fact, it was the commissioner who was quite involved with recommending Bill C-474.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia): I guess you would like to speak to that.

Ms. Penny Becklumb (Committee Researcher): Yes, I can speak to it.

There's a legislative requirement under the Federal Sustainable Development Act that when the federal sustainable development strategy is at the draft stage, it's to be submitted both to this committee and the commissioner. And we will do different types of reporting on it: the commissioner will review it as to whether it's reportable, or whether they can audit it properly; and we will do a different type of review of the strategy. But it's required by law.

Mr. Mark Warawa: Okay, then I have a question, Chair, through you.

What is the scope of that?

Ms. Penny Becklumb: It doesn't say; it's not set out in the legislation. So that's something for the committee to decide.

Mr. Mark Warawa: So, again, it would be for the steering committee to determine the scope of that review.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia): Yes, I suppose it would.

I have a question for Mr. McGuinty. What do you see as the timeline for that? Maybe the analysts could add something as well, but is this something that should be done very soon, or is it a medium-term objective?

Mr. David McGuinty: It's not an urgent matter, but with all the due respect I have for Mr. Warawa, I think he should know his file.

This is a mandatory kickback here to this committee. We have to examine this as it goes forward, and I think it would be important to, given that the government ratified it with the support of all parties. It's a good piece of legislation for the country. It compels the government to do many things, and I think we would need at least a day, one meeting on this, to be brought up to speed on how this is proceeding—at least one.

It's not an unserious matter. It compels the government to do an awful lot of important things.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia): If you agree, Mr. McGuinty, maybe we could take that information to the steering committee.

Mr. David McGuinty: Absolutely.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia): Mr. Warawa.

Mr. Mark Warawa: Mr. Chair, my question is what is the timeframe for that review? When is it required to take place? Is it the fall? It was in the fall that this came into force.

• (1000)

Ms. Penny Becklumb: It came into force on June 26, 2008. The strategy has to be finalized within two years after that, so it's not required to be finalized until June of 2010. This committee must be provided with 120 days' review of the draft prior to that. At the very latest, it would be a year from now that we would receive that draft; however, there was some indication that the draft would be coming substantially earlier than that.

Mr. Mark Warawa: Then I think that in a practical sense, with a lot on our plate and 22 meetings, this may be something we would consider a year from now.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia): Yes, sure—or the committee can revisit it. If the draft is ready in two months, we might want to have a meeting on it. I think there's a good sense that this is an issue we have to look at. Maybe we can have the steering committee work out the details, if everyone agrees.

Ms. Duncan, do you have a point?

Ms. Linda Duncan: I'm feeling the urgent need for us to get a list of the statutory and international law obligations and what the deadlines are for those reports. I don't have my statutes with me, but I know that under CEEA, there is a statutory obligation for either the Senate or the parliamentary environment committee to review CEEA, and I believe that's by the end of this year.

I think it behoves us to take a look at what the deadlines are in each one of these statutes before we make a decision.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia): Absolutely. The clerk has something to say about that.

The Clerk: Mr. Chair, we've requested a list from the department for that exactly. I also understand—I hope I'm not misspeaking—that the analysts are working on it as well, because we want it checked against the list they give us to ensure that it is complete. That is part and parcel of proper planning, to know what the mandate of the committee is.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia): I think we'd like to have all that by next Monday's steering committee meeting, so that we can do some productive work.

Mr. Bigras.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Bernard Bigras: Mr. Chair, the whip has just informed me that there have been some discussions among the whips. The House will very likely be informed about the study of the bill on species at risk. That has just happened.

As regards other business, I am somewhat surprised to hear through the media that the government and the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency are in the process of providing briefings to environmental groups. They are telling them that we will be amending the Environmental Assessment Act so that some projects will no longer have to go through environmental assessment, not just projects that cost \$10 million or less, as the Minister of Infrastructure said, but also certain other projects as well.

I have the impression that something is happening behind closed doors, without Parliament's knowledge. I would find it completely unacceptable that civil society groups are being informed about amendments to the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act to remove from its coverage certain projects that come under the National Energy Board or Atomic Energy Canada, when parliamentarians have not been informed of this.

What explanation can there be for the fact that civil society groups are aware that legislative changes will be made to the Environmental Assessment Act, while we parliamentarians are being kept in the dark? I do not know whether the parliamentary secretary could tell us whether the government intends to amend the Environmental Assessment Act.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia): Thank you, Mr. Bigras.

