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# **Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates**

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**EVIDENCE**

**Wednesday, May 5, 2010**

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**Chair**

**Ms. Yasmin Ratansi**



## Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates

Wednesday, May 5, 2010

• (1530)

[English]

**The Chair (Ms. Yasmin Ratansi (Don Valley East, Lib.)):** Order.

Are the cameras allowed?

**The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Marc-Olivier Girard):** CTV and CBC are allowed as long as they maintain their cameras on their tripods.

**Ms. Siobhan Coady (St. John's South—Mount Pearl, Lib.):** So this is in public.

**The Chair:** It is in public, yes.

I can see media here. I have hit the gavel.

I was expecting ministers, but unfortunately they are not here.

Yes, Ms. Coady.

**Ms. Siobhan Coady:** Thank you, Madam Chair, and welcome back. I hope you had a successful trip.

I'm very, very glad that you are here today, as I'm quite outraged, to be quite frank, that we have no witnesses appearing before us today, that we were turned down by—

**Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP):** On a point of order, Madam Chair.

Did you bang your gavel already?

**The Chair:** Yes, I did. I can bang it again, though.

**Mr. Pat Martin:** Would you mind?

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

**The Chair:** Order.

**Mr. Pat Martin:** I hadn't noticed that you'd convened the meeting.

**The Chair:** I banged my gavel and asked the media to leave, but I was told CTV and CBC were allowed to be here.

**Mr. Pat Martin:** I see.

It seems like a bit of a set-up. We should have been advised that this type of thing was...

**The Chair:** I guess we couldn't be in a room that the government channel could televise, so we had to be here.

**The Clerk:** The Afghanistan committee is in one of the main rooms of Centre Block, and the other one is Status of Women.

**The Chair:** So we have the privilege of CBC and CTV.

**Mr. Pat Martin:** They're always welcome. It's just that I wish I'd had some advance notice.

**The Chair:** Ms. Coady.

**Ms. Siobhan Coady:** I'm sure what my colleague is referring to is the fact that we would normally be televised today, so we're glad to see that some media are here.

As I was saying, I'm quite outraged that we have no witnesses before us today. I'm quite concerned about that. I feel that my responsibilities and duties as a parliamentarian.... I've been sent here by the good people of my riding of St. John's South—Mount Pearl. I have a fiduciary responsibility and I take that quite seriously. I feel that I'm being denied, actually, my rights and responsibilities to question people on this concern.

We are in the midst of a fairly serious study on a very serious matter of public trust, and I'm quite frustrated by the unwillingness of the ministers to appear. I'd like to talk a little bit about that. You know, I don't know what they're quite afraid of.

I want to ensure, Madam Chair—I want to make it very clear—that witnesses appear on this very serious matter. I want to ensure that they appear before we break for our summer recess, and I want to review with you the full review of who I would like to have before the committee.

Before I do that, let me explain why I'm quite frustrated today. We asked Minister Raitt to appear today. She sent you a letter saying that she's responding to the request in her capacity as the former Minister of Natural Resources, and that her office has searched for relevant records and no records were found.

Well, that, I guess, is of concern, because the Liberal Party did file an access to information request on April 16, and that request has come back to us saying that they need to go further to get the requested documents. They're indicating that more consultations with other government departments and third parties will be required, and verbally have said, yes, there is information here.

Again, I'm frustrated that this is coming out in dribs and drabs. I'm not quite sure why it is doing that and why this information is coming to us in this manner. If the Conservatives are quite serious about being open and transparent, then I suggest they do start becoming open and transparent.

Allow me to talk for a moment. We're dealing with future business here today. I want to talk about my suggestions on the list of witnesses. And I'd like to make sure that this committee is available any time Minister Raitt or Minister Paradis would like to appear. If that requires us to have special meetings, if it requires us to sit during constituency week, then I think we should make ourselves available.

I had suggested at our last committee meeting May 10, and I would like to again suggest, that we have the Parliamentary Budget Officer on Corrections. We did have a discussion about that, and I would again like to reiterate that I think this is a timely and important topic. It advances further the business of this committee, and I think we have to move forward on that.

I reiterate that I would like to have on May 12, then, Derrick Snowdy. I know he was requested to come today. He was not available. I'd like to hear about why he's not available today and if he would be available for another time, along with Ian Harvey; he's with HD Retail Solutions Inc. I'd like to have them here together, if I could.

On May 26, I'd like to have Jim Wright here for the first hour—we talked about that in our last committee meeting—and then the other companies for the second hour. When I say “other companies”, for clarity that's Upper Canada Solar Generation Limited, Canadian Solar Incorporated, and Renewable Energy Group Incorporated.

Then, on May 31, because we do have a duty toward main estimates, I'd like to have PCO on the main estimates. On June 2, I would like to have a panel of what I'll call staffers, or people involved in the various ministers' offices: Andrew House, he's in Minister Goodyear's office; Scott Wenger in Minister Prentice's office; Sébastien Togneri—

•(1535)

**Mr. Pat Martin:** A point of order, Madam Chair.

**The Chair:** Yes.

**Mr. Pat Martin:** You handed me this list half an hour ago and told me that this was the decision of the committee. I took it that this must have been prepared by the clerk, on your direction, to advise me of the agreed-upon list of witnesses.

I now find that the Liberal member, who has just taken the floor, starts to read directly from this list that I had presumed—I believed you, at face value—the clerk had prepared and was going to be our marching orders.

Now it seems that this was actually Siobhan's wish list, given to you, and you've dutifully given it to me.

You're supposed to be a neutral and independent chair, not the maidservant, the handmaiden, of the Liberal Party. This really bugs me. You weren't here, but we went through planning meeting after planning meeting where we were told, “Oh, May 10 and May 12 are not available. No, no, we have to have the main estimates.” They even looked up the motion from a month ago where we agreed on those dates, so our protestations were put aside. And now you arrive back from your international travels, take your marching orders from the Liberals, and tell me that's what we're doing and it's going to be ratified here at this meeting.

**The Chair:** Mr. Martin—

**Mr. Pat Martin:** Who's running this committee? I liked it better when the vice-chair was running it.

**The Chair:** Mr. Martin, I did not tell you that the clerk had given me the list.

**Mr. Pat Martin:** No, you just came and gave it to me as if this is what we're doing from now on.

**The Chair:** No, what I said was that this was a list that was given to me, and I gave it—

**Mr. Pat Martin:** By who?

**The Chair:** By the Liberal member.

**Mr. Pat Martin:** Oh, by the Liberal Party. I see.

**The Chair:** Yes. And I suggested that this was a list that was submitted, and I asked the—

**Mr. Pat Martin:** You told me it was agreed upon by the committee.

**The Chair:** No, no, no; I said no such thing, because I wasn't even here. I said you guys had had a motion from the committee, and Ms. Coady had—

**Mr. Pat Martin:** You two have colluded to take over this committee so you could grandstand for the first half hour after you brought in CBC and CTV.

**The Chair:** Mr. Martin, just so that you—

**Mr. Pat Martin:** Why don't you just have a press conference, Siobhan?

**Ms. Siobhan Coady:** A point of order; a point of order.

**Mr. Pat Martin:** You're already on a point of order.

**The Chair:** Order.

Mr. Martin, when I gave you the list, I said that this was a suggestion from the Liberals.

•(1540)

**Mr. Pat Martin:** No, you did not.

**The Chair:** I sat down with you, that's why. I never put down on any official paper that this was...this was a suggestion, and if that's a suggestion, the committee has to follow the suggestion, number one. The committee is a master of its own destiny. If you wanted to change the 10th, the 12th, the 15th—

**Mr. Pat Martin:** You weren't here. That's exactly what we tried to do, but we were unsuccessful. We were told it was impossible because we must deal with the main estimates and those witnesses were lined up and they were coming.

Ask your clerk.

**The Clerk:** I just mentioned that was what was planned and agreed upon. Until that point—

**Mr. Pat Martin:** Now all of a sudden that's not important, because you've colluded, with your Liberal Party, to bring us....

