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Chair

The Honourable Larry Bagnell

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• (1100)

[English]

The Chair (Hon. Larry Bagnell (Yukon, Lib.)): Good morning. Welcome to meeting 95 of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs.

I want to deal with a couple of business matters quickly in case we have to go to a vote again. Due to a change in the membership of our committee, the first order of business is the election of the second vice-chair. Since they have to be from the NDP, and the NDP has only one member, I don't think it'll be a hard process. I'll turn it over to the clerk for the official process.

The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Andrew Lauzon): Thank you.

Pursuant to Standing Order 106(2), the second vice-chair must be a member of an opposition party other than the official opposition. I'm prepared to receive motions for the office of second vice-chair.

Mr. Graham.

Mr. David de Burgh Graham (Laurentides—Labelle, Lib.): I move Mr. Stewart.

The Clerk: It has been moved by Mr. Graham that Mr. Stewart be elected as second vice-chair of the committee. Is it the pleasure of the committee to adopt the motion?

(Motion agreed to)

The Clerk: I declare the motion carried. Mr. Kennedy Stewart is declared duly elected second vice-chair of the committee.

The Chair: Congratulations.

If you would, please pass on our best wishes to Mr. Christopherson. He certainly made significant contributions to this committee. We're like a family, and he was part of our family.

Mr. Kennedy Stewart (Burnaby South, NDP): I'll do my best to fill his large shoes, and I will pass on your regards. Thank you very much for your support.

The Chair: Thank you.

For the next item of business, we have distributed a budget for witnesses. I think the total is \$28,000. There's a little room there in case we get more witnesses. Is everyone agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Chair: Carried.

Another quick piece of business is being handed around. As you know, Parliament is now trying to advertise a bit more about what committees are doing, through Twitter and the website. We have distributed what the wording would be. Does anyone have any comments on it? It seems to be pretty simple.

Okay. We could discuss it more later, but we have a bunch of witnesses lined up for this study, so unless people have other suggestions or we are interrupted by something, we'll continue to let the clerk try to arrange the witnesses the various parties have organized for the next few meetings.

Potentially the main estimates will be tabled after April 16. Because the Speaker and those people are hard to get, I'm suggesting that we tentatively set aside Thursday, April 26 for the main estimates with the Speaker and those witnesses we normally have for that. Okay.

• (1105)

Before that, we'll have witnesses the parties have suggested.

Claudine Santos, Senator Patterson's assistant, is joining us at the table.

Is there any other business? The Liaison committee wants to know all of our travel plans between July and December. Does the researcher have exotic places we can go yet?

Mr. David de Burgh Graham: The Wellington Building.

The Chair: We'll be travelling to the Wellington Building on occasion. We'll put in a "nil report" unless anyone provides anything else. We can always change it later.

We'll now continue our study of indigenous languages in the proceedings of the House of Commons. We are pleased to be joined by two senators, the Honourable Serge Joyal and the Honourable Dennis Patterson.

Thank you both for being here.

For members' information, former senator Charlie Watt was supposed to participate in this panel but he had a last-minute scheduling conflict with ITK, so he won't be joining us today.

It's kind of ironic, Mr. Patterson. I was at your committee last night, and now you're at my committee this morning. Senator Watt presented there too, and it was great to hear him. Just so the committee members know, the two witnesses last night at the Senate Arctic committee spoke in Inuktitut. That was great.

We'll turn the floor over to Senator Joyal.

Thank you for coming.

Hon. Serge Joyal (Senator, Kennebec, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair. I want to thank the members of the committee who have extended the invitation.

[*Translation*]

I am very pleased to be able to join you this morning.

[*English*]

I wish to provide the committee the context in which the Senate decided to allow the use of aboriginal languages, singularly Inuktitut, in the debates of the chamber and at the committee level.

That stems from 2006, so it's already a long time, as you know, 12 years ago. There were two Inuit senators, Senator Charlie Watt and Senator Adams. Senator Watt was appointed in 1984 and Senator Adams was appointed in 1977, so they were very long-standing senators. In all fairness, their first language is really Inuktitut; it's not English. When they tried to express themselves in English, for them it was like it is for me. I'm French-speaking, and when I speak in English, well, I have to make an additional effort. Concepts in one language, as you know, are difficult to translate into another language.

We noticed on the floor of the Senate that those two senators could not really take part as much, or as fully, as other senators could since they were not being allowed to use their language. There was a motion introduced on the floor of the chamber in 2006 by former Senator Corbin, who was an Acadian. The motion called on the Senate to study whether aboriginal people had the right to use their language in Parliament, and also, what we should be doing to make sure the system provided for the use of an aboriginal language as a third language group aside from English and French.

The question was referred to the Standing Committee on Rules, Procedures and the Rights of Parliament. I happen to have been a member of that committee for the last 20 years. That gives you my age. Personally, I have always held that the aboriginal people of Canada should have the right to speak their language. I was Secretary of State for Canada from 1982 to 1984, and Mr. Bagnell will remember that I was the co-chair of the Special Joint Committee on the Constitution in 1980-81. One of the key issues we had to deal with in those years—more than 38 years ago—was the recognition of the rights of aboriginal peoples in Canada; that is, section 35 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, under the Constitution Act of 1982.

I'll read that section, because it's a very important element that you should take into consideration. Section 35 states:

The existing aboriginal and treaty rights of the aboriginal peoples of Canada are hereby recognized and affirmed.

There's also paragraph 2(b) of the charter, which speaks about freedom of expression:

freedom of thought, belief, opinion and expression, including freedom of the press and other media of communication.

The Supreme Court of Canada, through those years, has interpreted section 35 and paragraph 2(b), which is about freedom of expression. In one of its landmark decisions in the Haida case in 2004, the famous Supreme Court case, the court stated:

Put simply, Canada's Aboriginal peoples were here when Europeans came, and were never conquered.

The conclusion is that they are there. They have their rights, their culture, and their identity. They have the right to express it and manifest it. This landmark case was preceded by another one in 1988, the Ford case, whereby the Supreme Court determined the scope of freedom of expression. What do we mean when we say that somebody has the right to express himself or herself? The court stated:

● (1110)

The "freedom of expression" guaranteed by s.2(b) of the Canadian Charter and s.3 of the Quebec Charter includes the freedom to express oneself in the language of one's choice. Language is so intimately related to the form and content of expression that there cannot be true freedom of expression by means of language if one is prohibited from using the language of one's choice. Language is not merely a means or medium of expression; it colours the content and meaning of expression. It is a means by which a people may express its cultural identity. It is also the means by which one expresses one's personal identity and sense of individuality. The recognition that "freedom of expression" includes the freedom to express oneself in the language of one's choice does not undermine or run counter to the express or specific guarantees of language rights in s. 133 of the Constitution Act, 1867 and ss. 16 to 23 of the Canadian Charter.

