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Chair

The Honourable Denis Paradis

Standing Committee on Official Languages

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•(1535)

[Translation]

The Chair (Hon. Denis Paradis (Brome—Missisquoi, Lib.): Hello, everyone.

Since the agenda will be somewhat disrupted once again this afternoon, let us look at the motions before us. There is one from Mr. Choquette, one from Ms. Lapointe, one from Mr. Samson, and two from Ms. Boucher. There is also the motion from Mr. Vandal relating to matters we can discuss. We will also discuss the draft report we intend to produce regarding translation tools.

First though, I would like to mention an invitation to see what your interest might be. Some members of Quebec's National Assembly find it hard to believe that there are many francophones members from outside Quebec serving in Ottawa, from all parties. I contacted the government leader in the National Assembly, Jean-Marc Fournier.

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher (Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix, CPC): Of course, he had to reply.

The Chair: Mr. Fournier has invited all francophone members from outside Quebec, from all parties, along with the members of the Standing Committee on Official Languages, to meet with the Quebec members. I have drawn up a list of people who might wish to attend the meeting. If any of you are interested, please feel free to have a look at the invitation.

We could travel there individually or on behalf of the Standing Committee on Official Languages.

We could go on Wednesday, June 1, leaving as a group at about 5:00 p.m., from the Gatineau airport. We would go to the National Assembly to meet the members, and then have dinner with them and discuss the French fact in Canada. We could return at the end of the evening.

Mr. René Arseneault (Madawaska—Restigouche, Lib.): Wait a minute. I also sit on the Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Technology. Is the date firm?

The Chair: The date was chosen in accordance with the calendar of Quebec's National Assembly, so it would be Wednesday, June 1.

Mr. René Arseneault: I would also like to meet Yves Beauchemin, for him to see that I am still alive and well.

The Chair: I have checked with the Liberals, the Conservatives and the NDP. They gave me the names of francophiles would might join us on the trip. There would be thirty or so members in all.

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: Very well, we'll leave it at that.

The Chair: So it will be Wednesday, June 1. I have to reply to Jean-Marc Fournier, the government leader in the National Assembly.

[English]

Mr. Paul Lefebvre (Sudbury, Lib.): So far so good.

[Translation]

The Standing Committee on Official Languages is, however, supposed to meet on that day.

The Chair: We will have to cut our meeting short then. Actually, the meeting in Quebec will replace the meeting of the Standing Committee on Official Languages. We will be meeting at the National Assembly instead.

Mr. Bernard Généreux (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, CPC): Will we charter a plane?

The Chair: We will charter a plane. We have already enquired about the cost of a 40-seater. Each member could use a travel point to cover the round trip.

Mr. Darrell Samson (Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook, Lib.): Mr. Généreux, do you have any points to lend us?

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Chair: Are we in agreement on this course of action then?

Some hon. members: Yes.

Mr. René Arseneault: Since I am replacing Mauril Bélanger, I don't know if I can accept on his behalf.

The Chair: Yes, but you have a second role here. You are a francophone from outside Quebec. The invitation is not only for committee members but also for francophone and francophile members from outside Quebec.

Would you like to say something, Mr. Généreux?

Mr. Bernard Généreux: So you mean francophones from outside Quebec, francophiles, and all franco-friendly members, as they are called?

The Chair: They are called franco-curious.

Mr. Bernard Généreux: Well then we will have to charter a plane with more than 40 seats. I would like to see the list. There are some Conservative members who speak French very well.

•(1540)

The Chair: I will provide the list.

Mr. Bernard Généreux: They are not francophones, but they speak French very well.

The Chair: That's right.

The list includes a number of Conservative members. We could look at it together.

The clerk said that if the trip was on behalf of the committee, each member would have to use one travel point. Should we decide to pay for the dinner from the committee's budget, though, we would have to adopt a motion to that effect.

Mr. Bernard Généreux: What, it's not on him?

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: Jean-Marc Fournier is your friend, after all. He could offer to pay for us.

The Chair: I don't think he's going to cover everyone's meal. He'll pay for the drinks.

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: I have friends who work with the House leader. Maybe we can work something out.

The Chair: If there are incidentals of that nature, do I have the committee's permission to go ahead?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: I have no problem with that.

The Chair: Now let's deal with the motions.

The bells calling us to the House will ring soon, so I need the committee's permission to continue sitting for about 15 minutes while the bells sound. Since we are so close to the House, we could continue our meeting for 15 minutes in order to deal with the motions before the committee today.

Let's get right to it with François Choquette's motion.

Mr. François Choquette (Drummond, NDP): Mr. Chair, I will put forward my first motion.

I'm not sure if the committee decided on this, but we don't have any fruit or cookies. I know Mr. Arseneault and I would appreciate having some refreshments, but I'm not sure whether the rest of the committee members feel the same. I don't know what everyone else thinks. Normally, we are allowed to have refreshments during committee meetings.

The Chair: You can propose a motion to that effect.

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: I'd like some cake.

The Chair: Great idea. I heard you propose the motion. I am looking at you, and I declare the motion carried. The clerk—

Ms. Linda Lapointe (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, Lib.): Mr. Chair, I'd like to say something, if I could.

