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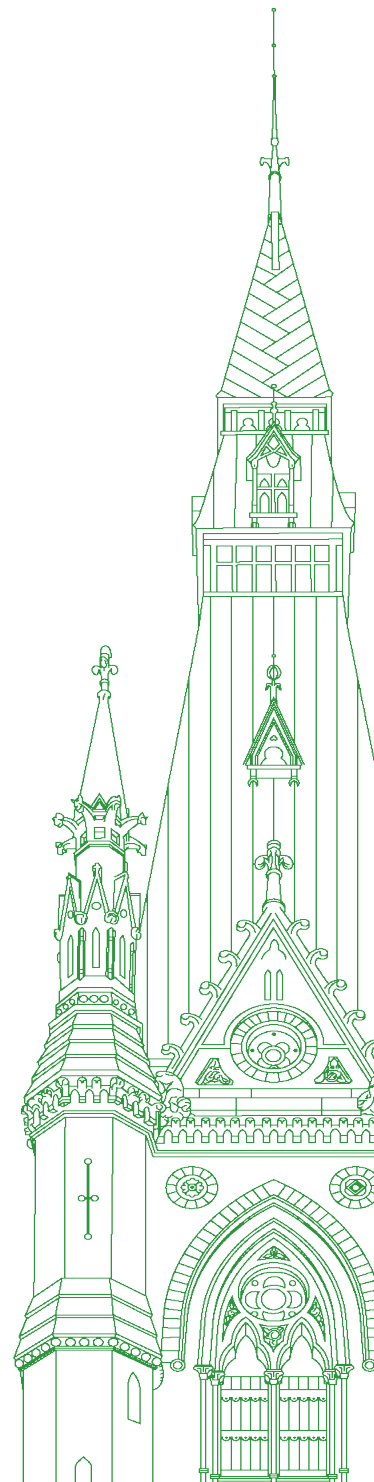
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Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities

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Chair: Mr. Sean Casey

Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities

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• (1705)

[English]

The Chair (Mr. Sean Casey (Charlottetown, Lib.)): I call this meeting to order.

Welcome to meeting number 30 of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities.

Today's meeting is taking place in public and in a hybrid format, pursuant to the House order of January 25, 2021. Proceedings will be made available via the House of Commons website. The webcast will always show the person speaking rather than the entirety of the committee.

Today, colleagues, there are a couple of things before we get started.

The fourth draft of the indigenous housing study is not yet available to us. It will be available to us in advance of Tuesday's meeting, and it will be the first item of business at Tuesday's meeting unless otherwise directed here today.

The other thing to tell you is that we have about 56 minutes for this meeting, because we have to vacate for the cleaning protocols for the next meeting. My hope is that we will be able to identify the subject of our next study and adopt some motions with respect to witness lists and the like so that we can be productive after next Tuesday, which will be dedicated, at least in part, to the URN indigenous housing study.

With that, we are in committee business so it's a bit of a blank page, but as I indicated, my hope is that we will be able to identify the subject of our next study and the parameters around it.

Please use the "raise hand" function, and we'll work through the speakers list, beginning with Mr. Turnbull.

Mr. Ryan Turnbull (Whitby, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

It's great to be back. I know we were slightly delayed in getting started today due to PROC, which is the other committee that I am on, but nonetheless, I want to thank Ms. Gazan for showing up at PROC and helping us to secure the time for this meeting today because I am glad to be moving forward with HUMA.

On October 15, 2020, I put a motion on notice to the committee. Most members would have received that. I know it's in our shared box for the committee. I would like to move that motion now as the next order of business that we study. It's a topic that I feel very passionately about, and I have prepared a few remarks to put to the

committee as to why I believe this should be the next order of business.

I move:

That the committee undertake a study on Social Innovation and Social Finance, outlining how these strategies can contribute to building a more inclusive, resilient, and sustainable economy as we look towards economic recovery, and that this study shall take no less than six meetings.

That motion, again, was put on notice on October 15, 2020, and it's been sitting there. I know that we've prioritized other business up until now, but I do think that this is an important topic. It's certainly something I feel extremely passionate about, and I would like to make a bit of a plea to the committee as to why I believe this is an important study to undertake as our next order of business.

I'll make those remarks now if that's okay with the chair.

The Chair: Yes, of course.

Mr. Ryan Turnbull: Thanks.

I would say, first and foremost, that I believe this study is relevant because of the many ways we have witnessed COVID-19 exacerbate the inequities within our society and our economy.

I've been studying those statistics quite a bit and have been using them for some of my interventions at PROC. Basically, the statistics show pretty significant inequities for populations that have been disproportionately impacted by COVID-19. This includes immigrants, racialized Canadians, youth, seniors, women, low-wage workers, indigenous people, those living in poverty, those living with a disability or a mental illness, members of the LGBTQ2S+ community and many others.

The list is extensive, but I think the underlying realization is that, if you experience barriers to employment of any kind or are a member of an equity-seeking group, you've felt the impacts of COVID-19 more than others. The pandemic exacerbated the inequities that were already there, and if you are vulnerable, at risk or marginalized in any way, you've found yourself in a worsened predicament and life situation as a result of the pandemic.

