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Chair

Mr. Steven Blaney

Standing Committee on Official Languages

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• (0905)

[Translation]

The Chair (Mr. Steven Blaney (Lévis—Bellechasse, CPC)): Good morning to everyone. Welcome to the 22nd meeting of the Standing Committee on Official Languages.

[English]

On the orders of the day this morning, we have some committee business, and then we continue with the consideration of the draft report on the study of immigration as a development tool in official language minority communities.

[Translation]

Mrs. Shelly Glover (Saint Boniface, CPC): We are not getting any sound.

The Chair: Are you not hearing the interpretation?

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher (Beauport—Limoilou, CPC): Okay, that is fine.

Mrs. Shelly Glover: I still do not hear anything; I am somewhat deaf.

The Chair: We are checking with our interpreters to see if the simultaneous interpretation system is functioning.

Mr. Brian Murphy (Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe, Lib.): Bilingualism is the raison d'être of the committee. If this were a true official languages committee, we would not need any interpretation, no?

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: I'm sorry, but I still need the interpretation

Mrs. Shelly Glover: It isn't the interpretation; it is because I am deaf.

Mr. Brian Murphy: It might be necessary for the gentleman from Quebec, but he might not need it.

Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours (Madawaska—Restigouche, Lib.): Please speak up.

Mrs. Shelly Glover: Mr. Chair, thank you, because you know that I have a hearing problem.

The Chair: All right.

I was saying that we had planned a meeting in two parts this morning. First, there will be committee business and then, we will deal with the report.

Our first bit of business is to deal with Mr. D'Amours' motion, which will be followed by that of Ms. Glover. Thereafter, the

meeting will be held in camera. You will recall that Mr. Gagné has a motion on... In fact, we will talk about that in camera.

Without further ado, I would invite Mr. D'Amours to break the ice.

Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

You have all received the notice of motion in the past few days. I would still like to read it so that all committee members and the people listening to us can know exactly what we are discussing:

That the Standing Committee on Official Languages invite Air Canada to once again place a prescribed complaint form for services in both official languages in the front seat pocket of all its aircraft, with prepaid postage and addressed to the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages.

Before explaining why I am presenting this motion, I would like to indicate that I am doing so in collaboration with my colleagues, Ms. Zarac and Mr. Bélanger. In the current context, we firmly believe that people do not know where to turn in order to file an official languages complaint. You will understand what I am getting at.

First of all, there used to be a reply card—a copy of which I have here—placed in all front seat pockets. It was clearly labelled as a complaint form and available to all passengers in their front seat pockets. Today, the form can only be found in the *enRoute* magazine. *enRoute* is a magazine that is distributed by Air Canada, among others, and can be found in the seat pockets in front of passengers.

As I previously indicated, the forms used to be entitled "Formulaire de plainte—Complaint Form." That was crystal clear. It was very simple to fill out and was sent to the Commissioner of Official Languages. That way, people could take the small card with them and then file their complaints.

What is a bit surprising today is that, when you go on to the Air Canada website, you can find certain pieces of information, including an invitation to transmit your questions or observations. Mr. Chair and committee members, you will agree with me that there is a big difference between "questions and observations" and "complaints." That is a clear attempt to diminish the importance of respecting the Official Languages Act.

Now let us delve a bit further and consult the *enRoute* magazine. In the June 2010 issue, the piece of information we are looking for can be found on page 110 of a 123-page magazine. Once again, it does not seem to be a priority for Air Canada to ensure that people will see that information. First of all, before making it to page 110, people will have to flip through the section on Air Canada's various world destinations, found on pages 108 and 109. I wonder whether they are not trying to prevent people from looking any further.

I would be remiss if I did not point out another thing. On page 110 of the current issue, you can read the following:

If Air Canada staff has allowed you to have an exceptional in-flight experience, please go to aircanada.com/customersolutions or fill out a comment card that flight attendants will provide you with upon request.

You can no longer ensure the respect of the Official Languages Act by way of a reply card. However, Air Canada will hand out cards in order to gather favourable comments. It is all very well to tell employees that they are doing a good job. However, if Air Canada is no longer able to give out reply cards concerning the respect for official languages, I wonder whether Air Canada actually wants to inform people of their rights and ability to file complaints.

And there is still more. Air Canada now directs you to an Internet site or e-mail address. There is no doubt that people do use those telecommunications or computer tools to communicate. In fact, those are also telecommunications tools because people can access their messages at all times on their BlackBerrys, for instance.

● (0910)

However, one major issue remains. Take the March 2008 issue of the *enRoute* magazine, and compare it with the June 2010 edition, a bit over two years later. At the bottom of the cover page of the March 2008 issue, it says "Yours to keep / Ce magazine est à vous." A passenger who starts reading the magazine aboard an Air Canada flight can keep it, because that's what is written, i.e., that the company is pleased to offer passengers a copy. Once back home, the passenger can gather the exact information in order to file a complaint.

However, the note at the bottom of the cover page can no longer be seen on the June 2010 issue. People now wonder whether they can keep the magazine or not. They wonder if they will get a slap on the wrist for doing so, because they do not know. If ever Air Canada states that I cannot keep a copy, then the company would probably send me a bill, which I would pay.

In fact, Mr. Chair, when flipping through the first pages of the *enRoute* magazine and looking through the fine print, you can read that an issue of the magazine costs \$5. You can even subscribe on a yearly basis. In the past, Air Canada clearly stated that passengers could keep the magazine, but that is no longer the case today. Moreover, if you read the fine print in the first few pages, you read that you can get a copy of the magazine for \$5. In 2008, it said that magazine was "Yours to keep," but that is no longer the case today.

When you consider all of those elements, Mr. Chair—and I omitted some because I do not want to take up too much of our time—it clearly appears that Air Canada is really trying to free itself of its obligations by placing the information on page 110 of a 123-page magazine. Moreover, customers are obliged to visit a website or use an e-mail address, i.e., ollo@aircanada.ca. In the past, complaints were sent to the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages. The address that is now provided on Air Canada's website is as follows: ollo@aircanada.ca. In the past, the complaint form, which had been prepared and championed by our late colleague Mr. Sauvageau, was sent to the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages. I do not think that created any confusion.

Air Canada says that the number of complaints received has decreased, but we know the reason for that. I do not need to repeat

my anecdote about the toilets or Mr. Godin's remarks about the 7Up can in order to understand that Air Canada is limiting the options for passengers who feel they have been wronged and would like to file a complaint. In the "Canada's Official Languages" section, on page 110 of the June issue, it is written:

If one of our employees has demonstrated our commitment to serving you in the official language of your choice, we invite you to share your experience and nominate the employee for a Dialogue language award.

That brings up a serious problem: I searched their entire website and was not able to find anything. I do hope that Air Canada officials are listening to us today and can point out to me where I can find the information on the Dialogue language award. I searched through the website using the search tool, but I really did not find anything.

It is one thing to want to congratulate employees who respect the official languages and provide customers with good service, but what we want to ensure is that people can file complaints. Moreover, if people wanted to nominate someone for a Dialogue language award, they would first have to find the link somewhere. It is unfortunate, but I was not able to find it despite my best attempts. I hope that people at Air Canada will be able to show me that I did not search hard enough. The website's search tool did not yield any results. I did not search in English, I only did so in French, but nowhere did I find that award. I hope someone can help us with that.

The motion is clear: it invites Air Canada to once again place a complaint form in front seat pockets, where you used to be able to find them. That would clear up any ambiguity and clearly state that, if people wanted to file complaints, they would know that the forms would be for that purpose, and not simply to write comments. If people file complaints on a questions or comments Web page, Air Canada might state that those people were simply submitting comments when in fact they would have been complaints.

● (0915)

In the past, there was no ambiguity. The purpose of the reply cards was clearly to gather complaints. It was very easy to understand. People knew what that entailed. They could at least indicate that they had had problems and could ask that the Official Languages Act be respected.