The Chair: Yes, of course.

Ms. Linda Lapointe: Cookies are nice, but I'd like to have some fruit, as well.

Mr. François Choquette: I did say fruit too.

Ms. Linda Lapointe: Thank you. I wouldn't want to have just cookies.

Mr. François Choquette: I don't eat cookies, either.

The Chair: I understand.

Mr. René Arseneault: And let's not forget the Saint-Justin water.

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: Oh yes, we have to have the Saint-Justin water.

The Chair: Motion carried. I will ask the clerk to arrange to have those refreshments at future meetings.

Now, it's back over to Mr. Choquette.

Mr. François Choquette: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The purpose of my motion is to invite Ms. Foote or senior officials to appear before the committee. The idea was to have them here on May 11, but unfortunately, my motion was a bit late in being dealt with. My thinking when I put forward the motion in the first place was that we could hear from the representatives and wrap up our study on the translation bureau today. I was thinking that senior officials could have appeared today, enabling us to wrap up our examination of the translation bureau today. As everyone knows, we have spent a lot of time on this issue, and I realize most of us are ready to move on to something else. But it would really be a shame not to meet with representatives from the department responsible for the translation bureau, and that's why I proposed the motion.

I put forward another motion that was postponed until later, but I'm not sure whether a date for that has been scheduled. The motion deals with the Treasury Board.

It also talks about question Q-53 on the Order Paper, which concerns the translation bureau, as well.

If we do things one at a time, we first need to wrap up our study of the translation bureau. We could do it once the report is done, as I realize the report will be written soon. If the committee members are in agreement, I would still like us to meet with senior officials from Public Services and Procurement Canada, if the minister, herself, is not available. We could ask them about their plans for the translation bureau.

And it would be great if we could hear from Treasury Board officials at the same time. We could meet for two hours, spending one hour with the Treasury Board representatives and the other hour with the Public Services and Procurement Canada senior officials. I don't imagine we'd need them here for more than an hour.

I know we're in the habit of making decisions through consensus rather than a vote. I am putting the suggestion out there, but if we need to vote on it, then we will.

The Chair: Before we get to everyone's comments, I have a piece of news to share. It's settled, Minister Scott Brison will appear before the committee on May 30.

• (1545)

Mr. François Choquette: Very good.

If we could also have senior officials from Public Services and Procurement Canada appear on May 30, I would be happy.

The Chair: Mr. Lefebvre, did you have a comment?

Mr. Paul Lefebvre: As far as Mr. Choquette's motion goes, I am in favour of having Public Services and Procurement Canada representatives appear to discuss the translation bureau. I would prefer that we start with that because I agree we could then wrap up our study on the translation bureau.

But I'm not in favour of inviting Minister Foote to appear right now. Perhaps a better time would be in the fall, once we've submitted our report and received some feedback. Even though deployment of the machine translation tool has been suspended, in the time it takes to review the situation, we should hear from the officials responsible at Public Services and Procurement Canada on the issue. I think we should start by hearing what senior officials have to say on the matter.

So that would be my proposed amendment to the motion.

The Chair: Do you have a date in mind as to when the senior officials should appear?

Mr. Paul Lefebvre: We could hear from Mr. Scott Brison for the first hour and the senior officials for the second.

The Chair: Perhaps the clerk could make some suggestions.

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: Mr. Chair, a suggestion was just made.

The Chair: May 9 and 11 are already booked.

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: Mr. Chair, he suggested a date.

Mr. Paul Lefebvre: Mr. Chair, my suggestion is this: that we hear from Mr. Brison for the first hour and the senior officials for the second. We would have another meeting with them.

The Chair: Does that work for you? It would be May 30.

Mr. Paul Lefebvre: That meeting would be for both.

The Chair: On May 30, then, we would hear from Mr. Brison for the first hour and the senior officials for the second.

Mr. François Choquette: Mr. Chair, a small clarification. During the first hour, we would hear from Mr. Brison, and during the second, we would hear from senior officials from Public Services and Procurement Canada. It would be helpful to have the senior officials from the Treasury Board stay for the second hour in case we have follow-up questions for them.

Thank you.

The Chair: No problem.

I'm being told that the Treasury Board officials wanted to appear before the committee on June 1, but we won't be here that day.

So the Treasury Board officials could come at the same time as Mr. Brison, and we would ask them to stay for the second hour, along with the officials accompanying Ms. Foote. That's what you're proposing.

Actually, Mr. Brison and his officials are expected to appear in the Senate on May 30, at 5 o'clock, so he can't stay. As for the officials, we will let them go at 5 o'clock.

Does that work for you before we move on to the next motion?

Mr. François Choquette: Mr. Chair, before we get into the next motion, I have something to add. As I mentioned, my fellow committee members wanted to have the time to read question Q-53 on the Order Paper before including it in the committee's study. I'd like it to be included in the committee's study, given that part of the question pertains to the translation bureau.

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: What is question Q-53?

Mr. François Choquette: I brought it up about three weeks ago. I had asked the clerk to send it out to all the committee members.

Everyone said they would read it so we could make a decision on it today.

The Chair: Mr. Choquette, analyst Chloé Forget would like to say a few words.

