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# Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage

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Chair: The Honourable Hedy Fry





## Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage

Tuesday, December 13, 2022

• (1030)

[English]

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Kevin Waugh (Saskatoon—Grasswood, CPC)):** Good morning, everyone. I'm going to call the meeting to order.

Our regular chair is on her way from the Ottawa airport, so I'll be in the chair until Dr. Fry arrives.

I'd like to welcome everyone to meeting number 61 of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage.

I would like to acknowledge that this meeting is taking place on the unceded traditional territory of the Algonquin Anishinabe people.

Pursuant to the motion adopted by the committee on Monday, June 13, 2022, and Tuesday, September 20, 2022, the committee is meeting on the study of safe sport in Canada.

Today's meeting is taking place in a hybrid format pursuant to the House order on Thursday, June 23, 2022. Members are attending in person in the room and remotely using the Zoom application. I'd like to make a few comments for the benefit of the witnesses and members.

Please wait until I recognize you by name before speaking. Those participating by video conference please click on the microphone icon to activate your mike, as usual, and please mute yourself when you're not speaking. For interpretation, for those on Zoom, you have a choice at the bottom of your screen of floor, English, or French. For those in the room you can use the earpiece. I will remind you that all comments should be directed here to the vice-chair.

In accordance with our routine motion I am informing the committee that we—

[Translation]

**Mr. Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ):** On a point of order, Mr. Chair.

Can you please confirm that sound checks have been done for each witness? That will help the interpreters in their work.

[English]

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Kevin Waugh):** That's what I was just doing.

Are you filling in for Mr. Champoux? If so, we don't have a notification. It has not been sent.

Let me finish here and you guys in the Bloc can send a notification to the clerk.

I'd like to welcome our witnesses.

Thank you to the Honourable Thomas Albert Cromwell, senior counsel of Borden Ladner Gervais LLP, who is appearing by video conference. I notice, Mr. Cromwell, you're on the west coast. I believe there is a three-hour time change. Good morning out in the west coast. With you today is Nadia Effendi, a partner at Borden Ladner Gervais LLP, also by video conference. We also have Victoria Prince, who is also a partner, Borden Ladner Gervais LLP, by video conference.

The Honourable Thomas Cromwell, you have the floor for up to five minutes if you wish. I know you have opening statements. After that, we'll go around the room with several questions on your report.

The floor is yours, Honourable Thomas Cromwell.

**Hon. Thomas Cromwell (Senior Counsel, Borden Ladner Gervais LLP, As an Individual):** Thank you very much, Mr. Vice-Chair.

I'll be very brief in my opening comments.

[Translation]

It is an honour for me to be invited to your meeting today. I hope I can be of use to you in your important work.

[English]

I would like to say two things in order to preserve as much time as possible for your questions.

First, as you noted, I simply wanted to note the presence of my two colleagues, whom I've asked to join me this morning in order to assist me in providing you with the information you require.

[Translation]

Ms. Victoria Prince is the national contact person for the Charities and Not-for-Profit Law Section, and Ms. Nadia Effendi is the chair of the Public Law and Appellate Advocacy Group. Both of them work in the offices of Borden Ladner Gervais, in Toronto.

They helped me with my governance review and coordinated the work of the entire team.

[English]

Second, let me say a brief word about solicitor-client privilege, which I hope will put everyone's mind to rest on that subject.

My engagement with Hockey Canada was to perform an independent and impartial governance review as the terms of reference refer to it as an assessment of Hockey Canada's current governance models and practices. Our three reports have been made public. In those circumstances I'm of the view that there is no concern about solicitor-client privilege in relation to my review in testifying before you this morning. I can also confirm that Hockey Canada has indicated its agreement with my view.

With that introduction let me reiterate that I'm here to assist you as much as I can based on the governance review that I conducted.

Thank you, Mr. Vice-Chair.

• (1035)

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Kevin Waugh):** Thank you, Honourable Cromwell.