We also know that small businesses have been hit hard. The number of new enterprises entering the market, such as new start-up businesses, was, on average, 16,500 per quarter in Canada, every quarter, from 2015 up until the pandemic. During the pandemic, that number has been very close to zero or very low—approaching zero. We know that many businesses, despite the many supports our government has offered and our best efforts, will potentially not survive COVID-19.

The reason I bring this up is that social enterprises are these unique business models that combine a social mission inside a business. They explicitly and intentionally embed a social mission—

Ms. Raquel Dancho (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC): I have a point of order, Mr. Chair.

We have a lot to get through today and the meeting was cut short, so I would ask Mr. Turnbull to wrap up his remarks, please.

The Chair: You have the floor, Mr. Turnbull.

Go ahead.

Mr. Ryan Turnbull: Is there a time limit on my remarks for this? I don't mean to belabour the point, but I have some other remarks that I've prepared.

Ms. Dancho, I'm a relatively new member of Parliament. I'm not sure whether there is a time limit. I totally respect that there are other members who want to speak, so I don't want to dominate the airwaves by any means, but I have some remarks that I want to put forward in support of this motion.

I hope that's okay with Ms. Dancho.

Mr. Chair, do I not have the ability to do that?

• (1710)

The Chair: You absolutely do.

The point of order has not been upheld. You have the floor.

Go ahead.

Mr. Ryan Turnbull: Thank you.

What I was going to say is that, if a normal business venture put profit at the centre of their business, a social enterprise puts people and the planet at the centre or the core of their business model. You can think of a social entrepreneur as a gentleman like Fabrice Vil from Quebec, who started Pour 3 Points. He says that someone who borrows pragmatic notions from entrepreneurship in order to maximize its beneficial contributions to society is no charity. He says that it contributes to creating positive change in society.

There are over 30,000 social enterprises that were documented across Canada from 2016 and 2017, with over 60% of those that purposely provide employment to marginalized, disadvantaged or vulnerable groups. These are equity-seeking groups. Social enterprises are essentially on-ramps for social and economic inclusion of our most vulnerable segments of the population. This is, I think, very important for this committee to realize, because I think it highlights how the social economy in Canada, and specifically in Quebec, I would say, which serves as an exemplar for all of the country, can really help us in the COVID economic recovery.

The social economy has been 40 years in the making in Canada. The Canadian Community Economic Development Network has been around for that long, and many of us are probably aware of many social enterprises like agriculture co-operatives that started mostly in rural Canada. Credit unions are social enterprises. The Salvation Army thrift stores are social enterprises. Whether you're a button factory in Dartmouth, a public market like Jean-Talon in Montreal, a furniture reuse facility in Toronto like Furniture Bank, an indigenous-owned and operated geothermal energy installation company in Winnipeg or a café and catering business in the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver, these are all businesses that have a social and often environmental mission at the heart of their *raison d'être*.

I have just a few quick stats, and then I'll move to wrap up.

Ms. Dancho, I'm sorry if I'm being too long or long-winded.

In Ontario alone, based on 2016 statistics, there are over 10,000 social enterprises in operation, and 68% of those had a poverty reduction focus. In Manitoba, there were at least 500 social enterprises in 2016 employing 17,800 people, and Manitoba has its own social enterprise centre called Social Enterprise Manitoba on Main Street in Winnipeg.

The centre is a long-standing partner within the Canadian Community Economic Development Network, which has operated for over 30 years to develop a people-centred economy and social economy within Manitoba. The centre in Winnipeg is a collaborative workspace that houses many social enterprises like Build Inc., AKI Energy, Purpose Construction, Local Investment Toward Employment, the Social Purchasing Portal, Vincent Design Inc., YouthBuild and others.

I want to speak specifically to Quebec and the importance that Quebec has. I have the statistics for all of Canada, but I want to make an appeal to my colleague Ms. Chabot as to why I think that this study is really important, because Quebec, I would submit to you, is probably the leader in this country in terms of the social economy.

There are 11,200 social enterprises employing 220,000 people with sales revenue exceeding \$47.8 billion in Quebec alone. Quebec's social economy has been invested in, and the Quebec government has done a great job, as well as the Government of Canada, in setting up what we call social finance infrastructure within that province to help these social enterprises grow, scale and become investment-ready and take on private investment. I have a couple of examples here.

• (1715)

La Fiducie du Chantier de l'économie sociale, which is the fund or the foundation in Quebec, was started with an investment from the Government of Canada of \$23.8 million and then leveraged with an additional investment by two labour solidarity funds and the Government of Quebec. In total, just think about the way a government investment can be leveraged with private investment to attract that private investment and then basically help grow social enterprises. There are over 190 of them that have been helped through this particular fund, with almost \$439 million in economic activity created and 3,497 jobs.

There's an even older fund in Quebec called RISQ for short—the Réseau d'investissement social du Québec. It has been around since 1997. Over the 22 years that the fund has been around, it has invested in 926 projects and created over 11,000 jobs. Again, with a very small investment this has leveraged private investment to help grow a social economy in Quebec, which I think serves as an example for the rest of the country.

I'll start to wrap up now. These are the reasons that I think this matters. Social enterprises are market-based solutions with a support system and some unique financing tools and mechanisms. These unique types of businesses can grow and become completely viable. Remember as they grow they create more social impact and they create more equity and inclusion. They also address a lot of the issues and challenges that we have, which this committee looks at and, in a way, ESDC is responsible for. I think this committee is the perfect committee to be doing this work.

