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• (1305)

[English]

The Chair (Mr. Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC)): I call this meeting to order.

Welcome, everyone, to meeting 47 of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates, a.k.a. the mighty OGGO.

Pursuant to Standing Order 106(4), the committee is meeting to consider the request by four members of the committee to undertake a study of contracts awarded to McKinsey & Company.

Today's meeting is taking place in a hybrid format, pursuant to the House order of Thursday, June 23, 2022. Members are attending in person in the room and remotely using the Zoom application.

I see Ms. Kusie has her hand up already, but before we get started, I want to make a couple of notes.

First of all, we have a brand new clerk. I want to recognize the great work that Paul Cardegna did with us in the past.

Thank you, Paul. I know you are probably watching.

We have a brand new clerk. She is not in the room today. She is doing Zoom, because she is under the weather. She is Aimée Belmore, and she'll be joining us at her very first official meeting.

Welcome, Aimée, to the only committee that matters.

Also today, we're welcoming back Mr. Green, an OGGO alumnus who is filling in for Mr. Johns, who is out of the country.

With that, we will get started.

Ms. Kusie, I notice you have your hand up.

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

[Translation]

I'd like to welcome our new clerk, Ms. Aimée Belmore. I hope that she will feel better as quickly as possible.

[English]

I want to thank the committee for coming here today. First of all, I want to thank my opposition counterparts from both the Bloc and the New Democratic Party, who recognized the urgency of having this meeting.

I know—as does everyone on this committee—that we were working on having an outsourcing study, as it were. I recognize I'm still relatively new to the committee, but we were going along with that outsourcing study, and I think it was going along very well. It was providing us with lots of good information about the role of consulting firms within government. However, as everyone on this call is aware, we received new information over the winter break.

I'm sure you're all aware that on January 4, CBC published an article showing that the current government has spent over 30 times more on government contracts with McKinsey—which of course is the company whose relationship with the government we're here to discuss today—than the previous administration. At least, that's what we thought until January 17. The Globe and Mail published an article stating that the actual value of government contracts with McKinsey since 2015—since this government has been in power—amounts to \$101.4 million. That's much higher than what had been reported.

In addition to that, the media stated that the government's connections with McKinsey have landed the firm a significant number of sole-sourced contracts. Of the valued \$101.4 million in 23 different government contracts, only three out of the 23 were open-sourced. The other 20 were sole-sourced.

Coming from a public service background at Global Affairs, I recognize how completely unacceptable that is in terms of government standards, and this is all happening at a time when Canadians are struggling.

In the words of my leader, Pierre Poilievre, Canadians are currently struggling to cope with 40-year high inflation, and 1.5 million Canadians visited a food bank in a single month. That's just shameful. The cost of a mortgage payment is now a bigger portion of a paycheck than ever before, and some Canadians are going to food banks asking for help with medically assisted dying, because they can't afford to live.

This waste is happening at a time when Canadians are struggling.

I want to take a minute to talk about our public service. It is a public service that I proudly served in for close to 15 years. We have a shadow government in place because of these consulting firms, which are not only creating a lack of agency within public servants and demoralizing the public service, but also creating incredible waste. We can see—from our studies here at OGGO, within the media and from the public servants who have appeared at this committee—that they are not even sure what they are doing or what the objectives are of their divisions and departments. As a result of that, these expensive consultants are being brought in as part of an effort to fix it, but guess what? Studies are showing that they're not fixing it.

I would even estimate that we are spending three times what is necessary for high morale and a highly functioning public service.

Again, my leader addressed this last week when he said that we want to move work internally, to the public service. We want a well-recruited, well-trained, high-retention public service, but these consultants are getting in the way of that. We have a situation in which we have significant expenditures with this single company in addition to many others, but the focus here is McKinsey. We have a shadow government operating, and we have Canadians who simply can't afford it at this time. They simply can't afford it.

There's more, though. We have to wonder: Whose idea was this? Whose idea was it to start this relationship with McKinsey? Well, guess what? Their former lead, Dominic Barton, is the former global managing partner for McKinsey, and led a 30-year career with the firm. While he was working with McKinsey, he was closely connected with the Liberal government. He served as the economic adviser to Justin Trudeau prior to his retirement from the company in 2018. Shortly after he retired from McKinsey, he was then appointed by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau to serve as Canada's ambassador to China. Let me tell you, having gone through the foreign service, I know that is a plum post and not easy to get.

It's evident where the idea to bring in McKinsey came from. It came from the very top. Guess what? I'm not the only one who sees it. The individuals who signed that letter to ask for this meeting today aren't the only ones who see it. The media sees this as well. I am going to quote Bob Fife, the Ottawa bureau chief of The Globe and Mail, who made comments on CTV's *Question Period* this past Sunday. These are the words out of Mr. Fife's mouth: "They got these contracts...because Dominic Barton's a buddy of the Prime Minister." Those are Bob Fife's words, not mine. He goes on to say more—that this "is what it looks like", and that Dominic Barton "advised him on the Infrastructure Bank, which [also], by the way, has been a flop."

It's no secret where these ideas are coming from. They're coming from the top. They're coming from the top and they're permeating all throughout government. We're seeing more and more media stories where more departments within the Canadian government are implementing McKinsey as part of what should be solutions, but, as we're seeing, are not. We're seeing this in defence. We're seeing this in immigration. We're seeing this in health. We're seeing this in different agencies under industry. This is not a single-department issue. This is coming from the top, with its tentacles permeating throughout government.

It's very clear where this is coming from—who had this idea in the first place to bring McKinsey in—but it is not only that McKinsey has been brought in at the top and at this magnitude. Why would the Prime Minister decide to work with a company that has such a questionable ethical background? McKinsey was under fire this past year over its contracts with the Government of France and campaign financing for President Emmanuel Macron. Spending on contracts with McKinsey more than doubled in the president's first term. They are under investigation for false campaign financing for Macron's 2017 campaign. Supposedly, some McKinsey consultants were working as unpaid volunteers for the campaign. Prosecutors are investigating whether this entailed a hidden campaign expense and if the firm enjoyed special access and treatment afterwards when winning lucrative contracts with the government.

