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Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics

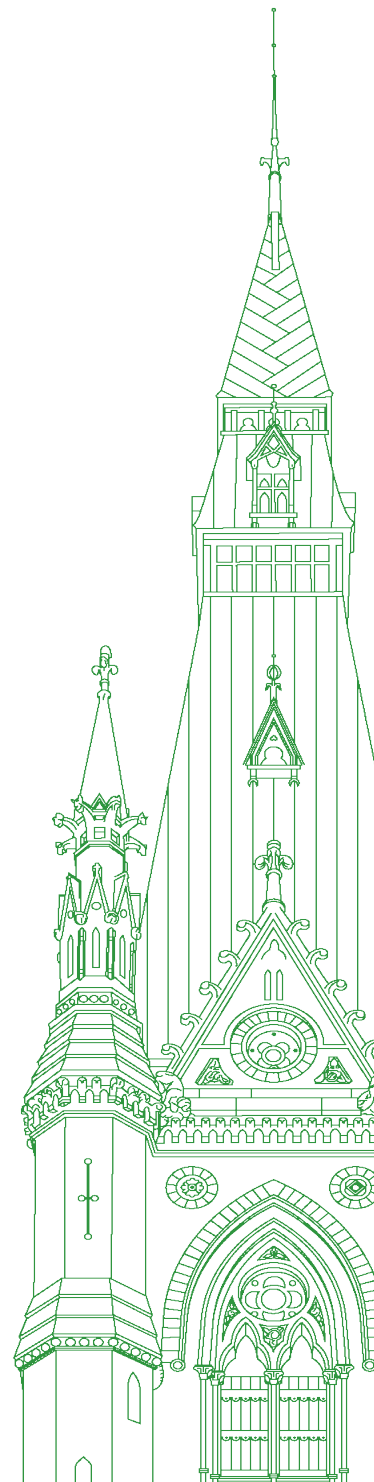
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Thursday, June 19, 2025

Chair: John Brassard



Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics

Thursday, June 19, 2025

• (1110)

[English]

The Clerk of the Committee (Nancy Vohl): Honourable members of the committee, I see a quorum.

[Translation]

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

[English]

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, entertain points of order or participate in debate.

Pursuant to Standing Order 106(2), the chair must be a member of the official opposition for this committee.

[Translation]

I am ready to receive motions for the chair.

[English]

Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands—Rideau Lakes, CPC): Good morning, Madam Clerk and colleagues. It's great to join you and be back at the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics to continue the good work we do here. Congratulations to everyone on their elections.

Madam Chair, I'd like to nominate my colleague John Brossard for the position of chair of this committee.

[Translation]

The Clerk: It has been moved by Mr. Barrett that Mr. John Brassard be elected chair of the committee.

Are there any further motions?

(Motion agreed to)

[English]

The Clerk: I declare the motion carried and Mr. John Brassard duly elected chair of the committee.

I invite Mr. Brassard to take the chair.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

The Chair (John Brassard (Barrie South—Innisfil, CPC): Thank you, Madam Clerk.

Thank you to the committee members as well.

[Translation]

I would also like to welcome all the new members: Mr. Thériault, Mrs. Church, Ms. Lapointe, Mr. Saini, Mr. Sari, Mr. Hardy and Mr. Majumdar.

I now invite the clerk to proceed with the election of the vice-chairs.

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

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

[English]

There are two hands up. I saw Mr. Saini first.

Gurbux Saini (Fleetwood—Port Kells, Lib.): I'm Gurbux Saini from the riding of Fleetwood—Port Kells, and I would like to nominate Linda Lapointe for the position of vice-chair of the committee.

The Clerk: Thank you.

Mr. Saini moved that Ms. LaPointe be elected first vice-chair of the committee.

[Translation]

Are there any further motions?

[English]

I see none.

(Motion agreed to)

[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 now prepared to receive motions for the second vice-chair.