It applies to you and to us in the Senate.

In other words, section 133 states quite clearly that both languages could be used in the debates of the chamber of Parliament, and I will read section 133:

Either the English or the French Language may be used by any Person in the Debates of the Houses of the Parliament of Canada and of the Houses of the Legislature of Quebec; and both those Languages shall be used in the respective Records and Journals of those Houses....

The courts stated quite clearly in 1988 that the use of a language other than English and French doesn't run counter to section 133. This is a very key issue, and we reflected upon that in the Senate when we had to review the basis on which a senator, in those instances, or a member of Parliament would decide to use a third group of languages. That would not run counter to section 133.

You would certainly know there is another section of the charter, section 22, that reads as follows, and I will read it for your benefit:

Nothing in sections 16 to 20 abrogates or derogates from any legal or customary right or privilege acquired or enjoyed either before or after the coming into force of this Charter with respect to any language that is not English or French.

In other words, the charter recognized that there are other languages that have customary rights or legal rights. In the Senate in those days we were reflecting on that situation—and I remind you, that was in 2008, so it's already 10 years ago—we thought that to try to take the best means to allow a senator to speak his or her aboriginal language would not run contrary to the letter of the Constitution or to the rights that stem from the various decisions, the various treaty rights, and the general status of the aboriginal people in Canada.

Moreover since then there has been the report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. I want to draw your attention to sections 13 to 17 of the report. That was not contemplated in the Senate chamber, because that was prior to our use of aboriginal languages. I will read the first one, which is recommendation 13:

We call upon the federal government to acknowledge that Aboriginal rights include Aboriginal language rights.

In other words, not to recognize aboriginal rights if you recognize aboriginal language rights and think or pretend that you will recognize aboriginal rights is a contradiction.

That's what this bill in the Senate, Bill S-212, stems from. It's the third time I have introduced this bill in the Senate. It was introduced for the first time in 2009. It is entitled, An act for the advancement of the aboriginal languages of Canada and to recognize and respect aboriginal language rights. This bill has been adopted at second reading and it is currently at the aboriginal affairs committee in the Senate.

• (1115)

I want to stress that because on February 14 the Prime Minister made a formal statement in relation to the replacement of the Indian Act. I will read a paragraph of the Prime Minister's statement in Parliament. It was not long ago, a month or so:

To guide the work of decolonizing Canadian laws and policies, we adopted principles respecting Canada's relationship with indigenous peoples.

To preserve, protect, and revitalize indigenous languages, we are working jointly with indigenous partners to develop a First Nations, Inuit, and Métis languages act.

That was the commitment of the government.

I think your work has to take place within that context. We have tried in the Senate, through our procedures—

I know my time is going on—

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher (Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix, CPC): We have to vote.

The Chair: Have you almost finished?

Do we have the unanimous consent of the committee to let him finish here? We have half-hour bells.

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Hon. Serge Joyal: I'll conclude. I know the time is short. I understand the pressure under which you work and exercise your responsibilities.

I would draw your attention to that general context in which we are in an evolving situation. I met with the Minister of Heritage two years ago when I introduced that bill, to inform her that this was my third initiative in relation to that. She pledged to launch consultations with aboriginal leaders throughout all of Canada, and the government has fully committed to introducing a languages protection bill.

We in the Senate have shown that it is possible to have a third group of languages used, aboriginal languages specifically, by, of course, having the opportunity to inform the Senate clerk or the committees clerk before that group of languages is used, to make sure that there is an interpreter available and there is a capacity for that senator to use that language and to be understood. Presently, of course, anyone can use any language, but if he or she is not understood, then it's not worth the paper on which that statement is printed and that MP or senator cannot fully participate in the deliberative and legislative functions of the chamber.

We thought it would be possible to do that in the chamber. In the beginning there were objections, no doubt about that, and those who said asked, if we were to do it, what kind of precedent we would be

creating for other languages and so forth. We canvassed those issues and we came to the conclusion that aboriginal people have a particular status. They have had constitutional protection through the years. As I said, they have never been conquered. They were there before my own ancestor arrived in 1649, who happened to be, by the way, a translator.

When the missionaries came to Canada in those years, they had to hire people to use as interpreters because none of the European settlers spoke aboriginal languages. The first thing they had to do was to learn aboriginal languages, because aboriginal languages were spoken. In those years, during the French regime and up to the Treaty of Paris of 1763, aboriginal leaders were speaking their aboriginal languages and not learning French; it was the French who were learning the aboriginal languages.

It's the situation now that they are trying to reintegrate into the Canadian mainstream, with their identity, with pride in speaking their languages. Of course, it is the responsibility of the Government of Canada, which through the residential school system obliterated aboriginal languages, to take the initiative and steps to reinstate for them the right to speak their languages.

It is in that context that the Senate took the initiative some 12 years ago to allow, progressively, the use of languages. Today, the two Inuit senators have retired from the Senate. Senator Adams has retired, and Senator Watt retired last month. There are no Inuit senators in the Senate presently. There are seven aboriginal senators in the chamber. We have devised a system through which it is possible to use an aboriginal language by, as I said, giving notice before so that there is an interpreter available and that there is a possibility for them to use their language effectively.

I certainly suggest to you to look into that carefully. Use the precedent that took place in the Senate. Senator Patterson was appointed in 2008 and came into the chamber just at the moment we were really recognizing the use of aboriginal languages. I think he could testify by himself on his experience in the Northwest Territories where there are—how many?—11 languages.

• (1120)

Hon. Dennis Glen Patterson (Senator, Nunavut, C): There are eight, plus French and English.

Hon. Serge Joyal: There are eight aboriginal languages plus French and English, and of course in Nunavut there are four languages.

The precedent of a legislature using an aboriginal language in Canada exists in the Northwest Territories and in Nunavut. In fact, there was a fact-finding mission of senators who went to Nunavut in 2008 to look into how it works and how it is integrated into the daily practice, because in Nunavut, 89% of the debate takes place in Inuktitut.

The Chair: Thank you, Senator.

Mr. Patterson, how long is your brief?