All these witnesses in fact we did put forward; all the parties agreed on a pile of witnesses. The clerk has them, and then it's up to the clerk to assemble those witnesses in some logical order based on availability and based on the type of testimony they might give. That's the way committees work.

You guys don't meet in between meetings and decide on what witnesses we're going to hear and when just because they happen to be your same political stripe.

**The Chair:** Mr. Martin, I can appreciate what you think, but I'm just going to consult the clerk, because the clerk had received from you guys a list.

**Mr. Pat Martin:** That's right.

**The Chair:** And whatever your lists were, he has them.

Now, if you wish to continue the study on the green technology that you were studying, that's fine. If you want to continue studying on the freeze, that's fine. And the first two, PBO....

**Mr. Pat Martin:** PBO on Corrections; that came right out of the blue.

**The Chair:** That's the freeze. That's the freeze study that we had agreed to do. There was a request from Madame Bourgeois that we get Corrections done, and when we were doing the study for the freeze, the PBO and Corrections Canada were part of our study.

When we were doing our framework for the studies, we had put down May as a potential time to look at the estimates. Now, on the 10th and the 12th, if you want to still look at the estimates, you're welcome to, because you are the master of your own destiny. Nobody can tell you—

**Mr. Pat Martin:** Somehow everything has changed, because we're called "government operations and estimates", and the main estimates of the Government of Canada are going to come before this committee, and they have to be dealt with by the end of May, by June 1, and you've scheduled one meeting for the PCO, on May 31, 24 hours before the deadline, before they're deemed to be adopted by the committee anyway.

I accepted what the clerk told us, that we had to deal with those estimates on the 10th and the 12th. I accepted the logic and the reasoning, and I accepted that a motion to that effect had been passed and witnesses scheduled. And then I find you get off a plane from wherever you were and you set up a meeting with your Liberal colleagues and you rewrite everything.

I'm not going to tolerate it. I'm a vice-chair of this committee. I won't be left out of the planning of this committee.

**The Chair:** Mr. Martin, Ms. Coady was making a suggestion. I'm going to listen to her suggestion and I'm going to listen to everybody's suggestions. Then, together, we will determine. You've had meetings where you have had nothing but dilatory things going on, where you couldn't even discuss.

We do not have witnesses today. Why don't we have witnesses today? We should have had witnesses, as the committee was very serious about doing its business. If it is not serious about doing its business, then none of us should be here. Either we do our business in a proper manner or we just fold up and go away. Therefore—

**Mr. Pat Martin:** You already did.

**The Chair:** —Ms. Coady has come up with a list. Anybody else who has come up with a list is more than welcome to present their list.

So Mr. Martin—

**Mr. Pat Martin:** We did that last meeting. We presented our witnesses.

He's got a list: every one of these names is on the list that Marc has already.

**The Chair:** So there are two things he has, the PBO and Corrections, that can come on May 10. If that's what you want, we can get them to come on May 10. That's what the clerk has.

For May 12, if you want estimates—

**Mr. Pat Martin:** I just resent the orchestrated hijacking of the committee. That's what I resent.

**The Chair:** I have just come back.

**Mr. Pat Martin:** Yes, I know.

**The Chair:** I received this list, and I gave it to you to say this is what came from the Liberals.

**Mr. Pat Martin:** You gave it to me as if this was the committee's list.

**The Chair:** No, no.

**Mr. Pat Martin:** This is actually the identical list, typed at Siobhan Coady's office, as if it—

**The Chair:** If it was the committee's list, Mr. Martin, it would have been sent by the clerk and not by me.

**Mr. Pat Martin:** Baloney.

**The Chair:** It would have been sent by the clerk to everyone.

Ms. Coady has the floor. She can tell us what her requests are.

Then we have a speaking order for Mr. Brown, Mr. Warkentin, and Ms. Mendes.

If you want, I'll put you down for your list as well.

**Mr. Pat Martin:** I already did that—when you were travelling, frankly.

**Mrs. Alexandra Mendes (Brossard—La Prairie, Lib.):** I'd like to comment on that point of order.

**The Chair:** I think Madam Coady has a point of order.

**Mrs. Alexandra Mendes:** This is on Mr. Martin's point of order.

**The Chair:** Sure, go ahead.

**Mrs. Alexandra Mendes:** It is true that the clerk had a list from last week. The problem is precisely that we have absolutely no one from that list today here, and that is why Siobhan has put forward another list.

We have no one from the full list that was provided to the clerk last week—no one—and we had more than 25 names on that list. That is the problem.

• (1545)

**The Chair:** Mr. Martin, I just checked with the clerk. He says, "What list?"

So if you think that you have—

**Mr. Pat Martin:** Oh, really.

You weren't making any notes at the last meeting? Shall we check the blues, perhaps?

Does anybody else remember me reciting 10 or 12 or 14 names, all of which are on this page today?

**The Chair:** Mr. Martin—

**The Clerk:** There was one decision made about the meeting on May 5, for more clarity.

**Mr. Pat Martin:** This is absurd.

**The Chair:** The clerk says that he was given clarity that Minister Raitt and Minister Paradis should be coming for May 5. Failing that, he should call Brian Jean and Mr. Jim Wright. He did it and he got a “no” there. But Mr. Wright has agreed to come on May 26.

Who else did you call?

**The Clerk:** I called Derrick Snowdy. He was unable to make it for today, but he's available for next Wednesday, May 12.

**The Chair:** Okay.

So Mr. Snowdy is not available for today, but he's available for May 12.

Those are the dates that he has given.

Yes, Mr. Holder.

**Mr. Ed Holder (London West, CPC):** Just for clarification, I heard some comment that 25 people were invited.

My practical question to the clerk is how many did you invite?

**The Clerk:** For this meeting?

**Mr. Ed Holder:** For this meeting. Because I think that speaks to the—

**The Chair:** Address the chair so that I can ask.

**Mr. Ed Holder:** Through you, Chair, to the clerk. Thank you.

**The Chair:** He invited ministers Raitt and Paradis, Mr. Wright, Mr. Brian Jean, and Mr. Snowdy.

**Mr. Ed Holder:** So clearly not 25.

**The Chair:** No.

**Mr. Ed Holder:** I just wanted to clarify the statement that was made.

**The Chair:** I will have to look at the blues and the 25 names that you have suggested.

With that clarification, can we listen to what Ms. Coady is proposing?

The clerk is confirming that whoever he spoke with... Mr. Snowdy has agreed to come on May 12. Now, if Mr. Snowdy has agreed to come on May 12, we can put it down, and decide whether we want him or whether we want to do the main estimates. Mr. Snowdy has given his commitment.

Mr. Wright wants to come on May 26. That is open.

And we can have the main estimates when we do....

May 10 is for Corrections, which is the departmental freeze, which we had agreed to. They have said yes.

So if everybody is on the same page as to who has said yes....

You were partially right: it's the clerk's list, not my list. He has Mr. Snowdy confirmed for May 12 and Mr. Wright confirmed for May 26.

For any other witnesses whose names were submitted, could we have a look and see who are those 25? Out of the 25, do you remember if you had made any suggestions? Your suggestions are what I'm—

**Ms. Siobhan Coady:** I have a list—

**The Chair:** Okay, fine, go ahead.

**Ms. Siobhan Coady:** —if I can go back to my original rant.

**The Chair:** Sure.

**Ms. Siobhan Coady:** Do I have permission to speak, Madam Chair?

**The Chair:** Yes. The floor is yours.

**Ms. Siobhan Coady:** First of all, I was on a bit of a rant—I'm a Newfoundlander, nonetheless—and the reason is that I'm quite frustrated that I'm looking at no witnesses today. When we discussed this last week, perhaps we weren't clear enough to the clerk that we wanted the witnesses to appear. Therefore, I'm bringing clarity and a suggestion as to how we proceed. If there was not clarity on Monday, I want to ensure clarity so that we can get through this.