The motion is quite simple. I have spoken to it for the past two or three minutes. In my view, the facts that I have set out this morning clearly show that there is an intent to create constant ambiguity. I hope that all political parties will support the motion so that we can adopt it. If ever Air Canada decides not to comply with it, then we shall see what measures could be taken. I think that this is a start and that it will yield results.

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

Before opening the floor up to committee members, I would like to clarify two points.

First, do you have copies of the magazine and form?

Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours: Yes.

The Chair: Do you also have a copy of the form that was used in the past?

Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours: Yes.

The Chair: Are they in both languages?

Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours: Yes.

The Chair: I would suggest that you pass them around. I myself have not had an opportunity to see the form in question.

Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours: If I may, Mr. Chair. The section of the Air Canada Web site refers to a form intended to gather questions or observations, not comments. I did not print out the English version. However, the form of our late colleague Mr. Sauvageau is in both official languages.

The Chair: However, is everything in the magazine?

Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours: The following is stated on page 110 of the magazine:

Write to us at ollo@aircanada.ca or visit aircanada.com and click on Contact us and then Linguistic Affairs.

There is nothing there about being able to submit questions or observations. There is really very little information.

I can hand you page 110, if you accept the fact that it is only in French. That is up to you to decide.

The Chair: You can hand around the documents that are in both official languages.

Needless to say, committee members are masters of the proceedings. All the same, we could ask Air Canada to provide us with information on the Dialogue language award that you referred to earlier. That is something that I can do as the chair. I would ask you to share your views on that.

We will now move to Ms. Glover for her comments.

Mrs. Shelly Glover: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

What interests me, but what also causes me a great deal of concern as far as this motion is concerned, is that we are not talking about all of the good things accomplished by Air Canada employees, even though we know that the company is contravening the Official Languages Act. That worries me somewhat. I am very pleased to hear that Mr. D'Amours has raised the issue. I was not aware that flight attendants had comment cards in their possession, that are ready to be distributed. I thank you, Mr. D'Amours. I was not aware that that existed.

We always give our citizens the opportunity to make comments, whether positive or negative, and we try to be as neutral as possible in carrying out our work. In my opinion, a motion was drafted in a manner that is more negative than neutral. On that subject, I believe I have proof that our position, as a committee, should be rather more neutral and not negative. I would like to quote you the committee's mandate, which is clearly defined in the *House of Commons Procedure and Practice* by Audrey O'Brien and Marc Bosc. In the section entitled "Standing committees", it states the following:

Standing committees form a majority of the committees established by the House of Commons. Their authority flows from their large number (24) and the variety of studies entrusted to them, but also from the fact that they return session after session as their existence is entrenched in the Standing Orders. Composed of 11 or 12 members representing all recognized parties in the House, they play a crucial role in the improvement of legislation and the oversight of government activities.

As Figure 20.2 shows, their titles and mandates cover every main area of federal government activity, but for a few exceptions. However, they do not match its administrative structure exactly. Standing committees fall into three broad categories: (1) those overseeing one or more federal departments or organizations, (2) those responsible for matters of House and committee administration and

procedure, and (3) those with transverse responsibilities that deal with issues affecting the entire government apparatus. The latter are likely to work with other committees in discharging their mandates...

The Standing Committee on Official Languages deals with, among other matters, official languages policies and programs, including reports of the Commissioner of Official Languages. The Committee's mandate is derived from a legislative provision requiring that a committee of either House or both Houses be specifically charged with reviews of the administration of the Official Languages Act and the implementation of certain reports presented pursuant to this statute.

We agree that Air Canada is a business that is governed by the federal government. However, the Official Languages Act in no way requires businesses like Air Canada to provide their clients with complaint forms. I would say that our position is that it should be more inclusive. Nowhere does it say that the cards should be addressed to the commissioner. I do not feel that it is in any way an obligation.

I will now read you an excerpt from the Official Languages Act:

● (0920)

2. The purpose of this Act is to

(a) ensure respect for English and French as the official languages of Canada and ensure equality of status and equal rights and privileges as to their use in all federal institutions, in particular with respect to their use in parliamentary proceedings, in legislative and other instruments, in the administration of justice, in communicating with or providing services to the public and in carrying out the work of federal institutions;

(b) support the development of English and French linguistic minority communities and generally advance the equality of status and use of the English and French languages within Canadian society; [...]

I want to emphasize the word "equality". In my opinion, it is absolutely critical to be more inclusive. Our motion should not be only intended to gather negative comments. I believe we should include all comments, whether they be positive or negative. It would be much more acceptable and balanced. In that way, we would allow all of Air Canada's clients to make their comments as they wish.

The Official Languages Act also has the purpose, according to subparagraph 2(c), "to set out the powers, duties and functions of federal institutions with respect to the official languages of Canada". I would like to speak of the Commissioner:

3. (1) In this Act,

"Commissioner" means the Commissioner of Official Languages for Canada appointed under section 49.

"federal institutions" includes any of the following institutions of the Parliament or Government of Canada: (a) the Senate, (b) the House of Commons, (c) the Library of Parliament, (c.1) the office of the Senate Ethics Officer and the office of the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner, (d) any federal court, (e) any board, commission or council, or other body or office, established to perform a governmental function by or pursuant to an Act of Parliament or by or under the authority of the Governor in Council, (f) a department of the Government of Canada, (g) a Crown corporation established by or pursuant to an Act of Parliament, and (h) any other body that is specified by an Act of Parliament to be an agent of Her Majesty in right of Canada or to be subject to the direction of the Governor in Council or a minister of the Crown, but does not include (i) any institution of the Council or government of the Northwest Territories or of the Legislative Assembly or government of Yukon or Nunavut, or (j) any Indian band, band council or other body established to perform a governmental function in relation to an Indian band or other group of aboriginal people [...]

I believe the definition of a crown corporation has been clearly explained. I wanted to read these definitions to emphasize what Air Canada's obligations are, as an organization that must comply with the Official Languages Act. When it was privatized, it was given its responsibilities under the Official Languages Act. However, private businesses or crown corporations are not obliged to send the complaints or positive comments of users to the Commissioner. No such obligation exists in our mandate or elsewhere.

Personally, I feel that comment cards addressed to Air Canada should suffice. It is Air Canada that must take the steps to ensure they are compliant with the Official Languages Act. If Air Canada management is not made aware, no steps will be taken either to solve the problems or to congratulate the employees who have received positive comments.

I partly support Mr. D'amours' suggestion. I would like to hear the opinion of the other members of the committee on this matter.

● (0925)

I think that with some refinement, perhaps through amendments, we could end up with a motion that would deal with my concerns and others', and that would satisfy Air Canada clients.

On this basis, Mr. Chairman, we cannot support this motion as moved by Mr. D'Amours. I would invite Mr. D'Amours and my colleagues to comment on this motion and explain why they consider that it complies with our committee's mandate.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Glover.

I will take this opportunity to mention that this morning, we traded our clerk with the clerk from fisheries...

Ms. Julia Lockhart (Procedural Clerk): From the Standing Committee on the Status of Women.

The Chair: She is from the Standing Committee on the Status of Women. So you certainly must know Ms. Boucher. It is therefore Julia Lockhart who is our clerk this morning.

On that note, we will carry on with Ms. Boucher.

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: Yes, Mr. Chairman.

As you know, we have very often heard the horror stories that Mr. D'Amours has told us here. Everyone knows me: I am happy to criticize, but I also want to say positive things as well. It is the wording of the motion that bothers me. We have to recognize the positive aspect of a given situation, and not just look at the negative, if we want improve things. Good things are done as well as bad anywhere you are, that is life. We would like our world to be perfect, but unfortunately it is most imperfect.

The motion as drafted does not suit me. I would like to have something more comprehensive.

Some people who fly with Air Canada or Jazz are satisfied with the service. That also has to be said, as well as reporting on the bad habits we have often heard here. However, no one has spoken of the good habits. We live in a world where the worse things go, the better we feel; and when good things happen, they must not be mentioned.

I think we will have to put forward a system and ask Air Canada or anyone who works in such public positions to take into consideration both sides of the coin. It is always important to do so, for the simple reason that in that way, we can get a good overview of the situation.