Linda Lapointe (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, Lib.): I propose Mr. Luc Thériault as second vice-chair.

The Clerk: It has been moved by Ms. Lapointe that Mr. Thériault be elected second vice-chair of the committee.

[English]

Are there any other motions?

(Motion agreed to)

[Translation]

The Chair: Congratulations, Mr. Thériault and Ms. Lapointe.

[English]

Before starting, I would 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 our interpreters. You'll notice there is a QR code on the card that links to a short awareness video.

I would also, if it's appropriate, like to invite the analysts up to the front. Is that appropriate at this point?

The Clerk: Yes, we can proceed to the adoption of the routine motions, and the first one is about them.

The Chair: First of all, I want to welcome back Nancy as our clerk. Nancy has done a great job in the past keeping us all in line, so we're glad to have you back, Nancy.

You'll get lots of correspondence from Nancy, and I encourage you to read it all, because all of it is important, as you will see.

We are going to go to the routine motions. I was hoping that we could adopt these as an omnibus issue. I know that everybody is in agreement with them, but I've been advised by the clerk that, in case any future amendments are required, it's better that we read them on an individual basis. We're going to have to proceed in that manner.

Does anybody want to propose these motions?

[Translation]

Ms. Lapointe, you may begin by reading the first motion, which pertains to analyst services.

Linda Lapointe: Regarding analyst services, I move:

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)

The Chair: Mr. Barrett, you may present the second routine motion.

[English]

Michael Barrett: 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)

• (1115)

[Translation]

The Chair: I would like to welcome the analysts, Mr. Thibodeau and Ms. Savoie.

[English]

Again, we had tremendous analysts who provided us with great information for all of our meetings. They're very diligent in their

work. I'm glad that they're a part of the committee as well. Welcome.

[Translation]

We will now move on to the third motion which pertains to meetings without a quorum.

Please go ahead, Ms. Lapointe.

Linda Lapointe: Regarding 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)

The Chair: Thank you.

[English]

Move the next motion, Mr. Barrett, please, if you don't mind.

Michael Barrett: The motion is 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.

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: Thank you.

[Translation]

We will now move on to the motion regarding time for opening remarks and questioning of witnesses.

Go ahead, Ms. Lapointe.

Linda Lapointe: I propose:

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 the 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.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Lapointe.

Is everyone agreed on this motion?

Go ahead, Mr. Thériault.

Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ): Mr. Chair, I will make the same remarks here as I made at the Standing Committee on Health. I would like to ask for some flexibility. I know this has been discussed among the parties.

In the last session, two parties shared speaking time in the first and second round of questions. In the second round, the NDP had two and a half minutes. There were about 20 MPs. At one point, the Conservatives also offered me some speaking time.

I am asking for some flexibility because, when you just have two and a half minutes in the second round, you can't do much. I think the members of each party are able to ask some very good questions. Each party does its own research, however, and I think it is always helpful to learn from everyone's expertise. Sometimes another MP or I myself could ask a question that would not be asked otherwise. One needs the time to do that, however.

So I am asking for some flexibility. Ultimately, I would like to have four or five minutes of speaking time in the second round, depending on the situation. After that, it could be two and a half minutes.

As I said, that is how speaking time was allocated in the last session.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Thériault.

In my experience in this committee, Mr. Villemure was given a bit more time on a number of occasions. We did the same for the NDP. I suggest that we do not amend the motion. However, during meetings and when we hear from witnesses, I can give the Bloc Québécois a bit more time if the other committee members agree. At other times, the witnesses were here for two hours, so we put the clock back to zero to give the Bloc Québécois and NDP a bit more time.

We encourage the other parties to take the time to ask the witnesses questions in order to stimulate discussion. If you agree, I could give you a bit more speaking time.

• (1120)

[English]

I think everyone agrees with that.

[Translation]

Thank you for raising that issue, Mr. Thériault.

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: Let us now move on to document distribution.

You have the floor, Ms. Lapointe.