Hon. Dennis Glen Patterson: Tell me how much time. I'm open. I was told roughly 10 minutes. I can probably make it shorter than that.

The Chair: If you could do it in five...because we have to go and vote. We'll be back from the vote at 12 o'clock, and our next witnesses are supposed to be at 12 o'clock.

Mr. John Nater (Perth—Wellington, CPC): Mr. Chair, will we have an opportunity to question these witnesses at 12 o'clock?

The Chair: We could try to extend into the next witnesses' time a bit.

Can you stay a few minutes after 12 o'clock?

Hon. Serge Joyal: I can.

The Chair: Okay. Why don't you give us the first five minutes, and then we'll go to vote?

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: The buses are a problem.

• (1125)

The Chair: We'll do it when we come back then.

We'll suspend to vote, but then we'll come back right after the vote.

• _____ (Pause) _____

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• (1205)

The Chair: Good afternoon. Welcome back to the 95th meeting of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs.

Because of our time constraints, we've brought in our other witnesses so they can listen until we get to them. We continue our study.

We're pleased to be joined by Floyd McCormick, Clerk of the Yukon Legislative Assembly; and Danielle Mager, Manager, Public Affairs and Communications of the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories.

Thank you both for making yourselves available today. We got delayed a bit, so we're finishing off our previous witnesses. You're welcome to listen.

We're not going to spend too much time, senators, but we'll have Mr. Patterson's statement for however long he wants and then maybe have one question from each party, and then we'll go on to our other witnesses.

Mr. Patterson is a great chair of the Arctic committee of the Senate, which is a new committee that has just started. I really appreciate going to those meetings. You do a great job chairing.

You're on.

• (1210)

Hon. Dennis Glen Patterson: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I'm very pleased and honoured to appear today to discuss the issue of rights and rules respecting indigenous languages in the House of Commons.

Just as a bit of background, I am a former MLA, a cabinet minister, and I was a premier in the government of the NWT between 1979 and 1995, so I've had some experience with questions of indigenous languages in the context of Parliament.

In the eighties, there was a push from the government of Pierre Elliott Trudeau to make the NWT officially bilingual. New Brunswick had just become officially bilingual, and the government of the day was urging other provinces and territories to follow suit. There was a lot of pressure on us in the NWT to become officially bilingual.

At the same time, we had a number of MLAs whom we described as unilingual. They spoke only aboriginal languages, or if they could speak English or French, they were clearly handicapped. At the time, as my colleague said, there were also nine aboriginal languages spoken in the NWT that we were very concerned about supporting and enhancing. The prospect of becoming officially bilingual in English and French without also recognizing and supporting the aboriginal first languages of the majority of our population was unacceptable.

What did we do? We engaged with the Secretary of State at the time, the equivalent of which is now the Minister of Heritage, who was the Honourable Serge Joyal. We secured substantial support for the recognition and enhancement of aboriginal languages alongside becoming officially bilingual.

In 1984 the GNWT passed the Official Languages Ordinance. It recognized English and French as official languages but also recognized the status of aboriginal languages. In our first ordinance, we called them official aboriginal languages.

I mention that because the end result was that aboriginal languages, with subsequent amendments in the NWT and Nunavut, came to have equal status alongside English and French as official languages in the Northwest Territories and Nunavut. Members of both of those assemblies could then—and can now—fully participate in their first languages in a fulsome debate on the complex issues that mattered most to them and their constituents. There is, at significant cost I will say, simultaneous interpretation available in both of those assemblies in the official aboriginal languages of the NWT and Nunavut. We were able to debate complex land claims and political development of the NWT, including a major proposal to divide the NWT and create the new territory of Nunavut, with the full participation of unilingual MLAs who were also respected elders. I think this background may be helpful to you in your discussion of this issue as it pertains to the House of Commons.

I want to say that language should not serve as a disincentive for full participation in our democracy on the part of aboriginal people. We have to respect section 35 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in the Constitution Act, as Senator Joyal has outlined, and understand that aboriginal languages are a fundamental expression of aboriginal rights.

In my opinion, if the primary language of a parliamentarian is an indigenous language, we must make every effort to ensure that the relevant accommodations are made to facilitate their ability to participate in meaningful and robust debate on the issues of the day. My respectful advice to your committee would be that, when there are members of Parliament who need to communicate in an aboriginal language other than English or French, in order to fully participate and exercise their rights and privileges as MLAs, as MPs, then full simultaneous translation services should be provided, including translation of documents. That's what is being done in the legislatures of the NWT and Nunavut.

• (1215)

Otherwise, any member who wishes to speak in an aboriginal language in Parliament should be allowed to speak with simultaneous translation available upon reasonable notice as is done in the Senate. So just to make it clear, if a member's privilege to debate and communicate is impeded by his inability to participate in English or French and that member is an aboriginal member, then full translation privileges should be extended. I'm not sure if that is the case today in the House of Commons, and it would be up to your committee, of course, to determine that. But otherwise—and I think this is really the question that's before you now—a member who wishes to speak in an aboriginal language in Parliament should be allowed to speak with simultaneous translation available but upon reasonable notice. This is what we've done in the Senate, and I think it's working well, and I think it may be a very useful precedent for your committee to consider.

That's my advice. Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Senator Patterson.

Senator Joyal, we can have personal opinions, but you've certainly set the legal boundaries framework we're working in. That was great.

We'll go around with one questioner from each party.

Mr. David de Burgh Graham: How long do we have?

The Chair: You talk very fast, so it won't be that long.

Mr. Graham.

Mr. David de Burgh Graham: We're talking about notice. What is a reasonable notice period and does it vary for different languages?

Hon. Serge Joyal: Forty-eight hours is normally the period. It has proven, so far as Inuktitut is concerned, to be a reasonable deadline for a senator to inform the clerk that he or she would want to address the Senate or the committee in that language. We think that 48 hours is a reasonable period of time in which to make it available especially—and it's always the same—to make sure that the interpreters are available. As I say, I think that the House of Commons—and I say that with the greatest respect for the House—and we in Canada are in the process of evolution. We're trying to reinstate a situation that has been lost and erased and deleted from history. So you can't do that.... My first boss on the Hill was former and late Minister Jean Marchand, who Mr. Bagnell might have known.

You are almost old enough to be a senator, Mr. Bagnell.

He always said that you can't have a transatlantic ship turn on a dime; you have to take a direction. The important thing is to have a

direction and to do it in a practical way, not to try to change your rules immediately. I don't think it's what I would advise you to do. That's not the way we did it in the Senate, and it has proved to be successful. It's how you do it practically.

