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• (1530)

[English]

The Chair (Mr. Vance Badawey (Niagara Centre, Lib.)): I call this meeting to order.

Members, welcome to the Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities. Today we will continue our study of the aircraft certification process. It is a pleasure to have the honourable Marc Garneau, the Minister of Transport, with us.

Minister Garneau, welcome. We'll start off with you and your presentation.

[Translation]

Hon. Marc Garneau (Minister of Transport): Thank you, Mr. Chair and committee members, for the invitation to contribute to the committee's study of aircraft certification.

Transport Canada appreciates the committee's work on all issues related to the safety of the travelling public and is pleased to help in any way it can.

Aircraft certification is essential to the safety and security of our transportation system and is part of Transport Canada's mandate.

March 10 marked the one-year anniversary of the tragic Ethiopian Airlines accident. And it's been nearly 18 months since the tragic Lion Air accident. Our thoughts continue to be with the victims, along with their family members and friends.

As committee members know, the model of plane involved in both accidents was the Boeing 737 MAX 8. On March 13, 2019, days after the Ethiopian Airlines accident, Transport Canada received and analyzed new satellite data that informed its judicious decision to swiftly close Canadian airspace to the aircraft.

[English]

These restrictions will remain in place until Transport Canada is fully satisfied that all safety concerns have been addressed by Boeing and the FAA, and adequate flight crew procedures and training are in place.

Civil aviation relies on the global collaboration of manufacturers, operators and regulators. All stakeholders, including governments, work together to minimize the risk of aviation accidents. The International Civil Aviation Organization, ICAO, facilitates this collaboration. Under the ICAO convention, the country that manufactures an aircraft—known as the “state of design”—is responsible for certifying its airworthiness and safe operation. The state of design must conduct the testing needed to certify the aircraft and then

share this information widely. Under annex 8 of the ICAO convention, countries can either accept the state of design certification or use the results of the original performance tests to validate the certification.

Boeing manufactures the Max 8 in the United States, and the Federal Aviation Administration, the FAA, is responsible for its certification.

[Translation]

The FAA is also responsible for certifying Boeing's approach to fixing the problems identified in the wake of the MAX 8 accidents. In addition, it must ensure the effectiveness of any recommended changes to the aircraft's design and operation, as well as to crew procedures and training.

Transport Canada continues to work closely with the FAA on its review of the MAX 8. We also continue to work closely with civil aviation authorities in Europe and Brazil in hopes that this model of aircraft can return to service, and transport travellers safely to destinations around the world.

Transport Canada has been, since the accidents, conducting an independent review of the design changes proposed for the MAX 8 that the FAA are working to certify. This review will include test flights of the aircraft to validate the proposed changes. Any changes in an aircraft's design or operations can also impact crew procedures and training.

A Joint Operational Evaluation Board, comprising international civil aviation authorities, including Transport Canada, is analyzing the proposed changes to the MAX 8 and will identify any potential impacts on crew procedures and training.

• (1535)

[English]

The board's analysis might, for instance, identify new training requirements, such as additional simulator training, before the Max 8 can return to service. Transport Canada may also require additional training for crews that operate the Max 8 in Canada.

A key contributor to the Lion Air accident and a suspected contributor to the Ethiopian Air accident was the automatic activation of a system known as MCAS, manoeuvring characteristics augmentation system, following a failure of an angle-of-attack indicator that measures the aircraft's angle relative to the oncoming air. MCAS is part of the larger system that also controls speed stability of the aircraft.

Under specific flight conditions, MCAS automatically moves the aircraft's horizontal stabilizer, the device that adjusts the nose of the plane so that it points up or down.

In the wake of the Lion Air accident, the FAA, the state of design responsible for the Max 8, issued an emergency airworthiness directive related to the MCAS. The directive amended procedures by drawing the crew's attention to the existing runaway stabilizer procedure that would allow crews to effectively counteract the unwanted activation of the MCAS system.

Three Canadian operators fly the Max 8: Air Canada, Sunwing and WestJet. Transport Canada immediately shared the FAA's airworthiness directive with these airlines, and then took an additional step to further improve safety. In collaboration with the three airlines, Transport Canada developed and implemented enhanced training requirements for pilots.

The requirements exceeded the standards implemented by the FAA's airworthiness directive and were specifically designed to reduce the time delay in the crew's use of the runaway trim stabilizer procedure required to counteract the effects of an unwanted MCAS activation.

[Translation]

The additional step of new training demonstrates Canada's commitment to the highest possible safety standards. To complete the training, aircrews had to memorize the five steps required to exercise the runaway trim-stabilizer procedure. Previously, aircrews had to memorize only two of the five steps and then, if needed, consult the cockpit handbook for the other steps.

I am confident that the measures implemented by the FAA Airworthiness Directive, subsequently adopted and enhanced by Transport Canada in collaboration with Canadian MAX 8 operators, significantly reduced the risks involved in situations like the one that led to the Lion Air crash.

The combination of mitigation strategies better prepared Canadian pilots to manage the failure conditions that were evident in the MAX 8 accidents.

[English]

Commercial aviation operates in a highly complex, continuously evolving environment. I encourage committee members to recognize that Canada maintains one of the safest civil aviation systems in the world. Our safety record results from the hard work, dedication, experience and technical expertise of the men and women directly involved in the system.

On behalf of the public, Transport Canada remains absolutely committed to safety and bases all of its safety-related decisions on accurate, current and relevant evidence.

Thank you. I'll do my best to answer any questions you may have.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Garneau.

Mr. Doherty.

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Thank you, Minister, for being here. Thank you to your guests.

On October 29, 2018, Lion Air flight 610, a Boeing 737 Max crashed into the Java Sea 13 minutes after takeoff, killing all 189 people on board. Less than five months later on March 10, 2019, Ethiopian Airlines flight 302, another Boeing 737 Max, crashed just six minutes after takeoff, and 157 people perished, including 18 Canadians.

We're here today in search of answers for the families of the victims of these crashes. We're here in search of answers for Canadians as to how the 737 Max aircraft received certification by you, Minister.

Transport Canada has world-leading technical professionals who are experts in their field. You are absolutely right with that statement. They're hard-working, and they're smart, dedicated people who did their jobs at all steps of the 737 Max certification process. They asked questions and they brought forth their concerns. They did their job.

Based on the internal information that we have obtained from a concerned citizen, Minister, you didn't do yours.

Despite serious safety concerns raised repeatedly at every step of this process by Transport Canada's technical experts starting from the test flight, then again just prior to certification, concerns were raised time and again in the certification report, yet you still certified this aircraft.

Canadians deserve to know and, most importantly, the families of the victims who died in this crash deserve to know why.

Minister, at any time prior to or during the certification of the 737 Max 8, were you aware of Transport Canada's concerns with this aircraft—yes or no?

● (1540)

Hon. Marc Garneau: The process of certification is complex—

Mr. Todd Doherty: I understand that, Minister. You know that I'm going to ask you to be very succinct.

Yes or no? Were you made aware of any concerns during the certification process?

Hon. Marc Garneau: I would like to be able to answer the question. It requires more than a yes or no.

The Chair: Minister, go ahead and answer the question.

Hon. Marc Garneau: The certification process, as you know, is a complex undertaking and one that I'm very proud that Transport Canada is very proficient at. In fact, we certify Canadian aircraft.

Mr. Todd Doherty: Minister, I need you to say it. I need you to answer my question, which was a very direct question.

At any time during the 737 Max 8 certification, were you made aware of your technical experts' concern regarding the 737 Max aircraft?

The Chair: [*Inaudible—Editor*]

Mr. Todd Doherty: Mr. Chair, this is my time.

Hon. Marc Garneau: I will answer by saying that I was comfortable with the work that was being done by Transport Canada to certify this aircraft.

Mr. Todd Doherty: Minister, in our opinion this is not an acceptable answer.

I'm sure that this is not much comfort to the families of the victims. You're the Minister of Transportation in this country. This is your department. The buck stops with you. For the record, it is your testimony today that....

Were you made aware of the concerns expressed by the test pilot with the stall identification, as well as the automatic flight control, at the time of the test flight?

Hon. Marc Garneau: I will say again that I have a very capable organization that undertakes the certification of aircraft.

Mr. Todd Doherty: Minister, were you made aware of this?

Hon. Marc Garneau: I am aware that a letter of concern was sent to both Boeing and the FAA as part of the validation process that we undertook.

Mr. Todd Doherty: Minister, at that time you were aware of the concern letter. Were you aware of the contents of the concern letter?

Hon. Marc Garneau: Yes, I was.

Mr. Todd Doherty: Minister, why did you then still allow this aircraft to be certified?

Hon. Marc Garneau: Concern letters are letters that are written when the regulator—in this case Transport Canada—validating the certification of an aircraft that has been certified by another country wishes to have clarification or does not agree with part of the certification procedure. In this particular case we expressed our concern.

Mr. Todd Doherty: Despite repeated attempts by your department—

Hon. Marc Garneau: This is called a letter of concern.

Mr. Todd Doherty: Minister, with all due respect, I understand that.

Hon. Marc Garneau: We sent it to Boeing and said there were some questions that we needed to have answered.

Mr. Todd Doherty: Minister, at every step, the FAA and, in turn, Boeing did not answer your questions.

The Chair: Let him answer the question.

Hon. Marc Garneau: That is part of the normal process when we do a validation of an aircraft that is certified by another country.

We indicated that we required answers to the particular questions that we raised, which had to do with identification of stall and we continued to persist with that.

• (1545)

Mr. Todd Doherty: Minister, thank you.

Who overruled the concerns of the TC experts and approved the certification of the 737 Max?

Hon. Marc Garneau: Certification of the Max 8 by Canada was done by Transport Canada.

Mr. Todd Doherty: Minister, immediately after the first crash—Lion Air flight 610—Transport Canada's technical experts once again raised the concerns, yet you failed to ground the aircraft.

Why?

Hon. Marc Garneau: On that, we looked at the evidence that was beginning to come out at that time. At that time, the FAA came out with what they call an “airworthiness directive”, which they felt would address the possibility of this happening again while they were proceeding with the fix to the MCAS.

That airworthiness—

Mr. Todd Doherty: At any time did you share your concerns with WestJet, Air Canada and Sunwing?

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Doherty. Thank you, Minister.

Mr. Rogers.

Mr. Churence Rogers (Bonavista—Burin—Trinity, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Welcome, Minister.

Hon. Marc Garneau: Thank you.

Mr. Churence Rogers: As you can appreciate, and all of us around this table appreciate, this is a very difficult study that we've been undertaking here. We've sent out condolences to the people impacted by these tragedies.

The first question I have for you is why did Canada not ground the Max 8 flight after the Lion Air crash? Did any other aviation authority do so?

Hon. Marc Garneau: When a tragic accident like this occurs, the first thing we want to know is what happened and we go to the state of design, which is the United States and the FAA. What they came forward with was what's called an “airworthiness directive”, which provides, in this particular case, a procedure for crews should the same situation occur—while they are at the same time working on a fix for what is known as the MCAS system.

We looked at the airworthiness directive provided by the United States. As I mentioned in my opening remarks, we went to Air Canada, WestJet and Sunwing and spoke to their test pilots and said this was being proposed. Amongst ourselves we said that it was not sufficient, because it is a procedure that must be done in a timely fashion. Instead of only memorizing the first two steps—the actual emergency quick reference checklist card is beside the pilot—we felt that it was important to memorize five steps.

We did our training differently from every other country in the world with respect to it because we felt that the airworthiness directive was insufficient. Air Canada, WestJet and Sunwing were very comfortable with it, and that is what we put in place in case a similar situation occurred before a fix was found for the MCAS.

To answer the second part of your question, no other country, by the way, grounded the Max 8 after the Lion Air crash.

Mr. Churence Rogers: In summary, what were some of the factors that you and your officials had to consider before taking the decision to ground the fleet?

Hon. Marc Garneau: When the tragic accident of Ethiopian Airlines flight 302 occurred, we immediately tried to understand what had happened there. I would caution people not to use hindsight here because at the time, on March 10, when this occurred, everybody was trying to understand what happened. Could it have been a mechanical or electrical problem? Could it have been a pilot error? Could it have been a terrorist act? Nobody knew what had happened on this particular occasion. Because we knew there were Canadians on-board and we knew that there were Max 8s that flew in Canada, we were trying to understand what had happened. We were scrambling for information and were speaking to our international partners. We were getting the information, some of it anecdotal, from ground observers. We were trying to find out what had happened in terms of the communications from the control tower and air traffic control. We were trying to understand what had happened with this particular accident because we had no clear picture of what had happened.