Linda Lapointe: I propose:

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, 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)

[English]

The Chair: Michael, you get the motion on working meals. I don't know why I left this one to you.

Michael Barrett: 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)

The Chair: Just make sure to let the clerk know if there are any dietary restrictions or requirements, if you don't mind. We try to accommodate as much as we can. Sometimes what happens is that in the later hours we might have snacks, but over the lunch period, we'll have a meal. I want to make sure that everybody's dietary restrictions are accommodated.

[Translation]

We will now move on to the routine motion regarding travel, accommodation and living expenses of witnesses.

Linda Lapointe: I propose:

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)

[English]

The Chair: We'll go back to Michael, finally, for access to in camera meetings.

Michael Barrett: 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)

The Chair: Before I go to Mr. Barrett, I want to advise the committee members that other committees have been requesting that reports done by past committees get a response back from the government. There are two studies that we submitted to which we did not get a response back from the government because of prorogation. I would like—and Michael's going to propose a motion on this—to have the government respond to the reports.

I'm going to go to Michael for the motion.

Go ahead, Mike.

Michael Barrett: I do have those two motions I flagged for you, Chair, but I have additional routine motions that we didn't adopt.

The Chair: I'm sorry, Michael. I might have jumped the gun on the routine motions.

We're going to have to go back to—

Linda Lapointe: Mr. Chair, don't we continue with that motion first?

[Translation]

The Chair: Yes, there was a page missing.

[English]

The next routine motion is on the transcripts of in camera meetings.

[Translation]

Go ahead, Ms. Lapointe.

Linda Lapointe: I propose:

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.

(Motion agreed to)

[English]

The Chair: Michael, you have the one on notices of motion.

Michael Barrett: I move:

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.

(Motion agreed to)

● (1125)

[Translation]

The Chair: We will now move on to the motion regarding orders of reference from the House regarding bills.

Go ahead, Ms. Lapointe.

Linda Lapointe: I propose:

- 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.

(Motion agreed to)

[English]

The Chair: This next one is on the technical tests for witnesses, Michael.

Michael Barrett: I move:

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.

(Motion agreed to)

[Translation]

The Chair: We will now move on to whips' access to digital binders.

Go ahead, Ms. Lapointe.

Linda Lapointe: I propose:

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.

(Motion agreed to)

[English]

The Chair: Finally, there is the routine motion on the maintenance of order and decorum.

Linda Lapointe: Do you want me to do that one?

[Translation]

The Chair: Yes, if you will, Ms. Lapointe.

Linda Lapointe: I propose:

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.

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Lapointe.

[English]

That concludes the routine motions.

Thank you, Mr. Barrett.

Thank you, Madame Lapointe.

As I was saying, other committees have requested that previous reports get a response from the government. There were two reports, in particular, that we did in the last Parliament for which, because of prorogation, we never got responses back. I think Mr. Barrett would like to move a motion with regard to that.

Mr. Barrett, go ahead, please.

Michael Barrett: Thanks, Chair.

As it's the matter at hand, since it's our first meeting and for the reasons that you outlined, I move:

Given that committee members, staff, the clerk, analysts and witnesses worked hard to produce the report entitled "Federal Government's Use of Technological Tools Capable of Extracting Personal Data from Mobile Devices and Computers" 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 federal government's use of technological tools capable of extracting personal data from mobile devices and computers" pursuant to Standing Order 108; that it adopt that report as a report from this committee; that, pursuant to Standing Order 109, the committee request the government to table a comprehensive response to the report; and that the Chair present the report to the House.

I have a second motion, but I'm not sure if you want to deal with them independently.

● (1130)

The Chair: I would rather deal with them independently, if that's okay.

On the first report, do we have any questions?

Go ahead, Madame Lapointe.

Linda Lapointe: Mr. Chair, can we have that motion written in both languages?

The Chair: Did we not send it through?

Linda Lapointe: If we want to study it, we would like to have it written, please.

[Translation]

The Chair: Okay.

