



House of Commons  
CANADA

## Standing Committee on Official Languages

---

LANG • NUMBER 001 • 2nd SESSION • 39th PARLIAMENT

---

EVIDENCE

**Tuesday, November 13, 2007**

—  
**Chair**

**Mr. Steven Blaney**

Also available on the Parliament of Canada Web Site at the following address:

**<http://www.parl.gc.ca>**

## Standing Committee on Official Languages

Tuesday, November 13, 2007

•(0905)

[*Translation*]

**The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Graeme Truelove):** Honourable members of the committee, I see we have quorum.

Welcome to the first meeting of the Standing Committee on Official Languages of this second session. I wish you every success in your work.

We will now proceed to elect a chair. I am ready to receive motions for the position of chair.

Mr. Lemieux.

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, CPC):** I would like to nominate Mr. Blaney as chair.

**The Clerk:** Mr. Lemieux moves that Mr. Blaney be elected Chair of the committee.

Are there any other motions?

Is it the pleasure of the committee to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** Agreed.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger (Ottawa—Vanier, Lib.):** Can there be other nominations?

Would you not like to be chair, Mr. Chong?

**Some Hon. Members:** Oh! Oh!

**The Clerk:** I declare the motion carried and Mr. Blaney duly elected Chair of the committee.

(Motion agreed to.)

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear! Hear!

**The Clerk:** Before I invite Mr. Blaney to take the Chair, if the committee agrees, we will now proceed with the election of the vice-chairs.

Are there any motions to that effect?

**Mr. Steven Blaney (Lévis—Bellechasse, CPC):** I would like to nominate Mr. Godin. Is that all right?

No? Mr. Rodriguez?

**Mr. Mauril Bélanger:** I would like to nominate Mr. Pablo Rodriguez as Vice-Chair of the committee.

**The Clerk:** Mr. Mauril Bélanger moves that Mr. Rodriguez be elected First Vice-Chair.

Are there any other motions?

Mr. Nadeau.

**Mr. Richard Nadeau (Gatineau, BQ):** Do we elect the second vice-chair immediately, or do we have to wait until we unanimously elect the first vice-chair?

**The Clerk:** If there is no other motions for the position of first vice-chair, we can move to the election of the second vice-chair.

(Motion agreed to.)

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** I move that Mr. Godin, the member for Acadie—Bathurst, be elected second vice-chair.

**The Clerk:** Are there any other motions?

(Motion agreed to.)

**The Clerk:** I would like to congratulate our two vice-chairs, Mr. Rodriguez and Mr. Godin.

I would now invite Mr. Blaney to take his seat as Committee Chair.

[*English*]

**The Chair (Mr. Steven Blaney (Lévis—Bellechasse, CPC)):** Good morning, everyone. I'm very glad to be here with you. Thank you for this renewed confidence in my capacity.

[*Translation*]

I would like to congratulate my colleagues, Mr. Rodriguez and Mr. Godin, on their election.

I am pleased to be here with you this morning. I would like to welcome back those committee members who were here last spring, as well as our new members.

As you know, the session was prorogued, and that is why this morning we had to elect a new chair and vice-chairs who will conduct the business of this committee.

There are about a dozen routine motions we need to pass that will govern how the committee operate. So I am prepared to receive motions on these routine matters.

Ms. Folco.

•(0910)

**Ms. Raymonde Folco (Laval—Les Îles, Lib.):** Are you going to take them one at the time, or can we move amendments to any of these motions?

**The Chair:** For the time being, no motion has been moved. So you may move them.

**Ms. Raymonde Folco:** The point at the page 2 entitled “Staff at *in camera* meetings”—

**The Chair:** On page 2...

**Mr. Yvon Godin (Acadie—Bathurst, NDP):** On a point of order.

**The Chair:** Mr. Godin has a point of order.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** Mr. Chairman, we already have a sheet listing the motions in order. We should go through them one by one, otherwise we might get confused. We should go through them in the order they appear, vote on each of them and discuss them where necessary.

**The Chair:** We all have the three-page document. We could go through it one point at a time. I am ready to receive motions.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** Mr. Chairman, I would like to move a motion on reduced quorum. I move:

That the Chair be authorized to hold meetings to receive and publish evidence when a quorum is not present, provided that at least four (4) members are present, including two (2) members of the opposition.

I am sorry, I made a mistake. I did not read the first motion. I thought it was about electing the chair and vice-chair.

We will start with the first motion, Mr. Chairman, regarding the services of analysts from the Library of Parliament. I move:

That the Committee retain, as needed and at the discretion of the Chair, the services of one analyst from the Library of Parliament to assist it in its work.

**The Chair:** That is the motion we have before us. All committee members have a copy of it.

Mr. Bélanger.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

According to this motion, it is at the discretion of the chair whether or not to retain the services of an analyst from the Library of Parliament. Could you tell committee members whether you intend to retain these services?

**The Chair:** Yes, Mr. Bélanger. It will probably be Mr. Paré.

Are there any other comments on the motion?

(Motion agreed to.)

**The Chair:** Thank you for your understanding. Is there another motion? Would someone care to move the next motion?

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** I would like to move the following motion about reduced quorum:

That the Chair be authorized to hold meetings to receive and publish evidence when a quorum is not present, provided that at least four (4) members are present, including two (2) members of the opposition.

**The Chair:** Are there any questions?

**Mr. Pablo Rodriguez (Honoré-Mercier, Lib.):** Is that the current practice, or has there been a change?

**The Chair:** The clerk tells me that the motions we have before us are those passed by the committee during the last session, before prorogation. Are there any other questions or comments? Are you ready for the vote?

(Motion agreed to.)

● (0915)

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** If no one else wants to work this morning, I will move the third motion. This is the motion regarding the distribution of documents:

That the Clerk of the Committee be authorized to distribute documents to members of the Committee only when they exist in both official languages, and that no document provided by a witness be distributed without the clerk's authorization.

**The Chair:** I think this motion goes without saying for the members of the Standing Committee on Official Languages. We must apply it quite strictly. I would ask those who want to distribute documents to committee members to ensure that they are in both languages.

Mr. Lemieux.

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux:** Mr. Chairman, I would like to move an amendment to the effect that the clerk is required to inform witnesses that documents must be in both languages. It sometimes happens that witnesses do not know that and come with documents in one language only, and we have to tell them that we cannot distribute them.

**The Chair:** So we have an amendment asking the clerk to inform witnesses of this requirement ahead of time.

Mr. Bélanger.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** I could agree with that, Mr. Chairman, but I want one thing to be made clear. If the intent of Mr. Lemieux's amendment is to ask witnesses to have their documents translated themselves, I would be opposed. We need clarification as to whether the intention behind Mr. Lemieux's amendment is to advise witnesses that if they want their documents to be distributed, they must provide them themselves in both languages or provide them in time so that they can be translated by the House translation services. If that is the intention behind Mr. Lemieux's motion, I can support it, but I hope the intention is not to require witnesses to translate their own documents.

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux:** No, my intention is to inform them that documents must be in both languages if they want them distributed here. However, it is up to them to determine the best way of doing that.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** If I understood correctly, Mr. Chairman, Mr. Lemieux is saying that documents must be in both languages. That is not the case. It is not up to witnesses to translate their own documents. That is the responsibility of the House of Commons.

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux:** If witnesses want their documents distributed, they must be in both languages.

**The Chair:** Mr. Harvey.

**Mr. Luc Harvey (Louis-Hébert, CPC):** We know that if the document is to be distributed to committee members, it must be in both official languages. In recent months, some witnesses arrived with only one version of their documents and they were told here that they could not distribute them. The motion is very simple. We can inform witnesses that there is a translation service available to translate their material. That could be added; we could easily agree to that. The objective is to ensure documents can be distributed if witnesses want them distributed.

Quite often, we get the translated version of a witness's document one week after the meeting. We cannot work with the text we are given. It think Pierre's amendment is the best possible one.

**The Chair:** Is this a friendly amendment to Mr. Lemieux's motion?

**Mr. Luc Harvey:** It is a friendly amendment.

**The Chair:** So the idea is to say that no documents from witnesses can be distributed without the clerk's authorization, and that the clerk should inform witnesses ahead of time of this fact and of the fact that a translation service is available to them.

So we have a friendly amendment. The question is whether we have a whole new amendment or whether you wish to include this friendly amendment in your amendment, Mr. Lemieux.

