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## **Standing Committee on Natural Resources**

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**EVIDENCE**

**Tuesday, December 11, 2007**

**Chair**

**Mr. Leon Benoit**

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## Standing Committee on Natural Resources

Tuesday, December 11, 2007

● (0905)

[English]

**The Chair (Mr. Leon Benoit (Vegreville—Wainwright, CPC)):** Good morning, everyone. The Christmas party for the natural resources committee is now over and we'll get down to business.

We are continuing with the clause-by-clause discussion of Bill C-5, the Nuclear Liability and Compensation Act.

We had left the meeting last time after having stood clause 34, to which I will now return.

(On clause 34—*Interim financial assistance*)

**The Chair:** I had indicated that I believed clause 34 would be inadmissible and that the amendment to clause 34 would be inadmissible. With advice from the clerk and having reviewed this again, I believe that is in fact the decision I have made, that the amendment to clause 34, reference number 3176561, is inadmissible.

I won't go through all of the information unless needed, but I will refer to Marleau and Montpetit, page 655, where it says: "An amendment must not offend the financial initiative of the Crown. An amendment is therefore inadmissible if it imposes a charge on the Public Treasury, or if it extends the objects or purposes or"—and this is the part I believe applies here particularly—"relaxes the conditions and qualifications as expressed in the Royal Recommendation".

So that amendment is inadmissible. We will therefore go ahead with clause 34.

(Clause 34 agreed to)

**The Chair:** Now, we had also stood clause 2, the definitions. The Bloc had indicated at one time that they might bring forth an amendment there. I believe we have an indication that won't happen, so I'll just go to the question.

(Clause 2 agreed to)

**The Chair:** Clause 1 is the short title.

(Clause 1 agreed to)

**The Chair:** Shall the title carry?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Chair:** Shall the bill carry?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

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

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Chair:** We are finished. There is no need for a reprint, as there were no amendments.

Thank you very much. It's unfortunate that we can't predict with any certainty what the outcome will be.

So to the officials, I thank you for all the work you've done on this bill, for coming to our committee when requested, and for your very valuable input. Thank you very much.

I will report that to the House tomorrow.

Maybe we'll just suspend for about two minutes. It will allow each party to get their information together. Then we will return with future business of the committee. We have two motions that we will deal with first.

Mr. Alhabra, you have something before the short suspension.

**Mr. Omar Alhabra (Mississauga—Erindale, Lib.):** I can wait until we come back after the suspension.

**The Chair:** Sure.

We'll just have a two-minute suspension and then come back and deal with the committee business and future business.

● \_\_\_\_\_ (Pause) \_\_\_\_\_

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● (0910)

**The Chair:** Welcome back, everyone.

We will start the discussion now on future business of the committee.

We were dealing with two motions last time, which we'd agreed to put off until this meeting.

Yes, Mr. Anderson.

● (0915)

**Mr. David Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC):** Mr. Chair, are we in camera or not?

**The Chair:** No, we're not.

Mr. Anderson, you had committed last time to approach the minister to try to have him come on Thursday to deal with the subject matter of those two motions. I know you've done that. Could you report on that?

**Mr. David Anderson:** Absolutely, Mr. Chair. Thank you.

I did approach the minister. He's not going to be available on Thursday. He said he'll come after the New Year. His schedule was full by the time he got the invitation, so he's not going to be able to be here this week.

**The Chair:** Okay, so we know where we stand with that.

Mr. Bevington had withdrawn his motion.

Mr. Alghabra, you had a motion that combined the substance of the New Democratic motion with an additional part. Can we start with that? We had put that off from the last meeting.

Yes, go ahead, Mr. Alghabra.

**Mr. Omar Alghabra:** Mr. Chair, I have something of another matter. It is very urgent.

**The Chair:** I won't go to any other issue until we deal with that one, because we'd agreed last meeting to come back to that motion. So let's deal with that motion first. We have a whole list of other motions, other issues that have been brought to the clerk, as well as future business.

**Mr. Omar Alghabra:** I understand.

Certainly, as I said to Mr. Bevington, I'd be happy to amend my initial motion to add "invitation of the minister". Since I have the microphone, I want to table....

We're discussing future business now. It's really important, because this is a matter of highest urgency. The Conservative government yesterday tried to table a motion in the House on the issue of isotopes. Since we are discussing future business of the committee—

**The Chair:** Okay, we're not going to go to that, though. You'd certainly be welcome to bring that up, but we're going to deal with that after we go through the others that were on the table first and that had come to the clerk and to this committee first.

Yes, Mr. St. Amand.

**Mr. Lloyd St. Amand (Brant, Lib.):** Do I hear you correctly that we're dealing with non-urgent, non-emergency, non-critical matters before we deal with the critical, urgent, emergency matter? Is that what we're hearing you say, Mr. Chair?

**The Chair:** It's a matter of debate, a matter of process that I'm talking about. We'd agreed at the last meeting to come back to Mr. Bevington's and Mr. Alghabra's motion. Mr. Alghabra's motion included Mr. Bevington's, so I'm coming back to that motion first.

Then you all have the list of other issues that have been brought to the committee. It includes six items, at least. Of course, you are welcome to bring other items forward after we deal with these.

**Mr. Omar Alghabra:** I have my time now, and I'm going to ask the committee to talk about this issue, and then it's up to the committee to decide that this is not a matter of urgency or that it wants to deal with other business.

We're discussing future business now, so I'm going to table a motion that the Standing Committee on Natural Resources schedule a special meeting on Tuesday, today, December 11, at 3:30 to hear from the Minister of Natural Resources, the president of the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission, as well as executives from

AECL to help the committee understand the ongoing crisis in the supply of medical isotopes and the causes for the extended shutdown of their nuclear reactor at Chalk River.

That was the end of my motion. This is a matter of great concern to the Canadian public. We, as the natural resources committee, have a duty to follow that story, to tell Canadians what's going on.

Yesterday the government wanted the House to pass a motion that lacked some substance, that lacked information. Even the Prime Minister believes that this is of highest importance. So it's really important that we discuss this matter.

We are discussing future business. If the committee decides that this is not of importance now, that they want to deal with the other business and keep this for later, I'll leave it up to the committee to decide. But I will be pushing strongly to have this motion discussed first and voted on as quickly as possible.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** Mr. Alghabra, we had agreed to a process. I'm concerned about changing the order. We had agreed to deal with your motion from the last meeting. Well, there were two items.

**Mr. Omar Alghabra:** I haven't even moved the first motion.

**The Chair:** We discussed it at the last meeting—

**Mr. Omar Alghabra:** We discussed it, but I haven't moved it.

**The Chair:** —and we had agreed to bring it forth.

Mr. Anderson.

**Mr. David Anderson:** On a point of order, Mr. Chair, I think we have an hour and a half here, so I don't think we have to get immediately to everything, but I think we should clean up the last meeting's business and decide what we're going to do with that, and then if the opposition wants to come directly to this motion, we can do that and have a discussion about it. We have three pages of other motions here as well that at some point we need to discuss.