[English]

Can we get those two motions sent to the clerk for distribution?

In the meantime, why don't I suspend for a minute or two to give the clerk enough time? We'll do that and we'll come back.

• (1130)

(Pause)

• (1145)

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

I will say that this is a teaching lesson for all of us. If you're going to propose motions, make sure that they're proposed and sent in both official languages, so we don't have further delays.

Before we left, Mr. Barrett read the first motion. It's been circulated among committee members in both official languages.

Are we in agreement with the first motion? Is there any discussion?

Ms. Church, go ahead.

Leslie Church (Toronto—St. Paul's, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

While I recognize the very good work that the committee members, staff, clerk and analysts have put into this report, certainly as a new member and also as it's a new Parliament, I feel it's incumbent on me to familiarize myself with the report before we adopt it as a report from this committee and on behalf of this committee. I would certainly prefer to have an opportunity to review it and its recommendations before we adopt it and send it beyond here.

• (1150)

The Chair: That's fair enough. I appreciate your comments.

The motion is on the floor. Is there any further discussion on this?

I will go to the vote. I assume that we don't have unanimous consent on that.

Would you like a recorded vote on whether we adopt this motion or not?

Leslie Church: Yes, please.

An hon. member: I'm not in favour of that, also.

The Chair: That's okay. We're going to come to a vote on the motion.

[Translation]

Mr. Thériault, you have the floor.

Luc Thériault: I would like to request a clarification.

Personally, my understanding of the motion is that the report has been adopted. If the committee has adopted the report but there has been no response as a result of prorogation, it is not up to committee members to revisit the adoption of a report that the committee adopted in a previous legislature. Our goal today is to ensure that the committee, once it has adopted its report, may pursue the motion that led to it, namely, that a response from the government is still needed.

It is possible to read the report and receive the response. If we wish to continue our work or tone it down, that is still possible. I do not think that we, as new committee members, can hold another vote on a report that has already been adopted. To my mind, that would amount to going back on the work that was done before. The goal is not to lose the work that was done and to ensure continuity from one session to the next. It is the parties who decided not to put the same players around the table, but the committee as an institution has already done its work.

The Chair: Go ahead, Mr. Sari.

Abdelhaq Sari (Bourassa, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I completely agree with my fellow member. There needs to be continuity in a committee's work. That said, the motion, as written, clearly says that the committee is asking the government to table a response. Before that, it says that the report was not adopted. It needs to be now that the study is complete. We are at the adoption stage.

I'd like to talk about that briefly, if I may. Since the committee completed the study, what we are being asked to do now is adopt the report. What the member is asking now is that we look at the report. Then we can proceed with adopting it. There is a distinction because the report wasn't adopted, unfortunately. The study was completed. This was brought to the committee's attention a week ago.

The Chair: Go ahead, Mr. Thériault.

Luc Thériault: Mr. Chair, when I spoke a moment ago, I asked initially whether this dealt with a report that had been adopted, and I was told that it did. If that is the case, I regret to say that the member's comment doesn't apply. It's fine with me if the language in the motion has to change to reflect the reality.

The Chair: I'm going to ask the clerk to answer your question.

The Clerk: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The report the motion refers to is committee report number 13 adopted during the 44th Parliament. The study was conducted from beginning to end. The report was adopted and even tabled in the House. In the report, the committee requested a response from the government pursuant to Standing Order 109. However, because of the election and the fact that Parliament was dissolved, all committee work came to a halt. A response was therefore not provided, which is normal.

Motions like this one are fairly common in committees in order to again adopt reports that were adopted in the previous Parliament. With the committee being made up of new members, it is considered to be a new committee. That is why the motion is asking the committee to again adopt the report, as is, for the purpose of again tabling it in the House and obtaining a government response. The request in the previous Parliament for a government response no longer stands because Parliament was dissolved.

Does that answer your question?

• (1155)

Luc Thériault: That answers my question, and my reasoning still applies.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Thériault.