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux:** That is fine.

• (0920)

**The Chair:** I will therefore re-read the amendment as amended, so that we can discuss it. The motion is that the clerk inform witnesses ahead of time and inform them as well that there is a translation service available.

Mr. D'Amours.

**Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours (Madawaska—Restigouche, Lib.):** I'm trying to understand the relevance of the motion, Mr. Chairman. I agreed with what Mr. Harvey said initially, which is quite surprising, but I was no longer with him by the end. We would have to wait a week in any case. If witnesses decide to bring a document that is not in both languages, this will change nothing. It is up to witnesses to decide in which language they present their documents. We cannot require them to come with a translated document.

Mr. Harvey, you say that sometimes you wait a week to get the translated version of a document. One way or another, whatever the amendment states, we will have to wait a week, because people may come with texts in one language only. Initially, your argument made sense, but by the end, it no longer did because one way or another, we might have to wait a week to get the translation.

**Mr. Luc Harvey:** If a witness has been informed that documents must be in both official languages, that is already a huge improvement.

**The Chair:** Is that all, Mr. D'Amours?

**Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours:** Yes, Mr. Chairman, but this will not change anything in any case.

**The Chair:** I would like to tell you that this is what the clerk does already. He informed the witnesses that their documents must be in both official languages and that there is a translation service available. It is up to committee members to decide whether we want to mention that in our routine motions.

Mr. Godin.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** The motion we are discussing is about the distribution of documents. This does not mean that witnesses could not give the committee their document. If the document is not translated in time, normally it will be translated by the House translation service, and we will receive it later.

I think that Mr. Lemieux is saying that we have to ensure that witnesses are informed ahead of time that if they want their documents distributed, they must be translated. However, if there are not able to have their documents translated, the House will do so. If a witness wishes to appear before us before his document is translated, that means the committee would have received it one week in advance, and so we will not have to wait a week to get the translation.

I see nothing wrong with the motion, because we are still talking about the distribution of documents, and not the submission of a document to the committee. We talking about distributing documents at this table. We should not get too far away from the motion.

**The Chair:** I think..

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** Since the clerk is already doing this, perhaps he could suggest a wording that would cover what we are trying to say.

**The Chair:** We are asking the clerk to come up with wording to express the committee's wishes, Mr. Godin..

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** What Mr. Lemieux said is true. I think that some witnesses come here with a brief text, but they do not know that they should have it translated. This may have been forgotten in the past. I think that is the intention behind Mr. Lemieux's motion. I support that, and I think that by stating that here, it would be...

**The Chair:** I am just going to ask the clerk to explain what he does at the moment.

**The Clerk:** When I speak with the witnesses, I tell them that we have certain rules and that any document distributed to committee members by the clerk or during a meeting must be in both official languages.

In the case of an organization with the translation service, the witnesses will come with a translated text. Otherwise, the witness can send in the document and we will have it translated. Of course, this takes sometime. So if we do not get the document in time to have it translated before the meeting, it has to be distributed afterwards. I think I explain our rules on this matter quiet clearly to witnesses.

**The Chair:** Mr. Rodriguez.

**Mr. Pablo Rodriguez:** I just asked the question, and he answered it. I wanted to know what was done at the moment, because for the moment, the situation may not be perfect, but it is working. I have been on this committee for three and half years, and I think we can leave things as they are, and trust our clerk to do what is required.

• (0925)

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** My concern, Mr. Chairman, is that we are transferring our obligations to the Canadian Parliament to the witnesses.

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux:** Not at all.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** I recognize that, Mr. Lemieux, but the way in which we have worded your motion could lead the witnesses to believe that it is up to them to have their documents translated, where is that is not the case.

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux:** No, no.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** I have the floor, Mr. Lemieux.

The interpretation of the motion that you have put forward could be, for people, that if they come here, they will have to have their own document translated, which is not the case.

I would like to continue the practice that the clerk described for us that involves warning people that if we wish to have the document distributed, it must be in both languages, and that we point out to them that it is not their duty to have it translated themselves. If they are able to do so and wish to, then so be it, but it is not an obligation. I would certainly not want us to move in that direction.

The proposal that was read to me could be interpreted by potential witnesses as putting the burden on them, which is not certainly the case.

**The Chair:** Would you like me to reread the amendment at this point?

**Some hon. members:** No. There is no problem.

**The Chair:** No, it is all right?

Mr. Lemieux.

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux:** I would like to point out that is not my intention. We do many things as a committee. All of the routine motions are regularly passed, but we decided that it would be a good idea to formalize the process. It is a good thing for the witnesses, because they do not often appear before the committee, and they must travel to come here. If they arrive with the document that is written and only one language, that causes problems. I thought I said that the clerk should warn witnesses that

[*English*]

if they would like to have their documentation distributed

[*Translation*]

the documents should be written in both languages. We could add a few words on that subject. We have already done so through

[*English*]

the friendly amendment.

[*Translation*]

In fact, we explained that the committee itself could have the translation done. That is not a problem for me. However, I would like to formalize the fact that the clerk has the duty to inform the witnesses. He certainly does so, but for the moment, we have a lot of issues on the table.

**The Chair:** Agreed.

Mr. Godin.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** I do not believe it is difficult to clarify. In my opinion, Mr. Lemieux's intentions were perhaps not clear at the outset, but they were good. It is simply an issue of submitting documents in both languages, but there was a bit of ambiguity. In any case, everyone agrees this must be made clear.

I want to ask a question that is a bit silly. Suppose we make no clarifications. The clerk usually warns people, but he takes his orders from the Chair. Imagine we have a new Chair—and I agree that this could under no circumstances be Mr. Blaney—decides to subvert the process by telling the clerk that he should no longer inform witnesses

of this requirement, but simply tell them to appear. Would the clerk have no choice other than to follow the Chair's orders? There is no need to be embarrassed. Do you receive your orders from the Chair, yes or no?

**The Chair:** I am told that this is common practice for all the committees. Is that right, Mr. Clerk?

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** The fact remains that the committee is its own master. We are only talking about a clarification, it is not the end of the world. All we need to do is specify that the clerk must inform the witness of the need to submit documents in both official languages, that if that is not possible, that Parliament will voluntarily translate them and in order for this to be done, the documents must be sent immediately to the clerk. It is not difficult.

**The Chair:** I believe Mr. Rodriguez would like to say something.

**Mr. Pablo Rodriguez:** This issue has already been discussed. I was wondering whether or not the clerk had the duty to inform the witnesses, regardless of the committee.

●(0930)

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** May I suggest an amendment?

**The Chair:** Is it a subamendment or an amendment?

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** It is a subamendment. We will clarify the issue.

**The Chair:** I am told that this is the normal procedure for committees if there has been no other indication provided by its members.

Mr. Bélanger.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** In order to clarify the intent, we could say in the sub-amendment that since it is necessary for the documents to be in both languages in order for them to be distributed, the clerk invites witnesses to submit them in both languages or to submit them sufficiently in advance so that they can be translated by the House.

This way, it is clearer that it is an invitation to do so. Otherwise, there was an element of obligation that is transferred to the witness, and I do not believe that it is appropriate.

**The Chair:** You are proposing, Mr. Bélanger, to add the words "as it is necessary to provide the documents in both languages".

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** It would read as follows: "Because a document must be available in both languages in order to be distributed to the committee, the clerk advises witnesses of this obligation and of the availability of translation services".

**The Chair:** Were you able to take that down, Mr. clerk? I believe we agree on the spirit of this amendment. I did not see the wording of Mr. Lemieux's either.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** We could say the following: "Given that there is an obligation, the clerk advises that translation services are available, unless the witnesses prefer to submit their documents in both languages".

In that way, the obligation is not transferred to the witnesses.

**The Chair:** We now seem to have a consensus. Do you wish to have further discussion? I think we have said just about all there is to say on the subject.

Mr. Godin.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** I would not want to send a message to the witnesses that they should not submit their documents in both languages. Normally, it is their responsibility to do so. If they do not do so, we take care of the translation.

**One honourable member:** They do not have that responsibility...

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** That is true. You are right.

**One honourable member:** Canadians can communicate with their members of Parliament in the language of their choice.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** Yes, that is true. In that sense, we can specify that and indicate that if they wish, they may bring their documents here.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** In order for them to be distributed, they must be in both languages. Take note of the fact that we do have a translation service.

