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Ms. Marie-Claude Morin

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•(0845)

[Translation]

The Chair (Ms. Marie-Claude Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, NDP)): Good morning, everyone. Welcome to the 53rd meeting of the Standing Committee on the Status of Women. Pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), we are continuing our study on sexual harassment in the federal workplace.

Joining us this morning is Alain Gauthier, representing the National Defence and Canadian Forces Ombudsman.

Mr. Gauthier, since you gave your presentation last time you were here, we are going to proceed to the questions right away.

Ms. Truppe, you have seven minutes.

[English]

Mrs. Susan Truppe (London North Centre, CPC): Thank you, Madam Chair, and thank you, Mr. Gauthier, for coming back to us again today for this important study.

You indicated that your mandate is “to investigate and make recommendations to improve the overall well-being and quality of life of the members of the Defence community.”

Could you indicate what form these recommendations take? For example, are they based on individual cases, are they broader policy and training recommendations, or are they referred to you specifically, and then, by whom? Are you able to select your own topics for review?

Mr. Alain Gauthier (Acting Director General, Operations, National Defence and Canadian Forces Ombudsman): We do provide recommendations on an individual basis. In my initial remarks, I mentioned that we receive about 1,400 to 1,500 complaints on a yearly basis. All these are individual cases that we address. In most cases, we try to resolve the issue at the lowest level possible by communicating with the commanding officer, the base commander, or the element to find and resolve the issue.

All we have is the ability to provide recommendations. We cannot supersede our review or investigation to the decision of the decision-maker within the Canadian Forces. We only have the ability to turn around and say, “The office has reviewed your case. This is what we recommend to the chain of command”. It is up to them to decide if they want to implement our recommendation.

We also look at the more systemic issues. If we start to see many, many similar issues related to something fairly specific, and if we believe there's an issue within the system as such, the ombudsman

has the ability on its own to initiate an investigation of the systemic issues.

We would carry out a longer investigation and come up with recommendations. This would be a written report that would be, in most cases, given directly to the minister for his review and comment. After 28 days, the report would become public and available, as well as posted on our website.

Mrs. Susan Truppe: The report to whom becomes public?

Mr. Alain Gauthier: The report that we produce on a systemic investigation becomes public.

Mrs. Susan Truppe: How many of those would you have out of the 1,400 or 1,500?

Mr. Alain Gauthier: It really depends. Over the history of the office over the last 10 years, I would say a couple of dozen reports have been produced. This year we have been fairly active. Concurrently, at this time, we've just published two recent reports and we're working on three more systemic issues as we speak.

Mrs. Susan Truppe: Can you give an example of a systemic investigation?

Mr. Alain Gauthier: Yes.

We have just published two reports. The report on operational stress injuries for regular forces was published at the end of August or early September, and two weeks ago the ombudsman released a report on reserved care.

We're currently working on three specific ones. One deals with Canadian Forces families. It pertains to longer systemic issues. We're working on delays in grievance and claims from a compensation and benefits point of view, and we're doing a case study on Cold Lake for the quality of life of our serving members over there.

Mrs. Susan Truppe: These ones are upcoming?

Mr. Alain Gauthier: Yes.

Mrs. Susan Truppe: At what point is the case referred to you? How do you end up with the case?

Mr. Alain Gauthier: Do you mean individual cases?

Mrs. Susan Truppe: Yes.

Mr. Alain Gauthier: When people call us, we open a file. They either call, they send an e-mail, or they send a complaint online.

•(0850)

Mrs. Susan Truppe: Is it that they're not happy with the outcome?

Mr. Alain Gauthier: They're not happy with an issue within the CF or DND, because we also cover all civilian personnel.

Mrs. Susan Truppe: Are you the final appeal? If they're still not happy, is that it?

Mr. Alain Gauthier: I wouldn't say we're the final appeal, because we have no authority to take any decision. Once again, we're there to provide recommendations to either the Canadian Forces or the Department of National Defence. That's about the extent of our mandate. A lot of our work is done to inform, educate, refer, and facilitate conflict resolution with the complainants who are calling us.

Mrs. Susan Truppe: You were saying you were only there to make recommendations, so if you had 1,400 to 1,500 cases per year, do you know or do you tabulate how many of your recommendations are taken?

Mr. Alain Gauthier: I would say, out of the 1,500, a very large proportion are resolved within 30 days. Through alternate dispute resolution, communication, or calling the chain of command, we find positive resolutions. There are about 200 cases that are investigated on an annual basis. Out of those 200 cases, we do provide our recommendation to say the person has been treated fairly and we recommend X, Y, and Z. I'm not tracking specific statistics to see what percentage is supported by the department, but I would say it's easily 50% to 60%.

Mrs. Susan Truppe: Okay. Thank you.

In your opening remarks I think you had also noted that you assist individuals to bring forward issues or concerns related to the fairness that need to be brought forward to the department on the individual's behalf. What type of intervention can your office make with the department that an individual can't make on their own so that they have to go to you? What do you do differently? What do you do that they can't do?

Mr. Alain Gauthier: It really depends on the type of complaint. If I go specifically for harassment, for example—

Mrs. Susan Truppe: Sure, yes.

Mr. Alain Gauthier: —we're not allowed to review the decision of the CF or DND, the decision-maker, to say that this was considered as harassment or it wasn't. The only thing we're allowed to review and make recommendations on is the process, so it's about procedural fairness: was the member treated in accordance with existing regulations? Did he receive the notification that he was allowed for disclosure, representation, and a written decision?

It's about whether the process was followed. That is about the extent of what we can do on individual cases.

Mrs. Susan Truppe: Okay.

You also mentioned, I think, that the cases you assess may be new or may be carried over from a previous year. They might be reopened cases.

Could you describe what would cause your office to reopen a case? For example, do you have someone there who is determining whether you should reopen something? Does someone request something when you reopen it? How is it reopened?

Mr. Alain Gauthier: Once again, somebody would call us about an issue with harassment. The first thing we would do is inform them about the process, give them the reference that exists within either DND or the Canadian Forces, guide them through the process, explain that they have to make a harassment complaint—

[*Translation*]

The Chair: I will have to interrupt you there. I am sorry, but Ms. Truppe's time is up. I am sure that you will be able to continue your comments a little later.

It is now Ms. Ashton's turn for seven minutes.

[*English*]

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill, NDP): Thank you very much, Mr. Gauthier.