I know Mr. Boshcoff had some concerns about what we were doing with future business as well. He had a motion that he had indicated he wanted to bring forward, which is also ahead of Mr. Alghabra's. So I'm not against discussing this, but we have an hour and a half, so I think we have time to do it properly and do it in the order that we had decided at the last meeting.

● (0920)

**The Chair:** That's certainly what I was hoping, Mr. Anderson.

I am concerned. When we made the commitment last time to come back to a particular motion, not doing that does concern me.

Madame DeBellefeuille.

[Translation]

**Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille (Beauharnois—Salaberry, BQ):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'm quite in favour of Mr. Alghabra's motion since this is an urgent issue. All committee members could show some openness, as usual, and support the idea that we should have the minister appear to answer questions concerning the Chalk River laboratory. People in each of your ridings are concerned. I think this is an urgent matter. Mr. Anderson says we have a lot of work ahead of us, and I understand that, but sometimes we have to make choices and give them priority.

In my opinion, what is currently happening at the Chalk River laboratory is an urgent matter that concerns a lot of Quebecers and Canadians. With your permission, I'm going to move that we deal with this matter on a priority basis. Then, if everyone agrees, we can examine the rest of the motions introduced.

[English]

**The Chair:** Yes, and Madame DeBellefeuille, we do have a motion on the floor, so we are dealing with that motion now. It's unfortunate that we're not dealing with the motion that we had agreed to start with. As I say, that does concern me.

Let's carry on with the discussion on this motion.

Mr. Boshcoff.

**Mr. Ken Boshcoff (Thunder Bay—Rainy River, Lib.):** Mr. Chairman, I'm willing to stand down my notice of motion and let it ride with all the rest of these, as long as it's included in the pile. But I understand the difference between this motion on isotopes being an emergency motion and not one that is scheduling next year's work. So I'll just say that and hope that makes the point.

**The Chair:** Mr. St. Amand.

**Mr. Lloyd St. Amand:** Mr. Chair, as a matter of practicality, my colleagues are correct that there is an hour and a half remaining in the meeting, which says to me there is abundant time to deal with the less urgent matters. The sooner we deal with Mr. Alghabra's motion, the sooner we're able to invite the minister—ideally by 9:35 or 9:45—to be available at 3:30. So let's give him as much time as possible to try to coordinate his schedule to be here at 3:30. I think we should proceed immediately with Mr. Alghabra's motion.

**The Chair:** Could you repeat your motion, Mr. Alghabra?

**Mr. Omar Alghabra:** Sure, and I apologize that it's not in both languages. This was drafted about 45 minutes ago.

I move that the Standing Committee on Natural Resources schedule a special meeting on Tuesday, December 11, 2007, at 3:30 p.m. to hear from the Minister of Natural Resources, the president of the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission, as well as executives from AECL to help the committee understand the ongoing crisis in the supply of medical isotopes and the causes for extended shutdown of their nuclear reactor at Chalk River.

**The Chair:** So you've changed in your motion the time for requesting the minister's presence from Thursday to this afternoon. The motion sent to the clerk, which I am reading, says Thursday—Thursday morning, I guess.

**Mr. Omar Alghabra:** The one I drafted 45 minutes ago but never tabled was saying Thursday. But I never tabled it because I realized that we talked about the urgency of this matter, and I thought I would propose that we do it as soon as possible. So I'm suggesting that we do it at 3:30. If there are legitimate reasons for delaying it until tomorrow, we'll discuss it as part of the debate. I'm not going to be that strict, depending on the availability of the committee, on exactly what time, but I'm stressing the urgency of this matter.

● (0925)

**The Chair:** Mr. Trost.

**Mr. Bradley Trost (Saskatoon—Humboldt, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I generally consider myself a pretty good-natured guy, but I am a little irritated this morning. If it's such an urgent matter—and this has been in the press for how many days now?—why didn't we have this motion tabled a week ago?

We're calling witnesses in six hours. Generally, depending on the issue, I sometimes have my staff research stuff, get some briefing notes on stuff like this. We don't know.... Maybe you've got some inside track on which witnesses are available and which witnesses aren't.

I would hope the AECL officials and the regulators and all those sorts of people would be working on the problem and not just sitting around Ottawa twiddling their thumbs and playing with paper clips and whatever, waiting for a committee to call, and the same with the minister. I hope he doesn't have free time every afternoon to shoot some hoops and then, shucks, wait for our committee.

I think this is an issue that would be worthwhile for the committee to look into. It's a serious matter. I don't know if we, as a committee, can really change anything; it's the engineers and company who have to do it. As for fixing regulations and fixing management practices, that's more of a long-term thing.

What we as a committee can do is more in the long-term perspective. So I wouldn't object at all to listening to AECL executives, management personnel, regulators, etc. To do this at 3:30 today, in six hours....

I have another committee scheduled at that time. I sit on two committees. A lot of us on the government side do, because ministers don't sit on committees. It shortens up the numbers, etc. I can't be here or I'd have to skip my other committee, and they're discussing business there too.

So while I'm prepared to look at this when it comes to our regular Thursday morning meeting, for 3:30 today, that's just ridiculous. You've got to give other people a little bit more of a heads-up so they can work together.

I've always tried to work with other members. I have good relationships with members of the Bloc, the NDP, and the Liberals and I'd like to participate in this, and if it's at 3:30 today I won't be able to. That's why I'm a little less good-tempered this morning than I normally would be. I think it's disrespectful to have it today at 3:30.

**The Chair:** Mr. Harris.

**Mr. Richard Harris (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC):** I would like to appeal to the practical side of this suggestion, but also certainly to the time constraints.

This issue certainly deserves to be looked at by our committee. A good point to make would be.... I'm going to get some help here. I have to listen to what Mr. Ouellet has to say.

**An hon. member:** Even though you have the floor.

• (0930)

**The Chair:** Go ahead, Mr. Harris.

**Mr. Richard Harris:** A good point to make is that there certainly is an issue with the Chalk River plant and the shortage of isotopes because of the shutdown. But the point is, will jumping into this now solve the current problem? What more is it going to do than simply make for a news story?

I think this issue is very serious and deserves a planned, scheduled series of meetings. We're not going to solve it even in one meeting. We're going to get a news story. If that's what Mr. Alghabra wants, you can certainly get the news story by having a meeting Thursday or this afternoon, if anyone can attend. But is it going to solve the problem? Is giving it a couple of hours or even an hour going to do it justice?

I believe this is an issue that should be looked at as a long-term solution, as a way of preventing this happening in the future. It deserves more than a last-minute meeting to get together and make some headlines. This is an important study we could do, and if we're going to do it, let's do it properly, let's do it justice, understanding that we can't fix this right now. The engineers and the scientists are working on that, but as a committee we can help lay some guidelines so this would not happen again. That's my point.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

Madame DeBellefeuille.