Ms. Chloé Forget (Committee Researcher): Question Q-53 contains a lot of information. Do you want it to be included in the report that will be tabled by the end of the session? I am not sure what kind of an analysis you had in mind.

Mr. François Choquette: I think that the most relevant part of question Q-53 is the one that pertains to Public Services and Procurement Canada. So we would keep three or four pages of the hundreds of pages of question Q-53. To help the analysts, I could make an amendment to include the part of the answer that has to do with Public Services and Procurement Canada.

The Chair: So the main motion was amended by Paul Lefebvre, and then amended again by you concerning question Q-53. Did I get that right?

Mr. François Choquette: We can discuss the amendments to the motion as a whole or individually; it's all the same to me. I don't see any issue with us discussing the amendments as a whole.

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: The following motion moved by Ms. Lapointe concerns orders of reference.

We are listening, Ms. Lapointe.

● (1550)

Ms. Linda Lapointe: Do you want me to read it out?

The Chair: Does everyone have Ms. Lapointe's motion?

Ms. Linda Lapointe: Have you read it? Do you have any questions? Are you okay with it?

The Chair: Mr. Généreux, go ahead.

Mr. Bernard Généreux: Mr. Chair, I will be very candid with you. Mr. Choquette just told me about the letter sent by Ms. May following this proposal. I want to understand the situation. I will tell you quite frankly that I unfortunately did not have the time to read the motion before coming here.

The Chair: Ms. Lapointe, it would benefit everyone if you could read the proposed motion.

Ms. Linda Lapointe: Please listen carefully.

Mr. Bernard Généreux: I am listening.

Ms. Linda Lapointe: The motion is the following:

That, in relation to Orders of Reference from the House respecting Bills,

(a) the Clerk of the Committee shall, upon the Committee receiving such an Order of Reference, write to each Member who is not a member of a caucus represented on the Committee to invite those Members to file with the Clerk of the Committee, in both official languages, any amendments to the Bill, which is the subject of the said Order, which they would suggest that the Committee consider;

(b) suggested amendments filed, pursuant to paragraph (a), at least 48 hours prior to the start of clause-by-clause consideration of the Bill to which the amendments relate shall be deemed to be proposed during the said consideration, provided that the Committee may, by motion, vary this deadline in respect of a given Bill; and

(c) during the clause-by-clause consideration of a Bill, the Chair shall allow a Member who filed suggested amendments, pursuant to paragraph (a) an opportunity to make brief representations in support of them.

Mr. Bernard Généreux: Where did you get that?

Ms. Linda Lapointe: I got help.

The Chair: Are there any further comments?

Go ahead, Mr. Choquette.

Mr. François Choquette: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I want to begin by congratulating the committee on being transparent by holding its discussions publicly, and not in camera.

The other issue I want to raise is the concern expressed by Elizabeth May. She wants to present her views to our committee. Whether she is right or wrong, we should at least take the time to hear her out in order to better understand her concerns over the amendments.

I know that, in the past, we have been inundated by hundreds of amendments and had to spend long hours considering them in the House of Commons. The committee could potentially experience the same thing with hundreds of amendments being put forward. So we should try to find a compromise that would help us improve the way we study bills.

When it comes to our committee, it should not be required to study bills this often, but it could still be required to do so occasionally. I think that, as parliamentarians, we have to operate with a high level of transparency and be committed to introducing the best possible bills, whether our political party is in power or in opposition. That is in the best interest of Canadians, whom we represent.

I propose that we take about 15 minutes at the end of one of our meetings to hear from Ms. May. The committee would then be able to make a decision regarding the vote, if everyone agrees.

Since we have no bills on the agenda, there is no hurry to adopt this motion.

•(1555)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Choquette.

Ms. Lapointe, go ahead.

Ms. Linda Lapointe: To my knowledge, when an MP who is not a member of the committee takes the floor, they use another member's speaking time to do so. Will you yield her your floor time? I think that we all want to hold on to our time. If someone who is not part of an official caucus takes the floor, that means we are yielding our time to them. I am perfectly happy to have my five or six

minutes of floor time to ask witnesses questions. Those are the implications. I doubt that your goal is to give up your floor time.

The Chair: Will you share your speaking time with her, Mr. Choquette?

Mr. François Choquette: That is why we have to hear what Ms. May has to say. We don't know what exactly she wants to explain. In her letter, she asks that we give her an opportunity to come speak to us. I think it would be appropriate to set aside 10 or 15 minutes at the end of a meeting to hear from Ms. May, especially since we have meetings with nothing yet planned on the agenda.

The Chair: Allow me to comment before we move on. Ms. May put that request to all the House committees, and not just to our committee. This does not concern only Ms. May, but all independent MPs.

Ms. Linda Lapointe: I will respond to this.

Truth be told, we are giving her an opportunity to participate in the committee; all she needs to do is give us 48 hours' notice. We are not trying to exclude her or the Bloc Québécois representatives. We are asking them to give us notice. Under these conditions, if they want to take the floor, we will let them. They could also propose amendments.

The Chair: Is that okay, Mr. Choquette?

Mr. François Choquette: Yes.

The Chair: So we will push back the decision regarding this proposal.

Some hon. members: No.

The Chair: No? Are we adopting it?