We'll start with the Conservatives for six minutes. We will start with Mrs. Thomas.

**Mrs. Rachael Thomas (Lethbridge, CPC):** Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Cromwell, for being with us here today.

I'll start off with a really basic question, and that is, it's my understanding that you were hired by Hockey Canada to do a review. Specifically, you were asked to look at their use of the national equity fund. Upon reviewing documents that were provided from Hockey Canada, you discovered that there was a second and a third fund, but that was not initially a part of the review that you were asked to do.

I'm wondering if there are even more things that perhaps you found in your review that you were not given permission or sign-off to disclose in your report.

**Hon. Thomas Cromwell:** For a short answer, absolutely not.

For a slightly longer answer, if you look at point five of our terms of reference, I was invited, in the area of governance, to make any other recommendations for actions that the board of directors and senior management could take to improve confidence. Once we started to realize that the reserve fund issue went beyond the national equity fund, we felt, obviously, that we had to look into that. We did and you have been able to read the results.

**Mrs. Rachael Thomas:** Thank you.

Justice Cromwell, would you say that everything that you wished to disclose has been disclosed?

**Hon. Thomas Cromwell:** Yes.

**Mrs. Rachael Thomas:** Okay. Thank you.

You make it clear in your review that it wasn't clear to you where money was originating from and where it was going. There seemed to be a lack of transparency and accountability.

With money coming in and money going out, and not having clear record-keeping as to where money is originating or where it might be spent, I'm just curious if there's any chance that public dollars could have been put into one of these three accounts or funds and then used to pay for a sexual assault claim.

**Hon. Thomas Cromwell:** Obviously—

**Mrs. Rachael Thomas:** Can we be assured that was not the case?

**Hon. Thomas Cromwell:** I can't provide any such assurance. I did not perform any kind of forensic audit. I looked at the records that I requested to see.

We noted some specific instances where there was no documentation for certain expenditures the public had been told had been made. On further examination, and for example, in one case, we found that the expenditure was made but from a different fund.

We encountered a few things of that nature, but I cannot stand before you today and say that I did a forensic audit. I wouldn't be qualified to do that.

**Mrs. Rachael Thomas:** Basically what I'm hearing from you then is that we can't know with 100% certainty that public dollars were not used.

**Hon. Thomas Cromwell:** I can't say one way or the other whether they were or they weren't.

**Mrs. Rachael Thomas:** Had proper record-keeping been kept, you would have been able to give that assurance. Would you not?

**Hon. Thomas Cromwell:** I think that would be—

**Mrs. Rachael Thomas:** I mean, if you can keep track of where money comes in and goes out, then clear record-keeping equals transparency, truth and assurance.

**Hon. Thomas Cromwell:** I think that question requires me to make a number of assumptions. As you can imagine, if you had a chance to look at the financial statements of the organization, it's complex. I'm not sure that, at the level of an audited statement, anybody could be sure where a certain dollar came from and where it ended up going.

That was not my focus. My focus was on what the fund was used for.

**Mrs. Rachael Thomas:** When record-keeping isn't clear, it does cause questions. Doesn't it?

• (1040)

**Hon. Thomas Cromwell:** If there's an absence of consistency in recording, of course.

One of the things I recommended in the review was that there be clear policies about both the purposes and the uses of funds.

**Mrs. Rachael Thomas:** Hockey Canada approached you and asked for this audit to be done. You were paid by Hockey Canada. Is that correct?

**Hon. Thomas Cromwell:** That's correct.

I take exception to the word "audit". It was the assessment of their governance, yes.

**Mrs. Rachael Thomas:** Okay, it was an assessment.

Now I'm curious whether, in your assessment, you found out when Hockey Canada became aware of the alleged sexual assault that took place in June 2018.

**Hon. Thomas Cromwell:** No, I did not.

My task was to evaluate governance. I think, as you'll see from our terms of reference, specifically excluded from it was the handling of individual cases.

