



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

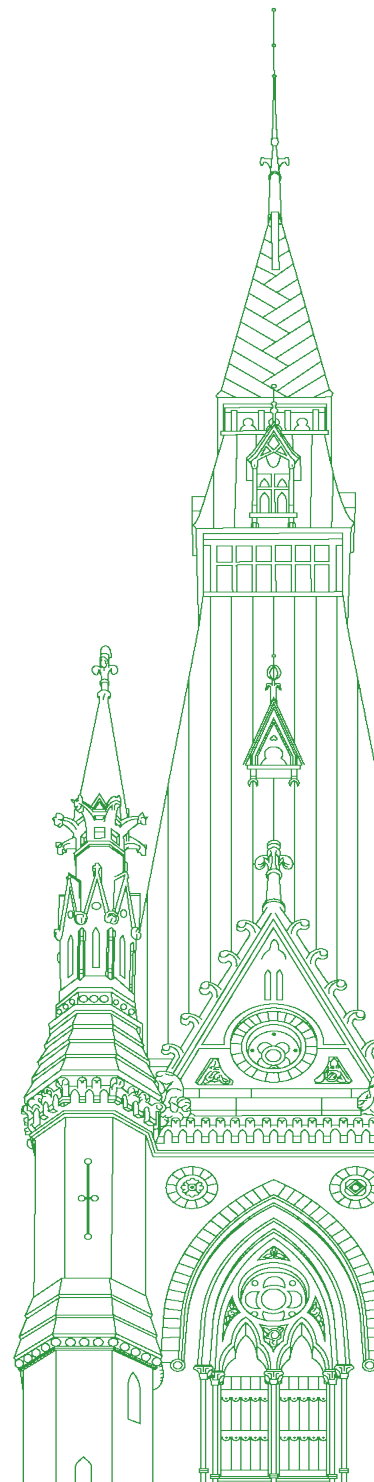
44th PARLIAMENT, 1st SESSION

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

EVIDENCE

NUMBER 025

Thursday, May 19, 2022



Chair: Mr. Robert Morrissey

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

Thursday, May 19, 2022

• (1535)

[English]

The Chair (Mr. Robert Morrissey (Egmont, Lib.)): I will call the meeting to order.

I welcome you all, including new members of the committee, to this 25th meeting of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities.

Today's meeting, as you are aware, is taking place in a hybrid format according to rules adopted on November 25. I would expect all members attending in person to follow the pandemic protocols that are in place.

To ensure an orderly meeting, I would like to make a few comments. Today's meeting is available in both official languages. To get interpretation if you're appearing virtually, simply go to the bottom of your screen and click on the interpretation icon. I would ask each presenter to speak slowly so that the translators can properly interpret what you're saying.

If any member of the committee loses interpretation, please notify me by using the "raise hand" icon if you're appearing virtually or by raising your hand if you're in the House. I would also ask that during the meeting, all comments be addressed through the chair.

As you are aware, pursuant to Standing Order 108(2) and the motion adopted by the committee on Thursday, February 3, the committee will resume its study of the housing accelerator fund.

I would like to welcome our witnesses to begin our discussions with five minutes of opening remarks, followed by questions. As individuals we have Edward Goldstein and Steve Pomeroy. Mr. Pomeroy is a consultant and executive adviser with the Canadian Housing Evidence Collaborative at McMaster University. From the Smart Prosperity Institute, we have Mike Moffatt, senior director.

I will now begin by asking Mr. Goldstein to present his opening comments for five minutes.

I will time you, Mr. Goldstein. As you get close to your five minutes, I will give you a 10-second notice to conclude your comments.

The floor is yours.

Mr. Edward Goldstein (As an Individual): Thank you, Mr. Chair and members of the committee.

My name is Edward Goldstein. I'm the president of Redwood Corporation, a family-owned business that develops land and builds subdivisions, plazas and purpose-built rentals.

In trying to prepare my presentation to this committee, I reviewed the comments of some of the other presenters and some of the questions that followed. One of the questions was in regard to a statement from CIBC that questioned the ability of the construction industry to be able to respond to the increased demand for housing and the resulting supply shortage. I believe that the question should have been about the ability of municipal governments to respond to this shortage by providing approvals in a timely and efficient manner to address the lack of supply.

I understand that there are currently shortages of labour and materials, but construction cannot occur until approvals have been obtained. My experience is that approvals are rare and require an inordinate amount of time to achieve. For instance, one of our developments is waiting for comments from the heritage group in a municipality, which sat with it for 18 months before deciding it had no comments. The site plan approval process was unable to continue during this time. This seems to be occurring on regular basis these days with many municipal departments.

There is an obvious shortage of purpose-built rentals in many of the large urban areas in Canada. My company had to rezone a site across from a regional shopping mall. It was a 4.8-acre site with 700,000 square feet of residential building area for rental housing in three 20-storey towers, and it attracted only 50 people to the public meeting, all of whom were interested only in when it was going to be built and when they could get a unit. That was five years ago. Currently the application is still being reviewed by staff and the project cannot begin construction. This is for a project to which there have been no objections from the public or any ratepayer groups, and the demand for the units has been demonstrated. Costs have risen dramatically during this time.

In addition, municipalities are inconsistent with their use of lot levies to generate income from developments. Some municipalities understand that the way in which they assess levies allows them to influence the areas and types of developments that developers propose. They understand that by paying levies on behalf of projects they wish to encourage, they achieve a payback in terms of the ability to obtain property taxes quicker than they would otherwise. This results in a quick return of their investment. This kind of forward thinking should be used more often and by more municipalities.

Some municipalities and regions charge different levy rates for units in multiresidential buildings based on their square footage. Developers are therefore discouraged from building larger, family-sized dwellings, of which there is little supply. Levies in one region in the greater Toronto area are expected to rise 16% for units under 700 square feet and 30% for units over 700 square feet at the next bylaw review. This seems to be counterintuitive to increasing the supply of affordable family dwelling units. I would also like to note that there are no size qualifications for levies charged on single-family, detached dwelling units.

The goals of the three levels of government must be aligned when money is given for large infrastructure projects. There's no point in funding rapid transit or highways when municipalities don't take full advantage of these expenditures in their planning process. Arbitrary height restrictions along subway or LRT routes should be less restrictive and allow more density. This would allow better access and more usage. It seems to me that the relationship between federal and provincial governments and developers is much more constructive than that between the developers and municipalities. This relationship seems to be adversarial in many cases. Much of the work done by the municipality is redundant and inefficient and adds excessive cost to projects. It exposes the municipality to additional liability as well.

The term affordability is misleading. I believe that what we are experiencing is a lack of availability of certain housing types that are required by different people. For instance, we think that affordability applies to home ownership, so we make funding available to allow more people to purchase their own homes, such as single-family, detached houses, townhomes or condominiums. In reality, many people, such as seniors or people who no longer require their own homes and are on a fixed income, would like to get out of the responsibilities of home ownership. They opt for a rental property because there's no requirement for a down payment or monthly condominium fees. There is a critical shortage of this product at this time. Municipalities should be sensitive to the needs and requirements of all people. This would increase the supply of resale homes as people move to a product more suitable to them.

• (1540)

Let's not forget that any two people making the same amount of annual income could have different ideas as to what is affordable or not, based on the lifestyle decisions they make. Any program that tries to define units as being affordable runs the risk of supplying units to persons for whom it was not invested in.

In summary, I believe that the committee should address the standardization of procedures with which municipalities examine development applications and the use of deadlines to speed up the process, the relationship between infrastructure spending and how municipalities utilize it, re-examination of procedures used to set levies and the uses for which they are required. In addition, consideration should be given to the fact that existing rental stock is aging and that much of it was built with data technology that doesn't meet our current carbon use and safety technology.

Thank you for your time.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Goldstein.

Now to Mr. Pomeroy. You have the floor for five minutes.

Mr. Steve Pomeroy (Consultant and Executive Advisor, Canadian Housing Evidence Collaborative, McMaster University, As an Individual): Thank you for having me here today.

I'm a long-time housing policy consultant and also am affiliated with research centres both at McMaster University and Carleton. I've spent about 40 years studying housing issues, particularly housing affordability issues.

In response to a call for ideas from CMHC back in January, I did submit a detailed brief discussing the issues of housing supply, the relationship between housing supply and affordability and the recent escalation in home prices and rents and provided some suggestions on how to structure the proposed accelerator fund. I've shared that with the committee. I think it's in translation. You'll get it in a week or so, I think.

I'd like to take one step back, though, from this question of how to actually use the fund and ask a more fundamental question: Do we actually need it? Do we need to spend \$4 billion on an issue that has been defined as supply?

I'm not convinced that the issue that's causing home prices and rents to go up is primarily caused by supply issues. I think it's caused more by issues on the demand side of the market. Therefore, if we've diagnosed the problem incorrectly, spending money to fix the problem isn't going to actually solve the problem. I think there's a lack of evidence.

The corollary is, if we have a lack of supply, will increasing supply actually fix the affordability, this issue of excessive rents and excessive home prices? The evidence I present in the brief suggests that wouldn't actually be the case.

In terms of the argument that we have undersupply, certainly if we look at it over the last 20 years, we've actually had a fairly robust supply response. For every 1,000 people that we increase our population by, we've been building 540 homes on average. That's 1.85 people per home, compared to a national average of 2.4, so we've actually built enough to meet this.

We did have a surge in population growth in 2017-20 just before the COVID crisis, which did cause some pressures on the housing market. However, most of that increase in population at that point in time was from non-permanent residents—temporary foreign workers and, particularly, international students—which would have had more effect on the rental market and rents than it would have had on home prices in causing that particular problem.

I think that what has caused the double-digit increase in prices we've seen over the COVID period in two years has much more to do with the demand side, particularly the access to cheap financing, which increased significantly with the decline in interest rates. More particularly, as house prices have gone up, three-quarters of the people buying a home are existing homeowners. If the value of their equity just doubled, their ability to bid when they go out and purchase their new home is significantly enhanced. This concept of supercharged demand, enabled by these bagfuls of equity and wind-fall gains from sleeping in their beds at night, along with low interest rates, is really a much more significant factor in pushing up home prices—and, to some extent, rents—than is the lack of supply.

If the cause of increases is more on the demand side, will an initiative that actually increases supply solve the problem of excessively high home prices?

If we look at housing stocks last year, we saw a peak level up 33% over the average of the last 10 years to 271,000 units nationally, so the industry has responded and municipalities have responded. I think the issue now is, how do we sustain that level of supply as opposed to having to double the supply, as was proposed in the budget?

In the kind of supply we're seeing, though, the median price of new homes completed in 2020-21 was up 40%. We increased supply by 33% and prices went up by 40%. In the rental market in the last five years, we have seen a very significant increase in rental supply, which we saw very little of for about 15 or 20 years prior to 2016, but along with that, the average rent of rental units completed since 2016 nationally is 45% higher than the average market rent. Here in Ottawa, it's 65% to 70% higher than the average market rent.

So we're producing new supply, but we're not addressing the fundamental issue of whether that supply is affordable to lower- and middle-income renters or enables young households to access the home ownership market.

I think my first suggestion to the committee would be to actually define the problem correctly and see if this is the right kind of response. If indeed we do want to go forward with the accelerator fund, then I think it has to be very surgically targeted to specifically address the affordability issues.

Basically, incenting municipalities and rewarding municipalities for increasing the supply of family-oriented, ground-oriented homes below certain price criteria would be an effective way to do that. We had a similar initiative in 1975 under the federal housing assistance program, and it provided municipal incentive grants to municipalities to do just those types of things.

• (1545)

The issue here is really about defining the problem correctly. If we want to address affordability, let's be very precise about that and design the programs to come up with ideas that specifically address affordability.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Pomeroy.

Now we'll go to Mr. Moffatt for five minutes.

Mr. Moffatt, you have the floor.

Dr. Mike Moffatt (Senior Director, Smart Prosperity Institute): Thank you for having me here today. My name is Mike Moffatt and I'm the senior director of the Smart Prosperity Institute, a clean economy think tank housed at the University of Ottawa.

Over the past five years, home prices have doubled in Halifax, in Kitchener-Waterloo and on Vancouver Island. They're up a whopping 164% in my hometown of London, Ontario. Despite that, they've not risen at all in Regina. They're up marginally in St. John's, Newfoundland, and are up less than 40% in Winnipeg and Quebec City, just a bit above inflation.

Why are home prices skyrocketing in some parts of Canada but not others? The answer is simple. In regions where housing completions cannot or are not allowed to keep up with population growth, we have skyrocketing prices. Southern Ontario is one such region. Before 2016, Ontario's population grew by roughly by 120,000 persons per year every year, and house price growth outside the greater Toronto area was relatively modest. The oil price crash of 2014-15 and the liberalization of federal policies governing international students caused an overnight population boom in Ontario centred around Toronto, and population growth rates nearly doubled overnight, as we detail in the report "One Million New Ontarians".

