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—
Chair

Mr. Kevin Sorenson

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• (1535)

[English]

The Chair (Mr. Kevin Sorenson (Crowfoot, CPC)): Good afternoon, committee. It's good to see each one of you on perhaps this final day of the 39th session.

This is the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development, meeting 37. Pursuant to the order of reference of Wednesday, September 20, 2006, we have Bill C-293, an act respecting the provision of development assistance abroad. We are going to continue in the exercise of clause-by-clause in the hopes that we will finish this afternoon.

Welcome.

We will proceed to amendment NDP-7 on clause 3, and I will ask Madam McDonough to begin. Basically, amendment NDP-7 is the deletion of lines 14 to 19 on page 2, the definition of “non-governmental organization”.

Madam McDonough, would you like to explain that?

Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP): Just as you said, Mr. Chair, the amendment is that Bill C-293 in clause 3 be amended by deleting lines 14 to 19 on page 2. This simply deletes the definition of “non-governmental organization” and replaces it with a new amendment that defines “civil society”.

Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.): Which we have already done.

Ms. Alexa McDonough: Yes. We sort of ended up going back, and now we're going forward again. Hopefully everybody remembers that.

The Chair: Yes, this is basically a consequential amendment to the deletion of part of the bill yesterday.

Are there any other comments on this?

Ms. Alexa McDonough: So moved.

(Amendment agreed to)

The Chair: We will proceed to amendment NDP-4.1.

Mr. Bernard Patry (Pierrefonds—Dollard, Lib.): Do you mean on clause 4?

The Chair: It's on clause 3. It's a new amendment that has just been brought forward. I don't know if you have a reference number there. The reference number is 2600145.

Madam McDonough.

Ms. Alexa McDonough: This proposes that Bill C-293 in clause 3 be amended by deleting lines 4 to 7 on page 2. It's simply removing the old definition because we've already replaced it with a new definition.

The Chair: All right. So moved then.

(Amendment agreed to)

The Chair: Okay. Because of that, then, we have Madam McDonough on reference 2599864, another new amendment that's been brought forward. This is consequential. It replaces “development assistance” with “official development assistance” in all of the following provisions.

Ms. Alexa McDonough: Do you want me to read it into the record? I don't need to?

The Chair: No. Well, okay.

Ms. Alexa McDonough: Okay.

I move that Bill C-293 be amended by replacing “development assistance” with “official development assistance” in the following provisions: (a) through (i)—which I think everybody has in front of them.

The Chair: All right.

Mr. Patry.

Mr. Bernard Patry: Thank you. I agree with clauses 1, 2, and 3, but we didn't finish clauses 4, 6, 7, and 9. Maybe it depends.... You want to change it everywhere.

I agree in a sense, but I would like to not accept clause 3 right now and see if we need to come back because of some definitions.

The Chair: All right.

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

The Chair: We have amended clause 3 now. This is where I would normally ask, “Shall clause 3 carry as amended?”

Mr. Bernard Patry: I disagree with this for the moment, because I have another question on clause 3.

The Chair: All right.

• (1540)

Mr. Bernard Patry: We didn't look at the definition of international agency.

[Translation]

In French, it is on page 1.

It says “any intergovernmental organization”. (...) However, a governmental organization can also be an international agency.

[English]

The Chair: So your concern is on page 1.

Mr. Bernard Patry: It's on page 1 in French, and page 2 in English on line 8 in the definitions.

The Chair: Mr. McKay.

Hon. John McKay: If he could explain the point again, I'm not quite sure I follow it.

Mr. Bernard Patry: The point is that “any agency” doesn't mean “any intergovernmental organization”. You could have an international agency that was not related to government, in a sense. For me that just means any organization whose objective includes global poverty reduction, or international humanitarian assistance.

Hon. John McKay: So you're objecting to the word “intergovernmental”.

Mr. Bernard Patry: Yes, because it's restricted to intergovernmental organizations,

[Translation]

including.

Exactly, Madam. Thank you.

[English]

Hon. John McKay: If Mr. Patry wants to delete “intergovernmental”, I can't see why that's objectionable, on the face of it. I have no objection to what he is saying, unless someone can tell me where that would mean something different.

I'm just looking through the bill as it's presented. In clause 5, “agency” is not limited to intergovernmental. In subclause 4(2) it says “...the competent minister may consult with international agencies and Canadian non-governmental organizations.” Again, I don't see any harm in taking out the word “intergovernmental”.

Is that the point?

Mr. Bernard Patry: Yes, because I want it to be broader.

Hon. John McKay: Okay. Good.

The Chair: You heard the rationale. So it would read:

“international agency” means any organization whose objectives include global poverty reduction or international humanitarian assistance.

We are removing the word “intergovernmental” under the international agency definition.

(Amendment agreed to)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Patry.

Is there anything else on clause 3?

Mr. Bernard Patry: Not for the moment.

The Chair: Mr. Goldring.

Mr. Peter Goldring (Edmonton East, CPC): In clause 3 on page 2 at the end of line 3, would it add clarity to simply add “in relation to this act”? It would read:

“competent minister” means any minister designated by the Governor in Council to provide development assistance in relation to this act.

The Chair: What would be accomplished by that?

● (1545)

Mr. Peter Goldring: We're trying to define it and add to it or be inclusive with this amendment in order to correlate the two with the existing wording, but simply by adding clarity to it in relation to this act.

Hon. John McKay: I understand your point. I would have thought, as an operating assumption of the bill, that any definition only applies to the bill itself. It has no extra application. If you think that will actually add something, I'm happy to do it. I just don't see how it operates.

The Chair: Mr. Menzies.

Mr. Ted Menzies (Macleod, CPC): I share the concern. There's a bit of ambiguity about it. My sense is that it's certainly not going to take away from it. It would just define it a little better, if anything.

Hon. John McKay: Merry Christmas.

The Chair: When we do these definitions, they're put in place so that they can be defined within the act. I think it's a given—

Mr. Ted Menzies: That's a given.

The Chair: —but if that alleviates the concern that you have, I don't see any negative feedback on that.

Are we in favour of that?

(Amendment agreed to)

Mr. Bernard Patry: Which one is carried?

The Chair: Mr. Goldring's.

Mr. Bernard Patry: I just want to ask John a question, if you will allow me, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Through the chair, yes.

Mr. Bernard Patry: John, when you say “international agency”, would it not be better to say “association”? Some internationals are associations but not agencies, in a sense.

Hon. John McKay: I don't think anything turns on the words “agency” or “association”.

Mr. Bernard Patry: In terms of association, you can have international associations that are not agencies. I'm just asking you what you feel about this. I'm not objecting to “agency” itself. I just want it to be broader.

Hon. John McKay: The word “agency” is used throughout the bill. To my mind, it has a more precise meaning than does “association”. Presumably you are going to be directing the government to deal with recognized entities, and the word “agency” generally brings it within a concept of recognition from government to government and from government to NGOs.

My suggestion would be that you stay with the word “agency”. The more you loosen it, the less precision you get. For instance, paragraph 9(1)(e) states, “a summary of the Departmental Performance Report of the Canadian International Development Agency”. The word is used throughout. I think it's a bit more precise when you use the word “agency”.

Mr. Bernard Patry: I just like the other one, but that's fine.

(Clause 3 as amended agreed to on division)

(On clause 4—*Development assistance*)

The Chair: Let's proceed to clause 4 and our first amendment. It is amendment CPC-1, which adds a new subsection.

Mr. Casey.

Mr. Bill Casey (Cumberland—Colchester—Musquodoboit Valley, CPC): Is that line 31 in clause 4? Is that where we are?

The Chair: Yes, clause 4.

Mr. Bill Casey: This addresses some of the concerns raised by Mr. Flack, of the Department of Foreign Affairs.

We want to add a third subsection. We don't want to take away from anything that's there. We're not trying to change subclauses (1) and (2). We want to add a subclause (3) just to address the Department of Foreign Affairs' concern that the scope is too large and will prevent the Minister of Finance from doing things he might want to do, like corrections training and all the things the Department of Foreign Affairs outlined—witness protection, peace process, land mines, judicial system training, and things like that—that aren't necessarily under development assistance. They might be things the competent minister might want to do, but they don't come under the poverty restriction or narrow scope. They just want to make sure the minister is free to do those things, and they were also concerned about requiring the minister to make reports on confidential events that happened at the Bretton Woods meetings, and things like that.

It has subclauses (1) and (2) already. We're not proposing to take anything away, we just propose to add this subclause 4(3):

(3) If the Minister of Finance is designated as a competent minister under this Act, this Act applies to the Minister of Finance only in respect of the Minister's powers under the Bretton Woods and Related Agreements Act, and any development assistance provided under the Act shall be deemed to be in compliance with this section.

• (1550)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Casey.

Mr. Bill Casey: You're welcome.

The Chair: He's moving that amendment.

Mr. McKay.

Hon. John McKay: I would oppose this amendment, Chair. I think the amendment was put forward without the benefit of the clauses that we've already passed.

The amendment, if left as is, provides, if you will, a gaping loophole for the Minister of Finance to just drive a truck through. It would almost exempt the minister from ODA provided by the Minister of Finance.

Given that we've already rectified the concern by the new definitions of both "international assistance" and "official development assistance", I think this particular subclause cannot survive.

The Chair: Madam McDonough.

Ms. Alexa McDonough: Yes, I would also speak against this amendment. I'm not suggesting this is the intention, but the effect of this could, in a way, do an end run around the entire purpose of the bill. I think it could really undermine exactly what we're trying to achieve here.

I'm not hearing what the rationale is for this, but in the absence of that, I think it's not supportable, so I'd speak against it.

The Chair: Mr. Casey.

Mr. Bill Casey: As I recall in Mr. Flack's testimony, he said that things like debt relief might be prevented by this bill under the other clauses without this. Any of the things that Canada has done, like land mines...I think we all agree that was a great international effort, but it might not be possible to fund things like that.

Judicial system training.... We heard recently that the RCMP are training other officers in many other countries. That might not be possible, and so on.

Those are not poverty reduction issues, and all we're saying is that he'd be allowed to do those things outside the narrow purview of "only poverty". If it's only poverty, we can't do these things.

Certainly I know opposition parties are often calling for debt relief for countries that can't pay their bills, and under this, theoretically, you might not be able to do that.

That was the position put forth by the Department of Foreign Affairs. That's why this is added.

The Chair: Going by what our researcher says here, when the testimony was here, this amendment would have been put in place because of the testimony that there was a concern that there might be a conflict with the Bretton Woods Act, so this would take away....

Mr. Patry.

Mr. Bernard Patry: I would support Mr. Casey, in the sense that when the Minister of Finance came here, he said there was some contribution with the Canadian International Development Agency. There is interest-free lending of money. You see this for some countries. There is also the International Monetary Fund's poverty reduction and growth facility, and also the debt relief.

