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Chair: The Honourable John McKay



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• (1600)

[English]

The Chair (Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.)): I call the meeting back to order.

I am assuming Mr. Bezan wishes to speak to his motion.

Mr. Bezan, go ahead, please.

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

I will move the motion. Do you wish me to read it into the record? It has been circulated and it is quite lengthy.

The Chair: It's in both official languages, so I don't think so.

Mr. James Bezan: We're good to go.

I know work on this has already been started. There's a similar study at the government operations committee, but I believe we also need to find out exactly what McKinsey consultants have been doing on the defence file and how many millions of dollars have been spent on procuring their services, often through single-source contracts.

This is an organization that has been charged with corruption in South Africa and that has been tied to the opioid crisis. There has been scathing report after scathing report. Of course, Mr. Barton, as our former ambassador to China, is a close personal friend of the Prime Minister, and because of these connections, McKinsey now has an open-ended contract that was signed in 2019 and goes right until 2100. We're talking about an 81-year open contract that could really impact not just taxpayers but the operations of the Government of Canada.

I think it is important that we get as much documentation as possible. This isn't about opening up a study at this point in time. This is about looking at the documents as to what contracts have been given, how this could possibly impact national security, what they've been doing on national defence and how those dollars could possibly be better spent on supporting the Canadian Armed Forces.

In the interest of time, I'll leave my comments at that.

The Chair: I recognize Ms. Mathysen.

Ms. Lindsay Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'll support this motion, but I would like to make what I hope are friendly amendments to it.

In paragraph a., after “and the Canadian Armed Forces”, add “and all special operating agencies therein”.

In paragraph b., it's exactly the same thing, “and all special operating agencies therein”, again after “and the Canadian Armed Forces”, four lines down.

Then I have another amendment I would like to make.

The Chair: Okay.

Do you want to move both at the same time, or do you want to have a debate on what is essentially the same motion?

Ms. Lindsay Mathysen: I could do both at the same time, I think.

Thank you.

The Chair: Okay.

Obviously we have to debate your amendment first, so we need the wording so it will be properly in front of the committee.

Could you tell the clerk that so that we can all have an understanding of what you just said?

Ms. Lindsay Mathysen: Okay.

The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Andrew Wilson): I just want to make sure I have the correct wording.

The Chair: Okay. Can you read it back so that she—

The Clerk: What I am saying is that I missed it.

It's “and all...”?

Ms. Lindsay Mathysen: It's “and all special operating agencies therein”.

The Chair: You have the line properly?

The Clerk: Yes, and it's the same in paragraph b. Okay.

The Chair: Are there any other comments you wish to make, at least on that particular amendment?

Is there any debate on the amendment?

(Amendment agreed to [*See Minutes of Proceedings*])

The Chair: You have a second amendment.

Ms. Lindsay Mathysen: In addition to reference to McKinsey & Company, I would like to add an investigation or the request also for Deloitte, PricewaterhouseCoopers, Accenture, KPMG and Ernst & Young. That's it.

The Chair: That's PricewaterhouseCoopers, Deloitte, Ernst & Young and who else...?

Ms. Lindsay Mathysen: It's Accenture and KPMG.

The Chair: Okay.

Do you have that?

The Clerk: Yes.

The Chair: That amendment is properly before us.

Is there debate?

An hon. member: Mr. Chair, I would just like an opportunity to understand the implications of these amendments.

I am wondering if we can suspend for a few minutes.

The Chair: I suppose we can suspend for a minute or two to think about what it is we're being asked to do here.

Is there any objection to a suspension for a minute or two? We are suspended.

• (1600) _____ (Pause) _____

• (1605)

The Chair: We are ready to resume.

Everyone has heard the terms of the amendment. We'll resume debate.

Is there any debate on the amendment?

Mr. James Bezan: I'll just say that I'm fine with adding on the other contracts to ensure that they're all in proper order, but we do know that the McKinsey contracts are of particular interest. They have grown exponentially during the last several years under this government. We know that there is a personal relationship between the Prime Minister and Dominic Barton, along with a personal relationship with the Minister of Finance, Chrystia Freeland. We've already found out, in just the last week, that the number is over \$100 million in contracts. It's \$116 million, and I expect that this number will continue to grow.

Again, it speaks to the fact that Liberal insiders continue to profit from this government while Canadians continue to hurt with rising inflation and high interest rates because of the mismanagement of the current administration.

Finally, I believe these dollars would be better invested in the Canadian Armed Forces than given to a consulting company based in New York.