Some hon. members: Yes.

The Chair: And we will hear Ms. May afterwards?

Ms. Linda Lapointe: Yes.

The Chair: Mr. Arseneault, you have the floor.

Mr. René Arseneault: Mr. Chair, I would like to clarify our colleague Ms. Lapointe's position.

If I understood correctly, you moved an amendment to the motion, Mr. Choquette. Is that the case, or was it simply a comment?

Mr. François Choquette: Mr. Arseneault, I suggest that we postpone the vote. If we vote now and hear Ms. May afterwards, it will not serve any purpose, since we will already have voted on the motion.

Mr. René Arseneault: I understand. It's a matter of procedure. I simply wanted to clarify things.

Mr. François Choquette: There is no problem, Mr. Arseneault.

Mr. René Arseneault: But there is a motion on the table.

The Chair: Yes.

Mr. Généreux, you have the floor.

Mr. Bernard Généreux: I move we vote today.

The Chair: Mr. Lefebvre, you have the floor.

Mr. Paul Lefebvre: I also move that we vote today.

The Chair: Mr. Samson, do you share that opinion?

Mr. Darrell Samson: Yes.

The Chair: Very well. We will nevertheless reserve the right to receive Ms. May, if I understand correctly. However, you suggest that we adopt this motion immediately.

Is everyone in agreement to adopt this motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. François Choquette: Mr. Chair, I will abstain from voting on this motion.

The Chair: Mr. Choquette's abstention has been duly noted.

Ms. Linda Lapointe: Are you afraid that you will one of these days belong to an unrecognized group of parliamentarians?

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

An hon. member: That's mean.

Mr. François Choquette: I do not wish that upon myself.

Ms. Linda Lapointe: I apologize.

I really appreciate you as a person, Mr. Choquette.

Mr. François Choquette: I am taking it as a joke.

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: We will now discuss Mr. Samson's motion, which is on immigration.

Mr. Darrell Samson: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

My motion reads as follows:

WHEREAS immigration is essential to maintaining and increasing the demographic weight of francophone minority communities;

WHEREAS the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act's purpose is to enrich and strengthen the social and cultural fabric of Canadian society, while respecting the federal, bilingual and multicultural character of Canada;

The Chair: Mr. Samson, allow me to interrupt you for a few seconds.

I hear that the bell has started to ring. Are the members of the committee agreed that we continue the meeting for 15 or 20 minutes?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Chair: Please continue, Mr. Samson.

Mr. Darrell Samson: Thank you.

I will continue to read my motion:

[...]; and

WHEREAS the federal government is committed, pursuant to part VII of the *Official Languages Act*, to enhancing the vitality of the English and French linguistic minority communities in Canada and supporting and assisting their development; and fostering the full recognition and use of both English and French in Canadian society;

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Standing Committee on Official Languages conduct a study of immigration to francophone minority communities and report its conclusions and recommendations to the House no later than December 31, 2016.

I indicated December 31, 2016 as the date, but I would not want this to limit us. In order to ensure that this will be fully successful, I am ready to withdraw the date.

● (1600)

The Chair: Are there any comments?

Mr. Choquette, you have the floor.

Mr. François Choquette: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

This is an extremely important motion. It is also a very timely topic. However, we are going to begin a study of the roadmap, which will take us to December 31. I had tabled a motion on access to justice in both official languages. I believe immigration, access to justice and health are important topics, as are others.

I suggest that after the study on the roadmap, depending on the results we obtain, we establish priorities and determine what we want to study at that point, rather than moving on immediately to immigration, even if I think that is an extremely important topic. That is my proposal.

The Chair: Did you want to speak, Ms. Boucher?

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: Yes, thank you.

I quite like your motion, Mr. Samson.

We are planning to study the roadmap. We know that Ms. Joly is also going to study it, and meet with people. We should not impinge on the minister's work with our own. I'd like to know what you think.

The Chair: You have the floor, Mr. Lefebvre.

Mr. Paul Lefebvre: I think it would really be up to Mr. Boissonnault, given that he is the minister's parliamentary secretary, to reply to that question, but he is not here.

You asked a good question. I want to make sure that I understand correctly. You don't want two studies to go forward in parallel, is that it?

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: Yes. If we study the roadmap and if for her own study Minister Joly is meeting with the same groups as we are, our work is going to overlap. We don't want to do that. We don't want to be pulling the rug out from under the minister's feet. After all, she has the last word.

We need to know whether in her study she will be looking at the roadmap first. If that is the case, we could conduct other studies in the meantime. We need to ask Mr. Boissonnault to find out exactly what is planned.

The Chair: Mr. Généreux, you have the floor.

Mr. Bernard Généreux: Mr. Chair, we have talked about this several times, and I think we are getting confused. Would it be possible, using the existing roadmap, to define the broad issues, the broad points, and list the priorities in each case? We could prepare lists by subject, and put them later in an order that will suit everyone. In that way we could analyze the 2013-2018 roadmap in an orderly way.

Inevitably, it will take several months to do this work, given the speed at which committees generally operate, unfortunately, and ours in particular. It is not that our committee does not work well, on the contrary; it is that we are dealing with all sorts of topics at the same time. I think we should proceed by topic; infrastructure, health, and so on. Ms. Boucher mentioned health, Mr. Samson spoke about immigration. Let us separate things into blocks, and then put them in the order we want to study them in.

