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Chair: Mr. John Brassard



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• (1145)

[English]

The Chair (Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC)): I call the meeting to order.

Mr. Barrett, I see you.

Welcome to meeting number 146 of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics.

Every member has Christmas carols on their desk, which we hope to get to soon.

Mr. Barrett, go ahead. You have the floor.

Mr. Darren Fisher (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, Lib.): I have a point of order, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: There's a point of order.

Mr. Darren Fisher: Members who are voting in the House have 10 minutes after the vote ends to get to a committee, so the—

The Chair: We have a quorum right now, Mr. Fisher, so I called the meeting to order. The meeting is under way.

Go ahead, Mr. Barrett. You have the floor.

Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC): I'm sure, Chair, that everyone will have time to get back to the committee before any votes are called.

I have a motion I would like to move.

It says:

That, given that,

(i) Canadians have been lining up at food banks in record numbers and facing the worst cost of living crisis in a generation,

(ii) The President of the King's Privy Council for Canada, Minister of Emergency Preparedness and Minister responsible for the Pacific Economic Development Agency of Canada accepted two taxpayer-funded VIP suite tickets to attend a Taylor Swift concert in Vancouver, and

(iii) The Prime Minister's Office has not clarified how the Prime Minister was able to obtain tickets to a Taylor Swift concert in Toronto, including whether he was offered exclusive access or pricing,

The committee:

(a) Order PavCo to provide to the clerk of the committee, within two weeks, all records concerning the offer or providing of tickets for any of the Taylor Swift concerts at BC Place to any federal ministers, officials, or ministerial exempt staff, including copies of any related communications; and

(b) Order the Prime Minister and the Prime Minister's Office to provide to the clerk of the committee, within one week, any records concerning payment for Taylor Swift concert tickets which the Prime Minister purchased.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Barrett.

The motion has been moved in committee business.

Do you have anything you want to say before I go to Ms. Khalid on your motion?

Mr. Matthew Green (Hamilton Centre, NDP): I have a point of order.

It seems we have some audio issues. It looked like Mr. Barrett was saying something, but it wasn't coming through on my end. I don't know whether others were in the same boat.

The Chair: Okay. I apologize for that, Mr. Green. I know the technician was saying something.

Have we sent the motion to members?

Mr. Matthew Green: I still can't hear anybody. That's the point of—

The Chair: Can you still not hear anybody?

Mr. Matthew Green: The screen was situated on the 180 Wellington cloud operator, not on any of the speaking that was happening in the room.

The Chair: Okay.

Madam Clerk...

We're trying to fix the problem here, Mr. Green.

Are you able to hear me now?

No.

Okay. The ghosts of Christmas past are the cause of—

Mr. Michael Barrett: It's the ghosts of motions that are not going to be passed.

The Chair: That's right.

We still have a problem.

Mr. Matthew Green: James, are you able to hear stuff?

Mr. James Maloney (Etobicoke—Lakeshore, Lib.): I wasn't at first, but I can now.

The Chair: Okay.

Mr. Maloney—

Mr. Matthew Green: I heard you, but I can't hear the floor audio.

Ms. Alexandra Savoie (Analyst): I also can't hear the floor audio.

Mr. James Maloney: I can't hear the floor. All I can hear is you, Matthew.

The Chair: Who was that?

Mr. Maxime-Olivier Thibodeau (Analyst): It was Alexandra.

The Chair: Alexandra, the—

Mr. James Maloney: There we go.

The Chair: Can you hear us now?

Mr. Matthew Green: Yes, I can. I thought I was losing you for a moment.

Ms. Alexandra Savoie: I can, too.

The Chair: Okay. Wonderful.

Mr. Barrett has moved a motion. We're going to distribute that motion to committee members.

Go ahead, Mr. Barrett. Then I have Ms. Khalid on the motion.

Mr. Michael Barrett: Chair, very briefly, given the cost of living crisis Canadians are facing, we can't look past this. Amid the excitement of a pop star coming to Canada, we can't have members of the executive or their exempt staff receiving preferential treatment or pricing to attend those events when the focus of government should be on providing for Canadians. It's that simple. Food bank use is at a record high, with two million Canadians using food banks in a single month.

This motion isn't calling for the appearance of any witnesses. It's not calling for any meetings. What this is calling for is the production of documents. On the committee's return at the end of January, we can consider the information received from PavCo, the Prime Minister's Office and the Prime Minister concerning these tickets. It should be pretty straight up and down when we're talking about individuals who are subject to the Conflict of Interest Act, such as ministers, exempt staff and the Prime Minister.

Of course, it would be completely inappropriate if we were to discover that any of these individuals were using their positions or power to get preferential treatment, when the discharge of their authority should be, at this point, exclusively focused on helping Canadians who are struggling.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Barrett. There are paper copies that are being circulated in both languages.

Ms. Khalid will be followed by Mr. Villemure on the motion.

Ms. Iqra Khalid (Mississauga—Erin Mills, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair. I appreciate that.

It's really nice to have this meeting here today, although I had hoped that we would spend more time on issues that, quite frankly, have a greater impact on Canadians. I know that we had started the study on Uber and ride-share companies and their impact on the privacy of Canadians, on the use of surcharges and how those charges go through the hands of gig workers and the gig economy, and yet here we are, once again neglecting the real work that we should be doing and putting forward a whole bunch of very partisan mumbo-jumbo to debate here in this committee, knowing full well what the outcome is going to be.

I am quite disappointed, Chair, that we did not go down the path of actual work in ethics. Having said that, I think that I may be able to support this motion as I go through it, but I would make some substantial amendments to this motion as it is. If it is indeed just a production of documents, I don't see why we would delay it when Minister Sajjan has clearly said exactly what happened, but I do find that there are some mistakes, at least in the very ridiculous preamble of this motion.

As I review it, I'm sure that my colleagues would want to speak up. Perhaps in a little while, I can present an amendment based on what I think would take away the partisanship of this motion and actually accept documents that—

I'm sorry; what was that, Mr. Caputo?

• (1150)

The Chair: Mr. Caputo, Ms. Khalid has the floor.

Go ahead, Ms. Khalid.

Ms. Iqra Khalid: I just wanted to clarify whether there was anything that I said that was maybe hurtful or something.

Mr. Frank Caputo: I am deeply hurt.

Ms. Iqra Khalid: Thank you. I look forward to returning the favour.

As I said, I'll pause for a moment and cede the floor to some of my colleagues as I look to see if we can work together to build a more consensus-filled motion on this issue.

The Chair: Okay.

[Translation]

Mr. Villemure, you now have the floor.

Mr. René Villemure (Trois-Rivières, BQ): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I'd like to ask my esteemed colleague whether he'd consider inviting Taylor Swift to testify, so we could get a more complete picture,

The Chair: Is that an amendment you're proposing?

[English]

Mr. René Villemure: It's a friendly amendment.

The Chair: Okay.

[Translation]

Thank you, Mr. Villemure.

My daughter might like that kind of meeting.

[English]

I now have Mrs. Shanahan.

Go ahead, Mrs. Shanahan.

Mrs. Brenda Shanahan (Châteauguay—Lacolle, Lib.): Thank you, Chair.

[*Translation*]

I'll continue along the same lines as my colleague.

All kidding aside, the whole Taylor Swift phenomenon seems to be capturing the imagination of parliamentarians here and the general public. I don't want to offend Ms. Swift, but I have to admit that I tried to listen to her music and I don't understand anything about it. That must be normal. Among the committee members, only Mr. Villemure and I grew up in the rock-and-roll era, with giants like Janis Joplin, right?

I'm less familiar with the music of the 1990s. On the other hand, I know Robert Charlebois, Harmonium and all those groups that weren't just bands; there was poetry in their songs. Their lyrics spoke to people of my generation.

The virtue of celebrities is that they're able to touch the imagination of a generation; that's what makes them charismatic. That's how I see Ms. Swift. I felt the same way about Madonna. I never understood Madonna, even though she had some good dance songs. And yet, we're exactly the same age. Finally, popular tastes aren't necessarily everyone's cup of tea.

Getting back to the motion, it's possible that Ms. Swift's management team may have been involved in distributing the tickets. From what I've read, Ms. Swift is a businesswoman. She's often been involved in distributing tickets to her shows. She's very dedicated to her business. So that could be an interesting aspect.

My colleague Ms. Khalid talked about the production of documents. Those documents were probably disclosed in accounting reports that are public. Normally, it takes a while to get access. In fact, I don't know if they're really accessible. I could be wrong. I'm not aware of all the administrative details, of all the issues that may arise.

It should be noted that the tickets were offered in exchange for a donation to a food bank. In the end, the tickets weren't accepted, but donations were still made. I think there was goodwill on both sides. If I understand correctly, Ms. Swift's messages deal with happiness, being kind to one another and so on.

• (1155)

However, you don't have to be nice to former lovers; she stops there. That's prohibited, and I understand her in that regard.

[*English*]

The Chair: Go ahead on your point of order.

Mr. Frank Caputo (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): If the Liberals are going to filibuster, they might as well keep it on point. This has nothing to do.... Pretty soon, we're going to start hearing about Travis Kelce. The reality is—

Mrs. Brenda Shanahan: Who's that?

Mr. Frank Caputo: "Who's that?" There you go.

Mr. Anthony Housefather (Mount Royal, Lib.): He's a very famous football player.

Mrs. Brenda Shanahan: Okay. That's really not my....

The Chair: Mr. Caputo, I understand your point.

Mrs. Shanahan has the floor. She can speak for as long as she wants. I'm sure she's going to bring it back to where we need it to be, but I generally, as you know, give a lot of latitude to what members can say.

