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# Standing Committee on National Defence

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Chair: Mrs. Karen McCrimmon





## Standing Committee on National Defence

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• (1110)

[English]

**The Chair (Mrs. Karen McCrimmon (Kanata—Carleton, Lib.)):** I call this meeting to order.

[Translation]

Good morning, everyone.

[English]

Welcome to meeting number 32 of the House of Commons Standing Committee on National Defence.

[Translation]

Today's meeting is in hybrid format, pursuant to the motion adopted by the House on January 25, 2021. The members will be present in person or through Zoom. The proceedings will be made available on the House of Commons website. So you are aware, the webcast will always show the person speaking, rather than the entirety of the committee.

[English]

If interpretation is lost, please let us know right away. We want to make sure everyone can fully participate in today's debate.

I think we have one member here in person. Madam Gallant, welcome. That will be easy.

As a reminder, all comments by members should be addressed through the chair.

As a reminder, to myself as much as everyone else, please try to speak slowly and clearly. When you're not speaking, your mike should be on mute.

With regard to a speaking list, the committee clerk and I will do the best we can to maintain a consolidated order of speaking for those participating virtually or in person.

Pursuant to Standing Order 106(4), the committee is meeting today to consider a request, received by the clerk and submitted by four members of the committee, to discuss the request for additional witnesses for the study of addressing sexual misconduct in the Canadian Armed Forces, including the allegations against former chief of the defence staff, Jonathan Vance.

I will now open the floor for debate.

Go ahead, Mr. Bezan.

**Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC):** Thank you, Madam Chair.

In light of the discussion we had earlier this week and having failed to take a final decision on a motion that was before us at that time, I have submitted a slightly updated version of the motion, which I'll read into the record now. Then I'll speak to that motion. I move:

That, in respect of the committee's study on addressing sexual misconduct issues in the Canadian Armed Forces, including the allegations against former Chief of the Defence Staff Jonathan Vance,

(a) recalling that Zita Astravas, former Chief of Staff to the Minister of National Defence, was invited on Monday, March 8, 2021, to appear before the committee within 14 days, and was ordered by the House of Commons on Thursday, March 25, 2021, to appear before the committee on Tuesday, April 6, 2021, and did not appear on either occasion, the committee issue a summons for Zita Astravas to appear before this committee, at a televised meeting, at a date and time determined by the Chair which is no later than Thursday, May 27, 2021, until she is released by the committee, provided that, in the event Zita Astravas defaults on the summons,

(i) the Clerk and analysts be directed to prepare a brief report to the House, outlining the material facts of the possible contempt the situation would represent, to be considered by the committee, in public, at its first meeting after the consideration of the main report on the study has been completed, and

(ii) the Minister of National Defence and Gary Walbourne, former National Defence and Canadian Forces Ombudsman, be invited to appear jointly on a panel for two hours, at a televised meeting, no later than Thursday, May 27, 2021; and

(b) the provisions of the motion adopted on Monday, April 12, 2021, concerning a report to the House, be supplemented as follows:

(i) notwithstanding the motion adopted on Monday, April 12, 2021, drafting instructions and recommendations arising from the evidence received by the committee after Friday, April 16, 2021, may be sent to the Clerk, (A) in respect of evidence received before the adoption of this motion, within 24 hours of the adoption of this motion, or (B) in respect of evidence received as a consequence of paragraph (a) within 24 hours of the adjournment of the meeting where the evidence was received,

(ii) until Friday, May 28, 2021, the committee hold at least one meeting per week to receive evidence related to the study and at least one meeting per week to consider the draft report,

(iii) at 2:45 p.m. on Friday, May 28, 2021, or, if the committee is not then sitting, immediately after the committee is next called to order, the proceedings before the committee shall be interrupted, if required for the purposes of the motion adopted on Monday, April 12, 2021, and every question necessary for the disposal of the draft report, including on each proposed recommendation which has not been disposed of, shall be put, forthwith and successively, without further debate or amendment,

(iv) the committee declines to request, pursuant to Standing Order 109, that the government table a comprehensive response to the report, and

(v) dissenting or supplementary opinions or recommendations shall be filed, pursuant to Standing Order 108(1)(b), in both official languages, no later than 4:00 p.m. on Friday, June 4, 2021.

Madam Chair, the motion I just tabled reflects the amendment that was carried at our meeting earlier this week, removing the request to call witnesses concerning the allegations around Major General Dany Fortin, and a timeline has been updated so that we hear from Ms. Astravas or from the Minister of Defence and Gary Walbourne by the end of business on May 27, which is Thursday of next week.

Madam Chair, this committee has spent a lot of time with the Liberals filibustering motions to call witnesses, in particular Zita Astravas, but others as well. I believe there should have been a recent analysis done that shows that committees have spent an extended amount of time in ongoing debates, extended committee sittings and hours, which could also be interpreted as filibusters, and 77% of committee time has been wasted by Liberal filibusters.

I would also say, Madam Chair, that in this committee in itself, with the practice that you continue to use of suspending meetings, we have spent over 11 days in suspension. We've been suspended 20 different times. We are headed to a long weekend. I would hope that committee members this time would want to debate the motion and not spend ongoing time talking about all sorts of other things that are not relevant to calling Zita Astravas. The reason Zita Astravas is so important, Madam Chair, is that she's the one who can bring some clarity to the conflicting testimony we received.

● (1115)

We have Minister Sajjan, who said he was surprised when this became public. Then we found out that Gary Walbourne had presented the information regarding allegations against General Vance three years ago, on March 1, 2018. Minister Sajjan then said he provided that information to the Clerk of the Privy Council. The Clerk of the Privy Council at the time, Michael Wernick, told committee that he received the information and the request to look at the allegations from Elder Marques. We have Elder Marques saying that he got the information and that the allegations came from Katie Telford and her office. Katie Telford is the chief of staff to the Prime Minister. When she appeared, she said that she got the information from Elder Marques.

One missing link in all of this is Zita Astravas, the former chief of staff to Minister Sajjan, who three years ago, in March 2018, provided this information up the chain. We believe she would be able to bring light to this discussion with regard to where things started to go awry.

Why was this never looked into? Why didn't this actually get investigated, despite claims by Liberals that there was an investigation?

We've heard from both the past Clerk of the Privy Council and the current Clerk of the Privy Council that they never investigated. They just had some meetings with Gary Walbourne.

Madam Chair, I would suggest to committee members that we get on with summoning Zita Astravas. Calling her has not worked to date. If the government decides that it isn't going to allow her to appear, then expect to have Minister Sajjan appear alongside Gary Walbourne so we can get down to the bottom of who's actually telling the truth.

This is important, Madam Chair, if we are going to change the culture and if we are going to expose who decided not to tell the Prime Minister. If we are going to ultimately bring about the culture change that's so desperately needed within the Canadian Armed Forces, so that women and men can go to work and know they're not going to be sexually harassed and experience misbehaviour by people in the workplace, including their commanding officers, then we need to get down to how this broke apart three years ago, how this undermined Operation Honour, and ultimately how we find ourselves in the situation today of now having several commanding officers, general and flag officers, currently under investigation for their own sexual misbehaviour and misconduct.

Chair, I look forward to our coming to a realization of the necessity of this motion so that we can get a report done and tabled in the House after June 4 and, ultimately, make recommendations that will provide a path forward for our forces.

**The Chair:** All right.

Thank you very much, Mr. Bezan.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Barsalou-Duval, you have the floor.

● (1120)

**Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ):** Thank you, Madam Chair.

At the last meeting, we already had the opportunity to talk about the motion. This motion is very similar to the motion moved and amended at the last meeting, so I won't elaborate on it. Clearly, it should be accepted by the committee. I think that we all want to know the truth about what happened. It's in the public interest.

I want to take this opportunity to move an amendment. The text was sent to the clerk a few moments ago. It seeks to amend Mr. Bezan's motion by adding the following:

(b)(vi) given a. the scope of the current study, which is likely to lead to new facts; b. and, that the committee believes that a report is urgently needed to put an end to the culture that has existed for too long within the CAF in order to prevent additional victims of sexual misconduct; that an interim report be presented in order to give the committee time to conduct a complete study of the issue and to complete its final study, while allowing for the implementation of recommendations as soon as possible.

I'll explain the purpose of this amendment. Since the committee began its study of this topic, new developments have been occurring on a regular basis. We've also seen filibustering, particularly by the Liberals, but also by other committee members.

As I said several times, we must table a report and make recommendations. It looks like further developments will come to light. I think that the committee must give itself the flexibility needed to continue working on this issue, especially as it becomes increasingly difficult and complicated to organize the committee's schedule with additional items and witnesses.

We must do everything possible to ensure that an interim report is tabled for the victims and that recommendations can be made.

Moreover, we must have everything that we need to continue the work, which I think is very important.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** *Stand by for a minute.*

As has been protocol in this committee when we receive late notices or motions, we're going to suspend for a few minutes until everyone has had a chance to have a read.

• (1120) \_\_\_\_\_ (Pause) \_\_\_\_\_

• (1135)

**The Chair:** I'm going to call this meeting back to order.

Everyone has now had a bit of time to read it.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Barsalou-Duval, can you provide the details of the amendment and explain it to the committee members?

**Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval:** Madam Chair, I would be happy to do so, even though I believed that my remarks when the amendment was moved provided enough information for people to form an opinion. However, I understand that people needed to read a bit of the content to get a better idea.

For the most part, we feel pressed for time and constrained. I personally feel that a report is necessary. It's important for the victims and for providing direction. However, the evidence provided sometimes makes me feel that we're constantly under pressure. This forces us to make tough choices and prevents us from exploring the issue as extensively as we would like.

I moved this amendment so that we can reconcile these two needs.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

Mr. Garrison, please.

**Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, NDP):** Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

I want to start with a few general remarks on where we are. An unfortunate tendency that I've seen in the committee is for some members of the committee to claim to speak for survivors and victims and to have exclusive concern for survivors and victims, and if you don't share their opinion on how this committee should act, somehow you're not standing up for survivors.

I'd urge all of us not to fall into that trap of questioning who is, in fact, concerned about making change here. That's in front of all of us, and we have all expressed our opinions quite clearly on that.

What's important here is that women, in particular, be able to serve equally in the Canadian military, and we've known for the past six years that is not possible because of the highly sexualized, hypermasculine culture in the Canadian military.

Nothing has really happened about that of significance, and we continue to have one complaint of sexual assault or sexual misconduct filed about, on average, once every three days. Clearly, what-

ever measures have been taken have been inadequate to address this.

When we talk about this question, sometimes I think we confuse the study we're doing in this committee with the study that's going on in the status of women committee. This committee's study, if you look carefully at its terms of reference, was to determine why nothing happened with the accusations against General Vance as the person in charge of Operation Honour when he was in fact accused of sexual misconduct himself. Why is there that vacuum at the top? Why was there that failure for three years, of leaving General Vance in office and in charge of Operation Honour?

I know sometimes people have said we're focusing too much on one case. This isn't one case. This is the chief of the defence staff, who was in charge of Operation Honour. It is critical to the credibility of any future reforms that this committee determine what happened, why no action was taken and why General Vance was left in charge. If that question is not answered, and if there aren't changes as a result of that answer, then it puts in question all the reforms that we want to talk about going forward and all those reforms that are necessary to change the culture of the Canadian Armed Forces.

In terms of the committee's work, I note Mr. Bezan's figures he's provided on the amount of time that is spent diverting this committee from its work, and as I said in the last one, I'm quite disappointed that the efforts to deal with the effects of COVID on the military and mental health in the military have been shoved aside in order to focus on a report on which it's very difficult for us to reach a consensus. We could have very clearly dealt with those other two reports in an expeditious manner.

In that sense, Mr. Barsalou-Duval's amendment may be helpful in that we could do an interim report and it would allow us perhaps to get back to the work on which we have a large degree of consensus here and there was a large degree of consensus among the witnesses we heard.

One last thing that disturbs me about the discussion is the tendency for certain members to say that Mr. Bezan and I are engaged in finger pointing. I think this trivializes the accountability function of Parliament. We are finger pointing. We are looking for the people responsible, and in a parliamentary system there must be a minister responsible for this failure to act in ways that have been effective over the past six years on the issue of sexual misconduct.

It's not finger pointing to seek to assign responsibility in a parliamentary system. It's a fundamental part of a parliamentary government, and that's certainly what I'm interested in doing, because if we can figure out either who ordered there to be no investigation into General Vance, or if we discover that no one ordered this and the ball was simply dropped at the most senior level, then what change are we going to see that will provide confidence for members in the Canadian Forces that this issue will be taken seriously?

We've heard all the promises. We've heard all the fine words over the last six years. What is going to change here to make sure this doesn't continue going forward?

While I have some concerns about wording, I'm not going to quibble with the amendment. I am prepared to support the amendment if it allows us to get at that question of who is ultimately responsible here for failing the men and women who serve in the Canadian Forces, and if this allows us to get back to some of the other important work of the committee.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

• (1140)

**The Chair:** All right. Madam Damoff is next.

**Ms. Pam Damoff (Oakville North—Burlington, Lib.):** Thank you, Chair.

It's actually a pleasure to join this committee today. I'm not normally here, but obviously I have been following the debate and the issues that have been discussed, as all of us have been. I spoke in the House of Commons on one of the opposition day motions on this. I have to say, as someone looking in from the outside, I've been really disappointed at the direction the opposition has taken in not putting survivors at the heart of what the problem is.

I just want to quote Julie Lalonde, who said, "The blame does not lie with one individual, one leader or...one political party. Please keep your eyes on the prize and choose bravery when having this conversation."

I think she summarized it quite well. The system in place under the Conservative Party—under the previous Conservative government—did not serve women in the military, nor has the process, which is exactly the same process under our government, served the women and men of the military to make sure they feel safe and come forward. That's why there needs to be change, absolutely. Pointing fingers, laying blame and trying to find one person who's responsible will not solve the issue.

If you look at the military, the RCMP or Correctional Services, we've seen over and over again issues of power dynamics, of predominantly women being subjected to sexual violence, sexual harassment and sexual assault. It's completely unacceptable that anyone should not feel safe going to work and that people feel they need to go to work and be subjected to this kind of treatment.

This committee needs to get to doing a report and to finding solutions for these survivors of sexual violence. The committee does not need to continue to try to find one person to lay the blame on. You're doing a complete disservice to survivors if that's where you're going.

I think Julie hit the nail on the head that there's lots of blame to go around. What needs to be done is to fix the problem and to really stand up for the men and women in the armed forces who need to feel safe and comfortable. That's where we are going. That's why we've appointed Louise Arbour to take a look at this.

Yes, I know people will say we don't need more studies. That's true, but I think her role is really important to make sure we find a space for working with survivors whose voices have not been part of this conversation. We need to make sure survivors are at the heart of anything we do, and that they're part of the solution. It's ridiculous for us as MPs and politicians to be sitting here trying to

come up with what will serve people in the armed forces. We need to be inviting those survivors to join us to find solutions.

I'm just going to say again that, as Julie said, the blame does not lie with one individual, one leader or one political party. I could not agree with her more. It's time for us to try to put solutions before Parliament and get down to doing the hard work of writing a report. I appreciate the Bloc's bringing forward an amendment that's trying to move us forward in that way.

Thank you for letting me speak today, Chair, and for letting me be part of this important debate.

• (1145)

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Madam Damoff.

We will move on to Monsieur Serré.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Marc Serré (Nickel Belt, Lib.):** Thank you, Madam Chair.

Like Ms. Damoff, this is my first meeting with this committee.

I've been a member of the Standing Committee on the Status of Women for three years. I completely agree with what Ms. Damoff said. I was there for Julie Lalonde's testimony. Unfortunately, Ms. Lalonde isn't alone. The Standing Committee on the Status of Women met with Christine Wood from It's Just 700, with Stéphanie Raymond and with several other courageous women who came to share their experiences and tell us that we must move forward.

When I read the motion moved by the Conservatives today, I was disappointed that they wanted to focus on a specific issue involving an individual. I want to follow up on the Bloc amendment, which enables us to focus on specific recommendations today—

• (1150)

[*English*]

**Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC):** On a point of order, Madam Chair, the previous speaker, on whom I asked to have a point of order, seems to be speaking to the main motion. It is my understanding we are speaking to the amendment.

Would you please clarify what we're actually on?

**The Chair:** This is to the amendment, but I believe it's relevant.

**Mrs. Cheryl Gallant:** Well, he was talking about the Conservative motion, not the amendment.

**The Chair:** It's relative to the amendment being put forward because it affects the rollout of the report.

Carry on, Mr. Serré, please.

**Mr. Marc Serré:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

I think the experience I have in FEWO, hearing the witnesses, is very relevant. If we're looking at the amendment here and looking at the main motion, we see that they're all tied because we should be focusing on what the Bloc is proposing. The Bloc is proposing to get this to the recommendation stage and get this to the government for some action, because we've done a lot of the studies that go from both.

When we look at what we're doing today, I just want to make sure that—when we talk about ensuring survivors...and about sexual misconduct, harassment and assault—we must be really moving forward on this, because we've heard a lot of testimony, as I mentioned, all over. When we look at eliminating all forms of misconduct and abuse of power to really create a safe place here for the men and women in national defence and the armed forces.... It's really a priority, I know, for all the members here and all the members at FEWO, too.

It's really important that we address this. However, the amendment is a strong amendment, and it should be stand-alone because.... I'll go back. The Conservatives are ignoring the facts here. The facts are very, very clear: In 2018, the former national defence ombudsman, Gary Walbourne—who came to FEWO also—met with the Minister of National Defence, and this meeting was a normal meeting with staff. At the end, he asked to speak privately with the minister, and then he told the minister that he had evidence of misconduct against the former chief of the defence staff. The minister was right. He did not ask for any specific details of any nature of the allegations. We talked about this.

Instead of following a process.... The proper process was followed here, Madam Chair. When we look at the ombudsman and at the complaint and the sharing of information and then look at.... As Michael Wernick, the former clerk of the Privy Council, stated clearly here at the national defence committee, an impasse was reached and no further action was taken; there was no further action or allegation. That is what the former ombudsman called unacceptable.

Now we're in 2015, and let's go through the process that was taken right before General Vance's appointment as the new chief of the defence staff. The minister was made aware of the allegation or the rumour. He shared it with his chief of staff, who then shared it with the Privy Council Office and the Prime Minister's Office, including the chief of staff of the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister's chief of staff then ensured that the matter was looked into. This is all familiar. That's the process that was followed then, and that's because it was the same process. The leader of the opposition at the time thought it was serious enough that he had his staff reach out to the Prime Minister's Office. That's very important. That was followed. We want to assure Canadians that the matter was looked into at the time.

Let's explore that a bit more. We heard testimony from Ray Novak, then prime minister Harper's chief of staff, that they had the national security adviser investigate the rumours. How did he investigate? He went directly to General Vance. He asked him about the rumours. Well, this is wholly inappropriate. When someone comes forward, you should never tip off the person who's being investigated, regardless. General Vance assured him that there was nothing and that it was dealt with, and that's it and that's all. We

don't know if there was any follow-up. We don't know if it was looked into, but the Leader of the Opposition assured us that it was looked into. That's shocking, Madam Chair, considering all we've heard with regard to how that rumour was looked into: a former national adviser asking General Vance's opinion.

● (1155)

That is not a process. That is not appropriate. Frankly, it's disconcerting that the Conservative government just took Vance's word for it, especially considering there was already an active investigation being conducted by the Canadian Forces National Investigation Service, the CFNIS, into General Vance.

I know it's really hard when you look at it. I would remind our honourable colleagues of the very troubling news that we learned last week, that the CFNIS was actively investigating General Vance in 2015. More specifically, they were investigating General Vance right up to July 17, 2015.

Do my colleagues know what happened on July 17, 2015? General Vance was appointed as a new chief of the defence staff. Then we learned through an ATIP that the commanding officer in charge of the investigation was facing pressure to wrap up the investigation. Who was the pressure from exactly? Was it the then minister of national defence, the then prime minister, the then parliamentary secretary to the minister of national defence, or the current Leader of the Official Opposition?

Surely, we can argue, but we can also agree here that politicians should not be involved in these types of investigations. We've heard it clearly at the status of women committee. The extra pressure on an investigation to conclude would be completely inappropriate and perhaps, one might say, even illegal. However, we still haven't gotten a definite answer from the Conservatives as to who was putting that pressure. No one has answered. No one has details. No one has provided any details whatsoever.

**Mrs. Cheryl Gallant:** I have a point of order. I've been listening to what is supposedly a discussion on the amendment, but there is little or no relevance to the amendment itself. We don't even know whether the speaker is for or against the amendment, since he is so far away from the subject matter at hand.

Could we please get on to the amendment, so other people have a chance to speak for or against it?

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Gallant.

Go ahead, Mr. Serré.

**Mr. Marc Serré:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

I clearly did say that I appreciate the Bloc's bringing forward this amendment focusing on a victim-survivor centre. This is very important, but it's convoluted as an amendment to the main motion by the Conservatives making their point here.

What I was saying here is that, because so far the Leader of the Opposition has provided absolutely no details whatsoever on how this was handled in 2015, we don't know if it was the right way. It's very interesting that it hasn't been done.

Let's continue with the troubling news from last week that we looked at and I talked about earlier.

There was an investigation facing pressure that was abruptly ended on July 17, 2015. The investigation was officially closed on July 21, 2015, four days after General Vance was appointed. Why was that investigation closed four days after the appointment? Why wasn't it closed before there was an appointment? Why did the Conservative government appoint General Vance in 2015, with an active investigation from the CFNIS still ongoing?

Let's also look at the chain of command here. The CFNIS reports to the provost marshal. The provost marshal reports to the vice-chief of the defence staff. The vice-chief of the defence staff reports to the chief of the defence staff. That means that, when the investigation was closed, the chief of the defence staff may have been involved in that decision. We all remember at this point that, when the investigation was closed on July 21, 2015, the chief of the defence staff was then General Vance. This is incredibly troubling.

We not only have rumours that there weren't proper investigations; we also have the chief of the defence staff rushed through to an appointment even though there was an active investigation ongoing by the CFNIS. All this was because they wanted to appoint General Vance before the 2015 election, which was called only a few short weeks later.

We've all heard that the Conservative politicians are concerned about the process our government has followed: the one that ensured that the highest-ranking civil servant was aware and engaged on this issue, the one that went as far as it could because the former ombudsman stated that he could not provide the information because the complainant had not signed off on it, and the same one that the Conservatives followed in 2015.

They say that these rumours were acted upon in 2015. May I then ask, what action was different from the one we took? I'm sure my honourable colleagues will say that the national senior security adviser was involved. Well, the national security adviser in 2018, Daniel Jean, stated that he would not know the details or be involved in an investigation at that point, because there weren't enough details to investigate.

In fact, I quote him:

I wish to indicate that these 2018 allegations were never brought to my attention.

I also think it is important to add that this is not necessarily unusual, particularly, as I explained before, if PCO senior personnel were not able to obtain information that would have allowed and warranted the pursuit of an investigation.

Therefore, we know why the NSA wasn't involved by the top civil servant of Canada.

If the Conservatives can explain how it was different, I would be shocked, because, as you know, it wasn't; it was the same. Now it's clear that the process isn't perfect, and the Prime Minister has clearly stated that there needs to be improvement so that no such impacts can happen again.

Let me lay out the facts one more time. The Conservatives followed the exact same process we did in 2015. The Conservatives appointed General Vance when there was an active investigation into him with respect to rumours that the Leader of the Opposition

says were looked into. The only thing we know about how they were looked into was the national security adviser going directly to General Vance and asking his opinion; and, finally, there was pressure on the investigation of General Vance to conclude.

• (1200)

This is very concerning. We deserve answers. Canadians deserve answers. Survivors deserve answers.

When we look at the amendment that's presented today—thank you to the Bloc for the amendment—the problem is that it's tied into the Conservatives' amendment, which doesn't focus on survivors, doesn't look at solutions and doesn't look at moving forward. We heard this clearly.

I'll stop now, Madam Chair, but I have a long list of victims—of survivors—who came to us at status of women and clearly said to please focus on making changes and on making this better and leave the politics aside, as Julie Lalonde and many others have said.

Let's move forward. Let's support our victims. Let's support our survivors. Let's get these recommendations in the House of Commons so we can properly debate them and move forward, supporting the victims. We clearly heard that.

I will have more to say on this later on, Madam Chair, if need be.

• (1205)

Thank you for allowing me to spend time at the national defence committee, bringing that survivor perspective that we have heard so much at the status of women committee.

[*Translation*]

Thank you, Madam Chair.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Serré.

[*English*]

I will move on to Mr. Bagnell, please.

**Hon. Larry Bagnell (Yukon, Lib.):** Thank you.

I'll be very brief. I have a lot to say, but on the main motion. As Mr. Serré said, it's unfortunate they're tied together so closely. It's too bad that wasn't set aside...the various problems with the main motion. I won't discuss those right now.

I did want to comment at the moment, though, on a couple of things that were said today.

One is that we want to unearth the truth, which is why the main motion is still there. I think Mr. Serré has outlined very seriously where the truth, if people want to go that way.... Personally, I want to stay with where I think the amendment is heading and where many members want to head in coming up with solutions to the problems, the systemic culture and reprisals, etc. For those on the committee who think the best answer is to go back, then obviously the serious complaints are the ones that were just outlined by Mr. Marc Serré.



It was said near the beginning of the meeting again, by different parties, that nothing happened or there was a failure to act. That was true back in 2015, apparently. I'll go into great detail later about when General Vance was appointed. In this particular case, they're reminding people of the situation. When people say that nothing happened, that's further from the truth. There was an email. No one knows what's in it, because the CAF member had every right to want confidentiality and to not provide the information. It was turned in within 24 hours for investigation. It was investigated as far as it could have been. That was done.

Numerous times, people in this committee have suggested that wasn't done. The one email—the one situation we're talking about—was handled as far as it could have been. It respected the CAF member's confidentiality.

As Mr. Garrison said, there are still many ongoing instances, very frequently. For the people who are here for the first time today, you'll see many times in the evidence that the Liberal members have said exactly that: In spite of the many steps taken by the minister, there's still much more to do. Because the minister took those various steps.... I won't repeat them. They've been outlined in great detail in this committee. No one has mentioned any minister before who has done more.

I think the way to move forward is to give a minister, who's totally onside with acting and has acted in a number of instances, the recommendations on the survivors, as the Bloc says, so we can actually make a difference. As Ms. Damoff said, we can help the survivors and keep that the focus of this.

I'll leave it at that for now. I really want to discuss the main motion.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr. Bagnell.

Madam Vandenberg, please.

• (1210)

**Ms. Anita Vandenberg (Ottawa West—Nepean, Lib.):** Perfect.

I know we're debating an amendment that.... I'll be honest. I appreciate very much that Mr. Barsalou-Duval has put forward this particular amendment. I know we had some conversations about perhaps being able to go through that very long draft report—over 60 pages, I believe—and choose the things we know we all agree on. As I've said before, I believe firmly that every member of this committee wants what's best for the women and men of the Canadian Armed Forces. I have no doubt about that.

I think we have some differences in terms of how best to do that, and that's legitimate. I think the idea of being able to pull out the recommendations that we agree on, to put out an interim report, to have that conversation, and then to continue with the ones that perhaps there isn't agreement for, is a really good idea. The problem is that it's in a motion, the main motion, which has a time limit on when that can happen. If you look at the calendar right now, by my calculation, it leaves about an hour and 45 minutes to actually debate that 60-plus page report, to go through it and to find consensus on each one. I'm a bit concerned about that. Perhaps that's something the committee might be capable of doing. I hope very much that we are.

What I'd really appreciate would be if Mr. Bezan could withdraw this motion. I know that our next meeting is planned to study the draft report. If there seems to be a willingness of members of the committee to pull those things that really matter to finding solutions to this, those areas where we can find consensus, I think that's a good idea.

My problem is that it's amending a motion that doesn't allow any time for us to be able to have that discussion to reach that consensus. I would not want members of the committee to just vote—boom, boom, boom—without any debate on these, and not have the kind of thoughtful report that we would need.

I'm still not entirely certain. What I do agree on 100% with Mr. Barsalou-Duval is the part of the amendment that says we need to end the culture that has persisted for too long in the Canadian Armed Forces. I absolutely agree with him. I know that's something all members of this committee believe in and want to do.

We have now spent four months hearing from witnesses, and each time we think we're at the point where we can actually start looking at the draft of the report so we can put recommendations forward, there are emergency meetings and motions to bring new witnesses. Each time, with thoughtfulness, the committee has said, "Okay, let's call those witnesses." We called Mr. Marques and we called Ms. Telford, but as soon as we're ready to start, there's always another motion.

I'll be honest. I don't believe that if we pass this motion or even the amendment, there wouldn't be yet another. Honestly, I think the best solution would be to withdraw the motion and allow the chair to call the meeting on Friday, at our next planned sitting, to be able to actually start going through these draft reports.

Having said that, I want to discuss some of the pieces of this amendment that talk about the culture. I would take exception to members of this committee who suggest that anybody's speaking for survivors because, throughout this process, I have been reading recommendations that came from survivors. They were either written by survivors, or spoken in testimony, whether it's testimony in our committee or testimony in the status of women committee. This is not necessarily what I think should happen. These are recommendations that have been presented by survivors.

We know that survivors are not a homogeneous group. We know there are many different views. In fact, there are many different views about what the solutions are. I have heard people suggest that Madame Arbour's review is not necessary because there's already a review from six years ago. We saw, with the Deschamps report that there was, I believe, a goodwill intent to try to implement those recommendations.

We created the SMRCs, the sexual misconduct response centres, and gave them specialized ability, external support and additional resources to be a point of contact and to assist survivors.

The SMRCs are doing a wonderful job. What we didn't realize at the time, and what is becoming very apparent now, is that taking it out of the Canadian Armed Forces but still putting it under the Department of National Defence, the civilian side, was not what survivors consider to be complete independence. What we're realizing now is that we need to go beyond that, but it's very intertwined.

• (1215)

We have as many solutions being proposed as there are problems.

Madame Deschamps made it clear that there needs to be an external independent body, but did not say how or what it's going to look like. The details of it were not there. For those who are saying, well, just do it, we've already seen a number of different people—different survivors, advocates, academics—who have come up with very different perceptions of what the how is. For many, the how is, as we've even heard, that perhaps it would be the ombudsperson reporting to Parliament. We've heard people say it has to be the SMRC, because they're the ones with specialized knowledge about sexual misconduct and we need to have something that's not about all issues where you might call an ombudsperson, but about sexual misconduct.

Then you have some who say no, if it's within the SMRC, then you have perpetrators and the people who are impacted in the same institution, and you need a firewall between them. Many have called for something like an inspector general, completely outside the chain of command. Then what would that be? What would that role be?

We know that the military justice system is something many survivors have asked us to take a look at. We know there have been many survivors whose experience with that system and experience with the military police system and with their chain of command has been very harmful to them. We need to look at that as well.

When those people are saying that Madame Deschamps had all of the road map, identified the problem, identified what the general solutions had to be... By the way, we've implemented many of those solutions. We had a piece of legislation, Bill C-77, that was specifically about a victim's declaration of rights.

Looking at the military justice system, we know right now that former Justice Morris Fish is finalizing a report about that system. This is a result of a mandatory review of the National Defence Act. I would hope this committee would be interested in that report when it is tabled with this committee, and will take the time to call Justice Fish and talk about that.

In fact, our next study after this is about military justice. We know that military justice is core to making sure there is support for survivors to be able to get the just outcome they're looking for.

There are so many proposals around this, even in our committee. We heard many different solutions, and we're having Madame Arbour look at all of this and be able to give the road map and give the how—how are we going to achieve this, taking all the different viewpoints about what it should look like and putting them together and actually creating a system based on the lived experience of survivors and on preventing that there be more survivors, which by the

way, this amendment says? I'm very appreciative to my colleague from the Bloc for putting that in this amendment, because that's precisely what we have to do when we're looking at the solutions.

If the committee were to find consensus around some of these points and present that as an interim report, I think those points of consensus would carry a lot of weight because, instead of a committee report where you have four parties saying completely different things and different supplemental or dissenting reports, you would have a report that has the thoughtfulness of all parties together focused on the women and men.

That would be a wonderful idea. To be honest, I'm a little concerned. Given the discussions that have happened, I don't know if we'll get there, but I hope we do. I appreciate that Mr. Barsalou-Duval is trying, at least. He's putting forward something that might actually give us a path to where we could find that consensus.

However, regardless of that, we know that right now we have General Carignan, who is assigned to take all the different pieces of this across CAF, across the Department of National Defence, and pull it all together and not wait a year for a report.

I think this is also a little cynical when people say, well, we're taking Madame Arbour and just doing another review so we can wait. We've said very clearly—and at some point I would like to read the speech I gave when we announced Madame Arbour and General Carignan—that we're going to be implementing...

First of all, the minister has said that Madame Arbour's recommendations will be binding, that we are going to act on them, but also that we will be implementing them as the interim measures come forward.

• (1220)

That means that as General Carignan is set up, when Madame Arbour suggests we need to act quickly on this particular piece, she's already in place and she'll already be able to start implementing those measures right now. We're talking within weeks. For those survivors who are listening, I know that time is urgent and that we have to do something now.

I have heard you and I've had conversations, and I know this is a really difficult time for survivors. It's a difficult time for those people in the Canadian Armed Forces who have experienced this horrendous and intolerable behaviour, who haven't yet come forward. I want to say to you that I don't blame you. I know we talk about courage with people who come forward. There is no lack of courage if you're at a point where you're not ready to come forward. However, our job, our accountability as legislators, is to make sure we create a system where you can, where you feel safe, where you feel comfortable, where you know that if you come forward you will be able to have empowerment over how that process unfolds, and that you yourself will be able to control how you can advance that.

If what you want is that the person who perpetrated comes to justice, we have a system in place that will make sure that happens. If what you need is peer support, if what you need is counselling, if what you need is just to put forward ideas, solutions or proposals to fix the system so the next person doesn't go through what you went through, that has to be an avenue for you as well.

It isn't one thing. We know that for survivors there are many steps and often it's difficult being the first. What we're seeing in the Canadian Armed Forces, and I can speak from personal experience, is that often you don't want to be the first one to speak up. You want to see if somebody else has gone through the same thing and then speak up. I think that is what's happening. When people feel that they see consequences, that there is no impunity, at that point they will start seeing more people feel comfortable and safe coming forward.

Our goal and our objective right now is to create a process that makes it safe, where you do not have to fear reprisal, where you have control over how the process unfolds, where you have advocates, where you have information about what your options are and what each of them looks like, that if you decide to do this, it's not going to lead to a process over which you no longer feel you have control; it also needs to be a process that makes sure this doesn't happen again. Doing that means that in regard to the people who are doing this behaviour—and we've seen it, criminal behaviour—but also the behaviours that minimize and diminish and make people feel small and unwelcome, everything along that spectrum has a process where it can be dealt with and people at a certain point can see a just outcome.

What we're seeing in the Canadian Armed Forces right now is very hard, but it's something we have to go through. Once the high profile cases came forward, once people started to speak their truth and once you had people saying, "This happened to me," and doing so in a public forum, which is incredibly difficult and frankly shouldn't have to be the way to do it...

There have been ways to do this both confidentially and also through a military justice process, and publicly if that's what the person wishes to do, but once people started to do that, we started to see consequences. We have actual military police investigations happening right now. We have an entire Canadian Armed Forces that is looking at this issue of changing the culture. We have a number of people who have had to step aside because of these investigations, and seeing that is going to make others feel empowered that they too can speak out.

I believe we are going to see more of this, and I don't think that's necessarily a bad thing, because it's something we have to go through in order to get to the other side of this, which is having a culture within the Canadian Armed Forces that allows people to thrive. It is not enough to stop this behaviour. It is not enough to stop the harm. It's not enough to stop the diminishing remarks.

• (1225)

We heard Professor Okros talk about how power is defined, with this idea of a normative masculine warrior culture that is really based in a World War I, in-the-trenches kind of concept of what a military is.

The Canadian Armed Forces is going through a tremendous shift, as are armed forces around the world. There are so many occupations, and so much of it is based on intelligence. So much of it is different from the toxic masculinity that there is currently in the Canadian Armed Forces. This is not to say that all members or that individual members in the Canadian Armed Forces are somehow not good. This is about a systemic culture that frankly hurts women, but it also hurts men because it creates this kind of normative.

As soon as you don't fit into that, as soon as you're a bit different—and we see this with all kinds of identity factors—you feel unwelcome. I've heard it. I've heard it from so many people who feel that it isn't even the really overt criminal activities; it's every step along the way that escalates until it gets to that point.

That's what we need to focus on. I'm so glad this amendment talks specifically about the culture. I have a lot more to say about the culture. I know that some of my colleagues have their hands up, so I'll make sure they get a chance to speak.

Mr. Barsalou-Duval, by focusing on the culture but also focusing on the survivors, is doing a great service here. I'm still not convinced that it gets us beyond the impasse, but I hope that the members of the committee can think about what he has said here so that perhaps we find a way forward. We can still have a report that is going to provide recommendations and that perhaps we can say has the support of all members of this committee from all parties, because this is not a partisan issue. This is something I think all Canadians share. We are in a very difficult time right now in the Canadian Armed Forces. We need to get through this time in such a way that we can come out of it stronger, with better processes and better procedures, so that this doesn't happen again.

At the end of the day, as I said, it's not enough to stop harm; we need to create a Canadian Armed Forces in which people thrive, in which everybody is appreciated for what they bring, and in which diversity brings strength. This is where we want to get.

This is only the first step. I very much look forward to the work of Ms. Arbour and General Carignan on this. I really hope members of the committee can set aside politics and really try to have some recommendations on which we can build constructively so we can find a way forward to build a better institution at the end of this.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Vandenberg.

We go now to Mr. Lightbound.

Go ahead, please.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Joël Lightbound (Louis-Hébert, Lib.):** Thank you, Madam Chair.

I want to thank my colleagues for their remarks and for their invitation. This is my first time participating in the committee or attending one of its meetings.

I want to start by saying that I appreciate Mr. Barsalou-Duval's amendment. As my colleague pointed out, it helps set the stage for the committee's recommendations and testimony to make their way through the House, thereby enlightening Canadians and the Canadian Armed Forces about the culture change needed within the military. From what I've seen, a great deal of testimony in the committee focused on what must change. We know that systemic change is needed within the Canadian Armed Forces.

However, as noted, this amendment is related to a motion to limit the amount of time that the committee can spend on considering these recommendations and carefully analyzing the testimony. I serve on the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security, where we're finalizing an equally important report on systemic racism in our police forces, including the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. We've spent many meetings considering all the testimony heard by the committee, much of it very disturbing, and the recommendations for changing the culture within the police forces to address systemic racism. Based on my experience, I can tell you that all this requires time and thoughtful discussion.

It isn't always easy. The parties and members of Parliament approach these issues from different perspectives. As noted by my colleague, Ms. Vandenberg, the committee must take the time to build consensus, which holds much more weight than preparing separate reports. As parliamentarians, we must find common ground, take the time to hold these discussions and determine the most effective way to make the necessary culture changes.

We must join forces because there's strength in numbers. We must come up with recommendations that everyone can agree on. Given the importance of the committee's study and the issue at hand, the committee must take the time to build consensus so that parliamentarians can join forces and make recommendations that will lead to the desired outcome. This outcome is a culture change for men, women and the Canadian Armed Forces. For too long, they have endured a broken system that must be fixed and corrected.

On that note, I think that the main motion poses a problem, in part because it narrows the scope of the study of this truly systemic

issue and limits the amount of time that parliamentarians will spend on it. I want to point out that the comments made by Ms. Damoff, who has since left, are very relevant. We need to look at the system as a whole to ensure that the proposed changes address the failures of the past and resolve issues for the future. We need to focus all government actions and all parliamentary discussions on survivors and make them our main concern. This is more important than trying to score political points on this issue. This certainly isn't the issue for that.

In terms of the culture change needed, I'm very interested in what Louise Arbour will be preparing. Her independent and comprehensive external review of the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces is significant. Ms. Arbour commands respect. She has a proven track record as a justice of the Supreme Court.

She can bring a very valuable perspective to this issue. Accountability and review are needed at all levels of the Canadian Armed Forces and the Department of National Defence, not only on an individual level, but also at the rank level. At the organizational level, she will review National Defence policies and practices and evaluate their effectiveness in eradicating sexual misconduct and sexual harassment.

I gather that Ms. Arbour's binding recommendations must be fully implemented on the ground and mustn't remain unheeded.

● (1230)

That's where her perspective, report and review will help with this culture change. I believe that the announced review will play a critical role.

What are the goals of this review?

We want to know why sexual harassment and misconduct persist within the Canadian Armed Forces, despite considerable, concerted efforts to eradicate them. We want to know what barriers make it difficult for victims and survivors to report inappropriate behaviour. Everyone in the Canadian Armed Forces should feel comfortable reporting inappropriate behaviour. This must be the case as we move forward. We want to know whether the response is adequate when victims report sexual misconduct. We must have this information. We want it to be used to make recommendations on preventing and eradicating sexual harassment and misconduct within the Canadian Armed Forces once and for all.

The Department of National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces have selected Ms. Arbour to lead this review. As I said, Ms. Arbour has the respect, legitimacy and independence to fulfill this important mandate. She will certainly also build on the report issued by former Justice Deschamps, who made 10 key recommendations to address and eliminate sexual misconduct and harassment as part of her review.

The Department of National Defence has taken several significant steps to implement Ms. Deschamps' recommendations. For example, the sexual misconduct response centre, or SMRC, referred to by Ms. Vandenbeld was established. Ms. Arbour's review will build on her work. She will look at the issues from a broader perspective to help the defence team chart a path forward.

I believe that Ms. Arbour's experience makes her ideally suited to conduct this review. This review will focus on defence's policies, procedures and practices. She will look at where efforts to address and eradicate sexual harassment and misconduct are falling short. She will determine how to improve these efforts in a practical way so that the necessary changes can be implemented in practice.

As part of her review, she will also take into account all relevant independent reviews of the department and the Canadian Armed Forces. This certainly includes the recommendations of the Deschamps report and their implementation, but also the work being done by the Honourable Morris Fish. He is leading the review of the National Defence Act. Ms. Arbour will also consider the Auditor General's reports and other internal audits. She will review their recommendations and findings. This must be done based on a solid foundation, including all the efforts already made, which I have just outlined.

However, in addition to looking at existing reviews, she will evaluate current organizational practices to see whether these practices are being consistently and effectively re-evaluated and to determine what needs improvement to prevent incidents of sexual misconduct. This includes looking at the recruitment, training, performance evaluation, posting and promotion systems in the Canadian Armed Forces.

Ms. Arbour will also review the policies, procedures and practices of the military justice system dealing with sexual harassment and misconduct. I understand that a review of the military justice system has been requested by some witnesses over the course of the committee's studies. This is important. Ms. Arbour, with her background, is well suited to observe these procedures and practices within the military justice system and to see how they might be improved or enhanced. The review will be based on the opinions, accounts and experiences of Canadian Armed Forces members and the defence team. All voices will be heard and must be heard.

As part of her mandate, Ms. Arbour will also invite victims to contribute to her review. I think that their voices must be heard. They must be the focus of Ms. Arbour's actions and of the review. The review will be conducted anonymously, of course, to encourage all individuals who wish to come forward. It will certainly focus on the lived experience of women and members of the LGBT community. However, I also believe that Ms. Arbour will be called upon to work with the advisory panel on racism and systemic dis-

crimination to reduce any unintended duplication of efforts within our institutions.

• (1235)

She will compile all this testimony to establish various significant aspects: how the culture within the defence team encourages silence and complicity; how fear of retaliation acts as a barrier to reporting incidents of sexual harassment or misconduct; and how defence policies have sometimes been inconsistently applied throughout the organization.

Ms. Arbour must address this issue and must have the opportunity to do so in a transparent and independent manner, as stated in her mandate.

In this regard, her assessment of procedures and policies will guide and inform the actions of the Department of National Defence and the government.

I see that some of my colleagues want to speak, so I'll wrap up my remarks shortly.

One issue with the motion moved is that it narrows the scope. We need a broader analysis and assessment of the situation in the Canadian Armed Forces with respect to sexual misconduct and other culture issues. We need to cast the net wide. Victims and survivors must be the focus of questions, concerns and certainly actions and recommendations.

Regarding the amendment, I think that it's a good approach. That said, we can't constrain or limit parliamentary debate on such a significant issue.

I'll stop here, Madam Chair.

Thank you for your attention.

• (1240)

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Lightbound.

[*English*]

Mr. Bagnell, go ahead, please.

**Hon. Larry Bagnell:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

I want to make a few comments on the comments that have been made in this debate so far.

Following up on the most recent, in relation to Madam Arbour, I don't think anyone on the committee doubts her tremendous ability. The Deschamps report identified the type of process—the need, for instance, for independence, etc.—but the mechanism for doing it, of the various things that need to be done, was not outlined. Madam Arbour, I agree, will be great at providing a detailed road map on how to get to the places Madam Deschamps suggested.

The discussion a few minutes ago related to training is also a good example of how the solutions to this aren't easy, being that it's been endemic for decades in our military, and in other militaries. Simple solutions will not do the trick. A good example was the emphasis put on appropriate training. Training sessions were put up, but I heard one witness—and I can't remember if it was at committee or at another event—talk about how she, as the trainer, was laughed at. They made fun of her, and that's all part of the culture.

That's what's important about the Bloc amendment. As I said before, unfortunately, it's tied to an untenable main motion, but on the culture, it is a huge item. We're all part of a culture. We're social, and to a large extent we work within and follow a culture that we're in.

Dr. Okros made a good comment on that:

The...comment I would make with this is that there does need to be a unique military culture. Canadians require very specific things from the women and men who are providing security for them. That requires some very specific things. There is no other employer that has the concept of unlimited liability, that expects and requires people to put themselves in harm's way.

To do that, to generate those capabilities and the capacity to endure...what can be really arduous circumstances, does require something unique that most private sector employers don't need.

The issue is, what should that culture be? I think that's the issue that is really up for debate and discussion. Again, what the comments we're providing here... [this] is a tension in the military as well around evolving over time. One thing that is baked into the military philosophy is that there are really important lessons that have been learned, that were paid for in blood over the centuries, that we will never forget.

That is of importance, but that can hold the military back from trying to envision the future military culture that they need to be building within a 21st-century security context, and with young Canadians who are seeking to serve their country in uniform.

It needs to be a unique culture. The debate, really, is about what should that culture be, what should be retained and what needs to fundamentally change.

It just emphasizes my previous point that nothing is simple, and that's why our debate should be revolving around these critical issues that we've heard. We've had many, many meetings. We've heard from the survivors and from the experts who can give us a way forward, and now we need to debate and come up with those recommendations. They're not simple, and that's why they need discussion. If they were simple, they would have been done already.

That's why we need the discussion on these critically important things that will help the survivors. That's why it's disappointing that the main motion, the way it's written, would allow recommendations to go through without any debate on them.

I'd be interested in hearing more from Madam Vandenberg on culture, because I haven't studied that in any great depth.

There are two last things I want to say. One is that I like the idea of modifying Mr. Barsalou-Duval's motion that we do a report based on what we could come to a consensus on. As Mr. Garrison said, we all agree we want to help, and I am sure there are a number of recommendations that we could come to a consensus on and that would make a difference for the survivors.

● (1245)

The other thing from the amendment that I want to come in on is that there's been a lot of talk—the word “victims” is in there—about improved support for survivors and victims. I will discuss

that at length when we get to the main motion, but the point is—and I said this earlier in debate—that hopefully we don't have to have a huge network of supports. Hopefully, by making the appropriate changes, we'll drastically reduce the incidents that Mr. Garrison said are so common at the moment.

Only we as a committee—well, not only we; they can go ahead without us—could add support and strength to consensus recommendations. They would go a lot further and would really make a difference for survivors and give the minister the moral authority to move quickly on the things we are recommending.

I'll leave it at that for right now.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Bagnell.

[*Translation*]

Mr. El-Khoury, you have the floor.

**Mr. Fayçal El-Khoury (Laval—Les Îles, Lib.):** Thank you, Madam Chair.

Every member of the defence team is entitled to be treated with respect and dignity in the workplace. It's also the responsibility of every member of the defence team, regardless of rank, position or title, even the top brass, to treat those around them with dignity and respect.

We know now that this expectation isn't enough. Without rapid and decisive action, without strict enforcement of policies and without accountability, sexual misconduct and harassment within the defence team will never be truly eliminated. We need to take a long, hard look at where our policies and initiatives failed. We have to learn from those we failed. We have to listen to them and make changes that really take our people and their needs and diverse backgrounds into account.

Last week, the Minister of National Defence announced the launch of an independent, external and comprehensive review of the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces. I want to take the time today to share details of this review, including its aim, how it will be conducted and what it means for the defence team.

There's a pressing need for accountability and review at every level of the Canadian Armed Forces and the Department of National Defence, not only from individual to individual and rank to rank, but also at the organizational level. It's important to review the policies and practices of the defence team and evaluate their efficacy at eradicating sexual misconduct and harassment. The review announced last week will play a critical role in this analysis.

The goals of the review are as follows. We want to know why harassment and sexual misconduct persist within the Canadian Armed Forces despite considerable, concerted efforts to eradicate them. We want to identify barriers to reporting inappropriate behaviour. We want to know whether the response is adequate when reports of misconduct are made. We want this information to be used to make recommendations on preventing and eradicating harassment and sexual misconduct in our armed forces once and for all.

The Department of National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces have chosen Louise Arbour to lead the review of the defence team's policies and culture. Ms. Arbour's review will build on the report prepared by former Justice Marie Deschamps, who made 10 key recommendations to address and eliminate sexual misconduct and harassment.

• (1250)

Since her review, the Department of National Defence has taken many important steps to implement Ms. Deschamps's recommendations. Ms. Arbour's review will build on the important work done by Ms. Deschamps but will examine the issues from a broader perspective in order to help the defence team chart a path forward.

Ms. Arbour's experience as a former Supreme Court justice puts her in an ideal position to carry out this review in a completely impartial manner. She will work independently from the chain of command of the Canadian Armed Forces and the Department of National Defence in order to remain neutral and ensure that the important work she's being asked to do won't be subject to any political influence. I think that we all agree that this would be inappropriate.

Her review will examine the policies, procedures and practices of the defence team. She will look at where the team's efforts to address and eradicate sexual misconduct and harassment are falling short and at how these efforts must be strengthened and improved.

As part of her review, she will consider all relevant independent reviews concerning the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces. This includes evaluating the defence team's implementation of the Deschamps report's recommendations. This evaluation will be coordinated with the Honourable Morris Fish, who is overseeing the review of the National Defence Act. The findings and recommendations of the Office of the Auditor General's reports and other internal audits will also be reviewed.

In addition to considering these existing reviews, she will also evaluate organizational practices that, if effectively re-evaluated, could help prevent incidents of sexual misconduct. These practices include the recruitment, training, performance evaluation, posting and promotion systems of the Canadian Armed Forces.

Ms. Arbour will also evaluate the policies, procedures and practices of the military justice system dealing with sexual harassment and misconduct. More importantly, the review will be based on the views, accounts and experiences of current and former members of the defence team.

All concerned members of the defence team deserve to be heard. Those who wish to share their experiences will be invited to provide input for Ms. Arbour's review. Their names will remain anonymous. Ms. Arbour will conduct her review without referring to specific cases of sexual harassment or misconduct in order to protect their privacy. Her review will focus on women and members of the LGBTQ+ community so that the defence team gains a better understanding of their perspectives and experiences.

• (1255)

She will work with the advisory panel on systemic racism, discrimination with a focus on anti-indigenous and anti-Black racism, LGBTQ2+ prejudice, gender bias and white supremacy to reduce any unintended duplication of efforts.

Ms. Arbour will put all this testimony together to identify signs that the defence team's culture promotes [*Inaudible—Editor*] and complicity, how fear of reprisal acts as a barrier to reporting harassment and sexual misconduct, and any indication that the defence team's policies were applied inconsistently across the organization, as in the case of political influence in the appointment of General Jonathan Vance in 2015. Even though there were rumours about him being the subject of an active investigation by the Canadian Forces National Investigation Service, the official opposition parties still appointed Jonathan Vance chief of the defence staff.

All these factors will inform her recommendations to the minister, the deputy minister and the chief of the defence staff. Accountability and transparency are key to changing the culture and eradicating sexual misconduct and harassment in the defence team. These are the guiding principles of Ms. Arbour's investigation.

She will provide monthly progress reports to the Minister of National Defence, as well as interim assessments and recommendations. All these assessments will be made public, as will the draft and final review reports. Ms. Arbour's reports will include a review of the defence team's policies and procedures, the causes and effects of barriers to reporting inappropriate behaviour, and an assessment of the sexual misconduct response centre's mandate and activities, independence from the chain of command and response to reports of sexual misconduct.

She will also make key recommendations.

I could go much further, but I'll stop here.

Thank you.

• (1300)

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Thank you.

[*The meeting was suspended at 1:01 p.m., Friday, May 21*]

[*The meeting resumed at 4:14 p.m., Wednesday, May 26*]

• (13610)

**The Chair:** I call this meeting back to order.

This is a resumption of meeting number 32 of the House of Commons Standing Committee on National Defence that was started on Friday, May 21, 2021.

I won't go through all of the preamble. We'll keep it short so that we can get our full two hours in today.

If interpretation is lost, please let me know immediately, because I think it's very important that everyone is able to participate to the fullest extent possible.

Before speaking, please wait until I recognize you by name. When speaking—and I'm reminding myself again—please speak slowly and clearly for our interpreters so that they can do the good work that we're counting on them to do. When you're not speaking, your mike should be on mute.

With regard to a speaking list, the committee clerk and I will do the best we can to maintain a consolidated order of speaking for all members, whether they're participating virtually or in person.

Pursuant to Standing Order 106(4), the committee is meeting today to consider a request received by the clerk and submitted by four members of the committee to discuss a request for additional witnesses for the study of addressing sexual misconduct issues in the Canadian Armed Forces, including the allegations against former chief of the defence staff Jonathan Vance.

I will now open the floor for debate.

Mr. Bezan, I think you're up first.

• (13615)

**Mr. James Bezan:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

I don't believe we need to move any motions back on the floor, since it's a resumption of the last meeting. I'll just say this.

Again, I just want to ask the committee to move quickly to accept this motion so that we can bring in Zita Astravas as the only person who can shed light on the contradictions that we've heard from numerous witnesses, including the Prime Minister's chief of staff Katie Telford, former clerk of the Privy Council Michael Wernick, former prime ministerial adviser Elder Marques and Minister of National Defence Harjit Sajjan, who all had different versions of who reported the allegations that came before the Minister of Defence on March 1, 2018, as was presented by former ombudsman Gary Walbourne.

The Liberal members of this committee have been talking out the clock. You, Madam Chair, have been suspending meetings at will, and all that has obstructed the work of this committee. It's blocked key witnesses from appearing. This has gone on for days on end, and it's time to put an end to it.

I would implore members of the Liberal Party who sit on this committee to get down to the brass tacks of passing this motion and dealing with this in a timely manner so that we can hear from Zita Astravas, get her summoned to this committee for two hours and then get back to work on the report and have it done before we rise for the summer break.

We only have five weeks left, and my calculation is that it is going to be at best nine meetings unless we find a way to add more

meetings or sit into the summer so that we can table our reports, not just on sexual misconduct in the armed forces but also on our study on COVID and the work done by the Canadian Armed Forces as well as looking at mental health. Those reports are also sitting in draft form, and I know that many committee members would like to see those tabled as well.

Instead of having endless hours of debate and filibuster, instead of obstructing the work of this committee, I'd ask that Liberal members allow this committee to vote on this motion along with the amendment from Xavier, so that we can get back to the basics of what we need to do, which is to uncover what happened with the allegations against General Vance, contrast that to the allegations brought against Admiral Art McDonald and see whether or not there was a cover-up done and orchestrated by Katie Telford and Minister Sajjan by not telling the Prime Minister about these allegations back in 2018.

The women and men who serve us in uniform expect results. They expect this report to come out, and any effort to stall this work is obstruction by members who continue to filibuster and not allow this motion to come to a vote.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

**The Chair:** All right, Mr. Bezan. Thank you very much.

I'm reminded by the clerk that we're still on the amendment. We're on the Bloc amendment to the motion. The clerk is about to send out to you the official translation. I know there were some questions last Friday about the interpretation, so we wanted to make sure we had an official version for you. You should find that in your mailbox shortly. It's coming your way right now.

Mr. Garrison, you're up next, please.

• (13620)

**Mr. Randall Garrison:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

I must start by saying that I was extremely disappointed in the way the last meeting concluded, with an arbitrary exit by the chair. I think it's part of the pattern Mr. Bezan pointed out of obstruction of the work of this committee by continual filibuster, by cancelling meetings and by suspending meetings.

The attempt by Liberal members to frustrate the majority of this committee in getting the witnesses we need to provide answers as to why there was no effective action on sexual misconduct in the military, and in particular, why there was no investigation and no action on General Vance, remains outstanding.



It's a disservice to the survivors of sexual misconduct in the military for the Liberal members of this committee to continue to argue that they want to get on to the report for survivors, while their very filibustering frustrates getting on to that report. It's like we live in some alternate reality where burning up time in committee doesn't keep us from getting the work done. I just don't understand the Liberals' position, other than that they do not wish to have the answers to the questions that we're asking here about why senior leaders either did not understand the severity of sexual misconduct or wanted to somehow protect senior officers who were accused of sexual misconduct.

I'm not going to go on at length, but in any institution where you have so many senior leaders who've had to exit their positions as a result of sexual misconduct, there would be a crisis and the board of that corporation or institution would be demanding accountability from those responsible. In this case, because it's the Canadian Armed Forces, the Canadian Parliament and this committee are the board that has to demand that accountability.

Again we've heard many times the Liberals using the words "finger pointing". Accountability is not finger pointing. It's identifying the people who should have acted and failed to act and identifying the reasons it happened, so that as we go forward and promise Canadian men and women who serve that this won't happen again, there is some assurance that we know why the action didn't take place before. The promises will not be taken seriously by anybody if we don't figure out why the previous promises weren't kept.

Like Mr. Bezan, I would implore the Liberal members of the committee to give up their filibustering. In the time they take to filibuster, we could have easily dealt with witnesses such as Ms. Astravas, who many times the minister and the Prime Minister's Office have pointed to as the key person in understanding what was conveyed from the minister's office to the Prime Minister's Office. That's the key question we still need to answer here in order to establish who's accountable for the lack of effective action.

Therefore, I would urge us to go to a vote on the amendment and then on the main motion expeditiously to schedule Ms. Astravas's appearance. Then we can get on to finishing the report on sexual misconduct, and then, though I would prefer to have dealt with them earlier, we can also get a chance to deal with the other two important reports: on COVID and the Canadian Armed Forces, and mental health in the Canadian military.

There's important work to do here and I implore the Liberals to stop obstructing that work.

**The Chair:** All right, Mr. Garrison. Thank you very much.

We go on to Mr. Spengemann, please.

**Mr. Sven Spengemann (Mississauga—Lakeshore, Lib.):** Madam Chair, thanks very much.

It's good to be with you, colleagues.

It feels a little bit like déjà vu. I said consistently from the outset that there are two components to our work. They are of equal importance, but in terms of the real heavy lifting on culture change, it is probably the more challenging problem. Everybody has pointed

to it. Every single witness has said that the culture needs to be changed.

That culture pre-existed, with informed speculation, the tenure of General Vance as CDS. It requires the recommendations that, as I alluded to in testimony in other sessions, a lot of countries have gone through or are going through. In parallel with that, we have a number of important cases that have come forward, including two former chiefs of defence staff and most recently, Major-General Fortin.

We can see each of these cases as being emblematic of a much deeper cultural problem. To use a metaphor that might not perfectly fit, it's maybe the tip of the iceberg. Unless we look at the iceberg itself, take it apart and look at the recommendations that will really change the trajectory of the Canadian Forces as an employer within which sexual misconduct no longer happens, we will not do our work.

Yes, the opposition is perfectly within their right to chase after additional testimony. In this case, I think we have heard testimony that's starting to be very consistent with respect to where accountabilities lie. Messages have come from witnesses, including Ray Novak, the former chief of staff of the former minister of defence, who has said that it is "inappropriate" in our democracy to involve elected officials including ministers or prime ministers in investigative processes with respect to misconduct. There is clarity on that.

There is also clarity with respect to the systematicity of this problem. There is clarity with respect to challenges relating to the chain of command, to demographics in the Canadian Forces and to the long existence of this issue. I think it would be a disservice to Canadian women if this committee was not in a position, prior to the summer recess, to put forward recommendations that aren't simply approved with a simple up or down vote, but that have been subjected to discussion and debate among the committee, and are prioritized and identified as the ones that are able to really make progress in a most expeditious manner, in parallel with the work of Madam Justice Arbour.

Let me take the committee back to 2015. I have referred to this previously, but maybe it bears repeating briefly in the context of this amendment that's now before us. I'm referring to an article published on April 22, 2021, in the Ottawa Citizen by David Pugliese where it is reported that General Jonathan Vance boasted that he was "untouchable" by military police. Further in the article it referred to the fact that he claims to have "owned" the Canadian Forces national investigation service. We have received much more recent evidence that's before the committee, and there may well be witnesses that we could bring in to illuminate this evidence more closely, but in my estimation that is not where the real work is. I will explain that in a minute.

According to that evidence, there was an investigation under way in 2015 at the time of the appointment of General Vance under the former Conservative government. Shortly after General Vance's appointment, that investigation came to a halt. If you take that evidence in conjunction with the testimony of the general's reported statement through media testimony that he "owned" the investigative service, that is really where the systematic nature of this problem lies.

In 2015, how could the appointed head of the Canadian Forces be in such an asymmetrical position of power and so removed from parliamentary oversight that he could boast about owning the Canadian Forces national investigation service? If it's true that General Vance was able to bring an investigation to a close at that time, that is an issue that every member of this committee across party lines should be seized with and should look at.

In that respect, it's not irrelevant who comes forward in terms of complaining against whom. That is incredibly important. It just points to a much more systematic problem that we need to solve. We have to weigh that against the timeline towards completion of this parliamentary session and the need to put out a report that has substance and recommendations.

We have had testimony with respect to ministerial accountability and the ministerial roles involved in this government with respect to Jonathan Vance. The Minister of Defence himself came and testified for six hours.

• (13625)

We have had staff from PCO. We have had Katie Telford, from the Prime Minister's Office, and Elder Marques, former PMO staff. We've had extensive testimony that pointed to the conclusion that it is not appropriate to involve either the minister of defence or the Prime Minister in investigative processes relating to the chief of the defence staff. The systematic nature of the problem is his reported ownership of the authority that is now investigating and, presumably, potentially, wasn't at the time of his appointment, or its investigation was truncated shortly after his appointment took place. That's a problem that I think we should all be concerned about.

I haven't seen symmetry within the thinking of this committee to look at these questions, to look at the recommendations. Yes, we've heard testimony. Yes, we have a pile of recommendations that have been put forward, but what is this committee going to say in June of this year to give confidence to the serving women, the former serving women of the Canadian forces, the men who are allies, Canadians of all genders, Canadians of all walks of life who wish to serve in the Canadian forces and feel that they can't, or the ones who are already serving and feel that they don't have a voice and that they can't come forward or, if they do come forward, that their careers and their futures are in doubt because they have taken the step of speaking out?

Those are the systematic questions that are exemplified in the cases that we have looked at and the cases that we've studied that are properly investigated by independent authorities. I think we have gathered the political and policy evidence behind them that we need to make recommendations urgently to take our country forward.

Again, I've pointed to a number of other militaries similar in nature to Canada's in the sense that they are military, they are subject to liberal democracy and parliamentary oversight and, at the very same time that we're talking about this, they are struggling and, in some cases, have put forward recommendations and processes that have been illuminating, quite helpful and could potentially be emulated. I've injected those thoughts into the committee's discussion and will continue to do so.

We have some work ahead, and I think we need to focus on the iceberg without in any way slighting the significance of the victims of the cases that are before us and that we've studied in the form of the individual allegations that have been made.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

• (13630)

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr. Spengemann.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Barsalou-Duval, you have the floor.

**Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

I too wanted to speak today. I don't know whether the committee members have had a chance to reflect on their actions, or at least on how we've been working in this committee over the past few weeks. However, I don't think that this practice of filibustering is conducive to the smooth running of the committee or to the effective use of the financial resources of the House, whose employees are paid by the taxpayers.

I think that it would be worth asking the following question. If our constituents, who are also the taxpayers, were here today, would they really be proud of us? If I weren't fortunate enough to be in my current position and if I had been tuning in to this committee for several weeks, I would be ashamed. I would feel as though I were watching school children who aren't trying to move forward and solve problems. The government filibusters every time members, especially from the opposition, want to call new witnesses, even though we're conducting a very serious study. I find this practice very unfortunate and even shameful.

I hope that my colleagues around the table will have had the opportunity during these meetings to reflect on this. Perhaps they will also have the chance to do so at this meeting. I want to ask my colleagues to stop this unacceptable waste of the committee's time so that we can finally move forward and do our work.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

[*English*]

Mr. Bagnell, please go ahead.

**Hon. Larry Bagnell:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

I would agree. I would implore that we stop this waste of time by debating motion after motion and witness after witness, which is unnecessary and is delaying the study. I implore Mr. Bezan to remove the motion, which, as he probably knows, has a number of problems with it. It doesn't bring forward the witnesses we need if we want to go further into the who, how, where and when, which I'll go into in great depth when we get to the main motion.

For the exact reason that people expect a report to come out, stop doing motions that recall witnesses who have been here for hours and who have nothing to add to the debate. Stop calling a witness whose potential testimony has already been dealt with and then a motion that wouldn't allow us to put a stop to looking at each recommendation, debating them and coming out with a serious report.

We had an anonymous email and no one knew what was in it because the person wanted their privacy, and they were allowed their privacy. It's incredible that, instead of dealing with the major problems to help the people in the military, Mr. Bezan would keep calling witnesses related to that email and not all the great testimony we've had from experts and victims.

If you want to go back.... I don't. I want to get on to dealing with those serious issues, but if you want to go back to the who, why and where, and then, as Mr. Garrison said, the serious issues related to the appointment of General Vance, as Mr. Garrison said, when people should have acted and failed to act.... There were potential investigations, one, apparently, there was pressure to stop on the day General Vance was appointed, and another one, a quote from someone.... The vice-chief of the defence staff said it was a mystery who investigated, seeing as it didn't occur.

Those are the serious questions that people want to go back to. I don't want to go back to that. I want to get on to the issues of helping the people in the military. As Mr. Barsalou-Duval said, why are members acting the way they are by bringing witness after witness, trying to recall witnesses and extending on this one email that's already been fully investigated as far as it could go, because the person didn't want to let any of the details forward.

We only have so much time in government. As everyone knows who's been in government, there are a huge number of federal departments, agencies and things that have to be dealt with, so there are rare points in time when you can get to the item that you want to make progress on. I think this is one of those points in time when we have a minister who's supportive of dealing with this, and all the committee members are supportive of dealing with sexual misconduct in the military. That's what we should be dealing with.

I could, in the future, if need be, explain or outline all the times and the quotes from the minister over the last several months as to how he says over and over again that much more needs to be done and that there's no tolerance.

Unfortunately, it's also been said in this debate that nothing has been done, or that nothing of consequence has been done. In fairness to the members of CAF and DND, they have been working hard to try to address this serious issue.

• (13635)

I think we have to dispose of that misinformation because some things have been done. There has to be a lot more, obviously, as Mr. Garrison outlined, and I've outlined in a number of committees the hundreds of complaints that have occurred. Much more needs to be done, but it's also not fair to suggest that nothing's been done. I'm going to go through some of those things, to give credit where credit's due.

The government has announced an external review, the creation of the chief of professional conduct and culture position, as well as initiatives around peer support, the extension of the SMRCs' reach across Canada and work on implementation of Bill C-77.

DND and CAF also released a joint CDS-DM initiating directive, which has provided our defence team members, veterans, observers and all Canadians much-needed clarity on DND and CAF's vision for Lieutenant-General Carignan's position and what she'll be empowered to do. Going forward, one of General Carignan's first areas of focus is developing a plan for engagement and consultation, including targeted focus groups in coordination with our colleagues in public affairs, to ensure that we keep up the momentum on listening.

In the budget that we're now debating in the House, \$232.2 million over five years has been set aside, plus \$33.5 million per year ongoing to address sexual misconduct and gender-based violence in the military and to support survivors. These funds will be used for gender-based violence prevention, fully funded at \$33.9 million over two years; internal support to victims, including access to legal advice; expanding the contribution program to support community-based sexual assault service providers; and a peer support pilot, online and in-person. I'll speak to that a bit later.

There are additional conduct items that are fully funded at \$33 million over two years to support \$15 million for increased investment in the SMRC—which I'll talk about later as well—\$15 million for external oversight and \$3 million for external assistance with training.

Then there are investments from existing reference levels of \$158.5 million, and this includes the implementation of Bill C-65 and the workplace harassment and violence prevention regulations, which I'll talk a bit about later; support for development of character assessment and training; additional support to enhance the military justice system; personnel support to base commanders; development of the departmental litigation oversight capability, which we've talked about a lot in this committee; and upgrading data management and tracking into a single system, which we've talked about having as a recommendation.

Additionally, DND and CAF are going to respond to the government with suggestions related to the CAF child care program and the clinical occupation and deployment health needs of women in uniform.

I also said I was going to get back to the work, and the deputy minister mentioned that a lot had to be done, but she also mentioned that there were good things being done. She mentioned the advancing initiatives related to the SMRC; the gender-based violence national action plan initiatives; the regional expansion of SMRC services, including a response and support coordination program; the expansion of support services to include service to DND public service employees and veterans; and the increasing need for virtual training options and targeted prevention training. The staffing of positions for that is also under way. I'll get back SMRC a little bit later and also the next time that I get to speak.

C-65's implementation is under way, which is another item of progress, so it's not fair to say that nothing has been done or accomplished.

• (13640)

In the departmental approach, there's work on the implementation of the workplace harassment and violence prevention, WHVP, legislation, which continues to progress. Direction and guidance on the WHVP workplace assessment is to be released by August 2021. A service-level agreement to provide access to WHVP training for CAF members is being finalized. Training will be available online by June 2021.

Mandatory training for public service employees is progressing well. As of March 31 this year, 40% of employees and 13% of members—

**Mr. James Bezan:** On a point of order, Madam Chair, we're debating the proposed amendment on the floor right now. I appreciate the update that Mr. Bagnell is giving as to what's been happening in the Canadian Armed Forces, but that isn't relevant to our study and the witness that we wish to call. I'd ask that he get on point and perhaps he may want to talk about why he's complicit in the cover-up by the Liberals and what they are trying to hide by not having Zita Astravas appear at committee.

**Hon. Larry Bagnell:** Madam Chair, I think it was actually that member who said that nothing's been done. Also, that member in his preamble veered totally away from the amendment, so I will just carry on. If he didn't want to know what's being done then he shouldn't have said in previous comments that nothing is being done by CAF and DND—

• (13645)

**Mr. James Bezan:** I said there's nothing being done by the Liberals. That's different.

**Hon. Larry Bagnell:** —related to this motion.

To give credit where credit is due on the things we've done, to supplement the employee assistance program, the WHVP centre of expertise is establishing additional assistance for employees affected by harassment or workplace violence.