We now know what had happened, but at the time we did not, until we obtained ADS-B data, which is GPS data that is transmitted from the aircraft up to a satellite and back down to the ground. The company that provided this is called Aireon. When we looked at that, we were wondering whether there might have been a similarity with the Lion Air crash. When we compared the 3D profile of the plane flying, we said that this looked very similar to it. It was at that point that we decided to ground the aircraft because we had evidence.

To my knowledge, today we are the only country that ever explained why we grounded this airplane.

• (1550)

Mr. Churence Rogers: You said in your speech that restrictions will remain in place until Transport Canada is fully satisfied. If the Boeing 737 Max were to return to service after all of this, what steps could Transport Canada take to reassure the public about the aircraft's safety?

Hon. Marc Garneau: That is a primary priority for us. We know that we want to make sure that Canadians who are going to fly on

this airplane in the future will be completely comfortable with the knowledge that we have addressed the problem.

The problem has four aspects to it that we have to address: hardware changes, software changes, the procedures that pilots must be trained to do, and the training that they must undergo.

I've also said in the past that Canadian test pilots will fly this airplane as part of our validation of the certification, but only when we are 100% satisfied that this has truly been fixed will we allow this airplane to fly over Canadian airspace.

The Chair: Thank you, Minister.

Thank you, Mr. Rogers.

Go ahead, Mr. Barsalou-Duval.

[Translation]

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Minister, in the aftermath of the second Boeing 737 MAX accident, when 18 Canadians died, you told the press that you would not hesitate to board a 737 MAX, just as it was being grounded around the world. Two days later, you announced that the plane would be grounded from that point on.

Would you say that what you said at that time was irresponsible?

Hon. Marc Garneau: No, not at all. If we had not decided to ground that plane, we would have issued the message that the plane could continue to fly, but that we recommended people not get on it. That would not have been a good message.

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval: Minister, you said you would be ready to board the plane.

Hon. Marc Garneau: The reality is that at that time we had not made a decision, because we did not know what the cause of the accident was. As I mentioned a few minutes ago, we did not know whether it was a mechanical problem or an electrical problem.

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval: I understand.

Hon. Marc Garneau: We didn't know if it was an act of terrorism. At that time, no one knew.

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval: You wanted to know the cause, but elsewhere in the world, there were countries that decided, as a precaution, to ground it right away.

I have several more questions to ask you.

Hon. Marc Garneau: Yes, but it's up to them to explain why they made that decision. In Canada—

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval: I understand.

I'd like to ask you some more questions, Mr. Garneau.

Hon. Marc Garneau: —we make our decisions based on scientific information.

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval: Boeing employees who worked on the plane claimed that it was designed by clowns who were supervised by monkeys, and that they would never let their families on board. The U.S. Congress transport committee even ruled that the Boeing 737 MAX was a fundamentally flawed and dangerous aircraft. On March 13, 2019, Canada and the United States were the last two countries to issue a flight ban on the Boeing 737 MAX.

Why did you wait so long?

In Canada—Quebec is still part of Canada for the moment—are we capable of thinking for ourselves or do we need permission from the United States before we act?

Hon. Marc Garneau: On the contrary, it was Canada's decision to ground the plane, for the reasons I have explained to you. We contacted the Federal Aviation Administration, the FAA, and the United States followed us several hours later. They did not precede us, they followed us. We told them that we believed there were very important similarities between the two flights that unfortunately crashed, and we decided to ground this type of aircraft. The United States followed us two hours later.

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval: I understand. That's your version of the facts.

Hon. Marc Garneau: That's not my version of the facts, that's the reality. Let us be clear on this point.

• (1555)

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval: These are the facts—

Hon. Marc Garneau: Canada made a decision and the United States made the same decision two hours later. We contacted them and told them that we were deciding to ground it. Do not say that—

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval: May I continue, Minister?

Hon. Marc Garneau: —that is my version of the facts.

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval: No, you're right, but let me continue, Minister.

Hon. Marc Garneau: All right, then.

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval: I'll admit that that's not just your version of events. It's true, the Americans decided to ground the planes two or three hours later, that's a fact. However, the fact remains that these things happened the same day. It was quite close.

I'd like to raise another point, but I think it's a little late.

Hon. Marc Garneau: Mr. Barsalou-Duval, I don't know what you are trying to imply, but I think it is disrespectful. We made our decision. The United States made theirs a few hours later. You must not try to create the impression that there was an agreement between the two countries. That is false and—

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval: I didn't assume that, I just asked a question.

When you said you were ready to board the Boeing 737 MAX, the U.S. government had information that convinced you to ground it two days later.

Hon. Marc Garneau: Again, what you're saying is not true.

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval: That's what was reported in the press, anyway.

Hon. Marc Garneau: Unfortunately, the media do not always interpret things correctly.

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval: Okay, but according to the media—

Hon. Marc Garneau: That is one of the reasons why I am very happy to be here. Many of the things that have been said in the press and in the media are either untrue, partially untrue or contain important omissions. I want to remind everyone that it is important to stick to the facts.

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval: That is fine, but according to the media—you will correct me when you have the opportunity to do so, after I have asked my question—the information was so critical that the planes were grounded the day you obtained it. The United States had already had this information for two days. You say that this was not quite the case and that it would not have been communicated, although our two countries, according to your office—I think this is true—communicate several times a day. You have been in communication with the American authorities at least three times a day.

Don't you think the FAA lacked transparency by not providing you with this information?

Hon. Marc Garneau: I can't speak for the FAA. With regard to your question about whether they had information, I will tell you that our two organizations were in touch and were both trying to understand why this accident happened.

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval: Thank you. I'd like to ask you one last question, since I have 30 seconds left.

Your officials, including Mr. Turnbull here, say they have full confidence in the FAA. Last week, when we called them in on February 25, they said, "We trust the FAA [...]".

Not only do the Americans seem not to have given us all the information, but they also let their companies certify themselves. For example, since 2005, due to budget cuts, with the new ODA procedure, Boeing itself has been certifying its own aircraft. So it was Boeing that chose the engineers who did the tests on the famous 737 MAX, and the FAA just approved things without quibbling.

Do you believe, as I do, that our officials may have made a mistake in blindly trusting the FAA?

Hon. Marc Garneau: The report that was recently produced by a congressional committee talks about how certification was done between the FAA and Boeing. I'm going to let the report speak for itself.

However, I can tell you that in Canada, when we certify our aircraft, we choose the delegates who work for the company and who will help us with the certification very carefully. For example, when we certified the Bombardier C Series, even though Transport Canada employees had spent 160,000 hours doing the certification, there were also delegates who helped us in that process. And in fact, it wasn't Bombardier that chose them, it was us.

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval: I'm not talking about our certification process, I'm talking about the U.S. certification process.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Barsalou-Duval.

Thank you, Mr. Garneau.

Go ahead, Mr. Bachrach.

Mr. Taylor Bachrach (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you, Minister, for being here.

The congressional House committee on transport, which has been holding hearings as you know, released a preliminary report a few days ago. They describe how the financial pressure on Boeing to compete with Airbus led to decisions and assumptions that “jeopardized the safety of the flying public”. The company was prioritizing its finances over the safety of the flying public.

They also found that there is a “culture of concealment” that saw Boeing withholding crucial information from the FAA, including “hiding the very existence of MCAS from 737 MAX pilots”.

On the current regulatory process, the report states that “the FAA’s current oversight structure with respect to Boeing creates inherent conflicts of interest that have jeopardized the safety of the flying public”.

Given these revelations and how they relate not just to the certification of the 737 Max but also to a more general failure of self-regulation at Boeing and the prioritization of financial interests over safety, can Canadians still trust FAA-certified aircraft?

• (1600)

Hon. Marc Garneau: There's no question: We've read these reports as well that have come out, and they speak for themselves.

I can tell you that one of things we undertook after the tragic Ethiopian aircraft downing was that we would review our validation processes to see if we could make them better. Since that time, we have participated in many committees with other regulators, including the FAA; EASA, the European regulator; and ANAC, the Brazilian regulator; and we are also participating in a group called the joint authorities technical review panel, so that we can examine the whole question of how certification needs to be done properly.

If we cast our minds back to decades in the past, we know that Canada has had lots of Boeing aircraft, going back to the 707 and the ones that came after that, and Airbuses. In the past, this process has worked very well. The certification—

Mr. Taylor Bachrach: Can I ask the next question, Minister?

Hon. Marc Garneau: Now after the Max 8, we are reviewing this situation.

Mr. Taylor Bachrach: After the first crash of Lion Air, on November 19, Transport Canada signed a validation improvement road map with the FAA.

The stated goal of this roadmap was to take “progressive steps to reduce, if not eliminate, in-depth technical involvement”, by a validating authority such as Transport Canada, where Transport Canada

would undertake “no further technical review or additional issuance of validation approvals” on an FAA-certified aircraft.

Do you agree with this agreement with the FAA?

Hon. Marc Garneau: I will ask David Turnbull, who is my chief responsible for certification, to answer the question.

Mr. David Turnbull (Director, National Aircraft Certification, Department of Transport): Thank you for the question.

Personally, no, I don't. In fact, the mandate of that activity is in the process of being rewritten. It so happens that this particular mandate was written at a particular point in time. I was not present at that meeting.

Mr. Taylor Bachrach: It was signed by Transport Canada after the first crash occurred.

Mr. David Turnbull: It was signed, but I'm telling you here and now that the wording of it was planned to be altered prior to these accidents.

Mr. Taylor Bachrach: But it wasn't altered. We signed—

Mr. David Turnbull: Not yet.

Mr. Taylor Bachrach: We signed a version with that wording. Isn't that correct?

Mr. David Turnbull: It's still in the process of being revised. We meet annually with the FAA. It's on the agenda for our next meeting.

Mr. Taylor Bachrach: Minister, can you commit to providing the committee with internal departmental documents indicating your department's assessment and the reservations of your officials regarding Transport Canada's reliance on the FAA's assessment in approving the 71 design changes to the Boeing 737 Max?

Hon. Marc Garneau: We can commit to providing any documentation that Transport Canada generates with respect to validated certification.

Mr. Taylor Bachrach: Will you provide those ones specifically?

Hon. Marc Garneau: Sure.

Mr. Taylor Bachrach: Regarding the 71 design changes to the 737 Max, had you yourself been informed of those changes?

Hon. Marc Garneau: I had not been informed about the specific 71, but I take full responsibility for the validation of the certification of the Max 8 by Canada.

Mr. Taylor Bachrach: At a press conference on March 13, 2019—this was the press conference at which you announced the grounding of the 737 Max—you stated that you were “very, very comfortable with the fact that the FAA is the certifying agency”.

Given what has come to light in the United States, do you stand by those comments?

Hon. Marc Garneau: I have watched very closely what has happened in the past year. I think the FAA itself is recognizing that certain changes need to be made with respect to its certification process. It will be up to them to make them, and we will watch what they do in terms of certification.

Mr. Taylor Bachrach: Do you stand by those comments that you made?

• (1605)

Hon. Marc Garneau: I made comments on the 13th based at that time on it. That is what I believed, yes.

Mr. Taylor Bachrach: Minister, the director general for civil aviation at Transport Canada, Nicholas Robinson, said in May 2019, following the Ethiopian Airlines disaster, that he had full confidence in the FAA.

Do you agree with this assessment?

Hon. Marc Garneau: We have to make our decisions about questions like that at the time we are asked those questions. At the time—

Mr. Taylor Bachrach: But you had concerns from Transport Canada officials. There had been an accident.

Hon. Marc Garneau: Yes, but let me explain what a concern letter is. It's not necessarily saying that we're not going to accept this aircraft. We're saying there are some things we need to better understand and some things we don't agree with. That's an ongoing process. It happens as part of the normal certification. It can also happen the other way around. When we certify an aircraft, another country may have some questions to ask. It's a very complex, a very technical process.

Mr. Taylor Bachrach: Some of the problems seem pretty simple.

Hon. Marc Garneau: Everything is simple in hindsight. I'll say that.

The Chair: Thank you, Minister.

Thank you, Mr. Bachrach.

We'll move on to Mr. Doherty.

Mr. Todd Doherty: Minister, a number of times in your testimony you have referred to hindsight as being 20/20.

The information that we have received shows us that you had a clear view from day one: from November 9, 2016, when the test pilot wrote about their concerns; from May of 2017, one month before the certification, when they raised the concerns once again; from four weeks after the first crash, when concerns were raised once again by your technical experts. It was raised in the concern paper that you're referring to.