In the U.S. they've also recently faced massive criticisms. Although it was Purdue Pharma, an American pharmaceutical company, that pleaded guilty to criminal charges in 2019 over its role in the OxyContin and opioid crisis, it was McKinsey & Company that developed a strategy involving driving sales of addictive painkillers, even as public outrage grew over widespread doses. McKinsey advised the company to turbocharge OxyContin sales and counter efforts by drug enforcement agents to reduce opioid use, and were part of a team that looked at how to counter the emotional messages from mothers with teenagers who overdosed on the drug. It was shameful.

A partner at the McKinsey consulting firm was also criminally charged in the United States with insider trading ahead of Goldman Sachs's agreement to buy fintech lender GreenSky, Inc., for \$2.24 billion. Puneet Dikshit, an executive with McKinsey, exploited information he gained about his client Goldman Sachs's pending takeover to buy profitable call options in GreenSky.

- (1310)

He had a leading role advising Goldman on the deal after learning that a deal was imminent, and bought 2,500 call options in two days before the announcement. He ultimately netted about \$450,000. He was sentenced to 24 months in prison for two counts of securities fraud.

It's worse than that, though. It is more significant than that. The engines for many of the missiles fired in the Ukraine war with Russia were manufactured by a massive Russian stakeholder enterprise called Rostec. Rostec and executives for that company hired the global consulting giant McKinsey & Company in recent years for advice. This was at the same time the firm was carrying out sensitive national security contracts for the defence department and the U.S. intelligence community.

This one is very public and possibly the mostly disgraceful. In 2018 a McKinsey & Company retreat in China took place only seven kilometres from an internment camp holding thousands of ethnic Uighurs. This was just a week after a United Nations committee had denounced the mass detentions and urged China to stop.

In August 2018, the VEB Bank, which is owned by the Russian state and known to be intertwined with Russian intelligence and to be under United States sanctions, hired McKinsey to develop its business strategy. In 2015, McKinsey published an interim report on the public reception of new policies in Saudi Arabia. In the report, they demonstrated that negative sentiment far outweighed positive reactions on social media and that three people were driving the conversation on Twitter: the writer, Khalid al-Alkami; Mr. Abdulaziz, a dissident living in Canada; and an anonymous user who went by Ahmad.

After the report was issued, Mr. al-Alkami was arrested; Mr. Abdulaziz had two of his brothers imprisoned by Saudi government officials, and the anonymous account was shut down. The Gupta family, a wealthy family from India with business ties in South Africa, has strategically placed corrupted individuals in various South African government utilities and infrastructure sectors. It is alleged that McKinsey was complicit in this corruption by using the Guptas to obtain consulting [*Technical difficulty—Editor*] conversation on Twitter.

I'm sorry. I am down to the last one.

Trillian was paid a commission for facilitating the business for McKinsey. [*Technical difficulty—Editor*] South Africa's national prosecuting authority concluded in early 2018 that the payments to McKinsey and its local business partner, Trillian, were illegal and involved crimes of fraud, theft, corruption and money laundering.

Mr. Chair, this idea came from the very top, from the Prime Minister, and I would also suspect from his two closest advisers, to have this corporation permeate the government. Why are they choosing to get into bed with a company that is not only ethically corrupt but possibly also criminally corrupt in many nations?

All these examples of ethical violations that I am giving today, Mr. Chair, are from after 2015. The government has had time to be aware of these ethical violations, but it has decided to not only continue the relationship but even deepen it and have it develop.

We've talked about the sole source, the shadow government and the amount of money that was spent, despite the state of Canadians. We've talked about whose idea this was, why it is permeating government and why the Prime Minister and his government would continue to work with such an ethically bankrupt company.

The final question, Mr. Chair, is who is pulling the strings and who is really in charge of Canada? Canadians go to the ballot box in the hope that they will elect a democratically functioning government, a government that will consider their interests and act in the interests of Canadians, those who brought them to power.

• (1315)

However, the initial CBC article from January 4, 2023, which indicated that the Department of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada actually had a contract with McKinsey & Company, indicated that two public servants explained that many policy decisions were actually made by McKinsey rather than by public servants.

They also said these policy decisions were made without public interest as their top priority. The sources in the CBC article also ex-

pressed significant concerns over McKinsey's impact on the decision to increase immigration targets. Immigration targets have a profound effect on every single aspect of our country, such as our housing situation and our health care situation. It's not the government that is determining these, Mr. Chair. It's McKinsey, as is evidenced by this article.

McKinsey's global head, Dominic Barton, chaired the advisory council on economic growth in 2016, which recommended immigration targets of 455,000 permanent immigrants per year. Isn't that funny? Isn't that just the number we just saw the Minister of Immigration brag about in the last month? Despite concerns by the minister at the time, the recommendations were implemented by IRCC.

Again, this government is not calling the shots. It is having the shots called by a third party source, by an external source, and who knows where that third party source is getting its ideas from, Mr. Chair?

As a result of all these different pieces that show how McKinsey's relationship with and the implications for this government are so wrong on so many levels, as I have just communicated, we, the members of the opposition, have come here today with a motion that we are going to now present to the committee.

I will read it into the record in English:

That the committee undertake a study, pursuant to Standing Orders 108(3)(c)(iii) and (ix), regarding government consulting contracts awarded to McKinsey & Company by the Government of Canada, or any Crown corporation, since November 2015, examining their effectiveness, management and operation, including the value and service received by the government, provided that

(a) the Committee schedule meetings to receive witness testimony, (i) the President of the Treasury Board, the Minister of Public Services and Procurement and the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, the Minister of National Defence, the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, the Minister of Health and the Minister of Public Safety each be invited to appear for at least two hours, and (ii) the parties each provide to the clerk of the committee, as soon as possible, their preliminary list of other witnesses who the chair shall schedule in a manner fair to all parties;

(b) the committee report forthwith to the House that it recommends that the Auditor General be called upon to conduct, as soon as possible, a performance and value for money audit of the contracts awarded to McKinsey & Company since November 2015 by any department, agency or Crown corporation;

