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Chair: Mr. Emmanuel Dubourg



Standing Committee on Official Languages

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• (1530)

[*Translation*]

The Chair (Mr. Emmanuel Dubourg (Bourassa, Lib.)): Committee members, I can see a quorum. We'll start the meeting.

Good afternoon. You have the agenda. We'll be discussing committee business.

I'll start by filling you in on what happened this morning. As you know, the subcommittee met this morning. First, I must tell you that I signed part of the committee's estimates, the spending authority, so that we could have coffee, but we'll talk about that a little later.

We mainly discussed the next meeting, this coming Thursday, and what the subcommittee is proposing. We'll pass around the subcommittee's first report.

In a nutshell, a motion tabled by Mr. Arseneault referred to Statistics Canada. The subcommittee proposes that the committee invite the Statistics Canada representatives this coming Thursday to a two-hour meeting, since we have many questions to ask them.

To get you back in the swing of things and as a reminder, I'll read the motion tabled.

The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Michel Marcotte): It's in the minutes of the last meeting.

Do you have it?

The Chair: Yes, it's in the minutes of the last meeting.

That, pursuant to Standing Order 108(3)(f), it is proposed that the committee convene Statistics Canada and other witnesses on the following subjects:

1. Update by Statistics Canada on the question of the enumeration of rights holders, and of the results of the work and tests carried out on this subject in relation to the 2021 census questionnaire;
2. The steps to follow, if necessary, to ensure that the questionnaire meets all the requirements of article 23 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, relating to how to count the beneficiaries of the 2021 census;
3. Advantages and disadvantages of the short form versus the long form with regard to the counting of beneficiaries;
4. Other questions.

• (1535)

This motion was tabled, and we discussed it at the subcommittee this morning. In light of these various points and given that there are “other questions” and “other witnesses,” we want to begin by meeting with Statistics Canada representatives starting on Thursday. They've been notified.

Specifically, we'll ask them about rights holders and other related topics. We also discussed—we'll come back to this issue in the

committee—the need to schedule the other meetings. We have a one-week break coming up. At the next two meetings, we want to continue discussing the issue of rights holders and to invite witnesses.

In terms of witnesses, we established that it would be helpful to have two to four witnesses at each two-hour meeting. At the end of the report that the analyst sent to us by email last Friday, we can see the list of all the witnesses who came here to talk about official languages and rights holders.

We'll discuss this so that the parties can submit the names of the witnesses to the clerk no later than Friday of this week. In keeping with the representation of the parties in the House, and if the committee wishes, the clerk and I will select these witnesses and invite them. Since this is the period after the one-week break, these people should be notified.

We'll start by hearing some comments.

Mr. Angus, you have the floor.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

First, I want to apologize for not being able to attend this morning's subcommittee meeting. Our work involves many other issues. We're now the fourth party. That's the new reality.

I have a list of potential witnesses and I'm ready to submit it.

The Chair: That's for the clerk.

Mr. Charlie Angus: I spoke with Mr. Arseneault. I think that the list is reasonable and simple. There are five witnesses. I'm ready to submit the list.

The Chair: Okay, but could we first talk about the meeting on Thursday with Statistics Canada? I want to know what you think about the fact that we're inviting the people from Statistics Canada to a two-hour meeting. Do you want to comment on that?

The Clerk: Thursday is in two days.

The Chair: Yes.

The Chair: Okay.

Mr. Godin, you have the floor.

Mr. Joël Godin (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, CPC): I think that we all agree that we should meet with the people from Statistics Canada on Thursday. Mr. Arseneault's motion calls for this meeting. For me, the process is quite clear.

The Chair: Okay.

Ms. Lalonde, you have the floor.

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde (Orléans, Lib.): Mr. Chair, I want to bring up a point regarding Statistics Canada. This point also concerns my colleagues. I suggest that we make a special effort to ensure that the chief statistician appears, if he's available. I think it's Anil Arora. We could also invite people who worked on this issue. It would be helpful to have them here to talk about all this.

The Chair: Ms. Lambropoulos, you have the floor.

Ms. Emmanuella Lambropoulos (Saint-Laurent, Lib.): Mr. Arseneault's motion, which you read, contained three questions. Do we want to add more questions? We could send the questions to our witnesses in the invitation letter, so that they at least have the proper information when they come to meet with us.

• (1540)

The Chair: The fourth point does say "other questions." We discussed the issue this morning with Mr. Beaulieu. I gathered that these questions would concern rights holders or matters really under the responsibility of Statistics Canada, and that we might have some sub-questions to ask the witnesses following their presentations.

Mr. Beaulieu, you have the floor.

Mr. Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ): If it would be helpful, I could send these people one or two questions that I plan to ask them. The questions concern their methods for analyzing language used, the distribution of multiple choice, and so on.

The Chair: Since the meeting is on Thursday, we suggest that you send these questions to the clerk as soon as possible so that these people can be notified.

Mr. Mario Beaulieu: I'll do so this evening.

The Chair: Mr. Godin, you have the floor.

Mr. Joël Godin: Mr. Chair, I want to use the right tools. You said in your introduction that we received minutes and that we had Mr. Arseneault's motion. Unfortunately, I don't have access to SharePoint and I have only crossed-out and corrected written material.

I want to know the exact wording of the motion.

Did you receive the minutes?

Mr. René Arseneault (Madawaska—Restigouche, Lib.): Yes and no. I'm in the same situation as you. The documents were sent through the A1 parliamentary email account and not through the P9 account.

Mr. Joël Godin: It should be consistent.

Mr. Chris d'Entremont (West Nova, CPC): We don't have access to the A1 account.

The Chair: Okay. While this may be the start of the session, the information has been sent out. I gather that everything related to the minutes is on the Parliament website. If you visit the committees

page, you can read these documents. However, when the email states that the information is in the binder, you must visit the Source site to find the information that isn't public.

Mr. Joël Godin: Mr. Chair, I want to make a comment. I fully agree with you when the technology works well. Unfortunately, SharePoint isn't a reference. In order for the committee to run smoothly, I suggest that the information be posted on the Source site and in SharePoint, and that we also be sent an email through the P9 account.

Mr. René Arseneault: Only through the P9 account?

Mr. Joël Godin: If some people use another address, they can inform the clerk.

The Chair: Yes.

Mr. Joël Godin: I'm working with crossed-out sheets, and we need the right tools. I spoke up to ensure that the committee runs smoothly, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Noted, Mr. Godin.

Mr. Mario Beaulieu: Each member should tell the clerk how they want to receive the documents.

The Chair: I think that the clerk knows. We talked a little bit about the matter this morning. Ideally, it would be the P9 account for everyone and the A1 account at the same time.

Mr. Chris d'Entremont: The new committee members don't have an A1 account.

The Chair: Indeed, but you'll definitely receive the documents through the P9 account.

The Clerk: Does everyone have a P9 account? I know that some members have an M1 account.