The committee has learned from your presentation that the ombudsman's office does not investigate allegations of sexual harassment. We're wondering who investigates these allegations of sexual harassment within DND. Could you be more specific in terms of the kinds of recourse that people face when they're connected with having committed sexual harassment?

Mr. Alain Gauthier: One of the first responsibilities I mentioned is to inform and educate. Once we line it up in the right direction, they have to use existing conflict resolution mechanisms, so if it's a sexual harassment complaint, they have to do a harassment complaint. They need to go through the chain of command using the process to do that.

Once the commanding officer has rendered his decision—whether it's founded or not, and what the conclusion is—if the member is not happy, he has the ability to come back to us for more questions, but then his next step is to use the grievance process specifically for the military piece. This process is fairly lengthy; it can take up to a year and a half to two years before they can have a second decision, in most cases by the Chief of the Defence Staff himself.

Then again, if they're not happy, they can come back to us. We'll look at it for the fairness piece of it and probably refer them to the Human Rights Commission, but that is about the extent. We don't do the investigation. The chain of command at the Canadian Forces does its own investigation, and they have several tools to guide them through the process.

● (0855)

Ms. Niki Ashton: Okay.

As we know, many workplaces are places where people can experience harassment, and I'm wondering, in the case of the ombudsman's office in particular, if people have faced situations of harassment? What is done to address that? What effort is the ombudsman's office making to create an environment without sexual harassment?

Mr. Alain Gauthier: Are you speaking specifically within the office and how we deal with that?

Ms. Niki Ashton: Yes.

Mr. Alain Gauthier: That's an internal question, instead of having the watchdog function.

We do the same. We follow public service regulations. We try to create a positive workplace. We try to create a sense that people should not have any fear of bringing a complaint forward.

One of the big misconceptions is that if you have a low number of complaints, you must be doing well. Numbers by themselves mean one thing, but there's another side to it. If people feel free to complain without fear of reprisal, you may see a higher number of complaints within one organization. Such an organization, I would say, is more healthy than the one with fewer complaints.

We're not tracking numbers as such. We're tracking health in the workplace and how they create the conditions that allow people to use grievance processes if they feel they've been harassed, whether it's sexual harassment or not. That's how we work. That's also how we keep our eyes on DND and the CF.

Ms. Niki Ashton: I appreciate that.

Our study is about the federal workplace in general. It's not only about the CF or DND, so it's important we ensure the same kind of attention is applied to all areas of the federal workplace.

How many people work in the military ombudsman's office?

Mr. Alain Gauthier: There are about 60 to 65.

Ms. Niki Ashton: Do you have a sense of how many women are employed versus men?

Mr. Alain Gauthier: I'm not keeping track, but it's a fairly high ratio. I would say almost 40% to 50%.

Ms. Niki Ashton: You spoke in terms of creating a culture in which sexual harassment is not tolerated, which is a very strong theme that many of our witnesses have talked about. I'm wondering specifically what the ombudsman's office does to create that kind of culture in your case, in your office.

Mr. Alain Gauthier: We have regular training for supervisors and managers, regular group meetings on a monthly basis, open-door discussions, and an annual discussion on ethics, harassment, and discrimination, so policies are very clear for all staff. That's how we go about it.

Ms. Niki Ashton: Does your office work with other ombudsman offices in terms of sharing best practices or learning from others?

Mr. Alain Gauthier: The one we're working most closely with is the veterans' ombudsman's office. They're a much smaller office. We do have some interaction, but most of their staff is located in Charlottetown, so it's limited.

Ms. Niki Ashton: If we could talk about projecting this question of culture to the work of DND and the Canadian Forces, does the ombudsman's office play a role in insisting on implementing best cultural practices to prevent sexual harassment in the workplace?

Mr. Alain Gauthier: I would say we have zero influence over them to tell them how to do it and how to implement the culture. What we can do is raise the issue and raise the notion that there is an issue with the cultural aspect. I think harassment is a very good example of this coming out.

It comes out in numbers. A couple of weeks ago Mr. Wenek showed a fairly positive picture of the Canadian Forces, simply based on numbers. There's more to it than that. There's the culture issue. There's the fact that from what we see and the number of complaints we receive at the office, there's a clear fear of reprisal if people move forward and make an official complaint, either on harassment or anything else.

Actually, the numbers are fairly high. Even in Mr. Wenek's numbers, he's talking about CF harassment surveys that were done in 1992 and 1997. In there he had numbers showing that the numbers were getting better and the culture is changing slightly, but they are still significantly high numbers.

One of those numbers in that survey showed there's still 14% of women who felt they were sexually harassed—14%. Let's say the population of women in the CF is 14% of the total of 70,000, so it's about 10,000 women in the Canadian Forces. Of that 10,000 women, when you look at his numbers, it's 14%, or 1,400 women, but only three or four people complained. How come it's such a huge gap? It is huge—huge.

• (0900)

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Thank you.

I have to interrupt you. It is hard to believe, but seven minutes go by very quickly.

We will now hear from a member on the government side.

Ms. O'Neill Gordon, you have seven minutes.

[*English*]

Mrs. Tilly O'Neill Gordon (Miramichi, CPC): Thank you, Madam Chair, and thank you for coming back, Mr. Gauthier. We certainly appreciate your giving us more time.

As you have said, we are hearing more and more from more and more departments that people are accepting nothing less than zero tolerance. The atmosphere and culture of the workplace is a key component. That's where we start, and that's what has to be implemented.

My colleague had started with a question, and you had to stop, so I'll give you a chance to complete the question she asked. Could you describe what would cause your office to reopen a case, who makes the request to reopen a case, and what the criteria are for reopening a case?

Mr. Alain Gauthier: Constituents come to us many times with a specific issue. As I said, they can come at the beginning to receive information about where to go, how the process works, and which complaint resolution mechanism to use. We guide them and refer them to what exists.

Once they have used those mechanisms, if they're not happy in the meantime, or even during the process, we're always.... We close the file, but at any given time they can contact us, and we're always going to provide help.

We guide them through a whole process that may last several years in some cases. At the end, if they're still not happy, they can come back to us. We'll reopen the file. We'll look at it, see where they're at, and try once again to guide them within that very complex conflict resolution in place within the CF.

Throughout the whole issue, from the beginning to the end, we have regular contact with them. We open and close the file. It's just terminology, because we always stay connected with them, based on their requirements.

Mrs. Tilly O'Neill Gordon: In the event of a reopened case, how do the possible outcomes differ? Do they differ from the old to the new case?

