



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

44th PARLIAMENT, 1st SESSION

Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration

EVIDENCE

NUMBER 054

Monday, March 20, 2023

Chair: Mrs. Salma Zahid



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• (1540)

[*English*]

The Chair (Mrs. Salma Zahid (Scarborough Centre, Lib.)): I call this meeting to order.

Welcome to meeting number 54 of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration.

Pursuant to the order of reference of Thursday, June 3, 2022, today the committee will commence consideration of Bill S-245, an act to amend the Citizenship Act, granting citizenship to certain Canadians.

On behalf of the committee, I would like to welcome the officials from Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada to provide their opening remarks. Today, we are joined by Nicole Girard, director general, citizenship policy; Uyen Hoang, senior director, legislation and program policy; and Alain Laurencelle, senior counsel, legal services.

Before we go into the opening remarks, I remind you that all amendments to the bill must be submitted to the clerk by Friday, March 31, 2023, at noon. That is the deadline for submitting any amendments to Bill S-245.

Go ahead, Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Good afternoon, Madam Chair.

Good afternoon, everyone.

Madam Chair, before I begin, I would like to point out that something happened last week. A meeting with a German delegation was cancelled. I'd like us to discuss that and to have some of my questions answered about what happened then and how it all went down.

At your convenience, we could have this discussion in camera, as it may be awkward for some people to do it publicly. I need to address what happened last week. The committee members need to talk about it together.

[*English*]

Mr. Brad Redekopp (Saskatoon West, CPC): Madam Chair, if we do want to discuss this and we need to go in camera, that should maybe happen at the end of the meeting because I know it's a bit of a hassle to switch over to in camera. Those are my thoughts on that.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde (Orléans, Lib.): I fully agree with my colleague Mr. Redekopp.

I think we are now dealing with an important topic—in this case, a bill. I think that, if it is the will of the committee members, it would be better to deal with this matter toward the end of the meeting, especially since going in camera takes some time.

[*English*]

The Chair: It seems the consensus is that we can discuss that issue at the end of the meeting, so we will keep about five minutes to go into that discussion.

With that, we will welcome our witnesses for today.

You will have five minutes for your opening remarks, and then we will go into a round of questioning. The floor is yours. You can please begin.

Ms. Nicole Girard (Director General, Citizenship Policy, Department of Citizenship and Immigration): Thank you, Madam Chair.

Before begin, I would like to acknowledge that I work on the traditional—

The Chair: I'm sorry for interrupting.

It's a technical briefing. I know you requested it. There will be 10 minutes for your opening remarks. Then we will go into the rounds of questioning.

Thank you. I'm sorry about that.

Ms. Nicole Girard: Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

Members, good afternoon. Before I begin, I'd like to acknowledge that I work on the traditional unceded territory of the Algonquin Anishinabe people.

We are pleased to be here today to support the committee's work on Bill S-245, which seeks to address the remaining lost Canadians. While the bill is well intended as drafted, the bill would not address all remaining lost Canadians and would have some unintended consequences if passed in its current form.

Before outlining these concerns, I'll provide a brief overview of the bill and then touch on lost Canadians, past legislative amendments and the first-generation limit, as these are relevant to the committee's consideration today.

In terms of a description of the bill, Bill S-245 is seeking to address the remaining lost Canadians by doing three things.

First of all, it would amend the Citizenship Act to automatically confer citizenship on some persons born abroad in the second or subsequent generation who lost their Canadian citizenship because they did not take the required steps to retain it under the former section 8 of the Citizenship Act.

Second, the bill also amends the citizenship legislation regarding automatic citizenship for those born abroad to a Canadian parent and seems to attempt to delay the implementation of the first-generation limit to automatic citizenship by descent, by moving the date from April 17, 2009, and pushing it out to June 11, 2015.

Last, for those who would automatically become citizens as a result of the bill as drafted but who may not wish to become citizens, the bill would allow for regulatory amendments to extend access to what's called a simplified renunciation process to renounce or give up Canadian citizenship.

Before touching on the specific issues with regard to Bill S-245, which I will come to in a moment, I will briefly summarize the former provisions of the Citizenship Act that led us to the emergence of lost Canadians, which the committee will be discussing in further detail today.

As I am sure you are aware, the requirements and some of the complexities of the first Canadian Citizenship Act of 1947 and former provisions of the current Citizenship Act created cohorts or groups of individuals who lost or never had Canadian citizenship status. These individuals are known to us as "lost Canadians". Changes to citizenship legislation that came into effect on April 17, 2009, and June 11, 2015, restored status or gave extended citizenship for the first time to the majority of lost Canadians up to the first generation born abroad to a Canadian parent. Before the 2009 amendments, a person born abroad in the second or subsequent generation to a Canadian parent were considered Canadian citizens from birth, but only until they turned 28 years old, unless they met certain conditions to comply with the former section 8 "retention of citizenship" provisions.

The conditions for those impacted included a requirement to have lived in Canada for one year before submitting an application to retain their citizenship or having established a substantial connection to Canada. If they did not meet the conditions and apply to retain their citizenship before they reached their 28th birthday, they would automatically lose their citizenship. Some were not even aware they had to meet these requirements and lost their citizenship unknowingly.

These section 8 retention requirements were repealed as part of the amendments to the citizenship legislation in 2009. The 2009 amendments also established a clear first-generation limit to the right to automatic citizenship by descent. This means that today any child born outside Canada to a Canadian parent is automatically a Canadian citizen from birth if they have a parent who is either born in Canada or came to Canada as an immigrant and subsequently became a Canadian citizen. That child does not need to do anything to keep their Canadian citizenship. However, those born abroad in the second or subsequent generation do not acquire automatic Canadian

citizenship from birth, as the committee is aware. Instead, they have to apply for a grant of citizenship. The first-generation limit now makes clear who does not have a claim to automatic citizenship by descent and needs to instead apply for a grant of citizenship versus those who've obtained it automatically.

On the impacts of Bill S-245 as drafted, as mentioned, the past provisions of the Citizenship Act led to the emergence of lost Canadians. There is a risk that passing Bill S-245 as is will have unintended consequences.

● (1545)

As drafted, the bill would have at least three unintended consequences of concern as it would, first, create new distinctions, as it only remedies some of the lost Canadians who lost their citizenship due to the former section 8. Second, the bill as drafted would create more lost Canadians. Third, it would automatically give citizenship to some for whom dual citizenship may be problematic for legal, professional or other reasons.

The issues with the bill are such that they would have negative impacts for lost Canadians and other Canadians, if not addressed through the consideration of remedies in the form of amendments to the bill at the committee stage.

First, Bill S-245 aims to restore citizenship to persons who lost it as a result of the former section 8 retention provisions. However, the bill as drafted does not restore citizenship to all those lost Canadians, since it only restores citizenship, as drafted, to those who never applied to retain it. The bill excludes those who took steps to retain their citizenship by making an application but were unsuccessful. This would create a distinction by not addressing all of those affected by the former retention provisions and not fully addressing these lost Canadians.

Second, the bill as written is unclear as to the effect on the first-generation limit but could be interpreted as moving the limit for anyone born between April 2009 and June 2015. Moving the date for the first-generation limit from 2009 to 2015 would have a significant impact on untold numbers of persons born abroad in the second generation or beyond, who would automatically acquire Canadian citizenship by descent from birth. Though well intentioned, this is problematic, as some would be negatively impacted and not everyone would benefit.

Specifically, those born abroad to a Canadian who have obtained a grant since 2009 would automatically become citizens by descent under the bill, meaning they would become the first generation born abroad, and thereby lose their ability to pass on citizenship by descent to their own children, if born abroad, which would create more lost Canadians. In other words, these children, who are not yet born, would lose access to automatic citizenship because of the shifting of the first-generation limit under the bill as drafted.

The bill would still exclude anyone born outside Canada beyond the first generation after June 11, 2015, from citizenship by descent. As such, the bill gives citizenship, or seeks to give citizenship, to some persons born abroad in the second or subsequent generation but not to others, which is a concern and would create more distinctions.

Third, in addition to these issues, some persons who become citizens automatically under the bill may find this problematic for legal, professional or other reasons, depending on the country where they live or work or other circumstances. The bill does provide for a regulation-making authority to allow for simplified renunciation in such cases where folks were born under the former section 8. However, regulations take time, and the bill lacks the necessary provisions to allow for the time to address implementation issues such as this one, which is important to mitigate impacts and concerns.

Finally, Bill S-245 is well intentioned and can be supported, but several amendments would be needed to remedy these issues with the bill as drafted. Amendments would be necessary to ensure that the bill better meets its intended objectives, to ensure more equal treatment of similar cohorts affected by the former section 8 retention rules, to minimize the introduction of new distinctions and to mitigate the risk of unintended consequences such as creating more lost Canadians.

With this, Madam Chair, I conclude my remarks. We would be pleased to address any questions that the committee members may have.

• (1550)

The Chair: Thanks a lot.

We will now go to our rounds of questioning. Our first round will be started by Mr. Kmiec.

Mr. Kmiec, you have six minutes. You can please begin.

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Thank you, Chair.

I'm going to go to the group who discussed those three unintended consequences.