Ms. Patricia Lattanzio (Saint-Léonard—Saint-Michel, Lib.): No. I have a P9 account.

I have a question.

The Chair: Ms. Lattanzio, you have the floor.

Ms. Patricia Lattanzio: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We're in the process of determining whether Statistics Canada representatives will be appearing on Thursday to give presentations and answer our questions.

We all received your report, Ms. Lecomte, and I want to thank you for it. I'm a new member of this committee, and the report gives me an overview of the situation. It's very helpful to us. That said, before we move on to the questions on Thursday, could we have a quick look at the document? The report isn't very complicated, but this would give us a chance to start the session with a sense of what happened in the past. There could be a 10- or 15-minute presentation to update us, and we could then ask questions. This presentation should take place before the people from Statistics Canada arrive.

• (1545)

The Chair: Okay. If we have time today, it would be helpful if this presentation could be given before the end of the meeting.

Ms. Lalonde, you have the floor.

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: I have a very technical question. Will all the information be in some type of e-binder?

The Clerk: Yes. May I respond, Mr. Chair?

The Chair: Go ahead, Mr. Marcotte.

The Clerk: There are two sources of information. First, there's the committee's French-language website, www.noscommunes.ca/lang.

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: Okay.

The Clerk: You'll find all the committee business, a photo of all the members, notices of meetings, minutes, audio and video recordings, and transcripts of evidence from all the meetings. You have access to all this for each meeting. After last Thursday's meeting, I posted the minutes of the meeting on the website. It's all there.

Each study undertaken by the committee will be posted on the site at a later date. If we receive briefs in relation to a study, they'll be posted on the website, if they're public, of course. Sometimes briefs are confidential, but that occurs fairly rarely. All these documents are public and available to everyone.

As committee members, you now have a private space. You can access e-binders through Source, as the chair said. In Source, you have e-binders, and you can see your committee or committees. In your case, the official languages committee will likely appear.

In this space, you'll have all the documents distributed, including Library briefing notes and confidential briefing notes. Generally, these documents aren't public. For example, they include documents for your work and draft reports.

This is your workspace, where you can find the documents distributed. These documents are also sent by email, but understandably they get lost quickly. If you want to locate a document submitted as part of a previous study or meeting, you'll find it in Source.

Does this answer your question?

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: I think so. I'll look into it. If I have any questions, I'll come see you. Thank you.

The Chair: Mr. Angus, you have the floor.

[*English*]

Mr. Charlie Angus: I'm just trying to get a sense of what we're doing today. We have two motions. Are we going to go to those?

I'm interested in hearing from the analysts, but not today. I think if we're going to have orders of business, we need to follow them. It's difficult for me, sometimes, to have a sense of what's going on.

[*Translation*]

I'm an anglophone, but an agenda is simple. If I'm not mistaken, there are two motions, Ms. Lambropoulos's motion and my motion.

Is there another one?

The Chair: This afternoon, we certainly wanted to discuss business. We started with the first motion. However, as I said earlier, when we come back from our one-week break, we must decide what we'll do. At that time, it will be appropriate to discuss Ms. Lambropoulos's motion and the motion that you submitted to us.

If we have time before the end of the meeting, we could ask the analyst to provide an overview of the situation of rights holders in preparation for the meeting on Thursday.

[*English*]

Ms. Emmanuella Lambropoulos: Today is strictly for committee business. Next week and the week after the March break, we have witnesses coming in from Stats Canada. Would it not be wise to discuss today which study we're going to do after the March break when we have witnesses here and committee business is not scheduled?

The Chair: Right.

Ms. Emmanuella Lambropoulos: It won't be reserved for committee business. It will be reserved for witness testimony.

● (1550)

The Chair: Exactly.

Ms. Emmanuella Lambropoulos: Since we have two hours today to discuss committee business, would it not be wise to discuss the two studies on the table and line them up now?

The Chair: Yes.

Ms. Emmanuella Lambropoulos: Okay.

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Go ahead, Mr. Beaulieu.

Mr. Mario Beaulieu: I think that this matter will require a great deal of debate, because we've only just arrived. By immediately establishing a timetable for all business between now and June, we're moving fairly quickly. We can discuss this, but I would have wanted to move other motions. Since I'm not yet used to the process, I didn't do so immediately.

The Chair: Yes, I understand.

Go ahead, Mr. Angus.

[*English*]

Mr. Charlie Angus: Thank you.

Can I just move my motion? We could decide, and then we could move on.

The Chair: No.

The Chair: We're going to finish with the first motion, and after that we're going to—

Mr. Charlie Angus: I'm not really sure what we're doing.

Mr. Charlie Angus: I want to step back, because I know I'm very slow.

I thought we had an agreement on the motion. Then I think you said that it would be Thursday we would be bringing our names of witnesses. I thought it was today. I gave you my witness list.

I don't if we are going to discuss the witnesses today? Are we just giving the names to you? I don't know what else we need to do with today's motion that we agreed to.

The Chair: We have the first report of the subcommittee. By reading this, you're going to understand exactly what we are doing.

[*Translation*]

We need to adopt the report of the subcommittee, which met this morning. That's the committee business. I am going to read the report, a copy of which you have received:

Your subcommittee met on Tuesday, February 25, 2020, to consider the business of the committee and agreed to make the following recommendations:

1. That Statistics Canada be invited to appear before the committee on Thursday, February 27, 2020;
2. That the committee invite additional witnesses to appear on Tuesday, March 10, 2020 and Thursday, March 12, 2020;
3. That members of the committee forward their list of suggested witnesses to the clerk of the committee by noon on Friday, February 28, 2020.

In terms of the first item, a two-hour meeting will be devoted solely to Statistics Canada. We have Mr. Arseneault's motion on that.

Then, Mr. Angus, the suggested witnesses are for the March 10 and 12 meetings. So, as Mr. Beaulieu said, in this meeting, we are not setting the schedule for the entire period. That's the subcommittee's job.

Before we proceed with adopting the report, are there any comments on that?

Yes, Mr. Godin?

Mr. Joël Godin: I'm trying to understand something.

In point 2, what connects all the witnesses? It is recommended that witnesses be invited on March 10 and 12. What is the topic bringing all the witnesses together?

We could submit lists of witnesses, we could flood you with names, but we need a framework.

The Chair: Just for clarification, we have decided to undertake a study on rights holders in this committee. So we are starting with Statistics Canada. The witnesses mentioned in point 2 are going to come and talk about their perspective on the enumeration of rights holders.

Mr. Joël Godin: I understand, but it wasn't on the record.

The Chair: Okay. It's a clarification. That's what we're here for.

Are there any other comments? Are we ready to adopt the first report of the subcommittee?

Mr. Angus, you have the floor.

[*English*]

Mr. Charlie Angus: I move to accept the subcommittee's report—

The Chair: Right.

Mr. Charlie Angus: —because I have a lot of problems with how long it is.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Charlie Angus: I accept it. That's how I vote.

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Do you agree?