While CAF is not subject to the Canada Labour Code, CAF is working on a harassment prevention modernization initiative to further align and integrate accountability and prevention components of the WHVP with the CAF system.

Stage one of the CAF harassment prevention modernization initiative is nearing completion, including through the issuance by the VCDS of an initiating directive, development of tools and support-

ing documents for the relevant DAOD on harassment prevention and the establishment of a governance structure and working group.

In stage two, the focus is on a CAF harassment prevention, a vision statement and the development of additional tools, guides, consultation and options. Analysis is being finalized. This work will take into consideration and align with the work of Bill C-65, Bill C-77, negotiations on policy measures and class actions [*Technical difficulty—Editor*] and the evolution of the chief of the professional conduct and culture organization.

I will now go on to military sexual trauma. Also, in relation to Mr. Bezan's last comment, I wonder why he won't change his motion to bring forward the real witnesses to the serious problems that have now arisen since the motion was designed, which have been brought forward by the press along with this serious potential cover-up related to the investigations during the time of the appointment of General Vance.

On military sexual trauma, MST, we've constantly heard from stakeholders and those affected by sexual misconduct that they want sexual trauma connected with military service to be acknowledged and recognized as such, and that they want to be supported accordingly. Along with Veterans Affairs Canada, the SMRC and external stakeholders, we're working on developing a definition of sexual trauma connected with military service. This work is being done in full consultation with survivor groups as well as with members of the SMRC external advisory council and others. While it is not a critical term, we acknowledge that the injury is associated with sexual trauma connected to military service. We are working with VAC to ensure that there continues to be policy alignment between the two departments particularly in the delivery of supports and benefits to those affected.

I want to talk about peer support now. This committee has heard from witnesses that our focus should be on the survivors and on helping them. They've asked for peer support. Work is under way. I hope we have recommendations. When we get to the main motion, I will go a lot into the recommendations, because the motion allows for a cut-off on debate on those recommendations.

As announced, DND, CAF and Veterans Affairs Canada are working on developing a professionally co-facilitated peer support program. This is another initiative that is a high priority for stakeholders, as we heard from witnesses. This is funded through budget 2021.

Because of our present situation and the direction of the world, we need to do more things online. SMRC, the CAF transition group and VAC are working to adapt an existing online peer support mobile application that was developed for Canadian Public Safety personnel. The process of adaptation, modification and implementation of the app is expected to take several months. Of course, this is very important because our military are stationed around the world.

There's also support for individual people, which CAF and DND have worked so hard on. Our government, as I've said, is not done. We have a lot more to do. As I've said at every meeting, that's what we should be working on, recommendations on those procedures. Some progress has been made. As we know, we need a lot more.

• (13650)

We're going to continue to consult with the experts, some of whom we had before our committee, and those who have been affected by sexual misconduct.

I want to highlight some of the measures that are already in place and accessible to the DND and CAF members. The SMRC, as I mentioned earlier, offers members confidential support 24-7 and anywhere in the world. I'm happy to say that budget 2021 has increased support for that. We heard from a number of witnesses how that wasn't the be-all and end-all, but it was certainly providing helpful services. It operates outside the military chain of command. Reporting directly to the deputy minister, it allows affected persons to access support in a confidential manner.

SMRC offers many programs and services to help affected members. One of them is the response and support coordination program, which helps CAF members navigate systems from the moment they make contact with SMRC until they decide they no longer require support. At every step of the way, SMRC personnel accompany those affected by sexual violence, providing whatever support may be necessary.

CAF members seeking information about the reporting process can contact the SMRC to explore their options while remaining anonymous. Civilian members of the defence team can also access support through SMRC, as well as the employee assistance program. Though SMRC is an important tool, we haven't got this right yet. That's why the defence team is in the midst of a top-to-bottom change of its institutional culture.

This is the right thing to do. It is not just a moral imperative. It is also vital to the success of the Canadian Armed Forces now and into the future. We've heard that time and time again. I think every committee member knows this a critical problem that we have to deal with to come up with solutions. A number of things are being done already, but obviously much needs to be done.

It was great to hear the acting chief of defence staff—I think it was yesterday or the day before—so open to hearing outside expertise to make sure this is done right. The culture change that's been so hard to do... I mean, this isn't new. It's been there for decades upon decades. It's not easy to change quickly. Just making paper changes is not enough. That's why we have all these initiatives and why we should be discussing the complexity of that culture change and how we do it.

That's why the Madam Arbour announcement will be helpful. Culture change is mentioned right in the amendment to this motion, which is why this is an important discussion as well.

The initial independent external comprehensive review led by the former Supreme Court Justice Louise Arbour is very important. Obviously, all the recommendations from the previous Deschamps report haven't been implemented. Much more needs to be done, but Madam Arbour will provide the road map and a suggested way to actually achieve the things that Madam Deschamps said needed to be done. It will look into harassment and sexual misconduct in both DND and CAF and will examine the policies, procedures, programs, practices and culture within National Defence and make recommendations for improvement. From that, we'll learn what did not work from all these things that I'm talking about today of the processes that are in place. We can build on what did work, see what did not work and why it did not work.

It's been noted and, as I said in previous meetings, a number of things are very puzzling. There were a number of good things in place. Why were they not working? Why did they still lead to the hundreds of cases that Mr. Garrison and I referred to in previous meetings.

It's noted in the terms of reference that Madam Arbour will be delivering a “work plan within 30 days to the effective date of” her contract.

• (13655)

I just wanted to mention that one other thing about the peer support program is that budget 2021 also includes funding to enhance other support services including access to free independent legal advice that will help enable CAF members to access support without making a formal complaint.

Another step forward, once again to give credit where credit is due for things that are being done and have to be acknowledged, it has been announced that Lieutenant-General Jennie Carignan will begin a new role as the chief of professional conduct and culture, which will unify, integrate and coordinate all policies, programs and activities that currently address systemic misconduct across culture change.

She's moved quickly in her new role and is actively working on building a core team around her. She's already begun to turn her attention to key issues including developing an outreach and consultation plan to continue hearing from defence team members, veterans and stakeholders, and mapping resources and reporting processes to get a clearer sense of what currently exists to inform future efforts to streamline.

Another step is that in addition to these steps, our government is following through on its commitment to consult with victims of service offences, which will inform the development of the regulations needed to implement the declaration of victim rights from Bill C-77.

The Department of National Defence has engaged directly with victims groups and will soon be launching an online questionnaire to collect anonymous feedback from DND employees and CAF members. Certainly we've heard from victims from both of those groups, and it will be really good to get that anonymous feedback for which they will have no fear of retribution or reprisal. That, we have heard, is one of the top three things on which this committee should be coming up with recommendations to help the minister, a minister who is open to making major changes at this critical time when we could actually make improvements.

Our government has heard from the victims groups who have generously devoted their time and energy to sharing lived experiences and feedback with us and also with committees. We have heard them and we are taking action. This is what the survivors and experts who have testified at this committee and the committee on the status of women have been advocating for.

There are some other sources available to CAF members to access counselling, advice and other support services, and this may be one of the things that the report of Madam Arbour comes up with. Members aren't aware of all of these supports and maybe that's one reason they haven't been as effective as they should be. There are the CAF medical centres, military chaplains, the CF members assistance program, military family resource centres and family information centre.

There are also complaint management centres. These are another avenue for members to bring forward concerns or incidents through one of the 16 complaint management centres located across the country under the integrated conflict and complaint management program. This service combines harassment, grievance and alternative dispute resolution approaches in a streamlined fashion, and they report tracking and resolved complaints of inappropriate behaviour like sexual harassment. If the nature of the sexual misconduct requires involvement of the military police and justice system, there are supports for CAF members during this process as well.

Another support is the sexual offence response teams. The military police have established six sexual offence response teams trained to handle sexual misconduct cases appropriately and with empathy. These teams are sensitive to survivors and help them connect with other resources and support systems they need. I'm certainly looking forward to survivors and complainants getting much better treatment than some of the witnesses we heard from did and hopefully these new centres and the training will have far more appropriate support and training for survivors.

In addition, the director of military prosecutions has established a sexual misconduct action response team made up of specially trained prosecutors. Their role again is to make sure survivors are treated with compassion and understanding and that they receive information and the support they need through the military justice proceedings.

• (13700)

Supporting survivors of sexual misconduct is essential, and that's why steps have been taken to ensure support is available and is provided from the moment a person seeks advice or counsel through to investigation and prosecution. Along with the future changes, these steps will help to build a safe and inclusive workplace where all people are supported and treated with respect.

We're creating a defence workplace where everyone is treated with dignity and respect, and we hope all our colleagues will join us in this effort. We'll build the right system, so that when an incident occurs, members of the Canadian Armed Forces and the Department of National Defence have access to a process that is sensitive, fair and compassionate.

CAF and DND are listening. They're learning. They're taking action to create an environment where sexual misconduct is never minimized, excused or ignored. We owe it to the men and women in uniform—as I think all committee members have said—to all members of the defence team and to Canadians to get this right, and we'll continue working hard to do just that on top of all these initiatives.

There has also been Bill C-65, with new regulations on preventing harassment and violence in the workplace. Harassment and violence in the workplace in any form, of course, will not be tolerated. Amendments to the Canada Labour Code contained in the workplace harassment and violence prevention regulations came into effect on January 1, 2021, and will expand the existing prevention-of-violence framework known as Bill C-65.

These amendments will strengthen the provisions of the Canada Labour Code by putting in place one comprehensive approach that takes all forms of harassment and violence into consideration. This will help departments to better prevent this and to respond to and provide support to those affected by harassment and violence in the federal public service. This new regulation will affect all DND public service employees and the Canadian Armed Forces members who supervise them. The coordination and implementation of this new regulation is assigned to the ADM of civilian human resources as the functional authority for the health and well-being of the public service employees within the department. Committee members have heard about harassment or sexual misconduct related to those employees—not just CAF members.

In short, this means that, along with all Government of Canada departments and agencies, our obligations with respect to harassment and violence in the workplace will increase. While we'll see more details in the coming weeks, some examples of what we will do under this new legislation include ensuring that a resolution process is in place and that issues are resolved in a timely and transparent manner; identifying the risk factors that contribute to harassment and violence in the workplace and developing and implementing preventive measures to mitigate these risks; and developing harassment and violence training and ensuring that all parties in the workplace, including employers, participate in this training.

In parallel, the VCDS has been tasked with addressing potential changes to the CAF policies and programs. For now, DAOD 5012-0, "Harassment Prevention and Resolution", and the harassment prevention and resolution instructions, accessible only on the National Defence network, will continue to apply to the CAF. Early in the new year, a working group will be stood up to conduct—that's this year—a holistic review of the CAF harassment framework in order to modernize and align it, where possible, with the Canadian Labour Code. The working group will also be tasked with looking at opportunities to streamline and align existing interrelated mechanisms and programs, so that, as much as possible, the employees at DND and the CAF members will have very similar treatment and help.

Existing programs, preventive measures and support will remain in place to keep our defence team free as much as possible from physical and psychological harm. However, when harassment or violence does occur, we must work together to identify it, root it out and take action to prevent reoccurrence. With this new legislation, Bill C-65 will help to strengthen all our efforts on all fronts.

• (13705)

The other bill that we brought in—again, to be fair, things have been done and have been moving forward—is Bill C-77, An Act to amend the National Defence Act—the declaration of victims rights.

The summary of the bill states:

This enactment amends provisions of the National Defence Act governing the military justice system.

It adds a new Division, entitled "Declaration of Victims Rights", to the Code of Service Discipline, that specifies that victims of service offences have a right to information, protection, participation and restitution in respect of service offences. It adds or amends several definitions, including "victim" and "military justice system participant", and specifies who may act on a victim's behalf for the purposes of that Division.

I know that the Conservatives are very sensitive and supportive of victims rights.

It continues:

It amends Part III of that Act to, among other things:

- (a) specify the purpose of the Code of Service Discipline and the fundamental purpose of imposing sanctions at summary hearings;
- (b) protect the privacy and security of victims and witnesses in proceedings [which involve] certain sexual offences;
- (c) specify factors that a military judge is to take into consideration when determining whether to make an exclusion order;
- (d) make testimonial aids more accessible to [the] vulnerable witnesses;
- (e) allow witnesses to testify using a pseudonym in appropriate cases;

We've all heard about potential retribution.

It continues:

(f) on application, make publication bans for victims under the age of 18 mandatory;

(g) in certain circumstances, require a military judge to inquire of the prosecutor if reasonable steps have been taken to inform the victims of any plea agreement entered into by the accused and the prosecutor;

(h) provide that the acknowledgement of the harm done to the victims and to the community is a sentencing objective;

(i) provide for different ways of presenting victim impact statements;

(j) allow for military impact statements and community impact [assessments] to be considered for all service offences;

(k) provide, as a principle of sentencing, that particular attention should be given to the circumstances of Aboriginal offenders;

As you know, there are provisions in the Criminal Code for that as well.

It continues:

(l) provide for the creation, in regulations, of service infractions that can be dealt with by summary hearing;

That's so more cases can go forward—

**Mr. James Bezan:** Madam Chair, I'm calling a point of relevance here.

This is completely off topic now. I believe that Mr. Bagnell is actually reading the draft report of Justice Fish that's been provided to the Department of National Defence. He's talking about military justice and service offences, and that's all fine and good, but that's our next study. This isn't the study that we're working on right now.

I would ask that he come back to the point.

Madam Chair, I ask that you try to direct the debate so that it's on point and relevant to the amendment.

**Hon. Larry Bagnell:** Madam Chair, as I said earlier, I wouldn't have to be doing this if the member had not suggested, on probably more than one occasion, that nothing has been done.

The terms of our committee—in fact, the terms of the motion—start out to address sexual misconduct. To say that nothing's been done is not accurate and not fair. This is what we need to build on. This is why we should not be debating a motion that doesn't really add anything. I think all members can see the motion before us really does nothing in relation to the serious advances forward.

I'm almost finished them. I'm definitely not reading from the report by Mr. Fish, but I should have actually included the fact that we've done that. I've not included that in my remarks, but I've not seen that report. I have no idea what's in it, so I'm definitely not reading from it. I'm almost finished here, so I'll just continue to give credit where credit's due and stop members from suggesting nothing's been done by the government, by CAF and by DND and a supportive minister.

It's also provided in regulations of service infractions that they can be dealt with by summary hearing, as I said, to get more cases forward. This can provide a scale of sanctions in respect of service infractions and for the principles applicable to those sanctions, provide for a six-month limitation period in respect of summary hearings, and to provide superior commanders, commanding officers and delegated officers with jurisdiction to conduct a summary hearing in respect of a person charged with having committed a service infraction if the person is at least one rank below the officer conducting the summary hearing.

Finally, the enactment makes related and consequential amendments to certain acts. Most notably, it amends the Criminal Code to include military justice system participants in the class of persons against whom offences relating to intimidation of a justice system participant can be committed.

Madam Chair, I think all this suggests strong, serious steps forward, and in some cases it's helping and will help. A lot of this work is under way right now and people should know that. I think members of the committee will be appreciative of that, but that's why, to be serious, our discussions, instead of dealing with the motion.... Although I appreciate the amendment, it still keeps the inappropriate parts of the motion, the constant recalling of witnesses to deal with an anonymous email where no one knew what was in it because the person wanted it to be confidential, which they have every right to.

Instead of dealing with the motion, we need to get on with what the committee heard, and they heard about the three areas. I think Yvan and other committee members have a great understanding that it's the culture change that is referred to in this motion, in the amendment. It's unfortunately tied to a bad motion, but the the good amendment by Mr. Barsalou-Duval talks about culture, which is the important thing that, if we're serious, we should be talking about instead of recalling witnesses who we've already had.

We should be talking about the reprisals. I'm not sure we've had enough discussion or recommendations. I may want to make some related to reprisals because I don't think it's hidden from anyone that one of the reasons that the reporting levels are so low is the fear of reprisals and the fear of the effects on a career that your family's sustenance depends on and that you entered with great honour and you want to serve with great honour. To then, for doing the right thing in reporting, have a fear of reprisal.... Are those serious discussions that this committee is undertaking?

The third of the three major items, I think, is how these fit in the chain of command, which was also referred to in the Deschamps report and for which Madam Arbour will hopefully be providing a road map of how we deal with.

• (13710)

However, we could be making serious progress on these issues for the survivors, which is where our focus should always be, instead of recalling witnesses, calling a witness who has already spoken or suggesting that the debate end at a certain time so that some recommendations could not be debated. Who's going to take a report seriously where we could not debate or discuss recommendations?

I will leave it at that for now. When we get to the main motion, I have a lot more detail to go into on some of these areas. I will pass that on for now.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Bagnell.

We move on to Madam Vandenberg, please.

**Ms. Anita Vandenberg:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

Before I begin, I want to ensure that all committee members know, based on Mr. Bezan's earlier point of order intervention, that when there is a report tabled in Parliament, as Justice Fish's report will soon be, all members get that at the same time and there will be technical briefings offered to members so that all members get access to that report. Nobody gets it ahead of time. This is just to make sure, as the member knows, that is the usual practice. As Mr. Bagnell said, he is not reading from anything that is currently not yet tabled in the House.

The other thing I'd like to address before I get into my comments on the amendment to the motion is to correct some of the statements that were made earlier today by opposition members and just ensure that anybody who's watching doesn't get the wrong impression about what is happening in this committee.

It was mentioned, I heard it said, that there have been cancelled meetings and meetings that have been cut short. I'd like to reassure anyone who's listening to this, to the proceedings today, that there have actually not been any meetings cut short beyond the scheduled time that the meeting—

• (13715)

**Mr. Randall Garrison:** On a point of order, Madam Chair, I would ask all members of this committee to adhere to the rules of honesty and integrity. When members intervene to say that what other members have said is—

**Ms. Anita Vandenberg:** That's debate; that's not a point of order.

**Mr. Randall Garrison:** It's not a debate.

**Ms. Anita Vandenberg:** I'm explaining exactly—

**Mr. Randall Garrison:** If you will just let me finish my point of order, you will understand the point of order.

The point of order is that when members say that other members aren't speaking the truth, that's actually against the rules of the House. That is my point of order.



You can have an opinion about what happens in committee, but you cannot say that other members are not speaking truthfully about what happens in the committee.

**Ms. Anita Vandenberg:** I believe my words were that I don't want anyone to get a wrong impression. That was not any accusation against any member of this committee, and I would like the opportunity to lay out what my understanding is of what has been happening in the committee.

From my understanding, going back over the minutes and evidence of all of the meetings since this began, there haven't been any meetings that were ended before the scheduled time at which the meeting was intended to end. Also, there was only one meeting that one could potentially say was cancelled. It was a meeting that was suspended at the insistence of the opposition because they didn't want the meeting to adjourn. They knew, then, we would come back and be able to put on the agenda the debating of the reports, so instead they insisted on suspending the meeting. Then it was events in the House, in fact, a motion in the House that superseded the very topic that—

**Mr. Randall Garrison:** On a point of order, Madam Chair, the member persists in saying what other members think or what other members do. She is entitled to her opinions. She is not entitled to suggest what other members of this committee had as their motives or what inspired their actions.

**Ms. Anita Vandenberg:** Madam Chair—

**Mr. Randall Garrison:** She can talk about her opinions and her views of what happened, but she is not entitled to ascribe opinions and views to other members of this committee.

It is dishonourable conduct.

**Ms. Anita Vandenberg:** Madam Chair, I'm very surprised at the aggression that the member is pointing towards me. I'm simply laying out facts about different meetings that have happened, what time they ended and whether or not a meeting was cancelled. There was a statement made earlier. As I said, I want to ensure that anybody listening doesn't get the wrong impression about what has happened.

The meeting I was just referring to, which one could say was technically a cancelled meeting, was in fact superseded, because there was a motion in the House of Commons where that issue, which the meeting was supposed to address, was debated for eight hours in the House. That superseded the meeting. That meeting was in fact suspended. There was even an attempt at a motion to suspend.

I will just go through the larger issue here. This was a study that was originally intended to be three or four meetings. This study has now gone on for four months. Our committee meets generally when the House is sitting. It meets for two meetings for two hours. That's four hours a week. On this study alone, not only has our committee extended well beyond the number of meetings that were originally intended, but it has actually sat for 26 hours and 40 minutes of additional time, in addition to the time that the meetings were actually scheduled. There have been five emergency meetings that have been called, again, in addition to the regular scheduled time for these meetings.

I do believe it would be logical to say that this particular study has had already more debate, more witnesses, more time than anything that had been anticipated. I don't want to leave the impression for viewers or anybody listening that any meetings have actually been cancelled or cut short.

That's just what I wanted to begin with.

I'd also like to address the amendment and the motion, because whether it's an interim or a full report, the issue of adding more witnesses and hearing more.... I do note that there are witnesses on this list who have already appeared. What has happened, I believe, is that, as we've progressed, each time that we're ready to review the report and in fact have scheduled meetings to review the three reports, there has been yet another motion put on the floor to call yet another witness or another set of witnesses. I think in each case we have brought those witnesses.

When there was an additional witness, Mr. Elder Marques, we did hear from Mr. Marques. Then the chief of staff to the Prime Minister was called, and we did hear from her. We've heard from the minister now for six hours. He came in place of his chief of staff, Zita Astravas. Even Ms. Alleslev, said in her testimony a couple of meetings ago, that was accepted by the committee at the time.

My concern is that there is a narrative being put out there that somehow we're trying to stop witnesses. As we can see, we have accepted all the witnesses that members of the committee have asked for, except for actually a few who were put by the opposition, like Jason Kenney and a couple of others. The fact is that, every time, there's another motion. This particular motion, with or without the amendment that we're discussing, asks for no debate or amendments when we discuss the report. It asks for no response from the government, which is a normal practice and procedure.

What is happening now, I think, is that, because we have accepted all of the witnesses who have been put forward, all the additional ones each time.... I'm not attributing any motives here. The perception could be made that these are poison pills deliberately put into these motions, knowing that members of the committee wouldn't be able to accept them, to not get on with the report.

I would note, Madam Chair, that our next study is on military justice. We do actually have Justice Fish about to table a very important review of the military justice system. I would implore one more time that, if the opposition would like to try to find consensus, perhaps the opposition could withdraw the motion which includes, as I said, things that say, by my calculation, an hour and 45 minutes to debate a report that's over 60 pages. It says right in it that there be no debate and no amendment, which is very undemocratic and a very difficult thing to do in the committee, when we do need to look at the different parts of the report and make amendments. Also, it's not asking for a government response.

• (13720)

What I would suggest is that, if the opposition withdraws the amended motion, perhaps at that point we could then review the report.

Then we could move to the justice study right at the time that Justice Fish is going to be tabling, which gives us an incredible opportunity. We would be able to call Justice Fish and other witnesses who can speak about an aspect of sexual misconduct that is vitally important and that has been identified by almost every witness we had here and before the status of women committee as a core issue in looking at whether or not there is justice for victims of sexual harassment, sexual assault and sexual misconduct in the military, and that is the military justice system.

That's why I do believe that the comments about that are incredibly relevant and that we have an opportunity as members of Parliament. As I said before, I believe all members of this committee want what's best for the women and men of the Canadian Armed Forces.

I would very much hope that we can put partisanship aside and look at the recommendations in this study. Frankly, there are many recommendations that come from important testimony. We have had Madam Deschamps herself come to this committee. We have had experts. We have had academics. We have had people who have come in good faith, testifying before us in the assumption that their testimony would then lead to a report and recommendations.

Again, I very much hope we can still get to that. I do believe that, regardless of whether we pass this motion, there will be another one and another one. We've seen that as a pattern at this point. I do believe that in this motion, deliberately or not, there are things the opposition knows can't be supported, including not having any amendments or debate on a very important report.

I would just really urge, Madam Chair, that members of the committee try to work together to at least still get this report out and to at least get the other two reports.... We may not get a report on military justice before the end of the session, but we could hear some really important testimony. I know that if we could hear from Justice Fish, he will have some very important things to say that I do believe are relevant and vitally important to the survivors.

I want to talk more about military culture. I have a number of recommendations that you'll recall I was speaking of several weeks ago that actually came from the testimony and the survivors. I had a list of 92. I still have 27 left. However, I will set that aside, because I see other people would like to speak. I will come back to those momentarily, as soon as my colleagues have had a chance to speak.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

• (13725)

**The Chair:** Thank you, Madam Vandenberg.

Monsieur Spengemann, please.

**Mr. Sven Spengemann:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

I'd like to thank my colleagues for their previous intervention, in particular Mr. Bagnell, who outlined the fact that the Government of Canada has taken substantial amounts of action. I'd like to echo Ms. Vandenberg's call for an effort to transcend partisanship and to see this as perhaps the fundamentally most important report this committee has had the opportunity to issue in its recent history.

I would like to complement Mr. Bagnell's overview of government action with a very short intervention, Madam Chair, that takes us back to June 2019—just about two years ago—when the predecessor committee in the 42nd Parliament issued its report on improving diversity and inclusion in the Canadian Armed Forces. That report was chaired by Stephen Fuhr, who was then the member for Kelowna-Lake Country. A number of members of the current committee also participated in that study, including Mr. Bezan, Mr. Garrison, Ms. Gallant and Mr. Robillard. I think there was a guest appearance by Mr. Erin O'Toole, among others. I also had the privilege of serving on that committee.

That report, Madam Chair, was impactful. Of course, it happened prior to the most recent developments with respect to the former chiefs of the defence staff, but there was a strong recognition by the committee across party lines that there was a fundamental issue with diversity and inclusion. I think all of us were very much engaged. There was no dissenting report issued. It was the committee speaking as a transpartisan committee, which I think in these kinds of cases is extremely important. I would like to use that as an impetus to direct colleagues to the possibility in front of us of coming together and really making an impactful set of recommendations that will move the yardsticks.

With respect to sexual assault, that wasn't a specific topic in the report, but as part of its study of diversity and inclusion, it did make very prominent reference to gender issues. It addressed the Canadian Armed Forces' "sexualized culture". Colleagues had the opportunity to engage in questions relating to gender-based analysis and the GBA+ framework that's being used in Canada. There were discussions, recommendations and texts on facilitating diversity training and education and on the importance of engaging men as allies. We've had testimony in this study by a male officer serving in the Canadian Forces who is an ally, who has spoken out and who is courageous. That report addressed questions with respect to the accountability of particularly senior leadership cadre, the collection of data and the creation of supporting networks, all of which was done, Madam Chair, in a non-partisan way with very coordinated, directed attention paid, across party lines, to these very pressing issues.

With respect to recommendations, some are particularly salient because in some respects they echo precisely what the minister has told us he is doing and one of the priorities we're seeing reported in the media. I am referring to that committee's recommendation 13, which states, "That the Government of Canada instruct Senior Leadership Team members of the Canadian Armed Forces to implement a program that will ensure the sponsorship of promising female Canadian Armed Forces leaders as they progress through the ranks." The minister has talked about this policy objective in the form of creating a pipeline that will allow women in significantly larger numbers to serve not only as officers but at senior levels in the Canadian Forces, and ultimately, as chiefs of the defence staff.

With respect to unconscious bias training, I made reference in the last session to the U.K. experience on training questions. I've sharpened that lens by putting forward some recommendations that have been helpful to the British government with respect to addressing this issue. In 2019, we also made a recommendation "That the Government of Canada make unconscious bias training available to all members of the Canadian Armed Forces, and that this training be repeated as necessary pursuant to best practices established by knowledgeable experts."

With respect to accountability of the senior leadership cadres, we recommended "That the Canadian Armed Forces explore options for holding senior leadership accountable for improving the representation of women and diverse groups." This was a fairly general recommendation that we would probably want to sharpen in light of the evidence we've heard in the current study.

A baseline recommendation was "programs for men and women to learn about gender equity and diversity". Again, this is something we would probably want to amplify.

• (13730)

This study was submitted, as I said, two years ago in June of 2019. The committee recommended a "standard exit interview", and also, with respect to data, that "the Canadian Armed Forces, with the assistance of relevant and knowledgeable organizations and academics, identify and maintain data on sexual assaults in all divisions, units and other parts of the military".

These are just some of them. There were others, Madam Chair, but I'm raising them to remind the committee of what is possible if we transcend a partisan approach. In my view, it's not terribly helpful to come to the table with a presupposition that there is a cover-up, as was said a couple of times.

In fact, it's the opposite. The minister, when he appeared, and the Prime Minister, in the House, have openly acknowledged that we need to do more for women and for all members of the Canadian Forces, that work has to be done, that the door is open, that "the time for patience is over" if I'm quoting the minister correctly, and that complete and total "culture change" is required.

It's really a message of giving the committee the latitude not to cover up but to uncover the challenges, to uncover the systemic challenges, which, in my view, we are doing, but I would like to reinsert the argument that it needs to be proportional. In light of the individual cases that have come forward, the committee has been focused for a number of sessions doing something that is normally done by the subcommittee, which is to discuss the names of additional witnesses.

We're burning our time, and those colleagues on our side who are concerned with the recommendations are making the argument that this time is precious and we need to focus on the substance of the pressing issues to make sure that the next case doesn't pop up. If all we do is put a band-aid on it in terms of acquiring and maybe getting some statements on the record with respect to how a particular case was handled or not handled, that in itself is important, but it doesn't solve the fundamental question of how to prevent the next case or how to create the accountability structures that the Canadian Forces so urgently need.

Also, in light of the significant comparative experience elsewhere... I've said this again and again. I'm not raising other jurisdictions—including the U.K.—in my interventions because it's interesting to see that something else is going on elsewhere. I'm raising it to highlight the systematic nature of this issue across militaries, and that in itself reflects how deeply entrenched these questions are with respect to sexualized cultures. For generations, gender equality in the military has not been a priority, and we really need to get to a better place urgently, not over the next 10 years but literally in very short order.

On that same note, Madam Chair, let me cite the conclusion from the 2019 report.

Again, I want to thank colleagues who are with us today and who served on that committee in the 42nd Parliament and have done the hard work. We did it very collaboratively, as all of you will remember. The testimony was tough. It took us aback in many ways. All of it preceded the most recent developments, which have further heightened the urgency and the significance of the problem, but I think we were very much engaged and all very much on the same side of the table with respect to solving these questions.

We concluded, Madam Chair, in that report, on its final page—I think it was page 57, so it was a substantial report—the following:

Taken together, the overarching message from witnesses was one of culture change. Their focus was not only the difficulties in achieving and measuring it, but—more so—the urgent requirement for it. The [Canadian Armed Forces] has taken steps to promote inclusion and respect for diversity at home and abroad. In the words of Ms. Perron—

Ms. Perron here is referenced as Captain (Retired) Sandra Perron, the "first female infantry officer" of the Canadian Forces.

—"[t]here is no doubt that the [Canadian Armed Forces] has veered towards making military culture more inclusive, more welcoming and more valuing of diversity, but it's too slow. Veering is not enough. We need a hard right."

That's where the quote ends. Again, this "hard right" she called for in 2019, some two years before the most recent developments, is even more urgent now, and to make that hard right, we need to go through the recommendations. We need to analyze them. We need to prioritize them, pick the best ones, pick the ones that will achieve the most change most quickly and not simply in one session sort of vote them up or down because we've burnt out the time fishing for witnesses for an additional sentence or two that may substantiate a prejudgment that some of us will have with respect to there being a cover-up.

Again, it's the opposite, in my submission. The door is open for real recommendations, for real change and for a transpartisan approach to show the Canadian public that this committee really is seized with probably the most pressing question, as I've said, in the recent history of the Canadian Forces and is willing and able to come together and make recommendations that will take the country into a very different space in very short order.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

• (13735)

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Spengemann.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Robillard, you have the floor.

[*English*]

**Mr. Yves Robillard (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin, Lib.):** Thank you, Madam Chair.

I'm all mixed up now. Can you pass to another one and come back, please?

**The Chair:** I can do that. Thank you.

Mr. Casey, you're up next.

**Mr. Sean Casey (Charlottetown, Lib.):** Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

It's nice to be here to participate in this committee meeting. I'm here as a substitute, of course, for Mr. Baker, and I expect that if Mr. Baker was here you'd have a much more eloquent intervention with someone as knowledgeable as he is. I do bring a bit of an outsider's perspective to the specific topic at hand and some experience in terms of matters of procedure. There are a few things that kind of sink in after 10 years in this place.

I know that Mr. Bezan is quite preoccupied with making sure that we're speaking to the amendment and to the motion and that the bounds of relevance be kept fairly tight, so I'm actually going to start with the amendment that has been proposed.

The amendment indicates that the scope of the study will likely lead to new facts, and in the second subparagraph, it indicates that the committee believes that a report is urgently needed to put an end to the culture that has existed within the Canadian Armed Forces. It then calls for the presentation of an interim report, which will allow for some action to be taken as the more fulsome report is delivered.

The first thing that strikes me on this is the inconsistency, quite frankly, between the amendment and the main motion. The amendment talks about urgency, but the main motion is to prolong the witness list. I would think that if we adopt the amendment and adopt the theory that this is urgent, we wouldn't be extending the witness list four months into a report.

I guess the other thing that I would offer is, again, based on 10 years of experience in parliamentary committees. It has been my experience that at the outset of a study, witnesses are suggested by each of the parties. They're prioritized, and they are then ranked in a manner that is consistent with the parties' standings in the House or in the committee. This is, I think, a tradition that goes across all 22 standing committees of Parliament. It's one that I've certainly seen, observed and respected on the committees I've served on over the years, including the one that I chair now, the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons With Disabilities.

There's good logic behind this. If the witnesses can be identified and prioritized at the outset, a work plan can be developed. As they say, you plan the work and then you work the plan. When you're

four months into a study and there are additional witnesses demanded who presumably didn't go through that original process, once again it's hard to understand that there is a true appreciation for the urgency of the issue when it continues in this fashion.

The amendment talks about and talks to the culture. Certainly, in recent months, Canadians have heard the heart-wrenching accounts of Canadian Armed Forces members and civilian colleagues who have been the subjects of behaviours and treatment experiences that are completely unacceptable. Also, as the amendment points out, their accounts have been ignored for far too long. For instance, the opposition knew of rumours against General Vance in 2015 but still appointed him.

• (13740)

They appointed him when there was an active Canadian Forces national investigation service investigation into him and appointed him to the most senior position within the Canadian Armed Forces. The current leader of the official opposition says he passed along sexual misconduct rumours about General Vance in 2015 and claimed those were looked into. I think that begs the question: How is it possible that General Vance was appointed at the same time and the investigation was suddenly dropped?

There's no question that what members have endured is wrong. The Canadian Armed Forces is entrusted to keep Canadians safe both at home and abroad. The organization owes survivors more. Every Canadian Armed Forces member makes enormous personal sacrifices to protect Canadians, and regardless of rank or gender identity, they have an undeniable right to serve in safety. The urgency of this issue, the urgency of the need for culture change, is identified in the amendment, and properly so.

The Department of National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces have to live up to this expectation. The minister has always followed the processes put in place. We've heard that repeatedly. He has always followed the processes put in place when allegations were brought to his attention. This is something he has always done and that he will continue to do.

Our government is taking important steps. Unlike the allegation that nothing has been done, that no steps have been taken, to build on the points made by my friend from the Yukon, we're taking important steps to address systemic misconduct within the Canadian Armed Forces and to bring about the culture change that is referenced in the amendment and the culture change that is needed in the organization. The need to change the military's culture is born of the reality that the lived experiences of many defence team members are completely out of line with the values professed by the organization. These are values of integrity, inclusion and accountability. That needs to change, and we, as a government, are committed to bringing about this change.

If we want that change to be significant, meaningful and to last, then we need to reflect honestly on what's been happening. Where we find failings and fault, we must accept responsibility.

Like in the case of the current leader of the official opposition, by the opposition's logic, should he be fired for hearing a rumour of misconduct against General Vance? As we know, just days after the former government appointed General Vance, the investigation was closed. According to the access to information request, the commanding officer said he was under "pressure". Who do they think applied that pressure?

Where we're able to learn lessons, we must seize the opportunity to build a better organization. Where members of the defence team share their accounts and experiences, we must listen and listen carefully. This also brings me to the main motion and the inconsistency with the urgency of the need to have a culture change.

The main motion calls for the presentation of a report without a request for a response from government. Is this seriously a motion that respects the urgency or that respects the need to ensure there are no further victims when there is no response requested from government, or is it something else?

The end goal should be simple. Where we hope to get to is to ensure that every member of the defence team is valued and respected. Defence culture and professional conduct must reflect the core values and ethical principles our military aspires to uphold as a national institution. That's what Canadian Armed Forces members, veterans, recruits, public servants and Canadians expect and deserve of the organization.

Recently, the Minister of National Defence announced the creation of a new organization to lead us there. We heard Mr. Bagnell refer to this. Among other initiatives, the Department of National Defence appointed Lieutenant-General Jennie Carignan as the Department of National Defence new chief of professional conduct and culture.

• (13745)

It's hard to imagine a better person to lead this important initiative. Under her leadership, the professional conduct and culture organization will unify, integrate and coordinate all of the policies, programs and activities that address systemic misconduct and support culture change within the forces. This new organization will include a new assistant deputy minister, who will directly support her. The team will bring together members from all ranks and classifications, reflecting the diversity that Canadians expect.

Make no mistake: This is not a generic prepackaged solution to a long-standing problem. Before any future steps are taken, those working to bring about change will actively listen to the accounts of people affected—people at every rank, people at every level and people in every installation across all regions of the country.

Members of the professional conduct and culture organization will honour each person's experiences, respect each person's individuality and will neither judge nor assume. They will listen, so that people's lived experiences guide the road to eliminating discrimination, biases, harmful stereotypes and systemic barriers.

As so many members of the defence team have already shared their experiences and recommendations, we don't need to wait before implementing a number of much-needed changes. Lieutenant-

General Carignan will take a number of steps to bring about that change now.

To start, they'll wrap up Operation Honour. Much has already been said about drawing this initiative to a close, but it bears repeating.

Lieutenant-General Carignan and her team will review all of the research conducted under Operation Honour, so that its findings can inform renewed culture change efforts. This new team will develop mechanisms to implement the workplace harassment and violence prevention regulations under Bill C-65, which was also mentioned by Mr. Bagnell, and will support the ongoing efforts to bring the remaining provisions of Bill C-77 into force. That will include bringing the declaration of victims rights into the National Defence Act.

The next order of business will be for the team to establish a framework that will help achieve a number of longer-term goals. They will realign responsibilities, policies and programs that address elements of systemic misconduct across National Defence and the forces. They will also simplify and enhance misconduct reporting mechanisms, including for people outside of the chain of command. They will give greater agency to and strengthen support mechanisms for those who have experienced misconduct. They will enhance tracking mechanisms from initial reports of misconduct to case closures, and they'll integrate additional data points, such as intersectionality, reprisals, member satisfaction and retention. Finally, they will lead institutional efforts to develop a professional conduct and culture framework that tackles all types of harmful behaviour, biases and systemic barriers.

Much work to build healthy, safe and inclusive workplaces is already being done within the department. Many organizations are focused on developing programs and policies that move us in the right direction. Among them, there's the GBA+, the integrated conflict and complaint management program, the anti-racism secretariat, the Canadian Armed Forces diversity strategy, Canada's anti-racism strategy and Canada's national action plan for women, peace and security. The professional conduct and culture team will work with the people leading each of those efforts to further their good work, and they will make the most of ongoing consultations, conversations, external and independent reviews and analysis to inform the way ahead.

• (13750)

The professional conduct and culture organization is being established with the clear understanding that previous culture change efforts have fallen far short of what was needed, and this, of course, is acknowledged in the amendment that is the subject of this discussion today.

As Lieutenant-General Carignan has said, those efforts were fractured, which resulted in segmented efforts and piecemeal changes. With the standing up of this new organization, the defence team is taking a fundamentally different approach. As Lieutenant-General Carignan also said, the new approach will be a more holistic and coherent way to address the complex challenges faced by the Canadian Armed Forces.

I'd like to take a moment to acknowledge Canada's good fortune at having such a decorated leader as Lieutenant-General Carignan leading this vital initiative. With 30 years of military experience, she has served in operations around the world and most recently took on a tremendous leadership role as the commander of the NATO mission in Iraq from November 2019 to November 2020. She's been invested as a Commander of the Order of Military Merit and is a recipient of the Meritorious Service Medal, earned as a result of her exceptional commitment to our Canadian Armed Forces, its missions and our country.

Reading her professional biography is an exercise in humility. In addition to an exceptional work ethic, she brings a profound understanding of military best practices to this role, and she has already shown herself to be a truly gifted leader.

I would like to reiterate our deepest concern for the well-being of every member of the defence team. The standing up of the professional conduct and culture organization is a testament to our government's genuine commitment to the defence team. We have shown that we are dedicated to creating a lasting culture change across the defence team. We will do just that, and I trust that these remarks were of some value to these deliberations.

Thank you for the time, Madam Chair.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr. Casey.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Robillard, you have the floor.

**Mr. Yves Robillard:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

I want to apologize to my colleagues for this technical issue.

We have to learn from those we failed. We have to listen to them and make changes that really take our people and their needs and diverse backgrounds into account.

Recently, the Minister of National Defence announced the launch of an external, independent and comprehensive review of the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Forces. This is a step in the right direction. I think that we should try to move in that direction and make our contribution by reviewing the recommendations rather than inviting more witnesses. Also, the culture and professional conduct in the defence community must reflect the core values and ethical principles that we aspire to uphold as a national institution.

This is what the military members, veterans, recruits, public service employees and the Canadian public expect and deserve. We all have a personal responsibility to create a workplace free from violence, harassment and discrimination of all forms. The chief, professional conduct and culture group will help us ensure that we meet this standard.

This new group will unify and integrate all associated culture change activities across the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces. It will become the centre of expertise and single functional authority for professional conduct and culture. It will be led by Lieutenant-General Jennie Carignan, who will be directly supported by an assistant deputy minister.

The initial team will be inclusive of members of all ranks and classifications and will emulate the diversity that Canadians expect. The actions that we undertake to change the culture will incorporate what we hear from those impacted by misconduct.

We will listen to our people at all levels, in all regions of the country.

These lived experiences and suggestions will guide the chief, professional conduct and culture's actions, solutions and decision-making to eliminate discrimination, biases, harmful stereotypes and systemic barriers.

This team will work in concert with groups across DND and the CAF that are already making progress towards building healthy, safe and inclusive work environments, while also capitalizing on ongoing consultations, conversations, external and independent reviews, and analyses. Research, expertise and complementary strategies and initiatives from which the team can benefit include GBA+; the total health and wellness strategy; integrated conflict and complaint management; the anti-racism secretariat; the CAF diversity strategy; Canada's anti-racism strategy; and Canada's national action plan for women, peace and security.

We will incorporate and implement changes recommended by Louise Arbour through the independent external comprehensive review, including interim assessments and recommendations. The sexual misconduct response centre will continue to be an external body, independent from the Canadian Armed Forces chain of command, providing support to affected people, giving expert advice and monitoring progress in addressing sexual misconduct.

● (13755)

Moreover, budget 2021 provides new funding to expand our work to eliminate sexual misconduct and gender-based violence in the Canadian Armed Forces and to support survivors. We will be announcing more about this in the coming weeks.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

● (13800)

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Robillard.

[*English*]

We'll go to Mr. Spengemann, please.

**Mr. Sven Spengemann:** Madam Chair, thank you very much.

Colleagues, I think a couple of sessions ago I was in the course of bringing you portions of the British experience with respect to two things. One is their approach to getting ahead of inappropriate behaviour in the British Armed Forces, and then also the correction and the approach to dealing with inappropriate behaviour when it has occurred.

I raise the British experience as illustrative of the systematicity across, as I've said, a number of militaries across the world that we work very closely with, be it through NATO or the United Nations or other coalitions. It's also because the British experience in particular that I started with, and there are other countries, has been illuminating. It's not just something that's interesting that's occurring in parallel. It's something that's directly relevant to our work. Some of the recommendations are issues that we have not dealt with or have not looked at.

In the context of the motion and the amendment, the amendment makes specific reference to new facts coming before the committee. New facts can come in the form of witness testimony, but they can also come in the form of documentary evidence and reports. Work that's being done on the very same issue elsewhere in the world is extremely relevant.

The main motion in its original form, I believe, if I have this right, was to cut short our work on the 28th at 2:45 p.m. and thereafter go directly to a vote on the recommendations. I'm struggling a bit, because I think there are some relevant passages in the work that both the U.K. armed forces and other jurisdictions have done. I will try to get some of that on the record over the sessions that we have prior to the formulation of what I hope will be an all-party report—not an interim report, in my view, but a report that is substantive and that has the recommendations that are required to achieve change as early as this summer.

The U.K. armed forces report is entitled “Report on Inappropriate Behaviours”. It was actually released a month after we released our parliamentary report in the 42nd Parliament that I referred to a couple of interventions ago. The committee then did not have the benefit of this experience and its deliberation, but we do now.

Let me get into some of the recommendations. They deal with a number of issues related to training and related to a concept that the British Armed Forces refer to as “reverse mentoring”, which I believe we have not looked at. Very importantly, it also deals with the role of bystanders. We've heard again and again testimony from witnesses in front of this committee that we need to find ways to give serving members of the armed forces or civilian members who are bystanders to sexual misconduct or inappropriate conduct the mechanisms that will give them the confidence to speak out and speak up and become change agents.

The U.K. proceeds with a premise that is very straightforward: “We must do more to stop instances of inappropriate behaviour occurring.” A lot of the attention that we've given has gone to mechanisms of reporting inappropriate behaviour that has occurred. There may well be inappropriate behaviour that has not been reported yet. In fact, the evidence suggests that this trend is very much there until the culture has changed. The U.K. analysis says, in addition to

having proper reporting mechanisms, what else can we do to get ahead of the problem to make sure that ultimately there are no cases that are being reported, not because serving members don't have the confidence to speak out but because no sexual misconduct has occurred? That, of course, is the end state that we all aspire to.

The U.K. report states:

This part of the report considers how we should better prepare the workforce, setting the tone and giving people the skills they need to prevent inappropriate behaviours occurring. It is principally the responsibility of the single Services and Civil Service senior leadership and a significant amount of work is underway already. In compiling the Report, we identified the latest thinking and leading practice from professional bodies, academia and other external organisations including allied Armed Forces.

I made reference a couple of sessions ago to the fact that the U.K. cited us in one of their recommendations. They cited work that had been done by the Canadian Forces. There is a need for collaboration and the exchange of best practices and solutions. It states:

This is about changing the level of tolerance and cultural acceptance of inappropriate behaviour across every part of Defence and at every level. It will require concerted effort and persistent attention; success will be measured in years not weeks.

● (13805)

This is a line with which we may take issue. The minister was very clear. He said the time for patience was over. We want progress quicker, and not measured in years but in weeks, if not months.

In any event, preparing the workforce is a crucial aspect of this, and the workforce includes the entirety of the defence sector. The report states:

“If a team enjoys good leadership, then unacceptable behaviour, such as bullying, harassment and discrimination within the team, will not be tolerated.” Leadership is the turnkey to set the conditions for improvement in behaviour across Defence. It creates an environment in which our people, military and civilian, have faith in the chain of command at every level, share a clear understanding of what is appropriate behaviour and are empowered to call it out when it is not. Leaders set the tone through role modelling; self-awareness of their own attitudes and biases; and in developing cultural intelligence and understanding of the whole force. Realtime feedback to leaders, especially from those more junior personnel within the organisation, is important and can be enabled through the use of reverse mentoring, 360° reporting and focus groups.

Reverse mentoring, by the way, Madam Chair, for those of us who are coming across the concept for the first time, is traditionally mentorship that goes from a more senior member of an organization to a more junior member, whether its in academia, the private sector or the civil service. This is the opposite. This is putting a junior member of the serving forces in a mentorship relationship with a senior member to provide feedback and to provide lived experience of right understanding. The thinking may not be apparent, or the senior member may not have been exposed to the extent that he or she needs to be in order to be a change manager within the organization. It's an innovative concept. I believe this committee may well want to turn its attention to its usefulness in our report.

The report states:

For the last two years, the Royal Navy has operated a diversity and inclusion action group and the Royal Air Force has recently established a diversity and inclusion shadow board. Some Army units have, similarly, adopted this approach through the creation of 'Regimental Inclusion Councils' as a mechanism to capture behaviours and feedback to the Commanding Officer; this inclusive approach is especially effective in reflecting perspectives from junior cohorts.

We've heard again and again, with respect to the Canadian Forces, that there is a generational divide. The problem is one that really differentiates senior ranks within the chain of command from junior and also middle ranks. It goes on to state:

The initiative complements the Army Empowerment Programme which seeks to delegate authority to more junior levels of Command.

And thereby achieves cultural change.

The recommendation that follows this analysis is that:

Services sustain and promote connected leadership in their training and preparation of leaders. Feedback mechanisms such as reverse mentors, focus groups and 360° reporting are leading practice and should be maximised.

The report then makes reference to a concept, and I'm not sure if we've identified the nomenclature within our work, but it's called "referent others". It states:

Academic research refers to the most visible and influential members of a group or community as 'Referent Others'; these include leaders, instructors and others in authority. Their behaviour not only has a disproportionate effect on the construction and propagation of the norm but they are also important agents for sustaining the culture of an organisation.

Looking at leaders within defence, not necessarily in the form of the chain of command but looking at trainers, external advisers and instructors as referent others, as people who can perpetuate the norm is a key component to achieving culture change. They are the multipliers. They are the amplifiers of norms. This is the granularity we need to get to in our report. We need to find those spots within the Canadian Forces where these kinds of approaches and models are useful.

The chain of command is one consideration and a very important one. This is a broader concept that the U.K. forces have identified and highlighted in this observation, that the identification, education and preparation of referent others, given their contribution to organizational culture, is a key component.

With respect to the prevention of inappropriate behaviour, and this is really where the rubber hits the road in terms of our work, the U.K. report states:

- (13810)

Our Armed Forces understand the risks faced on operations and the individual judgements we ask of our people, even of life and death. The unique nature of military life introduces risks away from the battlefield too, and the risk of inappropriate behaviour is one. Experience points to risk factors that are a recurring feature of instances of unacceptable behaviour, particularly in cases of bullying and sexual harassment: tight-knit units that perceive themselves as 'elite'; masculine cultures with low gender diversity; rank gradients; age gradients; weak or absent controls, especially after extensive operational periods; and alcohol. Unchecked or unrecognized, the combination of some or all of these risk factors sets the conditions for inappropriate behaviour to occur. To stop this, people in every part of Defence—not just the leaders and line managers—need to recognise the risk and have the good judgement to do something about it.

Madam Chairman, we may add to that, not only the good judgment but also the empowerment and the recognition that if they choose to take that step, their careers and their reputations are protected, if not enhanced, because they took that step.

The report continues:

The judgement we expect of our people on the battlefield must be the same level of judgement that we expect of their behaviour in the barrack block or the bar.

Or defence headquarters or anywhere else. It continues:

Cultures and behaviours training has to bolster that judgement. It has to be relevant for the people involved and offer skills and techniques which people can use to good effect. Current cultures and behaviours training focuses largely on Service values and standards and the Civil Service Code, complemented by diversity and inclusion training. This gives the impression that it is done to maintain organisational compliance with the law and with Service values, standards and codes which, in some areas, has developed a 'tick box' attitude.

Madam Chair, this is incredibly relevant analysis. I think, again, this is the granularity we need to get to. It's easy to recommend training programs. It's easy to put money into training programs. It's also easy to say that we've trained *x* hundreds of people, but unless we achieve the impact that is described in the level of analysis that we have here from the United Kingdom, these efforts will fall flat and will not lead to the culture change that we need to work for, very actively, very progressively and quickly.

The report continues:

To change cultures and improve behaviours, training needs to be set in context, be well-timed and personally impactful for the participants, with a clear set of outcomes. Key intervention periods are at career inception and subsequent confirmatory command, management and promotion training courses. Training 'Referent Others' to exhibit new behaviours and implicitly encourage adoption by their peers has proven effective at changing norms and behaviours in some hard-to-reach groups.

Training must also take a preventative view, to help leaders at every level better understand the early signs and symptoms of a systemic degradation of behaviours.

I'm going to close with the recommendation on this portion of the report, Madam Chair, but I'll come back with additional interventions on this—

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval:** I have a point of order, Madam Chair.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Go ahead, Mr. Barsalou-Duval.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval:** Could we ask Mr. Spengemann to slow down? The interpreters are saying that they're having trouble translating his comments because they don't have the report in front of them. Perhaps Mr. Spengemann could give them the report. This would make their job easier.



**Mr. Sven Spengemann:** Thank you for letting me know, Mr. Barsalou-Duval. I'll slow down for the interpretation process.

[English]

I was on a point leading to a recommendation in the U.K. report on training. The report just prior to that recommendation states that training needs to take a preventative view and needs to “help leaders at every level better understand the early signs and symptoms of systemic degradation of behaviours.” It's not only delivering training in a top-down fashion, but actually making the training agile enough to pick up the behaviour that it is supposed to address.

The recommendation that the British report makes is that:

All recruits should receive immersive culture and behaviour training at the start of service and continued at regular intervals through their career.

The British Army “has made use of the Garnett Foundation to facilitate 'Respect for Others' training informed by the chain of command. This is scenario based, interactive and highly regarded [training], but has been subjected to funding pressures and remains at risk.”

The run-on recommendation by the U.K. is that:

Use of third-party training expertise is considered leading practice and should be resourced and exploited across [the U.K. defence forces].

Madam Chair, there's another section that I wanted to get to, but I'll leave it here for the moment.

The next issue I wanted to deal with, again with highly relevant recommendations, analyses and insights, is on bystanders. To achieve culture change, we have to address the issue of bystander empowerment. Again, this committee will find segments of this report relevant and may potentially adopt them, in whole or in part.

With respect to training, I think we've seen that the reflex of any government is to say it will train its way out of the problem. Training is an important baseline approach. We've made recommendations on training in the previous report on diversity and inclusion, but it's to make sure that the training has the granularity and the sensitivity to behaviour on the ground. It needs to have the feedback mechanisms to see if it's actually working and then it must insert organizational change agents in key positions.

The U.K. has identified these as “Referent Others”. Regardless of rank, a referent other can be a civilian instructor, an academic who works closely with the armed forces, or a serving member. They are not necessarily of a certain rank, but potentially could be somebody of middle or junior rank who commands respect through a role within the Canadian Forces. It's to empower those women and men to play their roles with respect to training and to empower others in turn to speak out against misconduct.

I think these are really valuable insights and recommendations with respect to the question of eliminating sexual misconduct in the first place. The complement to that, of course, is adequate reporting mechanisms to report instances that are still going on. I'll have more to say on that in future interventions, Madam Chair.

I'll leave it there for now and turn it back to you and to colleagues.

Thank you so much.

• (13815)

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Spengemann.

We'll move on to Madam Vandenberg, please.

**Ms. Anita Vandenberg:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

I would like to address my intervention to paragraph (b) of the amendment on the motion. As I've said before, I applaud Mr. Barsalou-Duval for focusing on the culture. Paragraph (b) specifically talks about putting an end to the culture that has persisted for too long within the CAF in order to prevent women and men from becoming new victims of sexual misconduct. This particular part of the amendment is very important.

We have been discussing particularly in this committee what happens after there has been an incident, after someone has been victimized, has been harmed, but really what we need to do is to prevent the harm from happening in the first place. That's why I am very pleased to see that amendment. Unfortunately, it's an amendment on a motion that obviously is very difficult to support.

I would like to talk a little bit about how we do that prevention. It is one thing to have supports in place when you have a person who has gone through a very difficult and traumatic experience, but in order to prevent it, you really need to address the culture. You need to address the values: What it is that is valued and promoted within the Canadian Armed Forces, and what characteristics and skill sets are valued?

I said this in the status of women committee, but I think it bears repeating here. All too often there is an attitude of “Well, he's a womanizer, but he's a good soldier or aviator or sailor.” That does not exist. We need to make sure that the qualities of a good soldier, good sailor and good aviator include the kinds of qualities that allow leaders within the Canadian Armed Forces to draw out the best talent, the best skills, the best of everybody who serves and who is serving under them.

That requires a completely different value set. That requires us to look at the promotion system and how we advance people within the Canadian Armed Forces. If you advance based on certain hard skills, and you look at the leadership skills, the team-building skills, the empathy and the understanding as peripheral, those are the types of things.... Worse yet, if you look at behaviours that can be very toxic, behaviours that can undermine, diminish, condescend and make people feel unwelcome, and treat those behaviours as peripheral to the skill set you're looking at, that is harmful.

I think that paragraph (b) of the amendment really addresses the core of the issue. It also addresses why we need to get on to the military justice study, because for so much of this, it is a matter of ending impunity. When people see that there are consequences to negative behaviours, that the kinds of characteristics that are rewarded include the skill sets that facilitate inclusion, that ensure every single member is not just ending harm but are thriving, that there is an environment in which everybody feels they are fully and completely equal and that they are valued, those are the kinds of things that you advance.

On the corollary of that, with the kinds of behaviours, the kinds of characteristics that are causing the culture of toxic masculinity—we heard from a number of our witnesses on the normative warrior culture, which is very harmful—we also need to make sure there is justice and that there is not impunity when those kinds of things occur.

That's why I'm actually very pleased that—

• (13820)

**The Chair:** All right, this meeting is suspended.

Thank you.

*[The meeting was suspended at 6:22 p.m., Wednesday, May 26]*

*[The meeting resumed at 11:15 a.m., Monday, May 31]*

• (25115)

**The Chair:** I call this meeting back to order.

I do note there is a motion of estimates from the House, and at some point the will of the committee will be needed to provide direction on that matter.

This is a resumption of meeting number 32 of the House of Commons Standing Committee on National Defence, which started on Friday, May 21, 2021.

If interpretation is lost, please inform us immediately and we'll make sure that it is properly restored before continuing, because it's very important that everyone have a full opportunity to participate in these meetings.

All members should address their comments through the chair, and when speaking, again, as much to remind myself as everyone else, please speak slowly and clearly. The speed of speaking of some members is actually making the work of the interpreters really challenging, especially on very technical subjects. When you're using acronyms and things like that, that makes it really difficult for them to do their work. So, please, if you have a technical piece, if you can share it in advance, I think that would be very helpful. If not, then please make sure that you're speaking at a speed that would allow the interpreters the time they need to do their job, which is very challenging, even at the best of times.

With regard to a speakers list, the clerk and I will do the best we can to maintain a consolidated order of speaking for all members, whether you're virtual or here in the room.

We are resuming the debate on Monsieur Barsalou-Duval's amendment. Madame Vandenbeld had the floor.

**Ms. Anita Vandenbeld:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

As I continue the debate on the Bloc amendment to the motion the Conservative members brought forward, I would like to note there was a motion in the House requesting that the minister come for the estimates, which I think committee members will note that the minister has always done. He, in fact, has always come when this committee has asked him to come to present and answer questions. I can confirm the minister is available before the deadline of June 10 and is able to come to the committee should the committee request that.

I also want to note that on Friday, I submitted a notice of motion to bring Justice Morris Fish forward. I know that notice of motion didn't get to members, in keeping with the 48 hours' notice. That's why the chair also suspended at the beginning. I think it would be something that all committee members would find helpful.

As you know, there is a requirement for a review of the National Defence Act. A year ago, the minister asked former Supreme Court Justice Morris Fish to conduct a review of the military justice system. The minister has indicated publicly—and I do believe it's been sent to the clerk, and soon to be sent out—that he plans to table that tomorrow. There will be a technical briefing offered to all members of Parliament who are interested. I think that will be going out to members for the details and timing.

I also think this committee would want to hear from Justice Fish. This is a very important review. I think committee members would probably very much benefit from being able to ask questions and get his views on that report, particularly since Madam Arbour has also been tasked in her terms of reference to look at the military justice system. I would note that the next study we had planned is on military justice. I think that would be a very helpful thing for the committee.

I do note that right now we are still in a meeting that has been continuously suspended and has not adjourned, and that we are debating an amendment to a motion. I take note there was a notice of motion, and I would imagine my Conservative colleague will probably speak to that. I just wanted to say I think it would be very helpful for this committee to withdraw the amendment and the motion we're debating right now and to immediately go to a fulsome study of the reports.

I'm speaking to the amendment and the motion that are currently before us, because I can't speak on what might come. The motion said—and this was May 28, so it was last week—that members are going to be limited in the amount of time they can spend debating recommendations in a report. In most committees I have participated in, I have had very, very good experiences with colleagues being able to come to a consensus on recommendations.

In fact, one of the committees that I've sat on is a consensus committee, the Subcommittee on International Human Rights. We've been able to do tremendous work by coming to a consensus. Sometimes it takes time. We have to really go back and forth, talk through each of the recommendations, make our case and convince one another, and then come to that consensus. We did that on the Uighurs last summer. We had extensive conversations around that in order to come to a unanimous consensus report.

When I chaired the committee on pay equity, we made sure we came to a consensus, and it took time.

In addition to some of the other issues we've raised in the Bloc amendment to the motion, I would like to put something to members. What if there were a majority government, and the majority decided in a committee there was a limit, in this case an hour and 45 minutes—it would be none now because the motion is moot as it was supposed to be last Friday—to the amount of time members could actually spend debating and discussing a report? In a minority maybe that's not so bad because you can go back and forth. However, if you do this and there's a majority government, then any committee report could be passed with very limited debate. It could just be voted; it's an up-down vote. It's a couple of minutes of debate on the recommendations and, boom, it goes to a vote.

● (25120)

I was the founding chair of the all-party democracy caucus. I implore committee members that we not set a precedent in this committee of a majority of the committee being able.... Ultimately, the majority will be able to vote in what they want anyway, but to have a majority say that you can speak only for  $x$  amount of time and then it's just an automatic vote, I would say that's not democratic. I'm very concerned that this committee is going in that direction with this Bloc amendment to the current motion and any other that may possibly come forward.

What I really think this committee could do right now is.... If this motion is withdrawn or if we just adjourn debate on this motion.... All we need is a majority to adjourn debate on this motion. If we were to agree to adjourn debate, that would allow the committee to then have the three reports.... We have three reports right now that need to be debated. We could actually then go straight into debating.

One of them we're almost through. There are only a few recommendations left; we are almost finished. That one is a study that we started before Christmas. We could actually make sure that the work this committee has done, especially the one on mental health.... We had people who came to this committee, and it was not easy. It was hard for some of these people to speak and to take the time to relive their experiences. To not then have a report come out of that is not fair to those witnesses.

I would love to be able to stop the debate on this motion, go to those reports, get those reports done, have Justice Fish come for one meeting—that is also a fairly urgent thing because, of course, it's tabled tomorrow—and have the minister come to answer questions about the estimates, which, again, is about accountability, which is what the members opposite are talking about. They're talking about accountability. Accountability for spending is what the estimates are about. I note that the deadline for that has been extended. I imagine that's something the opposition would like. I have assurances that the minister is available to come. We could do those two meetings and go to the reports. Before the summer recess, we still have enough meetings so that we can get those reports out and translated and hopefully be able to get them tabled in the House.

I guess at this point I'm imploring the members opposite to just put aside some of the dysfunction that's happened in this committee and look at what good we can do. I do believe this committee can do good; I do. I think we've heard some really important testimony.

It just hurts me that some of that testimony might not make it into a report or recommendations because we're stuck at an impasse.

My preference right now would be that the motion be withdrawn and we can then talk about what we want to do next as a committee, including the reports, bringing Justice Fish and having some hearings on military justice. We know that every survivor who came forward talked about the justice system and how it needs to be reformed. We have a generational opportunity here to be able to weigh in on that. This is the moment, because we know that Madam Arbour is starting right now as part of her terms of reference on military justice. We have a moment right now as a committee to weigh in on that.

I really hope the committee can see past some of the very undemocratic motions that are coming forward and really try to come to some kind of consensus.

That's all I have to say, Madam Chair. Thanks.

● (25125)

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Vandenbeld.

Mr. Bezan, go ahead.

**Mr. James Bezan:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

I find it a little rich coming from the parliamentary secretary that she's concerned about shutting down debate at a committee on a report that the Liberals don't want to see the light of day, when they move closure at every whim in the House of Commons to shut down debate on important legislation. I think this government is on track to move closure a record number of times in parliamentary history. If the parliamentary secretary is sincere about fighting for democracy and parliamentary processes and decorum, then let's quit having closure motions by the government on legislation, often bills that have barely seen the light of day, never mind having a significant amount of debate on the substance of legislation that would impact all Canadians.

I'll just say this: The Liberal members of this committee have spent hours and days in filibuster. The Liberal chair suspended this committee on this report 25-plus times. We've been in this meeting, in suspension and actual filibuster, since May 21, so when you take into account all the suspensions, just the suspensions that we've had, it's now over a month that we have been trying to deal with this report and have some more witnesses called, like Zita Astravas. Instead, we've spent a month in suspensions and filibusters. That is not democracy. That is obstruction, and it's contemptuous behaviour by the government members.

Zita Astravas must have some fairly important information, because the Liberals have been complicit in the cover-up of the minister and the PMO on how things progressed after they found out on March 1, 2018 about the sexual misconduct allegations against General Vance. Zita Astravas was front and centre as the one who carried that information from the Minister of National Defence, Minister Sajjan, to Katie Telford, and the Liberals definitely don't want to have her appear at this committee.

Because of these ongoing suspensions and filibusters, and blocking the ability of the committee to hear from key witnesses in this study, knowing that the current motion before us, along with the amendment, is no longer valid because the dates have passed, I am going to withdraw that motion, Madam Chair, and I move the following motion:

That, the committee, in respect of the committee's study on addressing sexual misconduct issues in the Canadian Armed Forces, including the allegations against former Chief of the Defence Staff Jonathan Vance,

(a) the committee hear no further witnesses before a report to the House has been adopted; and

(b) the provisions of the motion adopted on Monday, April 12, 2021, concerning a report to the House, be supplemented as follows:

(i) notwithstanding the motion adopted on Monday, April 12, 2021, at 12:00 p.m. on Monday, June 7th, 2021, or, if the committee is not then sitting, immediately after the committee is next called to order, the proceedings before the committee shall be interrupted, if required for the purposes of the motion adopted on Monday, April 12, 2021, and every question necessary for the disposal of the draft report, including on each paragraph and proposed recommendation which has not been disposed of, shall be put, forthwith and successively, without amendment, provided that each member of the committee may speak once for two minutes on each proposed recommendation,

(ii) the committee declines to request, pursuant to Standing Order 109, that the government table a comprehensive response to the report,

(iii) dissenting or supplementary opinions or recommendations shall be filed, pursuant to Standing Order 108(1)(b), in both official languages, no later than 4 p.m. on Wednesday, June 9, 2021,

(iv) the Clerk and analysts be authorized to make such minor grammatical and editorial changes as may be necessary without changing the substance of the report, and

(v) the Clerk be instructed to inform the Chair and vice-chairs when the report is ready to be presented to the House, so that the Chair may present the report when the House next takes up Routine Proceedings, provided that, in her absence, it be presented by one of the vice-chairs.

Madam Chair, I'll now speak to that motion.

• (25130)

**The Chair:** Okay, stand by.

Unfortunately, we still have the amendment on the floor. That needs to be withdrawn as well before we can take something else on the floor. Then there is the main motion as well.

Mr. Barsalou-Duval, since you were the mover of that amendment, do you wish to withdraw it?

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval:** Madam Chair, I agree to withdraw the amendment moved.

I would also like to speak about the new motion when possible.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** All right, thank you very much.

To finish this off, Mr. Bezan, you need to ask the committee for unanimous consent to withdraw your original motion before we can go back and talk about the new motion.

**Mr. James Bezan:** Okay, I ask for unanimous consent to withdraw the motion on the floor.

**The Chair:** Are there any objections? No.

It looks good, and it's done.

**Mr. James Bezan:** Okay, I will not bother moving that again since I've already read it into the record, if you're okay with that, Madam Chair.

**The Chair:** Yes, that's fine.

**Mr. James Bezan:** Madam Chair, taking into consideration the debate that was ongoing for the last 10-plus days on that motion, knowing that we want to get to the point of tabling a report in the House before we rise for summer recess, realizing that we have only four weeks left, a maximum of eight meetings, counting this meeting here, unless we add more meetings to the schedule, if that's possible, and knowing that there are limitations on the available resources because of other committees that are currently meeting, I would implore, Madam Chair, that, if the opportunity presents itself and other committees have wrapped up for this session, we take their times in respect of trying to get our work done.

As the parliamentary secretary earlier alluded to, we have this report on sexual misconduct in the Canadian Armed Forces, specifically surrounding allegations against General Jonathan Vance and Admiral Art McDonald, but we also have our study on mental health and our study on COVID and the armed forces that we'd like to get finished, completed, and tabled, and then, at that time, move on to hearing from the minister on supplemental estimates, as well as from Justice Fish on his statutory review of the National Defence Act as it relates to military justice.

Now, the purpose of this motion is to provide some clarity on how we go forward. If the Liberals continue to talk paragraphs and recommendations ad nauseam, then we need to be able to move into a format where we can still have debate, so this motion would still allow each member of the committee to talk for two minutes on each paragraph or recommendation that is in the report that we have started to consider.

I would think that it's more than ample time for concerns to be raised on a paragraph-by-paragraph and recommendation-by-recommendation basis and would focus our efforts in coming to a decision on the best report to present to the House of Commons, and ultimately to Canadians, and provide direction to the Government of Canada as well as to the Canadian Armed Forces. I think this is an easy path forward for us, and I would encourage members to support this so that we can get on to the drafting of the report on sexual misconduct in the armed forces.

If the Liberals decide to filibuster this motion, which provides a timeline for us to get a report tabled in the House of Commons before we recess.... It states here that dissenting opinions would have to be submitted to the committee no later than Wednesday, June 9 at 4 p.m., which would allow us to table this in the House of Commons either on June 10 or on June 11. I would ask members to see this as a way for us to get some solid recommendations in to the government and to the Canadian Armed Forces. It will prove to Canadians that this committee has done more than just play politics, as Liberals like to accuse us of, yet all the evidence points to their ongoing filibustering as political games that have been played here.

We know that ultimately, at the end of the day, we can come to a decision. If the Liberals decide to filibuster this motion, it proves a fact to everyone watching, as well as to committee members: that, indeed, they don't want the report to see the light of day, mainly because there was a concerted cover-up that was done between the Prime Minister's Office, Katie Telford in particular, and the Minister of National Defence, Harjit Sajjan. Because of their action and inaction, ultimately there was a failure of Operation Honour, a failure in protecting the women and men who serve in uniform, and the culture was allowed to fester and become more toxic than what had previously been experienced.

• (25135)

I encourage all members to look at this and accept the motion so that we can finish writing the report and get it tabled in the House of Commons within the next couple of weeks.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Bezan.

• (25140)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Barsalou-Duval, please go ahead.

**Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

As you have seen and as I pointed out earlier, I agreed to withdraw the amendment on Mr. Bezan's original motion. I must say that I regretfully agreed to have it withdrawn.

There was unanimous consent to withdraw the motion. Mr. Bezan's current motion was also unanimously supported.

I said that I did so regretfully. I think that the committee could have done a much better job if we hadn't been subjected to endless filibustering. This has been the case over the past few months. The committee has been unable to do its job properly. I think that this is particularly sad.

I hear the calls for democracy from the governing party, the Liberals, with respect to the passage of the motion currently before us. It could shorten or limit debate.