[Translation]

**Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille:** Mr. Chair, I understand the nature of Mr. Harris's remarks. Ultimately, perhaps it would be more desirable to have a meeting next Thursday, perhaps an extended meeting,

because we don't want this kind of crisis to reoccur and we want to find solutions.

But as parliamentarians, it's important to understand what is currently going on because, when we read the newspapers, we don't understand what is happening. I think our duty is to try to understand, and that's what we could do on Thursday, perhaps in an extended sitting.

I would propose a compromise, that the committee sit for three hours instead of two in order to examine the entire question, to understand and hear from people from the lab and from the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission. I believe these people could come and answer our questions so that we could understand what's going on. After that meeting, the committee could decide whether to make it a subject for further study in order to find potential solutions to prevent this from reoccurring.

I'm interested in understanding what's going on between the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission and Atomic Energy of Canada, and I believe that on Thursday—I'm sure my Liberal colleague would agree on this compromise—we could extend the meeting and take the time to hear from witnesses in order to examine the entire question before deciding to make it a subject of study as such. The idea is that we elected members must understand what is going on by holding an extended sitting on Thursday of this week. I believe that would be a good compromise acceptable to all members.

I don't think we should spend two hours on it; my impression is that there could be a consensus on my proposal.

[English]

**The Chair:** Mr. Tonks.

**Mr. Alan Tonks (York South—Weston, Lib.):** I echo the thoughts of Madame DeBellefeuille. I do it on the basis of what Mr. Trost has said. We really owe it to each other to be able to carry on our committee work. I couldn't make it this afternoon. I'm subbing on another committee.

I would appeal to Mr. Alghabra that this compromise is very much in keeping with the spirit and the substance of how we do business. It is an important item. If we could rearrange our agenda for Thursday, that's very much in keeping with the way we should do it.

**The Chair:** Mr. Tonks, I'm sure I'm not the only member of Parliament who has Thursday fully scheduled too. I can't imagine that all of you don't have Thursday fully scheduled too.

I'm the chair of the committee at the regular meeting. We're talking about an extended meeting; that's what I was hearing from another member. That certainly concerns me. Of course, I'm here at the will of the committee, and I will do what the committee decides to do.

Mr. Anderson.

**Mr. David Anderson:** I would thank Madame DeBellefeuille for making the suggestion, because I think it's a good one. It's one we can support. I would like to make an amendment to add the CNSC to this as well. When you read the last one, you just mentioned AECL.

**Mr. Omar Alghabra:** I also said Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission.

**Mr. David Anderson:** Okay, so we'll make sure they are here as well. I will again take the message back to the minister and see if we can get him to come.

**The Chair:** Yes.

**Mr. David Anderson:** I don't think that's a problem.

**The Chair:** Mr. Allen, and then we'll go back to the mover of the motion, and then we'll put it to the question.

**Mr. Mike Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I do appreciate the fact that we are putting this off until Thursday. Having been through projects before, I know that when things go wrong it's important to do a lessons learned. I think that's what this committee can have a significant input to, into the lessons learned, in terms of what happened and why, because we don't want it to happen again.

I think this means that we have to have all the parties who were potentially involved in this, and that includes people who've been operating there who have the day-to-day decision-making management responsibility, as well as AECL and CNSC. I think we're not going to do justice to this unless we have all those folks involved.

Thank you.

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

Mr. Alhabra, as you've heard, two members of the committee from two parties have suggested that this occur on Thursday rather than today. Would you take that as a friendly amendment?

**Mr. Omar Alhabra:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

First of all, I want to say that by introducing this motion I didn't mean any disrespect to the committee and committee members. Yesterday the government House leader, Peter Van Loan, introduced a motion in the House calling on all parties to call on the AECL and the commissioner to work together, and asking us to prejudge the outcome of what's going on or what's happening.

So we couldn't necessarily agree to that motion, because there's still a vacuum or a lack of information. In order for us to respond responsibly to the motion that Mr. Van Loan wanted to table, we wanted to show that we agree with the fact that it's an urgent matter but we cannot support the motion that Mr. Van Loan had proposed until we ask for input from other stakeholders so we understand better.

That's why I'm proposing this motion. If the committee wishes to delay it until Thursday because of scheduling matters, I will accept a friendly amendment by any member of the committee here. I look forward to voting on this issue on behalf of Canadians so that they know what's going on.

• (0935)

**The Chair:** Are you looking for a formal amendment or do you consider that you...?

**Mr. Omar Alhabra:** Actually, okay, I'm looking for an amendment. Yes, please.

**The Chair:** Go ahead, Mr. Trost.

**Mr. Bradley Trost:** I'm prepared to move an amendment, however we word it, that we move to Thursday instead of at 3:30 p.m., as in the amendment.

**Mr. Omar Alhabra:** Do you want to make it an extended meeting? That would be reasonable; should it be another hour, perhaps, from 9 until 12 o'clock?

**The Chair:** Mr. Anderson, on this, we have to first find whether Mr. Alhabra considers this a friendly amendment.

Mr. Alhabra, are you willing to accept that? Otherwise we have to go to the question on your motion.

**Mr. Omar Alhabra:** Can we vote on the amendment?

**The Chair:** We can.

Mr. Trost, you didn't indicate a time length for the meeting in your amendment to the motion.

**Mr. Bradley Trost:** I move that Mr. Alhabra's motion be amended to move the proposed meeting to next Thursday, commencing at 9 a.m. and potentially going until 12 o'clock. Would that be fine with everyone? That would be a one-hour extension.

**The Chair:** Is the amendment clear now? Is there any discussion on the amendment?

Go ahead, Mr. Anderson.

**Mr. David Anderson:** I'm just wondering about the extension. I would like to see it extend up to one hour. If we get witnesses telling us that they're completely taken with this issue, and we can't get some of them in here, we may not have enough material for three hours. If you want to stay here for three hours for sure, that's okay; if you want to extend up to an hour, depending on what we have to hear, we could leave it to the chair's discretion.

Does that work?

**The Chair:** Mr. Trost indicated it was until noon, if necessary.

**Mr. Bradley Trost:** That would be provided we've got witnesses and questions. That's what I'm saying.

**Mr. Omar Alhabra:** What I'd like to suggest as well is that I don't know if it's necessarily appropriate to have AECL and the commissioner herself at the same time. Perhaps what we need to do is dedicate an hour to AECL, and then an hour for the commissioner, and then if the minister comes, maybe an hour for the minister.

**The Chair:** We'll vote on the amendment to the motion.

(Amendment agreed to)

(Motion as amended agreed to)

**The Chair:** That is for Thursday, and we will do our best to get the witnesses here.

Now we'll go to other business. I see Madame DeBellefeuille.

[Translation]

**Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille:** My question concerns what we've just adopted.

Can we agree that, if ever a miracle occurred and we finished the business of the session Wednesday evening, we would stay here for the meeting on this urgent matter?