**The Chair:** All right. I believe we can put the question.

If I may, I request that the motion as amended be read. Please pay attention.

**The Clerk:** It reads as follows:

That the Clerk of the Committee be authorized to distribute documents to members of the Committee only when they exist in both official languages, and that no document provided by a witness be distributed without the clerk's authorization, and, as the documents provided must be in both official languages, that the clerk inform witnesses that translation services are available if necessary.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** It would have to read: "as documents must be available in both languages in order to be distributed, that the clerk inform..."

**The Chair:** It is the "if necessary" that is too much. Could you please re-read the amended part, Mr. Clerk, so that we will all be voting on the same thing?

The first paragraph is the one that appears in the motion. We are voting on the amendment.

We apologize to our audience, the motion was not written, but it is the work of a non-partisan committee.

The procedural clerk will reread the amendment to us.

● (0935)

**Mr. Chad Mariage (Procedural Clerk):** In support to my colleague, I will read the motion because it is in my handwriting.

As documents must be available in both official languages in order to be distributed, that the clerk inform witnesses that translation services are available.

**Mr. Luc Harvey:** Because the motion has to make sense, I believe it would be a good idea to take into account that the first part of the motion already exists and says: "That the clerk of the committee be authorized to distribute documents to the members of the committee only when they exist in both official languages." The two paragraphs have to correspond to each other, and I believe that the wording of the second part is not appropriate.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** He should do it properly. We understand now.

**Mr. Luc Harvey:** Yes, but we are repeating the same thing twice. It is enough to simply inform witnesses that when they come here, they must have provided documents—

**The Chair:** I think we are ready to hear motions.

Mr. Bélanger.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** I want to make sure that I am being understood. I agree entirely: all documentation distributed here must be in both languages. I do not know if I express myself well, but I am correcting Mr. Harvey because of what he just said. Individuals and associations who come here are under no obligation to submit their documents in both languages. None. That is understood. But the way in which we are wording these motions give the impression that we expect these people to give us the documents in both languages, whereas that is not the case. The responsibility is strictly on the side of Parliament, and we take on that responsibility because we have the necessary resources to ensure that things are translated. When the clerk communicates with witnesses, I would not want him to give the impression that the witnesses have this responsibility. That is not the case. It is a nuance, but it is very important.

**The Chair:** Agreed.

**Mr. Luc Harvey:** If the document has not been translated, when it arrives here, it cannot be distributed.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** If you want your document to be distributed, send it to us a week in advance so that we can have it translated, or bring the translated version yourself.

**The Chair:** All right.

I now give the floor to Mr. Lemieux.

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux:** I feel that my amendment, which was simple, has become much too complicated.

[*English*]

It was a friendly amendment meant only to make sure that the witnesses who come know that if they want their documentation distributed, it needs to be bilingual. That was it.

So if they want to translate it themselves, they can. If they want to send it to the committee, they can. The clerk can explain all of that. My only concern was that the witnesses know in advance that if they want their documentation distributed, it must be in both official languages. It's no more complicated than that. There is no hidden agenda. Let's just be up front with the witnesses so that they don't come here and then say, "You know I prepared this, and no one told me", or "it wasn't clear". That's all.

[*Translation*]

**The Chair:** Mr. Lemieux, you still maintain your friendly amendment intended to inform people that translation services are available? Do you want it to be part of the motion? Do you agree with the wording of the motion that Chad read?

Are there any other comments? If there are none, I am ready to put the question on the amendment.

● (0940)

**Mr. Luc Harvey:** Mr. Chairman, it is not proper French. The amendment is fine, but when it refers to the first part, it does not work anymore.

**The Chair:** We will now proceed to read the amendment.

**Mr. Chad Mariage:** It reads as follows: “and as the documents provided must be in both official languages in order to be distributed...”

**The Chair:** We can set the amendment aside or deal with it. We agree on the intent; it is a question of finding an appropriate wording. If you wish, we will make one more attempt.

**Ms. Raymonde Folco:** My comment deals simply with the quality of the French. One cannot use the verb “*pouvoir*”. I do not want to launch into lengthy grammatical analyses. It does not at all change the sense of what the clerk was trying to say.

**The Chair:** We will read the amendment.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** The full motion would read as follows:

That the Clerk of the Committee be authorized to distribute documents to the members [...] and as the documents must be in both official languages in order to be distributed, that the clerk inform witnesses of the availability of translation services.

**The Chair:** Does anyone move that we vote on the amendment? We will reread the amendment one last time before putting the question.

We are dealing with the amendment. Reread only the amendment.

**The Clerk:** Just the amendment? All right.

Mr. Bélanger proposes the following wording:

and, as the documents must be in both official languages in order to be distributed, that the Clerk inform witnesses of the availability of translation services.

**The Chair:** Is it Mr. Bélanger or Mr. Lemieux who is moving the amendment? It is Mr. Lemieux who is moving it.

All in favour of the amendment?

(Amendment agreed to)

**The Chair:** All in favour of the motion?

(Motion as amended agreed to)

**The Chair:** Wonderful. Thank you.

We have other motions to deal with. I am ready to receive other notices of motion for our procedural rules.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** I move:

That the Clerk of the Committee be authorized to make the necessary arrangements to provide working meals for the Committee.

Without amendment, Mr. Chairman.

• (0945)

**The Chair:** All those in favour of the motion?

(Motion agreed to)

**The Chair:** Mr. Godin.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** I move:

That, if requested, reasonable travel, accommodation and living expenses be reimbursed to witnesses, not exceeding two (2) representatives per organization; and that, in exceptional circumstances, payment for more representatives be made at the discretion of the Chair.

**The Chair:** Are there any questions or comments?

All those in favour of the motion?

All those opposed?

(Motion agreed to)

**The Chair:** Mr. Godin.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** I move:

That, unless otherwise ordered, each Committee member be allowed to be accompanied by one staff person at an *in camera* meeting.

**The Chair:** Ms. Folco.

**Ms. Raymonde Folco:** I would like to add “including one staff member from the whip's office” to this paragraph.

**The Chair:** “including...”

**Ms. Raymonde Folco:** “... one staff person from the whip's office.”

**The Chair:** “... from the whip's office...”

**Ms. Raymonde Folco:** “... of each party.”

**The Chair:** “... from the whip's office of each party.”

Is that right?

We have an amendment on the floor. Are there any comments? Do you have any comments, Ms. Folco?

**Ms. Raymonde Folco:** Non, I believe that is all.

**The Chair:** Mr. Rodriguez.

**Mr. Pablo Rodriguez:** When Ms. Folco says “including”, does that mean that as well as one staff person, you would also have someone from the office...

**Ms. Raymonde Folco:** “... be accompanied by one staff person at meetings and including...” We would add that here.

**Mr. Pablo Rodriguez:** If not, I could decide to replace the staff member by someone from the whip's office.

**Ms. Raymonde Folco:** “...including one representative from the whip's office.”

**The Chair:** For each party?

**Ms. Raymonde Folco:** For each party, yes, okay.

**The Chair:** I am going to re-read your amendment, Ms. Folco: “including one representative from the whip's office from each party.”

**Ms. Raymonde Folco:** That is correct.

**The Chair:** Are there any other comments on Ms. Folco's amendment? I am ready to call the vote on Ms. Folco's amendment. All those in favour? All those opposed?

(Amendment agreed to.)

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** I would like to provide some clarification. We did the same thing at the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs. All members may bring one of their staff if they so desire, but there are always people from the whip's office who come in to see how the meeting is going. And each party does the same thing. That is why this motion was moved by the Liberals at the meeting of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs. Since we are already doing that, it might as well be put in writing. It is not new. We were doing it, but it was not put in writing.

**The Chair:** So that allows each political party to have an additional member present.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** The representative must be from the whip's office.

**Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours:** Mr. Chairman, when you talk about an additional staff member, that does not mean that each member is entitled to be accompanied by one of his or her staff in addition to someone from the whip's office. Each party is authorized to be accompanied by a representative from the whip's office. There will not be two people for each member of Parliament.

**The Chair:** Since each party only has one whip, there can only be one person. In the amendment that has just been adopted, that is a predetermined factor. I am ready to call the vote.

We have voted on the amendment. We are now voting on the motion.

(Motion, as amended, agreed to.)