I think we don't want to stop the Minister of Finance, in a sense, from going along with this argument. I feel this is an amendment just to protect the Bretton Woods...and other international obligations with the Bretton Woods—

The Chair: Mr. McKay.

Hon. John McKay: There were two issues raised by the Department of Finance. The first issue had to do with preventing the very things Mr. Casey is talking about.

The second issue had to do with confidentiality issues, and you'll see further on in amendments that we've dealt with the confidentiality issues, assuming we get to those amendments today.

With respect to this one, you'll recollect that I was describing what we were doing yesterday as the universe of international assistance, and within the universe of international assistance was the ODA. Because there is a difference between ODA and international assistance, all of the things the minister would wish to do with debt relief with respect to policemen in Haiti and with respect to various programs that are going on in Afghanistan could still be done by the minister. It just would not be counted as ODA.

When this bill receives royal assent, the Government of Canada will still carry on the way it's been carrying on. The issue will be whether policemen in Haiti count for ODA purposes, and that's the issue.

If this amendment goes forward, frankly, there is not much point to the bill, because the Minister of Finance will be completely exempt from the provisions of this bill.

• (1555)

The Chair: I'll go to Mr. Martin, but first I'll just read the testimony from them.

Is this a quote?

Mr. Gerald Schmitz (Committee Researcher): Yes, that's his speech.

The Chair: Okay.

First, as currently drafted, Bill C-293 could affect not only the Bretton Woods Act, but also statutes from which the minister draws authority for other international but non-developmental-related activities.

I think this amendment was put in place to alleviate those concerns.

Mr. Martin.

Hon. Keith Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, Lib.): I understand what you're saying and what the representatives from finance said and what Dr. Patry said, but in point of fact there's absolutely nothing at all in this bill that would preclude the excellent work that is done and will continue to be done after this bill is passed in the House.

I hope we understand, as Mr. McKay said, that all ODA is international assistance but not all international assistance is ODA-able. Because of that margin, we are allowed to continue the excellent programs, as you quite correctly said, and more. Nothing will preclude that.

I think this motion, as well-intentioned as it is, will do nothing other than undermine the essence of the bill.

The Chair: Mr. Menzies and then Mr. Casey.

Mr. Ted Menzies: I think Mr. Martin just made a good argument for putting this in. Why on earth would we want to disallow the good things this country does to not be definable as official development assistance? Other countries do.

Is there some reason Mr. McKay's bill should have the intent of embarrassing the government by suggesting we don't do our fair share of official development assistance, because we can't define it and we've tied our hands with this piece of legislation? There's no reason on earth we wouldn't accept this as a friendly amendment, to make sure we are recognized for what we do.

I absolutely support Mr. Casey's amendment. I think it's absolutely critical. We listened to the witnesses. We just heard the testimony that we need this. It's absolutely unimaginable that we wouldn't want to put this in.

The Chair: Mr. Casey and then Mr. McKay.

Mr. Bill Casey: With all due respect to the comments, it's absolutely clear. Clause 4(1) says:

Development assistance may be provided only if the competent minister is of the opinion that it:

(a) contributes to poverty reduction;

(b) takes into account the perspectives of the poor; and

(c) is consistent with Canada's international human rights obligations.

If we leave that, there's no room for debt relief, no room to deal with the money laundering that was described to us, no room for funding landmines, judicial system training, or training police officers.

It's very clear. If an opposition member wanted to take the government to account when the Minister of Finance wanted to apply debt relief to another country, they could take this clause and say you're breaking the law.

It's very clear. It may not be what you wanted to do, but that's very clear.

Hon. John McKay: No, no, no. That's the point.

The Chair: We need order here.

Mr. Goldring.

Mr. Peter Goldring: I agree with Mr. Casey.

It was very clear in some of the testimony before the committee and particularly with relationship to Haiti. We asked what the other essential elements are as part of poverty reduction. Of course the other essential elements are the security, the vetting of the police, the training, and many of the other elements. If we try to define and separate that from the good will of trying to reduce poverty, I think that would hugely complicate it. It would not only complicate it, but it would put some of these initiatives in jeopardy by trying to define them and put them into one category or the other.

The Chair: Mr. McKay.

Hon. John McKay: Mr. Chair, I would have hoped that the government members had consulted with their own officials prior to making their argument.

You did the definitions in clause 3. This entire concern, legitimate as it was when the testimony was given by the finance department officials, has been entirely dealt with. There is no basis for the concern. Therefore, there is no basis for the amendment. And as I'm given to understand, in that some folks have dealt with finance department officials as recently as this morning, they are no longer concerned. So this amendment is not necessary. In fact, if it goes forward, it will leave a monster hole in the bill.

• (1600)

The Chair: Mr. Casey and then Mr. Menzies.

Mr. Bill Casey: I just wonder, if the land-mine effort funding, debt relief, and policing in developing countries that are provided by Canada isn't aid, what is it?

Hon. John McKay: It's unofficial development assistance, international assistance. It's not official development assistance.

Mr. Bill Casey: I don't know how you can—

Hon. John McKay: That's the point of the bill. The bill is that you connect your official development assistance to poverty alleviation. That's what we've been talking about for the last...how many times?

The Chair: Mr. McKay, in all honesty, we've also heard the testimony that debt relief, for example, is one of the first steps you can take for poverty reduction. Those arguments can be made.

This is just making sure.... I don't know whether it's fair to say this is leaving a gaping hole in this bill. I think it's a realistic concern: we want the opportunity to go for debt relief. We want the opportunity to do some of this and to get credit for it, to have it ODA-able.

Hon. John McKay: There is nothing to stop the Minister of Finance from giving Mali \$10 million or \$100 million tomorrow—

The Chair: Except—

Hon. John McKay: —and having it connect to poverty alleviation. Who's to argue that it isn't poverty alleviation? But if they give the same \$100 million debt relief to, say, Russia, it might not be ODA-able.

There's nothing to stop them doing this. If you leave this in place, it basically exempts the Minister of Finance from the bill.

The Chair: Mr. Menzies.

Mr. Ted Menzies: I fail to see why it would exempt the Minister of Finance from the bill. Once again, I think it's making a stronger piece of legislation that actually recognizes that the finance minister plays a role.

This is the argument I was trying to make yesterday, that we're dealing with a number of different ministers. We may be dealing with the public security minister in some of these functions, in security issues that we promote in other countries. Why shouldn't that be ODA-able? Why shouldn't that be part of the package?

If you have some advice from the finance department, please table it and share it with the rest of us, because I'm not willing to accept your word on this, Mr. McKay.

The Chair: Do you have that?

Hon. John McKay: I can call somebody who's been doing the negotiations. Does that count?

Mr. Ted Menzies: I'm not asking for that. I think this amendment is a friendly amendment; it's helpful to the legislation; it defines it.

Hon. John McKay: With the greatest respect, I think your advice is behind the times. The evidence was given on the basis of the bill as it was drafted, and the Department of Finance was speaking about the bill as it was drafted. Now it's amended. There is no problem.

The Chair: Madam McDonough.

Ms. Alexa McDonough: I completely support John McKay's position on this. I think you're making an argument that would have perhaps had some sway before we changed the definitions.

But let's get back to first principles and what the objective is of what we're doing. It is to put into a legislative format the express desires, first unanimously by this committee and then by the House of Commons, to make poverty reduction the absolutely central priority of our official development assistance. That's what this bill does, and I think this subverts the very measures we put in place.

There's nothing here that precludes the government's doing all those various things you're talking about. But the ones that don't pertain to poverty reduction aren't ODA-able. That's the simple fact of it.

I guess the other thing is that it seems like a rather theoretical discussion when we're languishing at 0.32% of our ODA obligations. The real issue is how we are going to move forward on our poverty reduction commitments while the government can go on doing all kinds of things, some of them with the full support, some of them not with the full support of other members of Parliament and other parties in the House. But that's to be determined by the votes that take place in the House.

• (1605)

The Chair: When we talk about languishing at 0.32%, I think in fairness that is what the government side is saying. We all recognize a desire to work towards the 0.7%. But if there's \$10 million or \$15 million here because of something, and it isn't going to be counted, I'm wondering whether it's possible that a government is going to hesitate and say: "We get no credit for this. Why would we do it?" It's a consideration.

We have Mr. Goldring.

Mr. Peter Goldring: I think if we go back to our visits to the Scandinavian countries and the consultations there, they added to it. They recognized that a number of things help and assist and help the poverty situation. There is governance, for example. How much funding has gone through poor governance, and how much more can be affected and impacted by it?

We had witness after witness here who repeated the same thing. We were very specific on Haiti and asked them what the essential components were. To leave out security, to leave out governance, and to put it into a different file or pocket could do harm to it. It's the overall feeling that to exclude this.... It really does make this bill much more important to have that excluded.

Mr. McKay, your one reference that we didn't take part in—because we all took part in the witnesses, so we know what the witnesses were saying—was your one reference from the department itself, on which you have nothing to produce here for us. But all the other witnesses—the government witnesses, what we heard abroad, what we heard from Haiti—would imply that this should be in this bill.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Goldring.

Go ahead, Mr. Casey.

Mr. Bill Casey: If I were the finance minister, and a member like Mr. Martin asked for medical aid for Ghana, for instance, I think I could say that I can't do that because it's against the law. Without the amendment I'm proposing, the finance minister can use that as an excuse for almost everything. He can shut off almost everything, because he can just say that the opposition passed an amendment that says he can't do that unless it contributes to poverty reduction, health care, policing, and things like that. That's what's going to happen.

If I were the finance minister and I didn't want to provide funding for a certain issue, I would just say that it's against the law and that I can't do it, as the amendment was passed. I think it's an awful mistake to not put the amendment in and allow the finance minister to proceed and do the things that finance ministers have done for decades.

The Chair: Thank you.

We'll have Mr. Martin, then Mr. Menzies, then Madame Bourgeois.

Hon. Keith Martin: I just want to say that nothing of what Mr. Casey has offered is against the law, as he said. We are able to do all those things. I think we have to get back to first principles for the purpose of this bill. The purpose of this bill is to be able to define our ODA, and all the things you mentioned, all the wonderful initiatives you mentioned—debt reduction, demining, victim assistance, governance issues—could be defined as poverty reduction.

All Mr. McKay is trying to do here is give clarity to what ODA is and make sure that ODA is poverty reduction and not something else. All the things you've offered are ODA-able, and even if they were considered not ODA-able, they would still fall under the envelope of international assistance and therefore are doable and not illegal.

The Chair: Mr. Martin, when the world is striving to reach 0.7%, and indeed many countries have reached it.... Are some of the concerns that Mr. Casey has brought forward part of the ODA in other countries?