Mr. Alain Gauthier: It depends on the stage. I would say it's a journey. Based on where we're at on the road, the recommendation in our referral will be different in every case.

If we strongly believe the person has been treated unfairly, we will push it all the way to the Chief of the Defence Staff or the minister.

Mrs. Tilly O'Neill Gordon: They have a good chance of being heard all the way.

Mr. Alain Gauthier: Yes.

Mrs. Tilly O'Neill Gordon: Then what happens once it goes to the minister or the Chief of the Defence Staff?

Mr. Alain Gauthier: Once again we will provide our recommendation from an external, independent point of view, and then they have to decide if they'll implement those recommendations or what they'll do with them.

In some cases they see the problem slightly differently, and they come up with a resolution that is slightly different but that provides satisfaction to the complainant. In some cases they are wholly in agreement with our recommendation. In others they say we're full of it, that they don't think it works, and their legal adviser tells them they cannot do what we're recommending.

Mrs. Tilly O'Neill Gordon: You mentioned the numbers can sometimes be wide, but then it can boil down to maybe just three of the same people complaining about harassment.

I was wondering if you have occasions when the same person was always being harassed by the same harasser, or do you find that sometimes it can boil down to just a couple?

• (0905)

Mr. Alain Gauthier: Once in a while the same person keeps coming back. We work to try to improve the work environment by talking to the supervisor, the commanding officer, or the base commander to try to have the person moved from their work environment to another place, and in most cases it works. It's only in a unique, special case that it doesn't.

Mrs. Tilly O'Neill Gordon: In that case you wouldn't have to implement different disciplines for that person; you would just have to move him to another area.

Mr. Alain Gauthier: Once again, we only make recommendations. We cannot tell them what to do and how to do it.

We'll talk with them. We'll find the best way to do it. We need their agreement to be able to move forward to a positive solution in most cases.

Mrs. Tilly O'Neill Gordon: The committee understands that you receive many cases in your office. Does your office maintain statistics on what categories of complaints are received?

Mr. Alain Gauthier: Yes, we do.

Mrs. Tilly O'Neill Gordon: Can you tell the committee what portion of these complaints deal with harassment in general or sexual harassment in particular?

Mr. Alain Gauthier: In my opening remarks a couple of weeks ago, there was an addendum to the document. There was a small table that showed all of the harassment cases we have had in the last six years. Out of those harassment cases, there was another column showing sexual harassment. If you take last year as an example, you see 65 harassment cases, and out of those there were three sexual harassment cases. It was annex A that I provided to the committee.

The Chair: You have one minute.

Mrs. Tilly O'Neill Gordon: Please indicate at what point in the complaint process information and services become available. I'm referring to services for counselling, brochures, and special training. When along the way are they provided? Is it early, soon after they come there to work, or is it later? How often do you have your training?

Mr. Alain Gauthier: Do you mean personal training within the organization?

Mrs. Tilly O'Neill Gordon: Yes.

Mr. Alain Gauthier: We have it throughout their years, especially for those we call the intake officers, those who receive the complaint. It's part of their professional development, and throughout the years they all go on specific training or refresher training to be able to be a first respondent.

Mrs. Tilly O'Neill Gordon: That's fine.

Thank you.

[Translation]

The Chair: Thank you.

It is now Ms. Sgro's turn.

You have seven minutes.

[English]

Hon. Judy Sgro (York West, Lib.): Thank you very much.

Thank you, Mr. Gauthier, for making time in your schedule to come back so we can ask a few further questions.

The annex that you provided to us when you were here before shows that there were 375 harassment cases logged in that period of time, 64 in 2006-2007 and 65 in 2011-2012. It seems pretty consistent in and around the level of complaints. Out of those, 21 were sexual harassment cases. Can you give us a bit of an idea of how those were resolved? Were they consistently from any particular group over another? Were they all females who were complaining? Were there others who were complaining on sexual harassment? What details can you give us so we can get a better picture of just who's coming forward?

Mr. Alain Gauthier: When you look at sexual harassment, you will see that our ratio is fairly similar to what the CF and DND have as a ratio. It's a fairly high ratio of women being sexually harassed. Of course, our number, if you look at the 375, does not necessarily match with the number of the Canadian Forces or DND, because we provide different services. We have as many in six years as they've had in ten years. Lots of people come, but they are very reluctant to continue with a formal complaint based on all kinds of issues. Out of that number, it is sometimes concerning to see what the effect is on people, especially sexual harassment.

In a very recent case we had, the lady decided to quit the organization instead of going forward with a formal complaint. It's very hard for us to do anything, because we're bound by oaths of confidentiality, and unless the member decides or gives us the ability to move forward and explain her case to the department and try to do something, there's nothing we can do to assist that member.

She has left the organization because, from her point of view, it was the only viable solution she could choose. She felt that if she moved a complaint forward, reprisal on her would have been so high that it would have been worse than the existing condition, worse than tolerating the sexual harassment.

Delays are also a significant concern brought by constituents. If I bring a complaint forward, it will take an average of 90 days, if not more, to get a resolution. That period of 90 days is going to be very hard on the person and, in most cases, that person is now seen as an administrative problem for the organization. We've seen cases of people being posted administratively out of the organization because it was too much of an administrative burden to deal with those individuals. They didn't fit. Retribution is a huge thing. Delays are a huge thing.

The consequence if people are found guilty of sexual harassment is also minor. Mr. Wenek clearly mentioned that in most cases the consequence is a refresher training on harassment. It's one-day training. They use the public service course that is mandatory for most supervisors anyway. They have to go on the training. The one who has been identified as doing sexual harassment is going on a one-day training. Is it worth it for people to bring that complaint forward when they know at the end of the day the person will go on a one-day course?

It's all those concerns that force people to remain anonymous and not move forward with their complaints. Consequences are tragic in many cases.

● (0910)

Hon. Judy Sgro: I agree with you when it comes to people going forward. I don't think people go forward lightly, whether it's

harassment or sexual harassment. I don't think these are things that people go forward with lightly. There are significant repercussions, whether they are from your team you immediately work with or elsewhere, just saying not to pay any attention to it or whatever. I don't think people come forward lightly with this.

Bill C-15 is currently before the House. What can we do? Do you have any suggestions for improvements to strengthen that particular legislation?

Mr. Alain Gauthier: I think the biggest piece is the fear of reprisal. I'm not sure how you can include something to enforce consequences if there's reprisal. If we look at the civilian piece, we see the public service employee survey was done in 2011. In there, question 43 is very specific to reprisal for a public service employee using the system and for DND. If you look at that piece, the question reads: I feel I can initiate a formal recourse process (grievance, complaint, appeal) without fear of reprisal.