**The Chair:** You are very cooperative this morning, Mr. Godin.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** As regards *in camera* meetings transcripts, I move the following:

That one copy of the transcript of each *in camera* meeting be kept in the Committee Clerk's office for consultation by members of the Committee.

● (0950)

**The Chair:** Are there any questions or comments? We will proceed with the vote.

(Motion agreed to)

**The Chair:** Mr. Godin.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** I move the following for notices of motions:

That 48 hours' notice be required for any substantive motion to be considered by the Committee, unless the substantive motion does not relate directly to the business under consideration; and that the notice of motion be filed with the clerk of the committee and distributed to members in both official languages.

**The Chair:** Ms. Folco.

**Ms. Raymonde Folco:** To the best of your knowledge, colleagues, is this exactly what we have always done? It says here "[...] unless the substantive motion does not relate directly to the business under consideration;". It seems to me — but correct me if I am wrong — that all motions require 48 hours notice. Am I mistaken, Mr. Godin?

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** When we are working on a given issue, motions do come to us directly. I think that you yourself have presented several of them. So we do amend motions when we are working on an issue. However, if it is a new issue, the motion requires 48 hours notice, so that no one is caught off guard. These are the same rules.

**Mr. Pablo Rodriguez:** I would like some clarification. What do you mean by 48 hours? We have discussed this matter many times. I have seen motions come in at 6 or 7:00 p.m. two days before. Do you see what I mean?

**The Chair:** In the case you are referring to, the motion comes in about 36 hours ahead of time. Suppose the meeting were scheduled for Thursday and the notice of motion is received at 6:00 p.m. on Tuesday.

If the motion is submitted before 6:00 p.m. that day, it is considered to be the first 24-hour period. That is precisely how it works. According to our procedures, if a committee member were to submit a motion that does not deal with business under consideration and if the member were to submit it before 6:00 p.m. on the Tuesday, we could debate it on Thursday.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** I fully agree with that, Mr. Chairman, but perhaps the motion should say that. If we talk about 48 hours' notice for a motion submitted on a Tuesday at 6:00 p.m. for a meeting on the following Thursday at 9:00 a.m., that does not equal 48 hours. It should either say 48 hours, or two sleeps.

**The Chair:** Mr. Bélanger, the Clerk informs me that the usual rule applies in this case.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** Since we sit on Tuesdays and Thursdays, the matter must be clarified so that everyone understands. For example, as part of this morning's meeting, someone might want to give notice for next Thursday, but we need to ensure we do not encounter this problem on Thursday.

**The Chair:** If I understand correctly, Mr. Bélanger, you are saying that it is important for all committee members to understand the rule as interpreted by the chair and the clerk.

● (0955)

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** Questions have already arisen. If the clerk receives a notice of motion before 6:00 p.m. today, the motion will be in order for Thursday. Does everyone understand? Does everyone agree? No?

To be in order for Tuesday, does a notice have to be submitted by 2:30 p.m. or 6:00 p.m. the Friday or during the day on Sunday?

**The Chair:** We work seven days a week.

Mr. Bélanger, do you have a question?

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** What is the minimum deadline for a notice to be in order for Tuesday morning at 9:00 a.m.?

**The Chair:** The clerk informs me that since he is not normally here on Sunday to receive notices, according to the procedures, it must be submitted on the Friday at 6:00 p.m. That means we are talking about working days.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** So that means 6:00 p.m., and not 2:30 p.m. on the Friday?

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux:** That is a good question, because it is not explained very well here.

**Ms. Raymonde Folco:** Mr. Chairman, I would like to move an amendment in accordance with this very discussion. Why could we not add, somewhere in the paragraph, that for the Tuesday meeting, the notice must be submitted by 6:00 p.m. the previous Friday and that for the meeting on Thursday, it must be submitted by 6:00 p.m. the previous Tuesday. That way it would be clear for everyone.

**The Chair:** It is an amendment moved by Ms. Folco?.

Would you like to raise a point of information as well?

Ms. Folco, I would like to draw your attention to a provision in the House of Commons Standing Orders. It is on page 37. It says that such notice shall be filed with the clerk before 6:00 p.m., or 2:00 p.m. on a Friday. This is from chapter VIII, section 54, which deals with committee motions. It is for the House.

**Ms. Raymonde Folco:** In that case, if everyone agrees, I would propose changing my amendment so that for meetings on Tuesdays, the notice must be tabled on Friday by 2:00 p.m. and for meetings on Thursday, it must be tabled on Tuesday before 6:00 p.m. That would be consistent with what you just clarified.

**The Chair:** Mr. Godin.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** That causes a problem for me, and I will tell you why.

Ms. Folco, I would prefer referring to this paragraph and following the Standing Orders for the 48-hour notice. We are talking about meetings on Tuesdays and Thursdays, but if we decide to hold a special meeting on Wednesday, all we have here are two specific examples applying solely to meetings on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Nothing is set out for Wednesdays. I think the Standing Orders are clear: they refer to 48 hours' notice.

**Ms. Raymonde Folco:** I was following the Standing Orders word for word.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** No, you specifically said Tuesday and Thursday. You would have to strike that.

**Ms. Raymonde Folco:** I was simply attempting to respond to questions raised around the table. The motion starts with: "That 48 hours' notice be required [...]. That is the general rule. There are two possibilities.

If everyone agrees, I will withdraw my amendment, I do not mind at all. But last year, I remember that we had some problems with that. So it must be clear in everyone's mind.

• (1000)

**The Chair:** Two people would like to speak to your proposal, Ms. Folco: Mr. Bélanger and Mr. Lemieux.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** I do not know if the amendment is necessary. I think we are making progress. All committee members were clear that if we are talking about a Tuesday, the deadline is 2:00 or 2:30 p.m., whatever, the previous Friday; if we are talking about Thursday, the deadline is Tuesday at 6:00 p.m., and so on. Perhaps we do not need to put that in a motion.

I do, however, want committee members to understand that there is another issue. The House was not sitting yesterday. Does that mean that...

**An hon. member:** it was not a working day.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** That is right, it was not a working day. In that case, would we have had to submit the notice of motion on Thursday by 6:00 p.m.? Once the ground rules are clear, we can easily move on.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** For me it would be Friday. That is why it is 48 hours.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** That should be specified. If it is Monday—holidays often fall on Mondays—does that count or not, Mr. Chairman?

**The Chair:** Mr. Bélanger, I will look into it. I do not know the answer. I will ask someone to get you the answer. The question is, in the case of today, since yesterday was a holiday... Do you have the answer now? We will come back to that.

Mr. Lemieux.

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux:** This is getting a bit too complicated. Perhaps we could include a reference saying "in accordance with" and underline the paragraph in the House procedures.

**The Chair:** Is this a friendly amendment to Ms. Folco's amendment?

**Ms. Raymonde Folco:** I want to add that we do what Mr. Lemieux has said.

**The Chair:** It would be: "in accordance with House procedures".

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** If that is the case, Mr. Chairman, I am onside. I agree with that. We just need to understand. I think that means that a notice for Tuesday, where the Monday is a statutory holiday, must be tabled on the Thursday by 6:00 p.m.

**Mr. Luc Harvey:** It is 48 hours on working days.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** Right. Mr. Harvey, you are good at maths, and you catch on right away. Some here are not so good at that.

**The Chair:** Okay.

Clearly, whether the House sits or not has an impact. However, Mr. Bélanger's question is this: in cases like yesterday, where Monday is a statutory holiday, does...?

Do we agree on the amendment? The question is specific. I am going to ask the clerk to clarify the situation. The amendment will simply read as follows:

That 48 hours' notice, in accordance with House procedures, be required for any substantive motion to be considered by the Committee [...]

Are you ready to vote on the amendment?

(Amendment agreed to)

**The Chair:** We will now vote on the motion as amended.

(Motion, as amended, agreed to.)

**The Chair:** So we only we have one more routine committee motion left.

Mr. Godin.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** I move:

That witnesses be given ten (10) minutes for their opening statements; that during the questioning of witnesses, there will be allocated;

for the first round seven (7) minutes for the first questioner of each party in the following order: Official Opposition, Bloc Québécois, New Democratic Party, Government;

for the second round, five (5) minutes be allocated to each subsequent questioner from each party in the following order: Official Opposition, Government, Bloc Québécois, New Democratic Party;

for the third round, five (5) minutes be allocated to each subsequent questioner of each party in the following order: Official Opposition, Bloc Québécois, Government, New Democratic Party;

for the fourth round, five (5) minutes be allocated to each subsequent questioner of each party in the following order: Official Opposition, Government, Bloc Québécois, New Democratic Party;

• (1005)

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Godin.