After a while, as I say, it's part of a general effort of the overall system in Canada to reinstate aboriginal peoples' full participation in mainstream Canada. So I think that what you could do certainly is to follow suit, the way the Senate has done it, and I think you are going to help the Senate to continue to improve our approach to it. And we could share the capacity of the interpreter. There won't be one interpreter available for the chamber and one available for the Senate. We could pool those resources and share them so that we have a reasonable approach as we do with safety on the Hill, because we are in the process of adapting to a new situation. The government has stated that they fully endorse the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. You as a member of Parliament may remember that article 13 of the United Nations declaration reads "Indigenous peoples have the right to revitalize, use, develop and transmit to future generations their histories, languages, oral traditions." It is within that trend that we put our efforts.

• (1220)

Mr. David de Burgh Graham: So the answer is 48 hours.

Have any languages besides Inuktitut been tried in the Senate?

Hon. Serge Joyal: No, not at this stage. However, what we do and what I suggest you do is that when there is a new senator appointed, the clerk can ask the new senator if they would consider using the aboriginal language and explain the process to them. For instance, after a general election, when you have a new House of Commons, the clerk could, of course, ask aboriginal MPs if it is their wish and so forth, so there is a way to plan ahead of time, rather than one day having somebody stand up and say, "I want to speak in an aboriginal language." I think there is a way to plan all this in a rational way that could be helpful, as I say, for the whole system to adapt to this situation.

Mr. David de Burgh Graham: I have one final question before I turn it over.

In the Senate, do you use the Inuktitut in *Hansard*? Is it translated, and how long does that take?

Hon. Serge Joyal: As I say, in the beginning, we considered asking the senators to have their text already translated, so that it could be printed in *Hansard*. That's a way to start. As I say, we all learn from the experience. To have it printed the next day, within the same time limit, could be a way to start. Otherwise, there might be a time lag of two days before it is reprinted, but it is always better to have it at the same time.

Mr. David de Burgh Graham: I appreciate it. Thank you very much.

The Chair: Thank you.

Go ahead, Mr. Patterson.

Hon. Dennis Glen Patterson: Mr. Chair, maybe I could just quickly add that in the Senate, in the aboriginal peoples committee, we have offered translation for Cree and North Slavey speakers.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you.

You're next, Mr. Nater.

Mr. John Nater: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I realize that we don't have a lot of time, so I'm just going to throw a couple of questions out.

Either of you can feel free to answer, as you see appropriate. The first question is on the reasonableness of the time frame.

Senator Patterson, during your time in Northwest Territories politics, I'm curious as to whether there was any notice period or whether there it was simultaneous, as a member spoke.

Second—more generally and more to Senator Patterson, I would suspect—are you provided currently with any additional resources, through the Senate budget, for your own communications with your constituents in Inuktitut or in other indigenous languages, in terms of emails or newsletters—we have householders on the House side—and do you have resources such as that for translation?

Finally, regarding the cost factor, are you aware of the cost of the current pilot project in the Senate?

Those are my three questions. I'll throw it open for you to reply as you see fit.

Hon. Dennis Glen Patterson: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

In the Northwest Territories and Nunavut, there is no notice provision required because with unilingual members, there is full simultaneous interpretation available in all official languages of the territories, which include the aboriginal languages. As I mentioned, it's actually quite an expensive undertaking to have full-time interpreters. In fact, the *Hansard* in Nunavut is also translated into Inuktitut. Providing notice has never been an issue in those assemblies.

In the Senate, we have had occasions in committees where witnesses have provided information in Inuktitut in written form that has been translated, but there is no budget for senators or in the Senate for translation of aboriginal languages. It's just absorbed within the overall administrative costs of the Senate. For each senator who wishes to provide translation services, as I do, it's absorbed within the member's budget. Thank you.

Hon. Serge Joyal: I just want to confirm what Senator Patterson has mentioned. It is within the overall envelope of services to senators that the funds are made available. We're not talking a big amount of money because it's not on a daily basis. It's not as if we would have to earmark one position for a permanent translator. So far, we've been able to operate within the present budget envelope. It's the same with committees. A committee can always go back to the internal economy committee, which is the same board that you have, and request it. If the fisheries committee, for instance, is travelling in the north and will need a translator, it could apply to the internal economy committee for a specific budget for that kind of trip. We've never really had any problem, in terms of having the resources needed to hire the translator or to do the interpretation when a committee travelled, for either the aboriginal affairs committee or the fisheries and oceans committee.

● (1225)

The Chair: Thank you, Senator.

Vice-Chair Kennedy.

Mr. Kennedy Stewart: Senators, thank you very much for your testimony and good insights.

My question is for you, Senator Joyal. You've cited the Constitution in various court cases. I'm just wondering if you consider indigenous languages to have the same status, constitutional or otherwise, as French and English.

Hon. Serge Joyal: They don't have the same status as English or French, which is provided very clearly in the Constitution in sections 16 to 20 of the charter and in section 23, of course, for the teaching of official languages to minorities in various provinces, but they have a status. It's not a totally comparable status, but there's no doubt that they have a status, and I think it's fair with regard to what I call the evolution capacity of the Constitution.

Through the years, as I quoted in some decisions, the courts have been able to read into the Constitution the overall architecture of the Constitution. As one of those fundamental principles that stems from the secession reference of 1998—you may be familiar with the case—the court has identified what they call the underlying principles of the Canadian architecture of the Constitution. One of those is the protection of minority rights. Those are the elements that infuse the system.

As I say, the bill of rights is recognized in the Royal Proclamation of 1763 by the new sovereign of the land, and that royal proclamation is part of the Constitution. It's in the annex. In fact, it's the first document of the annex of the Constitution. I think that it was done, really, with the clear perception that in fact the rights of the aboriginal peoples were there at the beginning. They have been lost, but they were there, so they have a different status than English and French do.

French rights were reinstated by the Quebec Act and of course by the Constitution of 1867 and then the charter, but the aboriginal rights have never been erased per se. They are inherent. They have a different constitutional status, but they are there.

Mr. Kennedy Stewart: We had the historic Tsilhqot'in apology yesterday, which I'm grateful to the Prime Minister for doing. I think it was a very important thing to do, especially since I'm a representative from British Columbia.

