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## Standing Committee on Official Languages

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EVIDENCE

**Monday, November 18, 2013**

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**Chair**

**The Honourable Michael Chong**



## Standing Committee on Official Languages

Monday, November 18, 2013

• (1530)

[*Translation*]

**The Chair (Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC)):** Welcome to the fourth meeting of the Standing Committee on Official Languages. Today is Monday, November 18, 2013. We are meeting to discuss routine motions.

[*English*]

We have a motion in front of us from Mr. Gourde concerning members who are not represented by a caucus on this committee. We ended last meeting with debate with Mr. Nicholls, and so we'll begin with Mr. Nicholls.

**Mr. Jamie Nicholls (Vaudreuil-Soulanges, NDP):** Mr. Chair, I'm not going to take up much more of the committee's time or any time, actually.

I explored the Westminster precedent of scrutiny and the role that scrutiny plays. Certainly other than Westminster there are other systems to look at for the proper functioning of government. I'll leave the Liberal Party to comment on the Chinese system of government. I know the Swiss also have lots of different ideas they could present.

That concludes my remarks.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** On a point of order, Mr. Williamson.

**Mr. John Williamson (New Brunswick Southwest, CPC):** That's the superior Chinese system for basic democracy—or that was dictatorship. Excuse me, the record should show dictatorship.

**The Chair:** Before we go to Mr. Benskin on debate, we have a point of order from Mr. Godin.

**Mr. Yvon Godin (Acadie—Bathurst, NDP):** On the comments of Mr. Williamson, it's about the same system that Harper is running here right now.

**The Chair:** I believe both of those interventions were not points of order. They were matters of debate, and so we'll continue with Mr. Benskin.

**Mr. Tyrone Benskin (Jeanne-Le Ber, NDP):** I don't really have much more to add to what my colleagues have already stated. I would like to remind people in this room and whoever else happens to be listening that in the process of democracy, yes, majority rules, but majority also takes on the responsibility of the minority. It takes on the responsibility to make sure those voices are heard. I have my concerns that this motion may limit their ability to be heard.

I will leave the committee with those thoughts.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Godin, go ahead please.

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

At our last meeting, you heard our arguments and concerns in connection with this motion. I would like the record to clearly reflect that I genuinely believe the government is making a mistake and taking us down the wrong path. Ever since this country was founded, every parliamentarian has always had the right to express their views in the House. This motion takes that right away from them.

I want to be certain it is clear that the NDP is completely against this motion. Since the House makes the decisions, I hope we'll have an opportunity to strike down the motion in 2015 and restore the democratic process. Our fellow elected representatives in the House of Commons have rights, and we will not take those rights away, as the Conservative government is about to do. I wanted to make sure that is clearly indicated in the record.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Monsieur Dionne Labelle.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Pierre Dionne Labelle (Rivière-du-Nord, NDP):** On the motion, I have to say that the government party is a victim of its own turpitude. It's trying to impose gargantuan bills on us. Any attempt to restrict democracy in one area creates a vicious cycle; it will have an impact elsewhere. It's no coincidence that 800, 900 or 1,000 amendments to the gargantuan bill have been proposed. This has gone too far. This is an attempt to find other ways of curtailing debate.

I would like you to understand that.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

[*English*]

Is there any further debate? Seeing none, I will call the question. It's on the main motion moved by Mr. Gourde. I will instruct the clerk to take a recorded division, and I will pass the floor to him.

(Motion agreed to: yeas 6; nays 4)

**The Chair:** Are there any further motions from the committee?

Seeing none, I want to thank members for adopting the routine motions of the committee.

We'll now take a brief pause to go in camera to discuss future committee business. *[Proceedings continue in camera]*

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