



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

45th PARLIAMENT, 1st SESSION

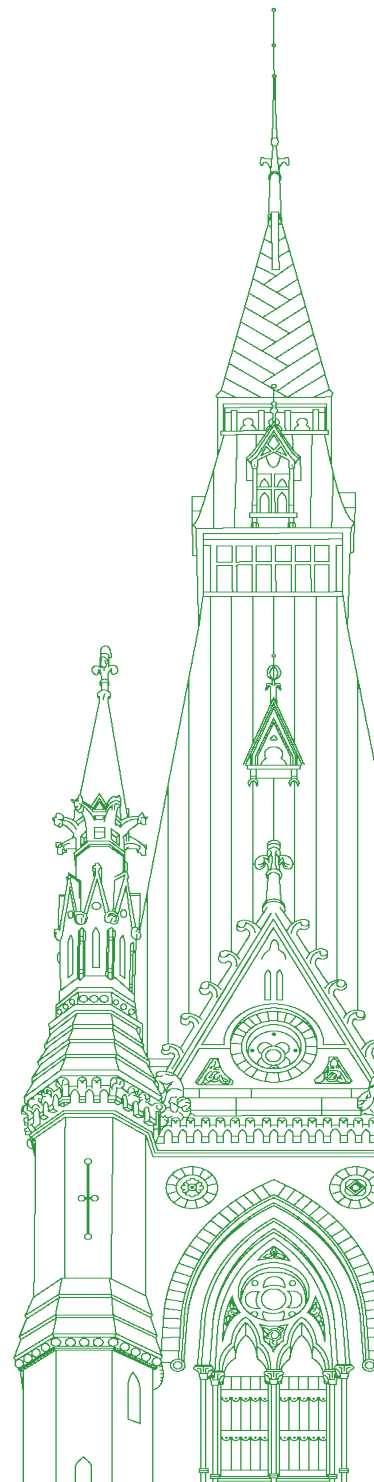
Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage

EVIDENCE

NUMBER 001

Monday, June 16, 2025

Chair: Lisa Hepfner



Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage

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• (1535)

[Translation]

The Clerk of the Committee (Jean-François Pagé): Honourable members of the committee, I see we have a quorum.

[English]

Pursuant to Standing Order 106(3)(a), as the clerk of the committee, I will preside over the election of the chair and the vice-chairs.

I must inform members that the clerk of the committee can only receive motions for the election of the chair. The clerk cannot receive other types of motions and cannot entertain points of order nor participate in debate.

We can now proceed to the election of the chair. Pursuant to Standing Order 106(2), the chair must be a member of the government party.

I am ready to receive motions for the chair.

Mr. Myles.

David Myles (Fredericton—Oromocto, Lib.): I'd like to nominate Lisa Hepfner to be the chair.

The Clerk: Are there any further motions?

It has been moved by Mr. Myles that Ms. Hepfner be elected chair of the committee.

Is it the pleasure of the committee to adopt the motion?

(Motion agreed to)

The Clerk: I declare the motion carried and Ms. Hepfner duly elected chair of the committee.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

The Clerk: I invite Ms. Hepfner to take the chair.

The Chair (Lisa Hepfner (Hamilton Mountain, Lib.)): Thank you very much to the members of the committee.

Before we continue, I would like to ask all in-person participants to consult the guidelines written on the cards on the table. These measures are in place to help prevent audio and feedback incidents and to protect the health and safety of all participants, including the interpreters. You will notice a QR code on the card, which links to a short awareness video.

I have a few comments for the benefit of members.

Please wait until I recognize you by name before speaking. For those participating by video conference, click on the microphone icon to activate your microphone, and please mute yourself when you are not speaking. For those on Zoom, you can select, at the bottom of your screen, the appropriate channel for interpretation: floor, English or French. For those in the room, you can use the earpiece and select the desired channel. I will remind you that all comments should be addressed through the chair.

For members in the room, if you wish to speak, please raise your hand. For members on Zoom, please use the “raise hand” function. The clerk and I will manage the speaking order as best we can, and we appreciate your patience and understanding in this regard.

I will now turn back to the clerk for the election of the vice-chairs.

The Clerk: Pursuant to Standing Order 106(2), the first vice-chair must be a member of the official opposition.

I am now prepared to receive motions for the first vice-chair.

Monsieur Gagné.

[Translation]

Bernard Gagné (Côte-du-Sud-Rivière-du-Loup-Kataskomik-Témiscouata, CPC): I nominate Rachel Thomas as first vice-chair.