Hon. Keith Martin: You can make all the things, all the wonderful initiatives that Mr. Casey has mentioned and works on, quite frankly, ODA-able. If they are not considered ODA-able, they are still doable, because they fit under the envelope of international assistance.

•(1610)

The Chair: They're still doable, but they aren't doable within the envelope of ODA.

Hon. Keith Martin: But they're doable under international assistance. All those—

The Chair: But in other countries they would be included within ODA.

Hon. Keith Martin: But all those things are ODA-able.

The Chair: In many countries they would be.

Hon. Keith Martin: Under this bill they would be too. We just have to focus, I think, on why we are doing this bill. In fact, this bill has actually added to our international reputation and will actually enable us to buttress what is considered to be ODA-able.

What we have done historically is not attach initiatives and money that we have spent on international assistance to being ODA-able. That's been our fault. What we ought to be doing is including under our ODA a lot of the things we've done in all our poverty reduction initiatives. We have failed to do that. It's an oversight on our part. But if we were able to include this, then we would be able to say to the world that our actual ODA spending is a whole lot more than what it is and has been for quite a few years.

The Chair: We'll go to Mr. Menzies and then Madame Bourgeois.

Mr. Ted Menzies: I think Madam McDonough made a good point when she raised the 0.32%, or wherever we're at now. That's the way the world views us.

If we narrow the definitions, as we've done—and I was not comfortable with the definitions that we approved yesterday, and that's why it is all the more important to put this amendment in—we will be held up as a non-performer, as not living up to our standards.

I've met with ministers of international cooperation from other countries who are at 1% of GNP and frankly are not comfortable with where the money's going. They say they get to that standard, they have to provide that amount of money, and they don't even know where it's going.

Here we are, leaving that standard in place, but by this definition. If we don't accept this amendment, we're setting ourselves up for an international embarrassment when we provide the assistance and yet can't be recognized for doing so by the rest of the world. That's the international standard. So why would we set ourselves up to not be able to be recognized for what we do?

The Chair: Madame Bourgeois.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Diane Bourgeois (Terrebonne—Blainville, BQ): I simply want to ask you to put the question, Mr. Chairman.

[*English*]

The Chair: Madame McDonough.

Ms. Alexa McDonough: Yes, I'm in favour of going to the question too, because I think we are going around and around the same arguments.

We have a difference of perspective here, but I want to say, at the risk of repetition—you might rule me out of order, because I think there is some kind of rule of repetition—that what's ODA-able is ODA-able. The definition of ODA is an international definition, so what is ODA-able for us is ODA-able for other countries. So that's not actually a valid argument.

But I think we should call the question, because I think we're not hearing any new arguments, and we should vote and move forward.

(Amendment negated on division)

The Chair: The next one is Mr. Martin's amendment, reference number 2564606.

Hon. Keith Martin: I'll just read—

The Chair: Keith, please give people a chance to catch up.

Ms. Alexa McDonough: Mr. Chairman, could you please say again what number that is?

Hon. Keith Martin: Reference number 2564606. It relates to line 31 on page 2.

•(1615)

The Chair: Go ahead, Mr. Martin. You move your amendment; it's clause 4.

Hon. Keith Martin: I am moving the amendment to clause 4, adding the following after line 31 on page 2:

(3) In calculating Canada's official development assistance contribution in Government of Canada publications, the competent minister or the Governor in Council shall consider only development assistance as defined by this Act that meets the criteria in subsection (1), and humanitarian assistance.

(4) Nothing in this Act shall be construed so as to limit or restrict the activities of the International Development Research Centre.

Subclause (3) is self-explanatory and relates to what we've already defined within the content of this bill.

Subclause (4) deals with IDRC. IDRC has its own act, and to restrict the activities of IDRC would be extremely not in the interests of our country and the great work IDRC does. With respect to accountability and oversight, this already exists within its own act. So to allay any of this committee's concerns with respect to the oversight of IDRC, that already exists, because IDRC functions under its own act and is subject to the normal accounting and accountability procedures of entities such as IDRC.

The Chair: All right.

So this would add to clause 4, entitled "Development assistance", as an addition to what we have there now, subclauses (3) and (4).

Mr. McKay, did you want to speak to that amendment?

Hon. John McKay: No. I think it's reflective of the testimony we heard and it's far more precise, given our previous changes in the amendments. I see this as particularly responsive to the IDRC folks, who were quite concerned. But when you look at the overall scheme of what we're trying to accomplish here, this is exactly what we want to do.

The Chair: Mr. Patry.

Mr. Bernard Patry: There is a difference between the French and the English. In the English they say "to limit or restrict"; in French, it's

[Translation]

only "*de restreindre*".

[English]

I would just like to be sure, because this is going to become law, that "Nothing in this Act shall be construed so as to limit or restrict the activities" or the financing. I want to be sure that they are also going to get their money.

The Chair: So there's something missing there in the French?

Mr. Bernard Patry: Yes, something is missing in the French.

[Translation]

(4) *La présente loi n'a pas pour effet de restreindre [...]*

[English]

What I would like is to be sure that they are going to get their funding. I just want to be on the safe side with that. So it would read,

Nothing in this Act shall be construed so as to limit the funding or restrict the activities of the International Development Research Centre.

The Chair: Mr. Menzies.

Mr. Ted Menzies: I guess I'm concerned that once again this appears to me to be what we just discounted in the last amendment, by not accepting the last amendment: "shall consider only development assistance as defined by this Act". I still argue that we got our definitions wrong yesterday, and I opposed those, but I

think this will restrict us once again in disbursements and reporting of those disbursements and being actually recognized for what those disbursements are.

Once again, we may actually be at 0.7%, but we can't tell the world we are, because we've restricted it in this amendment.

The Chair: All right. We'll keep that in mind.

I want to go back to Mr. Patry's comment and just see if our table has the addition that we should insert there.

[Translation]

Mr. Gerald Schmitz: "[...] *de limiter ou de restreindre* [...]"

Mr. Bernard Patry: "[...] *de limiter le financement ou de restreindre les activités* [...]"

[English]

Hon. Keith Martin: If that's a friendly amendment, then I accept the correction.

The Chair: Yes, it's the difference between the French and the English.

Hon. Keith Martin: *Pas de problème*. I accept Dr. Patry's amendment.

Mr. James Lee (Committee Researcher): But then you'd have to change the English as well. He said "limit the financing".

Mr. Bernard Patry: It's "to limit the funding or restrict the activities"—the funding, *le financement*.

I don't want to limit the funding, just to be sure that—

• (1620)

Mr. Gerald Schmitz: So it's just adding "the funding" and—

Mr. Bernard Patry: It's "the funding or restrict the activities".

The Chair: Do you want to write that down, Mr. Patry?

Mr. Bernard Patry: We're just adding two words in English, because there's something missing in French. In English, it would read:

Nothing in this Act shall be construed so as to limit the funding or restrict the activities of the International Development Research Centre.

Okay?

Hon. Keith Martin: So it's just adding those two words.

Mr. Marc Toupin (Procedural Clerk): And in French?

[Translation]

Mr. Bernard Patry: "[...] *de limiter le financement ou de restreindre les activités du Centre* [...]"

[English]

The Chair: All right. So that's accepted as a friendly amendment.

Mr. Menzies.

Mr. Ted Menzies: I hear no rebuttal to my comments before, and

The Chair: I know, but we will go to that again.

Mr. Ted Menzies: All right.

The Chair: But to that change, "as to limit the funding or restrict the activities of the International Development Research Centre"....

Mr. Martin.

Hon. Keith Martin: I will just say that this is actually saying, Mr. Menzies, that nothing restricts or limits the activities of the IDRC, but nothing precludes the government from including the funds that they give to the IDRC as being ODA-able.

So if you read it very carefully, the funds that go to the IDRC can clearly be construed as being ODA-able by a government. Nothing in that statement precludes that.

Mr. Bernard Patry: No, but nothing in the opposite also is true.

Hon. Keith Martin: You would have to actually state something in here to restrict that. Nothing in here, nothing in these amendments, restricts the government from including funds that they give to the IDRC as being ODA-able.

So call the question.

The Chair: All right, Mr. Menzies.

Mr. Ted Menzies: Why are we trying to limit it? Tell me the purpose for that? Why are we trying to make it so narrow that we may exclude such things as peace promotion?

The Chair: I'm sorry, Mr. Menzies, but it's in reference to the first part of subclause (3), "In calculating Canada's official development assistance", so it's not what we've changed. So that's right. That's good.

Go ahead.

Mr. Ted Menzies: If that is what we're talking about, I'm not sure where the IDRC got thrown in here. I was trying to look at what we had changed our definition to, because we're referring back to a definition that I think we changed yesterday. I'm trying to make sure we're being consistent. I'm hearing a lot of references to things we don't have a final copy of here, so I'm a little concerned with the process here also. I still say that by limiting this to considering only development assistance as defined by that, we're missing the opportunity to include peace promotion and promoting security.

It's nice to have a debate, isn't it.

The Chair: On clause-by-clause there is no limiting debate, but we're trying to move it as quickly as possible, just so you know.

We'll go to Mr. Goldring. Then, if there's no further debate, I'll call the question, first of all, on Mr. Patry's friendly amendment.

Mr. Peter Goldring: The concern is the same. It's very limiting in its outcomes or possible outcomes on what it can cover. We're only trying to include some of the things that have been discussed at the committee meetings on humanitarian aid and other emergency and crisis aid.

It's taking away the flexibility of what could be occurring. Quite frankly, it can be putting the initial amount of the aid that could be applied toward the circumstance and limiting that too. You're putting it in two different pockets, in effect, to be able to address the circumstance so that you can narrowly define one portion of aid from another. So I agree that it's too narrowly defining what it can be.

The Chair: Mr. Menzies.

Mr. Ted Menzies: How does this relate, Mr. McKay, to our involvement with multilaterals?

Hon. John McKay: It wouldn't restrict it at all, as long as it falls within ODA. The way you have to read this—

Mr. Ted Menzies: When they use the OECD definition and we use a different definition?

Hon. John McKay: We've changed the concept of development assistance to official development assistance. All this bill applies to is official development assistance, ODA.

When Canada does ODA, it has to show that it contributes to poverty reduction, takes into account perspectives of the poor, and is consistent with Canada's international human rights obligations. Subclause (3) will now read "In calculating Canada's official development assistance", and you have to reference back to that question.

That's the point of the bill. It's been around for six months. There's nothing new and nothing novel here. Canada can still carry on providing policemen in Haiti, or you can name all of the projects that Mr. Casey referenced there. Nothing in this bill restricts doing them. But as your leader rightly pointed out when he was the official opposition leader, the point is that Canada's ODA needs to have a string attached to it and is focused on poverty reduction. That's what Mr. Duceppe said, that's what Mr. Layton said, and that's what Mr. Harper said.