Mr. Woodworth would like to make a comment.

Is it on the same subject? Would you prefer to give the floor to Mr. Warawa? Otherwise, would you care to comment?

[*English*]

You are on the speakers list. Would you like Mr. Warawa to answer Mr. Bigras, or would you like to go ahead?

Mr. Stephen Woodworth: Let Mr. Warawa go ahead. I was still back on Mr. McGuinty's point. Mr. Bigras seems to have moved past it.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia): Do you want to come back on Mr. McGuinty's point?

Mr. Stephen Woodworth: I do very briefly, but I can wait.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia): Okay, Mr. Warawa, please.

Mr. Mark Warawa: This would have been a good question for Mr. Bigras to ask the minister. The minister was here for an hour a couple of weeks ago, so I do not have anything to report to him at this time.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia): Mr. Woodworth.

Mr. Stephen Woodworth: Back to Mr. McGuinty's point and the question of the review of the federal sustainable development strategy, I appreciate that Mr. McGuinty has put that on our radar, but it seems to me that the most we can appropriately do at this time is just to ascertain whether or not that draft is ready yet for us, or will be between now and June. If it's not ready for us, then I guess that solves the whole issue of whether it's part of the planning process we're engaged in, for now to June.

•(1005)

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia): Indeed, that's fairly close to how we're going to approach this for the time being.

Ms. Duncan.

Ms. Linda Duncan: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I want to follow up Mr. Bigras' very good point.

It is very critical that we very urgently be briefed by the government on what is happening with the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act. He very validly is saying that through the budget bill there are backhanded changes being made to the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, which should be validly tabled before this committee.

We've only discovered through a backdoor, again through NGOs and not through the government, that they have referred the review of CEAA to the CCME, which is not provided for in the statute. So we urgently need clarification on what the plan of action is by the government on the statutory requirement for the review of CEAA.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia): Ms. Duncan, is that the kind of question that could be brought to the minister when he appears on the budget main estimates, or do you foresee a different way of doing it?

Ms. Linda Duncan: Certainly we can raise questions, but it's a much bigger issue. On the main estimates, presumably we can broaden it out, but we need to know where the statutorily required review of CEAA is and what is happening with that. Where is this proposed complete rewriting of CEAA at? Are they intending to bring forward a new bill? If so, we need to have that, very critically, on our agenda. It's hard to have a serious discussion about the agenda until they let us know what's happening with the bill.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia): Monsieur Bigras.

[Translation]

Mr. Bernard Bigras: Mr. Chair, I agree 100% with Ms. Duncan. It is completely unacceptable that officials from the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency are making PowerPoint presentations to environmental groups on amendments to the act that we parliamentarians have not been informed about. Why is it that civil society groups are being told about possible amendments, and we are not? I think we have to add that question. Even if we have only

one meeting on this matter, we must at least be informed about the reports that are appearing in the media at the moment.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia): I have a suggestion, Mr. Bigras. On Thursday we have scheduled a one-hour meeting to study the order-in-council appointment of an associate deputy minister. Perhaps we could invite officials from the agency to appear before the committee during the second hour.

Mr. Bernard Bigras: Yes.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia): We would start the meeting at 9:00 a.m. or 9:15. I will do my best to be here at 9:00 a.m., if that would allow us to hear from representatives of the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency. If it is urgent, we could call them to appear on Thursday. That would give you an opportunity to ask the questions referred to by Ms. Duncan and yourself.

Mr. Watson.

[English]

Mr. Jeff Watson: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

A good starting point for opposition MPs would be to review the blues from the Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities from last spring, where we had the CEAA in front of the committee discussing potential changes to accelerate infrastructure funding. That agenda item was pushed by Mr. Masse, who was on the committee at that time, as well as Monsieur Laframboise, both looking to have a discussion about potential changes that could be had to accelerate infrastructure funding.

Some of this discussion has happened in front of parliamentarians prior to Bill C-10 changes, as well as the budget speech, which announced that it was part of the five-point plan to eliminate red tape. This is not entirely out of left field for members of Parliament. I suggest maybe they could start there in reviewing the blues and the testimony from CEAA.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia): Thank you.

I have Mr. McGuinty and then Ms. Duncan.