Some hon. members: Yes.

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: The first report is therefore adopted.

We'll have an open discussion so we can move on to the next item. We'll give you a copy of the schedule. We'd like you to tell us what work we should undertake according to the schedule that will be in front of you.

You have the table in front of you. We have just said that, in early March, March 9 and March 12, we're going to have witnesses at those two meetings. In the report we have just adopted, it says that you have to send our list of witnesses by noon so that the clerk and I can put it together. We are talking about two meetings with four witnesses.

• (1555)

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: Mr. Chair, I rise on a point of order.

I am very impressed with the fact that we are starting to create a schedule.

However, after March 12, should we not vote on motions or move motions to begin the discussion?

The Chair: Yes, that's right.

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: I think it's a little early to talk about a schedule. We don't even have a motion before us.

The Chair: Okay. That's to make it easier.

It's true that we have set the dates of March 10 and March 12. I just want to remind you that we're going to draw up the list of witnesses and you'll be informed. In terms of meetings after March 12, we have two motions on the table right now.

We're going to discuss those motions, first Ms. Lambropoulos' and then Mr. Angus', so that we can add them to the schedule.

Ms. Lambropoulos, is that okay with you?

[*English*]

Ms. Emmanuella Lambropoulos: Yes. Can we debate the motion I introduced the last time?

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Just before that, Mr. Angus, do you have a comment?

[English]

Mr. Charlie Angus: Well, I was going to help the calendar by bringing a motion that we could just vote on, and then we would have to plot it in when we figure out our witnesses.

[Translation]

The Chair: Okay.

Since we're talking about a motion, Ms. Lambropoulos' motion has been moved.

Could you remind us of that motion?

Ms. Emmanuella Lambropoulos: You all received it last week. I'm not sure whether you have it in front of you, but I only have the electronic version.

The Chair: Okay. We'll start with Ms. Lambropoulos' motion. Then we'll move to Mr. Angus' motion.

Do you have anything to add, Mr. Arseneault?

Mr. René Arseneault: I would like to rewind, and I apologize to everyone.

I realize that my motion does not require a report at the end of the study.

Can we still produce a report?

The Clerk: You can do whatever you want.

Mr. René Arseneault: Yes, but I don't want to be caught off guard at the end.

I don't remember us including this in our motions before.

I think everyone expects a report to be prepared after this study.

The Chair: Absolutely.

Mr. Chris d'Entremont: Yes.

Mr. Joël Godin: Suggest an amendment and we will adopt it.

Mr. René Arseneault: Can I move the following amendment?

I would add: "and that at the end of the study, a report be produced."

Mr. Joël Godin: Yes, he said so.

Mr. René Arseneault: Yes, but we need everyone's consent.

[English]

Mr. Angus, I didn't add that at the end of the study we would produce a report.

[Translation]

The Chair: The clerk tells me that it doesn't have to be an amendment. It can be moved as a motion.

[English]

Mr. René Arseneault: This is the motion. It's the motion I want to make.

• (1600)

[Translation]

The Chair: Okay.

Mr. René Arseneault: Should I be the one to move the motion?

The Clerk: You may move the motion.

Mr. Mario Beaulieu: I think everyone agrees.

Mr. Joël Godin: An amendment would be much less complicated since a motion would come later. A lot of water may flow under the bridge between now and then.

The Chair: I have a question for the clerk.

According to our procedures, should the motion be moved 48 hours in advance or is that not necessary?

The Clerk: It is not necessary, because the study is ongoing.

The Chair: Okay.

Mr. René Arseneault: So I'm asking the clerk what the easiest and quickest way is to say that the committee has to report to the House at the end.

The Clerk: You could move a motion suggesting that the committee produce a report on the enumeration of rights holders after hearing witnesses on February 27, March 10 and 12.

Mr. René Arseneault: You read my mind.

Mr. Joël Godin: Can you say it again, Mr. Arseneault?

Some hon. members: Ha, ha!

The Clerk: Have you noted it?

Mr. René Arseneault: That is exactly what I wanted to say.

The Chair: Mr. Angus, you have the floor.

[English]

Mr. Charlie Angus: Thank you. I often end up saying in the House that I'm the only anarchist in the world who wants to follow all the rules.

The Chair: Right.

Mr. Charlie Angus: I've never heard of our amending or adding to a motion once we've passed it. The motion has been passed.

The Chair: That's right.

Mr. Charlie Angus: I would think that we have goodwill around the table to just do a report. I don't know if we have to officially tell ourselves that we're doing a report.

In any committee I've been on, I've always pushed to have a report because people should hear what we're doing. I would just say that we're all in agreement. I don't think it's going to be controversial. I expected the report. I don't think we need another motion to add to the motion.

Mr. René Arseneault: All right, but then we need days or hours to produce the report and to work on that report. We have to go through it.

Ms. Emmanuella Lambropoulos: Right.

Mr. Charlie Angus: We haven't even come up with our witness list. Let's get our witnesses. Let's look at it. If we decide that someone has 800 witnesses and it's problematic, then we'll talk about that. If we have a few witnesses, it's going to be pretty straightforward. This isn't a big one.

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Okay.

Mr. G n reux, you have the floor.

Mr. Bernard G n reux (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivi re-du-Loup, CPC): My colleague Michael Chong is very knowledgeable about the parliamentary process. He told me that when a study is requested, it may or may not include a report.

If everyone agrees, we can add the obligation to write a report to Mr. Arseneault's motion. The clerk can simply take note of the small sentence to be added, and we'll move on.

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: I agree.

Mr. Bernard G n reux: We're not going to fuss for three days to make this decision.

The Chair: That's our suggestion to the clerk.

However, as Mr. Angus mentioned, we must follow procedure.

Basically, as I understand it, the committee is agreeing to produce a report after those three meetings.

Ms. Patricia Lattanzio: Yes.

Mr. Jo l Godin: Mr. Chair, I am going to throw some sand in the gears. I like things to be clear.

If we agree today, then let's put it on paper. We do not know what will happen. If the report is attacking the government, the NDP, the Bloc Qu b cois or the Conservative Party, maybe somebody will oppose it.

There will be a study, and we all agree. We should make it clear that a report will be produced.

The Chair: Okay.

Ms. Lambropoulos, you have the floor.

Ms. Emmanuella Lambropoulos: Could I suggest Friday, February 28, as the deadline for submitting a list of witnesses for next week?

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: Wait a minute, Ms. Lambropoulos.

[*English*]

Ms. Emmanuella Lambropoulos: I mean that for this study next week, we have to invite witnesses.

Ms. Patricia Lattanzio: Let's just finish this thing about the amendment for the report, and then we'll go to the other—

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: It's already there.

Ms. Emmanuella Lambropoulos: Didn't we already agree that we're not amending the report?

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: No, we're not amending it—

Ms. Emmanuella Lambropoulos: Okay, it's here.

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: —but bringing in a new motion.

Ms. Emmanuella Lambropoulos: I didn't see that.