Minister, at all of steps along the way, you had an opportunity. You said you'd take full responsibility. It took one person to say, "Wait a second. We're not getting the answers to the questions that we have." Your technical experts did their job.

At any time during the process prior to the certification of the 737 Max, did Boeing or the FAA communicate to you a tight timeline for delivery of the 737 Max to Canadian operators and that they would like to see the certification made in June of 2017?

Hon. Marc Garneau: No, they didn't communicate with me directly.

Mr. Todd Doherty: So you're not.... Minister, I'm going to refer back to....

Your director is actually jogging your memory.

You referred to the concern paper that you're well aware of. On page 2 it states:

Please note that in order to meet its delivery commitments to the Canadian operators, Boeing has requested Transport Canada to issue the 737-8 MAX ATC in June of 2017. To avoid delivery delays to our operators, Transport Canada will review and discuss FAA position on this concern paper during its upcoming 737-9 validation activities. Therefore, this concern paper

—as you rightly noted—

will remain open when the 737-8 MAX ATC is issued by Transport Canada.

Despite the serious concerns regarding the issues, Minister, your department still certified this aircraft.

Now that Mr. Turnbull has jogged your memory, do you remember now that Boeing and FAA told you about the timelines?

Hon. Marc Garneau: I'm aware of the concern letter. I'm also aware, as you pointed out, that we had decided that we would still accept it as an ongoing open file.

I'll pass it to David Turnbull—

Mr. Todd Doherty: I have one more question for you on this. Mr. Turnbull can answer this as well.

Hon. Marc Garneau: But you are making—

Mr. Todd Doherty: Minister Garneau, I just want to know: At any time during this process, did you or Mr. Turnbull communicate your concerns to WestJet, Air Canada or Sunwing?

Mr. David Turnbull: No, we did not. Perhaps it would help if I re-explained what Minister Garneau has already explained with respect to the process with the concern paper.

First off, this concern paper that you refer to did not specifically raise a technical or safety issue. It did not. It asked a question. The methodology by which Boeing demonstrates basic stall compliance—section 25.201—was in question. We did not understand fully the methodology that Boeing had used. There were a number of systems involved with respect to stalls, MCAS being one of them, which is part of the STS system; the EFS system; and there are other aspects of the design. We were trying to ascertain and understand the role these systems play in affecting the stall compliance. There was not a specific identification of a concern.

When the FAA responded to us—

• (1610)

Mr. Todd Doherty: I disagree, Mr. Turnbull. I disagree—

Mr. David Turnbull: Well, I'm the one who signs off on those, respectively, Mr. Doherty—

Mr. Todd Doherty: That's good to know, Mr. Turnbull.

Mr. David Turnbull: —and I can tell you where we're coming from.

Mr. Todd Doherty: Mr. Turnbull, I actually had technical advisers read through this—737 Max pilots themselves—and they were absolutely shocked to read what we read—that you or the minister, and the minister has accepted responsibility, certified this aircraft.

I will bring you back to edition 2, where you once again disagreed with both of the positions of the FAA. Your technical experts disagreed—you're absolutely right—with the stall identification criteria they're using and how they pertain to CFR in section 25.201.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Doherty.

Give a short answer, please.

Hon. Marc Garneau: Mr. Doherty, you've just made a claim that you have a source, a pilot, who has told you that they are “horrible”, if that's the term you used, by this concern paper. I would ask you to first of all provide the name of that person and their assessment of it, in writing. In fairness, I would like to hear what your source is.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Doherty.

Thank you, Minister.

Mr. Sidhu.

Mr. Maninder Sidhu (Brampton East, Lib.): I'd like to start by offering my condolences to the families affected or impacted by this tragedy.

Thank you, Minister Garneau, Mr. Turnbull and Mr. McCrorie, for being here today.

Minister, I'm just trying to understand the difference between Transport Canada and FAA. Can you provide some specific details on where Transport Canada took different steps from the FAA in dealing with the Max 8 situation?

Hon. Marc Garneau: Yes, and I think very few people know about this, but Canada has played an extremely important role in the last year in addressing the problem with the MCAS system and in working with other regulators to come up with a solution to it.

If I may be permitted to cite the following, because it is quite a long list.... We have played a leading role internationally in ensuring a safe return to service of the Boeing Max 8. In April of 2019, a month after the Ethiopian crash, Canada set the stage by identifying to the Federal Aviation Administration key areas of concern that must be addressed before the aircraft can return to service in Canada.

These key areas include acceptable levels of pilot workload—an extremely important factor—the architecture of the flight controls and, thirdly, the minimum training required for crew members.

In April last year, I publicly said that simulator training was required. In addition, Canada had been advocating since the beginning that simulator training would be required before pilots can fly the aircraft again. Boeing has now agreed that simulator training is required. Boeing has since committed to full-stall simulator training to familiarize crews with the angle-of-attack failure that occurred in both the Ethiopian and Indonesian accidents.

Canada also discovered that natural stall characteristics testing had not been performed on the Max with the speed trim system, the FS system and the MCAS system while those systems are inactive. In other words, when those systems are inactive, the plane can still stall, but there had not been testing of those characteristics when those two systems were turned off. That's something that we brought to their attention. We convinced the FAA that stall testing was required to validate safe-flight handling characteristics with the MCAS system off.

Canada also proposed a procedural change to reduce excessive cockpit distraction and workload conditions by allowing the crew to disable the stick shaker warning within the cockpit, which is another important contribution.

The leadership that we have demonstrated with my team in working with the FAA and with the Europeans and the Brazilians is clearly indicated here in how we are actively working to fix this problem, and Canada's input is being taken very seriously.

• (1615)

Mr. Maninder Sidhu: Thank you for the answer.

I have a two-part question. What role, if any, are Transport Canada officials playing in the FAA evaluation of a possible return to service of the Max 8 and how much of that information is being shared with us? Are we simply following their work or is there a back and forth?

Hon. Marc Garneau: We're on three big, important committees, or have been: the CMT, the certification management team; another called the JOEB, the joint operations evaluation board; and the third, the JATR, the joint authorities technical review.

We're deep into these committees that are evaluating this, so it's not just an American exercise with our watching from the side. We, and the Europeans and Brazilians are intimately involved in the whole process, and we will do our own validation of the final fix when it comes, including Canadian pilots flying the modified Max 8 to ensure that we are satisfied. We will make sure, if we feel there are certain procedures that have to be trained to and that simulator time is required, to make that compulsory in Canada.

Mr. Maninder Sidhu: Finally, is Transport Canada considering changing its validation system for the approval of internationally manufactured aircraft, and how often does it accept the state of design certification coming from other countries versus conducting our own tests to validate the certificate?

Hon. Marc Garneau: In the past, we have done validation of aircraft certified by the United States or the Europeans, and we have validated their certification. There's no question that after the Max 8 tragedies and the recognition that there were some problems there, that we're re-evaluating how we do validation of certification so that we give a more critical look at it and subject that certification process to a much higher scrutiny.

The Chair: Thank you, Minister.

Thank you, Mr. Sidhu.

Mr. Doherty.

Mr. Todd Doherty: I want to remind those who are here today and those who are tuning in why we are here. It's for the families of the victims: Ameen Ismail Noormohamed, Dawn Tanner, Rubi Pauls, Darcy Belanger, Stéphanie Lacroix, Angela Rehborn, Kosha Vaidya, Prerit Dixit, Ashka Dixit, Anushka Dixit, Micah Messent, Pius Adesanmi, Amina Ibrahim Odowa, Sofia Abdulkadir, Derick Lwugi, Danielle Moore, Peter DeMarsh and Jessica Hyba.

Minister, I don't believe this meeting has brought any relief or solace to the victims' families. If anything, I think it's raised even more questions, or perhaps it has validated the questions they've had. It took almost a year for you to meet with these families. As a matter of fact, in the last Parliament, when the motion to study this was raised, the Liberal majority shut it down. We are here today for them. We are here for the families who have listened every day to this testimony.

I appreciate that you've taken full responsibility for this. The concerns we have and the concerns that have been raised by the FAA or by the congressional hearing clearly point to the fact that this aircraft should not be recertified and that the FAA, and Boeing as well, should be held accountable for this.

Minister, will you be looking internally at this process? What is your message, given the information that we shared today, to the families that are listening in?

Hon. Marc Garneau: I met with the families and I apologized to them personally for not meeting with them earlier. The culture at Transport Canada, an organization I'm extremely proud of, that is very, very competent, is one of dealing with technical issues. We should have been more sensitive to the fact there were humans also involved here, and I apologized to the families. We learned some lessons there, because as you probably noticed, when flight 752 was tragically shot down in Iran, we were much quicker to react.

So I apologized for that. Our culture was to try to find the source of the problem. The fact that I did not, nor did other government officials, meet with them right after is something that I accept in terms of responsibility—

• (1620)

Mr. Todd Doherty: Minister, I'm going to ask—

Hon. Marc Garneau: Could I finish, please?

Mr. Todd Doherty: Minister, I—

Hon. Marc Garneau: I spent three and a half hours with them and I tried to answer their questions. I cannot imagine the pain they

feel from those losses. I was there right with them for three and a half hours and I am deeply—

Mr. Todd Doherty: And you can understand our—

Hon. Marc Garneau: May I finish, please?

Mr. Todd Doherty: —emotion as well.

Hon. Marc Garneau: Yes, of course. The pain, the loss, the suffering—it is impossible for me to imagine it, how much they suffered, and I deeply apologized for that.

Mr. Todd Doherty: Minister, then you will understand my—

Hon. Marc Garneau: Now let me finish.

Mr. Todd Doherty: No, Minister, you—

Hon. Marc Garneau: You have said that this airplane, based on the—

Mr. Todd Doherty: Minister, you will understand my disappointment—

Hon. Marc Garneau: You will need to know that you have said—

Mr. Todd Doherty: You will understand my disappointment, that when I read your documents—

The Chair: Mr. Doherty, let him finish answering the rest of your question.

Hon. Marc Garneau: May I finish, please?

Mr. Todd Doherty: Mr. Chair, it's my time.

The Chair: No, it's not your time.

Hon. Marc Garneau: No, it isn't your time; it's my time to answer you.

The Chair: Hold on. Minister, if I may—

Mr. Todd Doherty: Minister, you'll understand—

The Chair: Mr. Doherty, if I may—

Mr. Todd Doherty: Mr. Chair—

The Chair: —it's my time right now.

As the chair of this committee, I want you to understand that this is not your time; this is the committee's time.

Mr. Todd Doherty: It is my time.

The Chair: You're just getting 10 minutes of it. Show some respect. If you're going to ask a question—

Mr. Todd Doherty: I am showing respect.

The Chair: —then have respect enough to get the answer.

Mr. Todd Doherty: If you will—

The Chair: Minister, this is your time now—

Hon. Marc Garneau: Thank you.

The Chair: —to answer the question. Thank you.

Hon. Marc Garneau: And you are not showing respect.

Mr. Todd Doherty: I was.

Hon. Marc Garneau: But you said in one of your comments that all the experts agreed this airplane should not be recertified.

Mr. Todd Doherty: No, that's not what I said. I said your technical experts.

Hon. Marc Garneau: With all due respect, Mr. Doherty, you do not understand the complexity of this situation. That's something that is very, very clear.

Mr. Todd Doherty: Do you understand the complexity of it?

Hon. Marc Garneau: Yes, I do, actually.

Mr. Todd Doherty: Oh, you do. Okay. So—

Hon. Marc Garneau: And so regarding your statement that this airplane should not be—

Mr. Todd Doherty: Minister, then you'll understand my frustration—

Hon. Marc Garneau: —recertified, I don't know where you get that information, but you clearly do not understand the process of certification and the technical challenges that are involved with it, and the complexities that are involved with it.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Doherty.

Mr. Bittle.

Mr. Chris Bittle (St. Catharines, Lib.): Thank you so much, Mr. Chair.

Minister, do you think there should be systemic and formal changes to the international system of accreditation as a result of the Max 8 tragedies, and if so, what changes are you looking for?

Hon. Marc Garneau: I think we have all learned in the last year some very important lessons, and believe me, just within our department we have spent 8,000 hours as part of the process of understanding what happened and, at the same time, finding a fix for it.

As with all organizations, if you do not use the opportunity when something like this happens to improve your organization, then you are failing. I can tell you that at Transport Canada we're very aware of the fact that we have to look at ways to improve our validation process and, perhaps if I can put it in more colloquial terms, be a little more skeptical in the future as we approach these.

It has served us very well in the past, and Canada's record of air safety is really quite outstanding, but this is an opportunity for us to improve.