As I said, I don't care if we have to have special meetings. I don't care if we have to meet during our constituency week. I think it's my responsibility as a member of Parliament to ensure public trust. And if the Conservatives are, as they say they are, open and transparent, then great, we'll get to the bottom of this sooner rather than later. But I continue to have lots of evidence coming forward that I need to question, and I would like to be able to do that. Hence, I wrote up a list of potential witnesses.

We have a list, which we gave, and now, to ensure clarity, I want to be able to go through it. This is how I would like to see the month. Everybody else can make their suggestions as well. I'm putting forward a suggestion on how we proceed in this committee to ensure that we get the work done that I've been sent here to do.

If I could continue with my list, that would be great.

I don't know where we stopped.

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

• (1550)

**The Chair:** Just a second.

Mr. Martin, I have the blues, and I'll clarify that in a minute.

Go ahead, Ms. Coady.

**Ms. Siobhan Coady:** On June 2 I'm suggesting that we have what I'm going to call a panel of employees, the people who work in the various ministers' offices. I think I stopped at Sébastien Togneri, in Minister Paradis's office; Kimberley Michelutti, who is in Parliamentary Secretary Jean's office; and Doug Maley, who is in Western Economic Diversification. He is a public servant who has been part of the e-mails that have gone back and forth.

I'm suggesting that on June 7 we continue and have SNC-Lavalin. Again, we need to move forward on that committee business.

I think there was discussion about having Helena Guergis on June 9. I'd like to see her come before committee .

We also have to do Bill C-429. I suggested a date of June 14. Or maybe we need to continue with the Jaffer study. It depends on what continues.

On June 16, which is one of the final days of committee, I'm suggesting Rahim Jaffer.

That's what I'd like to suggest we proceed with in this committee.

Last week I gave lots of suggestions and handed the clerk a long list, and then I find that we have no committee witnesses. I want to make sure that we have committee witnesses. I want to make sure that everyone on that list is open and available to come before this committee.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

I will read—from the blues—what the vice-chair had to say, first in terms of who was supposed to come:

**Mrs. Alexandra Mendes:** Raitt and Paradis, and if they're not available....

**Ms. Siobhan Coady:** Jean and Wright.

**Mr. Paul Szabo:** And if you still haven't got anybody, I think Snowdy.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Chris Warkentin):** Is that clear enough? Okay, let's carry on.

Then Mr. Martin said as follows:

Secondly, I think we really need to conclude this study of the possibility of undue lobbying or undue influence of lobbyists over the administration of the green infrastructure fund. I'd like to be able to conclude it to the point where we as a committee might even issue a report to Parliament. So whatever vacancies we have.... Personally, I'm disappointed we can't get out of the main estimates on the 10th and the 12th.

So you wanted to get out of the main estimates on the 10th and the 12th.

You're the committee. You're masters of your own destiny. Whoever told you—

**Mr. Pat Martin:** And you're the Liberal Party. It seems anything is possible when the two of you put your heads together.

**The Chair:** No, Mr. Martin—

**Mr. Pat Martin:** Why is it that I have a copy of Siobhan Coady's list delivered to me by you as if this were carved in stone or something?

**The Chair:** Mr. Martin, let me finish.

I don't believe in giving up May 26 or June 2 or 7 for that purpose. If you wish to get there, if you want June 10 and 12, you're welcome to have it. If you want to continue with the study that you wanted to do on the green infrastructure fund, that is fine.

I'll read again from the blues:

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Chris Warkentin):** As soon as possible, but no later than the end of Wednesday, we should provide the clerk with, first of all, the list of everybody who members are interested in, and then the prioritization.

So who has provided the clerk with the list? Which of you sent an e-mail to the clerk? That is my question.

If Ms. Coady did it, then she has the right: she is entitled to ask that she read the list.

Yes, Mr. Holder.

**Mr. Ed Holder:** On a point of order, Madam Chair, that's no less valid than the list Mr. Martin put together. In fact, we all had gone through that.

**The Chair:** But we have to submit the list so that the clerk has clarity. The clerk must have clarity. If you do not submit the list, then there is a problem.

So now you have actually, physically, given—

**Mr. Ed Holder:** Well, then, I feel that somehow time was wasted at this committee.

Why would we spend such painless numbers of minutes going through these lists, as we did at our last meeting, to come up with a fairly comprehensive list—

• (1555)

**The Chair:** Mr. Holder, I can correct you.

**Mr. Ed Holder:** May I finish, please, Madam Chair?

**The Chair:** You shouldn't go on this....

“As soon as possible”—that's the vice-chair giving you advice —“but no later than the end of Wednesday.”

Have you provided it?

**Mr. Ed Holder:** We went through that totally at committee, Madam Chair, and I thought the list was quite exhaustive.

**The Chair:** But the vice-chair gave you instructions to provide it to the clerk to avoid any confusion. So to avoid any future confusion, let us do it.

It is a point of order, Monsieur Nadeau? No? Okay.

You're done?

**Ms. Siobhan Coady:** I had given the clerk a list at our last meeting. I just submitted it, because the vice-chair had been clear, and that's why I submitted it to him, and I think that's circulating now.

But it's pretty much the list that we were talking about, because I don't think I missed any names.

**The Chair:** Okay.

Mr. Brown.

**Mr. Patrick Brown (Barrie, CPC):** Thank you, Madam Chair. I wanted to raise a few points.

First, on Ms. Coady's suggestion to jump directly to Correctional Services, the original Liberal motion was to deal with Public Works and Government Services as a first study on budget freezes. I wanted to know why that's changed, why you want to do Correctional Services in front of Public Works.

Second, you mentioned the government is providing information in “drips and drabs”, as you phrased it. I certainly take contention with that in the sense that even before the committee had officially requested documents, Minister Baird's office provided exhaustive search of all possible documents and sent them directly to the committee. Every minister who has been referenced has sent all available documents. I think when it comes to full disclosure, you've had unequivocal full disclosure and complete eagerness to be cooperative. So I think when you make statements like that, it's not being fair or accurate.

Third, I do take concern with what Mr. Martin mentioned. I do hope that we're not in a situation where we're only...where we're suggesting to one member that these are the committee's witnesses. I think this committee works best when we work cooperatively, not partisanly. I think that would be unfortunate if that was misrepresented to Mr. Martin—and I take him at his word—that—

**The Chair:** I have a point of order, Mr. Brown.

Yes, Ms. Coady.

**Ms. Siobhan Coady:** Thank you.

I'm sorry; I have concerns with that.

I'm certainly not working partisanly. I'm asking for information. I've been asking quite calmly, quite clearly, quite diligently—

**An hon. member:** Is this a point of order?

**The Chair:** No, it's a debate.

You can continue.

**Mr. Patrick Brown:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

I don't want to be in a situation where lists are misrepresented. In terms of the witnesses suggested, you saw complete cooperation on this side. We supported all those motions trying to expedite the process as fast as possible.

So we are working in a cooperative fashion. If we get bogged down in a partisan fashion, if we try to cater to whatever TV cameras have been invited for a partisan purpose, I think it's going to derail our efforts to actually look into this.

I hope we can get back on track today and we can stop trying to—

**The Chair:** Do you have any suggestions that you have submitted to the clerk?

**Mr. Patrick Brown:** Well, the first suggestion, which I just said, was that we should deal with Public Works first.

As for the original Liberal motion, I don't understand why they're changing—

**Mrs. Alexandra Mendes:** Madam Chair.

**The Chair:** Yes.

**Mr. Patrick Brown:** Is this another point of order?

**The Chair:** Yes.

**Mrs. Alexandra Mendes:** Thank you.

The cameras have the right to be here. Nobody—nobody—invited them. I would like you to take that—

**The Chair:** Thank you.

**Mr. Patrick Brown:** That's not a point of order.

**The Chair:** Go ahead. Continue.

No debates across.

Go ahead, Mr. Brown.

**Mr. Patrick Brown:** I think it's obvious that some people are catering to lenses. But I'll forget about that.

My point is that the original Liberal motion has been changed. The sequence has been changed. They seem to have lost interest in their original motion, which was to look at Public Works.