You said that it only remedies some lost Canadians, that it would create new lost Canadians and that it wouldn't restore it to some persons the bill would apply to but who were rejected. Regarding that third group, those people who applied and were then rejected in retaining their citizenship, what were the reasons for the rejection? You're basically implying that we should expand the bill to include them, but if they were rejected then, what were the reasons for those rejections?

Ms. Nicole Girard: You are correct. The bill excludes those who applied and who were rejected. We don't have any way to know

what the reason for the rejection was, but the concern is that the bill has a differential impact in addressing some of these lost Canadians and not others. Those who applied had to demonstrate a connection to Canada, whereas the bill automatically remedies others who never applied and who may have a limited connection but nevertheless lost their citizenship automatically.

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Can I just ask, how does your department...? Don't you keep files of those persons you reject, who applied at some previous point? Have those files been lost since then?

Ms. Nicole Girard: The department does maintain information. Those who are impacted by the retention provisions were born abroad in the second generation since 1977. We may not necessarily have access to files going back that far in time in order to access the reasons not all those cases were accepted at the time.

Mr. Tom Kmiec: I want to ask you two more questions. I want to try to get them all in.

You talked about a substantive connection to Canada. How is that determined?

Ms. Nicole Girard: In most cases applicants who were applying to retain their citizenship had to demonstrate they were resident in Canada for one year. That would have been the connection.

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Is that for 365 days continuously at any point?

Ms. Nicole Girard: That's correct.

Mr. Tom Kmiec: That was the only connection they had to demonstrate, that they were in Canada for 365 days.

Was it based on an attestation? Was it based on actual utilities bills and things like that?

Ms. Nicole Girard: The department, at the time, would have had procedures in place in terms of various kinds of evidence that could be accepted to demonstrate residence. To my knowledge, it likely would have included the kind of proof you mentioned.

Mr. Tom Kmiec: I'm asking what the proof is. Would you take an attestation today, or will you actually require a person to show you utility bills from 25 years ago?

Ms. Nicole Girard: The requirements were repealed in 2009, so I can't really speak today to what would have been required.

• (1555)

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Okay.

During your presentation you talked about the bill's narrowness perhaps creating these unintended consequences. You used the word "problematic" as well. Why is it problematic? The narrowness of the bill is part of the reason I think it cleared the Senate so quickly, and I think part of the reason we're all debating it today as well. The narrowness of the bill has allowed it to sail through. Most people recognize there's a small group of lost Canadians who are impacted and that this would be a legislative way to fix an administrative problem that Parliament created after it repeatedly kept changing the Citizenship Act.

Why is it problematic?

Ms. Nicole Girard: The intent of the bill, to remedy lost Canadians, is one that the department or the government agrees with and can support. The issue is, as mentioned, that some who lost their citizenship automatically as a result of section 8 are included in the bill, and some others are not. To avoid creating distinctions, the bill could be considered for amendment at committee stage to cover all of those cases in the narrow cohort.

Mr. Tom Kmiec: The narrow cohort being the 1977 group.

Ms. Nicole Girard: That's correct. It's those impacted by the former retention provisions.

Mr. Tom Kmiec: For anyone beyond that, you would say it's not problematic to have those persons excluded. It would only be for the small cohort this bill is trying to address.

Ms. Nicole Girard: There is a second clause in the bill that's seeking to move the first-generation limit for those born abroad in the first generation. Again, there are concerns with that provision in the bill because it's addressing only those born between 2009 and 2015. It's not addressing those born beyond June 2015. Members of the committee, we've noted, have expressed concern about the lack of a mechanism to address those. It's also a concern that we have noted in the submissions by stakeholders who have made representations to this committee.

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Right, but I think the narrowness of the bill, as I said, is part of the reason we're here. A lot of parliamentarians like shorter bills that are easier to understand. I recognize this is not an easy piece of legislation. Every time Parliament has tried to amend the act, it's usually fallen short and we have created new lost Canadians.

If the bill sails through in the form it is right now, what is the estimated number of new lost Canadians that would be created? You said there would be new lost Canadians as a result.

Ms. Nicole Girard: I don't think we're in a position to estimate how many untold numbers of Canadians were born abroad since 2009 who could, in the future, become lost Canadians as a result of the bill as drafted, but it is a concern that could be addressed by amendments at the committee stage.

Mr. Tom Kmiec: It's just a possibility. There's no data that the department holds, having done a review of the bill, of a projection of possible lost Canadians who might apply in the future or come to parliamentarians to ask them to change the law again to cover them. There's no data...?

Ms. Nicole Girard: What I'm saying is that the bill as drafted would convert some persons who were granted citizenship since 2009 to become automatic citizens by operation of law under the

bill as drafted. This would remove their ability to pass on citizenship to their children who may be born abroad in the future, thereby creating more lost Canadians.

That is a definite scenario. How many could be impacted in terms of untold numbers of the future is not something we're able to estimate at this time.

The Chair: Thank you. The time is up for Mr. Kmiec.

We will now proceed to Ms. Kayabaga.

Ms. Kayabaga, you will have six minutes. You can begin, please.

Ms. Arielle Kayabaga (London West, Lib.): Thank you, Madam Chair.

I want to start by thanking our officials for taking the time to come and answer questions on this really important bill.

I'm going to go to questions around section 8 because it's a very complex issue. I want to make sure that we can all leave this room understanding exactly what we're talking about and which lost Canadians this bill is going to provide a remedy for.

In your presentation earlier, you described people who, under the old rules, were essentially stripped of their citizenship at age 28 if they didn't successfully apply to keep it. To me, this sounds like there are actually two groups still left out, due to the age 28 rule: one group that never applied, likely because they didn't know they needed to, and another group that did apply but were not successful because they didn't meet the criteria.

Is that correct?

Ms. Nicole Girard: Yes, that's correct.

• (1600)

Ms. Arielle Kayabaga: If these two groups are under the former age 28 rule, will they both see their citizenship restored if S-245 is passed?

Ms. Nicole Girard: The only group that would benefit would be those who never applied for whatever reason. The group that the bill doesn't include are those who applied and, for whatever reason, were not successful.

Ms. Arielle Kayabaga: If only one of the groups is included in this bill, could this be considered an inequality? Would this open up a potential legal challenge for the government?

Ms. Nicole Girard: I don't want to speculate on the form in which the bill could be passed with or without amendment by the committee, but it would create differential treatment by those affected by those former section 8 provisions. In that, you are correct.

From the perspective of the experts at this table, we'd like to recommend for the committee's consideration that all of those groups affected by the former section 8 have an opportunity to be remedied, but it would require an amendment to the bill.

Ms. Arielle Kayabaga: To your knowledge, how many people do you think are in the group of people who lost their citizenship due to the former age 28 rule? How many of those people would be captured in this bill as currently written, without the amendments?

Ms. Nicole Girard: It's difficult for the department to know exactly what that number would be since we only have data with regard to people who come forward and apply.

Currently, those who lost citizenship under the former section 8 provisions can come forward and apply for something called a discretionary grant of citizenship under subsection 5(4) of the Citizenship Act. A small number of those persons come forward every year to obtain a grant. I have a statistic here but I have to take off my glasses so that I can share it with the committee. Since 2014, 130 persons affected by the former section 8 received a discretionary grant of citizenship under 5(4).

Ms. Arielle Kayabaga: These questions are going to be around the first-generation limit.

I'd like to better understand how the first-generation limit rule is applied and what the 2019 coming into the force date means in practice. Does that date only apply to certain people, depending on whether they were born before or after 2009, or did the rule apply to everyone, as of that date, regardless of when they were born?

Ms. Nicole Girard: It is the latter. The rule is applying to everyone as of 2009. What it means is that for children born abroad after that date in 2009, they will be Canadian from birth automatically if they have one parent who was born in Canada or one parent who immigrated to Canada and became a citizen before their birth.

If it's their grandparent who falls under one of those categories, then they are considered the second generation born abroad and they are not automatically citizens from birth. Their avenue to citizenship is through the permanent resident process, followed by a grant of citizenship.

Ms. Arielle Kayabaga: Okay.

I would like you to elaborate on something that I found very surprising in your presentation. You said that Bill S-245 seemingly looks to push the application date of the first-generation limit from 2009 to 2015.

Can you add some comments to that?

Ms. Nicole Girard: I'm sorry. Does the member have a specific question in that regard?

Ms. Arielle Kayabaga: I just want you to elaborate on that.

Ms. Nicole Girard: As I mentioned in my remarks, pushing out the date of the application of the first-generation limit from 2009 to 2015 will essentially seek to delay the implementation of the first-generation limit to the later date. That means that those born abroad in the second generation or beyond—before 2015—will automatically be citizens from birth.

Previously—since 2009—they would have had to obtain a grant of citizenship, and those who are granted citizenship have the ability to automatically pass on citizenship to their future children born abroad.

With the bill converting those people to become automatically citizens from birth, that means they're then impacted by the first-generation limit and can no longer do so. That means that, if they have children born abroad in the future, they'll be considered second generation and, potentially, lost Canadians, as I mentioned in my remarks—

• (1605)

The Chair: I'm sorry for interrupting. Your time is up. The six minutes have passed.