Mr. Chris Bittle: Thank you.

More generally speaking, how do you respond to the criticisms that Transport Canada has been a victim of regulatory capture and that too much oversight has been delegated to the industry itself?

Hon. Marc Garneau: In our case, if we're talking about the Max 8, I think the examples I gave to your colleague Mr. Sidhu indicate that we're very proactively contributing to this and to the fix that is happening.

As I mentioned, after the Lion Air incident occurred, we said that the airworthiness directive provided by the FAA was not sufficiently complete for us, and we modified it, which should be an indication that we do think independently with an eye on safety.

We worked with the three airlines. They agreed and trained to that. Of course, we never had any problems with that.

We make our own decisions at Transport Canada, so we're not captive of anybody else or any regulations.

• (1625)

Mr. Chris Bittle: What is the aviation safety record in Canada? Can you provide statistics? Are there any trends that can be observed?

Hon. Marc Garneau: It's a good record. We're talking about all aviation here. There are small airplanes, general aviation, as well as big airplanes.

In 2018, there were a total of 151 aviation accidents, down from 2017, when there were 190. That's a 29% decrease from the previous 10-year average of 214. There were 16 fatal accidents in 2018, which is down from the previous 10-year average of 24. In 2018, fatal accidents accounted for 25 fatalities, also down from a total of 27 and below the 10-year average of 44 fatalities.

The accident rate continues to go down. Most of those accidents, I hasten to add, are with small aircraft in general aviation. The accident rate for large commercial aircraft is one of the best in the world.

Mr. Chris Bittle: Perhaps, Minister, I can afford you some time, and I promise not to interrupt. I don't know if you want to respond to Mr. Doherty. I'm new to this committee, and I hope, going forward, that we don't see this on a continuing basis.

Would you or Mr. Turnbull like to respond to some of the allegations that have been raised by Mr. Doherty?

Hon. Marc Garneau: Unfortunately, Mr. Doherty has not quoted his sources. In fairness, I think I'm allowed to ask why he makes certain statements without providing the sources.

He is guilty, like some of the media who, unfortunately, do not do their homework properly, and in some cases put out stuff that is not backed up by actual facts.

I don't know if Mr. Turnbull would like to add to that.

Mr. David Turnbull: I would just like to add that—

A voice: [*Inaudible—Editor*]

Mr. Chris Bittle: Sorry, Mr. Turnbull, but I have a point of order.

I thought this would be without interruption, Minister and Mr. Chair, but Mr. Doherty again is trying to talk over all of us when he doesn't like what's being said. That's inappropriate—

Mr. Todd Doherty: Without having an opportunity to—

Mr. Chris Bittle: Thank you so much.

Mr. Turnbull, I apologize for interrupting.

Mr. David Turnbull: I think we need to understand that the regulations and standards that we use to certify aircraft.... There are very many of them; they're very complex and in many cases they're very subjective. It is very common for a validating authority to come along and ask a question. We dig into an issue, we get an answer and we don't quite understand it. We are not necessarily, at that point, finding fault or discovering something that was wrong.

Our aim is to seek an understanding and, in some cases when we do not understand, we reveal a difference of interpretation, perhaps to one of the existing rules or the advisory material that supports those rules. We have to make a decision. I make a decision each and every time, on every aircraft we approve, whether that disagreement on interpretation constitutes a safety concern or whether it is simply a different approach to the same problem.

What do we do if it's that? We take it outside the project, and we say that we don't want to keep arguing about the interpretation of this problem in the future when we validate the next aircraft. Therefore, in other fora we will come together, we will send our collective technical experts to various meetings to try to harmonize the approach and agree on a common approach so we don't effectively trip over these things again.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. David Turnbull: That is how we migrate to a harmonized position.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Barsalou-Duval.

[Translation]

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval: Minister, even though Boeing had hidden the MCAS anti-collision system in its aviation manual and falsely claimed that it did not require additional training, your officials were aware of the new MCAS system. However, they decided not to test it during validation. In fact, they trusted the FAA. Furthermore, on February 25, when I asked them if it was a mistake not to have tested the MCAS, they said no.

Since 2018, Transport Canada has engaged in a new automatic accreditation process with the United States, Europe and Brazil. Despite all of the FAA issues we've just been talking about, when I asked your officials, they told me that they intend to move forward and continue this process.

I have two questions for you.

First, do you agree with your officials, and do you believe it was not a mistake for them not to test the MCAS?

Next, before considering a new common certification process, such as the one currently being considered, will Transport Canada ask the U.S. to end the ODA process, under which companies certify themselves and which ultimately results in no quality assurance?

• (1630)

Hon. Marc Garneau: I'd say two things.

First of all, we are all aware that not all the information on MCAS was provided to us. This was one of the important things that came out. It makes us realize that we're going to have to be

very careful about this kind of thing when we do certification in the future, and we certainly will be.

In its relationship with Boeing, the FAA is rethinking—it's one of the things that was done at the Certification Management Committee—the way it delegated the task of doing the certification to certain people, which allowed Boeing to select the people.

In some cases, this has resulted in the emails you mentioned. Frankly, it was quite shocking to read those.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Barsalou-Duval.

Mr. Bachrach.

Mr. Taylor Bachrach: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Briefly, Minister, you spoke earlier about your understanding of the complexity of the certification process. I can assume that this has been an understanding you've had for some time as the minister, and with your previous experiences. Is that fair to say?

Hon. Marc Garneau: Yes, airplanes are very complicated.

Mr. Taylor Bachrach: I'm thinking more about the certification system itself.

Hon. Marc Garneau: Yes.

Mr. Taylor Bachrach: Can I assume that includes the role of the FAA in Canada's validation process and certification system?

Hon. Marc Garneau: The way it works is that we certify Canadian planes, and because other countries believe in the quality of our certification, they accept, in the case of the United States and Europe, to validate our certification.

Mr. Taylor Bachrach: Yes, I'm familiar, and we validate theirs.

Hon. Marc Garneau: And we do that so—

Mr. Taylor Bachrach: I only have a couple of minutes, so I really want to get to the question.

One thing that stood out for me in the congressional report was the role of authorized representatives. These are employees of Boeing whose paycheques are signed by the Boeing company—

Hon. Marc Garneau: Yes.

Mr. Taylor Bachrach: —which the FAA asks to do their work for them—

Hon. Marc Garneau: Yes.

Mr. Taylor Bachrach: —to ensure the safety of the aircraft.

Hon. Marc Garneau: Yes, and—

Mr. Taylor Bachrach: Did you know about these authorized representatives and their role when you made the comment on March 13 that you were “very, very comfortable” with the fact that the FAA was the certifying agency?

Hon. Marc Garneau: Yes, we're aware of that.

Mr. Taylor Bachrach: Were you when you made those comments? To me, and I don't have the detailed understanding, it seems astonishing that we would put employees of a company in the position that they're forced to choose between two masters, one of whom signs their paycheques.

Hon. Marc Garneau: The process of certification is a massive process. I gave the example of the C Series. We at Transport Canada spent 160,000 hours of employee time doing certification. We also have delegates, the people whom you called “authorized”—we use the term “delegate”—and we choose them in Canada. That's how we proceed, because we want to make sure that the people who are doing the certification and reporting to us are people we have vetted.

Mr. Taylor Bachrach: Are they employees of the company?

Hon. Marc Garneau: They're employees of the company, yes.

Mr. Taylor Bachrach: They're employees of the aircraft manufacturers?

Hon. Marc Garneau: Yes, because otherwise, to do a certification on an airplane requires a really massive undertaking.

Mr. Taylor Bachrach: Given what's in the congressional report, then, is this something that is being reconsidered?

Hon. Marc Garneau: We check on them as they're doing the...we don't just sort of say, give us the report.

Mr. Taylor Bachrach: It talks about conflicted representation and the conflict of interest that occurs when you have an employee of an aircraft manufacturer doing the work of the regulatory body. Is this something that you're considering changing, going forward?

• (1635)

Hon. Marc Garneau: We believe that the process we have whereby we choose the people who are delegates to help with the certification.... We are confident that they have the expertise, and we monitor them as they do the work.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Bachrach.

Thank you, minister.

Mr. Taylor Bachrach: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: That will exhaust this session between 3:30 and 4:30 with Minister Garneau, the Minister of Transport.

We'll now be getting into our second session, with Air Canada, Sunwing Airlines and WestJet Airlines.

I will suspend for five minutes.

• (1635)

(Pause)

• (1640)

The Chair: Perhaps I can reconvene.

Mr. Todd Doherty: It'll be me and Mr. Davidson.

The Chair: Okay. We'll start the second part of today's meeting.

We'd like to welcome Mr. Murray Strom from Air Canada, vice-president, flight operations; from Sunwing Airline, Captain John Hudson, acting director for flight operations; and from WestJet Airlines, Mr. Scott Wilson, vice-president, once again from flight operations.

Gentlemen, welcome. I'm glad you could make the time to come out to the committee and give us your testimony. I'm not sure who's going to start, who picked the short straw.

Mr. Strom, you're up.

Mr. Murray Strom (Vice-President, Flight Operations, Air Canada): Good afternoon, honourable chair, members of the committee. My name is Murray Strom. I'm the vice-president of flight operations at Air Canada and the designated operations manager responsible for Air Canada's air operators certificate to Transport Canada.

I've been a pilot with Air Canada for 33 years and I'm currently a Boeing 777 captain. For most of my 33 years, I've been involved in the training certification of Air Canada pilots, and I've held various positions such as chief pilot on the Airbus A320, 787, 777. I was also responsible for the initial program to bring the Max 737 aircraft to Air Canada.

Before I begin speaking to the certification process, on behalf of Air Canada and our 36,000 employees, I'd like to express my condolences to the family and friends of the victims of these two tragic accidents that ultimately led to the grounding of the 737 Max aircraft. As someone who has spent his entire career promoting safety in aviation, I and the entire Air Canada family are reminded by events like these of the importance of my job and our motto, “Safety First, Always”.

My expertise is in training, inspection and operation of aircraft at Air Canada. It is not in the certification of the aircraft. That is a function of Transport Canada and other authorities such as the Federal Aviation Administration in the United States. I have, however, been involved and worked closely with the certification group at Transport Canada during the introduction of the A330, the 777, the 787, the 737 and finally the A220, formerly known as the Bombardier C Series.

Air Canada presently has 24 737 Max aircraft, of which 22 of these are stored presently in Arizona, and two are presently in Windsor, Ontario, undergoing routine maintenance, and where we are installing dual heads-up displays on all of our aircraft. This is a state-of-the-art safety system that enhances pilot situational awareness and is an added safety system for all of Air Canada's aircraft, which include presently the 787 and the A220.

We have another 12 737 Max aircraft at the Boeing-rented factory in Washington that are ready for delivery, and 14 aircraft that are currently on the factory floor being built. These aircraft were originally scheduled for delivery by July 1 of this year. As of July 1 of this year, we should have had 50 airplanes in our fleets.

Through the certification and introduction of the 737, I can assure you that the aircraft certification group at Transport Canada has been extremely thorough and professional. I would say the same is true for all the previous aircraft introductions that I've been involved in over the course of my career. They are experts in their field and respected throughout the world.

The worldwide grounding of the 737 Max fleet presented and continues to present an immediate operational and financial challenge. Our focus on this issue has always been the safety of our customers and our crew. Following the first accident, Canadian carriers, Transport Canada and other agencies immediately came together and co-operated to ensure the safety of the industry and the travelling public in Canada.

Transport Canada and the three operators of this aircraft have worked as a group to come up with a solution based on the information we had at the time. The sole purpose of this work was to ensure the safety of the Canadian public. This collaboration is still occurring today as we continue to work our way through the process. The 737 has been examined from wingtip to wingtip, nose to tail, by most of the regulators in the world and numerous agencies, including this committee. Once the process is complete, this aircraft will be, in my opinion, one of the safest aircraft in the world.

It is important to remember that accidents like this do not occur for one reason. There are many factors involved. The manufacturer and the regulatory bodies are in the process of doing their part. Rest assured that the airlines in Canada are also doing their part. I will ensure that our pilots are properly trained on all aspects of the 737 Max, both new and old.

I thank you for your time, and I look forward to your questions related to the aspects of the certification process.

• (1645)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Strom.

Next, Mr. Wilson, you're up.

Captain Scott Wilson (Vice-President, Flight Operations, WestJet Airlines Ltd.): Good afternoon, Mr. Chair and honourable members. Thank you for the invitation to appear before you today, proudly representing more than 14,000 WestJetters who every day commit to the safety and success of our airline in service of the travelling public.