But the thing I wanted to say, too—

**The Chair:** But Corrections was on the freeze, Mr. Brown.

**Mr. Patrick Brown:** Is this another point—

**The Chair:** No, this is not. I'm just correcting you, because you're going on and on. I'd like to ensure that we have some work done today.

**Mr. Patrick Brown:** It's difficult to make some comments when you're interrupted every 15 seconds.

**The Chair:** Well, if you're not...

Are we going to do committee business—

**Mr. Patrick Brown:** Do we have a neutral chair?

**The Chair:** —yes—or are we going to be deliberating—

**Mr. Patrick Brown:** Do we have a chair who is going to debate every 15 seconds, or do I have the permission to speak?

• (1600)

**The Chair:** Sure. Go ahead, speak—but I am going to correct you when you say you have—

**Mr. Patrick Brown:** I'm just saying you're the chair of the committee, not the Liberal director.

**The Chair:** And nobody is any party, depending on what you told me.

**Mr. Patrick Brown:** Well, we're...

**The Chair:** Go ahead, Mr. Brown. You have the floor. We'll listen to you, and hopefully you'll come up with some solid suggestions on committee business.

**Mr. Patrick Brown:** If I'm given the permission to talk.

The first suggestion was on Public Works.

The second suggestion is that, for some reason, when we make suggestions in committee, it seems they're not being translated afterwards.

When Mr. Martin reads out 25 names, he shouldn't have to follow up with a written list. If he puts them on the record, we should take that and follow up on that.

The same thing today: if we're making suggestions about what the next meeting should be and we get a consensus, we shouldn't have to follow up with a written version.



I would have assumed that all 25 names would have been followed up on.

**An hon. member:** We're masters of our own fate; I heard that.

**The Chair:** Mr. Warkentin.

**Mr. Chris Warkentin (Peace River, CPC):** Thank you, Madam Chair.

It's interesting; we had a number of very constructive meetings over the last little while, and certainly I hope we can move back into that type of environment. In terms of today, obviously we had some ideas as to who we could bring forward as witnesses, but we barely gave 48 hours' notice to these folks. It was less than 48 hours' notice, because by the time these folks were contacted, there was less than that much time. In this committee we can't even bring forward motions in less than 48 hours, never mind bringing whole lists of witnesses forward, so I understand why there may have been some reluctance on some folks' part.

I understand there are a number of people who have said they can show up at different times. This afternoon didn't work for them, but they can show up at different times, and we should entertain those witnesses on the dates that work for them, if, in fact, we want to hear from these folks. Let's accommodate the folks who have told us there is a timeframe in which they can show up to our committee.

We did get a response from Minister Raitt, which clearly stated that she nothing to contribute to the study, and she specified exactly why. She said that her office had searched for relevant records, and no records were found with regard to this. We are looking into an issue that actually doesn't fall inside her department. It falls into the transport department. The green fund is a specific fund, and it's not related to her department. She looked specifically for any type of engagement with this issue and found none, so certainly what we, as a committee, want to do is to find relevant witnesses who can contribute to this hearing.

Madam Chair, we do have a number of meetings that have been solidified. I would agree that if the committee determines that it wants to change what's on and what has been confirmed, we are certainly able to do that, but the 10th and the 12th have been designated for main estimates.

Mr. Snowdy has indicated that the 12th works for him to attend our meeting. So if we were to retain the 10th for main estimates, take at least half the meeting on the 12th for main estimates with the witnesses who have been secured, then if we needed an hour to speak with Mr. Snowdy, we could do that in the remainder of that meeting. I'm just thinking we may want to accommodate him when he's available. Then we have openings for witnesses on the 26th.

If we gave notice now to the witnesses who have been invited, there's a chance we'd have witnesses for that, but for the 31st we do have confirmed witnesses regarding SNC-Lavalin and Public Works. So that takes us to the end of May, and that probably gets us to a point we can work from. If things change over that period of time, we can then revisit where we're headed after that, but it looks as though we have confirmation of a significant number, with the exception of the 26th. We have Mr. Wright interested in coming that day. We could possibly fit another witness in there, but this doesn't

have to be as complicated as what it seemed to have been at the beginning of the meeting.

Madam Chair, that's my suggestion. I'm hopeful that we can move through this and get some things solidified so that we don't run into the situation where we're inviting people 24 or 48 hours before we hope they'll show up. We know we'll never get witnesses if we don't give the decency of a significant lead time, especially for those people who don't live in Ottawa.

**The Chair:** Mr. Warkentin, thank you.

I am consulting both ways, to ensure that I got everything correct.

Minister Raitt and Minister Paradis were invited on Thursday, so they were not given 48 hours. They were given more time, and they declined to come. But that's beside the point.

What we need to do is look at the calendar...

I'm sorry; go ahead, Monsieur Nadeau.

• (1605)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Richard Nadeau (Gatineau, BQ):** I would love to speak, Madam Chair. Good afternoon again, everyone.

Clearly, if we look at the minutes from the last May 3 meeting, to see what we did, we notice that we submitted a long list of witnesses or potential players to meet. Twenty-two people are on the list: ministers, public servants, people in the industry, stakeholders and even the investigator. Before we left, two days ago, we suggested this list to the clerk hoping to get the best of all worlds and that important players would come to testify. Our colleague Mr. Szabo even suggested that we invite groups of witnesses. That is the first thing.

As members will recall, those who suggested the names to get the work going, are my colleagues on this side of the table, from the NDP and the Liberal Party—and I say that without partisanship, excluding myself. They suggested names so that we could do the appropriate work. Otherwise, we would be “spinning our wheels”, getting nowhere.

Today, I see that someone came prepared and provided us with a potential schedule on which we can vote. It is still up to the clerk to check the availability of those people, God bless us. Let us recognize the work that has been accomplished.

In light of this possibility, or rather with the hope of being able to adopt something to that effect—we will hear the proposals—whether it is a 24-hour notice or a three-week notice, it is better later than never. Anyway, time flies; it is almost June. In this context, someone can accept with a 24-hour notice and cancel last minute the same way they would if we gave them three weeks notice. So, I would really like us to move ahead and meet the people whose names were suggested.

Ms. Coady's comments bring nothing new to the table. We have all the names in the transcripts from the last meeting. That is where I wrote them all down; I just made a list. All that is left is to move forward with this project.

Madam Chair, I will conclude by addressing the issue of whether to have or not to have cameras here. I am referring to what Mr. Martin said, not long ago, about the fact that it is better to be always in open air than to be in camera from time to time. We must be as often as possible out in the open so that the people hear us, see us work and have access to the information that is being exchanged here between the parliamentarians they themselves have elected. It is even better if there are cameras too. We must not start to be paranoid. Paranoia would develop rather if we were always in camera and the work we do could not be seen.

So I am congratulating both Mr. Martin and Ms. Coady who brought work so that we can move forward. We should not get bogged down; time is precious.

Today, we are receiving no witnesses, but at least we get the chance to examine what kind of work we can do. We can lend our clerk a hand so that this schedule, which changes with each meeting, could finally be a little more consistent. This consistency will come as soon as we are ready to introduce clear and precise proposals. But that is what we are about to do. Everyone is having the same vision and is heading in the same direction. I do not think it is time to pull our hair out and try to find plots when there is work to be done.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Thank you very much for bringing the temperature down.

The analyst has now provided me with the list, which you verbally suggested. You had Madam Guergis, Sébastien Tognéri, David Pierce, Philip Welford, some Hamilton, Catherine Godbout, Doug Maley, David Woynorowski, Wright Tech, Ian Harvey, Jaffer, Paradis and Raitt, Derrick Snowdy, John Baird, and Minister Prentice.

So I'm not making things up, and I'm not taking any orders from anybody. This is simply what I get from the clerk and the analyst.

Mr. Martin, the floor is yours.