We will now proceed to Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe for six minutes.

Please begin.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Ms. Girard, thank you for your very solid presentation.

I have a few questions for you.

Can you tell us what is happening right now to lost Canadians? Do they have to leave Canada?

Ms. Nicole Girard: Some people have experienced the impact of former section 8 of the Citizenship Act, which automatically caused them to lose their Canadian citizenship. They were actually living in Canada and did not know that this provision applied to them. They may have found out when they renewed a passport or something like that. As I mentioned, there is a discretionary grant of citizenship under subsection 5(4) of the Citizenship Act. Under that subsection, and in those circumstances, people can apply to regain their citizenship. Since 2014, I think, almost 130 people have regained their Canadian citizenship after automatically losing it.

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: Forgive me for not being as expert as you on the topic, but did I understand correctly that, when you lose your citizenship, you have 30 days to leave Canada? Is that in the act or is it not necessarily the case?

Ms. Nicole Girard: There is no provision in the Citizenship Act to that effect.

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: Okay.

How many Canadians have lost their citizenship under these circumstances since the beginning of 2023?

Ms. Nicole Girard: We don't have those numbers. However, I can say that we are talking about a discrete cohort, people who turned 28 before 2009. That provision is no longer in effect. Those people lost their citizenship just prior to the 2009 amendments to the act.

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: From now on, with the bill as it is currently drafted, how long would it take for people to regain their Canadian citizenship?

Ms. Nicole Girard: One of the concerns with the bill as drafted is that there is no provision for the Department of Citizenship and Immigration to make the necessary preparations to facilitate the implementation of this aspect of the act.

Normally, the necessary preparations would take a year, as regulations must be created and system changes made in order to process applications. Once the act or Bill S-245 comes into force, so will the provisions, depending on how the bill is currently drafted. So these people would become Canadian citizens again once the bill comes into force.

One of the other concerns raised, particularly by the Canadian Bar Association, is that the date for resumption of Canadian citizenship is not specified in the bill. Therefore, we are asking the committee to propose that an amendment be moved to clarify that a person who has lost their citizenship should have it restored on the date that occurred. This should be clarified in an amendment.

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: I understand.

Ms. Nicole Girard: I say this simply to fully answer your question, Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe.

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: Yes, absolutely.

You know how long the processing times are for many Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, or IRCC, programs right now. I'm thinking of temporary resident visas, but also of foreign worker programs, foreign student programs, and so on.

There are some structural issues. I understand that the minister is trying to improve things by increasing resources, but, what we are hearing right now, at least in the members' offices, is that it is very difficult to process immigration cases. Constituency offices are currently spending about 80% of their time on these cases.

Given the problems that IRCC is currently experiencing, if Bill S-245 is passed, do you think the goals will be met quickly? Will it be complicated for officials to implement the bill? Will new officers be needed to respond to the current situation?

• (1610)

Ms. Nicole Girard: I wouldn't say it will be complicated.

A lot of work was done to modernize programs during the COVID-19 pandemic, and processing times are improving. We definitely still have work to do, but we still welcomed a record number of new citizens in 2022, which was 374,000.

To reiterate some clarifications, I want to say that, when Bill S-245 comes into force, people who have regained their citizenship who are covered by former section 8 of the Citizenship Act would automatically be granted Canadian citizenship.

They would have to get proof from the department. That is the application that we are dealing with, finally. So it's not the processing time for their citizenship application that is long, it's the processing time for the proof of citizenship application. Also, processing times are constantly improving.

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: I understand.

Deputy Minister Christiane Fox appeared before this committee last fall and explained to us that a program would be put in place,

for example for asylum seekers, so that they could get their work permit within a month.

Currently, the processing time for a work permit application for asylum seekers coming through Roxham Road averages between 12 and 14 months. Since Ms. Fox said that, the expected results have still not been achieved. Yet this program was put in place in the fall. So, with your experience—

[English]

The Chair: I'm sorry for interrupting, Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe. Your time is up. You will get an opportunity in the second round.

We will now proceed to Ms. Kwan.

Ms. Kwan, you will have six minutes. Please begin.

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Thank you to the officials for being here today.

For sure, this Citizenship Act is a complex file, with so many changes over the years that amendments brought to the table often require amendments to the exception to the exception and so on. It's extremely confusing.

From my perspective, first off, I'd like to say that we have before us Bill S-245, and I want to acknowledge and thank Senator Yonah Martin for bringing this before us, because it gives us an opportunity to look into this issue and see how we can fix some of the problems. Maybe it will never be possible to fix all of the problems, but I think it will be important and incumbent on all of us to do our very best to try to fix as many problems as possible.

I appreciate the briefing in terms of your highlighting some of those areas. On the question around unintended consequences, I'd like to probe a little bit deeper into this issue around other countries, where, if you were to confer citizenship to the individual, it might cause them a heap of trouble, because in whatever country they might be in they may not be allowed to, for example, have dual citizenship.

Of course, conferring citizenship automatically in this way was done before. It was done under Bill C-37, it was done under Bill C-24 and so on. Somehow it was dealt with in those previous scenarios. I get it that times might have changed. There might be more people living globally, but nonetheless the premise of that has not changed.

Can you advise us on how officials addressed those issues back then? Why was it okay then to confer citizenship without these concerns of unintended consequences, but now it is a key concern?

Ms. Nicole Girard: Thank you for the question.

The member is correct in the sense that the risk of unintended consequences, then or now, will continue to be there. For the consideration of the committee, one thing we've become more aware of—certainly I've become more aware of—since 2009, in working on lost citizen issues, is that it is right for there to be a remedy. The principle of the bill is something that the government can support. The question is on the mechanism.

As the other member mentioned, the first part of this bill is looking to address a narrow cohort. A limited number of individuals are left who were affected by the former section 8 and lost their citizenship automatically. In some sense, it makes sense in terms of the provisions of the bill to restore those individuals their citizenship. At least, that is what the bill is looking to do.

We've become a bit more aware since 2009 of concerns in the international community of experts about the issue of unintended consequences, especially where there could be countries that may still have laws on the books where people who take out another citizenship could automatically lose the citizenship they have. They could be working in a profession where dual citizens may be barred.

It's not a theoretical issue. There were media reports of a dual citizenship crisis in Australia in 2017. More than 12 members resigned from their position when it was found that those individuals were in circumstances where they had dual citizenship. Australian law was not permitting dual citizens to be members of Parliament.

I think the question for this committee is on the remedy for those—other than the section 8s—who are described in this bill. What is the mechanism?

There is a reasonable argument that a mechanism could be made available, potentially through an amendment, for those born abroad in the second generation or beyond who can demonstrate a connection on application, so as to minimize this kind of unintended consequence. For that provision in the bill, we're talking about very large cohorts. We're not talking about the narrow group of section 8s who would be restored automatically.

• (1615)

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Alternatively, we can do it in reverse. That is to say that, for those who might be in the international community and do not wish to have Canadian citizenship conferred on them, for whatever reason, this could be made to happen. If all of the sudden they realize that somehow they got Canadian citizenship that they didn't want, they could say they would actually like to have that rescinded, retroactive to the day the bill was passed.

Then, that small cohort of people who might be impacted has a pathway to ensure that they will not be impacted. That could be done.

On the suggestion where you are saying that everybody who should be able to get citizenship and wants to get citizenship should apply to get citizenship, to my good colleague MP Brunelle-Duceppe's comment, as it stands, immigration is inundated with a backlog and more applications are coming in all the time. Why would we create a scenario where we have more work for officials and for people to go through? Minimize the number of people who

might be making an application and still keep them whole, and then do a reverse onus. That may be a better option.

Can I just get a quick comment from the officials on that?

The Chair: Your time is up. We'll come back when you have a second round.

We will now proceed to Mr. Redekopp.

You can please begin. You will have five minutes.

Mr. Brad Redekopp: Thank you Madam Chair.

Thank you to the witnesses for coming.

I want to go into the numbers a little bit. I'm a numbers guy, so I'm curious about that.

You mentioned the 130 that have been granted subsection 5(4) citizenship by the minister over the past...but I haven't heard much else. I'm sure that as you've looked at this legislation, you've done some work on rough estimates of numbers of people who would be affected.

Could you share some of that information with us?

Ms. Nicole Girard: Thank you for the question.

Those affected by section 8 are a limited cohort. We've shared a bit of a backgrounder with the members of the committee to the effect that, in recent years, we've seen, perhaps, 25 or 30 such persons come forward seeking a grant under subsection 5(4). We don't anticipate the numbers to be all that significant, but those are the ones who are coming forward now. There may be more than those. It's difficult to know exactly how many would come forward.

Mr. Brad Redekopp: Can I just interrupt? You mentioned the reporting. By the way, that was a good report. I'm assuming you or your department did that briefing. I thought that was very good information, but there were no numbers in there. I find it difficult to believe that nobody asked the question.

Are we talking 10, 100,000 or a million? What's the quantity? There must have been some kind of number work done in the department—or not. I mean, if there aren't any, just say no.

• (1620)

Ms. Nicole Girard: For the section 8 provision, we don't think that the numbers would be all that significant.