● (0940)

[English]

**The Chair:** Yes, I think we have passed a motion to do that.

In terms of other business, you have the list in front of you. I think we'll go through the motions in order. I don't know if it will work that way, because we have them by party, but the first item on the list is from the Conservative Party: "That the Standing Committee on Natural Resources hear witnesses and report to the House on labour retention in the mining industry".

Would a member of the governing party like to discuss that? Go ahead, Mr. Anderson.

**Mr. David Anderson:** I want to address all the government ones. I know my colleagues are perfectly capable of doing that, but—

**The Chair:** I'm not sure who they came from, so go ahead.

**Mr. David Anderson:** We had the mining industry in town about a month ago. They had a two-day meeting on labour retention. They said that's the big issue facing them right now, trying to find and train workers for their industry. They're toward the end of a working cycle right now where they're losing a lot of members from their industry and are trying to determine how they're going to continue in the future. So that was one of the reasons we put that forward.

**The Chair:** What I would like to do now, just so we're clear, is to go through all the suggestions that have been brought forth, for people to make a short presentation on each one so we know what the thinking is behind it, and then we'll go to a discussion of where to go after Thursday's meeting.

I think it would work best to set the agenda if we don't get into pre-emptive motions now. That doesn't work well. I know that from past committees. It may work for particularly political items, but it doesn't work well for substantive committee meetings.

So if we could move that way I would appreciate it, and in the spirit of that, I would now go to the Liberal Party and then to the Bloc and then to the New Democratic Party, and then go back and finish the other ones, one at a time.

Is someone ready?

Mr. Boshcoff, you have put in four suggestions, I think.

Just the first one, please.

**Mr. Ken Boshcoff:** Thank you very much.

Mr. Chair, just to make it easier for you, under the section where it says "1, 2, 3, 4" and then you see Mr. Alghabra's point, number 4 as written would become our top priority. I'll go through in order. We'd strike number 1, strike number 2, because the Conservative Party has mining down, and there's no sense in duplicating things. I don't really want to debate them. If the mining industry is coming, I think we're all happy with that. So number 3 would be our number 3 priority. Number 4 would be number 1 as written and suggested by both labour and the industry. And then Omar's point of the Global Nuclear Energy Partnership would be our second priority.

**The Chair:** I'm not sure where that one is.

**Mr. Ken Boshcoff:** Just down a bit.

**The Chair:** Down lower. Okay—

**Mr. Ken Boshcoff:** So that should clarify it.

**The Chair:** To you, number 4 then—

**Mr. Ken Boshcoff:** Number 4 is by far the top priority.

**The Chair:** Do you want to give a little bit of background as to why you would like that to come before the committee. It's your chance to make a short pitch.

**Mr. Ken Boshcoff:** I'm hoping that members of the committee, no matter what their party, understand the nature of the forest crisis. In Ontario over the last two weeks we lost 1,100 jobs. I know that in New Brunswick and Quebec, similar numbers have been happening. The issue has to be addressed from a labour standpoint, a community standpoint, and our international competitiveness from an industrial standpoint.

So as an issue, I can't think of any one that deserves more front-burner attention at this time, Mr. Chair.

I'll keep it brief, because I could use the rest of the time talking about it.

● (0945)

**The Chair:** Yes. Thank you.

Now we'll go to the Bloc Québécois. If you would give me your priorities too, if you could pick your first priority, that gives us a good indication of how you place them in terms of importance and that would be helpful.

[Translation]

**Mr. Christian Ouellet (Brome—Missisquoi, BQ):** Mr. Chair, we feel that our point 3, which concerns geothermal and solar energy, is by far the most promising and most important. For some years now, there has been an enormous amount of development, particularly on mid-depth geothermal energy, to power the electrical generation stations and to replace carbon, gas and nuclear energy. It would be important for Canada to be aware of the research done elsewhere in which we have not yet really been interested.

The same is true for solar energy. There have been a lot of developments in recent years, and we realize that we haven't yet integrated it.

So we should examine the prospects for these types of energy, which will become very important. If we want to head in the direction of the present government's policy, which is to reduce greenhouse gases, these two topics are priorities. It seems to me we should put them forward and study them in depth with the people doing this research.

[English]

**The Chair:** *Merci, Monsieur Ouellet.* I appreciate that. Number 3 is your first priority, geothermal and solar energy.

Mr. Trost, one that you had suggested is number 6 on the Conservative list, that the Standing Committee on Natural Resources hear witnesses and finish its report on greening of electricity. That report, I assume, would fit in with what Mr. Ouellet is talking about. I wasn't here at the time that report was done. Could you comment on that?



**Mr. Bradley Trost:** Mr. Chair, that's the entire point. That report isn't done. We had originally planned to finish it up. By the time we start in January it will have been eight or nine months since it was last looked at, and 40% of the committee is new since that period. I think it would fit. It would depend upon how we would do it, and I'd be willing to look at that. There are other options here that I'm willing to look at too.

I think there would be a bit of natural synergy there. We're still working over here to figure out our priorities, but I wouldn't be opposed to it. I don't know if it would be my first priority. I do think it would be respectful for us to finish the original report, which is the point I made when we originally discussed it about 10 months ago.

**The Chair:** I will come back to the Conservative Party to ask for the first priority. That is what I'm doing with the other parties. So we will do that.

We'll go to the New Democratic Party, Ms. Bell, for your priority.

**Ms. Catherine Bell (Vancouver Island North, NDP):** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I have two motions.

One is on the forest sector, and it fits in with what the Liberal Party has proposed. In Canada there is a growing crisis in the forest sector. It's not just in British Columbia, where we're losing \$1 million capacity due to raw log exports and we're losing forest because of the pine beetle, and we have a lot of communities that are having real difficulty. It's something that has moved across Canada. There are issues in Alberta with respect to the boreal forest. In Ontario and Quebec there is also loss of capacity. So there is a growing crisis in the forest industry, and we're hearing it from all sides, as Mr. Boshcoff indicated. I think that's a really important issue, and we should look at it first and take a few meetings to do that.

The second one is to talk about the confusion surrounding the offshore oil and gas moratorium that's been in place in British Columbia for a number of years. It keeps rising to the surface, and I think it's something we need to look at. Whether it's part of the oil and gas study, it is something we should touch on. It would only take a couple of meetings, and I would like to make sure that is something that we get to in this session. As I said, I think it fits in nicely with our energy discussions on oil and gas. It deserves some attention.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Bell.

Mr. Harris, you're going to present the Conservative priority.

• (0950)

**Mr. Richard Harris:** I was going to just express an opinion on the suggestions. Are you going in a different—

**The Chair:** Yes, I'd like to come back to the Conservatives first to get the first priority.

Yes, Mr. Trost, do you have that?

Do you mind, Mr. Harris? I'll come back to you after.

**Mr. Bradley Trost:** Any of the four of us can do it.

**Mr. Richard Harris:** I would like to do that, if I can.

**Mr. David Anderson:** On a point of order, we'll let Mr. Harris do this, because every tree in my riding has been planted.