We hear stories here, at the Standing Committee on Official Languages, as is the case with all the other committees, but there are never any grey areas. I think we have to clarify the situation. I would be prepared to propose a friendly amendment, as we say, so that Air Canada would be in a position to speak to their successes and so that we could also analyze their shortcomings. We have to take a broader look at the situation, and not only look at one side of the story. It is important to shine a light on both sides of the story so that we find ourselves in the grey area as little as possible.

This committee has to be proactive, so that people do not have the impression that we are only looking at one side of things, that is to say always looking at the bad aspects. I would hope that we are heading toward improvement, not deterioration.

We live in a rapidly changing and exciting world. We live in a world of globalization, a world in which our children are open to the world. I believe we must try and set parameters with a view to taking a much more balanced approach.

I would be prepared to move an amendment; if Mr. D'Amours wants to share that with me, I would be ready to do so.

Would you like me to read it, my dear colleague Mr. D'Amours?

● (0930)

Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours: Mr. Chairman, the members of the committee must address you.

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: All right.

Mr. Chairman, would the member Mr. D'Amours like me to read the amendment?

The Chair: Go ahead, Ms. Boucher.

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: I will therefore read the amendment I am moving, so that the distinguished member across the way will understand exactly which way the pendulum is swinging.

The Chair: I am sure that he, like all the other members of the committee, is anxious to hear it.

Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours: Mr. Chairman, a point of order.

I am really having difficulty understanding. I would like us to speak more slowly.

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: I will take my time, Mr. Chairman.

With the amendment that I am moving, the motion would read as follows:

That the Standing Committee on Official Languages invite Air Canada to once again place a prescribed comment form, both positive and negative, for services in both official languages in the front seat pocket of all its aircraft, with prepaid postage and addressed to the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages.

•(0935)

The Chair: If I understand correctly, Ms. Boucher, after the words "to once again place a prescribed complaint form for services... in the front seat pocket of all its aircraft" you replaced the word "complaint" by the words "both positive and negative comments". Am I right?

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: Yes.

The Chair: Let us go on to the next intervention, while still considering the amendment.

[*English*]

Now I will turn to Ms. O'Neill-Gordon.

Ms. Gordon.

Mrs. Tilly O'Neill-Gordon (Miramichi, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

It is slightly arrogant to presume that Air Canada would have only complaints from its passengers regarding its two official languages. I propose many would probably also like to let the commissioner know what a great job they are doing. Therefore, perhaps we should include a congratulation form along with the complaint form.

Air Canada is Canada's largest airline and flag carrier. The airline, founded in 1936, provides scheduled and charter air transportation for passengers and cargo in 178 destinations worldwide. Its largest hub is Toronto Pearson International Airport in Ontario. Its main base is Montreal-Pierre Elliott Trudeau International Airport in Quebec. Air Canada is the world's seventh largest passenger airline by fleet size, and the airline is a founding member of Star Alliance, an alliance of 26 member airlines formed in 1997. Air Canada's corporate headquarters are located in the Saint-Laurent area of Montreal, Quebec, in the riding of Mr. Dion, a member and the past leader. I wonder also if he consulted with Mr. Dion before proposing such a motion that will affect a national federally regulated company whose headquarters are in a Liberal riding.

In any case, Mr. Chair, Air Canada had passenger revenues of \$9.7 billion in 2008, and the airline's parent company is the publicly traded firm, Aviation Holdings. I would like to remind the committee that Canada's national airline originated from—

[*Translation*]

Mr. Richard Nadeau (Gatineau, BQ): A point of order, Mr. Chair.

[*English*]

The Chair: Ms. Gordon, would you please wait for a moment? Mr. Nadeau has raised a point of order. I will just listen to Mr. Nadeau, and I will come back to you, be assured.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Nadeau.

Mr. Richard Nadeau: We must discuss the amendment and not the motion as such. Now, Ms. O'Neill-Gordon is making a speech on the main motion. I know that there is some coaching going on, but I must make a point of order and let Ms. O'Neill-Gordon know that we have changed subjects some time ago.

The Chair: In fact, Mr. Nadeau, Ms. O'Neill-Gordon spoke of congratulations, which is perfectly relevant to the topic of the amendment, namely both positive and negative comments.

•(0940)

Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours: I am raising a point of order, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Mr. D'Amours, I will finish dealing with Mr. Nadeau's question. We should speak one at a time.

Mr. Nadeau, I consider that your point of order is not relevant.

Mr. D'Amours, do you also want to make a point of order?

Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours: Yes, but my question could be clarified by our clerk.

Today, we are talking about complaints regarding services in both official languages. I do not know Air Canada's biography, what this company does, how much money it generates on a yearly basis, how many employees it hires and how many airplanes it has, all these things are pertinent facts. Mr. Chair, could you ask the clerk if, within the framework of discussions bearing on a specific motion, the comments should deal precisely and directly with the motion at hand?

The Chair: Absolutely, Mr. D'Amours, you know that this is probably a preamble to some comments and that we must not judge things too hastily. This is what you have done. Nonetheless, I will ask the clerk to clarify the issue. We will not suspend the meeting just for that.

Mr. D'Amours, it is important, in fact, that all the interventions should deal with the topic at hand. You are perfectly right, up to now, Ms. O'Neill-Gordon's comments and those made by other committee members have dealt with the topic that we are dealing with. Thank you.

[*English*]

Ms. O'Neill-Gordon, we'll turn back to you. I invite you to continue.

Mrs. Tilly O'Neill-Gordon: I would like to remind the committee that Canada's airline originated from the Canadian federal government's 1936 creation of Trans-Canada Airlines, which began operating its first transcontinental flight routes in 1938. In 1965, Trans-Canada was renamed Air Canada, following government approval.

Following the 1980s deregulation of the Canadian airline market, the airline was privatized in 1988. In 2001, Air Canada acquired its largest rival, Canadian Airlines. In 2006, 34 million people flew Air Canada as the airline celebrated its 70th anniversary. Of those 34 million people, how many wished to formulate complaints on official languages services and how many would have liked to congratulate the airline? It is not up to us to say or decide, and I would argue, Mr. Chair, that we should allow the people to have the choice to do either.

Air Canada operates a fleet of Boeing 777, Boeing 767, and Airbus A330 wide-body jetliners on the long-haul routes. Air Canada also utilizes Airbus A320 family aircraft, including the A319, A320, and A321 variations, and Embraer E-170 and E-190 family aircraft on short-haul routes.

The carrier's operating divisions include Air Canada Cargo and Air Canada Jetz. Its subsidiary, Air Canada Vacations, also provides vacation packages to more than 90 destinations. Together with its regional partners, the airline operates, on average, more than 1,370 scheduled flights daily. These are impressive accomplishments, and Air Canada is a very important part of the lives of Canadians.

I think we have a responsibility as parliamentarians to act with all fairness and not just assume the negative. This motion asks us to assume that a company with the stature of Air Canada is not complying with federal laws, such as the Official Languages Act. It is, in my view, unfair and irresponsible for us to take that position, and I think we should consider a mechanism that balances out and allows for positive comments as well, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Thank you, Mrs. O'Neill-Gordon, for your comments.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Nadeau, you would like to intervene.

Mr. Richard Nadeau: I'll pass, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Then, let us continue with Mr. Weston.

Mr. John Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

First I would like to thank my colleagues from every party for having supported the bill that I tabled in the House yesterday evening.

An hon. member: We have just changed our minds.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. John Weston: It was a golden moment. All the members were unanimous. I was very happy to live this moment in the House along with everybody else.

We could also learn our Canadian history here. I thank my colleague O'Neill-Gordon for having taught us some of the history of Air Canada, which was founded in 1938.

I appreciate the spirit of these discussions. I think that it is important to emphasize the positive aspects in our civil society. In any case, our society depends on this positive spirit. We do not have as many policemen in Canada as other countries have to enforce our laws, because the people themselves approve of the Constitution, the laws and conventions of the land. I also believe that Canadians are happy when we, the parliamentarians, emphasize not only negative aspects but also positive ones.