So here we are. We've done this. The chair will be thoroughly depressed to learn that this foreign affairs committee has had this on its agenda since 1987. There's nothing new here. That's the whole point of the bill.

• (1625)

The Chair: Mr. Menzies.

Mr. Ted Menzies: There are some gaps missing in this. We pay dues to international associations that at this point are not ODA-able. Through multilaterals, whether they be in poverty reduction, whether they be in basic security needs, in trade facilitation, or in lifting people out of poverty, I just think they're not ODA-able at that point. We seem to be excluding them even more from us being able to claim them as ODA-able.

Hon. John McKay: Your argument would be correct if there were no concept of international assistance in the bill. But we've worked that concept into the bill, and the bill will not now apply to international assistance. So carry on.

Mr. Ted Menzies: Pardon me? It will not apply to international assistance?

Hon. John McKay: No. You can still carry on. The bill applies to ODA; it doesn't apply to international assistance.

Mr. Ted Menzies: You're starting to scare me.

Hon. John McKay: We've been talking about this for a long time now.

The Chair: It's the two definitions of "international development" and "official development". ODA and—

Mr. Ted Menzies: I know, and then throw into the mix what the rest of the world defines as ODA.

Hon. John McKay: Give us the big picture, Ted.

The Chair: First of all, do we accept the friendly amendment?

(Amendment agreed to)

(Amendment as amended agreed to on division)

The Chair: Do we have another amendment from the Bloc Québécois on clause 4 that I don't have?

Ms. Diane Bourgeois: No, but I think Madam McDonough has an amendment.

The Chair: Madam McDonough's is on clause 5.

Shall we vote on clause 4?

Mr. Patry.

• (1630)

Mr. Bernard Patry: I just want you to read me what we have in subclause 4(2).

[*Translation*]

It says here:

(2) In arriving at the opinion described in subsection (1), the competent minister shall consult with international agencies and [...]

[*English*]

I want to know what we're voting on.

Mr. Marc Toupin: We're voting on the whole clause.

Mr. Bernard Patry: Yes, but I want to know how subclause 4(2) reads. It's line 28 in English, 29 *en français*.

The Chair: I'll ask our legislative clerk to read it.

Mr. Marc Toupin: Subclause 4(2) would read:

In arriving at the opinion described in subsection (1), the competent minister shall consult with government, international agencies and Canadian civil society organizations.

Mr. Ted Menzies: We've already dealt with this one.

Mr. Bernard Patry: No, but you're voting on the total. I might come back on this because the total was not accepted.

The Chair: Yes, we have passed this, but the question is pertinent to whether or not we have a vote to carry clause 4.

Mr. Patry, continue; you are important.

Mr. Bernard Patry: I have one question for John.

[*Translation*]

You say that the minister shall consult international agencies and Canadian non-governmental organizations, but what happens if a provincial government or members of the civil society want to be consulted also?

[*English*]

The Chair: Well, we did put in to consult with governments and international agencies—

[*Translation*]

Mr. Bernard Patry: That is not my question.

[*English*]

The Chair: —but not provincial.

Mr. Bernard Patry: That's what he said. Do you want to read it back?

The Chair: Yes, we did say that: “consult with governments, international agencies and Canadian civil society organizations”. That was Mr. Goldring—

Mr. Peter Goldring: Yes. It carried.

The Chair: Yes, but it's pertinent to the question on clause 4.

Mr. Bernard Patry: What's your answer to that, John?

Hon. John McKay: I don't think there's anything to restrict the minister's consulting with anyone. If it's the Government of Quebec or the Government of Ontario or the Government of Prince Edward Island, there's nothing to restrict the minister from consulting with them. But the minister will be obliged to show that he or she has consulted with international agencies and Canadian civil society organizations in order to be able to show that she's met the test of the act.

I don't see any restriction whatsoever, but the other part is mandatory.

The Chair: Can we have a little more order here, please? There are too many conversations going on.

Mr. Bernard Patry: You talk about Canadian civil society, and I agree. But my question is also this. If the government would like to talk with—I don't know—Honduran civil society, if you wanted to give ODA to such a country, this would mean everything will be decided here in Canada. We won't be allowed to go abroad to the other countries to consult the other countries.

That's what we want. We don't want to export what we want to do; I just want to be sure we're going to be able.... If you just delete the word Canadian, you could consult with “civil society”, and that could be external civil society. Now you're just consulting, in a sense, with international agencies and Canadian civil society.

The Chair: And governments.

• (1635)

Mr. Bernard Patry: Eh?

The Chair: And governments. It reads:

...subsection (1), the competent minister shall consult with governments, international agencies, and Canadian civil society organizations.

It doesn't say provincial governments; it doesn't say international governments; it leaves it at governments. I believe it was Mr. Goldring's amendment that we had the other day on this.

Mr. Goldring, did you want to speak? Did I have you on the list?

We're right on the edge on this, because we've said that once we deal with a certain line, we'll do it that one time, and we're kind of going back on that. But in fairness to Mr. Patry, we haven't carried this clause yet, and he has some real concerns about this. We want to address them.

Madam McDonough, or Mr. Goldring, did you have something, or no?

Mr. Peter Goldring: I would leave it the way we had it.

The Chair: All right.

Madam McDonough.

Ms. Alexa McDonough: I'm just seeking clarification. I'm not meaning to be insensitive to your concern, but are you satisfied that we have already inserted "governments" and that this deals with it?

Mr. Bernard Patry: I'm satisfied with "governments", because it is in here; "governments" is fine, and "international agencies", but instead of "Canadian civil society", I just prefer "civil society". That means Canadian, for one, and other civil society in any other country.

Hon. John McKay: The argument is about "Canadian"?

Mr. Bernard Patry: Yes, the argument is just "Canadian", just to delete the word "Canadian", because we need to consult civil society in the other countries also, when we're doing ODA.

The Chair: Madame Bourgeois.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Diane Bourgeois: Mr. Chairman, we discussed this issue when we changed the word "may" to "shall". We said then that the minister was required to consult international agencies and Canadian non-governmental organizations, but that this would not exclude the countries Canada already consults at the present time. The intent was simply to ensure that he would also consult the agencies and NGOs.

[*English*]

The Chair: I think in fairness, Mr. Patry.... And you know what? You may be right. But I think the fact that we have included international organizations could also take away some of the—

Mr. Bernard Patry: No, it's not organizations; it's agencies.

The Chair: I'm sorry, you're right. We've included "international agencies" and "Canadian civil society organizations". Agencies, you're right, are not the same as associations or organizations, but I think that would still give enough leeway.

You know, international agencies would be consulted.

Mr. Bernard Patry: Okay, I'm not going to discuss it further. If you don't want to accept this, then I will accept being alone on this. But I want to point out one thing: if you want to go to a country like Colombia and focus on one area of Colombia, and there's no international agency over there that's working with you there, who are you going to consult? I don't know.

So that's what I mean. We need to consult civil society—Canadian civil society, all of civil society. I want to be sure that when we're doing anything for ODA, people abroad will be consulted, not just international, where it's big buddy. If we say "international agencies and local agencies", that would be fine with me. I just want to be sure that we're doing something locally as well.

The Chair: Mr. Goldring.

Mr. Peter Goldring: Could I have some clarity on the exact word that you would feel more comfortable with? Is this simply about taking out the word "Canadian"?

Mr. Bernard Patry: Yes. I just want to consult civil society.

The Chair: No, no, unless we have unanimous consent, we aren't going back to revisit this. If we have a motion that we go back to visit this, and we have unanimous consent to do it, if it was allowed procedurally—

Mr. Bernard Patry: I'm sorry, Chair, you cannot do this.

Even when you accept a clause, you can modify the clause. That's the rule. You can modify clauses. Even if you accept them one by one, when you're back at the end, if there is any amendment, it doesn't need to get unanimous consent.

• (1640)

Hon. Mark Eyking (Sydney—Victoria, Lib.): I don't think you can do that at all. That's not true at all.

Mr. Bernard Patry: What's not true—what I said?

The Chair: You see, I'm being told by the legislative clerk that once an amendment has been carried, it's carried.

Mr. Bernard Patry: Yes, but you can come back.

The Chair: You can come back by unanimous consent.

Mr. Bernard Patry: No, because you accept something else. It's not by unanimous consent; I disagree with that.

The Chair: I'm going to call the question on clause 4.

Mr. Peter Goldring: Have we a call for unanimous consent?

The Chair: I do not have a motion that we go back and revisit the clause. I would need unanimous consent in order to do it. No one has even brought that motion.

Mr. Bernard Patry: I will.

The Chair: All right.

Mr. Patry has brought forward the motion that we go back and revisit clause 4 with regard to subclause 4(2). Do we have unanimous consent to do that?

Some hon. members: No.

An hon. member: Call the question.

(Clause 4 as amended agreed to) [See *Minutes of Proceedings*]

(On clause 5—*Humanitarian assistance*)

The Chair: We will proceed to the next amendment, which is NDP-10.

Madam McDonough, clause 5.

Ms. Alexa McDonough: Mr. Chairman, this removes the funding of emergency humanitarian assistance from this bill's purview, and I think for obvious reasons. There already was recognition of the necessity to have maximum flexibility around dealing with emergency humanitarian crises.

The Chair: Thank you, Madam McDonough.

You've heard the argument. She moves her motion.

Ms. Alexa McDonough: I move that clause 5 be amended by replacing lines 32 and 33 on page 2 with the following:

This act does not apply in respect of funding or other assistance that is provided for the

The Chair: All right.

Do we have anyone who wants to speak to this?

Mr. Goldring.

Mr. Peter Goldring: If you're looking at what an emergency is, then you get into a debate on emergency, and poverty can be an emergency; it can be many different things. Is this going the other way on the entire issue of taking away the definitions of what it does or doesn't apply to? Because I would certainly think the poverty situation in Haiti is an emergency.

The Chair: Mr. McKay.

Hon. John McKay: An emergency is whatever the government says it is.

The Chair: So this gives the government, in your opinion—

Hon. John McKay: If the government thinks that poverty in Haiti is an emergency, it can use this as an opportunity to do so. If a tsunami comes along, it's obviously an emergency. If an earthquake comes along, obviously it's an emergency. The testimony was that they didn't want this act to restrict the ability of the government to respond to an emergency. That's why it's there.

The Chair: Okay, and are you supportive of this amendment?

Hon. John McKay: Yes.

The Chair: Mr. Patry.

Mr. Bernard Patry: I have a problem. Could you read me what clause 5 will look like?

The Chair: It will read:

This act does not apply in respect of funding or other assistance that is provided for the purpose of alleviating the effects of a natural—

Mr. Bernard Patry: Just for the purpose, okay.

The Chair: It replaces lines 32 and 33 in the English.

• (1645)

Mr. Bernard Patry: Okay, I just wanted to know. That's fine.