[English]

Again, similar to what other committees have done as they formed, given the past work they've done at committee, in several cases, reports were presented to Parliament—as this and the next one were. We did not receive a response from the government. All this does is seek a response to a report that was already presented.

There's no nefarious thing going on here. It's just that the first report we're looking at, which was a study proposed by Mr. Ville-mure, and the second report, which was proposed by Ms. Khalid, were adopted by the committee, and the recommendations were adopted by the committee and presented. That's what we're asking for here.

Is there any other discussion on this?

Go ahead, sir.

Gurbux Saini: As a new member, I am not familiar with the work that was done. I would like to have some time to look at the work that was done before I agree to vote on it.

The Chair: Okay, and I do appreciate that.

Like I said, the work was done by the previous committee. The motion on the floor right now is asking the government for a response to a previous report that was adopted by the committee in the last session of Parliament. It's to get that response back.

This hasn't really been a problem at any other committees—I'll tell you that right now. I've been at most of the committees that have adopted these similar motions, and it hasn't presented a problem.

Go ahead, Ms. Church.

Leslie Church: Mr. Chair, I really do appreciate that.

I'm wondering. Is it possible to move to suspend the consideration of this motion until we've had the chance to look at the reports we're talking about and then address this at our next meeting?

The Chair: You can make an amendment to the motion to propose that. Then we can have a discussion on that and, then, if there's agreement to that, we can do that. You're well within your right to amend Mr. Barrett's motion to reflect what you just said. If you want to do that, I'll give you a second to consider it. I could go to Mr. Sari if you want to consider that, or if you want to do that right now, you have the floor, Ms. Church.

Just as a reminder to all committee members, anything...all discussion comes through the chair. We obviously have crosstalk and discussion, but I just want to make sure everybody is familiar with that. I know there are some new members on the committee.

Go ahead, Ms. Church.

Leslie Church: Mr. Chair, I will take that opportunity, then, to move an amendment to the motion to suspend this until our next meeting, once we've had a chance to review the reports in question.

The Chair: I'm sorry, Ms. Church, but do you want to just say that again for me, if you don't mind?

Leslie Church: I just said that I would proceed to suggest an amendment to the motion, so that we suspend this until our next meeting to allow an opportunity to consider the reports in the interim.

The Chair: Ms. Church has an amendment to suspend the request of this report until the next meeting of the committee, when they've had a chance to review the report.

[Translation]

I see that Mr. Thériault wishes to speak to the amendment.

[English]

I'll then go to Mr. Barrett on the amendment.

Go ahead, Monsieur Thériault.

[Translation]

Luc Thériault: Is the amendment in order?

The Chair: The clerk is telling me that it is in order.

• (1200)

[English]

It's to suspend this committee so that we do not deal with this until the members of the Liberal Party—all members—get to see the report and then we will have a discussion when we come back.

It is in order and it's amendable.

[Translation]

Luc Thériault: I understand what Mrs. Church is looking for, but her request is premised on something that cannot happen. If someone says to me that they want to be able to read something before agreeing to it, that implies that they cannot agree to it, which, to my mind, would be a problem in this case, given the practices and traditions of the House. The committee produced a piece of work.

I have been here for nine years, and I have seen all kinds of work be discarded precisely because of a prorogation or general election. It's normal to be able to reinstate that work. It is equally normal for members participating in a committee who receive, from the analysts, a summary of the committee's work to review that information, which I did for most of the materials I had for today.

I want to stress that we cannot do what is being proposed, because it implies that it is possible not to accept the report in question. There is no reason to object to it. We should trust the committee, which did the work and produced a report that Parliament adopted. That is significant. The members adopted a report. The only thing missing is the government's response.

I'm new to this committee, and I could make the same argument, but I trust the committee. I voted to adopt the report. When you vote for the adoption of a report in the House, you are deemed to have read it.

I know I can't call for a vote, but if I hadn't spoken, I would have.
[English]

The Chair: As I mentioned, the amendment is in order. We're having a discussion.