In response to this population boom, Ontario changed almost nothing. Municipal planners all but ignored increased population growth. The 2017 revision to the provincial growth plan ignored the issue entirely, using population growth estimates that were several years out of date, which we detail in our report "Forecast for Failure".

High population growth and low housing completions lead to housing shortages, skyrocketing prices and an exodus from the Toronto region. In the year before the pandemic, 60,000 people, on net, moved out of the city of Toronto and Peel region to other parts of the province. Last year, that figure rose to 72,000. Most of those migrants were between the ages of zero and four and the ages of 28 and 32. It was young families that were priced out of the Toronto region and were forced to "drive until they qualified", going to other parts of southern Ontario. This exodus caused Toronto's population of children under the age of five to drop to levels not seen since the 1970s.

Because of the restrictions on building child-friendly, climate-friendly homes in our cities, those young families were often ending up in small-town Ontario, where family-friendly housing was allowed to be built. In our report "The Growth of London Outside London", we show that historically roughly 20% of housing completions in the London, Ontario, area were outside of the city of London. Over the last decade, that figure has steadily risen to 41%.

While there are many benefits to small-town living, and while those homes may be child friendly, they're not particularly climate friendly. Families are being pushed into neighbourhoods that are not walkable and will never have access to public transit. This sprawl leads to increased infrastructure costs and it strains big city municipal finances. Those families will visit London to shop, work and learn using local infrastructure, but they will not pay municipal taxes to the City of London. With increased immigration targets and rising numbers of climate refugees and refugees from Ukraine, Ontario's population growth will remain strong, creating a further need for family-friendly housing. Regions that cannot build this housing should expect to see population outflow and labour shortages, leading to slow economic growth.

The federal government and all four major Ontario provincial parties have been committed to setting a target of 1.5 million net new new housing units in Ontario over the next decade, a doubling of housing starts from the previous decade. We believe at SPI that this is an appropriate target. However, we caution against the thinking that a unit is a unit. Ontario has been able to increase the construction of small high-rise apartment units in our major cities and single detached homes in our exurbs and small towns. What is missing is child-friendly, climate-friendly housing within our cities. Whether through the housing accelerator or other policy levers, the federal government should not just ensure that it is in-centing more of the same, but instead ensure that its housing policies are compatible with its economic and climate goals.

I look forward to your questions.

• (1550)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Moffatt.

We'll now open the floor to questions from committee members, beginning with Madam Kusie for six minutes.

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC): Thank you very much, Chair.

Thank you to our witnesses for being here today.

I'm finding this study incredibly frustrating because I'm hearing about so many of the problems. Yet it seems to me, in addition to the current federal solutions that we have that are not solving the problems, the problems that the federal programs are built upon originate in municipalities from which a large part of the current coalition government comes. I'm very confused about what the solutions will be.

Respectfully, Mr. Pomeroy, it seems to me that even if I have three people who own a house and they buy another house, the rent will be less for someone looking for an option for three houses rather than one house. I do believe, if it was just one house that was built rather than three, it is still a supply issue.

Then when I go on to the testimony of Mr. Moffatt, I'm wondering, Mr. Moffatt, what the shirts are in the background. If you would allow me, after I finish this line of thinking, to ask if you could explain that, I would be interested in hearing about that as well.

I'm hearing you say that you are seeing the current government programs pushing Canadians out of major centres into smaller cen-

tres. At the same time, I'm hearing you say that the government needs to do more of the same bad programming to keep the individuals in the centres. That's really what I'm hearing you say. I was with you until about three quarters of the way through your testimony.

Mr. Goldstein, your testimony is the one that's resonating with me the most, even though, apparently, you're not our witness. I will say, I do like your name. That is the name of my son, "Edward". That's a great name.

When I evaluate what has gone wrong in my city of Calgary—and it's certainly not to the same extent as the examples provided by Mr. Moffatt in the GTA and other examples of Vancouver Island—it's three things that you touched upon, Mr. Goldstein. The first is approvals by municipal governments. There is one person to do retaining walls, for example, so you are waiting endlessly for an approval.

Second is the land supply. It think that in a coalition mentality there is a hesitancy to release land, which is just not realistic.

Finally, there are the levies, whereby municipalities think that if they stick it to the developers, that will solve their problems. However, the developers pass it on to the consumers rather than work collaboratively and intelligently with municipalities in an effort to not only economize those costs in the greatest possible capacity, but intelligently collaborate in an effort to avoid passing on those costs.

Mr. Goldstein, I'm hoping you'll be able to further address my comments about supply and those three things I mentioned—the approvals, the land supply and the levies. As well, I agree with your comment around affordable housing. I think this is a term that is continuously used disingenuously. People think, "We're a young couple; we want affordable housing", when really it's initiatives for a smaller segment of the population that the rest of the population will somehow have to pay for or subsidize.

I'd like your comments, please, Mr. Goldstein. Thank you.

• (1555)

Mr. Edward Goldstein: Thank you very much for your comments.

I could go on for hours about specific examples where I feel that the supply of developable land is being held up and is not able to proceed to the construction stage because the bureaucracy in the municipalities doesn't want to process those plans and they're not doing it in a timely fashion. I believe that's creating the supply issue. I think there's always a demand for housing. The demand is going to get better. We're actually going to be losing supply due to the fact that existing supply deteriorates. People are ignoring that fact, again, in the municipalities.

There really seems to be a disconnect between federal objectives and provincial objectives and municipal objectives created by political Nimbyism. I guess that would be the way to put it. Municipalities could be more constructive than they are in solving that problem. I mean, everybody stands to gain by supplying housing to all levels of society and making the communities work better within.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Goldstein.

Madam Kusie, your time is up.

Mr. Collins, you have six minutes.

Mr. Chad Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, Lib.): Thanks, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you to the witnesses for your attendance today and for the information you are providing.

I'll start with you, Mr. Pomeroy. Welcome, sir. Building new can be quite expensive. We've had certain witnesses come in to talk about retrofits and buying existing stock. It's cheaper and renovations can happen more quickly than new builds. The Parkdale Neighbourhood Land Trust was in front of us recommending an acquisition stream. It's really along the same theme that you adopted earlier in terms of a targeted approach.

Mr. Chair, if you remember, at the last meeting I talked about how it's not just about creating supply; it's about creating affordable supply.

I'd like to hear your comments about an acquisition stream, how that might help with either retaining affordable units that are in competition with the private sector or up for grabs for REITs and others, and how that might assist with a targeted approach to assist with our goal and objective of providing affordable housing.

• (1600)

Mr. Steve Pomeroy: I'd be happy to comment.

Mr. Goldstein mentioned the issue about the existing stock and about losing it. We haven't seen the data yet from 2021, but from 2011 to 2016 in this country we lost 322,000 units that were renting below \$750 a month. That was 60,000 units a year of very affordable existing housing, most of which was in the private sector. It didn't entirely disappear. Some of it was demolished for redevelopment as a result of intensification policies. For most of it, though, the rents simply went to a higher rent level and they were less affordable to the folks living there.

That process, which is generally referred to as "financialization", has various capital funds. I think REITs have been targeted in this, but it's not just REITs. It's a variety of investors, including individuals, buying three- or four-unit properties. They're seeing opportunities, because of high rent pressures and opportunities to increase the rents, to simply increase the rents. As a consequence, that stock moves out of it, and then we try to build new affordable housing for low-income people at \$400,000 a unit.

The idea of the acquisition fund is to enable non-profits to emulate the behaviour of REITs, essentially non-profit REITs, and go and acquire some of these existing older, as in from the sixties or seventies generation, relatively affordable market rental properties that are renting at close to the average market rent. With a small

amount of equity assistance and some financing through the federal government—by repurposing, for example, the rental construction financing initiative—they could actually acquire those. Because they're non-profit, they would tend to preserve the lower rents rather than push them upmarket.

Mr. Chad Collins: That's great. Thanks for that answer.

Along the same lines, in terms of a targeted approach for affordable housing, almost a third of Canadian households live in inadequate or unaffordable or unsuitable dwellings, and one-tenth are in core housing need. Can you advise us on how to assist those who are renters in this category with the accelerator fund?

Mr. Steve Pomeroy: The issue I was focusing on there was that housing need has those three categories. Is the unit big enough or suitable? Is it in good enough condition? Is it affordable? Of those folks in core housing need, 92% have only an affordability problem. They're living in a house that's adequate and suitable. Actually, taking the Canada housing benefit, for example, expanding it, and increasing the level of assistance to more households, for all those folks who are paying too much of their limited income for rent we could be giving them some help with the rent. We don't need to build them new housing. We could actually help them where they currently are.

I think we haven't traditionally in this country utilized those types of demand-side subsidies. The Canada housing benefit edges into that, but I think it's grossly underfunded relative to the level of need. We need about \$4 billion a year rather than \$4 billion over 10 years to really address housing affordability issues for existing renters, leaving aside any building.

Mr. Chad Collins: Thanks, Steve.

Mr. Chairman, I will switch gears now to Mr. Moffatt.

One of the unintended consequences of pushing density is that we see fewer family-friendly units constructed. I know, as past president of CityHousing Hamilton, that we had families on our affordable housing wait-list who wait anywhere between five and seven years for an affordable housing unit.

I would like to know from Mr. Moffatt how the accelerator fund can help support families who are in need of an affordable housing unit.

Dr. Mike Moffatt: The first thing we need to look at are all of the disincentives in the system to building larger units.

I agree with Mr. Goldstein that a lot of the tax and development charges we have at a municipal level incentivize the building of many smaller units rather than family-sized units. It's important, when spending this \$4 billion and creating incentives for municipalities, to make sure that we are incenting the type of behaviour that we want. One way we can do that is by ensuring that municipalities are not putting their thumb on the scale and giving certain advantages to building very small units rather than two and three-bedroom units that meet core housing needs as described by Mr. Pomeroy.

Mr. Chad Collins: Thank you for that.

Here's a subsequent question, Mr. Chair, through you. The accelerator fund was advertised and marketed through the election and subsequently as helping municipalities with some of the issues that have already been noted today and by previous witnesses.

What role do you see the private sector and not-for-profits playing in co-operation with municipalities as it relates to utilizing those resources through partnerships?

That's to Mr. Moffatt.

• (1605)

Dr. Mike Moffatt: I certainly think there is a role. For the lower end of the population, it's just going to be too expensive to assume that they play in the market rate space. With that said, I think a lot of the barriers to doing that are regulatory ones that hit both market rate housing and subsidized housing.

Frances Bula at The Globe and Mail has a number of pieces in which she talks about the issues of building affordable housing in Vancouver and how Vancouver's municipal government is getting caught up in some of its own rules. I think we need to address those barriers that are preventing the entire spectrum of housing being built. When we look at more nimble regulatory processes, we have to realize that we're doing that not just to help the market side but also to accelerate the building of houses.

The Chair: Mr. Moffatt, we've gone over the time. You can catch up during another question.

[Translation]

Ms. Chabot, you may go ahead. You have six minutes.

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

I'd like to thank the witnesses.

These are not only major issues, but also complex ones for those who may be watching today's proceedings. The situation is more or less the same in every Canadian city. It's a problem in Quebec as well. It was just featured on the midday news, in fact. Vacancy rates have never been lower, while prices continue to rise. The housing out there is not meeting the needs of an average family with children.

I may be mistaken, but it seems to me that we are still adopting a supply and demand mindset. In other words, if we increase supply, costs will come down. I don't think that reasoning is entirely valid. We saw supply grow, and yet, costs continued to rise.

As I recall, the \$4-billion in new funding is spread over five years, so all of that money is not being invested now. On top of that, the fund does not set out a definition for affordability, which I see as a major shortcoming. It's important to define what is affordable.

How can this new fund truly meet the needs? What conditions need to be put in place to meet those needs? In my view, we need to do the following things: keep growing the supply of social and community housing; clearly define affordability; and, above all, determine the proportion of funding that will go towards so-called affordable housing.

What do you think, Mr. Pomeroy?

[English]

Mr. Steve Pomeroy: It is a complex problem. I think there are two elements here. One is this definition of affordability. As the member from Calgary mentioned, it means all things to all people. We don't really know what affordability is. The term "affordable housing" really focuses more on low-income folks and housing affordability is whether or not our kids can afford to buy a house. We really have those two different segments.

I don't think the housing accelerator fund is the right answer for the very low-income people. I think we need to basically increase the funding in the national housing strategy, which is targeted to the specific issues of addressing homelessness and very low-income need.

If the accelerator fund wants to address the second issue of housing affordability for middle income kids trying to get into the housing market and moderate income renters, then we have to look at what kind of incentives we're getting to. The other speaker, Mike, mentioned the issue of size. We had a very similar program in 1975. One thing it created was the assisted rental program. It was municipal incentive grants. The grants were unit-based and they were a specific number. The builders built a whole bunch of bachelor and one-bedroom units. If we actually do want to address the affordability in the rental market, and particularly for families who can't afford to buy, I think the accelerator fund does need to be quite prescriptive. It should say that it will give incentives to municipalities if they approve this type of unit, and certainly family-oriented units for that particular issue.