I'm going to go back to Mrs. Shanahan because she has the floor.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Brenda Shanahan: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Actually, I'm speaking specifically to the motion. It was a good thing that you put on your earpiece, Mr. Caputo. That way, you'll understand my arguments and how I feel about the motion.

Taylor Swift is mentioned in it and that topic is considered important. Apparently, her show is linked to the issue of affordability, particularly to the fact that people have to use food banks. Donations to food banks are also at issue. I think that this still heads in the right direction. Ms. Swift still serves as an inspiration, even though there may have been an additional donation to a food bank in this case. I imagine that most of her fans followed her example.

She's very popular with people in general, somewhat like Justin Bieber. His fans were part of a certain generation and his songs were perfect for dancing. Mr. Harper's children were apparently among his fans. They attended some of his concerts. Perhaps we should explore the phenomenon of stars and why people want to attend their concerts so much. That's a bit of a philosophical question, I think.

If not everyone can afford to attend a popular star's concert, does that mean no one should? I'm looking at Mr. Villemure, who is very familiar with these kinds of questions combining ethics and logic. Of course, there are poor people who would have liked to see Taylor Swift's concert, but for whom it was impossible. Does that mean that no one should have attended? Some people paid a very high price for their tickets; others won them in a contest. Not everyone had that opportunity. A rather pointed question arises here.

• (1200)

[*English*]

I have to switch to English.

It's the dog-in-the-manger problem.

[*Translation*]

The dog can't eat hay and he won't let anyone else eat hay. Some parliamentarians may have been very disappointed not to be able to attend the Taylor Swift concert. A survey should be done to determine Taylor Swift's popularity by age and political party. Those are the questions I have when I see a motion of this kind. I'm wondering what the purpose of all this is. Is it to punish certain people? In my opinion—this may also be the opinion of Mr. Barrett, who moved the motion—this music was sometimes rather in dubious taste.

I'll leave it at that, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Shanahan.

[*English*]

Mr. Fisher, you're next.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Villemure, I saw that you had your hand up.

Mr. René Villemure: Thank you.

[*English*]

Mr. Darren Fisher: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'm looking at this motion, and I'm thinking about... Brenda touched on November 2012, when PM Harper awarded Justin Bieber the Diamond Jubilee Medal and then attended the concert with his family that night. Obviously, that's something we'd want to add, assuming we can go back that far. Obviously, there's the NHL game that Stephen Harper attended at the TD Garden in Boston with one of his ministers. There's value in going back and seeing the documents so that we can see whether these are patterns for ministers and for former prime ministers. We definitely need to have a long conversation about this motion if we want to get down to the point that Mr. Barrett is actually looking for.

Madam Khalid talked about the opening couple of paragraphs. They don't need to be there. We could have a chat, for instance, about getting rid of the whole of paragraphs (i), (ii) and (iii), and working on the conversation on paragraphs (a) and (b).

I will say, Mr. Chair, that we didn't really expect a meeting today. We had a conversation about this, and it looked like there wasn't going to be one. I don't know whether it's just one member who needs to reach out to the chair to book a meeting. I assume that Mr. Barrett must have just reached out to you. I'm not sure how it all happened, and we're meeting at a different time of the day.

Obviously, the opposition-led committees have the ability and would take the ability, of course, to meet as many times as they possibly can. We don't have a problem with that. However, it does seem that this has cropped up. Mr. Barrett said that he had a motion and that we have to meet before Christmas, and we have a motion on the floor.

• (1205)

The Chair: Mr. Fisher, I can confirm that this was not what happened.

Thank God we have opposition-led meetings. Thank God.

Go ahead.

Mr. Darren Fisher: What I would ask is this: Are we going to—and can we take a little bit of time to—go back through history to look to see who went to concerts and who went to Stanley Cup games so that we can find out exactly what the tradition is, what the pattern is, and who has paid for tickets?

For instance, was this quid pro quo: Justin Bieber got a Diamond Jubilee Medal and then all of a sudden Mr. Harper's family gets tickets to the concert? I mean, inquiring minds might want to know that.

I would say that, moving forward, we would probably consider several amendments to this motion. I'll let the next person in line speak on this. Certainly we'll ruminate, and I'll go through the Google machine to find some other examples we might want to include.

The Chair: Thank you for that, Mr. Fisher.

I'll just reconfirm that I did call this meeting, as is my prerogative as chair. You'll notice that a time slot did open up from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., which is good, because I was trying to avoid that 3:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. meeting so that the Liberals could enjoy their holiday Christmas party this evening. You can thank my benevolence for that.

Go ahead, Mr. Housefather.

Mr. Michael Barrett: Will the Deputy Prime Minister be there?

Mr. Anthony Housefather: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I would certainly second your being allowed to have the moniker “John the Benevolent”. There was Alfred the Great and Ethelred the Unready, so I think “John the Benevolent” sounds very good.

I also want to come back to what I consider to be a sad commentary about Madonna. I personally think that Madonna is an incredible singer, and she was one of my favourites when I was a little kid. I really would appreciate a higher level of respect for Madonna. I love *Material Girl*.

The Chair: I know that everybody is excited to get to the Christmas carols that I've prepared in both official languages that we're going to sing at the end of the meeting, but let's keep the meeting on track, please.

Thank you.

Mr. Anthony Housefather: I'm looking forward to that, Mr. Chair.

Basically, I'm just looking at the motion. As we all know, the substance of the motion is what the committee actually orders for production. The preamble to this motion, first of all, goes into talking about food banks, which is completely irrelevant to the substance of the motion. The second point doesn't tell the full story of what the minister has already disclosed. For example, it doesn't mention his charitable donation of \$1,500. On the third point, "The Prime Minister's Office has not clarified"—well, there's no obligation on them to actually clarify this.

To me, in order to avoid a lengthy debate about a preamble that really doesn't deal with the substance of the motion and that is unnecessary for the adoption of the substance of the motion, I would propose, Mr. Chair, an amendment to delete the preamble, meaning paragraphs (i), (ii) and (iii) of the motion. I think that will help us get to a better discussion of the actual substance of the motion so that we don't have to worry about the superfluous language that is somewhat slanted in one direction.

That would be my proposal, Mr. Chair.

• (1210)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Housefather.

The amendment is to delete the preamble.

Members of the committee are well aware of my thoughts on preambles. Let's get to the substance of what we want here as a committee, if we choose to vote for whatever the ask is. I'm not a big fan of preambles, because I do think they open up a tremendous number of problems in the debate, so I agree with Mr. Housefather on that.

We have an amendment on the floor. Do we have any discussion on the amendment?

Ms. Shanahan, go ahead.

Mrs. Brenda Shanahan: Once again, I think we can always rely on Mr. Housefather to get to the heart of the matter. I fully agree that we don't need the superfluous language in the preamble.

I note that "Taylor Swift" is still in the main body of the resolution, so there is some question about tickets for other programs, other shows, other sports events and so on. I may have something to say about that when we're discussing the main motion.

On the amendment itself, I'm certainly in agreement.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Shanahan.

I don't see any other discussion.

Mr. Darren Fisher: On the amendment...?

The Chair: We're on the amendment, yes. Go ahead.

Mr. Darren Fisher: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I thank Brenda for moving that. I—

Mrs. Brenda Shanahan: No, it was Mr. Housefather.

The Chair: The amendment to delete the preamble was moved by Mr. Housefather. That's what we're on right now. I would love to deal with that quickly, if we can.

On the amendment, I don't see any other discussion.

Do we have an agreement on the amendment?

An hon. member: No.

The Chair: We're going to call a vote. We have no agreement on the amendment.

Ms. Iqra Khalid: If I may, if we don't have agreement, then I just wanted to perhaps—

The Chair: I'm calling the vote on the amendment. If you have another amendment you'd like to make, then you can have the floor to move that, but on this amendment, I already called the vote. I asked for consensus, and there was none, so we're going to go to a recorded vote on the amendment to delete the preamble.

(Amendment agreed to: yeas 7; nays 3 [*See Minutes of Proceedings*])

The Chair: We are on the main motion as amended, which is the ask in point (a) and point (b). That's what we're on right now.

I had Monsieur Villemure, and then I'm going to put you at the bottom of the list here, Ms. Khalid.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Villemure will be followed by Mr. Cooper.

[*English*]

You're actually on the list, Ms. Khalid, above Ms. Shanahan.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Villemure, you have the floor.

Mr. René Villemure: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

A long time ago, a French politician said, "If it goes without saying, it will go even better by saying it." So I'm going to make a couple of points.

The amendment we just passed had to do with the preamble. The problem with preambles is that they can often be useful, but they generally contain value judgments as if they contain a conclusion before the debate is done, which isn't desirable.

With respect to the motion, I'll give the example of the Prime Minister, who has already had problems with gifts and conflicts of interest. However, you don't necessarily have to convict someone in advance. When you're Prime Minister, the chances are slim that you'll try to go to the Ticketmaster site to buy a ticket. It would even be unwise to do so.

So there's a certain logic to someone buying a ticket and paying the price. I fully agree with asking for a document that proves it. There's no problem, since the Prime Minister's history on gifts and conflicts of interest is indeed nebulous.

You can't take advantage of your office for personal gain. I agree, but was there another way to do it? I'm not sure. The documents will show that, but we must avoid having this committee become a permanent tribunal. Ms. Khalid and I are, I think, the only two original members of this committee.

Is that correct, Ms. Khalid?

We're the only members who have been here since the beginning. We've witnessed debates that have served the public interest. I believe that these debates will contribute to positive change.