In any other context, I would tend to view this type of motion with a great deal of trepidation.

For the past few weeks or months, the Liberals' arguments have left me in disbelief. I doubt whether they really intend to co-operate in a reasonable way to get a report through before the House closes.

I must say that I've overdosed on filibustering. I've seen enough of it to avoid being naive enough to give them the chance to block the committee's work once again. In my view, we could have done some real work. We could have heard crucial testimony for our study. Unfortunately, we weren't able to do so.

We can still have brief discussions on the items to include in the report. I think that a report is important. I've emphasized this several times before the committee. You can understand the sincerity of my commitment in this area. A report must be tabled in the House. We must do everything possible to ensure that this type of report is tabled.

The motion currently before us doesn't prevent anyone from expressing a different opinion. There's still time for debate. We still

have the opportunity to obtain additional opinions or a dissenting report from people who disagree with the content. This could even be my case.

That's why we must stop the sad spectacle of filibustering and get to work to bring the committee back on track under the current circumstances.

I, for one, will be supporting the motion moved.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Barsalou-Duval.

[*English*]

We'll now go to Mr. Baker, please.

**Mr. Yvan Baker (Etobicoke Centre, Lib.):** Thanks, Madam Chair.

I want to start by responding to some of the things that Mr. Bezan said a few moments ago. I find those things completely objectionable. Mr. Bezan referred to government members, who include my colleagues and me, as performing what he called "contemptuous behaviour", by debating motions that he has presented repeatedly at the last minute. He accused us of being "complicit in the cover-up".

First of all, to be able to allege that, you'd have to prove that there was a cover-up, which Mr. Bezan desperately has tried to do but has not been successful at. I can appreciate why he is frustrated, given the number of committee meetings he has wasted trying to do that.

Then, even if he had proven a cover-up, which he hasn't, he'd have to prove that we were complicit before accusing us of doing so, and neither of those things is true. I am incredibly disappointed, and I am wondering if it is even in order to say such things at a committee or in Parliament.

The third thing is that he referred to filibustering. It's interesting, because Conservative members—and Mr. Bezan, in leading them—have continually introduced motions at the last minute that call for witnesses, whom in many cases we have heard from already, to come back over and over again, to answer the same questions we have asked and heard answers to over and over again from those same witnesses and other witnesses.

What I find shocking is that Mr. Bezan is completely comfortable wasting the committee's time on that political finger pointing and recalling witnesses on those same topics we have already debated and heard from them on, but now he has the gall to suggest that the Liberal members are not allowed to spend time at committee debating the very motions he has introduced.

I want to respond to those points, because I found them all objectionable. I would be shocked if using words such as "contemptuous behaviour" and "complicit in a cover-up" is in order.

Going back to the motion that Mr. Bezan introduced, I agree that this committee needs to present a report, a fulsome and thoughtful report, that actually makes recommendations to the government on what to do to fix the problem of sexual assault and sexual harassment in the armed forces. That's what we should be doing.

In fact, that is what the government members have been fighting for, meeting after meeting after meeting, while Mr. Bezan and his colleagues decided instead to play political games and introduce further motions at the last minute to call witnesses and point fingers and try to grab headlines.

Yes, we should be issuing a report. The way you issue a report—and I don't have to tell the members of this committee how that's done, because they've all been part of it many times over on this committee and on others—in committees in the House of Commons is that you work together. You meet and you find a consensus, because that is the only way to build a report that reflects the will of the committee. What you don't do is waste months and months of this committee's time pointing fingers at the Liberals, unsuccessfully trying to repeat to people that there is a cover-up, which there isn't. Just because you repeat the word “cover-up” hundreds of times, that doesn't make it true.

Mr. Bezan has tried that tactic unsuccessfully, and now he is frustrated. Now what he is trying to do is make up for lost time, which he wasted, by introducing a motion that basically requires us to ram a report out of this committee that will not have the consensus we need. It won't speak for what we've heard at the committee—it will speak for what some members think they heard at the committee—and it won't do justice to the people we should be trying to help, who are the victims of sexual assault and sexual harassment in the Canadian Armed Forces.

Yes, of course we should be issuing our report. That's what you've heard from the government members over and over again for the past many weeks and months, while Mr. Bezan and his colleagues played political games. This motion would make a farce of that report. That's not a report. This is a way for Mr. Bezan to say, “Well, I ticked the box. There is some sort of document that came out of this committee that says 'report' on it.”

The victims of sexual assault and sexual harassment deserve way better than that. It should be a report that reflects the will of the committee, that is thoughtful and debated and considered. By limiting the amount of time that members can actually speak to the issues.... Come on, that's not the way you create a report on a complex, serious topic where you're serious about defending the interests of the people who are victims of sexual assault and sexual harassment. That's just not how you do it.

• (25145)

I'm surprised that I even have to take the time to explain this. Members here should know that. This is something that is....

What I also find objectionable is that in the motion that Mr. Bezan has presented, he is limiting MPs' ability to debate the report. Never mind the fact that limiting the amount of time to debate the report is not going to lead to a good report because, knowing that, members who disagree with the members who are speaking, instead of working towards consensus, can just ignore it and vote

the way they wish. They have no interest in finding consensus and no interest in working together. It's like pretending that some of the members weren't even at the committee the whole time—just let them have their two minutes and then I'm going to ram through the report I want.

Not only is that bad for the quality of the report, the calibre of the report, but it's completely undemocratic. Also, as Ms. Vandenberg raised earlier, imagine what happens when there's a majority government of any political stripe. Imagine that. This is a motion that, once you pass it here.... If we were to pass Mr. Bezan's motion here at this committee, it would set a precedent that any majority government could ram through any report and claim it's the will of the committee without it actually being the will of the committee, because if a government is a majority government, they'll have the majority of the members on the committee and they can vote through anything they want. As a member of the governing party, I don't like that, but if I were in an opposition party, I certainly wouldn't like that, especially if I didn't think that I would be in the majority.

I'm really shocked that Mr. Bezan is willing to set this kind of precedent, and I'm shocked that he wants to limit MPs' ability to debate. He had time to play political games for months and months on this issue, but he doesn't have time to debate the report, which is what the victims of sexual assault and sexual harassment actually deserve. I'm incredibly disappointed. I think that when you limit debate on a topic like this, you're not allowing the members of this committee, who've heard the testimony from so many experts and others, to be able to bring into the report what they actually heard.

I think we heard a tremendous amount that was incredibly important and that has to be in that report, has to be heard, has to be documented and, most importantly, has to be documented not just for the sake of documentation, but documented so that insights can be drawn and the recommendations of the report actually reflect what we learned. When I think about some of the things that we learned, there's so much that needs to be in that report.

For example, I think of what we heard from a survivor and a CAF member who presented to the Standing Committee on the Status of Women. I want to share this with you. This is the kind of thing that should be in that report and should be debated. Her thoughts and her insights should be included.

• (25150)

[*Translation*]

The Canadian Armed Forces member who testified before the Standing Committee on the Status of Women is Heather Macdonald. She said as follows:

It becomes even more difficult if you are in the navy and the incident happens on a navy ship at sea or in a foreign port. We do not have police officers with us on ship, so if there is a need for an investigation we rely on our coxswains and chiefs to do unit disciplinary investigations. This greatly reduces the chance that there will be admissible evidence gathered and preserved to help the victim find justice in a court of law. Most times, the victims pay a greater price than the perpetrators when they come forward, and that is why most victims are reluctant to come forward.

That last sentence, that victims will pay a greater price than the perpetrators when they come forward, is very important. That's why she says that most victims are reluctant to report people and bring up what happened. We've heard about this issue several times here in the committee. We need to address the issue as a committee.

Our report should include recommendations that would help resolve the issue. But no, Mr. Bezan doesn't want to do that. He just wants to quickly issue a report to say that he prepared a report and then move on. That's unacceptable.

I think that these types of testimonies provide very important information. We must use and include this information in our report, to make sure that the recommendations reflect the victims' opinions on what must be done to resolve the situation in the Canadian Armed Forces.

I'll continue with what Ms. Macdonald told us:

We need to fix this. We need to make this a better and safer place for females to work. The #MeToo movement very much exposed our societal gender problems. The military somewhat amplifies those issues, because of the fact that females are also a minority. As a minority we stand out, and we end up being more under a constant microscope than the average male sailor or soldier.

Added to that, females of all rank levels have a very fine line that they have to walk. Act with too much empathy or concern and you are labelled as "mothering", which is not perceived as a positive or sought-after trait. On the other end, be too firm or decisive and you are labelled a different derogatory term.

I don't know how many times in this committee we've heard Ms. Macdonald's point from witnesses discussing the internal culture issue. This is one glaring example, among many others, of that issue. To resolve this issue, if we're serious as a committee, we must think about it and discuss what we've heard. We must prepare a report that emphasizes that this issue must be resolved.

Mr. Bezan's motion doesn't serve this purpose. It says that we shouldn't discuss all this. Each member has only one or two minutes to talk about it, and that's it, the report is finished. This motion is a joke.

I'll continue with what Ms. Macdonald said when she testified before the Standing Committee on the Status of Women.

One area that I also think we need to understand is what I have heard called the old boys' club. For the most part, what I hear is a denial that it even exists. We are in an organization that relies on the most basic trust of your fellow soldier or sailor. When we find ourselves in hazardous conditions, we rely on the people we are working with to have our backs, to keep us alive. This creates relationships that are strong and cohesive. This is what we want for our organization.

So again, Ms. Macdonald, a survivor of sexual misconduct, is talking about culture. We need to understand the nuances of this issue. We should include what we've learned in the report. We can't do that by speaking for one or two minutes and then approving a report as such. That isn't fair. We aren't honouring the victims, women such as Heather Macdonald or others, who have testified before committees and who have spoken publicly. These women are incredibly brave to have done that.

• (25155)

Mr. Bezan's motion seeks only to show that a report has been prepared, but a report that doesn't reflect what we've heard, what these women have told us, and what must be included to provide recommendations that will resolve the issue of sexual misconduct in the Canadian Armed Forces.

As a result, Madam Chair, I'm completely opposed to the motion, obviously. I'm disappointed in Mr. Bezan's comments. I'm disappointed that he would move a motion of this nature. As I said, I think that this is undemocratic and that it sets a very dangerous precedent for future governments. If we set that precedent today by passing the motion, the majority parties can simply write whatever they want in a report, regardless of the perspective of the opposition parties.

Ultimately, we're here to resolve the issue of sexual misconduct in the Canadian Armed Forces. To do so, we must take the time to write a quality report. This motion is created to do the opposite, in other words, to say that we've written a report, but not a quality report that honours the victims of harassment and sexual misconduct in the Canadian Armed Forces.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

• (25200)

[English]

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr. Baker.

Mr. Spengemann, go ahead.

**Mr. Sven Spengemann:** Madam Chair, thank you very much. To begin, I would like to thank you for your leadership on this committee over the past months. It's clear that some partisanship has taken hold. Thank you for keeping us on the rails and for keeping the conversation going. I think we are talking about extremely important issues, even though we now have different visions, clearly, in terms of what needs to be done and how to arrive at the conclusions before the end of the parliamentary term. Perhaps today will offer an opportunity to get to a better space.

I would like to support the comments made earlier by my colleague Ms. Vandenberg with respect to the intersection of this topic with the issue of military justice. She mentioned a potential appearance of Justice Fish. I would support that. Time is ticking, and we're rapidly approaching the end of the parliamentary term. If we can create connection points and synergies that stress the horizontality and systematicity of the issue of sexual misconduct into the domain of military justice, we should absolutely take advantage of that—even though, as I said, the clock is ticking and time is being used now to discuss the different visions that we have in front of us.

In response to Mr. Bezan's motion, it's very clear that Mr. Bezan and colleagues of his have a particular view. They've made certain allegations. They've been spending the last few weeks trying to substantiate those allegations by chasing after one more witness, one more statement, that would allow the conclusion that what they say is accurate. In the meantime, the clock is burning and ticking away. We have a different vision, a different narrative, a different account of what needs to be done, which is to solve the systematic issue of sexual misconduct in the armed forces in a deeper way.

It's easy for opposition colleagues to say that we are filibustering. We're not filibustering. What we are doing is putting on the table not only, most importantly, the ideas, the visions, the experiences of serving and former members of the Canadian Forces and people who aspire to join the Canadian Forces, but equally, as I've tried to do over the past number of sessions, work that's been done elsewhere. This is work that's been done in other jurisdictions with a military that is structured similarly to ours, that is under democratic control, where the issue of sexual misconduct, all the way up to sexual assault, has equally caused concern and equally led to initiatives. In several cases, the work has been done. Colleagues in those jurisdictions at the parliamentary and executive levels have been able to get to the same side of the table and create high-quality reports with recommendations and accounts that are granular enough to warrant serious consideration by this committee.

In some cases, our experience has been cited elsewhere, in a good way, in a salutary way, but it's very clear that in Canada a lot of work remains to be done. It's urgent work. Those countries that are working in parallel with us are going to look to see if Canada will follow suit, take a leadership role on this issue and solve these questions and issues urgently. That's one thing I've been trying to do under the "filibustering" description by opposition colleagues.

Mr. Barsalou-Duval's amendment, which has since been withdrawn, stated very clearly that with the study under way, there was an expectation that this committee take cognizance of new facts. New facts come to us in the form of witness testimony but also in the form of, very often, comparable experience from other jurisdictions, particularly Five Eyes countries. We work with them very closely on questions of military co-operation, security and intelligence. That includes the U.K., as I've highlighted in recent interventions, as well as New Zealand and others.

In my last intervention before the committee, I drew attention to the work we had done as parliamentarians in a very different way, in a much less partisan way, in the 42nd Parliament. The report we issued then was not directly related to sexual misconduct. It was related to equity, diversity and inclusion in the armed forces. There were sections on sexual misconduct and the issue of the sexualized culture in the military. Some of the witnesses who appeared then appeared before us as well, but the outcome was different. The outcome was a report where colleagues had opportunity to consider among themselves, in a non-partisan way, a series of recommendations and approaches that we made to government, with respect to which a government response was requested. It wasn't a dissenting report. That means that even though it was a majority government at the time, if colleagues had disagreed with what was put forward, they would have had the opportunity to voice those concerns in a dissenting report. The committee spoke with one voice.

● (25205)

In this intervention, Madam Chair, I just wanted to put to the committee the consideration that it's time to move out of the partisan divisions and find a way to work together fairly, because time is tight. It's not impossibly tight, but we're at a stage where we now need to make the right decisions with respect to this report.

I think it's incredibly important that colleagues—as my friend and colleague Mr. Baker has outlined—have an opportunity to de-

bate, but not in the form of a two-minute statement on each paragraph or recommendation. By the way, if we take that at face value, that would be utterly inconsistent with the time frame that's recommended. The motion recommends that we be done, as I read it, on June 7. That level of debate—each member of the committee making a two-minute statement for each recommendation or paragraph—would potentially, first of all, be a series of monologues without the ability to really interact with each other, because we can't amend the recommendations or paragraphs. It would also take more time than the timeline of the 7th would allow.

Third, Madam Chair, it eliminates your ability to act as chair to really exercise discretion and debate among colleagues and guide debate in a very complex setting to a productive conclusion on recommendations or textual paragraphs. If we simply vote paragraphs up or down after a two-minute monologue, we don't create a report. We create a run-on series of statements that may or may not solve issues. We wouldn't raise the chances of them solving issues, because we haven't had the ability to combine, amend or reconsider motions, or to look at experiences from elsewhere to see if the recommendation hits the right tenor. We haven't had the ability to prioritize them in terms of timelines—in other words, what needs to be done first and what the government should most urgently take account of to really get on top of this issue quickly.

Time is of the essence. It's not only parliamentary time, in terms of getting this report finished before we rise for the summer, but, most importantly, it requires such urgent attention with respect to protection of members of the Canadian Forces who are currently serving.

Our efforts are to do two things. One is to prevent additional cases of misconduct. The other is to allow, in those instances where sexual misconduct has happened, victims to come forward in a much more empowered structure and with greater independent oversight that takes into account the evidence we've heard with respect to senior ranks and the cultural differences between various ranks within the armed forces.

These are very important considerations. To do a quick, slapdash, up/down approach in the course of a week, where the real heavy lifting... I've described this in other interventions as the tip of the iceberg being the cases we've actually looked at, high-profile as they were. The important cases of misconduct that have really taken the entire country's attention with respect to the problem are one portion. The massive issue of the lower part of the iceberg, which is hidden, is the system itself. It's the system that empowers people like the former chief of the defence staff to say, in 2015, that he owns the Canadian Forces National Investigation Service.



How can this happen? How can one senior-ranking officer of the Canadian Forces be so empowered institutionally—“misempowered” is probably a better term—that he would claim that he owns the entire national investigation service. That’s a system challenge. That’s not a challenge I’ve heard any thoughts or recommendations on from opposition colleagues, who are now saying that we should find another witness who may have an additional sentence to add.

Let’s do the real work. Let’s work on the iceberg. Let’s chip apart the iceberg and change the culture. Let’s look at those countries that have done it well and incorporate their experience and their testimony. Let’s prioritize the deeply scarring emotional impacts of the messages that came directly from former and current serving members of the armed forces. That needs to be front and centre. That can’t be done in a report that’s voted up and down in a quick session with a basket of recommendations that we have not even had the opportunity to relate to each other, to prioritize or to discuss in any meaningful way.

I appreciate Mr. Bezan’s concern that we do need to get this report out. I think it’s incredibly important. As I said earlier, no report in this committee’s recent history will be more important than this one. It needs to be finalized and it needs to be published, but it needs to have impact. To publish something that falls flat on expectations and impact is not worthy of this committee’s mandate and effort.

For that reason, I hope the motion on the table now will give us a pathway to a potential amendment, to a discussion or to a much more constructive approach where we can actually sit down as a committee on the same side of the table with the problem on the opposite side of the table and find a pathway to make those changes that are utterly, urgently needed.

• (25210)

I’ll leave it there. I have additional thoughts that will take us into more detail with respect to other experiences and insights that we may inject into the consideration of the recommendations, if and when we get to them in a meaningful way.

For the moment, I’ll turn it back to you, Madam Chair, with my thanks.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr. Spengemann.

Next we have Mr. Bagnell.

**Hon. Larry Bagnell:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I appreciate the opportunity to speak to this motion.

When the motion was first presented, I thought it was an improvement. I thought it was a step forward, and I was hoping, as Mr. Spengemann just said, that it would leave room so we could amend it in such a way that all the parties would agree that we could move forward in a co-operative way.

I have a number of things to say on the motion, at least four, but before that, as Mr. Bezan at times presents inappropriate preambles to the motions, I have to set the record straight on the comments he made in the preamble to the motion.

First of all, remember where we came from. There was an email. The person was anonymous. They didn’t want their name put for-

ward and they didn’t give permission for the information to be put forward. So we had an email, and no one knew what was in it. It was anonymous. It was reported immediately to the investigative officials, who investigated as far as they could, case done.

Then, the Conservatives started presenting motions to bring in all sorts of witnesses about those emails. The Liberals agreed for a time, even though it wasn’t studying the major things that witnesses, experts and survivors had told us we should be studying: the culture, the reprisals for reporting, the chain of command. There was nothing on that. It was on an email that no one knew anything about and that had already been investigated.

Finally, the Liberals said, enough, stop wasting the time of the committee on bringing forward motions to either bring back the same witnesses on that email, which no one knew what was in, or to bring other emails that were not necessarily appropriate. Let’s get back to what we should be discussing, which has some possibility in the new motion.

I appreciate the things that Mr. Bezan mentioned in his preamble we should move on with, but going back to what the facts were, remember that the situation was investigated fully, as far as it could go, because there was no permission or information to do anything else.

What came out subsequent to that motion was that, at the time of General Vance’s appointment, there were actually two serious allegations that the dogged research of the media found out—I think it was Global News and the Toronto Star—and General Vance was still appointed.

As I said, this isn’t where I wanted to go on any of these past witnesses. I wanted to get on with the things the survivors wanted us to get on with, but those who were seriously thinking of calling more witnesses—Mr. Barsalou-Duval talked about more witnesses in his preamble—would really have to change the witness list to those who found out at the time about those two investigations, and why General Vance was still appointed.

One investigation, the military police ended it, or announced they were ending it, the day he was made commander-in-chief, and four days later it was ended. They said, under access to information, and I have no idea who filed it, that they were under pressure. That could be a serious allegation. If you’re talking about witnesses, those would have been the types of witnesses.

The other investigation into General Vance at the time was referred to Mr. Novak. It was very similar to what happened with the email in 2018. In 2018, it was investigated as far as it could go. In the case of Mr. Novak, he said he went to Mr. Fadden—the very same process—but Mr. Fadden said there was no record of complaint or current investigation, so if there wasn't, then there needed to be one. But the national security adviser says he never did that investigation. If that investigation wasn't done, why was Mr. Vance appointed?

● (25215)

If you really wanted to go back and do witnesses, then, unlike in Mr. Bezan's preamble, those are the witnesses you would call on what recently came to light, which was more serious. As I said, that's not my area of interest—it's getting on with the future.

Since that story came out, there was even more. The outgoing chief of the defence staff, General Tom Lawson, said he was crystal clear: No allegation related to misconduct by Vance in Gagetown was brought over to him at any time, including while he was helping find his replacement, the chief of staff. He said he wasn't fuzzy at all. He would have looked into it. Subsequently, more people have come forward, such as former vice-chief of the defence staff Guy Thibault, saying they were never told either.

Those are the types of things that the people who thought that other motion was appropriate.... If they were serious, then they would have changed the witnesses to discuss the serious allegations that were actually found later. As the Liberals have been saying all along, the important thing is to get on with what the experts and the survivors have been telling us needs to be done, and have a serious debate, not a two-minute debate, on the very complex things that need to be done and need to be recommended.

Good examples are that, for instance, the administrative changes that were made in some cases were very good. But obviously, as Mr. Garrison has pointed out in the past, and I have pointed out, there were many hundreds of incidents still going on related to sexual misconduct. It's not working. It may be working to some extent. We listed at the last meeting for over an hour the things that the government has done, but still obviously a lot more needs to be done. It's very complex, obviously, when that many things have been done that may have made progress forward in some areas. If it's too simplistic an answer, then obviously it's not going to make progress on that.

That's why I think—and I've said this at almost every meeting—that's where we need to be having serious debate. They are not easy issues. There's a saying that for every complex problem there's a simple answer and it's wrong. That's why we need to have more than a two-minute input on each item. Whether it's two minutes on a paragraph.... Does that paragraph do justice to the witnesses? If not, do you just get to speak for two minutes, and that's it?

Obviously, these are very serious changes of direction for an organization, the military. For some of these recommendations, is two minutes serious? As both Yvan and I have said, either in this or in previous meetings, how seriously is anyone going to take a report where you've had two minutes each to discuss a paragraph or a recommendation?

● (25220)

It has been said many times that the purpose of this study is to hold the government to account. On this motion, how could you hold the government to account if the government doesn't get to do a response? Why would we not want to have the government respond to the various recommendations? The government has already taken a lot of steps but is in the middle of taking some more, with Louise Arbour, etc. We need to make sure that what the survivors and the experts said is included in the report and the recommendations, in the things they are doing. If that's not included in the report....

Then, with a major report like this, with so many recommendations, I was hoping, similar to what Ms. Vandenberg said, that we could in some way initially come to a way of agreeing on all the ones we all agree on, to get that part done. If not, when you have only two minutes and you don't know what's going to go through, is 48 hours really a reasonable time for a consenting report, with all the paragraphs that may be inaccurate or recommendations that may need further input?

Also, on the limiting of debate, I'm just wondering how the NDP or the Bloc would feel if this precedent passes and if in the future there's either a Liberal or a Conservative majority and they'll get two minutes per person input on major recommendations that could totally go against their party philosophy, against their principles. In fact, think of the things we're debating at length right now, for instance the Broadcasting Act; if you only had two minutes to deal with a recommendation there, would people think that was appropriate?

The last thing I would say at this time is that on this particular part of the procedure, which is where I think we could come to some agreement and have some discussion, because it's a very serious change in procedure, when I was chair of PROC the Conservatives and the NDP spent several months debating a change of procedure because they didn't feel it was appropriate. They made it pretty apparent, time and again, how important it is not to change procedures without all-party consent.

I'll leave it at that for now.

The last thing I would say, because it is related to my next comments, is that on the serious recommendations and serious paragraphs, if we have more than two minutes' input, we're going to have to make it now, during this debate. I assume all committee members who have some serious input on either paragraphs or recommendations, unless that has changed over the discussion of this motion, will put all their input into the recommendations or paragraphs for which they have more than two minutes' input to make their point, because this is the only time they're going to be able to make it.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

• (25225)

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Bagnell.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Robillard, you have the floor.

**Mr. Yves Robillard:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

Like my colleagues, I'm surprised by Mr. Bezan's motion.

Limiting the speaking time of each committee member prevents us from doing our job properly and effectively. In the committee, we had witnesses tell us how much this situation needs to change. It seems that this motion seeks to relieve us of our role as committee members by giving us the chance to say that we've spoken for two minutes and that we've contributed to the study. That obviously isn't true.

Also, by failing to leave room for any government response, this report won't change the situation. This proves once again that, for the opposition members, the motion is just a way to say that they tried, but that we didn't want to listen. That simply isn't true.

However, as a committee, we could focus on the victims and survivors and stop trying to score political points.

Once again, every member of the national defence team should feel safe and respected in their workplace environment. Eliminating harassment and sexual misconduct and creating a safe work environment for every defence team member is a priority.

An independent external comprehensive review of current policies, procedures, programs, practices and culture within the Canadian Armed Forces and the Department of National Defence will be initiated. Its purpose will be to shed light on the causes for the continued presence of harassment and sexual misconduct despite efforts to eradicate them; to identify barriers to reporting inappropriate behaviour; to assess the adequacy of the response when reports are made; and to make recommendations on preventing and eradicating harassment and sexual misconduct.

Here are the types of concrete steps that we can take to change this toxic culture within the Canadian Armed Forces. To that end, we'll also review the recruitment, training, performance evaluation, posting and promotion systems in the Canadian Armed Forces, as well as the military justice system's policies, procedures and practices for responding to these types of allegations.

The review will also assess progress made in addressing the recommendations contained in Marie Deschamps's external review into sexual misconduct and sexual harassment in the Canadian Armed Forces. The sexual misconduct response centre's mandate, independence and reporting structure will also be reviewed.

Here are the concrete ways that we can make a difference in the Canadian Armed Forces. The reviewer will deliver its draft review report to the Minister of National Defence, and, subsequently, to the deputy minister of National Defence and the chief of the defence staff. The final review report will be made public by the minister within 10 days of receipt and will be forwarded to the Prime Minister.

I don't think that Mr. Bezan's entire motion should be eliminated. I hope that the member will be open to the possibility of making amendments so that we can move forward.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

• (25230)

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Robillard.

[*English*]

We'll go on to Mr. Baker, please.

Oh. You're next, Madame Vandenberg.

**Mr. Yvan Baker:** Madam Chair, is it my turn or is it Madame Vandenberg who goes next?

**The Chair:** You can give Madame Vandenberg your turn if you'd like, Mr. Baker. Then you can go after her.

**Mr. Yvan Baker:** Sure.

**The Chair:** That's very gentlemanly. Thank you very much.

Madame Vandenberg, go ahead.

**Ms. Anita Vandenberg:** Thank you very much, Mr. Baker.

Thank you, Madam Chair. I know it's a little more difficult when I'm in the room to know exactly where I am in the order, but I appreciate the opportunity to speak.

I note that once again in this motion, as I mentioned about the previous motion, we have limiting the ability of members to one or two minutes, no amendments and an up-down vote on recommendations that have come from witnesses who took the time to come to this committee on what are very complex issues. There are many different solutions that have been proposed by different witnesses on what can be done, not just to improve what we're able to do for survivors, but also to prevent it in the first place.

To be in a situation where, as I've mentioned before, on a report that is over 60 pages long, we won't be able to discuss between us... This idea of a round of one minute, one minute and one minute and then, boom, we vote, well, that's not a conversation, Madam Chair. We have to be able to go back and forth. We have to be able to come to a compromise. I'll just say again, on that aspect of it, that I think this is a very bad precedent, because we all know, as members, that the real work in Parliament happens in committees. We all know, especially those of us who've been here for a number of years.

We have examples in the committees we've sat on of reports where we were able to get past our political differences, listen to what the witnesses told us and come up with some very good reports in this place. I would hate it if the report-writing part of our job were to be subject to the same kinds of political limitations and considerations that other aspects of our work are. This is where we can actually come together, really listen to Canadians, report to Parliament and then ask the government to respond to that report.

That's probably the most cynical part of this. I know that my colleagues have mentioned it, but the most cynical part of this motion is that not only are there going to be no amendments, with very limited debate and an up-down vote, where a majority can just push through whatever they want, but at the end of the day, to not ask for the government to respond to the report.... This is what accountability is, Madam Chair, to ask the government. Not wanting the government to respond is akin to saying, "We're going to be putting this through, but we don't actually want the government to take action on this and we don't want to have to say either yes or no to the different recommendations and explain why."

Madam Chair, I would go back to the fact that we've had exceptional witnesses. It is true that at the beginning of the report, it was supposed to be three days and it was supposed to be on a very limited topic, but, as in many other committees, when the witness testimony comes in and we know that nothing can be taken out of context.... As we started looking at the context, as we started hearing from witnesses and as this issue became more and more clear to members and we started calling more witnesses.... I mean, we had Madame Deschamps here—that is significant. We've had multiple academics here and we've had several witnesses who have literally spent their life's work on this topic and who gave us their ideas. To then say that we're just going to take one or two minutes on the recommendations that these witnesses took the time to come here and express to us is a disservice to those witnesses.

I'd just like to go through some of the recommendations we've heard from these witnesses, the recommendations we're talking about that we're just going to an up-down vote on after two minutes of discussion. There are a lot of really difficult, important, complicated, nuanced and complex things here. I'll give you some examples.

Members will recall that I've spoken previously about some of the recommendations we've heard from witnesses, both in this committee and in the status of women committee, and also about recommendations that we've heard as individual members from people who have very thoughtfully come to talk to us—I know that you, Madam Chair, and others here have had some really hard conversations in the last four months—and we have listened. I've mentioned that there have been some conversations and some things I've heard that have kept me awake. It's not easy.

- (25235)

What we need is to give the recommendations that came from our witnesses the same thoughtfulness when we're debating them as they did when they presented them.

I'm going to go through and talk about some of those recommendations. These are not necessarily recommendations that are in the draft report. These are things that we've heard from witnesses through various committees.

I've bundled the recommendations, and this particular section is around culture change in the Canadian Armed Forces. We know that culture change is needed. The things that are valued and the things that are seen as peripheral are really important, the way Canadian Armed Forces members interact with one another and the things they learn. What is something that will be rewarded? What is something they feel they must not speak out on or they need to

speaking out on? What is the reaction they get when they do so? How do people who are not the normative masculine warrior type experience their time in the Canadian Armed Forces?

I would venture, Madam Chair, that this is just as harmful to men who don't want to participate in this kind of culture. It is just as limiting to men to typecast and accentuate certain characteristics as being a good soldier, a good aviator or a good sailor, and certain characteristics as being weak or not in tune somehow with the Canadian Armed Forces, the culture that is there and the things people learn.

Even this week, we've heard really hard testimony and discussions about the Royal Military College, early on in the career of young people who are joining to serve and to protect their country. I'm not a veteran, but I know we have a veteran in the room and many more listening, and I really believe the motivation for people to join the Canadian Armed Forces, overwhelmingly, is to protect Canadians, to protect other people, to serve our country and to be honourable. These are the values, and when that isn't something they find when they get there, that is not an easy thing. I can only imagine, just from listening—and in the last few months we've been doing a lot of listening—that these are not easy problems.

I have a series of recommendations here that I've picked up over the last four months, and I'd like to read them into the record.

The first is "the appointment of a non-CAF member to conduct inquiries into sexual misconduct in the CAF and make recommendations". This is something we heard early on. It's exactly the reason we brought in Madam Arbour, but also General Carignan to actually implement this.

With Madam Arbour, for the first time, we have somebody who is outside the chain of command, who is outside the Canadian Armed Forces, and who is going to be looking at the "how". We know that Madame Deschamps—she testified here—identified very significantly the problem and that this has to be done outside of the Canadian Armed Forces.

We've heard now from the acting chief of the defence staff. We've heard from many very senior members on the departmental side and from the Canadian Armed Forces that Madam Arbour's recommendations.... They are not recommendations in the generic sense. This is a road map. This is the how. They couldn't have come from within the department or the CAF, the "how to do this". We tried that, and I do think that people made honest attempts to implement things, but it has to come from outside, and that is what Madam Arbour is doing.

I don't think we can underestimate the significance of the acting chief of the defence staff saying that the recommendations of a former Supreme Court justice are not just going to be implemented at the end, but every month. We heard the acting chief say that she is going to be reporting every month. We have now a new institution within that is going to be implementing as the recommendations come in.

● (25240)

With General Carignan, this isn't something where we're just going to wait for another report. This is a road map, and you heard the minister say that it will be binding. This is something that we're going to be implementing as we go, with General Carignan in a position to not only take those recommendations but also look across all of the Canadian Armed Forces and the Department of National Defence and at unifying all of the different pieces that are out there so that we actually do make a difference.

I'm seeing a significant moment right now when I do believe we have a real opportunity, and this often happens in periods of crisis. Because of those who have spoken out, because of those who have come forward, we are now in a very good position to really make a difference. I think this committee really could be focused on that.

Second, we also have Justice Fish's report coming out, which I'll talk about a little bit later, after we're able to see what Justice Fish actually recommends.

The next one here recommends “approaching the issue of behavioural change in the CAF with a top-to-bottom approach: examining individuals, culture, values, and attitudes”. This may be one of the most important recommendations, because what this recommendation does is talk about the values. When we talk about culture, what we're really talking about are the values and attitudes of individuals. That's not to say that we don't have a responsibility to create an environment where everyone can thrive. It really is about how individual members of the Canadian Armed Forces treat each other, the attitudes they bring, the way in which they interact and the values that the organization shows are the ones that are rewarding. That is what is important.

When the values are such that certain people in the Canadian Armed Forces feel that they can't contribute fully, that they're not really welcome, when there are microaggressions, when there are things that indicate every day, whether it's what is required to be in your kit or the way your uniform fits.... If the message that is being sent—particularly to women but also to other equity-seeking groups—every day in your day-to-day experience is that you're just being accommodated, that you don't really belong here but that they'll kind of try to fit you in, as opposed to values and an attitude and a culture where somebody is completely valued, where that person belongs there, where they know that they belong there and are not just being fit into what already exists, where the contributions of all individuals become part of the whole, part of the unit, part of the forces as a whole, and where there is leadership that isn't just about getting a particular job done but is about looking at the various skills, talents, life experiences and abilities that every member brings and making sure that every single person who joins to serve their country is able to do so completely.... That, I think, is

what the witnesses who brought this particular recommendation were talking about.

The next one is recommending “approaching the issue of behavioural change in the CAF with a beginning-to-end approach: examining new CAF members, indoctrination, course-of-career events, leadership development, incentives, and career advancement”. This is core to some of the things we have heard. It's from the beginning, from the very first day that somebody joins the Canadian Armed Forces, all the way through their career. This talks about the course of career events that shape the direction and the culture, the leadership development. What is a leader? I really think the concept of leadership...and this is not just in the Canadian Armed Forces. We've seen this in politics. We've seen this in many different areas.

● (25245)

There's been a lot written about this from a feminist perspective of what is leadership. We've even seen it here in the House of Commons, where if a woman is speaking and she shows emotion that's somehow considered weakness, not a real leader. This idea that leadership has to be aggressive and masculine, as I said previously, doesn't just hurt women; it also hurts men, because not all men are comfortable with that kind of normative, toxic masculinity. Most men aren't. I think this idea that you have to fit a certain mould in order to be included is what we talk about when we talk about culture change.

I like the way this particular recommendation is worded, where it says, “beginning-to-end approach”. The previous recommendation talked about behavioural change from a top-to-bottom approach. That's a lot of what we're talking about here today. But this one talks about a beginning-to-end approach, and I do think this is something that has to continue throughout a person's career.

I have a lot of hope, because I do think there is a lot of culture change happening, especially with the younger and newer members of the Canadian Armed Forces. I do think that kind of leadership is really the kind of leadership that we're going to need. I'll be honest: This applies to politics too. Those of us who are a little bit older and who have been around for a long time all have something to learn from the people coming up who are younger than us.

I can tell you that I have 19- or 20-year-old female staffers and interns who have called out things that I wouldn't have thought to call out. I think it's because at a certain point in your life you get almost desensitized. It's not that you get comfortable with something, but you hear it so much and maybe you try to call it out and then at a certain point it doesn't register anymore. I think a lot of us, those of us who are not in our twenties, let's say, a little bit older, a little more experienced, who have been in careers where very often.... In my career, very often I was the only woman in the room. In fact, that was the norm, more often than not, that I was either the only woman or one of very few women in a room full of men. At a certain point, it's like we learn those strategies that if you want to get things done and you want to move the dial on certain things you just learn to ignore other things.

Those are things we shouldn't ignore. Those are things we have to call out. I had some moments of self-reflection when some of my very young staffers said, we have to call this out; this is wrong. Then I think to myself, why is it that I wouldn't have thought...? As soon as you think about it, you think, yes, you're right. We absolutely have to call that out. Why didn't it register?

I think you have that same kind of self-reflection happening with a lot of the very senior members of the Canadian Armed Forces. I think a lot of people, looking back at their careers—and these are good people who have never participated in the kinds of behaviours that we're talking about—maybe became.... I don't want to use the word “desensitized”; I don't even know what word to use.

I do think there is a major shift happening right now, and that is a good thing. It's happening because of those who called it out. I'm not going to say it's the brave or courageous women, because the ones who don't, it doesn't mean they're not brave or courageous. I think we all need to look at what we do and what we consider to be relevant or not relevant, what we react to or don't react to. That's all part of culture. That's why I'm really pleased when I see here that it is about top-down and beginning-to-end.

The next recommendation I have here that I've put into this category is “setting a goal of consistent, timely, compassionate, and effective sexual misconduct resolution in the CAF in order to achieve culture change”.

● (25250)

There are a lot of people right now.... I don't think this is unique to the Canadian Armed Forces. Certainly, when #MeToo began, if you look at institutions around the world—law enforcement institutions, military, the United Nations—in a lot of institutions that traditionally have had many more men than women, there's a lot of self-reflection happening.

The wording in this recommendation is incredibly important: “consistent, timely, compassionate, and effective sexual misconduct resolution”. It needs to be consistent, because if you apply it in certain cases and not other cases, it lacks legitimacy. It needs to be timely because, obviously, justice delayed is justice denied.

I find it really sad that people phone me, when they've seen me on TV, and say, “I'd like to tell you something that happened to me 40 years ago. I've never told anyone.” How heartbreaking. For somebody to keep something inside for decades and feel that they can't tell anyone, not even the people in their personal lives, that is at the same time heartbreaking but also a huge responsibility.

To the people who have spoken, I really hope we're doing right by you, because by speaking out after 40 years, it is an even greater responsibility on us as politicians, as leaders, to make sure we get it right, to make sure that speaking out now is not going to be for nothing, and that younger people and people who are currently serving never ever have to go through what you went through.

This has to be timely. Nobody should ever again feel they have to be silent for decades. I can't even imagine, 30 years from now, if somebody experiences something now, that they would.... This has to be timely, and we need to deal with it right now.

“Compassionate” is an interesting choice of word. The reason those survivors brought this forward as a recommendation.... They also have to understand that people do change, people go through learning curves throughout their lives, and people do become aware. People don't always understand the impact of their silence, or the impact of what their behaviours are, until it's brought to them. Good people, when they realize the impact of things that maybe were normalized for them, are self-reflective and want to make amends. I think this can't just be punitive. It has to be compassionate, so that people can reconcile and make amends.

I'm not talking about sexual assault and sexual violence. I'm talking about the off-colour jokes, looking the other way or laughing because you want to be part of the crowd, or the things that create culture that many people have probably experienced. There has to be a compassionate way to make amends, so that those who experienced it can have closure and move on, and so that this behaviour changes.

Yes, some of that has to be punitive, when people do things to harm and hurt others. There has to be justice, but at the same time, there also needs to be a reckoning about how behaviours have to change, so that people internalize what they've done and are able to then change it, not only for themselves but for people who are coming up behind, people whom they're leading.

Obviously, it has to be effective. That's a given. There have been many attempts. We saw things like the duty to report, which were well-intentioned. Many of us, when we talk about bystanders, talk about those who looked the other way and said, “That's none of my business. I'm not going to talk about it.” The duty to report put that obligation to report it if you see it. The problem with that is that it took the agency away from the person who was experiencing it. It forced that person, often a woman, into a timeline and a set of events that the person may not have been prepared or ready for. Perhaps they might have wanted it at some point, but it took it outside of their control over how and when things got reported and how and when those were pursued.

● (25255)

I think what we've learned, if anything, from the recommendations, from the testimony by the witnesses, from everybody we've heard from, is that it is very important that the victim, the survivor, the person impacted has the agency and decision-making capacity about how it goes forward. That is, I think, a very thoughtful recommendation.

The next recommendation I have here—and this is something we've heard a lot about in the last four months—is about “addressing the failure of Operation HONOUR to link sexual misconduct and military culture, notably the lack of reference to the role of gender and masculinity in the CAF”.

One of the first pieces of testimony we heard here was from the minister, who came here at the very beginning and talked about toxic masculinity. I do believe that was the first time that a Minister of Defence in Canada has, in a public setting before Parliament, used the words “toxic masculinity”. It is, I think, a vitally important milestone to recognize.

It is one thing to recognize it; it's another to eliminate it. The how, that piece on how we eliminate it, Operation Honour didn't do that. Operation Honour—as much as I believe there were some good things that came from it—didn't make that link to culture. It didn't. As we've heard from many witnesses, it didn't achieve the results that it purportedly set out to achieve. There were many reasons for that. We heard a lot of those reasons, and I'm not going to get into those now.

To talk about culture without talking about gender and masculinity is almost impossible. A lot of what we're talking about and a lot of the experiences we've heard are specifically about the concept of masculinity, the concept of gender and the way most people don't conform or fit into those expected gender roles. The idea of masculinity and what masculinity is.... I don't remember which academic we heard from, but it might have been Dr. Okros who told us that, with regard to this idea of a “warrior culture”, this is one of the last places where we have people who may look to join because it's one of the places where “men can be men”.

That's a really toxic thing, if you think about it. Among men and women, there are so many different sets of behaviours. Trying to limit it to this one concept of masculinity is harmful to women and to men. I think that's something we definitely need to include in our report. Something we most certainly need to make sure of is that the witnesses who talked about these things and the recommendations they brought forward are heard.

I think I'll leave it there and let some of my colleagues continue. I certainly have a lot more recommendations here. I really hope we'll have to chance to table these in Parliament.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

● (25300)

**The Chair:** Thank you, Madame Vandenbeld.

Go ahead, Mr. Bagnell, please.

**Hon. Larry Bagnell:** I have a few points.

One is that I was actually really buoyed this morning when I saw this motion, although it took a while to read it and everything. It's too bad that, as usual, it came in late, but Mr. Bezan has apologized for it, and I accept that.

I wasn't as much of an objector as some others. I thought there was a way forward here. I still think there is a way forward here, and I don't think Mr. Bezan withdrew the motion on more witnesses just because it became obvious that the next witnesses should be Mr. O'Toole, Mr. Fadden, General Lawson, Guy Thibault and the head of military justice who closed the report on Mr. Vance. It was to get a way forward.

He made an interesting point about closure in the House, and I wanted to comment on that a bit.

As you know, the Conservatives used closure a lot of the time when they were in Parliament, but I don't blame them for that, actually, because I think there's a structural problem. This has been brought up at PROC and was never resolved. There's a structural problem in the way the House of Commons works that leads to closure no matter who's in government. This has been solved by other parliaments. I think the Scottish Parliament is one.

The fact is that when you have over 50 departments and agencies, important work that needs to be done in all those areas and a huge agenda, no matter who is in government you need to have a plan that makes sense. Some things are very minor additions and some things are major additions. End of life is a very serious type of debate and discussion, but some minor things—because there's no programming and there's no schedule—take up excessive time. No matter who's in government, if you want to move on for the people of Canada and the many topics that need to be moved forward on, you will need closure.

How other parliaments have dealt with this is that the parties get together and do programming. They decide in advance what is serious and what needs more time, and they come up with a schedule that makes a lot of sense. It reduced, and I think in some sittings actually totally eliminated, the need for closure, because they came up with something that made a lot more sense. The serious issues got the serious time, and the minor amendments got the time they needed. I recommend that to everyone.

As I said before, I think there are things in the report, in either the clauses or the recommendations, where there are members from every party who wouldn't necessarily agree with them right now and would not want to end their debate on them at two minutes. My gut reaction is that not that many are controversial, although one member did suggest earlier in this debate that most of them were. I think all members of all parties who have an objection and want to speak for more than two minutes on a clause or a recommendation should do that during this debate, because if this motion passes, they're not going to have any other time. I look forward to hearing from all the members on what's important to them.

I'll give you an example from my perspective of something that I don't think there's enough attention given to, in either the report or the recommendations, and that is reprisals. As we heard from a lot of the witnesses, either they reported and there were reprisals to their careers, or they didn't report because they feared reprisals by reporting.

● (25305)

In the administrative directive or the code of conduct, I'm not sure if there are strong enough condemnations of inappropriate reprisals, particularly in sexual misconduct, but it could be for anything. That is an example of what I think should be looked at more and should have a lot more than a two-minute discussion, because obviously it is one of the major flaws in the system and we should take more time on recommendations and the paragraphs of the report.

The last thing I would like to do is just throw this out. I just thought about this five minutes ago, but having seen the motion and having thought of a way forward that people might think about, I'm not looking for a quick answer or anything. I'm just thinking as I go and letting people think about this: What if we were to go through the paragraphs and recommendations quickly and agree by unanimous consent which ones could be dealt with in the way Mr. Bezan is proposing, with two minutes per member for discussing them? I think that would deal with....

It's hard to say, but my thought is that a lot of the report could be dealt with really quickly that way, in the way Mr. Bezan says, on particular paragraphs and recommendations that we all agree will be dealt with in that two-minute debate per paragraph and per recommendation. Because obviously the recommendations and paragraphs have evolved from what the witnesses said, they can't be so inaccurate that we wouldn't come to an agreement on a lot of them. Then, for those few where we couldn't agree unanimously that they be dealt with in that process, we would go back to them and deal with them in the regular process for clauses and recommendations.

I'm just throwing that out as an idea for people to think about. I'll turn it over to the next speaker.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr. Bagnell.

We'll go on to Mr. Spengemann, please.

**Mr. Sven Spengemann:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair, and thank you to my colleagues for their previous remarks.

I want to circle back to a couple of points. One is the government response. I think it's incredibly important that we ask for a government response. Colleagues have outlined why that is. It's a question of accountability. Unless we hear from the government what its reflections are on the recommendations and the tenor of the report that we're going to put forward, we have little way of ascertaining to what extent we're actually impactful and to what extent we're going to help move the yardsticks.

I'll use an example that I cited in previous interventions. The U.K. had its 2019 "Report on Inappropriate Behaviours", as they called it, issued in July 2019. Fairly shortly, a year later, the Right Honourable Ben Wallace, MP, Secretary of State for Defence in the United Kingdom, issued a report entitled "Unacceptable Behaviours: Progress Review 2020". Those kinds of things can happen if you ask for a government response.

From that experience, we see that if the right recommendations are made and put forward, positive action can follow in very short order. I think that's really one of the issues here that we've talked about this afternoon and in previous sessions. It's not only the urgency of the issue that's at stake. It's also the importance of making sure that we have recommendations that are actionable, that are impactful, and that aren't going to sit in a drawer or be ineffective if they are implemented. I think the government response is important for this committee to be seized with, and any additional studies that it may undertake, but also for the Canadian public to see what the government's reflections are and what its path forward is in response to our report.

I have two other quick points on Mr. Bezan's motion. I think one of the challenges we've seen is that it's not so much only the two-minute restriction in itself. I mean, for the sake of expediency, one can sort of follow the logic of why you would restrict time. We do this in committee all the time when we have witnesses. We have carefully negotiated allocated time periods. The challenge is if you tell a member they may speak only once, because that prevents any kind of debate building on comments that were made previously by colleagues, specifically with respect to recommendations. If a colleague has an idea of how to amend a particular recommendation and they've already spoken, then she or he will not be able to come back in again to give a reflection. You don't get a cumulative debate that may actually get us to the same side of the issue, if not the same side of the table.

For that reason, I think it's important that we be more flexible. While bearing in mind Mr. Bezan's overall concern that we need to finish this report in short order, to be able to land it, I don't think the two-minute restriction, if it's framed as speaking only once, will be helpful in that respect.

Mr. Bezan also mentioned—I think I'm quoting him correctly here, but he'll tell me otherwise if I'm not—that this was the "easy path forward". I think by "easy" he did not necessarily mean to take the issue lightly; he meant the most expedient way forward. I just want to be clear here, on the record, that the issues are complex. Testimony after testimony and intervention after intervention that we've heard from colleagues, some very thoughtful across party lines—in some cases, anyway—indicate how complex the issues are and how important they are to Canadians and, most importantly, to the family of the Canadian Forces currently serving and veterans.

For that reason, I think we have to be mindful that the easy answer isn't going to cut it: an expedient answer, yes, but we are entering now into the final stage of our work. There are complex challenges before us, coupled with complex recommendations that need to be thought through. I think it was my colleague Mr. Bagnell who said that complex problems that are responded to with simple answers will often be faced with ultimately the wrong answers. We need to take the time to think this through, but expeditiously.

I'd like to thank my colleague Ms. Vandenbeld for her most recent intervention with respect to recommendations that she put forward. I'd like to complement them briefly with some of the insights that are in the concluding section of the report from the U.K., which I've presented over a number of sessions. They relate to the topics of bystanders, recruits, social media and transparency of action. I'd like to get them on the record again, in light of the fact that if this motion passes, we will basically be truncating our discussion with respect to any additional input that may be made.

The issue of bystanders is incredibly important, not only in the Canadian Forces but in broader society. The elimination of sexual misconduct really is driven by the need to find different behaviour from bystanders, be they civilian or be they serving members of the armed forces.

● (25310)

On this point, again, the U.K. conclusions are illuminating. The report states:



Recent academic research refers widely to the role of bystanders in influencing behaviour in groups. Everyone is a bystander; we witness events unfolding around us constantly. Sometimes we recognise events as being problematic and we might decide to intervene—and become an active bystander; or not—and remain a passive bystander. There are many factors which will influence why we decide to intervene or not but when we do decide to intervene, we are sending a clear message to the wrongdoer that their behaviour is unacceptable.

The U.K. is drawing attention to the need to change bystander behaviour within both the civilian and the military elements of their armed forces.

The report cites a quote from Edmund Burke, who wrote in the mid- to late 1700s. The quote says, “The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing.” Appreciating when this quote was written will lead to an understanding of the fact that this is not gender-neutral language, but perhaps importantly, with respect to this issue, really it is the behaviour of men in large part that is at question. It is also the question of male allies. Again, the status quo will be maintained if people don't act, and bystanders have a particular role.

The report continues:

In empowering active bystanders, skills development and the creation of supporting challenge and reporting mechanisms is critical to the success of introducing effective intervention programmes. Several valid and reliable proprietary bystander intervention programmes exist but all such programmes require significant investment in training and education at all levels of the organisation. Bystander education equips people with the knowledge, skills and confidence to intervene; to challenge inappropriate behaviour; to call it out; and to report it. The Defence Academy active bystander intervention programme is judged leading practice in this regard.

These are the observations of the United Kingdom report on the question of bystanders. They recommend the investigation, development and implementation of bystander training across defence. That's a recommendation that complements the comments that were made by Ms. Vandenberg in her previous intervention.

The section goes on to recognize that more data may be required from recruits, and in this respect the U.K. report actually refers to us and the Canadian Armed Forces' work, stating:

The Canadian Armed Forces are considering whether or not to gather additional information on new recruits to have a better idea of the values, attitudes and standards they possess on joining, to assess risk and protective factors and therefore better tailor and focus training. We recommend consideration of the same.

The message back to us here is that as we develop this report, other countries are going to look to us, and in fact are already looking to us, with respect to what we do. There is a heightened attention that is signalled by the U.K. on our work or our potential steps with respect to gathering information on new recruits, something I feel the committee should be mindful of as we develop our report.

It is this granularity and this kind of interaction between us and other jurisdictions through the work we do that require some consideration and debate on our behalf, and not just in the sense of having the opportunity to intervene for two minutes without necessarily building on the comments of other members. I think, more systematically, we need the freedom to interact with each other to figure out what the right answers are, especially when it comes to the integration of the work that is already being done in other jurisdictions.

The recommendation by the U.K. is “Consideration should be given to gathering additional values, attitudes and standards information on new recruits to assess the risk and tailor preventative training.”

On social media, the U.K. makes a comment that perhaps requires some consideration on our part, especially considering what Ms. Vandenberg said earlier about young people and social media:

A widely acknowledged behavioural challenge is the increase in the transmission of social media messages with a sexual content. Whilst efforts should focus on this area, it is recognised that this is part of a broader societal challenge. Although there is an expectation that the more junior cohorts are more familiar with social media and online activity, some focus group feedback has suggested that this cohort, described as “digital natives”, do in fact require some training and education surrounding their conduct online.

● (25315)

This takes us into a broader conversation in the civil sector with respect to online bullying, harassment and misconduct. Perhaps we should turn our minds to this in a more thoughtful manner than the U.K. has had the opportunity to do here. It's a simple one-paragraph statement. We may want to elaborate on this, in light of the work that many of us are engaged in at the parliamentary level, outside of the Canadian Forces, with respect to online harassment, online hate, and the work we're doing in that regard, and feeding that back into the recommendations we're making with respect to social media messages by current or former members of the Canadian Forces.

Finally, there's a heading “Transparency of action”. This is fundamental.

Transparency of action needs to be communicated and evident to all Service personnel and civil servants. This should include greater transparency of the consequences for perpetrators, to bring to life the policy of zero-tolerance, energise values and standards and tackle elements of organisational cynicism that action does not get taken. Culture and behaviours—and the consequences for victims and/or perpetrators—need to feature as a routine conversation in the work place, and throughout training provision; it must be consistent and persistent.

This section of the report concludes there, with a call for “authentic leadership”, “relentless engagement” and “consistent communication” across the U.K. forces.

Bystander training, immersive role-playing training, and social media training are all good examples of programmes we recommend should be implemented across Defence. This will require concerted effort, resource and persistent attention over many years by Defence senior leadership, and leaders and line managers at every level.

Over the course of the interventions I've made so far on just the British experience alone—and I indicated there are experiences from other countries that the committee may wish to consider or at least take note of—there's a granularity here that can catalyze our work.

I know our time is short, but by looking to what was done already elsewhere and what was done successfully, we not only step to the side of our allies around the world that are facing the same problem, but we signal to Canadians that this is an issue that far exceeds our borders, that is systematic in nature, that is based on the way the military has acted generationally for too long, and that the culture change that's required is much more multilateral, if not global, in areas like peacekeeping and deployments around the world that the Canadian Forces is a part of.

I'll leave it there for the moment, Madam Chair.

● (25320)

**The Chair:** The meeting is suspended.

*[The meeting was suspended at 1:21 p.m., Monday, May 31]*

*[The meeting resumed at 1:22 p.m., Friday, June 4]*

● (34920)

**The Chair:** I call this meeting back to order. This is a resumption of meeting number 32 of the House of Commons Standing Committee on National Defence which started on Friday, May 21, 2021.

If at any time we lose interpretation, please let us know as soon as possible, because it's important that everyone have the opportunity to fully participate in these proceedings.

When speaking, please speak slowly and clearly. If you have very technical information to share, please provide it in advance for the interpreters to use. When you're not speaking, your mike should be on mute.

With regard to a speaking list, the committee clerk and I will do the best we can to maintain a consolidated order for all members whether they're participating virtually or in person.

We'll resume debate on Mr. Bezan's motion.

Mr. Spengemann, you had the floor.

**Mr. Sven Spengemann:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

Welcome, colleagues. I hope everybody had a good weekend.

I had a chance to reflect on the work that's ahead of us. It's slow, perhaps, but I think we are making some progress on this particular issue that's been in front of us for some time now. I think members of the committee have characterized it as potentially the most important issue this committee has faced in its recent history. I think it is extremely important that we come up with our vision of a way forward, of recommendations that will solve this issue, both with respect to the accountability that's attached to the cases that have come before the committee, including the former chief of the defence staff, and also the systematicity of this issue and the question of culture change within the Canadian Armed Forces that's so urgently required, and that many witnesses, including the minister himself, have spoken to us about.

Madam Chair, when I had the floor at our last session, I took the committee through a good portion of a July 19 United Kingdom report entitled "Report on Inappropriate Behaviours". The most recent section that I addressed dealt with the pre-emption of inappro-

priate behaviours in the British Armed Forces. I will have more to add on that, further on in the discussion, but I thought I would take a moment to take a step back and reflect on where we are as a committee. I realize that we are close to the summer recess. There are partisan winds blowing in various parts of the House and committees. That's understandable as a function of where we are in the process and the issues that are in front of us, which have partisan dimensions.

I believe this issue, Madam Chair, is one that we need to work on expeditiously in the sessions that we still have available to us, to overcome partisanship. I made reference in previous interventions to work that I was part of in the 42nd Parliament, along with a number of colleagues on this committee—Mr. Bezan, Ms. Gallant, Monsieur Robillard and Mr. Garrison—when we did work on diversity and inclusion. The circumstances were different, and it was a different time in political history, with a majority government, but I think there was a very strong view by this committee that we had to move to the same side of the table on "D and I", as it's called. There were questions at the committee relating to sexual misconduct. They were not as sharply pointed, because we didn't have the evidence in front of us relating to the former chief of the defence staff. It was an experience that really showed Canadians and us as members of this committee what we can do if we are united and are able to overcome partisan reflexes.

In this particular instance of the report in the last Parliament, there was no dissent. I think we were all on the same page. We may have had disagreement and discussion with respect to some of the minutiae of the report, but the issue and its importance were very much alive and in front of us. We were able to come up with some very good recommendations that are impactful. Some of them are in the course of being implemented.

I think we need to find a way, and maybe this afternoon's discussion can be a pathway to that, to overcome to the greatest extent possible the partisan obstacles to this particular report. We may not be able to fully do it. The stakes have gone up. The urgency is greater and the expectations are higher.

Madam Chair, the reason I raise some of the comparative experiences from other countries is to show not only that this shouldn't be a partisan issue inside our borders but also that this is an issue that many other militaries are grappling with for the same reasons—a chain of command and generations of a military culture not conducive to inclusion. The role of women through other work we've done with regard to the Canadian Forces, in women, peace and security, has been at the forefront of our work in many ways, but these other militaries are also facing the very same questions. In some cases, they have gone out front with respect to not only reports, as the United Kingdom has done, but also follow-ups, very expeditious follow-ups, within a year in the British case, that might be illuminating to us as well. I think this issue can be resolved efficiently and expeditiously if we overcome those partisan hurdles. It's incumbent on all of us to try to do that.

Madam Chair, with respect to Mr. Bezan's motion, I think one of the obstacles was the structuring of discussion time. Procedurally, it does limit your own discretion to guide the discussion, as chair of the committee, when we're in camera and dealing with the report, to make sure that members have not only equitable time to intervene but also constructive time to comment on each other's thoughts. If we're only letting each member of the committee speak once for two minutes, yes, we can get our voice in, but we can't really build on each other's thoughts and priorities and reflections.

I think what's most important for us is that we find, among the now relatively lengthy list of important recommendations in front of us, in part those that are most impactful and those that are most implementable in the short term.

● (34925)

If we agree on those across party lines, we should flag them, identify them, approve them and move forward on them in whichever way we choose. There may be others where discussions may be more attractive. Hopefully, there won't be any that are strictly partisan in nature, but those discussions had to happen. They did happen at this committee. Again, it's very natural to have partisan disagreement.

I want to go back to what I've described as the tip of the iceberg, the case of the former chief of the defence staff, Jonathan Vance, who was appointed by the former government in the face of an ongoing investigation. His tenure then continued into the current government with extremely troublesome allegations, evidence and, ultimately, a report that the former chief of the defence staff himself felt so empowered by that he felt he owned the CFNIS, the Canadian Forces National Investigation Service.

This is not a partisan issue. The trajectory of this one particular case extends across governments. With respect to the systematicity of the culture in the Canadian Armed Forces, this even precedes the government that appointed the former chief of the defence staff, Jonathan Vance. At this point, it really is incumbent on us to find a way to get past the partisanship, and get to the same side of the table.

In my assessment, Madam Chair, we do have adequate time.... The time is tight, but we do have adequate time to really get into a discussion that would be fulsome, impactful, and allow us to prioritize those recommendations we agree on. We can find a way to implement them, contextualize them, prioritize them, and signal to our government, through a response requested from government, that we are following this issue closely.

This is an issue of accountability. It's an issue of democratic oversight of the Canadian Armed Forces through this very committee. It's on our shoulders as the democratic element, not the executive but the parliamentary element that's attached to the operations of the Canadian Armed Forces.

I think it's extremely important that we ask for a government response, and that we do so as a committee that is, to the greatest possible extent, non-partisan in its orientation and approach.

I will leave it there for my opening remarks. I have more to say later, as I indicated, to take us through some additional portions of the U.K. experience.

There's also some compelling work that was done in New Zealand that I think the committee would find illuminating and helpful with respect to how we would prioritize the recommendations that are before us, or will come before us, when we proceed to finalizing our report.

Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

● (34930)

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Spengemann.

We will now move on to Mr. Baker, please.

**Mr. Yvan Baker:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I'd like to build on what Mr. Spengemann was saying.

I do think that first and foremost in our minds should be the victims, how we're going to address what they've told us, how we're going to address the heinous behaviour that they've had to face and the consequences they've had to deal with. I think anything short of that coming out of this committee would be disappointing and a failure of this committee to do what it should be doing, which is fighting for those victims and fighting to solve the problem of sexual harassment and sexual assault in the Armed Forces.

That's why I have a concern, a great concern, about the motion that we're currently discussing, that Mr. Bezan has proposed, because it doesn't allow us to accomplish that goal. I think the motion calls for a report to be churned out of this committee without the necessary debate and without the necessary consensus-building that is always the approach used to write a report in committees. All of us have been through that in this committee and other committees. We know how important that consensus-building is, especially on a topic that is not just as important but as complex and nuanced as what we're facing here.

Not having the report be built on the consensus of all the members of the committee, as is always done in committees, will not allow us to ensure that the report represents the collection of views that we have heard, whether it be from experts, from survivors, from the minister or from anyone else we've heard from.

I think an important part of debate that happens when a report is being produced by a committee is that the debate, that consensus, forces members to understand, to appreciate each others' points of view and to find a way to collectively come together and issue a report that is the best possible reflection of the joint views of the members of the committee and what they have heard and what they have concluded based on the testimony that's been put before them.

Ramming it through after a couple of minutes of speaking time for each member trivializes that discussion. It eliminates that discussion, frankly, about building consensus, and that lack of consensus means that we won't get the report we need, one that reflects what we've heard, reflects the nuance and the complexity of this issue and ultimately presents recommendations to actually solve the problem we're here to solve, which is sexual harassment and sexual assault in the Canadian Armed Forces.

I really think we need to move to the report in the format that we always do when we're working on reports in this Parliament, in committees, working by consensus, and this motion eliminates that debate, eliminates the consensus. Basically, all this motion would do, if it were passed, would be to make this report a tick-the-box exercise, and that would be an incredible disservice to this issue and an incredible disservice to the survivors and what we've heard them say and what other witnesses have told us here at committee.

You know, one of the survivors, as an example of what we heard and what parliamentarians have heard from survivors.... I know many members on this committee have spoken to the fact that they've met with survivors. Survivors have come and presented in this Parliament and in particular to the Standing Committee on the Status of Women, and I think we need to honour that. We need to honour their courage. We need to honour what they said, the content of what they presented, and we don't honour that by not incorporating it into our knowledge, into the conclusions we draw, and ultimately into the report we write, and this motion would prevent us from doing that.

One of the people, one of the survivors who came forward, who presented to the Standing Committee on the Status of Women was Dr. Leah West. I want to share with you some of the things that she shared. These are the kinds of things that I think we need to be including in the report. She said:

With the brief time I have, I'll try to do three things: first, introduce myself and how I found myself here today; second, identify what I believe to be the root cause of the CAF sexualized environment identified by Justice Deschamps in 2015; and third, discuss a way forward.

● (34935)

To begin, why am I here? I served in the CAF for 10 years as an armoured officer. I graduated at the top of my class from RMC in 2007 and immediately took command of an armoured reconnaissance troop. One Thursday night at the end of my first year with my unit, I was sexually assaulted by a superior at a house party that was well attended by other junior officers in my regiment.

At work the next day, I was ill and passed out on our squadron's bathroom floor. An ambulance and MPs arrived and took me to a civilian hospital. I did not know exactly what had happened to me the night before or why I was so ill. Almost everything after the first drink was poured for me was black, but I did know where and how I woke up.

...I was assaulted at a house party. I don't know exactly what happened to me because everything that evening went black, but I do know where I woke up and the state I was in when I woke up. Standing over my gurney when I was taken to the emergency room were two male MPs who convinced me to have a rape kit done. I agreed, and it revealed intercourse but no evidence of drugs. I never saw or heard from the MPs again.

The following Monday, my commanding officer called me into his office, somewhere I'd been probably only twice in my life prior to that. The MPs had informed him of what happened and he looked at me and asked, "How do you want me to handle this?" I didn't hesitate. I knew what I was expected to say, and I said it, "Nothing, sir." I told him that because I couldn't remember the exact details of the assault, I would modify my behaviour and who I could trust[.]

I told him not to do anything, because I couldn't remember the precise details of the assault. I said that I would modify my behaviour and who I could trust, as though I had been raped by a superior officer in my unit. He accepted my answer and we never spoke of it again.

I want to pause there for a moment and just let that sink in for a second. This survivor, Dr. Leah West, shared with the Standing Committee on the Status of Women this story of what happened to her, and this moment where she approaches her superior, and after.... I can't imagine what she would be feeling in the moment, but in the moment she knew that she was not to say anything. She was not to act on what had happened to her the night before.

This is part of the culture in the Canadian Armed Forces that we have heard about over and over again, and this is a real example of that. This, we've been told at this committee, happens over and over again, and we're going to ignore that and take two minutes each to say a few things and then ram a report through this committee?

I'm sorry. That's not okay. It doesn't do justice to what's happening in the Canadian Armed Forces right now, and it doesn't do justice and what's been happening for decades, forever.

Here we have a situation where someone has been raped, and not only can they not act on what's happened to them, but they know that the culture, the system prevents them from doing so.

I want to move on with what Dr. West went on to say:

Four years later, while deployed in Afghanistan, I was investigated without my knowledge by military police and my chain of command for having a consensual sexual relationship with a U.S. officer who was not in my unit but of the same rank.

● (34940)

The relationship was discovered when a male officer on my team accessed my email without my permission, found a deleted flirtatious email between me and the American and took it to my superior. They didn't need to investigate me. The day I found out what was going on, I admitted to my boss what I had done.

My relationship violated regulations against fraternization in theatre. I was charged and pleaded guilty, and I was fined, repatriated from theatre and posted out of my unit. All of this I could accept. I had knowingly violated orders, and my repatriation impacted the operational effectiveness of my unit. However, what I no longer accept is that I was also called demeaning names, told I wasn't worthy of leading soldiers, even threatened with violence by my commanding officer and repeatedly chastised by other senior officers.

For several months I worked alone in an office with four workstations managing a single Excel spreadsheet. The message was clear: My career in the regular forces was over. Eventually, when I was released, the position I had been offered with a reserve unit was revoked. The new commanding officer told me that I wasn't the type of leader he wanted in his unit. My experience is an extreme example of the double standard women in uniform face every day.

This service member, who graduated at the top of the class, was raped. Everyone knew that the system forced her, prevented her from bringing that complaint forward, and everyone played along. Everyone who knew about it played along. Then she broke the rules, admitted to breaking the rules and immediately faced incredibly harsh consequences.

This is the culture of the Canadian Armed Forces. Not only was she punished according to the rules, which she accepted, but she was mistreated and belittled and punished again, and offers of positions were withdrawn. She was told that she was not the kind of person they wanted in the Canadian Armed Forces.

If she is not the kind of person who is wanted in the Canadian Armed Forces, what about the man who raped her? What about the men who commit sexual harassment and sexual assault in the Canadian Armed Forces? Are they the type of folks that belong in the Canadian Armed Forces? Obviously not, but the only way we're going to make sure that they are not is if we solve the problem.

It's hard folks, but that's the reality. We have to tackle this. A tick-the-box report that ignores the nuance, ignores these stories and doesn't take into account these stories, to me, betrays that duty that we have. Mr. Spengemann talked about the partisanship. If anything can bring all of us in this committee together, surely we can rally together around this and say that we're going to produce a substantive—

● (34945)

**The Chair:** I'm afraid I think we—

Oh, are you back Mr. Baker?

No, I don't think so.

[*Translation*]

**The Chair:** Mr. Robillard now has the floor.

**Mr. Yves Robillard:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

Again, I want us all to remember why we're serving on this committee. We must be accountable to survivors and victims. Our work on this issue must move forward. We must give the committee the opportunity to consider the recommendations.

We found that the Canadian Armed Forces didn't always respond to reports of inappropriate sexual behaviour in a timely, consistent and respectful manner. As a result, some victims chose not to report an incident or to withdraw their complaint. They had little confidence that the investigations would produce any tangible results.

We must live up to the mandate given to us by our constituents and consider the recommendations in the report rather than calling additional witnesses. We must also live up to the courage demonstrated by the survivors and the various witnesses who testified before this committee. This courage must be on our minds at all times and must motivate us to move forward.

Canadian Armed Forces members must report any incident of inappropriate sexual behaviour, whether they experienced it or witnessed it. When a complaint is received, it's investigated. The commanding officer of the relevant unit consults with legal advisers to help determine whether the incident may be a service offence, which can include offences under the Criminal Code.

If it's determined that the incident is a service offence, the commanding officer can investigate and lay charges for breaches of the code of service discipline for unacceptable conduct. If the incident of inappropriate sexual behaviour breaches the Criminal Code, it must be referred to the military police. Any forces member who

commits an act of inappropriate sexual behaviour is liable to disciplinary action, administrative action, or both.

In order to better protect our armed forces members, I think that we should consider proposals that are unopposed and therefore common sense. We could save the recommendations that lack consensus for later.

I see that some of my colleagues would also like to speak. I'll leave the floor for now.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

● (34950)

[*English*]

**The Chair:** All right. Thank you very much.

Madam Vandenberg, please.

**Ms. Anita Vandenberg:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

I'd like to continue where I left off in the last meeting.

I know there are significant recommendations that we've heard from witnesses, from survivors, and I would just like to reiterate my hope that we could still come to a consensus on this committee and that we could move to actually debating. When I say “debating”, I mean really having an in-depth discussion about these incredibly important recommendations so that we can come to a consensus and ensure that we have a report that we can not only table in Parliament and request a government response, but also inform Madam Arbour's review that she is doing because this is a very historic moment here. I would very much hope that these important recommendations would be given the amount of time and attention and debate that they deserve to have.