I am now ready to hear your comments.

Mr. Rodriguez, you have the floor.

**Mr. Pablo Rodriguez:** Where those rules in force during the last session? Do we all have seven minutes, or five minutes?

**An hon. member:** We had seven minutes in the first round and five minutes after that.

**Mr. Pablo Rodriguez:** Okay.

**The Chair:** That was the procedure that was in force prior to the prorogation.

Mr. Lemieux, we have the floor.

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux:** I would like to discuss something with my colleagues. For me, it is important for each party to participate in the committee's work, and where possible, for each member to participate as well. On several occasions meetings have ended and Liberal and Conservative MPs have not been in the position to participate because time has run out. I want to start by clarifying that I like to listen to Mr. Godin speak and that I always listen carefully when he does. That is one of my pleasure in life. However, perhaps we could eliminate the NDP questions on the third round to ensure that all members present have an opportunity to participate in the discussion. We often have three rounds, but rarely four. The same problem arose when we travel. The problem arises mainly when we hear from more than one witness. Each of them have 10 minutes, and if we hear from two, three or four witnesses, there is not much time left over for discussion.

I am putting that idea on the floor for discussion purposes.

**The Chair:** If I understand correctly, Mr. Lemieux, you are suggesting that on the third round...

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux:** I am proposing an amendment, that on the third round, we eliminate the NDP question to ensure that each member has an opportunity to participate in the committee's work.

**The Chair:** Mr. Lemieux moved an amendment.

Mr. Godin, you have the floor.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** Mr. Chairman, I don't know if people are trying to punish me because I had called for the removal of the former chair, who was a member of the Conservative Party. My reasoning is as follows. There are four political parties. The Standing Committee

on Official Languages — Mr. Bélanger knows this because he has been a past chair — is a committee which allows members from each political party to speak. We have operated this way for years. In the past, when a member from another party wanted to ask a question but feared that he would not be able to do so, I gave him my time. I did this while we were on the road: wherever we were, I gave every party the opportunity to ask questions. But I think it won't work. Each political party asks a question on each round. I recommend that the motion remains as it is worded.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Godin.

Mr. Rodriguez, you have the floor.

**Mr. Pablo Rodriguez:** I would like to move a friendly amendment to the motion. Rather than eliminating the New Democratic Party's question, we could eliminate the Conservative Party's question... I'm just kidding!

**The Chair:** I would like to point out that Mr. Lemieux has put his motion on the table for discussion. We are trying to find a way for each member to ask a question. But right now, we are discussing the amendment as worded. If there is no other intervention or comment, I am ready to put Mr. Lemieux's amendment to a vote.

• (1010)

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux:** It is an amendment to the motion.

**Mr. Luc Harvey:** Mr. Chairman, is it the committee's objective to allow each member to speak, or to give each political party the same amount of time? I am asking this question in good faith. We have to establish whether the committee wants to give every member the opportunity to speak, or to give each party the same amount of time. We have four Liberal members, two members from the Bloc Québécois and one member from the New Democratic Party. Mr. Godin would have as much time as the party which has four members. Is that how we should operate? Yvon, you have more experience...

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** I am a member of the Standing Committee on Official Languages, and I have a lot of experience as a member of this committee. At the meetings of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, everyone gets their turn. Each party gets to ask questions. There has never been a problem here.

**The Chair:** Mr. Lemieux, you have the floor.

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux:** I would like to respond to that. I think that is the main point we are debating. Each committee operates differently. I was a member of the Standing Committee on International Trade during the last session, and we operated in a different manner. The NDP member asked a question during the first round, the third round, or something like that. Yes, that is the issue. In my opinion, we have to strike a balance. That is why I am saying that it is important for each party to participate in the committee's work, but also that each member be as active as possible, because often there is not enough time for each member to ask a question.

**Mr. Luc Harvey:** I would like to add something. We often have more than three witnesses. If we multiply four by seven, that's 28. Further, four times five is 20. That's already an hour and a half. If we spend 10 minutes on each witness, and there are four witnesses, that means that during the fourth round, each member will only have one minute, if we all have the right to ask a question. I say that with all due respect. Do we want everyone to be able to ask a question?

**A voice:** That's not how other committees operate.

**The Chair:** Are there other comments on Mr. Lemieux's amendment?

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** I would like to respond to what Mr. Harvey said. If we follow the procedure set out in the motion, without amendment, and we reach a fourth round, every member will be able to speak.

**Mr. Luc Harvey:** That depends on the number of witnesses.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** If we reach a fourth round—and that is why the motion is worded as it is—every member of the committee will get a turn.

**The Chair:** Mr. Lemieux, you have the floor.

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux:** You are right, but during the last session, there was not enough time for four rounds. We often only have two rounds, sometimes three, but no more than three rounds. Actually, exceptionally, once there was a fourth round of questions.

**The Chair:** Fine. Since there are no other observations, I am ready. Is the committee ready to vote on the amendment? Those who are in favour of the amendment to eliminate the NDP from the third round? Opposed?

There is one abstention.

(Amendment negatived.)

**The Chair:** I am now ready to hold the vote on the motion. Who is in favour of the motion as it stands?

(Motion agreed to)

**The Chair:** If I may, I would like to point out that one issue was raised, that is, that every member be given the chance to speak. As your Chair, I am open to hearing motions which would receive the support of the majority of members allowing each member to speak. That, to me, is a legitimate way of operating. Of course, the committee is the master of its own fate, but I am opened to receiving motions allowing all committee members to speak.

Mr. Godin, you have the floor.

•(1015)

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** Mr. Chairman, we meet twice a week. There are more than two members of the Conservative Party, for instance, which means that they can all take turns asking questions. Different members from that party can ask questions at each meeting. We do not want to prevent the conservatives from asking questions. But it is not necessary that all the questions be asked by the same people.

**The Chair:** Thank you for your observation. Thank you also for moving the routine motions.

We have basically completed our rules of procedures. Are there any other motions or observations with regard to procedures and the way the committee will operate?

Mr. Bélanger, you have the floor.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** I have a point of substance, Mr. Chairman. I do not know if you want to discuss this now, or if the committee wishes to do so, but I would like us to consider discussing certain issues beginning Thursday. If members of the

committee do not mind, I would like to submit two issues for discussion right now.

First, I believe that the committee usually hears from the official languages commissioner following the tabling of his annual report. I do not believe that the committee has had the opportunity to meet with Mr. Fraser after he tabled his first annual report. So that might perhaps be something to consider. I do not know whether he is available on Thursday or not.

There is a second issue, Mr. Chair, which goes back to the committee's business in 2003. That year, the Standing Committee on Official Languages of the House of Commons had prepared a fairly complete report on health, and one of the suggestions, or recommendations, contained in the report call on the official languages commissioner to investigate the state of direct health care services offered in French. Indeed, the government of Canada is responsible for directly providing certain health care services to certain segments of the population, namely native people, inmates or veterans. The report was tabled and made public last July, that is, in July 2007, and I believe it might be an excellent issue for our committee to study, especially as far as services to veterans are concerned. It is an issue which deeply touches us all.

So those are my two suggestions and I was wondering whether we could begin working on those issues beginning next Thursday.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Bélanger. But before giving you the floor, I had asked whether there were any other outstanding issues regarding procedure and routine matters of the committee, and I just want to make sure that there are none. Mr. Rodriguez, Mr. Lemieux and Mr. Godin had asked to speak. I would like to give them that opportunity first.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** No, I am done.

**The Chair:** Fine, you are done, that is good. So now it is Mr. Bélanger's turn.

You suggested two issues for the committee to deal with, the first being to invite the Official Languages Commissioner. Can you tell us about your second suggestion?

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** Certainly, I will explain it again.

[English]

In 2003, the official languages committee did a fairly substantive piece of work on health in general. Among the recommendations of the report was that the official languages secretariat undertake a review of the provision of health services where the Government of Canada is directly delivering health services to certain populations, whether the aboriginal population, the incarcerated population, or the veterans population. That report has now been done and was tabled in July of this year. I think it would be a very good report for us to pick up.