• (1610)

**Mr. Pat Martin:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

I think, first and foremost, we should be offended as a committee that both of these ministers have chosen not to attend because they have decided that we have nothing to learn from them. How do they know what questions we're going to ask them? Witnesses don't get to decide whether they'll attend a parliamentary committee, based on their decision that they have nothing to share with the committee. That's not acceptable.

I think a letter should go from the clerk. I know we can't compel a minister to attend here, but we can voice our dissatisfaction and displeasure that they chose not to attend, seeing as they were both sitting there in question period today.

A letter, I think, should go from this committee to Lisa Raitt and Christian Paradis, expressing our displeasure and our dissatisfaction with what is tantamount to an insult to the committee.

But Brian Jean's office is right down the hallway. I think we should all attend Brian Jean's office. He has a nice boardroom there.

We could simply pack up this committee and move down there. We'll visit him if he hasn't the courtesy to visit us. That would be one course of action that I could propose.

Other than that, I think we risk losing credibility as a committee if we don't at least give deference to the main mandate of this committee. I was part of this committee when it was created, when Reg Alcock was the first chair—the founding chair—and I was a founding member. We were all excited that finally some committee was going to give proper attention to the estimates process in Parliament.

We spend a lot of time on the public accounts committee analyzing money and how it was spent, but we spend almost no time analyzing what is proposed to be spent or if it seems justifiable or wise. It's half the name of our committee: it's the “government operations and estimates” committee. It would be really irresponsible to allow the main estimates to go by us without giving them a decent amount of time, while we're chasing down what may be an impossible task—some resolution of the Jaffer-Guergis affair.

That's all I would say. I think this is a very good list of witnesses. I don't know who wrote this one, but it's actually very good.

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

**Mr. Pat Martin:** You did? Well, it's a very good list.

If we can ask the clerk to schedule and cluster these in appropriate groupings at appropriate times within the limitations we have, I think that should be up to the clerk to do. We could chase our tail for hours here, saying, let's give 15 minutes there and half an hour to this one on this date. That's not our job. That's the clerk's job.

**The Chair:** Can I respond to that? The committee had instructed the clerk to call certain witnesses, and he did. There were options: to call ministers, to call Derrick Snowdy, to call Mr. Harvey, and—

**The Clerk:** No, not Mr. Harvey. It was ministers Raitt and Paradis, then Brian Jean and Jim Wright, and finally Derrick Snowdy—for May 5, this meeting.

**The Chair:** Okay.

So he had that list, and when he called them, they told him exactly what dates they were available.

What I'd like to do is solidify the calendar, if we can, and look at what we can agree upon. If we want to have Mr. Wright on the date he has suggested—which is May 26—if we're all in agreement, can we all say “agreed” that Jim Wright can come? We had requested it. It's part of the committee's business.

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Chair:** So we'll have Mr. Wright on May 26.

Mr. Snowdy said he could only come on May 12, because then he has court appearances.

Can we agree that Mr. Snowdy can come on May 12? Later we can worry about timing, for an hour, etc.

Can that be agreed?

Yes, Mr. Holder.

**Mr. Ed Holder:** On a point of order, Chair, I want to come back to Mr. Martin's point before I can agree to that—that is, what about the estimates?

If that is in fact our day for estimates—we were advised that it was committed to by officials—and that's a basic premise of this committee, my practical question is are we going to be able to complete our task of completing the main estimates?

• (1615)

**The Chair:** The suggestion is that if we can have Minister Ambrose for May 12 for one hour, with her officials—

**An hon. member:** Ambrose?

**The Chair:** Rona Ambrose: the Minister of Public Works and Government Services.

We would have her, with her officials, on May 12, on the main estimates, for the first hour, and Snowdy for the second hour.

Are we okay with it?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Chair:** So it's yes.

Is everybody paying attention?

Yes, Mr. Martin.

**Mr. Pat Martin:** My only point—Mr. Szabo and I were just talking—is that Mr. Snowdy is the key, principal instigator of this whole thing. We might need more than an hour to question him. That's my only concern with this plan.

**The Chair:** Okay, Mr. Martin, we have a solution. We can ask Minister Ambrose if she can come on May 26 for the main estimates for Public Works and Government Services. At that time we can have Mr. Wright; we can give Mr. Wright one hour and the minister one hour.

**An hon. member:** Yes.

**The Chair:** It sounds....

Yes, Mr. Holder.

**Mr. Ed Holder:** On a point of order, Madam Chair, are we saying that May 10 is still reserved for main estimates?

**The Chair:** I am going backwards.

**Mr. Ed Holder:** It would seem.

**The Chair:** Yes. Let's go backwards and see.

So what the witnesses...that have agreed to, we're going to let them stay. Then we're going to slot in our main estimates.

Mr. Snowdy requires two hours. So we will give Mr. Snowdy, on May 12, two hours. We will stick with that.

On May 26, Mr. Wright has one hour, and so does the Minister of Public Works and Government Services to do the main estimates.

Are we okay with that?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Chair:** Everybody yes? Yes.

The question remains that we were doing our departmental freeze, and we have Correctional Services. The Bloc requested that we have Correctional Services and the Parliamentary Budget Officer.

We haven't really seen very much, so it's the PBO and Correctional Services on May 10.

**Mr. Chris Warkentin:** Can I make a suggestion, Madam Chair?

I believe that May 10 has actually been solidified, and we have confirmed that PCO would be here for that date. That's the main estimates, so that would be a two-hour meeting. We've now given up one hour of the main estimates; four hours over two different meetings were designated, and we've already given up one hour.

If we decide to reallocate that meeting with PCO to a different date, we'd certainly want to do that before May 31, because the main estimates have to be looked at and approved by our committee by the end of May.

I would suggest keeping PCO scheduled for May 10. Let's take away part of the main estimates review on May 12 to bring in Mr. Snowdy.... No, pardon me, we're going to have Mr. Snowdy there for the full meeting of May 12 and then move the second one-hour meeting with Government Services and Public Works on main estimates to May 26 with Mr. Wright.

That leaves us the federal building contracts, which we've confirmed with SNC-Lavalin, as well as Public Works for May 31. They are confirmed. Let's bring the PCO on June 2, because then we'll have hopefully cleaned up the building maintenance issue after hearing from those witnesses.

Right now we have about seven different subjects on our agenda. If we can help the analysts as well as members to clean a number of things off our list, we can then continue in June on the issue of future witnesses and the review of the budgetary freeze, and that's when we can bring in the budgetary officer. PBO information doesn't expire; it's stuff that we'll be looking at. In June we're going to continue on that review of the freeze, so there's no real push to get that testimony in until June anyway.

I think we'd better do due diligence on main estimates and make sure that we take the two full hours on May 10 as well as the second full hour on May 26.

• (1620)

**The Chair:** Madam Coady, and then Monsieur Nadeau.

**Ms. Siobhan Coady:** Thank you very much.

This is precisely why I wanted to go through this, and why I tabled up front what I was hoping to achieve today.

I have a couple of questions. I'd have to go back through the blues to confirm this, but I understood that we had agreed on PBO and Corrections for May 10. It's an important study and I thought we had agreed, when Martha Hall Findlay was here, that we would actually look at that study on that day, because we wanted to move it from when it was scheduled earlier because the Parliamentary Budget Officer, of course, is tabling a very important report.

My second point is that maybe we need to have special meetings, as I said at the very beginning, because I am frustrated with not being able to get the witnesses before us so that I can fulfill my responsibility. Maybe there are additional meetings that this committee needs to have, Madam Chair, so we can actually get through our business. We have a list of witnesses here. I do not want to go into our summer break without having had these witnesses appear before us. I'd like to have a lot of this work concluded.

Again, I suggest that we first check on PBO and Corrections, because I had understood that we had agreed to having them originally.

Second, I'm listening, and I'm trying to agree to a lot here. If you want to move up estimates, look, I can accept that. But what I'm not going to accept is not calling these witnesses before we go into summer break.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Monsieur Nadeau.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** Madam Chair, in my experience, one hour is enough to study the main estimates. In any case, if we changed anything in the main estimates, we would go back to the House of Commons and that could lead to a confidence vote.