Just continuing with some of the recommendations that we've heard—and, again, I would emphasize that these are things we've heard from the survivors—I'll continue where I left off last time. For one, there was the recommendation on “addressing the unstated, but institutionally assumed white heterosexual male norm culture in the CAF. I think the wording of this is very significant for the survivors who said, “unstated, but institutionally assumed”.

When we talk about culture, this is really what we're talking about. It's not something that is written in any kind of procedural manual or that people are told outright. It is the things that are just assumed, the things that, when you join....

We heard from Professor Okros and from others about the ways in which groups in society—and not just in the military—are able to determine who belongs, who doesn't belong and who is more important than others, all of which is done through assumptions that we make. It's done through body language. It's done through certain kinds of language that we use about each other. It's done in a way, as it says here, that is “unstated, but...assumed”.

The next part, I think, is really important. It talks about “white heterosexual male norm culture in the CAF”. I think that this is something that is not just in the Canadian Armed Forces. I think we're seeing this across institutions, particularly military or policing institutions around the world, not just here in Canada, where there has been an assumed white, heterosexual male norm culture.

When you include all of those things, it's very important to understand that this isn't just about women and men. This isn't just about gender. This is about what is considered to be the normative, as I mentioned before, of a good soldier, a good sailor, a good aviator. Those things are very much based on what has been seen before as being good and successful and valued, and what a soldier may have looked like a hundred years ago.

I think that when you look at it this way, race is a big part of it; gender identity and sexual identity are a big part of it. We've seen for a very long time the discrimination—and in this case, not just unstated, but overt discrimination—against transgender, gay, lesbian, LGBTQ2+ and other members of the Canadian Armed Forces because of this normative culture.

The best way of describing it is really when we're socialized, even as children—“boys will be boys”—and this idea of how we're socialized. Girls are told to be nice. Girls are told, “Don't be bossy.” Boys are told, “Be assertive.” Then you add to that all of the intersectional layers. If you are not in the normative, whether it's because of your race, whether it's because you're indigenous, it's anything that is different. That's what they mean by “norm” here, I think. It is anything that is different.

When we say “different”, we're talking about “different from something”. The something that it is different from is the toxic masculinity, the normative culture.

• (34955)

When we talk about shifting culture, we're not talking about telling people that they're bad people because they have been part of a particular kind of assumption of what is normative, what is good. It is not about attacking individuals for wanting to conform to that, because, as humans, this is what we do. We join a group, and if there is a normative culture in that group, it is a natural human instinct to want to be included, to want to adapt and, in many cases, to change our behaviour and our interactions with people in order not to be an outsider, in order not to be excluded. We have seen that with many people, whether women, members of racialized communities or LGBT people, in order to be included. We, all of us, I think, have been in groups in which we feel as though we are on the outside, in which we don't call things out and we try to fit in.

The question is: What are we fitting in to?

Changing culture is about changing what we are fitting into, and if that thing that is the norm, that represents inclusion, is welcoming to who you are in your identity, and if you can come into a group and feel that the culture of that group is such that those small things that tell you that you belong are there, then you feel as though you are included. When you feel that it is something that you are a part of, then you don't have to adapt; you don't have to self-censor; you don't have to change your behaviour or language, what you say and what you don't say, or what you speak out on or don't speak out on.

If there is an inclusive, welcoming culture, then every identity, every person, regardless of whether they seem to be different from what the majority in that group has been traditionally, will feel as though they have a place in that group, and that will then become a self-fulfilling thing. As you bring in more people who have different backgrounds, assumptions and ideas, and diverse people who do things differently and are welcomed, that will then, of course, cause the culture to become even more inclusive so that the next people who come in will find themselves reflected in the normative.

This is why I don't think we can divorce what's happening with sexual misconduct from what's happening with white supremacy, racism, homophobia, or anything that is causing harm, hatred and exclusion. I don't think that these can be divorced from one another, because we have heard—and we have heard this many times—that this is not about sex; it is about power, and it is about the power of people who want to maintain a culture the way it is to exclude others and to keep that hierarchy the way that it has always been.

When somebody experiences sexual harassment or a sexual joke, or if somebody is experiencing all of the ways in which they can be diminished because of their identity, that's not about sex; it's about abuse of power. What makes it worse in hierarchical structures like the military, like policing services, and like places in which there is a very strong hierarchy of power is that the person who is abusing the power already has significant power over the person who is not as high as they are in the chain of command. That is why when we talk about changing culture, we're not talking about just saying that these people have been bad. Obviously, there are cases in which people need to be punished. Obviously there are cases in which we can't have impunity for really significant abuses of power, but it's also about changing all of those small ways in which people interact day to day.

I think that this particular recommendation that links the intersectionality, that talks about the white, heterosexual, male normative culture, is one of the single most important recommendations. As we discuss these recommendations, I hope we will actually get a chance to really discuss them and not just for two minutes before we have a vote. I really hope that we as parliamentarians get a chance to sit and have a real back-and-forth discussion about what these recommendations mean, why they are important, and what it is that we want Madam Arbour to look into.

• (35000)

I believe parliamentarians have an incredibly important role to play, based on all our testimony, and in some cases very difficult testimony, based on the people who took time out of their lives to come to us on the assumption that we would then be able to take that and put it forward and request a government response.

I have more recommendations, but I will for one moment talk about the cynicism behind a committee—and this is in that motion—putting forward a set of recommendations and a study and all the material that we have in that study and then not asking for a government response. The whole purpose is to make sure that these things are acted on. For a committee to not want the government to respond to our report, I can only assume that the underlying desire is not to have recommendations for the government to act on, to actually implement, but something else. I really hope that it isn't cynical. I really hope that we can actually get to these reports.

I would remind the members of the committee that if we were to even be able to adjourn debate or adjourn this meeting, that would give us a chance to get to the report immediately and be able to actually start to debate these recommendations the way they should be debated.

I'll go through some of the other things we've heard, because we've heard some really compelling testimony. I've been in the role of parliamentary secretary for national defence now for over a year and I can say that I have learned more in this position, in the last year or 16 months that I've been in this role, than I have in any job I've ever had in my life. I have learned more and I want to be clear for those veterans and members of the Canadian Armed Forces who are listening and watching that I see the incredible desire to serve. I see the good. I see members of the military who are willing to sacrifice everything for the good of our country, for the good of our neighbours, for the good of other people, to make sure we live in a world that is better, that is more peaceful and that is more stable, to make sure those who would do us harm are not given the opportunity to do so, people who sacrifice their family.

My husband grew up in a military family. My husband's family were in the air force, and do you want to talk about gender discrimination? My husband's parents, his mother and father, met in the air force. His mother was a meteorologist in the air force. They met, they married and they moved around as many people do. As soon as she got pregnant with my husband, she had to quit the air force because she was pregnant. We're talking about 1962; this is in many of our lifetimes. In 1962, she was not allowed to stay in the air force because she was pregnant with a child.

She left the air force and became a military spouse and spent the rest of her career as the trailing spouse, following her husband's career. My father-in-law stayed in the air force and they moved to Germany and were in Zweibrücken. They lived in Cold Lake. They lived in Comox. It's the same lifestyle.

My husband is very proud of that history. He joined the cadets. He got a gliding scholarship. In fact, after his father died, he had to, of course, return to the Ottawa Valley where the family was from, and I think the sacrifices that are made by military families are not known to a lot of people. I don't think they realize the roots. My husband was 20 years old, returning back to a place, the Ottawa

Valley, that he had never really lived in and had grandparents that he only knew on holidays.

When we're talking about this, I think we cannot lose track of the sacrifices that are made by the members of our Canadian Armed Forces so that they can protect us, so that they can do good.

Madam Chair, I'm looking at you and I want to acknowledge here in the committee the 31 years of service that you gave to this country.

• (35005)

I have to say that, for those people who are willing to do that, who are willing to give their lives, who are willing to go into danger to keep us from harm, we owe it to them that their work environment be safe. We owe it to them that when they put that uniform on, when they go to places like Bosnia and Kosovo and Afghanistan....

I've lived in Bosnia and Kosovo. I can tell you that my life was only safe because of the military, the Canadian Armed Forces and the other NATO forces that were there in the corner. When I lived in Sarajevo, there were 20,000 NATO troops in and around Sarajevo at that time. I could not have been there or been safe in the work I was doing to promote democracy and anti-corruption without those NATO troops. At that time, they were under Canadian command.

I don't know that young Canadians know how incredibly grateful the people of the Balkans are. I lived in Kosovo at the time that they declared independence. I can tell you that if you were Canadian, British, or American.... People were walking in the streets, old men with wrinkled faces, tears running down their faces, holding the hand of their young five- or six-year-old grandchild. They would see us as Canadians, and they would start to cry and say that because of us, their grandchild would not know violence, their grandchild would live in freedom. I don't know that Canadians know that. Our Canadian Armed Forces put themselves in harm's way so that people can live in freedom, so we can live in freedom.

My family are from the Netherlands. My father, who passed away just before Christmas, got his first candy from a Canadian soldier in his city in the Netherlands in 1945. He was born in 1940. He lived in a city. He was still afraid of airplanes the day he died because he knew that airplanes meant that the bombs would drop. He knew the word "cellar", by the way, an English word. He was five years old. He did not know any English, but he and his younger brother were hiding in the cellar when the fighting was going on and the Canadian Armed Forces had gone into the city that he was living in. They were led, by the way, by the scout who was the head of intelligence—and this is one of those wonderful synchronicities in life. He was the first Canadian to cross the river into the city that my dad was living in. His grandfather and great-grandfather and uncles were in the Dutch resistance. They made contact. That was the man we grew up next to. He was our next-door neighbour, and we knew that Ernie—Ernie Dombrowski was his name....

I'll be honest. Ernie was a bit of a curmudgeon. He was an older guy. We were little kids. We probably made lots of noise and played ball, and the ball ended up in his yard and he was a little grumpy. My father said to us, "You show respect to Ernie. You always respect Ernie because he saved us." He was the first Canadian into Deventer, the city my father and his family were living in, the first Canadian soldier to make contact with his own family who were in the resistance and to pave the way for the liberation.

At that liberation, my dad's family were hiding. My dad was the oldest. They heard silence. Of course, the children didn't want to stay in the small cellar, so they came out. They came out into the street, and there were Canadian soldiers who said, "Cellar. Cellar." My dad didn't know what the word meant, but he knew that the fighting wasn't over, and it was still dangerous and they had to get back in that cellar. They were finally able to get out of that cellar and go out into the streets, and my dad would talk about this until the day he died. He talked about the fact that when they came out they saw the Canadian soldiers and they saw the tanks. They were throwing cigarettes to the parents—this might not be so good in modern days—and candies to the children.

He would talk about this little candy. I think it must have probably been a Werther's Original, because he said it was a hard candy that was like caramel, with a golden wrapper. He took this candy. In five years, he had never had candy. The Dutch barely had enough to eat. They talked about how, when they would scoop the butter, they would get more and more butter, because they had so many bread-crumbs that they would try to make more butter by keeping the breadcrumbs in the butter. They had nothing. He had never had a candy, and this soldier gave him a candy. He remembered that for the rest of his life.

• (35010)

Madam Chair, if you'll allow me, recently I went to a seniors' home in my riding, and it was a 100th birthday party. To the gentleman, a sharp, sharp man of 100 years old, I said, "Thank you", because he had been a Canadian soldier, and in the discussion I had with him, he said he had been in Deventer, in the town my dad was from. Almost in tears, I thanked him. I said, "I am here because of you". I am in Canada, I am here as a member of Parliament, and I'm alive because of those soldiers. This man, this old man, was turning 100 years old, and when we started to talk, I asked, "Did you know Ernie Dombrowski?" He said, "Ernie? Ernie Dombrowski? He was my boss. I worked with him".

This was his birthday, so there were all kinds of candies on the table. They had these little packages like at weddings, where they have candies and a little ribbon. He takes this candy—100 years old, this man—this little package with the ribbon on it, and hands it to me, and says, "Madam Anita, will you please take this candy and give it to your father?"

That afternoon, an hour later, I went home to my parents, and I walked up to my dad—this was just a year ago, just not long before he died—and I gave him that candy. He had tears in eyes, and he said, "You know, Anita, it's the second time in my life that I have a candy from a Canadian soldier", and it could even well be the same one.

The point I'd like to make—and I have a lot more recommendations to go through, but I've let my colleagues speak for a little while—is that we owe it to the people who sacrifice as they do. We owe it to them to make sure they are safe. We owe it to them to make sure they have an environment where they can give their all and never for one second feel like they don't belong. Not only do they belong in the military, in the Canadian Armed Forces, but they are the reason we are here.

Madam Chair, I hadn't intended to go off on all of those stories, but it's something I feel very profoundly. I think it is very, very important that our committee realize the gravity, the importance and the seriousness of what we're talking about today.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Madam Vandenberg.

As soon as I get the tears out of my eyes, we'll continue.

We'll go to Mr. Bagnell, please.

**Hon. Larry Bagnell:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

I, too, was quite moved by Ms. Vandenberg's stories. It reminds me of what an honourable career the military is for Canadians—what they have done and what they aspire to do. We should be working to make sure that it remains an honourable career, but safe at the same time.

As I've often done at these meetings, I have to compliment Mr. Baker for bringing us back to the central focus that we should be discussing.

I know all members of the committee want to improve the armed forces. As we're debating bringing in new material that's important for the report, including information from survivors and experts, I'm sure all committee members are thinking about what recommendations should deal with these complex problems.

As I've said—and Mr. Baker said at the beginning of most meetings—the three fundamental problems are: culture change; fear of reporting, partly because of the role of the chain of command; and fear of reprisals for reporting. I talked about the latter at the last meeting. If you've picked such an honourable career, why would you want a reprisal to affect you in that career?

I compliment everyone who is going to speak today. There have been very courageous women in Quebec and the rest of Canada who brought forward these stories. Mr. Baker mentioned one of them. I compliment every committee member today who will speak about how we can deal with these complex issues, the problems that have resulted in thousands of inappropriate actions in the military, and dealing with the three items that I just mentioned.

Later on, I will go through my position on those recommendations that I believe would help with these very complex and serious problems. As I mentioned, obviously, the present members and potential future members of the military, and sometimes DND, really want these issues addressed, as well as solutions that will deal with the thousands of people involved in the military and DND.



I will talk about those recommendations later. My intervention will be short, and I'll save my other information for later.

We've had many experts and editions to help us formulate those recommendations. I'm only going to read a paragraph here, but it's from a report entitled "Unmaking militarized masculinity". It's a long report, well over 10 fine print pages, which I'm not going to read at this time. I'm going to read the abstract, so that people at least have a reference to it as they think about what recommendations we should make.

It's written by Sarah Bulmer of the University of Exeter at Penryn, UK., and Maya Eichler from the Department of Politics and the Canada research chair in social innovation and community engagement at Mount Saint Vincent University, Halifax, Nova Scotia.

The abstract begins:

Feminist scholarship on war and militarization has typically focussed on the making of militarized masculinity. However, in this article, we shed light on the process of 'unmaking' militarized masculinity through the experiences of veterans transitioning from military to civilian life. We argue that in the twenty-first century, veterans' successful reintegration into civilian society is integral to the legitimacy of armed force in Western polities and is therefore a central concern of policymakers, third-sector service providers, and the media. But militarized masculinity is not easily unmade. We argue that in the twenty-first century, veterans' successful reintegration into civilian society is integral to the legitimacy of armed force in Western polities and is therefore a central concern of policymakers, third-sector service providers, and the media. But the militarized masculinity is not easily unmade.

• (35015)

I think everyone on the committee would agree with that.

The abstract continues:

They may have an ambivalent relationship with the state and the military. Furthermore, militarized masculinity is embodied and experienced, and has a long and contradictory afterlife in veterans themselves. Attempts to unmake militarized masculinity in the figure of the veteran challenge some of the key concepts currently employed by feminist scholars of war and militarization. In practice, embodied veteran identities refuse a totalizing conception of what militarized masculinity might be, and demonstrate the limits of efforts to exceptionalize the military, as opposed to the civilian, aspects of veteran identity. In turn, the very liminality of this 'unmaking' troubles and undoes neat categorizations of military/civilian and their implied masculine/feminine gendering. We suggest that an excessive focus on the making of militarized masculinity has limited our capacity to engage with dynamic, co-constitutive, and contradictory processes which shape veterans' post-military lives.

I won't get into the rest of that report at this time.

**The Chair:** Mr. Bagnell, we've lost your feed there. Reselect "unmute".

Try it again. There you go.

• (35020)

**Hon. Larry Bagnell:** What I want to do before going into a lengthy paper or, as I said, going into all the recommendations I would have is to talk about a way in which we might be able to get some things forward fairly quickly. I'm just thinking off the top of my head.

From the experts and from the victims we've heard from—and I'm looking forward to hearing more from Mr. Baker—obviously the facts are the facts, and the situation is the situation. There are certain things that come up over and over again that obviously

should be done, or that have been suggested by the experts and survivors that should be done.

I think that because of our common cause and the common facts that have come up in this way at great length, there should be a number of things that we can all agree on. What reports reflect is what the witnesses said. It's pretty hard to disagree with that in the reports.

Recommendations evolve from what the witnesses and the experts have told us. We should be able to come to an agreement on a lot of that.

I'm just thinking off the top of my head, and I'm looking forward to hearing what other people think of this idea. I'm not sure exactly how to word it yet. If we were to go through recommendations very quickly, one at a time, and just have a vote as to whether they could be dealt with in the way Mr. Bezan has proposed, if there was unanimous consent on each particular motion, on those motions—and I personally think there should be a lot of them that we could all agree on—then we would deal with them in the way that Mr. Bezan has outlined in his motion.

Then we would get through all of those things relatively quickly and have things to show, and then on the difficult ones that we can't all agree to have a quick decision on, we could go into debate.

My assumption—and I might be wrong—is that there are a lot of things we can agree on, but there are obviously, as there always are in committees, a number of items that need some more detailed debate.

I will just leave that idea, that proposal, to go quickly through all of the recommendations, find out what we could unanimously agree on, go through Mr. Bezan's proposal of a couple of minutes per committee member, and take care of those recommendations. Then for what's left, what we couldn't agree on and deal with quickly, we would debate at length.

In that way, we would have some production, some answers for the victims, relatively quickly, and then we would have other things that we would be debating at length.

I'll just leave that suggestion. That's one of the reasons I didn't want to go into all of my suggestions and recommendations or a lengthy report right now. I want to make possible that way for everyone to move forward together to help the victims. I'll leave it at that.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr. Bagnell.

We go to Mr. Spengemann now.

Go ahead, please.

**Mr. Sven Spengemann:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

I'd like to thank all of my colleagues for their interventions, and in particular Ms. Vandenbeld for very personal reflections on the role of the Canadian Forces and the powerful sentiments that she put behind her illustrations and arguments.

As we come up to the 76th anniversary of D-Day celebrations this weekend, I think it is incredibly important that we all reflect on the contributions of the Canadian Armed Forces—the historic contributions and the current and future ones—including the important peacekeeping operations that we are part of today and operations through NATO.

Maybe I can suggest the argument to the committee that there are two components to the issue of sexual misconduct in the Canadian Forces that we are dealing with.

One is a moral component, in the sense that it is simply wrong. It is flat wrong for this behaviour to be present and to continue. All members of the Canadian Forces have a right to serve in a safe, secure manner that is free from bullying, harassment, assault and any kind of misconduct.

The other consideration—and I will be careful in terms of where to position it, as the moral component is the most important component—is an operational consideration that affects the Canadian Forces in a broader sense, Madam Chair. It affects every army and every force within the set of our allies and friends that are currently working with us across the world. It's the question of trust.

The trust in the Canadian Forces has very quickly and very fundamentally eroded through the ongoing issue of sexual misconduct. It's been amplified by the two prominent cases that we are studying. If members of the Canadian Forces can't trust each other, all the cultural components that we consider valuable in terms of the culture of excellence, service, camaraderie and looking out for one's fellow members of the Canadian Forces on the battlefield and in the halls of defence headquarters in Ottawa become eroded very quickly. This mistrust that is driven by the sexual misconduct has wider ripples inside the Canadian Forces. We are all following the news headlines closely and we don't need to look much beyond them to see the impact of this. It also erodes the effectiveness of organizations like NATO, of which many militaries are struggling with the same issue.

There is a defence component and an operational component to this. Ms. Vandenbeld was spot-on when she mentioned that the questions of supremacy, racism, homophobia and other drivers of exclusion and division that manifest themselves here in Canada and elsewhere in the world are incredibly relevant to the work that we're currently doing.

That's why the reference to this committee's previous work in the 42nd Parliament on diversity and inclusion is important. That's why the report of Mr. Justice Fish is important. Questions with respect to military justice are important.

We're facing a large, systemic problem that has a fundamental moral component, but also a very prominent and potentially very worrisome operational component.

Restoring trust takes time. Restoring trust takes an admission that we have an issue. This is an admission that many of our witnesses have openly made, including the minister when he spoke to us for six hours. Acknowledging that we are not meeting the expectations and that we are not protecting women serving in the Canadian Armed Forces is an incredibly important first step. I think that ac-

knowledgement is there across party lines and across levels of service and government.

The follow-up is where the rubber really hits the road and where this committee, in terms of parliamentary accountability, needs to do its work. That's why we need to look closely at the work of Madam Justice Arbour. She is an independent authority who has been given a mandate with great urgency and great scope.

We need to complement that as the mechanism of parliamentary accountability to the Canadian public. We're elected. We're members of this committee. The expectation of the Canadian public is for us to come out and take steps and make recommendations that will heal the trust that has been eroded and broken. That takes time, but, in the minister's words, "the time for patience is over." We need to act now and we need a complete culture change.

• (35025)

With that in mind, Madam Chair, I would like to take the opportunity to finish an important part of the experience that our British friends and colleagues have identified and reported on with respect to dealing with inappropriate behaviour when it occurs in the armed forces. Their conclusion like ours is that they have to do better. Their report focused on how they could improve the response to incidents when they do occur, judging in particular that they need to build trust and confidence in the complaint system, improve reporting of inappropriate behaviour and the support of those who are affected.

They proposed new governance structures to provide stronger centralized oversight and support, a single point of reference for data on inappropriate behaviour coupled with the ability to identify and share leading practice across the organization and offering alternatives, and potentially anonymous pathways for raising concerns of inappropriate behaviour or service complaints. Very interestingly, the British report says that this is the experience of the Canadian Armed Forces and the Australian Defence Force. In this part of the report, they recommended the establishment of a new central organization in the U.K., which they call the "Defence Authority responsible for cultures and inappropriate behaviours". They also recommended in parallel a review of the service complaints process.

To the extent that we still have pending cases, cases that have not been reported yet, dealing with inappropriate behaviour when it does occur is of fundamental importance in the U.K. and here in Canada to the restoration of trust. It's only one component, but it's an important one.

The report noted:

a common theme among organisations who had faced endemic behavioural problems was a very low level of reporting initially, often combined with a perception that all was well.

We're far beyond this point in Canada, but that was the insight gained from the British experience. It was only when a significant event prompted further in-depth investigation that the extent of the issue became apparent, and it's clear to us, Madam Chair, as members of this committee what those events were in the recent weeks.

The report continued:

The majority of cases found in the evidence we looked at from Australia, Canada and the private sector, pointed to a general lack of confidence to report inappropriate behaviour for several reasons.

Before I cite them, I want to point out to the committee that the reference to Canada in the British report is footnoted to the ERA and Madame Deschamps' report of 2015.

Those reasons include the following:

fear of adverse consequences on the complainant's career; fear of not being believed; belief that nothing would be done and a lack of transparency in the outcome of a complaint; inadequate or insufficient consequences or disciplinary action; complaint process not independent of the chain of command or line management; lack of anonymity for the complainant; amount of time taken to achieve a resolution.

The conclusion in the British report is that the number of complaints of inappropriate behaviour is under-reported in the service complaint system for similar or identical reasons. They make the following observation:

The Service Complaints target is to resolve 90% of all complaints within 24 weeks. In 2018, the Service Complaints Ombudsman reported only 50% of complaints were resolved in 24 weeks. We found the average target in the private sector for resolution of complaints of inappropriate sexual behaviour is 40 to 45 days.

There are very important discrepancies, and as you can see, Madam Chair, the U.K. really took a sweeping look at the issue all the way over into the private sector, which is really the parallel that we're concerned about, which will help us in line with efforts that are going on in the private sector to identify those additional constraints that we face within the Canadian Forces with respect to the reporting structure and the chain of command and other factors.

The report continued:

The private sector reports an average number of complaints of inappropriate behaviour equating approximately to 1% of the workforce per year of which 25%-40% is usually reported anonymously. By comparison, the Service Complaints Ombudsman Report in 2018 recorded that the Services received a total of 1,185 complaints of which 763 were deemed admissible and only 190 (25%) were related to bullying, discrimination and harassment. This represents less than 0.1% of the strength of the Services.

This low reporting rate of inappropriate behaviour has been attributed to the issues that we just talked about, the chain of command and others, and the report goes on to take a look at U.S. data from 2016. The report further states:

In 2016, the United States Department of Defence estimated that only 7% of those who experienced a sexual assault came forward to report the incident to the military. In 2018, this rate was approximately 30%. Other common reasons included: concerns that reporting would negatively affect their career; nothing would be done; confidentiality would not be kept; because servicewomen blamed themselves; work environment concerns; would be treated differently by leadership; and would be seen as weak.

● (35030)

All of these factors go to the question of trust. If people cannot trust the complaint system, it is a fundamental driver of the overall implication of mistrust with respect to the Canadian Armed Forces—the U.K. armed forces in this case, but by extension, the Canadian Armed Forces—as an employer, and most importantly, an environment where trust is fundamental to the operational effectiveness and also to the safety of the women and men who serve. If you cannot trust the person next to you, you're not going to be an

effective member, and the entire unit, and by extension, the entire forces will be ineffective.

The U.K. report recommended that “Defence should consider a call for evidence on inappropriate behaviours in conjunction with a sexual harassment survey in 2021.” I think it would probably be valuable for us as a committee to have an exchange on that recommendation and the implications here in Canada.

There are also thoughts on anonymous reporting as an essential component to restoring trust. The report continues:

While some people will feel able to report incidents of inappropriate behaviour through their chain of command or line management; many will not. The United States, Australia and New Zealand Armed Forces have utilised a restricted reporting method allowing an individual to seek support for a sexual assault without initiating an investigation, thus remaining anonymous. The United States restricted reporting data is compelling: all victims indicated that they would not have reported if the only means had been through a formal report. In 2017, 24% of those reporting went on to convert to a full report initiating an investigation. Key to this is that the report must be recorded to enable an understanding of the level of incidents.

Internal employee support networks provide valuable assistance but are not the answer. The army's sexual harassment survey in 2018 recommended the introduction of a web-based anonymous reporting tool for inappropriate behaviours, so that service personnel can make the army aware of these behaviours without fear of repercussion.

In the U.K., Madam Chair, this initiative is not yet resourced, so the report makes the recommendation to “Resource, develop and implement an anonymous tool for reporting inappropriate behaviours across defence.”

I raise this portion of the report again to highlight the importance of finding a pathway to effectively empower members of the Canadian Armed Forces to report inappropriate behaviour. We're not yet at the stage where we can assume that there will be no further incidents or that there will be no further reports. The fact that we had two cases, back-to-back, directly implicating the former chief of the defence staff shows the systemic entrenchment of the issues. We're not yet at the stage where we can even say there is a particular amount of light at the end of the tunnel. In parallel with that, as I've indicated in previous submissions and as structurally incorporated in the U.K. report, is the importance of finding ways to discourage this kind of behaviour from ever happening in the first place. These were my submissions and recommendations based on the U.K. experience with respect to training, feedback loops and innovative new mechanisms like reverse mentorship.

In short, there's a lot of work to be done on the question of trust. It takes time to restore it. The urgency is incredibly high. It will not be fixed tomorrow, but we have to start tomorrow if not today. I think that's the message we heard from the minister, that the time for patience is over. Again, the issue of trust is an operational component as much as it is a reflection of the moral breakdown that for far too long has been going on in the Canadian Armed Forces and so many other forces across the world. This moral breakdown is the result of a failure to take account of the role of women in the forces and the right of women and all genders to serve in the forces.

The challenge is monumental. The pivot point is trust, both with respect to the moral implications and the operational implications. Thinking forward, Madam Chair, if we look at our friends and allies within NATO who are suffering this issue in various degrees, unless we get on top of this systemically, the operational effectiveness of the alliance can and potentially will be called into question. This is in addition to the fact that we are facing a wrong that we are not righting. That's why I'm so emphatic about the responsibility being on the shoulders of this committee to do this work now, in the few sessions that we have left.

• (35035)

We can do it. I think Mr. Bagnell's proposal is an excellent one. We can find those recommendations that we can get behind. We can have a discussion, focused and short, on how to prioritize them, how to connect them to each other, what kind of sequence we need to set up to make sure those recommendations are mutually reinforcing and that they can cross-leverage, also, the work that Madam Justice Arbour is doing in parallel.

There's a huge amount of work in front of us on the most important issue, in my view, that this committee has faced in recent history. It is a runway to achieving something that will add value to the future of the Canadian Forces.

I will turn it back to you on this thought, Madam Chair. I still have a couple more things to say before I finish my remarks on the Wigston report. If there's time, I will briefly comment on the follow-up report that the U.K. put into place a year later. It's really just a year ago for us now. It led to some very interesting and innovative conclusions as well as additional recommendations that identified some gaps in Wigston that did not work. I think we have to turn our minds to the possibility of doing that here as well. If we put forward some recommendations that get implemented and a year later it turns out that they don't have quite the right emphasis or that they have to be changed, altered or resequenced, what kinds of mechanisms can we propose to the Government of Canada to make sure we have that flexibility, that adaptability, to make sure that whatever gets put in place doesn't just get held out as investment X to say that we've approached the problem? There's also a need to follow up and make sure they actually work and deliver the results in the longer term. The fact that the U.K. was able to do that within a year suggests that a government, a member state of NATO, should have that flexibility and does have that flexibility. That's an additional thought for the committee's deliberation.

With that, Madam Chair, I will turn it back to you. Thank you.

• (35040)

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr. Spengemann.

**Mr. Randall Garrison:** Madam Chair, on a point of order, I wonder if the Liberal members would do the rest of the members of the committee the courtesy of letting us know how long they intend to carry on this filibuster that is obstructing the work of the committee. If, in fact, they do intend to carry it on for the remainder of this parliamentary session and prevent us from dealing with the question of accountability for how the sexual misconduct complaints about General Vance were dealt with, it would be useful for members of the committee to know that they do intend to continue this obstruction indefinitely.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

**The Chair:** Go ahead, Ms. Vandenbeld.

**Ms. Anita Vandenbeld:** Madam Chair, if I may, I would encourage that if the opposition were willing to adjourn the debate right now we could go directly to those reports right now. If they adjourned the debate or allowed the chair to adjourn the meeting, the next item of business would be the reports. I think we would all be very, very happy to be able to do that right now.

**Mr. Randall Garrison:** On a point of order, Madam Chair, it's clear that there's no rule of this committee preventing gaslighting, but the parliamentary secretary engages in this all the time. All that's necessary for us to move forward on this—

**The Chair:** Mr. Garrison.

**Mr. Randall Garrison:** —I have the floor—all that's necessary for us to move to a vote on this resolution is for the Liberals to stop filibustering.

**The Chair:** Mr. Garrison, we don't call people names or make personal attacks. You can disagree with someone's approach, with their understanding, with what their priorities are, and that's all fine, but I don't agree with the....

**Mr. Randall Garrison:** But Madam Chair—

**The Chair:** Yes.

**Mr. Randall Garrison:** —the Liberal side has continued to question the motives of all other members of the committee. I brought that to your attention in the previous meeting at which I was present. They continue to dismiss our concerns as partisanship. I would say that, really, the concern about calling names and attributing motives starts on the Liberal side. I attributed to the Liberals no motives as to why they are conducting their filibuster. They can answer for that in public.

**The Chair:** All right. Thank you very much, Mr. Garrison.

We are done, then, with Mr. Spengemann.

We move to Mr. Baker.

Go ahead, please.

**Mr. Yvan Baker:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

I have to say that Mr. Garrison did attach motives, when he spoke a moment ago to his allegation, when he said that the Liberal members were not willing to ensure accountability. Very clearly, that's implying motive.

As far as the calling of names goes, I think it's really disappointing. Mr. Garrison, unfortunately, missed the last meeting, when members of the government side shared a tremendous amount of important information. Perhaps it's because he missed it that he doesn't have that context and that he feels the way he does in this moment. A tremendous amount of important information was shared by the members on the government side about why we feel the way we do and why we want a process that ensures that a proper report is written that, really, addresses the issue of sexual harassment and sexual assault in the Canadian Armed Forces and does justice for the survivors. I appreciate that maybe that context was something Mr. Garrison missed, and that perhaps explains why he feels the way he does.

That said, I want to continue with—

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval:** A point of order, Madam Chair.

I would like to know whether we are allowed to refer to a committee member being absent or present during our meetings.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** I would say no. I believe they follow basically the same rules in the House as here in the committee.

**Mr. Yvan Baker:** Then, Madam Chair, I apologize for breaching that rule. I wasn't aware that I couldn't do that. I know that members' presence is registered in the minutes, and thus I thought it was permissible to refer to it, but I didn't mean to breach the rule. I apologize for doing that.

That said, I just thought that the context from the last meeting is important to consider to understand why the Liberal members are saying what they're saying here today and why we're continuing to debate this motion.

With that said, I want to continue from where I left off when the.... Unfortunately, my Internet connection cut out as I was speaking in the initial intervention, so what I want to do is continue where I left off.

As I think the members will recall, what I was speaking about at that time was.... I was relaying the experience, the testimony, that was shared by Dr. Leah West with our colleagues at the Standing Committee on the Status of Women, and she was relaying an experience during her time as a member of the Canadian Armed Forces. She spoke about how she was sexually assaulted and how there was tremendous pressure so that she felt she could not speak up and could not file a complaint about that issue. Then later, she was punished for a rule that she broke—and she acknowledged that she broke that rule—and then subsequently faced various forms of what I would call bullying, abuse and broader mistreatment by a number of members of the Canadian Armed Forces.

She faced punishment for what she had done wrong. She speaks in her testimony about the fact that she understood that she broke the rule and that she admitted to breaking the rule. However, what I think is reprehensible is how she was treated when she wanted to bring forward but couldn't bring forward her complaint about being sexually assaulted while on duty.

I want to continue Dr. West's testimony that I started, which re-lays what I just shared with you. She said the following:

My biggest failure in life, actions for which I was pushed out of the armoured corps and for which I continue to carry immense shame, is, however, allegedly precisely the type of leadership displayed by the man who ultimately served as this country's longest-serving chief of the defence staff. Yet, for me as a female army captain, there was no hesitation to act on an email and remove me from my position, and that was the right call. We cannot turn a blind eye when military leaders put themselves and their interests before the mission. This ethical obligation is the foundation upon which any professional military operates: serve Canada before self.

This brings me to my second point. Where does this double standard come from? Why is sexual misconduct so prolific and even condoned in the [Canadian Armed Forces] when the victims are women but not the wrongdoers?

In my opinion, the sexualized environment identified in the Deschamps report is a symptom of two more fundamental issues at the core of the [Canadian Armed

Forces] culture. First, women and men and their contributions to the [Canadian Armed Forces] are not valued and respected equally. Second, the [Canadian Armed Forces] continues to perpetuate deeply flawed and antiquated expectations about who women and men in the armed forces are supposed to be and, correspondingly, how they ought to behave.

I want to pause there on what Dr. West said and explain to you, the committee, why I've shared it with you.

● (35045)

She talked about this double standard:

Why is sexual misconduct so prolific and even condoned in the [Canadian Armed Forces] when the victims are women but not the wrongdoers?

She talked about the Deschamps report and how the “sexualized environment” is a symptom of the Canadian Armed Forces culture. The first element of that, she said, is that women and men, and their contributions to CAF, are not being valued and respected equally. The second part is that the CAF “continues to perpetuate deeply flawed and antiquated expectations about who women and men in the armed forces are supposed to be and...how they ought to behave”.

I wanted to underline that part of Dr. West's testimony, because these are precisely the types of insights we need as a part of our report. These are the types of insights that wouldn't make it if the current motion were to pass, the one that Mr. Bezan proposed and is being debated right now. This is something that is incredibly nuanced, something that has to be discussed and something that has to be thought about. We have to think as a committee and discuss, and align on, and come to a consensus on, the recommendations that we're going to make to act on these problems, which Dr. West and so many others have raised.

We can't do that in two minutes. I'm sorry, but we can't, and that's what the current motion calls for. Again, I highlight this because it's a problem. Broadly speaking, Dr. West is talking about the broader culture. We don't need to have personal experience in this, although I'm sure many of the members of the committee do. We've heard from many witnesses. We know from the Deschamps report and others who we've heard from that....

My colleague Mr. Bagnell speaks very knowledgeably and regularly at this committee about the importance of culture, the role that culture plays in driving this problem, and how culture has to be addressed to solve it. I don't think there's any debate about that. The question is, how do you do it? That's complex. That's hard. Anyone who has been involved in culture change in any shape or form, whether in driving that culture change or in being part of an organization where a culture change is being undertaken by the organization, knows it's incredibly difficult and incredibly complex.

I just think we really need to take the time to understand what aspects of culture are the problem and then think about and come to a consensus on, in our report, how we will tackle those various components of the problem within the culture change that Dr. West is speaking about in her testimony. Then we have to turn to how we're actually going to tackle each of those. I mean, to me, that's what the report should be doing. That's what this committee needs to be doing. I think if we don't do that, if we don't tackle culture change in our report in this way, identifying the components of the problem and then recommending solutions, then we're failing as a committee. We're failing as MPs. We should be trying to solve this problem and honouring people like Dr. West and others who had the courage to come forward and speak to parliamentarians, speak in public and share their experiences, so that we can solve these problems. The current motion basically wouldn't allow us to do that. I just don't understand how we can allow a motion like that to move forward.

On that train of thought, Dr. West goes on to say the following:

How do we fix it? Given the time, I'll simply identify three recommendations....First, as we all know, we need an independent reporting mechanism. The government, I believe, should make interim policy and legislative changes to expand the mandate of the sexual misconduct response centre to include independent investigations. This can happen concurrently with the review by Justice Arbour.

She's talking about independent reporting mechanisms. I'll continue Dr. West's testimony:

Second, we must improve leadership training and officer cadet mentorship at the Royal Military College. The RMC is the training ground of our future leaders, but it is also where these outdated and degrading perceptions of men and women in the forces take root.

● (35050)

The second point that Dr. West has raised is something that we heard about from a number of witnesses, especially at the beginning of the study when we heard from witnesses who are really experts in this area. They really spoke to how the culture that needs to be addressed and that permeates the Canadian armed Forces begins not just within the formal organization of Canadian Armed Forces themselves when members start to serve, but at the Royal Military College. It's part of how members or future members of the armed forces are brought into the forces. No wonder it so permeates the forces. It's not just from day one on the forces, but from day one of the education within the Royal Military College, that—and these were Dr. West's words—“these outdated and degrading perception of the men and women in the forces takes root”.

That piece of it, about how we're going to address culture change not just within the forces, but within the Royal Military College and in the training and education that it provides to future members, needs to be addressed in our report.

I want to go on, though, with Dr. West's testimony. She says:

Finally, I believe the notion of zero tolerance for all forms of misconduct is unrealistic and unhelpful. Culture change in the CAF is a massive undertaking. Good people trying to do better will make mistakes. The cost of making those mistakes cannot be so severe that victims and observers hesitate to speak up and take action.

This is a really important new one that Dr. West is talking about. First of all, she reaffirms what I was saying a few moments ago about culture change being a massive undertaking. Two minutes per MP speaking to a report is not going to get us to a report that allows

us to undertake this massive undertaking of culture change, obviously.

She also makes another point. She talks about how good people trying to do better will make mistakes. She is talking about a subtle element of this, but I think it's an element that has to be brought into our thinking. It has to be brought into our report. It has to be reflected in our report and in our recommendations.

I'm sorry, but that point—to the extent that members agree with it and perhaps there are members here who don't agree with it—is a discussion that we should have if we don't agree with it. If we do all agree with it, we need to take the time to make sure that it makes it in there. There is no way, in our two minutes, we're going to be able to make the time to get it in there.

That's why I'm so concerned about this motion that's been brought forward. It undermines our ability to ensure that those kinds of insights and points are incorporated. We're here, as MPs, to make a difference for people. Right now on this issue, after the testimony we've heard and after you hear what I've shared today and the testimony I've read to you from Dr. Leah West, how can we allow a report to go out from this committee that doesn't do everything possible to try to address the actual underlying problem of sexual harassment and sexual assault in the armed forces?

I just don't understand how we could allow that to happen. That's why I'm fighting so hard against this motion: It wouldn't allow that to happen. We give two minutes per person. Check the box. We did a report. That's basically what this would be.

I don't know. If Dr. Leah West were here in this committee room, how would we look her in the eye and say, “That was okay. Here is your report, Dr. West.”

Here, after months and months of members on all sides of the aisle on this committee talking about how much they care, how much they want to solve this problem, how awful it is, how it needs to be stopped and how it needs to be dealt with, how could we then hand over a report that's based on two minutes of testimony from each MP on such a complex, substantive and important issue like that? It's impossible.

It's not based on consensus. It doesn't even take up all of the views of the members of the committee, which is always the case when reports are written at committee. How could we do that?

● (35055)

I can't support a motion like that. I can't support a process like that, and then look a survivor in the eye and say, “Hey, this is the best we could do.” This is not the best we can do.

That's why this motion is so concerning. That's why I'm speaking against it. I urge Mr. Bezan to withdraw the motion. That's why I urge members to go forward and write the report like we always do, as members of a committee, committed and thoughtful, committed to the cause of solving the problem and thoughtful about how we go about doing it. We should take into account everything we've heard and everything we've learned from our own experiences, our own points of view and our own understanding of the trade-offs of the various policy measures.

That's what has to be discussed and debated in the process of writing the report. There should not be two minutes of messaging that, frankly, it is not incumbent upon the other members of the committee to understand, because they know that once those two minutes are over, members can no longer speak. Whatever happens to be on the page is going out.

I personally cannot allow us to do that, when we know this problem exists today. Are we just going to kind of walk away from it? Will we just pretend that we issued a report that matters? A report designed and written in a way that it would be dictated or redone by this motion would undermine the effort of us actually tackling the problem.

I really urge Mr. Bezan to withdraw the motion. Let's move on to writing our report. Let's do it right away. Let's sit down and put our politics aside. Let's write the report as we always do. Let's just do something for the good of survivors. Let's do something that we can be proud of. We all ran for office to make a difference for folks. There's an opportunity to do that by writing a strong report. I urge us to reflect on that.

Mr. Spengemann talked about the partisanship that happens in the House of Commons. I get it. It happens. We all get it. A year from now, two years from now, 10 years from now, when we're no longer elected officials, we're going to look back on this study and we're going to hold it up. I want to be able to hold it up and say, "We made a difference."

I don't want to hold it up and say, "We ticked a box, so we could write a report. It was political game-playing. The problem of sexual assault and sexual harassment still exists in the Armed Forces, because partisan games trumped getting something done for survivors."

Come on. We're better than that. This motion doesn't allow us to do that. Let's just do it. Let's do the right thing.

Mr. Bagnell has proposed something that I think is really constructive. He's basically saying that we should at least find the things we agree on and move those things forward. There may be a lot of that; there may be a little bit of that. I actually don't know. We won't know until we have the conversation. What Mr. Bagnell is trying to do, I think, and I don't want to speak for him, is trying to move recommendations forward that help survivors, and help solve the problems. Let's at least do that.

I would love to hear the opposition's thoughts about Mr. Bagnell's proposal. Can we move forward that way, at the very least? That's still a departure from how we normally write reports, but it's a step in the right direction. He's trying.

We're trying to write a constructive report. Please, for one minute, think about how you're going to feel when you look in the eyes of survivors. Think about how you're going to feel 10 years from now, 20 years from now. Maybe some of you will still be here at that time, I don't know. However, 20 years from now, when you're no longer in office and you're talking to your kids or grandkids about what you did as an MP, what's the legacy that we as members of this committee want on this issue?

For me, the legacy I want to have on this issue is that we worked incredibly hard. We got over our partisanship, and we wrote a great report. We did everything we could.

Alone, we can't solve this as members of the committee. I am not naive. We could make a big difference, or we could not make a big difference. That's the fork in the road that we're at.

• (35100)

Passing this motion is choosing not to make that difference, it's choosing to just tick the box and say that we wrote a report, and then 10 or 20 years from now when we're talking to our kids or grandkids and reflecting on it, or whatever, we'll be saying that we won't want to talk about it because we'll have nothing to show for it.

Let's write up that report; let's help fix this problem of sexual assault and sexual harassment in the Canadian Armed Forces.

Let's do right by the survivors.

• (35105)

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Baker.

**Mr. Yvan Baker:** Thank you, Chair.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Robillard has the floor.

**Mr. Yves Robillard:** I thought Mr. Bezan had withdrawn it. He didn't?

I must have misunderstood.

[*English*]

**Mr. James Bezan:** Yes, please.

I have a point of order.

**The Chair:** Go ahead, Mr. Bezan.

**Mr. James Bezan:** I know that now we're getting near the end of the time of our meeting and that you have been suspending meetings rather than allowing debate to continue, and I just wanted to let you know that if you need to have a comfort break or anything like that, I'm more than happy to take the chair so that we can allow this filibuster to play itself out.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much for your magnanimous offer, Mr. Bezan.

[*Translation*]

We now go back to Mr. Robillard.

[English]

**Mr. Yves Robillard:** If you insist.

[Translation]

Thank you, Madam Chair.

To help us with our decisions about the motion we are studying at the moment, I would like to remind my colleagues about Report 5 on inappropriate sexual behaviour in the Canadian Armed Forces. The report, dated Fall 2018, looked at whether the Canadian Armed Forces had adequately responded to inappropriate sexual behaviour in order to respond to and support victims and to understand and prevent such behaviour. Therefore, I would like to add it to our discussion so that we can remind ourselves of some of its recommendations.

First of all, the researchers noted that the needs of the victims had not always been met. Under military police procedures, in all cases related to inappropriate sexual behaviour, the investigator must provide the victim with information on all local healthcare and victim support services when they first meet. Information must also be provided about the military police's victim services program. A victim services coordinator must update the victim on the progress of the case every 30 days until the case is closed.

We found out that, in the majority of cases in the sample that were submitted to the military police, or 31 out of 46, at least one of those steps was not taken. To fully support victims and to reduce the risk that they withdraw from the process, it is important that all of the steps be taken.

In most of the cases in the sample that were submitted to the military police, or 34 out of 46, the incidents were reported by a third party, not by the victim. In four cases, a commanding officer pressured the victim to come forward when the victim did not want to.

About one quarter of the cases, or 10 out of 46, resulted in charges. However, most of the cases, or 28 out of 46, had insufficient evidence to proceed. Of those 28 cases, we found that the most common causes of insufficient evidence were a victim's unwillingness to provide a statement and a lack of witnesses. This must give us food for thought once more about the place of victims, of survivors, in this process.

I will pause for a moment, Madam Chair.

**The Chair:** Okay.

Thank you very much, Mr. Robillard.

[English]

On to Mr. Bagnell please.

• (35110)

**Hon. Larry Bagnell:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

I just want to thank some of the members, now that these meetings have been extended, for the tremendous amount of additional information they've provided. Mr. Spengemann, for instance, provided information from other cases where these studies have been done.

In response to Mr. Baker's question as to what we will have achieved, we now have a tremendous record of data and information that those working on this, including Madam Arbour in the future, can use to come up with actions and recommendations that still need to be done at that time. Certainly if this committee can't come up with some recommendations, I will be inputting my recommendations, and we certainly have a lot of backup from experts and survivors to make those from.

Before I get on to my input on what I think the recommendations should be, if this is the only chance I get to do that, I did want to say that Mr. Garrison made a good point. I think it would be fair for committee members to know how long the opposition is going to debate this inappropriate motion, when they could adjourn the debate or the meeting so that we could either get on with the report or get on with other important business. It would be good for committee members to know when the opposition plans to bringing back unreasonable motions related to, for instance....

We had one email that was reported within 24 hours. No one knows what's in it because the member didn't want that, and the report and the investigation was done and completed very quickly. Why would we have motions to bring back witnesses whom we've already heard from for up to six hours, etc.? It would be fair for the committee to know when the opposition members are going to stop bringing forward these things and causing these delays and stopping us from getting to the report.

Also, the committee members, before they move on, would obviously have to know why the opposition members are suggesting no response from the government. My understanding of what committees do is that they investigate with expert witnesses and study a topic and make recommendations for the government to act on. Why do the three opposition parties not want the government to act? Why do they not want a response to the report? It would be good to hear that. Obviously, we have to hear that before we can go on to Mr. Garrison's request.

Also, the response, as Mr. Baker said, to my idea, if I didn't make it clear enough, is a compromise from this apparent stalemate that's stopping us from getting to the report. The compromise would be that we could start right away on the items we agree on or go through every recommendation to see which ones we can agree to go through the Bezan procedure on, with a couple of minutes on each, so we would have some things we could tell the victims. As Yvan said, we could be proud we had items to move forward on. Then we would go back, and the things we couldn't agree on the committee could have the normal debate on those.

Of course, as Ms. Vandenbeld mentioned, we also have this whole Fish report, with a lot of valuable information we can get into. If we can't get into it through a reasonable route through the committee, then we would have to bring that into this debate.



- (35115)

Just to give time for the opposition parties to think about my compromise and to make some comments on that and on why there's no response from the government, I will, as I said earlier today, go on with some of the things that I think should be in the report if this is the only time I get to say them.

First, I would assume that all members from all parties would really want to have their input into the recommendations, but not necessarily under the conditions of this motion. One of the items would be, because there are suggestions that the effects, the results, of investigations depend on.... Before I get into that, I just wanted to say, also related to some of the points Mr. Garrison made, that he seems to have a slightly different view from the views of other committee members on the emphasis on a particular part of our report being on political accountability. If that's true.... That's fine. That's his view. But if that's true, then, of course, as we all know, since we started our reports, there have been at least three detailed inputs—and one was very recent—of evidence suggesting that the political accountability is at the time of the appointment of General Vance.... There is a recent one of, let's say, June 1. I'm not sure if Mr. Garrison has seen that, but I could read it into the record. I won't right now because I want to stay on the important things of culture change, the fear of reporting and the chain of command.

Really, if anyone wants to deal with the political accountability, that's obviously, from the facts that have come out very recently, where it would be at, but I want to stay on the things that would help the survivors. As I said, there has been input suggesting that the effect of investigations or reprisals or sexual misconduct is different between genders and ranks—junior and senior—so I think that data should be disaggregated, collected and analyzed as much as possible to help our decision-making or our recommendations or Madam Arbour's recommendations. I will certainly pass that on if I can't do it through the committee.

Another item would be that we want to make sure that the recommendations or the procedures we come up with are really ensuring that the wants and needs of those impacted by sexual misconduct and other forms of non-inclusion—the minister has been very strong on those other forms of non-inclusion—should be the guiding principle for research, policy and program services and benefits. There have been some suggestions.... I can't remember which report it was in now, but the administrative directives, I think it was suggested, were not centred around the survivors and around those victims. They were more centred around protecting the system. That's why I think a recommendation along those lines would be valuable.

I also think, of course, that to help Madam Arbour the CAF needs to do a strategic review of the existing processes, including oversight from the beginning to the end, with a trauma-informed, survivor-centric-informed lens, similar to the first item I talked about.

Also, I think there needs to be, in our recommendations or in our report, the trauma awareness. Some of that has come out through what Mr. Baker said today, but also from the many other victims who we've heard and who have come to us either individually or through the committee, or who you've heard even in the media and,

from that, we have to respect that trauma affects the dignity of the impacted individual and that trauma is not short term.

- (35120)

It's not dealing with something where there's a penalty to the perpetrator and it's all over. This type of trauma will be in a person's mind quite often for the rest of their lives. Somehow that needs to be reflected in the report, as the witnesses have said, and the seriousness of the recommendations we make need to deal with that point.

I also think we need to recognize that, although the majority of times it affects women, as we heard from at least one witness, it's not just women who have been victims of this type of trauma.

I also want to talk about the support systems. As I said before, I'm a little hesitant to talk at length about support. I think we should concentrate more on eliminating the problem so that we don't have to have the support. Obviously when you have—as Mr. Garrison and I outlined in detail—hundreds of cases, we'll still need support, and we'll need support for situations that went on long before we studied this situation, because they can be long lasting.

Part of that support that the victims have asked for is a peer support network, which exists in other places. It should be tailor-made for the military under the special circumstances—and I know that military members of the committee would understand this—so that there can be a support network for a victim to discuss with other victims how to move forward.

Also, I think the seriousness of these types of injuries should really be defined as a full operational stress injury and identified as such within the scope of the federal framework on PTSD. I think that would give it more.... It would put it in a more serious light, where it should be.

Another area where I think we need a recommendation is on the attributes of an ideal soldier. It should be modernized to reflect the realities of the 21st century military needs, including an examination of the CAF's presently dominant heteronormative, white European background, assumed masculine culture. The values and attributes of the ideal soldier and the impact this norm has on sexual misconduct reporting must be critically examined.

Another area that we heard numerous times was related to the requirements or the things that help lead to promotions: what's considered, what would be considered, how that should be updated, the rewards of taking the appropriate actions and not taking inappropriate actions. All of these need to be discussed. I don't think any member of the committee thinks there shouldn't be a serious discussion on this type of issue.

I have a whole bunch more, but I think I will save them...except for one that I mentioned before.

- (35125)

I think it will take a more lengthy debate by committee members, because it hasn't been really talked about by members other than me. How do reprisals fit into the system, in either the code of conduct or in offences, even?

Obviously, reprisals—whether overt or not overt—have occurred in the past, but where is it listed that that's inappropriate, that it's an offence, that there's a result of having that offence on your record? I think if that were prohibited, it would certainly help many more victims come forward with the reports, as the recent report—

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Bagnell.

The meeting is suspended.

[*Translation*]

[*At 3:25 p.m., Friday, June 4, the sitting was suspended.*]

[*At 11:04 a.m., Monday, June 7, the sitting resumed.*]

● (41900)

[*English*]

**The Chair:** I call this meeting back to order.

[*Translation*]

Good morning.

Welcome everyone.

[*English*]

This is a resumption of meeting number 32 of the House of Commons Standing Committee on National Defence, which started on Friday, May 21, 2021.

If interpretation is lost, please let me know immediately so we can make sure everyone can participate fully in these proceedings.

I remind you that all comments by members should be addressed through the chair, and this is a reminder, as much for myself as for the rest of you, to please speak slowly and clearly. When you're not speaking, your mike should be on mute.

With regard to a speaking list, the clerk and I will do the best we can to maintain a consolidated order of speaking for all members, whether they're participating virtually or in person.

We are resuming debate on Mr. Bezan's motion.

Mr. Bagnell had the floor.

● (41905)

**Hon. Larry Bagnell:** Thank you.

Just to recap where we are, we've been about 58 hours and 49 minutes on this very important topic. We found out about systemic, inappropriate sexual conduct in the Canadian military. We've had many, many witnesses and heard sad testimony from survivors. This has been going on for decades upon decades, and we certainly need very complex and important action to try to turn the tide of this.

The major items we heard from the experts and from survivors were on culture change, which I'm sure we'll be hearing more about today, and the fear of reporting, partly because of the order of the chain of command and the fear of reprisals in that, if you do report, it could affect the honourable career that you've chosen.

That's why I hope we can get to the report as soon as possible to deal with all these very serious issues in the military and do what we can as part of helping the survivors.

The department and the minister have already taken action by appointing Madam Louise Arbour, and a number of steps are being taken. In the previous meeting, I went over almost an hour on things that have been done already, but obviously, more needs to be done, and we could certainly be part of that if we could get to a report right away.

I think the purpose of the report would be for the department and the minister to make the changes we're talking about. I don't imagine there's any member of the committee who does not want those changes that we recommend to be made or to be taken seriously, and the government should respond to them.

Somehow that isn't the case in the present motion, so I'm going to propose an amendment that the government has to respond to the things we're suggesting, the things the survivors have suggested and the things the experts have suggested, which could be a very productive report.

We want to make sure—and I'm sure all committee members do—that the government takes action and that the minister takes action on the items that survivors and experts have recommended could help the department move forward so it would be a safe working environment for members of both the CAF and the department.

The amendment I propose is to remove the first part of (b)(iv), which says, “the committee declines to request, pursuant to Standing Order 109, that the government table a comprehensive response...”

I would add “that pursuant to Standing Order 109, the government table a comprehensive response to the report”.

**The Chair:** Since we don't have a written copy of that, do we wish to have some time to review it and get a copy out to you?

● (41910)

**Mr. James Bezan:** Are we going to get a written copy?

**The Chair:** Yes, I think we should wait for that to happen.

**Ms. Anita Vandenbeld:** I believe it's been sent to the clerk. I think Larry sent it. You can double-check.

**The Chair:** All right. We'll just suspend for five minutes and then we'll give everybody a chance to have a look at that.

The meeting is suspended.

● (41910)

(Pause)

● (41915)

**The Chair:** Resuming debate, we'll go back to you, Mr. Bagnell.

**Hon. Larry Bagnell:** Just so people know, I'm amending subparagraph (b)(ii) of Mr. Bezan's motion to ask that the government provide a response to our report.

Just before I do that, I want to remind people that at the last meeting I threw out a suggestion of how we could proceed with the things we agreed on and leave the difficult things and then do them after. I haven't heard any objections to that from the opposition, but I'll leave that out there.

Related to my amendment, we want to make change. We're serious about making change. This is really a good point at which the committee could actually have influence and we could make that change.

We have a minister who, time and time again, has said that everything is on the table, that he wants to make the changes, that he wants to hear from us what those changes should be. We have an acting chief of the defence staff who has said he's very willing and eager to make changes and even agrees to take "outside" advice and do things outside the military chain of command.

These are dramatic, huge types of changes that will be required if we're really going to have an effect on what's been a sticking problem, not only in our military but in other militaries, as Mr. Spengemann has outlined in good detail.

Any problem like this requires complex and very thoughtful recommendations, which I hope we can get to soon, but change is major and, as everyone who has been around here long enough knows, change is difficult. It's not in human nature or organizational nature to make changes.

We would want the department and the government to offer a response to any recommendations we make. The whole purpose of our doing a report is that there would be changes. I don't think any members of the committee would not want changes or would want the minister and the government not to respond to our suggestions for these changes in terms of what they are going to incorporate out of what we're recommending.

It's sort of standard procedure when committees do reports to ask the government to respond to show that it is taking our recommendations seriously and is making changes that can really make life better for members of the military and make it a better option for people to choose. They should be able to choose that honourable career without fear of inappropriate sexual conduct, and all members should be able to carry on equally in one of the most honoured professions available to Canadians, one that is so essential to preserving our security.

I will leave it at that.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

● (41920)

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr. Bagnell.

Mr. Baker, go ahead, please.

**Mr. Yvan Baker:** Thanks very much, Madam Chair.

I wanted to thank Mr. Bagnell for his amendment.

I think I want to pick up on what Mr. Bagnell was saying. He was talking about how we drive change on this issue of sexual harassment and sexual assault in the armed forces. If this committee is serious about doing all we can.... Well, let's take a step back. If

we're serious as Canadians, as people who care about this issue, about taking action, then we need government to take that action. I think we can all agree on that.

I think this committee's role in ensuring that action is taken is to do the most we possibly can in terms of putting our shoulders to the wheel on making sure that government takes action. It's to write a report with thoughtful recommendations and ask that the government implement those recommendations. Then it's to hold the government to create an accountability mechanism, or do all we can as a committee, anyway, to ensure that the recommendations that we've put together and that we believe in are acted upon and that the government tackles this issue of sexual assault and sexual harassment in the armed forces.

To me, the government response, which is traditionally provided to most committee reports—almost all, from my understanding—has an important role. It plays the role of an accountability mechanism in my view because, in a transparent and public way, it asks the government to address to what degree it plans to implement what the committee has recommended. I think that's why it's a useful.... It's an important mechanism when committees issue reports, and it's important that we have that response in this particular case.

We've all been shaken by what we've heard from some of the folks who have testified at the committee. We've all spoken about how we've spoken to members of the armed forces and to victims and survivors. We owe it to them to make sure we do everything possible as a committee to make sure the right ideas get put to the government by this committee in terms of tackling this problem. We need to do everything we can to make sure the government acts on that—to advocate. I think the response from the government is an important mechanism in making sure we can translate into the government's acting on what I hope will be a report built on consensus that's very thoughtful and that would allow us to tackle this problem of sexual assault and sexual harassment in the military. I really think that what Mr. Bagnell has proposed is constructive and important over the medium to long term, to make sure we tackle this problem.

When I think of some of the things we've heard, I know we've heard many times from witnesses who have come forward to this committee, from witnesses who have come forward to the status of women committee, from victims who've spoken in different forums in the public realm, etc. We've all been touched by that, and if we're going to.... However, we've also heard from them that this is not a new problem. We all know that. This problem has existed forever, and people have spoken out about it in the past in different forums. It's not easy to do. Certainly, what we have heard is just a fraction of what's been happening, of course, and we've all heard that from those who have testified, from the witnesses and from the survivors.

The facts that there have been so many victims and that such a small fraction of them are heard from, that such a small fraction of their cases of this problem are being tackled—being addressed and brought before an appropriate enforcement mechanism—show how important the accountability piece of this is. It's not just about putting forward good ideas. It's about putting forward good ideas and then making sure we are all on the same page, no matter which political party we're members of or elected from, in making sure that this government, the following government and the government after that continue to move the ball forward on this issue. I think we would all acknowledge that this is a complex problem. It's a difficult problem. It's going to require commitment from all future governments, if we're going to tackle it.

● (41925)

When I think about some of the people who have spoken out, and whose advice has not been taken, one person I think of is Julie Lalonde. She has spoken publicly in the past, and she was good enough to present to the Standing Committee on the Status of Women.

I want to share with you something she shared. I want to share it with you because I think it's important. It underlines what we need the government to respond to and address, which is what Mr. Bagnell's motion is striving for, I think.

In French, she said the following:

[*Translation*]

I'm pleased that the committee decided to take some time to hear from experts in various fields, including me.

My name is Julie S. Lalonde. I've been working for almost 20 years to end violence against women in Canada. Each year, I provide training to thousands of people. I've worked in five countries, on three continents and in two languages.

Although I am the daughter of a former CAF member, my expertise in system change, violence prevention and bystander intervention is what dragged me into this conversation. I had a now-infamous day of training all officer cadets at the Royal Military College in Kingston in the fall of 2014. The anti-harassment educator got harassed at RMC, was the headline across the country. What was unfortunately missed is that I filed a complaint with RMC for reasons that go beyond the harassment I personally experienced. I was, and remain, deeply troubled by the comments cadets made with regard to sexual violence. Victim-blaming was rampant and the cadets insisted that women who drink too much are asking to be raped, except for one Navy cadet. He showed immense courage, and courage is what I would like to focus on for my comments today.

[*English*]

Just to recap or contextualize this, Julie Lalonde was speaking and providing testimony at the status of women committee. She was speaking about how she has tried to speak up, how she has tried to act to help train Canadian Armed Forces members to address this issue. She spoke about how awfully she has been treated and the resistance she and her thinking and what she was trying to teach have faced in the system.

That's what she was speaking about in the segment I just read to you. She underlined how challenging it was, even when giving the opportunity to young cadets, presumably young members of the armed forces, to address this problem. There was tremendous resistance. This is one reason Mr. Bagnell's motion makes a lot of sense.

Julie Lalonde's been doing this for years and has faced that kind of resistance. We need everybody pulling in the same direction on

this. Obviously, government is at the top of that list of organizations that need to be pulling and pushing in the same direction as the armed forces, this committee and many others.

That's why I think the amendment Mr. Bagnell proposed makes a lot of sense. Mr. Bagnell's motion, in my view, is trying to ensure that government is publicly declaring its position on the recommendations this committee would make.

● (41930)

[*Translation*]

I now continue reading from Ms. Lalonde's testimony.

I was invited to train all officer cadets grouped by year on a rainy October day in 2014. The first and second years were unruly but manageable. The third-year group was by far the worst audience I have ever dealt with.

Yes, they did accuse me of hating all men, laughed at the definition of consent, and took every opportunity they could to shift the blame from perpetrators to victims. During a particularly tense moment, I frankly lost the room. They were furious with my focus on bystanders and began yelling over each other and heckling me.

Ms. Lalonde described what happened. What I take from her testimony is that she came up against resistance and was even mistreated because she was trying to solve the problem of harassment and sexual assault in the Canadian Armed Forces. She was talking to very young members of the Canadian Armed Forces. As she said in her testimony, she was talking to third-year groups. That demonstrates that cultural resistance exists, as do other reasons that cause people to resist. That is why the committee, the government and the Canadian Armed Forces must do everything they can to make sure the problem is corrected.

Let me continue reading from her testimony.

In a sea of largely green uniforms a man in a Navy uniform shot his hand up. He was sitting amongst the most boisterous group, so to be honest, I called on him with hesitation. To my surprise, and the surprise of everyone else in the room, he stood up for me. He began to berate his classmates for attacking me, told them they were being babies for being so upset, and went so far as to say that the way we talk about women at RMC is embarrassing.

The room was stunned into silence. I think of this man often. In the days and months that followed my day at RMC, cadets and CAF members took to social media and traditional media to praise the cadets for being brave enough to challenge the educator. Hundreds of men derailing a conversation on sexual violence prevention to call the female facilitator a man-hater is not brave. Being the sole voice in a room of 200 people willing to take a stand in support of progress is bravery of the highest level.

That is what we need from you now. You will not eradicate sexual violence, misogyny and other forms of oppression within the military, such as racism, transphobia and homophobia, unless you are willing to be brave. Are CAF members uncomfortable with terms like rape culture, toxic masculinity and survivor-centred? Absolutely, we've seen that, but you cannot change something that you won't even name.

I will end my reading of Ms. Lalonde's testimony at this point. It is incredibly important, in my view. She testified before the Standing Committee on the Status of Women, but she could say the same thing before this committee, right here, right now. That is why I believe that I thought it was important to read you her testimony.

I want to repeat a sentence she said about the Navy cadet who stood up to intervene. She said: “Being the sole voice in a room of 200 people willing to take a stand in support of progress is bravery of the highest level.”

• (41935)

Let me ask my committee colleagues: is what we are doing “bravery of the highest level”? Put another way, what bravery of the highest level should we be showing for our other colleagues, for the survivors, for the government? How brave are we going to be?

As I see it, our bravery of the highest level is to write this report constructively, productively, and to make sure that the government will act on our recommendations. The amendment that Mr. Bagnell has proposed is an essential mechanism by which we can be sure that the government will do so.

If we do not demand a response from the government, I will be concerned. We may have a productive, constructive report that contains magnificent recommendations—and I have no doubt that we will succeed in that—but we must also seize that possibility and demand action from the government in this regard.

I implore you to support Mr. Bagnell's proposal. It is constructive. Ms. Lalonde spoke about a sailor being brave enough to stand up in a room of 200 people who were abusing her. I am not asking you to do the same today, nor yet in the coming weeks. The sailor did something very courageous. What I am asking from you does not require as much courage, we simply have to act and do what we can. It requires only that we are driven to help and support victims and survivors, to solve this problem of sexual harassment and assault in the Canadian Armed Forces.

So I am asking you to support Mr. Bagnell's amendment. It is our best way to make sure that the government will take heed of our recommendations, and that we will have done everything we can to solve the problem of sexual harassment and sexual violence in the Canadian Armed Forces.

Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr. Baker.

We will go on to Mr. Spengemann, please.

**Mr. Sven Spengemann:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

Good morning, colleagues.

I'd like to thank, first of all, Mr. Bagnell, for having introduced his motion to amend the previous motion, and to ask for a government response.

I'd also like to thank Mr. Baker for his intervention, which in very compelling terms restated the profound moral question that we're facing. He restated it through the testimony of Ms. Lalonde, as others have also come forward and spoken to various committees.

Most importantly, this question is one that our committee is seized with, and this is a question that really has the eyes of the country on it. There is an expectation that's increasing day by day, week by week, that this committee will come up with a report that

will move the yardsticks on this question of systemic sexual misconduct in the armed forces.

In previous interventions I have outlined the state of affairs in a number of allied forces that we work closely with, including the United Kingdom. I have some comments on New Zealand, and there are other forces, South Africa included, that are dealing with this issue in similar ways, roughly at the same time. A lot of the reports that I have looked at began right around the time when this became an issue following the release of the Deschamps report. Some of them are more recent.

The international landscape really gives us an appreciation of the systematic nature of this issue. It's something that's far greater than just a problem in Canada alone, significant as that problem is, and in a very deep sense our allies are grappling with the same issue. Some of them have done the work, and just because they've done the work it doesn't mean that we get to piggyback on their conclusions.

We need to do our own work, but I have introduced that state of affairs as illustrative of the magnitude and the severity of the issue, and the conclusion that if we do not take it seriously, if we do not resolve it, there is not only most profoundly the lingering moral question, the conclusion basically, that we have failed the women—the serving women, past serving women and future recruits in the Canadian Forces—and men, but also that we are moving into an area where there are going to be operational ramifications with respect to this question remaining unresolved. A military force that has not gotten on top of the question of systematic sexual misconduct is not a strong force. It will be weaker because of the residue of that problem.

That has a broader implication with respect to the work we do internationally, be it through NATO or through the United Nations and peacekeeping operations. If we are not a strong ally to those we work with, then the entire assembled force, be it a coalition force or be it a UN force, is going to be less effective.

There is yet another layer. If forces do not take systematic sexual misconduct seriously within their own ranks, there is also a high risk that sexual misconduct will extend not only to other serving members of that same force, or other forces, but also vulnerable civilian populations. With that in mind, there is some work that's been done in that area already through NATO, through DCAF, the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces, and other entities. The more leadership we put behind this as Canadians, the more effective our alliances will be through NATO and through the UN, in contexts where there are pressing global issues that need to be resolved.

I'd like to just put that to the committee for consideration. Again, the bifurcation is that there is a moral component that is fundamentally important, but also an urgent operational component. Canada has invested a lot of resources, a lot of thinking and a lot of leadership in the question of women in peace and security. We are talking to our allies; we're talking to UN agencies and others to increase the number of women serving overseas in our peace operations, to not only increase the number but also to put women into leadership positions and into peacebuilding positions. If we have an unresolved problem with respect to systematic sexual misconduct in these contexts, those investments will be not stronger, but weaker for it.

We have layer after layer of questions or reasons why this issue is so important, and why the time is now.

I'll give you yet another one. We are facing, at the moment, a number of questions with respect to justice and systematic ramifications and systematic factors that keep them in place, which extend beyond any given case or any number of cases with respect to complaints that are making their way into the media. We're facing systematic racism here in Canada, which we've acknowledged, against Black Canadians and against indigenous peoples. We need to look no further than the headlines of the last two weeks here in Canada to see just how disturbing these questions are.

