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Chair: Mr. Ron McKinnon



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• (1555)

[English]

The Chair (Mr. Ron McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam, Lib.)): I call the meeting to order.

Welcome, everyone, to meeting number 63 of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security. We will start by acknowledging that we are meeting on the traditional unceded territory of the Algonquin people.

Today's meeting is taking place in a hybrid format, pursuant to the House order of November 25, 2021. Members are attending in person in the room and remotely using the Zoom application.

I will start with subcommittee business. The subcommittee met last week to consider business of the committee going forward and agreed to a number of items.

You will all see the copy by email of the fourth report of the subcommittee on agenda and procedure. Does the committee wish to adopt this report?

Ms. Raquel Dancho (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC): Mr. Chair, I have my hand up.

The Chair: Yes, please, go ahead.

Ms. Raquel Dancho: I apologize, Mr. Chair, but I'll likely have my hand up quite a bit today, so I'll just draw your attention to that.

Could you read out for the committee members the subcommittee report bullets, please? It's relatively short.

The Chair: I'm sorry. I'll read it, absolutely.

Your Subcommittee met on Friday, April 28, 2023, to consider the business of the Committee and agreed to make the following recommendations:

1. That five meetings, including one meeting with the Minister of Public Safety, be dedicated to Bill C-20, An Act establishing the Public Complaints and Review Commission and amending certain Acts and statutory instruments.
2. That the members send their list of proposed witnesses for Bill C-20 to the clerk no later than Friday, May 12, 2023.
3. That the clerk takes the necessary steps to organize a total of four additional hours of committee meeting, to be held during the week of May 1st and/or, if needed, the following week, given the cancellation of the meetings on May 5 and May 19, 2023.

[That is] respectfully submitted [by your chair].

Do we have agreement to ratify the decision of the subcommittee?

The Chair: Ms. Dancho, is your hand still up?

Ms. Raquel Dancho: It's up again. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I just want to confirm that the subcommittee—just so I'm clear on the wording—is to bring in essentially two more two-hour meetings, or four hours total of additional committee time, because two Friday committee slots were eliminated. These aren't extra meetings per se. They're just making up for two meetings that were eliminated outside the control of this committee. Is that correct?

The Chair: That is my understanding as well.

In that vein, we do have approval for an extra hour today. We have a potential for two hours on Thursday and the potential for one hour next week, although all of that is a little blurry right now.

• (1600)

Ms. Raquel Dancho: I would like to speak here, if I may.

If, as you outlined, that is done, then the obligation from the subcommittee is completed. The subcommittee report is not agreeing to any additional committee hours outside of what you've outlined, just to be clear.

The Chair: That is correct. The subcommittee agreed to four hours to be allocated either this week and next week or somehow in the two-week period.

Ms. Raquel Dancho: Okay. This will be my last comment. I just want to underline in particular that we are supportive of making up for the time we are losing because of those two lost Fridays, but the Conservatives are not supportive of many additional hours to make up for the fact that we have been waiting six weeks to see the minister and to complete the consultations on the previously withdrawn amendment. Just to be clear, Conservatives are not supportive of any additional time over and beyond making up for those two Fridays, as it's not the committee's fault that the Liberal government took its time getting to the position where we are and the committee is not under an obligation to double up or triple up the time we are meeting and to move things along more quickly, as a result of the very long process that this has taken since November. It's not the fault of Conservative members, and we will not be speeding up this process in any way.

I just want to make that very clear.

The Chair: Thank you. I am so advised.

Is there any further intervention on this matter?

Go ahead, Mr. Motz.

Mr. Glen Motz (Medicine Hat—Cardston—Warner, CPC): Thank you, Chair.

Can you just clarify again the times for when you are thinking there might be some extra meetings?

The Chair: It would be this week and next week.

Mr. Glen Motz: Do we have dates?

The Chair: We get an hour today. That would leave three further hours to be acquired when we're able to get them, and that requires the help of the whips and the House resources and so forth.

Mr. Glen Motz: Did I hear the clerk suggest that the Thursday you were planning is out?

The Chair: I had heard previously that we might be able to get two hours this coming Thursday, but apparently that's not the case.

Mr. Glen Motz: Okay.

The Chair: I await developments. We'll do the best we can to get those hours whenever we can get them. It's going to have to be tomorrow or Thursday or next week.

Go ahead, Mr. Shipley.

Mr. Doug Shipley (Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte, CPC): I'm sorry. I'm not trying to drag this out either, but we all have plans. We have travel plans, work plans and other meetings. I'm hearing that we're not doing Thursday and then that we might be doing Thursday. That's only two days from now. Is there a possibility that we're doing Thursday or not?

The Chair: Mr. Clerk, can you advise, please?

The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Simon Larouche): Our request for sitting on Thursday evening was denied by the services of the House of Commons.

Mr. Doug Shipley: Okay.

The Chair: We didn't want Thursday evening anyway.

Mr. Glen Motz: Is tomorrow likely impossible as well?

The Clerk: There is no request made for tomorrow, so the only options for sitting this week would be for another committee to cancel its own meeting and having your whips decide to take that slot. The other request that was made was for an extension—

Mr. Glen Motz: We can have it Friday morning at the Liberal convention.

The Chair: You're trying to intrude on my convention time, I see.

Mr. Glen Motz: I wouldn't do that, Chair.

The Chair: I understand.

Are there any further interventions?

Is it the will of the committee to adopt this report?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Chair: I believe we have consensus. Thanks, all of you.

That being said, we shall carry on with our further business.

Pursuant to the order of reference of Thursday, June 23, 2022, the committee resumes consideration of Bill C-21, an act to amend certain acts and to make certain consequential amendments related to firearms. The committee resumes clause-by-clause consideration.

I welcome, once again, after a long absence, our officials. It's good to see you. We'll do our best to get this done.

At the point when we last engaged in clause-by-clause, we were embroiled in a vigorous debate on amendment G-4, which has been withdrawn. That effectively adjourns that particular debate.

We will continue.

I'm sorry. I forgot to introduce our officials.

From the Department of Justice, we have Marianne Breese, counsel, criminal law policy section; Paula Clarke, counsel, criminal law policy section; and Phaedra Glushek, counsel, criminal law policy section. From the Department of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, we have Rachel Mainville-Dale, acting director general, firearms policy. From the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, we have Rob Daly, director, strategic policy, and Kellie Paquette, director general, both from the Canadian firearms program.

Once again, thank you for joining us today. Your participation is much appreciated.

We will recommence as close as I can figure out to where we are.

You all should have received a new package of amendments. We start at this point with G-3. I believe that is standing in the name of Ms. Damoff.

Please go ahead.

(On clause 1)

• (1605)

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

I would like to move G-3.1, which deals with ghost guns or 3-D printed guns, as they're also known.

Essentially, when G-4 was withdrawn, an important part of that amendment was a change in paragraph (i) that would incorporate firearm parts into the legislation. That is important because ghost guns, or 3-D printed guns, rely on actual firearm parts in order to be usable.

All members can agree that this growing issue needs to be addressed urgently. It was actually part of our study on guns and gangs, which we were able to produce a unanimous report on. Many of us went to the RCMP gun vault, and we were able to see how quick and easy it is for criminals to 3-D print the receiver portion of a firearm illegally.

I met with police services across the country who told me how worried they are about ghost guns infiltrating our communities. Investigators, like Michael Rowe of the Vancouver police service, whom colleagues will remember, appeared at our committee during our study on guns and gangs. My colleague Mr. Noormohamed and I met him in Vancouver. He emphasized the need to create legislative solutions to address this gap so that police would have the tools they need to apprehend those who are creating ghost guns.

I'm just going to quote some of Inspector Rowe's testimony from when he appeared at committee. He said:

For example, one of the trends we're seeing out here in Vancouver right now is the use of privately made firearms or "ghost guns". During the gang conflict, we're seeing more ghost guns, specifically in the hands of people who are involved in active murder conspiracies or people who are believed to be working as hired contract killers. Ghost guns can be 3-D printed or modified from what's called a Polymer80 handgun....

Modern 3-D printing materials can produce a durable firearm capable of shooting hundreds of rounds without a failure. For example, one of my teams recently completed an investigation in which we executed search warrants on a residential home. Inside this home, we located a sophisticated firearms manufacturing operation capable of producing 3-D printed firearms. They had firearm suppressors and they were completing airsoft conversions—converting airsoft pistols into fully functioning firearms.

This amendment that I put forward, colleagues, is in direct response to Inspector Rowe's ask, where he said:

I'd respectfully like to submit that a potential solution would be to bring in legislative remedies to regulate the possession, sale and importation of firearm parts such as barrels, slides and trigger assemblies. This type of legislation would give us, the police, the necessary tools to be able to seize these items, get active enforcement action and more effectively target the manufacturing of privately made firearms.

Police services across the country are sounding the alarm on this problem, and the amendments we're introducing to address ghost guns are another reason Bill C-21 is an essential piece of legislation that would increase public safety.

There are also many amendments coming forward that will add the words "firearm part" to legislation, and this would help address the ever-growing problem of ghost guns in our country.

In order to do all of the other pieces that we need to do with firearm parts, we first need to pass G-3.1. Therefore, I'm asking for everyone's support on an issue that is a growing concern across the country. It will actually put us ahead of gangs and organized crime, and it will truly make a difference for police services right across the country.

I'm hoping that colleagues will support this.

Thanks, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Thank you.

We have Mr. Julian, followed by Mr. Motz.

Please go ahead, Mr. Julian.

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Thanks, Mr. Chair.

I am just going to speak briefly, because I think this is fundamentally important to pass. The bill, particularly the provisions related to ghost guns and cracking down on criminals, is something we need to move forward on.

Ms. Dancho referenced the delay. She's quite right. There has been a delay on the government side for the last few months. That being said, now that we're moving forward again, I believe we need to move forward in an effective way. Here's why: We know to what extent ghost guns are appearing right across this country. In the United States, the Biden administration has cracked down on ghost guns. United States law enforcement has seized over 20,000 illegally manufactured, untraceable ghost guns in the past year.

As you'll recall, we had the Department of Justice before us. Up until that last week, when we asked them to start compiling the fig-

ures, they actually didn't have figures that they could share with us. Presumably, the increase in Canada has been as dramatic as it has been in the United States. Certainly, anecdotally in our region of the Lower Mainland of British Columbia, we're seeing a remarkable, tragic increase in the number of ghost guns. Right across the country, in certain jurisdictions it's up to 10 times, even 40 times, the number of seized ghost guns—untraceable weapons.

The reality of cracking down on criminals means adopting this amendment. There are many amendments to come to deal with ghost guns. I think we're all aware, all four parties around the table, of the risk that comes from not taking action to close the loopholes that exist currently in the law on ghost guns. Certainly law enforcement has signalled this to us as well.

I'm hoping that we would rapidly pass this amendment. Thank you.

• (1610)

The Chair: Thank you.

It will be Mr. Motz, followed by Madame Michaud.

Mr. Glen Motz: Thank you very much, Chair.

I have a number of questions in regard to this.

I'm curious. We are targeting, so to speak, ghost guns in this particular amendment, but we don't mention them. I think it would be helpful if we mentioned what we're talking about, if we actually mentioned ghost guns. It certainly is an issue that has taken off across the country, and it has to be addressed. We agree.

There is one other thing I would like to ask the officials about. Currently—correct me if I'm wrong, please—there is nothing prohibiting a member of the public from ordering parts for a firearm from the U.S. and having them brought into Canada. Is that correct?

Ms. Paula Clarke (Counsel, Criminal Law Policy Section, Department of Justice): That's correct.

Mr. Glen Motz: If that's the case and if the printing of ghost guns requires some metal parts, which we know, would it not be a prudent addition to have here that anybody who brings firearm parts into the country requires a PAL or an RPAL in order to do so?

Would that not solve the problem? Help me understand what some of the nuances might be.

Ms. Phaedra Glushek (Counsel, Criminal Law Policy Section, Department of Justice): We can't speak to what other motions could or could not do, unless we are being given permission to speak to motions that are possibly going to be introduced later.

Do we have permission to do so from the chair?

The Chair: If the committee permits, I believe that Mr. Noormohamed wishes to respond to this. Is that okay?

Mr. Glen Motz: Sure. I'm not done with my intervention, but yes, please.

The Chair: Okay, go ahead.

Mr. Taleeb Noormohamed (Vancouver Granville, Lib.): I have proposed an amendment in this regard. I'm prepared to waive privilege on that specific one. In fact, I'm happy to waive privilege on all my ghost guns amendments, because I do think this will answer—

Mr. Glen Motz: All your ghost guns personally, or—

Mr. Taleeb Noormohamed: Mine personally, as well as others.

I think it would be important. If we're having a fruitful conversation about ghost guns, I think it's important to know that the importation of parts is something we are seized with in these amendments as well.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Noormohamed.

Mr. Motz, carry on, please.

Mr. Glen Motz: Thank you.

I appreciate that, Taleeb.

Go ahead, Ms. Glushek.

Ms. Phaedra Glushek: With respect to other ghost gun amendments that might be moved, the government is adding “firearm part” to various provisions in the Criminal Code such as importation, so trafficking or smuggling offences. They will be added to that.

There is no requirement currently in the law that someone has to have an RPAL or a PAL. I can turn to my colleague from Public Safety, who can speak to a motion being moved in the future.

• (1615)

Ms. Rachel Mainville-Dale (Acting Director General, Firearms Policy, Department of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness): Thank you.

There is a motion that you will see with regard to requiring a PAL, a possession and acquisition licence, in order to import or purchase a firearm part as it will be defined in this motion.