However, some questions are raised, and Mr. Barrett's is a good one. However, we mustn't become, under the wording of the motion, a court whose purpose is to always convict someone in advance and to act as such.

I'll support the motion because asking for documents is reasonable. That said, I'd like the committee to note that our role isn't that of a court, and that there are bodies such as the Office of the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner that will be called upon to judge this type of thing.

Thank you very much.

• (1215)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Villemure.

[*English*]

It's Mr. Cooper, then Ms. Khalid and Mrs. Shanahan.

Go ahead, Mr. Cooper, on the motion as amended.

Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

This is a motion that Canadians, frankly, deserve to see in the way of transparency on the part of this government. The fact that Minister Sajjan was offered and accepted tickets to a Taylor Swift concert is a classic, straight-up conflict of interest. The minister accepted tickets from PavCo, a provincial Crown corporation. PavCo receives funding from the federal government, including \$116 million in the past year to upgrade BC Place in advance of the World Cup.

The Conflict of Interest Act is crystal clear. It says:

No public office holder or member of his or her family shall accept any gift or other advantage...that might reasonably be seen to have been given to influence the public office holder in the exercise of an official power, duty or function.

Mr. Chair, here you have a public office holder, Minister Sajjan, accepting a gift for himself and his daughter from a Crown corporation that seeks federal funding and that has received federal funding from a minister who sits at the cabinet table and makes decisions about whether or not to fund that Crown corporation. That is a conflict of interest.

The fact that the minister, after he got caught, suddenly said, "Oops, I'm going to return the tickets" doesn't end the matter. That's not good enough. He got caught. That's the only reason he decided in the 11th hour not to attend. The fact of the matter remains that he was offered the tickets and accepted the tickets. We need to know exactly how that took place. There needs to be a level of accountability.

Frankly, it is reflective of a pattern of conflicts of interest and ethical lapses in this government. Minister Sajjan would not be alone in putting himself in a position to violate the Conflict of Interest Act. After all, his boss the Prime Minister—the serial lawbreaker—has broken the Conflict of Interest Act not once but twice. He's the first prime minister in Canadian history to do so.

That brings me to the Prime Minister. He attended the Taylor Swift concert in Toronto. Tickets were going for, in some cases, thousands of dollars—

The Chair: I'm sorry, Mr. Cooper—

Mr. Michael Cooper: It's the bells.

The Chair: I'm sorry, Mr. Cooper; I'm obligated at this point, when the bells are ringing, to seek unanimous consent of the committee.

Is it a quorum call? They're not flashing anymore. It looks like a quorum call.

Go ahead. Continue, Mr. Cooper.

• (1220)

Mr. Michael Cooper: Mr. Chair, that brings me to the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister accepted tickets or, according to his version of events, bought tickets to the Taylor Swift concert in Toronto. Tickets for that concert reportedly cost in the thousands of dollars. At minimum, they were \$1,500, and some tickets went for thousands more.

The Prime Minister would have Canadians believe that he purchased those tickets out of his own pocket. If that is the case, why is it that the Prime Minister and his office have refused to answer basic questions around the Prime Minister's attendance at the concert? The Prime Minister and his office have refused to disclose how much he paid for the tickets, when they were purchased and how many tickets he purchased. If the Prime Minister, in fact, had purchased the tickets, wouldn't he be eager to say, "I bought the tickets on such-and-such a day and I paid such-and-such an amount. Here are the receipts, and there's nothing to see here. I simply went and attended a concert out of my own pocket"? Mr. Chair, that would be what anyone would do if, in fact, they had paid for the concert.

The fact that the Prime Minister has been anything but transparent raises serious questions, and I would note that the record of the Prime Minister raises even more questions because, as I noted, this is a Prime Minister who is a serial lawbreaker. He is a Prime Minister who has violated the Conflict of Interest Act multiple times and has been investigated multiple times. It's not only that; the Prime Minister is a proven liar. He is an absolute liar.

Ms. Iqra Khalid: I have a point of order, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: I'm going to ask Mr. Cooper to be a little more judicious in his language.

On the point of order, go ahead.

Ms. Iqra Khalid: That was exactly my point, Chair. That's very unparliamentary language. It would be really upsetting for that member if I called him a liar.

The Chair: But you're not going to do that, are you, Ms. Khalid?

Ms. Iqra Khalid: I respect the rules of this House and this place.

The Chair: Go ahead, Mr. Cooper.

Mr. Michael Cooper: It's too bad that we have such an ethically challenged Prime Minister. We live in the greatest country in the world with the worst Prime Minister this country has ever seen.

Ms. Iqra Khalid: Again, I have a point of order, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Go ahead on your point of order.

Ms. Iqra Khalid: I don't see what that has to do with this motion. I think casting judgment on how good or bad somebody is doesn't really help us in getting through the orders of the day today. It is absurd. I could call that member the—

The Chair: I understand—

Ms. Iqra Khalid: —worst person in the world. I'm not going to do that. I will keep my thoughts to myself. I think, again, that it's very unparliamentary—

The Chair: I understand your point of order.

Mr. Cooper, you have the floor.

Ms. Iqra Khalid: —language for that member to be going down this path.

Mr. Michael Cooper: I just—

The Chair: Just hang on a second, okay? Let's keep the train on the rails here.

Mr. Cooper, you have the floor. Go ahead.

Mr. Michael Cooper: I will note, Mr. Chair, that the Prime Minister has necessitated this motion, or at least the part of the motion as it pertains to him, because all he has to do is show us the receipts to demonstrate that there's nothing to see here, but he hasn't done that, so what we have is smoke, and where there's smoke, there's fire.

As I noted, added to that are the Prime Minister's multiple ethical breaches, his law-breaking, his lying, so taken together, we need to get—

Mr. Darren Fisher: On a point of order, Mr. Chair, you've already already asked him to stop with the lying.

Mr. Michael Barrett: He's not lying. He's talking about Justin Trudeau lying.

The Chair: Mr. Fisher, I got your point of order.

Go ahead, Mr. Cooper.

• (1225)

Mr. Michael Cooper: Taken together, this motion needs to be passed. We need to see the records. We need to see if the Prime Minister is once again breaking the law, violating the Conflict of Interest Act, lying and gaslighting Canadians.

With respect to Minister Sajjan, now that he's been caught, we need to understand exactly what transpired and led him into a position where he broke the Conflict of Interest Act.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Cooper.

Ms. Khalid, go ahead, please, on the motion as amended.

Ms. Iqra Khalid: Thank you, Chair.

I want to talk a little bit about the points that Mr. Cooper made, which I think really contradict exactly what he's trying to say.

Mr. Cooper quoted the Conflict of Interest Act and what really makes a conflict of interest real.

In fact, this committee has tried in the past to study the Conflict of Interest Act and study exactly how 79% of Conservatives were using the total expenses of accommodations to use public funds to go to partisan party conventions.

How can we make sure that the Conflict of Interest Act creates that safety net for taxpayers?

I will quote here:

A loophole in the House of Commons' spending rules has allowed MPs traveling to party conventions to bill taxpayers for more than half a million dollars over the past year—even though House of Commons rules normally prohibit MPs from charging expenses linked to partisan political activity.

Since May 2023, MPs have charged to the House of Commons \$538,314 in travel, accommodation, meals and incidental costs associated with attending caucus meetings held in connection with party conventions—including more than \$84,000 for travel by “designated travellers,” often MPs' spouses.

Expense claims filed to the Senate by seven Conservative senators for travel, accommodation and per diems added another \$26,293 to the total.

Conservative MPs racked up 79 per cent of the spending by MPs. They billed the House of Commons \$426,283 to attend a caucus meeting associated with the Conservative Party's policy convention in Quebec City in September 2023, including \$331,699 for travel, \$71,408 for accommodations and \$21,053 for meals and incidentals.

This is a very important point:

Conservative MPs were the only ones to bill Parliament for spouses' travel to a caucus meeting connected to a party convention during that time period.

It's so interesting that Mr. Cooper would have you do as he says, but not as he does. That goes for all of his Conservative colleagues.

An hon. member: I have a point of order.

Ms. Iqra Khalid: Mr. Chair, I think he has a point of order.

The Chair: I heard, but I don't think you really do have a point of order.

Go ahead.

Ms. Iqra Khalid: I'll continue:

Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre did not file an expense claim to the House of Commons from his MP's budget for travel to Quebec City.

I find that to be quite troubling. All of our committee commits to talking about and working on ethics rules in the House, and what has Mr. Cooper done? He and his party made sure that this motion never saw the light of day in this committee.

It was presented. We talked about it. What did they do? It was don't "Do as I say", or whatever that saying is, Chair.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

An hon. member: Do as I say, not as I do.

Ms. Iqra Khalid: Yes, it's "Do as I say, not as I do." I would love a bigger round of applause. Thank you very much.

I will also point out—and this may be a trivial matter to some—that when we get these jubilee pins or little king's medals to give out to our constituents, I always find it weird when MPs wear them themselves, because I always thought these were taxpayer dollars that were spent to buy these medals or these little pins that we then give to our constituents. If an MP wears them, are they now misusing taxpayer dollars?

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Ms. Iqra Khalid: It's a very valid question. You should ask Mr. Williamson.

Mr. Michael Barrett: That's absurd. You're absurd.

Ms. Iqra Khalid: That is not absurd at all.

● (1230)

The Chair: I don't want the crosstalk—

Ms. Iqra Khalid: Mr. Chair, I would like an apology for that comment.

The Chair: I don't want crosstalk.

Mr. Darren Fisher: That's not right.