I think it's probably inappropriate to skew the accelerator fund to address the deep need issues which, as I mentioned, should be done through the national housing strategy.

• (1610)

[Translation]

Ms. Louise Chabot: We nevertheless believe that a portion of the funding should be dedicated to affordable housing.

We need to define what affordable housing means, and that definition should include the percentage of the overall market it accounts for. Affordable housing could be considered to be \$2,200 in a city like Montreal, which makes no sense. When we talk about affordable housing, we are talking about a place where people are going to live, so it can't be affordable for just one year; it has to be affordable on a lasting basis. It has to meet the needs of the middle class, so that those people can afford it.

If the new fund can't do that, it won't do what it's supposed to. If the goal is simply to create housing without taking affordability into account, the initiative is missing the mark.

The committee heard from witnesses who said that funding should be project-based, a bit like the process for the rapid housing initiative, which was quite effective. Do you think that's a good idea?

We are in the middle of a study where we can assess options. That approach worked well for organizations, even though the process was such that they had to submit their projects quickly.

Does a project-based approach sound like a good idea to you, Mr. Moffatt?

[English]

Dr. Mike Moffatt: I think we need to focus more on tying these funds to outcomes and particular reforms. I know a number of parties, for instance, have talked about how if cities are getting transit funding, they should be required to allow a certain height, duplexes or triplexes by right.

I think this money could be best spent by helping municipalities with regulatory reform to allow the market to build more family-friendly and climate-friendly houses, rather than paying to actually get homes built. As Mr. Pomeroy mentioned, I think that type of approach would be better on the national housing strategy or other federal projects.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Moffatt.

Now we go to Madame Zarrillo for six minutes.

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I really appreciate opening up this conversation around demand. I agree that it's been largely ignored in this conversation.

I have a question for Mr. Pomeroy and potentially for Mr. Moffatt on what they see as the goal of this housing affordability accelerator and what they're hearing in their circles on the interpretation of the goal.

I really appreciate the comments on tying it to outcomes.

Before I get into it, I would like to share with you some of the things I have seen on the demand side. For example, we have created demand with low interest rates, with immigration services centralized in large urban centres, and with OCP changes that encourage intensification—which are in fact creating gentrification and renovations, or destruction of purpose-built rentals. This also includes the short-term rental market like Airbnb. These are all of the demand-side pieces that I've seen.

I've even heard today some talk about the family-friendly and the larger [*Technical difficulty—Editor*]. I can tell you that in my experience we got transit funding along the route, and the development community said they were going to take the incentives they got for three bedrooms, but then came back and asked to turn them into lock-off suites so they could also rent out one or two of those bedrooms. Moreover, they then wanted interior bedrooms and didn't want to put windows on these bedrooms. It actually drove up the price. I'm really, really worried about this.

I want to dig in more on this demand side.

Mr. Pomeroy, I'm going to start with you. You named a few of the ones that you feel are driving demand.

Can you say what you think we need to focus on with the demand side? Also, what do you think is the goal of the housing accelerator fund, and what are they saying in your circles on what they think this is?

• (1615)

Mr. Steve Pomeroy: There is a great deal of ambiguity about what the accelerator fund is intended to do. In CMHC's consultation, they said that "Everyone [in Canada] deserves to have a safe and affordable place to call home." They said they needed to remove barriers to housing supply and wanted to offer options for renters to become homeowners. It's very much around this question of appealing to the middle class and asking whether our kids can afford to buy a home.

I think, to a large extent, it was politically motivated. It's a good political response, as opposed to a good policy response on helping young families get into home ownership. At the same time, they want "to remove barriers and help municipalities build [more] housing more quickly in an ambitious and innovative manner."

Here in Ottawa, we saw housing starts go up last year by 58%. It was a very significant response. Some municipalities have been able to significantly accelerate what they're doing and build more homes, but simply accelerating and expanding the supply hasn't affected prices.

There is this need to reflect on the objective of the accelerator funds: Is it to improve affordability, or is it simply to expand supply and hope that as a consequence of supply that will result in greater affordability? In basic economics, that should happen. The problem with the housing market is that homes are fixed in location and certain neighbourhoods have very high values. When I walk around Ottawa, people are knocking down 1960's homes selling for \$500,000 or \$600,000, and building a duplex and selling each side for \$1.4 million. We're doubling the number of units, but we're doubling the price at the same time.

I don't think anybody has really articulated, and perhaps this committee should, the objective of the accelerator fund. What are we really trying to achieve and what outcome measures are we going to put in place to make sure we achieve it?

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo: Thank you for that.

Mr. Moffat, you talked about that too—tying it to outcomes.

What are they saying in your circles, or what is your interpretation of what the housing accelerator fund is?

There is the question around demand. I know that you mentioned family housing. We know that the issue of schools in urban centres is difficult. Even in Calgary, the school board started busing kids into the urban centres because they didn't want to spend the money to put schools out in the communities where there's the growth.

Dr. Mike Moffatt: I would echo Mr. Pomeroy's sentiment. It's actually unclear to us what that housing accelerator should be trying to accomplish. I think affordability should be part of that, but I also think we need to think through environmental outcomes. In Ontario, we are losing 175 acres of farmland every single day to development. Again, as I said in my comments, our current system is very good at building small high-rise apartment units and single detached homes in small towns, and nothing else in-between.

On the demand side, I think of these issues that we've had during the pandemic—low interest rates, high white-collar savings' rates and so on—as an accelerant or a fuel. Think of it like gasoline. If you pour gasoline on a pre-existing fire like we had in the housing market in southern Ontario, you get a big explosion. Where you don't have a fire—we've had very low interest rates in Saskatchewan, Edmonton and Newfoundland—we haven't seen housing prices go up all that much.

Does this money play a role? It absolutely does, but it accelerates the pre-existing trends. As interest rates go up, we are going to see a lot of that speculative fuel come out, but we still have these underlying housing shortages in parts of the country.

The Chair: Ms. Zarrillo.

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo: Mr. Chair, do I have any time left?

The Chair: You have 10 seconds.

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo: Okay, I'll pass then. Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Zarrillo.

Next, we have Mr. Chong. Welcome to the committee. You have five minutes.

Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm excited to be here to talk about an important issue for Canadians.

I'd like to direct my question to Mr. Pomeroy. He mentioned something in his opening remarks that I thought was interesting. He said it's a demand issue, and not just a supply issue. What I've seen over the last two decades is the breakneck pace at which mortgage credit has grown, and, arguably, that's one of big reasons why housing has become unaffordable in Canada.

If you look at the data, mortgage credit stood at about \$400 billion in the year 2000. I'm speaking in nominal terms now, so it was

about \$400 billion in the year 2000. It jumped to about \$1 trillion in 2010, and then it doubled yet again to \$2 trillion in 2020. If you look at the compounded annual growth rate, it's 7.5% over that 20 years, far ahead of population growth and inflation, and far ahead of nominal GDP growth. During the last two years alone, it has jumped by another \$300 billion to \$2 trillion. Sorry, it was \$1.7 trillion in 2020, and then it currently jumped to \$2 trillion.

Arguably, if the Office of the Superintendent of Financial Institutions, OSFI, and CMHC, which I know you have some experience with, and Finance Canada had issued regulations to slow the growth in mortgage credit to something more reasonable, in line with population growth and inflation—let's say something around the range of 3.5% per annum—we could have moderated house price increases.

Finally, before I get your comment on this, there's a further example of what I'm talking about. In March 2020, OSFI relaxed the rules concerning domestic stability levels. That's the domestic stability barrier of 1% that's required by the big banks, and that decision freed up an additional \$300 billion in capital that the banks could then loan out, and, commensurately, mortgage credit growth jumped by some \$300 billion over the last two short years.

My view is that if OSFI, Finance Canada, and CMHC had put in place measures to ensure that this additional \$300 billion in credit didn't all get plowed into residential real estate, but perhaps into business lending and small business lending, and if other measures like that had been more broadly applied in recent years, we might not have ended up in this affordability crisis we're seeing now.

I wonder if you could comment on that.

● (1620)

Mr. Steve Pomeroy: Certainly, access to credit is a critical factor in driving up [*Technical difficulty—Editor*]. Home prices are market-driven. They are driven by what people can afford to pay. As much as the development industry would argue they are cost-based, I would argue they're market based, and then you would make sure the cost could be achieved. I think that having the access to credit has driven that up.

I did a chart. It's in the background paper you will get. If we look at the amount of borrowing, the median household could borrow over the last 20 years at the prevailing interest rate and the median income each year, that borrowing I am referring to was above the average house price. So we had people pulling that up, and therefore access to credit, mortgage credit in particular, has been a big factor.

Where OSFI and others got it wrong was around the macroprudential rules, trying to constrain access to credit to just sort of take the boil off the market, particularly after 2008-09.... The stress tests really impact first-time buyers more than they impact buyers who have existing equity. They don't need as much of a mortgage; they have all their accumulated equity. They're the ones who are driving the prices up, not the first-time buyers.

The first-time buyers are being closed out of the market, so we need to figure out a way to enable young kids to get into the market, because what will happen.... If you can't get into home ownership, you stay in the rental market. If you stay in the rental market, rents are going up, and the bottom end of the rental market is where things get hurt.

Try to think about housing as a system and recognize that what we do on the home ownership side affects the rental side. All of that is critically important.

I know this is not directly answering your question, but it is related to this. It's thinking about which parts of the housing system we want to help. Helping young buyers get into the market has an indirect benefit on the rental market, and can be very valuable. The policies that we've pursued over the last 20 years, or 10 years, particularly from 2015 to about now, have very much done the opposite and precluded them from the market.

The Chair: You have 10 seconds left.

Hon. Michael Chong: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Chong and Mr. Pomeroy.

We'll go to Mr. Van Bynen for five minutes.

Mr. Tony Van Bynen (Newmarket—Aurora, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'll be sharing my time with Mr. Coteau.

My questions will be directed to Mr. Goldstein. I only have two and a half minutes, so I'll try to get to them as quickly as I can.

We've heard the dilemma in which some of the incentives are now encouraging developers to build studios and single-room units and that it does not respond to family needs.

In your opinion, Mr. Goldstein, how can the government avoid the trap if the incentives that it offers do not direct the developers to build family units? To summarize that, how can we incentivize family units as opposed to smaller units?

• (1625)

Mr. Edward Goldstein: I think the biggest problem is the levy situation, which prevents you from building large units. In the past six years, I've built 600 units, and at least 75% of them were two and three-bedroom units over 700 square feet—closer to 900 and 1,000 square feet—and they were always the fastest ones to go.

There's such a large supply of one-bedroom units through condominiums in the GTA that nobody wants them as much as they want two and three bedrooms. There's nothing for families.

I don't know that the fund has much effect on this type of product; it's just the availability. I think supply is the biggest issue. One of the other witnesses, Mr. Pomeroy, I think it was, said that the

supply would help renters and therefore homebuyers, but it would also help homebuyers by taking some of the older people who presently live in homes out of that market and put them into the rental market. They really have nowhere to go if they don't want a house anymore.

Mr. Tony Van Bynen: I hate to interrupt you, but I'm at my two-minute mark.

Mr. Edward Goldstein: That's okay.

Mr. Tony Van Bynen: A quick question would be about whether the fund could subsidize the difference in development charges between smaller units and larger units. I'm looking at some really effective and quickly implemented incentives. Would something like that work?

Mr. Edward Goldstein: My question in this regard is: Why does the municipality have to load up development charges in a multi-residential rental building when there's very little cost to the municipality of having that building in the municipality? All it does is produce property taxes for them, and it doesn't require them to provide road repair, to do sidewalk snow removal or to do garbage removal. It could be a profit centre if they looked at it the right way. To me, they're not looking at it in the right way. That's the main thing. To throw money at it isn't really what should be done. The municipalities should recognize that their income will increase with these.

Mr. Tony Van Bynen: Let me apologize, please, Ed. I'm at three minutes and 21 seconds, and I'm shortchanging my colleague.

Mr. Edward Goldstein: I'm sorry about that.

Mr. Michael Coteau (Don Valley East, Lib.): Thank you so much.

My question is for Mr. Moffatt.

Mr. Moffatt, you said that there was a disconnect between the type of supply being built and the type that's needed, and you talked a bit about climate-friendly and family-oriented supply. Can you share some of the reasons you think municipalities are not building these types of units? Also, how could the accelerator fund—which, by the way, has a goal of building 100,000 units over the next few years—be used to accomplish this goal?

Dr. Mike Moffatt: Certainly there are levy issues, as Mr. Goldstein says. A lot of it is zoning. I could tear down my house here in Ottawa tomorrow and build a McMansion, but if I want to build a triplex and house three families, I would be facing years of red tape.