Mr. Glen Motz: Is that just a PAL, or is it an RPAL as well?

Ms. Rachel Mainville-Dale: It will be a PAL, a possession and acquisition licence.

Mr. Glen Motz: Okay.

We're trying to tighten up ghost guns. We should probably include RPAL, because a person with a PAL can acquire.... You're not supposed to have a handgun if you don't have an RPAL permit—

The Chair: May I suggest, Mr. Motz, that when those amendments come up, you could propose such an amendment?

Mr. Glen Motz: Okay. Fair enough.

Speaking about ghost guns and the idea that we should have some changes to them, the motion is coming up. In fairness to Mr. Noormohamed, I have not reviewed too far ahead some of the amendments that are coming forward. I will reserve an opportunity to speak on this a little bit later.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Motz.

We will go now to Madam Michaud, followed by Ms. Dancho.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'd like to thank Ms. Damoff for introducing this amendment. I won't repeat my colleague's and Mr. Julian's arguments. We saw firsthand the growing problem of ghost guns when we visited the Royal Canadian Mounted Police vault. It's high time we legislated on this. This is an emerging problem that police officers are facing. We've heard from many of the witnesses who have come before the committee about the urgency of legislating on this.

I will say no more, Mr. Chair. The Bloc Québécois will vote in favour of this amendment.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Michaud.

[*English*]

We'll go now to Ms. Dancho, followed by Mr. Noormohamed, potentially.

Ms. Dancho, go ahead.

Ms. Raquel Dancho: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I appreciate the remarks from Mr. Motz and others. I have also heard these things from police across the country. In fact, Winnipeg police have been hard at work. They just made quite a large bust of ghost guns, in fact dozens of them, that were going for \$7,000 on the streets. I have talked to police forces and police officers who predict that this may overtake other firearms that are being smuggled in that we know are also very popular. Eight to nine out of 10 Toronto handguns used in crimes are smuggled. If criminals are able to easily print them, which is increasingly so, as we've heard in this committee and from police officers in our own private conversations, this may overtake that, actually.

I believe it's imperative, and I support measures to do so. However, I do have a couple of questions of clarification. I have two quick things. Other motions to amend are being brought forward, and I appreciate Mr. Noormohamed's allowing us to discuss those.

This one in particular simply adds “firearm part” to prohibition orders and other things. Is that correct? It's just amending some parts so far, and other amendments will kind of add “firearm part” to other areas of the Firearms Act. Is that a fair assessment?

The Chair: Mr. Noormohamed is nodding, as are the officials.

Ms. Raquel Dancho: Thank you, Mr. Chair, for translating that.

There's another thing I wanted to ask. I believe the NWest and RCMP refer to firearm parts with a different term, as “essential components”. Is that correct? Do we want to be consistent with that? Is that important? I want to make sure we're not being inconsistent.

Within that, perhaps, is there a categorical difference between what the RCMP describe as an “essential component” and a “firearm part”, or are we talking about the same thing interchangeably?

Ms. Phaedra Glushek: This definition is for the purposes of the Criminal Code. I can turn to my colleague about how they would operationalize this definition.

The definition is with respect to two specific parts, the barrels for firearms and slides for handguns, which are the most common pieces that are used. If it were broader, it would include possibly all parts of a firearm. We wanted to limit the scope—not “we”, but the government—to those two that are the most difficult and common.

I'll turn to my colleague Kellie.

• (1620)

Ms. Kellie Paquette (Director General, Canadian Firearms Program, Royal Canadian Mounted Police): Thank you.

“Components” and “parts” are used interchangeably.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Dancho.

Ms. Raquel Dancho: Thank you.

The Chair: Mr. Noormohamed has already made his intervention.

Mr. Ruff, go ahead, please.

Mr. Alex Ruff (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC): Super quickly, on the operationalization of this, how's that going to be done? To some extent, other things are serialized. There are ways to track things.

Is there any plan to do that? Basically, if it's tied to a piece of legislation or the Criminal Code, and you're finding that, for lack of a better term, the illegal firearm.... When somebody is not allowed to do it, if they're in possession of these parts and they don't have the appropriate PAL or RPAL, depending on the firearm type we're talking about, that's how the charge would be laid.

Is that how it's going to be operationalized?

Ms. Rachel Mainville-Dale: Thank you for the question.

The answer is that, in future motions, you are going to see that it will require a PAL in order to acquire or import a firearm part, as defined, but the possession, like ammunition, is not going to be criminalized.

Mr. Alex Ruff: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.

Are there any further interventions on this amendment?

Seeing none, is it the will of the committee to pass this amendment?

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

The Chair: We go now to G-3.2.

We'll go to Ms. Damoff, please.

Ms. Pam Damoff: Thank you, colleagues, for supporting that amendment. It was an important one. I'm hoping I will get the same enthusiasm for the next amendment.

As we know, our committee has been working hard to engage Canadians from all walks of life about how we can do more to protect communities from gun violence. When we decided to pull

amendments G-4 and G-46, we were clear that we were committed to listening to Canadians of all backgrounds to ensure that we get this important piece of legislation right.

We've heard extensively from different experts in the field and from people representing the entire country. At committee, we heard from and received written briefs from gun control advocates, indigenous leaders, academics, survivors of gun violence and medical professionals, who all supported legislation to ban military-style assault weapons. Canadians support our government's efforts to ban firearms that exceed safe civilian use.

Recently, our government received the final report of the Mass Casualty Commission, which examined the worst mass shooting in Canadian history. The MCC, as it's known, made a substantial list of thoughtful recommendations, including on gun control. It called on all governments to “help implement these recommendations, which will contribute to ensuring safer communities for everyone. We all have work to do. It is time to act.”

Mr. Chair, that's what the Liberal members of the committee intend to do. This proposed amendment before the committee aligns with the recommendations put forward in the final report of the MCC.

Today, Wendy Cukier of the Coalition for Gun Control released a statement that highlighted how impactful these amendments will be. She said:

No law is ever perfect but Bill C-21 is a game changer for Canada and should be implemented as soon as possible. The law responds to most of the recommendations of the Mass Casualty Commission and the demands of the Coalition for Gun Control...which, with more than 200 supporting organizations, has fought for stronger firearm laws for more than thirty years.

The work of the MCC, the Coalition for Gun Control and our committee has led to this moment. The work we will do here today will make Canada a safer place to call home.

I'd like to get into what's included in the new technical definition proposed in this amendment, because it differs from the former definition that was put forward.

First and foremost, there is no list, so G-46 will not be reintroduced. This new definition is forward-looking only. It provides the clarification that gun owners need, and the protection that gun control advocates have long called for.

Let me be clear. The definition only applies to firearms that have yet to be created.

Second, in drafting the previous amendment, the French interpretation of “shotgun or rifle” was drafted as “*fusil de chasse*”. The literal translation is a “hunting firearm”, which is obviously inconsistent with the intention of the provision, and that wording has been removed.

Finally, the phrase “designed to accept” has been replaced with “originally designed with”. What we heard was that the previous language was too broad, and that any firearm with a detachable magazine could realistically accept another. After listening to that feedback, we updated our language.

Mr. Chair, the committee and Canadians now know how the new definition differs from the previous one, so I'd like to get into the technical definition we've put forward. The amendment reads:

(1.1) The definition "prohibited firearm" in subsection 84(1) of the Act is amended by striking out "or" at the end of paragraph (c), by adding "or" at the end of paragraph (d) and by adding the following after paragraph (d):

- (e) a firearm is not a handgun and that
- (i) discharges centre-fire ammunition in a semi-automatic manner,
- (ii) was—

• (1625)

Ms. Raquel Dancho: I have a point of order.

I'm sorry. I apologize for interrupting.

I believe the member misspoke. She mentioned, "a firearm is not a handgun". I think she meant to say, "a firearm that is not a handgun".

I mention it because I know it's important that we get this on the record.

The Chair: I heard the same thing. I think your intervention is correct.

Ms. Pam Damoff: I'm sorry. What did I say?

The Chair: I believe you said, "a firearm is not a handgun".

Ms. Pam Damoff: I'm sorry. It's "(e) a firearm that is not a handgun and that".

I'll continue:

- (ii) was originally designed with a detachable cartridge magazine with a capacity of six cartridges or more, and
- (iii) is designed and manufactured on or after the day on which this paragraph comes into force; ("*arme à feu prohibée*")

I'd like to break down each element in a way Canadians can understand. Before I do, Mr. Chair, I want to be very clear. In order for a firearm to be determined to be prohibited by this new definition, all four elements must be met.

I'll start with this: The definition does not apply to handguns. Our government is already taking decisive actions on handguns by freezing the market, a measure the vast majority of Canadians support. We know the definition is not applying to handguns.

The next element is that it only applies to semi-automatic firearms that shoot centre-fire ammunition. As my colleagues will remember, Mr. Noormohamed did a firearms 101 seminar. I won't get into all of that, but I will remind you that centre-fire ammunition is ammunition that is larger than rimfire ammunition. Rimfire is most commonly used in hunting firearms.

We also know that semi-automatic is just one action a firearm can be manufactured with. The semi-automatic action—

Mr. Alex Ruff: I have a point of order, Mr. Chair. I want to make sure I heard Ms. Damoff correctly.

Did you say that the majority of hunting firearms are rimfire? Is that what you said?

Ms. Pam Damoff: They're most commonly found in hunting firearms.

Mr. Alex Ruff: That's incorrect, but that's fine.

The Chair: Carry on.

Ms. Pam Damoff: Semi-automatic action is—and this is quoting Murray Smith from the RCMP—"where much of the loading action is done automatically by the firearm. It's kind of like having an automatic transmission on a car versus a standard." It is automatic for the user.

All of these actions, like bolt, lever, hinge and pump—actions that require more manual effort to reload—remain unaffected by this new proposed definition. For folks following along at home, we're talking about guns that fire larger bullets and for which most of the loading is done automatically. This seems pretty reasonable to me, and it certainly does to the members on this side.

The next criterion that must be met is a firearm that "was originally designed with a detachable cartridge magazine with a capacity of six cartridges or more". Again, for those at home, we can refer to cartridges colloquially as bullets. It's also important to note that the legal magazine capacity in Canada is five. Anything larger is deemed to be too big and is illegal. We're only talking about guns that fire a large number of bullets, where much of the loading action is done automatically. The definition is forward-looking only. It applies only to guns that have not been invented yet.

In the amendments I submitted yesterday, I also included a provision that will ensure that there's a five-year legislative review of this definition to ensure the right balance has been struck.

In summary, this definition only applies to future guns that are designed to fire a large number of big bullets, where much of the loading action is done automatically. In the words of Canadian Doctors for Protection from Guns, these amendments are "A victory for science, public health, and Canadian values".

What we have before us is a reasonable and technical definition. It also—and I want to stress this—does not take away from the firearms that were deemed prohibited in the 2020 order in council that banned 1,500 kinds of assault-style firearms, including the AR-15, from our country. Those firearms remain prohibited.

Today what we have before us are new amendments, including a new technical definition that provides clarity and sets an objective standard of what constitutes a prohibited weapon. It's a technical definition that the majority of Canadians support, and it was supported by the Mass Casualty Commission.

I've been on this public safety committee since I was elected in 2015. I've met with and listened to survivors of gun violence, domestic abuse and mass shootings, who have worked with our government to introduce legislation to strengthen gun control and enhance our public safety. That's why, in my community of Oakville North—Burlington, I hear from my constituents about the need to strengthen our gun control laws. One life lost to gun violence is one too many.

As someone who has advocated for eight years for a strategy to address and prevent gun violence, it gives me great pride to be part of a government that's introduced this legislation, which is the strongest piece of gun control legislation in our lifetimes.

I was really disappointed to see that already my colleagues across the way in the Conservative Party are spreading misinformation. Bill C-21 is a strong piece of legislation, and it has important aspects beyond the technical definition I've talked about today. Canadians are concerned about their safety and about gun violence. There isn't a one-size-fits-all solution to address gun violence and crime, but Bill C-21 is one tool in our tool box to address gun violence specifically and to ban guns that were designed to kill the most people in the shortest amount of time. It will bolster border and law enforcement capacity, reduce the number of firearms in circulation in Canada, stop gun crime before it starts, create red-flag and yellow-flag laws, and provide resources to help combat domestic violence involving firearms.

We're making critical investments in housing, mental health supports and youth programs to address the root causes of crime and to set young people up for success. We also created the first-ever action plan to end gender-based violence. All these investments and actions by our government, including Bill C-21, are part of our government's broader strategy to keep Canadians safe and healthy. Bill C-21 is a critical bill that needs to be passed as soon as possible.

I just want to reiterate, Mr. Chair, that we all need to be taking a public health approach to gun control. This is one part of that approach.

• (1630)

I call on my colleagues to support this amendment. Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Damoff.

We go next to Mr. Julian, followed by Ms. Dancho and Madam Michaud.

Mr. Julian, please go ahead.

Mr. Peter Julian: Thanks, Mr. Chair.

I'll speak briefly, again, because we have 160-odd pages of amendments, and I know that now that we're back on the rails, given, as I mentioned earlier, the issue around ghost guns, we have to proceed in an effective way.

I will be supporting this amendment, not only for the reasons that Ms. Damoff cited—the Mass Casualty Commission made strong recommendations in this regard—but also because of an issue that the NDP has raised in the House around the issue of manufacturers not being subject to a tight regime around approval and classifica-

tion. Manufacturers and importers, as we heard in our questioning of witnesses who came from the ministry, aren't subject to an iron-clad process right now. The companies can classify firearms in their own way. That's not appropriate given that such a loophole can lead to abuse, either inadvertent or conscious.