[English]

The Clerk: It has been moved by Mr. Gagné that Ms. Thomas be elected as first vice-chair of the committee.

Is it the pleasure of the committee to adopt the motion?

(Motion agreed to)

• (1540)

The Clerk: I declare the motion carried and Ms. Thomas duly elected vice-chair of the committee.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

[Translation]

The Clerk: Pursuant to Standing Order 106(2), the second vice-chair must be a member of an opposition party other than the official opposition.

I am prepared to receive motions for the second vice-chair.

Mr. Al Soud, the floor is yours.

Fares Al Soud (Mississauga Centre, Lib.): I nominate Mr. Champoux as second vice-chair.

The Clerk: It has been moved by Mr. Al Soud that Mr. Champoux be elected as second vice-chair of the committee.

Are there any further motions?

Since there are no other motions, is it the pleasure of the committee to adopt the motion?

(Motion agreed to)

The Clerk: I declare Mr. Champoux duly elected second vice-chair.

[English]

The Chair: We'll proceed now with the adoption of routine motions.

Is there a member who would like to read them?

Go ahead, Fares.

Fares Al Soud: The first concerns analyst services:

That the committee retain, as needed and at the discretion of the Chair, the services of one or more analysts from the Library of Parliament to assist it in its work.

(Motion agreed to)

Fares Al Soud: On the subcommittee on agenda and procedure, I move:

That the Subcommittee on Agenda and Procedure be established and be composed of four members, the Chair and one member from each recognized party, as designated by each party's whip; and that the subcommittee work in a spirit of collaboration.

(Motion agreed to)

Fares Al Soud: On meetings without a quorum, I move:

That the Chair be authorized to hold meetings to receive evidence and to have that evidence published when a quorum is not present, provided that at least four members are present, including two members of the opposition parties and two members of the government party.

(Motion agreed to)

Fares Al Soud: On travel, I move:

That, when travelling outside the Parliamentary Precinct: (a) the meeting begin after 15 minutes, regardless of whether quorum is present; (b) no substantive motion may be moved during such meetings.

[Translation]

Bernard Gagné: The French version says this: "*Que la présidente soit autorisée à tenir des réunions pour entendre des témoignages et pour les faire publier en l'absence de quorum, si au moins quatre membres sont présents*".

Sorry, that's the wrong motion.

Here's the right one, and this is what the French version says: "*Que, lors de déplacements hors de la Cité parlementaire: a) la réunion commence après 15 minutes, que le quorum soit atteint ou non*".

Shouldn't it say "regardless of whether quorum is present or not" in the English version?

The Chair: Do you mean the part that says "at least four members" in reference to a quorum not being present?

Bernard Gagné: No, I'm talking about the motion on travel.

[English]

It reads, "That, when travelling outside the Parliamentary Precinct: (a) the meeting begin after 15 minutes, regardless of whether quorum is present".

[Translation]

In French, it says, "*la réunion commence après 15 minutes, que le quorum soit atteint ou non*". It seems to me the words "or not" are missing in English. Am I wrong?

Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): That's how you say it in English. The translation is correct.

Bernard Gagné: Is that so? Okay, then. I'm not fluent enough.

The Chair: Is it the pleasure of the committee to adopt the motion?

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: We are moving on to the next motion.

● (1545)

[English]

Fares Al Soud: On time for opening remarks and questioning of witnesses, I move:

That witnesses be given five (5) minutes for their opening statements; that whenever possible, witnesses provide the committee with their opening statements 72 hours in advance; that, at the discretion of the Chair, during the questioning of witnesses, there be allocated six (6) minutes for the first questioner of each party as follows:

First Round:

Conservative Party

Liberal Party

Bloc Québécois

For the second and subsequent rounds, the order and time for questioning be as follows:

Conservative Party, five (5) minutes

Liberal Party, five (5) minutes

Bloc Québécois, two and a half (2.5) minutes

Conservative Party, five (5) minutes

Liberal Party, five (5) minutes

(Motion agreed to)

Fares Al Soud: On document distribution, I move:

That only the clerk of the committee be authorized to distribute documents to members of the committee and only when the documents are in both official languages; and that all documents submitted to the committee in both official languages that do not come from a federal department or members' offices, or that have not been translated by the Translation Bureau, be sent for linguistic review by the Translation Bureau before being distributed to members, and that the witnesses be advised accordingly.

(Motion agreed to)

Fares Al Soud: On working meals, I move:

That the clerk of the committee, at the discretion of the Chair, be authorized to make the necessary arrangements to provide working meals for the committee and its subcommittees.