**The Chair:** Yes, Mr. Harris. I wasn't sure you were prepared to do that.

**Mr. Richard Harris:** They don't have much for trees in the province of Saskatchewan.

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Richard Harris:** But you all will know that Caribou—Prince George is the largest softwood-lumber-producing riding in Canada, without a doubt, and not only is it devastated by the mountain pine beetle, which started in my riding as well, but also, with the depressed housing starts in the States, the markets are way off. And there is the Canadian dollar and just a multitude of things.

I believe our party has a lot of enthusiasm for the study of the forest sector, and I would certainly support that. And it is the lifeblood of the British Columbia economy as well. I know that in New Brunswick and other parts of Canada that are softwood producers it contributes a huge amount to the economy.

**The Chair:** All right. So we have heard the priorities. There are a couple of issues on which there seems to be agreement at least amongst three parties. One is the forestry industry, the second is green energy, and there is mining as well. There are really three main items that have come up as those that should be next, or first on the agenda.

Monsieur Ouellet, do you have a comment to make?

[Translation]

**Mr. Christian Ouellet:** Mr. Chair, the forests and everything surrounding them are under provincial jurisdiction, as you very well know.

We are very uncomfortable discussing a subject—even though it is important and even though we think it is valid for other provinces—that is not under federal jurisdiction, which encroaches on a provincial jurisdiction. Moreover, you know very well that perhaps the most important meeting that has ever been held on forests is currently taking place in Quebec over three days. So Quebec is taking charge of its forests.

We would therefore be very uncomfortable studying a topic that would be in contradiction with an established jurisdiction that is generally respected by the federal government. If there is some open-mindedness toward Quebec, we feel we should not consider the forest sector as a Canadian subject.

[English]

**The Chair:** So we can move this along, I first want to ask if anyone would like to make a presentation on other issues that haven't been discussed yet. There are several others. Does anyone from the government side want to address the other issues that haven't been talked about?

Just give a very short explanation of why you've brought these issues forward, why you'd like them to be discussed by the committee.

Mr. Trost.

**Mr. Bradley Trost:** Mr. Chair, I can run through them, but this is not to indicate....

One of the reasons we're supporting forestry is that we thought, actually, all three—and evidently now it's just two—of the opposition parties were interested in it.

I'll run through all these quickly that haven't been done.

• (0955)

**The Chair:** Sure. Thank you.

**Mr. Bradley Trost:** Labour retention in the mining industry is the number one issue they keep talking about—productivity, productivity, productivity, and it has to do with finding skilled workers. It's getting increasingly hard. There are labour shortages not just in western Canada. Even in eastern Canada it's getting very hard to get the welders and the heavy-duty mechanics, all those people you need to run a mine. It's the number one thing that the industry has said.

The next two are on geological mapping. This one particularly interested me. I'm probably the only member of the committee who has done geological mapping first-hand. But our geological maps are a huge infrastructure resource for our mining and mineral industries in the country. The work of the Geological Survey of Canada and the geological production by our scientific bodies in this country has been enormous. On a per capita basis, we are much larger than most of the rest of the world. It's important that we continue to build on this, because if this degrades, it lowers our ability to produce future mineral resources. That's why I argued for it and put it in there. It's actually quite interesting when the geological people start to present their background and history.

Regulatory issues are, again, a huge issue for industry. That's why we put it in there. It's something that I think is being looked at with the major projects office, and that could be involved. That was one reason.

On resource development in the Arctic, the Arctic is an important area of Canada, geographically huge, really represented by only three or four members of Parliament, depending on how you count, and it's something that, for sovereignty and natural resource reasons, we should look at.

And I believe we've talked about the greening of electricity.

But as I said earlier on forestry, the Conservatives on this side, in the spirit of trying to get consensus here—and because we have two members who know what trees are and one member who'd like to see trees someday and find out what they look like—reached out for it. The Liberals and the NDP had spoken about it, and our understanding was that, with all the questions that the Bloc Québécois were asking in the House, they wouldn't have had an objection. So we hadn't realized this would be a little bit of a problem for them. That's why we were working to try to gain consensus here.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Trost. I appreciate that.

So we've heard the initial discussion. But we have two more on the list. It does appear that the forestry industry is the one that's supported by three out of four parties at least. And the other parties indicated it's a very serious issue in their province as well.

Ms. Bell, you were next on the list, then Mr. Alghabra.

**Ms. Catherine Bell:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Is it appropriate to comment on all the things that are before us or just on the one?

**The Chair:** You bet.

**Ms. Catherine Bell:** Thanks to the Conservative Party for the explanation on some of the issues.

With regard to the first one, on labour retention, I would have thought this would be something that would be heard before the human resources and social development committee. That committee would hear something like that. It's an interesting topic and I would love to get into it as well, but I would have thought it would be more appropriate there. So it wouldn't be a high priority for me to support.

But I really appreciate the one on Arctic development. I think that would be very interesting in the future, maybe in the spring, and we could take a trip up there and see some trees along the way.

I'd like to thank the other parties for their support on the forest industry. I don't agree that it's a totally provincial issue. It's also an issue of trade relations. Raw logs can only be exported by permission of the federal government when they're from private lands, and that's a huge issue for Quebec and Ontario, as well as British Columbia. Also, it must be seen by some of the Bloc that it's a federal issue, because they do ask for assistance from the federal government in the House fairly regularly. So I would have thought it would be a big issue for them, and I've heard them speak in the House.

Also, on the geothermal solar energy piece, I think that would fit nicely in with our continuation of the greening of electricity. I think there's another energy issue there. Then the natural gas and things like that, if we were going to continue on that energy piece, would fit in there together as well. So I think we could combine some of these things if we took a look at it and figured it out.

I think, as Mr. Harris said, the forest sector is a big issue for all of Canada and we should take a look at it. There are lots of issues we can talk about in a few meetings, I think, on that one.

• (1000)

**The Chair:** Mr. Anderson, you're not on next. Yes, we'll get to you. You're after Mr. Alghabra and Madame DeBellefeuille.

**Mr. Omar Alghabra:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I think it does appear that there is a consensus as far as the forestry study is concerned, and I certainly support this, the fact that it's of an urgent nature. It's appropriate that the committee look at it and submit recommendations to the government on the conditions of the industry and jobs in those areas.

But I do want to take a moment to elaborate on or stress the issue of the GNEP, the Global Nuclear Energy Partnership, motion that I tabled, and I've yet to move it but I will be moving it today. I think it's timely and it's topical and it won't take too much time. It'll probably take two meetings at most.

And it's timely because the government had just indicated that they were going to join that international treaty. So I understand we'll do the forestry, but I think it's very timely and that we should dedicate.... Even though there may not be a huge consensus on this, but since it will take not more, hopefully, than two meetings and because it's timely and it's topical and it's relevant, I would ask that the committee perhaps accept that we do this right after the forestry, and come up with some type of supporting—supporting or critical—recommendations on the decision of the government to join that partnership.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Madame DeBellefeuille.