I'll be supporting the technical amendment because it helps close those loopholes. That's very important.

These amendments around ghost guns crack down on criminals. This amendment subjects manufacturers and importers to a regime that is tighter, and it ensures that they have to go through a due process. That is a shift away from saying to responsible gun owners that the focus of the bill will be on them. I think that's an important element to retain as we go through the discussions of these amendments—that if we're looking to tighten the rules, manufacturers and importers are a part of that, as is, certainly, cracking down on criminals.

I'll be supporting this amendment.

• (1635)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Julian.

We go now to Ms. Dancho.

Ms. Dancho, go ahead, please.

Ms. Raquel Dancho: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I have a number of comments and then some very important questions for the officials, for clarification.

I know that this area, formerly withdrawn amendment G-4 and the list that accompanied that, which has not been brought back—and I appreciate that—caused a lot of turmoil. That was over four or five months ago. It also caused a lot of stress within the hunting community and in the anti-gun community as well.

I just want acknowledge that I recognize that there were threats made to many members of this committee and to officials. I think it's important, as we get into this very important democratic discussion that we were tasked with, which is our duty at this committee, to acknowledge that Conservative members, me included, have not been immune to that abuse and those threats. I understand, on a personal level, how difficult it is for many of us to come to the table and have an honest and democratic dialogue about this.

Mr. Chair, I want to acknowledge that, going forward, it is my goal to ensure that each of us has the opportunity, the freedom and the protection to fight in our corner and to make our points known, but that I fully denounce, as do all Conservative members, any abuse or violence directed towards any members of this committee or any members of government. I just want to be very clear about that.

Going to this definition, I appreciate Ms. Damoff's overview. I appreciate it, and I will get to some questions, but I do want to address a few things that she said.

I appreciate, again, that this is a heated debate or that it has been in the past, but I don't appreciate the allegation that there has been misinformation over the past 24 hours from Conservative members, and I do want to address some misinformation that I think was shared, perhaps by accident, by Ms. Damoff.

Just to be clear, hunting guns take centrefire ammunition. It would be completely inhumane to hunt a deer or anything larger than a deer with rimfire. Centrefire ammunition is extremely common. You cannot hunt a big animal with rimfire, or it would not be humane to do so. That is very standard. I just want to be very clear about that since, again, we are talking about hunting rifles in many cases in this regard.

Ms. Pam Damoff: I have a point of order, Mr. Chair.

I just want to apologize to the honourable member and recognize that I misspoke.

What I should have said was that rimfire will not be impacted by the definition, but you're absolutely correct and I apologize.

Ms. Raquel Dancho: It's no problem. It is a complicated issue with lots of details.

I do have a number of clarifying questions because I have been bombarded, as I know all members have. Certainly on this side, on the Conservative side, we have received a lot of questions from constituents and others.

I want to make a couple of other statements on the French interpretation in particular. It was "*fusil de chasse*". As Ms. Damoff mentioned, that is "hunting rifle" as a direct translation. Can we just clarify what the French word is now? Also, is that still an accurate French word to describe what's in this new definition, please?

That's my first question. I have a few.

The Chair: I think that's a question for the officials.

Ms. Rachel Mainville-Dale: With regard to it in English, it talks about "a firearm that is not a handgun". In French, it's a very literal translation.

[*Translation*]

In French, it's "*une arme à feu qui n'est pas une arme de poing*".

[*English*]

It's an exact literal translation.

• (1640)

Ms. Raquel Dancho: Okay. Thank you.

There was a mention from Ms. Damoff of what the difference is between this definition and the last one. Just so folks are clear, I'm going to briefly outline what the last one was, if you'll just bear with me. I do think it's important, given how contentious this was at the time.

The last definition, which was withdrawn, was:

a firearm that is a rifle or shotgun, that is capable of discharging centre-fire ammunition in a semi-automatic manner and that is designed to accept a detachable

cartridge magazine with a capacity greater than five cartridges of the type for which the firearm was originally designed,

Can we be a bit more specific and elaborate on what specifically is different in the new one versus the old one? I'm really not clear. I believe it was something about original design, but can we get into further detail about what the difference is, please? Then I have more questions.

The Chair: Go ahead.

Ms. Rachel Mainville-Dale: Thank you.

The definition has been simplified. The change with regard to "rifle or shotgun", that has been changed to "a firearm that is not a handgun".

With regard to capturing the government's intent to capture firearms that have a detachable magazine and how to differentiate those that are intended for small detachable magazines, which are quite acceptable in Canada for hunting purposes, from the concept of large-capacity magazines or those that are designed for those large-capacity magazines, that language has been simplified to "was originally designed with a detachable magazine with a capacity of six cartridges or more".

Ms. Raquel Dancho: Okay. If I'm clear, then, it's the original design. If I have a firearm and I have altered it and it then otherwise would fit this definition, it wouldn't fit this definition. I hope it's clear what I'm trying to say. If it wasn't originally manufactured in a given way and then I altered it, and only by altering it did it fall under this definition, for the rest of it, is it then falling under this definition?

I hope you understand what I'm trying to say. Again, I'm not clear on the nuance there with original versus....

Ms. Rachel Mainville-Dale: In terms of your talking about post-manufacturing modifications, that's not what we're talking about. We're talking about that original design of the firearm.

Ms. Raquel Dancho: Okay. Thank you very much.

I have a few more questions here. Actually, I have a number of them.

You mentioned "not a handgun". Other than rifles and shotguns, are there others? Why that change? Other than rifles or shotguns, are there any guns that aren't handguns that would fall under this that didn't before, or is that just a sort of semantic change?

Ms. Rachel Mainville-Dale: I believe the intent is to capture long guns.

Ms. Raquel Dancho: All long guns...? Okay. All right. Whereas you feel that "shotguns and rifles" before didn't capture all of them, can you list a type of long gun that wouldn't have been captured under "rifle and shotgun"? Can you provide one right now?

Ms. Phaedra Glushek: Hi. I just wanted to bring a bit of additional clarification.

In the French version, it was "*fusil de chasse*". That was causing some confusion. In order to clarify and simplify the definition, I understand that we used "a firearm other than a handgun" to clarify that it does not include shotguns and that each of these firearms has to meet the defining criteria.

Again, the definition is prospective in nature. If new firearms come on the market, they would have to be assessed against that definition in the future of determining whether or not it would fall under the prohibition.

Ms. Raquel Dancho: Okay. I'm going to loop in this secondary clause that's within this—at least it's in the slide deck. I'm going to read from what it was. I think it's the same in the legislation, but this language.... Maybe you can correct me. It says that this is specifically a technical definition that would cover firearms designed and manufactured after this bill comes into force. It would not affect the classification of existing firearms in the Canadian market.

I am not quite understanding what that means. Let's say I have one of these firearms that falls under this definition. I'm still allowed to own it, use it, sell it or pass it down to my kids—whatever—when this bill passes if this definition passes with it. Is that correct?

Ms. Rachel Mainville-Dale: Yes.

Ms. Raquel Dancho: Okay.

Is this, in essence, a grandfathering clause? Can anyone who owns these right now, or buys them up before this passes—if it does—keep them, use them accordingly and sell them?

Ms. Rachel Mainville-Dale: It's different from a grandfathering regime, where the classification of the firearm actually changes and people are therefore permitted to continue to own those firearms.

This is the classification of those firearms. It does not change. Therefore, they are allowed to use, possess, sell and transfer them with the existing classification of that firearm.

• (1645)

Ms. Raquel Dancho: Okay, so it only impacts new....

When we say “designed and manufactured”, what if someone is manufacturing an old design? If they newly mint a gun that otherwise falls under this definition, but it's not a new design because there are, obviously, many firearms that have....

Go ahead.

Ms. Rachel Mainville-Dale: Think of it a bit like car manufacturing. Pick your favourite car, truck or vehicle manufacturer. They're manufacturing an old design. That's not captured.

What we're talking about are new designs and manufacturing.

Ms. Raquel Dancho: Okay. If I'm a car company—I know this isn't what car companies do—I can design a 2019 Jetta and sell it in 2023, but it's technically the 2019 model. Am I still allowed to do that, as long as it's not changed in any way? It's the exact same model as it was five years ago.

Ms. Rachel Mainville-Dale: That would be the government's interpretation, yes.

Ms. Raquel Dancho: Okay. It has to be newly designed and newly minted. Otherwise, firearms that fall under this definition will continue to be.... You could buy one brand new, as long as it's not a new design.

Ms. Rachel Mainville-Dale: That's correct.

Ms. Raquel Dancho: Okay.

I have more questions, but I know others do as well, so we can go to the next speaker for now, Mr. Chair. I will have follow-up questions.

The Chair: I feel there will be ample time for you to ask these questions.

We go next to Madam Michaud, followed by Mr. Motz and Ms. Damoff.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Michaud, you have the floor.

Ms. Kristina Michaud: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Ms. Damoff, thank you for introducing another amendment that I think is better than amendment G-4, which preceded it. Obviously, it's not perfect, but I don't think we'll ever get a perfect definition of what constitutes a prohibited firearm.

However, I do have a comment about the term “*fusil de chasse*”, something we just discussed. I'm very glad we were able to remove it from the amendment. I feel it was confusing to folks who thought that a weapon they were hunting with was directly targeted. It's the same thing with the list of firearms they had tried to put into Criminal Code: I feel it's a good thing that was taken out.

I also note that item (e) of amendment G-4 was removed from the definition of what constitutes a “prohibited firearm”, which stated “a firearm that is capable of discharging a projectile with a muzzle energy exceeding 10 000 Joules, other than a firearm designed exclusively for neutralizing explosive devices.”. Item (f), which stated “a firearm with a bore diameter of 20 mm or greater, other than a firearm designed exclusively for neutralizing explosive devices,” has also been removed.

Can the officials please explain to me why this language was removed and if it will make a difference to manufacturers when they design their future models?

Ms. Rachel Mainville-Dale: Thank you for the question.

The 10 000 Joules criterion still exists today. It was included in the order issued on May 1, 2020. It's one of the criteria established by regulation and so it still exists today. It hasn't been subject to any changes.

Ms. Kristina Michaud: Thank you.

I also have a question about item (ii) of amendment G-3.2, which talks about a firearm that “was originally designed with a detachable cartridge magazine with a capacity of six cartridges or more”.

We're concerned about this item, and that we fear it could be easily circumvented by manufacturers. For example, a manufacturer could put a gun on the Canadian market with a magazine that would effectively be limited to five rounds. However, nothing would prevent the manufacturer from marketing the same weapon in the United States, where this can be done, and equipping it with a high-capacity magazine, such as 30 cartridges. It would then be easy to illegally obtain these high-capacity magazines on the black market and use them in Canada on a firearm that is now legal here.

Therefore, I was wondering if inserting “originally designed” into the definition might give manufacturers an opportunity to circumvent the requirement specified in the definition. Would it not be better to say “able to hold a cartridge magazine with a capacity of six cartridges or more”? I don't know if my question is clear to you.

• (1650)

Ms. Rachel Mainville-Dale: The government intended to target weapons based on the type of magazine for which they were originally designed. As to the wording, it's up to the committee. I would also note that high-capacity magazines are illegal in Canada.

Ms. Kristina Michaud: I'm with you on the illegality of high-capacity magazines, but there are still magazines that have had a rivet put on them to reduce the capacity from 30 rounds to five rounds, for example, which is still legal.

The government says it relied on the Nova Scotia Mass Casualty Commission's recommendation for this definition, saying that theirs is virtually the same. I note a rather significant difference, however, in that the commission's proposed definition does not include “originally designed”.

Would including “originally designed” have a significant effect on enforcement? If removed, will it make a difference to manufacturers when they are required to comply with this definition?

Ms. Rachel Mainville-Dale: From our perspective, it's important to go by the manufacturer's intent when the firearm was originally designed. My colleague Ms. Paquette may want to add something.

[English]

Ms. Kellie Paquette: Thank you for the question.

Except for the prospective aspect, my understanding is that the intent of the new definition is that it would capture the same types of firearms that were in the original definition. As for the magazines, this is one element of the definition, so it can't stand alone. It's used to identify what a manufacturer is making. In looking at the magazines as a stand-alone, there are many firearms that can accept many magazines.

This is just one element to help identify a certain type of firearm.

[Translation]

Ms. Kristina Michaud: I will stop my questions here for now, Mr. Chair.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.

[English]

We'll go to Mr. Motz, followed by Ms. Damoff and Mr. Shipley.

Mr. Motz, go ahead.

Mr. Glen Motz: Thank you very much, Chair. I appreciate the responses.

I want to clarify a couple of things I've heard to date, to make sure that we're up to speed. One is that this new definition applies only to firearms that are going to be manufactured after Bill C-21 passes. Should Bill C-21 pass and receive royal assent, it then becomes anything manufactured after that. Is that correct?

Ms. Rachel Mainville-Dale: It would be after the paragraph comes into force.

Mr. Glen Motz: It's after the paragraph comes into force.

Ms. Rachel Mainville-Dale: That's right.

Mr. Glen Motz: When is the paragraph going to come into force?

Ms. Phaedra Glushek: At royal assent.

Mr. Glen Motz: Thank you. I thought I was losing my mind there for a second. I'm sorry. It's possible, but....

The other thing you mentioned.... Again, I'm still trying to understand. I guess my mind is going back to existing firearms on the original design and your definition with “original design”, which goes to new firearms.