(Motion agreed to)

Fares Al Soud: On travel, accommodation and living expenses of witnesses, I move:

That, if requested, reasonable travel, accommodation and living expenses be reimbursed to witnesses, not exceeding two representatives per organization; and that in exceptional circumstances, payment for more representatives be made at the discretion of the Chair.

(Motion agreed to)

Fares Al Soud: On access to in camera meetings, I move:

That, unless otherwise ordered, each committee member be allowed to be accompanied by one staff member at in camera meetings and that one additional person from each House officer's office be allowed to be present.

That, during in camera meetings, committee members may be informed by the committee Chair of the MPs who have been designated as substitutes for permanent members, in order to know which MPs are authorized to speak and vote during these committee meetings. That only those who have been recognized and identified as such be authorized to speak, in keeping with the usual agreed rules of order and decorum.

(Motion agreed to)

[Translation]

The Chair: Do you have a question, Mr. Généreux?

Bernard Généreux: It's actually a request. I'm going to read the other routine motions in French, if I may.

The Chair: Please do.

Bernard Généreux: Regarding the transcript of in camera meetings, I move as follows:

That one copy of the transcript of each in camera meeting be securely retained by the committee clerk for consultation by members of the committee or by their staff; and that the analysts assigned to the committee have access to the in camera transcripts.

The Chair: Is it agreed that the motion carry?

(Motion agreed to)

Bernard Généreux: Regarding notices of motions, I move as follows:

That a 48-hour notice, interpreted as two nights, be required for any substantive motion to be moved in committee, unless the substantive motion relates directly to business then under consideration, provided that:

- (a) the notice be filed with the clerk of the committee no later than 4:00 p.m. from Monday to Thursday, and no later than 2:30 p.m. on Friday;
- (b) the motion be distributed to Members and the offices of the whips of each recognized party in both official languages by the clerk on the same day the said notice was transmitted if it was received no later than the deadline hour;
- (c) notices received after the deadline hour or on non-business days be deemed to have been received during the next business day.

The Chair: Is it agreed that the motion carry?

(Motion agreed to)

Bernard Généreux: I now move the following:

That in relation to orders of reference from the House respecting Bills,

- (a) The clerk of the committee shall, upon the committee receiving such an order of reference, write to each member who is not a member of a caucus represented on the committee to invite those members to file with the clerk of the committee, in both official languages, any amendments to the bill, which is the subject of the said Order, which they would suggest that the committee consider;
- (b) Suggested amendments filed, pursuant to paragraph (a), at least 48 hours prior to the start of clause-by-clause consideration of the bill to which the amendments relate shall be deemed to be proposed during the said consideration, provided that the committee may, by motion, vary this deadline in respect of a given bill; and
- (c) During the clause-by-clause consideration of a bill, the Chair shall allow a member who filed suggested amendments, pursuant to paragraph (a), an opportunity to make brief representations in support of them.

• (1550)

The Chair: Is it agreed that the motion carry?

(Motion agreed to)

Bernard Généreux: Regarding technical tests for witnesses, I move as follows:

That the clerk inform each witness who is to appear before the committee that the House Administration support team must conduct technical tests to check the connectivity and the equipment used to ensure the best possible sound quality; and that the Chair advise the committee, at the start of each meeting, of any witness who did not perform the required technical tests.

If I may, Madam Chair, I'd like to say something on this matter.

What happened a lot in other committees was that witnesses or committee members did not have the time to do the necessary tests before the start of the meeting, and it was extremely disruptive. For the health and safety of the interpreters, we have to make sure that committee members and witnesses do the required testing before the meeting and that everything is working as it should. In the fall, the situation was awful on the Standing Committee on Industry and Technology. Committee clerks need to do whatever is necessary to make sure that the testing is done before—not during—the meeting.

Madam Chair, I ask that you see to it that the testing is done before the start of the meeting.

The Chair: That's what the motion says, so no changes are needed.

Bernard Généreux: You're right, nothing in the motion needs to change. I'm just pointing out how important it is to make sure that the required tests are done before the meeting begins, for the health and safety of the interpreters. Incidents have happened before and could happen again. It was very disruptive and delayed the committee.

The Clerk: If I may, I would like to point out that we have a team that systematically does the testing. Problems arise when we invite witnesses at the last minute, such as 24 hours before the meeting begins. That doesn't give us a lot of time. Otherwise, the tests are done, everything is working smoothly, and there are no issues.