For the other provision of the bill that's moving the first-generation limit from 2009 to 2015, those persons would be getting citizenship automatically. Again, it depends on how many people decide to come forward to seek documentation from the department. That particular provision would affect untold numbers—at least in the tens of thousands. It could be more than that.

Again, it would depend on how many came forward. As a reference point, we did include in the briefing deck that was shared with the committee that the 2009 and 2015 amendments together have resulted in close to 20,000 persons who have obtained a citizenship certificate from the department.

Mr. Brad Redekopp: Okay. Thank you.

I just want to stay on the topic of how citizenship is important. It's an essential part of this country. I hear from a lot of newcomers in Saskatoon and throughout the country that they're proud to come to Canada, proud to settle here, get a job and make a life for themselves. They're contributing to our country, for sure. They don't take citizenship lightly. They're not coming here to get welfare or the Canada pension plan. They're not coming for some dream of basic universal income where they don't have to work. Newcomers cherish citizenship.

Likewise, some have lost citizenship because of government errors. That's exactly what we're talking about here. Bill S-245 will fix that for a certain small group of people.

Of course, as Conservatives we value citizenship. We're not going to extend citizenship just to anybody who wants it. On the other hand, the Minister of Immigration has announced a plan to devalue citizenship by replacing in-person citizenship ceremonies with a one-and-done click on a website. There would be no ceremony, no physical connection. In fact, you wouldn't even necessarily need to be in Canada to click that button.

Madam Chair, at this time I'd like to just give a verbal notice of motion. I believe this has been sent around. It reads:

That the committee calls on the government to prioritize granting citizenship to new Canadians through in-person ceremonies; allow virtual ceremonies only if specifically requested by the individual when in-person ceremonies are impractical due to health or safety concerns; cease citizenship by "self-administer a digital oath by signed attestation" (as announced by the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration on January 31, 2022); have department officials appear at this committee for one hour to answer questions on this topic; and that the committee report this to the House.

I put that on notice.

My question for the officials is about this idea of a self-administered digital oath signed by attestation, as the minister described it. If you agree that newcomers feel a sense of pride and joy when they take that oath of citizenship with other immigrants at an in-person ceremony, why is the government moving in the other direction?

Ms. Nicole Girard: As outlined in the regulatory impact analysis statement that's publicly available, the primary rationale is to increase the flexible authorities for the way in which the oath can be administered and to provide an electronic option that people can self-select in the future if they wish to do so.

I think what has not come out as clearly, perhaps, in some of the public commentary is that ceremonies will continue. They're important events to mark a significant and important occasion, as the member has mentioned. Those ceremonies will continue.

However, those who may have this option in the future could face a variety of circumstances. They may be in a remote location.

They may need to travel. They may need a form of accommodation—

The Chair: I'm sorry for interrupting. The time is up for Mr. Redekopp.

Ms. Nicole Girard: Thank you, Madam Chair.

The Chair: We will have to move to the next member.

Mr. Dhaliwal, you will have five minutes. You can begin, please.

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal (Surrey—Newton, Lib.): Thank you, Madam Chair.

I want to thank you for the great presentations and for the questions and answers that are going through.

Even though you are explaining it very well, I represent a riding with people from over 100 countries. People from 100 countries have migrated to Canada, and many of them this bill will either help or not help. I'm going to ask you a few more questions.

Going back to the first generation, I'm sure people like Mr. Laurencelle will understand it better than engineers like me when it comes to this complex legislation. When I read this bill and the presentation you made, my understanding was that this legislation, S-245, would automatically confer citizenship on two relatively small groups of people, some of those impacted by the former age 28 rule. Now it sounds like there's potentially a much bigger number of people that it will affect.

Do you have any idea how many people might be granted automatic citizenship if the first-generation limit date is moved?

• (1625)

Ms. Nicole Girard: We do not at this time have the ability to have an accurate estimate of how many may be impacted by that change.

It would be all those born abroad between 2009 and 2015. Those aren't numbers that we track, but there are untold numbers. It could be in the tens of thousands or more in terms of order of magnitude.

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal: What could be the negative consequences of automatically giving citizenship to a much larger group of people?

Ms. Nicole Girard: As I mentioned earlier, since 2009, those impacted by the first-generation limit do not receive Canadian citizenship automatically and have had to apply for a grant.

Generally, those who obtain a grant of citizenship are able to pass on their citizenship automatically to a child they have who is born abroad. What the bill is doing instead makes those individuals automatic citizens by operation of law. They would be subject to the first-generation limit, which means that they can no longer pass on citizenship automatically to their children who are born abroad, whereas before they could. If the bill passes without amendment, they would no longer be able to.

The concern is that this could create future lost Canadians in terms of children who would be born abroad who no longer have access to that automatic citizenship through their parents.

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal: Would there be any negative consequences when it comes to security and criminality if we automatically confer this citizenship?

Ms. Nicole Girard: I'm sorry. I'm not sure I fully heard that. Could you repeat the question?

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal: Do you take into consideration security and criminality when you automatically grant those citizenships?

Ms. Nicole Girard: When it comes to automatic citizenship, those are not considerations because the law confers citizenship automatically.

Those kinds of considerations of criminality or security concerns are looked at when individuals apply for a grant of citizenship, because they are part of the requirements. Individuals are barred for criminality or security reasons when it's on application and it's a grant of citizenship, but the bill does not lay out a grant as a mechanism. The bill provides automatic citizenship as a mechanism.

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal: It is my understanding that there is a mechanism in place if the government or Parliament wanted to revoke citizenship. Are there avenues available in the act at this point in time?

Ms. Nicole Girard: There are avenues in the act at this time, but those avenues generally relate to individuals who have applied for their citizenship through a grant, for instance, if they have misrepresented in obtaining their grant. Perhaps they may not have met the requirements, or somehow, despite rigorous checks being done, they may have managed to conceal that they had criminality, which may have made them ineligible for citizenship. Those are provisions that apply to grants of citizenship.

I'm going to turn to my colleague from the Department of Justice in case—

The Chair: I'm sorry for interrupting. The time is up for Mr. Dhaliwal.

Ms. Nicole Girard: I see. Thank you.

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal: Thank you, Madam Chair and Director General Girard.

The Chair: We will now proceed to Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe for two and a half minutes.

[Translation]

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: Madam Chair, since Ms. Kwan has been working very hard on this issue since 2015, I will give her my time in the second round of questions.

• (1630)

[English]

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Thank you so much. I really appreciate that.

Maybe I can get a quick answer first from the officials to my last question.

Ms. Nicole Girard: I'm sorry, Madam Chair. Could the member just repeat the question?

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Yes. It was, very quickly, around those who are outside of Canada and the issue of doing the reverse onus. Instead of having people apply to have their citizenship conferred to them, we would actually get the people who don't want their citizenship conferred to them to apply, and it would be retroactive to the day of the passing of the legislation.

It's to save IRCC resources by not having them deal with a larger number of applications.

Ms. Nicole Girard: There is a provision under the bill to allow for simplified renunciation for those who don't wish to have it. I can't speak to whether the bill would provide authority for retroactivity or not, but perhaps my colleague from the Department of Justice may have some comment on that.

Ms. Jenny Kwan: The bill doesn't provide for it, but if an amendment were made to the bill to provide for it, I'd love to hear what Justice thinks about that.

Mr. Alain Laurencelle (Senior Counsel, Legal Services, Department of Citizenship and Immigration): If I understand the question, it's about an opt-in versus an opt-out.

Anything can be done with a bill, subject to the will of the committee, the House of Commons and Parliament. There are very few restrictions on legislating retroactively. There are some constitutional restrictions.

I think the question is perhaps more from an operational point of view. Both an opt-in and an opt-out would require an application. In terms of managing the workload, I guess that would be more for the department to determine, but you would have applications for both of the scenarios you've mentioned.

Ms. Jenny Kwan: That is correct.

From Justice's point of view, are you not concerned that if we were to do the opt-out scenario, the unintended consequence would therefore not be addressed? That is my question.

Mr. Alain Laurencelle: It would be a policy call for this committee and the House of Commons to decide.

I would just note that we have to be careful. For example, for the opt-out, one would have to look at the nationality legislation of the other country in question, because there might potentially still be issues of unintended consequences. Those countries might not recognize retroactivity, for example, as a concept.

It might do away with that problem, depending on the legislation of the country in question.

Ms. Jenny Kwan: I think there are a number of ways to skin that cat, so to speak. A person can apply to opt out, or alternatively, for those who wish to opt out, the application of this automatic conferring of citizenship would not apply to them. I'm not a lawyer, but I'm sure there are lawyers who can figure out the language of how that could be done to prevent those kinds of unintended consequences. I just want to note that this issue or concept existed previously and was never really an issue. There are ways to deal with it.

I hope we don't take the perspective that this might be a problem, so we're not going to do anything. If we take that approach, what is the purpose of existing in life, generally speaking? Everything needs to be addressed in one way or another, including getting up to get dressed in the morning.