One thing, I think, that is important to keep in mind is that many are owned and operated by non-profit and charitable organizations across Canada. Imagine Canada has been tracking statistics on the charitable organizations across the country. For many years now it has said that earned revenue, which is what we're talking about, basically charities involved in commercial activity.... It has said that these enterprises that charities run are done for a social mission, but they contribute revenue back to help support their charitable mission as an organization. In a time when those organizations have been left vulnerable by this pandemic and not had the ability to fundraise, I think social enterprise represents an opportunity for them to stabilize and generate revenue back to source in the absence of some of their other revenue streams.

The other thing I need to say is that social enterprises, again, are market-based solutions. What this means is that they do not require public expenditure forever or in perpetuity. They only require an investment for a short period of time, perhaps five years of government support, to really grow in scale.

I'll start to wrap up. What I've seen is that social enterprises can address food insecurity and the energy transition that we want to make. They can be engaged in early learning and child care, and that's a really important initiative that our government has identified. They often operate in waste reduction management and the reuse of many products at the end of their life cycles. They're also very engaged in that. There's seniors' care and reconciliation.

There's quite a great organization called Raven Indigenous Capital Partners, which has developed a unique social finance tool called “community-driven outcomes contracts”. They're an indigenous-run company that is contracting to ACI Energy to essentially have first nation and indigenous communities finance their own projects in their communities and have indigenous-owned and operated businesses or social enterprises do geothermal installations in northern and remote communities.

To me, this is a model we can use to solve many of these problems that we have, and I think our government has recognized that as a priority.

● (1720)

I will leave it there. I think I've made my case.

I hope the members of the committee will support this motion and undertake a study. I think it's really relevant to what we've experienced during COVID-19 and how we are looking at bringing our economy back in a more inclusive, resilient and sustainable way.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Turnbull.

The motion is in order. The debate is now on the motion.

Ms. Dancho.

Ms. Raquel Dancho: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I appreciate Mr. Turnbull's remarks. They were about 20 minutes long, so I appreciate the in-depth research and arguments he has made in favour of his motion, which he brought forward in October, I believe.

However, my understanding is that the motion was not unanimously agreed to. There was no vote on that; it was just tabled. My concern is that this committee has unanimously agreed to other motions, which should take precedence, particularly given that a number of those motions are focused on COVID-specific issues that are happening right now and that need to be discussed and addressed.

While I'm happy to talk about social finance, I know the provincial government in Manitoba has done good work with social impact bonds. I'd be very happy to have that study at some point, but given that we've unanimously agreed to other motions, I think those should take precedence, particularly the ones that are focusing on current COVID issues that are happening to people right now.

I think Mr. Turnbull has really made a 20-minute long argument. We've heard that, so I would move to adjourn debate on his motion.

The Chair: All right.

I'm going to need some procedural advice on this, Madam Clerk. We have a motion to adjourn debate. The first piece of advice I need is whether it's in order, and secondly, whether it's debatable.

The Clerk of the Committee (Ms. Danielle Widmer): It is a dilatory motion, which comes to a vote. There's no debate. There's just a vote.

The Chair: I would ask you then to conduct a vote by roll call, please, Madam Clerk.

● (1725)

Mr. Adam Vaughan (Spadina—Fort York, Lib.): I have a point of order.

I totally respect that the Conservatives want to discuss their priorities. I know other members of the committee have priorities as well. We have all seen the history of this committee together and I would just ask, as a point of order, that we move to, while not continuing the debate, have all the ideas tabled and then make decisions.

The Chair: I would submit that is out of order. We have a motion that is properly before the committee. We have to deal with that motion.

It's permissible in the debate of that motion to indicate that there's a preference to study something else first. That would be a reason to defeat the motion. It would be in order to put forward other ideas, but at the end of the discussion, we're going to vote on this motion.

Mr. Adam Vaughan: That's fair enough.

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): That was actually my question, Mr. Chair. It's hard to vote when we haven't heard the other options. I think that's why I hesitated in my decision.

You have responded to my question. Thank you.

Mr. Corey Tochor (Saskatoon—University, CPC): Just to clarify, is the debate on the Liberal motion, or are we to bring up other studies that we would like to propose?

The Chair: The debate is on the motion.

Mr. Corey Tochor: It's on the motion. I would not want to lose my spot in bringing up what I think would be a much better study. I believe the government, obviously, would like to study what Mr. Turnbull has put forward. As the loyal opposition, if we are being fair to our role, I believe we would put forward something that would be more relevant for these times in terms of impact.

I can think of the study on seniors. We've had numerous seniors, unfortunately, succumb to COVID. There are some real concerns in our country, I believe, on the handling with regard to seniors during this pandemic. I would like to hear a little bit more about what that study would be like. I would hope that opposition members from all parties would realize the importance of this study on seniors versus some very well-intended debate or discussions on social development, which Ryan has put forward. I believe it is much more valuable for our time to look at the one group that has been impacted the most during the pandemic.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Vis.

Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC): I'll just congratulate Mr. Turnbull on making probably his longest speech as a parliamentarian. I wish he would show that type of passion in the House of Commons during the budget debate.

Mr. Wayne Long (Saint John—Rothesay, Lib.): Chair, I have a point of order.

That's not called for.

Mr. Brad Vis: I thought it was a good speech.

The Chair: I'm not sure that's a point of order. In spite of the fact that I agree with it, I don't think it's a point of order.