Bernard Généreux: All right.

The Chair: Is it agreed that the motion carry?

(Motion agreed to)

Bernard Généreux: On whips' access to digital binders, I move as follows:

That the clerk of the committee be authorized to grant access to the committee's digital binder to the offices of the whips of each recognized party.

The Chair: Is it agreed that the motion carry?

(Motion agreed to)

Bernard Généreux: On the maintenance of order and decorum, I move the following:

That, during meetings, the Chair, if necessary, uses his prerogative to suspend the meeting to maintain the order and decorum necessary to ensure the application of the House of Commons' policies on workplace health and safety.

The Chair: Is it agreed that the motion carry?

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: Seeing as we've adopted all the routine motions, I think that's all for today.

[English]

Rachael Thomas (Lethbridge, CPC): I have two more here as part of the routine motions: delegation of authority to whips and then SMEM.

I do wish to move a motion, if I may.

The Chair: We're in committee business.

Please go ahead.

Rachael Thomas: I move:

That, given that committee members, staff, the clerk, analysts and witnesses worked hard to produce the report entitled "The Holding of a National Forum on the Media" during the first session of the 44th Parliament, and given that the government did not table a response because of the prorogation of Parliament, the committee deem that it has undertaken and completed a study on "The Holding of a National Forum on the Media" pursuant to Standing Order 108, and that it adopt that report as a report from this committee; pursuant to Standing Order 109, that the committee request the government to table a comprehensive response to the report; that supplementary or dissenting reports that accompanied the report in the previous session of Parliament be tabled with the main report; and that the Chair present the report to the House.

For those who are maybe new to the committee, I'll put that in layman's terms, if I may. Basically, in the last Parliament, there was a study done with regards to the national media. A report was drafted. Dissenting reports were drafted. It was ready to be tabled in the House of Commons, but unfortunately, the tabling didn't transpire because Parliament prorogued. There was no other reason for it not to happen. I'm seeking the consent of this committee to take that report and make sure that it is, in fact, tabled so that work is actually on the record rather than in the trash can.

• (1555)

The Chair: Since we didn't have any advance notice of this motion, I'm going to suspend for a moment so each party can discuss amongst themselves.

• (1555)

(Pause)

• (1600)

The Chair: We are back in session.

Does anybody have anything to say about the motion that Mrs. Thomas has brought forward?

David Myles: As you can tell, I'm new here, as are the three of us, actually. The challenge for us is that we don't know anything about this report. We are looking for a little more time or a summary of the report, understanding that this is a continuation of another committee but there are new members here. I'm not trying to be a pain. I'm just trying to know what I'm voting for. That's all.

The Chair: You're allowed to talk. We don't consider you a pain.

Monsieur Champoux is next.

[Translation]

Martin Champoux: Madam Chair, I was a brand new member in 2019, as Mr. Myles is now. I had a lot less grey hair and fewer wrinkles, but back then, a very important report entitled "Shifting Paradigms" had been under consideration during the previous Parliament, but had not been adopted because of the dissolution of the House. When the committee began sitting again, a Conservative member, Mr. Blaney, asked that the report be brought back, and he was amenable to my request for a bit of time to read the report given how important it was. I was very appreciative of that.

For that reason, I agree with Mrs. Thomas's motion pertaining to a study we did together. We heard differing opinions, and everyone worked hard on the study and the report that came out of it. I also agree that new members of the committee should have the time they need to become familiar with what we are about to vote on. That is a perfectly reasonable request and in no way diminishes my support for the motion.

• (1605)

[English]

The Chair: Do we have unanimous consent to come back to this later?

Monsieur G  n  reux, please go ahead.

[Translation]

Bernard G  n  reux: I agree with the member who moved the motion, of course, and with Mr. Champoux, but I think we should set a deadline so this doesn't get forgotten. I suggest we revisit the motion in two weeks.

The Chair: We won't be here then. We won't be back until October.

Bernard G  n  reux: We will be back in September, actually.

The Chair: Is everyone fine with coming back to the motion when we return in September?

[English]

Rachael Thomas: I don't have a problem with coming back to it in September. I just would ask that my colleagues function in an honourable manner and give me the opportunity to bring it back in September.

[Translation]

The Chair: Go ahead, Mr. Champoux.

Martin Champoux: Seldom am I the most demanding or strict, but I would go even further. Let's come back to it at the next committee meeting. Obviously, that won't be this week, but between now and then, everyone should have more than enough time to read and understand the report, and even the dissenting reports, if necessary.