I'm particularly concerned with the conditions for veterans. We've just been through Veterans' Week,

[Translation]

Armistice Day, on Sunday.

Mr. Chairman, the Official Languages Commissioner's report contains recommendations which, I believe, should be followed up on, and I would like the committee to do this. The issue is probably fairly timely, it would play out over a relatively short period of time, but I believe that veterans deserve services in the language of its choice, and I believe that these services would be more readily available as a result of the committee's work.

**The Chair:** So are you talking about the direct provision of health care services by the federal government exclusively to veterans? You also mentioned other groups.

• (1020)

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** We can decide on that after we have reviewed the report.

**The Chair:** So it's about all health care services. Thank, Mr. Bélanger.

I will continue down my list.

Since we have changed the subject, I will renew this speaking order. I have Mr. Bélanger, followed by Mr. Rodriguez, Mr. Lemieux, Mr. Godin and Mr. Nadeau. Let's begin with Mr. Rodriguez.

**Mr. Pablo Rodriguez:** Thank you.

I am in complete agreement with Mr. Bélanger. We should ideally begin with Commissioner. In fact, it is a tradition, the committee always invites him following the tabling of his report. Therefore, if at all possible, we should invite him to come on Thursday or, at the latest, the following Tuesday.

Second, of course, our work regarding the Court Challenges Program was interrupted, you may remember, Mr. Chairman, for all kinds of reasons. We had begun studying the issue, but we were not able to complete our work. And this matter is certainly brought to our attention every time we visit a committee. So, in my opinion, we should make the Court Challenges Program a top priority.

**The Chair:** To my knowledge, we had run down the list of witnesses for the Court Challenges Program. But I will check with the clerk to see if there are any new elements with regard to that issue. All right.

Mr. Lemieux.

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux:** I would like to know whether the Standing Committee on Health will study the report. Indeed, we would not want two committees to do the same work. As for health care services, are you talking about approaching the issue from the point of view of official languages? Would you also want to study services at the community level? Our involvement is important when it comes to the provision of health care services in French. Just think of the Consortium national de formation en santé, for instance.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** Mr. Chairman, would you like me to respond?

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux:** Yes, you may respond, and then I will continue.

**Mr. Steven Blaney:** Mr. Godin, would you mind if Mr. Bélanger answered a question?

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux:** I am sorry, but I have another question and I would like to continue.

**Mr. Steven Blaney:** Mr. Bélanger.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** Mr. Lemieux asked two questions, namely whether the Standing Committee on Health will study the report of the Official Languages Commissioner. I don't know, but it is obvious that our committee studies issues involving official languages, services to the francophone and anglophone populations respectively. Let's also not forget that the July 2007 report of the Commissioner was based on the study conducted by the Official Languages Committee in 2003.

In answer to your second question, namely whether we should study matters related to health in general, I would like to point out that the 2003 report did indeed deal with the provision of health services within Canada's official language communities. If the government decided to review the entire report, I would welcome that, because in some areas, things are going very well; this is clear and we are happy about it. However, there has been a lack of progress in other areas covered by the report. In particular, in the area of research.

I therefore do not object to reviewing the 2003 report, which in fact is one of the better reports produced by the committee. Mr. Godin was a committee member at the time. It might be important to update the report.

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux:** Yes. I believe that health care, and especially health care services provided in French at the community level, are important issues. They affect people who live in minority language situations.

Over the summer, I became involved with several projects at the Cité collégiale, which works in collaboration with the Université Sainte-Anne. I met with the president of the Collège Boréal, an institution which is located in northern Ontario. When the committee travelled during the last session, we visited post-secondary institutions. Some of these offered services in French. These are institutions in a minority situation. Others, mostly anglophone institutions, offered or would like to offer education services in French. I believe that the University of Ottawa has just published a report on its bilingual services. It's an important subject for me. We are greatly concerned with educating young French-speakers, especially in our minority language communities, and it is also a concern for the people living in those communities. This is why the Cité collégiale has just launched an advanced program for paramedics. Graduates of this program will find jobs in my riding. So there is a direct connection between post-secondary programs offered in French and minority language communities.

This is important for me and I also think it is for our committee. Mr. Chong also raised this matter during the first session.

I would therefore like to present the following motion:

That the Standing Committee on Official Languages study the role of post-secondary institutions in the promotion of linguistic duality and the teaching of official languages.

• (1025)

**The Chair:** Thank you. I am pleased to see that there are many issues up for discussion.

Mr. Godin, do you have a point of order?

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** Yes, Mr. Chairman. When we discuss future business, we only discuss suggestions. Normally, a steering committee is comprised of one member from each party. The majority of members on the steering committee decide what the future business of the main committee will be. But there have never been any motions with regard to future business for discussion in committee.

**The Chair:** All right.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** Further, we decided that we would all work together to determine what the future business should be. These discussions are not taking place in camera, at the steering committee, we are discussing the matter openly and we do not want to vote on motions.

**The Chair:** With regard to your point of order, let me point out that this morning, the election of the chairman was on the agenda and for the time being, we're discussing routine business. Mr. Lemieux, I think that we are now discussing directions for the working committee. For the time being, three topics have been set out.

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux:** The committee has just begun its work and we have not established whether there will be a steering committee. If we want a steering committee, we can discuss it, that does not present a problem. We've just adopted the routine motions. We're now talking about subjects of interest and we have not talked about a steering committee. If we want to change the discussion and talk about a steering committee, that's perfectly all right.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** I object, Mr. Chairman.

•(1030)

**The Chair:** Mr. Godin.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** I used the steering committee as an example. When we talk about future business which we recommend, motions are never tabled at the steering committee. Those are recommendations and we work together. We don't work on motions. We make suggestions, and in the final analysis, the majority decides what will be on the agenda of the committee.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** Point of order, Mr. Chairman, with your permission.

Have you ruled on whether Mr. Lemieux's motion is in order or not?

**The Chair:** At this stage, I suggest... I haven't finished my list of speakers and there's a motion. I would therefore ask Mr. Lemieux to delay his motion so that we can complete and finish the list of speakers. Do you agree, Mr. Lemieux? Three subjects have been raised right now. I'd like to allow members of the committee to express themselves on all the subjects being discussed. After that, I will be prepared to receive motions, if that is the committee's wish.

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux:** I'm a nice guy. Let's proceed like you've just suggested.

**The Chair:** Thank you for your cooperation, Mr. Lemieux.

Let me draw your attention to the fact that right now, there is no meeting anticipated next Thursday and if you want there to be one, we have to plan for one. The exercise we're doing allows us to

determine whether that's the case, what the subjects will be and whether the witnesses are available as well. We do have to consider that they too have been given quite a short notice.

Let's continue. I'll give the floor to Mr. Godin.

As long as you don't have any motions on the subjects...

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** Mr. Chairman, if you want to start receiving motions, you're going to receive a whole lot of them. That little game can be played both ways.

I'm prepared to support Mr. Bélanger's first proposal, regarding the official languages commissioner. The official languages commissioner has tabled a report, and it's important that he should come to present it to the committee. Since his report is done, perhaps the commissioner will be ready by Thursday. He could appear before us Thursday so that we don't waste any time. There's not much time left.

I also want to propose something important regarding the court challenges. This committee has done a tremendous amount of work. I would have thought that if Mr. Lemieux wanted to submit a proposal, he would have suggested that we finish the work that remains unfinished. But I saw that he didn't make this a priority. It doesn't seem that court challenges are a priority for the Conservatives; but for the Canadian people and for minorities it is one. They lost something major.

You said earlier that we didn't have any other witnesses, Mr. Chairman. I'm sorry — perhaps it's not up to me to apologize but rather up to you — but there are other witnesses. If you remember correctly, if your memory isn't too short, there was a proposal to invite Minister Verner and the former minister of Canadian Heritage, Ms. Oda, to come here and testify. The Conservatives had voted against it, but the motion had passed. Other witnesses are to appear before the committee. That's what would allow us to tie things together and produce a written report.

All the work has been done. We've already met all the witnesses from the public, but there are the government witnesses remaining who must come and explain their actions. That's what the committee had decided. I would like to get the support of the committee. Let us continue the work on court challenges — there mustn't be too many meetings left that can we hold — let us invite the minister and report to the House of Commons. I think that after that, we could study something else, health care, for example.