The grounding of the Boeing 737 Max aircraft in Canada 364 days ago has raised important questions. I commend the committee for having these hearings, for seeking information to support its questions and for its support of our dynamic industry.

My name is Scott Wilson. I currently serve as WestJet's vice-president of flight operations as well as the Transport Canada operations manager. In this role our CEO and accountable executive Ed Sims and I are designates of the Minister of Transport. Together we have a shared duty of care for the safety of the travelling public and are directly responsible for the safety of our 700 daily flight departures.

I'm also a current and active Boeing 737 NG and Max pilot, with 19 years' experience on the Boeing 737 across five variants of the aircraft.

My comments today will reflect the motion passed by the committee to better understand the certification process and the various relationships between regulators. I'll speak briefly today on our observations and interactions as an air carrier through this process.

On behalf of the WestJet family, let me start by sharing once again our sympathies and condolences to the families and loved ones of Lion Air 610 and Ethiopian Airlines 302. When tragedy strikes the aviation industry, we act like a family. We become closer, we support each other and tackle the challenges together in common bond. On matters of safety for the travelling public there are no competitive considerations. Our focus is always to learn from the accident to ensure that we become an even safer industry moving forward.

This commitment has helped ensure that commercial aviation remains one of the safest forms of travel available today. To achieve this objective, we rely on and work closely with a host of regulators and officials, including highly experienced Transport Canada national operations inspectors across the nation who interact with our airline at a technical oversight level on an almost daily basis, as well as officials headquartered here in Ottawa.

Last week you heard from Nicholas Robinson. The committee should know the tremendous work that has taken place under his leadership within the national operations and national aircraft certification teams. WestJet has full confidence in Nick and his team. Their transparency and commitment over the past year has been commendable.

WestJet took delivery of the first Max in Canada on September 29, 2017. Speaking to the FAA certification and Transport Canada validation process, I can only pass on my observations, as the process is rightly independent from the operator, who can only operate the aircraft in Canada upon the successful completion of the validation process culminating in the issuance of a Canadian type certification data sheet.

It is my observation that Transport Canada took a thorough approach with their review and subsequent validation of the Max. Of note, the FAA state certification date was March 8, 2017, followed by the European/EASA validation on March 27, 2017. The Transport Canada validation process was not completed until June 23, 2017.

The Transport Canada TCDS, with the Max incorporated, tripled in size from the NG that it was based upon, highlighting the thoroughness of Transport Canada's validation work and the depth of information added. Transport Canada went outside standard conventions when it also included head injury criteria safety requirements into the Max validation in Canada.

Shortly following the tragedy of Lion Air 610, Transport Canada and the three Max operators represented here today took the unprecedented approach of transparency and commitment to safety by working together on a common, made-in-Canada solution. This approach ensured that we could align to a single standard of safety for the Max fleets across Canada and capture the common attributes the operators share, with the high level of expertise across our flight crews and the strength of our training programs. It also allowed us to work together to quickly ensure the best output to our crews, training for the newly acquired knowledge of the system and the checklist enhancements.

The unique approach across three airlines with the regulator served as a pivotal point, one that we have maintained now for close to 16 months as a strong collaborative safety model, and one that will serve us well to ensure a safe reintroduction of the Max when it is approved to return to commercial service.

If the airspace restriction grounding the Max were lifted today, our pilots would be ready and qualified to operate the aircraft, pending the completion of any final training required by our regulator.

When it comes to training and expertise, our pilots are highly qualified operators of the 737, having safely flown millions of flight hours through our operating history across five successive variants of the 737 aircraft for now 24 years.

Since the Max aircraft was grounded last year, our pilots have maintained currency on the 737 fleet, continuing to safely operate close to 400 daily 737 departures. During this time our flight crews have also been actively engaged in our recurrent training programs, which see our pilots return to the simulator no less than once every six months. Because our training evolves through continuous improvement, we have already incorporated many of the learnings of the past year's events into our recurrent simulator training.

• (1650)

I'd like to note that WestJet recognizes that at the heart of all safety decisions are people: our employees and our guests. For our well-trained and highly capable cabin crew and pilots, the aircraft is a place of work. We've asked the minister to ensure that labour is at the table and is considered a partner as we go forward. This effort must be collaborative and inclusive. We are committed to honouring that partnership.

I want to thank the committee again for the invitation. I'd be pleased to answer questions with my colleagues.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Wilson.

Mr. Hudson.

Captain John Hudson (Acting Director, Flight Operations, Sunwing Airlines): Good afternoon, Mr. Chair and honourable members of this standing committee.

Firstly, I want to thank you for this invitation to seek information and to perhaps assist in answering your questions relating to aircraft certification in Canada, from one of the three airlines with the 737 Max in its fleet.

My name is John Hudson. I'm the acting director of flight operations at Sunwing. In addition to being a Transport Canada check pilot at Sunwing, I've been there in both standards and technical roles since 2012. I'm proud to be a military veteran. I have been flying Boeing aircraft for just under 30 years. I'm currently flying the 737 NG, as I said, as a Transport Canada check pilot, an instructor pilot and a captain.

My employer, Sunwing Travel Group, is the largest tour operator in North America. The airline doubles in size to 40 aircraft in the winter season to service Canadian holiday travellers and shrinks to half that size in the summer while we send pilots and aircraft to serve our European partners, keeping a smaller fleet within Canada in the summer.

Sunwing is devastated by the loss of life from the two Max accidents, Lion Air 610 on 29 October, 2018, and Ethiopian Airlines 302 on 10 March, 2019. We wish to express once again our deepest sympathies, as my colleagues have expressed here today. This is an unprecedented event in my aviation career and will never be forgotten by all of us in the Sunwing family. I want to make that point.

We took deliveries of our four Max aircraft from 25 May, 2018, to 11 March, 2019, and we had more than 7,000 hours of flight time on the Max aircraft when we stopped flying them. I conducted several of the customer demonstration flights in Seattle with Boeing pilots on the first of our Max delivery aircraft. I currently have about 80 hours flying on the Max 8 itself and have been conducting several post-grounding maintenance flights on our Max fleets. Like all of our pilots and like those at WestJet, we are dual-qualified on the Max and the 737 NG.

In addition to my role at Sunwing, I am humbled and privilege to represent the three Canadian Max-operating airlines for the IATA—the International Air Transport Association—Max task force since May 23 last year. That task force consists of international airline representatives from 11 airlines representing North America, South America, Europe, Singapore and China. It's a truly international group.

I have been asked today to bring my airline's perspective on the aircraft certification process. This perspective is strictly from an operational viewpoint and does not include the perspective from our engineering and maintenance groups. Nor will it delve into the unprecedented economic strain that has been inflicted on each of our airlines.

From the start of the entry-into-service project, Sunwing's interaction was with Boeing directly through a dedicated entry representative. The level of collaboration with Boeing directly was very high, but our initiative to liaise with the American airlines that were taking early Max deliveries and with our European partner, the TUI Group, greatly enhanced our training. Once again it was done in collaboration. Transport Canada national operations was also with us every step of the way as we worked through our entry into service.

For the entry into service pilot training, the Max was a relative easy conversion. Based on what we knew at the time and based on 12 years of operating the 737-800, the NG, there was little difference in procedures and in the pilot-level systems knowledge required. We were aware of the more complex differences confronting engineering in the systems; for instance, new engines, new digital environmental control systems and fly-by-wire spoilers. From a pilot's perspective, though, flying the Max in normal operations was truly like flying the NG.

Following the Lion Air accident and resulting airworthiness directive that Minister Garneau referred to earlier and that my colleagues referred to, we established unprecedented collaboration under the leadership of Transport Canada national operations and the three Canadian airlines operating the Max. This collaboration was a result of the AD that pointed to MCAS activation during an erroneous angle-of-attack event.

When those of us in the standards and fleet management groups looked at the AD, we saw that it revised a document called the "Aircraft Flight Manual", which is essentially a certification manual and is not directly used by the flight crews. It did not address our own pilot manual—the "Flight Crew Operations Manual"—directly. It left the airlines open to possible different interpretations among ourselves for our respective operations.

• (1655)

That was the point of the collaboration. In our collaboration, we felt it was extremely important that we as a group get the runaway stabilizer procedure correct when we changed it and aligned, and that there be no difference among the three airlines in the way this non-normal event was to be conducted, if necessary. What this unprecedented Canadian collaboration demonstrated was the absolute commitment to safety that the airlines and our regulator in Canada possess.

Early on November 8, 2018, Transport Canada approved our made-in-Canada solution, and we were operating the Max that day with the new checklist. We did and still do firmly believe that these actions significantly mitigated any residual risk surrounding MCAS and runaway stabilizer events on the Max.

Since the Max airspace closure, we have continued and expanded upon this collaboration. However, there have been significant challenges in obtaining timelines and even agreeing on development of the road map for return to service. These mainly surround conflicting information occasionally between the airlines and Boeing—we deal directly with Boeing on a weekly basis—and sometimes between the airlines and Transport Canada and among the Max-operating airlines themselves. We have weekly technical calls with Boeing and periodic meetings with Transport Canada, sometimes with

small conflicts in information concerning on which we have to collaborate, regroup and make sure that we're aligned. I don't have a solution to this issue, but occasionally it makes it difficult for the airlines to react.

Last fall and last week, Transport Canada's national aircraft certification, national operations, and standards and the airlines held a Webex meeting at which Transport Canada national aircraft certification explained in very appropriate detail their past and current issues, in addition to several possible Canadian-only changes to both procedures and training when the return-to-service airworthiness directive is published.

We now know approximately what to expect when return to service comes, depending upon the outcome of a couple of meetings. The joint operational evaluation board report and a couple of other events have to happen.

Those of us who operate the NG will also have to react to several changes for that fleet as well, as an outcome. This is now more than a Max issue; rather, it's a 737 issue in some respects. WestJet and Sunwing will have to overcome that to make sure we're all aligned.

In summary, while Sunwing cannot comment significantly on the initial certification process of the Max, I hope I have given you a perspective on the absolute common thrust of "safety first" that all of Transport Canada and the three Max airlines represented here share, and on the way this thrust has been demonstrated in a collaborative and coordinated manner thus far during our return-to-service effort.

I now look forward to answering your questions.

Thank you.

• (1700)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Hudson.

Mr. Bachrach.

Mr. Taylor Bachrach: Mr. Chair, this is a point of order. We spoke briefly, and I indicated my desire to bring forward a motion related to the study currently under way. I wonder whether you will welcome it at this time.

The Chair: Go ahead.

Mr. Taylor Bachrach: I move:

That the committee formally request that representatives from The Boeing Company appear before the committee with regard to the on-going study concerning the aircraft certification process.

I bring this motion forward because of the scathing report by the congressional committee on transport to which I referred in my previous questioning and because I believe that Boeing is a central party in the issues we are studying and that the families and all Canadians deserve to hear directly from the Boeing company.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Bachrach.

Do you have a date by or on which you would like to see them?

Mr. Taylor Bachrach: It would be at the soonest possible opportunity. I'd look to the clerk to suggest a possible date.

The Clerk of the Committee (Ms. Caroline Bosc): In these cases, it's typically good to have a date, a deadline, if you want them here by a certain date.

Mr. Taylor Bachrach: We're living in some pretty unusual circumstances right now, so putting a precise date on it, I believe, may be challenging. Let's say within two months.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Bachrach.

Mr. Barsalou-Duval, you have some comments as well, I believe.

[Translation]

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval: If Mr. Bachrach had not moved this motion, I would have tabled a rather similar one. I therefore fully support his motion.

I very much hope that the people at Boeing will understand that people from all over the world travel on these planes and that the consequences are not just in the United States, but all over the world. It is simply a matter of respect to come and answer the questions of the members of the committee.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Barsalou-Duval.

Mr. Doherty.

Mr. Todd Doherty: Mr. Chair, I think perhaps, if we can go to a vote on this and then let me move the motion that I have, it might help.

The Chair: What did you want to look at? Did you want to look at the possibility of amending the motion?

Mr. Todd Doherty: You know what my motion is.

With all due respect, I agree with Mr. Bachrach that it is germane to this conversation and to the study that we attempt to get Boeing to appear before....

The Chair: You're saying, then, that you don't want to amend it but want to have a separate motion.

Mr. Todd Doherty: I'll have a separate motion.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Doherty.

Mr. Bittle.

Mr. Chris Bittle: This is just a suggestion. Perhaps we can save this for the committee business portion, which we've extended, and hear from the witnesses. There was a significant request from the opposition to extend the time because they desperately wanted to hear from these witnesses. Now we're eating into that time. Maybe, then, we can table this for the time that we set aside to actually discuss committee business.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Bittle.