Besides, the expression "Her Majesty's loyal opposition" contains the word "loyal". This means that even if the opposition members criticize the government, all members must unite in this positive spirit.

In the private sector, companies depend on the participation of their clients. Mr. D'Amours suggested a good idea when he said that

the clients should have the opportunity to participate in the management of Air Canada.

In the documents handed out by Mr. D'Amours this morning, he emphasized two passages that, in fact, deal with positive aspects. Here is the first excerpt:

If one of our employees has demonstrated our commitment to serving you in the official language of your choice, we invite you to share your experience and nominate the employee for a Dialogue language award.

The other excerpt reads as follows:

If Air Canada staff has allowed you to have an exceptional in-flight experience, please go to aircanada.com/customersolutions or fill out a comment card that flight attendants will provide you with upon request.

Therefore, I favour the initiative of tabling a friendly amendment that will give the clients an opportunity to offer Air Canada compliments and congratulations as well as complaints.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

● (0945)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Weston.

Could somebody let me know where the magazine and the formulas are? Thank you.

[*English*]

We have another guest this morning at our committee: Ms. Wong.

Ms. Wong, welcome to our committee.

Mrs. Alice Wong (Richmond, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

This is a very interesting experience for me, because as you probably know, I'm the Parliamentary Secretary for Multiculturalism. Whenever you talk about languages, I may have a slightly different perspective when we only look at bilingualism. Canada is a bilingual country, and we need both French and English, and I'm so lucky that I speak English, one of the official languages, well enough to be here to represent my riding, where 67% of my constituents speak a language other than the two official languages. Some of my constituents would love to have access to as many languages as possible. I would not argue for only English or French, but what about Farsi or Chinese or Korean?

I come from the business point of view, because my background happens to be that I taught business in school, in university, in marketing and other areas. I travel a lot. Find out how many times I've flown with Air Canada, not only between here and my constituency, but all over the world.

I also come from the perspective of a consumer, a customer. I would definitely love to have a forum in which I can express my opinions.

However, I want to speak from two different perspectives, first from the business point of view, and second, from the perspective of official languages and linguistic duality. I also have a degree in linguistics, and my doctorate degree is in business. My dissertation is on bilingualism from a practical perspective, a study of content and language. I think this is quite an interesting topic. I'd be more than happy to comment on that.

• (0950)

[Translation]

Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours: Mr. Chair, I have a point of order.

[English]

Mrs. Alice Wong: I'm going to come to the point.

[Translation]

The Chair: Mr. D'Amours.

Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours: Mr. Chair, if I wanted to know Ms. Wong's curriculum vitae, I would consult her web site. Today we are discussing a very important motion, and I think that we could go on to something else besides what these people studied in the past and what their experience is. We should go on to more serious matters.

Mr. Chair, I find that these discussions, which are supposed to be about a serious motion, are verging on the ridiculous. Just now, we were going into historical data, and now we are trundling out CVs to tell people what we studied. If people want to share their CV, let them do it during their electoral campaign or on their web site.

Could we discuss the motion that I presented this morning, please?

The Chair: Mr. D'Amours, I know that you want us to discuss your motion. However, if you constantly interrupt the committee's work by raising points of order, this will draw the process out at length.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Chair: As I said just now, these discussions are about the use of both official languages, especially in the field of transportation. Therefore, I now invite the honourable member to keep to the subject matter. However, I consider that up to now, the information that I have heard is perfectly relevant, regarding the whole issue of the language of business and other linguistic considerations. I think that Ms. Wong was just ready to raise the issue that we are dealing with today.

Therefore, I would invite you to be sparing in your use of points of order.

[English]

Ms. Wong, I would invite you to...

[Translation]

Ms. Glover, do you want to raise a point of order?

[English]

Mrs. Shelly Glover: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I appreciate what you said about using points of order appropriately, because for whatever reason, it's not always understood in this committee as to what exactly a point of order is. But I believe I have a point of order.

My point of order has to do with unparliamentary behaviour.

[Translation]

Mr. Richard Nadeau: What is her point of order about?

[English]

Mrs. Shelly Glover: Do I have the floor, Mr. Chair, or does Mr. Nadeau?

[Translation]

The Chair: I invite the committee members to listen to this point of order.

Mr. Richard Nadeau: I was thinking out loud.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Nadeau. I accept your apology.

[English]

Mrs. Shelly Glover: I was going to say that I believe I do have a point of order, and it has to do with unparliamentary behaviour and language and the comments made by my colleague, Monsieur D'Amours, with regard to the background of someone who has a lot of experience and was just sharing that experience because it provides some credibility and some substance to the arguments she is about to put forward. I believe making jokes about her CV or about the manner in which she speaks about her experience and about her expertise is unparliamentary.

This is the first time that Mrs. Wong has come before this committee, and it disturbs me that we would have these kinds of unparliamentary comments made. I want her to feel welcome. I want her to know that we appreciate the background. I myself did not know about it.

So I would ask that you take that into consideration, Mr. Chair, and ask that Monsieur D'Amours not make jokes about other members, particularly when it's her first time here. I appreciate hearing about their experiences, so that I can be more educated when it comes to the points they're making.

Thank you.

• (0955)

[Translation]

Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours: I would like to raise a question of privilege, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Glover.

Concerning the point of order, Ms. Glover, I consider that your proposals are relevant.

Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours: I am raising a point of order, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Yvon Godin (Acadie—Bathurst, NDP): I am also raising a point of order, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Wait a moment. I will give you the floor later on.

I would remind committee members that one of the basic principles that we need to follow in order for the committee to run smoothly is to show respect to parliamentarians. I feel that, at this stage in our committee work, this aspect is relevant. This is a reminder for all members. As the saying goes, if the hat fits, wear it. This is important. I would invite you to respect parliamentarians as we proceed with our work.

I would also like to remind committee members that we are now doing the work of the parliamentary committee. This is not question period with its 30-second interventions. I would like members to allow others to clarify their thoughts and not have to limit themselves to short terse sentences.

Mr. D'Amours, on a point of order.

Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours: Mr. Chair, I would like to refresh your memory, because I think that you need it. It was you yourself who said, when a point of order was raised earlier, that discussions should nevertheless focus on the issue at hand.

The Chair: Absolutely.

Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours: You are mistaken about my point of order. You must understand that I was never joking, and that I never said that Ms. Wong's comments about her CV were a joke, never. Misinformation is starting to float around again. People should listen to what others are saying, and think twice before saying such ridiculous things. I never said that Ms. Wong and her CV were a joke. Before opening their mouths, all members should think twice.

That is all I wanted to say.

The Chair: Thank you for your clarification, Mr. D'Amours.

Now it is Mr. Godin who would like to raise a point of order.

Mr. Yvon Godin: Mr. Chair, with all due respect, I would like to remind you that you are supposed to remain neutral as the chair. I do not appreciate your comments, that is, your congratulating everyone. In my opinion, this is inappropriate. I want to be clear on this issue. If Ms. Glover does not know the people in her caucus, perhaps she could meet them at the restaurant to get to know them better. We are here, in committee, to work.

In addition, I think that this is a tactic to sabotage the report on immigration that we are supposed to be preparing. That is what this is all about.

I will stop here, because we are losing time. We should be voting.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Godin, for this point of order.

Mr. Yvon Godin: I have been aware of Air Canada's history since 1998. The people from Air Canada are breaking the law, that is what they are doing. It is time to put them in their place, and it is our job to do this.

In addition, the motion is not solely about inviting Air Canada here to make some complaint forms available. We are not here in order to congratulate the company, enough of this is already being done in their *enRoute* magazine, which congratulates the company night and day. This is a motion in response to an infraction of the law.

The Chair: Mr. Godin, I think that you are exceeding the scope of a point of order.

Mr. Yvon Godin: That is all that we want.

The Chair: Mr. Godin, if you wish to intervene, you will do so when you have the right to speak. Up until now, you have not been on the list of interveners, but if you wish to do so, you can.