The Chair: Mr. Samson, do you have a comment?

Mr. Darrell Samson: I propose that we adopt this motion so as to record our intentions in the *Minutes of Proceedings*. It will all depend on where we are at when the time comes to study the roadmap. I don't want us to lose the opportunity to make progress while we wait for everything to be clear in that regard. We should record in the *Minutes of Proceedings* that we are going to study the matter of immigration. I offered to withdraw the date of December 31 in order to give us some flexibility. I would like us to vote on this today.

The Chair: Mr. Lefebvre, do you have something to add?

Mr. Paul Lefebvre: I understand Mr. Généreux's point of view. Do we want to study other topics before we examine the roadmap? I think that is the question we are asking.

I believe Mr. Samson's intention is to indicate that before the end of the year we are going to study immigration. Is that correct? That does not mean that we will be doing this next week. Do you understand?

•(1605)

Mr. Bernard Généreux: I understand that. However, we already have three different motions here that refer to three of the elements in the roadmap. So there will necessarily be an overlap.

Mr. Paul Lefebvre: Yes.

Mr. Bernard Généreux: If we want to begin with immigration, that is not a problem, but let's do it in an orderly way, without submitting too many motions.

Mr. Paul Lefebvre: That's it. I agree with Mr. Généreux.

The Chair: We could ask the researchers to list topics for discussion in connection with the roadmap, including immigration, if we adopt the motion. As a group, we could decide on the order of priority for these points later. That is what I have understood.

Mr. Samson's motion remains valid. We could vote on it today and later determine a time frame, including other topics that will be put on the list by the researchers.

Does that work for you?

Ms. Boucher, you have the floor.

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: I would tend to agree. We work very well together, but it seems that we are coming at this from every imaginable angle. I have been the parliamentary secretary of the Minister responsible for Official Languages. The direction has to come from Minister Joly. She is going to be conducting a study, she will meet people, and this is what will guide us. Mr. Boissonnault is her parliamentary secretary. Before holding votes, we should know what Ms. Joly's plan is, and what she intends to do. If we go to meet the same groups as she does, there are going to be two teams doing

the same work. We are here to support her, but we should not be duplicating each other's work.

The Chair: I have just been reminded that on April 13 we adopted a motion introduced by Mr. Vandal stating that the committee would be undertaking a study of the Roadmap for Canada's Official Languages 2013-2018. That motion was passed on April 13.

Mr. Généreux, you have the floor.

Mr. Bernard Généreux: The researchers could list all of the elements of the roadmap and submit a list of priorities prepared in consultation with the parliamentary secretary to us. If Mr. Samson wants us to begin with immigration, I have no objection. I simply want our studies to align with all of the points in the roadmap. Ms. Boucher has moved motions, Mr. Choquette moved one, and Mr. Samson did so as well.

The Chair: Mr. Samson, do you have a comment?

Mr. Darrell Samson: I submitted my motion to the clerk and I expect us to vote on it. We have four years before us, and a lot of work to do. Consequently we have no time to waste. We have a very clear objective that even covers what Ms. Boucher is proposing in her motion. In fact, her motion overlaps with mine, I think.

I ask that my motion be put to a vote.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Samson.

I think that the various points of view that have been expressed are not incompatible. I am going to put the motion to a vote and we will include it in the request we will submit to the researchers, so that they can analyze the roadmap in the way Mr. Généreux suggested, with a list of topics to be prioritized. The motion will be passed without a date being specified at the end.

Mr. Paul Lefebvre: Could we add Ms. Boucher's motion concerning newcomers' access to French services to it?

Mr. Darrell Samson: I was told it would be included in mine.

Mr. Paul Lefebvre: Okay, that's good.

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: Just a moment, please. So we have now reached Ms. Boucher's motion, regarding access to services in French for newcomers.

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: That motion will in fact be incorporated into Mr. Samson's motion.

The Chair: All in favour?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Chair: Ms. Boucher, you have another motion. It is on access to health care in both official languages.

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: Exactly.

The Chair: It reads as follows:

That the Standing Committee on Official Languages undertake a study on access to services in both official languages for newcomers [...]

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: That's not the same one.

The Chair: I'm sorry, that was a different motion.

Here is the right one:

That the Standing Committee on Official Languages undertake a study on access to health care in both official languages in minority communities [...]

We can also pass that motion. Subsequently, according to the roadmap as a whole, we will prioritize our topics.

(Motion agreed to)

• (1610)

The Chair: Is there anything else?

Mr. Choquette, did you want to add something?

Mr. François Choquette: I have a question for the researchers. I know that Mr. Clerk recently received a document from CAPE. I want to make sure that that document will be included in our study of the report.

The Chair: What report?

Mr. François Choquette: The report on the Translation Bureau.

The Chair: Ms. Forget, you have the floor.

Ms. Chloé Forget: It all depends on what the committee wants to do. The report is currently at the Translation Bureau, being translated. We were to study it next week, from May 9 to May 11, unless you want to add something.