The Chair: It's already on the first report.

Ms. Emmanuella Lambropoulos: I'm sorry.

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Mr. Arseneault, you have the floor.

Mr. Ren  Arseneault: I firmly reiterate this motion, which was so well read in my mind by the clerk.

The Clerk: Repeat after me: "I move that—"

Mr. Ren  Arseneault: I move that—

Mr. Jo l Godin: I swear.

Mr. Ren  Arseneault: I propose that, at the end of the next three days devoted to the study of rights holders, including witnesses, we produce a report to be submitted to the House of Commons.

• (1605)

The Chair: The motion is in order.

Mr. Angus, you have the floor.

[*English*]

Mr. Charlie Angus: My concern is that I haven't seen the witness list, so how am I going to agree to our having three meetings? Are we going to force all the witnesses to sit in three meetings? We were told that we could bring witnesses. Now I'm told we're only going to have three meetings. That's not logical. Why don't we just say that following our witnesses, we will produce a report. If people are unhappy with the number of witnesses, that's something the subcommittee can address.

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: Correct.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Patricia Lattanzio: We must not restrict the number of sessions.

I understand, Mr. Angus.

Mr. Jo l Godin: I agree.

The Chair: My understanding is that Mr. Arseneault is going to rephrase his motion.

Mr. Ren  Arseneault: Before I rephrase it, let me make a comment.

[*English*]

We talked about that last week, Mr. Angus, and I do recognize that Ms. Lambropoulos, Mr. G n reux and I have been on the same committee for many years. Most of those witnesses have been heard. You provided me with a list a few minutes ago that resembles the list we talked about this morning; it's almost the same names. Maybe together, if we need more than two other meetings, we will add to them. We've heard all of this since 2017, I would say, concerning the rights holders and making sure that we have the right numbers, but I understand what you mean.

Maybe we could do another motion if you want, but let's stick with the first motion. We want to produce a report after the study that will be tabled in the House of Commons. Let's start with that and maybe talk about other days after the list of witnesses. That's the motion I want to make.

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Mr. Angus, go ahead.

[*English*]

Mr. Charlie Angus: I would just say that I'm very uncomfortable with the principle that we've heard everything that everyone has to say and so we can just move on. Why then are we sitting in a committee? I have better things to do with my life.

If the view of this committee is, "We know all the usual players. The usual players are going to say the usual things. We can get this off," I don't think that's a very respectful way to do this. When I call witnesses, it's because I want to hear what they have to say, because I respect their point of view.

If my colleague wants to vote to have three meetings, I am not going to vote in favour of that because I don't know. I have to leave it open depending on what the witness list will be, so that we can address issues. It is my right, as a member representing the New Democratic Party, to make sure that we are doing due diligence in our work. Maybe three days is enough, maybe four days, maybe five days, but I'm not going to agree to be locked in without seeing that witness list.

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Mr. Arseneault, you have the floor.

[*English*]

Mr. René Arseneault: That's fine, but that motion, Mr. Angus, is not to stop what you're saying. Maybe it could be done right afterwards with another motion. I do understand, but whether it's three days of studies or four days or 15 days, my motion is about the fact that I forgot to put down that we want to have a report at the end of that study, notwithstanding how many days it will take. I suggest that we stick with that motion, and then discuss that later on with the list of witnesses.

Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC): I have a point of order.

The Chair: Mr. Chong.

Hon. Michael Chong: The word "study" in parliamentary language means including a report with or without recommendations. I've been on a number of committees now over the years, and every single committee I've been on has used the word "study", and that includes a report with recommendations. So I don't think we need to revisit the motion that has already been adopted by the committee. I think the chair has sufficient direction to call witnesses. We have a deadline for members of the committee to submit witnesses. The suggested witnesses' names are to be in by this coming Friday. The motion does not restrict us from having more than two additional meetings in addition to Statistics Canada appearing.

Why don't we just leave in place the motion as adopted by the committee, and have our three meetings, and then we can discuss whether we will have further meetings beyond the three meetings?

At that point we can also discuss what kind of report we will have the analysts draft and what kind of recommendations we would like to see in that report.

That's all contained in the motion that has already been adopted by the committee, so I don't think we need to adopt any further motions. To that end, you have sufficient guidance, Mr. Chair, from the members of the committee, and I think we should just proceed.

I propose that we proceed on that basis.

The Chair: Yes, but just before that, I think Mr. Godin, with his previous intervention, would like to say a few words.

Go ahead.

● (1610)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Joël Godin: Mr. Chair, with all due respect to my colleague from the same parliamentary group, who has much more experience than I do, I will turn to the clerk.

I want to make sure that what my colleague said is accurate in terms of all studies requiring a report. If that is the case, we are wasting our time and we could move forward.

Mr. Clerk, I apologize for putting pressure on you, but if what my colleague is saying is correct, there is no point to our conversation because there will automatically be a report.

Mr. Chair, could you ask the clerk for an answer, please?

Ms. Patricia Lattanzio: I want things to be clear, I agree with that.

A voice: There's a motion on the table. Is it votable?

The Clerk: I'll answer the question.

Not every study produces a report and not every report is necessarily the product of a study. Let me explain.

If, for example, a witness made false statements, the committee could decide to report that incident to the House, not necessarily as a result of a study. A report includes any communication from the committee to the House.

Generally speaking, when a study is completed, given the time and energy invested in it, a report is produced and tabled in the House, with recommendations sometimes. Usually, there are recommendations and a government response is requested, but that's not always the case.

[*English*]

Ms. Emmanuela Lambropoulos: Bring it to a vote.

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Ms. Lattanzio, go ahead.

Ms. Patricia Lattanzio: To sum up, I agree with my colleague Mr. Godin, who says he wants it to be clear. I agree with that. I also understand that my colleague Mr. Angus doesn't want us to limit ourselves to three meetings. So let's adopt the amendment or the proposal of my colleague Mr. Arseneault, who is asking the committee to produce a report. To make it very clear today, let's vote on this request, without necessarily limiting the number of meetings. That way, I think we will come full circle and we can move on.

The Chair: Yes, okay.

Mr. Arseneault is going to move this motion. Just so that everybody can agree, I think the motion should call for a report at the end of our study on the enumeration of rights holders.

Ms. Patricia Lattanzio: I'm not impatient, but we have to move forward.

[English]

Mr. Joël Godin: That's it.

[Translation]

The Chair: On that note, Mr. Arseneault is going to move his motion.

To address everyone, I think the motion should say that, at the end of the study, a report must be produced on the enumeration of rights holders, period.

Mr. René Arseneault: That is exactly what I wanted to say.

Did everyone understand the motion? I can repeat it, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Yes, go ahead.

Mr. René Arseneault: I propose that at the end of our study on the enumeration of rights holders, a committee report be produced and presented to the House of Commons.

The Chair: Since the motion applies to our current business, as the clerk said, we are prepared to pass it now rather than in 48 hours.

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: Thank you.