**Mrs. Rachael Thomas:** Okay.

Hockey Canada was mandated by Sport Canada to join OSIC, in order to have funding restored. I'm wondering whether, in your review, you found any evidence that Hockey Canada wanted to join OSIC before this was mandated or enforced.

**Hon. Thomas Cromwell:** Very briefly, my understanding is that, in the past, the organization expressed some reservations about it, but that attitude has since changed.

**Mrs. Rachael Thomas:** Do you know why those original hesitations existed?

**Hon. Thomas Cromwell:** I'm aware of the reasons stated by Hockey Canada. They were focused on the suitability of some of the regulations and undertakings for their particular organization.

**Mrs. Rachael Thomas:** What wasn't suitable?

**Hon. Thomas Cromwell:** I'd have to check some notes on that.

Going from memory, it seems to me—my colleagues can jump in to correct me, if I stray, here—that one aspect of concern was the disclosure of financial statements, in the sense that it might invite claims, if people recognized the size of the reserve.

There are a couple of other things that, frankly, have slipped my mind, at the moment.

**Mrs. Rachael Thomas:** Mr. Cromwell—

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Kevin Waugh):** The six minutes are up.

Thank you, Mrs. Thomas.

**Mrs. Rachael Thomas:** We're at the end of our time. Perhaps you could provide us with that brief in writing, since you don't have your notes in front of you.

Thank you, Mr. Cromwell.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Kevin Waugh):** Thank you, Mrs. Thomas.

We move to the Liberals for six minutes.

Go ahead, Mr. Housefather.

**Mr. Anthony Housefather (Mount Royal, Lib.):** Thank you.

Thank you so much, Justice Cromwell, for your service to this country and the very excellent work you've done on the Hockey Canada file.

I want to start by asking you this: What audience did you write your report for? It seems to me that you wrote it to be read by a much wider audience than just the people who commissioned it at Hockey Canada. Who was your audience?

**Hon. Thomas Cromwell:** I would put it this way, Mr. Housefather. The audience was anybody who wanted to know what I thought about the governance of Hockey Canada.

**Mr. Anthony Housefather:** That's what I was thinking. I think that was appreciated.

At what point did you decide you were going to—and I think this is probably beyond the terms of your mandate—advise the board of Hockey Canada to not all run again, and to resign?

**Hon. Thomas Cromwell:** I became concerned that, from a governance perspective, the organization might be facing an almost existential crisis. I know you're very experienced in these matters and probably know more details than I do, but the spectre of what would happen to the organization, if all current sitting directors resigned, was—to use a polite word—murky. I became afraid, on one hand, that a precipitous act might be damaging to the long-term governance health of the organization. On the other hand, what had to be done was perfectly clear to any reasonable observer, I think.

That is why I advised the sitting directors not to renew their term or stand for re-election, but also not to simply, precipitously, all walk out the door.

**Mr. Anthony Housefather:** I think that was very wise counsel. Again, I appreciate that you took that step.

One of the things I want to ask you.... I saw a real misunderstanding out there, in some of the media, about the way you dealt with the NEF. For example, you answered the question Hockey Canada gave you by saying that of course it's appropriate to have a fund for uninsured claims. It's obvious that it's appropriate to have such a fund, if one's claims are uninsurable.

However, you went on, in your report, to criticize Hockey Canada for how it operated the fund. You said there was no proper disclosure; a lack of controls or definitions on how the money was to be used; cheques cut without proper internal disclosure and accountability; no receipts; and no record of the disclosure to members.

Would you agree that you were not exonerating Hockey Canada in your report, in terms of how they ran the NEF?

• (1045)

**Hon. Thomas Cromwell:** I wasn't trying to accuse or exonerate anybody. I was trying to set out the facts. Perhaps I wasn't as succinct as I could have been. As the old thing goes, I didn't have time to write a short report. I wasn't there to accuse or acquit anybody. I was there to study and assess the governance, and those were my conclusions.