How the accelerator can help is by providing incentives to say that, if we are going to provide municipalities with a certain amount of funds to speed up approvals processes and things like that, here are the particular zoning and regulatory changes we would need tied to that funding. I think it's a carrot-and-stick approach where the accelerator fund could be used to incentivize the kinds of regulatory, zoning and parking minimum changes that we need in our communities to allow for more family-friendly density.

The Chair: Your time is up.

Mr. Michael Coteau: Thank you so much, Mike.

The Chair: That concludes the first group of witnesses.

Mr. Chad Collins: Can we get in writing what the jersey represents to MP Kusie?

The Chair: Yes. I believe, Mr. Moffatt, that committee members are inquisitive about the uniform behind you.

Dr. Mike Moffatt: A lifetime ago, I was head coach of Canada's national dodgeball team; and yes, we do have one. We won gold back in 2013 and 2014.

I would like to say to Ms. Kusie as well, I think my comments may have been misinterpreted. I am certainly not advocating more of the same from the federal government. I would like to see changes. I just throw that out there.

• (1630)

The Chair: Okay. Thank you to all of the witnesses for appearing today.

We will suspend while we prepare for the second group of witnesses. Again, thank you Mr. Goldstein, Mr. Moffatt, and to Mr. Pomeroy, who is appearing in person.

We'll suspend for a couple of minutes.

• (1630)

(Pause)

• (1630)

The Chair: Welcome back to the committee's study on the housing accelerator fund.

Before I welcome the witnesses who are appearing virtually, I would like to advise you that you can choose to participate in the language of your choice. You can do that by clicking on the interpretation service icon on your Surface device. As well, if there is a loss of interpretation, please signal me by using the "raise hand" icon, and we will suspend while it's clarified. For those members in the room, if there is an interpretation loss, please raise your hand and let me know. I would also ask the witnesses to speak slowly for the benefit of the interpreters so that we have no issue with interpretation.

I would like to welcome the following witnesses: Brian Rosborough, executive director of the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, and Amber Crawford, senior adviser; and Michael Braithwaite, chief executive officer of Blue Door Support Services.

Welcome back again, Michael. We had problems the last time.

We are also joined by Mr. Seth Asimakos, general manager and founder of Kaléidoscope.

We will begin with the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, for five minutes.

Whichever witness is going to provide the opening remarks, you now have five minutes. I will indicate 10 seconds as you are approaching your timeline.

• (1635)

Mr. Brian Rosborough (Executive Director, Association of Municipalities of Ontario): Thank you for the opportunity to appear today before the committee.

Good afternoon, everyone. I'm Brian Rosborough, the executive director of the Association of Municipalities of Ontario. As the chair mentioned, I am joined today by my colleague Amber Crawford, who is a senior adviser at AMO. AMO is the collective voice of the 444 municipal governments in Ontario.

Housing affordability is really one of the greatest challenges facing our province and, indeed, our country. AMO has worked on this issue for many years with both the provincial and the federal governments. It's a truly complex issue and not one that municipal governments can solve on their own. In fact, the demand levers and supply actions are mostly held by others. Ultimately, we believe that solutions must involve a variety of actions from all orders of government and the development industry.

Earlier this year, AMO released a policy paper with nearly 90 recommendations for the various stakeholders that need to be involved. The document, titled "A Blueprint for Action: An Integrated Approach to Address the Ontario Housing Crisis", can be found on our website. Local leaders in Ontario are already rolling up their sleeves to do their part to improve housing options for people.

The measures and investments in federal budget 2022 include the housing accelerator fund, which is most welcome. The fund has great potential to help get housing built faster, through direct and flexible investments that allow municipalities to tackle the most serious local barriers to supply.

Increasing supply is crucial, but it is important to ensure that the housing accelerator fund enables the right kind of supply. Like FCM, which has also appeared before this committee, AMO believes that the right supply means affordable options—both market and non-market—that are aligned with the shared federal-provincial-municipal vision of low-carbon intensification and transit-oriented development. The right supply also means focusing on the specific local supply gaps unique to each local market.

However, we would also say that new supply is not the only solution. There is also work to be done to preserve existing housing stock that is affordable, especially purpose-built rental housing. In our blueprint, AMO supported the call by FCM for the federal government to provide acquisition funding and/or grants for the non-profit and co-operative sectors to purchase existing multi-residential buildings and keep them affordable for low-income tenants.

Our main purpose today with the time we have remaining is to provide input on the housing accelerator fund's program design. All municipalities can benefit from these investments. Flexibility is key to customizing local solutions. The housing accelerator fund must also account for the needs of smaller, rural and northern communities.

Ultimately, we would like to see a broad list of eligible activities that can be funded. Some examples we would highlight include activities such as establishing digital e-permitting; improving the development approvals processes, such as instituting Lean Six Sigma methodologies; increasing human resource capacity for municipal planning and approval processes; the adoption of new systems where feasible and desirable, such as the community planning permit system and/or a community improvement plan; conducting data analysis of local housing market needs; studying market conditions that are required prior to enacting inclusionary zoning or for transit-oriented housing developments; purchasing land for affordable housing development; addressing Nimbyism through public awareness campaigns; consulting about indigenous peoples' housing needs within municipal boundaries; and the collection and dissemination of best practices.

Our point is that there are many things that would help on the ground with different local circumstances.

We also have advice about the implementation considerations that include giving priority to projects that increase affordable housing supply both in the private market and in the not-for-profit and co-operative housing sectors; making the housing accelerator fund stackable with other federal programs, such as the national housing co-investment fund; and considering formula-based allocations rather than application-based funding as much as is feasible.

Last, we understand that the committee is open to advice about the federal lands initiative. This is important, given the high cost of land in the development process in many locations in the country. AMO supports the government working with FCM to redesign and expand the federal lands initiative by providing surplus land or underused Crown lands to municipal governments.

• (1640)

This should be contingent on building affordable or “missing middle” housing solutions.

With that, I'll conclude my remarks. Thank you for listening and for your consideration. Amber and I would be very pleased to answer questions when time permits.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Rosborough.

Now we'll go to Mr. Braithwaite for five minutes.

Mr. Michael Braithwaite (Chief Executive Officer, Blue Door Support Services): Thank you so much. It's a pleasure to be back.

My name is Michael Braithwaite, and I'm the CEO of Blue Door, an organization up in York Region that's been serving our community for about 40 years.

For the first 35 of those years, we were primarily focused on emergency housing, and over the last five, although we are still the largest provider of emergency housing in York Region, we have switched to providing some secondary housing, transitional housing and housing for specific groups like 2SLGBTQ+ youth. There was a need, and we filled that need through housing in the community.

We have switched our thinking. We've gone to more innovative thinking and have leveraged private donor funds to create sustainable, affordable rental housing for seniors, families and youth. We repurposed a vacant Parks Canada home. There are 44 of them in Rouge National Urban Park. We took one of the homes that was empty and in bad shape and turned it into a duplex, which will provide affordable housing for 30 years for two families.

With the funds from Reaching Home, we were able to buy a fourplex in Newmarket and work with partners to create long-term truly affordable housing for indigenous men, for women fleeing violence, for families at Blue Door and for single men and women looking for affordable housing.

We and our entire sector applaud the implementation of the housing accelerator fund and would make the following recommendations moving forward.

First, invest in and encourage community land trusts across the country. Purchasing land for land trusts and providing incentives for municipalities or developers to donate housing or property to land trusts can create truly affordable housing for years to come in many communities. We're in the process of doing that now, expanding an existing land trust from Toronto into York Region, with the help of the mayor of Newmarket, to create a land trust with funds from CMHC.

Second, provide funds to non-profits or charities with a focus on housing and homelessness to purchase existing rental housing. Mr. Pomeroy just presented to the group, and you know the statistic that for every purpose-built rental, we're losing 15 to the private sector. We need to get them into the hands of non-profits and charities like Blue Door. Recently, a nineplex in Aurora was up for sale, and it had very affordable rents that were way below market. There was a fear that it would go to the private sector and renovations would take place and we'd lose it to that sector because the funds weren't there.

Third, invest in programs like Blue Door's Construct program, a social enterprise that not only can help build the goal of hundreds of thousands of homes but will prevent homelessness by providing a living wage and meaningful work to youth, new Canadians and others across the country in the trades. Currently, there are over a dozen of these social enterprises operating across the country, with opportunities to create more moving forward.

Last, provide municipalities with the supports they need to create new zoning bylaws that might speed up the development of buildings and properties owned by faith communities willing to step up to create new affordable housing in this crisis. Right now in York Region, there are all sorts of faith communities with land and a willingness to do this, but some of the zoning pieces are a bit of a barrier getting in the way, so that could help create new housing quickly.

Thank you so much for listening, and thank you for your hard work and passion on this fund. We look forward to seeing it in action and look forward to your questions.

• (1645)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Braithwaite.

Now we'll go to Mr. Asimakos for five minutes.

Mr. Seth Asimakos (General Manager and Founder, Kaléidoscope): Thank you for this opportunity.

I am the general manager and co-founder of Kaléidoscope Social Impact, formerly the Saint John Community Loan Fund.

We're a 22-year-old organization, and we do three things. We do social finance, enabling other developers to develop affordable housing and mixed-use commercial and affordable housing. We also invest in social enterprises and microenterprises.

Our second service line is training—impact training, financial literacy, enterprise development training and youth entrepreneurship.

Our third vertical is our own real estate development. We have developed commercial new builds and have also renovated three buildings. We are currently at the last stage of design and financing for a 12-unit, plus commercial, supportive housing project. On the social finance side, we have three or four projects in the pipeline across New Brunswick that are building affordable housing units. There are probably about 50 altogether.

That's who we are as an organization. Our aim is to grow the fund to \$10 million and hopefully to \$20 million and \$30 million. We probably need about \$100 million in the fund just to leverage the builds that we do need in New Brunswick, to tell you the truth.

As context, New Brunswick's property values have doubled, and in some cases have tripled. We have 7,000 individuals on a waiting list for affordable housing in New Brunswick. Maybe a year and a half ago, when we did that study, there were 5,000. It has shot up incredibly, partially as a result of COVID and also as a result of people looking to the Maritimes as a place to live now. It's had a huge impact. We see many more people visible on the streets, as housing has pushed people from this level down to the next level and then to the streets.

If we look at the waiting list alone, at \$200,000 a door, we would need \$1.4 billion right there. The amount of money that's needed and that's being advocated.... It's still very limited, to put it in context.

I'll start by piggybacking on what's been said already. One is about enabling the maintenance of existing affordability. We were at a housing conference last week, and I heard an 8:1 ratio a few times. I didn't hear 15:1 as far as losing affordability to building new units goes, but that's our biggest problem right now. We have to find a way to purchase in the non-profit sector to maintain the existing supply, let alone build new stuff. I think that has to be a priority. There has to be a way to use that money to bridge the gap between what's being asked for on a price level and make it affordable for non-profits to purchase and maintain affordability.

As far as CMHC is concerned, since it's the main vehicle to get money out, it has to speed up the process. We're looking at six to 12 months for projects to get through a review, get to a letter of intent and finally get to an agreement and the flowing of capital. That's way too frigging slow. If you go to a bank, it won't take that long. We have to be able to speed that up. If you want to actually speed up the amount of affordable housing out there, you have to speed up the process. If that means you need more people, then hire more people at CMHC to do reviews.

The other option, similar to the social finance fund that they're going to be rolling out here shortly, is taking a chunk of money and getting giving it to intermediaries. That's another option. We are an intermediary, and we move considerably more quickly than CMHC in getting behind projects, so—

• (1650)

The Chair: Thank you. That concludes your time.

Mr. Seth Asimakos: Okay. Thank you.

The Chair: Now we'll go to Mr. Ruff for six minutes.

Mr. Alex Ruff (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC): Thanks, Chair.

My thanks to the witnesses for coming today and for providing some crucial testimony. It's fascinating. Sometimes the testimony is contradictory, depending on the panel, but I think that's important. It just highlights how complicated our country is and how diverse our country is.

Here's what I wanted to hit at. Being an Ontario MP, a rural MP, and being a couple of hours north of the epicentre of Toronto—no digs at my colleagues who are from the more populated areas—I will say that the pandemic has really exacerbated movement into more rural communities. That has been one of the key factors in driving up house prices as people have moved out of the bigger cities.

For example, the average price in my rural community of Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound has now topped over \$760,000, which is an increase of over 23% in just the first three months of 2021. When you get down into some of the other types of properties, single family homes are a bit lower, at just over \$600,000, but are up 28% year over year. Townhouses or row units are almost \$500,000, which is an increase of 40%, and apartments are \$386,000, a 46% increase. The supply in my area is the lowest it has been in three decades, with 388 residential units available for sale at the end of March.