I think, Ms. Paquette, as you just indicated, there are many firearms that are manufactured—both that have been for decades and that could be again in the future—that have the ability to receive different sizes of magazines over the capacity that's legal in Canada. Is that correct?

Ms. Kellie Paquette: Yes.

Mr. Glen Motz: Okay.

If I'm projecting forward then, we know that a magazine capacity of five for these types of firearms.... Anything over that is prohibited in this country already. Is that correct?

• (1655)

Ms. Kellie Paquette: Yes.

Mr. Glen Motz: What we're saying, then, is if there's any firearm that's manufactured after this paragraph receives royal assent, that firearm should not be capable of receiving a magazine larger than five. Is that what you're saying?

Ms. Rachel Mainville-Dale: There's a difference between the design of the firearm and of the magazine. You have to consider separately those two different concepts in terms of the capacity of the magazine and how you can convert it, according to Canadian regulations, and then the firearm in terms of the design and what it's willing to accept. Those are two separate concepts under the Canadian Criminal Code and the Firearms Act.

Mr. Glen Motz: I'm very aware of that, but I guess what I'm looking for is just clarity. Right now in Canada our law allows centrefire long rifles. What we're talking about here is a firearm that is charged with centrefire ammunition in a semi-automatic manner. We're talking about hunting rifles and shotguns. When you're looking at this design, currently you have firearms that are hunting rifles and shotguns that are centrefire and that accept a magazine that is five rounds and can accept a magazine larger than that.

However, we all know that anything larger than that is illegal and that the magazine is prohibited. That device is prohibited. We're basically back to exactly what we have today, that a firearm originally designed with an attachment magazine with a capacity of six cartridges or more will be prohibited, which is what we have today.

Ms. Kellie Paquette: Just to add a little bit of clarity, the original design is really looking at the specifications of that firearm. Within those original specifications of the firearm, the manufacturer or the designer will indicate the intent and what magazines are intended for that firearm. They could identify a two and a four. They could identify many. Sometimes they will identify one. That doesn't mean there are no other cartridges for that firearm. This element of the definition is really to look at the intent of the manufacturing of that firearm.

In that specification, was it specified for a 20-round? Regardless of whether it could take a two or a four, what was the intent of the specifications? That's my understanding of the fourth element in that definition.

Mr. Glen Motz: I appreciate that response.

To those of you who are legal counsel and who helped write this legislation, is there a way that this could be written to make it any clearer or any cleaner?

Ms. Phaedra Glushek: There are various ways of drafting legislation. We're not the drafters of the legislation. We are in the room and we give instructions, but to say it should or should not be a different way is speculation. We can't answer that.

Mr. Glen Motz: I appreciate the response, but that's not really what I was asking. I'm asking whether this is going to be a point of confusion for manufacturers potentially—I don't know if it will or not—or firearm owners, because it doesn't apply to firearms that exist on the market today and that are in the possession of lawful gun owners today. It applies to only those that will be manufactured at some point down the road, which Canadians would buy.

Again, it may be a question that doesn't really have any impact, but I'm still curious and I want to ensure that the specifications you refer to here are not confusing and that they don't cause, as some of my colleagues around the table have suggested, the manufacturers to perhaps be prone—and I disagree with the assertion—to potentially circumventing the law and the rules around the manufacture of firearms.

Are you comfortable that this definition will clarify any confusion that the manufacturers would have?

• (1700)

Ms. Rachel Mainville-Dale: The drafting of the provision meets the government's intent in what is proposed in the parliamentary legislative process to members of this committee and to Parliament.

Mr. Glen Motz: Fair enough.

I have just a couple more questions. Again, to review, this does not apply to bolt action or lever action. It's only semi-automatic. It's new designs, new manufacture after this is passed. It does not include any hunting rifle or shotgun that currently exists on the market today save, I suspect, all of the guns—the 1,500 or 2,000—that are listed in the order in council of May of 2020. Is that correct?

Ms. Rachel Mainville-Dale: All of your questions with regard to.... I'll stop all of the ones before the May 2020 OIC, so yes, yes, yes.

With regard to the May 2020 OIC, there is no change whatsoever that is going to be impacted by this definition. In fact, anything that is on the market today that would meet this definition is not impacted by this definition. There is no change of classification proposed as the result of this definition.

Mr. Glen Motz: I appreciate that answer. I'm asking probably an obvious question. Does the order in council stand as is?

Ms. Rachel Mainville-Dale: Yes.

Mr. Glen Motz: Those are all of my questions for now, Chair. I reserve the right to come back.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Motz.

It will be Ms. Damoff, followed by Mr. Shipley, followed by Ms. Dancho again.

Ms. Damoff, please go ahead.

Ms. Pam Damoff: I don't need to ask it now, Chair. It was about the order in council, and Mr. Motz asked it.

The Chair: Very well.

We'll go now to Mr. Shipley.

Mr. Doug Shipley: Thank you, Chair.

Thanks to everyone for being back here again. We're talking about Bill C-21. What a pleasure.

I have to start off by making some comments about my colleague across the table Ms. Damoff's opening remarks.

Ms. Damoff, we've had a nice working relationship I believe up until now. I don't think I'm an ultrapartisan guy, but some of your remarks quite frankly use a bad analogy. You kind of took a fully automatic weapon and mowed us all down with your opening remarks about all of your Conservative colleagues across the table spreading misinformation. I take offence to that.

An. hon. member: It's disinformation.

Mr. Doug Shipley: Disinformation, dismiss—all you guys ever use are those two words.

I've mentioned it many times. If you could show me an example of when I've even spoke about this since you brought out these new amendments, we can have that discussion. I haven't, so you can't blanket everyone.... I'm not sure what my colleagues have said or not said, and I don't think we've all said misinformation or disinformation.

We're starting off today and we have a lot of long work ahead of us, and to have the very opening remarks be so partisan, I find that a little bit objectionable, Ms. Damoff. I don't think that was a really great way to start the tone as to where we're heading on this. I just wanted to clear that up.

You mentioned that you've been on this committee since 2015 and how your residents have called on you to enforce stricter.... I don't want to paraphrase you, but I think you said stricter gun legislation. It's your party that's been in power for eight years. You've had eight years to correct things. I'm hearing day in and day out, not just from my residents, that things have gotten a lot worse in eight years. Now to sit here today and make it sound like you've done so much over eight years.... It's gotten worse across Canada, as far as I'm concerned, and the stats I think go to show that.

I'm sorry to have to start off making this about you and me having a discussion, but you kind of started it, Ms. Damoff. I took offence to some of your comments, and I wanted to feel a little better by getting it off my chest.

What I really want to talk about with this new amendment is the fact that I hope we can all agree that the original G-4 was a problem. It was probably written poorly and caused some issues. I know there's been a lot of time for your party to go back...and there were some consultations done by your minister. I'm sure you guys have had lots of meetings about this. To now see this new clause that's come out.... Quite frankly, it's just so vague. It's so poorly written.

On proposed subparagraph (ii) specifically—from someone who has been in design of product for over 25 years—to word something that says “was originally designed with a detachable cartridge magazine with a capacity of six cartridges or more” is so vague that you could drive a dump truck through that wording. You've had this long to come up with what you are really trying to do, and that's the best wording?

Some of my other colleagues have mentioned it too. It doesn't even make sense. I mean, “originally” what? Is that from a CAD design? Is that from when someone originally started the first plans? It's just vague. It really doesn't make any sense.

I guess I could ask the staff who are here today.... My colleague Mr. Motz touched on most of the questions I had about that second one.

I have no idea what “originally designed” means. That could mean just about anything. Does anybody want to jump in here and tell me how they can possibly say what “originally designed” means?

• (1705)

Ms. Kellie Paquette: I think the intent of using “originally designed” is so that it doesn't capture the aftermarket magazine. There could be firearms that were not originally designed with a certain

magazine, but then there could be a magazine that comes out in future years that also fits that firearm or that is made for that firearm. The word “originally” is so that you don't start capturing those aftermarket magazines.

Mr. Doug Shipley: I agree, but again, I'm not here to nitpick this apart, because I don't want to do the job for the government and correct their legislation on this one. However, on “originally designed”, you could have two sets of CAD designs going through an operation at the same time. One is dated five minutes before the other one, and that's the original design. It just doesn't make sense. That's what I'm trying to say. I understand what you're saying about the aftermarket, but on “originally design”, five minutes later is not the original design. It's the new design.

I'll leave it at that for now. Some of my colleagues have some comments. We'll see where this goes.

Thank you, Chair.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Shipley.

We'll go now to Ms. Dancho, who will be followed by Mr. Ruff and Mr. Julian.

Ms. Dancho, go ahead.

Ms. Raquel Dancho: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I have a couple of things.

On this definition, just so I'm clear, the police have to enforce this. Again, it has been outlined and officials have clarified, but I'm struggling to understand how a police officer would enforce this, assuming that the Liberal government, after three years, does eventually get its confiscation regime going and a number of these firearms are apprehended.

I'm not clear on how an officer is supposed to know if something is newly manufactured. Going back to the car analogy, sometimes a 2022 model and a 2021 model are only a little bit different. Has there been any thought of or discussion with police on how they would determine if a firearm is prohibited? How are they supposed to know that one is newly designed after this comes into force?

Can you elaborate at all? Perhaps it's too abstract. I'm just not clear on this actually being enforceable.

Ms. Rachel Mainville-Dale: If the definition in this legislation were to pass and it were to come into force, then our colleagues at the Canadian firearms program would be updating. As new designs come into the market, they would be updating the FRT, the firearms reference table, and law enforcement relies on the FRT.

Ms. Raquel Dancho: I see. If the manufacturer or someone orders one from the U.S., it would be stopped. The FRT would stop it from coming in or would prohibit it from being sold legally. Is that correct?

Ms. Rachel Mainville-Dale: Correct.

Ms. Raquel Dancho: Then it's up to the FRT, basically, to know these differences, if something is newly designed versus an older version. The FRT has that responsibility.

Ms. Rachel Mainville-Dale: The FRT is not a person. It's a table. It's a thing.

Ms. Raquel Dancho: Right, but it's the people who are responsible for the FRT, I suppose.

Ms. Rachel Mainville-Dale: Yes. It's the Canadian firearms program.

Ms. Raquel Dancho: Which is the RCMP, is it not?

Ms. Rachel Mainville-Dale: That's right, and colleagues at the Canadian firearms program.

Ms. Raquel Dancho: Is that not the case right now, then, with prohibited firearms? Using the FRT, the RCMP does not allow the sale of prohibited models of firearms right now. Is that correct?

Ms. Kellie Paquette: Yes, that is correct when the information is captured within the firearms reference table, but currently not all firearms in Canada are captured in the firearms reference table. When they are, yes, we use the specifications to update and create the record.

• (1710)

Ms. Raquel Dancho: Why are all not captured right now? Is it that it gets into the market and then it's added to the FRT or...?

Ms. Kellie Paquette: It's based on the classification regime. Currently, we don't have registration for non-restricted firearms. When that registration was removed for non-restricted firearms, there was no mechanism for the consistency of updating the firearms reference table. You will find that we're behind in some of the non-restricted firearms.

As we see them out in businesses, we update. We go to trade shows to try to see what new firearms are entering the market, but it is possible that we do not have all of the firearms within in Canada in the FRT.

Ms. Raquel Dancho: Specifically, though, only non-restricted... The restricted ones would be. Is that right?

Ms. Kellie Paquette: There are some instances where there have been some mistakes, where businesses have thought, based on the definition in the Criminal Code, that the firearm met a non-restricted definition, but after our review they were either linked to an OIC, or there were just some errors in that and they actually were restricted or prohibited firearms.

Ms. Raquel Dancho: Thank you.

You mentioned that there were a few instances. I'm sorry; I think I've forgotten the word. Did you say a few or many? Does this happen often, or is this a one-off situation?

Ms. Kellie Paquette: It's very difficult to determine. I know that last time we were asked for statistics on that as well, but because there's no mechanism to force the updating or for the businesses to identify to us what firearms are coming into Canada, specifically the non-restricted, I can't say how many errors there are.

The Chair: I think Ms Dancho is having a technical issue.

Ms. Raquel Dancho: I'm sorry. Can you hear me?

The Chair: Yes, go ahead.

Ms. Raquel Dancho: Okay, I don't know what happened there. I'm sorry. My connection is unstable. Please let me know if it happens again.

Okay, I think I'm clear on that.

There's one thing I want to understand better. In his announcement of this yesterday, the minister mentioned that he will also require the permanent alteration of long-gun magazines so that they can never hold more than five rounds, and he will ban the sale or transfer of magazines that hold—

Ms. Pam Damoff: I have a point of order.

I'm sorry, Raquel. Your sound is very strange. I just want to check with the clerk to make sure the interpreters are still okay because, on my end anyway, it's cutting in and out.

The Chair: Thanks. We'll check with the interpreters.

Ms. Raquel Dancho: My internet connection is strong again, so it should be okay. I'm using that updated headset.

The Chair: Are there no blizzards in Manitoba today?

Ms. Raquel Dancho: It's a sunny, beautiful day. I wish I were outside, actually.

How is that now? Is that better?

The Chair: I think it's good, so let's carry on.

Ms. Raquel Dancho: Okay. Here is my question. I'm not clear if I'm understanding this definition fully because, when the minister was announcing this yesterday, he did mention large-capacity magazines.

I'm just wondering if this is somewhere in this definition and, just to be clear, in what was provided to MPs, the media and the others: that he will require the permanent alteration of long-gun magazines so that they can never hold more than five rounds and ban the sale or transfer of magazines capable of holding more than the legal number of bullets.