DND scored 50% positive answers. That means 50% were negative answers, so half the people fear using existing mechanisms. On the CF side, it's the same. They do a survey every three years called "Your-Say". The 2009 survey asked exactly the same question, and it was 52%.

Hon. Judy Sgro: Can you just clarify that for us? That was the 2009 survey that was done by DND.

Mr. Alain Gauthier: It was done by the Canadian Forces.

Hon. Judy Sgro: It's referred to as "Your-Say"?

Mr. Alain Gauthier: Yes.

Hon. Judy Sgro: Maybe that's a good survey for the committee to have. If the clerk can reference that for us, it might be helpful. Thank you very much.

Mr. Alain Gauthier: You're welcome.

● (0915)

Hon. Judy Sgro: So it's 52%. That means all the great language we're using throughout the federal bureaucracy about making changes is somehow not getting communicated to employees. Clearly, we have more to do.

Mr. Alain Gauthier: Without a doubt, the fear is there. The fear is there when we receive the call. I'd say at least one-third of the people want to remain anonymous. They just want the information. They want to understand their ability to move forward, but we know that because of fear, they're not doing it.

You talk about Bill C-15. I'm not sure if there's a way to make the case that people have the right to complain without fear of reprisal. I think that would be a huge step.

Hon. Judy Sgro: Thank you.

[Translation]

The Chair: Thank you.

Ms. James, go ahead.

You have five minutes.

[English]

Ms. Roxanne James (Scarborough Centre, CPC): Thank you, Madam Chair, and welcome to our witness.

In your remarks from a few meetings ago, you mentioned that the ombudsman's office acts as a direct source of information, referral, and education. When you talk about a direct source of information, what exactly are you referring to? What information are you providing?

Mr. Alain Gauthier: The conflict resolution processes or mechanisms within both the CF and DND are fairly complex. We inform people about them. We educate them on how the whole system works—where they need to go, where to find all those references, how to find a template for either a grievance or a harassment complaint, where to find the links to websites.

If it's more of a referral, there's the MPCC, the Military Police Complaints Commission, and we refer them to the military police. Sometimes it's a financial issue they have, so we connect them with a compensation officer. It's to guide them through that very complex process.

Ms. Roxanne James: I apologize if this has come up already or in the last meeting—it's been a while since you were here—but do you actually do referrals to mediators? Do you refer complainants to counselling directly? Do you offer that as well, or do you simply make the suggestion?

Mr. Alain Gauthier: It is a very great tool that does exist, but it is about to almost disappear. The Canadian Forces has decided, with the strategic review, to cut 50% of its alternate dispute resolution services. Where we used to have 19 officers across Canada available as experts in alternate dispute resolution, it's about to be closed, and there will be four left.

This was a great tool to help resolve conflict at the lowest level, directly between the member and the chain of command. It's about to disappear, so I think we're going to lose a lot of capacity.

Ms. Roxanne James: You talked about 65 cases related to harassment, with three for sexual harassment. Were any of those ever forwarded to mediation or for counselling?

Mr. Alain Gauthier: I would have to go into the specifics of it, but I would say yes. It's one of the basic recommendations we make.

I think you heard Commander Crewe mention that they're doing a review of conflict resolution. They have a conflict resolution working group to better package everything that exists. They're creating what they call an early notification; it's to advise the chain of command before a member makes a formal complaint, to try to understand the issue informally.

Ms. Roxanne James: Does your office make recommendations? Would you ever recommend dismissal, removal, or some other measure on a particular issue?

Mr. Alain Gauthier: Yes, in some cases we recommend that the person be moved outside that work environment and transferred to either another unit or elsewhere on the base.

Ms. Roxanne James: That's one example. Are there any other examples you would have of recommendations? That seems...I don't want to say heavy-handed, but to remove someone and put him or her somewhere else is a pretty severe measure. If there were

problems warranting removal to another area, would there not be concern that a similar situation might occur?

Mr. Alain Gauthier: Every situation is unique. I would say that this is one course of action that is possible. Clearly, our most recommended is an informal resolution in which there needs to be an understanding and a win-win situation at the basic level.

The Chair: When you talk about removal and moving someone into a different area, direction, or whatever, are you referring to the complainant, who you would actually pick up and move somewhere else, or are you referring to the respondent or the person who may be accused of a certain situation?

● (0920)

Mr. Alain Gauthier: Once again, it depends. Sometimes the complainant asks to go elsewhere, and that will be the solution. We talk with the commanding officer to see if this is feasible and workable. Once again, we provide only recommendations. It's a very fine line in what we're recommending in dealing with a commanding officer.

Ms. Roxanne James: Okay.

Do I have any time whatsoever? Likely not.

The Chair: No, your time is up.

[Translation]

Thank you.

We will now continue with Ms. Hassainia. You have five minutes.

Mrs. Sana Hassainia (Verchères—Les Patriotes, NDP): Thank you, Madam Chair.

Thank you for appearing before us, Mr. Gauthier.

If I understood correctly, there is a huge gap between the number of people who say they have been assaulted and the number of complaints that are filed. Could you explain that gap? Is it because they are afraid to file a complaint?

Have you thought of a solution to reduce this gap by using mechanisms that work in other countries, for example?

Mr. Alain Gauthier: The gap is huge, but it is shrinking. I feel that the statistics presented by Mr. Wenek are accurate. If we compare today with 10 years ago, the statistics show that there has been a huge improvement. The change in culture explains the improvement, but there is still a huge gap.

I think we still need to wait a number of years and work on changing the culture within the organization. Perhaps we also need stricter regulations and consequences.

The fear of reprisal and the delay in processing the complaints are problematic. There are almost no consequences for wrongdoing and that's also a problem. People do not understand the complexity of the system and are not willing to spend two years in a conflict situation. That is another problem.

I think that a number of steps and mechanisms are needed if we want to keep going in the right direction.

Mrs. Sana Hassainia: Thank you.

Do your courses have a section that deals with sexual harassment? If not, has the Canada School of Public Service received any suggestions to include sexual harassment in its courses?

Mr. Alain Gauthier: We do not have specific courses on this issue. So staff members attend courses that rely on the training provided by the Canada School of Public Service. Supervisors have a two-day course. Sexual harassment is part of the explanations and training. So there is a specific course for supervisors and another one for employees.

Mrs. Sana Hassainia: So there is a part that deals with sexual harassment.