Ms. Dancho, please.

Ms. Raquel Dancho: Mr. Turnbull said that he was new to Parliament and he wasn't sure how this works. It seems to me he knows how filibustering works quite well.

I guess I'm just wondering how we're planning to spend the last half-hour of this already cut-down meeting, which was cancelled and then rescheduled, messing up a lot of my colleagues' plans. We do have other things that are going on. When this meeting was cancelled, other plans were made. Then this meeting was rescheduled. Then we all met. Then we sat through 20 minutes of what seemed like a very good filibuster; I will give that to Mr. Turnbull.

I just want to air my frustration at having to be here and listen to this and deal with Mr. Turnbull's filibuster on this. I would hope that we're going to wrap this up and vote on his motion. Again, I don't mind the idea of what he said. He made some good arguments, but I don't appreciate being called back here and then being lectured for 20 minutes by someone who clearly knows exactly what they're doing, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Ms. Chabot.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Louise Chabot (Thérèse-De Blainville, BQ): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I think the kind of meeting we are holding is really important.

• (1730)

Ms. Louise Chabot: My understanding was that, at this committee meeting, we could decide on the next study motion. I do understand Mr. Turnbull, who put forward his motion with good arguments. I was prepared to listen to him, but a procedural matter was raised, and that's okay.

Coming into this meeting, I was under the impression that we had already done the work on this matter. That was not just an impression, as I did refer back to our committee discussions. On February 2, we discussed here what's to come. There was an entire debate on whether we would prioritize the employment insurance reform or Ms. Falk's motion on the issue of seniors, which was amended with additions.

If you look at our committee discussions with Mr. Vaughan, among others, Ms. Falk herself was saying she was in favour of the idea of dedicating the next five meetings to the study on employment insurance, if that meant that we would move on to the study on seniors shortly thereafter. Mr. Chair, that is what you closed the meeting on.

So in the post-pandemic context, as that is where we are, I was pretty favourable to our next meeting focusing on seniors, as we had discussed and as I had understood.

Of course, that does not take anything away from the merits of what Mr. Turnbull put forward. Although his intervention may have seemed a bit long, the issues he raised were well-founded. However, given the conclusions the committee reached at that time on the study on seniors—which is fairly broad and related to what happened, as well as to government policies—I would keep our next study on the topic of seniors.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Chabot.

[English]

We'll move to Ms. Gazan, please.

Ms. Leah Gazan: Thank you, Chair.

I have to agree with my colleague Madam Dancho. It's been disillusioning for me in the House of Commons to have to sit through filibusters for two meetings in a row, although I appreciate Mr. Turnbull's knowledge.

I certainly support that study, but I would like to propose an idea around a guaranteed livable basic income, something that certainly would help seniors in this country, something in response to the current PBO report that indicated a guaranteed livable basic income could cut poverty rates 50% at zero net cost.

Particularly because we know people are falling through the social safety net as the pandemic goes on, I believe this will be a life-saving measure. I agree with the members around the table who said we need to talk about things specific to the pandemic right now. I would argue that a guaranteed livable basic income, particularly at the juncture we find ourselves.... I'd like that to be considered in addition to seniors.

I don't want to take too long. I know we have limited time, but the study on seniors is valuable. The social enterprise is certainly critical, particularly for getting people back to work, but a guaranteed livable basic income is certainly of interest to the majority of Canadians. It reflects the electorate and where the electorate is at.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Vaughan.

Mr. Adam Vaughan: Thank you.

I'm going to propose an amendment, which I hope will break the logjam. We have had a series and a pattern. Normally we do this at a subcommittee, but the Conservative leadership on this committee didn't want a subcommittee to straighten this out and bring proposals back to the committee, which is the easier way of doing it. I'll leave that there. For whatever reasons, the Conservatives don't think those subcommittee meetings work. That's their prerogative, and I respect that.

Here is my amendment. My motion is to amend Mr. Turnbull's motion so that the social finance study will be first; the NDP proposal on guaranteed basic income will be second, and the Conservative motion on seniors will be third, and that we split the remaining weeks between now and the end of the parliamentary session in June evenly among those three studies, starting at three meetings, three meetings and three meetings.

That way we all get a fair shot at this. I will remind everyone that we just finished a Bloc study, so we will commit at the end of that amendment that the Bloc, as they propose a study, would go into the fourth slot whenever we return.

The amendment would be that Mr. Turnbull's motion be amended to say that his study be for three weeks, that it be followed by a study on guaranteed basic income as presented by Madam Gazan for three weeks, that this be followed by a Conservative study on seniors for three weeks, and that the Bloc then be in a position to choose which study it prioritizes in the next space, out of fairness.

That is the amendment I propose for a proposed study.

• (1735)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Vaughan.

I would accept the amendment as being in order. It doesn't change what Mr. Turnbull has proposed. It simply proposes adding to it.

The debate now is on the amendment.

Ms. Dancho.

Ms. Raquel Dancho: Mr. Chair, maybe you can correct me if I'm wrong, but I am confused.

Mr. Vaughan, I appreciate your amendment, but you mentioned that it was the Conservatives who made the meeting public. My understanding is that it was the Liberals who made the meeting public. I just think it's important that be corrected because it seems to be untrue. I don't think you're misleading folks over this but—

Mr. Adam Vaughan: On a point of order, at the start of this committee before you joined it there was a decision made across all parties to put this business into the public realm. We actually voted against it, and it was the opposition who supported it.