In a speech later in the Senate foyer, the regional chief said that Canada was initially envisioned as perhaps one nation, which didn't work, an English-speaking nation. Of course, we had a two-nation concept of French and English, but he reinforced this emerging idea of a three-nation Canada, so that we all think of ourselves in a state that has three nations, with the third nation having multiple nations within it.

I think what this is moving toward, with translation in the House, is reinforcing that idea of a three-nation concept of Canada, but I'm wondering if the third nation isn't quite as equal. I wonder where we're heading and how far we can or should go with this.

Hon. Serge Joyal: I thank you for the question. You would need to ask me to come back to elaborate on this because—

Mr. Kennedy Stewart: I'm sorry about that. It's worth thinking about.

Hon. Serge Joyal: —as you know, I'm a veteran of constitutional negotiations stemming back into the 1970s.

I have always resisted the use of the word “nation” to try to—how should I say this?—singularize groups in Canada. As I say, we are different peoples. We come from different historical backgrounds. Our presence in Canada stems from various centuries.

As the aboriginal people have stated, “We're here to stay.” They will never leave. They have been here from time immemorial. My ancestors came here 400 years ago. We're here to stay. I won't go back to Bergerac, where my ancestors come from. It's the same for any new Canadians that were sworn in yesterday. What we try to share is the right of each person to try to develop according to his or her choice within a complexity of identities.

I always resist saying that they are the French Canadians and they arrived in 1604 or 1608. Then the Brits came in 1763, and then there are others who came. I always resist having a vision of Canada that divides. We come from so many different backgrounds, and the nature of Canada, I should say, is to celebrate that, to recognize that.

As I say and as Senator Patterson has clearly mentioned, those are inherent rights of the aboriginal people as much as I as a French Canadian have the inalienable right to speak my own language as much as I want and to speak the other language as much as I want.

• (1230)

Mr. Kennedy Stewart: It does differ when we start to codify and we start to allocate resources. I'm wondering how we are allocating resources—not just in this case—to enforce these different identities. I think this is a very important enforcement of an identity within our Parliament. I think it's a very important step forward, but I'm wondering if we're doing enough. They say that advance notice would be great, because it's administratively difficult to have simultaneous translation, yet in the Northwest Territories they have accommodated this.

Is this going far enough?

Hon. Serge Joyal: It's a beginning. We are trying to listen.

The Supreme Court has said about the charter that it should be interpreted in a liberal and purposive way. When I say liberal, I don't mean the Liberal Party, but in an open, evolutionary way. I think that all the rights included in the charter and the Constitution have been interpreted throughout years of evolution. We're at the preliminary phase of recognizing the rights that aboriginal people inherently have to speak their language. We won't change the system overnight, and I would not suggest to you to do it overnight. We want to make sure that we recognize their identity and their capacity to speak their language. We'll adjust the system

[Translation]

according to the needs,

[English]

as much as they request it and as much as the budget allows. The minister has announced in this budget some funds to support the teaching of a second language in English provinces and in Quebec.

We would hope to have much more money, but that's the amount of money we have.

On the other hand, you cannot deny the money. That would be equivalent to denying the rights. It would be meaningless, not worth the paper on which it's printed.

As I say, it's up to the responsible persons of the day, the government of the day, the MPs and the senators, to see how we will adjust the system. Both of us are happy to be here to talk to you about how we have adjusted the system in the Senate, because we thought it was the proper thing to do. We didn't work under a Supreme Court injunction that said, “Now you can speak Inuktitut or you can speak Cree or Dene.” We thought it was the right thing to do as Canadians.

The Chair: Thank you.

We have a tiny question by Ms. Boucher, and then we're going to go on to our other witnesses.

[Translation]

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: Good afternoon. Your comments are very interesting. I normally sit on the Standing Committee on Official Languages, where this topic comes up too.

My question is very simple. I have indigenous friends and they tell me that their culture has a number of dialects. How can we go about choosing from the dialects that are spoken? Each community has its own language.

Can you enlighten me on that, Mr. Joyal?

Hon. Serge Joyal: There are a number of indigenous languages and large language families, including Algonquian, which has at least five different dialects. The same goes for the Cree and Ojibway families. There are regional variations.

I believe that it is up to each indigenous member of Parliament or senator to determine which language he or she will use, so that it becomes possible to find interpreters. In fact, it is more a matter of ensuring that we can have interpretation than of determining absolutely what the three indigenous languages spoken in the Parliament of Canada will be. I do not believe that should be rigidly established at the outset.

As you said, in a number of communities, the language has to be learned again and better taught, not only through the oral tradition, but also through the education system of the indigenous peoples themselves. Things will evolve. Basically, it is about a member or a senator choosing to speak a certain language and having an interpreter available to translate that language specifically.

• (1235)

[English]

The Chair: Thank you very much, Senators. We certainly appreciate your presentations here. There's some very valuable information.

Hon. Serge Joyal: I apologize. I'm getting enthusiastic about this.

The Chair: That's great. Your passion is great for this topic.

Now we'll add Floyd McCormick, Clerk of the Yukon Legislative Assembly, and Danielle Mager, Manager, Public Affairs and Communications, Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories.

From Mr. McCormick, you have some brief comments and also the law in the Yukon, which was sent to you the other day. Just this morning, you got a statement from the Northwest Territories as well.

I understand that you don't have much of an opening statement, Floyd. Is that true?

Mr. Floyd McCormick (Clerk of the Assembly, Yukon Legislative Assembly): That's correct, Mr. Chair. I would be prepared to just take questions from the committee members.

The Chair: Thank you.

It's great to have you with us.

I'm sorry for the delays for you guys, but being clerks, you know how parliamentary procedures work. We get delays sometimes.

Danielle, if you'd like to make an opening statement, you're on.

Ms. Danielle Mager (Manager, Public Affairs and Communications, Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories): Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you to the committee for inviting me to speak to you today.

As you mentioned, my name is Danielle Mager. I'm the Manager of Public Affairs and Communications with the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories. In my role, I am responsible for booking interpreters and for scheduling the broadcasting network.

As you're aware, in the Northwest Territories, we have 11 official languages. It's the only political region in Canada that recognizes that many languages. The population of our territory is approximately 45,000, with half of that population residing in the capital city of Yellowknife. Approximately 10% of the population, about 5,000 people, speak an aboriginal language.

Of these official languages, nine are aboriginal and belong to three different language families: Dene, Inuit, and Cree. Aboriginal languages are most frequently spoken in smaller communities throughout the Northwest Territories.