Is that in this somewhere? Where is that mentioned in these amendments, or will it be in future ones that we can't talk about yet? Can I have an answer on that?

Ms. Rachel Mainville-Dale: Thank you.

That part of the minister's announcement—and I would refer you back to the news release—is outside of the bill. These are other measures that the government intends to bring forward, and that's outside of the scope of this bill.

Ms. Raquel Dancho: Okay, so that doesn't fall under this definition then. However, if we're talking about permanently altering magazines, which is the language used, that exists right now for five rounds. Magazines have to be pinned, so to speak, at five rounds, and the language used right now in legislation is “permanently altered”.

Can you tell us if that's different now because of this in regulation?

• (1715)

Ms. Rachel Mainville-Dale: Again, this is outside the scope of this bill. I would just refer you to the minister's announcement.

Ms. Raquel Dancho: Okay. The reason I ask is that it was announced when he was talking about Bill C-21, so he was announcing that there's a new definition and no list, and he was also announcing this. I'm getting a lot of questions about this.

I believe that the officials at the table right now are those who would be supporting those new regulations regarding magazine capacity. Can we have answers on those specifics? How do we get answers on what that means? It is all involved in this conversation as per the minister's announcement, and it's not clear.

The Chair: I would suggest that perhaps the officials might not be able to speak to what might be forthcoming in other matters. I don't know, but it's kind of out of the scope of this amendment in any event. The officials may answer if they wish.

Go ahead.

Ms. Phaedra Glushek: With regard to the regulations that are within the Criminal Code, we cannot speculate on timing or what would be included, but as my colleague has said, we can refer to both the Minister of Public Safety's news release yesterday, as well as the government's commitments to permanently alter large-capacity magazines.

That's about all we would be able to provide to the committee today.

Ms. Raquel Dancho: Does that include tubular magazines when he says that?

Ms. Phaedra Glushek: I have the wording of the commitment before me, if you would like me to read it. The mandate commitment is "Requiring the permanent alteration of long-gun magazines so they can never hold more than five rounds", and "Banning the sale or transfer of magazines capable of holding more than the legal number of bullets".

Those were the commitments made by the government on December 16, 2021, with respect to large-capacity magazines. Again, anything in future regulations would be confidential. We don't have any information about the timing and the scope of those regulations at this time.

Ms. Raquel Dancho: I will move on to other questions. I just have serious concerns, Mr. Chair, regarding this, because if it includes tubular magazines that includes things like the Winchester lever action, which is a very old wood stock classic gun used by farmers and hunters that very much is Grandpa Joe's hunting rifle. The Lee-Enfield gun is also Grandpa Joe's hunting rifle. I'm just very concerned that we don't have clarity on this. He announced it within the scope of the Bill C-21 amendments. If we can't get more clarity, I'm very concerned that we're not going to be able to answer the many questions we're receiving. Lots of people have tubular magazine long guns, and the Lee-Enfield is about as ubiquitous as the SKS.

The Chair: I would suggest that these concerns are, while valid, beyond the scope of this amendment. This is strictly a definition. It doesn't relate to magazines. Really, it doesn't relate to any existing firearm. That's what we've heard.

Carry on if you wish.

Ms. Raquel Dancho: I would just ask perhaps Ms. Damoff as parliamentary secretary—we talked about this offside—if the government would consider a technical briefing on that specifically, because there are a tremendous number of questions from industry and firearm owners about this. It is a growing concern. Perhaps we can have that conversation offside.

That's all for me for now, but I may have more, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Dancho.

We go now to Mr. Ruff, followed by Mr. Julian and Mr. Motz.

Mr. Ruff, go ahead, please.

Mr. Alex Ruff: Thanks, Chair.

I have a couple of things more for the parliamentary secretary.

In your opening remarks you made a couple of caveats or comments that the majority of Canadians support this definition. You talked about the consultation process. There are really two questions. How do you know this? Do you have any data or evidence that the majority of Canadians...? Could we get that tabled here so we understand where that evidence is?

Again, I did ask the minister privately in a one-on-one last Friday, I believe it was, when I was here at committee...because on the consultation process that he's taken since the previous G-4 was tabled, he said he went wide and across the country. Could we get the government to provide the committee with a list of where he went and who he saw? I'm not aware of his having visited one Conservative riding.

Again, I don't want to be partisan here. I'm just trying to understand if we're getting consultations that are only impacting some Canadians. That's my first question for the parliamentary secretary, which is tied to the logic behind this amendment.

• (1720)

The Chair: Members of the committee aren't here to answer questions. Ask her if she wishes to answer, but you might want to ask the officials these questions.

Mr. Alex Ruff: I could ask the officials if they have the information if she doesn't want to answer.

The Chair: She may answer if she wishes.

Mr. Alex Ruff: It's a straightforward question.

The Chair: It's not the role of the members of the committee to provide evidence to the committee.

Mr. Alex Ruff: I'll ask the officials maybe with the Department of Public Safety or with the firearms program, because obviously that's where some of this was built from. Do we have a list of all of the different places the minister went and who he consulted with over the last number of months?

Ms. Rachel Mainville-Dale: I would invite you to pose that question to the minister.

Mr. Alex Ruff: You don't have that information.

Ms. Rachel Mainville-Dale: Not with me, no.

Mr. Alex Ruff: All right. I guess tied to this, with the consultations for this definition, to the officials who helped drafted this, were manufacturers consulted at all?

Ms. Rachel Mainville-Dale: There were broad discussions, engagements, that were done. Again, I'm here to support the review of the motion and the bill. I would invite you again to pose this question to the minister.

The Chair: Mr. Ruff, Ms. Damoff will respond if you wish.

Mr. Alex Ruff: Thank you.

Ms. Pam Damoff: First off, the question should be directed to the minister, not to me. I'm not here to answer questions.

You asked where it comes from. In every poll that I've ever seen... I'll quote one. Ipsos did a poll that reported, "Eight in Ten (82%) Canadians Support Federal Government's Ban on Military-Style Assault Weapons". That was on May 28, 2020. It's available on their website. You can check that. It's public polling, so it's available for anyone who wants to look for it.

Mr. Alex Ruff: Did you say 2020?

Ms. Pam Damoff: That's one that I found. It's been consistent though, Mr. Ruff. It has been consistent for years.

You asked if polling was actually done. I have given you one. You can take a look. I would suspect the numbers have not changed very much from 2020 to 2023.

Mr. Alex Ruff: My question was around this definition. We're talking about this definition. "Military-style assault rifles" is not this definition. This is redefining what a prohibited firearm is.

The definition specifically speaks to what was discussed and brought forward under G-4, which is now withdrawn and rightfully so. We now have a new definition for prohibited firearms, based on what the minister announced yesterday and these amendments that were moved today by you.

I'm just asking for the consultation because that's exactly what you stated. That's fine. We don't have it. I just sort of wanted to get that clarified.

Specifically, I'll go back to the officials. If I heard correctly, from the understanding from the officials perspective, there were no manufacturers.... They are the ones that are directly impacted by this because this is a new definition in an amendment going forward for future firearms, not historical firearms. Therefore, I'm just trying to understand whether or not they were consulted because they're the ones who ultimately....

We have firearms manufactures and, again, they're not bad people. They're just producing a tool for hunters and sport shooters,

etc. I'm just trying to seek the clarity on whether or not they were involved at all in the consultation process of coming up with this definition.

Ms. Rachel Mainville-Dale: I would refer you back to the announcement yesterday that talked about how the "announcement follows engagement with Canadians across the country". It lists the different types of groups and stakeholders that were engaged with during the intervening period.

• (1725)

Mr. Alex Ruff: I'll leave it at that, Chair.

To just go again to some of the questions, Ms. Dancho made a great analogy in talking about vehicles, but again I'm just concerned about going forward.

Let's take, for example, the Browning hunting rifle Mark II or Mark III that was caught up under the previous G-4 and is no longer caught up in this. If it was to be remanufactured to the same specs in the future—if Browning produces more of these hunting rifles—they will not be captured under this because no matter how they were originally designed historically, tied to magazine capacity, they're not part of this. This is just for future firearms only.

Ms. Rachel Mainville-Dale: That's correct.

Mr. Alex Ruff: Thank you. That's it.

Mr. Chair, I would request maybe a quick recess for a break for the members. I know we'd like to have a quick huddle and maybe a bathroom break.

Thanks, Chair.

The Chair: I certainly support that. Is it okay for the committee to take a 10-minute break?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Chair: We are suspended for 10 minutes.

• (1725)

(Pause)

• (1740)

The Chair: Okay. The meeting is resumed.

I hope we all had a nice chat and a little lunch. I know I did.

Thanks to all of you.

We are engaged in debate on G-3.2.

The floor now goes to Mr. Julian, who will be followed by Mr. Motz and then Ms. Dancho.

• (1745)

Mr. Peter Julian: Thanks very much, Mr. Chair.

I've been here a while. I'm new to this committee, but I've certainly been on Parliament Hill for a while. I was in Parliament through the years of Mr. Harper's government and certainly at committee we would often receive amendments on even the same day. I appreciate that this time we've had 24 hours to digest the amendments, and we've had time to question, to appreciate our witnesses here and to get answers.

To start, we have spent well over an hour on one amendment. At that rhythm, I'm concerned that with the 145 amendments we have, it would take us through.... On the basis of what Ms. Dancho said at the beginning of this meeting, which was that the Conservatives would agree to the normal committee schedule of four hours a week, maybe making up occasionally for a day when Parliament does not sit—for example, with the Liberal convention this week-end and the Bloc convention in two weeks—at 145 hours and four hours a week, that takes us through to literally October 2024. That's not October 2023. It's October 2024.

I'm concerned about that because it.... I hope this is not a filibuster. I see some indications that it is. Some questions that are repetitive and some questions that are rhetorical. There's some debating that has nothing to do with the bill. That concerns me, because we did manage to adopt one amendment—a long time ago this evening, it seems—that deals with ghost guns, and we know that in some parts of the country the prevalence of ghost guns has increased 1,000% over the past year. That's 100% a month, Mr. Chair, so a delay of a month or two or 18 months, if we're continuing at the same rhythm, is something that, to my mind, is very concerning.

I take it on good faith that this is not a filibuster. I certainly hope it is not. I see many signs that indicate to me that it may well be. I certainly believe that we've all had time to consider the amendments. We've had time to question the witnesses as well and to get answers to those questions, and I think those answers have been very clear.

I'll express my concern, Mr. Chair, that if there is a need to advance on this.... I do understand and I agree with Ms. Dancho that the delay we've had over the last few months was caused by the government tabling amendments that had not been appropriately vetted. That is true, but two wrongs don't make a right. If the Conservatives are then delaying things, in my mind, in a way that means that we can't get to the important amendments and work through them in a forthright way, I'm concerned that we're delaying this bill even longer at a time when the ghost gun provisions are urgently needed by law enforcement and when law enforcement has called for that urgently.

I wanted to raise that concern. As I mentioned, this amendment is very clear to me, and I'll be voting in favour of it.

I wanted to flag two things.

One is that I'm beginning to sense that there is a filibuster, and I hope I'm wrong. Secondly, though, Mr. Chair, I think the idea that we would be restricted to just doing the normal committee schedule of four hours a week at the rhythm we're going right now in terms of amendments simply won't allow the effective consideration and the moving forward with this bill that are required.

I wanted to express my misgivings through you, Mr. Chair, to the committee. Hopefully, we will start moving forward on these things.

Through you, I want to express my appreciation to the witnesses. They've given very fulsome, very complete and very clear answers. I think we should take those answers and, as a committee, be effective in moving forward on this bill.

Thank you.

• (1750)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Julian.

If it's any help, I think this is a really significant amendment. I'm hopeful we won't need to extrapolate this amendment into all of them. That being said, of course as we go forward, as things develop, we will do what we need to do. We go next to Mr. Motz.

Mr. Motz, please go ahead.

Mr. Glen Motz: Thank you, Chair.

To Mr. Julian's point, and to yours that you just made in your intervention, I would agree. I think because of the importance of this particular definition and the impact on this bill and the impact on law-abiding firearms owners in this country and on manufacturers and the entire industry, if you will, this is something that we have to go through with some vigour and we need to discuss all aspects of it and understand it completely. The suggestion that since we're taking a long time on this particular amendment this is how it will be all of the time is simply untrue. I think we can be quite judicious on some of the other amendments moving forward.

Having said that, Mr. Chair, I am hopeful there will be some time to further digest this definition, but it doesn't appear as if there's any willingness by some of the other parties to do that. I will go back to something that I started with Bill C-21 when we first began our debate back in the fall. That has to do with scope. I've had conversations with many people on both sides of the aisle since Bill C-21 was introduced. You know, Bill C-21 was introduced as a handgun bill. It was debated in the House of Commons as a handgun bill, yet the majority of our debates at this particular committee since the new definitions have come out have had to do with long guns and shotguns, and they're completely out of scope.

If I understand parliamentary process, it would be reasonable, on the expansion of the scope, to go back to the House to be determined whether it is in scope, or the government could decide to put something forward so that it could be debated in the House and then brought back here to committee and we could continue to have this conversation. In fact, that may be something that the government should consider—actually bringing this definition and the new additions to this bill back to the House for debate.

Unfortunately I tried to do this last time on a motion. You ruled it to be in order and within scope. I disagreed and some horsepower in the House disagreed with you as well. That's still an opportunity that exists. Canadians heard us in the House debating a bill about handguns. Now, for the last six months or so we've been talking about long guns and shotguns and hunting rifles and things that impact a wider range of Canadians than the handgun freeze or ban or buyback process does. Now we're involving the livelihood of Canadians, the pastimes of Canadians and sustenance for Canadians who are now impacted by this particular bill.