Mr. David McGuinty: Mr. Watson has missed the point. What took place at the transport committee last spring was a discussion of the Navigable Waters Protection Act, which is part of Bill C-10. What's being discussed or reported in the media as being discussed behind closed doors with CEAA and environmental NGOs are changes contemplated to the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act. Bill C-10 does not speak to the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act. It speaks to the Navigable Waters Protection Act.

These are more significant and more material changes. I share Monsieur Bigras' and Ms. Duncan's concern that this isn't being brought to this committee. That's why I asked four times in a row this morning what the government's legislative agenda was, and the answer I got was that we're bringing in environmental enforcement. Okay. We're bringing in environmental enforcement.

Yes or no: Is the government pursuing legislative changes to CEAA behind closed doors? I think that's a reasonable question to have been asked by Monsieur Bigras. We're all concerned. I'm sure every Conservative MP sitting at this committee is concerned about environmental assessment and the impacts on our communities, so we would like to know. Is this an issue under item six, "other matters", that we ought to be dealing with sooner rather than later? However, they're not the same, Mr. Watson.

• (1010)

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia): Ms. Duncan, then Mr. Warawa.

Ms. Linda Duncan: Mr. Watson, you might want to look at the blues again, because in that meeting the transport committee agreed that they revisit the matter and allow the public to come and review it again.

As Mr. McGuinty said, the matter of CEAA incorporates the backhanded amendments to navigable waters in the budget bill, which is reprehensible enough. What is more reprehensible is that apparently there are major changes underway to CEAA and it is not coming before this committee as is statutorily required.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia): Mr. Warawa.

Mr. Mark Warawa: Mr. Chair, doing a quick math of approximately 22 meetings we have starting next week, we have a lot to cover. I'm quite concerned that with the amount of work that's going to be passed on to the steering committee, we may not get productive until we're well past the 22 meetings. We may end up with only 18 meetings after hearing from the steering committee and having to debate that further.

In the interest of moving along as we are required, there is a legislative requirement to review the Species at Risk Act. I was hoping we would hear from the whips. As I said earlier, this was raised at the whips' level. When we did CEPA, and there was a legislative requirement to review CEPA, we did that at committee. It was moved and it began.

So I am going to move my motion that we undertake the five-year legislative review of the Species at Risk Act, as required by the said act, and that that review begin Tuesday of next week.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia): Just as an aside, I take your point that we have a lot on our plate. We have a free hour on Thursday, so that's why I was suggesting we could invite CEAA for an hour and ask them some pretty pointed questions.

Monsieur Bigras.

[Translation]

Mr. Bernard Bigras: I understand the motion Mr. Warawa has just moved, but I think it would be in order and preferable that this motion be moved in the House, and that the House ask the committee to study this matter. I think it would be preferable to proceed in this way rather than passing a motion here.

I am not saying that we are opposed to the idea, but I do think we should not make a decision before the House gives us some instructions. I am not saying that this would create a precedent, but I do not think it would be good form. In any case, as I understand it,

there have been some discussions among the whips, and the motion will be coming forward. There is consent that this will be done.

However, if the parliamentary secretary would like to move a motion, he is absolutely entitled to do so. Nevertheless, I would prefer to let the House refer this to us, and that should be done within the next few hours.

• (1015)

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia): We are debating Mr. Warawa's motion.

Is there any further discussion?

Mr. Trudeau.

[English]

Mr. Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Lib.): It seems to me that the issue is on the order of things. As Mr. Warawa has brought up a number of times, we have an awful lot on our plate. I don't know why we should rush into SARA without being asked to, officially and formally. There is the oil sands report. There are a number of issues we need to look at that do have a significant amount of urgency to them. I'm all for waiting for the proper order of things, and it will perhaps allow us to be more focused on the things we do have standing before us, rather than initiating more.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia): Thank you, Mr. Trudeau.

Ms. Duncan?

Ms. Linda Duncan: Mr. Chair, of course the government is free to bring forward a motion at any time, but it seems to be at odds with what this committee just agreed, that the only sensible, mature way for this committee to proceed is to have before it the full information, including the information on the statutorily required reviews.

We have yet to have tabled before us what the date is for the review of CEAA, so it seems absolutely inappropriate and contrary to the decision we just reached that we agree we would first review what the deadlines are for these various statutory matters.

I intend to review it with my colleagues.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia): Thank you, Ms. Duncan.

Mr. Woodworth.

Mr. Stephen Woodworth: Thank you very much.