**Mr. Anthony Housefather:** Of course, I'm using criminal law terms that I shouldn't be using, but I think what you discovered was a lack of accountability and controls in the way they ran the NEF.

There's one line you added to your final report that intrigues me, and I'd like to ask about it. At the last meeting, I asked Hockey Canada about the section of your report where you found that the NEF didn't fund the player health and wellness programs that, in a memo to its members in July 2022, the organization claimed it did. In fact, in your interim report you mentioned this, and in your final report you added a line saying that, yes, in fact, the NEF did not fund those programs. They were funded from the health and benefit trust, which was another reserve fund—with its own set of governance problems—that Hockey Canada had.

The timing of these untrue statements in July immediately followed the public revelations about the NEF, the meeting of our committee, the hiring of a crisis communications firm and, in fact, the board minutes where they weaved a different narrative in terms of accusing the press of maligning Hockey Canada.

I was wondering whether you thought this false disclosure in July 2022 that the NEF had these other good purposes was deliberate. Or was it, again, just poor governance and a mistake?

**Hon. Thomas Cromwell:** I didn't explore why the error was made. I simply tried to ascertain the facts about the use of the funds.

It's also perhaps important just to note the issue related to the counselling aspect of what had been included in the original memo to members that I believe.... I don't have it in front of me, of course, but going from memory, the memo that went out to members mentioned a number of purposes for which the fund was used. If you have a look, if you happen to have the report handy, or wish to look at it later, we have a chart on page 152 of the report.

[*Translation*]

You'll find that at page 165 of the French document.

[*English*]

You'll see under item 4 that certain donations to various organizations, such as "telephone helplines" and so on and so forth were in fact made from the national equity fund. The point that was not made was the counselling fees, and we were ultimately advised that those were paid out of another fund, the health and benefit trust fund.

**Mr. Anthony Housefather:** Thank you. I have limited time, so I'm going to ask you one short question, Justice Cromwell.

Were you satisfied with how the nominations committee handled the recent announcement of their proposed candidates for the board of Hockey Canada? Did you follow the process? Were you satisfied with the way they did it this time? Did they follow your advice?

**Hon. Thomas Cromwell:** Let me answer that in two ways very briefly, if I may, Mr. Housefather.

The first is to say that I've had zero involvement in either the recruiting selection or the nomination of candidates, so post the process, I've certainly had no role to play in any selection aspect of their work. What I know about it is what I've read in the press, and all I can say is that it certainly appears that the nominating committee tried extremely hard to recruit the sort of board with the sort of profile I recommended.

**Mr. Anthony Housefather:** Thank you very much.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Kevin Waugh):** Thank you very much. We'll move on to the Bloc and Mr. Lemire.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Sébastien Lemire:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Cromwell, I, too, would like to congratulate you on your report. I must admit I was one of the skeptical ones given that the review was launched and paid for by Hockey Canada, but you have produced a document that will be useful not only for hockey but for

the entire sports sector. I give you my sincere thanks. Indeed, it would have been risky to repeat the same actions that got us here in the first place.

My comments are in the same vein as those of my colleague, Mr. Housefather, who just spoke.

Your 213-page report concluded that sports federations are at a crossroads and that they must become accountable. Your report has proposed numerous solutions, such as capping at 60% the number of directors who are of the same sex.

I would therefore like to ask you the same question: are you satisfied with yesterday's candidate nomination process?

• (1050)

**Hon. Thomas Cromwell:** In all honesty, I do not have enough information to say if I'm satisfied or not. I'm not at all involved in the process.

According to the news reports, it is obvious that the independent nominating committee made a great deal of effort to submit a group of candidates with qualifications and experience in various fields, which is completely in keeping with my recommendations.