The Chair: Bryan is next, followed by Lindsay and then Jennifer.

Mr. Bryan May (Cambridge, Lib.): I'll actually defer to Lindsay, because my question is around the purpose of expanding this. I'm curious as to why we're wanting to add these other contracts to

this particular motion, given the work that's been done already with OGGO.

I will defer to Lindsay.

Ms. Lindsay Mathysen: Thank you.

The companies that I've listed are actually from a piece of information that was given to OGGO, stating that in fact....

I understand that McKinsey & Company is of course in the spotlight at this moment. However, it is one of the smallest in terms of federal government contracts and expenditures. I have listed them in the order of the largeness or the size of those contracts, and at the end is McKinsey & Company. That's why I think it's important, as we look at the validation of those contracts and what's been happening, that we start to take a look at all of them, if that's truly in question.

• (1610)

The Chair: Go ahead, Ms. O'Connell.

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell (Pickering—Uxbridge, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'm going to move an amendment here as well on the main motion, if Ms. Mathysen's amendment is approved.

I would make the motion to amend—

The Chair: Hang on.

Mr. Bezan, you have a point of order.

Mr. James Bezan: Yes. I think we have to deal with the amendment at hand before—

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell: I'm making an amendment to this amendment. As well, I'm letting you know that I'll make the same—

The Chair: She can amend an amendment.

Mr. James Bezan: It's a subamendment.

The Chair: Yes.

Mr. James Bezan: Okay.

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell: I'm going to move that the contracts, if this amendment is approved, be included from March 2006. I'd really be interested to see.... If we want a wholesome picture of contracts in the Canadian government, then I think it's important that we go back to March 2006 and we just see whose buddies really are...and who's cozying up to who.

Mr. Chair, I really hope I have support for a wholesome look at March 2006 for this information.

I'd also like to ask for a recorded vote.

The Chair: I think you mean a “fulsome” report rather than a “wholesome” one.

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell: Thank you.

The Chair: Okay. That subamendment is properly before us. That's the focus of the debate at this point.

Is there any comment on the motion by Ms. O'Connell?

Yes, James.

Mr. James Bezan: I think most of this is on the public record. We know that during the Conservative time, the contracting that was happening under the Chrétien and Paul Martin governments fell dramatically under the Conservative government of Stephen Harper. That's public information. You can easily look at the numbers.

We also know that the McKinsey contract that was in place actually went to nil by the time we hit 2014. I'd also say that we know that, under this current government, spending has doubled on consulting contracts.

I have nothing to hide here. Most of this is public information. I hope it's not just a make-work project for those who have to come forward with all the records.

The Chair: Is there any other wish to debate? Does anybody want to go back to Laurier or Macdonald...?

Voices: Oh, oh!

The Chair: Is the subamendment before us understood by everyone?

Those in favour of the subamendment indicate by a show of hands—

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell: I asked for a recorded vote.

The Chair: Okay. Go ahead, Mr. Clerk.

(Subamendment agreed to: yeas 11; nays 0 [*See Minutes of Proceedings*])

The Chair: We have an outbreak of love.

The amendment as amended is now up for debate. Is there any debate on the amendment as amended?

We will vote on the amendment as amended.

(Amendment as amended agreed to [*See Minutes of Proceedings*])

The Chair: It passes unanimously. The motion is now amended. That is where we're at.

Go ahead, Ms. Normandin.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Chair, I'd like to move a motion to adjourn debate on the motion.

I think it's important that we debate it at some point, but it's also being debated more broadly at the Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates. Everything we're asking for is already included in the motion that is currently being discussed by the Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates. I think it's appropriate to give that committee the time to do its work. Then we could come back to the motion we have before us.

If the work done by the Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates isn't making sufficient progress or if we have additional questions, we can work on it, but let's wait until we know more about the work that committee is doing. This will prevent us from working in a compartmentalized fashion and going off in all directions.

The Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates is already doing exceptional and extensive work. I'd like to see what comes out of that before we debate this motion. It's a motion I want to support, but its content may not be complete yet. We may have information from another committee. Once we have that information, we can review the motion before us and add to it.

• (1615)

[*English*]

The Chair: That's a dilatory, non-debatable motion, so I'll put it to the committee.

An hon. member: I'd like a recorded vote.

The Chair: We will do a recorded vote.

An hon. member: Is this a motion to adjourn?

The Chair: Yes.

(Motion agreed to: yeas 7; nays 4)

The Chair: That exhausts that particular motion. We will go back in camera.

We are suspended.

[*Proceedings continue in camera*]

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