I'd also like to suggest that we examine National Defence. Last week in the newspapers, there were reports about the way francophones were treated in Borden with regard to language. I think that this merits a study. The situation is urgent. Our soldiers voluntarily give their lives to work for our country. I think it would be worthwhile for our Standing Committee on Official Languages to conduct a study on this.

This is not the first time we talk about National Defence: the lack of respect for official languages continues, on and on and on. I think it would be a good idea that our senior generals come and talk to us about the way they're treating our soldiers in Borden. Perhaps we could even invite soldiers who would come and tell us voluntarily what's going on. That's been in the papers, it's been made public and I can tell you that it looks bad. Somebody is willing to give his life for our country and he can't even be treated better than that! It didn't look good at all last week.

We have started a new session. We have to invite the commissioner of official languages and we have to finish the work that's been started and the committee has to accept all the work that was done previously so that it's not lost. This is taxpayers' money. Everything is recorded and the clerk has all the information. Let's put all that together and invite Minister Verner and the responsible government officials.

• (1035)

**The Chair:** All right. Thank you, Mr. Godin.

Indeed, I remember that there was a motion to invite the ministers, and that was part of the study that was underway at the time, if memory serves me.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** Yes, exactly, on court challenges.

**The Chair:** All right.

Mr. Nadeau.

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** Good morning, Mr. Chairman.

I have four points that I would like to raise. Let me come back to the issue of meeting the official languages commissioner. In fact, we agree about that.

The work on the Court Challenges Program is far from finished. Before making a final report, must we meet other stakeholders and ministers? Many questions are still left unanswered, and the issues must be explained.

There's also the issue of National Defence and the French language. Let us keep in mind the proposition tabled by Benoît Sauvageau. We are still waiting for the official languages commissioner's answer regarding this. Things are not getting any better. We noted that last week with the National Defence ombudsman for the Canadian Forces, Mr. Côté. The situation is ugly, and some issues need to be raised.

During the last session, the Bloc raised the issue of reviewing the Canada Community Agreements to adjust them to the needs of minority official languages communities, because they currently reflect the situation as it was 10 years ago and not as it is today.

Thus, there are four issues.

I trust that the clerk as well as yourself are attentively listening to these four points so that they can be raised during the coming meetings.

In the end, it was three to two!

Could you please repeat?

**A Member:** What was the fourth issue?

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** Thank you, Pierre. We have the official languages commissioner, a very nice gentleman with a little moustache; the Court Challenges Program or CCP; National Defence, including Borden. Perhaps we could ask Mr. Côté if he is available, as ombudsman, and if he can come and tell us about what is happening at Borden and about what he has heard from Petawawa, among other things. Finally, I suggest that we should review and improve the Canada communities agreements to adjust them to the needs of minority official languages communities.

Those are the four items.

**The Chair:** What was the fourth point again?

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** To review the Canada communities agreements and adjust them to the needs of minority official languages communities.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Nadeau.

Let me just note that I was a bit distracted while the clerk was telling me that we could invite the official languages commissioner to the next committee meeting, if he is available.

In fact, if the committee wishes, we could ask the commissioner whether he is available for the next meeting and we could also allow some time for discussing current issues and for drawing up a list of witnesses.

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux:** I have a point of order. I think that we must finish the discussion before deciding what to do.

**The Chair:** Mr. Lemieux, you have the floor.

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux:** National Defence is indeed an important issue. We had at least one presentation from the Department of National Defence during the first session. The policy at the time had failed, as we know. The commissioner said that. We all know very well that the procedures and programs offered by the Canadian Forces as well as their way of promoting the French language in the armed forces have not worked.

The department just launched a new program; I think that the new approach was implemented last spring. We are at the initial stages of the process. We know that the first attempt did not work.

[*English*]

What I'm saying is that I think defence needs time to implement the new program they were briefing us on when they came before the committee last time.

• (1040)

[*Translation*]

Perhaps it was during the month of May. It is only a matter of a few months. The new program was just launched. It is too early to discuss the results.

The Court Challenges Program is also an important issue. Our committee did a great deal of work on this issue. I remember that we debated it with every community that we visited during our trip across Canada. We prepared a report with recommendations to the government. We did debate this issue at the time, before tabling our report in the House.

Then, just before summer, a study came out. We debated this at length with the witnesses at the time. Mr. Godin and Mr. Nadeau suggest that we should continue. Let me emphasize that this is an important issue which is currently before the courts. There are also other issues. We must study them. As far as I am concerned, I think that we did a great deal of work on the Court Challenges Program, and there are other, equally important issues.

This is why I suggested a new approach, for determining the important issue for minority official languages communities. There are several important issues at stake.

I like what you said about the priorities for the communities. We live in minority language communities. We would like to know how we can help these communities.

During the first session, we also discussed the issue of the young generation. We have not really begun our work in this regard. We are still discussing the next generation of workers in our communities. It is still a worrisome issue. Immigration could be one solution. Minority language communities are still discussing immigration and various ways of integrating immigrants, especially francophones. The coming generation consists of children and young people. Will they stay in their communities? How can we promote language, etc.? This is another concept. Post-secondary studies for youth is also an issue. During our trip, I learned many things, and heard witnesses who said that the coming generation was very important. We are talking about young people in minority language communities. This topic is my second suggestion.

•(1045)

**The Chair:** Are you talking about young people, the coming generation or communities?

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux:** I am talking about young people in our minority language communities and what the federal government can do to help them in order to promote official languages so that they remain in their communities.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Lemieux.

We have four speakers on our list: Mr. Bélanger, Mr. Nadeau, Mr. Godin and Mr. Chong.

Let us begin with Mr. Mauril Bélanger.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I would like to request that our clerk provide us with certain documents. In the past, committee members received a copy—a brochure—of the Official Languages Act. Since it was amended in 2005, I think that there should be a new booklet. It may be good to hand copies of it out to members.

The same applies to constitutional legislation. There is a green booklet that contains all the constitution legislation, including the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, of course, and sections from the British North America Act, where the official languages issue is raised. I think that this would be a very useful working tool and I would suggest that the clerk hand it out.

On the other hand, Mr. Chairman, I alluded earlier to the July 2007 report on health. I do not know whether committee members

have received a copy of it, but perhaps it should be circulated once again. I mean the 2007 report and the 2003 report.

Finally, I do not know whether all the committee members have received the most recent annual report from the Official Languages Commissioner. Has our research assistant studied it and if the study has been done could it be handed out to the committee members before the Official Languages Commissioner appears before us? If not, could it be done?

Thank you.

**The Chair:** Mr. Bélanger, we have taken note of your requests for documents. Obviously, if the Official Languages Commissioner is called before the committee, the Parliamentary Information and Research Service will draft, as it usually does, briefing notes that will be distributed to committee members.

Did you have anything to add, Mr. Clerk?

**The Clerk:** No, but I might contact you in order to find out exactly what the requests are.

**The Chair:** Fine.

We'll carry on with our list.

Mr. Nadeau, you have the floor.

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** Mr. Chairman, I just wanted to draw to your attention, and to the committee members' attention, the fact that when Mr. Godin and myself raised the issue of national defence, we were referring to last week's statement by the ombudsman. I was not referring to what happened in the past, when the former Minister of National Defence, Mr. O'Connor, came before the committee to explain the new program that he was interested in establishing.

This is a topical issue. It happened last week. We were referring to the issue raised by the National Defence and Canadian Forces ombudsman, that is the situation of francophone recruits in the Canadian armed forces on the Borden base. This situation must be clarified and it is in that context that we mentioned the Canadian armed forces.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**The Chair:** We have taken note of that clarification. As you said, you were referring to the ombudsman's statements rather than to the new policy. Is that correct, sir? Fine.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** Mr. Chairman, I believe that the majority of the committee members, not necessarily all of them, would like us to invite the Official Languages Commissioner before us and to deal with the issue of funding for court challenges, so that we can finish the report. I would like you to check that.

I don't believe that Mr. Lemieux has understood the situation. He did not understand, during our national tour, that this was the first priority everywhere and that court challenges are an important issue.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to remind you that prior to your chairmanship, the previous chair decided to cancel a meeting against the committee's will and he had to go for a little walk outside. It now seems, and you'll excuse me, that the government representative wants to once again bury the issue and not move forward.