The Chair: I can add it to the agenda for the next meeting, whether it's this week or when we come back in September.

Bienvenu-Olivier Ntumba (Mont-Saint-Bruno—L'Acadie, Lib.): Mr. Champoux, I appreciate what you said, but I would prefer a specific date, as opposed to the next meeting. It would be a lot more precise to set a date in September.

The Chair: We don't have a date yet, because the committee has to be convened first.

Go ahead, Mrs. Thomas.

[English]

Rachael Thomas: Thank you, Chair.

I do have another motion that I wish to move. I suspect that there will be a similar outcome.

[Translation]

Bernard G  n  reux: I have a question, Madam Chair.

The Chair: The floor is yours, Mr. G  n  reux.

Bernard G  n  reux: I want to make sure I understand how the mikes are managed. Instead of turning on your mike, you turned it off, and then, you turned it on again. That means two mikes were on at the same time. You were talking to the clerk, and the interpreters must have heard what you said, brief as it may have been.

Is someone in charge of turning the mikes on and off, or is that our responsibility? Normally, a person's mike should be off once they've finished speaking, so that two people don't talk at the same time.

The Chair: That's a good question. There is someone in charge of turning our microphones on and off.

Mr. Champoux, did you have a question?

Martin Champoux: Madam Chair, can you see the virtual participants on your screen? I am asking because Mr. Waugh has his hand up, but I'm not sure whether you can see it.

The Chair: No, I don't see it. Thank you for letting me know.

[English]

Mr. Waugh, please go ahead.

Kevin Waugh (Saskatoon South, CPC): Thank you, Madam Chair, and congratulations on your appointment here today.

I'm just throwing this out there. I'm referring to Mrs. Thomas's motion. We may actually meet in July or August; we don't know that. I suggest the new committee members read over the report as soon as possible. You just never know when this committee will reconvene. Yes, we're back in September, but there may be an opportunity in July or August to get together, and then we can move Mrs. Thomas's motion at that time.

• (1610)

The Chair: Yes, as we said, we'll put it on the agenda for the next meeting of this committee, whenever that might be.

Mrs. Thomas, I believe, is next.

Rachael Thomas: I do have a second motion to move. I move:

That, given that committee members, staff, the clerk, analysts and witnesses worked hard to produce the report entitled "Harms Caused by Illegal Sexually Explicit Material Online" during the first session of the 44th Parliament, and given that the government did not table a response because of the prorogation of

Parliament, the committee deem that it has undertaken and completed a study on "Harms Caused by Illegal Sexually Explicit Material Online" pursuant to Standing Order 108, and that it adopt that report as a report from this committee; pursuant to Standing Order 109, that the committee request the government to table a comprehensive response to the report; that supplementary or dissenting reports that accompanied the report in the previous session of Parliament be tabled with the main report; and that the Chair present the report to the House.

This is similar. A report was drafted in the last Parliament. Unfortunately, due to prorogation, it was not tabled, although all of the pieces were in place for that to be done. It is just simply the final step that needs to be completed.

[Translation]

The Chair: Go ahead, Mr. Champoux.

Martin Champoux: The same logic applies, Madam Chair.

The committee worked very hard and managed to draft a number of reports in the last session of Parliament. I commend the analysts for the exceptional job they did. Still, I think it would be a good refresher for everyone—not just new members of Parliament, but also new members of the heritage committee—to review the reports. I think it would be helpful to allow some time for us to reread the reports. Again, the work was done rigorously and seriously, and the reports deserve to be tabled in the House, so I agree.

The Chair: Mr. Ntumba, go ahead.

Bienvenu-Olivier Ntumba: Thank you, Madam Chair.

I see that Mrs. Thomas is proposing motions one by one, and I'd like to understand everything. This committee is new for all members who are here for the first time. It would be great if she could tell us how many motions she plans to put forward so that we can read them and discuss them at the next meeting, as Mr. Champoux said.

The Chair: Mr. Champoux, do you have another comment?

Martin Champoux: Thank you, Madam Chair.

I completely understand what my fellow member is asking. I, too, am inclined to ask Mrs. Thomas to bundle all the motions she wants to propose along the same lines, those calling on the committee to adopt reports on studies. However, it is her prerogative to propose motions one by one, if she so wishes. Unanimous consent cannot be sought to force her or any other committee member to proceed in a particular way. If a member had a number of similar motions to propose, all of which would obviously produce the same outcome, it would be nice for the member to do it all in one shot. However, committee members are under no obligation to change how they do things.