[Translation]

**Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille:** Mr. Chair, I just want to let you know that, if I get up, it's because I have a backache. I wouldn't want you to think I'm behaving oddly today; it's just that I can't stay seated for long.

Having said that, I would like to explain to you in a little more detail why the study of the forest sector is a problem for us. We feel it is an extremely relevant subject, but one that would be better studied in the Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Technology. The forest sector is a provincial jurisdiction when the trees are in the forest, but once they have been cut, that really comes under industry.

Ms. Bell is right: the trade, sales and financial difficulties of the forest industry are a major concern for the Bloc québécois. We've proposed various solutions to help the sector, but in the context of a more commercial, industrial discussion. I also thought that the debates would perhaps be of more assistance to the forest industry if they were held in the Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Technology. That was simply a clarification. It's not a lack of interest, on the contrary. It's just that we feel this is perhaps not the best committee to study this matter.

At the last meeting, for those who were there, perhaps with the exception of two Liberal members, when we started writing the report on green energy, green electricity, we quickly realized that, if we wanted to cast our net too wide, we would lose the essence of our report. We had trouble agreeing, and the report ultimately became a research paper because we couldn't find a central theme.

We aren't opposed to the idea of redoing the report, but, frankly, we'll really need a very specific research objective, because I think that's what we missed in the last meeting. We didn't have a specific goal, objective, and we cast our net too wide. When we propose geothermal and solar energy, it's precisely because we don't want the study of these promising forms of energy for Quebec and Canada to be diluted in a big report on all possible forms of energy that can help Quebec and Canada achieve energy security.

In any case, I would like—and I believe Mr. Ouellet agrees with me—for us to avoid combining a lot of subjects and ultimately preparing a superficial report in which the research officers would have trouble finding a productive research theme.

That is the warning I wanted to give, Mr. Chair, because that's what the committee missed in the last meeting. I think that all my colleagues who were present will agree on the sentiment I'm expressing today.

•(1005)

[English]

**The Chair:** Okay. Some interest has been expressed in finishing that report. I hate to see a report partially finished.

Mr. Anderson is the last on the list. We've heard comments on all the topics brought forward. I'm looking for a motion on where to go next, as soon as I can get one, and we'll deal with the motion.

Mr. Anderson, you're on the list now.

**Mr. David Anderson:** I have a question first and then I would like to make a comment and maybe get an answer to that. I don't think you can answer this, Mr. Chair, because you weren't here either.

I'm wondering if the committee can tell me how much time they think we would have to put into the greening of electricity to finish the report. Was it at the stage where you were writing the report, or do you still need to hear witnesses?

Is there no translation?

**The Chair:** Madame DeBellefeuille, perhaps you'd like to respond.

[Translation]

**Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille:** In fact, Mr. Anderson, you probably saw the report, but perhaps you didn't have the time to read it. It's a very general report, which was good for our general culture and which informed us. However, it didn't have any research objective, and we don't see how we could make any recommendations on the basis of it. We were well informed, and now we have to take what we learned and adopt a very specific research objective in order to make recommendations. The purpose of every report isn't for it to stay on the shelves, but the government may perhaps be able to update the recommendations it contains.

I don't know whether Messrs. Tonks, St. Amand, Harris, Allen and Trost were present, but I get the impression there is a consensus on this feeling that it was a good cultural and educational start, but there wasn't a very specific research objective for recommendations to follow from it.

That was my comment, Mr. Chair.

[English]

**The Chair:** Mr. Anderson.

**Mr. David Anderson:** I was going to make the point that maybe that report should be finished before we go on to anything else, but I think it's going to take more time than the committee would like to put on it. Is that a consensus? So I'm going to suggest that if you want me to make the motion that we do the forestry study, I would do that.

**The Chair:** Okay, then the issue is, Mr. Anderson, how broad the study will be. You've heard the comments by Madame DeBellefeuille about that. I know from the past that if you make it too broad, that can lead to something that goes on forever and doesn't reach concrete conclusions and recommendations. We have two motions already on that. But, Mr. Anderson, if you would like to make some comment on what you would like to see in a motion, take some time to work on that, if you'd like.

**Mr. David Anderson:** I'm actually prepared, I think, to support the Liberal motion. They want the study of the unique opportunities and challenges in it, but it also calls on developing some sort of positive plan for dealing with the industry. I think that's a good motion and it's a good direction to move in.

**The Chair:** Mr. Boshcoff, would you like to move your motion then?

**Mr. Ken Boshcoff:** I would. Do you want me to read it?

**The Chair:** I think everybody has it in front of them, but read it into the record, yes.

**Mr. Ken Boshcoff:** I move that the Standing Committee on Natural Resources launch an intensive study that focuses on the unique opportunities and challenges facing the forest products industry and develop a market-based action plan that would set the groundwork for a vibrant forestry industry.

**The Chair:** You've heard the motion. Is there need for discussion on the motion?

Monsieur Ouellet.

[Translation]

**Mr. Christian Ouellet:** Mr. Chair, I'll reiterate my colleague's remarks. This is very specific in this case. We're talking about the industry, industrial products and the forest industry. We aren't really the right committee to discuss that. This motion should indeed be introduced in the Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Technology, not here.

[English]

**The Chair:** That's often the situation with a lot of issues. It could be studied by two or three committees of the House, and it's up to each committee to decide. I appreciate your advice.

Is there any further discussion on that?

Mr. Harris.

**Mr. Richard Harris:** Mr. Chairman, using Mr. Ouellet's logic, then one could assume that the study of the Chalk River situation and the shortage of isotopes, which are used for health reasons primarily, should be studied by the health committee.

The fact is that there are lots of reasons why we should do that study. There are an abundant number of reasons why this committee should be studying the forest industry—the challenges, the opportunities. There are so many things that are coming under the federal umbrella. So it's very appropriate.

•(1010)

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

Shall we go to the question, then, that the next order of business for this committee after Thursday be the motion just presented on the forestry industry?

Just before I call the question, Ms. Bell, you had something.

**Ms. Catherine Bell:** It was just that I have a motion in that's similar. I was just comparing the two, and the only thing I can see missing from this is that Mr. Boshcoff's does not ask that this report be reported to the House.

**The Chair:** They always are. The committee always reports to the House if we complete the study. So that really is implied.

Now to the question.

(Motion agreed to)

**The Chair:** It's carried. That will be the next order of business after Thursday. It wasn't quite unanimous, but it was close—three parties.

Now, should we go beyond that, or is there any point in going beyond that?

Mr. Alghabra, you are on the list, so we will go to you.

**Mr. Omar Alghabra:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'd like to move my motion now, the one I submitted notice to a week ago or so, more than that perhaps, that the committee study the government's decision to join the Global Nuclear Energy Partnership and conduct a full review of Atomic Energy Canada Limited, hearing testimony from all relevant witnesses, including the minister—I'm adding the minister—officials, and stakeholders who will provide the committee with the necessary information in order to report to the House its recommendation to the government.