I believe that the majority of this committee's members want to finish this study. Mr. Lemieux is telling us that he does not want the entire study and all the testimony to be disclosed to the public at large. He does not want a report to be tabled in Parliament. We already came to a decision on that. I would like the committee members to be asked if they want to finish this report. Don't forget that the Court Challenges Program was cancelled by the Conservatives and that they are the ones who do not want to listen. They were the ones who abolished the Court Challenges Program, a program that resulted in schools on Prince Edward Island and in Nova Scotia, that was helpful to SOS Montfort, here in Ottawa, and that was helpful in Ontario and British Columbia. We have already had this discussion. If Mr. Lemieux is still arguing against this, then that means that the government's position is that it does not want to discuss the Court Challenges Program. If that is not the case, then let's move ahead, Mr. Chairman. If it is the case, then Mr. Lemieux should use the last five minutes to tell us that he does not want to move ahead with this.

I am proposing that the committee decide to ask the Minister of Official Languages to appear before this committee and that we report to the House of Commons based on the work that was done prior to this session.

●(1050)

**The Chair:** Thank you Mr. Godin.

On that topic, I promise to go through the motions that were adopted before Parliament was prorogued in order to bring them to the committee's attention.

I would just like to remind you that we have to leave this room by 11 o'clock because another committee is coming in.

Mr. Chong.

**Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[*English*]

I don't think we should be studying the court challenges program again, or any of these other issues, frankly, for two reasons.

First, there will be plenty of opportunity to look at them in the upcoming session by calling the official languages commissioner when he makes his determination as to what his recommendation is in response to the cancellation of the court challenges program, so there will be an opportunity for the committee to call him as a witness for one meeting.

I don't think we should spend the entire committee's business for the next three or four months or beyond studying one issue that has really been studied to death, and that applies to these other issues that have been discussed as potential study topics. More importantly, I think all these issues that the opposition is proposing are frankly symptomatic and not foundational to bilingualism in Canada. If we really want to be useful as a committee, I propose that we study the entrance requirements for Canadian universities with respect to the knowledge of French.

It used to be the case in Ontario, for example, that the University of Toronto required French as essential to be accepted into university. They cancelled that requirement a number of years ago.

As a result, you no longer need to know French coming out of high school in order to be accepted into university. This is something the committee could study. We could call the university presidents into committee here to study this; if the study comes out and recommends that universities make this change to the program, and that change happens, it would have a far more profound impact on bilingualism and on francophones in this country than would studying these issues that are frankly symptomatic and not foundational, many of which have been studied to death in the previous session of Parliament.

Third, there will be plenty of opportunity for us to designate special meetings of this committee and to call the official languages commissioner to highlight these issues that the opposition is concerned about, but I don't think we should spend months and months studying things that frankly are symptomatic and not foundational to what this committee is all about.

I propose that we undertake a study of the role that post-secondary institutions play in the promotion of bilingualism in this country. I think that would be a far more effective use of the committee's time.

[*Translation*]

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Chong.

I only have Mr. Lemieux left on my speaker list.

Mr. Lemieux.

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux:** I would like to come back to my motion. We have just discussed several suggestions. What Mr. Godin is trying to do is table a motion. We just discussed Mr. Godin's two priorities, Mr. Nadeau's four priorities, Mr. Bélanger's two priorities and my two priorities. Thanks to Mr. Chong, one of my suggestions is being supported. How will we make up our minds?

Mr. Godin would like one of his ideas to be accepted on the basis of his convictions. Listen, do we have unanimity or not? We would like to move ahead, have a vote or something. Where's the motion? We can't work in this fashion.

●(1055)

**Mr. Pablo Rodriguez:** Point of order, Mr. Chairman. There is no unanimity, of that I am sure, for your motion. Let's forget it.

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux:** How will we choose our topics? We can't do it based on passion and conviction or on who speaks the loudest. I would like my idea to be taken into consideration. I'm saying that there is a process that must be followed. I have seen what happens in other committees. We haven't discussed a steering committee but we could. I suggested an idea but it hasn't been discussed.

If we have to make a decision now, then a motion has to be tabled. Yes, we have heard the preferences and the suggestions of the other committee members but a decision must be made and that decision does not only depend on us. We need to move ahead and consult the committee members.

I would therefore like to table my motion, that reads as follows:

That the Official Languages Committee study the role of post-secondary institutions in promoting linguistic duality and teaching official languages.

I am tabling this motion for all the reasons I already gave. I have a copy with me here.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** Point of Order, Mr. Chairman. Is the motion in order, yes or no?

**The Chair:** As I stated earlier, I wanted to hear all possible topics of discussion. I believe that all committee members had an opportunity to raise the issues they were interested in considering.

I would like to point out to Mr. Lemieux that if he still wishes to table his motion we have very little time left to discuss it, unless we vote on it very quickly. On the other hand, the comments that were made indicate that there's a will to have the official languages commissioner appear before us.

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux:** I have an objection. We can't pick just one idea out of the 10 that were raised today. We have to follow a process.

**The Chair:** Mr. Lemieux, I am going to conclude.

I see that we still need some time in order to discuss Mr. Lemieux's motion. I would suggest to that we take up the committee's agenda on Thursday. I would suggest that you postpone your motion until the next meeting. We could start our meeting with our daily business. If it is the wish of the committee, I can ask the official languages commissioner if he is available in order to present his report. However, I do not want to act against the wishes of the committee members.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** Point of order, Mr. Chairman. The Conservatives once again have wasted time that could have been spent on the Court Challenges Program. That's what he wanted to do. It is 11 o'clock and we have lost that time. The clerk could have asked the minister to appear next Tuesday. We could have then started our discussion on the court challenges program.

**The Chair:** Mr. Godin, you yourself provoked...

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** We're still discussing. What Mr. Lemieux wants to do is to bury the issue of the Court Challenges Program.

**The Chair:** Mr. Lemieux, do you want to table your motion now?

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux:** Yes, I would like to table my motion.

**The Chair:** We will not be able to debate it right away.

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux:** If the motion is on the committee's discussion, then we do not need 48 hours.

**The Chair:** I propose that we receive the motion and that we debate it at the next meeting.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** Mr. Chairman, I have a question. I don't have a problem with us receiving the motion. That is called a notice of motion. We will deal with it next Thursday. However, you stated that you would invite the official languages commissioner to Thursday's meeting. Is that correct?

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux:** Point of order. What have we decided? We didn't vote. The committee has not made a decision on this. We just discussed committee procedures. That was our duty. Then we talked about how we would proceed with motions. You said no. I agreed and I said that we could talk about the steering committee. Nothing was discussed. Now you want to decide on this yourself without even voting. Why would your idea be any better than mine?

● (1100)

**The Chair:** Mr. Lemieux, if you would like to table your motion I am willing to receive it. If the committee is ready, I am ready to proceed with the vote on your motion.

**A Voice:** Fine, let's do it.

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux:** I'm sorry but I did not understand.

**The Chair:** I am willing to receive your motion and to proceed with the vote.

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux:** Are there any people who would like to debate the motion?

**The Chair:** I will have to adjourn. Are you tabling your motion?

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux:** Yes. I am tabling my motion because that is the only way of proceeding in order to establish...

**The Chair:** Unfortunately, we have to leave the room. I will take the motion under advisement. It has been tabled and we will continue committee business next Thursday. We will deal with this.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** I would suggest that we invite the commissioner for next Thursday. The majority would like us to do that. Let's stop playing cat and mouse like Mr. Lemieux wants us to. He's making us waste our time.

**The Chair:** Thank you for coming. We will meet again Thursday morning in order to continue with committee business.

The meeting is adjourned.

---







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

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

**Also available on the Parliament of Canada Web Site at the following address:  
Aussi disponible sur le site Web du Parlement du Canada à l'adresse suivante :  
<http://www.parl.gc.ca>**

---

**The Speaker of the House hereby grants permission to reproduce this document, in whole or in part, for use in schools and for other purposes such as private study, research, criticism, review or newspaper summary. Any commercial or other use or reproduction of this publication requires the express prior written authorization of the Speaker of the House of Commons.**

**Le Président de la Chambre des communes accorde, par la présente, l'autorisation de reproduire la totalité ou une partie de ce document à des fins éducatives et à des fins d'étude privée, de recherche, de critique, de compte rendu ou en vue d'en préparer un résumé de journal. Toute reproduction de ce document à des fins commerciales ou autres nécessite l'obtention au préalable d'une autorisation écrite du Président.**