Mr. Yvon Godin: No, and you will not find me on the list either. Let's go ahead and vote.

The Chair: As you wish, Mr. Godin. You are free to express yourself or not. That is your choice.

[*English*]

Ms. Wong, I think the road is open for you to continue your comments, unless you want to—

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: On a point of order, Mr. Chair.

I would like to remind you about a rule which I will read to you:

In a standing, special or legislative committee, the standing orders shall apply so far as may be applicable, except the standing orders as to the election of a speaker, seconding of motions, limiting the number of times of speaking and the length of speeches.

Consequently, the number of interventions that a member may make in a committee, as well as the length of speeches, is not subject, *a priori* to any limitations. A member can therefore have the floor as long and as often as he or she desires, providing that the chair has in fact given him or her the floor.

Mr. Chair, everyone here is entitled to speak. We may have differing opinions, but each member of this committee is entitled to speak.

The standing orders also state:

The freedom the standing orders give committees regarding the number of times a person may speak and the length of speeches does not prevent a committee from adopting its own rules [...]

In my opinion, it is useful to hear from everybody. I will give the floor to Ms. Wong.

• (1000)

The Chair: To what rule in O'Brien and Bosc are you referring?

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: The rule is found on page 1051, under the heading: "Rules of debate and the decision-making process".

The Chair: All right, thank you.

With respect to your point of order, Mr. Godin, I completely agree with you that my role as chair requires that I maintain some neutrality. However, you will agree with me that, as chair, I must rule on the relevance of comments with respect to the issues we are examining. That is what I'm trying to do to the best of my ability.

Mr. Yvon Godin: Mr. Chair, what I wanted to say was in response to the statement that a CV makes it possible to know an individual better. We are not here to get to know each other, but rather to discuss a motion. That is what I wanted to say.

You are saying that our points of order are delaying things. Ms. Wong can talk for 20 minutes should she so wish, that does not bother me and I will respect that. She's entitled to speak. I am familiar with the standing orders. I also know that the government does not want to receive the report on immigration and I think that this is what this is all about. I simply want to state this publicly. That has nothing to do with Ms. Wong. It is a coincidence that these points of order were raised at the same time. The fewer the points of order the faster things will go.

The Chair: I am pleased to see that you acknowledge my responsibility, as the chair, for ruling on the relevance of comments. I do agree that this may lead to discussion, but I can assure you that I'm going to try to do this. As part of a discussion, it is normal to present a preamble to put things in their context. As the saying goes, in order to understand where you're headed, you have to know where you've come from. I think that this was what Ms. Wong was doing.

This time, I'm going to say it in French, Ms. Wong. You can go back to where you left off and make your statement.

[*English*]

Mrs. Alice Wong: Thank you, Mr. Chair, for allowing me to go on. This is a committee I'm not normally with, and I surely do not feel welcome anymore. I think I would hesitate the next time, if I'm invited back.

However, I'll come back to the comment.

Coming from my background, coming from the business point of view, and also from the act, I think the reason we are all here is because we bring our own experiences to the table so that Canadians can benefit from them. Since you don't know me, I presume you don't need that. My resumé...if you were to allow me, I could speak for two or three days.

Anyway, let's get back to the subject. I surely agree with the argument by our colleague, Shelly Glover, that nowhere in the act are they—meaning Air Canada—under obligation to provide such materials to the public, and that it will not foster the perception of official languages as a central part of Canadian identity. I'm proudly Canadian, so as a Canadian, I have the right to talk about that.

This makes the Official Languages Act again perceived as an obligation, an imposition, or a concession. Regarding his recent report, the commissioner spoke to us just this week about how we need to better promote linguistic duality and bilingualism. This will not achieve that. This, again, is a motion that will bring about strife.

Allowing the public to voice their opinions on the service received, whether they're good or bad, should be considered, but this should be balanced to not only suggest the complaints, but also the congratulations. Likewise, as I said, as a customer, as a frequent flyer, I do appreciate a lot of the good work that Air Canada has been doing.

So I actually speak in favour of Sylvie's amendment.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Wong. I want to reassure you that you are always welcome at this committee.

An hon. member: Hear, hear!

Mrs. Alice Wong: Thank you.

[*Translation*]

The Chair: We will now hear from the Vice-Chair, Mr. Bélanger.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger (Ottawa—Vanier, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I would like to say two things. I am under the annoying impression that what we are seeing here is an attempt to prevent the committee from presenting the report on immigration, after working on it for two or two and a half months. This is very annoying.

● (1005)

[*English*]

This second comment does not apply to you, Ms. Wong, and it does not apply to Mr. Murphy or Monsieur Bellavance.

I wonder, Mr. Chairman, how proud the students of Samuel-Genest will be of us this morning.

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Bélanger.

We will now continue with Ms. Glover.

Mrs. Shelly Glover: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

[*English*]

I want to first state that what was said by Monsieur Godin is absolutely false, entirely false.

The immigration report that we are in the process of doing was something that I suggested. I find that the report is of extreme value, which is why I initially suggested it, because it will help many of our minority communities.

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Mr. Nadeau?

Mr. Richard Nadeau: On a point of order, Mr. Chair. I do not have the procedure book with me, but I am not sure that we are talking about the amendment at present.

The Chair: Indeed, Mr. Nadeau, your intervention is relevant, and perhaps I should have also brought this to the attention of the committee members who have already spoken.

Ms. Glover, I would invite you to discuss the amendment to the motion, which pertains to positive comments.

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: On both positive and negative comments.

The Chair: Exactly.

[*English*]

Mrs. Shelly Glover: Mr. Chair, the reason I am taking a moment—and it's a brief moment—to respond to what Mr. Godin said is, first of all, because what he said during what he called a “point of order” was not a point of order, but he was allowed to speak for several minutes about how he felt this committee meeting was going. I think it is my right to at least respond to something he initiated. I did not take up the time of the committee by making a point of order to address his comments, which he made under a point of order, but I do believe it is my right, when I speak, to respond to some allegations that are false and allegations that are completely partisan, in my opinion, while I also address the amendments. I think it's important that we make sure we do not provide false information, particularly to those children who hopefully are watching today. They want us to be honest, they want us to have integrity, and I intend to live up to that obligation for those children and for all of the other people who might be watching today.

With regard to the immigration report, we want to extend the immigration report. We want to study it further. We want to be inclusive. It is the opposition that wants to shut it down by doing a report when the actual study has not been completed.

So let's make this clear. The government would like to continue with this invaluable study on immigration in our francophone and anglophone minority communities because we care about their survival.

Going back to the amendment, the amendment put forward by my colleague, Sylvie Boucher, is a very good amendment. I am going to support the—

[*Translation*]

The Chair: I apologize, Ms. Glover.

Mr. Yvon Godin: I would like to raise a point of order, Mr. Chair. I think that our colleague is disclosing things that occurred in camera. She is talking about the motion that she tabled.

Mrs. Shelly Glover: No.

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: No, she is talking about mine.

The Chair: I will nevertheless consider your point of order, because we have new members on the committee. I will accept Mr. Godin's point of order, simply and basically to point out that anything that pertains to the report per se—the report was distributed to members—and the recommendations, is confidential. Of course, the meetings that were held and the exchanges we had with respect to immigration are public, but the report as such and the recommendations are confidential.

I will therefore accept your point of order. For your information, it is important to remind members that, when you speak, you must avoid referring to conversations that took place in camera, which does not appear to be the case at present, but I do believe that the member's point is relevant.

Bearing this in mind, I will give the floor back to you, Ms. Glover.

Mrs. Shelly Glover: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

• (1010)

[*English*]

As I was saying, I believe this to be a fair and just amendment. I too have some significant concerns about the committee or any government or parliamentarian dictating to a private entity exactly what will be on something that is distributed to their customers. If we are to follow in the spirit that we are trying to help the situation, and that we are trying to make ameliorations that will help all our francophone and anglophone citizens, then it is imperative that we put forward motions that pertain to being inclusive and make sure we do not take a position.