My point is just to highlight some of the challenges we're having. The things I'm hearing from not-for-profits, social housing developers and others are that for the not-for-profits, rezoning costs with municipalities are costing them hundreds of thousands of dollars. They've got the land and they've purchased it, but it's costing them hundreds of thousands of dollars to rezone. Also, just getting access to the loans, along with the approval timelines, and the access for both developing and just normal housing, and the regulations, etc., and so on....

I guess my first question for the Association of Municipalities of Ontario is two questions, because, based on your testimony here, you're talking about the use of the housing accelerator fund for everything from purchasing to resources, hiring, digitization and so on. I guess it's fair to say that you want the program to be as flexible as possible. My second question to you would be, from a rural versus urban percentage, what kind of access or percentage breakdown of the housing accelerator fund do you think...?

Mr. Brian Rosborough: I'll begin. Amber may have some additional comments as well.

I'll start with your second question, on the rural-urban divide. We certainly don't have a recommendation in terms of what that allocation needs to look like, but to be sure, this is an impact for rural, remote and northern communities as well. As the member said, the impact of COVID, remote working and people leaving large areas and going into more areas of the province has had a massive impact, really, throughout the province of Ontario. It is a market that we've seen escalate in some cases by 60% over the last couple of years. It will be important for this fund to be of service in those communities as well.

On the second part, municipalities are I think eager to accelerate approvals where possible, but there are many barriers in that situation as well, whether it's Nimbyism, a lack of planners who are available, workaround planning or provincial regulation. In some

cases, it's not the municipalities but the sister organizations—the conservation authorities, the Ministry of Transportation and Ontario government ministries—that are causing some of those delays as well.

I'll ask Amber if she has some supplementary comments there, but I'll leave it at that.

• (1655)

Ms. Amber Crawford (Senior Advisor, Association of Municipalities of Ontario): Thank you.

I would add that one of the housing principles we've put forward in our blueprint is that, to your point on flexibility, it's very critical that provincial and federal governments ensure municipalities have sufficient flexibility to achieve their own housing affordability in ways that meet their own local needs rather than using one-size-fits-all solutions. I'd add that.

Mr. Alex Ruff: Thank you for that.

I guess my next question could go to all three witnesses.

It's just to maybe build upon what the previous witness, Mr. Pomeroy, was speaking about. We've heard from other witnesses as well about social housing or affordable housing versus housing affordability and how that ties into the rental market as well. I'm interested, again, not in hard and fast percentages—maybe that's the wrong way to break it down—but on the importance of some of this access. Mr. Pomeroy was suggesting that maybe this isn't the right fund to be directing at social housing or affordable housing, but more just on housing affordability. Could we get comments?

We'll start with Mr. Braithwaite.

Mr. Michael Braithwaite: I agree with what Mr. Pomeroy is saying. This may not be the right fund for that. We do know that for people who need deeply affordable housing and people experiencing homelessness, the private market of rental supply is not cutting it right now, so we need to get more supply into the hands of social housing developers and to non-profits so it stays truly affordable—

The Chair: You have 10 seconds please.

Mr. Michael Braithwaite: —with a rent geared to income for a long time into the future. I would just add that.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Ruff.

Now we'll go to Mr. Long for six minutes.

Mr. Wayne Long (Saint John—Rothesay, Lib.): Good afternoon, Chair. Good afternoon, colleagues.

Good afternoon, Seth Asimakos. It's a pleasure that you're on the panel. Seth is from my riding of Saint John—Rothesay. It's wonderful that you're here.

First and foremost, I want to thank you, Seth, for your leadership and the work you do in our city, especially with the social enterprise hub and Kaléidoscope. It's transformation for the region, so keep doing what you're doing.

Obviously you're here today to talk about housing, and I'm here to talk to you, and we're here to talk to you to get your feedback on what we can do.

Before I start with my question, I take your point about CMHC. We need to be better; we need to be more reactive, and I agree that 12 to 16 to 18 months is too long.

I want to talk to you about land acquisition and how the housing accelerator fund could help. We certainly know that at times securing funding for land acquisition to build affordable housing is a challenge. We've come up with the housing accelerator fund of \$4 billion, but do you think that this is something that could help address that challenge?

Mr. Seth Asimakos: Certainly land acquisition, property acquisition, is the first step in order to get anything triggered in a development. We built the social enterprise hub, and the lots were maybe \$10,000 to \$15,000 apiece. We paid \$60,000, maybe. Well, I spent \$60,000 on one lot a month ago, so that's where things are at. The starting point is so different right now.

To me, land acquisition is important. I like what Michael was saying about a land trust. One way to enable property acquisition and the maintenance of the affordability of land is to put stuff into a land trust. The land bank is an innovation here as well that we've started, and I'm on the board. There's a unique relationship with CMHC that can fund some of the acquisition that the land bank will be making over the next decade or so.

I think any time you can get involved with land acquisition so that we diminish the cost of the starting point is really, really important, for sure.

• (1700)

Mr. Wayne Long: Thanks for that, Seth.

Chair, I'm going to share the balance of my time with MP Collins.

Mr. Chad Collins: Thanks, MP Long. Thanks Mr. Chair.

Through you to the AMO reps, there's obviously a common theme today and with past witnesses around the whole issue of property acquisition and land. I know that as part of AMO's submission to the province—and I read some of your documents online—you specifically wrote:

Protect lower rent market housing from “renoviction” and conversion through an acquisition program that empowers community land trusts, non-profits, cooperatives and municipal agencies to acquire and preserve existing lower rent market housing at risk of being bought by investment companies.

There's a whole lot wrapped into that statement there.

Following up on what Mr. Long asked, Mr. Ruff, I know that you have a very healthy rural community as part of the AMO membership. I know that on our side of the table, our government and our rural members are looking for land. I know that was one of their top priorities in a recent discussion that we had at a rural caucus.

Mr. Chair, through you to the AMO reps, the comment that you wrote to the province and to the federal government emphasizes land. Is that something that also fits well for your rural members, not just urban ones?

Mr. Brian Rosborough: I'll let Amber take that one.

Ms. Amber Crawford: Yes, and thank you for the question.

The short answer is yes, absolutely, and that was one of the recommendations to the federal government in terms of improving outcomes for people.

The more we can empower and provide flexibility for not only land trusts but also the provision of Crown land as well, which I know is particularly of interest to rural members, the more options we have on the table. I think our local communities will be able to assess the best way, and that's exactly why we've put that in as one of our recommendations on the blueprint to not only the federal government but also to the province.

Mr. Chad Collins: I have one quick follow-up question. Infrastructure—water, sewer and other infrastructure—that is required in order to build a residential development, irrespective of its size, is always a challenge for rural communities. Have you made recommendations regarding infrastructure? You know, it's all well and good to purchase a piece of land, but if you can't service it, you can't have people living there at any point in time. Can you comment on that very briefly in the couple of seconds we have left?

The Chair: You have 10 seconds.

Ms. Amber Crawford: Sure. We have made a recommendation about the numerous provincial directives, including the provincial policy statement and greenbelt plan as well as the regional growth plans, to deal with addressing that issue that you brought up. It's a very good one and is one of the barriers that rural communities have mentioned to us, so it's certainly part of the solution. It's a complex issue, though.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Crawford and Mr. Collins.

[*Translation*]

Go ahead, Ms. Chabot. You have six minutes.

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

I would also like to thank the witnesses for their contribution.

My questions are for the Association of Municipalities of Ontario representatives.

How do you think the federal government could improve the federal lands initiative?

Would it help municipalities to get more land?

[*English*]

Ms. Amber Crawford: I can start.

I think the issue you raise is a good one. It's talking about re-designing and expanding the federal lands initiative to provide surplus or underused Crown lands to municipal governments, contingent on building affordable or "missing middle" housing options. That's certainly consistent with what the Federation of Canadian Municipalities has offered.

Brian, do you want to jump in as well?

Mr. Brian Rosborough: No, I think that's great, Amber. Thank you.

• (1705)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Louise Chabot: In your opening statement, you talked about a more flexible model, one that simultaneously takes into account the private sector, not-for-profit organizations and a wide range of partners—whom we believe are essential to the approach—and affordable housing.

Affordable housing has been defined in a number of ways. According to Statistics Canada's website, "[a] household in core housing need is one whose dwelling is considered unsuitable, inadequate or unaffordable and whose income levels are such that they could not afford...housing". In fact, 1.7 million households were in core housing need, according to the 2016 census data.

Do you think the housing accelerator fund will, in part, help solve that problem?

If not, how can it address the problem?

[*English*]

Mr. Brian Rosborough: I'll begin and I'll ask Amber to chime in.

I don't think the fund is going to solve the problem, but it can certainly make very important contributions. We see the role of the not-for-profit sector and the co-operative housing sector as being absolutely essential to affordability, but you also raise an interesting point, which is that looking at questions of housing affordability without looking at incomes is really only one side of the story.

We also have work to do in terms of affordability and in terms of incomes of Canadians who are looking to get into the housing market, either the rental or the purchasing market, so this program needs to fit into a much broader context that includes some of those initiatives as well.

Ms. Amber Crawford: I'll add something about the need for a rental housing strategy. That's certainly part of it. We've spoken about supply, but previous presenters have done a great job of suggesting that it is two sides of the same coin, so we need to also look at demand and make sure that for everyone in our complete community, there's a mix of tenures, mixes, types, etc.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Louise Chabot: My next question is for any or all of the three organizations represented.

Should building affordable housing units be prioritized under the new fund?

The question is for the representatives of all three organizations.

From what I've heard, I believe two of the organizations said yes. It's even necessary to build sustainability into the affordable housing supply. It's about not just the supply, but also the demand.

I'd be happy to hear from whoever wants to answer the question.

I have two minutes left, so the chair will let you know when you're out of time.

[*English*]

Mr. Brian Rosborough: I'll simply add that affordable housing must be part of the equation. The extent to which this fund can assist with deep affordability is something that should be seriously considered.

In Ontario, municipalities are keenly incited to increase the amount of affordable housing available, because when housing becomes unaffordable, as our other witnesses will tell you, the result is increased homelessness. In the province of Ontario at least, that's a municipal responsibility. Municipalities are concerned with housing at all ends of the market, and one affects the other. As I said, they're motivated to address this problem, and this fund can be extremely helpful to municipalities of all sizes as we look ahead to doing that.

The Chair: Who's taking the last 15 seconds?

Mr. Seth Asimakos: I can just say that in New Brunswick, the municipalities don't really have an impact. In Saint John, for instance, the municipality doesn't have an impact on housing so much, so that's one thing, but I think there has to be a discussion on a bigger scale of equity caps in terms of how much a property can actually appreciate in value. Housing shouldn't be a commodity and it shouldn't be a quick way to get rich. That's what's happening right now.

In the rural area, all through the province, it's happening. We can talk about rent caps, but really an equity cap is the only way we're going to prevent this from continuing. That's a huge discussion. This is not the place that's going to solve it, that's for sure.

• (1710)

The Chair: Thank you.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Louise Chabot: We could bring forward another motion to discuss that issue.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you, Madam Chabot.

Madam Zarrillo is next, for six minutes.

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo: Thank you.

I'd be supportive of Madam Chabot's motion.

I wanted to thank the witnesses today. It's incredible testimony, and so important.

I want to revisit the CMHC, and I'm going to start by just reiterating the goals and the aims, which are "to remove barriers and help municipalities build housing more quickly in an ambitious and innovative manner".

Mr. Asimakos, you mentioned CMHC, and I've heard this before, so I'd like to hear your experience. I've had experience of a project having waited 12 or 18 months to hear back that there will be a partnership. Meanwhile, nothing can happen at the municipal level.

I'm going to ask, Mr. Asimakos, if you could share other barriers, including what's happening at CMHC, and any others.

I'm going to take a moment to mention that I've heard the word "Nimbyism" a couple of times today. Before you speak, Mr. Asimakos, I have to make a statement about that. It isn't an argument, and I'm sure there are many in this room who would agree. Mayors and councils have the freedom to vote for rezoning at any point in time. It's due only to a lack of courage that they continue to hide behind this Nimbyism, so I just want folks to know that I don't buy into the argument of Nimbyism, because the NIMBYs don't have the gavel.

Mr. Asimakos, could you just tell me what your experiences are with CMHC?

Mr. Seth Asimakos: I'll address what you just finished there. It's really important for municipalities to have a very strong urban plan or rural plan or what have you, one that talks about revitalization and the mixed development that's needed in neighbourhoods. We do have that in Saint John. That only happens when council actually goes in that direction, and we have a very strong council that's in favour of mixed uses and so on.

The experience with CMHC is on two fronts. One is our own projects that go through. I just looked at our application that went in, and the timelines on everything were itemized in the return email. It was crazy: It was 14 days to review this little application, then another 30 days, another 60 days, and another 60 days. When you add that up, it's almost six months to know whether you're going to have money flowing or not. Meanwhile, if I go to the credit union and say, "Here's our plan with financials and everything", it can turn something around within three weeks.