Now that that's done, I will ask Ms. Lambropoulos to read her motion. We'll debate it and then move to Mr. Angus' motion.

Ms. Emmanuella Lambropoulos: I move the following

That, pursuant Standing Order 108(3)(f), the Committee initiate a study consisting of at least 10 meetings to examine the ways that the Government of Canada can:

(a) Ensure the protection of linguistic minorities with regards to protecting the rights of right holders to receive an education in the minority language and in an attempt to protect the identity and culture of the members of the Official Language minority communities;

(b) Ensure the promotion of bilingualism and raise the bilingualism rate across the country;

that this study be completed by June 2020; that the Committee report its findings to the House; and that, pursuant to Standing Order 109, the government table a comprehensive response thereto.

The Chair: Mr. Angus, you have the floor.

[English]

Mr. Charlie Angus: Thank you. I'm just looking for clarification. In the original motion I'm reading, I see at least 10 meetings

mentioned. What I heard in my translation was "a number of sessions". What wording are we're using?

Ms. Emmanuella Lambropoulos: It's 10 meetings, in English.

Mr. Charlie Angus: It's 10 meetings, okay.

I can support the motion. I'm a little wary of 10 meetings. I feel as if we're defining a calendar without defining the issue and the witnesses. I always prefer to define the witnesses and then decide how long we're going to meet. I would prefer to just have a meeting and draw up the witnesses and decide our calendar then, as opposed to defining the calendar first.

● (1615)

[Translation]

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Beaulieu, you have the floor.

Mr. Mario Beaulieu: I, for one, am going to make a bit of a longer introduction.

In my opinion, there are two main problems with the Official Languages Act. The first is that it does not consider francophones in Quebec to be part of the francophone minority in Canada, yet they are the largest francophone minority. As a result, all groups that defend and promote French in Quebec are excluded and are not consulted.

I'm simplifying the facts a little bit, but let's say there are two main models of language planning. One model is based on institutional bilingualism and individual rights, and the other is based more on collective rights and the principle of territoriality. Almost everywhere, models of institutional bilingualism of the kind we see here lead in many cases to the assimilation of minority languages or, in other words, to language transfer.

The Quebec model is based more on the principle of language rights. The fact that French is the common official language in Quebec does not preclude services in English from being offered to the English-speaking minority. In fact, Quebec is probably the most bilingual province in Canada. It is where anglophones receive the most services. They have so many services that it ends up promoting the linguistic transfer to English among allophones. That's one point of view.

The Official Languages Act will likely be modernized this year. In Quebec, the Charter of the French Language will be updated. It would be interesting to assess the impact of the official languages policy and institutional bilingualism on the situation of French in Quebec.

The second problem with the Official Languages Act is the principle behind the words "where numbers warrant", which means that, in French-speaking and Acadian communities, when French declines, when there are fewer francophones, services in French are reduced. Perhaps the opposite should be done.

One of the effects of this is that francophones outside Quebec are trying to broaden the definition of “francophone” and change the indicators to make it appear that there are more of them in order to get more services. That is legitimate. However, I think we need to find a mechanism that will make it possible to no longer have to skew, to change the number of francophones in order to obtain services in French. In my opinion, if we could do that, we would really move the debate forward. Otherwise, it would be as if, in order to reduce unemployment, we would change the employment statistics; it would give the impression that we have solved the problem. It is important that the picture be realistic and objective and that measures be taken to remedy the situation.

Recently, even analyses of Statistics Canada's language projections indicated a rather worrisome decline in French in Quebec. In fact, over the next 20 to 25 years, the proportion of people whose mother tongue and language of use is French is expected to decline significantly. I don't know if it's possible to incorporate this into the motion. I would simply like to avoid postponing this issue until later.

The Chair: Ms. Lambropoulos, you have the floor.

Ms. Emmanuella Lambropoulos: All the things you said are not necessarily excluded from the wording of the motion. Once we're ready to begin the study, we will hear witnesses. We will discuss the witnesses we want to invite to testify. Ultimately, they will be the ones who will suggest the recommendations to be included in the report.

• (1620)

The Chair: Mr. Beaulieu, you can also propose an amendment to the motion and clarify your thoughts.

Mr. Mario Beaulieu: An amendment can be proposed, but the conclusions are in the motion. I don't think promoting bilingualism specifically or expanding institutional bilingualism without any guidelines will help to safeguard French in Quebec and prevent its decline.

At the same time, I understand that the policy is based on that. The point I'm making has not often been heard at this committee. Still, it is a reality in Quebec and elsewhere as well. Francophone and Acadian communities focus their efforts on obtaining a minimum of services in French, except in certain places. Acadia is the place where French is strongest, outside of Quebec and some parts of Ontario.

We could add the following point (c): “Study the impact of the Official Languages Act and institutional bilingualism on the situation of French in Quebec” or something similar.

The Chair: You're talking about institutional bilingualism and so on. At this morning's meeting of the subcommittee, an amendment was proposed to say that, in point (c), individual rather than institutional bilingualism should be promoted. I don't know if that will move the discussion forward.

Mr. Mario Beaulieu: Acadians want bilingualism to be promoted because they want more services in French.

The Chair: Mr. G n reux has the floor.

Mr. Mario Beaulieu: To some extent, institutional bilingualism in Quebec is widespread. Pierre Elliott Trudeau even said that the

day all Quebecers are bilingual will be the end of French in Canada.

Montreal already has a big problem with French. Services are increasingly being provided in English, and francophones aren't demanding to be served in French. We can't be against individual bilingualism, but—

Ms. Emmanuella Lambropoulos: We could add these words to point (b):

[English]

“Increase the bilingualism rate across the country (outside of Quebec).” Does that solve the issue?

[Translation]

Mr. Mario Beaulieu: We could say “outside Quebec”.

Ms. Emmanuella Lambropoulos: That's pretty much what you're saying, isn't it?

Mr. Mario Beaulieu: Yes.

Ms. Emmanuella Lambropoulos: Okay.

Mr. Mario Beaulieu: My other point has to do with...

Ms. Lattanzio, I'll let you go ahead.

Ms. Patricia Lattanzio: I indicated to the chair that I would like to speak, but I'll wait until you're done.

Mr. Mario Beaulieu: That might be one possible avenue, but there's someone who disagrees less.

I pretty much summed up what I was saying earlier. The Official Languages Act aims to strengthen English in Quebec. All the money in the official languages program is given to support anglophone groups and their institutions, while French is in decline. That being said, another one is being started—

The Chair: Okay.

Mr. G n reux, you have the floor.

Mr. Mario Beaulieu: We aren't going to solve everything all at once. Still, I'll give you an idea of where I'm headed.

• (1625)

The Chair: Mr. G n reux, you have the floor.

Mr. Bernard G n reux: We're just beginning our deliberations.

I have a very simple question. Were these two motions discussed at the subcommittee meeting this morning?

Mr. Beaulieu, were you there?