Mr. Alain Gauthier: Yes, that is part of the course.

Mrs. Sana Hassainia: Okay.

How do you think that the new policy on harassment prevention will help employees?

Mr. Alain Gauthier: I noticed that two DAODs have been updated. Once again, the policy is fine. It is the way it is applied that makes the difference. Once again, the change in culture has to continue to take place. They are certainly going in the right direction, but it will still take a number of years, if not decades, before we have a completely harassment-free workplace.

Mrs. Sana Hassainia: Is there a way to assess how effective the courses are?

Mr. Alain Gauthier: No.

Mrs. Sana Hassainia: Thank you.

Is there a way to set up a mechanism to assess how effective the courses are once they have been offered? Does real visible change take place?

Mr. Alain Gauthier: In the Canadian Forces, it is a challenge to get a clear idea of the total number of cases. The Canadian Forces have mentioned that they work with three separate databases. So it is very difficult to get the same number of cases every time we ask about it. The Canadian Forces are in transition and they have to put all their data in the same database. Once they do that, we will have a better idea of how big the problem is.

Mrs. Sana Hassainia: What procedures does the School of Public Service use to address harassment issues? Are those procedures also followed in cases of sexual harassment?

Mr. Alain Gauthier: Procedures have been set up. The guidelines established by the Department of National Defence clearly mention that the first thing supervisors have to do in a case of sexual harassment is to separate the people as quickly as possible, to determine whether it is really a case of sexual harassment based on the facts and to follow up with an investigation.

However, that is not always what happens. The policies are in place and the structure is there, but their application may vary, which has caused a problem in the cases that have been brought to our attention.

I don't have an insight into all the current cases. We can only know about cases when people decide to call us to report a problem and to tell us that something is wrong. That is when they ask us to provide them with guidance or to help them.

• (0925)

Mrs. Sana Hassainia: Thank you very much.

The Chair: Thank you.

We will now hear from Ms. Young, who has five minutes.

[*English*]

Ms. Wai Young (Vancouver South, CPC): Thank you so much for coming in and for providing us with so much more detail on the differences.

One of the things I wanted to ask you about was Bill C-15. It appears that we're trying to better align the criminal court with the civil court. Therefore, can you explain that to us a bit more? What are the objectives and how are they being implemented through your system?

Mr. Alain Gauthier: I'm not sure I understand the question.

Ms. Wai Young: I'm talking about clause 50 and the amendment that it includes of Bill C-15. It's amending the military court to better align or be more in line with the civil courts. I'm just asking you how this is being integrated or changed within the system as you know it.

Mr. Alain Gauthier: That would be totally outside of my realm. One of the things we don't do is necessarily look at the discipline piece of the military. Most of the issues the office looks at are the administrative pieces—finance, posting, harassment pieces, all this stuff. As soon as it becomes disciplinary and in court, it's outside of our mandate and outside of our box. We deal with very few, if any, of those cases. I have no visibility on that specific clause and Bill C-15 for that effect.

Ms. Wai Young: Really? That's very interesting. Is it a specific omission, then, that you're not part of that, and that it's not included in your mission or mandate?

Mr. Alain Gauthier: It's not part of the mandate.

Ms. Wai Young: Looking at the system of how the military court deals with harassment is not part of your mandate?

Mr. Alain Gauthier: Harassment is, but within the harassment piece, once again, as I've said, we're fairly limited in looking at the process and the procedural fairness of the harassment piece.

We cannot review a case and say that our decision would have been different. We cannot say, "Here's what we think at the office of the ombudsman. You should have supported this, and this is our recommendation for the consequences." We cannot do that.

Ms. Wai Young: Given that clause 50 talks about the public access and openness of the court, and clauses 47 and 48 talk about who's on the court martial panel—and I could go on about different clauses—you're saying that you have no part in that or—

Mr. Alain Gauthier: None at all.

Actually, there's a specific clause in our mandate that prevents us from looking at what the Military Police Commission is doing. Anything that is of a criminal nature, we're not looking at it. Everything dealing with discipline or criminality is clearly outside of what the office is looking at.

Ms. Wai Young: That's very interesting.

So when clause 62 talks about sentencing, you have no input into how the sentencing happens or the length of that—none, zero?

Mr. Alain Gauthier: Zero.

Ms. Wai Young: Oh. So if somebody were to go through the system and appeal it, you would still have no input into that?

Mr. Alain Gauthier: No. We have no ability to assess that person.

Ms. Wai Young: Would you have an ability, though, to talk to or consult with the department on what things they can do or change to improve—

Mr. Alain Gauthier: The only thing we try to do is to guide the person to the right place. Our first respondent would have little knowledge about the discipline and the legal piece on that side. There's very little we could do for that person when he or she calls us.

Ms. Wai Young: That's very interesting.

I'd like to ask you about what you were saying with regard to going from 19 stations down to four stations as alternative dispute mechanisms. Am I correct?

• (0930)

Mr. Alain Gauthier: Yes.

Ms. Wai Young: How is that going to happen? I mean, why from 9 to four? How are you going to be servicing people?

Mr. Alain Gauthier: Alternative dispute resolution is under the responsibility of the chief of military personnel. That's a decision that he took as part of the reduction of the deficit. I think alternative dispute resolution, from their point of view, is a mandatory service we provide to civil servants, but it's not mandated by law for the military, so they're significantly reducing the size of it. They decide how they're going to spread it throughout the various bases. My understanding is that there are going to be four bases left with the given service.

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Thank you.

Ms. Young, your time is up.

I will now give the floor to Ms. Day, for five minutes.

Mrs. Anne-Marie Day (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, NDP): Thank you, Madam Chair.

Mr. Gauthier, thank you for joining us today.

The more I listen to the witnesses, the more difficult the situation seems to be. Your service was created in 1998 to promote openness and transparency within the Canadian Forces and the Department of National Defence. But as we know, the ombudsman can provide opinions, but cannot impose anything.

I am really at a loss because we have the Canadian Forces, the National Defence, the grievances within the army and the procedures to deal with it all. At the end of the day, isn't there a certain code of silence that, by the time the information gets to you, it has been sanitized and you don't really get the real numbers on harassment and sexual harassment?

Mr. Alain Gauthier: The figures that I have are from people who call in. I only see the number of people who call the office to ask for information or help. We keep in touch with the people from the Canadian Forces and we have a good relationship with them. We can look at their numbers and see that, in many cases, their numbers are different from ours.