[English]

The Chair: Is everybody in agreement that we hold all of the motions until our next meeting to give new members time to go over the material?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Chair: Go ahead, Mrs. Thomas.

Rachael Thomas: Thank you.

I have a third motion that I wish to move. I move:

That, given that committee members, staff, the clerk, analysts and witnesses worked hard to produce the report entitled “Tech Giants’ Intimidation and Subversion Tactics to Evade Regulation in Canada and Globally” during the first session of the 44th Parliament, and given that the government did not table a response because of the prorogation of Parliament, the committee deem that it has undertaken and completed a study on “Tech Giants’ Intimidation and Subversion Tactics to Evade Regulation in Canada and Globally” pursuant to Standing Order 108, and that it adopt that report as a report from this committee; pursuant to Standing Order 109, that the committee request the government to table a comprehensive response to the report; that supplementary or dissenting reports that accompanied the report in the previous session of Parliament be tabled with the main report; and that the Chair present the report to the House.

The Chair: In accordance with the other motions that this committee has agreed to put off until the next meeting, could we all agree to put this motion off until the next meeting as well?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Chair: Continue, Mrs. Thomas.

• (1615)

Rachael Thomas: Thank you.

Chair, if you wouldn't mind just clarifying something. It was asked that I send out the package before the meeting, but I believe, according to the routine motions we just passed, that's the duty of the clerk, at the will of the chair. Should I submit or should any of us submit motions for consideration, my understanding is that we send them to the clerk. Then, at the will of the chair, the clerk sends them out to the committee, in both French and English.

The Chair: I believe the standard is to give committee members some time. Motions are distributed to committee members and the committee in advance of the meeting so that it's not a surprise when we arrive here and we know what we're voting on and how we feel about the motions.

Rachael Thomas: Chair, I don't know that my question is being answered here.

According to the routine motions, it is not customary that we ourselves send our motions to all the members of the committee, but rather that we send them to the clerk. The clerk then processes them, makes sure they're in both French and English, and then, at the will of the chair, sends them to the committee members.

The Chair: That is correct. Thank you for the clarification.

Go ahead, Mrs. Thomas.

Rachael Thomas: Thank you. I do wish to move a final motion. I move:

Given that the 45th session of Parliament has just begun, and Canadian identity and culture is at a crucial moment, pursuant to Standing Order 108, the committee invite the Minister of Canadian Identity and Culture to testify before the committee for no less than two hours and the department officials for one hour, no later than September 26, 2025.

I have this motion available both in French and English for my colleagues to consider at this time.

The Chair: Go ahead, Mr. Champoux.

[Translation]

Martin Champoux: Madam Chair, it is completely normal for a minister, at the beginning of a new Parliament or session of Parliament, or after being newly appointed, to appear before the committee charged with examining matters related to their department. I am therefore in favour of inviting Minister Guilbeault.

Obviously, the appearance will happen in the fall, but I think it's important to set a deadline, so the minister can arrange his schedule. We all know how the unforeseen can affect a minister's schedule, but I don't think the minister will shirk his duty. I think he will come at the first opportunity. The motion states that the appearance should take place no later than September 26. I think that's pretty reasonable given that the House starts sitting again on September 15, if I'm not mistaken. That should give the minister a chance to plan accordingly.

[English]

The Chair: Next is Monsieur Al Soud.

Fares Al Soud: Could I propose that we, as a new committee of new members, take the time to assess and highlight our priorities as a collective before choosing to do that?

The Chair: I have Monsieur Champoux.

[Translation]

Martin Champoux: I somewhat agree with that suggestion, Madam Chair. Meeting with the minister is an essential part of everything the committee will be dealing with. We need to meet with the minister to find out his plans in relation to various issues. That is crucial to steer the committee and help us decide how to prioritize the studies we want to conduct. The sooner he comes, the better we can plan committee business. It's a must.

The Chair: Go ahead, Mr. Al Soud.

Fares Al Soud: I completely agree with Mr. Champoux, Madam Chair. We need to figure out what our priorities are, so our discussion with the minister can be as fruitful as possible. That said, we fully agree that the minister needs to appear before the committee eventually and that the committee should prioritize that discussion.

The Chair: Does anyone else wish to comment? It doesn't look like it.

Since no one else has anything to add, I will call the vote.

[English]

Are all in favour, or do we want a recorded vote?

We'll have a recorded vote.

(Motion agreed to: yeas 5; nays 4)

• (1620)

The Chair: Seeing no other hands, I will adjourn.

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