Mr. Gerald Schmitz: It gives more discretion to the government.

The Chair: The argument you've heard from Mr. McKay and Madam McDonough—I apologize, this is her amendment—is that this gives the government more latitude, more ability to respond quickly to an emergency, whether it's a natural or artificial disaster.

And I think, in fairness to Madam McDonough, this comes out of testimony that we heard.

Mr. McKay.

Hon. John McKay: Just to be a bit more precise and to marginally respond to the government's argument, if in fact the Government of Canada provides \$100 million in tsunami relief, I want that to be ODA-able. I want it to be clear that the criteria in subclause 4(1) would not restrict the government's counting that as ODA-able. If there's even more precision required, you might say something to the effect that “the criteria in subsection 4(1) shall not apply to funding or assistance”.

I don't want to slow the debate down—this pace is slow enough—but I want to be perfectly clear that if necessary, we'll make it so that there's not a scintilla of doubt.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. McKay. I'm sure people do not want a scintilla of doubt.

Mr. Menzies.

Mr. Ted Menzies: I wouldn't want to go near a scintilla this close to Christmas.

I'd like a point of clarification on what is now the definition of “official development assistance” under new paragraph 3(b):

that is provided for the purposes of alleviating the effects of a natural or artificial disaster or other emergency occurring outside Canada.

Are you now suggesting that this act does not apply?

Ms. Alexa McDonough: When it comes to emergency assistance.

The Chair: The point is that it doesn't have to be specific to poverty reduction if there is an emergency assistance.

Mr. Ted Menzies: So why on earth did we narrow the definition yesterday? I go back to my argument. I'm just trying to clarify this. Why are we going around and around?

Ms. Alexa McDonough: We're trying to help you out here. Don't look a gift horse in the teeth. We're trying to help you out here.

I accept John's suggested amendment as a friendly amendment, because this very much responds to the concern that we might tie too many restrictions to the government's ability to respond rapidly and fully to an emergency. We're not meaning to bind the government in that regard. The last thing you want to do is have a whole lot of requirements for consultations, and so on. The point of being able to move in an emergency is to be able to move quickly.

The Chair: Please continue.

Ms. Alexa McDonough: Can I just make it clear that I accept that as a friendly amendment? I think it clarifies what we're talking about.

Mr. Ted Menzies: I think I'm in agreement with defining this—

Hon. John McKay: Okay. Good.

Ms. Alexa McDonough: Call the question.

Mr. Ted Menzies: But why should we limit ourselves in the first place? I go back to this hastily worded piece of legislation we're dealing with, and we're having to put in clauses that re-plow ground that should never have been plowed in the first place.

Ms. Alexa McDonough: Call the question.

The Chair: Are we ready for the question? No?

Mr. Patry.

Mr. Bernard Patry: I just want to know whether we have an amendment or not. I didn't hear. There is so much noise, I don't know.

The Chair: Is there no friendly amendment?

Ms. Alexa McDonough: Yes, there is a friendly amendment.

Mr. Bernard Patry: You were talking about a friendly amendment. I have no clue what's going on.

Ms. Alexa McDonough: There is a friendly amendment, which I accepted, except I can't read what you've written here.

Hon. John McKay: Why don't I read it for you?

The Chair: He wasn't always a lawyer; he started as a doctor.

Ms. Alexa McDonough: It sounded good when he said it, but I can't read it.

The Chair: That's why you can't read it.

Hon. John McKay: It was written by Keith Martin, so nobody can read it.

The Chair: It's written on prescription paper.

Hon. John McKay: "The criteria in subsection 4(1) shall not apply in respect of funding or other assistance that is provided for in the"—I'll give this to the clerk.

Mr. Bernard Patry: Are we on clause 5 or 4?

• (1650)

The Chair: We're on clause 5.

Mr. Bernard Patry: What are we doing now?

The Chair: We're having a friendly amendment to NDP-10.

Mr. Bernard Patry: Is it on clause 5?

The Chair: Yes, it's on clause 5. It's on clause 5, number 5. So instead of "this act does not", it would say "the criteria in subsection 4(1) shall not apply".

Mr. Bernard Patry: Let me think about that—"the criteria of"—

The Chair: "The criteria in subsection 4(1) shall not apply in respect of funding or other assistance that is provided for the"....

Mr. Menzies.

Mr. Ted Menzies: I'm still wondering about clarification here, but we'll probably accept it.

Ms. Alexa McDonough: Question.

Mr. Ted Menzies: I understand where this came from, and it wasn't from you. We realize that, Mr. McKay. So don't give yourself any more credit than you deserve.

Hon. Keith Martin: Perhaps we should read the whole thing out for the benefit of Dr. Patry.

Mr. Bernard Patry: No, I just want to understand what this friendly amendment is.

The Chair: The friendly amendment—not the complete amendment, but the friendly amendment—would then read, "(5) the criteria in subsection 4(1) shall not apply in respect of funding or other assistance that is provided for the".

Mr. Gerald Schmitz: It exempts emergency assistance from the

The Chair: I guess the question is the purpose of the friendly amendment. I almost liked it better as the original NDP motion.

Mr. Bernard Patry: What is the difference?

The Chair: That part I don't think we have fully understood. What is the difference between saying "this act does not apply in respect of", and "the criteria in subsection 4(1) shall not apply"?

Hon. John McKay: I am happy to withdraw the friendly amendment, but I thought I was actually helping out the government.

The Chair: No, no. I'm just saying for myself—

Hon. John McKay: I'm just trying to respond to their arguments. If they don't want it, it's fine by me.

The Chair: Mr. Patry and then Mr. Menzies.

Mr. Bernard Patry: If we just go for "the criteria of subsection 4 (1) shall not apply", it doesn't mean that the other criteria of the bill apply. I much prefer to say "this act does not apply".

Ms. Diane Bourgeois: No friendly amendment.

The Chair: Okay.

Hon. John McKay: I'm not friendly then.

Ms. Alexa McDonough: We're just trying to be responsive to the concerns raised, but if that's the general consensus, let's go back to the proposed amendment and call for the question.

Mr. Bernard Patry: We agree? Okay.

Hon. John McKay: That's fine. We won't be friendly any more.

The Chair: Mr. Menzies, go ahead.

Mr. Ted Menzies: We need a clarification. What are we suggesting here?

Mr. Bernard Patry: Nothing.

The Chair: Order, please.

I think what Mr. McKay has now suggested is that they would be willing to go with the friendly amendment, or they'd be willing to withdraw it, waiting and pending the government approval.

Mr. Ted Menzies: What are we going to vote on?

The Chair: What would you prefer?

Mr. Ted Menzies: If we're going to talk about clause 4, we'd better talk about all of 4, or just leave it the way it is.

The suggestion was to put in that this act applies to subsection 4 (1).

Mr. Bernard Patry: I don't accept the friendly amendment. I think this act does not apply.

The Chair: So he has withdrawn the friendly amendment?

A voice: Yes.

Mr. Ted Menzies: Okay. That's what I was trying to clarify, what we're voting on.

The Chair: All right.

Hon. John McKay: Do you want help?

The Chair: The question called is on NDP-10.

(Amendment agreed to on division)

(Clause 5 as amended agreed to on division)

(On clause 6—*Advisory committee*)

The Chair: There are no amendments on clause 6.

Does anyone have any questions or any amendments from the table on clause 6?

Mr. McKay.

Hon. John McKay: Clause 6 should be withdrawn, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Marc Toupin: It can't be withdrawn, but they can vote against it.

The Chair: The table tells me that we can't withdraw it, but we can vote against it.

Hon. John McKay: Okay. I'll vote against it then.

The Chair: Anyone else on clause 6—?

• (1655)

Hon. John McKay: Call the question.

The Chair: Wait a minute, we'd better word this carefully.

Shall clause 6 carry?

(Clause 6 negated)

(On clause 7—*Petition to Committee*)

The Chair: There are no amendments to clause 7.

Mr. McKay, would you like to speak to clause 7?

Hon. John McKay: The fate of clause 6 should befall the fate of clause 7 and clause 8.

The Chair: Okay. We'll do clause 7 at the present time.

(Clause 7 negated)

The Chair: We're getting good, guys.

We've heard Mr. McKay's suggestion on clause 8.

(Clause 8 negated)

(On clause 9—*Reports to Parliament*)

The Chair: We have a couple of amendments to clause 9.

Mr. Marc Toupin: There are line conflicts here.

The Chair: I'll just read what the table has given me.

On CPC-2, there is a line conflict with NDP-11, Liberal 5, NDP-12, and NDP-13. As long as you're aware of those...

Mr. Casey.

Mr. Bill Casey: My amendment is proposing to replace the entire clause 9 with a much briefer one, just because there are so many reporting requirements in clause 9. There was a concern raised about the Bretton Woods Act about breaches of confidentiality by Mr. Flack, who testified from the Department of Foreign Affairs.

I'm proposing that we shorten it and make a simpler reporting procedure, and also protect the minister and allow him to just report what he's allowed to report, and not require him to report things he's not allowed to report under the Bretton Woods Act.

The Chair: All right. If this carries, the other amendments would not be entertained or put.

Mr. McKay.

Hon. John McKay: Just as a point of explanation for members, CPC-2 and CPC-3 should be read together. In my view, they would substantially weaken the Department of Finance's requirements and transparency. It would make for a far weaker reporting requirement.

There are two legitimate points that are raised by the Department of Finance. One is on confidentiality, and we think that is appropriate. It is dealt with in amendment L-5.1. We don't wish to have the Minister of Finance breach any confidentiality agreements that would result from their obligations under the Bretton Woods Institutions. So we've dealt with that in one of the subsequent amendments.

The second one is an issue of providing summaries of reports. We think that is a legitimate point, and that's contained in NDP-11.

So we think that taken as a whole, CPC-2 and CPC-3 actually weakened the transparency requirements. So I'm hoping other members see it the same way.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. McKay.

Mr. Menzies.

• (1700)

Mr. Ted Menzies: In the spirit of trying to make this as clear and concise as it can be, but not making it onerous on the minister, as a result of your proposal, Mr. McKay, we're going to be burning up an awful lot of hours just providing a string of reports that are not necessary.

I think Mr. Casey's amendment brings enough reporting mechanism to it to bring total accountability back to the House of Commons, and that's what's necessary.

Hon. John McKay: Because the bill required a royal recommendation, a petitioning process and an advisory committee process were lost. Therefore, the obligations of the bill now fall on the competent minister or ministers, and their obligations under the bill have to be as strong as they can possibly be.

Whether any trees give their lives in sacrifice for this bill I'm not prepared to say, but I do want the obligations of the ministers to be as strong as possible. As I reiterated before, confidentiality and the summary point were legitimate issues, both of which are dealt with in subsequent amendments.

I don't think there's anything else I can add to that.