My suggestion is that we give consideration to the fact that this definition and some of the amendments to this bill are out of scope. That would be a motion that I would present to this committee—that it be sent back to the House to have determined whether or not it is in scope and have the Speaker make that ruling.

• (1755)

The Chair: I have not ruled specifically on this amendment in this meeting. However, I have heard arguments on both sides of this question over the days, over the months. I'm inclined to maintain consistency with the previous decision that it is in scope and carry on from there. If, later on, the House feels it is not in scope, it may happen in due course that the House will address that issue. I certainly look forward to that should that be required. At the moment, I will rule that the matter is in scope at this time.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Kristina Michaud: On a point of order, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Go ahead, Ms. Michaud.

Ms. Kristina Michaud: I have a question about what you just said. If we complete the clause-by-clause consideration of the bill, but then the Speaker of the House rules that one of the items is out of scope, what happens at that point? Can you help me understand that?

[*English*]

The Chair: We're a little out of my area, but Mr. Julian might be able to respond to that.

My belief is that, before that should happen, the House would take action. The House leaders have considered this, and they will bring action to bring it into scope explicitly.

Failing that, if it is not done in due course, when we report back to the House, such elements that the Speaker might feel are not in scope at the time the bill comes back to the House, he could set them aside and possibly have them brought forward at report stage explicitly. I don't know.

I will defer to Mr. Julian, if he wishes to respond to this.

Mr. Peter Julian: I'll defer to you, Mr. Chair, because you're absolutely right. Mr. Motz is right as well.

Ultimately, confirmation of scope comes from the House, so that is something that the House can choose to do. If the House has not confirmed that, the Speaker is the one who is governed to make that decision. That was certainly the trajectory we were taking a few months ago with the amendments.

I completely agree with your interpretation of this being in scope, but ultimately, if any party questions that, the House confirming scope is an important step to take.

Mr. Glen Motz: If I may, Chair.... Thank you, Mr. Julian, for that.

I go back to Ms. Michaud's question. Hypothetically, given your ruling, if we continue to move down this path and then we find out in the weeks ahead that the House, the Speaker or both confirm that it's out of scope, what does that do to these amendments? What does that do to our discussion? What does that do to the bill?

Those are legitimate questions that we have to have answered before we decide to move forward.

The Chair: Those are all fair points.

Mr. Glen Motz: Mr. Chair, does the clerk have a view on this?

• (1800)

The Chair: The Speaker will not rule on this matter until the bill is returned to the House. The Speaker regards what happens in committee to be matters for the committee to determine. Once the bill is complete and we report it back to the House, if there are concerns about scope then, those need to be raised with the Speaker in the House and the Speaker would deal with them appropriately.

What “appropriately” means is that, if he feels at that time that there were aspects we passed that were, in his view, out of scope, I believe he would back out those provisions. He might require them to be voted on explicitly at report stage.

Mr. Julian, go ahead.

Mr. Peter Julian: You're right, Mr. Chair.

We saw this under the Harper government a number of times, I believe, where ultimately the House confirmed the scope of bills while the committee was working through amendments. I'm certainly hoping it's not going to take us 18 months to work through the amendments, which is the schedule we've sort of set up today. I hope to be profoundly wrong in this regard.

That being said, the Speaker would not rule until there's a committee report when we have finalized the clause-by-clause amendments. The House can choose, during that period, to confirm scope.

It's an important discussion, but I think it's a bit premature because we have just started clause-by-clause again, and we have, according to my schedule, a heck of a lot of hours to go. The Speaker's ruling would only take place after we report, as you've pointed out, Mr. Chair. The House can choose in the meantime to confirm scope, which I think is quite possibly a very likely outcome.

The Chair: I have been advised by the legislative clerk here, who has done phenomenal work in taking these amendments that came in yesterday and over the last few days and putting them together.

Thank you for that.

In terms of my thoughts that, if the Speaker felt they were out of scope they could be dealt with at report stage, that's not the case. They would just be pulled from the bill at that time.

Is there any further discussion on this point?

We'll go to Ms. Damoff on this point, followed by Madam Michaud.

Ms. Raquel Dancho: Mr. Chair, I've been on the speaking list for quite some time. I thought that I was after Mr. Motz.

The Chair: You certainly are. In terms of the amendment, I was thinking that we're dealing with this particular subtopic, if you will.

If you wish to respond now to Mr. Motz's comments instead or in advance, after Ms. Damoff, Ms. Michaud and Mr. Motz again, presumably we'll get back to the amendment itself.

Do you wish to respond now or wait until that time?

Ms. Raquel Dancho: I have a few clarifying questions left, not too many but a few.

I want to address a few of the things that have been said regarding a filibuster. Any suggestion that asking for an hour of questions after what, in its previous iteration, was the largest hunting rifle banning in Canadian history is kind of silly. This is what the committee is for. This was just dropped yesterday, and we're trying to understand what this is. It's very odd.

I know it's not technically a grandfathering clause, but I'm trying to understand the magnitude of this, because the last version of this was extremely serious and impacted the 2.3 million gun owners in this country and caused a country-wide uproar and mobilization of hunters, farmers and sport shooters.

I was thinking about an hour, maybe two or a few more—I don't know—to get perfect clarity on what exactly this means and the impact it's going to have. We're going to make sure that we get that clarity. I'll note that the first meeting we went through before this went forward was relatively short with peaceful orders. My expectation is that most of the amendments, assuming that there are no curve balls that we don't know about yet, will proceed in a very [*Technical difficulty—Editor*].

The Chair: Madam Dancho, I think we've lost your audio.

The clerk advises me that your connection is very intermittent. We missed the last part of what you said.

Ms. Raquel Dancho: I was wrapping up that point.

I want to also note that the last time we had this amendment, it had a very similar definition. In fact, it was almost the same. We originally called a vote to rule it out of scope, but the NDP voted against it. Then, in the House, the NDP most recently tried to—

[*Translation*]

Ms. Kristina Michaud: I have a point of order, Mr. Chair.

[*English*]

The Chair: We have Madam Michaud on a point of order, please.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Kristina Michaud: The interpreters are telling me the sound quality is keeping them from providing interpretation into French of Ms. Dancho's words.

[*English*]

Ms. Raquel Dancho: I apologize, colleagues. I don't know why this is happening. My Internet connection is fine, and I have done all the latest tests.

How is it now?

The Chair: Speak a little bit more, and we'll see if it works.

Ms. Raquel Dancho: Okay, I will try to speak slowly.

I'm also not clear on the scope. The NDP tried to move a motion in the House ruling that the last iteration, which was very similar, was out of scope, so I'm not clear why their perspective has changed. Perhaps they would like to add some clarity, but the definition is largely the same.

The Chair: I'm sorry. The quality of your sound is inadequate for interpretation.

I would say in response, if I may, that this not the same amendment. It is strictly forward looking, and that is the bottom line. It incorporates—

• (1805)

Ms. Raquel Dancho: Mr. Chair, the definition of what—

Ms. Pam Damoff: I have a point of order, Mr. Chair.

There are two things. First, Ms. Dancho is not getting interpretation, but I have a question.

Has someone challenged the chair's decision? If not, we should just go back to the clause that I've introduced. If there's no challenge of the chair, which I haven't heard yet, then we should get back to clause-by-clause and the amendment.

I'm sorry that someone can't participate virtually, but if the interpretation is not coming through, we can't just continue to take part. If there's no challenge to the chair, then we should just move on, Mr. Chair.

Ms. Raquel Dancho: Mr. Chair, my interpretation is still not coming through.

The Chair: Your connection is very sporadic.

Ms. Raquel Dancho: I will log off and restart my computer program and hope [*Technical difficulty—Editor*] in the few minutes that I'm gone.

Thank you.

The Chair: We all have to do our best.

Meanwhile, let us go to Madam Damoff.

Do you wish to carry on?

Ms. Pam Damoff: It was just the question of whether we should continue on with the amendment that I put on the floor, if there's no challenge to the chair's decision. If there is a challenge to the chair, then it's non-debatable and we'll just vote on it.

I haven't heard that there has been, so let's just carry on with the amendment.

The Chair: Madam Michaud, you were next, followed by Mr. Motz.

[*Translation*]

You have the floor, Ms. Michaud.

Ms. Kristina Michaud: I just wanted to add a clarification regarding Mr. Motz's and Mr. Julian's remarks that it was premature to think about how the Speaker of the House will rule once Bill C-21 is at report stage in the House.

I find it a little peculiar to be hearing this at this point, because just before the government withdrew its amendments G-4 and G-46, the NDP was about to introduce a motion calling on the Speaker of the House to rule on the scope of Bill C-21.

As Ms. Damoff says, if your ruling is being challenged, Mr. Chair, perhaps we should go to a vote now. Otherwise, I would be willing to go back to debating the amendment.

[*English*]

The Chair: Mr. Motz, go ahead.

Mr. Glen Motz: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

To add some clarity to my motion, I'll put it this way.

I move that the committee report the following to the House: that notwithstanding the usual practices of the House, the committee requests for the Speaker to provide a ruling as soon as possible—

The Chair: Sir—

Mr. Glen Motz: —on the admissibility of amendment G.32 in relation to the scope of Bill C-21.

The Chair: We have a motion on the floor. We can't move another motion at this time.

Mr. Glen Motz: I'm amending my own motion.

The Chair: Your motion is not on the floor. Ms. Damoff's motion is on the floor.

Mr. Glen Motz: My motion is still on the floor.

I said "I move" to determine whether this is in scope.

The Chair: You can't move a motion while there's a motion in progress.

If you wish to challenge the decision of the chair, that's different. I think it's privileged, and it would proceed without further debate.

You cannot move another motion at this time.

Mr. Glen Motz: We will wait until Ms. Dancho is back online.

The Chair: Absolutely. Is it your intention to challenge the chair?

Mr. Glen Motz: Yes.

The Chair: Okay.

We will wait for Ms. Dancho. We'll suspend until she comes back online.

• (1805) _____ (Pause) _____

• (1810)

The Chair: Ms. Dancho, welcome back.

In your absence, Mr. Motz challenged the chair. The question is therefore as follows: Shall the decision of the chair that this amendment is in scope be sustained?

I will ask for a recorded vote.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Kristina Michaud: On a point of order, Mr. Chair. Before we take it to a vote, I have a question for the legislative clerk, if we have time.

[*English*]

The Chair: Is it a question on the vote itself? We'll pause for a minute for the question, if you like, but no debate. This is not debatable.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Kristina Michaud: No, it's only one question.

Mr. Legislative Clerk, if the government wanted to introduce a motion to expand the scope of the bill, at what point could it do so? Should it do so before introducing new amendments that would be out of scope with the bill, such as an assault weapons amendment, or could it do so at any time until the bill returns to the House once clause-by-clause consideration has been completed?

• (1815)

[*English*]

Mr. Philippe Méla (Legislative Clerk): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

[*Translation*]

It's hard to answer your question, Ms. Michaud, because I don't have the text of the motion in question, but there are two options.

Under option one, the committee could introduce a motion to expand the subject matter of the bill and report it to the House. Once the House adopts the report, it could issue a House order allowing the committee to actually consider amendments that initially would have been out of scope with the bill.

Option two is that the government, or anyone, really, could introduce a motion to the House proposing the same thing. This would be debated during Routine Proceedings. It's one or the other.

Ms. Kristina Michaud: Can it be done at any time until clause-by-clause consideration has been completed, or does it have to be done before such motions are introduced?

Mr. Philippe Méla: Again, it depends on the text of the motion and what it includes. I don't have the actual motion in front of me, so it's hard for me to answer you.

Generally, this type of motion comes before the introduction of amendments, so that the subject matter of the bill can be expanded immediately and the amendments considered after the fact. If I understand correctly, in this case you're talking about a retroactive motion. The extent to which that would work depends on the wording of the motion. So it's a little difficult for me to definitively answer your question.

Ms. Kristina Michaud: Thank you.

[*English*]

The Chair: Shall the decision of the chair be sustained? If you vote yes, you are voting to sustain the decision of the chair. If you vote no, you're voting to set it aside. A tie goes to the chair.

I will ask the clerk to do a voice vote.

(Ruling of the chair sustained: yeas 6; nays 4)

The Chair: Thank you, all. The decision of the chair is upheld. As far as we are concerned in this committee, until it gets back to the House, it is in scope.

I have on my list Madam Michaud, followed by Mr. Motz.

Mr. Taleeb Noormohamed: I'm sorry. I have a point of order, Mr. Chair.

Just for the benefit of everyone here in the room and for the staff, will we go until 6:30, or is there an intention to keep going beyond that time?

The Chair: We have until 7:00, although I understand there's a hockey game that starts around 7:00—

Voices: Oh, oh!

The Chair: —so we might want to see how we go. Passing this straight away will get you to the hockey game.

Next we have Mr. Motz, followed by Ms. Dancho.

Mr. Glen Motz: Mr. Chair, I move that the committee report the following to the House: that notwithstanding the usual practices of the House, the committee request to the Speaker—

The Chair: Mr. Motz, we cannot have a motion at this time. We are engaged in a motion, Ms. Damoff's motion. Until we finish this motion, we can't entertain another motion.

Do you have any further remarks on this motion?

Ms. Dancho, please go ahead.

If we have a problem with sound, in my experience, cutting off your video might help, but let's see how it goes.

• (1820)

Ms. Raquel Dancho: Okay. Please let me know. I apologize, colleagues. This has not really happened to me before.