Mrs. Anne-Marie Day: Is it a significant difference?

Mr. Alain Gauthier: It is relatively significant and, as I explained, it is because of fear of reprisal. People call us, ask a lot of questions and, then, they decide not to go ahead with the process because they do not feel capable of going through it for two years. They feel that it would be too difficult, that the harassment would only become worse and that, at any rate, it would practically not make a difference.

Mrs. Anne-Marie Day: Do you have a website?

Mr. Alain Gauthier: Certainly.

Mrs. Anne-Marie Day: Can people get information from the website about harassment or sexual harassment?

Mr. Alain Gauthier: Often, when they call us, we direct them to the National Defence or the Canadian Forces website because the instructions and regulations are posted on the website and they are kept up to date. We try not to post outdated information on our website. We always refer individuals to the site that has updated information.

Mrs. Anne-Marie Day: I personally often consult popular sites, when I am looking for a house or I want to post an ad, for example. You can figure out how many people consult those sites. It is automatically counted on the site. Do you do that? That would give you an idea of the number of people who consult your site about sexual harassment or harassment.

Mr. Alain Gauthier: The communications section has some data. My group does not monitor the website. We have data, but they are certainly not specific. We are not able to separate them and determine whether a person visited the site to find out about harassment, compensation or a transfer. We do not have that degree of detail.

Mrs. Anne-Marie Day: You also don't have data about visits on the site related to post-traumatic stress?

Mr. Alain Gauthier: No.

Mrs. Anne-Marie Day: We have a provincial ombudsman. His mandate is partly to make recommendations, but those recommendations have a rather broad scope. When he asks a department to make adjustments, the department usually complies. Departments do not like to receive any recommendations because that means that there was a complaint, which in itself denotes some sort of flaw.

Do you have that type of relationship with the Canadian Forces and National Defence?

Mr. Alain Gauthier: The ombudsman's mandate was established based on a departmental directive. In fact, the Minister of National Defence decided to create the office of the ombudsman and set up its own directive. It was not done through legislation, the way it is for other independent organizations.

As for National Defence, there are three independent organizations. There is the Canadian Forces Grievance Board, which was formed under the National Defence Act. So there are legislative provisions to that effect. The MPCC is also covered under the act. The third outside organization is not. That is our office. We do our work under a mandate from the minister.

About one month and a half ago, a very interesting event took place. It was the International Conference of Ombudsman Institutions for the Armed Forces. This year, the fourth edition was held in Canada. Representatives from 25 foreign countries came to share the lessons they have learned. It was interesting to see the wide spectrum of authority delegated to various ombudsman offices. In some cases, there was no authority or just the authority of a simple figurehead, whereas in other cases, the organizations were able to make decisions that the government or the authority in question implemented. I think that we are somewhere in the middle, closer to making recommendations. That is where we are at right now with our mandate.

• (0935)

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Day. Your time is up.

It is Ms. Bateman's turn. You have five minutes.

Ms. Joyce Bateman (Winnipeg South Centre, CPC): Thank you, Madam Chair.

Mr. Gauthier, thank you for joining us once again. We still have a few questions for you.

This morning, you said that, sometimes, a large number of complaints is a sign that an organization is healthy.

[English]

How do we make that happen?

[Translation]

What is the recipe?

As you must have heard in all the questions, people feel that a large number of complaints is an indication that there are problems. But you said that the facts suggest otherwise.

Mr. Alain Gauthier: When I looked at the statistics on harassment, I did a study. I looked at the number of complaints received by the office over the past two years. When I added them up, I got a total of 134 harassment complaints in the past two years.

I separated the complaints into different categories to see how many complainants came from the regular forces, the reserves, cadets, civilians and family members, meaning all our constituents. I then separated the complaints according to bases and the gender of complainants to see where they were coming from. Actually, almost exclusively, most of the complaints came from the Bagotville and Valcartier bases.

I discussed the matter with the ombudsman because it was contrary to our perception. Last year, he went to Bagotville and Valcartier. He found that the work atmosphere was excessively pleasant and that the relationship between employees and the chain of command was effective. The conclusion that we came to is that people are not afraid to file a harassment complaint if they feel that they are subject to harassment. That is why we have received a higher number of complaints. It is explained by the fact that they are not afraid of reprisal.

So, if we are simply relying on the number of complaints, we get a distorted picture. There are other bases in Canada from which we receive no complaints. But we know that there are problems. We hear about them. The members call us and tell us which base they are from. It is out of the question for them to take up the problem with their chain of command because they know it would affect their careers.

Ms. Joyce Bateman: The environment is not open.

Mr. Alain Gauthier: There is no environment.

Ms. Joyce Bateman: Okay. Thank you.

I have another question.

This morning, you mentioned that the 19 conflict resolution centres will be reduced to four.

Could you explain the potential risks for clients and possible solutions?

Mr. Alain Gauthier: Cutting alternative dispute resolution or ADR services was the decision of the Canadian Forces. I know that this will have a considerable impact because informal conflict resolution helped to solve a lot of problems.

Major strides have been made over the past five years within the Canadian Forces. They have integrated a joint team of military members and civilians in their informal conflict resolution system. It was a mixed team that made it possible to offer quality services to both the military and civilians on each base. In addition, the fact that this team was on the ground, that it was known by the chain of command and that it was made up of local people was very helpful.

As a result, eliminating this team means eliminating an important tool for quickly resolving issues on the ground.

In my view, if this tool no longer exists, people will be likely to go through much more formal processes a lot sooner because that will be the only solution they will see. In addition, all the existing formal processes take a long time. A harassment complaint takes on average 90 days to process and a grievance takes between 18 and 24 months.

• (0940)

The Chair: Ms. Bateman, you have 15 seconds left.

Ms. Joyce Bateman: That's all?

The Chair: Yes, 15 seconds. You have time for a quick question.

Ms. Joyce Bateman: Is this informal resolution a pillar for the Treasury Board in dealing with harassment? Is that the case?

Mr. Alain Gauthier: This service is mandatory for public service. It is actually a tool that has to be implemented for public servants. This service will continue to exist, but it will be very limited. In my view, this service will be centralized in the large centres and people will have to travel to get access to the service.

Ms. Joyce Bateman: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. Gauthier. Unfortunately, I have to interrupt you. We have already used all the time we had. The time has gone by very quickly.

Thank you very much for coming back and taking the time to answer questions from the members of the committee. It has been very interesting. We really appreciate that you have made the trip here for a second time.

I am going to suspend the proceedings for a few minutes to let the next witnesses take their seats.