The Chair: Mr. Martin.

Hon. Keith Martin: I think our amendment will clarify the concern the government is mentioning. If you look at my amendment, which is 256772, it really rewords paragraph 9(a) and says "the total amount spent by the Government of Canada on official development assistance in the previous fiscal year". So that is very clear, and I think it will probably clarify the concern the government has expressed.

The Chair: Okay.

Mr. Patry.

Mr. Bernard Patry: I don't know what you're talking about.

The Chair: We're talking about CPC-2. It amends clause 9 by replacing lines 8 to 28 on page 5 with the following:

(1) The Minister shall cause to be submitted to each House of Parliament, within twelve months after the termination of each fiscal year or, if that House is not then sitting

Do you have that?

Mr. Casey.

Mr. Bill Casey: I just noticed here that it says in paragraph 9(1)(b),

a summary of the annual report submitted by the Committee under section 8;

Didn't we just do away with clause 8?

Hon. John McKay: He's correct.

The Chair: Are you looking at amendment L-5?

Hon. John McKay: No, he's looking at paragraph 9(1)(b).

The Chair: Yes, there will be consequential changes, editorial changes—I guess they'd be amendments—that will come from some of the things that we have done, and those will be reflected later.

Mr. Bill Casey: If you look at the reports that are listed here, it just seems to me an onerous list of reports. I think an annual report should be adequate, and that's my proposal.

The proposal here—I don't have to read it to you—is to have a report containing a description of any activity; a summary of the report; a summary of the annual report submitted on Bretton Woods, and they already do that anyway, so why duplicate it; a summary of any representation by Canadian representatives with respect to priorities and policies of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund; a summary of department performance; and a statistical report on the disbursement of development assistance within one year. It just seems to be an onerous, repetitive bunch of reports.

•(1705)

Hon. John McKay: It's already done. We're only asking for a summary.

The Chair: Are we ready for the question?

(Amendment negated)

The Chair: All right. Now we will move to amendment L-5.1, reference number 2566772, on clause 9.

Mr. Martin.

Hon. Keith Martin: I'll give you a second to find it.

The Chair: I want to tell the committee, we're scheduled to go until 5:30. I know there are some flights that are going to be caught out of here, and others have meetings beginning at six, so my intention is to drop the hammer at 5:30 if we aren't....

Go ahead, Mr. Martin.

Hon. Keith Martin: I'll read this out, Chair, and hopefully we can get through this very quickly.

The Chair: I think we can.

Hon. Keith Martin: It says,

the total amount spent by the Government of Canada on official development assistance in the previous fiscal year;

That is paragraph 9(1)(a).

The Chair: Does everybody have it?

Mr. Bernard Patry: What's going to happen to amendment NDP-11, then?

The Chair: Amendment NDP-11, that is the one. There is a line conflict with amendment NDP-11. Pass that on to Madam McDonough. If we carry amendment L-5.1, amendment NDP-11 cannot be put. Is that all right?

Ms. Alexa McDonough: Yes, that's fine. Let's move. Call the question.

The Chair: All right.

Does anyone want to speak to amendment L-5.1?

Mr. Menzies.

Mr. Ted Menzies: We're just trying to get the paperwork in front of us.

The Chair: Yes, that's what we're doing here.

I'll read it again:

That Bill C-293, in Clause 9, be amended by replacing line 15 on page 5 with the following:

Hon. Keith Martin: I'll continue:

(a) the total amount spent by the Government of Canada on official development assistance in the previous fiscal year;

The Chair: And paragraph 9(1)(a.1),

a summary of any activity or initiative

Is that correct?

Hon. Keith Martin: Correct.

The Chair: That's the second line there, “a summary of any activity or initiative”. That's paragraph 9(1)(a.1).

Mr. Menzies, and then Mr. Goldring.

Mr. Peter Goldring: On the second part, “a summary of any activity or initiative”, it doesn't provide a lot of clarity to it as to “any”. I would think “any activity or initiative” is pretty broad as far as an interpretation is concerned on when to trigger intensive reports.

Hon. Keith Martin: Paragraph 9(1)(a), as it reads right now, is “a description of any activity or initiative taken under this Act”. We're just rewording it to say, “a summary of any activity or initiative taken under this Act”. We're just changing “description” to “summary”.

The Chair: It changes “description” to “summary”.

Hon. Keith Martin: Yes, it's not a cataclysmic event.

The Chair: Mr. Patry.

[Translation]

Mr. Bernard Patry: The French version and the English version are not always perfectly identical. In French, we have: “un résumé des activités ou des projets”, whereas, in English, we have:

[English]

“summary of any activity or initiative”. I may be wrong, but for me “initiative” means something that you try to do. It's not a project; it's something you'll try to do. Let's say you want to go with ODA to such-and-such a country. You say, we're looking at this, but you don't do it. Are you going to do a summary of this?

Hon. John McKay: Change it to “initiative” *en français*.

Mr. Bernard Patry: Do you not want to change it in English to “projects?”

[Translation]

It would be “toutes les initiatives”. Very well.

[English]

Hon. John McKay: No.

An hon. member: Question.

Mr. Bernard Patry: No, we have an amendment first, if you don't mind.

Hon. John McKay: That's fine.

The Chair: Madame St-Hilaire.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Caroline St-Hilaire (Longueuil—Pierre-Boucher, BQ): I am not convinced that in this context the term “initiatives” is really appropriate in French. I much prefer the word “projet”, which is the equivalent of “initiative” in English. In French, a project is something that you set up in the hope of realizing it.

• (1710)

Mr. Bernard Patry: Agreed.

[*English*]

The Chair: Then shall we leave it as it is?

Actually, Mr. Patry, did you move this?

Mr. Bernard Patry: No.

The Chair: Okay. Then we will leave the English and French as is?

Some hon. members: Yes.

The Chair: Mr. Menzies, were you going to speak to this?

Mr. Ted Menzies: Yes. I am concerned about once again burning up a bunch of departmental time to write reports on something that we will be providing an overall report on to Parliament at the end of the year. Writing extra reports is not good use of taxpayers' money.

The Chair: The question is on amendment L-5.1.

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

The Chair: Amendment NDP-11 is now not put.

Next is NDP-12. Madam McDonough.

Ms. Alexa McDonough: Consistent with the consensus that has already been achieved, we remove all references to the advisory committee. That is where this is coming from.

The Chair: This is consequential from another amendment. It deletes proposed paragraph 9(1)(b), lines 17 and 18 on page 5:

(b) a summary of the annual report submitted by the Committee under section 8;

Is anyone speaking to that? I will give you time.

(Amendment agreed to)

The Chair: Next is amendment NDP-13. Madam McDonough.

Ms. Alexa McDonough: This is again very straightforward. It is a response to wanting to make this more inclusive. It is that proposed paragraph 9(1)(d) be amended by replacing lines 24 and 25 on page 5 with the following:

priorities and policies of the Bretton Woods Institutions; and

It replaces “World Bank and the International Monetary Fund” with “Bretton Woods Institutions”.

I so move.

The Chair: All right. Is it consequential? It is not really.

Does anyone want to comment on this?

Mr. Patry.

Mr. Bernard Patry: I just want to ask Madam McDonough this. Do the World Bank or IMF or all the Bretton Woods institutions not report on a yearly basis? Why should we put that here? I'm just asking. I think they report.

Ms. Alexa McDonough: Let me look back.

Mr. Bernard Patry: I think it's redundant, that's all.

Hon. John McKay: It's not redundant. We're just changing—

The Chair:

A summary of any representation made by Canadian representatives with respect to priorities and policies of the

Bretton Woods institutions—and the International Monetary Fund?

Hon. John McKay: It just replaces the IMF with Bretton Woods institutions; it's generic.

Mr. Bernard Patry: My question—

The Chair: Go ahead, Mr. Patry.

Mr. Bernard Patry: Thank you.

When you talk about any representation made by a Canadian representative with respect to priorities and policies, does it mean that anytime the board of any Bretton Woods institution has a meeting, any representation or summary of these meetings should be available to the committee, even if it's an in camera meeting, including the fact that Canada is also representing some other countries, such as Ireland and some of the Caribbean countries?

Hon. John McKay: Subject to the confidentiality that we just passed.

Ms. Alexa McDonough: I think if I understand your question, the point of this is that whatever reporting requirements there are for the now World Bank and International Monetary Fund, we're broadening those to say the Bretton Woods institutions. Those reporting requirements don't necessarily respond to the criteria that we set out in this bill. It's a way of reinforcing that whatever their reporting requirements may be, we have some criteria that we want to be sure are taken into account. That's the point of it.

It's not some totally new set of requirements; it's just making sure that we're hearing back on the provisions of this bill that we're adopting here.

Mr. Bernard Patry: Regarding my question, if there is a meeting of the IMF or the World Bank, and inside the meeting they're discussing the facts about giving grants or subventions for anything they're doing in the world in any country, you want to ask the competent minister, the Minister of Finance, and the World Bank to give us a résumé of what was discussed over there.

That's what I'm asking you. That's what we're requesting: a summary of any representation, a representation by Canadian representatives with respect to priorities and policies. Have you discussed policies? We're going to discuss policy, and at the end they are going to say we have three or four policies, and we end up with one.

Do you want to know everything that's going to be discussed in the World Bank or in all these institutions?

Ms. Alexa McDonough: First, the operative word is summary.

Secondly, we need to come back to what this exercise is about. It's also about greater accountability and transparency, which is something we all agree is important. I think there is a concern to establish that what we're advocating on behalf of Canada is both reported back to Canada and is understood to be consistent with the priorities we have adopted here.

Summary is the word. We're not talking about verbatim reports and everything that gets discussed, but a summary of what it is we are there advocating and representing on behalf of Canada.

•(1715)

The Chair: All right.

Mr. Patry.

Mr. Bernard Patry: Regarding Canadian representatives, does it mean just the one who is responsible, the key person, or does it mean any staff over there? They are representatives of Canada over there.

Ms. Alexa McDonough: That's why we want to know what they're doing on our behalf, and whether it's consistent—

Mr. Bernard Patry: If you have a staff of 20 people, do you want to know what the 20 people are doing for transparency? I'm reading this.

The Chair: A summary of any representation made by Canadian representatives—

Hon. Keith Martin: We're nitpicking here. Let's get on with the question.

Mr. Bernard Patry: I want to get answers; that's my privilege. I'm sorry about that. We're not nitpicking. I want to be sure that's what it means.

The Chair: Mr. McKay, I'm sorry.

Hon. John McKay: I don't know whether it can be any clearer. We're trying to make the language consistent, so that Bretton Woods is the institution. All the amendment contemplates is to the priorities and policies of the Bretton Woods institutions, as to a summary of any representations made by Canadian representatives. Of course, that's exactly what we want: a summary of any representation made by Canadian representatives with respect to the Bretton Woods institutions. With that information, we will then be able to assess ODA.