In another connection, I would like to know if the May 30 meeting with the Secretariat of the Treasury Board and the officials of Public Services and Procurement Canada is to be included in the report. If so, next week would probably not be the right time to study the report on the Translation Bureau.

The Chair: That is a good point.

Mr. Choquette, you have the floor.

Mr. François Choquette: We could simply confirm receiving the CAPE document in a footnote, for instance in the bibliography.

As for Public Services and Procurement Canada, I expect the report to be finished by then. It will be interesting to see what these people have to say subsequently.

So in my opinion this will not be included in the report, but it is up to the committee to make the decision.

Do we have something on the agenda for the May 16 and 18 meetings?

The Chair: Not yet.

Mr. François Choquette: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: I now yield the floor to Mr. Lefebvre.

Mr. Paul Lefebvre: Mr. Chair, I get the feeling there are more plates in the air than in the cupboards.

I suggest that after the vote Mr. Boissonnault come to speak to us about the minister's position. I think he is in a good position to provide us with some direction.

We don't seem to know what is going to happen from week to week, and it would certainly be good to figure out where we are going.

The Chair: In fact, Mr. Vandal's motion about the roadmap for official languages was supposed to be the next element on our

agenda. However, we are going to have to interrupt our work to go and vote.

Consequently, I am suspending the meeting for the time it will take for us to vote.

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_____ (Pause) _____

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• (1645)

The Chair: We are resuming the meeting until 5:30 p.m., or until the next vote, because I know that there is supposed to be another one.

So, in our discussion we were asking that the parliamentary secretary come and talk to us about the roadmap. Who had made that request?

Mr. François Choquette: We were all more or less in agreement.

The Chair: Mr. Choquette, perhaps you could formulate the request for the members of the committee.

Mr. François Choquette: It was Ms. Boucher who made that request.

The Chair: Fine.

Go ahead, Ms. Boucher.

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: As I said earlier, there are several motions on the floor. Personally, I would not like us to interfere with Ms. Joly's work. I know she said she was going to be meeting some groups.

Rather than scattering its energies in every direction, and in order to be consistent in its work, should the committee not study the roadmap first? We need to know what Ms. Joly wants to do for her part, so that we don't get in the way of her work. That was it, generally speaking.

The Chair: Mr. Boissonnault, you have the floor.

Mr. Randy Boissonnault (Edmonton Centre, Lib.): Thank you.

I am very happy to see that this committee is enthusiastic about the roadmap.

In order to avoid duplication, the committee must undoubtedly proceed in the way that has been outlined.

In my work as parliamentary secretary, I will certainly be working closely with Minister Joly in preparing the official consultations on the next roadmap and action plan. We are currently doing all the preliminary work to prepare those consultations. What needs to be pointed out about the consultations of the stakeholders in the field that will be conducted by the department is that they will focus on the next action plan and will in this regard align with the government's mandate. That is the first point.

With regard to this committee's work, I suggest, not as parliamentary secretary, but as a member, that you, the parliamentarians, study the last two roadmaps so as to determine what they contributed to official languages and how they fell short, both under the Liberals and the Conservatives. Let's examine the last two roadmaps, that cover a 10-year period, in order to identify the shortfalls and pitfalls that have meant that in 2016 we are still facing issues in connection with the vitality of official language minority communities throughout the country.

It is primordial that you do this work as parliamentarians. The work you will do with witnesses will be different from what we can and will do as a department. There will be some important things missing if you do not do this study. I must say that your work will really orient what we will do as a government when it comes to the roadmap. Moreover, your work may mean that some elements will be in the roadmap that would not be there otherwise.

And so I encourage you to look at what was done in the past so that you can determine, as parliamentarians, what you want to see in the next action plan.

For my part, I am the link between these two processes, given that I sit on this committee and will be heading the consultations on behalf of the department with Minister Joly.

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: Perfect.

Mr. Randy Boissonnault: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Thank you.

Go ahead, Mr. Vandal.

Mr. Dan Vandal (Saint Boniface—Saint Vital, Lib.): Mr. Boissonnault, could you suggest some dates so that we know when it would be best to begin our consultations?

Mr. Randy Boissonnault: It is up to the committee to determine that. If you have finished the study on immigration and you begin before the end of the session in June, you could already have a list of witnesses. This will stimulate discussion in all of the francophone and among English-speakers in Quebec, so as to determine what we want to see from parliamentarians and from the department. I think this will stimulate a rich array of ideas and will in the final analysis lead to a better plan.

And so, I think you should start that study in the near future.

• (1650)

The Chair: I now yield the floor to Mr. G n reux, and then it will be Mr. Samson's turn.

Mr. Bernard G n reux: Before we left a while ago to go to vote, I was talking about the need to look at the broad outlines of the current roadmap. If the broad outlines of the current roadmap are the same as those of the previous one, we should determine what they are and invite witnesses according to those points in order to analyze them.

I have a much better understanding of what you want to do, and I have no problem with it. We need to analyze what was done over the past 10 years to find out where the two previous roadmaps fell short and see how we can improve the next one. That is what I understand from what you have been saying.

Mr. Randy Boissonnault: That includes the current roadmap.

Mr. Bernard G n reux: Yes.

If I am not mistaken, the topic of immigration was a part of the two previous roadmaps.