(c) the committee order each department, agency or Crown corporation which entered into a contract (including a memorandum of understanding or other agreement) with McKinsey & Company since November 2015, to provide the clerk of the committee in both official languages and within three weeks of the adoption of this order, and notwithstanding any non-disclosure agreements which might be applicable, copies of (i) requests for tenders or other procurement requests related to contracts awarded to McKinsey & Company, (ii) tenders, bids, proposals or other applications received in respect of those procurement requests, (iii) contracts entered into, including any amendments thereto, (iv) all correspondence and electronic communications including emails, text messages, message app communications, and handwritten notes pertaining to these contracts, (v) statements of work performed by McKinsey & Company under each contract, (vi) all work product provided by McKinsey & Company under each contract, (vii) invoices provided by McKinsey & Company, and (viii) records of all payments made to McKinsey & Company, (ix) the hourly and/or daily rates McKinsey & Company charged for each employee working on all respective contracts the company has received since November 2015, and (x) the names of project managers and/or project authorities from McKinsey & Company on all respective contracts and projects the company received since November 2015;

● (1320)

(d) the committee order McKinsey & Company to provide to the clerk of the committee within three weeks of the adoption of this order, and notwithstanding any non-disclosure agreements which might be applicable, with respect to each contract entered into with a department, agency or Crown corporation of the Government of Canada since November 2015, copies of (i) all records referred to in paragraph (c), (ii) all records concerning the details and descriptions of work performed under each contract, (iii) time sheets documenting work done for each respective contract, (iv) the hourly and/or daily rates McKinsey & Company charged to the government or Crown corporation for each respective contract awarded to it since 2015, (v) the names of project managers and/or project authorities from McKinsey & Company assigned to each project from a contract with the government or Crown corporation since November 2015, and (vi) all records concerning subcontracts issued by McKinsey & Company in relation to each contract, including tenders, contracts or memoranda of understanding (including any amendments thereto), invoices, payments and evaluations, (vii) all correspondence and electronic communications including emails, text messages, message app communications and handwritten notes pertaining to these contracts, and (viii) the complete client list of all organizations McKinsey & Company has worked with since November 2015;

(e) evidence and documents received as part of this study be also considered in the committee's study on the outsourcing of contracts.

Mr. Chair, before I conclude, I will say that I really stood by the words of my leader when he called this out last week. I was just as pleased to see the Prime Minister's public response that he is willing to get to the bottom of this. In fact, the two ministers—Minister Fortier and Minister Jaczek, for whom I have much respect—have been charged with this and will take responsibility to work with us in an effort to get to the bottom of this.

I'll say, Mr. Chair, I'm very concerned that we're going to see another task force or study from these two ministers. I don't want to see that, Mr. Chair. We saw that with the recent whistleblowing legislation. Despite the report and recommendations of this committee seven years ago—which were not implemented by the Trudeau government—it wasn't until a private member's bill from the Bloc came forward that the government decided to do something, although it was something ineffectual.

In my opinion, Mr. Chair, that won't fly. We need them to be accountable to this committee, because Canadians are looking for transparency. Canadians want answers and they deserve answers.

Given the willingness of the Prime Minister and those ministers to co-operate, I absolutely expect that the members of the government on this committee will be pleased to work with us in tandem

to get to the bottom of this. I think we're all looking forward to this and to these questions, which will be responded to as a result of what I have brought forward here today.

● (1325)

[*Translation*]

As I have already said, Canadians are asking questions. They are struggling with the highest inflation rate 40 years. In just one month, 1.5 million Canadians had to use food banks. Today, a mortgage payment represents the most significant chunk from their paycheck. Some Canadians even go to food banks to get medication as well, because they do not have the means to survive. It is a real shame.

As per the leader of my party, M. Pierre Poilievre, while Canadians suffer, the Liberals' friends are content. It is a good time to be a friend of the Liberal government, but it is a very difficult time for Canadians.

Why did we spend so much? Who came up with this idea? Who is controlling all this?

[*English*]

Mr. Chair, in conclusion, I will say that Canadians want answers relative to what I have brought forward here today. Canadians are struggling, and this government is driving up the cost of living. Meanwhile, Liberals and their connected friends have never had it so good.

Why did they spend so much? Whose idea was this? Who's pulling the strings?

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

● (1330)

The Chair: That's great. Thanks, Ms. Kusie.

The motion is in order. We will now go to debate.

Mr. Jowhari, you had your hand up first.

Mr. Majid Jowhari (Richmond Hill, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

As this is the very first time.... Despite a number of attempts on our side to reach out to the chair and the clerk to request a copy of the motion in both official languages in sufficient time for us to be able to have a read of it and get a better understanding of the intent, the scope and the timelines, the fact is that we did not get any response. This is despite the fact that two different members of the committee reached out three times, on three different occasions.

I would ask the chair's and the committee members' indulgence for our side to take about a 20-minute recess to review this motion.

Most of you now have a copy of it. I understand that some of the members had a copy yesterday, as early as three o'clock. We did not, so we didn't have the opportunity to be able to read the motion in more detail and reflect on it.

If you grant us about 20 minutes, we can come back and start the conversation to ensure that Canadians get the answers they require.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, sir.

Why don't we start with a 15-minute suspension and see from there?

We are suspended for 15 minutes.

• (1330) _____ (Pause) _____

• (1355)

The Chair: We are back from suspension and we are back in our meeting.

Mr. Barrett, you're first up.

Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC): Thanks, Chair.

While our colleagues get situated, I think there's an issue with a word missing from the English version. It's a grammatical issue, but it then creates a problem with the French version.

In subparagraph (d)(viii), where it says “the complete client of all organizations McKinsey & Company has worked with since November 2015”, it should include the word “list”. It should then read as follows: “the complete client list of all organizations McKinsey & Company has worked with since November 2015”.

It's a grammatical error. Unless there's a proposal that this section be struck, I would look to see if we could adopt that amendment and the translated result on just a show of hands.

The Chair: Actually, when Ms. Kusie read it into the record, she did read it as client “list”. I took that as the official one, but I think we can all agree just to change that one word and then we can go to Mr. Housefather, who is next up.

I will accept that as approval. Thanks.

Go ahead, Mr. Housefather.