I have a couple of questions or kind of a big question, I suppose, on this amendment. Just to be clear on what our caution is with this.... Liberals, or particularly the minister in his announcement, made it very clear: He is looking to ban what he has dubbed so-called assault-style weapons, a term that the government is trying to establish in this definition. He has said that these are designed for the battlefield and are unsafe for public use, which is what Ms. Damoff alluded to in her remarks as well, making these all sound very scary.

Of course, Conservatives and many firearms owners take issue with this, as we found in G-4 and G-46 that many commonly used firearms used for hunting were encompassed in what they were calling assault-style weapons. That was made very clear. Our caution is that, if this amendment is being brought forward, the definition of what they want to describe now is what they've been calling assault-style. This is now their definition. As I said, if they're so dangerous, why is there this...? It's not grandfathering, but I've been calling it, for lack of a better term, a forward-looking clause. If the Liberals are saying that they're too dangerous for public use—which, of course, we disagree with and firearms owners disagree with—why are they letting people keep them, and why are they having a forward-looking clause?

That's what we're not understanding. That's why we feel like there's something else going on here that we're not clear on, given the arguments that have been made for the last number of months and years by Liberals.

I'm not sure. I feel like that is, perhaps, more of a political question, so I don't mean to put the officials on the spot. However, that is our hesitation here, because of what was established in the last amendments and what the argument continues to be, including this announcement that the minister made yesterday, saying battlefield guns, "assault-style" weapons and all these slogans and words he's been using. Again, if they are so dangerous, why are you letting people keep them?

Perhaps Ms. Damoff can explain, and then perhaps we won't feel so cautious and will understand that this is really what it is, that you're letting everybody keep these. Is that what we're seeing here?

I just have one follow-up, and then I'll be done.

The Chair: If you're asking questions of Ms. Damoff, she's not here to answer questions. She's a member of the committee. She may engage in a debate as she wishes, and you may certainly ask questions of the officials.

Ms. Raquel Dancho: I'm not trying to put her on the spot. I'm just trying to explain why we're being very cautious about this because it really doesn't make sense, Mr. Chair. I think that is obvious, given the rhetoric that we've heard from the Liberal government.

The Chair: That is really a matter of what we're debating right now.

Anyway, if you wish to come back at this....

We'll go next to Mr. Noormohamed.

Ms. Raquel Dancho: No, I'm not quite finished, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Okay, go ahead.

Ms. Raquel Dancho: I did want to note that there have been no consultations through this committee process on this forward-looking clause. Had there been, we may have gotten more clarity on what exactly this means.

Again, it seems that there's a trick being pulled here because it just doesn't add up at all. There were no consultations done on this. When we were at G-4 and G-46, the government conceded that, because they were so significant as the largest hunting rifle ban in history, we were going to have eight consultation meetings as a result.

Now here we have a new definition, Mr. Chair, and no consultation on it that the committee gets to do. It just seems very strange.

The NDP did view this as out of scope before and the Bloc was open to that. It is just odd that we needed so much consultation on the prior one. Now we have a new one, yet we're not allowed to consult and we're being criticized for asking an hour's worth of questions on something that may be very significant. I'm not really clear on that.

Secondly, I appreciate that Ms. Damoff mentioned a poll, but for the government's own consultation, when I asked for an information request on public consultations on Bill C-21, they provided us information on a \$200,000 consultation. Of the 133,369 people who were consulted through that, 77% of them responded that nothing more was needed to limit access to so-called assault weapons and 81% said no to limiting more access to handguns.

This is \$200,000 and almost 200,000 people consulted, and the evidence was quite clear from their response. It doesn't really add up with that one poll that probably polled about 1,500 people, maybe 400 even.... Just to be clear, the government's own evidence was not in favour of this from a public opinion side.

Lastly on that, Mr. Chair, we know that when the government says "assault-style", they really mean hunting rifles. That was established in G-4 and G-46, which was why, it seems, the government withdrew them. It was established by hunting associations across the country. We have talked about a number of hunting rifles that are commonly used. The SKS, for example, is very commonly used as a hunting rifle in indigenous communities and others. It's just a bit frustrating in that regard.

It's not clear on capacity. I recognize that's been informed now. It's clear now. It's not in the bill, but magazine capacity does impact

a lot of these firearms and it's disappointing we don't really get to ask any questions about that.

Also, I will ask a question on the firearms advisory committee.

Is this new firearms advisory committee included in the bill? When asked about banning the SKS, the minister said that they were referring it to this firearms advisory committee. Is that in the bill? Is that being brought forward through this bill?

That is for the officials.

• (1825)

The Chair: Could the officials please respond?

Ms. Rachel Mainville-Dale: Thank you.

I would refer to the news release that was published yesterday.

The intent to re-establish the Canadian firearms advisory committee was announced by the minister yesterday. The information about that is.... As part of that, we're waiting for instructions from the minister.

Ms. Raquel Dancho: Okay, that's not being created through this bill, just to be clear.

Ms. Rachel Mainville-Dale: No.

Ms. Raquel Dancho: Mr. Chair, just to conclude, we were provided a technical briefing basically minutes after getting the slide deck for all of this. We are getting a lot of questions.

The minister is responsible for this because he announced, within the scope of Bill C-21, the announcements that we're talking about today.

I would appreciate, and I think members of the media, stakeholders and other members of Parliament would appreciate a fulsome briefing now that we've had a bit more time to digest what these amendments mean and what the capacity and magazine restrictions will mean. What is the makeup of this firearms advisory committee? Who is going to be on that? How was that decided? How can gun owners trust that it won't be biased?

These are basic questions that we need answers to.

As the lead on public safety, I would ask that you consult with the parliamentary secretary for public safety on providing another amendment. I believe there is time because we know now there won't be any more time for another public safety meeting this week, which we know Liberals are supportive of. That time's freed up, so why not have a technical briefing where we can ask more questions now that we've had time to digest this and have a few more answers from officials?

Mr. Chair, perhaps you can respond on whether you will have that conversation with the parliamentary secretary, and then I'm done.

The Chair: Thank you for your input.

We are focused on this bill and on this amendment.

I'm really going to focus our conversation on this bill and this amendment. Many of the things you spoke of are outside the scope of this bill. They're outside the scope of this amendment. They are certainly things that you can bring up with the minister going forward.

With that, I believe next on my list is Mr. Julian, followed by Mr. Noormohamed.

Mr. Julian, please go ahead.

Mr. Peter Julian: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I will be very brief.

Ms. Dancho has shown that she has had questions answered, because she's establishing a narrative around this particular amendment. She does say, and I take her at her word, that this isn't a filibuster. The repetitive nature of some of those questions or the questions that go beyond the bill are something that she says is helpful to her in doing the analysis of the amendment. I would ask her through you, Mr. Chair, if then, as I believe they should, the Conservatives consent to additional meetings. If that is indeed the case, if they have an understanding now of the amendment and if what they are trying to do is get answers, that is certainly their prerogative. What I find disturbing is at the same time as they're using up this committee time, which is their prerogative, they are refusing to have additional meetings. That's the problem, Mr. Chair.

If we're talking about a potential filibuster, or if that's the intent of the Conservatives, again, at this rhythm it will take us until October—not of this year but next year—2024 to complete clause-by-clause analysis of this bill. Ghost guns are right now at an epidemic level in certain parts of the country. The provisions in this bill that deal with ghost guns and crack down on criminals are needed. I hope that the Conservatives consent to those additional meetings because they're obviously needed. I don't object to their asking questions. I do object when they're clearly questions that have either already been answered, or that have nothing to do with the bill. I do object to that. I find that's not a useful use of our committee time.

If the Conservatives are not filibustering then I think they can show good faith by agreeing to a substantial number of other committee meetings so that we're not in this same position in October 2024 when law enforcement has said the provisions around ghost guns are needed now.

• (1830)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Julian.

Ms. Raquel Dancho: Mr. Chair, I can respond if you'd like me to.

The Chair: No, I think we have to carry on with the proper.... I will put you back on the list.

Ms. Raquel Dancho: No, I don't need to respond but he posed it to me.

The Chair: Mr. Noormohamed, please go ahead.

Mr. Taleeb Noormohamed: I will be extremely brief.

I have a couple of things to note. One is that there have been technical briefings that were held. At the last one, I understand there were only two questions asked. The great thing is that we have all but one of the officials who were on that briefing in the room today. I would invite those who are concerned to ask questions to the very same officials who are seated right there. I note that there hasn't been a whole lot of time given to actually asking questions of the officials, but a whole lot of talking. If we're going to express concerns about not being able to get information, we should avail ourselves of the individuals who are the experts and are part of this.

Ms. Raquel Dancho: I have a point of order, Mr. Chair. Mr. Noormohamed is misleading the committee. The technical briefing—

The Chair: Ms. Dancho, please wait to be recognized. I take your point but it's not a point of order. We'll carry on with Mr. Noormohamed.

Mr. Taleeb Noormohamed: We have officials in the room who are the ones who know what is going on the best in terms of the specific content. We have an opportunity to ask them questions. I think it's important that we avail ourselves of the opportunity, given that they are here sitting at 6:32 in the evening. We should take advantage of that.

Again, I would invite all to ask those questions. I do want to make one very important point to everybody who is watching this and following this. We've heard a lot of rhetoric about how people are coming after things like the Lee-Enfield. I want to be very clear about something. There are four elements to the technical definition. One is that it is not a handgun. Two is that it discharges centrefire ammunition in a semi-automatic manner. Then it's that it has a detachable cartridge with the capacity of six cartridges or more, and it is designed and manufactured on a day after this paragraph comes into force.

It is important that we not mislead people into thinking that something is happening that is not. I don't want to say much more than that, but if we're going to have thoughtful debate on these amendments, let's ground those conversations in facts because Canadians deserve that. If we're going to move forward on doing good gun legislation together, people need to be working from the truth.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Noormohamed.

We go now to Mr. Shipley.

Mr. Doug Shipley: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I have a couple of quick questions as we move along here. I think it was touched on a little bit earlier, but I will admit that I missed the point.

I need some clarification, and we're going to stick to the amendment here because that's what we're asked to do.

Regarding this amendment that defines prohibited firearm, I've already voiced my concerns that I don't think that it was very well written. I'm not going to go through that again.

What confuses me is that, if this is such a great definition of a prohibited firearm and this is the way forward and not going retroactively, at the same time, the public safety minister announced that there would also be a firearms advisory committee that will determine future bans of firearms that are presently owned by law-abiding Canadian gun owners.

If we have this definition and if we have this amendment that we've all talking about here now for hours and hours, why do we need it and what does this firearms advisory committee going to do when set up?

Perhaps someone on the extra panel could brief me on that.

Ms. Rachel Mainville-Dale: The intent that the minister announced is in the publicly available news release that was put out yesterday. I could read the news release, if you like, but it's outside of the scope of this bill.

They talk about re-establishing the Canadian firearms advisory committee to independently review the classification of existing firearms. They talk about a diverse membership, expert recommendations and appointing the committee with a certain amount of time to seek a recommendation within a certain amount of time after that.

• (1835)

Mr. Doug Shipley: Thank you.

I think your voice was very soft. Maybe I should have grabbed my earpiece. I apologize.

I heard the other side say that it has nothing to do with this amendment, but I disagree, because we're talking about firearms and the definition going forward. They both go hand in hand, and it's tough for me to make a decision on one amendment not knowing what the path is going forward. That's all I'm trying to bring up on that.

I do have some other questions, but I'll give the floor up for now, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Shipley.

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

Mr. Glen Motz: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you, again, to our officials for your patience.

Concerning the definition based on this new proposed subsection 84(1)—and I read that before I came here today—what you're striking out is a firearm that is not a handgun and that discharges center-fire ammunition in a semi-automatic manner, which are hunting rifles and shotguns. It was originally designed—and I've heard from the RCMP, Ms. Paquette, the specifications of what originally designed means—with a detachable cartridge magazine with a capacity of six cartridges or more, and is designed and manufactured on or after the date on which this paragraph comes into force.

That is a potential definition.

Can our experts and those who are legislative assistants look at this particular one? Does this fit the definition or fit the moniker that has been placed on the demand of this government that they

ban military-style assault firearms? Does this definition fit what you would commonly think was a military-style assault firearm?

Ms. Rachel Mainville-Dale: The definition as proposed captures technical characteristics of firearms that are, in the government's opinion, not suitable for civilian use and that pose a risk to public safety.

Mr. Glen Motz: Again, maybe I'll ask the RCMP, who are more into the classification of firearms. Does this definition fit anything to do with a military-style assault firearm?

Ms. Kellie Paquette: I have the same answer.

Mr. Glen Motz: You have the same answer. Interesting. Again, that kind of proves my point that there is no such definition. There is no such firearm that exists in this country that isn't already prohibited—a military-style assault firearm.

I received an email on this exact issue earlier this week. I guess that would be yesterday. This fellow has 32 years serving Canadians, and he doesn't understand why in the world “assault” is being used to describe a firearm in Canada. This does apply to this. I hope at the end of this I never hear that ludicrous phrase used to describe firearms again in this country and what the Liberals are planning to do under their virtue signalling.

Anyway, he goes on to say, “Canadians need to be educated that there are six action types of firearms. Semi-automatic is one of the actions of the six and can be defined in the Firearms Act and regulations.” I won't go into the definition because you basically provided that definition here.

We know that fully automatic firearms are prohibited in Canada and have been for 40 years. Only Canadians who have them as a collector item are able to have those types of firearms. They cannot be taken to the range. They can't be transported without an ATT, and that ATT has to be issued by the CFO.