Actually, strictly speaking, we haven't reached any decisions here today at all, except to refer matters through to the steering committee, so I don't think it's quite right to characterize what's been now proposed as in any way not in accord with anything that's already been decided.

Apart from that, it seems to me that no one has disputed that there is an immediate statutory obligation to review the SARA. Whether it comes now or whether we wait for a request from Parliament, nobody has disputed that it has to be done and that it's an immediate obligation. Consequently, I think it's quite appropriate that we get that done and out of the way.

In the meantime, we've got dozens of other suggestions about what we'll do for the rest of our time between now and June. As Mr. Warawa points out, it could take a while to even get that agenda figured out. In the meantime, we can at least do something constructive with SARA.

[Translation]

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia): Mr. Bigras.

Mr. Bernard Bigras: I understand what Mr. Woodworth is saying, but the situation is not such at the moment that the committee needs to pass such a motion in order to move forward. I repeat that as regards the review of the act—and this will appear in the minutes—the Bloc has said that it supported this. Agreement was reached among the whips. Under these circumstances, I see no need for the committee to pass a motion of this type. There is no point in doing that.

Mr. Chair, we must be cautious. The House will invite the committee to look into this matter. The committee has certain responsibilities, but it is preferable to wait for references from the House, and that should happen within the next few hours.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia): Thank you, Mr. Bigras.

Mr. McGuinty.

[English]

Mr. David McGuinty: Mr. Chairman, Ms. Duncan has raised an important point. I think the government has to go back and do its homework. It should come to the committee and explain to it what is forthcoming in terms of mandatory reviews, a legislated review for SARA, other reviews under other international conventions, and some work on the Sustainable Development Act. I think Mr. Woodworth is correct in saying, if we find it's only a question of a nominal assessment of what stage the reporting is at, let's hear it.

There is a whole series of reportables, a whole series of deliverables that are mandatory and that compel the government to do things. Unfortunately, the government doesn't seem to know what they are. It's their job.

Mr. Warawa, with all due respect—through you, Mr. Chair, to Mr. Warawa—it's your job, as a parliamentary secretary, to know what exactly is forthcoming here and to present it and roll it out, so that we as a committee can spend taxpayers' dollars and time wisely by addressing issues that are sequential, by addressing issues that are mandated.

Your own government had a motion here a month ago saying you wanted to make sure we dealt with government business first. I agree. What is the government business—not only in terms of what is legislated as mandatory work by this committee, but what are you actually doing as a government in terms of legislation?

We're all seeing ghosts right now, apparently, around amendments to the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act. We don't know what's going on; you don't seem to know what's going on; I don't know whether you know what's going on, Mr. Chair. Before asking for a motion on compelling one piece of work over another, Mr. Warawa, all objective observers would probably agree that it would be important for you to lay out for this committee, on behalf of the Government of Canada and the people of Canada, what it is you have to do, what it is we have to do, what it is Ms. Duncan is addressing here concerning international conventions and requirements and responsibilities.

I think that would be useful before foreclosing on a work plan that is 22 meetings long, which is a lot of time. How is it possible to go forward even to the subcommittee next week, Mr. Chair, if we don't have a clear indication of what is forthcoming? I ask the question objectively. How are we supposed to do this?

• (1020)

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia): Thank you, Mr. McGuinty.

I'd like to make a point at this juncture.

We have a very questionable situation whereby we have whips working on something. We're not sure whether your motion is technically out of order, given that the order should come from the House.

That being said, I think if we're going to work together as a committee, going forward—and we have a lot of work to do, and I think fundamentally we all want to do a good job as parliamentarians, putting aside our partisan interests—we have to work with a measure of good faith.

I don't know how many of you recall this, but at the last meeting I said I didn't mind chairing the committee while Mr. Bezan was away, as long as we're not taking votes that would sidetrack or preclude—or foreclose, as Mr. McGuinty said—the progress of the study on water and oil sands, which was first adopted at committee back in March.

I'm getting a sense, with all due respect—maybe this isn't your intention, and I don't want to prejudge it—that we're being railroaded into something to avoid something else. It may not be the case, but I remember that at the last meeting I said, “Mr. Bezan, I'll take the chair of the committee while you're away, but not if it's going to basically deny me a vote on an item of business that I have proposed.” There's that, plus the fact that there's a lot of confusion around whether this motion is out of order, what the whips are going to do.