[Translation]

Thank you for your comments on the amendment.

[English]

Mr. Barrett is next, on the amendment.

Michael, do you want to speak on this?

Michael Barrett: Prior to Ms. Church's moving the motion, I was going to say that perhaps, if the desire was to not deal with the item, you could invite a motion to adjourn debate, which would be dilatory and we'd be onto it. However, we have the amendment in front of us, so I'll leave it to you to manage that.

The Chair: I'll leave it to the members as to whether they want to do that. I have to deal with what's in front of me and the amendment is in front of me. I don't see any further discussion....

Ms. Church, go ahead, on the amendment.

Leslie Church: Mr. Chair, I want to comment on my colleague's intervention.

I believe that it is our privilege as members to understand what we are voting on. Although it may be convention that we examine the work that was previously done by a prior composition of the committee, the fact is that we have had a new Parliament established. It is our responsibility as members to understand what we are deeming to be put forward from our committee.

At this stage, we are minutes from having adopted standing procedures for this committee that suggest we should have a minimum of 48 hours' notice of motions on substantive items, which this is. I do not for a moment deny that it sounds to me as if the subject matter of the report is something that is probably of interest to this committee. However, I have absolutely no bearing at the moment to understand what that report was. There is not a binding requirement that a committee put forward materials that were created in a past Parliament.

I don't want to impede this committee's work, but I do feel quite strongly that for a motion that was presented to the committee on material that we are not presented with, do not have access to.... We have no knowledge, even at the moment, as to whether the two reports that we're considering are the be-all and end-all of the committee's unfinished business from the past Parliament. Maybe there are others. I have no knowledge as to how the member opposite has brought forward these particular reports for consideration.

It seems to me to be a reasonable request that we reconsider this once we've had the chance to look into the actual reports.

Without any knowledge of the content in them, why are we putting them forward and deeming that this go forward in our names?

• (1205)

The Chair: Maybe I can try to clarify a little bit here.

This particular report, and the one that I'm presuming we'll be dealing with afterwards—or maybe not—was adopted by the committee in the first session of the 44th Parliament. It was presented to Parliament. All of the recommendations were adopted. They were agreed to. There was no supplementary report by any other members of the committee. There were no dissenting reports at all.

What we're asking for now—and as I said earlier, this has been a pattern, if you will, on other committees and all of them have been accepted unanimously without any dissent at all—is to simply have those reports, which were presented by the chairs of the committee in accordance with all the standard practices, have a response back from the government. Those reports have already been adopted by the previous committee.

As I said earlier, every other committee has been asking for this, given the fact of prorogation. There's no hidden agenda here. The committees did the work. They adopted recommendations as a result of that work, and now they're asking for the government to respond on the recommendations and on those reports. That's what's been going on here for the last week, so I don't know why it's a problem here.

Do you speak to the amendment? We're on the amendment right now, and I have you on the main motion.

I saw your hand up before, Mr. Sari. You were on the main motion, but we're on the amendment now. I can put you on the list. I have Mr. Hardy, Mr. Thériault and then you.

Mr. Hardy.

[Translation]

Gabriel Hardy (Montmorency—Charlevoix, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I would like to address a comment that was made. Nothing is being hidden here. Everything was read and is already in the public domain. It is wrong for members to say today that they had no knowledge of this content. The reports are available on the government's website as we speak.

The Chair: Go ahead, Mr. Thériault.

Luc Thériault: I appreciate the reason behind this and I gather that the Conservatives are open to doing it later. The problem is the 120 days. The government could give us a response, and we would have it when we come back in September.

The problem is that, if we don't adopt the motion today, we won't have a response until Christmas. The government has 120 days to provide its response. The people who worked on the report want answers as soon as possible.

When we start working in September, we could review the report and the government's response. At that point, we could decide whether to follow up on the study, undertake a new one or emphasize an additional aspect.