In the NWT legislature we have 19 members, three of whom speak an indigenous language on the floor of the House on a regular basis. This includes our Speaker, who speaks Tlicho every day during session. We have three interpreting booths in our chamber, and we have the ability to interpret in three official languages of the Northwest Territories. When we are in session, we switch these languages off every week, but we do have Tlicho on a permanent basis for the Speaker.

If a member chooses to read his or her member's statement in an official language of the Northwest Territories, they will be given an additional 30 seconds to read the statement in both English and the official language. If the member does intend to use an official language on the floor of the House, we do request that they provide us at least 24 hours' advance notice so that we have the ability to book the interpreter. As you can imagine, in the Northwest Territories it can be challenging to bring people into the capital city when we have 33 communities throughout the entire territory.

I do have some things that I've culled from the members' handbook about the official languages services. First, it states:

The Official Languages Act of the Northwest Territories guarantees Members the right to use any official language in the debates and other proceedings of the Legislative Assembly. As set out in the Act the official languages of the Northwest Territories are Chipewyan, Cree, Tlicho, English, French, Gwich'in, Inuktitut, Inuvialuktun, Inuinnaqtun, North Slavey and South Slavey.

Under "Classification of Official Languages Services", it states:

At the outset of each Legislature, the Office of the Clerk will consult with each Member to determine service level requirements.

Under essential service, it states:

An Official Language will be designated "essential" if:

a Member indicates that he or she has limited or no ability in English and requires the use of another Official Language; or

a Member indicates that he or she has some fluency in English but prefers to use another Official Language where possible. If a language is deemed to be essential, simultaneous interpretation services will be made available for all sittings of the House and all Committee meetings at which the Member is scheduled to attend.

Under "Provisional", the handbook states:

An official language will be designated as provisional if a Member indicates that he or she is fluent in English but desires to use another official language at times during Assembly proceedings.

In such instances, interpretation services will be provided when reasonable advance notice is given to the Office of the Clerk that such language services are desired. The contact for such requests is the [manager of public affairs and communications]. Members should endeavour to provide at least four hours' notice if they wish to have provisional interpretation services available during a House or committee proceeding. Every effort will be made to find a qualified interpreter.

Under "Non-Essential", it states:

An Official Language would be designated as "non-essential" if no Member indicates the ability to use the language during Assembly proceedings.

In such instances, interpretation services in this language will not be made available as a matter of routine practice.

Under "Translation of Documents", the handbook states:

Written translation services, where reasonable and practicable, will be provided for designated documents in all of the essential languages, as well as upon reasonable request for documents in any of the provisional and non-essential languages.

Designated documents include, but are not limited to, the Orders of the Day, bills or bill summaries, amendments to bills, motions and committee reports.

Under "Broadcast Services", it states:

The Office of the Clerk will endeavour to provide public broadcast coverage of House proceedings in as many official languages as [feasible]. The broadcast coverage will be provided on a rotational basis and will attempt to achieve equality of status and equal right and privileges for all official languages.

In the legislative assembly, we broadcast to all 33 communities throughout the territory and also to the rest of Canada through Bell ExpressVu and Shaw Direct. We also provide House proceedings on all of our social media platforms.

● (1240)

That concludes my opening statement, and I am available for any questions the committee might have.

The Chair: Thank you very much. *Meegwetch. Mahsi cho. Gunalcheesh.*

I'll go to a five-minute round for each party and then just open it up informally for people who still have questions.

Monsieur Graham, from the Liberals, go ahead, please.

Mr. David de Burgh Graham: I notice in the briefing notes we received that Yukon permits any of the three languages to be spoken but there is no guarantee of being understood. Is that correct?

Mr. Floyd McCormick: That's correct. The languages act provides that anyone participating in a parliamentary proceeding can address the proceeding in English, French, or a Yukon aboriginal language, of which there are eight, but there is no duty to provide interpretation or translation.

Mr. David de Burgh Graham: For written records, if they speak in one of the eight languages besides English and French, is the Hansard translated or how does that work?

Mr. Floyd McCormick: We work with the members to try to get a transcription into the Hansard. We usually rely on the member to provide whatever written notes they might have in order for the transcript to reflect the language in which the member addressed the House.

Mr. David de Burgh Graham: In the Northwest Territories, is there a bank of translators and interpreters available who you keep a database on, so that you have people for every language available on relatively short notice? You said translation is always available at the scheduled meetings for these members who have it as an essential language. However, for example, from time to time, I go to committees that I'm not a member of. If they want to do something other than their regular scheduling, do you have translators ready to go, on call, for the essential languages?

Ms. Danielle Mager: We do. We have a bank of interpreters that we go to. For instance, for our Tlicho interpretation, we have one main interpreter we go to, but if she's not available, there is someone else we can go to. It's the same for most of the languages.

Mr. David de Burgh Graham: Do you have a database for translators even for the languages that are not deemed essential in your legislature?

Ms. Danielle Mager: We do.

Mr. David de Burgh Graham: Okay, and how is Hansard handled in your case?

Ms. Danielle Mager: It is the same as in the Yukon. It would be the members who would provide us with the written documentation that we could provide to Hansard.

Mr. David de Burgh Graham: You mentioned earlier something about "reasonable request", that on reasonable request, translations are provided. Have there been a lot of unreasonable requests?

•(1245)

Ms. Danielle Mager: It would be a matter of the time involved. Because some of the interpreters have to come from different northern communities, "reasonable request" means whether we would be able to provide them with transportation to the city in a timely fashion.

Mr. David de Burgh Graham: How much does this interpretation and translation service cost the Northwest Territories? Do you have a sense of that?

Ms. Danielle Mager: I don't have the exact number, but our interpreters range from \$300 to \$450 per hour, and if they are

travelling from outside the capital city, we will pay for their travel and accommodation and provide them with a per diem.

Mr. David de Burgh Graham: I don't have any more questions. I might come back to you in the general round. Thank you very much.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Kennedy Stewart): Thanks very much.

We'll go to Mr. Reid for five minutes.

Mr. Scott Reid (Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston, CPC): Thank you very much. I'm glad to see you in the chairman's position. I think this is your first time there. Well done.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Kennedy Stewart): Thank you.

Mr. Scott Reid: I want to address my questions to Ms. Mager.

First, you read your standing orders, and the word Chipewyan is in there. I assume that is just another way of saying Dene. Is that correct?

Ms. Danielle Mager: The Dene language has a family of languages within it. Chipewyan is part of the Dene language: Chipewyan, Cree, and Gwich'in.