Mr. Samson is asking the committee to analyze the current immigration situation, and the country has just received 50,000 refugees. I suppose that is not a coincidence.

Mr. Samson, in your motion on immigration, were you referring to the current situation or to the past 10 years?

The Chair: Mr. Samson, you have the floor.

Mr. Darrell Samson: I was referring to both at once, that is to say that I want our study on immigration to reflect today's reality. We need to determine what the current situation is in minority communities and what direction we should take over the next five years.

The document I have in hand, dated June 2015, should have served as a tool to ensure the vitality of communities. This report prepared by the Standing Committee on Official Languages sets out what was done, but also lists a number of existing problems. By comparing the situations, we could bring about some progress in these files.

Certain parts of the roadmap are essential. New testimony will enrich the study as a whole.

I will give you an example. The last roadmap does not refer to day care, to investment in day cares of approximately \$4 million. So some things are missing. We could analyze those missing elements or the changes made to the roadmap from the beginning, and that would help us to build a plan for the new roadmap, and guide our actions over the next few years.

I suggest that we look at the current immigration situation so as to determine our direction and the means we will need to follow it over the next five years.

The Chair: You may speak, Mr. G n reux.

Mr. Bernard G n reux: I hope I understood Mr. Boissonnault's wishes properly.

He would like us to examine what was done over the past 10 years so as to identify shortfalls and eliminate them, and also to figure out how to improve the situation for minority communities. That is what I understood.

Is that correct, Mr. Boissonnault?

Mr. Randy Boissonnault: I was mistaken if I referred to the Dion plan, since it was the Conservative government that produced the last two roadmaps, the 2008-2013 one and the one from 2013 to today.

Regarding immigration, I don't think there will be duplication. I don't know how many meetings you intend to hold on this topic, but if the committee conducts an in-depth study on what the future holds in that area, this will contribute immediately to the roadmap process. It is complementary work. You could begin with a study on immigration, followed by one on the roadmap. I think that your report could fit in to the next roadmap very well. That is my opinion.

●(1655)

Mr. Bernard Généreux: I just want to make sure that if we do a study on immigration, we will be doing it in light of the two previous roadmaps. Other elements will be added to our report to the minister, but we have to make sure that this report hangs together and is not made up of a series of disparate elements. Things have to be logical for the report to be consistent, in order to allow the minister to make decisions with regard to the next action plan or the next roadmap. It is important to understand that.

I see no problem in beginning with the study on immigration, tomorrow morning if need be, but the report has to be accompanied by a complete analysis of the two previous action plans.

The Chair: Go ahead, Mr. Lefebvre.

Mr. Paul Lefebvre: I agree with Mr. Généreux. I don't know what the agenda is for our next meeting, but we could perhaps take a look at the two previous roadmaps. Our researcher could have them ready for us. Afterwards, we could discuss our priorities, in order of preference, and prepare a calendar. I think we have reached that point and we are all on the same wavelength.

So according to what you have said, immigration would be the first item on the agenda.

The Chair: There is also our meeting with the judge.

Mr. Paul Lefebvre: Then there is the justice file, and that is a part of that as well.

But before we get there, we have a lot of plates in the air. We have to see how we want to proceed.

The Chair: May I ask the researchers to provide us, at our next meeting, with a type of global overview of the points in the roadmap, which we will examine? Do you have a suggestion?

Ms. Lucie Lecomte (Committee Researcher): Would Wednesday be good for you? That would give us a bit more time.

The Chair: Yes, Wednesday is good.

Mr. Paul Lefebvre: And over the next two days, we will study the report, correct?

The Chair: Yes, but we are running into a problem there, because unless I am mistaken, we will be receiving Mr. Brison on May 30.

Mr. Paul Lefebvre: That is why we need a calendar.

The Chair: We can begin by examining the report on translation, that according to what I understand, the report will also have to take into account the points raised during Mr. Brison's appearance and that of the officials of Ms. Foote before the committee, which will only take place May 30.

Mr. Paul Lefebvre: Will we postpone our work on the report and wait for Mr. Brison to have appeared before the committee? That is what I would like to know.

The Chair: I am told that Mr. Brison's testimony and that of the others will not be a part of the report.

Mr. Paul Lefebvre: Exactly.

The Chair: Mr. Choquette, you have the floor.

Mr. François Choquette: I thought everyone was in agreement that our study on the Translation Bureau was over and that we had a good idea of the direction we were going to take.

It would be interesting in spite of everything to meet the people from Public Services and Procurement Canada to ask them some questions, and it does not matter if the report is complete at that time.

Does everyone agree on that?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Chair: Thank you for these clarifications.

Mr. Généreux, you have the floor.

Mr. Bernard Généreux: I just want to make sure that the committee will not be working for nothing and that we will be preparing an agenda that will allow us to produce a report that will be consistent and sensible.

The Chair: Our researcher wants to have a word.

Ms. Lucie Lecomte: I would like to say that the report on the Translation Bureau will be available for you to begin its study on Monday. In fact, you will receive it Friday and you can begin to study it on Monday.

The document I am asked to prepare will be ready on Wednesday and will be distributed. The committee can look at this issue when it is ready.