● (41940)

This is also a question of justice. This is also a systemic question. It is a question of the right of Canadian women, and all Canadians, to serve in the Canadian Forces, to aspire to serving, to go into retirement looking back on their careers as having been fulfilling and having been free of harassment, bullying and misconduct of any kind.

This question is connected to yet another current relating to justice and systematic challenges that we need to address, and these challenges are monumental in their outlay, their components and their elements. They need strong recommendations from this committee. Yes, we have the work that's being done in parallel by Madam Justice Arbour, and it's important work. This committee may well want to consider whether to speak to her through its reports, as well as to the Canadian public.

Fundamentally, though, Madam Chair, the committee needs to speak to government, and that is why it is so important that we have this mechanism of inviting, in fact, insisting on the fact that the government prepare a response to our recommendations. If we don't do that, we're having a conversation among ourselves that really doesn't gain traction in a direct way with respect to prospects for resolution.

Receiving the report from government, looking at the report from government in future sessions of this committee, and seeing what follow-up work is required are incredibly important, and that is the our role as parliamentarians—all our ministers in government, our fellow parliamentarians. It is our institution that is charged with that accountability to the kinds of recommendations that the committee will hopefully issue in very short order.

For those reasons, I think we can all be very grateful to our colleague, Mr. Bagnell, for having introduced this amendment to make

sure that the government issues a report. In fact, I'm struggling with questions as to why we would not invite a response from government.

Madam Chair, I've highlighted a number of components of the work of the United Kingdom that's been done in this respect. What I've not gotten to yet is their recommendations, and I will do that in a minute, with respect to a centralized authority that they have put forward. It's important for us to look at those recommendations, but through the lens of this being the kind of recommendation that would move the yardsticks, and that requires a government response.

If government tells us that certain recommendations aren't viable, or they're already doing them, or a different approach is required, we need to receive that information in the form of a response from government. The U.K. has, following the Wigston report, come forward with a response and with a review process a year later, which I will speak about later on, through the Right Honourable Ben Wallace, MP, Secretary of State for Defence. It was issued in December 2020.

If government action is requested on an urgent issue through a report like Wigston, and government is invited to step into the fray, as in this case—the minister said the door is wide open, we need to act now and the time for patience is over—good things can and do happen. That is why it's so important for this committee to at least take note of the work that's been done elsewhere. Again, it doesn't replace what we need to do here as members of Parliament, but it gives us guidance. It gives us a sense of reality. It gives us insights into the opportunity to actually move forward within a very progressive time frame, again in parallel with the work that Madam Justice Arbour is doing.

Madam Chair, if you'll allow me, I have a few issues that I wanted to raise and didn't get to in my last intervention. Most importantly, what I wanted to put to the committee is a list of about a dozen or so recommendations with respect to the central defence authority in the United Kingdom. Again, if this committee makes a recommendation similar to the tenor that the U.K. has developed, it's almost unimaginable that we would short-circuit or sidestep the question of a government response. The government is accountable to Parliament, and we in turn are accountable to the Canadian public. That is the central line of accountability in the Westminster system.

Again, with my gratitude to Mr. Bagnell, I wanted to just touch upon a few remaining items from the Wigston report before concluding this intervention.

Wigston made recommendations with respect to communication being central to the elimination of systemic sexual misconduct in the British forces and to getting at individual complaints in such a way that victims and survivors are empowered to come forward.

● (41945)

It said that communication is crucial in the sense that “[c]lear and user-friendly guidance must be produced for people to recognise the scope and range of inappropriate behaviour.” It states:

Effective communication of definitions, policies and guidance helps people understand what inappropriate behaviour is; what Defence's stance is on it; how it can be reported; what the process will involve; and how long it is likely to take. People are less likely to report inappropriate behaviour if they are not clear on what it is; where to "draw the line"; how to raise concerns; or what raising a concern will entail.

The recommendation Wigston makes is to implement "a clear, simple and enduring communications campaign to articulate the range and scope of inappropriate behaviours, and what to do when instances occur."

If we imagine that we were to put forward a recommendation similar to that tenor and granularity in our report, again, it defies understanding that we would not ask government to respond to that recommendation, to tell us whether it's realistic, whether it's already being done and, if it's not, what kind of resourcing would be required to put it into place.

The U.K. also has [*Technical difficulty—Editor*] for all defence personnel. Again, that's something our committee could turn its attention to in the formulation of our recommendations. We could also ask the government to respond with its position on such a suggestion.

In the United Kingdom, mediation has been suggested as an area of attention. The report concludes:

Mediation is only currently utilised in small pockets across Defence, with its use being viewed with caution by the Service Complaints Ombudsman. The benefits of certified and professional mediation for individuals and organisations are widely recognised, however, with much useful material produced by the Arbitration, Conciliation Advisory Service and the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development. In her review, Sue Owen reported that one of several changes respondents to her survey wanted to see was the option of using informal resolution, including mediation, in preference to formal procedures, where that would be more beneficial. Those benefits might include: flexibility to suit particular circumstances; a space for more open and honest discussion; a quicker response to conflict to prevent escalation; less chance of the working relationship breaking down beyond repair; the chance for employers to understand the problem, and make changes that benefit employees and the wider organisation.

It goes on to state that feedback on the current mediation services is positive, in the assessment of the reporters, but there is a recommendation that "Defence should resource, train and deliver an effective, certified and professional mediation service, recognising and addressing the potential risks of mediation identified by the Service Complaints Ombudsman."

Again, this is the kind of recommendation that if we were to explore it—the role of mediation services in those much more minor instances than sexual assault for quick resolution, for a resolution that is supported by all sides in these cases—we would want government to have an opportunity to respond and to give its view.

Madam Chair, let me conclude this intervention, perhaps, with the "defence authority" that's proposed by the United Kingdom, which would be responsible for "cultures and inappropriate behaviours". Wigston really took a strong view that a centralized authority is required and made a number of potential recommendations on its mandate. I'm going to put these forward for the benefit of members of committee.

Again, let's ask ourselves, if we were to recommend something like that, or very different, but with the same tenor and the same aspiration of resolving the cultural challenges, would we not want the

Government of Canada to issue a response to these kinds of recommendations?

Wigston's first recommendation is that the defence authority in the U.K. be responsible for "governance of Defence cultures and behaviours" as well as ownership of "pan-Defence strategy and policy for inappropriate behaviour and oversight of the implementation".

The second recommendation is "Ensuring consistency in messaging internally and externally on behaviour, attitude and beliefs, including celebrating positive behaviours; and facilitating sharing of leading practice across the organisation."

The third is "Assuring values and standards are upheld across Defence."

The fourth is "Recording, analysing and tracking management information, including identifying and advising on trends."

The fifth is "Setting the Defence training requirement for cultures and behaviours."

● (41950)

The sixth is establishing a defence authority service complaints team for selected service complaints relating to inappropriate behaviour, operating in support of and with respect to the single services' chain of command. The seventh is establishing a system for the anonymous reporting of complaints utilizing modern reporting methods, including a phone-based app, web-based forms, email and telephone. The eighth is to develop and oversee support programs for victims and other people affected.

The ninth recommendation is ensuring a consistent approach pan-Defence to climate assessments, mediation and helplines. The 10th is "reporting annually to the Permanent Secretary, Chief of the Defence Staff and the Chiefs of Staff." The 11th is overseeing the implementation of those recommendations of the Sue Owen Review that have pan-Defence implications, and the 12th is monitoring and reporting on the recommendations of the report.

Again, Madam Chair, this is a very strong view that in the U.K., a central defence authority would be part of the answer in creating a culture in the U.K. armed forces with respect to the elimination of sexual misconduct and the resolution of complaints. Again, these are recommendations with granularity to them, with implementability, with achievability questions and with efficiency questions. In a report like the one we're currently contemplating, to make those kinds of recommendations without an explicit request for the government to respond would miss the mark in the following senses. We would not close the accountability loop, we would not know what the government's position would be, and this committee would then not have the capacity to potentially engage in follow-up work, either in the fall or even in a subsequent Parliament, as this is clearly an issue that's not going to go away.

Again, the minister said the time for patience is over. Culture change is absolutely required, but in my estimation, Madam Chair, this committee is going to remain seized with this question through to its resolution. The need to ask government to respond to this report and to successive reports in the future, to make sure that Parliament and—indirectly, through Parliament—the Canadian public can see, evaluate and ask questions about the process is absolutely indispensable in our system of democracy.

With that, I'd like to thank my colleague, Mr. Bagnell, for bringing forward this amendment, and my colleague, Mr. Baker, for his thoughtful comments with respect to the voice of women in Canada.

I just want to circle back and say that when I talk about other countries, behind each recommendation and behind each page of policy work that's done in the U.K, New Zealand, South Africa and so many other jurisdictions, there are also women victims and survivors in those countries whose voices we haven't heard directly. They have not hit our headlines. They have not spoken to our committee or to the Standing Committee on the Status of Women. This is driven by a moral question relating to women in the armed forces of many, many countries. For that reason, the magnitude of the problem we are facing exceeds our own borders and therefore requires even greater attention by this committee. There's an extraordinary amount of leadership ahead of us, I believe, and ahead of our government. However, without the accountability loop being closed in the form of asking government for responses, we will not be able to do our work.

With that, and with my thanks, Madam Chair, I will hand it back to you.

• (41955)

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr. Spengemann.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Robillard, the floor is yours.

**Mr. Yves Robillard:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

Let us continue with Report 5, which I referred to earlier, and let us examine the recommendations. The report is very significant because it reminds us of the importance of a response from the government, a central factor in this motion. This is why the motion put forward by Mr. Bagnell is so important.

The researchers examined the confidence that victims had in the system:

We found evidence of the impact that reporting had on the victim. In 21 of the 53 cases, the file showed that the victim experienced fear, distress, discomfort, a lack of support, reprisal, or blame, including from the victim's commanding officer, senior leaders, instructors, and colleagues. In addition to the psychological trauma, such outcomes can only reduce victims' confidence in the system and contribute to the belief that there are negative consequences for those who report inappropriate sexual behaviour.

One primary victim support service provider told us that the Forces could improve support and increase victims' confidence in the system if each victim was assigned a case manager. This individual would have the required knowledge and expertise to support and guide victims through the reporting process.

The researchers' recommendations were as follows:

The Canadian Armed Forces should make victim support a top priority by introducing comprehensive and integrated victim case management services from the time the victim discloses an incident to the conclusion of the case; and ensuring that members, service providers, and responsible officials have a clear understanding of what the complaint processes are, how they work, and what the possible outcomes are for both the victim and the alleged perpetrator.

The department's response was as follows:

Agreed. The Vice Chief of the Defence Staff will oversee the development of a comprehensive Operation HONOUR campaign plan that will designate victim support and the implementation of an integrated, national case management system as the main effort. The Sexual Misconduct Response Centre will play an active role in the development of this campaign plan. The Centre's charter will be amended to permit broader engagement with Department of National Defence and Canadian Armed Forces senior leaders. The campaign plan will be sent for review and approval by 1 October 2019.

The Canadian Armed Forces will continue the development and publication of new policies, including related Defence Administrative Orders and Directives (DAODs) and an Operation HONOUR manual as a comprehensive source of information on processes as they pertain to inappropriate sexual behaviour. The Forces will continue to evolve the Respect in the Canadian Armed Forces Workshop and provide briefings, updates, and reports to ensure the widest distribution of information.

• (42000)

The Strategic Response Team on Sexual Misconduct will ensure that the multiple sources of information (such as the manual, Operation HONOUR website, and Respect in the Canadian Armed Forces mobile application) are up to date with the latest information regarding policies and processes.

The workshop, mobile application, and website are already operational and will continue to be updated as new information, orders, and policies are produced.

The manual is in advanced draft form and will be reviewed by the Centre before it is sent to the Deputy Minister and the Chief of the Defence Staff for approval. The new DAOD 5019-5, Sexual Misconduct and Sexual Disorders, is in draft form and will be reviewed by the Centre and sent for formal approval by summer 2019.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr. Robillard.

[*English*]

We'll go to Mr. Bezan, please.

**Mr. James Bezan:** Thank you, Madam Chair.



I'll be brief. I just want to point out that the Liberals are filibustering their own amendment to ensure that this report is blocked and never sees the light of day. This is a procedural discussion on whether the report requires a government response to it, if we ever get to tabling the report.

I should point out that there is an advantage to not having the government respond in writing. It allows the opportunity for the House of Commons to actually have a concurrence motion and a four-hour debate in which the government can respond verbally and talk about the value of this report. It allows the report to then come to a vote in the House of Commons. For that reason, I will be opposing this amendment by Mr. Bagnell.

I have to say that I'm getting very tired of the political grandstanding by some Liberal members. I find it very disappointing that they are using the testimony of victims of military sexual trauma from the status of women committee here. That is callous. I believe it's unfair to those victims to have their testimony repeated here, especially if there has been no permission given to members of this committee to use their testimony at our committee.

We need to be more balanced in our debate as we move forward. We want to make sure there is relevance to the amendment and to the main motion, rather than this ongoing obstruction, and come to a vote so that we can get to writing the report and tabling it before we recess for the summer.

What we're seeing here is an ongoing filibuster, with the Liberals talking out the clock on their very own amendment. This is disappointing, especially for those in the armed forces who want to see us come out with an actual report on what went wrong, as it revolves around the sexual misconduct allegations against our current chief of the defence staff and our former chief of the defence staff.

Sitting here and debating needlessly and endlessly is very disheartening to those of us who want to get to a report. I'm sure it is disgusting to watch for those who currently serve or have served in the armed forces, especially for those who have been victims of military sexual trauma.

• (42005)

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Bezan.

We'll move along to Madam Vandenberg, please.

**Ms. Anita Vandenberg:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

I thank Mr. Bagnell for bringing this amendment. I'm very disappointed to hear that my colleague Mr. Bezan would not want to have a government response to our report. On the argument about being able to have a debate in the House, certainly once there is a government response, that is a possibility. It is always a possibility to debate concurrence in committee reports.

However, I believe it is somewhat cynical to put forward a report with recommendations and then say that we don't want the government to respond to this report, that we don't want a written response, that we don't want the government to be accountable for saying whether it supports or does not support the recommendations in the report. In all the committees that I have sat on, the norm has always been that we would request a government response. By not requesting a government response, it seems to me that the only

purpose of tabling a report, in that case, is not to actually make change. It's not to actually have the government implement those recommendations. At that point, it would simply be a communication. It would simply be to try to get things tabled without actually making a difference.

I've heard a lot in this committee about holding the government to account and accountability. One of the key things is to have a written government response. To me, this is really a no-brainer. I don't understand the motivations of the other members who don't want the government to respond in writing to our report. It is fairly cynical.

I'd also point out that to talk about giving a voice to survivors, to amplify the things they have said before Parliament, in committee in testimony, and to call that callous is really doing a disservice, because one of the problems we've had in all the decades that this has been occurring is that there has been no voice. There has been no amplification.

When survivors come forward, when they speak before a committee, that's not an easy thing to do regardless of which committee it may be. One thing that is very important for us as legislators, as public officials, is to amplify the voices that are rarely heard, to amplify the voices that, for whatever reason, have been ignored historically or have been silenced or self-silenced out of fear. When those voices speak out in a public forum, I think calling it callous for us to repeat and reinforce and amplify the things they're saying again shows a tremendous amount of cynicism.

I would also like to remind my colleagues on the committee that if we were to agree to adjourn this debate, a debate on a motion and an amendment that, frankly, limit debate and don't allow for a real substantive discussion, simply agreeing to adjourn the debate right now, right at this moment, we would be going into the study on the reports.

Concerning the next item of business we have on this committee, we did actually have some meetings when we were studying reports. I'll remind our colleagues that there are three reports. We were actually making quite a bit of progress on those reports. If there's good faith to actually allow the real discussion, the real debate around the amendments, around what is written in that report, the analysts' work in capturing the testimony we heard, I would very much encourage that. If we were to adjourn this debate right now on this amendment, this motion, we would be able to go in camera right now and start the discussion on all three of those reports.

The fact is that the opposition is forcing the chair to suspend every meeting instead of adjourning the meeting. We need permission to adjourn the meeting. The chair can't do that unilaterally, and they've made it very clear in the past that the chair can't do that. The only option, then, is to suspend meetings at the end of the time scheduled, which means that we come back to this motion when the next meeting starts. However, if we were to agree to adjourn a meeting, just adjourn a meeting at the end of the meeting, we would be able, then, to have the chair, in the next meeting, schedule a meeting specifically to go to this report.

• (42010)

I think it is very disingenuous to say that there's an unwillingness to review the report when you put forward motions that are essentially poison pill motions, motions that are limiting every person to only speak for two minutes. I don't know many people out there who, whether in their family or their workplace or a social setting or a formal setting, when they're trying to solve a problem, a complex problem...and sexual misconduct in the Canadian Armed Forces is a complex problem. When they're trying to solve that problem, I don't see very many situations where they say that each person can speak for two minutes and not respond to each other, with no dialogue. They can just speak for two minutes, where it's automatically up, down, majority rules—and that's it. That is not how it should be in Parliament. That is not how it should be anywhere. I don't think that's how we can actually get to a report, a good report, on this.

I am still appealing to my colleagues on the other side to please allow us to adjourn the meeting and allow us to go to the study in good faith and have a real discussion. I still believe there is definitely an ability and room to be able to find a compromise and at least, on the testimony we've heard, the important recommendations that have come from survivors, get that done, get that tabled and get done the other two reports based on the testimony people gave to this committee at that time as well.

At the moment, I'm not seeing that willingness. I know that members are very concerned about the motion. We've tried to improve the motion with an amendment that at least would require accountability from the government. I cannot imagine the reason that particularly the opposition parties would not want the government to respond—unless they are not interested in hearing what the government has to say and are not interested in dialogue. It's clear that there is very little interest in dialogue, because the motion says you can only talk for two minutes and then that's it. Every person talks for two minutes. You don't have the back-and-forth. The motion itself is to say that there's no dialogue.

I really think most of our constituents who send us here to this place want us to try to work together. They want us to try to get along and to find the common ground, to find those compromises. We have said very clearly that there will always be things that we may not agree on with each other. There are always possibilities for dissenting reports. There are always possibilities to have a debate back and forth and then actually come to an agreement. I've had many reports here in this place where the members of the committee found common ground when many people said they couldn't.

Madam Chair, when I was first elected in the last Parliament, I became the chair of the Special Committee on Pay Equity. I said to the committee members at that moment that I wanted a unanimous report. That was the goal. I said that if I as the chair was not looking for a unanimous report at the outset, then I was not doing my job. Particularly then, when we had a majority government, it would be very easy for the members of the majority party to just put forward their motions and say, "Okay, there won't be any debate. You can talk for two minutes, but then we're just going to vote you down anyway."

That's essentially what the opposition parties are doing in this. That would be, in my view, a disservice to members and to the constituents who send us here, expecting that we will actually debate real issues. Samara has done a number of surveys of parliamentarians. In one of their recent surveys, they found that the one area that parliamentarians found they could have influence, and where they really found that the partisanship was set aside and the real work happened, was in committees.

Going back to the example of when I was chair of the pay equity committee, everybody told me that it would be impossible to be able to have a unanimous report on pay equity. The positions were so far apart. There were such polarized views on that issue that it wouldn't be possible. Guess what? We did have it. We reported, and we actually now have implemented the recommendations of that pay equity report in Parliament. We were able to get that consensus in the committee on something as polarizing as that.

I really think, if there's good faith, that right now, at this moment, we could adjourn the debate on this motion, we could get to the study, and we could make sure that we work together, as members, to have the best report possible.

• (42015)

Mr. Spengemann said earlier that this could very well be the most important report this committee ever does, and Mr. Spengemann has been sitting on this committee for some time, longer than I have, longer than many of us. I really think it could be.

I know that there are many occasions where partisan politics gets in the way of our being able to sit down together to say what's good for the people we are serving here. I really would like for us to be able to do that in this case.

We can't do that if this motion passes. We can't have a real discussion and come to a real consensus if we say beforehand that you can only speak for two minutes and that we would not have a government response.

I am very surprised, Madam Chair. I actually expected, at least on the issue of having a government response, that the opposition would be supportive. As I've mentioned before, that is the norm. It is something that is done—I don't even remember the last report that didn't ask for a government response. Certainly in the committees I have been on, I don't have any recollection of that.

The only thing I can think is that it is because, given the two things together where you can only talk for two minutes and then vote up or down—and we know that the opposition parties are a majority, so by voting up or down, they could push through anything they would like to see or not see in the report—and then not having a government response, it is essentially trying to ensure that it is a political position being put forward. It's not something that you're trying to get action on and through which you're trying to make a difference. It is essentially putting forward a statement of position, of opinion, and not having that dialogue.

Madam Chair, again, I'm very disappointed. I think that at minimum we should pass this amendment. I still have problems with the main motion, and I think we would need to discuss that, but I also would ask that at the end of this meeting or at the end of the next meeting we know that suspending and not agreeing to adjourn means we can't get to the report.

Right now, if we were to adjourn this debate, we would get to the report and we could actually work together. I am once again exploring my colleagues opposite to please work in good faith because, as I mentioned, this idea that the things we're saying here... If we don't get a report, it may be that this is the only opportunity that members will have to be able to put those recommendations on record and give voice, but to say that it's callous to amplify someone's voice who has not been heard...

As I mentioned, I have had more than one person call me and say that I'm the first or second person they have told about something that happened to them 30 or 40 years ago. Those voices have been silenced, self-silenced, for so many reasons, for so many decades that when someone speaks and an elected official repeats or amplifies or speaks and puts on the record what that person has said, to me, that is our job. That's not callous. That is what we're here for.

That is the reason we were elected, and my constituents know that I have spent all of my time in Parliament trying to give voice to those people who are not generally heard in a debate, who are not those that have the loudest and most powerful voices, and then to make sure that we are truly debating and having a dialogue on that.

I've been the chair of multiple all-party caucuses, the all-party women's caucus. I founded the all-party democracy caucus, and the reason I did that is that I believe that members of Parliament who are elected here are elected because we want to make things better. I may disagree with, for instance, Mr. Bezan, about what makes things better. I might think something makes things better that he thinks makes things worse. That's what Parliament is about, but that dialogue, that back and forth is what we have to do.

Madam Chair, every Friday I used to do a coffee hour at Tim Hortons, at a local college—now I do it on Zoom—where any constituent who wants to can come for an hour and talk about issues.

● (42020)

What I have found on those calls is that people come with diametrically opposed views. They're very entrenched. Then they hear from neighbours, constituents or other people who, in their day-to-day lives, perhaps they would never have listened to. An indigenous young person might be talking to a senior who's never talked to an indigenous person. You have young people. You have older people. You have Conservatives, Liberals, NDP and people who aren't even on that spectrum. They all come together. The way I structure it, they have to listen to each other.

Everybody gets a chance. Someone raises a topic and everyone who wants to gets a change to respond to that person. Of course, I'll answer questions and respond, but by the end, people realize things are rarely black and white. They start to see each other as human. They start to see each other as people who have truly legitimate points of view that might be different. As those discussions happen, I see people moving toward each other, and, if not agreeing, under-

standing where the other person is coming from because they know that the rules of the discussion are that everybody has to be respectful.

Madam Chair, I wish our discussions here in Parliament, in committee, could be a little bit more like that. I think part of my goal as a member of Parliament is to make Parliament a little bit more like that. I said when I first ran for Parliament that I was running so that I could change Parliament, not let Parliament change me.

If we let this amendment and this motion pass, we're doing the opposite. We are blocking debate. We're blocking the opportunity for members to really engage with one another to try to find, if not agreement, some kind of understanding where we can at least put something forward that has the agreement of all members, and then still have the ability of members to put supplemental or dissenting reports on the other pieces. We can't do that if this motion passes.

Madam Chair, I know it's taking a lot of time. Frankly, had we started right away on the report when this motion was put to the floor and had we said we're going to adjourn the debate and had actually gone to...I think we'd have the report done by now. We've had enough time.

It's not just that report, but the mental health report and the report on COVID and the CAF. I think we would have had all of those reports done by now, but we couldn't do it when we have the constraint of not being able to talk to each other. That's essentially what this is.

Frankly, I think that it's a really bad precedent. I don't want to be a member of Parliament in a Parliament where committees start to not talk to each other, not discuss with each other and not debate. That's the whole point of being here. It's to debate and we debate fiercely. I know that. We believe very passionately and very strongly in the things we say in Parliament.

At the same time, I look at those Friday coffee hours that I do. There have been many occasions where I've changed my mind based on things that my constituents have said, or where I've seen the group come to a consensus where in the beginning there was even anger. It's because we make sure that everybody has a chance to say their piece. This is very important, Madam Chair, because often there are situations where the strong voices are heard, but the voices of those who perhaps have been taught throughout their lives that their voice isn't valid or that to speak out causes harm or reprisal, or people to attack them.... Those who have suffered abuse or suffered people trying to silence them are not as likely to speak up. Madam Chair, when they do, it is not callous. It is very important for us to amplify that. It is vital that, if we can't get a report, at minimum we need to talk about the things that the survivors have brought forward and get them on record and in the public domain so that the government can respond.

Thank you, Mr. Bagnell, for this amendment about a government response. I can't imagine, for anything that's tabled in Parliament, why any member of Parliament would want to have important testimony and important recommendations get tabled in Parliament and then not ask the government to say whether they agree or disagree with it and what they're going to do about it. That is the normal procedure in Parliament.

● (42025)

I'm not certain, Madam Chair, what the opposition thinks that they could gain from not getting a government response. I'm not impugning any motives on any individual member of the opposition parties, but I find it very cynical. It's basically saying, "I'm going to get my views out there. We're going to make sure we get only what the majority wants, and we don't want to give the government a chance to provide a response to it." It's very cynical.

Madam Chair, I know that the committee is at an impasse. I really hope that we can find a way though it, because this topic is just too important to too many people. We tried. I don't know what will happen to this amendment, but we are trying.

I thank Mr. Bagnell for putting this forward, because I think it is really important that we get to that report.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Madam Vandenbeld.

We will go on to Mr. Baker, please.

**Mr. Yvan Baker:** Thanks very much, Madam Chair.

I feel the need to respond to what Mr. Bezan said about it being callous to read the testimony of survivors who presented to the Standing Committee on the Status of Women. After Mr. Bezan spoke, I looked up the definition of "callous". It says, "Showing or having an insensitive and cruel disregard for others".

The only thing to me that would be callous would be if this committee didn't undertake to listen to the survivors, heed their stories and act on what they're recommending and asking, what many of them have been pleading with the government to do, and have been pleading for for far too long. That would be callous.

Sharing their stories that they have had the courage to share publicly is not callous. They need to be heard. If we don't hear them, how will we ensure that those listening know that it's time for change? If we don't share those stories and listen to them, how will we understand their concerns—truly understand their concerns—so that we can address them? If we don't share those stories, how do we motivate MPs, people in government, leadership of the armed forces and people throughout the armed forces to act, to do right by those survivors?

It's not callous to share their stories. It's callous to ignore them. It's callous to try to silence them. Most importantly, I think, it's insensitive and cruel. It is callous not to do everything possible to act on these stories.

That's why I continue to share them. We need to honour the courage of the survivors who have come forward to present their stories in a public setting on the record. I'm sharing what they have shared on the record.

I hope Mr. Bezan and others will listen, but most importantly, I hope that they will come around. We're debating right now Mr. Bagnell's amendment to Mr. Bezan's motion. Mr. Bezan's motion is designed to undermine the writing of the report. It means we cannot take what we've heard from the survivors' stories and translate it into action. That would be callous. That would be cruel. That's what I'm fighting for and I'm going to continue.

I want to continue sharing with you what I started sharing in my prior intervention, which Julie Lalonde shared with the status of women committee. It's the tail end of her testimony.

As you will recall, Julie Lalonde was invited to speak to train cadets of the armed forces at the Royal Military College. She spoke about how the third-year cadets in particular mistreated her. One of the members stood up in the classroom amongst 200 of his colleagues to defend her. She called it "*un acte de courage du plus haut niveau*". My best interpretation of that is that it was an act of courage of the highest level.

● (42030)

Here is what she said to our colleagues at the status of women committee:

[*Translation*]

I want to end by reminding you that I am calling on you to do something that I am doing myself. I am not asking you to do something that I am not personally willing to do myself. Since I came forward about my experience a few years ago, I have received thousands of threatening emails, social media messages and even phone calls. I have been accosted at in-person events and I can no longer speak in public on any topic without a security detail.

I have paid dearly for my courage, and so it is very disheartening to see those of you with immense power shying away from the hard work that's necessary to make change. Sexual violence has existed within the Canadian Armed Forces for decades.

The blame does not lie with one individual, one leader or even one political party. Please keep your eyes on the prize and choose bravery when having this conversation.

● (42035)

[*English*]

I think that testimony is very powerful in any setting, but it's incredibly appropriate here in the context of this discussion. I don't know what Julie Lalonde would say if she were testifying before us right now, but I think that these words that I just shared with you, that she shared at the status of women committee, apply here.

She's asking us to do something. She's asking us to honour her courage. She can't speak in public without being harassed, without a security detail, and she continues to speak out. Certainly, I'm going to share her stories and share her experiences. If she needs a security detail to do it, certainly I can do it in the House of Commons or in this committee. She's asking us to take action.

She talks about the fact that her courage has cost her so much, and when speaking to our colleagues at the status of women committee, she said—and I'm translating from French—that it's incredibly disappointing to see that those of us who have immense power refuse to do the important work that's necessary to change things, that those of us with immense power refuse to do the difficult work that's necessary to change things.

I know that we all have different perspectives on what needs to be done to address sexual harassment and sexual assault in the armed forces—I know that—just like we have different views on a range of topics. That's why we have to do that difficult work of sitting down like we always do, like all committees do in the House of Commons, and debating all of the issues, channelling what we've heard and writing a report that takes action. That's the difficult work that we can do—we must do—if we're going to honour the victims, honour the courage of Julie Lalonde and so many others. That's the difficult work.

That is nothing compared to the courage and the difficult work that Julie Lalonde is doing or that the other survivors whose experiences I've shared, whose testimony I've shared here in this committee before, have shown and have done.

The government members of this committee are asking the opposition members of this committee to do that difficult work. The opposition members, by supporting this motion by Mr. Bezan, are basically saying, "We don't want to do the difficult work. We want it to be easy. We want our way. We want to make a political circus of it." That's a completely separate topic, but also true.

Yes, coming to a consensus to write this report will be hard. It will be really hard, but it's the only way. It's the only way forward, folks, on this issue for this committee. I really hope that I will not have to look Ms. Lalonde, or any of the other survivors, in the eye, knowing that the committee passed the motion presented by Mr. Bezan. It would result in a "tick the box" report that didn't actually go through the process that's required to get to a good outcome for them.

If that happens, and if Mr. Bezan's motion were to pass, survivors would have every right to say to us what Julie Lalonde said to the status of women committee, which is that it's disappointing to see those of you who have an immense power refuse to do the difficult work that's necessary to change things.

Let's change things. Let's pass Mr. Bagnell's motion. Let's withdraw Mr. Bezan's original motion, and let's get to work on the report.

Thanks, Madam Chair.

● (42040)

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr. Baker.

Mr. Bagnell, you are next.

**Hon. Larry Bagnell:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

I think we're still waiting for the opposition to respond on a couple of items. It would be only fair to hear from them before we were to vote on them.

One is the proposal I made last week, to get to the report. As Mr. Spengemann just said, it's so important to get to the report and stop this stalling with inappropriate motions by Mr. Bezan.

The proposal I had made was that we use Mr. Bezan's process to go through all the recommendations and see which ones we could unanimously agree to, which we will use Mr. Bezan's process on and get those done. They would be done relatively quickly. We would have a substantive report that would help the survivors, that would give the defence department and the minister direction, and, if my amendment passes, they would have to respond to that.

Then, we would continue and deal with those items that, as in any committee, we're not fully in agreement on and have those hard discussions. I haven't heard any negative feedback from the opposition on that proposal, but we'll wait to see what their thoughts are on getting to the report right away.

The other item that we're waiting to hear from the NDP and the Bloc on is this amendment. It's as if they think that the government shouldn't respond. We don't know that, and I think it would be unfair to go to a vote.

I have to apologize for making this motion without their knowing in advance. If we have to wait until the next meeting for them to think it out, that's fine. I understand that.

A government agenda is tremendously complicated. No matter who's in government, there are all sorts of things lined up to get on the order table, to get done by committees. I think Madam Vandenberg earlier today explained all the things related to the defence of Canada that are waiting in line on our committee. This is the one time when we have the leadership at CAF and the leadership in the minister's office.... We have a slot in time where we could actually make a difference.

Through my previous suggestion, or another way, and through this amendment, hopefully we could get to a report right away. The opposition could stop making that not possible. We could go to the report right away and come up with some substantive things to help survivors and make the department a much better place to work.

I, too, have to respond to what Mr. Bezan said. First of all, the purpose of Standing Order 109 is to give the government time. As many members have mentioned, and I've certainly mentioned, these are serious, very in-depth, complicated recommendations in which any government that's thoughtful would take the time to go over, analyze and come up with a response—not in a few minutes after a surprise concurrence motion is called.

I think it's very important to ask the government to think out and make a response so that we know, and that the survivors know that what they've said, and what the government is responding, shows they're being taken seriously.

• (42045)

I agree with Mr. Spengemann. I thought it was shameful that Mr. Bezan suggested that hearing the witness statements was not the most important item, that it was not critical. Obviously, we have a difference of philosophies here. What's to be emphasized in this report, or what's the most important part, from my perspective, and I think from some of my colleagues', is the survivors and the experts providing suggestions as to how we deal with the systemic problem that's affecting thousands of members of the CAF.

Mr. Bezan seems to think the emphasis should be on the problem with General Vance. The problem with Mr. Bezan's.... That's his right. He wants to concentrate on General Vance's problems, but what he hasn't done is admitted that what the evidence has shown is that the most serious problem with Mr. Vance was at his appointment.

We found out that there were two serious.... First of all, before that, in 2018, there was an anonymous email. The person didn't want to be identified, so nothing could come out of it. It was investigated within 24 hours as much as it could have been. The information was kept confidential, as the member of the CAF wanted, so that was totally taken care of.

There were many witnesses called about that anonymous email, which they couldn't say anything about or didn't know what was in it. We spent all that time on that in many meetings. I believe the survivors would really not think we were taking the survivors' situations and the situation in the military seriously if—

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Bagnell.

I feel really bad for having to interrupt you, but the bells are ringing for a vote.

This meeting is suspended.

*[The meeting was suspended at 12:48 p.m., Monday, June 7]*

*[The meeting resumed at 1:06 p.m., Friday, June 11]*

• (51705)

**The Chair:** I call this meeting back into order.

*[Translation]*

Good afternoon and welcome, everyone.

*[English]*

This is a resumption of meeting number 32 of the House of Commons Standing Committee on National Defence, which started on Friday, May 21, 2021.

Please, if interpretation is lost, let us know immediately so that everyone has the opportunity to fully participate in the proceedings.

I will remind you that all comments by members should be addressed through the chair.

When speaking, again as a reminder to me as well as anybody else, please speak slowly and clearly. Our interpreters have been doing yeoman service, and we're asking an awful lot of them, so please do your very best to speak slowly and clearly, and give them a break because we all have a busy couple of weeks ahead of us and

we're relying on them very heavily. Please be kind to our interpreters.

With regard to a speaking list, the clerk and I will do the best we can to maintain a consolidated order of speaking whether you're participating virtually or in person.

We are resuming debate on Mr. Bagnell's amendment to Mr. Bezan's motion.

Mr. Bagnell has the floor.

**Hon. Larry Bagnell:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

At the last meeting we heard a shocking revelation that had just come in that committee meeting, and it was that a member of our committee, during this study that we're doing on sexual misconduct in the military, did not think the committee should be hearing testimony that had been given by victims.

To not hear testimony given by victims, that's incomprehensible.

I'm sure there are other committee members who were just as shocked as I was about not reviewing testimony given by witnesses. What could be more important on this study? I could just imagine what some victims might be feeling when their testimony was being read at committee, and a committee member said, that's not what we should be discussing. It was just not any committee member; it was a senior member.

I think that really provides a stark divide between committee members.

As I have said so many times, and I believe there are other members who feel the same way, we should be taking the testimony of victims and experts and recommending solutions. Not reviewing and using the testimony of victims in designing a report is incomprehensible.

I wonder what brave victims who came forward think when they are told we shouldn't be using their testimony and we should spend weeks upon weeks of our time on an anonymous email that no one was allowed to see, while actually we have real victims—

• (51710)

**Mr. James Bezan:** I have a point of order.

I just think, about this rant by Mr. Bagnell, that he's been somewhat chastised for using witness testimony for his political gain. What I said is that we shouldn't be using witness testimony to filibuster. We shouldn't be using witness testimony without the permission of those witnesses. For him to say anything other than that is disingenuous.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Bezan.

Carry on, Mr. Bagnell, please.

**Hon. Larry Bagnell:** Thank you.

The member's just emphasizing the point of our not using that testimony—

**Mr. James Bezan:** Not for your grandstanding, no.

**Hon. Larry Bagnell:** We actually have real live victims who had the courage to tell their stories.

Regarding the email we're talking about, its existence was referred to investigators in 24 hours and dealt with, but no, we have to call witness after witness to discuss this anonymous email, which no one knew what was in it, and hear the testimony of witnesses, and we must call back witnesses who have already appeared for three to six hours to talk about that email. What are we doing as a committee?

There was a debate in the House on Wednesday night on GBA+. Frankly, I was proud of a number of the members from different parties who spoke constructively. Fortunately, the member from our committee who just spoke, who does not think evidence put on the record by victims should be considered, was not supported by speeches of the members in the House.

The Conservative member for Calgary Skyview talked about survivors. I'll just quote some of the things she said.

She said, "When that individual made an appearance before the committee, she mentioned how", and went on to talk about what she heard. She also said, "We heard from another witness who had reported an incident", and she went on to describe it.

She said:

So many witnesses, women in particular, came forward to our committee to express this lack of confidence.... We even had a witness who gave a very interesting perspective on the double standards that the military justice system has towards women and men.

The Conservative member went on:

This witness discussed how, when she was deployed in Afghanistan, an investigation had been conducted into a consensual relationship she had had with a U.S. officer, who was not in her unit but of the same rank. She admitted that the relationship was against the regulations, and she pleaded guilty to the charges. She was fined, repatriated from the theatre and posted out of her unit. She accepted this as her punishment.

However, as a result, she was called demeaning names and was told that she was not worthy of leading soldiers. She said that she was also threatened with violence by a commanding officer and was repeatedly chastised by other officers. She was sent to work alone in an office managing a single Excel spreadsheet, and it quickly became very clear...that her career in the Canadian Armed Forces was over. When she left the military, she had originally been given an offer to go into the reserves, but that was revoked when the commanding officer told her that she was not the type of leader he wanted in his unit.

She said the biggest failure in her life were the actions for which she was pushed out of the armoured corps, and for that she continues to carry immense shame.

Obviously that Conservative member thinks testimony of witnesses is very important.

Two days ago Wednesday night, the NDP member Ms. Mathyssen referred to the testimony at the status of women committee.

She said Lieutenant-Colonel Eleanor Taylor said, "Throughout my career, I have observed insidious and inappropriate use of power for sexual exploitation."

She said Christine Wood said, "I feel like women have never had a level playing field in the [armed] forces".

Ms. Mathyssen also talked about the culture as what we need to address with recommendations. That's exactly what the Liberals for

the last few weeks have been saying at this committee, giving evidence and information related to the culture.

The Conservative member from Calgary Midnapore also referred to evidence from the victims, witnesses at the status of women committee.

Therefore, there was much reference to witnesses, and as I said, some very constructive discussion.

In fairness to Mr. Bezan, there is a part of our study on sexual misconduct in the military that refers to General Vance. Given that there are thousands of incidents, victims and perpetrators, my emphasis would not be on that one anonymous email that no one knows what was in, but that's Mr. Bezan's choice, which he's entitled to.

If he wants to concentrate on General Vance, and as I've said, I don't want to, then he has to be honest about the facts and evidence that have been revealed recently, where it is shown that the major issue related to General Vance was his appointment in 2015. I can understand how that would be difficult for him, but the facts are facts. I won't go into the details on all those facts right now, but just give a summary.

• (51715)

At the time of the appointment, Mr. O'Toole passed on, through his staff, I believe, a rumour to PM Harper's chief of staff related to General Vance's alleged conduct at NATO in Naples.

In tribute to Mr. Garrison, actually, I think he asked some of the best questions of Mr. Novak. I'm not sure if he got all the answers he wanted, but that was just the tip of the iceberg as seen from the information that's come out since.

There was a hurried investigation, which was concluded the day General Vance took over command. Apparently, an access to information request, which I assume came from the press, said they felt under pressure to complete the investigation. I'm not sure what led to that pressure, but depending on what it was, it might have been a very serious offence.

Then there was a second rumour about inappropriate action at Gagetown. Apparently, the request was put forward to the national security adviser to investigate. I think it was that one. He neither remembers the request nor certainly did he do an investigation. There's obviously a lot more to be seen here in 2015 than an anonymous email in 2018 that no one could see, and its existence was reported within 24 hours and acted on as far as possible.

If any committee member, rather than listening to the testimony that had been recorded by victims and experts in efforts to come up with solutions for them to help the victims improve the military, would rather deal with General Vance, then the facts show that the most serious questions about who, where, why and when are at the Conservative appointment of General Vance. With these rumours and unaccomplished, incomplete investigations, why was he appointed?

Two nights ago, on Wednesday night, during the debate in the House, the Bloc member raised this issue of the Conservative appointment. I will read from Hansard:

Members should recall that the Conservatives had already caught wind of allegations against General Vance. However, they still appointed him as chief of the defence staff even though the Canadian Armed Forces had just been roundly criticized for their management of sexual misconduct cases and pervasive sexist culture.

Certainly, there is enough evidence that I've already outlined that any further discussions regarding General Vance should be concentrated on his appointment in 2015 in spite of uninvestigated rumours at the time. For any committee member who still wishes to concentrate on General Vance, on June 1, the Ottawa Citizen reported on their uncovering even more related to General Vance's appointment. Let me quote some of that:

Military police investigating allegations of an inappropriate relationship by Gen. Jon Vance in 2015 never interviewed the senior officer, but did consult the satirical Frank magazine for information.

The police investigation was hurriedly done just weeks before Vance was to take on the top military job as chief of the defence staff.

It was hurriedly done. Is that a good way to start an appointment?

The article continues:

The Canadian Forces National Investigation Service probe took just four weeks to wrap up, concluding there was no "physical evidence" Vance had a relationship contrary to military regulations, according to documents obtained by this newspaper.

Vance was never interviewed for the investigation and police relied on a statement he provided a year earlier on the same allegation. In addition, a formal investigation plan was never created by the Canadian Forces National Investigation Service for the 2015 probe, according to the records.

A formal investigation plan was never created, although a member of this committee has said that the appropriate investigation was done.

The article continues:

The investigation service, also known as the CFNIS, was called in after Lt.-Gen. Christine Whitecross received an anonymous email on June 10, 2015, claiming Vance was involved in sexual misconduct while he was posted to NATO as deputy commander allied joint force command in Naples. The claim centred around Vance's 2014 relationship with a subordinate U.S. female officer, whom he eventually married.

The CFNIS was to determine if Vance followed military directives governing personal and romantic relationships between personnel.

● (51720)

"No direct witnesses were found by any of our sources of information relating to a physical act," stated the CFNIS investigation, although it did conclude Vance indeed had a personal relationship at the time with the U.S. officer.

The CFNIS tried to contact the anonymous source who claimed they could provide names of military staff who knew about Vance's relationship in Naples, but the police received no response.

There are still lots unanswered questions.

Vance in his previous statement denied any wrongdoing.

Investigators also reviewed an April 2015 article in the satirical magazine, Frank, which outlined allegations about Vance during his time in NATO. The article was titled, "Humour in Uniform"....

But police later determined—

Although it didn't have an affect at the time on the Naples headquarters police....

—that, "Given time, this personal relationship would likely have had a detrimental effect."

Why would you appoint someone under those conditions?

In addition, the investigation examined concerns about Vance's statement to the Vice Chief of the Defence Staff Lt.Gen. Guy Thibault. Vance had claimed he had no command relationship with the U.S. officer. "Though the statement by LGen Vance was technically correct, there would also likely have been times that LGen Vance was in Comd of (the U.S. officer)....

Several months before the CFNIS probe, then Prime Minister Stephen Harper raised the issue of the relationship in Naples when he met with Vance. At the time, Harper was considering the general for the...job.

Later, the Conservative government raised concerns about a rumour circulating that Vance, while at CFB Gagetown in New Brunswick allegedly had an inappropriate relationship with a female subordinate....

In early 2001, the CFNIS launched a new investigation after Maj. Kellie Brennan told Global News she had a long-term relationship with Vance that started at CFB Gagetown and continued in Toronto in 2006—

This was nine years before the Conservatives appointed him.

—when the general was her superior officer. Vance has not responded to repeated requests for comment from this newspaper....

It's obvious that, for anyone who wants to study anything more about General Vance, it is about his appointment in 2015. We can continue to debate the totally unreasonable and inappropriate motion before us, or we can withdraw the motion to simply get on to learning from victims and witnesses and discussing, without unreasonable time limits, recommendations that we can all agree on to improve the lives of the brave men and women in the Canadian military.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr. Bagnell.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Robillard, the floor is yours.

**Mr. Yves Robillard:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

I would like to start by recalling how important Mr. Bagnell's motion is and to thank him for it.

I actually feel that it is a compromise that would allow us to do our work properly. Clearly, two minutes are not enough to understand the complex and difficult situation that members of the Canadian Armed Forces are experiencing. Is two minutes all the time that we have or that we can give the victims, the survivors? That's ridiculous. Not asking for a response from the government is equally ridiculous.

I would now like to quote from the article by Professor Maya Eichler about Operation HONOUR. It highlights the importance of taking time to deal with this problem.



Militaries have long relied on particular notions of femininity and masculinity, such as women in need of protection, men as protectors and women as patriotic mothers. While the warrior has endured as “a key symbol of masculinity”, women’s and men’s roles in war are not static. Women’s presence in Western militaries has significantly expanded over the past four decades. Women’s greater participation in militaries is an outcome of political and social changes. In particular, it is related to the shift from conscription to volunteer forces, the advocacy of the women’s movement, the changing nature of warfare, and more recently, international gender mainstreaming instruments, such as UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security.

Notwithstanding women’s increased military participation, feminist scholarship shows that many Western militaries have retained the characteristics of male-dominated organizations. They privilege masculinity, and marginalize women and values associated with femininity. Not all women have negative experiences in the military and many women have fulfilling military careers. However, militaries remain crucial sites for the (re)production of gender inequalities. Women in Western militaries are still concentrated in support functions, performing administrative and clerical work. In almost all militaries, combat remains an exclusively male sphere, if not legally then in practice, and combat has been a particularly contested area of struggle around women’s integration. Militaries can therefore be seen as highly invested in “defining and policing the boundaries of women’s service”.

In a recent article, Claire Duncanson and Rachel Woodward explored the question of how militaries can be “regendered” in ways that challenge their unequal gender order. They go beyond earlier feminist debates that focused on either advocating for women’s right to fight or opposing women’s cooptation into militarism. Instead they argue that we need to consider the possibilities of transforming gendered military cultures. In this article, I use the insights of critical feminist international relations to explore this Canadian issue by tracing the shifts in the Canadian military’s approach to gender over the past three decades and examining the potential and limitations of Operation HONOUR.

● (51725)

I will come back to this a little later.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

● (51730)

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr. Robillard.

[English]

We move on to Mr. Spengemann, please.

**Mr. Sven Spengemann:** Madam Chair, thank you very much. I would like to welcome colleagues to the discussion this afternoon, and thank my colleagues for their earlier intervention so far.

At the outset, Madam Chair, you reminded us that this meeting has been in session since May 21, some 20 days. We’ve had very fulsome discussions, debate, not necessarily progress, but certainly debate about how important the issues are before the committee, and how they should be tackled. I think it’s incredibly important to keep in mind that testimony is at the forefront of the committee’s work. That’s why we have these meetings, that’s why we have panels and that’s why we invite people. I think it’s absolutely critical that we put victims’ testimony at the centre of our discussion and at the centre of the problem, particularly for those victims who have been courageous enough to come to us directly, or who have spoken to other parliamentary committees and have taken the decision to give their testimony in a public setting.

In fact, that’s the very starting point of this problem for this committee—how to empower victims to have the courage, the comfort, the support to come forward. If they get the perception that, for some reason, when they come to a parliamentary committee, having taken the step of going into the public realm, they then become a political footballer, their testimony becoming some sort of a polit-

ical football, that immediately will reintroduce a chilling effect on the potential of other victims coming forward in equally sensitive scenarios before other committees.

I think Mr. Bagnell is absolutely spot-on when he says this testimony not only needs to be encouraged and supported, but it needs to be put at the very centre of our discussion. I just put that to the committee for consideration.

In addition to that, of course, there’s expert testimony, of which we have had substantial amounts. There’s testimony from officials, including elected officials, the minister himself, high-ranking officials in ministers’ offices, high-ranking officials in the Privy Council Office. That is incredibly important. Academics as well...and in my submission, also testimony from other jurisdictions that have done this work.

The committee really went through a trajectory of discussion on what was put forward. In the minds of some committee members there would be additional testimony that should be pursued at all costs. There would be that extra statement that would really close the loop on fundamental questions that, in my view, had already been answered by other witnesses. That chase for an additional witness was ultimately abandoned in favour of an additional argument, which was to hamper the work of the committee as parliamentarians normally do it.

In prior interventions, Madam Chair, I made reference to the good work of this committee, in the 42nd Parliament, on diversity and inclusion in the armed forces, which had a component on sexual misconduct. In those discussions there was no dissenting report. In those discussions there was absolutely not even a question that colleagues would be able to exercise their full parliamentary rights and privileges in those discussions, and not be somehow limited artificially to a two-minute response without having the ability to then follow up or reply, or even build on the testimony or questions of colleagues that were put forward previously or subsequently.

In a very important respect, Madam Chair, this proposal would also hamper your ability as chair and as a former serving member of the Canadian Forces, and I’m going to say as a woman, to put your own expertise, your own passion into this subject matter, and to guide the discussion as chair of this committee to a fruitful outcome. With the approach that’s been suggested by the opposition, that would not take place in a natural way, because it would be artificially truncated by these two-minute segments. That would be one intervention only per paragraph or recommendation, I think, was the framing of that motion.

It’s really important that we have substantive testimony firstly from victims, secondly from experts, policy-makers, academics, thirdly from other jurisdictions; but that we then have a process that allows us to go to work on the subject matter as parliamentarians, as this committee has done in the past, as members of all parties of this committee, or many parties of this committee, have done in the 42nd Parliament. We have gone through that experience, we know how it works, we know how productive it can be. We should really unleash our ability as parliamentarians to the utmost to do that work and to get behind the issue and to get on the same side of the table.

With respect to the question before us, again, it has two components. It has the case of the former chief of the defence staff, then followed by another case. The testimony that is at stake with respect to the circumstance of the former CDS, as Mr. Bagnell has pointed out, really takes us in good part back to 2015, and even prior to that period. I think the question that all of us should be interested in across party lines, including members of the Conservative Party, would be how a former chief of the defence staff could hold himself out to be so powerful that he would control the Canadian Forces national investigation service, that he would own them. This investigation goes back to a time of 2015, at the time of his appointment.

● (51735)

That institutionally and systematically is completely unacceptable and must be unacceptable to all of us, regardless of political affiliation. This is not a partisan question. This is a question of how we change the culture in the Canadian Forces, exemplified by this case, but not limited to this case. There may well be other cases. There are, and we certainly have been made aware of, other systemic challenges that prevent additional complainants from coming forward against officers of the Canadian Forces or members of the Canadian Forces of significantly higher rank. That was one of the issues we were most concerned about, the asymmetry between senior and junior ranks.

I've drawn the committee's attention to work that's been done elsewhere. This is not to say necessarily that because other jurisdictions are facing the same problem, the Canadian jurisdiction is somehow less significant. The problem is equally significant in all parts of the world that are dealing with it. However, because we can use those experiences as an example of the kind of work we could and should be doing—10 of the recommendations, 10 of the conclusions and in at least one case, the step of actually having a follow-up exercise within a year of completion of a report on this very same issue—that information, in my view, is extremely relevant to the committee. I've used time before this committee to put it on record, and I will continue to make submissions along those lines.

Madam Chair, at this point I would like to just simply bring to a close my thoughts on what I refer to as the “Wigston report”, the review into inappropriate behaviours out of the United Kingdom. It took place around the same time that we really started to get into this issue. It was tabled in 2019. If we look at other jurisdictions, it's roughly that period, 2015-19, where a lot of other militaries were seized with this issue. Perhaps not in all cases, or maybe not in any cases, it was through an instance involving a former chief of the defence staff like we had, but certainly, it was with the same recognition of the importance of this issue for women members of the armed forces—and ultimately, for all members of the armed forces concerned.

Wigston really gave us the impetus to take a look at what could happen if a government gets behind this issue proactively, in a very progressive way and with progressive time frames. I would like to put to the committee the concluding portion of that report. What I would like to do in later testimony is to briefly highlight some of the insights from the follow-up that took place a year later, in 2020. If we get it right and we get something out to government and gov-

ernment responds, we can get action maybe quicker than any of us would realize.

The Wigston report, in its conclusion, stated the following:

The Report into inappropriate behaviours in Defence makes 36 recommendations on what we should do to stop instances of inappropriate behaviours occurring, and what we should do better when inappropriate behaviours have occurred. Ultimately, the challenge of inappropriate behaviour will only be addressed through a determined effort across the whole force to change the culture, driven persistently from the top and at every level of leadership and line management below that. It requires authentic leadership; relentless engagement; and consistent communication. Everybody has a part to play.

We defined inappropriate behaviours as breaches of laws, norms of behaviour or core values and standards which harm or risk harming individuals, teams or operational effectiveness, and that bring or risk bringing the reputation of individuals, units, the Service or Defence into disrepute. We took a consciously broad view of inappropriate behaviours however we focused first and foremost on those that harm individuals. We judge that an unacceptable level of inappropriate behaviour persists in Defence, however we were unable to quantify it precisely. The evidence reflected in this report indicates a significant number of our people have experienced bullying, discrimination and harassment, including sexual, but have not felt able or been able to come forward to report it. This pattern mirrored what we identified in other organisations including the Canadian Armed Forces, the United States military and the Australian Defence Force.

The absence of reporting reflects a deficit of trust in our complaints system. Our own surveys and external stakeholders highlight repeatedly the shortcomings of the current system for raising complaints about inappropriate behaviour, with complainants citing a fear of retribution and low confidence or faith that anything would be done, or done in a timely manner. We also observed a disproportionate over-representation of women and ethnic minorities in the Service Complaints system, and a lack of data on other minority groups.

● (51740)

Our recommendations on what should be done to tackle inappropriate behaviour focused principally on leadership and line management at every level setting the right culture and standards; ensuring people meet those standards consistently; and being alert to when standards might slip. We also made recommendations about effective, targeted and resourced training; a centralised assurance function; the compilation of a single set of data and statistics relating to inappropriate behaviour; regular Board-level focus on culture and behaviours; and better sharing of leading practice across the three Armed Forces and Civil Service.

To do better when instances of inappropriate behaviour have occurred or are alleged to have occurred, we recommended a review of the Service Complaints system to include: a dedicated central Service Complaints team equipped to deal with the most complex allegations of bullying, harassment and discrimination; a helpline for supporting complainants and respondents as well as the chain of command and line management; and a parallel channel for raising Service Complaints outwith the chain of command, including anonymous and bystander reporting. We also recommended consideration of a two-tier process for Service Complaints to streamline the process for more straightforward cases, enabling staff focus and resources to be aligned to the complexity, sensitivity and gravity of the complaint.

We identified a need for central oversight of cultures and inappropriate behaviours across Defence. We recommended the establishment of a Defence Authority responsible for cultures and inappropriate behaviours. Working to the Chief of Defence People as the Senior Responsible Owner, the Authority would be responsible for pan-Defence strategy, policy and governance; a single point of reference for all management information; assurance activity across the Armed Forces; and sharing leading practice across Defence. It would also house the central Service Complaints team and related helplines and support services. The Authority would need to be fully resourced with an estimated 30-50 suitably qualified and experienced people, recognising this will be an additional workforce requirement for Defence.

Under the subtitle, “What does good look like?”, the second to last paragraph of the conclusion says the following: “Tackling inappropriate behaviour is about the determination of leaders to change...culture; everything else hangs off that. Real cultural change comes only when leaders communicate and role model those behaviours relentlessly, [when] there is a clear understanding of what they mean in practice, and where there are evident consequences for breaching them. Success might ultimately be judged when matters that arise - as they always [*Technical difficulty—Editor*] by junior leaders or colleagues instinctively and immediately in every part of Defence. An inappropriate comment is made, a corporal tells the perpetrator to apologise, [*Technical difficulty—Editor*] why it caused offence, the apology is made and accepted, and the matter resolved. We are already there in many parts of the organisation but changing embedded cultures and driving out inappropriate behaviour across the whole of Defence will take persistent and concerted effort, at every level of leadership and line management, over an extended period of time.

Finally, we would all recognise that inappropriate behaviour, and the consequences for the people affected by it, damages the United Kingdom Armed Forces' hard-won reputation for courage, determination and professionalism. We should not, however, lose perspective on the behaviour of the overwhelming majority of people in Defence who serve with courage, determination, professionalism and great pride, protecting the UK 24/7.”

Madam Chair, that's the concluding section of the Wigston report. As members will have seen through this testimony and other interventions I have made, there is a relevance, a level of granularity, an openness and an acknowledgement of additional gaps that could not be closed. There are also very precise recommendations with respect to resourcing the central defence authority, for example, with staffing levels being recommended of 30 to 50 in this case.

This is the kind of work that was done in the U.K. under circumstances similar to ours, with the exception that it did not—at least I am not aware of it—reach to the highest level of the chief of the defence staff. It's certainly a jurisdiction and an ally with whom we work very closely through the Five Eyes, through NATO, through the United Nations and through bilateral training exercises, which has not only been seized with the importance of this issue, but also looked to our country in several instances, having catalyzed the debate through the Deschamps report of 2015.

● (51745)

The U.K. has gone forward and made progress. I put it to colleagues on this committee that if we get to the same page on this, we can make recommendations of similar impact, granularity, relevance and timeliness, and we can really together move the yardsticks on this issue. I think the Canadian public and serving and former members of the Canadian Armed Forces expect nothing less.

Thank you very much, Madam Chair, I will leave it there. I will have more interventions later on, but that's it for the moment.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr. Spengemann.

We go on to Mr. Baker, please.

**Mr. Yvan Baker:** Thanks very much, Madam Chair.

I wanted to follow up on what Mr. Bagnell was speaking to in his remarks. During his remarks Mr. Bagnell expressed disappointment—I think I'm probably being diplomatic—about Mr. Bezan's comments in our committee at the last meeting when Mr. Bezan used the word “callous” to describe members of the government side who were sharing testimony from another parliamentary committee that was made on the record from survivors of sexual assault and sexual harassment in the armed forces. When Mr. Bagnell expressed that concern, Mr. Bezan called it a “rant”. I thought that was completely inappropriate. Mr. Bezan thought it appropriate to use time in his testimony at the last meeting to criticize members of this side. As disappointing as it was to hear Mr. Bezan say that, none of us interrupted him, and none of us called it a “rant”. I wanted to object to that type of interruption of Mr. Bagnell earlier in the meeting, Madam Chair.

I also wanted to say that it wasn't just in the last meeting that Mr. Bezan shared this point of view. To be frank, I would have expected that he would have reconsidered his point of view after the last meeting. After he had heard from some of the members of the government side who responded to his intervention suggesting that sharing survivor testimony that's on the record from the status of women committee is, as Mr. Bezan called it, “callous”, I thought he would have reconsidered that position. I guess he didn't, or he felt even more strongly about his position, because Mr. Bezan decided to deliver a member's statement in the House of Commons where he said, in referring to government members of the committee, “they are disrespectfully and unfairly quoting survivors of military sexual misconduct”.

What is disrespectful and unfair about sharing the testimony of survivors that has been made before a parliamentary committee on the record? I've been thinking about this for the last couple of days since I heard these words in the House of Commons and I cannot get my head around it. These survivors are the people we should be trying to help. They should be at the centre of what we're doing in this committee. They should be our focus. Success to me is only if we as a committee do everything we can to help these folks. Anything short of that is not success; anything short of that is failure. These are the people we should be trying to help, and these are the people whose voices we should most want to hear. Their perspective, their expertise, is what we should be focusing on and giving the most weight to. It's not just because they're the victims in this, but because they know so much about this and they've thought about it and they've discussed it with people and they're experts, and they know how to fix the problem. These are the people whose voices we should most want to hear.

That's why members of the government side are sharing their testimony, we're giving them a voice, we're amplifying their message. To me, what's disrespectful and unfair is not to listen to that message, not to try to understand, not to make it a priority. What's beyond disrespectful and unfair is to try to silence those voices in any way, shape or form. Mr. Bezan has tried to do that twice on the record. To me, that shows that Mr. Bezan has a very different set of priorities and that he's not interested in solving this problem. If he was, when government members, or any member, was sharing that testimony, he would have been listening the most intently, he would have been the most interested, and maybe he would have shared some of that testimony himself or at least reflected on it.

• (51750)

[*Technical difficulty—Editor*] the platform in this committee and the platform for sharing the perspective of survivors.

I find that beyond disappointing. I find it beyond reprehensible. I completely agree with what Mr. Bagnell was saying. I think it underlines the problem on this committee. It underlines why we have a motion by Mr. Bezan before us, which is designed to produce a document that does nothing to help survivors.

That's why, in the motion, there is going to be two minutes of debate for each member and then we move on. No consensus would be required under Mr. Bezan's motion in delivery of the report, as there is with every other report that is produced by a committee in the House of Commons, because Mr. Bezan just wants to ram it through. He doesn't want to deal with these challenging issues, clearly.

The only way to get to a report that helps survivors is to build consensus. It's to list the survivors, first of all. That goes without saying, I would have thought. Certainly after having done that, we should sit down together as a committee and wrestle with our differences of opinion and find that consensus. Then, after we find that consensus around what the problems are, we should come to a consensus on the solutions, and then make recommendations, and then put them before the government and urge the government, insist that the government act on them. That's the purpose of this committee, and every committee: to make change for the positive.

The issue before us that we need to make change on is what is happening in the armed forces and the sexual assault and the sexual misconduct that we've heard about. It's about helping the survivors. That should be the focus of the report.

Mr. Bezan's motion prevents us from doing that, because we can't debate these complex issues. We can't come to a consensus on these complex issues, and then [*Technical difficulty—Editor*] basically decide which clauses go in and out, which clauses stay and which clauses [*Technical difficulty—Editor*] for us to quote survivors of military sexual misconduct.

Mr. Bezan's motion is disrespectful and unfair to those survivors. That's what's disrespectful and unfair, because all it would be is a report that doesn't take on and solve the challenges facing survivors, facing the Canadian Armed Forces.

Mr. Bezan can hold it up and say, "See? We produced a report", a report that is absolutely useless at solving the problem that we should be solving.

The reason others and I are sharing what survivors are telling us is that we're trying to remind the members of this committee what we should be focused on and what needs to be in that report and why Mr. Bezan's motion would prevent us from issuing a report that helps survivors. In fact, issuing a report the way Mr. Bezan proposes would be harmful, in my view. It would claim to be a report that addresses the issues of sexual harassment and sexual assault in the military, but it wouldn't, because Mr. Bezan doesn't want to discuss them. He doesn't want to deal with the nuances. He doesn't want to deal with the complexity. He just wants to release a document and move on. That would be disrespectful and unfair.

That's why we're sharing and that's why I am going to continue to share.

One of the folks who presented to the Standing Committee on the Status of Women, whose perspective I think is important to hear from and to take heed of, is Ms. MJ Batek.

• (51755)

I want to share with you some of what Ms. Batek shared with our colleagues. She says:

I'm here as a veteran military sexual trauma survivor, a military domestic violence sexual survivor and as a representative of the Survivor Perspectives Consulting Group, also referred to as SPCG.

SPCG was recently created by a small group of military sexual trauma survivors. For decades, we have watched in silence and have now come together to take action, to ensure survivor voices are heard, and create solutions to help combat this crisis.

Just as the Government of Canada uses gender-based analysis plus, which goes beyond sex in gender to other intersecting identity factors, such as race, ethnicity or age, the Canadian Armed Forces should consider the perspective of military sexual trauma survivors at every stage of the strategy and policy development.

We at SPCG are willing to work towards the provision of that perspective in a professionally coordinated format. We do not propose to have all of the answers as we are not organizational culture or military justice experts, but we are the unfortunate experts by experience of military sexual trauma.

I'm going to pause here. This is what I was referring to a few moments ago. Here, you have somebody who's a survivor, who has experience and who is working together with other survivors to identify solutions to the problem and, as she says, to create solutions to combat this crisis. Those were her words.

There are two points I want to make about the initial part of her testimony. First of all, these are the kinds of people we need to be hearing from. These are people who are not only survivors whose perspectives we should be focused on intently, listening to and learning from, but these are also experts. That's the first thing.

The second point is that even though Ms. Batek is a survivor and really knowledgeable and has worked hard with others to become really knowledgeable to develop those solutions, even she is admitting that, "We do not propose to have all of the answers as we are not organizational culture or military justice experts, but we are the unfortunate experts by experience of military sexual trauma".

By any measure, I think we could all agree that Ms. Batek is an expert, but even she is saying that she's not an expert in all aspects of solving this problem. If the experts acknowledge that we need other experts to help with components of the problem, surely we need all of their help to solve this problem. Surely we need to hear from all of them and we need to incorporate all of that in a report to the extent that we have heard from them.

She speaks specifically about how they are not organizational culture or military justice experts. How many times have we heard and spoken about culture at this committee and how difficult that is and how much change is needed in the armed forces? We've heard from expert after expert who has presented to this committee about how changes in culture are desperately needed in the armed forces and how difficult that is to implement in any organization, especially as one as large and as hierarchal as the armed forces.

Many of the members on the committee have spoken about this in our discussions. Mr. Bagnell especially continues to highlight the importance of culture change to solve this problem.

One of my points is that we need to hear from Ms. Batek and others like her. We need to make sure that knowledge and expertise is brought into this report. We need to also heed her warning that there are other people we need to turn to for expertise on military justice and on organizational culture. All of that has to make it into the report.

● (51800)

For that to happen, we need more than two minutes of debate each, or discussion each. It has taken me more than two minutes just to explain why Ms. Batek's testimony is so important and why we need to hear from these experts. It will take us time.

It will take hard work to convey and debate and find consensus around what we actually want to recommend as a committee, which is why, in my view, Mr. Bezan's motion is so dangerous and disrespectful to survivors.

I'd like to go on reading from the testimony that Ms. Batek provided to the status of women committee:

We can help define this problem, the full extent of which is still unknown. We can point to specific gaps, deficiencies and issues. We know, for example, that the internal reporting mechanism is flawed and that independent oversight is badly needed.

We can help find and develop solutions—immediate, medium and long-term solutions—because we have ideas. We have ideas that can be developed into plans, policies and programs.

For example, we have developed a one-day workshop that can be used in the immediate term to help kick-start the culture shift that is desperately needed throughout the organization. This training package, called the frontline workshop, is survivor born and is based on civilian best practices curated specifically for the Canadian Armed Forces.

The frontline workshop will challenge and confront the social norms and unconscious biases of the attendees. It will shake their foundation and open their minds unlike anything the military has done before. We can provide feedback on and input into strategies, plans and policies every step of the way, during development, implementation and monitoring stages.

I want to pause there in Ms. Batek's testimony.

Ms. Batek and her colleagues are proposing a solution to part of the problem. They're proposing to offer their help to solve the problem in a concrete, tangible way. Is the committee going to recommend that? Is this committee going to consider that? Clearly it is not if Mr. Bezan has his way, because Mr. Bezan doesn't want to even hear from Ms. Batek. However, even if he did hear from Ms. Batek, even if we all listened to what Ms. Batek had to say, which is why I'm sharing what she had to say, would we implement, would we ask her and her colleagues to implement the solution

they're offering to the Canadian Armed Forces? Would we recommend that the government implement it? We don't know.

The reason we don't know is that some members of this committee don't want to take the time to know. They want to tick the box, say they wrote a report, which does nothing for survivors. It is beyond belief, really. They're offering a frontline workshop that will challenge and confront the social norms and unconscious biases of the attendees, something we've heard about, over and over again, from people who've tried to underline or explain why this problem of sexual harassment and assault in the military exists. They're offering to help us solve that problem and we're going to refuse to have an opinion on it.

We are going to put ourselves in a position where we can't consider it, because we can only spend two minutes each talking. Some members of the opposition just want to move on to other things and they want to have a big debate in the House of Commons without actually considering what Ms. Batek has to say or what she has to offer, or the impact she could have on solving this problem.

I don't understand why our priority is moving on, with moving on from this report in a way that's not helpful to the survivors so we can have a debate in the House of Commons. We can have debates in the House of Commons, and we should, and we can continue to do that in the years to come. In the months and years to come, I'm happy to participate in those debates, but we are MPs. We're not the experts. The experts are talking to us. We should listen to them and we should think about what they've said and thoughtfully review it together and come to a consensus together like we do for every other report we ever write.

● (51805)

Then we should do what Mr. Bagnell is proposing in his subamendment and that is to make sure that the government actually responds. The only way to ensure that our committee has any impact is to make sure that we not only write a thoughtful report but that government is accountable for responding and tackling those challenges.

We and others can hold government to account for doing what they said they would do in their response, but Mr. Bezan doesn't want them to respond. He doesn't want to hold the government accountable for solving this problem. The only reason I can imagine is because they don't want to actually solve the problem.

He wants to have this debate in the House of Commons so he can grab some headlines and play some politics. That's not why I'm here. That's not why I ran for office. The survivors expect and deserve better.

Ms. Batek goes on to say:

Just like any GPA+ analysis of various identity factors, we want to provide the military sexual trauma survivor perspective with potential solutions to the Canadian Armed Forces as a professional voice, as well as to other stakeholders such as Veterans Affairs Canada.

We are currently in the building phase of our organization, but we are aiming to represent multiple identity factors, including men, indigenous, veteran, LGBTQ+ and civilian survivors, among others, as this is not specifically a women's issue. Yes, I did say civilian survivors, because it is important to note that the impact of a sexualized military culture is not limited to members of the military. The impact reaches beyond the perimeter of the workplace and negatively affects the lives of military families, spouses and children as well as the community at large.

I want to pause on that point.

Ms. Batek is flagging for us that this problem extends beyond where many people think it extends to. She's talking about civilian survivors. She's talking about other groups of people who are impacted. I think we need to hear that, we need to listen, and then we need to write a thoughtful report that takes into account Ms. Batek's testimony and the testimony of other survivors, experts and the others we've heard from, all of them. I know it's going to be hard work and I know it's going to require a lot of consensus building, but we have to do it, because that's how we can get to a report that makes a difference or that has recommendations to government that can make a difference.

We need Mr. Bagnell's amendment to pass, because we need government to be accountable for implementing those things. If the government implements those things that we recommend, we are helping to address the problem of sexual assault and sexual misconduct in the military.