It is rather about looking at the big picture and asking logical questions. Then we could make time to discuss the Correctional Service issue, for example. I am referring to the May 10 meeting where we have to welcome officials from the Privy Council Office to talk about the main estimates. During the other hour—it does not matter what goes first or second—we could address the Correctional Service issue because it has been dragging on for a long time.

Then, on May 26, we could hear Mr. Wright for an hour and Ms. Ambrose for the next hour on the main estimates. We have two hours; we can do two different things. We do not have to talk for two hours about a budget that we already know and that we cannot even change. Let us move the whole study forward.

As for SNC-Lavalin, Mr. Warkentin, its representatives are just across the river; they take a taxi and they are here. It is the same thing for Public Works and Government Services Canada. So, if we move their appearance from May 31 to June 7 or another date, it is not a big move. It is not like Montreal moving to Gatineau or Ottawa.

We can play around with the date of May 31 based on the availability of the players we are interested in for the green energy study. We must think about the ministers' offices, including Mr. Paradis, who was the Minister of Public Works and Government Services, and Ms. Ambrose, who is now running that department.

That way, we get to the right targets for the discussion of topics that were announced ages ago.

Thank you.

• (1625)

[*English*]

**The Chair:** I tried asking the clerk if we could get this to work. Now that you've all come up with suggestions, I just want to see if we can make it work.

On the meeting with PCO, the analyst advises me that you are correct that it will just take an hour, as it's such a small budget. We can also have PWGSC on the same day. If we can get both to come on that same day of May 10, then we will have covered the estimates.

You're right, Monsieur Nadeau, it doesn't take long and we're not going to be able to change anything. So it is just a matter of our stamp of approval, and it's really an edification exercise for us.

So the bottom line is that if we can have PCO—which is confirmed—and PWGSC and its minister on May 10, that will free up the second hour on May 26 for some of the witnesses you would like to see. If you are in agreement that SNC-Lavalin was your request as well, we can get them pushed into June, if you wish.

Are we comfortable with going with PCO and PWGSC on May 10?

I have Mr. Warkentin first, then Ms. Coady, and then Mr. Nadeau.

**Mr. Chris Warkentin:** Madam Chair, we certainly could do that. I think there'd be a good possibility of that. My understanding is that PCO has agreed to come on the 10th.

My understanding is that what we're dealing with in these main estimates is the plan that PCO will be bringing forward to move out of a budgetary deficit. I think it's absolutely essential that we, at this committee, get a handle on what the plan is exactly. The contribution that this committee will make will be determined based on the dialogue that we have with PCO, as well as the officials, with regard to the main estimates.

I know we have a lot of things that are pulling us in different directions at this point, but the fact of the matter is that we're talking about a time in history when the estimates really matter. I mean, we are running deficits. We're having plans of restraint coming forward. If we, at this committee, haven't made some effort to understand what's going on, we can't claim two years from now, when we go to public accounts, that we never had an opportunity to bring this forward and dig through this.

I'm comfortable, because I happen to sit in the position where I'm a government member. So I can go to talk to ministers about these things and to different people and get a sense. But this really is the opportunity, and we have an obligation, regardless which party we come from, to dig through this.

I hear from Mr. Nadeau that we don't have any authority, that we have no opportunity to make any difference. Well, actually, we at this committee have one of the greatest responsibilities, in my opinion, as it relates to this Parliament and as it relates to finances in this country. There's no other parliamentary committee that quite has the influence of the ongoing operations of government.

I understand the political desires of people to go in different directions, and I fully understand that. But I just hope we don't sacrifice one of the main responsibilities of this committee in the effort to get in every other witness. The main estimates are the only ones where there's a deadline provided for us, and that's the 31st.

I think if we look at the freeze, or the case studies that we were looking at as they relate to the freeze, we had a number of different witnesses coming. Certainly Corrections was one of them, but we also wanted to look at the Information Commissioner as well, and there were several others.

So there are a number of witnesses that we need to get through before we can complete our study on that, anyway. That's why I'm suggesting let's move that into June, let's get through the work that we as the committee are tasked with and responsible for, and do it appropriately and diligently.

I would hate for this committee to get into a position of simply being a rubber stamping of the estimates. The whole reason that this committee was set up was to engage in a dialogue that would be something more than a rubber stamp.

**The Chair:** Before I turn to Ms. Coady, I will just say that if a plan is going to be submitted to us, perhaps we could ask that this plan be given to us so that we can study it and we're not looking at the plan while they're talking to us. I think that would be a better idea and an effective utilization so that the government members are not advantaged over the opposition that doesn't even have a plan.

•(1630)

**Mr. Chris Warkentin:** Madam Chair, all I'm suggesting is that in the budget, there was...and in PCO, of course, we're talking about restraint in certain areas. So we already know that the plan is out there.

**The Chair:** So if they have a plan, if they give it to us, I think we can ask intelligent questions.

**Mr. Chris Warkentin:** Absolutely, and that's why I think that two hours is necessary.

**The Chair:** The two hours between the two would be, I think, sufficient, because we are not collapsing any government or doing any such thing.

Ms. Coady.

**Ms. Siobhan Coady:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

We're all trying to be reasonable here. If we're going to bring PCO and PWGSC on the 10th, then on the 12th I would suggest Mr. Snowdy as well as one of the other witnesses we've put forward. There was an extensive list put forward. I'm suggesting here Ian Harvey. It could be anyone on the list that we have.

I'd like to see PBO and Corrections fairly soon, because I thought we were going to do it fairly soon. So if, on May 26, you're saying

Jim Wright, for the first hour, then perhaps PBO and Corrections for the next hour, that might be an option.

Then my suggestion would be, on the 31st, to start to invite some of those on our list, because it's quite an extensive list. Then I think Mr. Nadeau suggested SNC-Lavalin was okay for the 7th. I believe he indicated that, and I think we're okay with the 2nd as well.

**The Chair:** Monsieur Nadeau.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** No, that is fine, Madam Chair.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Okay. Here are the suggestions that were given, and I'd like us to vote on that.

It will be PCO and PWGSC on the 10th, with a proviso that PCO gives us a plan of action prior to the meeting so we are comfortable we are asking legitimate and logical questions.

**Ms. Siobhan Coady:** I have a question on that. Are you going to go through the whole list? I want to know where the PBO and Corrections are.

**The Chair:** Sure. If that's what you want—

**Ms. Siobhan Coady:** Sorry; I just want to know where we're headed on that.

**The Chair:** Here is what I'm going to do. I'm going read out your suggestions and see where we can find commonalities.

The first suggestion is PCO and PWGSC on the 10th.

On the 12th, we have Mr. Snowdy. It was suggested that we need him for two hours. We can leave that. That was agreed upon by everyone.

I'm only going to take those we have made changes to. The changes we have made—and I need a vote on it—are PCO and PWGSC on the 10th, for main estimates, and PCO is to provide us their plan prior to that, if they can.

**Mr. Chris Warkentin:** Madam Chair, just in terms of clarity, I'm not sure what plan you're speaking of. If it relates specifically to the budget freeze, that is outlined in the budget, so that's what they'll be speaking to.

**The Chair:** Mr. Warkentin, you suggested that you are aware of a plan that PCO is going to bring to the committee that they would like to discuss with us, and therefore we need two hours with them.

**Mr. Chris Warkentin:** No, I'm speaking specifically to the budget measures. They plan to deal with the deficit through the budget freeze. We as a committee are aware of that, because we're investigating the budget freeze as one of our additional studies.

**The Chair:** So we're doing estimates, and we will look at the estimates—

**Mr. Chris Warkentin:** I just want clarity in terms of the plan.

Are you asking that they bring their testimony early? I'm just not sure what you were referring to in terms of a "plan". There will be people that are seeking that information.