On a separate piece related to this, one of the issues I hear a lot about is that this bill is not comprehensive enough. That's a major concern among the series of concerns that have been listed. If amendments were to be tabled to broaden the scope of the bill, even though they were deemed to be out of the bill's scope, there is still a provision or way to get around that, which is to go through a royal recommendation, if the minister were in agreement.

If that were done, would the department be opposed to looking at measures that would expand and try to capture those lost Canadians so that we would not be constantly dealing with issue of lost Canadians? At least we could make an attempt to try to catch as many as possible through amendments to this bill.

Ms. Nicole Girard: I can't speak to the procedure, but as already mentioned, because the bill is benefiting some born abroad in the second generation and not others, from this vantage point it would be preferable during the amendment process to see if it would be possible to have a more equitable approach and solution in the amendments, as the member has mentioned.

As mentioned, there would be ways to come at it and different risks, but rightly, as you mentioned, that is for the committee's consideration.

• (1635)

The Chair: That is the time, Ms. Kwan.

Ms. Jenny Kwan: I'm sorry. Can I just finish the sentence?

The Chair: I was indicating that the time was up. We will have to go the next member.

Mr. Maguire, you will have five minutes.

Mr. Larry Maguire (Brandon—Souris, CPC): Thanks.

Jenny, I will give you time to finish your question.

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Thank you.

One way to address this situation as comprehensively as possible is to rescind the provision that came in to say that those who are second-generation born would not have their citizenship conferred to them. That would be an easy way to actually deal with it. Is that something the department thinks is advisable?

Ms. Nicole Girard: I'm not sure I can advise or comment on that, but another way to come at it would be to leave the first-generation limit as is and have a mechanism that's equitable for those who were born abroad, second generation or beyond, to access with the demonstrating a connection test.

Ms. Jenny Kwan: What we're talking about then is an application process, which already exists by the way. People can apply in this onerous and ineffective process, but people are saying, don't go down that route.

Mr. Larry Maguire: I'm just going to—

Ms. Jenny Kwan: I would think that we don't want to repeat history and do want learn from that experience. Maybe it's a safe way to do it, but I don't think so.

The Chair: Mr. Maguire is asking for his time.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Larry Maguire: I meant that you could ask your question, but...

Ms. Jenny Kwan: I apologize. I'm sorry. I misunderstood.

Mr. Larry Maguire: Madam Chair, in regard to Mr. Kmiec's question earlier about the number of lost Canadians in this, I wonder if the witnesses could table an analysis of the total number of lost Canadians or a projection of the total number of lost Canadians that are involved here. Is there an analysis they can table with the committee, please?

Ms. Nicole Girard: As I think I've mentioned, the cohort impacted by the former section 8 is in the range of 25 to 30 such persons who come forward to the department every year. There are those who lost their citizenship automatically at age 28 before 2009. It's a limited cohort, likely in the range of those kinds of numbers, that we would see come forward. Depending on what the committee may wish to do with the provision that deputy Kwan was just mentioning, that particular provision of moving the first-generation limit would have an impact on untold numbers of persons born abroad—in the tens of thousands or more.

Mr. Larry Maguire: Okay. Thank you for that.

I was just wondering: On average, and this is maybe similar, how many people a year are shocked to find they aren't Canadian citizens when applying for a passport?

Ms. Nicole Girard: As I mentioned, we had 130 such persons who came forward and received that discretionary grant because they had lost their citizenship automatically due to section 8. It's a limited cohort as I mentioned. It's not a significant number.

Mr. Larry Maguire: That was the number in that 50-month window between February 15, 1977, and April 16, 1981. Is what you're referring to?

Ms. Nicole Girard: That's correct.

Mr. Larry Maguire: The previous government streamlined a process for people receiving citizenship through ministerial discretion by eliminating the necessity of going through the Treasury Board cabinet committee's approval. Did that help at all in speeding up the process?

Ms. Nicole Girard: I can't comment on the timelines for that process because they may vary from one case to the next, but my understanding is that it's a timely process for those going through—

Mr. Larry Maguire: It's so few that maybe it didn't. I don't know.

Ms. Nicole Girard: —the subsection 5(4) process for the reasons the member mentioned. It's not a cabinet process. It's done in the department.

Mr. Larry Maguire: We've heard reports that some of the lost Canadians received their subsection 5(4) ministerial grants in their favour after many years of waiting. How long on average does that process take?

Ms. Nicole Girard: I don't have those statistics today, but we can follow up with the committee and determine what is feasible to provide and provide it in a timely fashion.

• (1640)

Mr. Larry Maguire: Thank you.

Will having this legislation passed make the situation of lost Canadians impacted by this legislation more efficient for the IRCC's functions? I'm assuming that the bill would reduce the number of inquiries and streamline the process in some cases.

Ms. Nicole Girard: Yes, the member is correct because, particularly for those impacted by section 8 who've lost their citizenship, they would no longer need to come forward for a discretionary grant, which is addressed case by case. The circumstances may be different and vary, and they would become citizens automatically by operation of law and need to apply for a proof of citizenship should they wish to have evidence of their Canadian citizenship, which is a fairly straightforward process.

The Chair: The time is up for Mr. Maguire. We will now proceed to MP Ali.

MP Ali, you will have five minutes. Please begin.

Mr. Shafqat Ali (Brampton Centre, Lib.): Thank you, Madam Chair.

I have a question for you. You have said in your presentation that for everyone who still considers themselves a lost Canadian, there are existing remedies through either an immigration process or applying for a grant of citizenship. Can you explain what the different grants are that exist? What criteria would someone have to meet in order to be successful in their application?

Ms. Nicole Girard: Thank you for the question.

That's correct. There are existing avenues. For the one we were just speaking of, the discretionary grant, the application through the minister for the discretionary grant is on the basis of hardship or unusual hardship, and certainly that would describe those who lost their citizenship automatically due to the former section 8 provisions. That's one option.

The other avenue for those born abroad in the second generation or beyond since 2009 who are no longer automatically citizens but have a Canadian parent, the parent has the option to sponsor their child for permanent residence in Canada. Once the child becomes a permanent resident through that avenue, there's no waiting. The parents can then apply for a grant of citizenship for the child. Certainly, there are some requirements, but the main one in that circumstance is that they have a Canadian parent who is going to apply on the child's behalf so that the child can then become a citizen.

Mr. Shafqat Ali: Thank you.

Through you, Madam Chair, I'm trying to better understand how it works, particularly for someone who obtains one of the special grants you have talked about. Let's say that I have looked at the grant criteria and have decided that I need it, and I decide to make an application. What is the specific process from the time IRCC receives my application? How long is it before I find out if I have been successful?

Ms. Nicole Girard: We don't have the processing time on hand today for the discretionary grant of citizenship, but I have undertaken to go back and assess what is feasible to provide and to provide that as soon as is reasonably possible to the committee in response to the member's question.

Mr. Shafqat Ali: Thank you.

Your department is faced with a large backlog after the pandemic. Would an automatic grant not help to relieve some of these pressures, rather than having another application process that could add further stress to the system?

Ms. Nicole Girard: Thank you for the question.

As mentioned, the department has undertaken a number of modernization measures over the last couple of years. We have brought applications online. We conduct online tests and online citizenship ceremonies, as has been mentioned. Resources have been added and significant progress has been made to reduce inventories and processing times. In the grant of citizenship business line, there is still more work to be done, and the department is working hard to continue to improve its service to citizenship applicants, though, as I mentioned, we had record grants of citizenship last year.

Where the bill is extending citizenship automatically to some under the bill as drafted, those applications would be instead for a proof of Canadian citizenship, which is the smaller business line, if I could put it that way, because the grant business line for newcomers, for immigrants to Canada, is a much larger one. As I mentioned, we had 374,000 new citizens last year. The grant business line is more in the tens of thousands by comparison, and those who, under the bill, may wish to come forward and have evidence of their Canadian citizenship would need to apply for what's called a "proof of citizenship". The department would undertake the necessary implementation preparations to be able to issue those if Parliament passes the bill and we then are called upon to implement it.

• (1645)

The Chair: Thank you. Your time is up, Mr. Ali.

We will now proceed to Ms. Rempel Garner.

Ms. Rempel Garner, you will have five minutes. Please begin.

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Thank you, Chair.

If I may, I would compliment you on the lovely baklava you provided.

The Chair: It's a very special Scarborough baklava. It's owned by a Syrian refugee.

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner: They really produced some delicious baklava, and I would like to say that this is in scope if I may.

I'm buttering you up because I move:

That, pursuant to Standing Order 108(2):

(a) the Committee extend the total number of meetings currently allocated to the current study regarding the Government's response to the final report of the Special Committee on Afghanistan by a minimum of three meetings, to be held prior to March 31, 2023; and

(b) Senator Marilou McPhedran, MP Marc Garneau, Minister Harjit Sajjan and Minister Marco Mendicino be invited to appear separately before the Committee prior to March 31, 2023, for two hours each, to discuss matters related to the current study; and

(c) Dr. Lauryn Oates, of the Canadian Women for Women in Afghanistan group, be invited to appear individually before the Committee prior to March 31, 2023, for one hour, to discuss matters related to the current study; and

(d) summonses do issue for the appearances of former Minister for Women and Gender Equality Maryam Monsef, Laura Robinson, and George Young, to appear separately, for two hours each, at dates and times to be fixed by the Chair, but no later than March 31, 2023, to discuss matters related to the current study; and

(e) summonses do issue for the appearances of senior departmental officials from the Department of National Defence to appear before the Committee, at a date and time to be fixed by the Chair, but no later than March 31, 2023, to discuss matters related to the current study.