I don't know what else I could do in terms of any other phrasing I could possibly use.

Ms. Alexa McDonough: I think it is clear that's what we're looking for, and people will vote accordingly. I would move this amendment and hope we can move to the question, unless people have other—

The Chair: Okay.

Mr. Menzies.

Mr. Ted Menzies: I'd like to have a clarification here if I could, Mr. McKay. Are we going to get different ministers involved here again when we're dealing with the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund? We're talking about the "competent minister". Is this then going to be the finance minister dealing with Bretton Woods?

Hon. John McKay: Yes.

Mr. Ted Menzies: It will be the finance minister specifically?

Hon. John McKay: That's the way it works currently.

Mr. Ted Menzies: Okay. So just so—

Ms. Alexa McDonough: But remember, they're advocating on behalf—

Mr. Ted Menzies: —whoever that particular minister is that's dealing with that.

Hon. John McKay: That's right.

The Chair: Bretton Woods falls under the finance minister's responsibilities.

Hon. John McKay: Are we specifically saying that?

Mr. Ted Menzies: We don't need to be.

The Chair: We don't have to because that's his area. That's his jurisdiction.

Ms. Alexa McDonough: It's their representative.

•(1720)

The Chair: All right. Are we ready for the question?

Mr. Ted Menzies: But it says "the minister". Once again, we're still wrestling with the "minister" issue.

Hon. John McKay: But "the minister" is previously defined as "the competent minister".

Mr. Ted Menzies: As "the minister of the"—

Hon. John McKay: It's in the definitions clause.

Mr. Ted Menzies: Sorry, okay.

The Chair: Mr. Patry.

Mr. Bernard Patry: If I understand properly, it means that the Minister of Finance will give the report to the minister, and the minister will give, at that time, the report to Parliament. The Minister of Finance will be, in a certain sense, under the jurisdiction of the minister of CIDA.

Hon. John McKay: That's a possible way of doing it.

Mr. Bernard Patry: Yes, that's a possible way. Do you think the Minister of Finance will agree with being under his jurisdiction?

Hon. John McKay: It doesn't matter whether he agrees or whether he doesn't agree.

Mr. Bernard Patry: But it matters for me, because you see there is a certain solidarity. Because he could say by "a summary of any representation made by Canadian representatives with respect to the priorities..." done by the competent minister. You should have there "the competent minister". If you want to do something, do something with "the competent minister", because I would not like to have the Minister of Finance reporting to a minister of CIDA.

Hon. John McKay: I'm sure you're not commenting on the competence of the current Minister of Finance.

The Chair: I think we all understand what he's—

Hon. John McKay: I'm sure that's true.

Mr. Bernard Patry: With “a competent minister”, you're adding “a summary of any representation made by the Canadian representative with respect to priorities”...a summary by the competent ministers.

The Chair: He has a point there. Maybe it's just been so long that some of these things are starting to make sense to me. He does have a valid point there.

Mr. Ted Menzies: That's the problem. They don't make sense.

The Chair: Yes, you can go back to subclause 9(1), though, Mr. Patry. I'd just point out that it says,

The Minister, after consultation with every competent minister, shall cause to be submitted to each House...

And then it talks about getting a summary of the representations made with respect....

So I think maybe the upper part, subclause 9(1), answers the question. Does it?

Mr. Bernard Patry: Yes. You could change it to just “The Minister or the competent minister”.

Hon. John McKay: Put “competent minister” after “consultation”? Is that what you're saying? I'm not quite sure what you're driving at.

The Chair: He's saying that we include “The Minister or the competent minister”, and then strike the rest after “consultation with every competent minister”?

Mr. Bernard Patry: No, you say “The Minister or the competent minister”. Delete “after consultation with every competent minister”. It's “The Minister or the competent minister...shall cause to be submitted...”.

The Chair: That makes sense.

Hon. John McKay: Okay, fine.

Ms. Alexa McDonough: Can you repeat that, please?

The Chair: “The Minister or competent minister, after consultation...”.

Mr. Bernard Patry: No, not after.... We delete “after consultation with every competent minister”. The competent minister will not consult with himself.

The Chair: No, I know. But you'd still have “after consultation, shall cause to be submitted”, right?

Mr. Bernard Patry: Yes.

The Chair: “The Minister or competent minister, after consultation, shall cause to be submitted to each House....” Is that correct, Mr. Patry?

Ms. Alexa McDonough: Agreed.

The Chair: Agreed?

Ms. Alexa McDonough: Yes.

The Chair: You're calling for the question?

Mr. Ted Menzies: No. Mr. Patry has a good point. How many reports is this going to generate? Who actually submits a report? If the competent minister is the Minister of International Cooperation, does she then submit the report from the finance minister?

Mr. Bernard Patry: No. It's the competent minister at that time for finance. For CIDA, it's “the minister”.

Mr. Ted Menzies: So it's a different minister.

The Chair: Mr. Patry has a point.

Mr. Ted Menzies: I know he has, and there's confusion on this.

The Chair: “The minister or the competent minister shall cause to be submitted...”. That breaks it out a little better there. Do we ask the question on that?

Hon. John McKay: Fine.

The Chair: Now can we ask the question on that?

Mr. Bernard Patry: You're on subclause 9(1)?

The Chair: Yes, we have to go back to it.

Mr. Bernard Patry: I just want to know what's going on.

The Chair: This is a friendly amendment to subclause 9(1). Then we'll go back to NDP-13.

Are we in favour of the friendly amendment to subclause 9(1) as read?

Some hon members: Yes.

The Chair: Now back to NDP-13. We've debated this.

Are you ready for the question?

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

•(1725)

The Chair: All right, CPC-3.

Mr. Bernard Patry: I just want to ask a question on paragraph 9(e).

The Chair: On 9(e)?

Mr. Bernard Patry: Yes, 9(e), before subclause (2).

The Chair: All right.

Mr. Bernard Patry: It says “a summary of the Departmental Performance Report of the Canadian International Development Agency”.

Is CIDA doing it now?

Mr. James Lee: Yes, they have just issued the new one.

Mr. Bernard Patry: Is that the report?

Mr. James Lee: Yes. So it stays.

Mr. Bernard Patry: It's redundant, but that's okay.

So it's done. Okay. I just wanted to know. Thank you.

The Chair: Okay.

CPC-3. Mr. Casey.

Mr. Bill Casey: This is in line with what we did with clauses 6, 7, and 8, so I don't think it should be a problem if you want to vote it down.

The Chair: Just on that, you see where it says “the positions taken by Canada”. It’s “(a) the position”. We’re wondering if there should be a (b) before “a summary of the manner”? There is in the French. So that would be to include “(b)”, “a summary of the manner in which Canada’s activities...”.

All right, Mr. Casey, go ahead.

Mr. Bill Casey: Based on the testimony we had, we think this should be eliminated.

The Chair: You mean delete lines 29 to 31, so delete subclause (2). It’s a deletion.

Hon. Keith Martin: It’s a replacement, isn’t it?

The Chair: Okay, so you delete this and replace it with:

The Minister of Finance shall, in addition to the report required under section 13 of the Bretton Woods and Related Agreements Act, contribute to the Report to Parliament under this Act:

(a) the positions taken by Canada...”.

All right, Mr. McKay.

Hon. John McKay: The statistical report is pretty important. The premise is that you take out the statistical report and then you provide a summary of the positions taken by Canada.

We think that hard numbers are rather critical to knowing what our performance might be under this bill. I can’t see how I can give up on some sort of statistical summary. That’s the problem with the amendment.

The Chair: Mr. Patry.

Mr. Bernard Patry: I have a question for Mr. McKay.

The Chair: Go ahead.

Mr. Bernard Patry: When it says “The Minister shall issue a statistical report”, what do you mean? Is it a report about the ODA itself? Is it a report about ODA by humanitarian sections and the number of emergencies? What type of report do you want? Is it by region? What type of a report? This is very vague. The department will give you what they want to give you.

Hon. John McKay: I imagine the first time they will give me what they want to give me.

Mr. Bernard Patry: I don’t know—

Hon. John McKay: Then the second time, if I’m not happy with it, or more accurately, members are not happy with it, they’ll ask for a breakdown, whether it’s a regional breakdown or a country-by-country breakdown.

I don’t think you can phrase it beyond simply saying “statistical”.

Mr. Bernard Patry: Yes, but if you’re not happy, are you going to come back to change the bill?

Hon. John McKay: No, you don’t have to come back. You can say you’re not happy with the statistical report and that there’s more information to be generated.

I don’t see the issue here.

The Chair: Mr. Goldring.

Mr. Peter Goldring: The way I’m reading this motion is that it makes reference, under “section 13”, to a report under section 13 of the Bretton Woods agreement. I guess the question is whether that

report is a statistical report that would meet the intentions of your deleted lines, in which case it would still be in there but would also have the additional provisions that are listed below.

Is that report required under section 13 of the Bretton Woods and Related Agreements Act not a statistical report that meets your original requirements?

Hon. John McKay: Not necessarily; it may be simply a summary of activities.

• (1730)

The Chair: Mr. Patry.

Mr. Bernard Patry: My answer to this is, it’s very easy. If we’re not satisfied with the report, it’s not an MP who is going to tell CIDA what to do or not to do. It needs to be done by Parliament; we cannot tell CIDA.

Hon. John McKay: But the report would be deposited to this committee, presumably. And if it were just a bland report saying virtually nothing, then you or any other member could move to say that we want greater statistical analysis than has been provided. All this does is give you the opportunity to ask that question.

Mr. Bernard Patry: Okay.

The Chair: Mr. Casey.

Mr. Bill Casey: My point in making this proposal is that when I look at this, it looks as though paragraph 9(1)(a) is pretty much the same as paragraph 10(a), and paragraph 9(1)(d) is pretty much the same as paragraph 10(b). These are just duplicate reports—duplicates on duplicates.

I don’t know whether you’re trying to get contradictions, or get so much information that the department won’t be able to do anything else, or what, but it seems to me there’s too much duplication in the reporting requirements in this. It’s actually a short, simple bill, relatively speaking, but there are so many reports required under it; this is duplication on duplication.

I’d just propose that we do away with clause 10, because everything else is covered.

The Chair: Mr. Patry.

Mr. Bernard Patry: Mr. Casey in a sense is right, because there is a duplication. We amended subclause 9(1) to put in “competent minister”, and in clause 10 we talk about “Minister of Finance”. This is why we talked about this in clause 9.

I agree with the description that we should have “any activities”. Paragraph 9(1)(b) has been deleted. Paragraph 9(1)(c) concerning Bretton Woods is in clause 10. It’s the same with paragraph 9(1)(d), which is covered in clause 10. We’re just duplicating.