Mr. Anthony Housefather (Mount Royal, Lib.): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Thank you to members of the committee for giving us a chance to have a bit of a break to discuss the motion that we had not seen, even though we had asked for it on Monday and again on Tuesday. I'm hoping, in the context of the study, that we will all work together across party lines co-operatively. That would include sharing things like the motion in advance. That didn't happen in this case, and I'm a bit disappointed.

I want to say, just as a precursor, though, that I think this committee has a really important... The chair has mentioned many times that this is the mighty OGGO and how this committee is very important—and it is. It's very important that parliamentarians have an oversight role over government. This committee has a very important oversight role, and the study on McKinsey is an important part of our oversight role in the context of our study on outsourcing, which is a much broader question: What should be done by the public service, and where is it reasonable?

In some contexts, it is reasonable to give contracts outside. We can use this as part of that overall study to look at that specific issue and come up with recommendations that hopefully this government and all future governments may take into consideration and adopt with respect to when we outsource and when we don't.

I also agree with what Ms. Kusie said, that there's another question we could look at that would be a policy question: When should a company's actions abroad that become in the public domain—where we know there are settlement agreements and we know there are allegations going on in other countries—lead to us having an internal discussion about whether that company's standing offer should be cancelled or suspended and whether or not our current policies go deeply enough into researching what is happening with companies that may be on our list abroad?

There are a lot of policy issues here that we can work on together. I'm not of the mind that there's anything inherently wrong in terms of how the government engaged McKinsey or what occurred in respect of any of these contracts, but I'm happy to engage in the discussion and look through them all, so that we can all, with our own clear heads and based on the information we receive, find out. The goal here is to ensure that Canadians are well informed.

I have a couple of amendments, Mr. Chair. I'll make them separately, one by one, so that there's no confusion.

• (1400)

The Chair: Mr. Housefather, speak a bit slower. I don't write as fast as you speak. Thanks.

Mr. Anthony Housefather: I will speak very slowly.

The first amendment, Mr. Chair, would be to change the dates. I would replace all places where it states “November 2015” with “January 1, 2011”. I would also replace all references to “2015” with “2011”.

In some places there's a month and a year, and in some places there's just a year. In all the places where there's just a year, I would change it to “2011”. In all the places where there's a month and a year, I would change it to “January 1, 2011”.

[*Translation*]

I would just like to repeat it in French: replace all the instances of “2015” with “2011”, and replace every instance of “November 2015” with “January 1st, 2011”.

[*English*]

The Chair: We have that, Mr. Housefather.

Go ahead.

Mr. Anthony Housefather: This is basically to give us an overview. We've been talking about the contrast between how McKinsey dealt with the previous government and how it dealt with this government. I think it would be useful to also have one term of the previous government to see what the contracts were and the assorted information that's being requested on McKinsey going back the four previous years. I don't think it would be much more work to deliver this information in addition to what's already been requested, which is pretty voluminous.

The Chair: We've noted that down.

Do you have other amendments, Mr. Housefather?

Mr. Anthony Housefather: I do, Mr. Chair, but I don't want to confuse unnecessarily by making them part of one amendment. Should I go to the next after we've dealt with this one, or would you rather I give you all of them right away?

The Chair: Do you want to do them all right away?

Mr. Majid Jowhari: I would suggest that we go amendment by amendment and vote on them. It looks as though there is support on the Bloc side and the NDP side for that amendment.

The Chair: Just hold on one moment.

Are you saying one at a time or...?

Mr. Majid Jowhari: Yes. I would like to do them one at a time, please.

The Chair: Okay.

Mr. Michael Barrett: I'll speak to the amendment, Chair.

The Chair: The will of the room seems to be to go one at a time.

Ms. Vignola is first and then Mr. Barrett.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoilou, BQ): I would like to give my opinion on what Mr. Housefather said about the overall study.

I agree with the committee doing the study. Indeed, I had good reason to sign the letter on holding a meeting. We can ask questions about McKinsey and his sense of ethics. We can also ask questions about many other companies, for the exact same reasons.

The main issue is to determine whether we really need external consultants. Do we not already have this expertise in-house? If we do not, why is that? If we have it, why do we not use it?

There is nothing more demotivating for an employee than to have the impression that their work is not recognized. I am certain that government employees who have the necessary expertise are surprised to see referrals to consultants. These employees have the necessary knowledge and can help the government. They are government employees, but their skills aren't solicited. That's extremely demotivating.

Furthermore, that means taxpayers are paying to people: the consultant and the employee whose skills are misused. It's sad.

As for the amendment, I have no objection to the proposed date changes. If we are making a comparison, better to do it right. I am still surprised that we haven't asked to look at documents from the

previous year. Of course, we don't want to end up buried under an avalanche of documents.

That said, I swear before my colleagues that I will analyse all the documents I receive. However, we have to give ourselves a reasonable timeframe, and I think 2011 is a reasonable timeframe to make an adequate comparison.

● (1405)

[*English*]

The Chair: I'm sorry, Mr. Barrett. I did say it was you next, but it was Mr. Green after Ms. Vignola.

Mr. Green, go ahead.

Mr. Matthew Green (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Thank you.

It's certainly good to be back at this committee, although I wish it weren't under these circumstances. This is something we certainly picked up in the last session of government. With other companies we found a pattern—companies like Deloitte, PricewaterhouseCoopers and many, many others—of this kind of consultant-class outsourcing of government services and contracts. While it is the case that it may be a relatively nominal increase for McKinsey from 2006 to 2015 of about \$2.2 million, from 2015 at \$100 million, plus over 23 contracts, it's significant. My concern, like that of my counterparts on the opposition side, is that while it might be simplistic and easy in terms of low-hanging fruit to narrow the scope of this study to just McKinsey, it would provide, in my opinion, and I think the government would agree, greater value to Canadians in terms of value for money for their tax dollars, to get a better look at where this is happening.

I disagree with my friend Mr. Housefather in terms of this just being a procurement issue and when we should or shouldn't procure and outsource our services and our decision-making, because there's an ethical question about the relationships with Mr. Dominic Barton. That's just a fact. Having policies in place around procurement that would provide, in my opinion, clearer and more defined understandings of what those types of perceived conflicts of interest might look like.... It is my thinking that if we were to look at the other consultant-class contracts that are out, we may find similar things.