**The Chair:** I thought you suggested that they had a plan of action—

**Mr. Chris Warkentin:** The budget documents; yes, absolutely.

**The Chair:** —and if they have a plan of action that is not a repetition of the budget document, then they can present that plan of action to us. If it's repeating the same old, same old, we do not need it. Then PCO will stick with one hour on estimates and PWGSC can stick with one hour on estimates.

Linda did a good job of teaching us how estimates are read. If we want to go through a refresher course on that, I can keep an extra day, half an hour, for everybody to come to see the estimates so you can ask legitimate questions if that's required. We can do that.

So are we in agreement with PCO and PWGSC coming on May 10?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Chair:** So we're going to stick with that.

Yes.

**The Clerk:** I just want to mention you have Minister Ambrose for Wednesday. I will try to have her for Monday, but.... I'm such a modest servant, I don't know if it's going to be possible.

•(1635)

**The Chair:** We will try that.

On the 26th, we had agreed to get Mr. Jim Wright, and we can have one more witness that day.

Ms. Coady, you had suggested the PBO and Corrections.

Are there any problems there?

Yes, Mr. Martin.

**Mr. Pat Martin:** I think if we're on the green infrastructure program study—which is really the Jaffer study, let's face it—we should have another witness, another one of Mr. Jaffer's clients, perhaps Mr. Harvey. I think Mr. Harvey from HD Retail is probably the most interesting one to us. He's the one who says that Jaffer said he could get him a \$5-million loan at 2% interest payable only if the company returns to profit.

I think we should keep it in the thematic. It would be very difficult for us to change hats after an hour of questioning on the Jaffer affair with Mr. Wright and then go into the PBO. I think we should use that second hour for another witness dealing with the Jaffer affair, and I think it should be Mr. Harvey.

**The Chair:** Ms. Coady.

**Ms. Siobhan Coady:** I'm certainly in concurrence with my colleague on that, as long as we can then move PBO and Corrections to the 31st so we can conclude that.

**The Chair:** Okay.

Mr. Wright has agreed to come on the 26th, and we can ask the clerk to call Mr. Ian Harvey for the 26th.

Is everybody in agreement?

**Some hon. members:** Yes.

**The Chair:** Okay.

How about the 31st?

Yes, Mr. Martin.

**Mr. Pat Martin:** I'd like to ask who it is that wants PBO and Corrections. I can't remember who asked for that study.

Madame Bourgeois? I see.

**The Chair:** This is the government freeze.

**Mr. Pat Martin:** Yes.

I'm not as interested in that, frankly. With all due respect, if there was anything that I could see us pushing back, I think that would be it.

**The Chair:** Madam Coady, and then Monsieur Nadeau.

**Ms. Siobhan Coady:** Just on that point, I think Madam Hall Findlay also had some requests in that area as well. It's mostly because we know that Corrections has gone up in terms of costs quite significantly—I think, if memory serves me correctly, from \$200 million to billions. And I think there were a lot of questions and concerns around the budget freeze and the impact of some of these changes to legislation that we are doing and the costs and that the Parliamentary Budget Officer was going to bring forward a report on this. And I know that Madame Bourgeois was quite concerned about this as well.

That was what we were discussing prior to.

**The Chair:** May I give some inside information? The report of the PBO is not out yet, and Mr. Martin is right in his suggestion that if we are going through this green technology study and if we could just finish it off, it would be better to get them.

If, Mr. Nadeau, you are in agreement, we could go that route.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** Madam Chair, those really are two important topics. The Parliamentary Budget Officer could come later, when he has all the tools in hand. That could be at the end of June or when Parliament resumes, at the end of September—if there is no prorogation. We could also address the Correctional Service issue at some other time.

We talked a little earlier about the maintenance work of buildings. Since an engineer has already come to talk to us, we should close this file soon. We saw one side of the coin; we could see the other. It would be the right balance.

To come back to what Mr. Martin and Ms. Coady were saying, we can use their points another time, for other studies. Let us think of the green energy issue and the scandal that has hit and has so tarnished politicians. We could then finish working on the issue of contracts, in organizing potential meetings.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Mr. Warkentin.

**Mr. Chris Warkentin:** I just wanted to ask the clerk about the 31st. Do we have confirmation that SNC-Lavalin will be attending as well as Public Works? As of yet, were you able to confirm that? I think that was what we had learned through the last meeting.

**The Chair:** We had confirmation from Public Works and Government Services and SNC-Lavalin, but they can be moved at the committee's will. They can be moved because it is the committee that discusses—

**Mr. Chris Warkentin:** I appreciate that. I just wanted to fully understand if they had confirmed that they were available. So that is helpful.

I'm just looking here, and if they are confirmed for the 31st, my fear is that we'll come back to the next meeting and all of a sudden there will be several people who can't come. When we have confirmed witnesses, I think it's sometimes better to leave them confirmed and then schedule other people into times when we don't have people confirmed already.

So I am happy either way, but the one thing that I do know—I am just making a helpful suggestion—is that when I look at the number of meetings in the month of June, we have one, two, three, four, possibly five or maybe six meetings, and several issues that still have to be addressed.

There were two things that we had left in terms of the case studies for the budget freeze. One was the PBO and the Correctional Services. We also had Public Works, and I believe maybe the Information Commissioner. I am wondering if there is a possibility that we could couple up on a couple of those meetings, making them one-hour meetings, to address each of those departments so that we might be able to get through that study before the end of June and be able to bring forward a report.

My fear is that if we don't put forward some type of a report by the end of June, this becomes old and it becomes outdated, and before we know, we are in a situation where we have reports that are left dragging. So I am just wondering if there is a possibility that we can couple up similar types of studies at the same one-hour or two-hour meeting and give one hour to each witness or case study.

• (1640)

**The Chair:** Monsieur Nadeau.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** A point of order.

Mr. Warkentin is talking about things that have just been removed from the agenda. Whether it is the Correctional Service or Mr. Page, we said we would include them when we come back in September or October. It was a request on our part. Moving it... It is worthwhile listening quietly so that we can move forward.

As to SNC-Lavalin and Public Works and Government Services Canada, as I said, they are less than 15 minutes away by taxi. The people from SNC-Lavalin have contracts with the government, so they have to react to the needs of the committee. We are not going to start thinking about their needs, especially since I am sure that they want to talk to us, since Mr. Beaulieu has already said some things. If we put them on the agenda at another time, they will be more than ready.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** I'm going to ask for the 31st. Mr. Martin suggested we look at a list of witnesses for green technology. That has to be what we are looking at. Are there specific suggestions...?

I'm sorry, Ms. Coady, you had the floor. Then I'm going to ask Mr. Martin if he has any specific suggestions.

**Ms. Siobhan Coady:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

I have some suggestions for the 31st and the 2nd. Hearing from Mr. Nadeau, he's completely okay with the 7th for SNC-Lavalin and Public Works. Either we move up the panel of the employees to May 31, or we leave them on the 2nd and add the companies. We wanted to hear, and I think it was Mr. Martin's suggestion that he'd like to hear—and I agree with him—the companies that have been involved, Upper Canada Solar Generation and the Renewable Energy Group. We had suggested various other companies come before this committee.

So that would be an opportunity, on the 31st, to have that panel.

**The Chair:** Could you list them so that the clerk knows what companies he's supposed to call?

**Ms. Siobhan Coady:** There was Upper Canada Solar Generation, the Renewable Energy Group, and Canadian Solar Incorporated. I think that's all, but I'll leave it open. Maybe Mr. Martin or someone else might have another suggestion, but I think those are the key ones.

**The Chair:** So you're giving three companies.

Mr. Martin, you were on the speakers list.

**Mr. Pat Martin:** I think we should cluster them in panels, because I'm pretty sure we are running really tight on time to bring this to any kind of conclusion.

So I agree that Doug Maley, Sébastien Togneri, Andrew House, Scott Wenger, Kimberley Michelutti, André Morin, and even Sandy White could all be lined up there together. Those are the staffers who had direct contact with either Jaffer or Glémaud.