I say we listen to survivors. I say we write a report that's thoughtful, that allows us to come to consensus, that obtains a government response and that demands government actions, because I think survivors deserve no less.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

● (51810)

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr. Baker.

We will move on to Mr. Bagnell, please.

**Hon. Larry Bagnell:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

Obviously, we're at an impasse that stops us getting forward with recommendations that can help the military and help the survivors, because at the moment, the opposition refuses to withdraw a motion that would lead to an unreasonable report.

I proposed a possible way forward. I haven't put in an amendment yet, but it was a compromise where we could get some recommendations to help the military and to help the future men and women who want to go into the military and so that the survivors have been heard. My solution was roughly that we go through all recommendations from all parties, see which ones we could unanimously agree to use Mr. Bezan's process on, get those recommendations forward and then deal with the more difficult ones at the end.

I haven't heard any objections from the opposition parties, so I assume they're still discussing it. The committee will have to wait until we see a response before we can go forward.

What I really want to do today, because the particular motion doesn't allow us to debate recommendations—other than the two minutes which, as the previous speaker mentioned, is totally inappropriate for a number of very serious recommendations—I want to propose some major recommendations today, and then those members who are interested can help me word them, reword them or object to them, and we could have a debate on each of those, but that will have to wait.

Before doing that, I want to, as I've said earlier today and before, time and time again, and the previous speaker just mentioned it as well.... The serious recommendations we make should be based upon what the witnesses told us and what the experts have told us. The recommendations I will come up with for our discussions at subsequent meetings are based on the testimony of those experts and witnesses, which is what all committees do. They hear witnesses, and then that's what's in the report, what the witnesses said and what is recommended.

I just want to go into some of that expert witness testimony from elsewhere, because it leads to some of the recommendations that I am going to make later on.

Ms. Lalonde said:

I can tell you that the highest rate of post-traumatic stress disorder worldwide is among victims of rape and sexual violence. The second-highest rate is in the military. We urgently need to take this seriously.

Trauma shouldn't be organized into a hierarchy. When their trauma isn't considered equivalent to the trauma caused by war, victims of sexual violence don't receive the support that they deserve. That's unacceptable.

Later on I'll be making a recommendation related to our report, related exactly to that, that this type of trauma has to be treated equally with other types of trauma.

There was another question: "How important is it that this is a constantly evolving way of finding solutions? ... How important is it that this is a constantly evolving process?"

Dr. Okros said:

First of all, I definitely agree that it is important, and I definitely agree on the evolving. One of the challenges of Operation Honour was that there was an end state. There is no end state to the way in which Canadian society has continued to evolve and, therefore, to how the Canadian Armed Forces has to continually evolve. I think these will be valuable and required processes going forward.

● (51815)

The other comment I would make is that, while there are efforts to reach out, again, we need to understand the consequences of military sexual trauma. We need to understand that there are still individuals who are not able or willing or in a position to come forward and speak. I think part of this needs to be reaching out to the organizations and to the colleagues they are willing to talk to, in order to have individuals bring their voices forward.

We've heard before in some other testimony from high-ranking military members that there are more stories to come, and that they just haven't been able under the circumstances to bring them forward. That's the type of recommendation we should be looking at, how it can be appropriate and easy for them to bring it forward and not have reprisals.

I'm just going on with the quote.

The last quick comment I will make is that we need to be very careful about people speaking for others. I cannot speak for members of the armed forces, and I definitely cannot speak for women. I think we have concerns when people choose to speak for other groups.

That's why it's very important that we hear the direct testimony of victims and people who are involved on the ground who can outline the horrific situations they've been in. I still think over and over again that if that happened to me, I have no idea how I would handle that. People cannot denigrate the gravity of those instances over a lifetime.

Then it went on to talk about power imbalance. The question was, "In what way do we need to address [that]...in order to be able to get to the point where we're preventing all of this kind of behaviour in the first place?" To the quote I gave earlier from the debate in the House of Commons on Wednesday night, I mentioned a quote related to that earlier in this meeting. I mentioned a quote related to power imbalance. Dr. Okros said:

This is part of self-insight and self-understanding. I think the more we can do to facilitate people... I will say that I'm the best representative on the screen. Old white men like me in particular need to really open up our eyes and start learning. We also need to look at customs and practices that reinforce these things. A simple example is visible in this committee.

That was the committee he was speaking to.

The speaking order and length of time for questions signal a power hierarchy. We need to be thinking about what message is sent. Who is the least important person on this screen right now? What are the ways in which we can level or address those or make sure that those who perceive they're the least important are still empowered to speak up and speak out?

It's complex. All organizations, all institutions, practice it. It requires open communications. The most critical thing I would go back to is that it needs those who have the weakest voice to be able to be heard the most.

I'm sure, as you know from testimony we've heard, that it's simply not the case at the moment. She gave us all food for thought and no easy solutions. I don't know what all of the solutions are. That's why we need to debate more than two minutes very serious recommendations and try to come to the best conclusions on those recommendations.

On the urgency of taking action now, Dr. Okros said:

This is urgent. We have people who are still hurting. We have members internally within the military. It's been stated. They have lost trust. That needs to be rebuilt with urgency. Canadians need to have confidence in their military. They need to have confidence that when particularly young women, young men and people of diverse identities choose to serve Canada in uniform, they will be treated with respect and have good, full, meaningful careers. That needs to be something that is communicated effectively.

Christine Wood went on after that, on getting to action:

I can tell you things that you have heard before.

Victims need supports. There are more and more coming forward and there is still no safety net there to catch them. These individuals are not coming forward to report a simple discrepancy that they saw in paperwork. They are coming forward with their experiences of terror, debilitating anxiety and shredded self-confidence. They are broken. It is simply unethical to continue to ask them to come forward without having a plan in place to support them.

- (51820)

To be clear, we are asking for the same supports that we were asking for four years ago: a national platform for online peer support, group therapy, outpatient therapy and in-patient psychiatric care when necessary that is MST-specific in its focus. It needs to be trauma informed and needs to be able to address the moral injury of betrayal by your brothers and sisters in uniform.

That's why in my recommendation I said I will be bringing it forward later for extensive debate. We have to talk about that peer support that has been recommended there.

If the committee brings forward some recommendations, it will help survivors. If the opposition lets us get by this impasse, if we can bring forward recommendations, people will want to have confidence that they will be implemented. That's why my amendment to the motion is that we should have a reply that the government is going to be implementing them.

There was a suggestion that there's a loss of trust and that it needs to be overcome. Obviously, there are certain senior leaders in the military presently under investigation and we'll let that run its course.

In reference to the minister, I know Mr. Bezan has been criticized a lot today, but this is not something he brought up; it was another committee member. If the committee members are interested in progress, when has there been a minister who is so open to the progress? As I mentioned, if there are media watching who weren't at all the previous committee meetings, I spoke for close to an hour about the things that have been done by this government and under this minister. That's a good record that people can go to in case someone says that things have not been done.

Obviously, the minister is the first to admit, as the committee and the number of incidents that Mr. Garrison and I have outlined show, there's a lot more that needs to be done. These are the things that we should be discussing.

To assure you that the government is open to respond, if there are some suggestions that there's no response because they won't, as Mr. Baker said earlier today, out of the three big items that really need recommendations, the first is culture change.

To show you that the minister is open to culture change, as he said, anything is on the table. He's just waiting for us to move ahead as a committee and make recommendations. He's not actually waiting. Because we're stalled, he has gone ahead and made some major appointments, including Madam Arbour. With or without us, he's moving ahead, and we will certainly get our recommendations to him. I will, one way or another.

However, just to show you that he's open, I'm going to quote him for anyone who suggests that there's a lack of openness from the minister to listening to our recommendations for change. As everyone knows, change is often difficult.

● (51825)

We could spend a whole committee on the quotes of how he's willing to look at what we're proposing, what victims are proposing and what experts are proposing to try to deal with a difficult situation that plagues not only our military, but militaries around the world. Of course, culture is important, because you can't blame individual members totally if they're in a culture where that's acceptable. We're social animals, so we have to improve that culture.

To show that the minister is open to change, I'll just go through some comments he made. He said in the other committee:

Culture change is something we're all committed to. I believe that in the committee here, there are some wonderful recommendations that can be provided, but also a need to look at changes that need to be made.

We need to make sure we just don't look at a report, look at a recommendation, sign off, and think it's done.

That's very insightful by the minister. I've mentioned at earlier meetings that not only was there roughly an hour of things I outlined that have been done, including an update of an administrative procedure that I thought was much better than the previous one, but obviously, as the minister has just said in what I quoted, they're not all working. You can't just make the recommendation. You must have the appropriate follow-up.

He went on:

For example, I can list off a whole bunch of things, but ultimately I'm always looking at what results we are creating on the ground.

When somebody is joining, are they in basic training and having a safe environment?

Again, that's very perceptive, because as was mentioned before, there was an incident in basic training. A recommendation was that this needed to be incorporated, related to sexual misconduct and inappropriate behaviour, yet the trainer was besieged by laughs and ridicule by the people taking the training because that was the particular culture. Therefore, it can't just be the recommendation. As the minister says, there has to be the follow-up.

On creating a safe environment, I'm quoting the minister again:

If something comes up, whether it's a religious conversation, a gender issue, LGBTQ rights, or anything, we should immediately address it, because the Employment Equity Act states that we must.

Do we have the right action groups? Do they have the right governance structure? This is what the independent panel on systemic racism, gender bias and LGBTQ rights is currently doing: looking at where those issues are, digging deep inside the Canadian Armed Forces and looking at what changes are needed.

Again, as you can see, the minister is open to change and already has taken significant action. That's the type of champion we need to bring our recommendations forward.

The minister went on:

I talked about the numbers, and right now, those aren't the metrics we want to judge ourselves by, but you know what? That's progress. It's not success. Going from six to 14 general officers is important, but the pipeline—when you look below that and when you create a greater pipeline—can never be stopped.

Why was it, with regard to the representation of women, that the percentages were obviously nothing to be proud of? If it was 15% women in the past, why didn't we have 15% women before? One of my goals was to immediately start making those changes, so when somebody had a complaint, they could come forward, regardless of retribution.

When I sign off on any general officers, I don't look at what their ability to command is; I trust they can do that. The question I ask is, "Are these persons lead-

ers who can bring in cultural change?" If they are not, we don't want them being promoted, but if they are, we want to give them proper resources to do so.

● (51830)

Again, the minister is almost ahead of us here in making these suggested changes, because that would be one of the recommendations that I've referred to as needed and that I think the parliamentary secretary has referred to: what is taken into consideration during promotion. Obviously it has to be looked at in our recommendations and in our systems.

The minister went on:

We also need to make sure we have senior women at the table, so that we have proper representation. This is not the be-all and end-all, but it does make sure that we have the right people to put the right structures in place. We need to look at how the independent investigations are conducted.

Of course, I mentioned a potential question about that earlier, related to General Vance's appointment; and survivors have brought up the second big issue, which I'm not going to address right now, but that's the chain of command involvement related to investigations.

The minister went on:

We need to take a look at whether we have the right resources in place, so that people are supported.

In the testimony of the experts that I just read a few minutes ago, that was one of the points they raised as well, and the minister is right on that:

The one question I have...is, if somebody has done something in the past, would it be acceptable for them to join the Canadian Armed Forces? If somebody does something inside the Canadian Armed Forces, why can't we get them out sooner?

The minister is already looking at all these questions and he is obviously moving forward and looking at very important considerations. However, we could add to that. We've spent a lot of time studying and hearing experts and witnesses, and we could actually add to that if people would co-operate and come together on the things that we can at least agree on. Obviously, there are some things we won't agree on.

The minister went on:

Those also have to go through proper legal checks and balances, because ultimately I can't make a decision on that. That's the law.

We have to follow the law, and if changes need to be made, we go through the parliamentary process to get those laws changed, so that we can create the proper changes. Ultimately, all of us—including this committee, and I look forward to your recommendations—need to be able to do the ripple effect of any recommendation to see how it can actually have that impact.

Too often in the past, what we have done and where we made some changes, they actually didn't achieve the outcomes we wanted. When I became minister, that was the last thing I wanted, giving out these speeches. I wanted to be focused on the metrics themselves and the changes we're making.



That, from my perspective, is insightful from the minister. We don't hear often enough that it's the measurement of the outcomes that is important. Certainly we can consider that if we're allowed to have a serious discussion on recommendations.

The minister went on:

We have made progress, and we're proud of that progress, but obviously, this is not enough

As I said earlier, the minister has said that many times.

He continued:

I'm deeply hurt that we couldn't move forward, and I wish we had a magic wand to make all this go away, but we don't. At the same time, I didn't quit before, when I was serving to support the people, and I'm not going to quit now.

I'm committed to our Canadian Armed Forces and to ensuring we create an inclusive environment—

You heard earlier in his statement about ways he's already working on that.

—because there are people in Canada right now who want to serve their country. They deserve to have a harassment-free workplace so they can reach their true potential. We're not going to stop until we achieve that, regardless of how long it takes.

You can see that there's no question that the minister and government are not ready to respond; they're ready to take our recommendations seriously. He said previously that everything is on the table.

• (51835)

That's why I have said over and over that we should get to these serious recommendations that would help survivors, based on the testimony we've heard from survivors and the experts. I hope to hear some more of it so that I can refine the recommendations. I want to have a lengthy discussion at this meeting or at subsequent meetings about that.

I will leave it at that for now. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr. Bagnell.

We will move on to Madame Vandenbeld, please.

**Ms. Anita Vandenbeld:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

I want to thank my colleagues for their thoughtful interventions today.

I am still disappointed that we are continuing to debate motion after motion. The opposition continues to rebuff any efforts to withdraw this motion, adjourn the debate or even allow us to adjourn this meeting, knowing we would then be able to get directly to the reports. I am disappointed that all three opposition parties have rebuffed good-faith efforts to see if we can get past this impasse.

I was particularly disturbed earlier when Mr. Bagnell was giving a proposal, which I believe to be very sincere, to see how we can get past this impasse, at least in part. He was being laughed and scoffed at by members of the opposition here in the room. It's one thing for us to disagree, but it's another to laugh at each other. I really think we're above that, and I believe that Mr. Bagnell was sincere in what he was proposing, just as I have been in the various proposals that I have brought to all three opposition parties and that other members of the committee have discussed.

At this point, one of the best things we can do is make sure, regardless of what happens with the reports, particularly when we have motions that ask for no government response.... I am very grateful to Mr. Bagnell for bringing forward an amendment that says we do need a government response, because what is the reason we are here and putting a report to Parliament if it's not to have the government respond to that report and take action on it? I'm hopeful, but I'm also very disappointed that there does not seem to be any good-faith willingness to try to get beyond this impasse.

Having said that, I'd like to continue where I left off last time and talk about some of the very important recommendations that some of our witnesses, survivors, academics and experts have brought to our committee, to the FEWO committee and to us as members of Parliament. I believe that these are vitally important recommendations. I am very glad to hear my colleagues talk about the importance of making sure that we are amplifying the voices of survivors and experts. We heard from academics who have spent their entire academic careers looking at these kinds of issues, and they have solutions. We've heard a lot of recommendations and a lot of solutions, so I'd like to continue to put on the record and amplify some of those voices and recommendations.

As those who were watching this meeting previously will recall, I've been going through a list of various recommendations that we compiled based on testimony, particularly what we have heard from survivors. We have compiled them into a section on culture change in the Canadian Armed Forces. I will begin where I left off.

The next recommendation is about addressing the generalized lack of expertise on sexual misconduct, culture change or gender issues in the Canadian Armed Forces.

I think it's interesting that the survivors put that forward in particular, because I think "lack of expertise" can mean many things. First of all, I believe there is increasingly more expertise on this issue. Of course, within the SMRC, which is on the departmental side, there is developing expertise not just in terms of people, but also in the data they're collecting and through combined knowledge and the knowledge creation that comes from lived experience. I believe there is more and more expertise, certainly on both sides and within the Canadian Armed Forces, because of the training we have put in place. However, I think when the survivors put this particular recommendation forward, it was more to talk about the gaps.

We know that somebody who is trained to be a soldier, a sailor or an aviator is somebody whose main job every day is to protect Canadians.

● (51840)

They are very specialized and well trained. It does not mean that they would necessarily have the in-depth level of expertise that one needs in order to provide advice, particularly when it comes to institutional culture change. Culture change is not easy, especially when it is dependent on self-reflection.

I've worked in institutions around the world, with UN Women and other global institutions, on culture change. It requires a set of eyes coming from outside, simply because culture is something you're unaware of. When you're in a particular institutional culture, it can be very difficult to recognize the things that make up that culture. They become self-evident; there are certain paradigms that everybody shares. Unless somebody is directly confronted with something that they consider self-evident and are asked why they have that belief, why they hold that particular notion and then have to reflect on it, then that particular culture and that paradigm are not going to change. That is what requires the outside expertise.

I do believe that this is expertise on a number of levels. This would, of course, be people who are subject matter experts in issues of sexual misconduct, trauma-informed experts who understand how to investigate. We need experts on essentially how to respond to these issues, but we also need experts on culture change, institutional culture, processes and procedures. I think it is really telling that the survivors themselves are asking for that to come from outside the Canadian Armed Forces, in some ways to put up a mirror to show what it looks like to somebody who is not already embedded in it, and honestly, to somebody who isn't invested in things staying the same.

Many of us know that once you're in an institution, and of course you believe in that institution fundamentally, it's such a betrayal when that institution fails you. Those who are in the Canadian Armed Forces, by their nature, believe in what they're doing, believe in the institution. It's very hard to be self-reflective and to look at the flaws within. I think this recommendation is particularly important and certainly would be worthy of putting in a report.

The next recommendation is to acknowledge that the CAF's current approach of self-monitoring is "too reactive, inconsistent, linear and simplistic to be effective and successful against the complex problem of sexual violence."

I think that these words that were chosen by survivors and witnesses are very telling and very important. First is the idea of self-monitoring being "too reactive". I think that is, sadly, something that we have seen, instead of looking proactively, preventing or taking actions before there is a significant crisis or problem. I do believe that it's been recognized. It's certainly been recognized by the acting chief, the minister, myself and many others. The approach to self-monitoring should not be reactive, but should be something you do before it reaches a crisis. That's very important.

The next one is even more important. It is that the CAF's current approach is "inconsistent". This is something that we've seen in the testimony. We certainly saw the differences in the way that men and women who commit almost the same or exactly the same offence are treated differently. Sometimes in your chain of command, the resources available to you would allow for things to be resolved in an equitable and just way, and there are just outcomes. But, for oth-

ers... I think this is why Justice Fish made the recommendation that the chain of command be taken out of military investigations involving military police or CFNIS. Investigations should not rely on the chain of command, particularly if the chain of command is where the problem is.

● (51845)

If that's where the harassment is occurring, it's very important that it be done independently. It has to be independent because of this inconsistency.

The one thing that is required and necessary is for people to feel that they have trust in an institution, for people to feel that it will be fair to them, whether they're a victim or a perpetrator, whether it is a serious misconduct issue or something like a joke, which is also very serious. However, no matter what it is, it is the consistency in the response, if people know that regardless of who brings it up, regardless of the rank or position of the person who's perpetrating, regardless of where they are in the chain of command, regardless of what their role is, they will have consistent application of the policies, the procedures, the values and the processes in order to get a just outcome.

In fact, I would say that a just outcome is defined by the fact that it is consistent and not dependent on who happens to be in your unit, or who your chain of command is or who you are.

The next one—and I will be honest, I'm not entirely certain what it means, and I think we would need to do a little more reflection and thinking on it—is the choice of the word "linear". The survivors have put this forward, saying that CAF's current approach of self-monitoring is too linear. This is just my own interpretation, but I think what they're saying, when they say it's too linear, is that it is an action and then a consequence, and it just goes in a straight line as opposed to looking at the full context, looking 360 degrees, making sure that we're not just looking at *a equals b equals c*, but actually looking at everything around so that we can actually change the culture. However, I'm actually not certain. That's an area that certainly we could delve into a little more.

The next one is a bit more obvious: the choice of the word "simplistic", that the CAF's current approach of self-monitoring is simplistic. That's an easy trap to fall into.

We have seen that this is a complex issue. In the beginning, when we started our study, which I'll remind members was supposed to be three days and has gone on for about four months, I think most of us thought we understood. Most of us thought we had a bit of a handle on it. We knew that bad things had happened and we thought we knew how they should be fixed. However, the more we delved into it, the more we heard from witnesses, the more we heard from the academics and from members of CAF, from people who are actually part of the process, I think we learned how complex it is. That's exactly why the motion before us, which says we can only spend two minutes each discussing these recommendations, doesn't work. It isn't simplistic. It is very nuanced, very complicated. Even the solutions are complicated.

We've heard so many proposals from very credible witnesses. In some cases, these proposals have been complementary to one another, but in other cases, they have been contradictory.

There are those who propose solutions, who say that we need to put everything into one. We need to take the SMRC, the ombudsperson and an inspector general type of office and put it all in one place. There are others who say that if you have the investigative arm, which is investigating perpetrators, in the same place as the support for the survivors, the advocates, the counselling, the policy and the data, there needs to be some kind of division there, otherwise you have the very same people counselling survivors and doing the investigation at the same time and providing whatever supports or processes for the people who are conducting this bad behaviour.

We've heard that. We've heard a number of different solutions in what ways it should report to Parliament. What does "independent" mean? We know that when the Deschamps report, in 2015, went to the highest levels of CAF, the definition of independence, to CAF, was that it be outside the Canadian Armed Forces, outside the chain of command.

• (51850)

By putting it under the Department of National Defence, the civilian side of National Defence, who are not in the actual chain of command because they're not actually military members—often many of them are ex-military—that was seen by many to be considered independent.

We know now that it didn't work. We know now that's not independent enough. We've heard from so many of the witnesses that it wasn't working for them, that putting it under DND was not necessarily what Madam Deschamps would have intended. However, for many people, that was the interpretation.

Now that we know this, it also shows, by the way, why it is so important that we have Madam Arbour. Madam Deschamps did a very effective job of identifying the problem and identifying what needed to be done. There needs to be an independent body, but actually getting from the what to the how, actually putting together a road map, specifics of exactly how to do this, if you asked 25 of the people who came before us, you could probably get as many as 25 solutions about how you actually put that in place. That piece is the hardest. We all know that. In our own lives, we know that. We often know what we need to do, but how do we do it? What is the first step? What does it look like at the end? What are the unintended

consequences? This particular file is full of unintended consequences.

Operation Honour had unintended consequences. I believe those who initially established Operation Honour did so in good faith and believed the impact of it would have brought the results.

We now see that many of the things in Operation Honour did not have the intended impact or results, and what we've seen, actually, is that certain things were harmful. We know that things like the duty to report have taken away agency of individual victims, individual survivors, people who go through certain kinds of behaviour and then perhaps either are not ready to go forward with a full-out investigation or choose to try to do it in a different way.

We know that sometimes, on certain things, it's better to make sure that the people who have experienced it have the agency and are able to control how and when these things come forward. In many cases, informing the perpetrator that somebody has complained is perhaps the thing that the person fears most, but because of duty to report, that has happened and it might happen before someone feels ready. It could be that with the right supports, with the right options placed before them, with the right understanding of process, with the right advocates beside them, people would want to come forward, go through a full investigation and be able to confront that person and see that the person comes to justice. However, the duty to report took that away. It forced people into that before they were ready or when they specifically didn't want to.

It's very hard, because one thing we see is that bystanders are very important, that people who see wrong need to call it out. It is a really hard thing to know, when somebody is calling out somebody else. We call it, in certain other areas of feminism, the "white knight syndrome".

I think most of us as women have had those circumstances where a very well-intentioned ally, a male who wants to do the right thing and stand up for women, jumps in, in defence, at a point where a) you might have been perfectly capable of defending yourself, or b) you didn't want that because it makes you feel like you're somehow incapable of defending yourself or less.

That white knight syndrome is really hard, because for a lot of men—I've spoken with a number of men, even in my own life, who genuinely want to do the right thing—it's not easy to know at what point you have to call it out, at what point you have to report and at what point you are actually taking away that agency and sense of power from that person, the victim.

That's why there is this reflection on duty to report and making it duty to respond, because responding doesn't necessarily entail reporting, but it means you have to do something.

• (51855)

You can't ignore it. You can't brush it under the carpet. You can't just let it be. You have to respond, but respond appropriately. That's where a lot of the training comes in. Going back to the previous recommendation, that's where a lot of the expertise is too. We need external expertise from people who know about these things and who can give training and guidance to ensure that whatever we do does not have the unintended consequences that many of the things we've tried so far have had.

The rest of this says, "to be effective and successful against the complex problem of sexual violence." There we have it. Right there in the recommendations brought to us by survivors, they talk about this as a very complex problem. If it was an easy problem, it would have been resolved. It is a very difficult problem because it isn't about individual behaviour. It is, as we've said, about the entire context, the entire culture: the assumptions, the preconceived notions and the ways in which people interact with each other.

Again, I will go back to Dr. Okros, who was extremely good at explaining to us the power dynamics that happen and that in any given space, we determine... I think Mr. Bagnell was very self-reflective when he talked about the idea of who is most important in the room. How do we navigate that?

Madam Chair, in this particular room, you're sitting at the front, and that would indicate to many people that you are the most important person in the room. I tend to agree. Wassim, the clerk, is also sitting there, on your right, and we know that sitting at the right or left of the chair puts a person in a very elevated position. If we didn't know anybody in this room and walked into the room, we would immediately know certain things about your importance. Then we would look to body language and the way people interact.

I would like to go back, though. I've talked about who is important, how we determine that and how we try to elevate ourselves or diminish others to change social structures and what is important, so I'll go back to what happened earlier in this meeting.

Mr. Bagnell was putting a sincere idea forward about how to get past this impasse and how to find consensus, and he was snickered at and laughed at. One of the key ways that people determine power is through ridiculing, diminishing, snickering and laughing, and we saw it right here in this room earlier today. Frankly, I am extremely disappointed, because we are all members of Parliament and are held to a much higher standard of behaviour, particularly towards one another. We know that this is the kind of behaviour that is intended to diminish. It is intended to show who is important and who is not.

We've seen it in other ways as well. We've seen it in the use of language. Men are referred to by their title or by their last name—Mr. whoever—and women are almost always referred to by their first name. This is in public settings. Obviously when you're in a personal environment it's a different thing, but in an official formal public setting, there is a diminishing that happens when you refer to people by their first name as opposed to "Mr." or whatever the title is.

These are all subtle things that we don't really know we're doing, although I would suggest that earlier today members probably did

know what they were doing. Sometimes it's deliberate and sometimes it's not.

I'll end here because I've got quite a few other recommendations. I just want to say that the committee worked very well together for the first year and a half that I was on it, and I know we're at an impasse. However, I really hope that in some way we'll be able to find a way past this impasse. Maybe we could find some way to put our own interests aside and put the survivors ahead, and make sure these recommendations get out. That's why I'm reading them into the record.

• (51900)

**The Chair:** We are suspended.

*[The meeting was suspended at 3 p.m., Friday, June 11]*

*[The meeting resumed at 11:07 a.m., Monday, June 14]*

• (58705)

**The Chair:** I call this meeting back to order.

*[Translation]*

Good morning and welcome, everyone.

*[English]*

This is the resumption of meeting number 32 of the House of Commons Standing Committee on National Defence, which started on Friday, May 21, 2021.

If at any time interpretation is lost, please inform me immediately and we will ensure that interpretation is operating before we continue. It's important that everyone has an opportunity to participate fully in these proceedings.

As a reminder, please speak slowly and clearly, and I will try to do the same, for our good interpreters. With regard to a speaking list, the committee clerk and I will do the best we can to maintain a consolidated order of speakers for all members, whether they're participating virtually or in person.

We are resuming debate on Mr. Bagnell's amendment to Mr. Bezan's motion.

Madam Vandenberg has the floor.

**Ms. Anita Vandenberg:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I do believe that at the last meeting I left off by going through some of the very important recommendations that survivors have presented to us, either through testimony at FEWO or directly. I just want to start by saying that I do wish that we actually had agreement from the opposition to adjourn debate so that we could immediately get to the reports. There are three very important reports that I think it would be very important for us to go to directly to consider drafting.

What we're debating right now is an amendment that asks that we have a government response, and again, I reiterate that I don't see the purpose of having reports and then not asking the government to respond to those reports. As a result, we're still here, and I will continue discussing these important recommendations so that at least we can get these recommendations on the record because I think that it is very important, and then we will do our best to ensure that there is action taken on these.

There's a tremendous amount of effort and work that survivors and experts went through when they came to speak at our committee.

We forget because we're here as members of Parliament. We're used to being in a committee room. We're used to speaking, but for somebody to come to Parliament and be asked to speak before a parliamentary committee, especially somebody who has survived a sexual trauma, or for people who have spent their lives as academics studying an issue, to give their testimony and to answer questions is a big deal. It matters, and a lot of preparation goes into that.

I would point to people like Professor Maya Eichler, who, when she came here, had her 10 minutes to be able to present. This is a professor who has literally devoted her academic study to the Canadian Armed Forces, military culture and gender issues. She had a tremendous amount to provide to this committee, but instead of allowing us to ask questions and have the interaction back and forth with her, again, there were games played, motions coming forward, and all she had was her 10 minutes.

I would very much like to make sure that some of the testimony and also things that witnesses, survivors and experts, have provided are at least on the record, right here, which will be in Hansard and is official. I will do this by reading them out. I do believe that I ended on the recommendation that self-monitoring is too reactive and inconsistent for the complex problem of sexual violence. I'll go to the next recommendation, which recommends addressing the use of sexually and racially coded language that supports and accentuates social hierarchies in the Canadian Armed Forces.

I think this one is very important. It does go to quite a bit of the testimony that we heard, and I spoke the other day about how these social hierarchies are established. It's rarely blunt. It does happen, but it's rare that somebody turns to somebody else, points at them and says, "You do not belong," or makes an overt kind of comment that would indicate that a person does not belong, that a person is "othered", that they are different. They do it through coded language.

I do think that it's interesting here that when putting these recommendations forward, survivors mention sexually and racially coded language because we cannot distinguish.... There are many people for whom intersectionality only duplicates and amplifies what they face.

Women have always faced discrimination within institutions, including in the military. If you are a transgender woman, you will face even more discrimination. If you are racialized, Black or Indigenous, and a woman.... We add these layers of identity, and I think we can't necessarily distinguish because when people are

choosing who belongs and who does not.... We heard from some of the witnesses the idea that there is a masculine normative toxic culture. It's the warrior concept. It's this idea that to be—and I mentioned this previously—a good soldier, a good aviator, a good sailor, there is a particular typecast that is assumed.

● (58710)

A lot of this is based on a not very modern way of looking at military. We know that in the military there are occupations across the board. I had the wonderful opportunity—I think it was three years ago—to be able to sail on the HMCS *Winnipeg*. We went from San Francisco to Esquimalt through the leadership program. This is something all members of Parliament are allowed to participate in. It's a wonderful way to get to know the day-to-day life of our sailors, who are doing tremendous work, and to really understand what that's like.

It was three nights on a ship. Very few people get to experience what life might have been had they chosen a different path. For three nights, I got to see first-hand, had I made a different choice in my life, had I chosen to go into the military, to join the navy, what it would have been like. It gave me a level of understanding, just sleeping in the bunk on the ship and eating with the sailors, and sitting down talking and listening to them.

I talked to women who were on that ship who were just returning home. They had been on the ship for six months. Being away from their families, being away from their children, the sacrifices that they make, but also the incredible sense of unity and camaraderie....

There's a recommendation coming up that talks about group loyalty. I think this is one of the things that makes it so hard when that's betrayed. I could see the close quarters. I could see that if somebody were in a situation where they were being sexually harassed—you can't avoid people on a ship. It really made a difference when we were sitting and talking. Different people and different ways of minimizing, diminishing or building up, building team and leadership can affect the entire group.

I'll talk a little bit later about some of the other experiences I had while on the HMCS *Winnipeg*, the people that I met there and how profoundly impressed I was. We were able to participate in fire drills. We were able to participate in rescues of somebody overboard. We were able to participate in many of the day-to-day activities. We saw the engine room. We saw the operations room. We did a simulated attack where we actually experienced what it would be like if the ship were hit by a torpedo. The table in the dining room turns into a surgical table. There are multiple uses for the space because space is very limited.

It was really an incredibly eye-opening experience that showed me that there are so many trades. There are so many ways to serve that aren't what you see on TV, that aren't what we see in pop culture.

Again, I reiterate this World War I notion of the soldier in the trench. There is so much more in today's military, and yet the way in which the stereotype, the normative of who will succeed.... It is still very much a masculine, heterosexual normative way of looking at it. Frankly, that is doing a disservice because it actually takes away the number of skill sets—men and women. I do think that it is very important to know that if there's a toxic masculinity that only favours a certain kind of masculinity over others, this is just as limiting and damaging to men who don't fit the stereotype as it is to women.

I go back to the recommendation that talks about sexually and racially coded language because I can only imagine, in an environment like that, when there are microaggressions, when there are comments made—and they can be very subtle comments, but they are ways in which people within the group navigate. I think we've all experienced it. I imagine anybody who is racialized, or a woman, or indigenous or LGBT, or anybody who has an identity that isn't part of the normative of the group that they're in has experienced this kind of thing.

• (58715)

I've certainly seen it in politics, where there are things that are...and I like the fact that it says "coded" because it is coded. It is a signal that somebody sends to someone else to say, that person is different; that person is other; that person does not belong here. It's a way in which to create the social hierarchies that Dr. Okros and others spoke to us about and provided testimony about.

Sometimes I think people don't even realize they're doing it. We hear things said, and we repeat them. I think that sometimes—especially for those who are in the dominant group—they may not even realize when they're using certain language, when they're using certain terms that have become so frequent, the harm and the impact that actually might have on other people in the group, who then are being told—not outright but day by day through little things, through microaggressions, through the words that are used, through the choice of terms—"You don't belong here. You're not part of the group."

I've heard from some of the survivors that it can be even more damaging, that constant piling-on over time of these microaggressions, the language and the things that make you feel like you don't belong in a place that you've committed your life to, for something you believe in thoroughly. That's where the sense of betrayal, I think, comes in. You have people who believe profoundly in the group they are a part of, where the objective is the protection of Canadians, the bringing of peace and security in the world.

Going back to what I learned when I was on the HMCS *Winnipeg*, the work that they're doing—I mean, they've intercepted drugs in the Caribbean. They've intercepted pirates off the coast of Somalia. They've participated in multiple multi-country efforts to make sure that we are safe and secure on so many levels, things that we wouldn't even know about. Honestly, I think we should probably talk more about some of the successes, the things our military members do that make our day to day lives safer. I don't think that people who have a family member who is struggling with drug addiction realize how many drugs are intercepted and stopped from getting here, to North America or Canada, because of the military.

That's something that, when we look at young people thinking about their career....

I was talking to a young woman whose brother is an addict. She has had real difficulties with that. She said, "I want to be a social worker because I want to make a difference, and I want to make sure that other people don't become addicts, that they have services." That is wonderful, I think, that giving back and the fact that this young woman wants to be a social worker, but would she ever even have thought that perhaps if she joined the navy that might actually be another way to stop the drugs from getting here and stop things like what was happening with her brother? I don't know if she would have thought of that as a way of giving back, because we don't know the stories. We don't know all of the different things that the military does, and part of that is because of this stereotype.

You know, when you watch TV, you look at a lot of the shows that portray the military. I'll confess, I watch a lot of them myself. This is a genre that I quite like, but just like I asked a friend of mine who is a doctor, "You know, I've watched 11 seasons of *Grey's Anatomy*. Does that make me qualified?"

She said, "It certainly doesn't make you qualified to be a doctor, but..." Anyway, she made a joke that I'm not going to repeat, but it's the same thing with political shows.

We all know that when we watch these political shows, they don't reflect the reality of what it is to be an elected member of Parliament. In the same way, I think a lot of the shows and pop culture that portray a life in the military are not a full picture of what life in the military is. You do see in pop culture this racially and sexually coded language. You do see a lot of the stereotypes.

I think Hollywood is getting better at trying to show a little bit more.

• (58720)

I watch *SEAL Team* and I noted that recently they dealt with an issue about sexual harassment on a ship. They had one of the characters step in and speak out for somebody. She herself had experienced it and then she saw it happening to someone else on the ship. She stepped because she was an officer and had more power than she had at the time that this had happened to her.

They showed the backlash, the retaliation and some of the challenges that they had. When more women spoke out, when somebody who had some power at that point, an officer, defended somebody who didn't have power, who was more junior, they faced a backlash, and other women spoke out. Because of that, in that show anyway, it started to make a difference. They've dealt I think with other issues as well.

I think you're only now seeing that and you're seeing it because it's reflecting what is really happening. However, for a lot of the pop culture, for a lot of what we see when children look at, what do I want to be when I grow up, and they look at soldiers and they look at TV and Hollywood, I don't think it is inclusive.

It's getting better. I gave the example in the show *SEAL Team* where they've also tried to deal with issues about PTSD and veterans, and I think that's a good thing, but it's only very recently that Hollywood is starting to portray some of these issues that really happen.

I think it is really still the norm in our mindset, which is why there's the sexually and racially coded language, the social hierarchies, the portrayal of military in only a very aggressive masculine warrior kind of way, whereas leadership as we know is much broader than that. That's not to say that you don't need those skill sets, but we need to see it a lot more broadly.

That's why I think that particular recommendation is so important, but I do see that there are many other hands up, so I will allow my colleagues to have a say before I come back and go through some of the other recommendations.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

● (58725)

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

We go on to Mr. Baker, please.

**Mr. Yvan Baker:** Thanks very much, Madam Chair.

I wanted to speak because I wanted to return to the focus of what I think Mr. Bagnell's amendment is designed to achieve. It clearly suggests that, at the very least, we should be asking for a government response to the report that this committee produces. I wanted to speak to some of the reasons I think that's important.

One of the things that I think is critical in light of the challenges facing the armed forces is making sure not just that good ideas or solutions get proposed but that they get acted upon. Requiring a government response is something that helps ensure that legislators like us, when we put forward those recommendations, those solutions to problems that we are trying to tackle.... Actually, government has a responsibility to indicate to us and to Canadians how they plan to proceed on those.

I think it's important that we hold this government and future governments to account on their actions on this issue. The problem of sexual harassment and sexual assault in the military is a long-standing problem. I think you all know this. It has transcended government after government. There are a lot of reasons why this has happened, but during that period of time, there have been many good ideas brought forward, many people who have advocated and many survivors who have courageously spoken up to alert people to the problem and to try to solve the problem.

Of course, there are many reasons why this issue has not been addressed and why it has not been solved. One of them, I think, is that we need to make sure that this is signalled as a priority by MPs of all stripes to the government of the day, whichever government happens to be in power.

This report is our way to convey our advocacy, to convey our point of view, to try resolve the issue of sexual harassment and sexual assault before us. This is our primary tool as a committee. I think it's powerful, especially if it comes from the committee itself; and if all members of the committee work towards a consensus to write that report, I think it has a powerful impact.

Putting that aside for a moment, making sure that the government actually responds to it is incredibly important because (a) it's what we know we can expect from government; (b) we can signal if we disagree with what government is doing; and (c) we can hold government to account for its actions against its own stated intention when it responds to our reports.

I wanted to reinforce how important I think Mr. Bagnell's amendment to Mr. Bezan's motion is. Members of this committee will know that I've relied quite a bit during this debate on this amendment, on Mr. Bezan's motion, on trying to do my best to give voice to the point of view of survivors, of victims. It's helpful to refocus if need be, certainly to focus ourselves and others who are watching this, reading the transcripts and studying what we're debating here and what it is we should trying to solve.

Who is it we should be trying to help? Who are the people who are suffering and going unhelped? They are the victims of sexual harassment and sexual assault in the armed forces. As you know, I've tried to do my best to give voice to their points of view, especially in the testimony that a number of survivors and experts have provided to the Standing Committee on the Status of Women.

● (58730)

One of the people I was speaking about in our prior meeting was Ms. Batek, who is a survivor. She testified at the status of women committee as a representative of the Survivor Perspectives Consulting Group, SPCG. SPCG was created by a small group of military sexual trauma survivors. They've come together to help address this problem, to ensure survivor voices are heard and to help create solutions.

Members will likely recall that at our prior meeting, I read some of the testimony that Ms. Batek provided to the status of women committee on the kinds of help that she and her colleagues could offer to government, the military, MPs and so on in trying to tackle the problem. I highlighted Ms. Batek's testimony for a number of reasons. One of them was that I felt it was an excellent example of the type of perspective that we need in our report and work here at the Standing Committee on National Defence. We need to hear their voices, which is why I'm giving them a voice in this debate, but we also need to heed their advice.

Ms. Batek alluded to a number of the complexities and issues that have to be tackled to stop sexual harassment and sexual assault in the military. I highlighted them because it was important that we take note of the work ahead, how complex this is, how much work is involved and how much expertise is needed to solve it. The expertise of people like Ms. Batek and others, especially survivors, needs to be at the centre of not just who we're trying to help, but whose help we need to solve this problem.

That is why I feel so strongly that we need a report that's written based on the consensus of members of this committee, just as reports are written at every committee on every issue. We need to make sure that we speak with one voice. I think that's important.

I also think it's very important that we acknowledge these issues and that what's contributing to sexual assault and sexual harassment in the military is going to require our best. We'll need to put our best foot forward to resolve this, because it's complex and nuanced. To understand that complexity, the nuance and what has to be done, we need to understand and bring into our report recommendations like those provided by Ms. Batek, her colleagues and other survivors.

I want to share with you something that Ms. Batek said in her testimony to the Standing Committee on the Status of Women. She spoke to the impact of what's happening. She said:

A sexualized military culture, in many cases, may lead to military domestic violence, child abuse and civilian sexual assault. Not only does this culture provide a safe place for perpetrators to hide and exist under the protection of a uniform, but it also inadvertently teaches the victims to tolerate the intolerable, which leads to lives plagued with mental health challenges, potential homelessness and future abusive relationships.

The social cost of allowing this toxic culture to survive extends to the Canadian public, and that makes this a Canadian problem, with real financial and social costs affecting all taxpayers.

I want to pause there. Rightly, we focused our discussions and debates on the impact that sexual assault and sexual harassment have on CAF members, and I think what Ms. Batek is raising is very important to take note of. It is one of the things we should be considering as we're writing the report. One of the reasons that Mr. Bagnell's amendment is so important is that getting government responses to how it's going to address all elements and impacts of this problem is important.

● (58735)

In this particular case, Ms. Batek is speaking about how the sexualized military culture can lead to a whole series of issues outside of the military, most immediately in this case for the families of members of the armed forces who are impacted by the sexualized military culture. She talks about domestic violence, child abuse and civilian sexual assault, so this committee can't allow itself, in my view, to put out a report that just ticks the box that allows us to say we wrote our report if it doesn't take into account this very issue, particularly when we haven't thought about, considered, debated and understood the nuance of how the families of CAF members and how others in civilian life are being impacted by what's happening in the military. We can't do that if each MP is only given two minutes to speak. It's just not realistic. It has taken me more than two minutes to explain this problem and to convey Ms. Batek's point of view.

Her words and concern are about the social costs of allowing this toxic culture to survive, and extending that to the Canadian public is something we need to take heed of. I think we need to make sure that our report and the government's response take note of that and have solutions to address it. What are those solutions? We could debate that. I have some thoughts on it and I'm sure members of the committee have thoughts about it, but that's the discussion we need to have. That's the consensus that all members of this committee need to build if we're going to get recommendations that are in the best interests of survivors and of members of the Canadian public who are impacted in the way that Ms. Batek has explained.

Ms. Batek went on in her testimony to say:

...when Lieutenant-General Eyre testified before this committee on March 23, he explained that his approach to changing the sexualized military culture was based on two streams, the second of which included listening and learning. This is exactly where SPCG fits in.

I want to pause there for a second because I think there's an important point to be noted from what Ms. Batek is saying. She highlights Lieutenant-General Eyre's testimony before the Standing Committee on the Status of Women, and I know that Lieutenant-General Eyre testified at this committee as well. What she chose to underline in this part of her testimony was that a key component of his approach, in one of the two streams that he indicated were important, was listening and learning. If that's something Ms. Batek thought important to highlight in her testimony to the committee, it's worth underlining here at this committee too. As we think about the motion by Mr. Bezan, the amendment proposed by Mr. Bagnell and how we move forward, we need to listen and learn and apply that listening and learning.

It's not okay for us to sit here and say we heard the witnesses and move on. It's not okay to suggest that we shouldn't hear from the perspectives of survivors. It's quite the opposite. We should be listening and learning and then applying that. If we don't listen, that is, to me, beyond reprehensible. If we just listen and don't learn, it is the same. To me, it is unforgivable that we're not going to listen and learn and then act on what we listened to and what we learned.

I guess I'm urging members of the committee to do that. I think the people like Ms. Batek who testified before our colleagues are urging us to do this. They are offering their expertise and advice, and I think we need to make use of that expertise and advice. The only way we can do that as a committee is if we actually put it into our report and get the government to respond to it, as Mr. Bagnell has urged us to do.

● (58740)

Ms. Batek went on. After talking about the listening and learning, she said:



This is exactly where SPCG fits in.

Our team can provide the perspectives needed to ensure that every strategy, every plan, every policy and every program aimed at tackling this crisis is viewed through a survivor-informed lens.

Is our work informed by a survivor-informed lens?

If we're not willing to take the time to hear what the survivors have said, to understand and to learn from what they have said, if we're not willing to take the time to document what they have said and what they have advised government to do, in a thoughtful way, if we're not willing to do all of those things and then hold government to account to act on those things, then we're not taking a survivor-informed lens. We're not tackling this crisis that the survivors have faced and so many other people are facing as we speak.

I share that to say, let's take a survivor-informed lens. Let's make sure we take into account what they have to say, and their advice and their expertise and their solutions, the solutions they have brought forward and others have brought forward, and let's write a fantastic report that we can be proud of, that Canadians can be proud of, and most of all that survivors can be proud of.

Thanks very much, Madam Chair.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Baker.

We'll go on to Mr. Spengemann, please.

**Mr. Sven Spengemann:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

Good morning, colleagues. It's good to be back for the continuation of our discussion.

I'd like to reinforce the view, which I think is shared by all members of the committee, that the perspective of victims has to be front and centre. Victims have spoken in various fora, including the media and various parliamentary committees, and it is extremely important that their view is what governs our actions. Everything else is secondary. I want to reinforce the comments made by my colleagues in that direction with respect to that point.

Following the testimony of victims was testimony from experts, from policy leaders, from elected officials, from senior managers and our public service, from academics, and I've made the point, Madam Chair, in previous interventions, from other jurisdictions. I'll get back to that in a moment.

Before I do, before I get into some more substance that will be helpful to the committee in its deliberations, I want to take a moment to talk about partisanship. We're approaching the end of the parliamentary term. Partisan winds are blowing a bit more fiercely now than they were earlier in the year. I think it's important that we keep an eye on what the purpose of a parliamentary committee is, in its formulation, its past history and its past achievements. I made reference to the achievements of this particular committee in the last Parliament, on diversity and inclusion in the armed forces and also sexual misconduct in the armed forces in a previous report.

Partisanship is an important part of who we are. As elected officials, we belong to political parties, and, in many respects, it's very valuable to our democratic process to have different ways of looking at different problems and to make partisan points when appropriate.

This particular issue calls for as unified an approach as we can possibly reach because of its long-standing nature. Its harmful impact on current and former serving members of the Canadian Forces, and the Canadian public at large—victimizing and revictimizing—needs to stop. It needs to stop urgently, and it can only stop if we unify ourselves to the greatest possible extent.

In that respect, I have a suggestion for colleagues.

We have the House of Commons, and as Canadians will know when they watch question period, things will get partisan in the House. They historically have been partisan, and they should be. Partisan division is a useful way of highlighting problems, identifying different approaches and giving Canadians a choice in terms of which approach they should follow.

However, perhaps we can arrive at a conclusion that partisan energies are best directed to the House at large, and this committee, and other committees like it, should take a less partisan approach, should try to take the important testimony of victims, of experts, of elected officials, of others, and try to get to the same side of the table, facing the problem, solving the problem. It may not always work out, but to the greatest extent that we can, we should be non-partisan in our orientation. I'm hoping that with the few remaining sessions we have left, maybe this thought may bear fruit and we can get to a place where we can make some progress, in a manner as unified possible.

Madam Chair, I'd like to briefly take a moment of my time this morning to bring the committee to a report that I mentioned. We've had the benefit of the U.K. experience, as I mentioned. Particularly helpful to the committee is the fact that the U.K., in fairly short order, conducted a review of sexual misconduct and other inappropriate behaviour in the U.K. armed forces in 2019. I've referred to it as the Wigston report, conducted by Air Chief Marshall Sir Michael Wigston. Then, within a year, they went through an implementation and review process. That process led to a progress review that is published, entitled "Unacceptable behaviours".

I want to highlight to members of the committee some elements from that report, and I do that for three reasons, Madam Chair.

The first reason, and I've said this before, is that armed forces like Canada's, which are subject to democratic control and are often working in alliances, be it NATO, UN peace operations, are encountering this problem with the same intensity, the same seriousness and severity, and are taking action right about the same time that we are. There are some cross-references in that work to the Canadian experience, back and forth.

● (58745)

That's reason one. It isn't just a Canadian problem. It's not an international problem but is certainly a multinational problem. It's relevant—not only the moral component—in the sense that sexual misconduct clearly is wrong, no matter where it occurs, but also in that it affects the operational effectiveness of alliances like NATO and UN peace missions and peace operations.

The second point is that I'm raising these experiences in part to encourage the committee to move forward. As my colleague Mr. Baker and others in past interventions have said, it's really time to see if we can come together around some key recommendations.

The message is simply that if other countries can do it, if they can put forward a report and an implementation review in a matter of a year plus, then we should be able to do something similar if we get our collective minds and political energies behind it.

The third reason is the substance of the conclusions, recommendations and insights these other countries and jurisdictions have developed, which in many respects, as I've illustrated, are actually helpful to this committee. It could accelerate our thought process, especially with the tight timeline remaining now, to see what came forward elsewhere, particularly in the U.K., with whom we have close alliances and operational alliances as well. As I'm hoping to submit later on, there is also the case of New Zealand.

But, Madam Chair, I would like to take the committee through some of the insights from this review of the Wigston report, which was published in 2020, just about a year ago. It was commissioned by the Right Honourable Ben Wallace, MP, Secretary of State for Defence.

Secretary Wallace wrote—and this is in the U.K.:

Today's Armed Forces is very different from the one I served in 30 years ago. It is more diverse, more tolerant and more professional. But, as Air Chief Marshal Wigston's 2019 Review found, Defence still has a long way to go if we're to become a truly diverse and inclusive organisation. So, one year on from the publication of the Wigston Review, I asked Danuta Gray to assess what progress was being made. Her findings show there have been some significant improvements. More people from BAME backgrounds are joining us. Diversity task forces have been set up. Policies to tackle [ignorance] have been tightened.

But [the] report also shows some attitudes within Defence remain stubbornly out of step with the values and standards expected of a modern employer. Things must change quickly. We must rid our ranks of any prejudice that besmirches our reputation. We must ensure a zero-tolerance policy towards unacceptable behaviour. And we must improve our training, our education and our communication. Above all, we must make Defence a more welcoming environment to everyone whatever their gender, religion or background. That is why I have accepted [the] excellent recommendations in full.

The top-level message from the U.K. experience, the Wigston report, outlines and summarizes the nature of the problem and gives recommendations. The government committed to an implementation process, and then, immediately on the heels of that, a review process, which we can now benefit from and take note of.

With respect to the U.K.'s approach to implementing its report:

The Wigston Review highlighted that culture change would be necessary requiring authentic leadership, relentless engagement and consistent communication. The recommendations were accepted in full by the then Secretary of State, Rt Hon Penny Mordaunt MP, and published in July 2019.

...

Following the acceptance of the recommendations, work began to establish a central team which became known as the Wigston Review Implementation Team (WRIT). Situated in the CDP's area,

—that is Chief of Defence People's area—

under the Civilian HR Director, it used existing resource primarily from the Civilian HR Directorate with one post provided by the [Royal Air Force]. The WRIT team was in place by October 2019.

So there was very quick expeditious action by the United Kingdom to recognize the nature of the problem and to move forward its implementation and a review. The review took account of the COVID impacts. It also referred to “re-energised momentum” with respect to the Black Lives Matter movement, and this may be important for members of this committee to consider.

The U.K. concluded:

The black lives matter movement sparked protests and a national debate in the UK about racism.

During this period, one of the regular Defence all-staff calls was dedicated to a discussion on race. This discussion not only enabled personnel with Defence from black and ethnic minority backgrounds to share their lived experience, but it also revealed attitudes, which the Permanent Secretary confirmed, [that] have no place in Defence. The strong sense of feeling about the urgent need for Defence to make further progress, both on improving its diversity as well as changing culture and behaviour, led to additional momentum and energy to bring about change.

● (58750)

The Chiefs' Statement of Commitment issued in July 2020 set out bold changes which built on the Wigston Review and are an important signal of intent by senior leaders to change the culture in Defence.

In July 2020, the one-year anniversary of publishing the Wigston Review was used to continue the debate on culture change. A further all-staff dial-in highlighted progress by announcing updated policy, new training opportunities and the launch of a whole-force bullying, harassment and discrimination helpline.

I put this to the committee, Madam Chair: In light of the work on equity, diversity and inclusion that I referred to earlier, which this committee and the 42nd Parliament undertook, the explicit linkage that the U.K. has made between the broader issue of diversity and inclusion and the issue of inappropriate behaviours, primarily directed against women, is an important one and one that is also worthy of our contemplation and potential action

With respect to the complexity of the issue, the U.K. acknowledged that:

Implementation has not been without challenge. The pace at which recommendations were initially implemented...was slower than expected, due to issues with allocation of responsibility and resourcing. Whilst there are a range of explanatory factors to consider, there was a noticeable shift in momentum from Summer 2020.

At the same time as implementing the Wigston recommendations, broader transformation programmes are underway within the single Services and within Head Office. These all recognise people as a crucial component and are therefore closely tied to progress on reducing unacceptable behaviour and creating an inclusive environment where everyone can excel. The different programmes have entailed a variety of approaches and timelines linked in to Wigston implementation work.

The report then goes on to review the progress assessment conducted in the U.K. It refers to training, including the importance of external third party training. Bystander training was also raised as a very important point. It refers to policy and makes a number of recommendations. It also refers to management information, communication, and, very importantly, leadership.

On the point of leadership in particular, the report states that:

Immediate steps were taken to appoint a [Ministry of Defence] Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) with CDP fulfilling the role.... The single Services and the [U.K.'s Strategic Command] have also appointed SROs, fulfilled by the Principal Personnel Officers in the Army, [the Royal Air Force] and UKStratcom, and in the Royal Navy by the Director for People and Training.

Boards now include culture and behaviours as a standing item owned by single executive owners.... Some single Service/UKStratcom Non-Executive Directors...reflected that further conversations about the Wigston Review and unacceptable behaviours would be welcome. The [Royal Air Force] have created a sub-committee of their board chaired by one of the NEDs to oversee Wigston implementation. Within Head Office, this is considered at the Head Office Management Board and the single executive owner is MOD's Chief Operating Officer.

So there have been some very expeditious structural changes in response to the Wigston report, and the inside scheme from the implementation review is important for us to consider, especially in light of the minister's repeated statement that the time for patience is over and that the door is open for ideas on a complete culture change in the Canadian Armed Forces.

Madam Chair, I won't take the committee through all the recommendations that the implementation review has conducted. There is a section titled, "Looking to the future". It's important to note that it accepted, as I have stated, the Wigston implementation recommendations in full. That is extremely important in light of the commitment to Madam Justice Arbour's work here. Getting good recommendations is not meaningful if the government does not commit to accepting them and carrying forward the implementation process.

In the U.K. they have done just that. They have implemented and accepted all of the Wigston recommendations, but the review also led to a number of additional ones. It's very important that, when one conducts a review process and finds out that certain recommendations don't quite hit the mark or fail to deliver the result that they were intended to achieve, additional recommendations be put forward and then also accepted.

Some of the recommendations that were made in addition to the ones I have highlighted over previous interventions are, on training and education, for example, to "provide a service readily available to inexperienced leaders to provide advice about dealing with unacceptable behaviours". This is an issue that, in our estimation, from the testimony we have heard, affects senior ranks.

• (58755)

It's in symmetry with respect to senior officers in the reporting line. To give new leaders, inexperienced leaders, people who are coming up the chain, the resources to deal with unacceptable, inap-

propriate behaviours is absolutely crucial to making sure that the problem actually is solved.

Other recommendations with respect to the complaints process, new recommendations, are: the embedding of targets and commitments to the defence plan; aligning objectives throughout the organization; tracking progress up to the defence board level; adequate resourcing for this work, including to deliver the recommendations made here; increasing best practices; sharing across the organization; and considering using user-friendly feedback in finalizing changes to the service complaint system. These are also new recommendations.

It's important to note that not only was the U.K. mindful of the time frame required to solve the problem as expeditiously as possible, but it also came out with the report. It committed to implementation of the original recommendations. It then conducted a review within a year and, very importantly, on substance committed to making additional recommendations to fine-tune the first set put forward in the Wigston report. This is an approach that has proven it is working in the U.K. under tight time frames.

I call on my colleagues to consider that we need to do something very similar in Canada, under very similar time frames, to make sure that we solve a problem that is pervasive across so many militaries around the world, with whom we work closely. Again, it is a moral issue. It is simply wrong to have this behaviour continue. It is also an operational issue that reduces the effectiveness of our relationships and the way we operationally conduct exercises and important peacekeeping work, be it through NATO, be it through UN peace operations around the world.

We must get on top of this problem. We have examples telling us how to do it, including a granularity of recommendations that in some cases could be directly emulated here in Canada if the circumstances are similar.

I encourage my colleagues to set partisanship aside to get to the same side of the table in the remaining sessions that we have and to do this really, really important work. Survivors deserve nothing less.

Thank you.

• (58800)

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

Go ahead, Monsieur Robillard.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Yves Robillard:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

First of all, I would like to thank my colleagues for their comments on motion M-58 that I introduced last Wednesday in the House. It was about GBA+, and I am sure that the motion could change things for our armed forces.

I would now like to continue along the same lines as before by quoting Dr. Maya Eichler's report on Operation HONOUR. She stresses the importance of taking time to deal with the issue from a historical point of view.

In Canada as elsewhere, there is nothing "natural" about women's history of limited participation in the military. It is the outcome of policies of gender discrimination that only began to be seriously challenged during the 1970s and 1980s. Before that, the military openly upheld a gendered military culture that defined men as the bearers of arms and women outside the sphere of combat. As such, gender differences and inequalities were emphasized and the importance of reinforcing them was seen as central to ensuring military effectiveness.

The history of women in the Canadian military goes back to 1885 (the North-West Rebellion) when women first began to serve as nursing sisters. In the First World War, close to 2,000 Canadian women served overseas as military nurses. The Second World War saw almost 50,000 female enlistees in the Canadian forces. They were called upon to help relieve 'manpower' pressures and release men for combat duty. However, women received unequal pay for equal work, were limited to certain occupations, and did not receive the same post-service benefits as the men...As Pierson writes, the Second World War "set a precedent for tolerating the objectification and harassment of women in the CF". After the war, women were demobilized. While women's enlistment resumed in the 1950s, it remained limited in numbers and to the types of positions open to them. The Canadian military remained a male-dominated and highly gendered institution. Gender discrimination, of course, was not unique to the military, but reflected wider societal and global gender norms.

**The Chair:** Excuse me, Mr. Robillard, can you raise your microphone a little?

**Mr. Yves Robillard:** Sure.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

**Mr. Yves Robillard:** I will continue.

Awareness of the need to end gender discrimination by the military began to grow with the publication of the report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women in 1970. Out of its 167 recommendations, six specifically related to the military's policies towards women. The Canadian Human Rights Act (1978) and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms...lent further legitimacy to the cause of ending discrimination against women by the CAF. Beginning in 1979, the Canadian Armed Forces initiated a series of trials...to investigate the effects of mixed groups, in particular on operational capabilities. While the air force lifted all restrictions on women's participation in 1987 as a result of the SWINTER air trial, the army and navy maintained the ban on women in combat roles.

• (58805)

The feminist movement played a key role in challenging the restrictions on women's full military participation. The National Action Committee on the Status of Women was founded to push for the implementation of the 167 recommendations of the Royal Commission. This included pushing for implementation of the recommendations relating to women in the military.

**Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval:** A point of order, Madam Chair.

**Mr. Yves Robillard:** Can I continue?

**Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval:** I am raising a point of order, so I expect the Chair to give me the opportunity to explain—

**Mr. Yves Robillard:** Yes, but I'm not interrupting anyone.

[English]

Madam Chair, may I continue please, without interruption?

**The Chair:** It's a point of order.

Go ahead, Mr. Barsalou-Duval, and then it's back to Monsieur Robillard.

[Translation]

**Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

I am listening carefully to my colleague Mr. Robillard's speech. It is very interesting. I am learning a lot about the history of women in the army. Unfortunately, I see no link at all between the history of how women were recruited and treated and the motion we are debating at the moment, which is about whether or not there should be a government response to Mr. Bezan's motion.

Could Mr. Robillard explain the link between the two?

If not, perhaps we could go back to the topic we are discussing.

**Mr. Yves Robillard:** Madam Chair, I will say to my colleague once more that, if he had been following my comments in the House last Wednesday, he would have understood that my remarks are directly related to the topic. I'll continue and I will ask him not to interrupt me.

The National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC) was therefore founded to push for the implementation of the 167 recommendations of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women. This included pushing for implementation of the recommendations relating to women in the military. However, NAC struggled with its anti-militarist stance while it lobbied for women's full integration into the military.

The National Action Committee on the Status of Women explicitly did not advocate women's involvement in the military but also strongly argued that the military should not receive an exemption from the Charter. The struggle to end discrimination against women in the military was further advanced by the founding of the Association for Women's Equity in the Canadian Forces in 1985.

At the time, the Canadian Armed Forces had a gendered quota policy—a "minimum male requirement"—for each military occupation, based on a Canadian Forces Administrative Order. The minimum male requirement ranged from 100% in combat roles to 0% in the dental professions.

The Canadian Armed Forces asserted that in some occupations, especially combat roles, mixed-gender units were a jeopardy to operational effectiveness. This gendered quota policy was challenged by a case brought to the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal (*Brown vs. the Canadian Armed Forces*). In 1989, the Tribunal ordered the Canadian military to fully integrate women over the next decade. The CAF leadership resisted women's full integration into combat roles, arguing that their presence would undermine unit cohesion and that women were not up to the physical demands of combat operations.

The CAF had used implicitly gendered arguments about cohesion and operational effectiveness to support its case against women's employment in combat roles. Once again, the Tribunal paid no heed to this institutional resistance. It ruled that an emphasis on equality can strengthen the cohesion which is so highly valued by the Canadian Armed Forces. Operational effectiveness is a gender neutral concept. The Tribunal concluded that there was no risk of failure of performance of combat duties by women sufficient to justify a general exclusionary policy.

As a result of the ruling, all occupations were opened to women, with the exception of submarine service, which was opened to women in 2001, and the Roman Catholic Chaplaincy.

As this brief overview shows, the Canadian military has a long history of banning women from combat roles and incorporating them into other roles depending on the needs. Canada's military leadership long resisted the full integration of women, citing fears that their presence would disturb the cohesiveness of fighting units. In this approach, the military was explicitly constructed as a gender unequal institution. Operational effectiveness, it was argued, required discrimination on the basis of sex.

• (58810)

However, pressure from strong feminist movements and from social and legislative reforms has pushed the Canadian Armed Forces to allow women into command positions.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr. Robillard.

Mr. Barsalou-Duval, you have the floor.

**Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

I had the opportunity to hear the end of the speech by the colleague who spoke before me, but I still did not understand how it related to the topic we are discussing.

However, since this is not a point of order now, I will take this opportunity to also share with you what I would like to say to this committee.

I do not know whether members of the committee were listening to the news or reading the newspapers this past weekend, but I am personally quite outraged that members of the government are filibustering and preventing us from moving forward with the work of the committee. Did we not see General Vance playing golf with two senior Canadian military officers, including a military police commander?

I find it particularly disturbing that General Vance is walking around free, which is still his right, while the government is filibustering again and, more importantly, not saying a word about that. In fact, I have not heard any of my colleagues on this committee say a word about it so far.

So I'm very disappointed and very bitter, because this filibuster has been going on for weeks and could go on for months, while important work needs to be done.

**Mr. Yves Robillard:** Madam Chair, a point of order.

[English]

**The Chair:** Go ahead, Monsieur Robillard.

• (58815)

[Translation]

**Mr. Yves Robillard:** I would just like to remind my colleague that he interrupted me earlier when I was speaking. I was actually doing so in accordance with the Standing Orders, which he is not doing now.

[Technical difficulty ] we are addressing the public right now.

[English]

**The Chair:** All right.

[Translation]

Thank you, Mr. Robillard.

[English]

We'll go back to you, Mr. Barsalou-Duval.

[Translation]

**Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

I am doing this in full compliance with the Standing Orders, since I am talking about the systematic filibustering of the motion, this darned filibuster that is blocking the work of the committee. I do not see how this could be more compliant with the Standing Orders when it comes to the work of the committee.

I see that, at this time, the government is more interested in preventing the committee from doing its work. In a way, this supports the climate of impunity that we see in the Canadian Forces. Personally, I find this behaviour particularly shameful.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr. Barsalou-Duval.

[English]

We will move on to Mr. Bagnell, please.

**Hon. Larry Bagnell:** I thought Mr. Garrison was before me.

**The Chair:** It looks like we lost Mr. Garrison.

**Hon. Larry Bagnell:** I want to first of all compliment Mr. Spengemann on his intervention, on the brilliant idea of the suggestions from other militaries that have solved these problems. The fact that the committees and the reports came up with recommendations that were actually implemented makes it much better information for us, to look at recommendations in the time we have available and on a very complex issue. It's always better when someone has tested the water first. I would like to thank Mr. Spengemann for really adding to this committee.

I would also like to thank Mr. Baker for his continued emphasis on the survivors. I think the military can best be improved by listening to their input and showing that we take it seriously. I can't think that any member of the committee would not want us to do that.

Thanks to Mr. Robillard for his motion in the House, and discussion of the history and importance of women in the military, which is fundamental to coming up with recommendations.

I was quite disappointed in Mr. Barsalou-Duval's intervention. I thought that after weeks, as he said, that the Bloc would finally put their attention on the survivors, on the cultural issue, which I'm going to speak to at length later today, on the cultural issues related to the military, and on the fear of reprisals that survivors have.

He raised an important point about the golf game, which is under investigation now. However, he talked about bitter disappointment, weeks and months of filibustering, basically by the opposition presenting motions that were counterproductive, first of all, for going week after week, month after month, since February, calling witnesses on an email that was anonymous. We didn't even know what was in it. We weren't allowed to know what was in it. This is when we have all these major problems and courageous, real-life victims from the military from Quebec and the rest of Canada whose situations we should be discussing, and the major, very complicated problems that we have brought up a number of times.

Then there was a motion that caused the opposition to continue to have effective filibustering, a motion that any member of Parliament who has served on committees would think unreasonable: that you only have two minutes. I mean, a serious issue that a survivor from Quebec brought up and whether it would or wouldn't be included as a recommendation, that a person would only have two minutes for input for or against, or to improve a recommendation on something that would have such a devastating effect on someone's life, is very disappointing.

I was of the hope that the Bloc would be the first party that would come on side to ask for the removal of the unproductive recommendations, so that we could get on with the major issues related to culture, to reprisals, to the issue of the chain of command.

It is really perplexing that the Bloc, the NDP and the Conservatives would not want a government response to help the men and women in the military through the recommendations that we, as a committee, came up with after so long looking at and identifying the major problems.

● (58820)

I don't think anyone in the opposition would disagree that the major problems are the culture, the fear of reprisals, the chain of command. Why have we gone to all this work if the Conservatives, the Bloc and the NDP do not want a response from the government to show the victims that they were actually listened to and to put some moral persuasion on the government to take action on the recommendations we come up with?

I have more to say on that, but I see Mr. Garrison wants to speak, and I don't want to prevent him from having that opportunity. I'm not sure where he is on the list, but I have a lot more to say on the

culture and also the lack of ability to move forward because of unproductive motions on the table.

I will stop now so that hopefully Mr. Garrison gets a chance to speak, and then I'll come back with the other much longer interventions that I have.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Bagnell.

Mr. Garrison, did we lose you on a technical issue? You just disappeared.

**Mr. Randall Garrison:** Yes, Madam Chair. I emailed you saying that I was trying to log back in. I suddenly got kicked out.

**The Chair:** Okay. I think it's fair, then, that you take back your position in the line, if it was a technical issue. You can go ahead, and then we'll pick up the list from after where you originally were on that list.

Is that acceptable?

**Mr. Randall Garrison:** Yes. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**The Chair:** Go ahead, Mr. Garrison.

**Mr. Randall Garrison:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

I was kicked off while Mr. Barsalou-Duval was speaking, but I want to talk about how serious I think it is for us to be here discussing these motions, given the events over the weekend, because it actually draws a line under what is the important difference between the government and opposition members here.

The original purpose in my mind and as written in the motion for this study was to look at why there was no action at senior levels to combat sexual misconduct, and I probably should qualify that by saying no effective action. No one on the committee can dispute, in a situation while Operation Honour was supposed to be operating, that there were more than 500 sexual assaults, a total of more than 700 sexual assaults and sexual harassment claims filed.

For me, the critical issue here is why there is this lack of action at the senior level. Was this the fault of senior leaders who simply didn't understand this? Was this the fault of a minister or a Prime Minister who didn't want to take responsibility for this? To me, that's the critical question.

I understand if members of the government don't think that's the important question, but it is hard to sit through more than 40 hours of committee time being taken up by reading reports from other jurisdictions and testimony from another committee into the record here.

The government members are pretending that the status of women committee is not about to issue a report that takes into account the survivors' testimony and includes—my understanding is it is expected to include—most of the recommendations that they have been talking about here.

We have this failure at senior levels to fully understand what the issue is here. I think the golf game over the weekend is a serious indication that it persists. It persists at two levels. I cannot believe that the acting chief of the defence staff is still in office this morning. The group that investigates General Vance reports to him, yet he chose to play golf with him over the weekend. No police chief who played golf with someone being investigated by the department would remain in office.

● (58825)

**Ms. Anita Vandenberg:** On a point of order, it was not the acting chief of the defence staff. It was the vice-chief.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Go ahead, Mr. Garrison.

**Mr. Randall Garrison:** I apologize for that error. It was the vice-chief of the defence staff. I misspoke. The fact is that he's still in office and what we have is a statement from the minister saying it's being investigated.

I'm extremely disappointed that we didn't have a statement from the minister demanding his removal or his suspension immediately. The signal this sends to victims throughout the Canadian Armed Forces is that there is a small group of people at the top who simply do not take this seriously and who do not think that victims matter. If you can play golf with a man who is being investigated not only for an email, as one member likes to say, but for a pattern of accusations, which have been made public, of sexual misconduct before and while he was chief of the defence staff, then we have a very serious situation.