I think this is really a plea for cooperation. Maybe we could strike from the motion that we have to start Tuesday, because when we say we have to start Tuesday, I'm getting the sense that we're basically shoving any other business off the table.

That's just my comment. Mr. Warawa. You can take issue with it.

The floor is to Mr. Calkins right now.

Mr. Blaine Calkins (Wetaskiwin, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

To address some of the concerns you have, I get the sense from being here today that we're putting the cart before the horse on a lot of issues, because what this committee seems to be doing today is advising the subcommittee on what to report back to this committee. So it seems a little bit odd from that perspective.

We also know, we clearly know, that we have a legislative responsibility and Marleau and Montpetit basically says that committee shall proceed with legislative responsibilities when they are before the committee. It says here in section 129, "Five years after this section comes into force, a committee of the House of Commons, of the Senate or both Houses of Parliament is to be designated or established for the purpose of reviewing this Act."

This committee is struck in accordance with its mandate to review matters pertaining to the environment and sustainable development, which is where the Species at Risk Act is.

We know we're five months behind on a legislative review. There has been a lot of speculation from the other side about legislation coming forward to change CEAA and that somehow this legislation is going to be changed outside the context of Parliament. Has something happened in the context of the Parliament of Canada that I am not aware of that allows a law to be changed before going before Parliament? Because that seems to be the allegation being made across the floor.

• (1025)

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia): Mr. Bigras—

Mr. Blaine Calkins: These are the questions I have. I'm not done, Mr. Chair.

I would ask this. Mr. Jean was here, the member for Fort McMurray—Athabasca, clearly willing to bring forward names of people to discuss your particular motion, Mr. Chair, when you were sitting as the vice-chair. I don't think there is anybody here who is trying to railroad you or railroad your motion. I'd be very interested to go up to Fort McMurray and take a look at what's happening up there. I'm an Albertan. It's of great interest and concern to me, and to my constituents as well. It affects our province. It affects our entire country.

Yes, we have other obligations, international obligations that need to be looked at, but we have a bird in the hand and we're sitting here speculating about birds in the bush. This is an issue that needs to be addressed. This committee has the jurisdiction to study the Species at Risk Act legislation. The precedent has been set in the previous Parliament, where the committee undertook the review of the Canadian Environmental Protection Act.

It makes no sense, because what's going to happen, Mr. Chair—and we talk about this 22-day work frame—if we don't get to work at looking at the Species at Risk Act? I can tell you right now that on Tuesday next week all we're going to do is have the same meeting we had today in response to the report that will be submitted by the subcommittee on agenda and procedure that is held the day before. Then we'll be at the same point in time, where we could actually be doing something constructive on behalf of biodiversity in our country, of species that are at risk in our country, and it's mandated by previous legislation that we review this legislation at this particular point in time.

I am all in favour of moving ahead. It's not a point to be obstinate or to try to railroad this committee. It is something we can do and move forward and do and make this committee do something more productive than sitting around talking about agenda and procedure items and jockeying for that position.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia): Mr. Warawa.

Mr. Mark Warawa: Chair, I want to make it very clear that the government does support a water study. As you pointed out, the last Parliament ended with a look at water and the oil sands, and we look forward to further witnesses coming and further discussion on that.

It has resulted in the motion that I presented two weeks ago. The government recognizes the legislative requirement to do a SARA review. I have found it frustrating that this is not moving forward when we do have a legislative requirement and the government supports this. The whips of the opposition need to get together and support this. It is a legislative requirement.

As I pointed out a number of times today, we have a limited number of meetings, approximately 22 meetings, so I was trying to move the agenda along. But I also want to work collaboratively with our members in this committee.

We have heard concerns that they want to allow the opposition whips to meet with the government whip and agree to move this forward. It's important that this move forward, so I encourage the members here representing the opposition to talk to their whips and tell them to move this forward.

I then will back off and remove this motion, but again, the clock is ticking and we have meetings next week that we need to prepare for. This week, we are meeting today and we are meeting on Thursday, but what are we going to do next week? Monday, we have the steering committee. Tuesday, we'll have a report from the steering committee and we'll be rehashing what we're doing today. So what are we going to do on Thursday? I was proposing that we start SARA. I'm open then to start a water study.