Ms. Iqra Khalid: I would like an apology for that comment, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: For what?

Ms. Iqra Khalid: He called me "absurd".

Mr. Darren Fisher: He called her "absurd".

The Chair: I don't—

Mr. Michael Barrett: Indeed I did, and I won't apologize.

The Chair: Okay.

Well, I can't force—

Mr. Michael Barrett: Those medals are part of the order of precedence. Anyone who receives one, just like anyone who receives a decoration from the viceroy for their service in the Canadian Armed Forces, is absolutely entitled to wear them. To say otherwise is preposterous.

No, it's not an abuse of taxpayer money for anyone who receives a decoration that's in the official order of precedence to wear it, any more than it is for the viceroy, the Governor General of Canada, to wear their medal. It's an absurd comment.

The Chair: Thank you for that, Mr. Barrett.

I actually did read the order of precedence last week as it relates to the King's coronation medal. You're quite right on that.

Go ahead, Ms. Khalid.

Mr. Darren Fisher: Sorry, Chair. I have a quick point of order.

The Chair: Go ahead.

Mr. Darren Fisher: Feeling that someone's comment is absurd is a whole lot different from saying "you are absurd". I would ask Mr. Barrett if he would apologize for that comment.

Mr. Michael Barrett: No.

The Chair: He already said that he's not going to apologize.

Go ahead, Ms. Khalid. You have the floor.

Ms. Iqra Khalid: Thank you, Chair.

I'm not very surprised. Rudeness is quite common in some places. I was making a point about the perception of how taxpayer dollars are used. I'm sorry that he was so offended.

Oh, look—I can apologize. That's fine.

I will perhaps also talk about a Hungarian think tank that was run by a Conservative MP who used taxpayer dollars to spend tens of thousands of dollars on sponsored travel all across the world. Looking to see who benefits from sponsored travel is something that we had tried to study in this committee as well: How should sponsored travel be used? Should MPs be entitled to take taxpayer dollars and spend them across the world, or should those taxpayer dollars be staying here in Canada?

If we're so worried about how taxpayer dollars are used and about how the Conflict of Interest Act applies, then we need to make sure that we have a well-rounded approach to how that happens and not just say, "Oh, if you're a Liberal, you must be violating something."

Mr. Darren Fisher: I have a point of order, Mr. Chair.

We were sitting over here very quietly listening when they were speaking. Every time Iqra says something that they don't agree with, they commiserate amongst themselves and make noise. Could we just—

The Chair: Yes. I do—

Mr. Michael Barrett: We won't be silent during their foolishness.

The Chair: Mr. Barrett, please....

Mr. Fisher, I hear talking on this side. I don't think it's disrupting the meeting. If it was disrupting the meeting, then I would call it out. It's quite common. I've also heard conversations that happen from your side. I've called it out in the past when it becomes disruptive, and I'll continue to call it out.

Go ahead, Ms. Khalid.

Ms. Iqra Khalid: Thank you, Chair.

You know, again, I find it really telling that all of a sudden there are big whispers and potential disruptions in this committee. It's because they don't want to hear what I have to say. They don't want to study, as we have tried to do with the help of the Bloc and with the help of the NDP, all these issues in a very non-partisan way, to say that we have an issue with the Conflict of Interest Act, potentially.

We have a way here in this committee to review that act based on the kinds of transactions that have happened in the past, whether by Conservatives or anyone else, yet, as Mr. Villemure said, I have sat on this committee year after year, listening to a whole bunch of hay and not getting any work—any work—done.

How many reports have we really tabled so far, Mr. Chair? That, I think, is really unfortunate, because there is a lot of good work that needs to be done in this committee. Mr. Cooper outlined it himself. We need to study the Conflict of Interest Act and what is violating that Conflict of Interest Act. If there are members on that side who are in clear violation, as reported, then we need to study that too. It can't just be this minister or that minister or that PM, calling them names every single day—to what objective? If we are really trying to do something here and if we are really trying to make positive change to better protect taxpayer dollars and to have a better Conflict of Interest Act that suits the needs of taxpayers and Canadians, then open it up. Have that non-partisan conversation.

Why is it that we always have to insert politics and be toxic? I have received so much of that toxicity, whether through Facebook, live videos—

• (1235)

Mr. Michael Barrett: I have a point of order, Chair.

Ms. Iqra Khalid: —or terrible tweets getting put out against me, or my office address being released—

The Chair: Ms. Khalid, just hang on. There is a point of order.

Mr. Michael Barrett: Chair, it's on relevance. The motion deals with the Conflict of Interest Act. This is important, because the Conflict of Interest Act is something that this committee deals with.

Ms. Iqra Khalid: That's not a point of order.

Mr. Michael Barrett: The code for members is dealt with by the procedure and House affairs committee. What Ms. Khalid is talking about is not germane to the motion. What she's talking about could potentially fall under the code for members, but that would be the purview of the procedure and House affairs committee.

Why does this deal with ministers and the Prime Minister only? They are the only ones subject to the act. I'm sure that all members have—

The Chair: It's a fair point.

Mr. Michael Barrett: —read it, and they've been here for years, but everyone needs to understand—

Ms. Iqra Khalid: On that same point—

Mr. Michael Barrett: The member opposite needs to understand—

The Chair: Thank you. You made your point, Mr. Barrett.

Mr. Michael Barrett: —that what she's talking about betrays her absolute ignorance about the act and the code.

The Chair: You've made your point.

Mrs. Brenda Shanahan: I have a point of order.

The Chair: Mr. Barrett, you made your point on the difference between the act and the code. I appreciate that.

Ms. Iqra Khalid: I have a point on that same point of order, Chair.

The Chair: I did not appreciate the last part of it.

Mr. Michael Barrett: Do you mean the lack of understanding? That's the definition of the word. It's a lack of understanding.

Ms. Iqra Khalid: Mr. Chair, I am just as capable of calling people names. I refrain from that because I have respect for this committee and for this place.

The Chair: Ms. Khalid, hang on a second.

Ms. Iqra Khalid: This is the second or third time he's done it today, Chair. That's just today.

Mr. Michael Barrett: A lack of understanding is not—

An hon. member: I have a point of order.

The Chair: I would prefer it in a different tone and a different context, Mr. Barrett, to be fair.

Mrs. Brenda Shanahan: I have a point of order.

The Chair: I have several points of order here.

Go ahead—

Ms. Iqra Khalid: Sir, I called a point on that same point of order that Mr. Barrett raised.

The Chair: Can we just agree to—

Ms. Iqra Khalid: No, Chair. I want to make a point here.

The Chair: No. Hang on a second.

Ms. Iqra Khalid: Before I started my remarks—

The Chair: I'm not going to you until I'm done.

We will just agree that we're going to get through this. We're not going to go point-counterpoint. This is not a *Saturday Night Live* skit. Let's just get through this without any assertions, please.

Ms. Khalid, go—

Mr. Darren Fisher: No. Brenda has a point of order, and I have a point of order.

The Chair: I'm going to go to Mr. Fisher and then to Ms. Shanahan on the points of order.

Go ahead.

Mr. Darren Fisher: I get, Mr. Chair, that you want to see this go a bit more smoothly, but Standing Order 18 says that you can't "use offensive words against either House, or against any member thereof." You wiped it away by asking him not to do it again, and then he did it again.

The Chair: I've asked him not to do it.

Mr. Darren Fisher: He has to apologize for doing it.

The Chair: I can't make him apologize, Mr. Fisher. I can't. I am trying to control this meeting as best I can here.

Mr. Darren Fisher: By allowing him to get away with this....

The Chair: Let me ask you a fair question. Do I know what he's going to say until he says it? Does anybody in this room know that? I can only deal with the words that are spoken and with the actions.

Mr. Darren Fisher: Right, and once they are spoken—

The Chair: I'm dealing with it as best I can. I've asked everybody for some calm. Let's get through this motion as best we can, without name-calling on all sides, not just on one side. That's how I'm dealing with it. If you have a better suggestion, then let me know.

Mr. Darren Fisher: I will say that no one on this side has said anything close to offending Standing Order 18, as has been said by two of the three—

The Chair: Fine.

Ms. Shanahan, go ahead on your point of order.

Mrs. Brenda Shanahan: Mr. Chair, I find it surprising that you claim that you don't have the power, the authority, to bring decorum to this committee, because indeed you do. You can demand that the member withdraw his comment. You asked him to apologize, and he refused to apologize. That's a direct challenge to you. You can then go further and can ask him to withdraw his comments. If he refuses to do that, then I think you need to take the next action, which is for you take it from there. If I were in your place, I would ask your whip to remove him as a member of this committee.

• (1240)

The Chair: Thank you for that intervention.

I'm asking for decorum. I expect decorum from this point forward. I am not going to accept anything less than that. I'll deal with it if I have to.

Ms. Iqra Khalid: I have the floor.

The Chair: Go ahead. You have the floor—

I see Mr. Maloney's hand up. I don't know what that's for.

Mr. James Maloney: I was going to get involved in this point of order, but just add me to the speaking list, please, Chair.

The Chair: Go ahead, Ms. Khalid. You have the floor.

Ms. Iqra Khalid: Thank you, Chair.

Since I was interrupted, I would like to clarify that at the beginning of my remarks, I said I was going to start by countering some of the points Mr. Cooper made in his remarks. It was Mr. Cooper who was talking about the Conflict of Interest Act, not me. As he was talking, I was making notes on exactly all of the instances in which he was being quite hypocritical in his remarks. If I'm ignorant and he's hypocritical, it is an eye for an eye and we'll make the world blind.