The Chair: Fine.

Ms. Lucie Lecomte: The document I will be submitting to you will be a draft study plan for the roadmap.

I just wanted to point out that these are two separate documents.

The Chair: I would also like to clarify one point.

Do you want the researchers to make recommendations in the report following the testimony we have heard? We can examine those recommendations together, which could be different.

Do you want the draft report to also contain recommendations?

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: We normally make recommendations.

The Chair: Yes. They can suggest some also, but we are not forced to accept them.

Shall we ask them to propose some recommendations to us, or will we examine the report and make our recommendations after that?

●(1700)

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: I'm going to let you go on because I don't understand.

The Chair: Mr. Choquette, you have the floor.

Mr. François Choquette: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Regarding the study on the Translation Bureau, there were several points on which several people were agreed. When the vast majority of people are in agreement on some points, they can become a part of the recommendations suggested by the researchers. Afterwards, the committee can of course decide whether to adopt those recommendations or not, or to add some or remove some.

If the researchers prepared some recommendations, they could be a good starting point, especially those which were the object of the greatest consensus.

We should remember that the experts who came to testify know more than we do on their subjects. Our work is to prepare the best possible report for the citizens we represent.

The Chair: Does that suit you?

Mr. Vandal, you have the floor.

Mr. Dan Vandal: That suits me, on condition that we all understand that these are only recommendations and it is up to us to make the final ones.

The Chair: They are suggestions.

Mr. Dan Vandal: We may change them or reject them.

The Chair: It is a draft.

Ms. Lucie Lecomte: They are always drafts.

Mr. Randy Boissonnault: I want to clarify the process. Concerning the researchers' report, if you decide to include recommendations, they will not be discussed at a public meeting.

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: No, that is never discussed during a public meeting.

Mr. Randy Boissonnault: That is correct. You will be entitled to remove recommendations and they will never be a part of the public study. If you think that the researchers are able—and I know that they are—to sort things out and clean up all of the recommendations that were made during the testimony, this will save you a bit of time in formulating recommendations.

The Chair: I want to mention that the two meetings slated for the study on the report on the Translation Bureau, on May 9 and May 11, will be held in camera.

Mr. Samson, you have the floor.

Mr. Darrell Samson: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I would like to confirm certain things about my motion. I think that some people understood that the topic of that motion would be integrated into the roadmap, whereas that is not at all the intention I had. It is a separate study that will be based on the roadmap. The motion was not to be included into the roadmap.

In its current form, the motion has been twinned with the roadmap. Its purpose is to initiate the work on immigration. There is no doubt that the work that will be done will be used for the purposes of the roadmap, but for the moment, this is not a motion that is directly aligned on the roadmap.

The Chair: At the time when we passed your motion, we said that we would be looking at all of the priority dossiers included in the roadmap. Where are we going to situate this study? We will situate it within this broader study on the roadmap. We could always decide at that point to make it a priority topic and to begin with that point, or we may begin with another file. Earlier Mr. Généreux said that we could begin with that file and that would not be a problem.

Generally, your motion is related to the study on the roadmap. It was passed but we have yet to decide at what point we will make its topic a priority.

Mr. Darrell Samson: After the round table, I had understood that this would be the first thing we would be working on.

Mr. Paul Lefebvre: Mr. Chair, I am in favour of that. When the researchers have provided us with a calendar and a draft of the topics to be studied, we can indicate that immigration will be one of the first topics to be studied. This is in line with what we want to do.

The Chair: That's perfect, we will do that on Wednesday. We will then have the list and we will situate ourselves according to that, Mr. Samson.

Go ahead, Mr. Boissonnault.

Mr. Randy Boissonnault: I apologize, I could not be here while you were discussing Mr. Samson's motion. I wonder if you could give me some information, and put things in context for me.

Immigration is a file that is of concern to Minister Joly and Minister McCallum. It is a priority issue for francophones, as it has an impact on the vitality of minority communities. It is really a timely matter. This issue concerns us, and concerns the two ministers and their departments. If your committee decides to study that matter first, you will have the participation of both departments.

Mr. Darrell Samson: In conclusion, I would add this. Every day where we do not try to find solutions to problems regarding immigration, we are maintaining or reinforcing issues for minorities. Immigrants and refugees are entering Canada every day. We are placing ourselves in very difficult situations in rural communities.

• (1705)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Samson.

Mr. Choquette, you have the floor.

Mr. François Choquette: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I just wanted to say that we have already adopted the motion on the roadmap. We made the roadmap a priority. I believe Mr. Vandal moved the motion on the roadmap. I have no objection to our also studying Mr. Samson's motion on immigration, but I think it should be a part of Mr. Vandal's motion, because that was the priority motion at that point.

Logic would dictate that we examine it with Mr. Vandal's motion, that is to say in connection with the roadmap. The researchers will list the priorities, and we could of course include immigration.

The Chair: If I understood correctly, we'd like to begin with immigration.

Wednesday, we are going to decide which files will be our priorities, and determine the order in which we will study them, after consulting the list of priorities our researchers will have prepared for us.

Does that suit you?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Chair: Are there any other topics you'd like to raise? Apparently not.

Thank you very much.

The meeting is adjourned.

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