The Chair: Is there anyone else?

Mr. Menzies.

Mr. Ted Menzies: Yes, I would agree with Mr. Casey’s amendment, recognizing that it is the Minister of Finance who should issue these reports. That’s what we’re dealing with: what we’re doing according to the Bretton Woods institution. This just makes it far simpler and equally as good a reporting as what is suggested in the bill as proposed.

The Chair: Mr. McKay.

Hon. John McKay: The issue here is hard numbers. The Minister of Finance is in possession of those hard numbers. I don't see what is challenging for the Minister of Finance—or the “competent minister”, as the case may be—in providing a statistical report on the disbursement of development assistance.

What's the challenge here?

The Chair: Clause 10 has duplication that is—

Hon. John McKay: There is some redundancy. I'd concede that point. Having said that, you'd want to make sure that everything.... You see, the way the original concept was set up was that there would be “the minister” and the Minister of Finance, in the anticipation that “the minister” was the CIDA minister.

Now that you've renovated it so that it's the minister or “the competent minister”, in some respects you might want to jam everything of clause 10 into clause section 9.

Mr. Bill Casey: It's pretty much there now, I think.

Hon. John McKay: Well, you'd just want to go through it paragraph by paragraph. I don't want to get into procedural issues here, Chair, but—

The Chair: Yes, we're on subclause 9(2), and we're dealing with Mr. Casey's amendment. I think Mr. Casey's amendment.... You're right, it's duplication.

Mr. Bernard Patry: Paragraphs 9(1)(d) and 10(b) have the same wording.

The Chair: Is there an amendment coming to delete clause 10?

All right. I think what the Conservatives put forward here was a motion to delete clause 10, recognizing that the department had said it was duplication, but accepting, then, the amendment dealing with subclause 9(2).

• (1735)

Mr. Bernard Patry: You were on clause 10, and now we're back on clause 9.

The Chair: No, we're on clause 9 now.

Mr. Bernard Patry: That's okay.

The Chair: What we would have to do is vote against clause 10. We won't even withdraw it, we just have to vote against it.

Mr. Bernard Patry: That's okay.

The Chair: If it's the same clause, we don't want to include it, because I think everyone here wants to make this bill a little better. And you've heard the government's concern that there's a lot of duplicate reporting.

Hon. John McKay: Mr. Chair, as just a quick summary—and I don't like doing things quickly—it seems to me that the argument is correct that clause 10 is duplication, given some of the changes that we've already made. I would suggest that in order to make sure we cover all of our bases we take amendment CPC-3 and instead of replacing subclause 9(2), we just simply add it as 9(3).

I think that would cover everything.

The Chair: I'm sorry, could you say that one more time, John?

Hon. John McKay: All right. Delete clause 10.

The Chair: Okay, well, we'll do that later, yes.

Hon. John McKay: Okay. Insert amendment CPC-3, not as a replacement for subclause 9(2), but as an addition.

Hon. Keith Martin: That will cover the Conservatives' concern and will fulfill the finance concerns in the bill.

The Chair: Okay, well, Mr. Casey, that would take a friendly amendment to change deleting lines 29 to 31. That part of it would be changed so that Bill C-293 would be amended in clause 9 by adding, after line 32, new subclause 9(3), which would begin:

The Minister of Finance shall

Mr. Bill Casey: But we'd keep subclause 9(2) in place as it is now.

The Chair: Yes.

Hon. John McKay: Subclause 9(2) stays as it is, and 9(3) is the addition of the CPC amendment.

Mr. Bernard Patry: Could you show me this on paper?

The Chair: Mr. Menzies.

Mr. Ted Menzies: We're into duplication again, but at least that does make some sense. We're not duplicating ourselves. I go back to —

The Chair: You are in some way, because the statistical report and Mr. Casey's amendment basically deal with Bretton Woods. They're still both there, but clause 10 is gone.

Mr. Ted Menzies: But what is the report from Bretton Woods if it isn't going to be statistics? What are you going to tell them?

I think we're duplicating again.

The Chair: Well, maybe it would be the same.

Hon. John McKay: We'll risk it.

Mr. Ted Menzies: Are CIDA's wages ODA-able, because we're certainly going to be hiring more people to put all these reports together.

The Chair: All right.

Mr. Casey, are you willing to accept that as a friendly amendment, that it begin, “that Bill C-293 be amended in clause 9 by adding after line 32 on page 5 the following”, and then as written?

Mr. Bill Casey: No problem.

The Chair: All right. Let me think this thing through.

Do we accept the friendly amendment?

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

The Chair: Now, on CPC-3, as amended.

(Amendment agreed to)

(Clause 9 as amended agreed to on division)

(Clause 10 negated)

(On clause 11—*Order in council*)

The Chair: We are on amendment NDP-14 on clause 11.

We'll go to Madam McDonough.

Ms. Alexa McDonough: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

This proposes that clause 11 be amended by replacing the lines 11 to 13 on page 6 with the following: “This act comes into force 30 days after the day on which it receives royal assent.”

The intention of this amendment is simply to remove the open-ended option for the government with respect to bringing it into force. It would therefore obligate the government to enforce it within 30 days of receiving royal assent.

The Chair: Do you have a question?

• (1740)

Mr. Bernard Patry: Is it regular to...? With the Governor in Council, what's the difference? You don't want it to be postponed, is that all?

The Chair: What is the regular...?

Mr. Menzies.

Mr. Ted Menzies: I guess I'm concerned that with all the reporting we've put in place here it's going to take a long time to prepare for this, so I don't want to restrict the time any more than we already have.

Ms. Alexa McDonough: It just accelerates the reporting period.

Mr. Ted Menzies: I recognize that.

The Chair: It basically says that rather than waiting for the Governor in Council, and then the day after that comes in, this is 30 days after receiving royal assent. Logistically, I don't know what the difference is. Normally in bills like this it does go to Governor in Council. Is that the deal?

Ms. Alexa McDonough: Well, not to be suspicious or paranoid, but history is replete with examples of legislation being passed and never ending up receiving royal assent. So we just want to make sure that doesn't happen.

Hon. John McKay: If this were a government bill, you wouldn't have to worry about that. This is a private member's bill, and frankly, the government can just stall royal assent, then, bingo, Parliament dissolves, end of story. So that's the point.

The Chair: The amendment says “after it receives royal assent”, so it then becomes—

Mr. Gerald Schmitz: It is the coming into force—the proclamation.

The Chair: Would you be willing to go to 60 days? I don't know what the logistical.... I'm not certain why 30 days is taken and not 90 or whatever.

Ms. Alexa McDonough: Well, for the sake of cooperation, to bring this wonderful collaborative effort to fruition, I'd certainly accept a friendly amendment. Take your pick, 45 or 60.

Hon. John McKay: How about 45?

Ms. Alexa McDonough: Okay, 45 is a good compromise.

The Chair: Mr. Menzies.

Mr. Ted Menzies: Going back to how hastily put together this piece of draft legislation is, what is standard? What is doable? We're talking about probably four different departments here. Is that doable? I'm not sure it's doable in 60 days.

A voice: It's irrelevant.

Mr. Ted Menzies: Yes, the whole thing seems irrelevant to you, sir.

The Chair: I'm just throwing that out. I don't want to handcuff anyone here. It's going to receive royal assent.

Are you willing to go to the 60 days, Madam McDonough?

Ms. Alexa McDonough: I actually think I'd rather keep it at 30. We see too much straining against getting on with this, so let's put it to a vote and.... It has been two and a half years in the works.

The Chair: Mr. Goldring.

Mr. Peter Goldring: Well, there seems to be a misunderstanding.

The Chair: I'd like to end this on a happy note. Rather than tying the.... Go ahead.

Mr. Peter Goldring: On one hand we're hearing that the concern is because, according to John, it's been known to be held up and not receive royal assent. Then we're hearing on the other hand that there's a concern about putting a time figure in afterwards.

What is a normal, appropriate period of time, and does it depend on the complexity of the bill, and do you want to tie it down too badly? And if it is a matter of deciding on something here, I would think 60 or 90 days would be a reasonable amount of time to put into it, not a narrow focus of 30 days or 45.

Ms. Alexa McDonough: All we're talking about here, Mr. Chairman, is the act coming into force 30 days after the day on which it receives royal assent. The various reports that are due, and so on, don't even start—

The Chair: That would be a year down the road, after the fiscal—

Ms. Alexa McDonough: That's right.

The Chair: Yes, I realize that.

Ms. Alexa McDonough: Given what a long, long labour this bill has had, we should try to get it to come into force 30 days after the day on which it receives royal assent and get on with it.

Some hon. members: Call the question.

• (1745)

The Chair: Is there anyone else on debate?

(Amendment agreed to on division)

(Clause 11 as amended agreed to on division)

The Chair: Now, on the short title....

Mr. McKay.

Hon. John McKay: As a point of clarity, I just want to make sure that amendments NDP-4 and NDP-5 were withdrawn.

The Chair: Yes.

Hon. John McKay: Okay, so that's done.

Given the renovation that we put into clause 9 with respect to the competent minister and the elimination of clause 10, I think it now would be better to read paragraph 9(1)(e) as “summaries of the Departmental Performance Reports of all competent ministers” with respect to their activities of official development assistance. We've essentially put the entire reporting function right into clause 9 and eliminated clause 10. So I think it's only appropriate that all of the summaries of all of the competent ministers be put into it.

I could read that in:

summaries of the Departmental Performance Reports of all competent ministers with respect particularly to activities related to official development assistance.

That would replace the singular report of the CIDA minister.

Does that makes sense?

Ms. Alexa McDonough: I'm not sure I see where it's going.

Hon. John McKay: It would replace—

A voice: We adopted the clause.

The Chair: We can't.

Hon. John McKay: Okay, we can't.

The Chair: All right. We'll go back to the short title.

I'll call the question on clause 1, the short title, as amended, because of this whole amendment from the NDP on the definition of “developmental assistance”. That's why we have to change that. It was the (b) part to the amendment that she brought forward.

So shall clause 1, the short title, carry as amended?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Chair: Shall the title as amended carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Chair: Shall the bill as amended carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

The Chair: Shall I report the bill to the House?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Chair: Shall the committee order a reprint of the bill as amended?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Chair: Congratulations, Mr. McKay.

On behalf of the committee, I want to thank all of you for the hard work that we've had here in this session. Certainly as we break for this holiday season, the Christmas season, I wish you a very Merry Christmas and happy holidays. Enjoy your time away from this place. Be safe.

Hon. Keith Martin: And a special thank you to our staff.

The Chair: I was getting to that, Mr. Martin.

Also, we have staff who have given a lot of time and expertise to helping us as a committee, so we wish them the same and we give them a hand.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

The Chair: I look forward to getting back here with you after the break. Be safe.

The meeting is adjourned.

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