You yourself, or Chair James Bezan, with the clerk, have the witnesses' names. We need to trust the chair, and I would then propose that we plan for Tuesday or Thursday of next week. Likely Tuesday we'll be hearing from the steering committee, so Thursday of next week we can begin the water study, start moving on that and use constructively the limited number of weeks we have. At this point, it seems we're stalled, and I think there is a desire from everybody here that we start moving and start having productive meetings.

• (1030)

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia): Thank you, Mr. Warawa. I appreciate that.

Mr. McGuinty, and then Mr. Bigras.

Mr. David McGuinty: I am sorry, Mr. Chair, I didn't understand the import of Mr. Warawa's comments. Could you just recap?

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia): My understanding is that instead of proposing that we start Tuesday with the review of the Species at Risk Act, on Tuesday we essentially discuss what the steering committee has come up with, approve it, amend it, or whatever; and then, Thursday, we start with the water study.

Obviously we are going to have to get to the Species at Risk Act, especially once the whips have decided when to refer it to us, and so on. So Mr. Warawa essentially is being flexible on this and is suggesting that we all speak to our whips and push them to move this thing along, because he is saying, and I agree, that we all really want to get down to work at this committee.

That is, as I understand it, the synopsis of Mr. Warawa's comments. Is that correct?

Mr. David McGuinty: So is Mr. Warawa withdrawing his motion?

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia): Essentially. That's my sense of it.

Mr. Mark Warawa: Yes.

Mr. David McGuinty: Is that right? Thank you very much.

[Translation]

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia): Mr. Bigras.

Mr. Bernard Bigras: I agreed with Mr. Warawa regarding the principle at issue here, but it was important to deal with the technical problem. I think we have just done that. Ultimately, we will achieve the same result, and that is what matters.

[English]

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia): Madame Duncan.

Ms. Linda Duncan: I just wonder if we could also encourage our whips to discuss when they're bringing forward the review of CEAA.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia): Yes, of course. I imagine we can do that.

Mr. McGuinty.

Mr. David McGuinty: Just to follow up on Mr. Calkins' positive remarks about the need to do this review on SARA, a five-year legislative review, I think everyone is in complete agreement that we have to do this, and we will do this, but the question I was trying to pose earlier was what other reviews are there? What other reporting requirements are there right now in the full ambit of what Environment Canada is responsible for, both domestically and internationally?

We don't know, and you're asking us to make a decision in a vacuum. It's important to proceed with the five-year review. We want to proceed with the five-year review, but why should we go forward with SARA first, over some other report that may be due?

That's all we're asking. If the government can help us, please, by calling officials and getting just a lineup of what we have to do in the next six months or year, what's forthcoming—or three months, or 22 meetings—maybe when the steering committee meets we'll be better placed to say okay, it's SARA first, or it's oil and water second, or some other report that's due, third. We don't even have that information disclosed to us. It's kind of hard to make a decision in a vacuum.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia): We'll go to Mr. Bigras.

[Translation]

Mr. Bernard Bigras: Could we ask Mr. Warawa to give the steering committee some sort of table? We are not asking for specific dates, but rather a general idea so as to facilitate the committee's work. If he tells us that an amendment to the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act will be tabled in the next two months, we could plan and organize our work better and target the month of June, depending on the government's priorities.

At the moment, we are totally in the dark about all of this. We really do not know where the government is headed legislatively. And we should not forget that generally speaking government bills have priority. At the moment, we do not know what issues should have what priority. I fail to see how we can move forward as things stand at the moment.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia): Mr. Warawa and Ms. Becklumb have agreed to provide some guidelines at the steering committee meeting so that we can plan our schedule properly. Everyone agrees on this.

Under "Other Business", there is a reference to the upcoming report of the National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy on carbon pricing. I do not know who suggested that. Was it Mr. Warawa?

Ms. Becklumb.

[English]

Ms. Penny Becklumb: I suggested that as well, simply because it is expected to be coming soon from the national round table. It may be something the committee wants to review.

[Translation]

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia): Are there any other comments?

Mr. McGuinty.

[English]

Mr. David McGuinty: There's a really good report the NRT put out recently on commercial building retrofits and commercial building grants for energy efficiency purposes. I don't know if folks want to bring in the NRT to talk about carbon pricing. They have been doing some good strong work.

I didn't think about the first report the analyst mentioned, but certainly there was a good report out, I think a week ago. Mr. Warawa would know it. I haven't seen a copy of it yet. It was on energy efficiency and commercial buildings and the desperate need for new fiscal measures.