I would like to have this after the committee completes its forestry study. I'm moving this motion, to which I've already served the notice.

**The Chair:** Okay, I appreciate that.

Before we get into discussion on that, it certainly fits in with your motion. We should decide roughly how much time we want to take with the other study. Before we go, I think it's important that we discuss that. It certainly fits in directly with Mr. Alghabra's motion.

Mr. Harris, on the amount of time for the study, what should our target be for completing the study?

**Mr. Richard Harris:** On that, I think we should take into consideration some travel for the committee, certainly out to British Columbia, the heart of the softwood lumber area, and over to Quebec, where I know there are some very important forestry issues, and perhaps even to other parts of the country. There's a myriad of things we should be looking at. Certainly travel time should be considered in the overall length of time for this study.

**The Chair:** Looking at the amount of time we want to set aside for this study, we want to consider travel now. I'm looking for comments on those two issues. Keep in mind Mr. Alghabra's motion, because I think it's really important that the thought on that is in the mix here as well, and then we'll go to Mr. Alghabra's motion. But they do fit in together.

Mr. Boshcoff.

**Mr. Ken Boshcoff:** Thank you.

Personally, I'm not so certain that we need to travel on this issue. For some of the Arctic stuff, there might be some places that people just haven't seen and don't have any familiarity with. So I'm envisaging four meetings, having representatives from the industry, labour, the human side of it in terms of how people respond to communities that are closing down and that type of thing, and then the opportunities in terms of marketing. So I don't really see more than four meetings.

I believe the information is very much available, and we just have to give the Forest Products Association of Canada and CEP some opportunity to state their case.

• (1015)

**The Chair:** Okay, you've heard the thoughts there.

Mr. Trost is next on the list, and then Mr. Anderson and Mr. Harris.

**Mr. Bradley Trost:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I actually hadn't raised my hand, but I'll take it.

Four meetings seems to me a very, very short period of time. I'm not opposed, but a little bit longer, I would suggest, might be possible. It doesn't have to be 10 or 12 meetings, but in four meetings I don't think we would cover it, particularly as we are a natural resources committee.

I think Madame DeBellefeuille had a point about International Trade and Industry having good stuff, but in the natural resources committee, we do also need to look at some of the technical issues on things like the pine beetle, and so forth, because that's where the Department of Natural Resources specializes more than Industry or International Trade. So we need to make sure we take time for a meeting or two on stuff that's more purely natural resources, related to this issue, than other departments, which would purely be the trade issues.

So I agree with Mr. Boshcoff on a couple more meetings, maybe, or having it a little bit more extended on that.

**Mr. Ken Boshcoff:** I'd be honoured to take more time, so thank you.

**The Chair:** If you look at the calendar, we come back on January 28 and we have six meetings before the break week, which starts on February 18. If there were to be travel, certainly something we could do is travel the week after that, the out week, but it's just a thought. The six meetings we have before the break week fit in more with what Mr. Trost is saying, with no objection from Mr. Boshcoff.

But are there other thoughts on the study and the time and whether we should travel?

Mr. Anderson, and then Mr. Harris.

**Mr. David Anderson:** I would agree with Brad. I think six or eight meetings for hearings would probably be what you would require. We also need to plan a couple of meetings for the report. So you're looking at eight or ten meetings, I would say, altogether, and then you'd be able to do a report that's adequate.

**The Chair:** Certainly the report takes some time from the time we complete the hearings until the time we can study the report, so that

could fit in with the break week as well. If we've finished the study by Thursday, February 14, we could give some time over the break week to have a report ready by February 26. It's just a thought.

Now we have Mr. Harris on the list.

**Mr. Richard Harris:** I don't know how I got back on the list.

**The Chair:** Okay. If you can't remember, Mr. Harris.... No, I'm just kidding.

Mr. St. Amand.

**Mr. Lloyd St. Amand:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm flattered to be called Mr. Harris. I'm not sure if that was the intent.

In any event, I concede that Mr. Anderson's point is a valid one, that two meetings would be required to complete the report. I don't think travel is required, Mr. Chair. And I also appreciate that it's a complicated topic, but I think with a careful selection of witnesses we can avoid repetitious or superfluous comments.

I would think four meetings, eight hours, and two additional meetings to do the report would do it adequately.

**The Chair:** We have a couple of suggestions. One is six meetings and then two for the report, and the other one is four meetings and two for the report.

The one thing I think would be required is that there be time between the time the meetings are completed and we start looking at the report. It's almost impossible for research to have a report ready for the next week. If we complete hearings on a Thursday, to start dealing with the report on the Tuesday of the next week is virtually impossible. It would be very difficult, certainly.

Mr. Alghabra.

• (1020)

**Mr. Omar Alghabra:** Thank you, Chair.

I want to echo what my colleague St. Amand just said. I think it's really difficult to know exactly how many meetings we need. We don't even know what the list of witnesses is. But I think we should aim for a goal, and I think four meetings—which allow us eight hours, and each hour could have two witnesses or so—should be adequate. If there's a need for more, based on the witness list that we see, that we never thought of, perhaps we could discuss extending it, but I think a target of four weeks is appropriate. And perhaps in between the time we finish the hearings and review the report drafted by the researchers, we can do the GNEP examination.

**The Chair:** Now we'll go to Madame DeBellefeuille.

[Translation]

**Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I would support Mr. Alghabra's recommendation. It isn't as though we were examining a subject that hasn't previously been studied; we're not starting over from scratch.

The Forest Summit in Quebec will be over in three days, and recommendations will emerge that we could review here. We could bring in the witnesses who have been heard at the summit.

I also think a lot of work is currently being done in Ontario and New Brunswick to analyze the forest crisis, which is very great. I would agree with Omar that four meetings would be enough to really look at the entire question and hear from high-quality witnesses.

Mr. Ouellet and I will therefore second the motion to devote four well-chaired meetings on this subject, with good witnesses and good questions.

[English]

**The Chair:** Mr. Harris.

**Mr. Richard Harris:** The motion reads “launch an intensive study that focuses on”, etc. I'm not so sure four meetings could do justice to an industry as large and as critical as the forest industry, if we're to do an intensive study.

Unless you agreed to four meetings while I was out taking a call, does the mover feel four meetings would do it justice, given the use of the word “intensive”?

**Mr. Ken Boshcoff:** No, I had agreed with you guys that we have more.

**Mr. Richard Harris:** Right. I guess that's my point. It says an “intensive study”.

Honestly, knowing how big the forest industry is and knowing all of the components we would likely look at, I hardly think four meetings would do justice to having an intensive study. We simply wouldn't be able to complete it in that time, in my opinion.

**The Chair:** Mr. Anderson, I was going to suggest a way forward, but go ahead.

**Mr. David Anderson:** Mr. Chair, did you say that six meetings takes us to the break?

**The Chair:** Yes, and that's a logical.... I'm hearing probably a majority, or certainly close to it, looking at the six. That takes us to a break week. It would give the researcher a little more than a week to get a report ready for the next week, and then we could go on to other business, which is what we were discussing.