In this case, I believe Madame Boucher's amendment to the motion allows us to make a suggestion, and I appreciate that Monsieur D'Amours' motion is to invite Air Canada to do this, but we should do it in such a manner that they have the right to be concerned about not offending their customers and not trying to push onto their customer base any kind of negative opinion or suggestion.

I too have had a number of very good experiences with Air Canada, *en français*, in English. I have been very satisfied with many of the trips I've taken. I would like to see Air Canada provide the opportunity for customers to make comments, both good and bad.

I believe the motion put forward by Madame Boucher is going to allow people like me to make our comments without feeling as if we are somehow going against what the comment card is for. If we suggest that it's only a comment card for complaints, how is someone to make a positive acknowledgement on a complaint card? I wouldn't feel comfortable doing that. It would seem completely contrary to what the card is for. I think we ought to be very careful to be inclusive and that we do not propose something that would leave out part of the population, part of Air Canada's customer base, and that is in effect what the original motion would do.

Madame Boucher has put forward an amendment that allows everyone to participate in providing comments to Air Canada with regard to their experiences. I thank Monsieur D'Amours for making a suggestion, but I particularly prefer the amendment that has been put forward by Madame Boucher.

I, frankly, cannot understand anyone who would not support the kind of amendment—and it's a friendly amendment—that has been put forward by Madame Boucher. I believe Madame Boucher does this because she has always displayed an affection for being inclusive. That is something I appreciate very much. When I sit in committee, I note Madame Boucher is a passionate member of this committee who quite often speaks from the heart. That is why I will support this motion, because I know that Madame Boucher has the people of Canada in her heart when she makes motions like this.

It is not a motion that is meant to be partisan or is meant to offend anyone. As she clearly stated, she appreciates the work that Monsieur D'Amours has done on this, and she's simply trying to make a friendly amendment that would allow Canadians to take part wholly and fully in the process to provide Air Canada with some feedback. That's what it's supposed to be about. It's supposed to be about feedback so Air Canada can make adjustments and can help their employees to respect a law that is very important to every member of this committee.

• (1015)

Once again, this amendment allows that to happen. Without this amendment, we are going down a very negative path. I simply would never vote in favour of our committee putting forward something that is negative, that is divisive, that is going to cause angst not only with Air Canada employees but also with customers.

For those reasons, I am going to support the well-thought-out amendment that Madame Boucher has put forward. I think it is right to do so.

I encourage every member of this committee to seriously reflect on how they hope customers will see our input. I hope they reflect on how Air Canada has been a major contributor to the economy and has done its utmost to try to push forward, to respect, the Official Languages Act in many areas.

Yes, they have some work to do. There are some improvements to make. Our committee has done some good work in making some suggestions with regard to that.

Coming back to this motion and this amendment, the motion does not help Air Canada. It does not help Canadians.

It will not help to have the cards sent to the official language commissioner, in my opinion. I believe, as was said before, we need to make sure that Air Canada can address the problems that arise from these comments and also that Air Canada can commend the employees who do good work and who provide valuable service to Canadian travellers.

That's why I believe the amendment is probably the best way for us to go. I would hope that all members of this committee would take that to heart, as does Madame Boucher, when they make their decision. I'm hoping to see them all support this friendly amendment. Then we can move on to other business.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Thank you.

[*English*]

Thank you, Ms. Glover.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Boucher, the floor is yours.

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: I would like to talk about my amendment to the motion once again, because I feel it is very important. Indeed, when I requested a "friendly amendment", I did so in an effort to take some initiative. We must not always focus on the bad; we must also look at the good. Perhaps Air Canada could become, in what I hope is the not too distant future, a pillar that finally understands what customer service is all about. That was my purpose.

Having myself worked in customer service my entire life before coming here as a member of Parliament, I think that it is very important for everybody to receive this type of comment, be it negative or positive. This helps balance things, focusing on shortcomings and suggesting corrective measures. It is much easier to take corrective action in this manner.

I will reread the motion with the proposed amendment I made earlier:

That the Standing Committee on Official Languages invite Air Canada to once again place a prescribed complaint form for both positive and negative comments pertaining to services in both official languages in the front seat pocket of all its aircraft, with prepaid postage and addressed to the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages.

I feel it is important that this motion include these two aspects. Hence we can ensure that we are not simply putting out a report but that we are now able to provide Air Canada with tools so that it can improve.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Boucher.

[*English*]

This morning we have a new member with us, coming from the Liberal bench.

I would invite Mr. Murphy to address this committee.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Brian Murphy: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

A long time ago I sat here as a member of this committee.

I simply do not understand the reason behind the amendment, and I totally disagree with Ms. Glover's comments.

First of all, I would like to point out that in New Brunswick, we do not have the services of Air Canada whatsoever. We do, however, have services provided by Jazz. This company is not the same "animal" as Air Canada, because it is not subject to the same obligations.

Then, I wanted to say—

• (1020)

The Chair: Mr. Murphy, allow me to tell you that Jazz is bound by contract to Air Canada—

Mr. Brian Murphy: I am quite aware of that.

The Chair: Further, it falls indirectly under the Official Languages Act. You know that.

Mr. Brian Murphy: May I continue?

So, Air Canada is an entity which is subject to the Official Languages Act. Ms. Glover was saying that there were concerns because of the possibility that Air Canada might be forced to provide complaint or compliment forms—but nothing is being done for the moment. However, it should be pointed out that section 10 of the Official Languages Act clearly states that Air Canada must offer bilingual services in Canada's main airports, including those located in and around Ottawa, and also on flights between Montreal and Moncton—which do not exist—and elsewhere in New Brunswick—which do not exist, either. That's my background. I have a lot of concerns, because this does not apply at all to New Brunswick, and that is unfortunate.

Something else concerns me as well. The complaint form has been in existence for several years now. It already exists. I imagine that, since Air Canada has already provided the complaint form in the past, it is not worried. We don't know of any correspondence addressed to Air Canada which states that there is dissatisfaction with the fact that there is a complaint form. Air Canada created the complaint form, which is not a complaint and compliment form.

There is basically something lacking as far as the amendment is concerned. I am a lawyer. I'm sorry about that, but I am a lawyer. When a lawyer pleads in court, when he pleads a case concerning human rights before a commission, it never revolves around a compliment form. You don't appear before a judge to make your case against the defendant, to pursue litigation, by beginning to say that you would like to compliment the opposing party. You do not tell the court that you want to make a complaint, but that you also have good things to say.

[English]

In English, to make it clear, the reason the official languages commissioner exists is to ensure that the Official Languages Act is being followed. Like all complaints, like all disturbances, like all claims people have, that is usually the result of complaints, not compliments. It seems ridiculous to me that you would want to add compliments to a complaint form for a body that exists to address grievances and complaints. The official languages commissioner will take care of the good points about Air Canada, which Madam O'Neill-Gordon, Madam Wong, Mr. Weston, and the others have made. We're not anti-Air Canada on the level of their service. They will get that feedback. The official languages commissioner will do investigations, and I would imagine these will be very full investigations that say, by and large, Air Canada does a very good job in delivering its services in compliance with the Official Languages Act.

But in order to ensure their obligations, you have to have a complaint form, because it is a process and it is a commission, and like all other commissions, it is what is going wrong under the law that provides an obligation on its part. This isn't the Better Business Bureau. This isn't a Zagat survey. This isn't Expedia, rating the best hotels or the best airlines in the world. This is very serious. The issue of compliance with the Official Languages Act is very serious and therefore ought to be driven by what Air Canada has already provided, a complaint form.

That's my comment.

• (1025)

[Translation]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Murphy, for pleading your case.

We will now move to Mr. Godin.

Mr. Yvon Godin: I did not wish to speak.

The Chair: No? Your name is on my list.

In that case, we will move on to Mr. Weston.

Mr. John Weston: I would like to thank my colleague Mr. Murphy. I think that it requires a certain degree of courage to take part in the work of a committee when one is not a regular member. Regardless, there is a big difference between the courts and this situation. By definition, the courts hear from opposing parties. I believe that the purpose of the Standing Committee on Official Languages is to make Canada more bilingual.