Ms. Raquel Dancho: We have done subcommittees in camera though.

Mr. Adam Vaughan: All right, and then you refused subcommittees going forward, so we're now doing it in public.

Ms. Raquel Dancho: A month ago or two months ago we did a subcommittee.

Mr. Adam Vaughan: That was the last one, and you refused to participate in that process, which is—

Ms. Leah Gazan: On a point of order, Chair...

The Chair: Perhaps we can have Mr. Vaughan and Ms. Dancho retreat to their corners, and we'll hear from Ms. Gazan.

Ms. Leah Gazan: That was actually my point of order.

I think we have a lot to cover in the meeting and I'd like to get... I'm actually happy with that amendment of three, three and three. It's collegial. It certainly reflects everybody's research interests.

Can we call the question? I don't know if it's too soon, but is it possible to call the question?

I just want to make sure we get something done today.

The Chair: We can call the question when the list of speakers is exhausted.

Ms. Dancho had the floor, and I'm going to cede the floor back to her in case she wasn't finished her submission.

Ms. Raquel Dancho: I'm good, Mr. Chair. Thank you.

The Chair: Madam Chabot, go ahead, please.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Louise Chabot: With all due respect, Mr. Chair, I understand the amendment, but I have not seen a formal motion on the issue of guaranteed minimum income or basic income. Perhaps I missed it.

There is something I have trouble understanding. Mr. Vaughan, I could quote you in saying that we have discussed the Conservative motion on seniors, which was moved by Ms. Falk. I can even take the time to read it again. Here it is:

That, pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), the committee undertake a study on the impact of COVID-19 on the financial, social, health and overall well-being of seniors; that the committee review existing and announced programs for seniors, and make recommendations to improve support to seniors;

The motion did propose that six meetings be held. Our discussions really focused on studies that could be prioritized—the study on employment insurance and this one. We reached a consensus in committee when we decided to conduct a study on employment insurance. Mr. Vaughan, you said then that Ms. Falk was raising an important issue and that we could still carry out the study on employment insurance and then do the study on seniors.

Less has been said about this aspect, but I think we must consider the number of meetings we have left until parliamentary work ends. We have seven weeks left, with two meetings a week. So we have 14 meetings left. We must also complete a study on indigenous housing and a review of the employment insurance system. I also think we should hear from the Minister of Labour, Ms. Tassi, on the estimates. I believe this was on our agenda for May. In my opinion, we would have enough time for one study or two short ones.

What Mr. Turnbull put forward, especially concerning social innovation and social economy, is very intriguing. I have no reservations about the substance of his motion, but I am taking into consideration the state of our previous debates and the time we have left. We could carry out two studies. We are talking about discussing substantive issues such as social innovation and seniors in three meetings. The Bloc Québécois cannot claim to be entitled to another motion by the time work ends. So there is no concern when it comes to the Bloc Québécois.

• (1740)

[*English*]

Mr. Colin Carrie (Oshawa, CPC): Mr. Chair, I have a point of order. I was just wondering about the admissibility of the amendment.

Mr. Turnbull's motion was quite specific, but Mr. Vaughan's amendment is now talking about future studies that have nothing to do with the amendment. I was wondering if you could clarify if it's actually in order.

The Chair: I ruled it in order. That would be subject to challenge, if you wish.

My view is that it slightly amended the motion, to the extent of taking it from six meetings to three, and then added it to it, but the entire motion is still intact, other than the changing of six meetings to three.

I ruled it in order. If the committee wishes to challenge, that's for them, but I did rule on it.

Mr. Vis.

Mr. Brad Vis: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I guess the committee forgot the motion we passed in support of the rapid housing initiative. I'm wondering whether Mr. Vaughan's motion could even be in order, given that the committee already committed to giving x number of meetings to talk about the rapid housing initiative, meetings that have been taking place for a very long time. I can't support Mr. Vaughan's motion, even if it is allowed, based on the agreements this committee has made in the past.

I think, for all of us on the call today, it would be very helpful if the analysts could bring us back to all those planning meetings where we agreed to certain studies that we haven't followed through on. After prorogation, things got a little mixed up there, but I do know that my housing motion was passed and that those meetings were agreed to. I believe Mr. Vaughan will honour the commitment to those meetings that we agreed to previously.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Vis.

Mr. Tochor.

Mr. Corey Tochor: I don't want to raise it as a point of order, but just more as a reference, Brad brought up what was passed. As I'm relatively new to this committee.... Regardless of when the membership changes—and I've been [*Technical difficulty—Editor*] to sit on this committee—whatever has been moved in the past and adopted for the next studies, should that not take precedence? If not, what's the point of actually voting and agreeing to something that may change in future committee meetings?

I would ask you, Mr. Chair, to maybe report back to us on what has been approved by the committee in past meetings, and if there are other studies—whether from the NDP, the Bloc or what have you—that have been agreed to. Those should set the order of committee business.

● (1745)

The Chair: I have absolutely no problem with doing that.

Several motions have been adopted, and none of them have indicated that they are next on the list, so that's the purpose of today's exercise. I guess what happened today was that a motion that was on notice came forward with the inclusion that it be next. You are correct that there are others that have been adopted, but there was no indication within those motions or otherwise that they would be next on the list.