Mr. Mario Beaulieu: Yes, we had the same discussion.

Mr. Bernard G n reux: You had the same discussions.

A subcommittee is used to indicate what we are going to talk about and our direction. I feel like we're going in circles. In any case, we're beginning our discussions.

Those who are new to this will find out fairly quickly—this was the case in the past, at least—that there is good cooperation between all the parties. It is very friendly, and it allows us to move forward in various ways to protect all francophone communities across Canada and anglophone communities in Quebec. That is our objective here. There isn't much room for partisanship in that.

I understand that Mr. Beaulieu wasn't necessarily taking a strictly partisan angle, but we need to give ourselves time to be able to begin our work.

Otherwise, if we get into such fundamental issues as what you just talked about, Mr. Beaulieu, we'll never get out of it. We'll be discussing the first motion for the next six months.

We're dealing with some very deep issues here. I'm neither for nor against it. We need to have these discussions, I agree, but we can't just think we're going to lump it all together in one motion.

We have to produce it at some point. If we're going to deliver, we have to be productive and we have to move forward in time. There will be time over the next few months or even years to deal with much more complex vision issues.

You can't get too caught up in a motion. There will be no end.

The Chair: Ms. Lattanzio, you have the floor.

Ms. Patricia Lattanzio: I would like to thank my colleague, Mr. Généreux. He summed up exactly what I was going to say.

I'm from Quebec and have an anglophone background, and my perspective isn't the one you presented on services for anglophones. I agree that this is an issue that could be studied later, but I wouldn't want us to get bogged down in another debate that isn't necessarily the subject of our motion.

We should stay focused on the issues at hand. We are talking about minority rights. In Quebec, anglophones are the minority. I understand what you are arguing today. You're saying that Quebec is the minority in Canada. I agree with that.

However, we should stick to the motion as it stands. Then we will see if there are other issues. Otherwise, we get bogged down in other debates and other issues. I don't see the relationship between what you've just proposed and the motion on the table. It's out of context.

I understand there's a connection. It connects with my experience. However, the motion must remain as it is. Let's have the discussion and hear from witnesses. Then, if there are other issues that need to be dealt with from a national perspective or from the perspective of minorities in the country, and if that is the will of the committee members, we'll do so.

The Chair: Go ahead, Mr. Angus.

[*English*]

Mr. Charlie Angus: Thank you.

The role of the subcommittee is not to decide what motions are coming forward to committee. This is the right of every individual member. The role of the subcommittee is to come back with recommendations—i.e., we now have this, that and the other—to try to streamline a calendar. That comes back to the committee and the

committee can look at it. It's still the role of individual members to decide if they have a problem. It is the right of every individual member to bring a motion. It is the right of every other member to either agree or suggest an amendment. If there's no amendment, then one can say they won't support it for whatever philosophical reason. But I think there is a motion and it is in order.

Mr. Beaulieu, I don't know if I heard an amendment that was clear on this.

If there is one, we vote on the amendment. If there isn't one, then we say whether or not we support it. That's what we have to keep in mind. This motion is in order. It is within the confines of the role of the committee. It might be philosophically different from my colleague's beside me, but it's the right of Ms. Lambropoulos to bring it and for us to decide whether we support it.

• (1630)

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Mr. Beaulieu, you have the floor.

Mr. Mario Beaulieu: I would just like to say that it's not philosophical, but that it's very concrete.

According to Statistics Canada's projective studies, the French language is expected to decline fairly rapidly.

Whether in terms of mother tongue, language of use at home, first language of use, first official language spoken, there is debate about indicators. In my opinion, when we talk about official language minorities, Quebec is one of them.

Even the UN Human Rights Committee considered that Quebec anglophones were part of the majority and, therefore, not a minority as defined by the UN. I am one of those who want anglophones to flourish and prosper, and I'm not at all against the rights of the historical anglophone minority. However, for me, it's important to take this into consideration.

When we look at the results for the francophone and Acadian communities, we see that there are considerable language transfers from francophones to English. The lowest results are in Acadia, but it is still in the order of 12 or 13%.

If we want to ensure that there is linguistic duality in Canada, we must therefore look at the problem as a whole. Saying that we're only going to study the promotion of bilingualism from that perspective until June, and then we will see in a few years, it will be a little late.

However, I can propose an amendment to add the point I mentioned earlier. I don't know if people would agree or if it would make the discussion too long, but I think it all goes together. It would read as follows: “study the impact of the Official Languages Act and institutional bilingualism on the situation of French in Quebec”.

I'm not against what you proposed earlier for outside Quebec, but I'm not sure if you were proposing it again—

The Chair: Okay.

Mr. Beaulieu, as Mr. Angus also explained, there is a formal motion on the table. Before I turn the floor over to Mr. Godin, I would like to say that we should think about proposing and writing this amendment so that we can discuss it, vote on it and then deal with the main motion. It would be nice to have it in writing. In the meantime, we will—

Mr. Mario Beaulieu: I already have it in writing. Would you like me to text it to you or would you like me to write it by hand?

The Chair: You just have to write the amendment by hand and submit it to the clerk to see if it is admissible.

In the meantime, Mr. Godin would also like to say something.

Mr. Joël Godin: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Actually, I don't completely disagree with my colleague from the Bloc Québécois. We can play with numbers when we change the units of measure. So we have to be careful. I share his question in this regard.

However, with regard to the motion on the table, I have an amendment to propose, and its purpose is to move the committee forward.

I will read the passages where there are corrections: In the first line, "That pursuant to Standing Order 108(3)(f), the Committee initiate a study to examine how the Government of Canada may". I'm removing "at least 10 meetings".

Moving on to the next point: "(b) promote bilingualism in minority regions;" I'm taking out everything else.

I'm beginning the last paragraph with "that the Committee presents", which means that I'm removing "that this study be completed by June 2020;". There is no time limit. As for the promotion of bilingualism, some regions that don't need the promotion of bilingualism, such as Quebec, are being eliminated.

That's what I'm proposing.

The Chair: All right.

• (1635)

Mr. Joël Godin: Is that clear?

The Chair: Yes, Ms. Lambropoulos?

Ms. Emmanuella Lambropoulos: I agree that the number of meetings should be removed, because that's going to depend on the witness list, which we do not have yet. However, with regard to item (b), its purpose is really to make Canada a bilingual country from coast to coast to coast.

If English speakers in Saskatchewan happen to want to learn French, they should be able to do so. They should be given the opportunity to do so and more chances that it will happen. However, I don't know if I want this to be limited to situations where there are minority communities. It kind of runs counter to promoting bilingualism across Canada, which is what we should be doing.

Mr. René Arseneault: I would like to add something for committee members. Last year or the year before, we visited western Canada. Statistics show, as Mr. Généreux can attest, that bilingualism is stagnating among English speakers outside Quebec and New Brunswick. In many anglophone communities, people want to send their children to immersion schools. In my opinion, based on everything we have heard, that is the most practical solution to having people become bilingual if they wish to do so but do not have the tools. I am saying that as an example. There are other tools and other ways, but a study needs to be done on that to see what the demands are, what the tools are, what infrastructure can be offered to them, how it's done elsewhere, and vice versa in Quebec.