I don't know what the issue is and why it takes that long. For us in financing developments, if it comes to us really well put together and we work with existing developers, it shouldn't take that long. It just shouldn't. That's my experience. In financing others, we've seen organizations go into the process, and because it's such a volatile market in the supply chain, on pricing and on everything, quotes at the building store for supplies are limited to seven days now, and as far as contractors go, it's getting to be under 30 days. When something takes so long and you have to go back and get more quotes...These are quotes that are quantity surveys at a high level that don't get turned around that quickly. There's an expense to that. Something has to be done there. Those are my experiences.

I'd like to mention a couple of other things that I wasn't able to mention before. With forgivable loans, there's a lock on equity, so in a non-profit you are locked out of leveraging that equity for other financing for up to 20 years. If you're a housing developer in the non-profit sector, your whole purpose is to actually develop housing, so why put a lock on that? I just don't understand that. That should be taken off. That would free up a lot more equity to leverage financing.

The other thing is subsidies on renovations. Social development, which basically flows the money from the feds through the province, did increase its subsidy on new builds, but the subsidy on renos did not increase. That has to change. When you're talking about maintaining existing housing, well, it's about renos. It think it's \$24,000 a unit, and there's nothing right now.

• (1715)

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo: That's another motion we should put forward to look at that.

Mr. Braithwaite, you talked about innovation. Thank you for those examples. They were amazing. It's part of this ask. They're asking for innovation. I wanted to talk to you specifically about your experiences with CMHC, and also about persons with disabilities and universal design. What kind of innovation are you seeing there to get these units and homes built for persons with disabilities?

The Chair: You have 20 seconds.

Mr. Michael Braithwaite: One of the things that we haven't talked about is partnerships. We say innovation, and it's groups like my organization, Blue Door, working with groups like Community Living in York Region to make sure we're serving them and that we're listening to those lived experts, people with lived experience, about what their needs are, especially when it comes to people living with disabilities.

When we work with them, we're looking at the purchase or design of new properties, and they're telling us about their lived experience. We're able to work with them and then work with architects to make sure that not only are we meeting the standards of accessibility but that we're also actually meeting the needs of the people who are going to be living in those units moving forward.

With CMHC—

The Chair: I'm sorry, Mr. Braithwaite; your time is up.

Thank you, Ms. Zarrillo.

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Could I ask if Mr. Braithwaite would mind doing a written submission on the experiences with CMHC and some other barriers in financing?

Thank you.

The Chair: Mr. Braithwaite, would you submit anything you may have in writing to the committee chair?

We'll now move to Mr. Liepert for five minutes and then Mr. Van Bynen for five minutes as well. That will conclude our questioning, because I do need some time for committee business.

Mr. Liepert, you have five minutes.

Mr. Ron Liepert (Calgary Signal Hill, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you to the guests, not only today, but throughout this study that we're doing on housing.

I can't help but sit here listening and thinking that if this were a weekly television show, it would be called "The Blame Game". Most of our witnesses have been from central Canada. I happen to represent a riding in Calgary, Alberta. I think many of the things I've heard from many of the witnesses have been the same kinds of things that I hear about in Alberta. Municipalities are blamed for delays by developers. Municipalities then turn around and blame the province and say that it's not municipalities holding things up, but various departments of government.

We tie all of that in to the fact that we have a federal government that for six or seven years has been spending a lot of money and talking a lot about how much money they've been spending on housing, but we have had really no concrete evidence of what has been accomplished. It's one thing to say how much money you spend; it's another thing to talk about results. We really have seen no verified results. Ministers are picking numbers out of the air, but don't have any backup as to where those numbers come from.

I guess I'm a little bit where Mr. Pomeroy was in the first session today.

The first question we should be asking ourselves is this: Is this acceleration fund even required? It seems to me like our issue is not necessarily about more money. It's a question of not being able to get through all of the various rules and regulations to actually have the money at the end of the day get to where it needs to go.

I would throw the question out there and say that I really like the idea of Mr. Pomeroy, which was that we should be studying whether this fund is even required. What are some other things we could be doing to get rid of the problems that seem to be pretty prevalent in this industry, literally, across the country?

I throw that out to any one of the guests and ask them to comment on it.

• (1720)

Mr. Seth Asimakos: I'll comment.

As far as the municipality goes, I think our municipality is doing what it can within the framework it has.

When the money comes down from the feds into the provincial government, they make decisions. There is opportunity to use some levers there, but I would definitely never say that less money is needed to create affordable housing in this country.

I do think that the process definitely has to speed up. They talk about a rapid housing initiative, but why don't we make the current process rapid? That would be ideal.

Mr. Ron Liepert: I happen to agree with you, sir.

Are we getting bang for our buck? At the end of the day, let's remember that these are taxpayer dollars we're talking about here. If various rules, regulations and process slowdowns are eating up a large percentage of the money that's going out the door, that's what we have to look at first, rather than pushing more money out the door.

Mr. Brian Rosborough: I'll just add that we're talking about a very complex array of arrangements regarding housing from coast to coast to coast, with a lot of players. Some are in the public interest and some are in the private interest. We've had a major shift in the market relating to the fact that people now see housing as an investment instrument rather than a place to live. We've had low interest rates that have artificially inflated the housing market. We've had some rent controls in the past that have positive and negative impacts.

We have a real crisis on our hands. I think we're looking at all of the tools that may be available to help address it. Some of these are systemic questions around provincial regulation and municipal actions. Anything the federal government can do to help will be welcome.

The rapid housing initiative is an example of very effective federal program that saved lives in this province during COVID. I think we have an opportunity here with this fund to put together an array of supports that help deepen affordability, help protect existing rental stock and help municipalities do a better job of fulfilling their responsibility in the public interest.

The Chair: You have 10 seconds.

Mr. Brian Rosborough: Perhaps we even need to spend some money helping the public understand why intensification is good, why provincial regulations are helpful, and why it is that we need complete communities and why there are complex discussions around that.

Nobody wants to reduce the supply of housing. Everybody wants it increased for different reasons. Not everybody wants the price of housing to go down.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Rosborough.

You have gone over your time, Mr. Liepert. Thank you.

Now we go to Mr. Van Bynen to finish, for five minutes.

Mr. Tony Van Bynen: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'd like to thank all of our witnesses for providing us with the benefit of their insights.

I'd like to direct my question to Mr. Braithwaite.

You talked about a couple of your projects. My concern with any investment that the federal government or any level of government makes is sustainability. You've had a couple of projects. I'm wondering if you could share with us some examples of what the debt-to-equity ratio would be so that it's sustainable while being deeply affordable. How much equity would be needed in a unit?

Michael.

Mr. Michael Braithwaite: I'm going to talk about Parks Canada. I mentioned that there are 44 vacant homes. We talk about sustainability over time. We were able, through various government programs, to raise the capital to take one of those vacant homes. Parks Canada didn't have the capital to do so. Not only did we invest the money in the home to create a duplex for two families—I think they were two three-bedroom homes—it's like paying your rent in advance. Now we've created 30 years of affordable housing. There's no debt on that. We can operate it. It's sustainable and easy. There are not a lot of operational costs attached to that.

The other piece to that is that the people who did the work on the home are part of a construction social enterprise. You're actually preventing youth from falling into homelessness because they're doing the work there. They're launched in the trades where they make a living wage and have meaningful work. There are 43 more of those homes sitting vacant with land available. It's things like that.

It is tough when you talk about the debt-ratio piece. We're looking at a small house that has a big piece of land in Newmarket. We want to work with Habitat for Humanity to do a mixed kind of rental and ownership model, but through the current programs offered at CMHC, it's really hard to get that mix to make it affordable for us as a non-profit over the long term and to balance that out. The more rent-geared-to-income units we offer, the more unaffordable it becomes. You want to put some market in there. To truly make all of those units below market rent or rent geared to income we'd need a heck of a lot more support than some of the CMHC programs are providing at this moment. It takes innovation and different partnerships.

• (1725)

Mr. Tony Van Bynen: I have two other questions that I'd like to direct towards AMO.

We heard some testimony from a municipal officer a couple of weeks ago. They said there should be no changes and that the efficiency of the housing development process is as good as it gets. Has AMO at any time undertaken an end-to-end study that would talk about what we need to do, such as initiating changes to the building code? Should we be funding additional staff for processing, or should we fund an end-to-end process review to streamline the development process?

Have there been any studies that this committee could have a look at that point to the efficiency of the development process or the time consumed in the development process, or any types of studies that have reduced the number of things required and that could expedite the process? Is there a study that AMO can provide us with?

Ms. Amber Crawford: The short answer is that a few years ago we did streamline the development process document, which I'm more than happy to share. That started the conversation. I'll also include some case studies from some municipalities that have done some great work at streamlining. I won't list them, but there are probably about four or five of them in that document that also illustrate exactly what you're speaking about.

Continuous improvement is something that AMO has definitely looked at. We work with different staff organizations, from planners

to building officials. We've certainly been on files such as building code harmonization, etc. We take a holistic approach.

Mr. Tony Van Bynen: I hate to interrupt you, but I understand the philosophy. The next question is about the disbursement of funds. I'm aware that AMO was managing the gas tax on a population base. There's the suggestion that the funding should go directly to municipalities either through FCM or AMO, or be on a population basis as opposed to a project basis. What are your suggestions?

The Chair: Make it as short answer, please.

Mr. Brian Rosborough: That requires the wisdom of Solomon and we don't have a recommendation for a particular allocation formula. We do want to suggest that it's important that this be available to all types of municipalities, including northern, rural, and large urban ones, and not be limited to one type. We've seen some progress on that. You're right, we do deliver the Canada community-building fund on the behalf of the Government of Canada. We do that effectively. That's on a per capita basis as it's distributed nationally. This is a little more complex. I think we need to understand what the outcomes of the program are to know for sure how it should be allocated. We are certainly prepared to engage in further discussions on that as the work of the committee proceeds.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Rosborough.

The time has gone well over, Mr. Van Bynen.

I will suspend for a few minutes while the witnesses leave. We need a few minutes for committee business.

The witnesses have left, so we will move to committee business for a few minutes.

We need to discuss the upcoming meeting that is scheduled for next week as per the motion that was adopted on Monday, which referenced the Standing Committee on Finance adopting their motion inviting HUMA to consider the subject matter of part 5, divisions 26, 27, 29 and 32 of Bill C-19. We thought today would we would be dealing with that, but we did not have any witnesses.

• (1730)

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie: Did we really?

I don't think so, but anyway, continue.

What do we have for next week?

The Chair: It was one of today's, but it's totally for the committee to commit.

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie: I don't really think we thought it was going to happen, but let's see what's on deck for next week, please.

The Chair: Currently, we have confirmation for a meeting on Tuesday from 2:30 to 4:30, and we just received confirmation for a meeting for Thursday from 11 to 1.

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie: Are those all eastern standard time?

The Chair: Yes, EST.

We have witnesses who have been submitted. The clerk has received witnesses from the following.

Clerk, can you speak to that witness list?

Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada (Hochelaga, Lib.): No, go ahead, I'll go afterwards.

The Clerk of the Committee (Ms. Danielle Widmer): I have received witnesses from the Conservative Party and the Bloc, and the Liberals have submitted witnesses as well. I will be reaching out. It's just a matter of whether we have two meetings and whether we would want witnesses for both those meetings with both panels, that is, two panels of witnesses? It's up to the committee to decide how you would like to proceed with the witnesses.

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo: I'm sorry, Mr. Chair, I can't hear the clerk at all.

The Clerk: I'll repeat what I said. I received witness lists from all parties. We have two meetings scheduled for next week—for the Tuesday afternoon and the Thursday morning time slots. I'm looking for direction on whether the committee would like to invite witnesses for both of those meetings—there are enough witnesses for both of those meetings—or if the committee would like to have one meeting with two panels on the Monday, and maybe half a panel on Tuesday.

Monday is a holiday, and we could have two panels on the Tuesday, and maybe one panel on the Thursday if they want to discuss recommendations, it's up to the committee how they want to proceed.

The Chair: We must have the recommendations and suggested amendments by letter in both official languages to FINA no later than 4 p.m. on Friday.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada: I have two comments.

First, I think the ideal thing would be to ask the witnesses to appear either Tuesday or Thursday, in case they aren't available one of the days. That would give them more leeway.

Second, the motion that was adopted referred to three meetings, but now I realize that there will actually be just two. Does that mean the committee has to adopt a new motion? That's what I'm wondering. Oh, I'm being told that it's not necessary.

In that case, I know that we have to prepare a letter to send to the Standing Committee on Finance on Thursday, so we'll need to set aside an hour for that,

[*English*]

because we have to submit it by Friday.

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie: Also, do we not have to fit the clause-by-clause in in those two meetings as well? Is that not accurate?