The way we tackled business from the outset was that everyone who had a study they thought would be of interest to the committee brought it forward, and it was agreed that there would be an agreement later with respect to the order. That is the discussion that we're in now.

Madam Chabot.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Louise Chabot: With all due respect, Mr. Chair, I think we had agreed on this matter. I don't know whether the decision was formal. We should look at our meeting minutes to determine that. I want to come back to the fact that our discussions were not held in a subcommittee meeting, but in a committee meeting. We agreed that, after the study on employment insurance, we would begin the study on seniors, as proposed by Ms. Falk. I think that should be confirmed.

If we start over, it does not say that the next study will not be Mr. Turnbull's or another study that may be proposed. It may have been naive of me to think it would be simple today.

[*English*]

The Chair: Ms. Gazan.

Ms. Leah Gazan: Just in keeping peace with the committee.... I think it's actually a rather good idea if we have the clerk come back with the studies that we've put forward to date so that people who are new to the committee can see what has been discussed and what was specifically said and agreed upon. I know I have my priorities, but I also respect democracy.

I think, for the good of the committee and the relationships here, that's a really good idea.

The Chair: It's no problem to provide to the committee all of the motions that have been put on notice, all of the motions that have been passed. That information is certainly available.

Mr. Vaughan.

Mr. Adam Vaughan: If we had an established schedule we wouldn't be debating what's next. That's the whole point of today's meeting. The agenda for today's meeting is to decide what the study is next. Committees—

Mr. Brad Vis: I have a point of order.

The Chair: Hold on just a second, Mr. Vaughan.

Go ahead, Mr. Vis.

Mr. Brad Vis: I believe my study is ongoing. We haven't completed it yet.

Thank you, Mr. Chair

The Chair: Go ahead, Mr. Vaughan.

Mr. Adam Vaughan: I was getting to that.

We are sequencing the next few meetings. That's the prerogative of committees. It's in the hands of the committee to make decisions. Events change. We've seen it across a lot of other committees in the last few days and weeks in this new year alone, let alone over my life in Parliament, where issues emerge and committees make decisions on what to study next. That's why we don't do 15 studies in a row. We do them in small batches.

When COVID occurred, we completely changed everything and we didn't get to URN. We started URN in February, but we didn't start again until September. Proroguing helped us do that, quite frankly.

The issue is that Mr. Vis is correct. We agreed to return to RHI when there are gaps in the schedule and when thresholds are possible. We can certainly see from the URN study and in the way in which translations and study reports come back vis-à-vis the EI study that there will be gaps. I think that, rightfully so, when we encounter one of those gaps, we work together to bring forward the appropriate officials to complete that. The RHI study has no date, no sequence and no timetable. We are setting date, timetable and study subject now, so the motion in front of us is as presented.

Mr. Turnbull has moved his motion. I have moved amendments to accommodate the other parties and their priorities. The chair has made a ruling that the amendment is in order. I think if we dispense with that motion we can then move on to making sure we accommodate Mr. Vis's motion, which I think is an excellent motion. I have always agreed. In fact, I appeared as a witness on that study because I was so enthusiastic to talk about the program.

There will be gaps and we have a backup plan to fill those gaps on short notice by bringing in experts from CMHC and from the department to fulfill the goals that Mr. Vis has proposed.

I would suggest that we could get to the vote and move from there.

● (1750)

The Chair: Mr. Carrie.

Mr. Colin Carrie: I'm just trying to clarify what exactly is going on here. As you know, I am not a regular at this committee. From what I glean, there was an agreed-upon schedule, Mr. Turnbull brought forward his motion and then Mr. Vaughan modified that so that we can add three other studies to it. I'm just a little bit confused here.

Before we vote on anything, would you be so kind as to clarify what exactly is going on here?

The Chair: Sure.

There was no agreed-upon schedule. Several motions were passed to adopt studies without any indication of the priority to be assigned to each. This meeting is to determine the priority of future business, including the studies that have been adopted.

You're partially right that the purpose of this meeting is to plan our next steps.

Ms. Dancho.

Ms. Raquel Dancho: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I was just listening to Madam Chabot and Madam Gazan and, of course, our members talking about seniors. It sounds like we could actually have quite a robust study on seniors. I think Madam Gazan can bring in plenty of excellent witnesses to talk about UBI and the benefits therein to seniors. We could easily incorporate that.

[Translation]

I would like to say to Ms. Chabot that many issues could be discussed and that Bloc Québécois members would be okay with that. We could work together and undertake a study—

[English]

Mr. Corey Tochor: I have point of order.

The Chair: Ms. Dancho, hold on for just a second.

Mr. Tochor, go ahead.

Ms. Raquel Dancho: I think Mr. Tochor is having some audio issues.

Mr. Corey Tochor: I think I'm back on.

Just as a point of order, I think the translation was garbled up there. I apologize.

Ms. Raquel Dancho: I can just wrap up in English.

Mr. Corey Tochor: I am studying French, but it's much tougher.

Ms. Raquel Dancho: I'm sure yours is better than mine.

Mr. Corey Tochor: No, it is not as good as yours, but I digress.

The Chair: Ms. Dancho, if you could just raise your mike a little bit, that might help. I just got a note to that effect.