Thank you.

• (0940) _____ (Pause) _____

• (0945)

The Chair: I would like to welcome the second panel of witnesses, both of whom are from the Canada School of Public Service. Joining us are Jean-François Fleury, Acting Vice-President, Learning Programs, and Felicity Mulgan, Acting Director General, Functional Communities, Authority Delegation and Orientation. Thank you very much for accepting our invitation.

You have 10 minutes for your presentation, followed, if time permits, by a round of questions, of course. We may have to leave to vote later this morning.

Go ahead.

Mr. Jean-François Fleury (Acting Vice-President, Learning Programs, Canada School of Public Services): Thank you very much.

[English]

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to talk about the training offered at the Canada School of Public Service.

I will start by providing a brief overview of the school's mandate. Then I will describe the relevant curriculum for this study.

The school is a common learning provider for the public service of Canada. We provide a broad range of learning opportunities for public servants. These opportunities can take the form of classroom courses open to all, online courses available 24/7, courses customized to meet organizational needs, and events to share best practices and promote government and public service priorities.

The school's objectives are to support the growth and development of public servants; to help strengthen the knowledge, skills, and competencies they need to do their jobs effectively; and to assist deputy heads in meeting the learning needs of their organizations.

We are a service delivery organization. We offer services in both official languages across Canada.

Responsibility for learning in the public service is shared. Deputy heads are responsible for determining the learning, training, and

development needs of the employees within their organizations and for fixing the terms on which these activities are carried out.

The Treasury Board Secretariat and the office of the chief human resources officer are the policy leads. The school works closely with both the Treasury Board Secretariat and the office of the chief human resources officer, as well as with subject matter specialists and public servants as a whole, to identify the learning needs of public servants and to determine the right opportunities and methods for addressing those needs.

As per Treasury Board's common services policy, the school is defined as an optional service provider. We are a key delivery arm for training public service employees. Departments can choose to come to the school or they can use other services and service providers. These include in-house training strategies and contracting with the private sector.

I will be more specific now about the training the school provides in the context of this study. I will describe the curriculum from broad foundational learning to specific subject matter training to the training offered to specialists in the field.

The school provides broad foundational learning through a variety of courses and programs that help employees understand the craft of government. This training includes orientation, authority delegation, professional development, and leadership training. Many of these courses contain modules and/or content that deal with values, ethics, and people management issues. This type of training aims to provide employees with basic and essential information on how government works, on the code of values and ethics, and on the legislation, policies, and regulatory environment that govern how the public service operates.

To be more specific, I will get into the orientation program. It's one of our key foundational learning products.

This program is designed to introduce new public servants to the culture and structure of the public service and to make them understand their roles. It includes modules on the code of values and ethics and on how government works. This program is delivered using online and in-class methods. It includes a one-day classroom course touching on values and ethics and a mandatory online module called "Paving the Way: Values and Ethics Foundations for Employees". It also includes coverage of the policy on harassment prevention and resolution and uses scenarios to help participants explore ethical issues.

An evaluation was done in 2009-2010. The results demonstrated that over 80% of the respondents were better prepared to deal with ethical situations in the workplace, to discuss ethical issues with others, and to find resources regarding values and ethics.

Another key foundational learning program is authority delegation training. This suite of courses is designed for supervisors, managers, new executives, directors general, and ADMs. It provides public servants with the essentials on the roles and responsibilities related to their delegated authorities in the fields of human resources, finance, procurement, and information management. More specifically, it contains a people management component on creating a respectful workplace. It also covers the values and ethics code and the policy on harassment prevention and resolution.

All participants who go through ADT, or authority delegation training, have to validate their knowledge through an assessment. This provides them with certification showing that they meet the knowledge standards as defined by the Treasury Board Secretariat.

The school also offers sessions to senior leaders, including newly appointed deputy ministers, to help orient them in their new role. It includes discussions of real-life cases and considers approaches to managing different situations that take into account the key accountabilities.

Over and above the foundational learning I just described, the school also offers subject-specific training to help employees and managers foster a respectful workplace with a diverse and representative workforce.

- (0950)

Typical objectives for this type of subject matter training are to sensitize employees to the culture of values and ethics, increase awareness of obligations and responsibilities, and understand how harassment complaints should be managed.

This curriculum includes a number of learning products.

The first is creating a respectful workplace. This course is designed for employees, supervisors, and managers. It explores potential harassment situations, what it means to create a respectful workplace, and how to promote attitudes and behaviours that will improve workplace well-being. Participants learn about personal and corporate responsibilities and have the opportunity to discuss the process and typical outcomes of harassment complaints.

The second product is an introduction to employment equity and diversity. This course, for all public servants, explores the issues, organizational requirements, and legal obligations related to the implementation of the Employment Equity Act. Participants learn creative and practical approaches to supporting a diverse workforce.

A third product deals with leading a diverse workforce. This is a leadership course that provides supervisors and managers with the opportunity to explore the emotional, intelligence, and leadership competencies required to lead diverse teams. Participants explore generational, cultural, and gender-based differences to help them lead more effectively.

A fourth product is a course on principles and practices of labour relations for supervisors and managers. It covers the policy on harassment prevention and the code of values and ethics. Other legislation includes the Canadian Human Rights Act, the Canada Labour Code, and the Employment Equity Act.

Finally, we have a course on mediating conflict. It is a course for supervisors and managers that examines how to deal with conflicts rationally and fairly by using feedback and observational techniques.

In addition to the training offered to the general public service, the school offers training aimed at subject matter specialists. This training helps develop employees' knowledge and skills to meet specific legislative, regulatory, and policy requirements, or mitigate risks related to these functions. For example, the school offers labour relations training for HR advisers as well as labour relations training for labour relations specialists. These are two different products.

Furthermore, the school offers two courses aimed specifically at people dealing with actual harassment complaints inside departments. These could be managers, values and ethics specialists, HR specialists, or others.

One course is on investigating harassment complaints. This course prepares them to conduct these investigations according to the standards of the Treasury Board Secretariat policy on prevention and resolution of harassment in the workplace.

We also have a course on managing harassment complaints. This course is designed to help participants manage a harassment complaint process in accordance with the policy. Participants follow how the complaint process unfolds step by step and learn their role in managing this process.

In conclusion, the school plays a key role in offering relevant and responsive training that helps departments create and sustain a values-based and respectful workplace. We constantly review our curriculum to ensure offerings are up to date, effective, and reflective of current legislation, policies, and public service reality.