Mr. Scott Reid: I see. You listed those three separately in the list you went through. Cree and Chipewyan are listed separately, and the third one you mentioned was—

Ms. Danielle Mager: —Gwich'in.

Mr. Scott Reid: Right. Thank you.

On Tlicho versus the others, there's a bit of a hierarchy as things stand now. You can correct me if I'm wrong here, but I'm assuming it's not the case that Tlicho is given some type of priority over other indigenous languages based on a larger number of speakers; it's based effectively on demand because of the fact that the speaker is a Tlicho speaker. Is that correct?

Ms. Danielle Mager: That's correct.

Mr. Scott Reid: Would that likewise be true for the fact that you ask members if there are any unilingual speakers of indigenous languages as a way of figuring out where you should place your priorities? That's also not an attempt to create a hierarchy of languages, but rather to create a practical response to demand?

Ms. Danielle Mager: Absolutely. If there are members who speak an official language on the floor of the House on a regular basis, we will aim toward those languages more than toward the other non-spoken languages.

Mr. Scott Reid: Do you have any members who are unilingual speakers of their language, or who at any rate don't speak English with sufficient proficiency to be full participants in debates unless they're participating in their indigenous language?

Ms. Danielle Mager: Right now we do not. As Senator Patterson mentioned earlier, when Nunavut was still a part of our territory, we did have some members who spoke only Inuktitut.

Mr. Scott Reid: I'm struck that there seems to be, at a practical level, a difference between Inuktitut and all other indigenous languages in Canada. There seems to be the capacity to carry on life as a unilingual Inuktitut speaker, which is something that is not characterized by the other indigenous languages in Canada. It seems to have an advantage in that respect.

I ask this question—I'm not explaining this to you as much as I am to my colleagues—because I think at the federal level we'll experience the same thing. There will be people coming here whose purpose in speaking the indigenous language they bring with them is to serve as part of reinforcing that language as opposed to being part of a practical need for themselves in order to be understood. I think that's a relevant consideration that we're going to have in the future.

I have one last question. You mentioned the Tlicho interpreter who's available on demand. Is that person a resident of Yellowknife?

Ms. Danielle Mager: Yes.

Mr. Scott Reid: With the other languages, if the need for an interpreter arises, is it the case that you have Yellowknife residents who could be used as interpreters, or would you have to go elsewhere in the territory to find people who are capable of being interpreters?

Ms. Danielle Mager: We would have to go outside of the capital city, because there are not many official language speakers who could capture that broad a language base. We would have to go outside of Yellowknife.

Mr. Scott Reid: I have one last question in that regard, then. You don't have to answer this right now. Perhaps we could draw upon our analysts to do some research for us in this regard.

I think we would face a similar situation at the federal level if we had a request to speak one of the languages that.... I think it might be easier with Inuktitut. There are many Inuktitut speakers in Ottawa. But if we had a Salish speaker, for example, it might be difficult to find a translator; I just pulled that language out of a hat. We're going to face issues as to the practicality of how to do that. You have experience, so I'm hoping we could simply draw upon your experience in order to find a model that would guide us a little bit and give us some idea as to costs.

• (1250)

Ms. Danielle Mager: Absolutely. I don't have those numbers right now, but it's something I could definitely work on with your analysts.

Mr. Scott Reid: Thank you very much.

The Chair: *Mahsi.*

Mr. Stewart, I just wanted to make sure you knew that there was no free ride being vice-chair.

Voices: Oh, oh!

Mr. Kennedy Stewart: Yes. That's right.

The Chair: You work hard.

Mr. Kennedy Stewart: Wow. I have to roll up my sleeves to cover this committee.

Thank you very much for your testimony today. It's very useful.

I'm just wondering how often you review your own system. When you do your reviews, do you go to other jurisdictions to continually learn about how to improve your own system? That would be within Canada or perhaps outside of Canada.

Ms. Danielle Mager: Sorry, is that to me?

Mr. Kennedy Stewart: Sure. If you have something to offer, that would be great.

Ms. Danielle Mager: As far as a review goes, our review is just based on feedback from the public and whether or not people are actually watching us. We do have an annual review. We will actually call the communities to see if people are viewing the proceedings and if they're listening to them in the official languages.

We also do a full gauge as to how many interpreters we bring in for each language. We do calculate, on about a yearly basis, which languages we're utilizing more often than others.

Mr. Kennedy Stewart: Thanks.

Do you have anything to add, Mr. McCormick?

Mr. Floyd McCormick: I would say it's probably similar for us in the sense that we respond mostly to whatever feedback we get from members or the general public in terms of what kinds of services they want us to provide. There has been more emphasis in the last few years on ensuring, for example, that when a member speaks in French in the House, the words appear in French in *Hansard*. We've been able to work out a system to make that work. There hasn't been the same demand with regard to indigenous languages.

Mr. Kennedy Stewart: Thank you.

I also have a question for both of you. Often when you see debates and things on television, you'll have a sign language interpreter in a little box up in the top corner. Sometimes those are done in a remote way, so the interpreter is not actually in the room, they're in some studio somewhere else. I'm wondering if you've ever experimented with remote translation, where the interpreter would be on call and would be able to do this remotely.

Either one of you can start.

Ms. Danielle Mager: In the Northwest Territories we have not experienced anything remotely. We have travelled for public hearings with the standing committees and we've had interpreters from the communities come into the public hearing and do simultaneous interpretation, but we've never done anything via video conferencing, or anything remotely with technology.

Mr. Kennedy Stewart: And how about—

The Chair: Floyd.

Mr. Floyd McCormick: The situation here in Yukon is similar. When some of our committees travel to communities, we try to ensure there is someone there who speaks the local indigenous language in case that's necessary, but we have not had people participate by video conference or teleconference, similar to the way we're doing it right now.

Mr. Kennedy Stewart: Through your travels looking at this issue, do you know of any jurisdictions where they would use remote interpretation services?

Ms. Danielle Mager: I don't, sorry.

Mr. Kennedy Stewart: Okay, that's that.

We talked about the large parts, the mechanics of your system day to day, but are there any quirks that we should look out for if we start to put this in place? Were there any hiccups in the system that you overcame quickly and that we might try to avoid as we're putting it in here?

Let's start with Mr. McCormick.

Mr. Floyd McCormick: Given that the Yukon Legislative Assembly doesn't provide simultaneous interpretation for any languages, I guess I really don't have anything to offer you in that regard.