Members of the government are taking up the committee's time. They have effectively prevented us from dealing with the study of mental health in the military before Parliament rises for the summer. They have also effectively made sure that we are not dealing with the COVID recommendations before we rise for the summer. This motion is in the form it's in because of the filibuster that has been going on. Why are there suggested time limits? The time limits are there so that the Liberals can't do what they've been doing for the past few weeks, which is talk endlessly and not allow us to get to a vote. If the motions really are counterproductive, then let them come to a vote and vote against them, and then we'll see what happens. However, the Liberals aren't prepared to do that.

They're also talking about recommendations and asking us to proceed with the things we all agree on. Well, we don't all agree on the central purpose of this study. The central purpose is to get at the question of why General Vance was allowed to stay in office as chief of the defence staff for more than three years after the Minister of National Defence was presented with evidence of sexual misconduct, which he refused to look at. Another important question is why General Vance was initially appointed when there were accusations of sexual misconduct at that time. It's these failures to act by senior military and political leaders that allowed this situation to go on and allow it to continue to go on.

Again, what I would have liked to see is the removal of the vice-chief of the defence staff, on a temporary basis at least, to send the signal that this kind of behaviour—sexual misconduct—is understood and is not condoned, and that the government will act. Unfor-

tunately, once again we see a failure to act and a statement simply saying that it's under investigation and will proceed as usual.

I remain bitterly disappointed about the fate of this committee in this Parliament, and bitterly disappointed about the failure of the government to act on sexual misconduct at the highest levels.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr. Garrison.

Go ahead, Mr. Spengemann.

**Mr. Sven Spengemann:** Madam Chair, thank you very much.

Thank you for the opportunity for a second intervention.

Following Mr. Garrison, I think it's quite clear that the motion on the floor at the moment is reflective of the fact—or the discussion around it is reflective of the fact—that members have a different view of what the work actually is. It's not a 180-degree opposite view. It's the view that some members think this is really about one or two key cases and solving them and the accountability that flows from that, notably the case against the former chief of the defence staff, and that is important, but, Madam Chair, there are others on the committee who take the view that this is broader.

This is about this case, but also about the systemic problem, the cultural problem, that permits harmful sexual misconduct to continue at a time when it has been an urgent issue for a number of years now. I've made a point that the fact that it exists elsewhere amplifies the importance of the work this committee needs to do, not just to establish accountability on the one case of the former chief of the defence staff, but also to make those kinds of recommendations that in other countries are now precipitating the kinds of changes that we need urgently to implement here in Canada.

I've argued that to do that we need to get to the same side of the table. We all need to be lined up against the problem—focused on the problem, not focused on the politics. For that reason, I took the view earlier today that this committee really should be seen as a vehicle for a much less partisan discussion than what typically takes place—in the minds of many, quite appropriately—in the House of Commons.

I outlined three reasons earlier why I think it is important that we look at what is going on elsewhere in the world, and I'll repeat them just briefly in light of the most recent intervention.

The first reason is that it really shows us the breadth of the problem as a systemic issue, not just in Canada but across a number of militaries, including two militaries I will refer to that we're working extremely closely with. One is the U.K., which I've completed interventions on. The other is New Zealand, which is part of the Five Eyes. We are engaged very closely on matters of security and defence with New Zealand. New Zealand has done some remarkable work that I will introduce to the committee in a few minutes.

The second reason is to encourage members of the committee to move ahead, to get to the same side of the table and to do the work that has been done elsewhere. We can do this in the course of a few minutes by agreeing to let the parliamentary process inside a committee like it's normally structured take its course, and by coming up with recommendations that are actually helpful and will move us forward. This is in the collective hands of the committee to achieve as early as right now.

The third reason, Madam Chair, is that the substance of the conclusions, recommendations and insights from our friends and allies are important. I think colleagues have listened attentively and will realize that the granularity of recommendations, the relevance of recommendations and also the review processes and the tweaking of recommendations inside a very short period are useful to the committee and are most directly relevant to the discussion that's in front of us.

With that, Madam Chair, I will take a few moments, if I could, to introduce the work that has been done in New Zealand.

In New Zealand also, the work started very recently, in 2019. In that year, the Ministry of Defence in New Zealand commissioned an assessment of the New Zealand Defence Force's progress against what they call Operation Respect. We have Operation Honour here in Canada. Operation Respect is a similar program in New Zealand. There's an exercise to measure how effective the recommendations in that operation were.

This was an organization-wide program that was initially introduced to eliminate harmful and inappropriate sexual behaviours in the New Zealand Defence Forces and improve the culture of dignity and respect. You'll see in a moment, Madam Chair, why this is so relevant to the work that has been going on in Canada.

The program review states the following:

The [New Zealand Defence Force] planned to first focus on creating a new system for responding to inappropriate sexual behaviour, before taking a proactive and systematic approach to changing its culture. Launched in March 2016 by the then Chief of Defence Force, Lieutenant-General Tim Keating, the programme was based upon the Canadian Armed Forces' approach to addressing the same issue.

The reference implicitly here is that it's related to the Deschamps report, which was brought forward at that time.

It continues:

It is important to note that other Five Eyes nations, including Canada, continue to grapple with the complex and difficult challenge of eliminating inappropriate and harmful sexual behaviours in their armed forces. They are also inviting independent reviews and face ongoing scrutiny over their cultural reform efforts.

- (58830)

As required by our Terms of Reference, this is a report of both NZDF's progress against its own Action Plan and an assessment of whether the work is positioned for future success. We assessed the outcomes and impacts of the Operation Respect programme through a strong qualitative approach, given the lack of suitably robust quantitative data and baseline measures.

From August 2019 to February 2020, we conducted an extensive documentation and data review, made base and camp visits, conducted one-on-one interviews and focus groups, and received written submissions. We also sought the experiences and views of independent and external experts who have led previous and concurrently running reviews of the NZDF. We spoke to more than 400 past and present members of the NZDF who shared their personal stories and experiences

of their lives and careers. NZDF's subject matter experts were consulted throughout the review process.

I will quickly interject here. As I said earlier, when we look at policy recommendations, reports, conclusions and reviews thereof, this sometimes takes the form of rather bureaucratic and not necessarily engaging language. However, behind every one of these recommendations there are conversations with victims and survivors in those two jurisdictions. There's an incredibly important human element there, as there is in Canada, that is really driving the reform efforts among our allies, as much as they're driving our efforts at this committee here at home.

To continue, the report says:

We heard that many enlist for the exciting and interesting careers, travel opportunities, professional and leadership development opportunities on offer. Many told us that they have never worked in any other workplace or profession, have had long and satisfying careers, and are proud to be in service to their country. Unfortunately, some also reported experiencing harmful and inappropriate behaviours, including discrimination, harassment, bullying or sexual violence.

Early in our process it became substantively clear that while some progress is being made, we identified a number of recurring, problematic themes about the real challenges that stand in the way of Operation Respect's success. We identified three fundamental challenges:

1. There is a lack of transparency and accountability of the NZDF's progress in addressing and preventing the harm that continues to be experienced as a result of sexual violence and/or discrimination, bullying and harassment.

2. A 'code of silence' prevails and many personnel will not raise a complaint or report serious issues such as sexual violence because they fear the repercussions and do not trust the NZDF processes and systems.

3. The culture of military discipline and command makes it difficult for personnel to raise concerns or speak out against the behaviour or decisions made by their immediate manager or others more senior in the hierarchy.

This report reflects our assessment that unless these [challenges] are addressed, Operation Respect is not well-positioned to succeed in enabling a 'culture of dignity and respect'.

Members of the committee can see how directly relevant these insights and conclusions are, and how much they reinforce the assessment of experts and victims who have come before the committee in the past few weeks and months.

The report continues:

It is clear that this work continues to be critical. The risk or costs of not acting are high for the individuals impacted, the teams in which they work, and to the organisation's effectiveness and reputation. It is imperative that the New Zealand public has trust in the NZDF and a measure of that may be that its people work in an internal environment free from unnecessary harm.

We commend the NZDF for taking the lead to tackle the problem. They have laid the foundations of a positive and ambitious programme of culture change. In 2016, the Sexual Assault Response Team (SART) was stood up along with a two-track disclosure process. This enabled a victim of sexual assault to confidentially access support services, and to do so without notification to command (which would initiate a formal investigation into the incident under the Armed Forces Discipline Act 1971 and the Manual of Armed Forces Law); or without notification to the NZ Police.

These were both significant steps forward, and along with the Sexual Ethics and Responsible Relationships (SERR) training, are the most effective elements of the Operation Respect Programme.



In looking for ways for leadership to build on these important foundations, and to tackle the cultural barriers, we came across the 2010 inquiry by Auditor General Lyn Provost into New Zealand Defence Force payments to officers seconded to the United Nations. It found many of the same cultural issues we evidenced in this report, albeit framed up in a different context (fraud/improperly claiming allowances). The issues around speaking up and its impact on culture was identified as a problem then, meaning this is a legacy issue for leadership.

● (58835)

Culture change within organisations is challenging and takes time. In this context it is essential to hear the voices of the people, even if the messages are hard to hear. Using this knowledge will be vital to the future success of Operation Respect in achieving the kind of organisation to which the NZDF aspires to.

The NZDF itself told us that their traditions, training and lifestyle builds strong allegiances within tight teams. It also said that in no way does this excuse harmful behaviours. It also helps explain why their people may be unwilling to risk team allegiance by reporting harmful behaviours thereby placing the magnitude of the Operation Respect challenge in context. This also indicates a pressing need for safe independent channels for people to use that does not compromise this team allegiance.

We encourage leadership to take the opportunities presented in the recommendations to build greater trust and a stronger system to deal with complaints of harmful behaviours and in particular in dealing with sexual violence.

Our conclusions from this process are that the most significant changes the NZDF could make to build more trust in its organisation and its processes, and make a difference for its people and the victims of harmful behaviours, in particular in dealing with sexual violence are:

1. To be transparent and accountable by engaging independent oversight and monitoring of progress by a trusted body/entity such as the Auditor-General.
2. Provide a trusted external and independent complaints channel (like that offered by the Defence Ombudsman in Australia) to receive, investigate and remedy cases of harmful behaviour and sexual violence.
3. Actively promote the 'Safe to Talk' helpline as an external and independent support channel for victims of sexual harm.
4. Create a comprehensive and integrated data management system to assess progress against clear outcomes measures and report on complaints—

● (58840)

**The Chair:** I'm sorry, Mr. Spengemann. The bells are ringing and in order to continue, we need unanimous consent.

**An hon. member:** No.

**The Chair:** We do not have unanimous consent.

The meeting is suspended.

*[The meeting was suspended at 12:41 p.m., Monday, June 14.]*

*[The meeting resumed at 1:03 p.m., Friday, June 18.]*

● (68500)

**The Chair:** I call this meeting back to order.

*[Translation]*

Good afternoon, everyone.

Welcome.

*[English]*

This is a resumption of meeting number 32 of the House of Commons Standing Committee on National Defence, which started on Friday, May 21, 2021.

If interpretation is lost, please let me know immediately in order for us to ensure that everyone has an opportunity to fully participate in the proceedings. When speaking—as always, I'm saying that to

me as much as anyone else—please speak slowly and clearly. When you're not speaking, your mike should be on mute.

With regard to a speaking list, the clerk and I will do the best we can to maintain a consolidated order of speaking for all members, whether they're participating virtually or in person.

We are resuming debate on Mr. Bagnell's amendment to Mr. Bezan's motion.

Mr. Spengemann had the floor.

**Mr. Sven Spengemann:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

Good afternoon, colleagues.

Let me return in a moment to where I left off when we suspended last time. Just to reorient members and our audience, since March 21, I believe, when this meeting first started, we have had fulsome interventions on a number of key components to our study, and then the interpretations of colleagues on the Liberal side.

There are two fundamental elements to the work that this committee is charged with.

One is the accountability around the instances involving the former chiefs of defence staff, most notably the former chief of the defence staff, Jonathan Vance, who was appointed in 2015. Along the way, he was reported to have made the statement that he “owned” the Canadian Forces national investigation service and as subject to complaints.... His tenure continued into the current government. That's one fundamental element of the committee's work and our interpretation.

The second is how to change the culture of the Canadian Forces, how to make recommendations to get us into a space where those kinds of instances, these instances of sexual misconduct, will no longer happen. Equal importance is attached, in my view, to both of these components.

We've highlighted the importance, in fact the primary importance, of the testimonies of victims, through recent interventions by my colleagues, for which I thank them. We've also highlighted the importance of expert testimony and testimony from elected officials, including the Minister of National Defence. He testified at this committee for six hours, with the conclusion that the time for patience is over and that we need a complete and total culture change. He invited recommendations and ideas for solutions.

There were also very senior officials from the Privy Council Office and the Prime Minister's Office, and in addition to that, academic experts, who testified to us. We have also looked at experiences in other jurisdictions, notably and in some cases, jurisdictions with which we work very closely. They are NATO allies, Five Eyes allies or armed forces with whom we operate in various multilateral and international settings.

These experiences that I've put to the committee are important for a number of reasons. One of them is the systematicity of the issue that we're facing, which extends outside of the borders of Canada. Second, these experiences, to the extent that they have resulted in reports and actually follow-up inquiries and reviews of initiatives that have been undertaken to probe their effectiveness, are illustrative of the kind of thinking this committee should engage in and use its parliamentary mandate, authorities and energies for. Lastly, the actual solutions proposed in other places could be extremely relevant to the Canadian solutions that we are charged with exploring.

In several cases, Madam Chair, there have been references to the Canadian initiatives, most notably the Deschamps report in 2015. When we look at these comparative experiences.... I spent about an afternoon and located a good half-dozen of them. I've presented one in full, which is the U.K. case. I was in the midst of introducing a second one, the experience of New Zealand. What's interesting is that the work started around about the time of the Deschamps report, in 2014 or 2015. A good portion of these inquiries were concluded, and then in some cases they were followed up on last year, in 2020.

Before I get back to the case of New Zealand, I want to briefly draw members' attention to an article on Poland. Poland is a NATO ally of ours, and this article goes back to October 2020. I've said to members, when I talk about experiences elsewhere and the kinds of recommendations other jurisdictions have made, that it often seems bureaucratic. It seems mundane in a way, because the language does not capture the emotion and the testimony, and the injuries, the harm that was inflicted on mostly women in those other jurisdictions who have served or who are serving.

Briefly, then, the experience from Poland is illustrative of the kinds of emotions we have seen here, through victims who have had the courage to come forward and through discussions we have had with colleagues also in other committees, not just ours. This particular article is an English-language Polish publication. It notes:

In a high-profile case from 2017, former Military Gendarmerie officer Karolina Marchlewska accused a fellow soldier of sending her obscene text messages and a senior officer of groping her. When Marchlewska told a superior, he responded by asking her questions about her private life.

● (68505)

The internal investigation into these allegations was later discontinued, and Marchlewska herself lost her job. "I am being made guilty, a perpetrator," Marchlewska told [the media outlet]. "There was no help, either from the defence ministry, or from the command of the Military Gendarmerie."

Captain Bozena Szubinska, a former defence ministry representative for women in the military service, told [the media outlet]...that "the military is unable to cope with violence against women".

"Women do not report [cases] to military law enforcement agencies [because] they are afraid of repercussions, stigmatisation and harassment," she said. Even when they do make reports, "they often, under pressure, withdraw cases at the prosecution stage".

"Worse still," Szubinska added, the method of "solving the problem" is simply to "remove the women who report harassment from the ranks of the military".

"They leave, they become civilians, and everyone is satisfied; they believe that this is [then] no longer a military problem," [she added]. "Nothing could be further from the truth. The crime took place in the military and the military should feel responsible."

That is a very brief excerpt from an article in the Polish press. Again, Poland is a NATO ally and this article was from October of last year. It is the very same problem as ours in a closely allied military, with the same tenor of testimony we've seen here. This reinforces the systematicity of the issue we're facing, and it exceeds our borders.

Let me turn back, if I may, to the introduction of New Zealand's experience. New Zealand had an independent review, dated June 2020, of the progress of its action plan for Operation Respect. Operation Respect, in a very rough analogy, is similar to the former Operation Honour, and it is an initiative launched by the New Zealand Defence Force.

There are five significant recommendations for changes that the New Zealand Defence Force should make, and I think that was the point where I was interrupted when we suspended our last meeting. These five elements are the following:

1. To be transparent and accountable by engaging...oversight and monitoring of progress by a trusted body/entity such as the Auditor-General....
2. Provide a trusted external and independent complaints channel (like that offered by the Defence Ombudsman in Australia) to receive, investigate and remedy cases of harmful behaviour and sexual violence....
3. Actively promote the 'Safe to Talk' helpline as an external and independent support channel for victims of sexual harm....
4. Create a comprehensive and integrated data management system to assess progress against clear outcomes measures and report on complaints and outcomes of incidents of harmful behaviour....
5. Engage leaders at all levels to collectively own and lead the management of harmful behaviour, including sexual violence, discrimination, bullying and harassment in the NZDF.

That's the top level set of recommendations by this review. The fundamental element of the insights they have gained is very similar to the tenor of the discussions that we have faced and that we're dealing with.

The terms of reference of this particular review process had seven elements. The review was meant to:

1. Establish a strategy to change the NZDF's culture.
2. Increase training and education.
3. Provide an alternative way to report sexual assault.
4. Create a dedicated, professional sexual assault response team.
5. Address specific risk factors associated with facilities and alcohol.
6. Recruit more women into the armed forces and increase female representation in senior leadership roles.
7. Monitor and further reduce discrimination, harassment and bullying.

I'll briefly reference the sixth element. The minister has spoken frequently about the pipeline we need to build in Canada to have a significantly larger number of women in senior ranks. It has been referred to at this committee as "male toxicity": the negative and harmful culture that persists primarily in senior ranks. To change that culture, one of the recommendations this committee should turn its mind to with urgency is supporting the creation and maintenance of a talent pipeline that allows female Canadian Forces members to progressively move into senior ranks of the organization.

● (68510)

The New Zealand report is very careful to note that they “were not mandated to investigate or make factual findings about the substance or merit of any specific or individual incidents or allegations”. New Zealand did not suffer the same experience, to my knowledge, that we did with respect to the chief of the defence staff actually being personally subject to complaint while at the helm of an operation that was supposed to achieve the very culture change that we are mandated to address.

They are looking at the second component that I outlined in the beginning: the mechanisms, the recommendations, the pathways to achieving culture change in New Zealand. For that reason, I submit that this experience is directly relevant to what we are doing at this very moment.

The approach that this body took to measuring progress has a number of elements. They discuss the methodology they used and they discuss how they “drew themes from the volume of [different] perspectives”.

On terminology, they make some important observations that would be relevant to consideration of the efforts that are under way before our committee. With respect to “commonly understood terms”, such as “victim”, “target”, “complainant” and “accused” throughout the report, it is a reference to “people who experience, report or are accused of inappropriate or harmful behaviour whether bullying, harassment, discrimination or some form of sexual violence”. They state:

Terms such as rape, sexual assault and sexual violence are frequently used interchangeably and are not intended to align with any legal definitions. In this report we generally use the all-encompassing term ‘sexual violence’ to describe not just physical violence, like sexual assault, but also acts of sexual intimidation that do not involve physical contact.

Direct references to other documents use terminology as used as in the original, such as the Operation Respect Action Plan that refers to both sexual assault and harmful and inappropriate sexual behaviour.

Again, the definitions are incredibly important not only in scoping the reference of the review exercise that’s under way in this case, but also when it comes to the formulation of recommendations and communication with the Canadian public to make sure that we’re sufficiently inclusive and also sensitive with respect to experiences of victims involved.

Their report then, in the section “What your people told us”, talks about the feedback they received from members of the armed forces in the review. They state:

Overall, participants shared a wide range of experiences and opinions.... In this report we have tried to provide a balanced account of what we were told during the course of the review.

Many different situations and experiences were described to us. Not all were related to experiencing or witnessing harmful behaviour or sexual violence. But many of the experiences were painful and distressing in the retelling and involved personal cost to those who shared [them] so frankly with us. Many explained [that] they had chosen to share with us as we were independent and were providing them a safe and confidential place. Many thanked us for what they described as a cathartic experience.

We heard from individuals who have experienced verbal, mental, physical and sexual abuse or violence from colleagues. We also heard of domestic and family violence.

We heard about the serious impacts that such experiences have on individuals’ health and wellbeing.

We also heard [about] how the [New Zealand Defence Force]’s failure to act or [to] resolve situations in a timely way often compounded the original trauma and resulted in highly stressful situations for all...those concerned, including wider personnel and staff.

Personnel, past and present, including senior personnel who were directly involved in policy development, the initiatives that sit under the areas under review and the implementation of the same, shared openly their views on progress or the lack thereof.

To protect the anonymity of individual participants we cannot share the specific details of individuals or the information, opinions or experiences provided to us. One common refrain was that people do not feel [that] they can safely speak out within the [New Zealand Defence Forces].

It is important to understand [that] we are not reflecting back the voices of just a few, but of many.

We [reviewed] two very clear and consistent messages following most group sessions and individual interviews: People were surprised and grateful that we did not ‘just present another Operation Respect briefing’ but [that] we asked for opinions and experiences; and they sought our reassurance that we would “tell it like it is” and make their voices heard. In this report we have endeavoured to do that.

● (68515)

Madam Chair, there are some additional extremely relevant elements that I think I will go back to in a second intervention. I wanted to put this forward to the committee as a reflection of the strong similarity between the experience in New Zealand and what this committee is confronted with, to make sure that we put the testimony of victims front and centre, as my colleagues on the Liberal side have done in the past few weeks of interventions in this particular session of the meeting.

I also want to make sure that we develop not only recommendations that help us move forward but a sensitive way of empowering victims of sexual misconduct to come to this committee. In addition, I want to make sure that in the future, mechanisms are built that raise the confidence of those who are still serving and those who have served to come forward, to bring complaints to be heard and to have the assurance that this committee—the parliamentary committee seized with this issue—will take them seriously and will develop recommendations that will expeditiously bring us into a much better space.

I will leave it there for the moment, Madam Chair, but I would like to come back and present some additional elements of this particular review that I think will be very helpful to members of the committee.

● (68520)

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

We will go on to Mr. Bagnell, please.

**Hon. Larry Bagnell:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

I’d like to welcome Mr. Kelly, if he’s still here. I hope he finds some interesting information today. My comments aren’t related to him on my first intervention today because he hasn’t been at the committee.

It really perplexes me as to why the NDP, Conservatives and Bloc would not want to help—

**Ms. Leona Alleslev (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, CPC):** I have a point of order, Madam Chair.

Just so you know, Mr. Kelly has left.

**Hon. Larry Bagnell:** Okay. Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Alleslev.

Go ahead, Mr. Bagnell.

**Hon. Larry Bagnell:** Thank you.

It's really perplexing to me as to why the NDP, Conservatives and Bloc would not want to help the men and women in the military by having the government respond to the recommendations that we come up with. Why would we have gone to all this work over months if the Conservatives, NDP and Bloc do not want the government to respond to our recommendations and improve the lives of the men and women in the forces and to show the victims that they were listened to? That is the purpose of my amendment.

Yvan Baker and I agree on an item: We came to Parliament to accomplish positive change, to improve Canada. MP Baker asked a very good question in a previous meeting: When we have all retired and we look back at this winter-spring session of Parliament of the defence committee, what then can we say we've accomplished?

Did we agree on many recommendations to help the thousands of victims existing or women existing in the military? No.

Did we do a thoughtful, lengthy debate and give recommendations on the complicated challenges of changing the culture? No.

Did we do a thoughtful, lengthy debate and give recommendations on a second major problem involved, the chain of command? No.

Did we do a lengthy debate and agree on recommendations on the third major problem, the fear of reprisals? No.

Did we help our soldiers around the world survive the terrible COVID pandemic that killed so many? Not yet.

Did we help so many of them afflicted with some...internally tortured with mental health afflictions? Not yet.

Did we help the navy procure needed warships? No.

Did our committee help the air force procure the next generation of needed warplanes? No.

Did we help keep our troops around the world safe? Did we help in Lithuania and Ukraine? No.

Did we address the Russian or Chinese military aggression? No.

Did our committee help make the world safer with our recommendations on peacekeeping? No.

Did we take into serious consideration the hundreds of emails and complaints and the hours of witness testimony or potential testimony to come up with the recommendations? No.

Did we modernize NORAD? No.

I'll tell you what the Conservatives, NDP and Bloc have accomplished. We've had week after week of witness after witness to fully investigate one anonymous email that the person didn't want public, so that no one knows what was in it. At one point, they even suggested recalling witnesses on that email. Since they have caused this endless stalling by refusing to co-operate for the good of the

troops and by trying to force a motion through that would only allow two minutes of debate—the motion that we're talking about—on the serious topics related to improvement for our military.... In a subsequent submission, I'll go into how that just doesn't make sense.

In answer to Mr. Baker's question on what did we accomplish, the fact that the opposition parties are stalling week after week with their unreasonable motion doesn't mean that every member of the committee has accomplished nothing. In fact, a good researcher could do a chart on each member in the past few weeks, outlining how many times a member brought up valuable input from victims to the committee and got it on the record so that it could lead to improvements in the military, how many times a member brought on record input from experts that would help us design recommendations to help men and women in the military, how many times a member brought valuable input from other militaries that have found some solutions to the problems we are wrestling with, and how many times each member has raised constructive input on perhaps the biggest problem we are wrestling with: culture. How many times over the last few weeks has a member discussed the key major problems related to chain of command? How many times has a member discussed the threat of reprisals if a CAF member actually reports sexual misconduct?

In fact, that researcher could also rate the parties on how many times in the last few weeks they each made a positive contribution to those three major problems leading to sexual misconduct in the military: chain of command, fear of reprisals and culture.

I would be curious about the results of that research, but my gut reaction is that Mr. Spengemann and Mr. Baker have made the greatest number of positive contributions to the study by bringing most of the evidence related to those major issues to our committee.

It's not too late for all committee members to contribute. If the opposition parties would stop stalling the retraction of their unreasonable motion and have the government respond to the committee's work, which is what my amendment today deals with we could use various ways to move forward.

● (68525)

One was my suggestion that we quickly go through the recommendations that we can all agree on. I'm sure there would be a number of them. Then we could go into the more difficult ones that we couldn't agree on.

I'll leave it at that, Madam Chair. In my next intervention, I'll get more into the item of culture.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

We'll move to Mr. Baker, please.

**Mr. Yvan Baker:** Thanks, Madam Chair.

I want to thank Mr. Bagnell for his thoughtful intervention, first of all for his kind words, but most importantly, for really summarizing the cost of the political game-playing that the opposition is leading at this committee, and the cost in terms of the positive impact we could be having on a whole series of issues that matter to so many people in so many different contexts, whether that be equipping the armed forces, whether that be our position in foreign conflicts, whether that be securing our own Arctic, our own future and our own interests, or whether that be sexual harassment and sexual assault in the military.

I want to thank Mr. Bagnell for summarizing the opportunity cost, if you will, of the political game-playing the opposition has undertaken since this study began. It has driven us away from delivering the positive results that we should be delivering for folks and, particularly, for members of the forces.

I want to focus our attention on what I think our report and our committee should be focused on, which is addressing the issue of sexual harassment and sexual assault in the military, the issue of addressing the concerns that survivors and victims have raised, that experts have raised over and over again. As much as I and other of my colleagues on the government side have been criticized by some members of the opposition for trying to share with this committee the perspectives and testimony of victims and survivors, I'm going to keep sharing those. I know my colleagues have continued to share that perspective. To me, that should be our focus, not the political game-playing that has been the focus of the opposition.

In that vein, I want to share with you some thoughts that were shared by a survivor, Ms. Emily Tulloch, at the Standing Committee on the Status of Women. When you hear her perspective, I think you'll understand why I'm sharing it. I think it shines a light on what's at stake and why we should be writing a fulsome report with a government response, like Mr. Bagnell has proposed in his amendment, and why I hope that Mr. Bezan will consider withdrawing his motion, which Mr. Bagnell has tried to constructively amend.

I hope Mr. Bezan will withdraw his motion. Mr. Bezan's motion would result in a report that would not allow us to properly and thoughtfully analyze the issues, what we heard, to really identify all the components of the problems that are driving sexual assault and sexual misconduct in the military. It would not allow us to develop and compile the solutions to those problems. It would not allow us, ultimately, to address that problem. Mr. Bezan's motion would not allow us to address the needs of survivors, of victims. They are begging us for that work. They are asking us over and over again to take action. They've been asking us to take action for years. I think this committee should heed their call.

I'm going to repeat one of those calls here today. Ms. Emily Tulloch was testifying to the Standing Committee on the Status of Women. She said:

I joined the Canadian Armed Forces in July of 2018. Since then, I feel like I've experienced a lifetime's worth of sexual assault and misconduct. I'm here today

to tell you that I was raped only one month—one month—into my basic training in Saint-Jean. I was also sexually assaulted during my training in Borden. I have been groped and kissed unwillingly at crew parties and mess events. These degrading behaviours are more common than you think.

● (68530)

On top of all that, I have put up with misogynistic and sexist comments all throughout my career. They range from being told that I only got in because I'm a girl to what an instructor in Borden said to me while looking me dead in the eye: If you've had daddy fix everything for you in your cozy little life, let us know so we can give you a hand.

I believe in the importance of the military. I hope to continue my career and to serve my country to the best of my abilities. My experience with our military justice system, however, has been quite negative. It has left me with a lot of questions about how military police should conduct their investigations. I had three interviews with the military police since I first reported misconduct. Two of those interviews were honestly dreadful. These so-called interviews felt more like interrogation.

I want to pause there for a second, because I think it's important to reflect on what Emily Tulloch is sharing. First of all, she talks about the fact that she was raped one month into basic training in Saint-Jean and then sexually assaulted during her training in Borden. That is what we should be stopping. This is the issue that we should be singularly focused on. We should be focused on solving the problem that Emily Tulloch and others have raised and have shared with us, which is that women primarily, but members of the forces, are sexually harassed and sexually assaulted.

In Ms. Tulloch's case, one month into her training she is sexually assaulted by someone who purportedly is a colleague, who purportedly is to serve, who swears the same oath, who supposedly believes in serving our country and who treats a fellow armed forces member this way. This is what we should be focused on, doing everything we can to come together, shed our partisan labels, write a good report and do right by victims who have suffered in ways I can't possibly comprehend.

Mr. Bezan's motion does not allow us to do that. It prevents us from doing that. It took me over two minutes just to share Ms. Tulloch's story, and Mr. Bezan's motion would force us to write a report where each MP gets two minutes to speak and then, boom, we move on to the next clause or the next paragraph. That would not give us enough time, and it would not be based on consensus. As Mr. Bezan's motion indicates, we'd all just vote on each clause, up or down, and move on.

I think survivors deserve much better than that. I don't understand how you can listen to something like this, to what witness Tulloch has shared with our colleagues, and think that this shouldn't be our priority as a committee. I don't understand why we would pass the motion that Mr. Bezan proposed, which would handcuff us and prevent us from addressing what Ms. Tulloch is telling us.

● (68535)

Ms. Tulloch is not alone. We know that. We've all spoken to that. We know this is a widespread problem. Mr. Bezan's motion effectively would force this committee to look the other way. Even worse than look the other way, it would require this committee to write a report that claims to address this issue when it actually wouldn't. It's worse because it's misleading.

Folks, people are suffering. Mr. Bezan's motion is about grabbing headlines and claiming to have done something when nothing has been done. That's why I hope that he'll withdraw it, not because it's politically convenient, but because it's the right thing to do. I don't know a single person who can't help but be touched by this kind of testimony. This kind of testimony is exactly what we should be....

Every time I come to this committee and I share with you some of these stories, this testimony is on my mind for hours afterwards. Hours after our committee meetings, I'm still thinking about what these women have gone through and are going through. I don't know, but somehow there are members on this committee for whom it doesn't have that impact. Maybe the politics are more important to them than this, but this should be our focus.

Ms. Tulloch talks about how she believes in the importance of the military. She hopes to continue her career. I flag that only to say that Ms. Tulloch testified in a public setting at a House of Commons committee and shared what I've shared with you, and still hopes to serve. I applaud her for her courage, not just for sharing this in a public realm, which takes a tremendous amount of courage, but she's done so and still wants to serve in the military. I think that just demonstrates to what degree Ms. Tulloch and others are asking us to act and are asking us for help. I underline that just to say, colleagues, friends, let's respond to that call. We should be responding to that call.

Mr. Bagnell has proposed an amendment that makes a lot of sense. It basically says that the committee's report needs to be responded to by government so the government is held.... In my view the value of and one key reason for Mr. Bagnell's amendment is that it requires government to put on the record what it's going to do in response to this committee's recommendations, to this committee's concerns. I believe it was Mr. Bagnell who, earlier in our discussion today, mentioned that by eliminating that requirement, which is a standard requirement for committee reports, included by committees that are serious about having government act on their recommendations, by proposing the removal of a government response, which is what the opposition has done, it is basically saying it doesn't really care what the government does.

Why are we all here as MPs if we don't care what government does on an issue like this? Why are we here?

I cannot get my head around why the opposition would go out of its way to say we don't want the government to act on what we recommend. Is it because they don't think it's a serious problem? Is it because they don't put a lot of stock in what we're going to recommend?

Anyway, I think the fact that Ms. Tulloch and others, who are active serving members of the armed forces, have had the courage to come forward, we owe it to them. We have to appreciate how much courage that takes, how important this is and, therefore, how important it is that that be our focus.

● (68540)

In the latter part of what I read from Ms. Tulloch's testimony about her experience, she started describing her experience with the military police. I think it's important to hear the perspective of the people who are interacting with the military police. When I read

Ms. Tulloch's testimony—I should read some more, to be frank, so that we have the full context, in fairness—the fact that she felt the way she did when interacting with the military police speaks to another component of this problem that this committee needs to be taking on, addressing in our report, recommending solutions for and holding government accountable for solving.

I want to read a little bit more from what Ms. Tulloch had to say. She said:

Two of those interviews were honestly dreadful. These so-called interviews felt more like interrogation. During these interviews, I felt that investigators were not treating me like a human being. I was just another case file to them. There was no empathy or humanity. It was so frustrating that I left early during the second interview. I felt like I wasn't being heard and was being treated like a criminal. No one should be treated like a criminal when they are that vulnerable and in need of help.

I'm going to pause there for a moment. Ms. Tulloch is the victim and is describing treatment that I think we could all agree has to stop. She's talking about the fact that she needs help and is instead being treated like a criminal. I'm not professing to be the expert. In fact, all of us who've heard testimony from experts and from survivors need to sit down, as we write the report, and discuss, debate and figure out how we want to tackle this particular element of this much broader problem. This is just one element of a much broader problem, but we need to address this. Again, Mr. Bezan's motion would prevent us from doing that.

Ms. Tulloch went on to say:

The military police need to improve their training for how to conduct interviews of sexual assault victims. There needs to be a specific course made to teach them that victims need understanding and empathy. If there already is a course, then they need to tear it apart and rebuild it from the ground up.

I'm going to pause there again. Is this something we would recommend as a committee? Is it in our report? Will it be in our report? If we pass Mr. Bezan's motion, members who feel strongly about this wouldn't be able to fight for, debate and discuss it. This could get voted out. It might not even be in there for all I know, but it should be in there, as far as I'm concerned. I'm sure many of my colleagues on all sides of the aisle would agree that recommendations to solve this problem of how military police investigate these allegations has to be in there, but we can't do that if we pass Mr. Bezan's motion. Mr. Bezan's motion doesn't allow us to discuss it except for two minutes. Good luck. I've spent two minutes just sharing what Ms. Tulloch told us. How would we ever come to consensus in two minutes?

This is another example of the issues. I'm conveying what Ms. Tulloch told us because I want us to refocus on what, in my view, we should be focused on here, on how multi-faceted and complex the issue is that we're facing, and on how many components there are likely to be to the solution, if we're serious about solving it.

• (68545)

Therefore, how Mr. Bezan's motion would prevent us from doing that, how Mr. Bagnell has proposed a government response.... At the very least, what Mr. Bagnell has done is constructive. He has tried to say that we should at least find consensus that whatever we do recommend needs to be tackled by the government.

What Ms. Tulloch is talking about is just one of the many elements of this problem, and the opposition parties are basically supporting a motion that allows them to say that we wrote a report on this topic. However, it does nothing to address the issues that face survivors—that survivors have faced and continue to face.

I know that others want to speak, Madam Chair, so I'm going to pause there.

I would just ask us to refocus on survivors and on writing a solid report.

Thanks very much.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Baker.

Mr. Garrison, go ahead please.

**Mr. Randall Garrison:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

I apologize. My “raise hand” function keeps going on and off on its own. I'm not sure why that's the case.

I want to take a few minutes to talk about the question that Liberal members keep raising in this committee and in the House, and that is the questioning of the motives of opposition members in dealing with this study. I raised earlier with the chair that I think this is actually a question of privilege. I think it is a violation of the rules of the House of Commons to reflect on the motives of other members and, in particular, to reflect on the way they do their jobs. Even if it's not found to be in violation of privilege, it's clear that it's not productive. We can sit all day and argue about motives and we will make no progress on anything.

I have to say on the charge of partisanship, at the risk of committing the offence that I'm actually complaining about, that I think this may be a bit more about projection on the part of Liberal members than it is about the reality we're facing.

Let me talk about my motives on this study very directly.

I'll talk first of all about why I believe this study is important and what I believe this study is about on principle. The purpose of this study, from the beginning, has been to look at why there was no effective action to combat sexual misconduct in the military over the last six years and, in particular, why no action was taken in 2018 when allegations of sexual misconduct were made against General Vance, why he was allowed to stay in charge of Operation Honour for nearly three years after that and why he was even given a salary increase.

The Liberal members persist in ignoring the fact that the status of women committee is conducting a study on what should be done in the future to address sexual misconduct. They are the ones who heard from victims. They are producing a report with those recommendations, which I understand will be tabled shortly in the House of Commons. For me, the key question here is that all those good

recommendations that I believe the status of women committee will make will come to no good end if we don't understand why all the good recommendations made by Madam Justice Deschamps six years ago weren't implemented and didn't cause progress on this problem within the military.

How did we face more than 500 sexual assault cases while Operation Honour was in place? Why did we face a total of more than 800 cases, when you combine sexual assault and sexual harassment, while Operation Honour was in place?

All the good recommendations that any House of Commons committee can make will come to naught if we don't understand why the previous recommendations weren't followed, weren't implemented and there was no progress. To me, that is being concerned about survivors and helping survivors understand why nothing happened in their cases, and it's about future survivors and making sure there aren't as many as we've had in the past, and in fact trying to achieve the goal that there will be no more survivors of sexual misconduct. If we don't know why no progress was made, we'll never get there. That is the central part of this report.

Now I want to speak more directly and personally about my motivations in this study and how much I believe that this is about supporting victims.

As an adult survivor of child abuse, I know a lot about being a victim of sexual assault. I know a lot about what it feels like to try to tell your story and not be believed. I know a lot about what it feels like to talk to people who should have known or who did know and took no action. I know a lot about how it feels when no action is taken, and you find later, as in my case, that there were eight other victims of the same behaviour, some of them very close to me. So I do resent being told that I don't care about survivors because of the political positions I might be taking here. I resent it a great deal.

It took me a long time to accept that what happened to me happened as a child, but when I tried to bring these things forward as an adult, I faced all those same challenges that survivors of sexual misconduct in the military face now. Therefore, I believe that coming to a conclusion and examining very carefully why effective action didn't happen is taking the part of survivors and is the most important part of what we can do in the defence committee.

The status of women committee has heard from many survivors. They've heard much of the testimony that's being repeated here. It is shocking and disturbing testimony. There is no doubt about that, but as I said, the status of women committee, I understand, is very close to tabling their report, which will have recommendations about that.

• (68550)

I will leave that there, but I really will not tolerate people arguing that, because of what I think is important here and the way I wish to approach this, I don't care about survivors. It's just not true on principle and it's certainly very untrue personally.

Let's be clear. This is about the Minister of National Defence's record over the last six years. It's not about who he is as a person. Certainly, and I want to be very clear, the Minister of National Defence is not the victim here. The victims are those who were subject to sexual misconduct on his watch and who saw no effective action taken against it.

Let me turn to what I've said before: There needs to be a rule against gaslighting. There needs to be a rule against this creation of an alternative universe here. The reason we haven't gotten to the report on mental health and the reason we haven't gotten to finish the report on COVID is the Liberal filibuster that's been going on, whether it was on a previous motion about who was to be called as a witness or the motion in front of us. The Liberals say they don't understand why a motion would have time limits. The Conservative motion, it seems clear to me, has time limits in it because of the Liberal filibusters preventing us from being able to reach conclusions and issue a report.

The members go on and on about why a committee report would not ask for a response from the government and how it always happens, but that's not true. The justice committee just issued a report on coercive and controlling behaviour, and the committee did not ask for a government response. Do you know why? They said the government had already testified before the committee and the government needed to get busy on the recommendations rather than writing a response to the committee. There was more important work to do than responding to the committee.

It isn't true that every committee report always asks for a government response. It's certainly not true that not asking for a response means you don't think it is an important issue. You might, in fact, think it's something the government should get busy on rather than spending time coming back to tell us in committee what they already told us many times.

I would very much like to have finished the report on mental health in the Canadian military, but Liberal members, including the chair of the committee, made the decision to stay on the topic of sexual misconduct, despite the offers of the opposition to finish the reports on mental health in the military and COVID in the military and then return to this question. Those overtures were rejected. I believe it was a form of placing pressure on the opposition members to give up our inquiry into why there was no effective action, in order to get to the reports on COVID in the military and on mental health.

Before someone says that never happened, I'll just remind honourable members that I don't delete my tweets. I don't delete the text messages that I receive from people. I hope that members won't bother denying that this was a pressure tactic placed on opposition members.

Where are we now? If we don't finish our report today, it will not be tabled before we rise for the summer. The Liberal filibuster today ensures that will not happen. That also means we will not finish the report on mental health in the military. It means we will not finish the report on COVID in the military. Given the sabre-rattling occurring all around the House of Commons, this in fact may be one of the last meetings of this committee in this Parliament. It is

not the opposition that has blocked progress on all these other topics; it is the consistent filibustering by the Liberals.

Now, I'm not reflecting on why the Liberals have done this. I, frankly, don't understand it. We've been trying to get to the bottom of why there was no effective action taken against General Vance, why the recommendations of the Deschamps report weren't fully implemented and why sexual misconduct is still rampant in the Canadian military. I believe that answering those questions is the central task before us as the defence committee. I'm very disappointed that the Liberal filibuster prevents us from answering those questions.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

• (68555)

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Robillard, you have the floor.

**Mr. Yves Robillard:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

In order to understand the problem of misconduct in the Canadian Armed Forces, the CAF, we have to understand the prevailing culture in the CAF. As my colleague Mr. Spengemann has done, I will deal with the subject of the culture in the CAF.

As Dr. Maya Eichler points out:

...even in an allegedly gender-neutral military, military culture continues to reproduce warrior masculinity as the ideal if there is not a concerted effort to change the culture. While the 1989 tribunal ruling led to the removal of legal barriers that discriminated against women, the military's gendered culture was largely left intact. This became evident in the continued challenges to women's full integration into the CAF.

This is a very important point, because only by observing the trauma caused in the past will we be able to avoid trauma in the future.

Soldiering remained a gender-specific, male experience. As research based on interviews with female soldiers reveals repeatedly, women in the military face a catch-22: being perceived as too masculine or too feminine. In order to be recognized 'real' soldiers, women are encouraged to perform masculinity while maintaining their femininity. Common themes reported are: having always to prove themselves, being seen as less capable, being singled out, being treated like outsiders, being demeaned, sexually harassed, asked to perform feminized tasks, and more.

Once again, we can see that this is a long-standing culture. As a government, this is what we must be tackling.

These themes illustrate how unequal gender norms persisted, despite an official policy of employment equity and gender neutrality (Taber 2009). It has remained up to individual women to find "strategies to successfully negotiate their participation and identity or leave the military".

As a result, women's representation in the CAF is disproportionately low (standing at approximately 15%), and uneven across the organization. Women are still concentrated in occupations stereotypically associated with femininity—medical, dental, and clerical work—and underrepresented among the senior leadership.



We must give serious consideration to these factors in our report and we must allow the government to give a response. Women's limited integration is particularly evident when it comes to combat roles. More than 25 years after the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal decision, combat roles remain almost exclusively staffed by men and closely tied to a masculinized warrior image. In 2016, only 2.5% of the combat personnel in the regular force, and 5.5% in the reserve, were female.

Media coverage of Canada's war in Afghanistan illustrated the ways in which gender-neutrality became a key device for understanding the place of women within the Canadian Armed Forces. Captain Nichola Goddard's death in 2006—the first death of a female Canadian soldier in combat—led to a spike in media reporting devoted to female soldiers deployed to Afghanistan. Military spokespeople and CAF members who were interviewed continued to assert that gender played no role in the military.

● (68600)

For example, an article on Captain Goddard's death in the *Toronto Star* quoted a Department of National Defence (DND) spokesman as saying that the Canadian Armed Forces and the Department of National Defence regard a soldier as a soldier. No emphasis is given as to gender. The notion of gender neutrality was an explicit strategy of DND in managing public relations around the death of Captain Goddard.

An internal email exchange released under Access to Information shows that there was a real effort to downplay the gender of Captain Goddard. One of the emails states that everyone in theatre is a soldier.

Dozens of media requests to interview or profile women in combat roles were declined. To try to remove attention and emotion from the gender issue, the Department of National Defence was concerned about a female combat soldier's death and the public reaction it might trigger. They therefore chose a gender-neutral approach in response. As Claire Turenne Sjolander and Kathryn Trevenen point out, it seems possible that Captain Goddard's own assertion of her gender-neutrality was not a simple affirmation of gender integration, as the military and press assert, but rather, a common and tactically smart response to the high cost of being a woman in a highly masculinized environment. This message was reinforced by public statements from female soldiers. Goddard herself did not want to be singled out for being a woman. She made a concerted effort to fit in with her male colleagues. Similar statements were made by other women who were interviewed by the media. For example, Major Eleanor Taylor, Canada's first female infantry commander in combat, made it plain that she did not want attention for being a woman when male company commanders were doing similar jobs. "I don't really consider it relevant [that I am a woman]," she said. "The fewer people in my organization think about it, the better."

Gender neutrality places the onus of change on female soldiers. Gender neutrality means that women are expected to fit into the norm of military masculinity; therefore, gender neutrality does not drive military culture towards change, it allows it to remain unchanged. Indeed, there is research that shows the persistence of a gendered military culture despite the official posture of gender neu-

trality. Donna Winslow and Jason Dunn have argued that the combat arms in particular "emphasize the values and attitudes of the traditionally male-oriented military organization and, in particular, masculine models of the warrior, thus resisting female integration". For example, the prevalence of misogynist and homophobic attitudes among male combat personnel was documented in a 2005 study conducted by the CAF.

Even as legal barriers were removed, an ideal of soldiering centered on the male warrior undermined women's social integration into the military, especially in combat roles.

Once again, we must really consider this as a factor in our response, and we must allow the government to provide a response so that the matter can be settled.

● (68605)

As Taber argues, "The employment equity policies of the Canadian military do not counteract the embedded ideology of the warrior narrative." That gender neutrality was indeed not sufficient to change a deeply gendered military culture was confirmed by the Deschamps Report.

Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

Mr. Spengemann, go ahead please.

**Mr. Sven Spengemann:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

I want to start by thanking our colleague Randall Garrison for his passionate intervention just a few moments ago. He and I served on this committee in the 42nd Parliament. I have a great deal of respect for him. We've done some great work together, including, as I mentioned in previous interventions, the report on diversity and inclusion in the 42nd Parliament, through this committee, which also made reference to sexual misconduct.

With respect to other committees doing their work—he mentioned the work going on in the status of women committee—Madam Chair, I think it's important for us to keep in mind that each committee is the master of its own destiny. Just because one committee is doing a report doesn't necessarily mean that another committee should or should not do a similar report.

In this case, one might well argue that, in fact, if two committees were to come to similar conclusions, this would strengthen the importance of the issue and would further catalyze government action. In fact, it's the systematicity of the issue that's the opportunity for this committee. We have the chance to study the case of the former chief of the defence staff, the behaviour we've been focused on for the past months and also the question of culture change, and to put forward recommendations or a report that addresses this issue in its entirety and really gets to the bottom of what the challenge is.

I want to circle back for a moment to the submissions I had made on New Zealand. I want to put to colleagues that this independent review of their operation in New Zealand, which is called Operation Respect, exposes in a non-partisan way some of the reasons—or the questions, anyway—that Mr. Garrison was pointing to as to why it is so difficult to achieve action, or has been difficult here in Canada since the Deschamps report. Even with a commitment from government, there are structural and systemic barriers that the New Zealand case exposes, which this committee could and should focus on and make recommendations to overcome.

I will outline some of those for the benefit of members. I will conclude with a couple of portions from that report on culture change. I understand that my colleague, Mr. Bagnell, wishes to address that issue later. I think that will connect well with what he will likely say with respect to the importance of culture change.

In New Zealand, the key question before this independent review committee was the following: “What progress has the [New Zealand Defence Force] made in creating a culture of dignity and respect through the implementation of its Operation Respect Action Plan?”

The independent review concludes that:

The initial Operation Respect Action Plan and work was well resourced and commenced quickly, with energy. The successful implementation of the Sexual Assault Response Team (SART) and the two-track disclosure process is a significant step forward. These features, along with the Sexual Ethics and Responsible Relationship (SERR) training, have become the positive face of Operation Respect.

The [New Zealand Defence Force] laid the foundations of a positive programme of culture change, but it has not managed to maintain a consistent and thorough approach to its ongoing strategy or implementation. Momentum, visibility and focus have been lost.

Again, this is a non-political, non-partisan message from New Zealand explaining that, despite this initiative, progress was slow and not optimal. It continues:

Despite the positive efforts, overall there has been insufficient progress since the plan was launched, in 'creating a culture of dignity and respect' generally and in preventing or promptly addressing harmful behaviour, including sexual violence specifically.

We were also asked to assess: Whether the NZDF is well-placed to achieve the key actions and outcomes described in the Action Plan (by assessing whether resource allocation and organisational structures and processes are appropriately configured to achieve success)?

The conclusion is:

It is our view that at this [New Zealand Defence Force] is not currently positioned to drive the change required given the capacity and capability challenges in strategy, planning, resourcing and budget, compounded by three fundamental challenges and a number of other barriers to progress.

The report outlines the following:

We set out below three key reasons why cultural change has been hard to achieve:

1. There is a lack of transparency and accountability of the NZDF's progress in addressing and preventing the harm that continues to be experienced as a result of sexual violence and/or discrimination, bullying and harassment.
2. A 'code of silence' prevails and many personnel will not raise a complaint or report serious issues such as sexual violence because they fear the repercussions and do not trust the NZDF processes and systems.
3. The culture of military discipline and command makes it difficult for personnel to raise concerns or speak out against the behaviour or decisions made by their immediate manager or others more senior in the hierarchy.

• (68610)

Again, the things that we've heard from various sources here in Canada are reinforced by the experience in New Zealand, without any partisan or political or even parliamentary overtones.

Under “Barriers to progress for Operation Respect”, there are 12 barriers outlined in summary format, as follows:

1. The organisation's culture is changing slowly but it is difficult to break the 'code of silence.'
2. The strategy for culture change needs to foster collective ownership.
3. Operation Respect is driven from [headquarters] with varying levels of buy-in at camps and bases.
4. The purpose and scope of the programme is too broad, has lost focus and is not well understood.
5. Communications are not well received and there are 'branding' challenges with the programme.
6. Leaders need more tools, support and incentives to own and drive the change.
7. Leadership structure and reporting lines for Operation Respect have become confused.
8. The budget for the programme is insufficient to drive significant change.
9. The roles and responsibilities of those who manage complaints are unclear.
10. The military justice system creates barriers to reporting harmful behaviour or sexual violence.

I just want to flag here the important intersection, which was outlined by my colleague Ms. Vandenberg at a previous session, between this work and the work on military justice.

The list goes on:

11. Without good data collection and management, it is not possible to understand the issues, assess and monitor change, or reduce risk.
12. Monitoring and reporting of progress are rudimentary.

Again, there are some insights here that very directly, with the committee's collective will, could be mapped onto our experience here in Canada and move us forward out of the current logjam we find ourselves in. We could actually make some very good progress on the issues.

The review body made some more specific findings on the action plan. The action plan had the mandate of establishing a strategy to change the New Zealand Defence Force's culture. The review found that change was not significant or fast enough and that the prevailing culture continued to be problematic.

The action plan had the mandate to increase training and education. The review found that the sexual ethics and responsible relationships training was well received and opened a difficult dialogue but needed to be embedded in all training. I had made previous recommendations or interventions on the issue of training.

The plan was asked to provide an alternative way to report sexual assault. Again, that issue is directly relevant to what we're talking about here. The review did not make a finding on that but did not report any progress.

The action plan was to create a dedicated sexual assault response team. The conclusion was as follows:

- a. 'Two-track' response to sexual violence is an excellent initiative but the Sexual Assault Response Team...is stretched and fragile.
- b. Need an alternative avenue, independent of the [New Zealand Defence Force], for reporting and seeking support for victims of sexual assault.

Again, the tenor and the relevance of these kinds of recommendations, conclusions and insights are undeniable and, directly, are the kinds of things we should be doing here as a committee.

The action plan was asked to address specific risk factors associated with facilities and alcohol. That's an issue that we haven't broached in detail, but there are some insights, including the fact that "Drug usage is an increasing concern" and that "Alcohol consumption may be decreasing, but is still a major problem with issues to address." Also, initiation and hazing in the New Zealand Defence Force continue.

The action plan was asked to recruit more women or to recommend ways to recruit more women into the armed forces and increase female representation in senior leadership roles. The conclusion there is that "Progress is being made, albeit slowly." Again, I flag here, for the committee's reference, the minister's commitment to creating a talent pipeline of women who will move into senior ranks expeditiously within the Canadian Armed Forces.

Lastly, Madam Chair, the action plan in New Zealand was asked to monitor and further reduce discrimination, harassment and bullying. The review found that there was slow progress and that "The issue was widespread and systemic, without pathways or processes for support or resolution."

I raise these issues to indicate the systematicity of the problem that armies are facing around the world, including in New Zealand. This analysis, again, is independent. It's free from any political interference. It should underscore for members of this committee and the Canadian public some of the structural and cultural obstacles we're facing here in Canada. We should turn our minds expeditiously to ways to break that status quo and to get us out of that impasse.

If I may, Madam Chair, there's reference in this report to the fact that the organization, and by that I mean the New Zealand Defence Force, is changing slowly, but it is difficult to break the code of silence.

- (68615)

This will connect us with comments that I think colleagues on our committee will make subsequently on culture change. I'd like to just make reference to some of these conclusions. The report states:

Operation Respect [in New Zealand] is perceived by many as a largely positive initiative that has acknowledged some of the negative issues within the NZDF's culture.

The common view of long-serving military personnel is that the NZDF culture has changed in the past decade or two, mostly for the better. References were made to decreased sexism, racism and drinking.

However, the degree to which Operation Respect may have contributed to this over the past three years is unclear. Progress may be due to longer-term societal and generational changes, along with New Zealand-wide behavioural change strategies such as anti-drink driving and the White Ribbon anti-violence campaigns.

Harmful behaviours continue to impact military and civilian personnel. Numerous disclosures were made during the review including emotional and physical abuse, and sexual violence.

Forms of discrimination, harassment and bullying were shared with us that are unacceptable and do not reflect NZDF core values. These are not limited to any one area of the organisation and include military on military, military on civilian, and civilian on civilian.

These behaviours were frequently in stark contrast to the core values the NZDF expects of all personnel. As an illustration, people do not have the courage to speak out; harmful behaviour towards colleagues compromises commitment and comradeship; and there is no integrity in choosing to do the wrong thing. Others have noted the importance of the NZDF being seen to be living by these values.

Madam Chair, I submit this as an important reference point on the challenges that New Zealand is facing with respect to culture change. They also call for collective ownership. They also call for the importance of this being taken on board at the leadership level, at the highest level within the NZDF.

The report states:

We could not find evidence of a clear change management approach or phased plan to support current and future work in the programme. Many spoken with said that they believe the approach is reactive or tick-box, more about making the NZDF 'look good' rather than changing the culture.

We note that over recent years there has been a number of internal or NZDF commissioned reviews and audits. These have generated extensive 'to do' lists which have perhaps become additional tasks to tick off, before prioritising, implementing and embedding core aspects of the programme.

We identified a strong perception that many projects, including those related to Operation Respect, are introduced but not fully embedded before another initiative is launched.

Again, we've seen similar developments here. The culture change hasn't materialized. The minister, again, has said that the door is open. The time for patience is over. The culture change needs to be total and complete.

Again, Madam Chair, my point has been, from the outset, that unless this committee seizes itself with the question of culture change in parallel to the question of the accountability of the former chief of the defence staff and the investigation surrounding him to the extent that political discussion of that investigation is even appropriate, unless we are invested in the question of culture, we will not create the value for the Canadian Forces that is so urgently needed. I'm very grateful to hear that my colleague Mr. Bagnell will also address the issue of culture change. I just can't understand for one second why that could be or should be sidelined.

I mean, yes, there's an important study going on at the status of women committee. Again, that committee also is the master of its own destiny. There's nothing that restricts it from learning about the defence culture and inviting witnesses from defence.

This, Madam Chair, by virtue of its mandate, is the committee in the House of Commons that is seized with defence questions. If we were to decide that for some reason the question of culture isn't relevant to our work or that we should not make recommendations on it, I think we'll have lost a tremendous opportunity. It isn't just about the case of the former chief of the defence staff. That's the emblem, the symptom of the problem that now has nationwide attention. Again, the real work is the iceberg below.

Once again, I can do nothing else at the moment because we are shackled to a view that we should not use our parliamentary procedure to actually debate these potential recommendations in a meaningful way. I can do nothing more but repeat the argument that we must do this work and that we owe nothing less to the current, future and past serving members of the Canadian Forces and to the Canadian public.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

• (68620)

**The Chair:** Thank you.

We move to Mr. Bagnell, please.

**Hon. Larry Bagnell:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

I want to address Mr. Garrison, but before I do, I want to first of all say thank you to Mr. Baker. He always has such moving testimony on the people who were really affected and why we're all here. I think it brings us back to thinking about how serious it is and how we should be trying to find solutions. There are people who, through no fault of their own, have had such terrible situations when they've entered to protect our country in such an honourable profession.

I'd like to thank Mr. Spengemann. Who would have thought that our study could have so much added intellectual wealth from other militaries, which had the same issues and came up with suggestions that we can think about? Because it's all in the testimony, Madam Arbour certainly will be able to look at, in great detail, all of the things we've put on record in our committee as she goes through her important work.

Also to his point, which I hadn't thought about, how powerful it would be.... I mean, we're the first committee doing this. We're going to try to continue but how powerful it would be to have two sets of similar recommendations go to the government, to Madam Arbour, to really try to get action to an intractable problem.

I want to talk to Mr. Garrison. Sincerely, he moved me. His personal story...that took some courage, so a huge commendation for that.

I think he made a very good point about not impugning motives. I think that's the way Parliament should operate. I've thought about that throughout this committee. It's very hard sometimes in a partisan environment...and I've tried not to.

Mr. Garrison, if I have at any particular time done it, I certainly apologize for that. I've certainly tried not to do that. I'm sure he would support that right across the board.

I'm sure that our members have been impugned at certain times in these committees. Mr. Garrison, Elizabeth May and I should

maybe do an analysis of question period for a few days, to see if we can see, both in questions and answers, impugned motives. Elizabeth May has made some great input on trying to improve the decorum and what happens in Parliament. Certainly what Mr. Garrison said, I think is not confined to this committee, but should be a widespread concept that's spread more often.

I just think that we have a bit of a different opinion, Mr. Garrison. I'm going to go into something later to show you my sincerity. I wrote it a week ago, actually, to say that I believe in your sincerity. On the lack of progress, which he said is very important, both of us have mentioned numerous times the many instances, the hundreds of instances, that continue to occur and have been for decades.

In the committee in the last couple of weeks, I've mentioned a couple of times how complex this is. I've explained, and I will explain—not in this intervention but in my next one, on culture, which is fairly lengthy, which I worked on at home—how, just because you make rules, for instance, a training rule, or this and that, it doesn't necessarily solve the problem. It doesn't stop the problem. That's why this is so complex.

I think where we differ is on the aspect that nothing has been done. It would be a lot worse, actually, if nothing had been done. The point that he and I have made about the ongoing cases shows the complexity of the problem and why we have to.... As I've said several times in committee: To a complex problem, there's no simple solution.

• (68625)

However, since this minister has come in, we have made efforts to ensure that victims feel supported through the process. There's a case management system to ensure cases are investigated and resolved in a timely manner. There's increased training from experts that is victim-centric and accessible to all CAF members no matter where they work. There's ongoing work on a review of unfounded cases.

As all members know, there was the passing of Bill C-77, with a declaration of victims' rights that puts victims at the core of the military justice system. There's the launching of "The Path to Dignity and Respect", a strategy for long-term culture change. On Bill C-77, for victims, we're going to consult the victims. We're working on consulting the victims to draft regulations for this bill. We've consulted federal partners, including the SMRC, which we've talked about at length in previous meetings, and are developing an online survey to consult as many victims as possible.

I'm sure everyone on this committee and the minister, numerous times, have said any type of inappropriate sexual behaviour is totally unacceptable.

I went through close to an hour of things that have been done. I think it's disingenuous not to acknowledge those facts. Obviously, as Mr. Garrison and I have said, there are numerous things still to be done. That's why we should be dealing with these serious types of issues that we've been talking about for the last couple of weeks.

Mr. Garrison, are you able to hear me? Okay. It's just to show you that the words I'm saying now are not in response to what you just said but I wrote them, I think, a week ago Sunday night or something last week on this.

I was saying at the last meeting that Mr. Garrison convinced me more of his sincerity by acknowledging the questions around General Vance's appointment. Our study is about sexual misconduct in the Canadian military, including issues related to General Vance. Mr. Garrison is the only member of the committee who has made it clear that General Vance's related issues are most important for him, and he has every right to do so. I think he sincerely believes that. As I mentioned in a previous meeting, he did some of the best questioning of one of the witnesses related to that.

I have some lengthy input, but for the moment, rather than giving my lengthy input on culture, which I'll do in another intervention, I'll just talk about Mr. Garrison's choice. We each have our priority of what's most important in our study, so in respect to Mr. Garrison's sincerity, I would like to make my case, too, while respecting him.

I'm not the least bit expert in this major problem in the CAF, which is why I base my views on the testimony of victims and the experts. When I get to my lengthy input on culture, I'll actually refer to the experts again—to an expert referring to experts.

From what I understand from the experts and victims we've heard from, this problem goes back decades, far into the previous century. The culture in this and other militaries is one of the biggest, if not the biggest issue, but it's probably the biggest. In another intervention I'll explain how it supports what I've been saying earlier, that you can make technical changes, but that doesn't, in itself, solve the problem. One of the experts will say that.

A tiny fraction of all incidents are actually reported, and the two major causes of hesitancy to report are the location in the chain of command of reporting and dealing with an incident, and the fear of reprisals, both emotional and to someone's career, in which they've invested their life.

- (68630)

From my perspective, if these are the major issues, why would they not be what we're coming to grips with and designing recommendations about—to restore the military to a safe workplace and to honour the courage of the victims who have come forward?

Now I'll turn to my views on Mr. Garrison's view, which he has every right to have, as I said. I think he sincerely believes, and I appreciate his thoughtfulness, that the issues related to General Vance are the most important part of the study. In response, I would suggest the following.

There are hundreds of perpetrators, a number at the senior level. Why would we base our entire study and weeks and weeks of testimony from witness after witness on an anonymous email related to

General Vance that no one was allowed to know what was in? When we know of or suspect an offence, it is turned over to investigative authorities. That was done within about 24 hours. General Vance is retired so he's not going to have any role in solving the pressing issues we're trying to solve. He's already under investigation. We don't have to do that and we shouldn't be doing that.

I've tried to put myself into those shoes. If I were told there was an anonymous complaint about any member of this committee and I wasn't allowed to know what it was about, and it had been immediately turned over to the investigators, who went as far as they could because they were refused the evidence, what would I do? Would I ask that they be kicked out of caucus or some other type of penalty? I definitely could not have mounted a campaign. I'd have to give credit to months of meetings with witnesses to such an email, which I didn't know what was in it.

I've heard Mr. Garrison's view. I appreciate it, but for all the reasons we have heard from the experts and the survivors, they have outlined the major causes of this sexual misconduct in the military. For the sake of the men and women in the military and to honour the survivors, I think we should return to thoughtful discussion of their solutions to the complex problems.

I just want to comment on the other reports. The draft reports on mental health in the Canadian Armed Forces and the impact of COVID-19 on the armed forces are sitting unreviewed, because we have had all these emergency meetings and motions to expand our particular report. As you know, we had a meeting on April 26 to start considering the report on COVID-19 in the CAF, and I believe we made some good progress. Despite this, there was a 106(4) request that forced us to further delay this report. We haven't gone back to the review since. There's nothing that requires us to finish this report we're working on now before we could proceed to those reports. I know Mr. Garrison is particularly passionate about one of them.

I think our committee's priority should be the report on sexual misconduct. Opposition members know that they could move to proceed to any of our three outstanding reports and they would have our support to do it. We can't do that while they're pursuing a motion to limit our ability to properly debate and amend this crucial report. That is their choice. We're not blocking them if they want to take that step and go to those important reports.

I hope Mr. Garrison knows that I'm sincere in my thoughts on where he's coming from and my technical disagreement on some of the points.

I'm happy to put that forward, Madam Chair.

• (68635)

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

Madam Alleslev, go ahead please.

**Ms. Leona Alleslev:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

I want to point out to the committee, because it appears that perhaps they are unaware, that the status of women report on sexual misconduct in the military has, in fact, been tabled. There are 21 recommendations, all of which are incredibly important and crucial, not least of which is the one that talks about freezing all general officer promotions and salary increases until a comprehensive and independent investigation has been done to ensure that they are all beyond reproach.

The status of women committee was able to do the work, which included some valuable contributions from the Liberal members of the committee, that was set before it, and the fact that this committee cannot because of Liberal members is something we should understand more about. Perhaps the Liberal members on this committee can indicate to us why the status of women committee was able to get a report done and this committee is being filibustered to ensure that we can't. In fact, we probably have even more insight and valuable contributions to make on this report, which would be complementary, as the members of this committee have said, to the status of women report.

I recommend that all members of the committee take a look at that report, because that committee was able to do what we have yet to do.

• (68640)

**The Chair:** Thank you.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Robillard, the floor is yours.

**Mr. Yves Robillard:** Madam Chair, in order to be able to understand the problem of sexual misconduct in the Canadian Armed Forces, we must also examine the importance of Operation HONOUR in the CAF. So I will deal with the matter of sexual assault in the CAF.

As Maya Eichler points out:

Despite the sexual assault scandals that hit the CAF over the past two decades, the problem of sexualized violence remained largely unacknowledged by the CAF prior to 2014. In 2014, articles in *Maclean's* and *L'actualité* forcefully brought the issue of sexual assault and sexual harassment in the military to the forefront. Based on interviews with women who had experienced sexual assault while serving... [the articles revealed] the lack of concerted action on the part of the military despite formal procedures undertaken by the complainants. The reports showed that sexual assault and sexual harassment were persistent problems within the forces.

[Published in 2015], the "External Review into Sexual Misconduct in the Canadian Armed Forces" (the Deschamps Report) changed the nature of the debate on sexual violence in the Canadian military. The report documented a sexualized military culture hostile towards female and LGBTQ members that increases the risk of "more serious incidents of sexual harassment and sexual assault". The findings of the report have busted the myth of the gender-neutral military and confirmed much of what earlier feminist analyses had shown in regard to the CAF and other militaries.

As a committee, we here can change that with our recommendations, and with a government response to them. Maya Eichler continues:

For example, research found sexual harassment to be commonplace, especially in combat roles. Justice Deschamps explicitly linked the military's sexualized culture to the challenges surrounding women's integration and their low representation in the leadership of the CAF. She argued that increasing women's representation, especially among the senior leadership, is one of the key strategies for achieving cultural change. Giving strength to this argument, Deschamps referenced sociological research that shows that "the ideal of the combat male warrior concept has impacted on the integration of women into the military".

The military's reaction to the Deschamps Report has been mixed, and has wavered between welcoming and rejecting the findings. On the one hand, efforts to address the recommendations of the Deschamps Report and change the military's sexualized culture were swift and are ongoing.

As a committee, we here can change that with our recommendations, and with a government response to them. We must make sure that the testimonies have not been in vain. As the minister said, all options are on the table.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

Mr. Baker, go ahead please.

• (68645)

**Mr. Yvan Baker:** Thanks very much, Madam Chair.

I would like to start by saying a few things about what Mr. Garrison said earlier on. I first want to say thank you to Mr. Garrison for sharing what he's gone through. I have no words; I just want to say thank you. That's really courageous.

The second thing I want to say was that it was never my intent to impugn motive and if I did so, I apologize. I agree with what you said about how the impugning of motive should have no place here. If I was guilty of that, I apologize. That was not my intent.

Certainly in my last intervention I think I wanted.... As you can tell, I'm very concerned about our doing everything we can to stop sexual assault and sexual harassment from happening in the armed forces. I was trying to identify the reasons—or I asked the question why—we weren't pursuing the writing of the report the way it's conventionally done. In doing so, I asked about what the rationale or the reasoning of some members of the opposition might be. That wasn't meant to impugn motive or to make an allegation about another member. It was simply speculating as to why we weren't going down the path that I thought was in the best interest of survivors.

That said, in your intervention you answered that. You explained why you felt that we shouldn't go down that path. I don't know if you meant to, but to me, you answered the question I was openly asking in my prior intervention. I thank you for answering it. It was never meant to impugn motive, but if it did, you have my apologies for that.

Mr. Garrison, I really appreciated what you said about why you feel that the report should take a different direction from the one members on the government side have been advocating for. Like Mr. Bagnell, I respect your point of view and I'm thankful that you explained why you feel the way you do. I don't agree with that. Obviously, I see it differently. I've heard what you said about the status of women committee pursuing a report and making recommendations. I think that report has a tremendous amount of value to the cause of addressing the underlying problem of sexual misconduct in the armed forces.

From my perspective, I really believe that we have an opportunity as parliamentarians—the members on the status of women committee and those of us here on the defence committee in particular, as well as those in the senior positions of the armed forces and the minister and his team in the government have an opportunity particularly—to really make a difference on this issue. That is why I feel it's so important that all of us put our shoulder to the wheel and push in that direction.

From my vantage point, if that means there's a little or some or a lot—I don't know; I'm speculating of course—of overlap between what's written in a report by this committee and that of the status of women committee.... If there's overlap and we're reinforcing each other, great. That's all the better because we're putting that many more voices, shining that much more of a light and giving that much more voice to those whose voices need to be heard. We're driving that much more accountability upon the government—whether it's this one, the next one or the following one—to hear our recommendations and take action on them.