The Clerk: There is no clause-by-clause. We're doing a subject matter review of Bill C-19, and based on the letter, it's only recommendations that we're providing to the finance committee.

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie: Okay.

The Clerk: We're giving broad recommendations. These might be recommendations based on the testimony we heard, and maybe

we do a summary of the testimony, or maybe it is suggestions on how to proceed on that, but we are combining those into a single package in a letter to be given to FINA by four o'clock on Friday in both official languages.

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie: Okay, my apologies. My understanding from Monday's meeting was that we were required to do clause-by-clause.

I'm sorry, Clerk, you were asking if we wanted three meetings, rather than the two we have scheduled, or are you saying we have those two, let's work with what we have?

The Chair: It was based on the availability of House of Commons services. At first, they could only confirm one on Tuesday, and we got confirmation shortly of availability for Thursday between 11 and 1. That's what we have now. The committee controls itself.

Monday is a holiday. On Friday, the report, whatever it is, comes in from the—

• (1735)

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie: I think two meetings would be reasonable. I think it would be unreasonable to ask for three meetings during a break week.

Again, this rests on the government. Again, who cares. They don't care that we were given such a tight timeline to turn this around. I think two meetings in a break week—

The Chair: It was the FINA committee that referred it to this committee.

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie: That's correct, but nonetheless, it's the timeline set by the government.

The Chair: Actually, it was the opposition that referred it.

Mr. Liepert has had his hand up for a while. Then, it's Madame Zarrillo and Madame Ferrada.

Mr. Liepert, please go ahead.

Mr. Ron Liepert: I thought when we passed the motion, part of the motion was to request ministers to attend these meetings. Have we been turned down by all the ministers we asked for?

The Chair: The motion only identified two, and we have no confirmation as of now.

Mr. Ron Liepert: You're saying that's still a possibility. We have not been told that they will not attend. Is that fair?

The Chair: That's correct. We have had no confirmation, and we need to make decisions based on what we have available for next Tuesday's meeting, which is now confirmed.

Mr. Ron Liepert: Could I suggest that we make one more request of these ministers—

The Chair: We certainly can.

Mr. Ron Liepert: —before we lock in the other witnesses?

The Chair: Well, the meeting will adjourn in a while, and I would suggest that we need to firm up the schedule on what we have available for Tuesday.

I have to go to Madame Zarrillo, and then Madame Ferrada, Mr. Ruff and Madame Chabot.

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Could we get a reading of the motion that was passed, or have it on screen?

The Chair: I'll have the clerk read it into the record.

The Clerk: Are you referring to the motion regarding the ministers, Ms. Zarrillo?

The Chair: The full motion.

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo: Yes, please, the motion that was passed at the last committee.

The Clerk: The first was:

That, in accordance with the request of the Standing Committee on Finance, the committee hold three meetings prior to Friday, May 27, 2022, to consider the subject matter of Part 5, Divisions 26, 27, 29 and 32 of Bill C-19....

The second motion was related to the ministers. It was agreed as follows:

That the Minister of Labour and the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion be invited to appear before the committee in the context of the subject matter of Part 5, Divisions 26, 27, 29 and 32 of Bill C-19....

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo: Thank you so much. I just wanted to understand whether we were looking exclusively for the ministers.

I want to make a comment for the record that I did not submit any witnesses. I think it was stated earlier that all parties submitted witnesses. I just want to make it clear that I haven't submitted any witnesses outside of that. I didn't submit for the ministers, because I felt it was part of the motion.

Thank you very much.

The Chair: I have Madame Ferrada, then Mr. Ruff and Madame Chabot, and then Mr. Liepert has his hand up.

[Translation]

Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

After hearing all the comments, I would like to put forward a motion to ensure that we will be able to provide the Standing Committee on Finance with a document and that the department has enough time to work on the study.

I'll have the motion sent out to everyone. It reads as follows:

That, pursuant to the motion adopted by the Standing Committee on Finance on Thursday, May 12, 2022, inviting the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities to study the subject matter of the Part 5, Divisions 26, 27, 29 and 32 of Bill C-19, and taking into consideration the uncertainty of the availability of the House of Commons services during the week of May 24, 2022:

(a) the committee invite relevant officials from the Department of Employment and Social Development for one hour studying Part 5, Divisions 26, 27, 29 and 32 of Bill C-19;

(b) during the second hour of that same meeting, the committee provide drafting instructions for a letter to the Chair of the Standing Committee on Finance, containing recommendations in relation to the provisions studied by the committee.

The reason for the motion is to ensure that we hold not only two meetings, but also a two-hour meeting. If I understand correctly, the meeting will take place next Thursday.

• (1740)

[English]

The Chair: We have a motion on the floor.

Is there discussion on the motion?

Oh, sorry, Madam Kusie. Go ahead.

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie: No worries.

Soraya, you wrote that beautifully. Is it available in both official languages, please, so that I can have all of my colleagues look at it?

The Chair: Madame Chabot, are there interpretation issues?

[Translation]

Ms. Louise Chabot: I haven't received the motion yet, but I can still comment.

As I understand it, we would hold only one meeting, taking place on Thursday, instead of three meetings. I am completely opposed to that.

I was in favour of hearing from witnesses over two days. It is now almost six o'clock on Thursday. We provided the list of five witnesses whom we would like to invite, but we don't know whether all of them will be able to appear. If we want to make sure we can hear from them, we need two days to do it. I think the department officials will certainly be able to appear before the committee.

The committee should invite the witnesses to appear over two days. We talked about inviting the ministers over three days. I propose that we invite them over two days, because it will be tough to have them over three days. When the ministers appear, they are joined by department officials.

No one should be expected to do the impossible, but the witnesses should be a priority.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you.

Ms. Kusie, go ahead on the motion that's currently on the floor.

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie: Can we have it written and in both official languages, please?

The Chair: I have now been advised that it has been circulated in both languages.

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie: Okay.

The Chair: The motion is in order. It's under discussion on the floor.

Go ahead, Mr. Ruff.

Mr. Alex Ruff: I'm just looking at it here. I mean, we have confirmation, so the motion is already about availability. We do know that we have the two meetings. I get the witnesses. I get that we still haven't heard back from the ministers.

My proposal is that we book the witnesses for Tuesday and maybe the first half of Thursday, and then we take the second hour just to go through and finalize our report. That would give the clerk and the team enough time to get the report drafted and emailed out to everybody. If there's no push-back, it can be turned in by 4 p.m. on Friday.

I disagree with the motion.

The Chair: The motion is on the floor. If it is not amended, we'll call for a vote on the motion that's currently before the committee.

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie: I need a moment—

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo: I'm sorry, Mr. Chair. Could I have one question?

The Chair: Yes, you can.

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo: On the initial motion when we were asking for the ministers to come, did I hear that the support staff would accompany the ministers? Is that usually the case?

The Chair: No, I'm not aware of that.

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo: Okay, so we would have needed to have extra time for the ministers and then extra time for support staff or for the staff who are running the organization. Is that right?

The Chair: They could accompany the minister. It has occurred before.

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo: Thank you.

The Chair: Go ahead, Madame Ferrada.

[Translation]

Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada: Mr. Chair, if no one else has their hand up to speak, I would ask that we go ahead and vote on the motion.

[English]

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie: No. Okay, clarify what this is for me.

It says, "Pursuant to the motion adopted at the Standing committee on Finance...inviting the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities to study the subject matter of the Part 5, divisions 26, 27, 29 and 32 of the Bill C-19, and taking into consideration of the uncertainty of the availability of the House of Commons services.... The Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities hear from relevant officials from the department of Labour...."

The second hour of that meeting.... I don't understand the point of this motion. How is this different? We voted for two meetings, and this just references one meeting. You just want one meeting. That is what this is saying.

• (1745)

Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada: Yes. It's a meeting on Thursday.

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie: It's one meeting rather than two.

Okay, that's clear. I was kind of getting that idea, but I wasn't entirely clear that it was just one meeting.

We had said three in the original motion, and I just said that two were okay. I think one is unacceptable at this point. Two is a rea-

sonable compromise between the three that were passed in the original motion and the one that Ms. Martinez Ferrada is suggesting here today.

It's just disappointing that we don't get the time that these pieces of legislation deserve, especially since they have such significant impacts on employment insurance, the tribunal process and the labour code, etc.

I thought I understood that, but now I understand completely. I think two is a reasonable compromise, Chair. Thank you. We can go to the vote.

The Chair: Mr. Liepert has his hand up, and then we'll go to a vote on the motion of Madame Ferrada.

Mr. Liepert, do you have your hand up?

Mr. Ron Liepert: Yes, I do. I want to ask a quick question.

If I understand this motion correctly, it would mean we would have no witnesses testify before this committee. We would hear from department officials and then write a recommendation based on department officials' testimony.

I'm not even sure why we're bothering if we're only going to do one meeting and have department officials who never tell us anything worthwhile anyway. This is just another attempt by the Liberals to not have any public input. There's no sense in even having the one meeting, in my view, if we're not going to have a minimum of two with some witnesses.

The Chair: Madame Zarrillo, go ahead on the motion currently on the floor.

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I want to understand which part of this the finance committee is going to be looking at, because the finance committee said that they were also going to be studying these sections. It's their responsibility, so I want to understand what burden falls on that committee as well, please.

The Chair: The committee has the responsibility for clause-by-clause discussion. They're the only ones who can actually make changes or recommendations. We're simply going to review it and pass on comments.

I have Madame Chabot and then Mr. Long.

[Translation]

Ms. Louise Chabot: I want to comment on the discussion around who is supposed to study which parts of the bill.

The Standing Committee on Finance asked a number of committees, including ours, to study parts of Bill C-19. We were asked to study the part on the employment insurance system, which is within our purview because it falls under the responsibility of the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion.

The motion we adopted says that we are supposed to spend three meetings studying that part of the bill if possible, subject to everyone's availability. In addition, we are supposed to invite the two ministers. Today, we are being told that we have to go down to two meetings. That was settled. We don't know whether the ministers are going to appear, but at least we have a list of proposed witnesses.

Furthermore, I don't think we should avoid holding meetings where witnesses could express concerns over certain provisions in the bill. I don't want to hear what department officials think, because it's futile. All they are going to tell us is why the bill is drafted the way it is. I want to hear from witnesses who have concerns about the provisions. If we go down to a single meeting without witnesses on Thursday, we are shirking our duty, which we agreed to fulfill.

As a compromise, I am willing to hold two meetings. I won't insist that we hold three, because that would not make sense.

If the ministers aren't able to come, it's no big deal. We should prioritize the witnesses.

• (1750)

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you, Madame Chabot.

Mr. Long is next.

Mr. Wayne Long: Thanks, Mr. Chair.

I want to get a few points on the record. This was sent to us from the finance committee. It's not our report, number one, and we don't do clause-by-clause consideration; we don't do anything with that. We just give some recommendations.

How many committees are involved with this? We are, and justice, industry and immigration. This was sent to us and, yes, the Liberal MPs on finance agreed.... It is in our laps. We have a short timeline, we haven't heard back from the minister about whether she can even come, and we have a holiday on Monday. The fact is that we can get one good day in and give some recommendations.

Let's be clear again: This isn't our report. FINA is not even compelled to accept or implement any of our suggestions. Let's just take one day to review this, get our heads around it, develop recommendations and send them back to FINA.

I'll say it again: This isn't our report.

The Chair: I want us to be conscious of the clock. It's six o'clock. If we continue, there will be no meeting next week. We have to come to a decision.

Go ahead, Madam Zarrillo.

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo: I'll be really fast, then.

On all the motions that are out there, my expectation was that the ministers were going to come, but it doesn't look like they are. What I'm hearing from many of my committee colleagues is that they want to hear from witnesses and they don't see value in having public servants come to this committee.

Is there an opportunity to have one day for the witnesses who have been proposed by some of the parties around this table? That is my question.

The Chair: Go ahead, Madame Chabot.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Louise Chabot: I'll speak to the crux of the issue. We came to an agreement last week. I realize that it would suit the members across the way if we didn't hold any more meetings. They weren't exactly crazy about the idea last week, and that's still the case today.

To answer the honourable member's question, I think we could hear from witnesses on Tuesday and do what Ms. Martinez Ferrada is suggesting on Thursday.

I think it's possible because we have the availability for two meetings. Now we are being asked to limit the study to one meeting without witnesses. I think it's possible to hold one meeting and that it comes down to political will.

[*English*]

Mr. Ron Liepert: I call the vote, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: There is a motion on the floor.

Mr. Clerk, call a recorded vote.

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie: No. I'm still on the list to talk.

The Chair: No. There was a call for a vote.

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie: I was on the list to talk before the vote was called.

The Chair: Go ahead, Ms. Kusie.

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie: Ms. Zarrillo, what do you think? How many meetings do you think there should be next week?

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo: I'm sorry, Mr. Chair, but I don't know if the usual way of doing committee is by asking each other questions on that.