• (1255)

Mr. Kennedy Stewart: Ms. Mager.

Ms. Danielle Mager: In the Northwest Territories, because it is such a large land mass, we do sometimes have challenges with travel. That's something that is completely beyond our control.

Another concern is accommodation. If you have to book people travelling in from different areas, you have to make sure there is accommodation available. It might not be a problem in Ottawa, but it is sometimes in Yellowknife.

Reliability is also a concern. You have to make sure that you find people who are reliable and able to provide the service. Reference checking, I think, would be important.

Mr. Kennedy Stewart: I have just one more question.

You say you continually check, on an annual basis, with people in the communities to see how they're dealing with this. Can you give us some sense of the feedback? I can imagine it would be quite a thing to not hear your language often and then to turn on the television and hear it spoken. Can you give a sense of the feedback, the highs and lows, perhaps?

Ms. Danielle Mager: Lots of the feedback we've received has been very positive, especially when we reached out to the elders in some of the smaller communities. They really appreciate the fact that when they turn on their TV to watch the proceedings of the legislative assembly, they can listen to it in their official language.

As far as negative feedback goes, I haven't received any, to date.

Mr. Kennedy Stewart: Okay, thank you.

[*Translation*]

The Chair: *Mahsi, Drin Gwiinzih Shalakat*

[*English*]

I just have a quick question for Ms. Mager.

You said people watch it on TV. So if someone's speaking Tlicho and it's on TV, how do the people who speak the other eight languages and English and French know what the person's saying?

Ms. Danielle Mager: When we do our scheduling, we rotate it. We have the four audio languages, so when we're scheduling, there's audio one, which is the floor language, audio two, which is usually Tlicho, and then audio three and audio four, which we rotate on a regular basis.

When we're scheduling our broadcasting, we will normally start with the live proceedings because they go for two hours and they're always in the floor language, which is mainly English. After the two

hours of live, we will go to Tlicho, then to another aboriginal language, and then another, and then we'll go back to English. We rotate the languages so that it's not just the aboriginal language.

The Chair: Thank you.

We'll have an unofficial round.

Is there anyone?

Ms. Tassi, do you want to go?

Ms. Filomena Tassi (Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas, Lib.): Thank you both for your participation today.

In my view, we've heard different testimony and opinion with respect to this being a right that we have to recognize, that an indigenous language should be able to be spoken in the House and understood. The other side of it is getting it right. It's that balance.

Can each of you comment on how you feel about that? Is the priority that we recognize the right and just accept the bumps and perhaps mishaps that we experience on the way, or should be emphasis be on starting it, but making sure that when we do it, we do it right?

Ms. Danielle Mager: In my experience, I think that, especially in Canada, language revitalization is incredibly important. As we continue to grow the languages and to educate the youth, I think it's very important for them to be able to listen to especially House proceedings, which affect everyone in the Northwest Territories, in their official language. I think, from my experience, that even though there are bumps and bruises along the way, allowing people to hear the proceedings in their languages is so important that it's worth the risk.

The Chair: Mr. McCormick, go ahead.

Mr. Floyd McCormick: I would refer back to the ruling the Speaker of the House of Commons made last June with regard to the question of privilege, in which he talked about which services would be offered in the House proceedings as being a matter for the House to decide.

The House has to consider, obviously, what is required in order for members to fully participate in the proceedings, but the House can also not ignore the fact that resources are required to make that a reality and whether or not there is sufficient demand or requirement—however you want to phrase it—to justify the expenditure of particular resources, which could involve changes to the layout of the chamber, purchasing of equipment, hiring of personnel, as well as operation and maintenance costs.

When you look at the requirements that are faced for indigenous languages in all parts of the country, that may or may not be the best use of resources going into indigenous languages.

• (1300)

The Chair: Mr. Nater.

Mr. John Nater: Thank you, Chair.

I have just one very brief question, a clarification, for Ms. Mager.

You mentioned that the floor language is channel one, and it's typically English. I want to clarify then. Is each of the indigenous languages that are used then translated into English on that channel as well?

Ms. Danielle Mager: Yes, that's correct.

Mr. John Nater: Thank you.

The Chair: Mr. Reid.

Mr. Scott Reid: I believe you mentioned earlier that the cost was in the neighbourhood of \$300 to \$400 dollars an hour in the Northwest Territories. Is that right?

Ms. Danielle Mager: That's right.

Mr. Scott Reid: That's not the amount that's paid as an hourly rate to the translators. I assume that's all costs in. Is that right?

Ms. Danielle Mager: No, that's the hourly rate provided to the interpreters.

Mr. Scott Reid: Oh, that seems....

Ms. Danielle Mager: Sorry, they interpret for two hours every day during session.

Mr. Scott Reid: That seems really high, if you don't mind my saying so.

Ms. Danielle Mager: It's a rate issued by the interpreters and not by us.

Mr. Scott Reid: Okay.

Does anybody know much the interpreters are paid here in Ottawa?

Mr. David de Burgh Graham: They can answer over the translation.

Voices: Oh, oh!

Mr. Scott Reid: Is it the same rate in Yukon as well?

Mr. Floyd McCormick: We don't employ interpreters in the House, so it's not really an issue for us.

Mr. Scott Reid: Okay, maybe our analysts can find out what it is for Nunavut.

The Chair: We are having them as witnesses later on.

Mr. Scott Reid: Oh, all right. We're going to cancel this question. Thank you.

Cost is always a matter that's on our minds.

The Chair: Thank you.

Are there any Liberal questions? Going once....

Would either of you like to give any closing statements or advice to our committee?

Ms. Danielle Mager: I don't think so. I wish you the best of luck.

The Chair: Okay, thank you very much. We appreciate your taking time out, especially extra time because of the delay.

[*Translation*]

Thank you.

[*English*]

Mahsi cho. Gunalcheesh. Sôga senlá. Meegwetch.

We'll let you know what's happening. Thank you.

Ms. Danielle Mager: Thank you.

Mr. Floyd McCormick: Thank you.

The Chair: We've scheduled, just for this committee, the rest of the month. There's no meeting on Thursday, but the first three meetings back, we'll be bringing the witnesses people have suggested, and on April 26 there will be the main estimates, tentatively. That includes protective services, the Chief Electoral Officer, and the Speaker and the Clerk of the House. That takes us to May, unless the ruling of privilege this morning was positive, but I don't think it was. No. Okay.

Is there anything else for the good of the nation?

The meeting is adjourned.

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