Mr. Chairman, can I ask you to read Ms. Boucher's amendment once more?

The Chair: Mr. Weston, it basically is the same motion as the one presented by Mr. D'Amours, except that the expression "complaint form" is replaced by "form for both positive and negative comments".

Mr. John Weston: Personally, I would rather see the expression "as well as a card of congratulations" included, but I don't think I can propose an amendment now, right? There is already one before us.

The Chair: We usually deal with one amendment at a time. Sometimes a subamendment can be proposed, but it does not go further than that. Otherwise, we would end up with a layer cake, if I

can put it that way. In theory, and sometimes in practice, you can propose a subamendment, if you wish.

Mr. John Weston: I don't know if Mr. D'Amours would find that more acceptable.

The Chair: You can also agree on the wording with the mover of the amendment. It's as you wish.

Mr. John Weston: If it is acceptable, I would propose adding the words "as well as a congratulations form" after the word "complaint" and before the words "for services provided". I sincerely hope that this will be judged acceptable by all of my colleagues on the committee. Because in my opinion, that will achieve the objective.

The Chair: I would like to make a comment, sir.

First of all, the clerk reminds me that a subamendment must be specific to the amendment, in this case the words "positive as well as negative comments". Currently, you may therefore move a subamendment if the amendment affects those words. You may also wait until the debate on the amendment has finished and move a new amendment. It is up to you.

[English]

Mr. Weston, did you understand me?

[Translation]

Mr. John Weston: I think it is a phraseology problem. Is that the correct term?

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: I believe so.

Mr. John Weston: I am looking at Mr. D'Amours. I am not sure if he is happy with what I am proposing.

I could make changes to it so that it will be acceptable, technically speaking. I would like to hear my colleagues' comments.

The Chair: The clerk informs me that what you have moved would be a new amendment and not a subamendment.

All right?

[English]

Mr. John Weston: I know. Okay.

[Translation]

The Chair: Fine.

We will now go to Ms. Glover.

Mrs. Shelly Glover: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I would like to raise two points. I believe I have a subamendment to suggest. I would like to read section 25 of the Official Languages Act, because Mr. Murphy does not seem to understand that Jazz does indeed have an obligation. When Minister Baird appeared before us, he himself repeated that the obligations of those providing services on behalf of Air Canada must be respected. The same is true for a bill dealing with this issue. Section 25 stipulates the following regarding third party services:

25. Every federal institution has the duty to ensure that, where services are provided or made available by another person or organization on its behalf, any member of the public in Canada or elsewhere can communicate with and obtain those services from that person or organization in either official language in any case where those services, if provided by the institution, would be required under this part to be provided in either official language.

Section 25 of the act clearly indicates that Jazz also has responsibilities. As a committee, we ensure that they bear them. However, we must intervene with Air Canada because that is the company that must ensure that Jazz is meeting its obligations.

I move the subamendment. We spoke a lot about the Commissioner of Official Languages. I am prepared to accept all of the testimonies that I have heard, for example that it be addressed to the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages, even though I have provided information that clearly demonstrates that there is no obligation there in that regard.

I would like to add the words “and to Air Canada” after “the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages”. As I have already stated, this would allow Air Canada to take steps to deal with both complaints and positive comments. It is in fact Air Canada that manages the employees, and is responsible for bringing them back into line or congratulating them.

I hope my colleagues will support me. Once again, if you wish to discuss my subamendment with me, I would encourage you to share your point of view.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

• (1030)

The Chair: Ms. Glover, I have discussed the issue with my clerk. It would be better to put forward your proposal as an amendment and not as a subamendment, given that it does not deal with the same part of Mr. D'Amours's motion.

Mrs. Shelly Glover: Ah, I understand.

The Chair: Ms. Boucher's amendment affects the words “positive as well as negative comments”. It is not in the same place, and moreover, it is another concept.

Mrs. Shelly Glover: All right.

The Chair: It does not deal with the kinds of comments, but the person to whom they would be addressed. I would therefore propose that you set that aside and perhaps move another amendment to the motion later.

For the moment, we must vote on the amendment. Ms. Boucher is on my list.

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: I simply wanted to speak to Ms. Glover's subamendment or amendment concerning Air Canada that we have just mentioned. I just wanted to say that I thought that it was brilliant, but I don't know if we are to discuss it.

The Chair: We are ready to call the question on your amendment, Ms. Boucher.

I will read Mr. D'Amours' motion as it would read including the amendment:

That the Standing Committee on Official Languages invite Air Canada to once again place a prescribed complaint and congratulation form for services in both official languages in the front seat pocket of all its aircraft with prepaid postage and addressed to the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages.

• (1035)

Mr. John Weston: I would like a recorded vote.

The Chair: You wish to have a recorded vote, very well.

Therefore, I would just like to check on one thing, in order to refresh my memory. Our clerk will oversee the recorded vote.

(Amendment negated: nays 6; yeas 5)

The Chair: Ms. Glover, you expressed a desire to—

Mrs. Shelly Glover: Yes, I just wanted to repeat that I would like to move another amendment. Here it is:

That the Standing Committee on Official Languages invite Air Canada to once again place a prescribed complaint and congratulation form for services in both official languages in the front seat pocket of all its aircraft, with prepaid postage and addressed to the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages and to Air Canada.

The Chair: I am improving, I do not even need to consult the clerk.

Ms. Glover, you will understand that, as the committee has just studied the first part of your amendment, it is not possible to move the same one, because we are already aware of the committee's position, therefore, your amendment would only be in order if it was to add the words “and to Air Canada”.

I would invite you to make comments on Ms. Glover's amendment.

Ms. Boucher.

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: I was saying this earlier on, but now I can speak to it. I find this quite brilliant that we would have a comment form that was addressed not only to the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages, but also to Air Canada, because both parties could have frank and open discussions, at some point in time, even though there may already be discussions underway between them.

However, it is very important that both parties have access to the same comments. If there are negative comments made to Air Canada, the Commissioner of Official Languages should be informed of them at the same time as Air Canada. In that way, neither party could claim that they had not received the complaints or comments, either positive or negative.

It is very important that the commissioner work alongside Air Canada, and that at the same time, he be aware of the issues. We met with representatives from Air Canada and from the commissioner's office at different times, and often they seemed not to have received the same complaints or comments, or the comments were not referred to the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages or vice versa.

Therefore, it is very important that the Commissioner of Official Languages and Air Canada both have access to the same comments, whether they be positive or negative.

The Chair: Fine. Thank you very much, Ms. Boucher.

Mr. D'Amours is asking me to reread the motion. I will reread it while pointing out the addition. Essentially, it would add the words “and to Air Canada” before the very end of the motion, so that the motion would read as follows:

That the Standing Committee on Official Languages invite Air Canada to once again place a prescribed complaint form for services in both official languages in the front seat pocket of all its aircraft, with prepaid postage and addressed to the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages and to Air Canada.

Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours: I will accept it so that we can move on.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: It is a friendly amendment.

The Chair: Therefore, as the mover, you say that you will accept the amendment. If I have your consent, we could indeed move on to —

• (1040)

Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours: This is a friendly amendment to my motion. We can then move on to other business.

The Chair: For the information of the other members of the committee, Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours has accepted to amend his motion by including the proposal of Ms. Glover. I will therefore accept comments by members of the committee on the subject of the motion.

Mr. Godin, do you have something to say on the motion as informally amended?

Mr. Yvon Godin: I will try to respond quickly.

First of all, we are discussing a complaint form. There will only be one form. If it is to be addressed both to the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages and to Air Canada, which way will it go?

Secondly, the Commissioner of Official Languages has the right to verify whether or not the complaint is valid before referring it to Air Canada. We are discussing complaints that come under breaches of the Official Languages Act. Normally, the Commissioner of Official Languages and his team will check on the complaint. If it is not valid, Air Canada will never hear about it. If it is, do not worry, Air Canada will be informed of it. The commissioner will work with Air Canada. This is the normal process for any complaint addressed to the commissioner, under the Official Languages Act.