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie: Okay, then it's pretty clear to me how many....

There is currently a motion that has been passed, which is that there will be three meetings next week and that there are witnesses. That's where things are right now.

The way I see it, then, is that we should have three meetings next week. We have submitted witnesses' names. We have submitted enough names to last through all three meetings. I think we should contact those witnesses and have them come to the three meetings. That is the motion that was passed.

My colleague Mr. Liepert has already said that the minister should be asked again. They should all be contacted and they should be asked again.

Mr. Long has tried to indicate that this is a study for the finance committee, that it's finance that is responsible for this. In fact, they have charged our committee with thoroughly reviewing these items. I said specifically on Monday what those four things are. They are EI, the EI appeal board, collective agreements.... These are things that have significant impacts on all of our ridings, and it's the budget. Of course the budget is going to be dispensed to a number of different committees to evaluate all sorts of different parts of it. This is nothing new. I would expect this of the government, assigning other parts of the bill to other committees.

As I said, we have a motion that has passed for three meetings next week. We have witnesses who will be there, so we should go ahead with those three meetings.

I tried in good faith to lower it to two meetings. This idea was rejected, and instead one meeting was put forward. My Bloc colleague here was not happy that there was only one meeting suggested. As she indicated, there would therefore not be any witnesses from the public or from Quebec, which includes the public, or other third party stakeholders. They will not have the ability to present this—

• (1755)

The Chair: Madame Kusie—

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie: I'm not done, Mr. Chair

The Chair: I have to suspend at 6:00 p.m. to do a staff change, and then we'll resume until it comes to a conclusion.

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie: Okay.

The Chair: We're suspended.

• (1755)

(Pause)

• (1810)

The Chair: Members, the committee is back in session. We may have time constraints.

Mrs. Kusie had the floor when I suspended.

Mrs. Kusie, you were speaking on the motion.

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie: As I was saying, we were going to have three meetings, and I thought moving it down to two meetings was a reasonable option. I think two is the reasonable compromise between one and three.

I don't know why we can't have a compromise, and as I said, if I had the option, I would actually prefer to probably have four meetings, one for each part of the section. I don't think it's unreasonable at all to expect that. These are all very important parts of the budget.

I don't buy the idea that the finance committee has this and that as a result we just say that it's not a big deal. They wouldn't have referred it to us if they didn't want us to do a thorough examination. Really, when we're thinking about four hours out of the next week, it's a good compromise between the six hours we were looking at originally and the two hours that have been proposed.

Mr. Chair, it's the principle of it. We made a decision on Monday that we all committed to three meetings and the ministers. I'm not

surprised the ministers aren't here. There were too many outs, and they were taken, and now this additional out is being taken in going to one meeting. I'm not sure if the government thought that only one meeting was going to be available or that no meetings were going to be available, but lo and behold, they had space for two meetings, and as a result of that, we are seeing this occurring.

It's the principle of it. We voted on those motions in good faith and we passed those motions in good faith, and now we have the government being backed by the NDP, it would seem. It's usually the non-speaking committee member indicating support of the government position, which is understandable, considering the agreement the two parties made, and it's usually my expectation, very honestly. It's just disingenuous and it's unfortunate, because I think that two meetings are really an acceptable alternative to the three meetings that I had originally suggested.

We're getting into this late period of the parliamentary season when we have to go through all of these processes, which really are just like a delay or a push-through, with democracy being shut down and no opportunity to speak, no opportunity to examine all of the information. That is very disappointing. It's certainly not what our constituents expect of us. It's just disappointing that we're at this point, and I don't know why we just can't have two meetings.

• (1815)

It's an important opportunity to have the witnesses we put forward show up to this committee and give their testimony. We put witnesses forward, and in fact I think the Bloc put witnesses forward, did you not, Louise? I believe the Bloc put witnesses forward.

It's very interesting that the NDP did not put witnesses forward. I'm not sure if they didn't recognize they had to do that or if they also thought perhaps there wouldn't be any meetings next week, but that's simply not the case, as we're seeing.

As well, I was even thinking sincerely about the clause-by-clause study, which I now understand we no longer have to do. I was just mentally preparing for it, because I know that when we went through Bill C-3, I wasn't really given the courtesy of being able to read line by line to truly understand it, which again is something I think my constituents expect of me. I thought it was just disappointing and ungracious not to allow the opportunity to do that.

Once again, given the way we see patterns emerging in this committee and as we see them across the House, and given the behaviour we can expect from different groups and different individuals, I was also preparing for the clause-by-clause study. I wanted to really have a good understanding of that, since I didn't expect we would have the time or that I would be given the consideration to read every single word.

As well, I know that last time Ms. Zarrillo was subbed in by Mr. Boulterice. When I saw him in the House this week, I thought, yes, that's probably going to happen again. It's probably going to be Mr. Boulterice, as the labour critic, who steps into the role again for the review, especially since there is a part pertinent to the Canada Labour Code. We will see him here again, and understandably so, because it takes time to familiarize yourself with these processes, as I've come to learn in my five years here. I must say that I'm really only getting the hang of it after all this time.

I know my colleague Mr. Lobb has much more experience in reviewing these bills. I would just like to take a moment to congratulate him on the passing of his bill yesterday, at a time when the opposition parties worked together in an effort to provide good legislation and a thorough review for Canadians, but that definitely was something I was expecting in the clause-by-clause consideration.

As for the witnesses, as I mentioned, I thought we could potentially have one meeting on each of the divisions. Those divisions, again, are 26, 27, 29 and 32, and we could have witnesses on each of them, because each is definitely significant within the budget.

Regarding the Employment Insurance Act, I went to the employment insurance consultation presentation, and I was the only parliamentarian there, other than your parliamentary secretary, Irek, whom I really like. He is a really nice guy. I was very impressed by the comprehensiveness of the presentation that was made. I think even the information we saw there would be relevant to this, but my more important point is that this is the kind of information we could expect to see—

• (1820)

Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada: Chair, on a point of order, I want to make sure that we have time with the resources right now. How long do we have the interpreters?

The Chair: We will lose them shortly.

Madame Clerk...?

Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada: We will lose them shortly.

A voice: Is that at 6:30 shortly?

The Clerk: I am waiting for confirmation. We are checking. There are two other committees that were scheduled to sit this evening. I think there are discussions among the whips about where the service will be allocated. I am waiting for a response, but at this point in time it's uncertain.

Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada: Okay. I just want to make sure we're talking this out in a good manner and not wasting everybody's time, especially the interpreters' time, which is very precious.

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie: May I continue?

The Chair: You certainly can.

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie: Thank you.

As I was saying, that was an incredibly comprehensive review.

Perhaps I can share my two critiques here, even though they will not go into the testimony of the review of this bill. The first one was that there was no timeline, despite the comprehensive evaluation of the EI consultation.

The second part was that there was no idea as to how the EI benefit would fit into the entire suite of benefits that the Canadian government provides. Again, I think this is something that Canadians would be interested in.

The part on the benefits related to employment is particularly ironic for this committee, because this was part of the Bill C-3 discussion, and again I think one reason Monsieur Boulterice was brought into this discussion was specifically around the negotiation of benefits—sick days there, but benefits in particular. I can imagine all sorts of witnesses who would have been so important to have here to talk about these types of benefits and the use of the benefits.

I guess the irony too is that I think these topics would be specifically relevant. Again, Madam Chabot recognizes this, I think, coming from a labour union background, so I'm a little bit surprised that this isn't more important to the NDP on this committee.

Another thing, again coming back to the labour code and division 29, is that I really think of the NDP historically as the party of labour. Just the fact that they potentially would not want to study this amendment to the labour code as outlined in Bill C-19 and—

• (1825)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada: I have a point of order, Mr. Chair.

[*English*]

The Chair: Madam Kusie, we have a point of order.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada: I want to make sure that the honourable member realizes that, if we aren't able to make a decision, another committee's meeting being held elsewhere will have to be cancelled because we are taking up the resources of the House of Commons.

I think the honourable member is well aware that we all agree on holding two meetings. If she wants to keep talking, she should know that she will be taking resources away from another committee. I've been saying that for a while.

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie: You agree on having two meetings. Is that right?

[*English*]

Okay, then you will withdraw your motion?

Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada: Yes.

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie: Okay, Chair, have you recognized that her motion is withdrawn?

The Chair: Madam Kusie, you will have to concede the floor and give it to Madam Martinez Ferrada to formally do that.

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie: Okay, sure, I'll do that.

The Chair: Okay, so you concluded your comments.

Madam Martinez Ferrada, you are the next in line to speak.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada: Mr. Chair, I withdraw the motion I put forward earlier. I am happy to accept the consensus on holding two meetings next week.

[*English*]

The Chair: Madam Chabot and Madam Kusie, do we have consensus on the two dates that are currently given to us by the resources, which are Tuesday and Thursday?

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie: Yes, I will host a virtual mimosa party.

The Chair: Well, we don't need that. We just need the two meetings.

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie: Okay. All right. That sounds good.

The Chair: Then, Clerk—

Go ahead, Madam Zarrillo.

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo: I'm sorry, but what are you asking me, Mr. Chair?

The Chair: Madam Martinez Ferrada is withdrawing her motion and will agree to the two meetings scheduled for next week. I'm told the interpreters are leaving in a few minutes and that this meeting will end at that time.

Do I see a consensus on holding the two meetings next week? We'll allocate the witnesses.

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Chair: Okay. The meeting is adjourned.

Published under the authority of the Speaker of
the House of Commons

SPEAKER'S PERMISSION

The proceedings of the House of Commons and its committees are hereby made available to provide greater public access. The parliamentary privilege of the House of Commons to control the publication and broadcast of the proceedings of the House of Commons and its committees is nonetheless reserved. All copyrights therein are also reserved.

Reproduction of the proceedings of the House of Commons and its committees, in whole or in part and in any medium, is hereby permitted provided that the reproduction is accurate and is not presented as official. This permission does not extend to reproduction, distribution or use for commercial purpose of financial gain. Reproduction or use outside this permission or without authorization may be treated as copyright infringement in accordance with the Copyright Act. Authorization may be obtained on written application to the Office of the Speaker of the House of Commons.

Reproduction in accordance with this permission does not constitute publication under the authority of the House of Commons. The absolute privilege that applies to the proceedings of the House of Commons does not extend to these permitted reproductions. Where a reproduction includes briefs to a committee of the House of Commons, authorization for reproduction may be required from the authors in accordance with the Copyright Act.

Nothing in this permission abrogates or derogates from the privileges, powers, immunities and rights of the House of Commons and its committees. For greater certainty, this permission does not affect the prohibition against impeaching or questioning the proceedings of the House of Commons in courts or otherwise. The House of Commons retains the right and privilege to find users in contempt of Parliament if a reproduction or use is not in accordance with this permission.

Also available on the House of Commons website at the following address: <https://www.ourcommons.ca>

Publié en conformité de l'autorité
du Président de la Chambre des communes

PERMISSION DU PRÉSIDENT

Les délibérations de la Chambre des communes et de ses comités sont mises à la disposition du public pour mieux le renseigner. La Chambre conserve néanmoins son privilège parlementaire de contrôler la publication et la diffusion des délibérations et elle possède tous les droits d'auteur sur celles-ci.

Il est permis de reproduire les délibérations de la Chambre et de ses comités, en tout ou en partie, sur n'importe quel support, pourvu que la reproduction soit exacte et qu'elle ne soit pas présentée comme version officielle. Il n'est toutefois pas permis de reproduire, de distribuer ou d'utiliser les délibérations à des fins commerciales visant la réalisation d'un profit financier. Toute reproduction ou utilisation non permise ou non formellement autorisée peut être considérée comme une violation du droit d'auteur aux termes de la Loi sur le droit d'auteur. Une autorisation formelle peut être obtenue sur présentation d'une demande écrite au Bureau du Président de la Chambre des communes.

La reproduction conforme à la présente permission ne constitue pas une publication sous l'autorité de la Chambre. Le privilège absolu qui s'applique aux délibérations de la Chambre ne s'étend pas aux reproductions permises. Lorsqu'une reproduction comprend des mémoires présentés à un comité de la Chambre, il peut être nécessaire d'obtenir de leurs auteurs l'autorisation de les reproduire, conformément à la Loi sur le droit d'auteur.

La présente permission ne porte pas atteinte aux privilèges, pouvoirs, immunités et droits de la Chambre et de ses comités. Il est entendu que cette permission ne touche pas l'interdiction de contester ou de mettre en cause les délibérations de la Chambre devant les tribunaux ou autrement. La Chambre conserve le droit et le privilège de déclarer l'utilisateur coupable d'outrage au Parlement lorsque la reproduction ou l'utilisation n'est pas conforme à la présente permission.

Aussi disponible sur le site Web de la Chambre des communes à l'adresse suivante :
<https://www.noscommunes.ca>