I'm trying to get through this meeting. I'm trying to have a respectful conversation and take partisan politics out of the work we do. We have, in so many ways, stepped away from the true meaning of this committee.

Mr. Villemure and I have had these conversations many times. All I'm trying to do, Chair, is see how we can better ensure that parliamentarians—all of them—conduct themselves in the manner a parliamentarian should. That doesn't just mean obeying all the rules of the House; it's being respectful, not name-calling, and making sure conflicts of interest—not just actual, but also perceived—do not happen. I have said this many times before in this committee: We need to do a thorough review of how this happens, instead of a piecemeal review here and there, depending on whose political objective is being achieved, because that's not the role of this committee at all.

I think we can do better. Again, I'm quite embarrassed by what Canadians have watched today as a result of the conduct of my colleagues here.

I'll park my comments there, Chair.

The Chair: Okay.

Mrs. Shanahan, you have the floor. Go ahead.

Mrs. Brenda Shanahan: Well, thank you, Chair.

I want to put on the record that when abusive comments are made and unparliamentary language is used by members, it's not the individual members who are affected: It is the honour of this House. It is the honour of our Westminster parliamentary system, which relies on people being able to speak with each other.

[*Translation*]

They must address each other in a respectful manner.

[*English*]

We are not here speaking on our own behalf. It's not our own particular interests we are bringing forward. It's the interests of the people we represent and Canadians as a whole.

That is why, Chair, I must say that I am disappointed that you have not taken a firmer hand in the conduct carried out.

The Chair: Mrs. Shanahan, I have two options if the meeting is disruptive: suspend the meeting or adjourn the meeting. Those are the only two options I have at that point. I've chosen not to do that, hoping we can get through this motion. I'm sorry you're disappointed, but I'm exercising my authority as chair the best way I know how, and I'm not going to accept your challenging me on that. I'm doing my best here.

I've asked for decorum, so I expect decorum. That's the way we're going to proceed. If we don't have it, I'll think about those other two options.

Mrs. Brenda Shanahan: Indeed, Chair, your role as chair is primary to that respect occurring. I would appreciate all colleagues here, when you ask for decorum, respecting that decorum, because, again, it's not about you personally, but the role you occupy. I will park those comments there.

Moving to the motion at hand, there appears to be a question here of ordering PavCo, which I believe is a ticket distribution company of some sort—I don't know, since it's been a while since I bought concert tickets—"to provide to the clerk of the committee, within two weeks, all records" and "providing of tickets for any of the Taylor Swift concerts at BC Place", etc. Members have the motion before them.

As I said in my discussion regarding the amendment, I have questions about why... if we're concerned about—I guess this is what we're concerned about—undue influence being wielded by the offering of Taylor Swift tickets, I guess times have changed, but maybe not so much, because we heard how it was a question in earlier Parliaments of Justin Bieber tickets and a question of hockey game playoff tickets and whatnot for members, and not because members were themselves special people but because the role they occupied would have been accorded some kind of special favour or privilege.

When we hear that any member of Parliament or any senator is potentially in that role, it might be worth exploring the records of each and every parliamentarian, whether it be around a specific event or enlarged and spread out.

I want to think about that a little more, because it's not really my cup of tea to do that kind of thing. In fact, it is the role of the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner to investigate if and when there is a complaint, either by a member of this Parliament or by a member of the public vis-à-vis the conduct of a member here. This is why we are advised—and we heard it from the commissioner himself on several occasions when colleagues were going down another rabbit hole—to consult with the Ethics Commissioner as often as we feel the need to when we are faced with a certain situation.

This is because any member at any time can be offered something that may be questionable during the course of their duties. It may be okay or it may not be okay, and it's not every member. What you think would be an open-and-shut case or a black and white situation is not always so.

We are very fortunate that we have the Office of the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner to consult. Apparently, that was the case for Minister Sajjan when he attended, I believe, some kind of fundraiser in support of a food bank. He made a donation, the tickets were offered and he consulted the Ethics Commissioner, who said there was no problem with that and he could go ahead, but other people had plenty of problems with it, and Minister Sajjan declined the tickets in question.

● (1245)

Again, it's something that... I look to a colleague like Mr. Ville-mure.

[*Translation*]

There are principles and regulations. Often, however, regulations don't fully reflect the principles. I agree that in some cases it's better to act beyond reproach. That was the minister's decision in this situation, but it took away the opportunity for some of our colleagues to question him and to take advantage outright of a very high-profile situation, since these were tickets to a Taylor Swift concert.

● (1250)

[*English*]

If it were a question of receiving a set of coffee cups or something, I don't think that would have received the same attention. They could have been very nice coffee cups. They could have been Tim Hortons coffee cups, which can go for a pretty penny sometimes, but no, that would not be of interest to colleagues who were seeking to take advantage of a grey zone situation.

I have to say that I am really of two minds about whether this is something that is useful for this committee to look at. Is there sufficient concern or risk to our institution? That's really what we're talking about when we talk about issues of conflict of interest and ethics on the Hill in both our Houses, although here, of course, we just deal with the House of Commons. The question is, are we looking at a situation that could cast any doubt or bring a shadow over the institution in question? That is what really needs to be addressed, over and above any particular details of whatever that situation may be.

As I said before, clearly, if I had been offered Taylor Swift tickets, I would not have taken them. Maybe I could have sold them on eBay; I don't know. Maybe I would have had some takers here, even in this room. That was not a situation that I was faced with, but it can be imagined that parliamentarians would be faced with a number of situations that, again, are in that zone. They're not out-and-out brown paper bags filled with cash. It's not that. It looks different, and there can be some question as to whether it is something that could cast a shadow over our institutions. That's where I am on paragraph (a).

On part (b), Chair, I always have a problem with "within one week", "three days", "48 hours", etc., especially when we're heading into a period when we know that Parliament is closing down and there's a holiday period, or people are on vacation, and so on and so forth. To me, we have to give an opportunity to the people who do this work to do it properly.

As I say, I'm not really aware of what's involved. It's not like pulling up your own bank account and seeing what you pay for, although on that note, Chair, I wish people would pay more attention to that sort of thing, because they would then be more aware of their own financial situation. I'm alluding to something that happened to me earlier in the day, but that's neither here nor there.

Again, on the two minds, if we were to go down this road, what are we looking for? If we're going to look for it, we should look for it with a net wide enough to provide helpful information and result in something that can be used to better protect our institutions. If that's not the case—if, really and truly, the commissioner is sufficiently enabled to take the means necessary to protect the institution through his investigative powers—this is of no merit whatsoever and is not something I would support.

I'm going to leave it at that, Chair. However, can you put me back on the list? I want to come back with some of the other thoughts I've parked for the moment.

Thank you.

• (1255)

The Chair: Okay.

I have Mr. Fisher, Mr. Maloney, Mr. Housefather, Mr. Barrett and Mrs. Shanahan.

Go ahead, Mr. Fisher.

Mr. Darren Fisher: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Thank you also for your efforts to keep decorum in this committee. However, I will still state my disappointment that there have been no repercussions for breaking Standing Order 18. I find that very disheartening. I'm sure there's something in your chair's handbook that allows you to ensure that either repercussions or an apology are forthcoming over comments made towards Ms. Khalid. I can't imagine a situation in which the chair could just say, "Stop", "What?" or "I'll tell you to stop again." We've had these conversations at this committee before, because it's all about the clip.

René, you and I have talked about this before—the clip. You get your 30 seconds. You get your little clip that can go on Facebook, where you're refusing to apologize, so it looks like you're refusing to apologize to a Liberal member. However, Standing Order 18 is one of the Standing Orders that ensure we show decorum to other members.

Frank, you and I had a conversation about this before, when we were travelling on committee business. "Wouldn't it be great if we treated each other better in our committees and in the House?" Well, it's great to say that in private. It's great to say it when there are no cameras. It's great to be friendly when it's an in camera meeting. However, it's very distressing to see that lack of decorum among people who are elected to represent their communities.

I'm not a hyperpartisan person. You've probably never seen me be super-partisan, and you probably won't. I understand there is somewhat of a game to the business of politics, when we do everything we can to score political points and make the other people look bad, and I get it; I've been here for over nine years. I've seen it. I've seen it done well. I've seen it done well by some of the Conser-

vative members in this room, but it's not done well when you lash out at somebody, make a negative comment and refuse to take that comment back. That's not what we should expect of people in this committee.

I will tell you that when I first joined this committee, I felt like... Mr. Chair, you called it a "shooting fish in a barrel" committee, and everybody chuckled. I thought, "This is going to be nice. We're going to have a nice committee where people respect each other but hit hard and score political points." For several weeks now, we have actually had meetings like that. It's been quite good for some time, but I can't get past the decorum standing order—Standing Order 18.

I'm going to say something people may not agree with here: Abuse at this committee is almost always directed towards Ms. Khalid. She's no shrinking violet. She will fight back. I'm sure I don't need to be fighting on her behalf right now, but I say as her friend and as a friend of members on the other side of this room who are also virtual right now that I'd like to think that I'd stand up for them as well. I honestly would like to think that people know I would stand up for them.

Getting back to the motion, I think there's value in having a really good, fair discussion and we're not calling people liars, absurd or preposterous, a discussion in which we could check this out, have this conversation and talk about past news stories that don't become motions at this committee because a prime minister was in Boston for an NHL game seven or because PM Harper went to Scotiabank Place to see Taylor Swift in 2010. I'm not really that concerned about it, but if we're calling apples "apples" and oranges "oranges", maybe we need to find out. Did he get a free ticket? Did he pay market value for that ticket for a Taylor Swift concert in 2010? I have no idea.