The issue is delaying the committee's work by 120 days.

• (1210)

The Chair: Mr. Sari, would you like to comment on the amendment?

[English]

Go ahead, please.

[Translation]

Abdelhaq Sari: I think the amendment has more to do with form than substance. I completely agree that the content is already available online. Personally, I didn't know I was going to be on this committee a week ago. I don't think we've had much spare time lately, so we have not had time to read every single report that has been posted on the House of Commons website.

Now, I'd like to get back to the form of the motion. I encourage members to read the motion as proposed again. There are a few things I don't quite agree with from a procedural standpoint.

The motion, as written, calls on the committee to adopt a study because it was completed. I'm coming back to the motion as it is written. I, personally, am not all that comfortable adopting it. That is why I support my fellow member's amendment.

[English]

The Chair: Okay. Just for clarity, it's a motion that's been adopted by almost every committee this week. There's nothing that has changed.

[Translation]

Abdelhaq Sari: We are being asked to adopt it. It says so in black and white.

[English]

The Chair: Mr. Majumdar, please go ahead. Then I have Ms. Church after that.

Shuvaloy Majumdar (Calgary Heritage, CPC): Mr. Chair, let me try and get this straight. I'm new to Parliament, in a sense, and certainly new to committee, but I'm a bit of a nerd. I enjoy going through the websites and doing the homework before arriving for work.

Mr. Thériault had articulated how in the initial report we have a 120-day deadline for the government to respond to the report, which would allow for us to continue committee business properly

and in earnest in the fall, which I think is the intention of every member around this table. Because some colleagues across the table have not done their due diligence and their basic homework, which is part of the obligation of being a public office holder, we are now looking to find a way to beg for time.

I know we are in a new Parliament and we have a new government, but I'm curious whether the tactics in this new Parliament are going to be the same as those used by the previous government. This, I think, is a good-faith gesture to continue the work the committee started in the past in the way in which all other committees in Parliament have been taking on the responsibility to do that work. This strikes me as speciously obstructionist at a point where we should be focusing on the business of Parliament and the business of the people. If the Carney government chooses to employ the same tactics as the Trudeau government and relitigate these old issues by using procedural delays and ignorance as a foil, then that will be very unfortunate.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Majumdar.

I'll recognize Ms. Church and then Mr. Saini, on the amendment.

Leslie Church: Mr. Chair, I appreciate that the members opposite may have had advance notice of the motion they brought forward and the studies that are considered therein, but to the best of my knowledge, on this side of the table, we received the motion during the break in this committee only a few moments ago. I think we are really interested in getting down to business with the work of government.

As a point of clarification, maybe I would address a question to the clerk as to whether or not, to Mr. Thériault's point about the 120 days, this requires a retabling of the report. If so, would that occur now, or is that more likely to occur in the fall? In that case, we're on essentially the same timeline, whether or not we are given an opportunity to actually review these reports before being asked to report on them.

The Chair: I'm going to allow the clerk to clarify that. I don't believe it requires a retabling of the report.

Go ahead, Madam Clerk.

The Clerk: Yes, if the committee adopts the motion as it is now, the chair would have to present the report to the House again.

That being said, the report has already been prepared. It's not like we have to review all of the report, because it's already written. This would be a one-page report with the report attached to it. It normally does not take long for us to prepare it, and the tabling could most likely take place this week.

• (1215)

The Chair: Which I would do tomorrow during Routine Proceedings?

The Clerk: Most likely.

The Chair: Yes, it's very likely.

You still have the floor.

Leslie Church: Well, Mr. Chair, it doesn't change my view. I would like an opportunity to review the reports, and that's where I would sit on this.

The Chair: Thank you.

I have Mr. Saini.

Go ahead, please.

Gurbux Saini: As a new member, I have some difficulty when my friends say that it's the same tactic as the Trudeau government's. I was not part of the Trudeau government.