This gentleman went on to say that he has been doing his job as an instructor for the Canadian Armed Forces throughout his career, and he's a verification officer for the RCMP. He was really curious to know who the verification officers are who are describing firearms as assault-style, because it doesn't exist.

This is not pegged at you officials, because I know that's not a term you said. However, I suppose you're forced to defend it because the Minister of Public Safety, the Prime Minister and other individuals have virtue signalled to Canadians that the assault-style are the firearms they intend to take off the streets.

There's no such firearm category of the six action styles in this country is what this individual said, which I agree with, that aren't already prohibited. He's a Canadian firearms instructor, a Canadian firearms verification officer, a range safety officer and a canine handler. These are people who are in the field, who are operational, who deal with this stuff daily and who this government has caused confusion. They are certainly confusing the Canadian public on the use of terms.

As I said, my hope is that with this definition—and I don't know whether it will pass or not—no one ever uses that term again to describe the firearms that you're trying to prohibit, because this does not fit that category. You talk to military people, which my colleague beside me has been for many years, and they will tell you unequivocally that the firearms being branded with that name they would never ever take into battle, because their lives depend on it.

I just hope that, if there are officials here who have the ear of the public safety minister that they get that term out of his mind. It's driving people bonkers because there's no such term. It is fearmongering, nothing but fearmongering, to those in the Canadian public who don't understand the current firearm legislation and the strictness of our firearm laws and what they do for Canadians.

I will leave it at that for now, Mr. Chair.

• (1840)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Motz.

Next is Mr. Ruff, please.

Mr. Alex Ruff: Thanks, Chair. I have a couple of very quick points.

I know Mr. Julian raised the concerns about the debate that's ongoing and how long it's going to take, specifically because of his concerns around the increased threat across this nation with respect to ghost guns. I fully agree, and I think that's why you saw unanimous support for the amendment we just passed.

My question is for the officials. There is nothing preventing the current government from taking what is in this legislation tied to ghost guns and passing that through regulation tomorrow, is there?

Ms. Rachel Mainville-Dale: There are certain provisions or measures that are being proposed in here that need to be based in law. They are not ones that are to be included in regulations because you need the regulation-making authority to do so in terms of taking those regulatory actions. Some of them are actually necessary as part of the bill, if that's the government's and the legislature's intent.

Mr. Alex Ruff: I got you. That's a fair response. I respect that there are aspects of it that do require legislative change.

My second point goes more to the discussion of why there are some concerns and confusion around here. We already challenged you, Chair, on the scope of this, but it goes to the question around the tech briefing. I just want it clear for all Canadians who are watching or reviewing this.

On the tech briefing, we were notified very last minute. In fact, we received the link for those MPs less than 20 minutes before the brief actually occurred. I sent a follow-up, in fact, to the parliamentary secretary at the 45-minute mark asking where it was, and we had it.

When the questions came up, there were only two people, me and Mr. Motz, and we were restricted to one question each with a follow-up, and I had a pile. Before we knew it, the tech briefing was over. Again, I have nothing against any of the officials who were part of the briefing yesterday, but it was over so quickly. I

know from talking to other colleagues, and this is my concern here, that this amendment was not debated.

We had that discussion at length on the previous amendments. This wasn't part of the original bill. We have not quite 338 MPs in the House of Commons right now, after the resignations. My point is that all sorts of colleagues, who represent Canadians right across this country, are still asking us questions.

Just to go back to the previous point, we do kindly request that the government and the parliamentary secretary consider offering another technical briefing opportunity for all MPs and not only for those who had the benefit of our wonderful officials here at the table.

I'll leave my remarks at that, Mr. Chair.

• (1845)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Ruff.

Ms. Dancho, please go ahead.

Ms. Raquel Dancho: Thank you very much.

I have one question, and then I have a suggestion that may hurry this along, which committee members may be open to, but I'll come to that in a minute.

Just on the technical briefing, again, I want to impress how important it is that we get these answers. Mr. Noormohamed mentioned something about the Lee-Enfield. I haven't gotten a clear answer on how the Lee-Enfield and the Winchester rifle, model 1873, which has a tubular magazine, will be impacted by what the minister said when he announced this amendment concerning the high-capacity magazine permanent alterations.

These are legitimate questions. There are people who watch this committee and who have these questions. It is the minister's fault that he announced them at the same time perhaps—I don't know—but he made that connection himself. Therefore, that's why we've come to this committee looking for answers on whether the high-capacity permanent alteration announcement will impact tubular magazines and the Lee-Enfield.

It would put a lot of concerns aside if the government could be clear and if the Liberal members could be clear right now and guarantee to Canadians that tubular magazines and the Lee-Enfield will not be impacted by the minister's announcement yesterday. That would cause us to relax a bit because those are huge changes.

I want to suggest something to help us move forward. Mr. Chair, could you just come back to me?

I put this to Liberal members. If they wish to engage in this, can you guarantee to Canadians that tubular magazines and the Lee-Enfield will not be banned by the minister's announcement yesterday?

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Dancho.

I really need us to focus on this bill and this amendment. This amendment explicitly excludes firearms such as the Lee-Enfield, the SKS and all of those things. It doesn't apply.... It has nothing to do with any existing firearm. If you have those suggestions to make, by all means bring them up with the minister off-line or with the parliamentary secretary off-line. It's not really part of what we're doing in this meeting at this time.

Go ahead, Ms. Dancho.

Ms. Raquel Dancho: I will go to my suggestion then.

Just to wrap up that point, it would provide a lot of clarity to Canadians who own those firearms if they knew that those were not being banned, and it's the minister's fault that he connected those two things yesterday in the announcement, just to be clear. The Liberal members do have an opportunity right now to denounce or to assure that these aren't being banned, but they have chosen not to.

I will go on to suggest that—Mr. Chair, you could confirm this—if we have unanimous consent to park this, we can actually get to the rest of the bill, and we can come back to this clause. We can get started on the other clauses, ghost guns and other things. I don't think there are a lot of issues forthcoming in other clauses.

Conservative members obviously have more questions about this and about the announcement yesterday. It may give me an opportunity to speak with the minister, or perhaps another technical briefing would come. When we do get back to this clause, if we decide to park it for a minute, that could go more quickly.

Again, we're very hesitant. The track record of the Liberals has not built trust concerning these new types of definitions, so we are hesitant. In the rest of the bill, the amendments don't look too bad. I don't think there will be any issues there.

I could put forward a motion that we pause this clause for now, and we can come back to it. We could get going on the rest of the bill. I could put forward a motion if there is willingness. If there's not, then I won't waste your time.

The Chair: A motion at this time would be out of order because we are engaged in a motion.

We can't park an individual amendment, if you will. We can stand the whole clause and return to the whole clause later on. That would stand all the amendments relating to that one clause that have not yet been processed.

Ms. Raquel Dancho: I suppose that's what I'm suggesting, then, Mr. Chair, that we get on with it. Then Conservatives can get the answers we need and we're not wasting committee time.

The Chair: Okay. I don't know if that's—

Ms. Raquel Dancho: Can we get a response from the clerk, please, just on the technicality of this, so I can be clear if I can move something?

The Chair: I have just consulted with the legislative clerk. We require unanimous consent to do this.

Do we have unanimous consent to stand this clause and proceed with it another time?

I see no unanimous consent, so we need to carry on with this discussion.

• (1850)

Ms. Raquel Dancho: Okay, Mr. Chair, then I'm going to have to continue, because we need some more answers here, more clarity. We don't trust that there isn't something being pulled over gun owners right now. Given the track record of the Liberals on this committee and the minister, I think it's reasonable that we have this hesitation about this specific definition.

What is being done today just doesn't follow. It doesn't make sense, based on the rhetoric, that they would bring forward this forward-looking clause. I haven't heard any explanation of why that is being done.

I'm also not reassured that this firearms committee is not just a back door to banning the very long list they withdrew. It sounded like, from the minister yesterday, that it could be the case. Again, I don't know why he would announce these things together if we couldn't talk about it in the context of Bill C-21 today in this committee and get real answers about the composition of that committee and about high-capacity magazines. Why he would confuse people, I don't understand, given the mass confusion he created with these amendments a few months ago by convoluting these things. That's not on us; that's on the minister for doing that.

It's frustrating that we can't get clarity on what a firearms advisory committee would look like, what they're allowed to do and what the deal is with high-capacity magazines. Are Lee-Enfields being banned? Are tubular magazines being banned?

Just to be clear, Conservatives are quite disappointed. We cannot get the clarity for gun owners on this that they need, given their reasonable apprehension and fear, which was created over the last five months with amendments G-4 and G-46.

Mr. Chair, that's all I have at this time, but, again, I would urge you to urge the parliamentary secretary to talk to the minister about another technical briefing. That could certainly help things go along, especially considering that the good-faith measure to park this clause for now to get to the rest of the bill was not approved, which would have allowed us to get to the other important measures and get more answers in the interim. I think that it was a good-faith measure. It was certainly made in good faith.

I don't know why we can't do that, but anyway, that's all for now, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Dancho.

We have Mr. Motz followed by Ms. Damoff, Madam Michaud and Mr. Julian.

Mr. Glen Motz: Thank you, Chair.

I have a few questions for the officials. They've been asked before about other aspects of other bills and this one.

To the best of your knowledge, was there any gender-based analysis completed for this particular amendment?

Ms. Phaedra Glushek: I believe I've answered this previously, but I might be incorrect.

Mr. Glen Motz: Not today, you didn't.

Ms. Phaedra Glushek: Any analysis that is taken with respect to the motions or the bill would be solicitor-client privilege, but there are a variety of factors that we look at as counsel when we are developing policy. One of those factors is gender-based analysis.

Mr. Glen Motz: Okay. That's a very political answer. Are you sure you're in the right role?

Mr. Taleeb Noormohamed: I have a point of order, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Glen Motz: I have a question.

Mr. Taleeb Noormohamed: Going after and asserting—

Mr. Glen Motz: Come on, relax a little bit, Taleeb.

Mr. Taleeb Noormohamed: —that officials of the government are somehow acting as partisan individuals is not okay. There's a line we in this committee don't cross, and, to my mind, that's crossing the line.

Mr. Glen Motz: Maybe you need a bigger line.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Noormohamed.

I would recommend to Mr. Motz that he respect the witnesses.

Mr. Glen Motz: I have great respect for these witnesses, contrary to what my colleague might suggest with the disinformation across the way.

What you are telling me, then, is that generally a gender-based analysis is conducted, but can you confirm, with this particular amendment, that there was a gender-based analysis conducted?

Ms. Phaedra Glushek: I can repeat my last answer and say that, when we look at developing policy, including motions such as the motions before the committee today, we do a variety of analyses, including a gender-based analysis. That would have been part of something we would have done.

Mr. Glen Motz: Okay.

Ms. Phaedra Glushek: I can't tell you, like I said, the outcome of that analysis. What I can say is that it does form part of our policy analysis when we are developing policy.

Mr. Glen Motz: Okay. Thank you.

I take it when you talk about motions, you're talking about new stuff that comes forward. I suspect that's what you mean.

As part of that analysis you would do, was any evidence presented to those drafting this and to the department that showed that this particular amendment, G-3.2, would have a positive impact on public safety?

• (1855)

Ms. Phaedra Glushek: Any statistical or evidentiary evidence that we would have in the process of the policy development, again, would be solicitor-client privilege and included within our analysis of the amendments.

Mr. Glen Motz: I'm hoping that my colleagues across the way can, at some point in time, provide any such evidence that would suggest that this amendment would have a positive impact on public safety. I'm not sure that it meets that threshold.

Are there any statistics showing that these legally owned firearms are being used in the commission of offences that then would force the government to develop this type of a definition in this amendment?

Ms. Phaedra Glushek: Can I ask which firearms you're speaking to?

Mr. Glen Motz: It's those that could be covered off or related to the new definition in G-3.2.

Ms. Phaedra Glushek: The definition is a qualitative definition. There is no list or schedule that lists any of those kinds of firearms, so I don't think we can actually provide that information.

I will turn it over to my colleague, Ms. Mainville-Dale.

Ms. Rachel Mainville-Dale: The new definition that is being proposed is one that's based on technical characteristics that the government has determined—or made a decision proposal—are not suitable for civilian use and pose a risk to public safety.

Mr. Glen Motz: Thank you.

That's a fair statement. However, I think it shows that whoever's playing the music for your officials to dance to has a misguided approach.

To me, there has to be some evidence somewhere. Stats Canada, the RCMP or law enforcement across the country have to have some evidence to suggest that these—basically what you're describing here are hunting rifles and shotguns—pose such a significant threat to the safety of Canadians that they, the government, feel that they have to develop a definition that fits that category of firearm.

It goes after hunters and sport shooters, basically. It is a little disconcerting that it's still a definition that is possible to have. We need to be aware of that.

I have a couple more.

Did the minister talk about consultations? We don't know who all he consulted with. We know some because some have reached out to us about—

The Chair: Mr. Motz, I'm afraid we've run out of time.

You have the floor. We will resume this debate....

I have Mr. Julian on a point of order.

Mr. Peter Julian: I just wanted to say in response to the issue around the firearms advisory committee that it was established under the Harper government in 2006. The Conservatives can get information from their own folks on that.

I really am saddened by this filibuster.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Julian.

Mr. Motz, when we resume, you will have the floor and you may continue your questioning at that point.

Thank you once again to the officials.

Thank you to our legislative clerk, our analysts and all of our committee staff.

It's really great to see you guys again. I think we'll be seeing a lot more of you.

With that, we are now adjourned.

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