We review our curriculum using three main methods. After each course, a learning evaluation form is filled to ensure that the objectives were met, that the instructor was understood, and that the content was up to date. If ever the results for these are not favourable, a corrective measure is then put in place immediately.

We also review our entire curriculum annually to ensure its relevance. We regularly consult our colleagues at TBS, as well as relevant community leaders and subject matter specialists, to ensure we meet their needs from a learning perspective.

To close, I want to reiterate that the school's principal role as a learning service provider is to support deputy heads in meeting their learning needs of the employees and of their organizations.

I would like to thank the committee for this opportunity, and I welcome any questions you may have.

•(0955)

[Translation]

The Chair: Thank you.

We will now proceed to the question period.

Ms. Ambler, you have seven minutes.

[English]

Mrs. Stella Ambler (Mississauga South, CPC): Thank you, Madam Chair.

Thank you very much to both of you for being here today, and for your presentation.

My first question is very simple. Who pays for the courses, and how many people go?

Mr. Jean-François Fleury: The two courses that are part of foundational learning, the orientation and authority to delegation, are centrally funded. The rest of the products we've enumerated in this list are cost-recovered, which means that employees and departments pay the school for that course.

We have statistics on the public servants' usage of these courses. I can go down all of them if you wish, or just highlight a few.

The foundational learning area is where the bulk of the public servants come through the school. The orientation program, since its inception in 2006, has served 42,000 learners, and the authority delegation training has served 57,000.

As we move into more specific products, these numbers go down because the target audience is smaller and more focused. I can give you other examples if you wish, but—

Mrs. Stella Ambler: No, that's great. Thank you.

Are any of the courses mandatory?

Mr. Jean-François Fleury: The foundational learning course is. The authority delegation as well as the orientation program are required training. This means that we work with departments. Departments identify a learning coordinator, and when they have new employees or recently promoted employees, they submit the list of those employees to the school; we ensure meeting that demand by offering the products.

Mrs. Stella Ambler: Thank you.

Do you train any of the students or deputy ministers or employees who attend to be mediators or to specialize in alternative dispute resolution, or is it more informal?

Mr. Jean-François Fleury: For deputy ministers, it's more of a high-level orientation to the culture and to creating a respectful workplace. For employees, it varies on which level of course they want. For the subject matter specialists, we guide them through the step-by-step way to manage harassment complaints.

Ms. Felicity Mulgan (Acting Director General, Functional Communities, Authority Delegation and Orientation, Canada School of Public Service): I could build on that. Probably the closest we get to that is our course on mediating conflict, but it's really aimed at managers.

We're not training people to be specialized mediators or alternative dispute resolution professionals. We're really just training managers to deal with issues at the manager level and to know when something needs to go beyond that.

•(1000)

Mrs. Stella Ambler: If and when they receive a complaint, they'll know how to deal with it, which would be more about who to send it to rather than how to deal with it themselves.

Ms. Felicity Mulgan: Correct.

Mrs. Stella Ambler: Okay. Thank you for that clarification.

We've heard a lot in this study about the culture of the work environment, and you spoke about it as well. If it's an unhealthy one, it can create a culture for harassment. We've also heard that sometimes a lack of respect is part of the problem and will sometimes create harassment in the workplace.

Creating a culture of respect is something that is important, but it's tough to legislate respect. How does what you do contribute to creating that culture of respect in the workplace?

Mr. Jean-François Fleury: As you mentioned, the respectful workplace has many different facets to it.

From a learning perspective, from a school perspective, the code of values and ethics in creating a respectful workplace is an underlying theme of most of the products we listed here and other products that we have. Whether it's leadership courses or whatnot, we always promote creating a respectful workplace and ensuring that the code of values and ethics is well understood. From a learning perspective, that's what we contribute to the more holistic end game, which is to have a respectful workplace in the departments.

Mrs. Stella Ambler: Thank you.

I was looking at some of the courses that are offered, in particular those on investigating harassment complaints and managing harassment complaints.

Let's say a supervisor or manager in human resources attends one of these sessions, probably a day-long session. I'm wondering who gives the sessions. Are they themselves human resources experts? I'm wondering if any of the teachers have been trained specifically in sexual harassment or harassment cases.

Ms. Felicity Mulgan: The instructors we use at the school are all experienced public servants who are currently public servants often on assignment to the school. They are experienced in the field.

I'm sorry; can you just remind me of the question again?

Mrs. Stella Ambler: Do the instructors themselves have backgrounds in dealing with harassment complaints?

Ms. Felicity Mulgan: Absolutely. That's essential for hiring them. They must have a background in that area.

Mrs. Stella Ambler: Do you feel that over time this issue has improved, and do you see that at the school? Over the last 10 or 20 years, have you seen an improvement or more of an awareness and a willingness to deal with sexual harassment complaints, as opposed to 10 or 20 years ago, when maybe they would have been swept under the rug? Are you seeing any improvement at the school level?

Mr. Jean-François Fleury: From the school perspective, it was created in 2004, so trying to do the comparison over 20 years is—

Mrs. Stella Ambler: I'm sorry; I didn't catch that.

Mr. Jean-François Fleury: That's fine.

The comparison is quite difficult, but definitely our curriculum has evolved to include a lot of the respectful workplace concepts. We feel that the heightened awareness has influenced the curriculum to ensure that the code has values and ethics, and that the workplace is

Mrs. Stella Ambler: And it's reviewed every year, too—

Mr. Jean-François Fleury: Yes, it is.

Mrs. Stella Ambler: —so that probably helps as well.

Mr. Jean-François Fleury: Yes.

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Ms. Ambler, your time is up. We also have to go to vote.

Ms. Truppe, you have the floor.

[*English*]

Mrs. Susan Truppe: Madam Chair, there's a vote now.

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Yes, we have to go and vote.

I have no choice but to adjourn the meeting. There is no point in making our witnesses wait because we would only come back for five minutes.

I am sorry and thank you very much for sharing your ideas with us this morning.

● (1005)

Mr. Jean-François Fleury: Thank you.

The Chair: We are probably going to contact you to see if you are able to join us at another committee meeting. It will more likely be after the holidays, since the House does not have a lot of sitting days left before it adjourns.

Mr. Jean-François Fleury: We look forward to hearing from you.

The Chair: Thank you for your understanding.

Mr. Jean-François Fleury: Thank you.

The Chair: Have a great day.

Mr. Jean-François Fleury: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.

That concludes our meeting.

(Meeting adjourned)

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