• (1035)

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia): Thank you, Mr. McGuinty.

Are there any other comments on that item?

We'll go to Ms. Duncan.

Ms. Linda Duncan: I don't want to complicate matters, but it may well be that the report might be a joint finance and environment committee review. We've talked about the potential of that for some matters. We might want to talk about that at a steering committee meeting, but perhaps not at the first steering committee meeting.

[Translation]

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia): Let us move on to the other items—the 2009 budget and travel.

[English]

The Clerk: I think you've already talked about it.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia): We've talked about that.

Go ahead, Mr. Warawa.

Mr. Mark Warawa: Mr. Chair, we have a few other items here under item six, "other matters", including carbon sequestration. That's very important.

Mr. Godfrey, Mr. Ouellet—I'm trying to think of who else—Nathan Cullen, and I went to Berlin and heard that the world is counting on carbon capture and storage to reduce approximately 25% of greenhouse gas emissions.

Canada is one of the world leaders in that technology. It's in our budget 2009. That may be something the committee wants to consider, because it is a very serious tool to fight climate change. We may want to plan a couple of meetings on it, and that's why I suggested that it be in there.

On travel, if we're going to be dealing with the oil sands and the impact on water, it's very important that you actually see it firsthand. But again, the steering committee will be dealing with that.

Mr. Chairman, I just wanted to find out if there's consensus so that we're using our meetings wisely and properly. This week we have our meeting schedule. Next week we have just the steering committee. I suggest that Tuesday, a week from today, we then hear from the steering committee and hopefully provide a meeting similar to this, but much more strategic, to agree with the recommendations or critique the recommendations of the steering committee. That would be Tuesday of next week.

Then on Thursday we could start with water. I'm just wondering if there is consensus among the committee members to start that next week.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia): My sense is that there is, but if there isn't, now's the time to speak to that and our schedule for next week.

Mr. David McGuinty: I'll just respond.

On the carbon capture and sequestration issue, I agree with Mr. Warawa that we should hear more about it.

I understand there was a study released by the C.D. Howe Institute in the last three days that indicates that carbon capture and sequestration is one of the least efficient uses of taxpayers' dollars in terms of actually achieving GHG reductions. Sequestration turns out to be extraordinarily expensive, and of course it's not even technologically proven yet. There's so much research to be done.

So it would be important, Mr. Chair, for Canadians to learn about the status of that and to what extent it's promising or not. And if it is promising, let's hear more about it. If it's expensive compared with other forms of GHG reduction technologies, or energy efficiency measures, we should hear about that as well. So I think it would be an important subject to hear about.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia): Mr. Bigras?

[Translation]

Mr. Bernard Bigras: Mr. Chair, Mr. Warawa seems to be saying that our study on the tar sands should include witnesses on carbon sequestration. I do not want there to be any misunderstandings here. I am not at all opposed to him suggesting witnesses who promote this technology. However, the steering committee should also consider the other side of the coin, in particular the suggestions Mr. McGuinty just made.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia): Fine. Are there any other questions or comments on carbon storage or gasification?

Let us now move on to the reports from the Environment Commissioner. There is a reference to follow-ups to these reports. Would you like the committee to do a more comprehensive study of a particular matter that the commissioner examined?

We are at the end of our agenda. Mr. McGuinty would like to add something.

● (1040)

[English]

Mr. David McGuinty: Could I just make a suggestion, through you, Mr. Chair, to Mr. Warawa and to our analyst?

Is it also possible that we get, on a more regular basis and with advance notice, those appointments that are subject to review through this committee?

I'm prompted by the example of the national round table, which has 25 members. The clerk may remind us of this, but I always assumed that each and every member was appointed by the Prime Minister, and perhaps still is. But I don't know of the procedure after the round table was taken from PCO and put inside the Department of the Environment. I think it's now a ministerial OIC appointment, but I don't recall.

I don't even know if we have the full exposure here, as members, as to who is being appointed to what, and what appointment is subject to review. But it would be helpful for us to plan out who we should be seeing. I know that we are seeing the new associate deputy.

Can you help us with that?

Ms. Penny Becklumb: I don't get any more notice than you do. It comes through the clerk.

The Clerk: We do receive them, and we do send them out on a regular basis to members' offices electronically—because that's how we get them. I do put them on the agenda as future business, so you do have access to that information.