I'm not suggesting that this committee embark on some kind of fishing expedition. If you look at the numbers, McKinsey is certainly one of the most atrocious human rights violators in the list, but there's significant contracting out to Deloitte as well. That's something we heard time and time again, at both OGGO and in my time at public accounts.

As to the dates, yes, right off the bat we certainly support backtracking to 2011, but in my early participation in this committee on this particular study, I would suggest that we also consider revisiting some of the other contracts that have seen significant lifts in their procurement, as well as who is deciding on the incremental increases year after year. It's one thing to underbid for a contract and tell the government you're going to provide value for money, and underbid everybody else, but then when the re-signing of the contract comes back and we're seeing sometimes a 160% increase on the contract, I don't think that's an ethical procurement practice either.

I know my friend will have a series of amendments. There will probably be a series of amendments around the table. That's fine. My hope, though, is that the outcomes from this will change the practices, policies and procedures in a way that is so clear for the Canadian public that future governments will have a very difficult time doing the same—getting caught in a situation where they may or may not have close personal ties to senior leadership in some of these consulting contracting companies.

To close, Mr. Chair—by the way, it's good to see you in the chair, Kelly—I'll say this. There are enough conspiracy theories out there about deep state and all this other stuff around shadow government. These types of things don't help. It's not helpful when the government takes this tack and does this kind of close relational procurement with insiders and friends.

That being said, I'll certainly support this. My hope is that in future amendments to come from my friend and others around the table, we contemplate some of the other points I brought up.

Thank you.

• (1410)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Green.

Go ahead, Mr. Barrett.

Mr. Michael Barrett: Thanks, Mr. Chair.

I'm sure there are a number of amendments, so I don't want to speak at too great a length about this particular one.

There is a risk that the farther we go back, the more we will start to dilute the work the committee is going to be able to do with an awful lot more information. Why is it that we're looking at these contracts with McKinsey in particular? I think Mr. Green spoke to the ethical questions with respect to the connections in particular between the Prime Minister and Dominic Barton and McKinsey. Also, there's the morality of the Government of Canada dealing with a company like McKinsey. Brand “Canada” is something I know we as Canadians are all very proud of. I'm very proud of it. When the government throws in with companies like this, not just by continuing to do the business it has always done with them but rather by increasing it by many orders of magnitude year after year, then is this a message that the Government of Canada approves of the ongoing involvement of this company in some of the things my colleague, Ms. Kusie, outlined?

We're talking about election spending scandals in France and corruption scandals in South Africa. We're talking about helping countries like Saudi Arabia identify, hunt and target individuals

who are critical of their government so they can punish them and their families. Of course, something we're all aware of is the opioid crisis we're facing in Canada and in North America, and McKinsey's role in working for Purdue Pharma in supercharging opioid sales and availability. They're basically giving Purdue the road map to light an inferno that continues to engulf communities and sweep up and take lives right across our country. That is specifically why we're talking about McKinsey. The rise in the numbers of consultants hired by this government is astronomical when you look back.

I don't think there's a limit on the comparisons that could be made, but it's important that we consider why it's McKinsey in particular. Why is this example of outsourcing the one that finds itself in front of this committee? In some of the initial reporting by CBC in early January, there were public service whistle-blowers. I'm not talking about any of the other service providers. We're not talking about things that took place 10 years ago or under previous governments. I want to quote from the CBC article:

“We had a few presentations on very generic, completely vapid stuff. They arrived with nice colours, nice presentations and said they would revolutionize everything,” one of the sources said.

“In the end, we don't have any idea what they did,”.... [It was] “nice marketing” that “isn't science.”

We were spending \$100 million, and the bureaucrats don't know what they were doing. We do know, from those same whistle-blowers, that McKinsey had a hand in transforming policy, not just in management consulting.

It's important that we keep our eye on the prize and remain focused in what we're doing here. I hope we're able to maintain that focus as we move through the amendments that are being proposed.

• (1415)

The Chair: Thanks, Mr. Barrett.

Do we have a consensus on the date changes proposed by Mr. Housefather?

(Amendment agreed to)

The Chair: We'll consider that adopted, with all the dates changed to January 1, 2011.

Mr. Housefather, do you want to continue with your suggested amendments?

Mr. Anthony Housefather: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I just—

The Chair: I'm sorry. Let me just interrupt.

There's always the issue, unfortunately, of limited resources. Right now, we're at 2:16. I'm getting signals from our clerk that we're probably good for about another hour to another hour and 20 minutes, just so everyone's aware.

Please go ahead, Mr. Housefather.

Mr. Anthony Housefather: Thanks, Mr. Chair.

Just to set everybody's expectations, I do not think the amendments I have are complicated or controversial. I have only two more.

The next amendment basically just relates to the time frame of production of documents by the departments, agencies or Crown corporations in paragraph (c).

Because these have to be translated before they get to the committee—when they come from the Crown and the departments—given the volume of documents that are presented and requested, I do not think having them show up at the committee in three weeks is going to be possible. My request would be to amend “three” and have “five weeks of the adoption of this order”, but to have them provided on a rolling basis.

Basically, Mr. Chair, we would say that “within five weeks of the adoption of this order, on a rolling basis, and notwithstanding any non-disclosure agreements,” so that we get the documents as soon as they're translated. The last ones would come in five weeks. We don't want to say that they have to translate all of them in three, because I don't think that is going to be possible.

I would, Mr. Chair, distinguish between paragraph (c) and paragraph (d), where we're ordering McKinsey...because my understanding is that McKinsey will provide us with documents in only one language and we will have to translate those as well. I think three weeks is fine for those. It's only in paragraph (c), where they get translated before coming to the committee, that I'm asking for three weeks to be changed to five, but with the clarification that they be provided on a rolling basis. I think that's a reasonable suggestion and that would make it easier for the departments to get us the information.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: We seem to have consensus.

I'm sorry. Go ahead, Mr. Barrett.