● (68650)

In the course of writing the report we may identify additional areas of focus to what the status of women committee has worked on. We may dive into greater detail in a particular area where the other committee has not, so there's an opportunity to reinforce, of course, the other committee's work, but also to build upon it. All of that, to me, should be of the highest priority, because I think at a critical time it allows us to make potentially significant steps forward in addressing the underlying problem. I have to say that I appreciate your responding to or explaining why you feel the report's focus should be slightly different, or different, and I honour that perspective.

One of the things we could also add to this conversation and that could be in our report, and one thing I value when it comes to members of all parties who sit on this committee, is that we have members who served in the armed forces, or who have worked extensively with the armed forces in some capacity. I think that perspective brings something to this conversation that's really important, and it's a specialized experience that members who've actually served have. I don't have that experience, but I think some of the committee members do, and I think that's one of the reasons our report could bring a tremendous amount of value. Even it was just reinforcing what the status of women committee has presented, I think that would do wonders on this issue and make a meaningful difference, ultimately, for survivors, whom I'm so passionate about.

I wanted to share that.

I want to thank Mr. Garrison again for his thoughtful response, and for sharing his personal experience. That takes courage, and I thank you.

One area I was speaking to previously that I wanted to come back to is where survivors told us there's need for improvement, which I think should be in a report by this committee. I am speaking to the testimony of Emily Tulloch, who is a survivor and an armed forces member who testified to the status of women committee. What she was speaking to in her testimony was an example of the kind of issue that I think those members on the defence committee, but particularly those members who served in the armed forces would better understand. She was speaking to the military police and how they undertake investigations. Her recommendation was that the training for military police needs to be improved in the area of how they conduct interviews of sexual assault victims.

● (68655)

I want to read a bit of Ms. Tulloch's testimony around that particular issue. She says:

I also believe that an officer of the same sex of the victim should conduct the interview. In my situation, it wasn't offered that I could speak to a female officer until halfway through my interview, when I started crying. Even then the military police said they would have to reschedule for the next week, because there was no female officer available.

She goes on to say:

In basic training the leadership tries to ingrain the core values of the military in recruits. These values are duty, loyalty, integrity and courage. These values are taught through PowerPoint and workbooks. However, these values are falling through the cracks. That is how we get this toxic culture that we have been dealing with for so long. It has been abundantly clear that military leadership has not been able to uphold the high ethical standards of integrity. If the leadership can't follow basic core values and set a good example, how are the majority of troops supposed to?

I want to pause there for a moment because Ms. Tulloch is speaking to.... She says these values are duty, loyalty, integrity and courage. These are the core values that the training of recruits emphasizes. One of the things that this speaks to is how much work has to be done in the area of culture change. I know Mr. Spengemann has spoken to this extensively. Mr. Bagnell has spoken to the issue of culture change extensively, but Ms. Tulloch's words are that these values are “falling through the cracks”. Then she says that this is how we get “this toxic culture that we have been dealing with for so long.” Ms. Tulloch is underlining something that I really think we need to drive home as a committee: not just culture change but some of these specific concrete suggestions that are being made to us by survivors and by others who are familiar with culture change and who have testified before this committee. Whether there's a bit of an overlap or not with the Standing Committee on the Status of Women report, I think this would be something that is important to reinforce, drill down on, add additional suggestions on, or enter into additional detail on.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ):** A point of order, Madam Chair.

I come from the Standing Committee on the Status of Women, and I am so disappointed in what is going on here and now at the Standing Committee on National Defence. I would just like to echo the comments of several other speakers, like Ms. Alleslev, in saying that we actually managed to produce a report.

Just now, I heard Mr. Robillard say that, in our report, we specifically demanded that the Deschamps Report, published in 2015, be implemented. It was published six years ago, and here we are, with nothing done.

My preference would be for the Standing Committee on National Defence to produce a report in support of the one we produced at the Standing Committee on the Status of Women.

[English]

**The Chair:** That is not a point of order. That is debate. Thank you.

I'm sorry. Carry on, Mr. Baker.

**Mr. Yvan Baker:** Thanks, Madam Chair.

I was speaking about Ms. Tulloch's testimony. She was speaking about culture change. She was speaking about how the core values of duty, loyalty, integrity and courage are not being demonstrated by the leadership of the forces. She went on to say:

In basic training we are shown this cartoon video that oversimplifies the concept of consent. In my view, the video is little more than a joke. It's all fun to watch, but the topic of sexual misconduct isn't fun. It should be uncomfortable enough to realize that this is a real issue that needs to be dealt with.

In regard to Op Honour, I believe it has served its purpose. It is time to end that course of action and start something else. Op Honour certainly got the conversation going and improved resources and education available to CAF members, but the leadership has been wilfully ignorant of the fact that it has been seen as a joke for years. For many of us, Op Honour has aged like rotten milk. It just leaves a sour taste in your mouth.

• (68700)

**The Chair:** All right. We are suspended.

Thank you, everyone.

[The meeting was suspended at 15:00 p.m., Friday, June 18.]

[The meeting resumed at 11:03 a.m., Monday, June 21.]

• (75500)

**The Chair:** I call this meeting back to order. This is a resumption of meeting number 32 of the House of Commons Standing Committee on National Defence, which started on Friday, May 21, 2021.

Please let me know if there are any problems with interpretation, just so everyone can fully participate in the proceedings. When speaking—and I say this as much as a reminder to myself as to anyone else—please speak slowly and clearly. When you are not speaking, your mike should be on mute.

With regard to a speakers list, the committee clerk and I will do the best we can to maintain a consolidated order of speaking for all members, whether they are participating virtually or in person.

We are resuming debate on Mr. Bagnell's amendment to Mr. Bezan's motion. Mr. Baker had the floor.

Go ahead, Mr. Baker.

**Mr. Yvan Baker:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

Just to recap, Mr. Bagnell proposed an amendment to Mr. Bezan's motion that would require a government response when the committee completes its report on this current study. I think when we left off last meeting, I was speaking about the importance of making sure that we obtain a government response to ensure accountability for the recommendations that are brought forward to the committee.

We know from witness testimony given before us that sexual misconduct and sexual assault are long-standing problems in the Canadian Armed Forces and they've transcended many governments. One thing I'm very passionate about is ensuring that we take the steps today—this government, this committee and others working on this—and every step we possibly can, to set us on the path, no matter which party is elected to government, whether with a majority or minority, and whatever the complexion of our committees happens to be in the future, particularly at this committee and the status of women committee, which are focused on this issue. We should institute the changes, bring in the changes that need to be made to ensure not only that we solve this problem, but also that future governments are held to account for their actions on this issue. I know that everyone on this committee has a different view as to who might be in government next, but regardless of your views on that particular question, I think we should and can all agree that it's important to put in place changes today that are sustained, that address the issue and that ensure future governments are incentivized to continue with that work.

To me, one of the best ways to do that, although not the only way, is to make sure that now, when this pivotal work is taking place and we're undertaking this pivotal study, we generate a report that makes thoughtful recommendations to government about how to tackle this problem and that ensures future governments are held to account, regardless of their political stripe. Having a government response is critical to that because it ensures that the government of today, first off, is clear about its intentions. If those intentions aren't consistent with the views of the members of this committee, survivors, experts or anyone else, then they have a chance to vocalize that and there's an opportunity for the government to adjust its course and plan. That's really important, from a policy perspective, for actually solving the problem.

Getting today's government to issue a response to this report would also set the bar for the next government, the government after that and the government after that. To me, that's why the response is so vitally important for ensuring that we actually solve this problem in the years to come. We need this government, the next government and every government after that to solve the problem and, when it's addressed, to be constantly vigilant to make sure that sexual harassment and sexual misconduct are stamped out of the Canadian Armed Forces.

These are some of the reasons that I think Mr. Bagnell's motion is really constructive and important for tackling the underlying problem that we're trying to tackle today and through this study.



I also want to highlight one of the things I mentioned before that I wanted to come back to. I think there is a tremendous number of steps that need to be taken to eliminate sexual assault and sexual misconduct from the armed forces.

• (75505)

That's because it's a wide-ranging problem; it's a complex problem and there's a tremendous amount of nuance. We've heard from a number of witnesses, experts and members of the armed forces, and members of Parliament like myself and others have shared the voices and the testimony of survivors. We've heard those voices and others, both in this committee and outside this committee. Because this issue has gone unsolved—or not even unsolved, but it hasn't been enough of a priority—in my view, for far too long, it's so important that we do everything we can as a team, as a committee, to put our shoulder to the wheel. We should apply every effort to make a positive difference on this issue.

That's why I feel strongly that we need to issue this report. There was some discussion at our last meeting about the fact that, well, the status of women committee has issued a report. At our committee here, the defence committee, some of the witnesses we heard from were the same, but some of them were different. We heard from them in different amounts and they answered different questions. First off, to the extent that we issue a report that echoes some of the recommendations of the status of women committee, that's great. That means there's consensus and that just puts further advocacy behind the government acting on those recommendations. To the extent there's something different, that too adds value.

Given that we've heard from the witnesses we did, the calibre of the witnesses we did, I think making sure that we, first of all, honour their contributions to this committee is important. That's one of the reasons. However, I also think that until we find something different, because we have different perspectives and different experiences, that's something that's important to do as well.

This is a moment where we need to put our shoulder to the wheel to do everything we can to address this problem and not be like politicians of the past who've not done everything they can. Therefore, I wanted to address that point that had been raised in the debate we had at our last meeting.

One thing that is also critical is that the report be created based on consensus. Why is that? It's not just democratically important. It's not just important to give weight to the report, although in my view those things are true, but it's important because of the complexity and the nuance of this issue that we're trying to solve. That's going to take time. It would take time in discussion between us to lock in on a line on how we articulate the problem, but also really on what recommendations we want to make to government.

I will highlight a few examples of some of that nuance and that perspective that we need to bring into our thinking when we write the report. One example is someone I've spoken about before who is a survivor, who you might recall has presented to the status of women committee and talked about an experience she had when trying to train cadets and how she was mistreated—and continues to be mistreated—when she came to provide training at the Royal Military College. I shared with the members of this committee some of her testimony from the status of women committee.

• (75510)

One of the things I wanted to share with you is more of what she said at the Status of Women committee. These are excerpts from her testimony.

Julie Lalonde says:

I'm an expert on bystander intervention, and what I hear from bystanders all the time is, "I didn't say anything because it was just a comment. If he had touched her, I would have said something, but it was just a comment. It was just a joke. Oh, you know how he is. He's old school," and so on.

Ms. Lalonde goes on to say:

I think it is vitally important that the very philosophy of the path, which is what we're currently calling this discussion, explain that sexual violence exists on a continuum and that comments are directly related to abuses of power and directly related to gang sexual violence, which is happening.

I want to pause there for a moment. Ms. Lalonde is talking here about abuse of power. She refers to "abuses of power". I think we've heard that not just from Ms. Lalonde but from experts who have presented at this committee. I think we have a responsibility to make sure that we as a committee consider in our deliberations how we would address this abuse of power. This is perhaps part of the culture change that we want to see, but perhaps there's more to it than that. I don't know. That's something we would have to have a discussion about, but I wanted to underline this topic that Ms. Lalonde raises as important to at least part of the problem of sexual assault in the military. I think it's really important that we tackle that. Again, this is an example of how important it is.

In her testimony, Ms. Lalonde also speaks to bystanders and how some bystanders often react when someone makes a comment and they don't intervene or act. She talks about how that has to change, and that's another important component of this that I think we as a committee have a responsibility to tackle in our recommendations. Again, it requires significant thought and it requires a government response. Whether that be how bystanders react or whether that be the issue of abuse of power and so on, it requires the government to say, "We agree with you," or "We disagree with you," or, "Here's how we're thinking of approaching these elements of the problem."

Going on with what Ms. Lalonde continued to say at committee:

This idea that we have to focus on the serious forms of violence—you cannot just focus on those without pulling back and doing that macro piece. We need to equip bystanders and to say that maybe an intervention for a comment doesn't look the same as it would for someone being cornered, but it's still an intervention that's necessary.

I want to pause there. What's our committee's view on the role of bystanders? What's our view on what the Canadian Armed Forces need to be doing to ensure that bystanders do what needs to be done? What's our solution?

I'm of the view that what we do with people who are... What we do to address this so that bystanders are not just bystanders, so that they're helping to resolve the problem.... To me, it's critical that we address that. It's so important that this committee create the circumstances where we can really think that through and tackle it and make a recommendation on it and hold the government to account for solving that particular component, amongst others. I wanted to highlight that as an example.

There's another nuance that I wanted to highlight. This is again from Ms. Lalonde's testimony at the status of women committee. This is a segment of her testimony and is actually a response to a question from a member.

• (75515)

She said, "Lastly, this is truly an intersectional conversation. As Christine has said, for adult men in this country—not children, but adult men—the highest rates of sexual assault are if they are incarcerated or if they join the military."

I'm going to pause there for a second and repeat that about men: "The highest rates of sexual assault are if they are incarcerated or if they join the military." I think that just underlines how serious this problem is. I underline that because it's a reminder of how bad the situation is and how we really need to focus on solving this problem—not the politics, not the headline-grabbing, but this problem of what's happening to victims in terms of sexual assault and sexual harassment. What is the military doing to prevent it?

Let me go back to what Ms. Lalonde said. She said:

We need to look at this from an intersectional lens.

I would also say an intersectional lens includes the fact that there's a significant amount of racism in the military. The Proud Boys were recently designated a terrorist organization. There were proud members of those groups who were also... [Canadian Armed Forces] members.

You can't talk about power unless you talk about all the ways in which power manifests itself in the military, and that includes racism and homophobia. A huge reason men don't come forward, as Christine said, is shame: shame that's directly tied to the homophobia within the CAF.

She said we have to look at it intersectionally, which means "having all the players at the table". She went on to talk about Veterans Affairs, Canadian Armed Forces, etc.

I share this to say that in Ms. Lalonde's testimony, she underlines, or she's making a recommendation, at the very least, that this problem should be tackled in a certain way. Certain departments should be brought to the table. It should also be thought about in the context.... She's talking about men here. Julie Lalonde is talking about men and how they're ashamed to come forward. That's linked to the culture of the Canadian Armed Forces. What are we going to do about that?

Yes, we've talked about culture a lot. Many of us have spoken about the need to change the culture. We've heard that from witnesses. We've heard that from experts. Mr. Spengemann and Mr. Bagnell have spoken about the need to change the culture on a number of occasions, and have offered some thoughts as to how that should happen. This is a particular consequence of the culture. This is an element of the culture that Ms. Lalonde is speaking to with regard to the shame that men feel and why it happens. How are we going to tackle that?

I'm raising segments of Ms. Lalonde's testimony to underline how serious the problem is, as a reminder. I know that we all know it's serious, but this is to underline how serious it is and therefore how important it is that the focus of our work be on solving the problem rather than talking about politics. I think the best way to honour survivors is to tackle the problem. The best way to tackle the problem is to take into account what folks like Julie Lalonde and so many others are offering us in terms of suggestions as to how that can be done, and then incorporate those in our report. Then, like Mr. Bagnell has suggested in his amendment, we get the government to respond so that we have greater confidence, certainly the most confidence that we can contribute, that this government and future governments will tackle the problem of sexual assault and sexual harassment in the Canadian Armed Forces.

Madam Chair, I see that others have their hands up. I will end it there for now.

Thanks very much.

• (75520)

**The Chair:** All right. Thank you very much.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Robillard, you have the floor.

**Mr. Yves Robillard:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

I would like to continue along the same lines as last week by reading Maya Eichler's comments about sexual misconduct in the Canadian Armed Forces.

This report is of the highest importance because it gives us a scholarly view of the problem affecting our armed forces. It also ties in with my colleague Mr. Bagnell's motion in that it focuses on the importance of the government in the matter. It goes without saying, therefore, that we must ask for a government response to our committee's recommendations, as this text will make clear.

In Maya Eichler's words:

The Deschamps Report was released more than 25 years after the Human Rights Tribunal ruling that ordered the military to remove all legal barriers to women's employment in the Canadian military. Prior to the ruling, the military leadership actively resisted women's equal integration, especially into combat roles, arguing that women's inclusion would undermine operational effectiveness. Once faced with the ruling, the military took a passive approach to women's integration, which we have described as "neutral" in this article. It enabled legal change but did not ensure a transformation of the gendered culture within the CAF. This gendered culture in the Canadian Armed Forces revolved around the association of soldiering with masculinity and idealized the male warrior figure. It marginalized women and characteristics stereotypically associated with women, creating obstacles to women's successful integration. It also contributed to sexualized violence in the Canadian Armed Forces, an allegedly gender-neutral institution.

The Deschamps Report and the military's response to it represent a turning point in the military's discourse around gender and sexual violence. The leadership of the CAF has acknowledged the problem of widespread sexual misconduct and the need to change the military's culture. However, the leadership of the Canadian Armed Forces has framed the elimination of sexual misconduct only in terms of its value to operational effectiveness. This presents a limited conceptualization of gender equality and does not acknowledge the CAF's underlying masculinized warrior ethos. Furthermore, Operation HONOUR indicates a shift from gender neutrality to a strength through diversity approach that collapses gender within larger diversity issues. This is problematic because it fails to acknowledge how significant male power and the privileging of masculinity still are in the military (as they are in many institutions), while instrumentalizing gender and diversity for operational purposes. Changing the military's culture will require an explicit engagement with male warrior culture, militarized masculinity, and gender power rather than a purely instrumental approach to gender as is currently the case.

Once again, as a government and a committee, we here can act by making our recommendations to the government. By asking the government for a response, we will automatically ensure that we will have some feedback on our recommendations.

• (75525)

Maya Eichler also says this:

The military's shifts in the politics of gender teach us some important lessons. First, change in the military's policy on gender, both in 1989 and since 2015, came about as a result of external pressures. Second, defining gender equality in terms of gender neutrality is not sufficient to bring about real change. Feminist scholars have shown that gender neutrality, or the denial of gender as an important social category, usually mask the continued privileging of masculinity and prevent transformative change. It is too early to predict whether a "strength through diversity" approach in conjunction with Operation HONOUR will be sufficient to affect cultural change. It is important, however, to consider the limitations of the current approach. By defining its response to widespread sexual misconduct as an operational issue and focusing on the added value that women bring, the military is likely not going far enough in challenging the underlying gendered culture it seeks to change. Closer feminist examination of this most recent shift in the military's approach to gender is urgently needed. The military needs to open itself to other stakeholders in civil society, such as the media and feminist experts. The CAF's first progress report on the fight against inappropriate sexual behaviour recognizes the importance of input from civil society partners and other experts. This should include stronger engagement with feminist researchers and practitioners. While civilian pressure and involvement in itself is not enough change the military's culture, it can render visible some of the limitations to the military's current approach to gender.

I feel that we can draw the same conclusions as Ms. Eichler about sexual misconduct in the Canadian Armed Forces. Although her text is from 2017, it unfortunately remains current. As she says so well, the changes made in 1989, and those made since 2015, came about as the result of external pressures.

It is therefore our role, as members of this committee, to make recommendations to the government with a view to resolving the issue of sexual misconduct in the Canadian Armed Forces. In order for those recommendations to be not just empty words, we must make sure that the government provides us with a response. It is

our responsibility to do so, and a simple matter of good common sense.

• (75530)

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr. Robillard.

[*English*]

We will go on to Mr. Spengemann, please.

**Mr. Sven Spengemann:** Good morning, Madam Chair, and thank you very much.

I would like to start by thanking my colleagues, Mr. Baker and Monsieur Robillard, for their preceding interventions and their thoughtful commentary.

Madam Chair, you'll correct me, but I believe it's been a month that we've spent in this meeting. We started on May 21, as I think you reminded us a couple of sessions ago. It's been a month of full-on discussion and thoughtful reflections and revisiting of incredibly important testimony with respect to where the Canadian Forces are today, where they should be, and where this issue should be directed internationally as well, with militaries that are going through the same processes or very similar processes. I'll make more elaborate submissions on that in a moment.

What I want to say at the outset is that although we have different reflections and perspectives of what the study is all about and also about how we should conduct our work, I think it's incredibly important that this committee remain seized with the issue of sexual misconduct. In fact, there is absolutely no way to conceive that we would somehow bring this to a close here today, or in the coming days, and divest ourselves of this work.

This is work that will continue. It is continuing at the executive level, with the leadership of the minister and his team. It's also continuing through the work of Madam Justice Arbour, who is conducting a review in parallel. It is my very strong sense that this committee also, going forward, will need to remain invested in the subject matter, will need to conduct assessments and reviews of whatever government action follows. That is extremely important.

We've looked at the experience of other countries that have done reviews and that, in response to those reviews, have tweaked or complemented an initial set of recommendations because they weren't working or weren't quite achieving, in the most expeditious way, solutions to the problems that needed to be addressed.

I think it goes without saying that going forward, the work on sexual misconduct in the Canadian Armed Forces will remain front and centre for this committee.

I've said in previous submissions, Madam Chair, that there are two components to our work, or to the reason we have this work in front of us. The first component is the most important; it's the moral component, and it's the conclusion that sexual misconduct is wrong, is unacceptable. As an adjunct to that is the moral conclusion that women absolutely, unequivocally have a right to serve in the Canadian Forces and need to be protected if and when they choose to do so.

There is also—and I think my colleague Monsieur Robillard made reference to this a few minutes ago—an operational component to the work, and that relates to the effectiveness of the Canadian Armed Forces and its allied forces around the world with respect to sexual misconduct. If we don't take this work seriously, if we don't eliminate this egregious practice of sexual misconduct, deep rooted as it is, and if we don't eliminate it in the most expeditious way, there will be an operational impact on the effectiveness of the armed forces. It goes to morale, but it also goes to effectiveness in the field. It goes to trust, trust on the battlefield, trust in deployment, trust in the hallways of National Defence headquarters in Ottawa, trust across bases and everywhere in between, and also trust in the Canadian Forces as an international partner and ally within NATO and UN peace operations, and any other types of deployments involving other militaries in between.

If women in the Canadian Forces can't trust their chain of command, and if other militaries can't trust the Canadian Forces as an ally and a partner that takes this issue extremely seriously and is in the process of eliminating it, we will be weaker as an ally in all kinds of international contexts.

This moral and this operational component really are at the centre of why we're doing this work, and again, the moral component is paramount but the operational one is not to be ignored.

In the same vein, it's not just the threat of sexual misconduct within militaries, or potentially across militaries that are working together in a partnership arrangement, be it in a NATO deployment or a UN peace operation. It's also the risk, potentially, of vulnerable civilian populations, refugee populations that the Canadian Forces and its allied forces are charged with protecting. If the issue of sexual misconduct is not eradicated, is not given the utmost priority, there is a risk that civilian populations in areas of deployment will be vulnerable to sexual misconduct perpetrated by members of armed forces who are deployed in that setting. That is yet a third component that we need to be very mindful of.

• (75535)

In the meantime, Madam Chair, as I have outlined in a series, now, of previous submissions, we've seen that numerous other countries are doing very similar work in parallel and in some cases have, in fact, been able to publish follow-up reports on first rounds of initiatives and responses. I think that I indicated early on that in the course of a very quick round of research one Saturday afternoon, I was able to come up with a good half-dozen examples. I've made submissions on the experience in the U.K. I've started to talk about New Zealand. I will, in a subsequent submission, talk briefly about South Africa. There are other countries, like Australia and Sweden, that have done this work. Given the timing of these initiatives elsewhere, which roughly coincide with ours—in the last five

years from 2015 or 2016 through the present—again, it is an important impetus for us. Because so many of these other countries have taken note of our early initiatives, it's important that we remain seized and that we remain in a leadership role and don't lag behind the initiatives that our friends and allies are doing and conducting elsewhere, for the same reasons I've outlined above: the moral reason and the operational reason.

The review and analysis of the insight from other countries into the systemic nature of sexual misconduct is fundamental to our own work. I think it would be unimaginable that this committee would simply ignore a whole host of experiences elsewhere, good and bad, some with different approaches and different recommendations and conclusions but equally important with respect to solving the issue in each jurisdiction. That we would simply choose to not look at that and to say, “Well, you know, we have our own problems,” that we'd have our eyes to the ground and lose sight of what is going on elsewhere in the world.... We need to look at these examples. We need to glean from them the important insights that have been put forward in these reports. In some cases, the insights were simply that not enough has been done quickly enough, that a whole bunch of gaps exist. The frustration on the part of the teams that are operating on these initiatives is as manifest as our frustration across party lines that this work is not proceeding quickly enough. Therefore, if there are lessons, if there are examples that we can impart on others but in return also take back from others, then we should absolutely, without question, look at them.

The focus in many of those initiatives has been the scope of the problem. We've heard a lot about definitions of various forms of misconduct, between physical and sexual assault and rape and other forms of misconduct, including bullying, intimidation and harassment; the search for mechanisms to achieve culture change in a more expeditious manner; mechanisms to ensure the empowerment of victims to report misconduct; accountability; the independence of oversight, the democratic control of armed forces to Parliament, to the executive; the search for data and the search for leadership on this issue at all levels of the service, be they military or civilian; and then the importance of communication and training as well.

These are complex issues. Upon review of them, we see some general currents emerging on how this problem might be solved, and it comes to leadership, communication, independence and empowering victims to report. Some of those commonalities are, I think, now manifest and apparent to us. However, when it comes to putting forward our own report, I think it is important that we are able to deliberate as parliamentarians; that we unleash the parliamentary process that is there for reasons of its efficaciousness, its democratic value, its wisdom in arriving at better outcomes when parliamentarians are able to get together in an in camera setting. We need to debate the recommendations, ideas and approaches that may be controversial; where there may be differences in views we must not limit ourselves to a single two-minute intervention but really have debates, and sometimes tough debates, potentially not reaching agreement after those debates, in which case the mechanism of a dissenting or supplementary report is absolutely appropriate and has been used frequently in the past.

However, we need to do the work to be able to figure out what we, as this particular committee, can put forward to add value. There has been reference in a number of ways before the committee—in previous sessions and this one as well—on the value that we have coming from other parliamentary committees. In parliamentary custom, each committee is the master of its own destiny.

• (75540)

Just because another committee is conducting the work does not mean that our committee, or any other committee, should say we're not doing it because committee X is doing it. There is tremendous value, especially with an issue that's as important and profound and as entrenched as this one, if multiple lenses are used, multiple angles, multiple mechanisms of amplification through the democratic process of particular recommendations of testimony. In his previous submission, Mr. Baker made reference to the importance of bystander training, which was raised at the status of women committee and has come up in other jurisdictions as well.

These insights are important and we need to cross-fertilize them and find a horizontal way of looking at them. This committee is seized, then, not only with protecting the women who are currently serving and who have served. That's front and centre, finding mechanisms to protect victims, empower victims, support victims all the way along. This committee is seized with it as much as the status of women committee is seized. However, without wanting to speak for the status of women committee and its interpretation, which it's free to undertake, this committee, our committee, the Standing Committee on National Defence is then very much seized with the governance structures of the Canadian Forces, the leadership questions, the resourcing questions, the accountability and review questions, the parliamentary oversight questions of this work, and we should make recommendations that fall into the historical role, and the future rollout, that we will play in looking after the Canadian Forces and making sure that the Canadian Forces correspond to the expectation of current and former serving members, of Canadians, of our human rights framework, of our justice framework, all those things.

Therefore, it is important for us to do this work. It is equally important that we look at the work that other committees are doing

and making sure that we are amplifying those of their recommendations that we feel are fundamentally important.

With respect to the government response, it is absolutely crucial that the government is asked for a response. Again, that creates the accountability feedback loop to this committee, through which we are overseeing government action as parliamentarians, as elected members and as members of this particular committee.

To do all this work and then say at the end that we don't want to hear a government response, in my mind, it gets us not even halfway there, because unless we push the government...

From other jurisdictions, we've seen the value of repeated reviews. In the case of the U.K., there was a review conducted in as tight a time frame as one year, where recommendations and insights came back and new recommendations were developed. It's then very important for this committee to have a way to go back to government to say, okay, you've told us *x* during this parliamentary period; you've done *y*, and we have taken a look and we feel that you should also do *z*. That would give the government, then, through the parliamentary democratic process, the mandate or the impetus to further refine the work.

As I said, this is work that will be ongoing. It will have to be subject to some sort of ratchet effect where we can't backslide but have to move our way forward, and each time a good set of recommendations is put forward that work and that seem to be working, government needs to be encouraged to keep them in place. Those recommendations that don't work need to be either changed or eliminated, or adjusted in such a way that they can precipitate the results that so urgently need to be brought about.

It's not enough for either this committee or the government to say, look what we've done; here's our answer, and then leave it to the wind to see if the results actually materialize. We need to stay engaged; we need oversight, and for that reason, we need a continued insistence on a government response to the work that this committee generates. I think that's fundamentally important.

It's those two things: being able to deliberate as parliamentarians in the way we normally do, to have frank and robust debates, and yes, disagree with each other; and then ultimately our product being put forward to government with a mandate for government to respond.

I'll go back briefly in the same vein to do what I didn't have a chance to do last time, which is to highlight some of the recommendations that came out of the New Zealand review. You'll recall that New Zealand had an operation roughly similar to Operation Honour in its conceptualization, called Operation Respect. I presented to the committee a one-year review that was tabled in June 2020 by an independent team that had looked at New Zealand's Operation Respect and determined that a number of things were still missing, many of which reverberated in the same way as things that are still not satisfactory here in Canada. They came out with, I think, a set of 44 recommendations. I'm not going to go through them all.

• (75545)

I think some of them are very specific to the New Zealand context and some of them we have already debated and, I think, implicitly accepted in some ways. I want to highlight some of them for the committee's consideration and benefit before turning it back to you, Madam Chair.

The fundamental challenge that the New Zealand review identified resulted in a recommendation that the minister of defence of New Zealand request that every two years, for 20 years, its auditor general carry out an audit of the New Zealand Defence Forces' progress in regard to Operation Respect's specific outcomes, paying special attention to the elimination of harmful behaviour and sexual violence.

This takes me back to the comments I made a couple of minutes ago. The minister says that the time for patience is over and culture change needs to happen now. Yes, the time for patience is over in the sense that we need to act and put forward the recommendations that will bring about change, but New Zealand has framed this as a problem that will take time to solve. The most egregious behaviour will hopefully be solved very quickly, but overall, their conclusion is they want an audit every two years for 20 years to make sure that the problem is actually eradicated. It's a semi-generational problem for them, if you look at that 20-year time span. There's absolutely no possibility to backslide. New Zealand sees these audits as fundamentally important.

It has also made a recommendation to limit the scope of Operation Respect to two distinct streams of work, mirroring the approach that some other jurisdictions have taken. The first is the elimination of sexual violence, which is the most egregious and harmful behaviour—rape, sexual assault and actual violent, physical behaviour. The second tier would be the elimination of discrimination, harassment and bullying. These are subsidiary behaviours that nonetheless stem from the same completely inappropriate culture that needs to be changed and eradicated.

New Zealand also makes the following recommendations to its government:

Build collective ownership of leadership by developing a long-term strategy in collaboration with base and camp commanding officers. Using a phased approach, the strategy should build on the current foundations of Operation Respect and allow for flexibility in implementation so that each service can tailor to their culture, state of change readiness and prioritised needs.

Madam Chair, we've had discussions on the various cultures—plural—that exist in the Canadian Forces. Some of them are salutary and very positive with respect to excellence, teamwork, not leaving your teammates behind, readiness and all the good things that go with the Canadian Forces and that its current and former members cherish and can be very proud of. There are also the negative aspects.

New Zealand recognizes that there are differences within the various branches of its forces. These differences need to be taken account of and given back to the leadership of each branch to solve.

They recommend the appointment of a “change communications specialist to work solely on this project in conjunction with a specialist in sexual violence (such as the head of the [sexual assault re-

sponse team]) to implement regular strategic and nuanced messaging.”

We've seen elsewhere, in other recommendations, the importance of outside perspectives and expertise in change management, communications and other parts. The tension is always if somebody is too far removed from the organization, they will not understand the nature of its internal problems, but if somebody's too close to the organization itself, she or he will be captured by the organization's interests and not be able to solve the problem effectively. Appointing a change specialist to work in conjunction with the existing leadership structure is New Zealand's answer to that. They've put it forward as a recommendation.

The engagement of all leaders at all levels to own the management of harmful behaviour, including sexual violence, discrimination, bullying and harassment in the NZDF, is of foremost importance behind that recommendation, in the sense that unless there's ownership by the leadership of the behaviour, there's no accountability and no prospect for change.

In Canada, obviously, we've had an experience that's very different from that of other jurisdictions. The very head of the armed forces—the person in charge of the former Operation Honour and the person who was to be at the top of the accountability chain—was then actually accused of having engaged in the same kind of behaviour that he was mandated to prevent. That's different from other jurisdictions. Nonetheless, New Zealand sees it as essential that the management at all leadership levels own the responsibility for eliminating this behaviour.

They also recommend the allocation of a significant budget to develop key tools for leadership in all personnel. Here, they make reference to the “Respect in the Canadian Armed Forces” mobile app.

• (75550)

It's important to recognize that we need leadership and communication strategies, but we also need tools. I raise this recommendation because New Zealand is in fact very closely looking at Canada and has in many respects indicated that it has taken action as a result of having reviewed the Deschamps report in 2015. I don't want to overstate this in the sense of saying that the eyes of the world are on us, but certainly the eyes of some key allies and partners are on us. For that reason, in addition to all the other ones I've mentioned, I think it's incumbent upon us to continue to move forward and to review the kinds of tools that we have put in place, including the Respect in the CAF mobile app, to see if they will serve the purposes of current and former members of the Canadian Forces in solving the issue.

New Zealand is also quite concerned about data management, so they recommend a comprehensive and integrated data management system to routinely and systematically collect data and report on complaints and outcomes of incidents of harmful behaviour, including sexual violence and discrimination, harassment and bullying.

As parliamentarians, we know that good governance cannot happen without good data, without accurate, properly disaggregated data. There have been comments by colleagues on the intersectionalities of sexual misconduct, the close relationship to diversity and inclusion, and the impact on members of the LGBTQ2S+ community and others. For all these reasons, we need good data. We also need good data to see if any of the branches of the Canadian Forces are leading or lagging. Maybe there's one branch that has particular innovations in solving this issue and has come out front. Data would capture that. Then it could be a competitive race to the top in solving the issues among the other branches. There could be a constructive, competitive spirit that emerges from data that reflects positive action that actually works to resolve the issue in the most expeditious way.

Other recommendations touch upon organizational learning strategies, education, communication, making sure that members of the armed forces in New Zealand are actually aware of the various options that exist, not only with respect to governance of diversity and inclusion in their branches, but also reporting.

Going back to Mr. Baker's comments earlier, he made reference a number of times to the importance of bystander training in reference to witness testimony that the Canadian House of Commons has received through committees. New Zealand recommends contracting the evaluation of bystander training programs to independent assessors. Again, bystander training seems to be one of those issues that are fundamentally important in accelerating progress. They have recognized that and they say, okay, to do that, let's put an assessment process behind that and make sure that bystander training actually does what it seems to be doing in so many other contexts. Does it also work in the military?

Again, monitoring of performance and reviews translates into absolutely critical recommendations that this committee absolutely must be mindful of, in my view.

"Conduct annual audits of the [sexual assault response team] to ensure that both the safety and wellbeing needs of the team are being met, alongside those utilising the service." That's not necessarily something we've turned our minds to yet, and I'm raising it for that reason. Those teams that are going to conduct the work to eliminate sexual misconduct in the armed forces, those men and women officers and NCOs who are part of that organizational effort, are going to see some ugly things. They're going to potentially see or hear testimony. They're going to see or hear all the bad things that are going on, and have gone on for far too long. We need to make sure those teams are looked after with respect to mental wellness.

The change agents, the change managers, in the armed forces are breaking down a culture that is harmful, insidious and destructive, and we need to keep them strong. I think it's an excellent recommendation. I think it's very worthwhile for this committee to take a

look at it to make sure that we look after those who look after the women and the victims of inappropriate sexual misconduct.

"Prioritise work to increase the individual personal safety factors of barracks, ablutions and toilet facilities" is a very pragmatic recommendation that looks to current operations and bases across the New Zealand Defence Force. We could certainly match that granularity in our work and make sure that women of the Canadian Armed Forces continue to use their physical facilities and are safe and protected, and changes are made if they're not.

● (75555)

Lastly, "Ensure consistent and regular communication to clarify what is and is not appropriate behaviour including hazing and initiation rituals to improve consent culture and reduce coercion and peer pressure." Communication is crucial, but we have to look all the way to the beginning of the chain of thought of somebody considering a career in the Canadian Forces, to the recruitment process and the kinds of communications on sexual misconduct she or he will receive when walking in the door of a recruitment centre. Anybody who is contemplating a career in the Canadian Forces at this very moment will most certainly ask herself or himself those questions. Is this a safe place? Yes, I want to serve, but where are we in light of the recent weeks of headlines, and where are we in light of this committee's work? Am I walking through a door where I have a greater assurance of safety?

I think it's crucial that communication be clear to recruits who have taken the decision to join the Canadian Forces, that inappropriate hazing or initiation rituals, which really set the stage with respect to the perception of what kind of culture exists with respect to hazing.... When you go through a hazing ritual, you walk away with certain perceptions that this is a place where this kind of thing will continue throughout your career and perhaps in different and even more harmful forms.

It's an excellent recommendation by New Zealand. It takes us all the way to the beginning of the process for somebody who decides, with the most noble of aspirations, to serve her country or his country by going into a recruitment centre and obtaining some information on a career in the forces.

I will leave it there. I've taken you through only a segment of the recommendations. There are many more, but again, my emphatic suggestion is that this committee be seized with and turn its attention to the experiences elsewhere as a fundamental starting point, if you will, for our discussions on what has worked, what hasn't worked, and what we could borrow to make our recommendations stronger, more effective and more efficient.

As Madam Justice Arbour's work goes forward, potentially she will also have the opportunity to review, I would think, the work of other countries. I think it's important that we look at the systematicity of sexual misconduct that's going quite a ways beyond Canadian borders and in so many other countries being seized with the same issue. If a best practice emerges somewhere, it should be harnessed quickly by all other jurisdictions that are involved in solving this issue, for both the moral reason and the operational reason that I described at the beginning of my submission.

Madam Chair, I'll leave it there for the moment and turn it back to you, with my thanks.

● (75600)

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr. Spengemann.

We will move on to Mr. Bagnell, please.

**Hon. Larry Bagnell:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

Welcome to all my colleagues on the committee.

First of all, I want to thank Mr. Spengemann for his continuing great research on other militaries. With the courageous survivors we've had who have come forward, with the experts and with this information from other militaries, this committee may now have the best information on file of any military in the world, which the CAF can use, the government can use and Madam Arbour can use to come up with a positive step forward.

I want to thank Mr. Robillard, too, for the tremendous work he's doing on women in the military, because that's obviously a key aspect of preventing misconduct in the military.

I have several issues with the motion before us. My amendment is to deal with one of those issues.

I believe there should be a government response to the motion, to the recommendations. These are very complicated changes, which I will go on shortly about. Change is never easy, as everyone knows. Even small change can lead to resistance, let alone the major changes that are needed here and in a number of militaries. I believe there's a far better chance of these changes occurring if the government, with its response, is part of the solution. I don't imagine there's any committee member here who feels there would be less chance of success on some of the recommendations we would make if the government were not part of the solution for that.

What I want to do is address one item in my first intervention today, and that is related to culture, to show how complicated it is and why we need a government response, because the solution is so complicated. As I said before in the last meeting, I really need the experts' input, because I have no expertise in this area. I'm going to talk about what the experts have said about culture, to show why it's complex and why we need the government to be part of the solution with its response.

The first input I'll talk about is from Dr. English. He said:

The culture that exists now in the Canadian Armed Forces is sometimes referred to as a warrior culture. Now, this warrior culture came into the Canadian Armed Forces in the early 2000s when we started co-operating very closely with the United States in Afghanistan, and after 2005 when General Rick Hillier became chief of the defence staff and wanted a warrior culture to replace what he called a bureaucratic culture that existed in the Canadian Forces at the time.

The warrior culture that was chosen because of our close association with the United States was a particular culture that had been created in the U.S. in the eighties and nineties, which was based on a hypermasculine, sexualized military culture that had actually been created to keep LGBTQ people out of the military, and later this was deployed against women.

This was an artificial, foreign, hypersexualized culture that, according to American researchers who have researched this culture, contributed to "creating or sustaining a cultural environment where sexual assaults can occur and thrive."

By importing this American hypermasculine culture, we've really created a lot of our own problems. I think one of the first things any culture change would have to do would be to go back to what we put into "Duty with Honour", our profession of arms manual in 2003, which was something called the "warrior's honour".

This new Canadian warrior culture in response to the Somalia crisis was to be based on the warrior's honour that they would use the minimal amount of force possible to achieve their objectives, and that the warriors had a responsibility both to carry out their mission and also to respect the laws of war. This is quite different from what we have now. I would think that's the first thing that has to change.

● (75605)

Dr. Okros then went on to explain that it's true that we have to change, for the reasons I just quoted, but also that the Canadian military and in fact all militaries are in a very unique situation. They have to have a unique culture. The question is, what would that culture look like, given the constraints, the conditions or the unique environment of a military?

He said:

The other comment I would make with this is that there does need to be a unique military culture. Canadians require very specific things from the women and men who are providing security for them. That requires some very specific things. There is no other employer that has the concept of unlimited liability, that expects and requires people to put themselves in harm's way.

To do that, to generate those capabilities and the capacity to endure under what can be really arduous circumstances, does require something unique that most private sector employers don't need.

The issue is, what should that culture be? I think that's the issue that is really up for debate and discussion. Again, what the comments we're providing here...there is a tension in the military as well around evolving over time. One thing that is baked into the military philosophy is that there are really important lessons that have been learned, that were paid for in blood over the centuries, that we will never forget.

That is of importance, but that can hold the military back from trying to envision the future military culture that they need to be building within a 21st-century security context, and with young Canadians who are seeking to serve their country in uniform.

It needs to be a unique culture. The debate, really, is about what [that culture should be], what should be retained and what needs to fundamentally change.

Going on to show how complex it is and why we need a government response because of the complexity, Dr. von Hlatky talks about women. There are some comments about certain situations that women are in. She goes on to explain how women face differences throughout the entire spectrum of their military career. There could be different aspects at different times in their career, but certainly, right from recruitment to retirement, it's a totally different situation for women. That's obviously very critical in improving the military in the discussions that we're having.

Dr. von Hlatky said:



I would certainly welcome this opportunity to review how we can better focus on the unique needs and experiences of women in the Canadian Armed Forces. If it takes a crisis to precipitate more attention to this issue, then so be it.

In general, I think it's been the big push behind integrating a gender-based analysis plus tool—

Again, I compliment Mr. Robillard for his discussion on that in the House a couple of weeks ago, his motion on gender-based analysis in the military. Congratulations, Mr. Robillard.

—into the way that the Government of Canada develops its policies, and here, this certainly applies to the Canadian Armed Forces. Because the experiences of women are different from men—and we pointed to some cultural factors for why that is—there are other reasons, as well, for why they may have different needs and different experiences.

At every career stage, once again, whether it's at the moment of recruitment or at the moment of release and the transition from being in the military to reintegrating in civilian life, women face unique challenges. If we can use this opportunity as a way to further study what these unique challenges and needs are, then I definitely think this would be a good step in that direction.

At the same time, I don't think we should assume that what's going on right now—what's playing out in the media—is a central decision-making factor for a woman, either in terms of considering her career options in the military or whether she's considering joining the Canadian Armed Forces. There are a host of motives and reasons for why women make decisions about their careers, and that may have an impact or it may not. Certainly, it's just one consideration among many.

● (75610)

To show the complexity of this one topic, that being culture, and why we need the government involved in a very thoughtful response to what we come up with, I'll go to Dr. Okros. He said that one of the ways to improve this culture is to make sure that everyone, all the groups, maybe under-represented groups, etc., have voices and are heard.

Dr. Okros said the following:

I'll start by saying that I'm probably the last person to speak on behalf of women serving in the Canadian Armed Forces, and it's the point I'd like to make. Inclusion strategies, when we are looking at diverse peoples, use the phrase “nothing about us without us”. If we apply the women, peace and security agenda principles, one of the things it should lead to is the recognition that women need to be empowered to represent themselves, and that includes with agency, with voice.

I would offer...in terms of what the CAF does internally...that it is important to ensure that the voices and perspectives of those we wish to speak for are being heard and being considered. In the long run, creating mechanisms of voice so that individuals and subgroups within the military can be heard effectively would be a good strategy.

Dr. Okros goes on to say this:

The extension beyond this is the issue of creating social hierarchies. Every workplace, every group, has social hierarchies of who is the most important down to who is the least important. These are the things that are being policed commonly using sexualized or racialized language and references.

...when people put in these snide comments, when women make an observation and are ignored and then their male colleagues say exactly the same thing and are applauded, these are the day-to-day practices that send signals about who's important and valued and who's not.

When people seek to create these hierarchies and police them by rewarding certain individuals based on characteristics and attacking others, that's what starts damaging identity and belonging.

It is important for us to be recognizing it. It isn't unique to the military. What I tried to identify are some facets of the military such as the importance given to normative conformity, obedience to authority, the differentiations of rank and the power differences. These things can accentuate those and make it more difficult.

As I reported earlier, Dr. English made the same type of reference to the specific environment of the military.

Dr. Okros continued:

As I said, these things are essential for operational effectiveness, but they're double-edged swords because they get used against people as well.

The environment and the needs of operations have these different requirements because it's such a difficult situation, but then these different requirements, if used improperly, are part of the problem. That's why this committee needs to have very considered discussion of this one complicated topic of culture. It's not simple. It will take some time.

I'd like to go back to Dr. von Hlatky now with regard to training. She came up with a very important point that I had never thought of before, but it makes obvious sense when you think about it at length. She talks about how the training related to sexual misconduct is totally different from operational training. It's treated far less seriously. Operational training, as anyone who's been in operational training knows, is done over and over again until it's just a gut reaction. It's instinct. That's what saves your life in different situations.

Dr. von Hlatky states:

I think we can recognize the opacity of the current culture. I want us to switch the framing from operational effectiveness to organizational effectiveness. Operation Honour framed misconduct as a problem that undermines operational effectiveness; and I think moving forward, it would be prudent to talk about organizational health. Organizational effectiveness is a prerequisite for operational effectiveness, and the way that the forces get ready for operations is through training...and certification. You plan and practice until your instincts are right, and even in difficult, complex environments with high stress and sleep deprivation, you will perform in a way that is consistent with your training.

● (75615)

On the other hand, we have Operation Honour training, which consists of passing on information about sexual misconduct. It's ticking the box, and we don't worry so much about how the information is retained or applied beyond monitoring who's up to date on their training and who's not.

While I fully agree with my colleagues that it's important to look at culture, I think it's important to look at culture through different phases of the career and at how military identity is developed throughout these stages. I also really believe in the importance of some more bureaucratic fixes, and training is one of them. We need to give this kind of training as much importance as the other types of training that happen in the military.

Later on in this intervention, I'll explain how Dr. English repeats the same point.

Once again, just to show a need for a government response to this, Dr. von Hlatky goes on:

There has been a lot of defensiveness in the past as well in terms of reacting to problems as they arise, and of course, five years ago, that's where we were as well. However, despite these doubts, I don't think we should wait until the next CDS is appointed to take decisive action... [T]here needs to be an immediate call to action and stress on the importance of this crisis-like situation for the people. There are a lot of people in the Canadian Armed Forces, and right now they need to hear from their leaders. The well-being of the Canadian Armed Forces members, victims and survivors...is paramount.

As you have heard, our members have been saying this in recent committee meetings.

Dr. von Hlatky continues:

People need leadership in times of crisis. General Eyre is it right now. This is obviously needed from the PM and the defence minister too, but Canadian Armed Forces members will look to their service commanders and CDS to set the tone.

We spoke to deeper change and cultural change, and that's certainly necessary immediately. Sexual misconduct cannot always be put away as a problem to solve on its own. We've tried...to really emphasize the connection between military culture and the prevalence of sexual misconduct. Then there are the more immediate questions that have been raised in the last few weeks, and we need to reverse-engineer this problem. The question that needs to be answered immediately is how officers get to the top of the hierarchy while abusing power. How can the incentive structure within the CAF change so that abuses of power are not explained away or covered up by subordinates, peers and senior leaders alike?

You can see that is a huge issue that will take more than a couple of minutes of discussion to come up with a rational, thoughtful solution as to how we deal with it. I'll talk about that in my next intervention—not in this one, but later on in the meeting. I'll talk about that promotion situation as well, but it shows that we need thoughtful discussion by committee members on that and then a response from the government on this very complicated issue.

Dr. von Hlatky goes on:

...in my opinion, abuses of power have not been adequately addressed as part of the Operation Honour journey, and this circumstance should motivate a series of adjustments across the board—from training approaches to communications to leadership to data collection—

When we go on to discuss recommendations, probably not until my third intervention today, one will be related to data collection, which, for obvious reasons, will be important as to what levels the effects are at and how they are different.

Then again, to show the complexity of this issue and why we need thoughtful discussion in committee and a government response, Dr. Okros says:

I would just offer that it's important to make a differentiation between commitment and understanding. I would state that I believe leaders at all levels are committed to addressing the issues.

● (75620)

And all people on this committee are, I'm sure. He continues:

As...has been observed by women's organizations externally, the gap is in the understanding. As I tried to say, it is at one level easy to see or easier to understand why it's difficult to understand it. Again, one of the phrases people use is that it's hard for fish to discover water. It's difficult for people who are completely immersed in a very strong, dominant culture to really understand what that culture is.

Again, I think this is the reason for some of the calls for the assistance of those who have external academic and professional perspectives to bear, to assist senior leaders in understanding the culture and then helping them to figure out what the culture change initiatives can be.

That is exactly the reason why I said at the beginning of this intervention that I and perhaps other committee members without experience need this expert input. But Dr. English put sort of a caveat on that. He said:

To follow on from that, one of the issues is exactly about what leaders believe. General Thibault made a very perceptive comment, that his lack of belief in Justice Deschamps' conclusions was based in his own personal experience. He didn't see it, and we know from research that this is true, that we form biases and we tend to favour our own personal experience over, for example, academic studies.

However, it goes back to this key point, which is power. Many of the behaviours that go on—and they're not all related to sexual misconduct, as has been pointed out by a number of speakers—are related to maintaining and keeping power. One of the main things you have to do when you want to make comprehensive culture change is to make significant changes in the leadership, and the Canadian Forces has rarely, if ever, been willing to do that. That comes down to oversight.

Mr. Baker mentioned oversight already today. Dr. English continued:

I'll make the last point very briefly, because it was brought up, about demographics. Until you change the demographics of the forces, get more women in, get more diversity, the experiences are going to remain within this homogeneous group that doesn't really believe in change. I think the leaders have said that.

You know, it's not just a few. There's a certain level that it has to be before it will be effective.

I'm just going to make one more input on this culture, again to show how complicated it is. It's from Dr. English, and this is a good conclusion to my first intervention today. I've referenced this a number of times actually in these committee meetings:

I've read the latest DAOD 9005-1 on sexual misconduct.... I find parts of it contradicts itself. I was discussing with a colleague the other day about duty to report. On one hand, it would say that you report here, disclose here, and it doesn't get reported. You disclose here, and it does get reported. You disclose here, and it doesn't get reported at first, but maybe it will get reported later on, because someone or a profession has a duty to report.

For your average person, it would be quite complex to figure out exactly what's going on. I know why the DAODs are written the way they are. They're written by lawyers and bureaucrats to cover all the bases. For the average member, it would be quite difficult to decipher that.

Going back to the culture question, that really is the substance of my arguments. In the end, it doesn't really matter how good your rules and regulations are or how open to reporting you are. If people know, within the culture, that anybody who reports will be ostracized, bullied, harassed, have their career ended, then it doesn't really matter how good and clear your regulations are, or how open you say you are. Many times, many organizations, including the CAF, have said this. That's why it goes back to the fundamental problem of changing the culture.

I have to re-emphasize that my colleagues are a little more optimistic than I am about "The Path to Dignity and Respect". If it calls for cultural realignment, it's assuming that everything is not so bad. I'm afraid most people have said it is pretty bad. It needs more than realignment. It needs comprehensive change. Until that change happens, it doesn't really matter how many rules and regulations are made about reporting, people aren't going to do it. We've had many reports done on that, and have explained why.

● (75625)

Over and above everything that's been said about culture at previous meetings, I've just spent 24 minutes on an intervention on this one complex issue that our committee is struggling with, so how reasonable would it be that this motion would only allow me two minutes? These issues are very complex. We have to come out with a thoughtful discussion of these issues—and that's only me. It just shows how unreasonable the motion is. It would limit me to two minutes when I've used 24 minutes right now, plus things, as people have mentioned, that I've said in previous meetings.

Think for a minute if we were allowed only two minutes on the motion and then made our recommendations to the Government of Canada. The way the motion is right now, the government wouldn't have to respond to it. Given that the recommendation was provided without serious debate, the government would have two options. First of all, it could not take it seriously, because of this unreasonable motion we're discussing, because it wasn't a serious debate on the issue, or it would be forced to do a detailed evaluation and analysis of the recommendation to ensure that it was an appropriate recommendation. I'm glad that all committee members, especially the opposition, have the belief that the government has the ability and the expertise to do that. That would take a long time.

I don't think it would really help the survivors if we caused them to take all sorts of extra time by not giving them well-thought-out, well-debated recommendations. That's why I believe that the motion before us is not the most effective way of proceeding, and I would hope that we could have thoughtful debate and a government response to these very critical and important issues.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Bagnell.

We will move on to Madame Vandenbeld, please.

**Ms. Anita Vandenbeld:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

Thank you for all the thoughtful interventions before me in today's meeting, and particularly Mr. Bagnell's. I noted at the very end that he explained well, I think, how complex and complicated the solutions are to these issues that we are facing in the Canadian Armed Forces right now and how cynical the motion is, both the not wanting to have a government response to our committee report and the limitation of the two minutes per person to be able to debate issues that really require a lot more thoughtfulness.

It's not obvious what the correct answers are. I think we have done a very good job of outlining what the problem is, and we know that there is a very significant problem. However, the answers differ depending on who you speak to, on what perspective they bring. We know from history that very often you can put in place solutions, that you can put in place programs, like Operation Honour, that look like they will solve the problem and that then have unintended consequences and don't achieve the results we're looking for.

Just in terms of the motion itself, I do believe it is very cynical, Madam Chair. I have referred to it, in fact, as a "poison pill" motion. I don't believe there is good will on the opposition side to actually really want to work together in good faith to get these reports done. The fact that we are now sitting here half an hour before the end of the last scheduled meeting before the summer break really disappoints me.

The opposition members know, both in private and in this committee—and other members of this committee, Mr. Bagnell and others—that we have made many overtures to try to find a solution to this impasse. I'm certainly not going to speak publicly about those overtures, but they were done very much in good faith.

I think we all want to see this report, this and the other reports. Given that we are now at this eleventh hour, I think all of us feel a

little bit deflated about the fact that we're unlikely to see some of these recommendations, especially the ones that matter to the survivors.

I just have to say, Madam Chair, that there have been arguments that all the committee needs to do is talk about the finger pointing and who did what right and when, and talk about the politicians. If it had been three meetings, if we had stuck to the original title of the motion, done the three meetings, had the minister here and then reported on that, that would have been different. However, the fact is that we then continued as a committee to call witnesses, including survivors, professors, experts, people from the Canadian Armed Forces, officials and others who have been working on this throughout their lives. There are people who came for whom this is their life's work. They have been putting forward solutions for decades. To have those people come to this committee and give that testimony and to then turn around and say that we don't need to include any of that in the report, I think, is unfair. It's unfair to the witnesses. It's unfair to the survivors. It's unfair to the women and men of the Canadian Armed Forces.

It is really too bad because I think Mr. Bagnell's proposal that he's made several times now, that we at least go through and find the things we all agree on.... I thought that we did all agree on at least those proposals that help us move forward for the women and men in the Canadian Armed Forces, and it's becoming very evident to me now here that we don't.

Putting these very cynical motions, knowing that these are motions that we would not be able to support, such as not having a government report.... I think it could have been different, Madam Chair. It could very easily have been different.

The word "filibuster" has been thrown out a lot. I would just like to remind particularly those who might be listening that the opposition holds all the cards right now. You've heard me say many times, and you've heard others say on this committee, both privately and publicly, that if we were to have adjourned the debate at any moment in the last month, we would have gone to the next item of business immediately, which is the study of the report. Madam Chair, you'll recall that not only could we go to the study of the report but we were doing the study of the report.

● (75630)

Without saying what happens in camera, we were actually advancing quite well, I think. We were actually talking to each other. Somewhere along the way, the opposition has been putting these what are known as 106(4) motions, which immediately ended the topic that we had been talking about. Then they came in with another meeting and another new motion. It's been one after another after another. I can't remember how many hours this meeting has been going on. Over the last month there has already been 26 hours of overtime in addition to the times that we were scheduled to sit.

Each time, in good faith, we've debated it and then we have agreed. Each time we have agreed and we have had somebody else come in, another witness, whether it was Elder Marques or Katie Telford or the minister for six hours. Each time they came back with something else, until it became readily apparent that it wasn't about trying to get a report done; it was really about just dragging it on. No matter what we agreed to, they were going to keep coming up with more motions.

That became even more evident when we as a committee agreed to a certain timeline. We spoke with the clerk and analysts to see how long they would need to be able to translate and format the report, get it out and table it in the House. We agreed to a timeline in this committee that would have allowed us to get all three reports tabled. The opposition just blew through that timeline, again with motion after motion, with 106(4) after 106(4), with all the procedural tactics.

I would remind everyone again that when somebody is filibustering, it generally means that they have control of the meeting. But the opposition could have said at literally any moment that it moved to adjourn debate. We would have adjourned the debate. We would have gone directly to a study of those reports without these unreasonable limits of two minutes to speak. Then there would have been no back and forth, no dialogue. If they really want dialogue about this and want these reports done, the opposition holds all the cards here. They have the majority on the committee. They have been holding all the cards from the beginning. Should this report unfortunately not be able to be tabled before the summer recess—which is looking more likely—I don't want there to be any doubt about who held the cards in terms of deciding whether or not that would happen, as well as about the level of effort by me personally in conversations in this committee, and by Mr. Bagnell, who has proposed different ways to move beyond the impasse to build consensus. Again, I just want to express my disappointment before I go into some of my remarks today.

Given that it looks as though we're going to continue to debate this motion and Mr. Bagnell's amendment to try to ask for a government response—and frankly the least we should be doing is asking the government to respond to our recommendations. Barring that, we have heard a lot of very good recommendations, which, at a minimum, I want to make sure are on the record. I want to make sure they're right here on the record in a format that at least can be picked up by the CAF, by DND, by the government, by the minister, and by Parliament so that we actually have these here today at least.

With regard to these recommendations, I'll remind everyone—and I've been reading through them for some time now—that they are coming from the survivors. They are coming from the stakeholders, the experts, the academics, the people who have come as witnesses before this committee and other committees and who have reached out to each one of us. I know there are many people who have reached out personally to all of us.

Given that we are short on time, what I would like to do is to read the remaining ones that I haven't yet gotten too. I'll read them all and then comment on some of them.

Again, these are not in my voice. These are in the voices of the survivors. These recommendations were brought to us. These are the ones specifically on culture change. This is a summary of those recommendations. The reason, again, Madam Chair, I'm putting these forward is that I think it is important that in speaking to Mr. Bagnell's amendment we have a government response, and if it's not going to be a response to a committee report, at least we can put this on the record so that the government can look at these.

• (75635)

First of all, it recommends updating the path to dignity and respect to identify and reflect factors that increase the risk of workplace harassment.

Madam Chair, we've heard a little bit about the path to dignity and respect, and Mr. Bagnell actually cited some of our witness testimony that said that it doesn't really go far enough. I know that when it was put forward, it was put forward as an evergreen document. It was really intended to be the beginning of the discussion.

I'd note, actually, that this path to dignity and respect was put forward in October. It was done based on, at that point, some significant work recognizing that after four or five years Operation Honour wasn't having the intended result. Again, I believe that those who worked hard on Operation Honour did so believing—to simplify it—that by simply ordering this to happen that could work; but there were some very good aspects to Operation Honour as well, and there were some successes, which we haven't talked about. But, by and large, I think all the survivors we heard from have said that it didn't work. It didn't achieve the intended goal.

Recognizing that last year, a year ago, long before the crisis, long before any of our committee studies or any of the events that have unfolded since February, the department and the Canadian Armed Forces, the minister, had already started working on how to achieve culture change, because the recognition was that the reason Operation Honour wasn't working was that you couldn't just put in place what needed to be done. You had to also change the underlying culture. That's what we've all been talking about in this committee.

I think that updating the path to dignity and respect is very important, because the underlying intent on culture is very important. I know there have been survivors who have come back with recommendations about it, who would like to see it expanded and would like to see other things included. The fact that we now have Lieutenant-General Carignan and Madam Arbour working in this area is actually going to be very helpful in terms of what we do on the culture change and where we take the path to dignity and respect.

To state again, this was done last October, and I think that those who are saying that nothing was done until February or March... We were already working on this. In fact, we were working not just on this. The minister is the one who commissioned the Fish report to look at the military justice system. In December, the minister actually created an advisory panel and a secretariat on racism and discrimination in the Canadian Armed Forces, which again is another piece of the culture change that has to happen. These things that have been in the works for many years, on top of Bill C-77, the declaration of victims rights, on top of creating the SMRCs and doing a review of all the unfounded cases, and a lot of the other things that have been done over the years.... This has been an iterative process that has been going on since 2015, since our government came into power, and I think that needs to be recognized.

It has not achieved the results, and that's why we're here. That's why we need these recommendations and that's why we need a government response to these recommendations.

That's the path to dignity and respect.

The next one recommends addressing the social factors that inhibit sexual violence reporting and challenge central tenets of the CAF. There are three things that are mentioned: obedience to authority, normative conformity and group loyalty. I noted in Mr. Bagnell's intervention that he actually was citing I think it was Dr. Okros, or one of the witnesses we heard, where he talks about things like "obedience to authority" and "normative conformity". I think this issue of group loyalty is actually something we should delve into.

These are not bad things in the military. I think what we need to realize is that there are parts of the military culture that are actually needed—this group loyalty. And again, I use a non-gendered term—what's often been referred to as the band of brothers, the brotherhood, which, again, in itself shows that it is not inclusive. But it's that concept of being part of something bigger than you and having each other's back.

● (75640)

I recently spoke to a veteran about when you go into battle with someone and the lifelong loyalty and the lifelong bond that comes from that. No matter what, 50 years later you still have that bond of having been through that battle and having each other's back. You never forget. It was a very powerful thing to hear.

I have not been in the military, but I've worked in Bosnia and Kosovo and other places I worked alongside and witnessed a lot of that culture—the strength of that kind of bond, the loyalty and the unit. I don't think anybody wants to lose that. The problem is the flip side of that, which is that sometimes that loyalty can be twisted into protecting someone even though they have conducted behaviour that is harmful to that group, that unit and that team.

When we talk about the complexities, I think that's what we're talking about. I know that people have been saying to me and to others to not throw the baby out with the bathwater. When you talk about culture change, it can be frightening for some people because there are aspects of the culture that have worked and have worked for decades and generations. We don't want to lose that.

Then you look at the other words here, like "normative conformity". What has to be recognized is you can't have group loyalty if certain members of the group are not part of it and if the loyalty is only to some and not to others. You can't have obedience to authority if that authority is excluding and is perpetuating behaviour that is harmful.

The normative conformity that we've heard about from the witnesses is very harmful to people—and not just to women, racialized Canadians, indigenous Canadians or LGBTQ2. It's harmful to men who do not conform to that particular normative.

We know that within every gender there are completely different ways in which people engage one another and behave and learn. To only put one forward.... I think it was Mr. Bagnell, or it might have been Mr. Baker, who talked about the warrior culture. To only take one form—almost a stereotype or a very flat idea of behaviour—and say that is what is accepted and all the other behaviour isn't.... What that means, to be honest, is that the men who don't actually naturally conform to that very aggressive warrior culture and that masculinity will also be excluded.

When we talk about the exclusion, the group and the unit, it isn't just about women. We know and we've seen throughout this that the sexual harassment, sexual violence, assault and all of the ways in which gender is used to minimize, diminish and exclude from this group has a particular harm that is unique to those who have experienced sexual violence, whether they be men, women, trans or LGBTQ. We talk about exclusion from that group and we talk about harm, but then you add the sexualized nature of it.

I just want to be clear again that what we've heard from all the witnesses and what I've heard in a lot of the stakeholder engagements I've done and from those who I've spoken with recently, is that it isn't about sex. It's about power. It's about abuse of power. This is why in the military.... A little bit later we have another recommendation, which I might skip down to, actually.

The next recommendation talks about examining how sexual misconduct interacts with consent in asymmetric professional relations. This is the key.

● (75645)

The first time I read this I had to think a little bit about what this meant, because not having been in the Canadian Armed Forces myself, not having been in a military, this is something unique, these asymmetric professional relations. This is why there are certain things that are considered sexual misconduct in a military environment that wouldn't necessarily be considered criminal or even be punished outside of the military. It's because of the power. It's because of the asymmetric professional relations where, particularly—again, I've not lived it, but I'm echoing what I've heard—you have people who have so much authority.

I remember one woman saying to me that it was somebody who had the authority to tell her when she could go to the bathroom, when she could go to sleep and what she could wear. When you have someone with that much authority over your day-to-day life... There's such a hierarchy. When something like this happens, it's a betrayal, and it's an abuse. It is an absolute abuse, because even if the person in authority believes that they have consent and that the person wants to receive this attention, it's not possible because of this asymmetric relationship.

This is where I think there are a few—and I don't know if I'll get to all of them in this intervention—of these recommendations that talk about that kind of relationship and whether or not somebody not saying no, or not reporting something means that they consented to it. It is very clear that there are occasions where, because of the authority that exists, there is fear of retribution, fear of career reprisals.

Some of the people I have spoken to were very young when these things happened to them. I spoke to some people and it happened 30 or 40 years ago, when they were 19 or 20 years old. When your commanding officer asks you to go to their barracks—or tent, in the case of the person who called me—and you're 19 years old and there's this power differential, can you say no? Often people will laugh along with the joke, or go along with the behaviour and pretend that they're okay with it, not because they're okay with it, but because they are afraid. I'll go back to the wording that there is this asymmetric professional relation. I think it's very important that three or four of the recommendations here refer to those words, “asymmetric professional relations”. It's why, when we look at military justice, the code of discipline and what is an offence in the military as opposed to in other day-to-day civilian life, we have to look at it differently.

We have to make sure that those in authority understand the power they have. I have spoken with some men who have said that they really didn't realize that the person may or may not have been willingly receiving the attention, because of the way the person may have interacted. They didn't realize their power. I think training is needed on these power differentials that exist. We need to make sure that there is training on how to understand your power and not use it in a way that is going to harm others.

The level of harm, I think, has been underestimated. This has done significant harm. As I said, I have spoken to people who have carried this for 30 years. This has been with them for 30 years. That level of harm that happens... We need to make sure that people in authority understand the power that they have to do harm and the impact their behaviour can have on people.

To go back to the group loyalty that's been mentioned here, it has an impact on the group. It's not just because you're losing talent or you're losing people who could have contributed in enormous ways.

• (75650)

Again, some of the survivors I've spoken to have said, “I think I could have served my country well. I think I could have been good at this.” There's a loss of the potential of what that person wanted to do to serve, and there's a loss to our country of what they could have done if they had been given the kind of environment that

would have allowed them to contribute fully, so I think this is one of the most important recommendations.

The next recommendation here talks about providing clarity on which aspects of CAF culture must change and which are allowed to remain the same. Again, you know, it's very easy for us to say the culture is terrible and everything is bad, and it's a little bit dangerous because, as in the previous recommendation here, I think that—

**Mr. James Bezan:** I have a point of order, Madam Chair.

**The Chair:** Go ahead, Mr. Bezan.

**Mr. James Bezan:** Liberal members have been speaking ad nauseam for quite some time. I tried to get on the speaking list earlier. Where am I in that speaking list? I know that we only have five minutes until we normally suspend these meetings instead of trying to adjourn and we are going to be running out of time here. As a mover of the main motion, I'd like to speak to it before we shut off this committee before the end of this session.

• (75655)

**Ms. Anita Vandenberg:** Madam Chair, I'll end my intervention here. I'd be happy to make sure that others have a chance to speak.

**The Chair:** Mr. Baker, Mr. Robillard and then Mr. Bezan is what we have right now.

**Mr. James Bezan:** Madam Chair, I believe that there are no other committee meetings after one o'clock, and this is during the day, so there might be an opportunity for more resources. I'd like to see us extend this meeting so that we have an opportunity to fill the debate and bring this to some sort of close, at least on the amendment proposed by Mr. Bagnell.

**Ms. Anita Vandenberg:** Madam Chair, I'll cede the floor to Mr. Bezan.

**The Chair:** Go ahead, Mr. Bezan.

**Mr. James Bezan:** Thank you.

I want to thank Ms. Vandenberg for ceding the floor and allowing us to close off this debate.

This has been going on for a long time, since May 21. Let's point it out. We're in meeting number 32. There have been ongoing suspensions. This is the fifth meeting, and we're almost into the tenth hour of debate on the amendment proposed by Mr. Bagnell that says, quite simply, to table a comprehensive report from the government, a response to the report, if we ever get to the report.

All the debate we have listened to over the last month has barely touched on the issue of the scope of the study, which was the sexual misconduct allegations against General Vance and Admiral McDonald. We had a report that came from the status of women committee—I think all of us support the recommendations that came forth—that looked at the broader context of the issues around sexual misconduct in the Canadian Armed Forces, but, when it comes down to the issues of ministerial accountability as tied to the chief of the defence staff, that is where the Liberals have continued to filibuster.

We hear they don't like that term. When these minutes are finally published and people have a chance to read them through, they will see that Liberals dominated this discussion talking about recommendations from other committees and other countries and other studies that were not done by Parliament itself, rather than talking about the issue of trying to come to a decision on how we go forward to write a report.

This obstructionism has not hurt just our filing a report on sexual misconduct as it relates to General Vance and Admiral McDonald and the lack of action taken by Minister Sajjan, but this also prevented us from finalizing our reports on mental health and on how our Canadian soldiers responded to the COVID-19 crisis and were impacted by it.

We heard a lot of witness testimony that didn't appear at this committee read into the record. I believe that was done as a part of political grandstanding. I think it was insensitive to those victims. It's disrespectful to our armed forces. I have to say that, while watching these politics play out, I've never been more disheartened, and I've been a member of this committee for the past 10 years.

How many more victims were re-traumatized by listening to their testimony read here without their permission? In that time

frame, we know that every three days someone within the Canadian Armed Forces is sexually assaulted, and because we dragged our feet and allowed this obstructionism to take place, we were not able to come to a final decision.

It's disgusting. It's egregious that Liberal members put more time into protecting the Minister of National Defence, the Honourable Harjit Sajjan, rather than protecting the women and men in uniform. I would say that this is complicit in the overall cover-up of sexual misconduct. These ongoing suspensions and contemptuous behaviour borders on violating the privilege of all members here.

Knowing that, it is the top of the hour. It is the end of the session.

I do now move to adjourn meeting number 32 of the Standing Committee on National Defence.

● (75700)

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

(Motion agreed to)

**The Chair:** This committee is adjourned.

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