Quebecers and Acadians are fairly bilingual. Quebec anglophones are very bilingual compared to the rest of Canada's anglophones. We still need to conduct a Canada-wide study. This is about Canada's Official Languages Act, which deals with two minority communities, one outside Quebec and the other within Quebec.

I understand my colleagues' reluctance with respect to the 10 days, but nothing in this motion's current form prevents Mr. Beaulieu from asking the same questions of witnesses. At the end of the day, I think we are going to end up with the same motion. If we eventually need to go further and focus on something more specific at Mr. Beaulieu's request, we will have the opportunity to do that. There will be a lot to study. The Standing Committee on Official Languages has no shortage of ideas.

I think that it is important to keep the bilingualism provision as it is written.

The Chair: Mr. Beaulieu, what do we do with your amendment?

Mr. Mario Beaulieu: I sent it to Mr. Marcotte. If we add a third item, we will not touch the others. In my opinion, promoting bilingualism and increasing the rate of bilingualism across the country and in Quebec are not the issues we need to work on the most. We have to ensure that English speakers have services in English, and I think that this is already very much the case on the ground. We can work on that, but continuing to make people bilingual ultimately means anglicizing them. That's my point of view.

Mr. René Arseneault: It's in the act.

Mr. Mario Beaulieu: It's in the act, yes, but we are reviewing the act. The act is there to defend official language minority communities.

I can still include your point of view in the proposal, but I don't want to stick to promoting bilingualism. If need be, I will oppose it. As Mr. Angus said, we don't have all to agree. We are in a democracy.

[English]

Ms. Emmanuella Lambropoulos: I think we have a motion and an amendment on the floor.

[Translation]

The Chair: First, we will hear from Mr. Godin.

Mr. Mario Beaulieu: Can we read the amendment and debate it?

The Chair: We're getting there.

Mr. Godin, go ahead.

Mr. Joël Godin: I would like to tell my colleagues on the committee that, language aside, Quebec is a founding people. I am very uncomfortable with bilingualism being promoted in a province that has fought to preserve its language. That is why I agree with my colleague from the Bloc Québécois on this issue, even though I do not agree with all of the Bloc Québécois' positions.

Mr. Mario Beaulieu: I don't expect that.

Mr. Joël Godin: No, we don't need each other, actually.

However, I just want my colleagues to be aware that, as a result of a study, we are discussing a proposal to find ways to promote bilingualism in a French-speaking province. It is the only francophone province in Canada. There is only one other bilingual province, New Brunswick. So that bothers me. I know that these are the principles of bilingualism in the country, and we are not against English, quite the contrary, but we want to protect our language. So I have major doubts about promoting bilingualism in Quebec.

• (1640)

The Chair: Mr. Angus, you have the floor.

Mr. Charlie Angus: The problem is, there's a contradiction between the two points. The first point is to ensure the protection of minority communities with regard to access to education in their mother tongue. The second point is to promote bilingualism across Canada.

The trouble is that, in my region, for the Franco-Ontarian community, it's very important to have access to services in French. In terms of bilingualism, we are talking about the rights of anglophones to have education in French. Those are two different things.

[English]

My suggestion is to limit the study to the issues of protecting the rights holders to receive an education in a minority language and protecting the identity and culture of members of the official language minority communities, period.

Then you're guaranteeing that in Quebec, for the anglophone community, it's about their education. In Saskatchewan, it's the francophone community.

In my region, it's the franco-Ontarian community. When we talk about promoting bilingualism, then I'm having to say to all of my anglophone school boards where we don't have enough teachers in French, and all that, that there are different realities. I think it becomes too complicated.

It's my friendly amendment to stick with point (a) of the motion. It's a very focused study. Then if we want to do a study on bilingualism, that's a whole other context. We are doing two contradictory things here.

My friendly amendment, if it's accepted, is just to drop point (b).

[Translation]

The Chair: First, we need to find some common ground. There is Ms. Lambropoulos' motion. Mr. Beaulieu has discussed a motion with us, as has Mr. Godin.

Mr. Mario Beaulieu: It was an amendment.

The Chair: Pardon me, it was an amendment.

The clerk received Mr. Beaulieu's amendment after Mr. Godin's amendment. Normally, we would need to deal with Mr. Godin's amendment first and then discuss Mr. Beaulieu's amendment. I just wanted to put that in context. We will read Mr. Godin's amendment and then we will go to Mr. Beaulieu's amendment. It can also be a subamendment.

Mr. Angus, you have the floor.

[English]

Mr. Charlie Angus: Is it possible to have Ms. Lambropoulos give us a sense of.... We can sit and argue about these amendments. If she's supporting one of them over the other, I will withdraw mine. I would rather hear from her what she wants from this, and then we can move forward.

[Translation]

The Chair: Ms. Lambropoulos, the floor is yours.

[English]

Ms. Emmanuella Lambropoulos: I agree the most with Mr. Angus. I think point (a) of my motion is really the issue that we're trying to solve in this situation. Point (b) was just trying to help everybody.

I think if we stick to point (a), we're good with it. I appreciate the recommendation.

[Translation]

Hon. Michael Chong: Mr. Chair, I propose that you seek unanimous consent of the committee for Mr. Godin to withdraw his amendment and for Mr. Angus to move his amendment. We can do it that way.

The Chair: All right. That's a very good proposal.

First of all, Mr. Beaulieu, do you agree with what Mr. Chong said?

Mr. Mario Beaulieu: We would take out item (b).

The Chair: Yes. We will read it.

Mr. Mario Beaulieu: In that case, I will turn my amendment into a notice of motion for future consideration.

The Chair: Yes.

Mr. Mario Beaulieu: It would be interesting to be able to study it. As far as bilingualism is concerned, some bilingual countries have based their bilingualism on territorial models. They have different languages in different regions, as is the case in Belgium and Switzerland.

• (1645)

The Chair: What Mr. Angus is going to read to us will also be in line with Mr. Godin's comments.

So, we are agreed to hear from Mr. Angus again on this...

Mr. Mario Beaulieu: I have only one question. Are we also taking out the 10 weeks?

The Chair: We will read it and we may get there.

Mr. Angus, go ahead.

[*English*]

Mr. Charlie Angus: I'll move my amendment, which would be "That, pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), the Committee initiate a study consisting—"

The Chair: Excuse me, it's 108(3)(f).

Mr. Charlie Angus: Okay. I'm looking at 108(2) and I'm wondering. Okay, I was never great at mathematics, but it looked odd to me.

Anyway, I'm reading it.

The Chair: Yes.

Mr. Charlie Angus: It is, "the Committee initiate a study consisting"—and I have a problem with 10 meetings, but that could be another amendment.