Is there any further comment?

Mr. Bachrach.

Mr. Taylor Bachrach: I will move that we table it until the beginning of committee business.

The Chair: Shall we table it until committee business?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Bachrach, and thank you, members.

Mr. Doherty, the floor is yours.

Mr. Todd Doherty: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I want it on record that I was in aviation for 22 years, both on the airline side.... I was a proud WestJet—sorry, Air Canada—and I had a company that worked with other carriers as well. I also was in airports and Transport Canada.

I take safety and security, as you mentioned so aptly, Mr. Wilson, Mr. Strom and Mr. Hudson, as being always paramount. If a mistake is made, that's a bad day, which is, I guess, why emotions are running high, given some of the information that I've received.

I'm not an expert on certification. I will defer to Mr. Turnbull and the minister on that.

My question is for all three of the carriers, given the information that was mentioned in the previous testimony.

At any time, was information brought forward to your carriers about Transport Canada's concern with respect primarily to the stall identification the FAA was using on the 737 Max?

• (1705)

Mr. Murray Strom: No, it wasn't. I wasn't in this position at that time, but I was never made aware of it. However, in most certifications and from my experience working with the certification group, normally that would not be something brought forward to us.

Mr. Todd Doherty: Does anybody else...?

Capt Scott Wilson: I concur with that. I was in the current position when the Max was brought into WestJet.

Again, we're independent from the certification process, so once the aircraft has a validation and we have an operating certificate, we're able to basically move forward.

The information was not available to us.

Mr. Todd Doherty: Mr. Wilson, WestJet has a long history of the 737 being its primary aircraft. Would it have been the expectation of the company that the stall identification criteria applied on the 737 Max would be the same as for any other aircraft they've had?

Capt Scott Wilson: That's a complex question. When you look at the requirements concerning how a type is validated, from the basis of the 800 NG to the Max, the whole point of many of the items they've talked about, including MCAS, was to ensure that they basically met the certification requirements.

Mr. Todd Doherty: Thank you.

Are you familiar with the term “nose-down pitch not readily arrested”?

Capt Scott Wilson: I am.

Mr. Todd Doherty: This issue was brought forward from day one by Transport Canada technical experts, and the fact that Boeing was using this as their stall criteria.

Would it raise a concern to you that Transport Canada technical experts raised this issue time and again with the FAA and that the FAA and Boeing refused to answer what stall criteria were being applied on the 737 Max?

Capt Scott Wilson: With the detail not fully and readily available to me on what you're actually probing into, sir, I can't effectively answer.

Mr. Todd Doherty: Okay.

I'm going to read an excerpt:

CPC FT 03 has raised again understanding of FAA interpretation of 14 CFR 25.201.

That is Canada's stall identification compliance for the 737 Max.

The approach used by the FAA on the 737 8 MAX is different than what Transport Canada's civil aviation has used on its domestic programs, and even what the FAA has used on other programs such as the 787. This concerned paper will not prevent Transport Canada's issuing, as TCCA will use its 737 9 validation to address this issue with the FAA.

Does that raise any concerns with you?

Capt Scott Wilson: Issue papers and concern papers are a normal process, going back and forth. We have been transparently included now with the process we're going through, as far as the recertification of the MCAS software, the flight control software, is concerned.

We understand and we see that concerns are raised and that they basically go through an evolution to get to a common understanding or ground. Without knowing what the understanding was truly aligned with, particularly with respect to the individuals involved on the Transport Canada side, I couldn't comment beyond that.

Mr. Todd Doherty: Thank you.

I'll turn it over to Mr. Davidson.

Mr. Scot Davidson (York—Simcoe, CPC): Thanks for appearing here today. We all applaud your commitment to aviation safety in Canada.

My question would be about what I will call the AOA or angle of attack “disagree”. It was installed in the 737 Max and was pushed by Boeing sales people as a safety option that airlines could pay for. I believe WestJet had that option, the AOA indicator.

It seems hard to believe that Boeing was pushing a safety option on an AOA.

• (1710)

Capt Scott Wilson: I believe you're talking about the angle-of-attack indicator.

Mr. Scot Davidson: That's correct.

Capt Scott Wilson: One is the AOA alert, the “disagree” alert.

Mr. Scot Davidson: Yes.

Capt Scott Wilson: The disagree alert is common in the 737. We had it on the NG and were supposed to have it on the Max.

I believe the issue you're most particularly speaking to is that the “AOA disagree” was an option—

Mr. Scot Davidson: That's right.

Capt Scott Wilson: —but it was an option on the NG as well.

Ultimately, for that indication there is no checklist, there is no training associated with it. It's a bit of a red herring that it is itself being put forward as a safety option.

Mr. Scot Davidson: And would you—?

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Wilson.

Thank you, Mr. Davidson.

Ms. Jaczek.

Ms. Helena Jaczek (Markham—Stouffville, Lib.): Thank you so much for coming. Obviously we want to acknowledge your dedication to safety on behalf of the public and your crew.

Notwithstanding your expertise and what we heard, a little bit, from your opening statements on collaboration, unfortunately two tragic events have occurred.

I'd like to explore a little bit more about the collaboration between airline carriers and the manufacturer of the new or amended product.

Could you just outline...? Boeing gets an idea to improve a certain product. Presumably this idea comes from pilots, from people who are using the plane. Then, is there some immediate discussion with airline carriers at that point as to how to go forward with this presumed improvement?

The question is to any of you.

Mr. Murray Strom: I've been involved in many aircraft introductions, and it's been made very clear by Transport Canada certification that they are not certifying the aircraft for any individual carrier; they're certifying it for the people of Canada.

We generally don't become involved in the discussions on the certification side. They come to an agreement on the certification of the aircraft. Boeing produces the manuals, Transport Canada produces their supplement, and we use that information and determine how we're going to operate our aircraft.

Ms. Helena Jaczek: Perhaps I misunderstood Captain Hudson.

It appeared from your testimony that you have been very involved from the beginning of introducing new amendments.

Capt John Hudson: Well, most of the involvement on the collaboration side of it has happened following the entry into service. As we have explained, the actual entry into service—the certification part of the Transport Canada role of validating or certifying aircraft—is not typically something we get to have collaboration or involvement with.

In this extraordinary event that happened, however, as I was trying to explain, we collaborated among the three airlines, because we took it upon ourselves, under the leadership of national operations at Transport Canada, to...

First of all, we were all reacting in a combined call when the emergency directive came out, and those of us who were a bit more the technical experts or subject matter experts thought at the time—and again, this is in a “time compression” time frame—that we could go further.

That started us down this post-Lion Air emergency directive process of making sure that when we changed an operation or we had an idea or things like that, we would....

We collaborate regularly with Transport Canada anyway, on the operational side. The thrust of my comments, then, was post-entry into service, not on the certification side.

Ms. Helena Jaczek: Thank you for clarifying that. I find it very important.

I was also incredibly impressed by the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure report of the U.S. Congress. In that report, they actually mentioned that some foreign carriers asked Boeing about providing simulator training for their pilots transitioning to the 737 Max, and apparently Boeing opposed such training.

Presumably none of you was involved in this request for simulator training. Were you aware of this?

• (1715)

Mr. Murray Strom: I'll start off and I'll let John and Scott finish.

At Air Canada, we only fly the Max aircraft, so we weren't involved in any discussions on the transition of NG pilots to Max pilots, whereas both Sunwing and WestJet were. I'll thus defer to them.

Capt Scott Wilson: The benefit, coming off a common type such as the 737 NG—or the 800, in our case—to the Max 8 is the commonality of the training, the commonality of the systems, and you train out the differences.

I believe the point of your question was that Boeing was saying that certain training wasn't required. We weren't involved in any of those conversations. What happens is that as the aircraft is certified in Canada, we take a look at it. It has certain training requirements with it, and we basically as a minimum meet them and often, in certain cases, exceed them as we enter the aircraft into service.

It's important to make sure that the training is tailored to the background experience of the pilots, whether they're new on a type or whether this is a transition following many years of experience.

Ms. Helena Jaczek: Would you as carriers like to be involved earlier in the process; in other words, before the state of design has certified it? I think we were fairly confident about what we heard about Transport Canada when Canada is the state producing the design, but obviously what we're reading here, in relation to the congressional report about the FAA, seems to really question whether Transport Canada should trust the FAA.

Is there any role for carriers earlier on in the process, related to either certification or validation?

Capt John Hudson: That's a great question. There's always is some communication that happens, certainly in our case before our first aircraft came, and we were quite collaborative with Boeing in that respect. However, you have to know what your expertise is, however, and we are not test pilots for aircraft certification; we are operators. There's a very different set of skill sets there and a very great difference of expertise. I think you have to be careful when you start to involve the operator too much in the initial certification of an aircraft.

Transport Canada, in its certification process, has test pilots, and they do certification work. In commercial aviation, however, we have a very significant delineation between pre-certification and post-entry into service. We are operators.

I said in my testimony at the beginning that I have conducted “customer delivery flights” and “customer test flights”, but that's post-production; it's from an operator's standpoint. I would caution that we want to keep the expertise in its lane. We're good at operating the airplane, but I certainly wouldn't have expertise in the certification, in many respects, of an aircraft.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Hudson, and thank you, Ms. Jaczek.

Mr. Barsalou-Duval.

[Translation]

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

From what I understand, all three of you were pilots before taking up your current positions. So my question is for all three of you.

I imagine that, as pilots, former pilots or even in the course of your duties, you have often talked to pilots, former pilots or even other colleagues. Prior to the crash of the first Boeing 737 MAX or the second one, did you have any conversations or did you hear from colleagues about any particular problems with that aircraft that needed to be addressed? Were these kinds of comments or information communicated to you?

[English]

Capt Scott Wilson: I'll start.

We took a look at delivering the first aircraft in 2017 and then, at entry into service, we had a very easy entry into service.

In our experience in operating the aircraft, up until a year ago we had no technical issues, no training issues and really no negative effects that we could see, operating the Max in service quite successfully.

Capt John Hudson: I would second that. We took our first delivery in June 2018. We had some experience before the tragic Lion Air crash and had no technical issues, virtually, with the airplane. There are always little snags here and there, but they were nothing that made the Max stand out as different from the NG that we're currently flying.

Mr. Murray Strom: Immediately after the Lion Air crash, we went back through our FDA program, which is the program that sends data from the aircraft to our computers, and analyzed it along with the pilot reports to see whether we had any flight control difficulties at all on the aircraft to try to better understand that question. We reviewed all of the pilot reports, trying to figure out whether we saw any trends, and there was nothing. We did it again after the second crash, and again we did not experience, with the airplane reporting to us or the pilots reporting to us, any issues that were anything at all similar to what we saw in both these crashes.

• (1720)

[Translation]

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval: If you had been aware of the problem with the MCAS software on that aircraft, would your respective airlines still have purchased those aircraft?

[English]

Mr. Murray Strom: If we had thought there were any problems at all, we absolutely would not have. We wouldn't have taken delivery of the aircraft if we knew there was an issue with the aircraft.

All three of us are responsible to the minister for the safety of the travelling public. All three of us, regardless of who is paying us, take that job extremely seriously. We will never put a pilot, a flight attendant or a passenger on an aircraft that is not safe.

Capt John Hudson: When the emergency airworthiness directive from the FAA came forth, we had to react to it, to the way they, in their airworthiness directive, had gone through their process and highlighted.... They basically in the AD highlighted this system and some of the possible risks with it.

Here I go back to my original comments. There are times when you have to be decisive. This was when our three carriers got together at that time. We were talking about problems with MCAS. We saw that it was possibly at the time—given hindsight—an issue.

[Translation]

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval: Would you have bought the plane if you had known this problem existed?

[English]

Capt John Hudson: Well, for sure we would have let Transport Canada run through its certification process, so the question is better asked of Transport Canada's certification group. If they had known about MCAS, what would have changed in their process?

Do you understand what I'm saying? We react, because the whole system is based on—

[Translation]

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval: I understand your answer.

The presence of the MCAS software was not mentioned in the manual provided at the outset by the Boeing Company. Nor did the pilots receive training on the system, other than one hour on an iPad.

First, is it common to omit information on new products in instruction manuals?

And secondly, is it common to only offer a one-hour training session on an iPad for a new plane?

[English]

Capt Scott Wilson: When you take a look at the miss on having MCAS fully understood by the operator and properly promulgated through the publications, that's unusual. I've certainly never experienced it myself, at this time.