Ms. Raquel Dancho: My point was this. Just listening to Madam Chabot and Madam Gazan, I think the study that was already proposed, amended and unanimously agreed to by this committee to study seniors in COVID, given as we well know that they're the hardest-hit group in Canada.... They are worthy of a study and priority, which may be difficult for the Liberal government to recognize, but I do think that seniors are worthy of being a priority at this committee.

I think that what the Bloc and the NDP have said would suit well in that study and would encompass the things we're looking to do. Just to reiterate, seniors have suffered more than any other demographic in this country in the last year, so for the HUMA committee not to study seniors in the worst year on record for seniors, I think would be a huge oversight and quite disappointing. I would just like the committee to consider that in the vote.

The Chair: Madam Chabot.

[Translation]

Ms. Louise Chabot: I also think that we chose that motion, which came from the Conservative Party and not from the Bloc Québécois.

To answer your question, the Bloc Québécois did not have another motion to put forward. You will note that I have not put forward any other motions from the Bloc. We talked about the motion on employment insurance. I agreed and decided that the next study would be the one from the Conservative Party on seniors. Should we have to carry out another study afterwards, we will do it.

Members are talking about amending Mr. Turnbull's motion, which calls for six meetings, and another motion concerning seniors that also calls for six meetings. They want to split the difference. This amendment is probably acceptable, but I don't think it is in keeping with the spirit of motions.

● (1755)

[English]

The Chair: Go ahead, please, Mr. Tochor.

Mr. Corey Tochor: Thank you, Chair. I'm sorry, but what we're discussing right now is not clear to me.

We have the motion that was read by Ryan and then amended. We're at the stage where we're voting on the amendment to the motion put forward by Ryan. Could I hear those read together? This has kind of been put together on the fly. I would like to hear it presented, if that's possible.

It has been a long day. We had a committee and we're off committee.... I apologize for not making notes as quickly as possible with the motion that was on there, but if Ryan could read his motion.... It sounds like it was produced prior to this meeting. Then we could have Adam's amendment to that. It might clarify things.

The Chair: Okay. On the motion put forward by Mr. Turnbull, do you have that in front of you, Mr. Turnbull?

Mr. Ryan Turnbull: Yes, I do.

The Chair: Would you care to provide that for Mr. Tochor? Then we'll have Mr. Vaughan recite the amendment to the motion.

Go ahead, Mr. Turnbull.

Mr. Ryan Turnbull: I move, as the next order of business:

That the committee undertake a study on Social Innovation and Social Finance, outlining how these strategies can contribute to building a more inclusive, resilient, and sustainable economy as we look towards economic recovery, and that this study shall take no less than six meetings.

That was provided on October 15, 2020, and it is in the shared drive. Just so everyone is aware, it was on notice for quite a long time.

Mr. Corey Tochor: Just on a point of order, Ryan, what is the name of the file on the shared drive, if you don't mind? I couldn't find it or I didn't see it before. I apologize if it's there.

Mr. Ryan Turnbull: I don't know. I have it printed out here. I printed it off. I can't remember the name of file because I'm not looking at it right now. It's one of the notices of motion, and I think it would have my name on it.

The Chair: For clarity, Mr. Vaughan, could you recite the amendment, please?

Mr. Adam Vaughan: My amendment was to amend Mr. Ryan's motion to read that the study on social finance be first and that the time be amended to three weeks, that it be followed by the motion presented by Madam Gazan and that that be three weeks, that that study be followed by Madam Falk's motion on seniors and that that be three weeks, and that we agree that the Bloc be in the position to choose the fourth study after that.

Mr. Adam Vaughan: I mean meetings.

We have a very strong tradition of receiving written submissions that allow us to create reports. It's not just about live testimony. We also have a robust capacity to receive reports and information from stakeholders who are very engaged in all of these issues.

The Chair: Do you mean weeks or meetings?

The Chair: Mr. Tochor, I think that's what you were looking for.

Are there any further submissions before I move to the next person on the speakers list?

Mr. Vis.

Mr. Brad Vis: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'm just trying to pull up some notes here from our digital binder from our meeting on October 28. The minutes say:

The committee proceeded to the consideration of matters related to committee business.

A point of order was raised by Jenny Kwan related to a possible breach of privilege.

RULING BY CHAIR

The Chair ruled that the point of order did not touch on a matter of privilege.

I remember that meeting. It was pretty intense.

The question: "Shall the decision of the Chair be sustained?" was put and the decision was sustained on the following recorded division....

Your subcommittee met on Wednesday, October 21, 2020, to consider the business of the committee and agreed to make the following recommendations:

1. That, pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), the committee's study on urban, rural, and northern Indigenous housing be composed of six meetings.
2. That prioritized witness lists for the study on urban, rural, and northern Indigenous housing be sent to the clerk of the committee by Friday, October 30, 2020.
3. That the Parliamentary Budget Officer be invited....
4. That, pursuant to the order of reference of Wednesday, September 30, 2020, the committee conduct a study on the Main Estimates 2020-21; that the study include, but not be limited to, the following witnesses....

We won't go into that.

5. That the subcommittee meet towards the end of the study on urban, rural, and northern Indigenous housing to provide recommendations on the prioritization of the following studies:

- a. That, pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), the committee conduct an ongoing study of the rapid housing initiative as the program is rolled-out over the next six months to Wednesday, March 31, 2021; that all aspects of the proposed program be examined, with specific focus paid to the number and location of units acquired....