• (1300)

I think Mr. Cooper said that Canadians need to know and are demanding answers. I checked back with the constituency office, and I've not had one person ask about Taylor Swift concert tickets—not one. I'm not sure, with all of the important things that are going on in the world right now, whether this is the top-of-mind issue that Mr. Cooper said it was.

I would say that having a full conversation on what we want to accomplish, including members of Parliament, ministers from the past and prime ministers from the past, is maybe a worthwhile discussion, but it's a rabbit hole, and I'm not sure it's a rabbit hole that we necessarily need to go down.

I think these types of cases should get sent to the Ethics Commissioner. The Ethics Commissioner should rule on them. That's why we have these commissioners, but we've seen in the past that when we've had the Ethics Commissioner come back with a ruling that said, "There's nothing to see here, folks", then there was another motion saying that we'll bypass him because our job is to get to the bottom of this, regardless of what the Ethics Commissioner—who is an integral part of the ethics committee—says.

I'm happy to hear again what other people think about broadening this and adding some things to this motion to see if we can actually get to the bottom of this.

That's all I have at the moment, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Fisher

Next on the list, I have Mr. Maloney.

Go ahead, sir.

Mr. James Maloney: Thanks, Chair.

Look, I may be the only person in Canada who woke up this morning wondering how John Diefenbaker got tickets to see the Beatles at Maple Leaf Gardens in 1967. I suspect fewer people woke up this morning wondering how any other politician, either now or ever, got tickets to a concert.

This motion is a colossal waste of time. It's unproductive. It's embarrassing for anybody watching this, if there is anybody other than staff members. If Canadians were to watch the debate that's taking place today during this committee, they would just shake their heads in shame, regardless of which party's talking.

I signed on this morning to help out one of my colleagues who couldn't attend. Then I see you, Mr. Chair, and I see Mr. Cooper—two people whom I've worked collaboratively with in the past and for whom I have a great deal of respect—and I sit back to watch the meeting, and what do I see? I see a bunch of name-calling. It looks like a schoolyard, as Mr. Fisher has pointed out. Ninety-five per cent of it is directed at one of my colleagues. She is no wallflower and she could defend herself, but the behaviour that I've witnessed at this committee is absolutely shameful.

I'll repeat myself: Anybody who watched this would think it's a disgrace. I think anybody who's been behaving in this way should just stand up right now, raise a point of order and say, "I'm sorry, that was really pathetic."

If you look at this motion—I will end with this—it's so ridiculous, because nobody cares. It comes from Mr. Barrett, so I guess I shouldn't be the least bit surprised, considering his greatest contribution to Parliament that I've seen is baseless character assassination.

Mr. Chair, in the interest of preserving decorum, I would hope you would adjourn this meeting and put an end to the misery that we're all experiencing.

Thank you.

• (1305)

The Chair: I appreciate that advice, Mr. Maloney, but I'm not going to do that.

Mr. Housefather, go ahead.

Mr. Anthony Housefather: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I was still looking forward to having you lead us in Christmas carols.

I think that rather than taking the opposite tack, I'd prefer to take the tack that we are in a holiday season. We're in the Christmas season. We're in the Hanukkah season. We're in the season of probably other festive holidays from different religions. I'm hoping that we

can put a Christmas truce in place here, because I also am somewhat disturbed by the type of language being used. I really hope we can remember that we're here to be productive. We're here to be colleagues. We're not here to insult one another. We're not here to fight with one another. We can disagree, but we can disagree, as Scott Aitchison and I have always said, without being disagreeable. It feels like too much that has happened today has been disagreeable.

That being said, let me come back to the substance of the motion. The main purpose of this motion is difficult for me to understand. We're ordering various productions related to Taylor Swift concerts. As my colleagues have pointed out, for umpteen years different politicians have gone to concerts like this.

PavCo is the company mentioned here:

(a) Order PavCo to provide to the Clerk of the Committee, within two weeks, all records concerning the offer or providing of tickets for any of the Taylor Swift concerts at BC Place to any federal ministers, officials, or ministerial exempt staff, including copies of any related communications; and

Well, PavCo is a provincial Crown corporation. It is not a federal Crown corporation. It is a provincial Crown corporation. PavCo has said that its standard practice is to make these offers, and it continues to want to do so in the future. That is what I've read in multiple articles from the CBC and CTV and other sources.

If there is an issue with PavCo and PavCo's practices, should it not be a committee of the B.C. legislature that looks at PavCo and its practices and determines whether or not on an ongoing basis this is a correct means by which PavCo continues to promote its concerts at BC Place or other venues? I fail to see the link to the Parliament of Canada in the practices of PavCo.

Then you get to the fact that minister is covered by the conflict of interest and ethics act, which means that this committee has jurisdiction over the minister, Minister Sajjan, in his decision to accept a ticket or two tickets to the concert. However, we also know, from all the information we have, that Minister Sajjan didn't accept free tickets. He made a \$1,500 donation to a food bank, which was what BC Place had suggested or PavCo had suggested—making a donation to a charity. He checked with the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner before doing so.

Now, all parliamentarians deal with the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner. It's not just ministers or parliamentary secretaries like me and Ms. Khalid. We all, as parliamentarians, deal with the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner. We should be able to rely on the advice we receive from the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner. It's not correct that if the minister is told by the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner that this is in compliance with the act, the committee should then be able to discredit the advice given by the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner and pursue a different level of inquiry.

Maybe politically it's not smart to take tickets and maybe it's not a smart political decision, but it's not a violation of the conflict of interest and ethics act, which is what the committee's jurisdiction is. It's fair if the Conservatives want to criticize the minister for taking the tickets and say that it was silly politically, but it's not a violation of the act. The commissioner actually gave him advice that he could do this.

[*Translation*]

I'm less and less convinced that this is the committee's responsibility. If we have a problem with what the minister did, we should ask the Ethics Commissioner to look into this matter. If the committee wants to pass something to ask the commissioner to look into what happened, I have no problem with that.

● (1310)

However, I find it problematic to ask a provincial public company to produce documents in connection with a file for which the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner gave favourable advice to the minister.

I think we're prolonging this discussion because there's a new motion today. It shouldn't be before this committee and certainly doesn't meet the needs of Canadians right now.

Mr. Chair, I'll give the floor to the next person.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Housefather.

Ms. Shanahan is next questioner.

Mrs. Brenda Shanahan: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

First of all, I'd like to thank my colleague for providing clarifications regarding PavCo. I now have a better understanding of the situation, particularly why we were talking about fundraising and food banks.

I think that kind of thing still happens quite frequently. As I was saying earlier, if there are problems with PavCo, it's up to the government of British Columbia to deal with them.

I don't know if it's the practice of committees to call provincial public companies, but I think that would be quite bizarre. I don't think there's any precedent.

Let's imagine that Loto-Québec gives tickets to a show. I don't know which artist is popular right now. Mr. Villemure could certainly give us a name or two. I'm more from the time of René Simard, but let's take the example of Céline Dion, who is back and whose performance in Paris I greatly appreciated.

If this crown corporation was giving tickets to a Céline Dion concert, and if federal ministers were among the people who received them, I don't think the Government of Quebec would want a federal parliamentary committee to start asking questions about its procedures. This question almost discredits the proposal, in my opinion.

I also think that talking about the price of a ticket that a minister, a member of Parliament or a federal public servant agrees to pay leads nowhere, and only satisfies people's curiosity about the tastes of certain parliamentarians. I don't think that would help us do our job and protect our parliamentary institutions.

Either it applies to all possible concerts, which opens up a whole universe to explore, or we'll just leave it at that, because as my colleague also explained, that's the commissioner's role.

If a ticket exchange for any concert were to result in some kind of contract, that would be called influence. That's not at all what

we're talking about, and the commissioner has all the powers needed to do that work.

● (1315)

Mr. Chairman, since I'm still thinking about all this, I'll give the floor to my honourable colleague Mr. Villemure, but I would ask you to put me back on the speaking list.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Shanahan.

Committee members, for your information, I asked the clerk if we could have more time after oral question period.

Mr. Villemure, you have the floor.

Mr. René Villemure: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'll forego my usual restraint. Indeed, I'm not in the habit of speaking intensely regarding certain debates.

Mr. Barrett's question is an interesting one. Is this offence a priority? Is it one of the worst? The answer is no in both cases. It's not uninteresting, because the Prime Minister has a bad history when it comes to gifts and conflicts of interest. However, as one member said earlier, the debate we're having is being blown out of all proportion.

A person in a position of authority will certainly be offered things, whether it be you, Mr. Chairman, Mr. Fisher or Mr. Caputo, for example. I suppose we'll judge properly whether it's acceptable or not.

Being held to account is what lies at the heart of a conflict of interest. Is a person beholden by accepting a favour? You could say that the tickets to the Taylor Swift show, which are sold for \$15,000 on the black market, are significant. As I said earlier, when you're a prime minister or president of the United States, there are limited options to get certain things—Bill Clinton said that that going to McDonald's was hard; at the same time, you get a bunch of stuff that you don't usually accept.

I think it might be worthwhile to ask for documents, but I'm surprised that they're making such a big deal out of it.

We are members of the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics. Ethics is the pursuit of just solutions according to the circumstances. However, that's not what I've been hearing from the outset, and I find it disappointing.