When you take a look at the training, it's important to understand that we train continually and through many levels of fidelity. We train face to face in ground school. We use the benefit of our electronic flight bags, which are our iPads, and the opportunity to train on systems differently through them. A one-hour or two-hour or three-hour system is not uncommon.

Of course, we are all, through recurrent training programs that follow an initial training program with many hours in the simulator, very adept at ensuring that we have the right level of fidelity to ensure the right output, which is a safety output for all of our pilots who are training.

One hour using an iPad on a system, then, is not unusual. Most of us did much more, on a transition course training out the Max for differences, than was the regulated requirement.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Wilson.

Thank you, Mr. Barsalou-Duval.

Mr. Bachrach.

Mr. Taylor Bachrach: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and to our witnesses for appearing today.

I'd like to start by asking about the workers who fly on the 737 Max, who work for your companies and who, every day, went up in those airplanes. I'm wondering if you have heard from them. I'm sure you've heard from the pilots, but have you heard from the flight attendants and the unions representing them in a formal way? What concerns have those workers expressed to you so far?

• (1725)

Capt Scott Wilson: The good news is that we have relatively strong, consistent and collaborative answers amongst us. When we take a look at those who have been flying on the Max—both pilots and cabin crew—yes, they have questions as well, and obviously it's our job to ensure that before the aircraft is safely put back into the fleet, we're able to answer those.

The union has been involved. Our head of the Air Line Pilots Association for Canada is here with us today. We've also been working with CUPE, which is our flight attendant union across the airlines. We've been actively engaged in keeping them abreast, and even together, right now, as was mentioned by the minister who was here, we've all put forward line pilots to be part of the joint operational evaluation board, which will validate the training from a line pilot perspective with Transport Canada's concordance and assistance.

Mr. Taylor Bachrach: Can you characterize the questions and concerns that have been brought forward by those groups?

Capt Scott Wilson: For those who have flown Boeing aircraft in particular—and all three of us are Boeing captains on current Boeing aircraft—Boeing has a longstanding commitment to the pilot group. It's very engaged. You know the Boeing aircraft at a different level; you're tied to it a lot more.

It feels wrong that we didn't understand some of the information that was available to us. Most of it comes around to how come this wasn't provided to us, because a pilot takes very seriously his responsibility to understand the aircraft and the system so that he's able to manage anything on the aircraft to a safe outcome.

Capt John Hudson: If I could just add to that, on the lines of communication, I'm sure none of us thought we'd become communications experts on MCAS. We're technical people, and we operate airplanes.

One of the things our airline did very early on—and we got great feedback for it—was to provide town halls and factual information to our employees, because if you don't have the buy-in of the employees to understand and ask questions, how can you ever go out and explain it to the travelling public? The facts matter. Those were certainly our efforts, and we'll continue to do that before we return to service.

Mr. Taylor Bachrach: I'd like to ask a brief question about the angle-of-attack disagree alert safety option. You spoke to this before. I believe you characterized it as a “red herring”.

I'm a lay person. It seems this is a safety feature that was offered by the manufacturer as an option to the airlines that were purchasing the aircraft.

Why did you choose not to purchase that safety feature? That's my understanding from your previous comments. Also, were there ever questions raised about why that safety feature was being offered in the first place? My understanding is that this safety feature alerted pilots to the problem that Boeing was aware of and had concealed.

Capt Scott Wilson: I think you've mistaken two of the aspects. The alert about the angle of attack is called the “angle of attack dis-

agree”, and that's common to the NG. It was basically available and was configured on all three of the—

Mr. Taylor Bachrach: My apologies. It's the disagree alert.

Capt Scott Wilson: Yes. We had that.

Mr. Taylor Bachrach: You did purchase that piece. Okay.

Capt Scott Wilson: Yes, but I wanted to make sure it was understood that there is a secondary piece called the “angle-of-attack indicator”. That's the one that is an option. It also comes with no training and no corresponding checklist. As a result, it's not considered to be a true safety enhancement as the media has portrayed it.

Mr. Taylor Bachrach: If I may, very briefly, because I only have 30 seconds left, in this report from the congressional committee, they mention that the AOA disagree alert was delivered inoperable on many aircraft. Were any of those aircraft in your fleets? Did you receive inoperable—

Capt Scott Wilson: That is correct. The aircraft was configured, and again, it was supposed to be lined up exactly like the NG aircraft, with an AOA disagree, which is an alert on the bottom right-hand side of the CDS. The alert on the NG is a stand-alone. On the Max, it happened to be tied to the angle-of-attack indicator, so if you didn't have the option, what you didn't know was that you wouldn't have had the disagree alert, and the operators weren't....

Capt John Hudson: Just quickly, from a technical point of view, an angle-of-attack indicator is not the only alert in this particular malfunction you're talking about. There are other alerts that the flight crew get, including an indicated air speed disagree and an altitude disagree. There are multiple alerts going on at the same time.

While the AOA disagree alert is helpful, it's not the only piece of information we get during that kind of a non-normal situation.

• (1730)

Mr. Taylor Bachrach: Did the culture of concealment that's described in this report affect your companies and your pilots? Did the features that were concealed affect the airplanes you purchased and the pilots that fly for you?

Mr. Murray Strom: Has it been raised by our pilots? Yes, it has been raised by our pilots. This is why we have taken the extraordinary measures we have, for the three of us to work together on the safety aspect with Transport Canada, with Boeing and with the technical experts, to make sure we get this one right. It has been brought up.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Strom. Thank you, Mr. Bachrach. And to you, gentlemen, thank you for your participation here this afternoon. Thank you for the time you have taken to come out and provide testimony for the members, as well as for the public and those in the gallery.

I will now suspend for five minutes before we go into our business planning session.

• (1730) _____ (Pause) _____

• (1730)

The Chair: Members, we are meeting past the time of 5:30, based on a motion that was passed last meeting by Mr. Doherty that we take on committee business at this time.

Mr. Rogers, go ahead.

Mr. Todd Doherty: There's a motion on the floor, actually.

Mr. Churence Rogers: It was tabled for committee business, so whether we do it in...

Mr. Chris Bittle: Perhaps we can quickly deal with Mr. Bachrach's motion. Then perhaps we can entertain a motion to go in camera, which I think is a....

The Chair: Mr. Bachrach does have the floor. We're going to entertain his motion. If I may, then I would also like to go into a discussion on the motion, and we will go from there.

Mr. Bachrach, you have the floor.

• (1735)

Mr. Taylor Bachrach: It's a motion that I moved previously under my point of order:

That the Committee formally request that representatives from The Boeing Company appear before the committee with regard to the on-going study concerning the aircraft certification process.

I think it's clear to everyone at this table why that's important in light of what we have heard and what we have read. Copies have been circulated. I'm happy to proceed to hear from the other members. I understand that my colleague, Mr. Barsalou-Duval, has an amendment he would like to make.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Bachrach.

Mr. Barsalou-Duval.

[Translation]

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Here is the amendment I would like to make. When Boeing representatives appear before the committee, I would like the meeting to be televised and broadcast on House of Commons channels.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Barsalou-Duval.

As well, I want to stress the point because there is a process that has to be followed here, Mr. Bachrach. It's a two-part process. I will let the clerk comment on that with respect to the need of having a date attached to it.

Madam Clerk.

The Clerk: As some people may be aware, Boeing has already been invited in the context of this study. They have not responded to correspondence thus far, so in bringing this forward with a deadline, a specific date by which they should be invited, if they do not attend by that date, then there are other procedures we can follow after the fact.

The Chair: Mr. Bachrach.

Mr. Taylor Bachrach: Perhaps it would be in order for me to add a date as a secondary amendment—

The Chair: Absolutely.

Mr. Taylor Bachrach: —after we vote on the amendment that's currently on the floor, unless you would like an amendment to an amendment.

The Chair: Thank you. No.

Mr. Taylor Bachrach: I know that as a former mayor you probably dislike those as much as I do.

The Chair: I mention it now to give you some time to think about it.

Mr. Taylor Bachrach: I'm happy to make an amendment after we vote.

The Chair: Are there any questions or comments on the amendment for it to be televised?

(Amendment agreed to)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Barsalou-Duval.

Mr. Bachrach, on your motion, would you like to attach a date to it as an amendment?

Mr. Taylor Bachrach: I move that we ask for them to appear at the meeting on March 26.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Bachrach.

Are there any comments or questions on that amendment?

Mr. Barsalou-Duval.

[Translation]

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval: Mr. Chair, I have heard rumours that there may be a change in the schedule of the House. If that is the case, it will be difficult to meet on March 26.

I'm going to present another proposal and it will be debated as a second amendment later. It could be more like the end of April. That would make sense.

[English]

Mr. Taylor Bachrach: I'm happy with that. I accept that.

The Chair: Madam Clerk, would that suffice?

The Clerk: Yes.

The Chair: Are there questions or comments?

(Amendment agreed to)

The Chair: Before we go on to Mr. Bittle's—

Oh, I'm sorry. On the main motion, go ahead, Mr. Berthold.

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): I want to make one thing clear. When the motion passes, I would like the French version to go through linguistic revision, please.

[English]

The Chair: Absolutely. Thank you, Mr. Berthold.

Back to the amended motion, are there any questions or comments?

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

The Chair: We do have another motion from Mr. Doherty.

Mr. Todd Doherty: Mr. Chair, I'll keep it quick. I'm in agreement with Mr. Bachrach. I move:

That, the Committee extend its current study on the 737 Max 8 two additional meetings that shall be held subsequent to March 24, 2020, to allow for the Committee to hear additional witness testimony.

I have this in both English and French.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Doherty.

Are there any questions or comments on that motion?

Oh, yes.

Mr. Todd Doherty: Again, I will note as well—and Mr. Bittle and I have had some conversations offline—further to Mr. Barsalou-Duval's comment, that if the House calendar is adjusted, the committee also consider that.

• (1740)

The Chair: Yes, that's fine.

Are there questions or comments?

Mr. Bittle.

Mr. Chris Bittle: I propose an amendment of up to “two additional meetings”, because I know that one of the slots wasn't necessarily filled already, so....

The Chair: You're fine with that, Mr. Doherty?

Mr. Todd Doherty: Yes, I'm fine with that.

I'm sure all colleagues are getting requests to appear here. I know we are. We will endeavour to have...and perhaps, Mr. Chair, we can, as a committee, come up with a date as to when we have to supply the clerk with the witnesses.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Doherty.

Let's vote on the amendment first.

(Amendment agreed to)

The Chair: To the amended motion, and attached to that—Mr. Doherty, you're correct—if in fact we are going to add additional witnesses, we do have to come up with a date by which to have those witnesses in.

Mr. Todd Doherty: By the end of April.

Sorry. Did you mean the date for the witnesses?

The Chair: By the end of March?

Mr. Todd Doherty: That will depend if the House is sitting.

What we will endeavour to do, from our side, is to have a list of witnesses—I don't have my calendar here—

The Chair: By March 20?

Mr. Todd Doherty: —by March 20.

The Chair: Is that fine, Madam clerk?

Okay, we'll have the witnesses in by March 20. Is that good? I see all of the staff nodding their heads. That's a good thing.

Are there no further questions on the amended motion?

The clerk has asked me if we can prioritize the witness lists.

Mr. Todd Doherty: Yes, we will do our best.

The Chair: Okay, with nothing further, all those in favour?

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

The Chair: Mr. Bittle.

Mr. Chris Bittle: My concerns have been let out of the bag. I don't think going in camera is necessary at this point.

The Chair: That's fine.

Mr. Rogers.

Mr. Churence Rogers: Going back to a couple of previous resolutions that we tabled—the one on the gas tax fund, for example—I think I'd like to put that to the floor today for the committee to vote on. We've added amendments here that were introduced by Mr. Doherty and a couple of others. I'd like to see that motion adopted.

The other one I was going to make reference to is Mr. Barsalou-Duval's motion on the controller. I think it was two meetings that he suggested.

I propose that we vote on these motions today, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Okay. Do you want to distribute it?

Mr. Churence Rogers: Do you need copies?

These were already previously distributed, but we—

The Chair: Right.

I'm assuming, Mr. Rogers, that you're tabling the motion for the gas tax. Are you tabling the other one too, or are we going to go to Mr. Barsalou-Duval for that?

Mr. Churence Rogers: Mr. Barsalou-Duval might want to do that one, but I suggest we try to get these into the business discussion so that we can structure our business going forward.

The Chair: For future business?

Mr. Churence Rogers: Yes.

The Chair: Okay.

I'll take that motion right now and then go to Mr. Barsalou-Duval. Then I'm going to go to the Conservatives, because Mr. Davidson has two motions as well.