I'm a new member. My responsibility is to make sure of the work I do, because I am responsible for that, rather than getting into the tactics of Liberals, Trudeau's.... This is what we hear in the House of Commons every day. Trudeau is not the Prime Minister. We have a new government, and I'm part of that.

Thank you.

The Chair: I don't have any other discussion.

Oh, wait.... I have Monsieur Thériault.

[Translation]

Luc Thériault: Let's try to put forward objective, not partisan, arguments. Otherwise, we are going to get off track.

What I care about, as a new committee member, is the government's response. Reading the report is one thing, but without the government's response, I can't figure out how I want to approach committee business when I come back in September. When we're back in September, I would like to have the government's response as soon as possible. That way, we would have both the overall vision and the government's response at the same time. Then, we could decide whether to study the matter or not. Right now, we are in limbo, and that is the problem.

I understand what Mr. Sari is saying, but that is the language customarily used in the House. In many cases, the House's customary language makes me cringe, but that is the language that was established to describe the situation we are in. Committees have adopted motions with this language. That is the language that has been used for years, and it is what it is, unless we want to change it. We can do that, but it would have to be proposed for every committee.

I know that members come here to do serious work, that they want to know what they are agreeing to, but this is simply about agreeing to receiving a response from the government. That will give us an overview, and my fellow members will have the whole summer to read it all. I imagine that we would have the government's response in September, and we could then move forward with our work.

That is how I suggest looking at this. I hope I've convinced my fellow members, because the goal is not to insult anyone. The goal is to work together.

The Chair: Thank you for your comment, Mr. Thériault.

[English]

We are on the amendment. I don't see any further discussion. The amendment is a motion to hold off until September, so that we can revisit this in September. That's the motion on the floor right now.

I'm going to ask if we have unanimous consent on that, which I always do. If we don't have it, then we'll go to a vote.

A voice: No.

The Chair: There is no unanimous consent, so we'll need to go to a vote.

Go ahead, Madam Clerk.

• (1220)

The Clerk: The result is four yeas and four nays.

The Chair: I vote no.

(Motion negated: nays, 5; yeas 4 [See Minutes of Proceedings])

The Chair: We're now on the motion presented by Mr. Barrett.

I see no further discussion on that.

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: Mr. Barrett, if you want to present the second motion now, I'd invite you to do that, please.

I'll remind committee members that there is some other business we have to deal with as well.

Michael Barrett: I move, given that committee members, staff, the clerk, analysts and witnesses worked hard to produce the report entitled "Oversight of Social Media Platforms: Ensuring Privacy and Safety 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, that the committee deem that it has undertaken and completed a study on the oversight of social media platforms ensuring privacy and safety online, pursuant to Standing Order 108; that it adopt that report as a report from this committee; that, pursuant to Standing Order 109, the committee request the government to table a comprehensive response to the report; and that the Chair present the report to the House.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Barrett. The motion has been moved.

I'm sure Ms. Khalid would be very happy if we received a response from the government on this.

Is there any discussion on this?

(Motion agreed to [See Minutes of Proceedings])

Michael Barrett: This is one of many motions that will get consensus at this committee.

The Chair: I'm sure it is.

There is some other business that we have to deal with.

Members of the committee are aware of a third party ATIP request that came in. An email was circulated, and any discussion on this should take place in camera.

I'm going to ask the committee if they're in agreement to go in camera.

Mr. Barrett, go ahead.

Michael Barrett: I have a question, if I may.

The Chair: Yes, go ahead.

Michael Barrett: It is a requirement that this item be dealt with in camera. Is that correct? I just want to be clear.

The Chair: If there's discussion—

Michael Barrett: I just want to be always clear about our reasons for going in camera.

The Chair: Right. There is a requirement that this be dealt with in camera, because it deals with information to which the committee is privy.

Michael Barrett: Do you need a motion, Chair?

The Chair: I need a motion or consensus.

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Chair: We're going to suspend for a couple of minutes while we prepare to go in camera.

[Proceedings continue in camera]

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