Madam Chair, I did move this previously on February 8, 2023.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, with regard to your motion.

Mr. Redekopp.

Mr. Brad Redekopp: Thank you, Madam Chair.

I would like to move an amendment to this motion. It's just a technical amendment. I move that we replace all of the instances of the words "March 31" with "April 30", and that we add the word

"former" before the reference to MP Garneau. It's those two changes.

The Chair: Go ahead, Mr. El-Khoury.

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

I believe it's unfair for the witness to stay completely two hours without at least two minutes of break. If my colleagues agree to give them two to three minutes of break to relax, it would be appreciated.

The Chair: I've been advised just to clarify to all of the members before we agree to this that the debate was adjourned on this motion. If we have to resume debate on that, someone has to move a motion that the debate be resumed.

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner: I'm sorry. I thought that's what I said, to resume debate on the motion moved on February 8.

• (1650)

The Chair: Before we proceed further, we will have to vote on this so we can resume debate.

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner: Is that procedurally correct?

The Chair: I can ask the clerk to clarify, because this is what she said.

Madam Clerk, can you please clarify that?

I will suspend.

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner: No. Why? It's a live motion on the floor.

The Chair: She's just clarifying.

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner: On a point of order, I believe procedurally you are out of order on this. It is a live motion on the floor. I was recognized by the chair. The motion has already been put forward by committee. The motion has been deemed, and I moved it. This is a live motion that's on the floor, and we should be continuing with debate on the amendment.

The Chair: The clerk is just checking. She advised that. She is just reconfirming, because she provided the advice that we have to have a motion to resume debate. Before we proceed further, I will wait for the clerk.

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner: On a point of order, the clerk is not a member of the committee, and it is procedurally in order.

If you are making a motion that is procedurally out of order, which I don't think you are because it wouldn't be.... Technically, Chair, I don't accept setting a precedent whereby we suspend for a member who is not a part of the committee to intervene in the committee's proceedings. It's not technically correct. We should proceed with debate on the amendment, proceed then with the debate on the motion and carry forward.

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal: Madam Chair...?

The Chair: I have Mr. Dhaliwal.

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Madam Chair, you are doing an excellent job as chair. From time to time, as I'm sure, Madam Rempel, you know, the chair has always discussed with and heard advice from the clerk. I think that's exactly what's she's doing right now as the chair. It's very clear. It's to give a couple of minutes to the chair to make those decisions that have to be made, so I would love to see this meeting suspended for two minutes.

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner: Again, on a point of order, Chair, there's no procedural correctness in what's happening here, and we have to be bound by procedure. Wishes, thoughts and hopes are not in the 800- to 1,000-page book on procedure that we are bound to.

Chair, we need to proceed with debate on the amendment that is on the floor.

Thank you.

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: With all due respect, I'm just wondering. It's the third time that a member is interfering and saying certain things, and every time she says, "I move the following motion". Never once did I hear that she's actually moving to resume debate.

Madam Chair, with all due respect, I'm asking that we suspend this meeting so we can talk. We do have officials here who are prepared to hear about a legislative bill that we have to go forward. That was a motion that was unanimously passed last time in consideration of the importance of doing legislation first. This is why we're here.

I would like to suspend this meeting at this time, Madam Chair. Thank you.

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner: That's fine. I understand that you don't want to vote on this.

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: We're just looking for a break for the officials.

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner: The meeting hasn't been suspended, so on a point of order, Chair, I—

The Chair: Can I have the attention of the members?

Ms. Rempel Garner, when you started reading the motion, did you say, "I want to resume debate on this motion"?

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner: What are you advising, Chair?

The Chair: I just want to clarify, because the clerk has asked me to check that with you. Did you say that you resume?

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Chair: Can I just have silence from both sides?

• (1655)

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner: Chair, just to clarify, this is my time.

Okay. I move that we resume debate on my motion from February 8, 2023, which previously was adjourned, per the text that I just read before, but I will, Chair, clarify that you also turned to Mr. Redekopp and accepted an amendment to be brought forward on my

motion and by doing so I would say that you deemed the motion admissible in the way that I put it forward.

The Chair: Ms. Rempel Garner has moved a motion and she has asked for the debate on it to be resumed.

Go ahead, Mr. Redekopp.

Mr. Brad Redekopp: Do I need to re-move my amendment?

The Chair: Yes.

Mr. Brad Redekopp: Madam Chair, I would move to delete every instance of "March 31" and replace it with "April 30", and also add the word "former" in front of the reference to MP Garneau.

The Chair: Thank you.

On the amendment, go ahead, Mr. Dhaliwal.

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal: Now that we're going into debate on this one, I would respectfully ask you to give the officials a five-minute break so they can use the washroom and whatnot. I would really appreciate it.

In the meantime, we're debating, and I would love to get this done one way or the other. You don't need to suspend the meeting, because we're already going through the debate and the officials don't need to watch that debate sitting here.

The Chair: I would like to check with the officials.

Would you like to stay or would you like to leave the building as the debate has been started on the motion that has been moved by Ms. Rempel Garner?

Ms. Nicole Girard: Madam Chair, we can take a two-minute comfort break to allow the committee business to proceed, but we're here to answer your questions, so we'll be pleased to come back and continue to answer any questions the committee may have.

The Chair: That's fine.

Mr. El-Khoury has his turn now.

Mr. Fayçal El-Khoury: Madam Chair, don't we need a vote in order to resume debate? Can you check that, please?

The Chair: Is it the will of the committee to resume debate?

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal: We should take a vote.

The Chair: We will take a vote on that, because some members are requesting it.

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Pardon me, Madam Chair, but I've been on many committees now and I have never yet seen a vote on resuming debate on a motion that is live and that has been duly put on notice and debated several times by a committee. I've never seen that at any other parliamentary committee. The motion was not voted down prior at committee. The procedures for committee business are that, if a motion has been duly put on notice as per the rules this committee has set, then any member may move or resume debate on a motion that has yet to be resolved by the committee. Now we have an amendment to that motion. There's no vote to be had, Madam Chair.

The way I understand it, the procedures are done. We are supposed to be debating it. If there are no speakers, then we would proceed to a vote on the amendment and then on the main motion. I'm not going to say anything else because I don't want to prolong the meeting. I do want to go in camera to deal with Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe's point about the meeting of a delegation.

I believe, Madam Chair, that procedurally there would be no vote on whether you can resume debate on a motion that's been duly put on notice and that is live before a committee because it has not been resolved yet.

• (1700)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Kmiec.

I have consulted the clerk, and she has said that, if there is no objection then we can proceed, but if there is an objection and some members are pointing out that there should be a vote, then we have to have a vote because the debate on this motion was adjourned and now we are bringing it back. As per the clerk's advice, if the members are objecting, we will go to a vote. We will vote whether we want to resume the debate on the motion.

Madam Clerk, could you please take the vote?

Mr. Tom Kmiec: On a point of order, Madam Chair, can the clerk please provide the committee the exact page where this rule is in place? I'm looking to other members of the opposition here, but I have never seen something like this happen before in a parliamentary committee.

The Chair: Go ahead, Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: I completely agree with Mr. Kmiec. I think he is right in every way. His whole explanation is true. I don't understand why there is a vote on a possible debate.

There. Mr. Kmiec is right.

[*English*]

The Chair: I will ask the clerk to clarify.

The Clerk of the Committee (Ms. Stephanie Bond): If the committee gives its implicit consent to resume debate, then we may resume debate.

The Chair: Do we have the consent?

Mr. Ali.

Mr. Shafqat Ali: Thank you, Madam Chair.

I would ask my colleagues. I don't see any harm in resuming the debate because it was adjourned and it was a live motion. I would request that my colleagues allow debate to be resumed.

Thank you.

The Chair: If all of the members are saying they are in favour, we will proceed. We have the amendment on the floor.

Ms. Kwan.

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Thank you.

I would like to move a subamendment, but before I go to that, there was a lot of talking going on and I didn't quite hear exactly what the amendment was. I apologize. Can we just hear again what the amendment is?

The Chair: Mr. Redekopp, could you please repeat it?

Mr. Brad Redekopp: I move that we replace every instance of "March 31" with "April 30", and that we add the word "former" in front of the reference to MP Garneau. Effectively we're moving it by a month.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Redekopp.

Ms. Kwan, are you clear now?

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Yes. Thank you for this.

I guess I'm technically supposed to speak to the amendment. I don't have trouble amending the timeline as proposed, but I would like to move some subamendments to the motion. I would like to move that we delete paragraph (c), which calls for Dr. Lauryn Oates of the Canadian Women for Women in Afghanistan group—

The Chair: Can I have silence in the room so everyone can understand what subamendment she's proposing?