Turning to this motion, we all have a copy of it. It was distributed earlier, and we also have it being distributed now.

That motion having been moved, are there questions or comments on the motion?

All those in favour please signify.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Chair: Mr. Rogers, when did you want to schedule this, to begin with?

Mr. Churence Rogers: I don't have a specific date, but I was thinking right after we finish the Max 8 study—which is on what date?

An hon. member: I'm not sure, because there could be two more meetings.

The Chair: Depending on the House.

Mr. Churence Rogers: It would, then, be next.

The Chair: Fine, that's good.

Mr. Churence Rogers: So it's going to be the Max 8 study. When we conclude with it, that is where I would like to see this done.

The Chair: Mr. Barsalou-Duval, do you have any comments?

[Translation]

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval: I agree that we should quickly conduct a study on the gas tax fund. However, there is a very important issue that we started discussing at a previous meeting, and it has to do with security. I am talking about CN's decision to transfer its Montreal rail controllers to Alberta.

I would like this study, which takes just two meetings, to be completed before starting the other study, given that it's happening right now and the decisions could be irreversible after a certain period of time.

• (1745)

[English]

Mr. Churence Rogers: Mr. Chair, I have no issue with that. I think we can certainly do the controller one first and then do the gas tax one afterwards.

The Chair: Let's deal with your motion as it's written out here, and then we'll go to Mr. Barsalou-Duval, because he has, I would only assume, a motion as well, which is already on the table. We can work out the timing for it, and then I'm going to go to Mr. Davidson.

Are there any questions or comments on his motion?

Mr. Berthold.

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Berthold: We have not determined the number of meetings. It will be based on the witnesses we want to hear from. We could schedule the first meeting, and then we'll see what happens.

[English]

The Chair: Yes.

Mr. Churence Rogers: I think that's fair enough. Initially we suggested maybe four to six meetings, but that would depend on the witness list and so on.

The Chair: That's fine.

Mr. Barsalou-Duval.

[Translation]

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval: Mr. Chair, we passed Mr. Rogers' motion. So we're going to do a study on the gas tax fund. If I understand correctly, we're about to vote on the date on which we're going to do that study.

[English]

The Chair: I'll be quite frank. I know what your desire is, which is to get to your study right away. I think we all get that and I think Mr. Rogers is prepared to hold back the timing of this to then open it up for you and then after that do the gas tax.

What I'm suggesting we do is vote on this motion first, which we're going to table. It hasn't been tabled yet, as your motion has been. Let's vote on this first. Then I'm going to come to you and then go back to Mr. Rogers again and then to Mr. Davidson.

On the motion to put this on the table, all those in favour please signify.

(Motion agreed to [See Minutes of Proceedings])

The Chair: Mr. Barsalou-Duval.

[Translation]

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Here is my motion:

That the study relating to the relocation of CN rail traffic controllers in Montreal to Edmonton be the next study undertaken by the committee.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Barsalou-Duval.

Are there any questions or comments on this?

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: Now we go on to the witness list.

When do you want to have the witness list in by?

Mr. Bittle.

Mr. Chris Bittle: Given the circumstances, can this be shelved until we get back? We'll still have our additional days, plus we have to write a report. There's still a lot of time before we have to set a time for witness lists.

The Chair: Is it on this issue, Mr. Berthold?

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Berthold: If parties already have witness lists to send to the clerk, there is nothing to stop us from proceeding immediately.

[English]

The Chair: Absolutely. Great. Thank you.

Go ahead, Mr. Rogers.

Mr. Churence Rogers: I didn't have a specific date in mind for the gas tax study, just that we would follow the controllers study, so I guess it would be the same process.

The Chair: Great.

Are there questions and comments?

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

The Chair: Go ahead, Mr. Davidson.

Mr. Scot Davidson: I have two motions, Mr. Chair.

I move:

That, pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), the committee study the Canadian Aviation Regulations pertaining to flight crew fatigue management.

This has already been circulated.

Second, I move:

That, pursuant to Standing Order 108(20), the committee study train whistling at public grade crossings and the procedures for stopping train whistling within communities.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Davidson. Let's deal with the first motion. Are there any questions or comments on the first motion? That was the one about flight crew fatigue management.

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: Are there questions and comments on the second motion, having to do with train whistles?

Mr. Scot Davidson: In rural communities, things have changed and they'd like it looked at.

The Chair: Are there any questions or comments on that?

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: On further business, go ahead, Mr. Berthold.

• (1750)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Berthold: Mr. Chair, I would like to move the following motion:

That, pursuant to Standing Order 108(1), the committee request that Infrastructure Canada provide the full list of the more than 52,000 federal projects with approved and committed funding, under the Investing in Canada Plan, with all available details, title, stream delivery, program name, province or territory, municipality, the associated funding, and other available information, and that the list be provided to the committee by April 14, 2020.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Berthold.

Are there any questions or comments?

Mr. Bittle.

Mr. Chris Bittle: Again, given the reality of what's going on, and if there are going to be any agreements in terms of what the civil service does and their access to it, is there a willingness to accept "30 days after the House next sits", for example? Because it's up in the air, I don't want us to be found to be in contempt.

Mr. Luc Berthold: What do you know, Chris?

Mr. Chris Bittle: I don't know anything. I'm just hearing things, and it's been mentioned by Mr. Barsalou-Duval as well.

Mr. Todd Doherty: Of course, it's the "Bloc/Liberals".

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Todd Doherty: That's it—again.

Mr. Chris Bittle: In all seriousness, if we're hearing that in Ontario schools are being closed and sporting events and large gatherings are being cancelled, it's not outside the realm of possibility that it will happen either to the federal civil service or the House of Commons itself, and if we're setting a firm deadline for these documents to be provided, I don't want it to be a question of privilege for the member, if we get back and that's not fulfilled.

The Chair: Can we put a period after "committee" and take the date out?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Berthold: I move that the list be given to the committee "as soon as possible".

[*English*]

The Chair: Is "as soon as possible" fine? Okay.

Are there further questions and comments?

Mr. Luc Berthold: If it's not soon enough, I will put another motion on the table.

The Chair: We know you will, Mr. Berthold.

Mr. Doherty.

Mr. Todd Doherty: Further to the comments, we're in unprecedented times right now. We should add to our colleague's comments that our thoughts go out to all those who are dealing with a potential coronavirus, including our Prime Minister and his wife. It's really important that in times of crisis we put away our partisan swords. It sends a greater message to Canadians that we're working together. Whether it's the 737 study or the other motions that have been put forward for studies, it would behoove us to have an understanding around this table that, given the potential of the calendar being adjusted, we will do our very best as a committee to recognize the importance of all of those motions and the timelines we have set.

The Chair: Well stated, Mr. Doherty, and I would agree. Working with the clerk, as well as our team here, we will roll with what we have to do to accommodate what the motions intend on doing, their intentions.

As well, I appreciate your comments, Mr. Doherty, with respect to us as a House of 338 members putting party politics aside and the partisanship aside. We're working together on behalf of all Canadians to deal with this crisis and, of course, getting through it.

With that, I thank you all. I know we're going into a constituency week, and hopefully we can go back home and take care of things more local.

Mr. Berthold.

Mr. Luc Berthold: I just want the motion to be voted.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Chair: You thought we were going to walk away with that. You caught that.

Mr. Bachrach.

Mr. Taylor Bachrach: I have a very brief piece of committee business after we vote on the motion.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you.

Are there any further comments or questions on Mr. Berthold's motion?

Mr. Luc Berthold: I'll add the amendment first, "as soon as possible".

The Chair: "As soon as possible".... We'll do the amendment first.

Thank you, Mr. Berthold.

(Amendment agreed to)

The Chair: On the amended motion, are there any questions or comments?

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

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Bachrach.

Mr. Taylor Bachrach: I heard from one person that they were frustrated by the inability to get the blues from our meetings soon afterwards. Perhaps I didn't follow along as closely as I should have when we moved the routine motions at the beginning, around the blues, but I think it warrants a conversation about whether we want to amend those or put forward another routine motion that would make those available in a more timely manner.

The only other option is to listen to the audio, I believe, which takes a long time. You can't really do a word search on an audio file.

I don't know if I could put that forward verbally as a motion. I move that we make the blues available as soon as possible for members of the public after our committee meetings.

• (1755)

The Chair: Are there any questions or comments on that, members?

The only concern I have is that the blues aren't always accurate.

Mr. Todd Doherty: Yes.

The Chair: Once they go to the public and they're not accurate and you catch that—

Mr. Todd Doherty: Right.

The Chair: —and you then amend it based on the inaccuracy, it's out in the public already. That's the only concern that I have.

Mr. Taylor Bachrach: I understand that, Mr. Chair. I believe, because we have the audio out there already, people have a way of obtaining what happened at the meeting, and that's a risk, but I think we need to balance that with our objective of transparency and providing the public with access to our proceedings.

The Chair: The audio will be accurate. It's the blues that sometimes aren't accurate—the written version.

Mr. Taylor Bachrach: What people think I said isn't necessarily what I meant.

The Chair: I'll look at the committee.

Mr. Bittle.

Mr. Chris Bittle: I share the concerns regarding the accuracy of it, because it's very easy to cut and paste the transcripts, and I have done it. Sometimes it's a lot easier to just post that on social media and then that becomes the truth that's out there.

I don't know if this is a question for PROC with regard to decisions are being made across the House rather than just our committee. Since there are only a few minutes left, maybe this is something that we can take back to our whips and House leaders to discuss, rather than making a decision right now, because if a decision were made right now, I'd be against it, but I'm happy to take it back to our House leaders.

The Chair: Mr. Bachrach.

Mr. Taylor Bachrach: Chair, if I may say, it's a fair comment. What was communicated to me by this person was that, in her opinion, the other committees make the blues more readily available than ours does. Perhaps the clerk could comment on that. If that's indeed the case, I don't see any reason why our committee should make information less accessible than other committees do.

The Clerk: You guys love to make me speak. I prefer to be seen and not heard.

It's completely a committee cultural thing. Some committees readily share them and some don't. It's entirely at your discretion what you choose to do. Some committees have special lists.

I will do whatever it the committee pleases do on this.

The Chair: Once again, my concern is this. The audio will be very, very accurate. You can't manipulate it; you can't make a mistake on audio; it's you speaking. However, when the blues come out, they can be inaccurate. I've sometimes found—not many times, but sometimes—a word and/or sentence can be wrong, so you fix it. Then, of course, it gets repaired and goes into the record.

Again, my concern is that the written part of it—and people can still hear the audio, which is accurate—sometimes being inaccurate, which can fall into the wrong hands. That's my concern.

Mr. Taylor Bachrach: I don't want to belabour the point, Mr. Chair. Perhaps members of the committee are of different minds on this. I offer it as a motion, and I think we can vote on it. If it passes, it passes; and if it's defeated, it's defeated. I'm happy either way.

The Chair: Mr. Doherty.

Mr. Todd Doherty: I echo Mr. Bittle's comment. I think this is something that we can take back to our individual parties and go from there. I would urge our new colleagues who are around the table to ensure that they're always checking the blues, because I have had the media using completely inaccurate quotes of my speeches. I suffer from mumble mouth, apparently, and I'm not clear, but you should always be checking it.

I agree with Mr. Bachrach that the blues should be made readily available, but we should have an opportunity, or our office should have an opportunity, to at least go through them and make sure that they're accurate. That's my only concern.

I think that we should take this back. It's 6 o'clock, so I'll leave it to you, Mr. Chair.

● (1800)

The Chair: Okay, thank you.

Did you want to defer that to our whip—

Mr. Taylor Bachrach: I'm happy to do that.

The Chair: —instead of voting on it? That's fine, Mr. Bachrach.

Okay, Mr. Baldinelli.

Mr. Tony Baldinelli (Niagara Falls, CPC): I have just a quick question as a newbie. How quickly do the audio transcripts get posted, and how quickly do we get copies of the Hansard transcript?

The Chair: In committee?

Mr. Tony Baldinelli: The blues, yes.

An hon. member: The audio would be out right now.

The Clerk: The audio is immediate. The blues are usually available within 24 to 48 hours, and then the transcript is within two weeks.

Mr. Tony Baldinelli: Okay, it's two weeks.

An hon. member: You do want to make sure that you go through it.

Mr. Tony Baldinelli: Yes.

The Chair: Yes. I have found inaccuracies in the past.

Mr. Todd Doherty: I've got the blues, Chair.

The Chair: Members, is there any further business?

We're done. Have a great week back in your ridings. We'll see you soon.

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