Mr. Michael Barrett: Just for clarification, I wasn't sure that I caught the exact reference that Mr. Housefather made. The only change was in (c), “in both official languages and within three weeks of the adoption,” so the only change is that it would say, “five weeks of the adoption and on a rolling basis”.

The Chair: My understanding is that it's as they become available and in five weeks at the latest. That was in the first part of (c).

Was there another part of that, Mr. Housefather, that you were referring to?

Mr. Anthony Housefather: No, Mr. Chair. It's exactly what Mr. Barrett just said.

The Chair: It's just the one change to five weeks and then as they become available after being translated.

Mr. Michael Barrett: I just think, Chair, for clarification, that all parties, everyone involved, would be well served if that instruction came from the chair to the responding entities with respect to what our expectation is. We've seen challenges with departments that don't respond or that say it will be a lot of trouble. They come

back after the deadline and say, “Well, now we could start to furnish you with them on a rolling basis.”

The Chair: That's a very good point.

What I'm going to propose to the committee is that I will work with the parties and our clerk to come up with precise language in a letter regarding our expectations. We've just seen, unfortunately, with GC Strategies, that despite our best efforts and despite the committee having asked for all documents, the documents they provided were short of invoices. To avoid that, again, I will work with the parties and with the clerk to come up with an encompassing set of requirements—I'll provide it in advance—in terms of what we are going to ask for.

Mrs. Block.

• (1420)

Mrs. Kelly Block (Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek, CPC): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Just so I'm understanding the change that is going to be made in paragraph (c) and, I'm assuming, (d), it would read, “to provide the clerk of the committee on a rolling basis, in both official languages, within no more than five weeks....”

The Chair: Yes.

Mr. Anthony Housefather: Just to clarify, Mr. Chair, it would not apply in paragraph (d). It would be only for (c) because in (d) they don't provide it translated, so we should get it in three weeks so we can translate them. It's only for the translation.

The Chair: We'll ask for the same thing—that as they are translated, they be released to the committee.

Are we comfortable with that?

Go ahead, Mr. Housefather.

Mr. Anthony Housefather: Mr. Chair, my—

The Chair: Oh, I'm sorry. I didn't see that.

Madam Clerk, you're muted.

The Clerk of the Committee (Ms. Aimée Belmore): I apologize. I was just looking for clarification.

Do you want to make the language “on a rolling basis” or “as they become available” for precision in the translation of the motion?

The Chair: I think “as they become available”.

The Clerk: Okay. Do you mean “within five weeks of the adoption of this order, as they become available”? It's just a final call for the language, to make sure we don't have various versions floating around.

The Chair: Do you have something, Ms. Vignola? No. Okay.

That's an excellent point. Thank you. Having two clerks is like having two referees on the ice at the same time. It's wonderful.

Are we comfortable with that?

(Amendment agreed to)

The Chair: Mr. Housefather, it's back to you.

Mr. Anthony Housefather: Thanks, Mr. Chair.

My last simple amendment relates to the amount of time for which each minister is invited to appear. Normally, as you know, ministers are invited to appear for one hour, and then we have the officials for the hour after. I'm not sure we're that interested in the officials.

My suggestion is that I can amend this one of two ways: to say "at least one hour" instead of "at least two hours", or "for an opening statement and then at least two rounds of questions", which I think is the more reasonable thing, because I think the committee is probably concerned that the minister is there for only one round of questions.

I propose that it be amended to say, "each be invited to appear for an opening statement and at least two rounds of questions". That would mean the minister would be there for two rounds of questions. I think that is fair, and normally it wouldn't be for two hours.

That would be my other amendment, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: I'm looking for anyone who wishes to speak to that.

Mr. Matthew Green: Can he cite the paragraph that would be amended?

The Chair: Is that in paragraph (a), Mr. Housefather?

Mr. Anthony Housefather: That's correct, Mr. Chair. It's in the fourth line of paragraph (a), and it would replace "for at least two hours" with "for at least an opening statement and two rounds of questions".

The Chair: Hold on for two moments.

Mr. Michael Barrett: In the interest of fairness and compromise, I like the two-hour response from Mr. Green, but given the opportunity for opening statements and an hour or at least three rounds of questions, nothing is belaboured. Then the second and third opposition parties would have a total of 11 minutes each for questions over three rounds. I think that's enough.

• (1425)

The Chair: That's a good point. That's what I was expressing. We would get six minutes, and the second round would be five minutes, but then the other two parties would have only two and a half.

I'm looking after you, Mr. Green and Mrs. Vignola.

Mr. Matthew Green: He's my new union rep.

The Chair: Mrs. Vignola brings sweets, so you had better step up, Mr. Green.

Are we comfortable with an opening statement and a full hour? I think we can get through three in an hour.

Are we comfortable with that, Mr. Housefather?

Mr. Anthony Housefather: I am, Mr. Chair.

It would be an hour and twelve to do three rounds, but I'm comfortable with the end result of an opening statement and three

rounds of questions. If that's the consensus of the other parties on the committee, I'm okay with that, too.

The Chair: That's the opening statement and three full rounds. I see consensus.

(Amendment agreed to)

The Chair: Thank you.

Was there anything else, Mr. Housefather?

Mr. Anthony Housefather: There's nothing more from me, Mr. Chair, but I just want to point out one thing. I'm not proposing to amend it, but I believe that because only McKinsey was in the motion that came to the committee, it would be beyond the scope if I proposed to amend it to add something else. I just want to let Mr. Green know that.

On the last part, number (viii) in paragraph (d), where we're asking McKinsey for its complete client list of all organizations, personally I don't care, but I think it's going to be pretty upsetting to McKinsey to be asked for all its clients around the world. I am wondering if we want to clarify whether that is just in Canada or worldwide. Again, I think it's a burdensome thing for any contractor of the government to be faced with having to provide its client list, potentially, to a committee. If the opposition parties all believe it's important, I'm not going to propose an amendment. I just want to point that out, and I think we should check whether the scope is Canada or the world. Thanks.

The Chair: Thanks, Mr. Housefather.

Mr. Barrett.

Mr. Michael Barrett: When we're talking about, as I mentioned before, the issue of our country's brand and our government's integrity, we have the mixing of these contractors with our public service, so the public doesn't know where one ends and the other begins. We know who works for our federal public service. They're accountable for their actions to their employer, the Government of Canada, and ultimately to taxpayers.