Ms. Jenny Kwan: I'm moving, Madam Chair, a subamendment to delete "(c) Dr. Lauryn Oates, of the Canadian Women for Women in Afghanistan group, be invited to appear individually before the Committee prior to March 31, 2023, for one hour, to discuss matters related to the current study". I would like to move to delete item (d) as well. Finally, I would like to move a subamendment to change, in item (e), the word "summons" to "invite".

Let me just explain why I have moved these subamendments, Madam Chair.

First off, Dr. Lauryn Oates is a representative of the NGO doing incredible work in very difficult times in Afghanistan. I know that she also has staff who work in her organization who are actually in jeopardy at the moment. They need to get to safety but are unable to do so. Of course, I have a lot of questions for the government about its inability to bring these individuals to safety. On this question, she is the only person from an NGO who has been asked to come.

I think, at this point, given the situation that we're dealing with, it would be appropriate to have these various people listed under item (b) come before the committee. I think it is entirely appropriate for that to happen. However, I don't think that Lauryn Oates should be required to come unless she wants to come. I would move that we actually strike that item out. The clerk can invite Dr. Lauryn Oates to send in a submission, if she wishes to do so, in terms of her perspective and views on the matter for the committee's consideration.

With regard to item (d), I'm generally not opposed to having former ministers—or ministers, for that matter—come before the committee. In fact, I think accountability rests with ministers. If it is a former minister and the matter was related to them at the time they were minister, then they should come before the committee to answer these questions.

In the case of former minister Maryam Monsef, it is my understanding that she just had a baby. Being a new mom can be a difficult time in so far as it is so new. It's a happy time as well. Having been a new mom so many years ago now—it was 19 years ago, to be more precise—I remember those days. There were days when I could barely get up. Literally, all of the day would go by, and I would not have brushed my teeth yet. I was just scrambling, trying to do all of the stuff that I was supposed to do as a new mom.

Anyway, it's a bit of a thing. I want to just extend that courtesy to her because I think it could be difficult for her to be away from her baby. I know it's a short period, perhaps, even saying that it's just for two hours. Still, maybe there's another time we can invite her that would be more convenient for her. We can certainly entertain that.

With respect to former staffers Laura Robinson and George Young, I will say this at this time: There may be times when I think former staffers would be appropriate to speak. We're hearing that, in fact—although not a former staffer but a current staffer from the PMO—on the foreign interference question. The NDP actually supports a move.... My colleague Peter Julian actually did move to have Katie Telford come to that committee on the foreign interference issue.

In this instance with these former staffers, what I would like to do first is to have their former bosses come before us. That is, the ministers should come before us to answer pertinent questions. After that, if there's a determination that it is deemed to be necessary or appropriate, then we can call and invite these former staffers to come before us. I think we still have an opportunity to do that. That's why at this point I'm suggesting, Madam Chair, for us to remove clause (d).

• (1705)

Finally, on the words around “summons” in clause (e), I don't know. I think we had this discussion at some other time with respect to having individuals come before the committee, including ministers. I was told that we're not really able to summon them and rather it's really for the House if the matter is such that they don't come. In this instance, I'm talking about the ministers on the Afghan file. We were frustrated as a committee that those ministers were consistently unavailable and never offering a date. We were frustrated with that process.

I wanted to summon them, and I was pretty well told, no, you can't summon them. You can ask them to come and if they don't by a certain date, then the committee can report the matter to the House, and then the House can take further action, including summoning them to come before the committee. In the spirit of that, that's why I'm proposing that we, instead of using the word “summons”, use the word “invite”.

That's my thinking behind this, Madam Chair. Otherwise, I'm fine with the change to April 30. I'm fine with the “former” MP Marc Garneau piece as well because that just reflects the current reality of things. I'm looking forward to having these witnesses come before the committee, because the Afghan file is an important one and people's lives are at risk at the moment. It's something that I really want to have our committee work on.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

• (1710)

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Kwan.

You mentioned it's like a subamendment, but it is not related to the amendment that was proposed by Mr. Redekopp in regard to changing dates. Therefore, I would seek the committee members' consent as to whether we should deal with what Ms. Kwan is proposing first, and then go on to changing the dates, which Mr. Redekopp proposed. If that's the will of the committee, we can proceed that way.

Ms. Kwan has moved some amendments, so that's what we will get into.

Ms. Rempel Garner.

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner: Thank you.

On the subamendment, I would agree with my colleague on her assessment of paragraph (c). The reason why Dr. Oates was included in the original motion is that Dr. Oates is referenced in an article from, I believe, November 2021, where she speaks about an unnamed senator essentially assisting her organization, people who were affiliated with her organization, with documentation, which is the subject of this. I think it would have been material to know if she had received some of these documents from the senator, because that does say that the process was circumvented for some groups and not for others.

I understand her hesitance, though, in not wanting to be here. On the other hand, in that article, I will point out to my colleague and put on the record that she is cited as saying that—it was either her or someone else in the article—they knew this senator went too far. It bothers me that we potentially had people who were probably very well intentioned and do great work right now working on a process that they may have had suspicions was not legitimate. That's not how we do business in Canada. We should be working to change policy, not circumvent policy, even in the toughest of situations, because that's how we keep processes fair and equitable for everyone.

I do have to take issue with my colleague's suggestion for point (d), and I want her to listen why. I refer her attention, through you, Chair, to an article published by The Globe and Mail on February 17, 2023. The headline of the article is "Sajjan unclear on whether top adviser told him he was sharing Canadian government travel documents with senator". This article refers to Mr. George Young. Mr. George Young is at the centre of this entire matter. This is the former defence minister's former chief of staff.

This entire article talks about how Minister Sajjan couldn't recall or maybe recalled giving this person a potential document. I'm going to read from the article for my colleague, through you, Chair. This is from an interaction that Mr. Sajjan had with the reporter:

Mr. Sajjan further confused the matter on Thursday. In a brief interview with The Globe, he dodged 10 different questions about whether he knew Mr. Young provided what are called visa facilitation letters to Ms. McPhedran.

I would argue that Mr. Young is material to the committee's study of this matter, given that Minister Sajjan has already had a long interaction with the press wherein he has tried to obfuscate on whether or not he knew or had given permission to Mr. Young for the use of these facilitation letters. I would also point out to my colleague that Mr. Young has used the excuse that he might be invited to this committee as a rationale for not commenting to the press or providing further public comment on this matter.

For me, the most important person out of anybody to attend this committee hearing.... Frankly, the two people are Senator McPhedran and then George Young, as our first starting place, because my understanding, based on everything that has come out in the press and on my understanding of the files, is that Mr. Young is at the heart of this. We need to know whether or not the former minister of defence authorized a workaround process through his chief of staff. If, in the media, Minister Sajjan is already dancing around the issue, then it behooves us as a committee to have Mr. Young here to give his side of the story.

I would argue that any attempts to delete Mr. Young from this, I would say.... I don't want to ascribe motive to my colleague, but I would look to her to seek to amend her motion again to include Mr. Young. Any concerns otherwise, I would say, are trying to perhaps gloss over or perhaps brush the involvement of Mr. Young under the rug, given that there are several media articles, including the one I cited from the Globe, wherein Mr. Sajjan already danced around the press on what he knew when. I just want to get to the bottom of this so that this doesn't happen again.

• (1715)

We're looking at major humanitarian crises around the world right now. We need to make sure this doesn't happen again right now, so that other people aren't impacted by that.

I wish she had separated her subamendment out. I can't support it without having Mr. Young here. I think what will happen without that is that we'll have these ministers maybe come or maybe not, and they will dance around the issue. I'm sure Senator McPhedran will come, though. That will be interesting, but not having Mr. Young here will actually materially change the committee's ability to investigate this matter and I would ask her to consider that.

The Chair: Ms. Kwan.

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

Since the comments from my colleague were put to me directly, I'm happy to offer my thoughts with respect to them.

First off, I want to be very clear and say that I'm not here to try to protect anyone or slip anything under the rug for anyone. Those who know me will definitely realize that's not what I'm made of. That is an aside.

In general, I will say this. It is my view that elected members—when we're talking about government—and ministers and former ministers need to be held accountable. They need to be open and transparent and they need to take responsibility, because that is their job.

Regarding the potential involvement of George Young, I don't know the details of this case, to be honest with you, other than what I've read in the newspaper. The matter is also—as far as I know, unless something has changed—under police investigation. Maybe that's concluded. I don't know. No one has informed me. Again, all I know is what I've read in the newspaper, but the first order of accountability rests with the ministers and former ministers. They need to be held to account, and they need to explain to this committee and the public what has transpired.

We've seen it over and over again that ministers come before us and they talk as though they have marbles in their mouths, and nothing comes out. It may be that we need to move in another direction to find the truth. If that's necessary, I'm absolutely willing to entertain that, but we don't know at this point what will happen.

Maybe I should know better, but I'd like to give that opportunity to these former ministers to come before this committee to answer the questions of committee members. If they refuse to come—as has been the case with current ministers on the Afghanistan situation including, for example, the Minister of DND, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, etc.—we have moved the motion and passed the motion for them to come by a certain date. If that does not happen we will seek other means to try to summon them to come. That option is still available to us. If we invite these ministers to come by this date, which if amended successfully would be April 30, and they don't come by then, I would absolutely be happy to come back and say, "Look, they are refusing to co-operate, and we need to escalate things."