Then that same group of companies, we're already dealing with Ian Harvey, I believe, who is from HD Retail Solutions, on the 26th. I'm glad we're getting to him first, before the panel of the rest of Mr. Jaffer's clients, because I think he's the one who indicated there was a direct offer to get access to this money, and could have very valuable testimony.

I think that is the solution, to cluster them into panels. I've seen it work well before when they're in a specific category, and we can then have at it.

• (1645)

**The Chair:** Are you asking for panels by businesses? How would you like to do it?

**Mr. Pat Martin:** I suggested—I think that's what Siobhan suggested too—one panel of the five or six assistants to ministers, and one panel of the three or four clients of Mr. Jaffer and Mr. Glémaud.

**The Chair:** Fair enough.

Ms. Coady.

**Ms. Siobhan Coady:** There are just two things.

I think that's a good panel. I very much support having one panel for the companies, one panel for employees on May 31, June 2.

I would like to ask in the interest of time, especially because we're having so many on the panel of staffers come before us, that they limit their speaking to three to four minutes, rather than having 10 minutes each, and then all of a sudden we have no time for questioning.

**The Chair:** Agreed, because that is what we will instruct the clerk.

**An hon. member:** No speech.

**Ms. Siobhan Coady:** No speech at all?

**The Chair:** Well, it is the committee's decision. If you don't want any speeches, then we'll tell the clerk. We can ask them to give two to three minutes to speak, if you want.

Mr. Holder, and then I'd like to see if we can close this.

**Mr. Ed Holder:** I think this is all fair comment. It might be appropriate, for anyone around the table who wants to understand the background of our guests who attend—all of them—to give them two minutes, if appropriate, to explain who they are and their background. That might well be appropriate.

**The Chair:** Mr. Martin.

**Mr. Pat Martin:** I don't disagree with giving them a moment to introduce themselves, but we don't want a recitation of why they didn't do anything wrong and so on. They're there to answer our questions, not to give excuses.

I have only a minute, because I have to run away, but I would like some kind of a ruling or indication from the chair. I want a letter sent to both of those ministers expressing our dissatisfaction, and that their not being here is contrary to the spirit of openness that Mr. Baird is trying to portray in question period day after day.

I would very much like...and I'll move it as a motion, if you like: that the chair is directed to write a letter to the ministers stating, with all due respect, our extreme dissatisfaction with their decision not to attend when invited to our committee.

**The Chair:** All those in favour—

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

**The Chair:** —no—of this decision by the chair to write a letter...?

**Mr. Chris Warkentin:** Isn't there opportunity to speak to this motion before we vote?

**The Chair:** The bottom line is that it's just a suggestion to the chair. I want to see if I can or I shouldn't send it.

So I will take the vote of the—

**Mr. Chris Warkentin:** Madam Chair, what I would say is that the letter that I see before me doesn't indicate that they won't.... They've stated their reasons for not being here. It's specifically because they aren't related to the issue that they were called here to talk about.

Madam Chair, it's important that we as a committee recognize exactly the rationale and the reasons for that.

**The Chair:** Ms. Coady.

**Ms. Siobhan Coady:** On a point of order, Chair, I thought the vote was called.

**Mr. Chris Warkentin:** I believe it's a substantive motion.

**The Chair:** It is debatable, so Mr. Warkentin is right to debate.

**Mr. Chris Warkentin:** Madam Chair, I think it's very important that we do recognize that every minister who had information related to this issue brought forward all documentation. This minister doesn't have something to help this committee move forward on this issue. So I think it's important that we recognize the fact that the government has in fact been fully transparent and has been totally accountable on this issue bringing forward all documentation. All the documentation we have before us we have because the government provided it to us, and ministers have provided that information to us.

I think it's important that this be on the record and that we reference the letter that she brought forward to us in a response if in fact it's the committee's will to bring forward a letter.

•(1650)

**The Chair:** I have a motion before me. Mr. Martin has suggested that I write a letter respectfully asking the ministers that I'm...

All those in favour? All those opposed?

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

**An hon. member:** I have a point of order.

**The Chair:** I'm sorry, I was taking a vote.

I thought he had finished speaking.

**An hon. member:** No, you only looked that way.

**Ms. Siobhan Coady:** Before Mr. Martin leaves, may I say something very quickly?

**The Chair:** Yes, sure.

**Ms. Siobhan Coady:** I also want to make sure that we're going to invite Madam Guergis and Mr. Jaffer.

I just don't want Mr. Martin to leave without...because he raised it, and I've raised it, and I think Mr. Nadeau has raised it. We want to make sure that we have set aside time for those two witnesses to appear.

I just wanted to make sure, Mr. Martin, you had that opportunity before you left to make sure that you added to that....

**The Chair:** We have June 9 if you wish to invite Ms. Guergis and Mr. Jaffer back. We have no idea when the House closes.

**Mr. Pat Martin:** I don't think we'll still be here on the 16th. I would like the two of them here on the 9th.

**The Chair:** Okay.

All those in favour of calling Mr. Jaffer and Ms. Guergis on the 9th?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.



**The Chair:** Before you disappear, we are instructing the clerk that for the 31st he will get in touch with the three companies so there is a panel of three companies. For the 2nd of June, we'll have the paid staffers. For the 7th of June, we will have SNC-Lavalin and Public Works. For the 9th, we will have Ms. Guergis and Mr. Jaffer.

Yes, Mr. Martin.

**Mr. Pat Martin:** As a final direction to the chair, I think if there is any push-back from Jaffer and Guergis about whether or not they will attend, we should authorize that the chair issue a subpoena to compel their attendance.

**Some hon. members:** Yes.

**The Chair:** Does that go for paid staffers?

**Some hon. members:** Yes.

**The Chair:** Okay.

Is anybody opposed to sending out subpoenas for those witnesses?

Oh, Ms. Guergis cannot be.... Yes, okay.

**An hon. member:** But anyone else can.

**The Chair:** Anyone else, yes; the staffers, etc.

**The Clerk:** I need some clarity: this is in case the witnesses decline the invitation to appear?

**The Chair:** Yes, that's correct, with the exception of Ms. Guergis.

The meeting is not over just because Mr. Martin is leaving.

Ms. Coady, have you finished? I have you on my list here.

**Ms. Siobhan Coady:** No, that was my point.

**The Chair:** Fair enough.

Mr. Martin.

**Mr. Pat Martin:** I'm sorry; I don't know if I made it clear that given that we have such limited time to wrap this up, if any of the witnesses—for instance, the political staffers—put up any resistance to coming here, I think you should be authorized to issue subpoenas for them as well.

Have we clarified that? Has that been raised?

**The Chair:** Yes, we have clarified that, but I'm glad you are reclarifying it so that the clerk is aware of it.

**Mr. Pat Martin:** Good. Thank you.

**The Clerk:** So it is left to the discretion of the chair to issue a summons or not?

**The Chair:** Yes.

**Mr. Pat Martin:** Yes.

Obviously if they have legitimate medical reasons or something like that, you show some latitude.

**The Chair:** Committee members, before you disappear, I'll tell you for the purposes of clarity that I am only filling up the calendar to June 9. If the 14th and the 16th are still available, we will discuss them then.

**An hon. member:** [*Inaudible—Editor*]...the Parliamentary Budget Officer.

**The Chair:** Yes. Well, we will discuss.

Therefore, I need to have the committee's approval for the budget that is before you. This is for our reports, report writing, witness expenses, and any....

The amount we are requesting is \$25,900 to cover witness expenses, video conferences, and miscellaneous.

Are there any questions?

We're good? Does everybody approve the budget?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Chair:** Can I see that by a show of hands? We'll take it before the liaison committee.

Thank you.

Okay. I'll sign it and we can proceed.

Is there any other business? No? Yes?

Before we leave, there are two witnesses that we may schedule for June 14, if we are here. They are Public Works and Government Services for their envelope freeze, and the Office of the Information Commissioner for the same.

Are we okay with that, since we have those two witnesses outstanding?

Is there any other business?

Seeing none, the meeting is adjourned.





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