This is a company that has a dubious record on the world stage. I'm not going to itemize or offer new examples, although there are several. I think it's very important for Canadians to know who the government is doing substantial business with. We've seen some examples today of who McKinsey is dealing with worldwide. Frankly, if it's not willing to share with Canadians who it's doing business with, well then perhaps it's not interested in doing business with the Government of Canada.

I think this is a question of accountability. I think it's eminently reasonable for us to ask for this, and I look forward to the response.

The Chair: We'll keep it as global.

Mrs. Vignola.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Julie Vignola: As I said earlier, I want to get answers. Naturally, I would have preferred two hours to ask questions, but thank you nonetheless for proposing three rounds. That will give us 11 minutes for questions. It's never enough to ask all our questions, but it still presents several advantages, including the opportunity to ask follow-up questions and get the answers we otherwise might not be able to obtain ourselves.

The big question, the one on clients, is interesting. I understand it might be pointless, because McKinsey will not want to give us a list of their clients, but it is important for us to have it. Indeed, it would allow us to finally determine if the government really is working to achieve the objectives people elected them for, or the objectives gently whispered into their ears by foreign influence. The people elected us, and we are the ones who have to make decisions. We can use consultants, of course, but if they are the ones who establish national objectives at the end of the day, that's a problem, especially because the ones we are discussing are foreign. No one wants Canada, especially not Québec, to become an American suburb. I want to protect my language and interests. As I said earlier, we want to know if Quebecers and Canadians paid twice for the same service. If we use foreign experts, when we already have experts here at home, it's not very logical.

Now, to come back to the issue before us, I'd like us to ask for the client list. I see a significant gap in the motion, unless I have read and reread it incorrectly. We are asking for McKinsey's documents, but we are not asking its representatives to appear here. We must do so to hear their answers. It would be hypocritical not to include them in our list, because we are talking about them. We want to know who makes the decisions, but we have to ask McKinsey's representatives that question as well. We therefore must add them to the list, including Mr. Dominic Barton, to get answers to our questions.

That would be an amendment, to be added to those already proposed.

I would now like to ask a question out of simple curiosity. Given the current rumours, should we specify the names of ministers we want to meet? For example, in the motion, we should perhaps specify that we want to invite Mr. Sean Fraser, the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, to make sure he's the one who appears, in case there is a change in the department and the new minister doesn't know anything.

I'm making the suggestion, but I'd like to get your opinions first.

• (1430)

[*English*]

The Chair: Mr. Jowhari, go ahead.

Mr. Majid Jowhari: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'm not sure whether it's necessary to do that, because all the members can submit a witness list, and in their witness list they can ask for the minister to show up. If they want to name him, I don't think there's an issue, but....

The Chair: I think you have a good point there.

Back to your comment that it would be good to have the minister for two hours, that would be my preference as well. I'm going to suggest that if we reach the point where one hour's not enough, perhaps we could get a motion from the floor to bring him back.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Julie Vignola: Do you agree that, in the motion, we should add McKinsey's representatives to the list of witnesses summoned before the committee? Personally, I can only invite one witness, given my position within the committee. Since the McKinsey firm is at the heart of the motion, I'd like us to name its representatives so that they come and testify before the committee.

Currently, we are asking them to provide documents, and we are asking for documents about them, but we are not summoning their representatives. They must come.

[*English*]

The Chair: It's a fine point. I'm going to make the assumption that we can provide for that in witness lists provided to the clerk. The assumption is that we're not limited to just those specified here. Is that clear for you, Madame?

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Julie Vignola: It's clear, more or less.

I'd have liked for the McKinsey firm and Mr. Dominic Barton to be named in the motion, like the ministers. I understand we will each have to provide a list of witnesses, but as I said, I'm entitled to ask for just one witness. So, if I'm the only one to ask for Mr. Dominic Barton, I cannot ask for other witnesses that I would have liked to hear from. It would be more logical to name them in the motion. That would let us list other witnesses we would also like to see.

• (1435)

[*English*]

The Chair: Go ahead, Ms. Block.

Mrs. Kelly Block: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I have not sat on this committee for as long as many others have, and I have only the most recent precedent of the study that we introduced on ArriveCAN. In that one, we saw that we needed to have a very detailed motion in order to get the information we felt was needed to demonstrate to Canadians that we were leaving no stone unturned. I'm wondering if you could advise what the precedent would be for including the names of some other witnesses in a motion to ensure that we have the weight of the motion behind the request for individuals to appear.

The Chair: To address this, Mrs. Vignola, would you be comfortable with this? At the end of (a) we can add "witnesses from McKinsey, witnesses as proposed by OGGO, and specifically Mr. Barton".

I'll go to Mr. Green and then Mr. Jowhari.

Mr. Matthew Green: Thank you.

Having been privy to similar types of studies, I think it's important, when dealing with corporations, that we're requesting the most senior person in the country. What we don't want is for them to send a lawyer who doesn't have access to the information and who stonewalls the committee.

It's listed here that the senior partner in Toronto for McKinsey is Ms. Baghai. I don't know if that's the case, but I would ask that the request go to the most senior person in Canada or their global equivalent, a senior-ranking executive who would have the information, not some legal team that's going to come here and stonewall the committee.

I'll share with you that on other committees I'm involved in—and I'm sure Mr. Barrett and others who've been involved in them would attest to this—if a legal team is sent, we can forget about getting any kind of useful information. It ends up being a waste of our time, quite frankly.

The demand would be that somebody from McKinsey come, somebody who has a senior enough position to be able to speak to the matters at hand. That would be my only addition.

I support just going ahead and naming them right now, naming McKinsey and naming Dominic Barton, and then allowing our other witness suggestions to be free and clear of those.

The Chair: They would be along the lines of the most senior person from McKinsey in Canada, Dominic Barton, and other witnesses noted by this esteemed committee.

Mr. Jowhari.

Mr. Majid Jowhari: I'm going to break this into two pieces.