Mr. David McGuinty: But is it coming here as a matter of—

The Clerk: It's going to each member and then is placed on the agenda as future business as well, so it behoves the committee, or the subcommittee at least, to make a decision to invite or not invite those order-in-council appointments.

I'd like to point out that we do send a lot of information to members, so if you have any questions about information that we send you, I'd be more than happy to meet with your staff, so that they know they can flag these things.

I sometimes suspect, and I may be speaking out of line, that a lot of this information is simply discarded in members' offices, because it looks rather technical, as it's just a few lines. But if your staff ask questions, they surely can phone us and we'd be happy to sit down with them and say this is an order-in-council appointment and you should bring this to your member's attention, if you so wish, so they know what information is being provided.

[Translation]

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia): Very good.

Are there any other items to be added to the agenda under "Other Business"?

[English]

Mr. David McGuinty: I just have an open question for the government. If I could follow up with the analyst on the question of the appointments, could I make a suggestion that it be dealt with at the subcommittee?

I don't know what appointments are forthcoming. Through you, Mr. Chair, maybe Mr. Warawa could help us understand what appointments are forthcoming. He is a privy councillor. He is the parliamentary secretary to the minister who makes the appointments, or who vets the appointments through PMO. We often don't have notice of this until the appointments have been made.

The Clerk: Have been made, yes.

Mr. David McGuinty: So I would make a suggestion for all of us. We may want to hear at all times from folks who are appointed to different jobs, just as a matter of opportunity, to find out more about them and their backgrounds and where they intend to take agencies like the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency or to pull any other organization out of a hat. So I would make a plea, Mr. Chair, that perhaps at the subcommittee that could be dealt with.

I'd like to ask something, Mr. Chair, as a point for open consideration. The President of the United States was here last week. There is a discussion starting between Canada and the United States on energy and environment. Certainly I don't have and I don't know if any other member here on any side of the House has any understanding yet of what that really means. Does the government intend to bring any of this to committee, in cooperation with the opposition parties?

I think there are ministers in Washington on different files. This is a good thing for Canada. We're strengthening our relationship with Washington. But on this particular file of environment and climate change, cap and trade, carbon pricing, and all of these things, is the government in a position to help us understand whether we can play

a role in working cooperatively with the government to achieve the right outcome?

We have absolutely no knowledge of anything that's going on. Is that not a potential topic that Mr. Warawa may want to take up with his minister and find out whether we can be of help here at this committee?

• (1045)

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia): That's duly noted, and I believe it's noted by Mr. Warawa.

Ms. Duncan.

Ms. Linda Duncan: I would concur with that request, and I just wanted to make sure that the review of CEAA and the review of any intended amendments to the deleterious substance provisions of the Fisheries Act be on that additional agenda.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia): Can you repeat that?

Ms. Linda Duncan: I would ask that those be on the agenda for matters to review. I just want it clarified to make sure that the review of CEAA is on that list, to follow up.

Secondly, at the beginning of the meeting I had raised the issue of my understanding that amendments to the Fisheries Act related to deleterious substances may be coming forward, and that this should be on the list to inquire of the government. If so, if that's coming forward, then we need to fit that into our agenda of 22 days.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia): Okay. That's noted. And of course you'll be at the meeting, so you can ensure this happens.

Mr. Woodworth, then Mr. Warawa.

Mr. Stephen Woodworth: Thank you. I have just a small question.

In the course of these proceedings, Mr. Chair, I think you suggested the possibility of reversing our decision to start at 9:30 on Thursday, and I'm not sure where that's been left. Are we starting at 9:30 or 9 o'clock on Thursday?

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia): I would appreciate it if we could start at 9:30, because I have to come from another meeting.

Mr. Stephen Woodworth: Sure. When we were talking about trying to manage the agenda, there was a suggestion to start earlier. That's now by the boards, so it's 9:30.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia): It's 9:30, unless there are objections. There don't seem to be any.

Mr. Warawa.

Mr. Mark Warawa: Mr. Chair, the question is on the subcommittee, the steering committee on Monday. We're scheduled to meet from one o'clock to two o'clock. I don't know if that's a realistic timeframe. I suggest we meet from noon to two.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia): Is everyone in agreement?

[*Translation*]

If there are no other questions, this could complete our meeting.

Mr. Bigras, do you agree that we should meet at noon? Agreed. So the clerk will send us a notice and will make sure that there is a lunch for us.

The meeting is adjourned.

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