Yes, Mr. Alghabra.

**Mr. Omar Alghabra:** Do we need to specify the number of weeks? We don't even know the list of witnesses yet. We're making assumptions about how long the study will take; the motion doesn't even specify the time. So let's conclude that this is number one on the list, and now, what is number two? We'll decide, when we come to putting together the witness list and deciding who else is going to be invited, how long it's going to take us.

I think we're just talking concepts here. We don't even know how many witnesses we're going to invite.

**Mr. Richard Harris:** I think we always use the term “up to”, and it would be appropriate, perhaps, to say “up to six meetings” in this case.

**The Chair:** Is there agreement that we go with Mr. Boshcoff's motion, with “up to six weeks”? Is that agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

•(1025)

**The Chair:** It's agreed. We'll see, I guess, when it ends. Pardon me, that was “six meetings”, not “six weeks”. It's “up to six meetings”, so we'll have to see how it goes.

With that, then, let's go back to Mr. Alghabra's motion. We now have the time, more or less; it's flexible, but we have an idea. We're not talking about a full-year study or a study going to the end of June.

Mr. Alghabra, if you could bring your motion up again, we will deal with it now.

**Mr. Omar Alghabra:** Do you want me to read it again?

**The Chair:** Yes, just so that everybody has it, and to be sure.

**Mr. Omar Alghabra:** Chad, can you read it?

**The Chair:** There is a revision.

Sure, the clerk will read the motion.

**The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Chad Mariage):** It is: That the Committee study the government's decision to join the Global Nuclear Energy Partnership and conduct a full review of Atomic Energy of Canada Limited, hearing testimony from all relevant witnesses, including the minister, officials, and stakeholders, who will provide the Committee with the necessary information in order to report to the House its recommendations to the government at the conclusion of the forestry study.

**The Chair:** I don't think that reads quite right.

Mr. Anderson.

**Mr. David Anderson:** There's just a question of wording here. I want to go through this: “That the Committee study the government's decision to join the Global Nuclear Energy Partnership”. Then, does he want the committee to conduct a full review, or was the second decision to conduct a full review by the government?

So it should be to study the government's “decisions”, plural, which were to join the GNEP and to conduct a full review, isn't that right? You don't want us to do a full review of AECL.

**The Chair:** Is that agreed, then, Mr. Alghabra?

**Mr. Omar Alghabra:** Yes, that's not necessary.

**The Chair:** Is there any discussion on this motion? Again, we should be considering.... Did it say how many meetings? I don't think it did.

You talked about that a little bit. How much time do you anticipate for this study?

**Mr. Omar Alghabra:** I suspect it would be two meetings, and probably a meeting to write the report, because I don't think the report will be—

**The Chair:** That's one meeting to go over the report?

You've all heard the proposal here, in the motion. Is there any discussion?

**Mr. David Anderson:** My only question would be to the other opposition parties. If this is their second priority and they're comfortable doing this, we don't have an objection.

**Mr. Omar Alghabra:** Well, that's part of the vote on the motion.

**The Chair:** This motion is that it be the second priority of the committee. The committee has to decide that, of course.

Is there any further discussion on the motion? That would be part of the discussion, certainly.

All right, we'll go to the question, then.

(Motion agreed to on division [See *Minutes of Proceedings*])

**The Chair:** Is there any will on the part of the committee to go beyond that?

Ms. Bell.

**Ms. Catherine Bell:** I would like to go to my second motion, on an offshore oil and gas study. I don't know how many meetings it would take, but probably only a couple, to have a short study of this issue.

**The Chair:** Ms. Bell, we know that this issue, and several others too that members of the committee or parties have shown an interest in.... Something I've learned from fourteen years on committees is that rarely will an agenda planned that far in advance be adhered to anyway. So let's decide as we get a little bit closer.

I think it would be a really good idea that after we finish the forestry study we discuss future business at that time, so that we can prepare what to look at beyond the other two-meeting study.

Mr. Ouellet.

[Translation]

**Mr. Christian Ouellet:** Mr. Chair, I agree that we should not plan too far in advance. However, once we have completed the other studies, I would nevertheless like us to keep our discussion of geothermal and solar energy as a priority, since those issues concern everyone, in all provinces across Canada. I'm not denying the importance of going to British Columbia. Moreover, Mr. Harris wants to go there. So we'll go and see in the spring, when the weather is fine.

So once we've completed these studies, I propose that we discuss geothermal and solar energy on a priority basis. Then we'll look into the question of the moratorium on gas.

• (1030)

[English]

**The Chair:** Monsieur Ouellet, after we're finished the forestry study, when we discuss future business, if you decide this is still your priority, could you bring it forth then? It sounds like a fascinating study. Could you do that?

Mr. Trost and then Mr. Tonks.

**Mr. Bradley Trost:** Mr. Chair, I was going to make the same point, that we can't project our business that far out; there's no point.

**The Chair:** Okay. That point has been made.

Mr. Tonks.

**Mr. Alan Tonks:** Mr. Chairman, this is a question of process. The issue of geological mapping is one on which I have received deputations in my office from the mining industry and others. While it doesn't appear that we have a time slot with respect to dealing with it, would it be possible for the committee to ask research to update us on the status of geological mapping and receive that report as an entree into whatever action we deem appropriate? It may be the kind of thing that involves just a quick briefing and a resolution and direction coming out of the committee, as opposed to a whole series of hearings.

I wonder if we could have a clarification of that, and if that process is in order, I would suggest that the committee entertain a motion at some point to give research staff that particular direction. Then we will have that paper as the basis for some future action.

**The Chair:** Mr. Tonks, I think that's an excellent idea, and it's very helpful in terms of looking at future business to have a little more background. Why don't we ask the researcher to ensure that this is done and that it's ready at the time we look at future business next, which will be when we complete the forestry study?

Is that agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Chair:** Is there any further business?

Mr. Boshcoff.

**Mr. Ken Boshcoff:** I earlier addressed the Keystone pipeline project. As you can see, it was number 3: "Implications of the Development of the Keystone Pipeline".

We have been advised that if we are to cease being hewers of wood and drawers of water, this is an opportunity for us to build 18,000 jobs for Canada as opposed to simply sending them to the United States. I'm very keen that we have some kind of meeting to review this.

I don't know how long it would take, but this is the committee to hear issues such as this. I'd even recommend one session to hear all parties who have an interest in the Keystone pipeline project state their case.

**The Chair:** Again, perhaps you could bring that up when we go to future business, right after the forestry study.

**Mr. Ken Boshcoff:** Oh, I'm sorry. I thought that's what you just asked.

**The Chair:** No. When we go to future business right after the forestry study, if that's still a priority for you we'll have that in the mix.

Since there is no other business, the meeting is adjourned.







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