I agree that the committee should ask to see the documents. As Ms. Shanahan was saying earlier, the Ethics Commissioner gave the go-ahead. If we don't agree with the commissioner's verdict, it's up to us to change the act or code. We also have the privilege of amending privacy legislation. We are asking for that, but it's not being done. I believe that the Conflict of Interest Code for Members of the House of Commons in its current form has a lot of flaws. However, at present, the commissioner is responsible for enforcing those shortcomings, which creates political problems, as Mr. Housefather said.

I think we have to give this case its full weight. Mr. Barrett is asking for documents; let's get them and we can analyze them. No one has died. We can't treat this as the worst offence, because it's not.

I'd very much like for us to move forward. To pass the motion, we have to vote, and in order to vote, we have to stop talking. Talking to the point of exhaustion will still lead to a vote. I'd like us to avoid exhaustion and vote on the motion, which I will support.

The Chair: Mr. Villemure, thank you for your intervention.

• (1320)

[*English*]

Next on the list I have Ms. Damoff.

Go ahead, Ms. Damoff. We're on the main motion as amended, just so you know.

Ms. Pam Damoff (Oakville North—Burlington, Lib.): Thank you, Chair.

I was asked to fill in for a colleague today and I was happy to do so. I'm sad to say that I'm having a bit of déjà vu here.

If the Conservatives don't like the ethics rules, why aren't they bringing forward a motion to study the legislation? Repeatedly, we have the Ethics Commissioner make rulings, and then the Conservatives say that they don't like what the Ethics Commissioner said, so we need to do this or we need to do that.

As a member of Parliament, I have several times consulted with the Ethics Commissioner to get an opinion on any number of things. I rely, as do all of us in the House, on advice from the Ethics Commissioner. Why do we have one if the Conservatives then say that even though the Ethics Commissioner was consulted and approved of some advice, they don't like it, so we need to have a motion at the ethics committee?

I'm actually sad to see that when I'm back after several months of being on other committees, it's like a broken record here at the ethics committee. It's not only on the motion: When I joined the meeting today, once again Mr. Barrett was disparaging Ms. Khalid, which is something that happened repeatedly when I was on the committee. Obviously that hasn't changed either. It's unfortunate that there's a lack of respect between parliamentarians.

I'm really saddened by this. I think it's unfortunate that we can't have a conversation on issues without it being personal and without disparaging other members of Parliament. I would hope that committee members, in particular those who do use these disparaging comments, would think twice before doing it.

Mr. Villemure from the Bloc knows how much I respect him and his opinion, but I have to disagree with him that we need to see the documents in order to make a decision on whether or not to proceed. Quite frankly, the motion the committee should be debating today is on the actual ethics rules.

I know there have been comments from all parties, quite frankly, on how the ethics guidelines need to be updated. Instead of looking at that and actually doing something productive as a committee, it's one more, "Oh, we have a gotcha moment. Let's bring a motion to

committee, because we think we have a gotcha moment." This is coming from the Conservative members.

I'll be honest. My goodness gracious, with everything going on in Canada and the world right now, what's being debated at the ethics committee is a Taylor Swift concert. I saw online former prime minister Stephen Harper with I think Justin Bieber, and with Taylor Swift. It's mind-blowing to me that this is the pressing issue of the day that the Conservative Party feels it needs to have debated in the House of Commons at a committee. I would think there would be other things that we could be looking at that would be far more important to Canadians.

Chair, I'm going to leave it there, but I did just feel that I needed to pipe up and say that it's unfortunate that these same conversations that were being had months ago are still being debated without actually getting to the crux of what the problem is.

I'm not even sure it is a problem, but I think a valid conversation this committee could have would be about how and if the guidelines that the Ethics Commissioner uses could be updated. I think that's a valid conversation that we can have, but to play gotcha and to be disparaging other MPs in committee is, in my opinion, a waste of time. It's also disrespectful to colleagues on the committee when their reputation is being disparaged by other members.

I'll leave it there, Chair.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Damoff.

Mrs. Shanahan, go ahead.

Mrs. Brenda Shanahan: Thank you very much, Chair.

I was very glad to hear the comments of my colleague Ms. Damoff, because I know that she served here on this committee. When she said that she felt that it was déjà vu all over again, I feel like I could commiserate with her, because I was on this committee as well in a previous Parliament.

There's nothing new about this tactic that has been chosen by the Conservative MPs here to effectively take whatever ruling the commissioner has made, question it and, frankly, proceed as if no prior consultation had taken place and as if there was no ruling by the commissioner. In fact, in one case—a recent case—it was, I think, four times that the commissioner had ruled on the case of a minister, and that was not enough. Not once, not twice, not three times and not even the fourth time was that sufficient for the members in question.

It is really regrettable that instead of taking a proactive view, which I think we could all agree on and in fact was what Ms. Khalid was making her arguments about.... We recognize that there are indeed some gaps, as Monsieur Villemure has said, and a requirement to update the act regarding conflict of interest and the code of ethics for parliamentarians.

It is difficult. We talk about the difference between principles and regulations. Regulations do try to capture every possible situation that can arise in contravention of principles. However, human nature is very imaginative, Chair, and people think of different ways to circumvent them. I guess they think it is their privilege to do so.

I'm speaking about something that came up at public accounts because it had to do with spending by members on their travel expenses. Conservative members used the pretext of a caucus meeting in Quebec City to pay for travel not only for themselves but for spouses and staff to attend what was effectively a partisan political convention—which is normally paid out of one's own personal pocket—at the same time and, for all intents and purposes, in the same place.

Taxpayers were not fooled, because Mr. Franco Terrazzano of the Canadian Taxpayers Association, normally someone who one would think is inclined to agree with a Conservative point of view, denounced that practice. He was inflamed that such expenses were claimed on the taxpayer dollar. He certainly made that clear in his comments regarding fiscal prudence and the judicious use of taxpayer money, and he certainly had something to say, as did other commentators.

That is an area that indeed is worthy of this committee to be taking up, to be looking at. I believe we're way overdue on the updating of the act respecting conflict of interest and the code of conduct for members. I think that would have been an exercise that would have been very much welcomed by all members of this committee, but indeed that was not the choice of this committee.

● (1325)

I wasn't here for all of those discussions, but I certainly would have been on the side of undertaking that study and looking at it. Let's provide the context, especially in modern day, of what the kinds of situations are.

Again, Mr. Chair, I come back to this: It's not about a gotcha and it's not about getting this person, that person or the other person. It's about looking at the risk and the potential for the actions of anyone who is a parliamentarian, who is representing Canadians, who is working on behalf of Canadians. It's about the risk that their actions may result in a diminishing the institutions that have been handed to us over many generations, some with fine tuning, changes and updates over the years, but they are institutions that still adhere to the basic principle that we are here not on our own behalf, not for our own interests, but for the interests of Canadians and for the interests of Canada.

I say this knowing full well that this view may not be shared by all members at this committee, but I know that the purpose of conducting our affairs is to ensure that Canada is well represented on the world stage and that we are able to encourage economic development and prosperity across the country. I often say to my constituents that my role as a federal member of Parliament is to ensure that every part of the country enjoys the same standards and has access to the same opportunities, which means that constituents in the smallest village in Jardins-de-Napierville should enjoy the same opportunities.

I'm very happy to say that we have seen significant investment in our region over the past 10 years, and I'm very proud to have played a role in that. It's not Brenda Shanahan by herself who did that; I was working in conjunction with municipal authorities and provincially elected members, who have changed, of course, over the years, and stakeholders in the region.

What would sadden me is if I had constituents who could not have confidence in the people they had elected to represent them here in Ottawa, which is just a place. We have to meet somewhere, so this is where it is. It is this idea of Parliament, where we're able to speak together and work together, and we do so in our respective roles.

That is why I believe, Mr. Chair, that we don't refer to each other by our personal names in the House. We are not allowed to use our personal names. We must always use either “the member for such-and-such a riding” or the executive title the person holds. To make it even more clear, I'll say that we are not addressing Sally, Joe, Jean-Guy or Céline; we are addressing the member for such-and-such a riding or the minister of such-and-such a ministry. That is the way we conduct ourselves in that regard.

Therefore, Mr. Chair, with regard to this motion, the more I reflect on it, the more I am not at all convinced of its having any merit. I would like to hear from other colleagues to see if any other arguments can be brought forward that would convince me otherwise. In the meantime, I think I'll leave it. Perhaps we can hear from other colleagues here. That would help me in my thinking.

● (1330)

Chair, you can put me back on the list.

Thank you.

● (1335)

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Shanahan.

Mr. Fisher, go ahead, sir.

Mr. Darren Fisher: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I googled what the mandate of this committee is. We're tasked with studying issues “related to reports of the Office of the Information Commissioner of Canada, the Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada, the Office of the Commissioner of Lobbying of Canada, and the Office of the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner”. We have the power to ensure that Canadians' personal data is protected.

I see my old friend Glen Motz, whom I've been on committee with in the past. I look forward to hearing what you have to say, Glen, on this particular motion.

We have the power to ensure that Canadians' personal data is protected. Certainly we've talked about this a lot, about this increasingly digital world and the difficulties with protecting that data. We've had conversations within the last two or three weeks on this and the importance of it. We have the opportunity to improve access to information so that our democracy becomes open by default and more transparent. These are some of the issues.

Mr. Chair, I spoke about how this committee has worked quite well for several weeks in a row in getting the important things done that fall within this mandate. When I first got to this committee, we were full of gotcha moments. We were full of gotcha motions. There were several motions put forward at a time. Decisions were made at the last minute, or at least revealed at the last minute, for which motion we would be talking about and which clips members of the opposition might get for their social media pages. As I said before, I'm not super-hyperpartisan, but I do find some of that political gamesmanship annoying.