One is current senior executives of McKinsey, which is not an issue, because this is about McKinsey and we want senior executives who are, at the end of the day, accountable, to be down here. There's no question about that.

As far as specifically naming one individual goes, I would suggest that we possibly have a side meeting when the list of all the witnesses is there and we collectively decide who we want. We are naming one specific individual who's an ex-McKinsey...and I understand that. I've read all the news. I have all the briefings. I understand why you're asking that question, but all I'm saying is let's not start establishing a precedent that we need to name a single witness in our motion. We've worked collaboratively before. I'm committed to making sure that we continue to do that. We will put forward a list of witnesses, and the list of witnesses will always follow the rules that we set at the beginning of this committee, i.e., that there will be proportional representation of witnesses, as we agreed, based on the percentages that we agreed on.

I can probably guarantee you that you're going to have that name coming in from all the committee members, but I just don't want to set the precedent of naming one individual only. As you can see, we are naming the senior executives of McKinsey and we're not limiting it to Canada; we're expanding it to senior executives. Naming one individual sets a precedent that I am personally not comfortable with.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

• (1440)

The Chair: Thanks.

I'll go to Mrs. Vignola, but I will note that there has been a precedent set. As recently as two or three months ago, one of my motions specifically—when I was sitting in a better chair—called for J.D. Irving to appear. That was adopted by the committee, so we have done it. I understand what you're saying, but we have done it in the past, just very recently.

Ms. Vignola.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Julie Vignola: In short, you made a suggestion about paragraph a). Currently, this paragraph has two subparagraphs on witnesses. I'd like to add a third subparagraph to propose a meeting lasting at least two hours with McKinsey's representatives. If possible, we can add Mr. Dominic Barton's name to the motion. If it's not possible, if that creates a problem or precedent, we could specify that his resume shows that he was Canada's Ambassador to the People's Republic of China, if memory serves.

[*English*]

The Chair: Mrs. Block.

Mrs. Kelly Block: Perhaps I'm belabouring the point, given Mr. Jowhari's response to Ms. Vignola's intervention, but all you have to do is go back and look at the motion we adopted when we agreed to study the ArriveCAN app. We listed ministers and their names. We listed the proponents of GC Strategies. If we believe that there is weight behind the request, because it's in the motion and this is something we are all agreeing to, then I would concur with Ms. Vignola that we should include, if not the person, then certainly the position that we want to hear from.

The Chair: The clerk, I think, is almost ready to read back what I'm sensing is committee approval.

Mr. Simon Larouche (Legislative Clerk): Four amendments have been noted by the clerk.

Do you wish me to go back to the four amendments, or just the latest?

The Chair: It's just the last one.

Mr. Simon Larouche: I might ask for some clarification, given the last comment of Ms. Vignola. She mentioned a time frame of two hours. What I have is that “the most senior representatives of McKinsey & Company in Canada be invited to appear” be added to paragraph (a).

I don't know if anything else should be....

The Chair: I think the consensus from the committee—taking into account what Mr. Jowhari is saying—is that we're also naming Mr. Barton, and we're also adding in “and other witnesses as compiled by the committee”.

Mr. Green and Ms. Vignola, are we comfortable with that?

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Julie Vignola: I'm sorry, I was distracted momentarily.

[*English*]

The Chair: Okay, Mrs. Vignola.

We limit it to the highest-ranking at McKinsey, and to Mr. Barton and other witnesses as decided by the committee. I think I'm sensing consensus with all that, so it's agreed.

(Amendment agreed to)

The Chair: It looks like we'll start on the very first meeting when the House is back in session. I assume, then, that the committee is agreeing that we'll start off with this study. I'm suggesting that for witnesses in the first round, understanding that things will be in flux.... I'm asking you for special witnesses by Tuesday of next week, so that our clerk has time to start sending out invitations, knowing that sometimes it does take a few days of advance notice to receive them—for example, for the bureaucracy, as noted here, to coordinate for the ministers—or to extend other invitations, and that, once received, you'll allow our clerk, me and our analysts to get back to you and to coordinate the meetings and the invitations.

Are we comfortable with that?

I have Ms. Kusie and then Mr. Jowhari.

• (1445)

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie: Thank you, Chair.

Given that this story is moving so rapidly and we are finding out new information by the day, it seems, I have had some preliminary conversations with some of the members of the committee, and I just thought I would check the will of the room to meet potentially next week. Given the urgency of it, I thought I would throw this out there as a possibility, recognizing that it might be more difficult to get witnesses, but just given the urgency of the situation and the weight of the situation, perhaps you could check with the room as to whether there is an interest in meeting next week, please.

The Chair: Thanks. I understand that it's not the will of the room, I'm afraid.

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie: Okay. I appreciate that. Thank you.

The Chair: Go ahead, Mr. Jowhari.

Mr. Majid Jowhari: I just want to get an understanding of when the suggested first date of this study is going to be. That's all.

The Chair: It would be on the first Monday that we're back in session. I think we're back at 3:30 on January 30.

Mr. Majid Jowhari: That's January 30 at 3:30. Okay. Thank you.

The Chair: Also, it's Tuesday at 3:00 p.m. for witnesses, understanding as well that we may need to add some or adjust as we go, but if we could add that so we could allow our clerk to start filling in pieces as we go forward.... Are we comfortable with that? Is there anything else from anyone? Do we need to read the amendments through, or are we comfortable as we decided them?

Perfect: All are approved as we walked through and approved them. If there's nothing else—

Go ahead, Mrs. Vignola.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Julie Vignola: Do we have to vote on the amendment and the motion?

[*English*]

The Chair: We did that as we went through.

Mr. Majid Jowhari: One by one.

The Chair: Yes, one by one.

Mr. Majid Jowhari: They're all adopted.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Julie Vignola: I was sure the recorded division was going to happen at the end, that's all.

[*English*]

The Chair: They're all adopted.

Before we adjourn, thank you to those who came out during a break week. I appreciate it.

Mr. Green, it's good to see you back on OGGO, if only for a couple of hours.

Thank you as well to Mr. Larouche for filling in. I appreciate it greatly.

Again, welcome back, Ms. Belmore, to OGGO. I look forward to seeing you in person next time.

With that, we are adjourned.

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