The Chair: No, it's out. Take it out.

Mr. Charlie Angus: It's out, okay. That's clear. It reads, "That pursuant to Standing Order 108(3)(f), the Committee initiate a study to examine the ways that the Government of Canada can ensure the protection of linguistic minorities with regards to protecting the rights of rights holders to receive an education in the minority language and in an attempt to protect the identity and culture of the members of the Official Language minority communities; that this study be completed by June 2020; that the Committee report its findings to the House."

Did we take that out as well?

The Chair: Yes.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Okay, so basically point (a) is what we're going to study. That's my friendly amendment.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Chris d'Entremont: All right.

The Chair: Is that clear to everyone?

A voice: Yes.

Mr. Mario Beaulieu: If I understand the amendment correctly, item (b) is withdrawn and there's no longer any question of 10 weeks.

A voice: Yes.

The Chair: I therefore move that we adopt Mr. Angus's amendment.

(Motion agreed to, as amended)

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: I get it: there are no dates, no dates, no dates.

The Chair: Mr. Angus.

[*English*]

Mr. Charlie Angus: I would like to finish off committee business. I'd like to move my motion.

The Chair: Yes, but just before that, please, the clerk will read it again.

The Clerk: Only if you want.

The Chair: We don't want to read it again, eh? It's clear. Okay.

[*Translation*]

Perfect. Things are nicely in harmony.

Mr. Angus, read us your motion.

[*English*]

Mr. Charlie Angus: It reads:

That the Committee invite the Commissioner of Official Languages Raymond Th  berge to report on the work of his office

[*Translation*]

It's simple.

The Chair: The motion has been duly tabled. So, debate is open. Discussion and comments on Charlie Angus's motion may begin.

It is being distributed. You already have a copy.

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: With regard to these two motions, the one from Ms. Lambropoulos and the one from Mr. Angus, we should also talk about dates, that is, when we are going to do these studies.

Ms. Lalonde, you want to comment.

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: Mr. Chair, I strongly suggest that our outstanding subcommittee look at this issue and present us with an angle and some witnesses. I know my colleague Mr. Angus has already made that point. I think the subcommittee will be hard at work until next week.

• (1650)

The Chair: Mr. Angus, you have the floor.

[*English*]

Mr. Charlie Angus: For my motion, I think it's normal that we invite him and see what dates he can be here. When he comes back and tells us what they are, we can work around that. I'm not going to lose any sleep over the calendar.

The Chair: Okay. I think it's really clear that the only witness we're going to have is Monsieur Th  berge.

Mr. Charlie Angus: [*Inaudible—Editor*] to respond to him.

The Chair: Just a minute.

[*Translation*]

How long will a meeting with Mr. Th  berge last? Will it take two hours?

Mr. Charlie Angus: It will take two hours, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: All right.

The Clerk: Two hours? Duly noted.

The Chair: Colleagues, it is true that we have enough material for the next few weeks, but it should also be noted that the main estimates will normally arrive in early March and we will have until May 31 to pass them. All of this will be part of our work too.

Mr. Chong, you have the floor.

Hon. Michael Chong: Mr. Chair, did you say we were going to have a meeting to consider the estimates?

[*English*]

The Chair: The main estimates.

[*Translation*]

The Clerk: It's the main estimates. That's up to the committee.

Hon. Michael Chong: I think we have to do it.

The Chair: Yes, absolutely.

The Clerk: Normally, the main estimates should be introduced in the House this week because they have to be tabled before March 1. We'll be set shortly.

The Chair: Yes, we will discuss it.

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: Do we need a motion for the main estimates?

The Chair: Do we need to make a motion or is it automatic?

The Clerk: No. They are automatically referred to the committees. Some committees adopt a motion to set the date on which they will consider them. Other committees proceed with consideration without further ado because there is already an order of reference from the House.

The Chair: All right.

The Clerk: It can be helpful, but it's not necessary to have a motion.

Hon. Michael Chong: Yes.

The Clerk: We can adopt a motion if we wish to agree on specifics, but some committees have held meetings with no motion.

The Chair: All right.

Mr. Beaulieu, you have the floor.

Mr. Mario Beaulieu: I would like to point out how open-minded members have been. That's certainly helpful.

The Chair: Yes.

Mr. Mario Beaulieu: I think that paves the way for some interesting debates. On another note, I will send my amendment to you again. I will turn it into a motion, and maybe we can clarify the content.

The Chair: All right, Mr. Beaulieu.

Mr. Angus, you have the floor.

[*English*]

Mr. Charlie Angus: On reviewing the finances, I would suggest that we don't need a motion. I would have it locked in for a day when witnesses can't come. This often happens. Maybe we lose something and we give the clerk the opportunity to move things around based on who's available and who's not. We can look at it then.

[*Translation*]

The Chair: All right.

There was a comment at the beginning of the meeting and I would like to come back to it. It is almost 5:00 p.m. Given that we

are going to be meeting with Statistics Canada this coming Thursday, I don't know if you want our analyst to talk for about 15 minutes about the enumeration of rights-holders.

Ms. Patricia Lattanzio: I would really like to get an overview.

Ms. Lucie Lecomte (Analyst): I can do it for the whole committee, but I can also meet with members individually.

The Chair: That's right. The analyst is proposing that it be done individually with members who would be interested. Or it can be done before the committee directly.

Mr. Angus, you have the floor.

[*English*]

Mr. Charlie Angus: Well, because it just came up, I prefer that we either put it off or we do it at another.... I'm uncomfortable changing the direction of the committee, because all manner of things can happen then. I wasn't aware this was going to happen, so I prefer to not have it now.

• (1655)

[*Translation*]

The Chair: All right.

Mr. Beaulieu, the floor is yours.

Mr. Mario Beaulieu: Are we sure that the officials from Statistics Canada will be available on Thursday?

The Clerk: You can never be sure of anything.

Mr. Mario Beaulieu: But the contacts have been made.

The Clerk: They have known for the past week that they stand a good chance of being called on. Obviously, I cannot confirm anything, but I am sure people are listening right now and they will be able to tell us whether or not it's possible.

The Chair: Mr. Godin, you have the floor.

Mr. Joël Godin: Mr. Chair, what you're suggesting is that the analyst give us a summary of the situation. There may be people who want to leave now.

Those who are interested can maybe stay here after the meeting. I would like to hear it.

The Chair: All right.

You have received the email containing the document in question. We are free to leave or stay.

In closing, I just want to remind you that our next meeting will be on Thursday, but keep in mind that the witness list has to be sent to the clerk by Friday noon. With that, colleagues...

Ms. Lambropoulos, would you like to comment?

[*English*]

Ms. Emmanuella Lambropoulos: Do we have a deadline to submit witnesses for the other studies, since that's in two or three weeks?

[*Translation*]

The Chair: The subcommittee will look into the matter and provide you with a specific date. We will take the time we need to consider all of this.

[*English*]

Thank you very much, colleagues.

The meeting is adjourned.

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