Indeed, it can be harmful, as we saw earlier here in conversations. I spoke earlier about Standing Order 18 and decorum in committee. It's disappointing and it's harmful when we see stuff like that happen at committee.

I'm still not convinced that this motion is necessary. I'm not convinced of that, based on the number of things I'm hearing back home about this, which is basically zero. What the people back home do care about and what Canadians, I think, across the country care about is that their representatives, regardless of their party affiliation, are working to make their lives better and to understand the issues that Canadians are focusing on and to find ways to work together to make those things better.

Inflation was very high. It's come back down to the Bank of Canada rate, which is very good news. I'd like to say that it took a lot of the work of parliamentarians, but I would say that there are some parliamentarians out there who would probably like to see inflation go back up. I think they look at that as a political opportunity for themselves. Again, that's harmful. That's hurtful. It's extremely depressing that we would look for negative things to happen in our country so that those things might make us look a little bit better politically.

Again, I see that as hugely disappointing. I would like to think that we'd all be pulling in the same direction and let the differences in policy shine through. In a true democracy, you would then have Canadians getting a chance to make a decision, an informed decision, on different policies. I guess I could even include different ideologies. There are people who think centre. There are people who think left. There are people who think right. It doesn't bode well for them to just hear us beating each other over the head with negative comments, insults and derogatory remarks.

Again, it goes back to the 30-second clip that you see on Twitter or that you see on social media. That's become the norm of the day in politics. I saw it happen in other countries before it happened here.

• (1340)

We've had studies on social media and the effects that social media can have. It's great that you can now reach Canadians immediately, but is it great that you can reach them with some of the hateful, hurtful things that happen in the House of Commons and at committees these days? I don't think that seeing that kind of poor decorum, day in and day out, is something Canadians in my province and in my riding—or in Mr. Motz's riding, for that matter—feel is good for democracy and good for the state of Canada.

Again, to go back to Ms. Khalid, she takes the brunt of an inordinate amount of that negative decorum that we see, particularly in this committee, but we also had Ms. Damoff here for a little while filling in for another member, and Ms. Damoff has chosen not to run next time because of the hateful comments, and not just those made to her but those made to other people. It puts us in a position where we start to wonder whether this negative power that we see day in and day out is something we want to deal with.

I'm not, at this very moment, ready to make an amendment to this motion as amended. I'm still waiting to hear debate from the other side as to why this is so important, topical and on the minds of Canadians, even though, technically speaking, it's not within the mandate, unless we agree to send it to the Ethics Commissioner and have the Ethics Commissioner come back to us with his thoughts on this particular issue.

Again, I see that a member of the opposition is going to speak on this, so please add my name back to the list, Mr. Chair, after we hear from Mr. Caputo, I believe.

The Chair: We won't be hearing from Mr. Caputo until after question period.

Next I'm going to go to Mr. Chahal. Mr. Chahal, I may have to cut you off at some point so that we can get to question period.

Go ahead.

Mr. George Chahal (Calgary Skyview, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair, for giving me the opportunity, and for not cutting me off yet. The last time I was here at this committee, I was unable to place a point of order or even get a few words out, so I appreciate your giving me the opportunity. I get to deliver some remarks today.

I see Mr. Caputo is here from Kamloops. Mr. Motz is here from my home province of Alberta, and Mr. Barrett is strolling back into the room with other colleagues as well. He's from the province of Ontario, the province we're sitting in right now. We're here in the beautiful city of Ottawa, representing Canadians from coast to coast to coast in this committee room.

I came in today and heard about some of the antics at this committee. What really concerns me about decorum, as was raised by my colleagues Mr. Fisher and Ms. Damoff, is the partisan attack against one of the members of this committee.

It's extremely unfortunate that Conservative members think it's okay to attack parliamentarians and attack one of my colleagues. As many of my colleagues have said, it's quite harmful for the individual. Inciting this very toxic behaviour in these committee rooms and in our Parliament is a constant behaviour among Conservative politicians. We see it day in and day out.

I can tell you, Mr. Caputo, from my time as chair of the natural resources committee—the committee I still chair—that last year we saw Conservative members turn that committee into one that just spent time targeting individuals. Mr. Villemure, you may be aware that Ms. DeBellefeuille, a member of your party, the Bloc, was in the middle of voting and was threatened. She was unable to participate in debate or hear the chair—me—and the clerk read the roll, and then was threatened by members of the Conservative Party. We should all remember how Conservative members of the natural resource committee—members who had subbed in—threatened a member of Parliament who just wanted to be able to hear the translation.

You also may recall how that all started. It was the Conservative members' opposition to a number of bills. One bill was for the Canadian Sustainable Jobs Act. It was Bill C-49, which is going to open up billions of dollars in investment for our offshore wind industry. As we know, Conservatives are opposed to clean energy projects in this nation, whether it's on Canada's east coast or.... The beautiful provinces of Newfoundland and Labrador and Nova Scotia have an opportunity to build prosperity. Why are there delay tactics? Why is there the targeting of members of Parliament and committees, when all they're here to do is work on behalf of their constituents?

In my home province of Alberta, we've seen attacks by the Conservative Alberta provincial government on renewable energy. If you don't know, we've done some work on this at the natural resources committee. They're saying we're up to \$33 billion in lost investment.

Mr. Chair, you'll understand the narrative of where I'm going once I get to it a little later on and why this is so important for what you're discussing today.

Projects are being delayed or cancelled, and investment is leaving our beautiful province of Alberta. Southern Alberta—where Mr. Motz is from, just a little south of where I'm from—is one of the sunniest parts of the country. We have an opportunity, whether it be the town of Cardston in that county or in other counties in southern Alberta that have relied on energy as a source to get funding so their communities can grow and prosper. We're now seeing many communities concerned about the cutbacks they're going to have to make to infrastructure projects because the funding is no longer available or the royalties they're hoping to get from these new clean energy projects just won't be available.

• (1345)

Why? It's because of a partisan ideological attack on renewable energy across this country and in my home province of Alberta by Conservative politicians. Albertans are asking, how does that happen? Let me tell you how it happens: We have an ideological premier who has a war on clean energy. Well, how are they solving the problems of the province of Alberta by not bringing on new investment opportunities, good-paying jobs and new energy sources?

Mr. Frank Caputo: I have a point of order.

The Chair: Go ahead on your point of order, Mr. Caputo.

Mr. Frank Caputo: I can't help but smile about the tenuous connection between travel and the—

Mr. George Chahal: I'm getting—

Mr. Frank Caputo: I'm not done, Mr. Chahal.

I can't help but wonder about the tenuous connection between travel, the Liberals' polling numbers in Alberta—given their policies—and Taylor Swift.

The Chair: I'm going to go back and remind Mr. Chahal—I know he walked in a little bit late in this meeting—of the motion that we're dealing with. It's that the committee:

(a) Order PavCo to provide to the clerk of the committee, within two weeks, all records concerning the offer or providing of tickets for any of the Taylor Swift concerts at BC Place to any federal ministers, officials, or ministerial exempt staff, including copies of any related communications; and

(b) Order the Prime Minister and the Prime Minister's Office to provide to the clerk of the committee, within one week, any records concerning payment for Taylor Swift concert tickets which the Prime Minister purchased.

I make that point because we're not discussing anything having to do with natural resources.

Generally, I give a lot of latitude to people on this committee. You're chair of a committee; you understand that. I'm going to ask that you come back to the motion as amended, please.

Go ahead.

• (1350)

Mr. George Chahal: Thank you, Mr. Chair, for highlighting that. That's what I was going to do. I think you need to build the narrative to understand why Standing Order 18 is so important and what the thought process is of Conservative politicians. I'm going to get to exactly what you're talking about today.

I have a nice headline here from the Edmonton Journal: "Alberta ministries again decline to answer questions on luxury box playoff tickets". Whoa, can you believe that?

Mr. Chair, I see my colleagues across the way, and I might have an amendment as well to include into Mr. Barrett's motion at some point, once we see what's going on, because I think there are a number of things we could add into it.

I also want to hear a little bit more debate from Mr. Caputo and others. This does involve Mr. Caputo's home province as well, in some of the narrative that these journalists have provided regarding Conservative politicians using luxury boxes over and over again.

Now—

The Chair: Mr. Chahal, I'm going to cut you off here. We have—

Mr. George Chahal: I have lots more.

The Chair: I'm going to cut you off here.

I'm going to suspend the meeting. The expectation is that we'll be back in this room at 3:45 this afternoon.

The meeting is suspended.

• (1350) _____ (Pause) _____

• (1600)

The Chair: I'm going to call the meeting back to order.

When we last left our heroes, Mr. Chahal had the floor, but I understand that he is ceding the floor to Mr. Villemure.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Villemure, you have the floor.

Mr. René Villemure: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I move that the meeting be adjourned.

The Chair: Is there unanimous consent to adjourn the meeting?

That doesn't seem to be the case. So we'll have a recorded vote.

(Motion agreed to: yeas 7; nays 3)

[*English*]

The Chair: The motion to adjourn the meeting carries.

Before we adjourn, I want to wish everyone a very merry Christmas and a happy Hanukkah, for those who are celebrating.

I want to also thank our clerk, our analysts and all the technicians.

[*Translation*]

I hope you all take some time off during the Christmas break.

[*English*]

I hope everybody is able to spend time and relax with their family and come back invigorated.

[*Translation*]

You can now start singing Christmas songs.

[*English*]

An hon. member: Do it in your best Taylor Swift voice.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Chair: Have a great time with your families, everyone.

The meeting is adjourned.

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