If these ministers come and offer nothing, if, for example, important questions are put to them and the answer is "I don't know. I can't remember. The dog ate my breakfast and my paper and my homework and all the rest of it" kind of thing, then I think that would warrant further consideration as to what action needs to be taken to get at the truth. I'm open to all of that, but following the steps and procedures that are before us, I think we should move forward as per the way I have subamended the item.

I want to take a moment to talk about Dr. Lauryn Oates. I had the opportunity to speak with Dr. Lauryn Oates after this motion was first moved and—

• (1720)

The Chair: Ms. Kwan, if I can interrupt you for a second, I want to let the officials go. I see a speaking list, so I don't think there will be an opportunity to go back to Bill S-245. After you, I have two other members who would like to speak.

On behalf of the members of the committee, I would like to thank you for coming today. I'm really sorry we were not able to utilize your time well and that we had to get into the discussion of other motions. If you want to leave, you can. Again, on behalf of all the members, thank you for taking the time to appear before the committee on important legislation.

I'll give the witnesses a second to leave, and then—

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Madam Chair, perhaps I can jump in before the officials leave.

Given that we're pressed for time on this issue and that committee members did not get through all their rounds in terms of questions—

The Chair: They are leaving now. We will proceed with the discussion on—

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Can I finish, Madam Chair, on a point of order?

The Chair: Yes, Ms. Kwan.

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Given that this motion has interrupted our proceedings, and given that Bill S-245 is going to be a bill that we will need to deal with in a timely fashion, because it has to go before the House, and committee members did not get a chance to ask their round of questions, can we have the committee's support to say that committee members can submit written questions to the officials so that we can get those responses back for our consideration as we move forward on this bill?

The Chair: Yes. The officials always try to answer questions from the committee whenever we have requested it. If members would like to proceed that way, they can send questions to the clerk of the committee and that will be done.

Thank you once again.

Ms. Kwan, you had the floor. Please continue.

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Thank you, Madam Chair. I appreciate that assurance that committee members will be able to send in written questions to officials related to Bill S-245.

Getting back to Dr. Lauryn Oates, I had an opportunity to speak with her after the motion was moved, and she expressed her concerns with respect to that. With that as an aside, it may well be... As much as I appreciate the media and their reporting, there may be times where things that are reported by the media may not necessarily be 100% accurate. There might be nuanced information that might not be captured in the article.

To that end, I think it would be important, given that Dr. Lauryn Oates was referred to in the newspaper, that she be given the opportunity to provide a written submission to us. Of course, as always,

committee members can consider at a later time whether they want to invite people back if it's deemed that the information provided was deficient and further work needs to be done. If that's the case, we can all take that into consideration.

I'll leave it at that, Madam Chair. Thank you.

• (1725)

The Chair: I have two other people on the speaking list, but before we go to Mr. Dhaliwal, I want to ask the members a question.

At the beginning, we decided to go for five minutes in camera to discuss what Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe would like to do. The committee will end at 5:38 p.m.—we started the meeting at 3:38 p.m.—and I want to know if members would like to go in camera or proceed with this discussion now.

No...? Okay. We'll proceed with this.

Mr. Dhaliwal, you are next on the speaking list.

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal: Madam Chair, maybe you should ask Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe if he wants to go in camera, because that is his thing. Instead of us making a decision—

The Chair: If members don't decide and there is no agreement...

Mr. Dhaliwal, you are on the speaking list, and next is Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe.

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Madam Chair, I certainly understand your intention that it's to be decided by the members, but when Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe brought forward that he needed a few minutes in camera, that is also very important work that we are doing on that issue in particular—

The Chair: I request that all members please keep silent. One member has the floor. He is speaking. With side conversations, it's difficult for me to hear what the member is saying. I request that all members please avoid side conversations.

Go ahead, Mr. Dhaliwal.

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal: Thank you, Madam Chair.

We are doing great work. There is the motion Madam Rempel Garner brought forward. Then Mr. Redekopp brought his amendments and, of course, Madam Kwan brought her subamendments. That's very important work, and we should continue to work on that.

At the same time, Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe brought in a request, which is also important. We should listen to what he has to say on that particular issue. If he wants to go in camera to have this meeting and discuss an issue that is important and near and dear to him, as well as to Quebec and Quebeckers, I would love to support him on that.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe is next on the speaking list.

Go ahead, Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: Thank you, Madam Chair.

A number of people have different opinions on a number of motions and on how to use the procedure. Personally, what I am interested in is that we talk about what happened last week, as I think what happened was serious. However, I think some committee members would prefer to have these discussions in camera. That said, I don't mind having them publicly.

I want to say something about the debate we are having right now. I personally believe that we should postpone the current debate. Basically, I am proposing a dilatory motion; if it were to pass, we could talk about the issue that I raised at the beginning of the meeting. What was said was that we would go in camera to discuss my issue, before returning to Ms. Rempel Garner's motion.

I move that we adjourn this debate, but not everyone agrees with me. I will let the members argue amongst themselves about this. Anyway, personally, I already have my mind on the motion that is on the table right now.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

[*English*]

The Chair: Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe has moved to adjourn the debate on the motion.

Go ahead, Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: Madam Chair, I am not moving to adjourn debate on the motion.

I am moving a dilatory motion; I want the committee to go back to the issue that I raised at the beginning of the meeting. Then we'll go back to the debate we're having now. So I'm not asking that the debate be adjourned. What I am proposing is a dilatory motion, which is very different.

That said, I see that time is running out. I don't think we'll have time to go in camera before 5:38 p.m.

As I understand it, we had until 5:38 p.m., but we needed the committee to go in camera. Once we turn the equipment off and back on, we will have only two minutes left; that is not enough time for me to make my case. I'm a little disappointed about that, but that seems to be the way committees work.

Instead of waiting until the end of the meeting to go in camera, I will now ask that the committee go in camera at the beginning of the meeting. That way, we can get some things done. I feel like I got shafted, but I learned from it.

• (1730)

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe.

Go ahead, Madam Lalonde.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: I tend to agree with my colleague.

I think we all had good intentions when we came here to listen to the officials who had to give us technical information, given the complexity of Bill S-245. I also thought that we, the committee members, had agreed to work in a rigorous manner. So I want to apologize to Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe. I had no idea what the Conservatives were going to do to hijack this meeting, which we had previously set up.

Had I known, I would have never said that I shared the view that it was better for us to meet in camera at the end. I would have said that we should do it at the beginning, as you mentioned, Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe. Unfortunately, the Conservatives still find ways to disrupt our committee's work.

To go back to my colleague Ms. Rempel Garner's motion, the amendment and the subamendment, I think my colleague Ms. Kwan has raised some good points. We hear some justified hesitation here about whether or not to proceed. We want to see the people who will testify, as we know that it is important to know their point of view. I believe that the ministers will be coming to see us, in accordance with a previously passed motion.

There was one thing I was proud of, Madam Chair. Just before the break last Thursday, the government made a very important announcement about the humanitarian aid that people need in Afghanistan. We know how important that is. I was very proud to be part of that announcement as parliamentary secretary, but it was even more wonderful to hear from the Red Cross, which could be an agency that will be—

[*English*]

The Chair: Can I please request that members avoid side conversations? It becomes very difficult to hear what the member is saying.

I'm sorry, Ms. Lalonde, please go ahead.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: There is no problem. We maintain the same level of politeness in this committee.

To go back to what I was saying, this announcement was a very emotional moment for some of us because we understood the effect that this was going to have on the humanitarian side. The exemption added to the Criminal Code will allow the government to help the people who need help the most in this humanitarian crisis.

The Red Cross was present at the announcement, as were other organizations, and they all seemed to applaud this initiative. Anyway, I, for one, applaud this initiative, because it wasn't easy, but we got it done. This was a government-wide effort involving the Minister of Justice, the Minister of Public Safety, the Minister of International Development, and the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship. They have all made a commitment to this.

So I'm proud to see my colleague's motion bearing fruit. I think we all agree that it is important to take concrete steps, and this is another one that the government has been able to take, in addition to everything else that we have accomplished lately.

With that, Madam Chair, I think we can move to a vote. We have a few minutes left before 5:38 p.m., so I'm prepared to support my colleague Ms. Kwan's subamendment.

• (1735)

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Lalonde.

Next, we have Mr. Dhaliwal.

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal: Thank you, Madam Chair.

I want to commend my dear friend Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe for being so patient. I actually agree with him, Madam Chair. Next time when he brings his issue, it should be dealt with right away.

On the other hand, I spoke to Madam Kwan's subamendment. I would love to see it go to a vote, so that we adjourn the debate and vote on Madam Kwan's subamendment.

The Chair: Seeing no other person raising their hand for the debate, we will go to the vote on the subamendment by Ms. Kwan.

(Subamendment agreed to: yeas 7; nays 4)

(Amendment as amended agreed to)

(Motion as amended agreed to)

The Chair: We are at 5:38 exactly. Do I have the will of the members to adjourn the meeting?

The meeting is adjourned.

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