I have already filed complaints with the Commissioner of Official Languages, copies of which I sent to Air Canada or to another party. Canadian citizens have the right to be able to complain to the Commissioner of Official Languages. Under his mandate, he is in a position to decide whether the complaint is valid or not. If it is unfounded, it stops there. In this instance, we are taking away the commissioner's responsibility to decide whether or not the complaint is founded.

That is why I cannot support the amendment. That should be an amendment and not the motion as such.

The Chair: It is now part of the motion, Mr. Godin.

Mr. Yvon Godin: How can it be part of the motion? In order to change a motion, the consent of at least three-quarters of the members is required.

The Chair: You are raising minor points of procedure, Mr. Godin.

Mr. Yvon Godin: I'm very proud to be of assistance, Mr. Chairman.

The Chair: You are aware of the tradition at the committee according to which we accept what we commonly call friendly amendments on a friendly basis.

Having said that, Mr. Godin is raising a practical issue and I invite the committee members to take it under advisement. In fact, there are two parties destined to receive this form.

[*English*]

I will now give the floor to Mr. Weston.

[*Translation*]

Mr. John Weston: I would like to say something about Mr. Godin's comments. If we consider the objective of the Official Languages Act, the business itself must be aware of its clients' comments. I believe it is in the spirit of the legislation, and in line with what Mr. Godin himself defends as a promoter of the vitality of both official languages in Canada, to inform Air Canada.

That is why I would support this amendment. I believe that it is also in the spirit of the act to obtain both the criticisms and congratulations for services offered by Air Canada, whether they be positive or negative.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

[*English*]

Now we'll move to Ms. Wong.

Mrs. Alice Wong: I'm also speaking in favour of the friendly amendment, since our honourable colleague has agreed. I think in other committees, once the person who submits the motion agrees, there is a friendly agreement and then there is no other required procedure. I do not know why this committee acts very differently from other committees. I absolutely support the procedure; it is definitely the right way to go. Procedurally, I do not think we're violating any normal procedure in committees.

It doesn't matter whether it's bilingualism, official languages, immigration, or status of women. Once the person who presents the motion has accepted that as a friendly amendment, then I think we can just move on.

• (1045)

The Chair: Thank you for your comments, Ms. Wong. You could have almost called it a point of order.

I would kindly say that the rules are for the members, not the members for the rules.

Mrs. Alice Wong: No.

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Ms. Boucher, would you like to speak to the motion?

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: I agree with Ms. Wong. Mr. D'Amours had accepted a friendly amendment. I don't see any problem with sending the forms to them both, namely the Commissioner of Official Languages and Air Canada. Both can receive the forms.

Sometimes, we receive them by the boxful. When you have something to send to somebody, you send it. I do not see any problem. I think that it would be important that they receive them. The people at Air Canada will be aware of the fact that the commissioner has received complaints, and the commissioner can talk to them directly about such complaints. If only the commissioner received the complaints and he did not discuss the matter with the people from Air Canada, there would be a breakdown in the communication at one point.

I'm entirely in favour of Ms. Glover's amendment. In my opinion, it respects the idea behind Mr. D'Amours' motion.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Boucher.

Mr. Nadeau.

Mr. Richard Nadeau: Mr. Chair, could you reread the exact wording of what we are discussing at present?

The Chair: Absolutely.

As I told Mr. D'Amours earlier, Mr. Nadeau, it is essentially the same motion in the original version, with the words "and Air Canada" added at the end. Is that all right?

Mr. Richard Nadeau: Yes.

The Chair: We have heard everybody on the list with respect to the motion.

Ms. Glover, do you wish to make a comment?

Mrs. Shelly Glover: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I appreciate what Mr. Godin said. However, it is important that everybody listening to us at present realize that they can send their complaints directly to the Commissioner of Official Languages. There is no problem with that. If they are not comfortable with the form found in the pocket, or in the *enRoute* magazine, they can send it secretly. We will not take this opportunity away from them.

However, I am completely against this idea whereby parliamentarians want to promote the secret filing of complaints, to the detriment of organizations that work with the Government of Canada. Should this happen, they would not be able to improve their services quickly. It is incumbent on parliamentarians to ensure that Air Canada improves the situation and its services and fulfils its responsibilities. Of course, the Official Languages Commissioner, upon receipt of the complaints, can initiate investigations. However, that can take time, sometimes 2, 4, 6 or even 10 months—this has already occurred. I think that Air Canada should find out as quickly as possible if one of its employees violates the Official Languages Act.

I am upset to hear a parliamentarian suggest that such things be done in secret. That is not our job. We do what we can to improve the situation. We are not here to prove that we are better than anyone else, or to catch organizations in the act. That is not our role. If we see problems, we deal with them, we try to resolve them. Air Canada's customers, Canadians—

• (1050)

[English]

They deserve better. They deserve service that is appropriate, and if someone is working on behalf of Air Canada and they do not

follow the law, Air Canada ought to know right away so they can put into place some measures that will fix it. To try to circumvent their managerial responsibilities I think is wholly wrong. I do not agree with what Monsieur Godin said.

That is why this amendment that I'm making, although I'm not satisfied it is entirely inclusive and I'm unhappy we are not including that it contain positive reinforcements as well as the complaints—I would be wholly unsatisfied if we didn't at least tell Air Canada as well, when we asked them to put a pamphlet into their own seats.... My goodness, we've got to tell them if there is a problem so they can take some measures.

That is my comment on this.

I'm thankful that Monsieur D'Amours was prepared to accept the slight changes I've suggested. Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Glover.

It's now time to vote on the motion.

[Translation]

We will now vote on the motion. I will reread the motion one last time.

That the Standing Committee on Official Languages invite Air Canada to once again place a prescribed complaint form for services in both official languages in the front seat pocket of all its aircraft, with prepaid postage and addressed to the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages and Air Canada.

Ms. Boucher?

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: Could we have a recorded vote?

The Chair: Yes, absolutely.

We will proceed with a recorded vote on the motion.

(Motion agreed to: yeas 10; nays 1)

The Chair: I will not have to rule on the motion as it has been adopted.

To conclude on the subject of Air Canada, I would remind you that Mr. D'Amours, in an opening comment when he presented his motion, referred to the Dialogue language award.

In the exchanges that occurred over the past two hours, there have been many comments on the positive and constructive aspects as well as the committee's role to encourage the advancement and to promote the equality of both official languages.

I take it upon myself to request that our clerk and our analyst ask Air Canada to provide us with a status report on this Dialogue award, in order to find out where the company is exactly with this and to find out what mechanisms it has set up to recognize anecdotes pertaining to linguistic success.

Ms. Boucher, do you wish to add anything to this matter?

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: I would like some clarification. Earlier, when Mr. D'Amours talked about his motion, he said that he had not seen this anywhere.

Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours: That is what I said.

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: Perhaps we could also check why it cannot be found anywhere.

The Chair: Would somebody move the motion, so that we can obtain more information and find out where—

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: I will move it.

The Chair: So I have somebody who will move this motion regarding the Dialogue language prize.

Are there any other comments, can we adopt the motion?

[*English*]

Mr. Yvon Godin: What's that?

The Chair: Where were you, Mr. Godin?

Mr. Yvon Godin: I was on the moon.

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Ms. Boucher moves:

That the Committee request that Air Canada inform the Committee about the status of the Dialogue Award program in order to promote success stories with its Air Canada employees and find out where the Committee can obtain information

and what steps have been taken to inform both employees and the public about this program.

Do I have the unanimous consent of committee members to proceed with the motion tabled by Ms. Boucher?

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: Thank you.

We will see each other next Thursday, to continue with committee work.

●(1055)

Mr. Yvon Godin: Mr. Chair, according to the agenda, we have five minutes remaining.

The Chair: Yes, but this was an internal housekeeping motion. We need more than three minutes to begin discussing it. I do not want us to be rushed by the other committee that is coming in.

The meeting is adjourned.

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