I won't go on, but I will say that, at the end of it, it says:

...the Chief Executive Officer of the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation appear for two hours at a seventh meeting to testify; that the initial meeting be held no later than Saturday, October 31, 2020 and the final meeting be held by Friday, April 30, 2021....

What we already agreed to, Mr. Chair, has not been followed. For the Liberals to come forward with another motion, when we had a really intense meeting in committee business on October 28 and we're not following what we already went through, is wrong.

After that, it said, "b. That, pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), the committee undertake a study on the review of the employment insurance program", which we're doing.

What the committee agreed to do on rapid housing hasn't been followed and I don't think that's fair. I could go on about this, but it's just not right. We work pretty well on this committee. Generally it's been pretty good, but for the Liberals to try to throw our schedule off and, frankly, to not give Rosemary—who's not here today—who's been really amenable to a lot of different studies, a chance to discuss seniors, because the Liberals are trying to hide that seniors aged 65 to 75 didn't get the OAS, is wrong.

I think the clerk needs to come back to us, Mr. Chair, and give us a review of everything we've agreed to in committee business, all of the motions passed, so that we can make an informed decision. I thought we were coming here in good faith for a quick meeting today and the Liberals started to filibuster because they didn't want to deal with the business before us, probably because they knew we were up for a Conservative study on seniors and they didn't want to have to address the points the budget made.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

• (1800)

The Chair: Colleagues, we've reach the appointed hour, but we require the consent of the committee to adjourn. Is it the will of the committee to adjourn and to continue these discussions on Tuesday? If it isn't, we will continue.

Do we take a standing vote? I can't read the room and I don't want to pretend to do so.

Ms. Leah Gazan: I have a point of order, Chair, very quickly. We'll get those documents before the next meeting? I think we could do it if we came on the same page.

The Chair: Absolutely, yes. They're readily available.

Ms. Leah Gazan: Thank you.

The Chair: Is it the will of the committee to adjourn or to continue?

Mr. Corey Tochor: Adjourn.

Mr. Adam Vaughan: Do not adjourn.

The Chair: Do we have consensus to adjourn?

Mr. Adam Vaughan: No.

Mr. Corey Tochor: Let's call the question.

The Chair: No, we're not going to call the question until we exhaust the speakers list.

Actually, we have Mr. Tochor.

Mr. Corey Tochor: No, I believe Madam Chabot was up next.

The Chair: Madam Chabot.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Louise Chabot: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

It is not the first time you are being asked to return all the motions back to us. It's okay for them to be returned again. I invite all my colleagues to read the transcript of the February 2 meeting, which was held less than six months ago. We did the exact same thing, and we reached consensus.

I do want us to move things ahead, but we should do so in another meeting. For our benefit, I remind you that a certain number of meetings are set aside for the study and that our work sometimes takes longer than predicted. There may be unforeseen circumstances in committee, such as the receiving of bills or appearances by ministers, which are very important.

We must be able to determine how much time we have left for this study and to remember the meeting of February 2. I actually invite my colleagues to reread the meeting's transcript. The motions could also be sent to us.

• (1805)

[*English*]

Ms. Raquel Dancho: Do you want to move to adjourn?

The Chair: I believe that we saw consensus to adjourn, and then there was a suggestion that we should call the question.

Mr. Tochor wants to speak.

You have the floor, sir.

Mr. Corey Tochor: I move to adjourn, Chair.

We're past the time that was allotted for this meeting. We came here in good faith and were kind of jumped on, with questionable motives by some members.

I move that we adjourn.

The Chair: Do we have consensus to adjourn?

Some hon. members: No.

The Chair: We do not have consensus to adjourn.

Mr. Vis.

Mr. Brad Vis: If we're not going to adjourn, maybe the analyst can get back to us right now.

I'm sure they've been pulling up old committee notices of meetings and stuff. They can maybe just give us an update for the time being. I would like to hear from the analyst, please, on all of the studies agreed to right now, if that's okay.

The Chair: Ms. Gazan.

Ms. Leah Gazan: I feel that I've learned about filibusters today—over and over.

The majority of the committee wants to adjourn. We can meet the next time with documentation. I think it's critical that we're on the same page.

I'm here to get things done for my riding, as an elected official. I want to see the housing study finished. The more we banter about all of this stuff, the longer we wait on the results of the URN study, which is something that I think is critical. I have my agenda too. I'm willing to put my motion forward next. I didn't get an opportunity to read my motion in this meeting.

There seems to be some sort of consensus from Madam Dancho, talking about guaranteed income, seniors and what was proposed by Mr. Turnbull. I agree that the study on seniors is a critical one as well. I think that's where I'm at with it.

Mr. Colin Carrie: I have a point of order, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: We have a point of order from Mr. Carrie and then from Mr. Tochor.

Mr. Carrie, go ahead.

Mr. Colin Carrie: Mr. Chair, I believe we have a motion on the floor to adjourn.

I don't believe you need consensus. It's a dilatory motion. I think we just go to an immediate vote.

The Chair: I think you're right.

I don't see consensus to adjourn, so can we have a standing vote, Madam Clerk, on the motion to adjourn the meeting?

(Motion agreed to: yeas 6; nays 5)

The Chair: Thank you, colleagues.

We'll undoubtedly continue this discussion on Tuesday. Have a great evening.

We are adjourned.

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