**Mr. Sébastien Lemire:** You made quite a few recommendations on the makeup of the board of directors.

Are you able to tell us if Hockey Canada will adhere to the Canadian Sport Governance Code, which applies to all national sports organizations that are recognized by the Canadian Olympic Committee, before the December 31, 2022 deadline?

**Hon. Thomas Cromwell:** I believe Hockey Canada made an announcement on the subject.

**Mr. Sébastien Lemire:** I will have to check that, because I don't recall seeing anything.

In light of the organization's lax attitude towards governance, did you look at the increase in insurance premiums for Hockey Canada directors? Why did the premiums shoot up so quickly?

**Hon. Thomas Cromwell:** I am no insurance expert, but I am under the impression that the number of claims, especially for cases of sexual assault, went up considerably over the last 10 years, which has led to an increase in premiums.

**Mr. Sébastien Lemire:** To your knowledge, has something similar happened with other national sports organizations, or have premiums shot up much more quickly for hockey?

**Hon. Thomas Cromwell:** Unfortunately, I can't make any comparisons. However, you will find, at page 165 of the French version of the report, a table in which I indicated the various insurance policies and the cost for each participant.

**Mr. Sébastien Lemire:** During your inquiry, did you learn that people within and outside of Hockey Canada used these funds for their own purposes, especially the insurance funds?

**Hon. Thomas Cromwell:** I am sorry, but I'm not sure I understood the question.

**Mr. Sébastien Lemire:** Did you learn that a person could have used the funds for personal reasons and benefitted from the increase in insurance premiums?

**Hon. Thomas Cromwell:** No.

**Mr. Sébastien Lemire:** How do you explain the fact that Hockey Canada's financial statements have not yet been posted on its Internet site?

**Hon. Thomas Cromwell:** That choice was made by the organization. Obviously, I recommended another approach.

**Mr. Sébastien Lemire:** How do you explain that some people who suffered grievous injuries or became paraplegic weren't covered by the insurance policies?

I suppose you heard of various such cases through the media.

**Hon. Thomas Cromwell:** I just have a general idea of Hockey Canada's insurance coverage, and I don't know why the people that you mentioned weren't covered, if that is indeed the case.

**Mr. Sébastien Lemire:** According to one of the allegations, the referee did not see anything during the game and did not call a penalty. For that reason, Hockey Canada did not have to pay out.

Are Hockey Canada's partnerships with organizations such as the Canadian Hockey League and the National Hockey League transparent? Did you see any irregularities in these partnerships?

Hockey Canada has third-party liability insurance, but its players are loaned. Do you think this gives it an advantage?

Do you spot any irregularities regarding players from Hockey Canada and other national sports organizations?

• (1055)

**Hon. Thomas Cromwell:** I didn't see any such irregularities.

**Mr. Sébastien Lemire:** Is there a procedure to be followed to ensure that the money is used appropriately when various funds can be accessed?

Did you make any recommendations in this regard?

**Hon. Thomas Cromwell:** As you know, I recommended that the organization set up a policy framework that would govern the use of these funds. That would contribute to greater transparency, and the organization itself...

[English]

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Kevin Waugh):** We'll move on now.

[Translation]

**Hon. Thomas Cromwell:** Pardon?

[English]

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Kevin Waugh):** I'm sorry, Honourable Cromwell. We are well over—

[Translation]

**Hon. Thomas Cromwell:** I'm sorry.

**Mr. Sébastien Lemire:** Thank you, Mr. Cromwell.

[English]

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Kevin Waugh):** —our time allotment here so we're going to go to the NDP and Mr. Julian for six minutes.

**Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP):** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Thank you, Justice Cromwell, for your work on behalf of Canadians. As you are well aware, our committee has been seized with this issue with Hockey Canada, Hockey Canada governance, Hockey Canada's response to the most horrific allegations of sexual assault over the last few months. We appreciate your coming and answering questions.

I wanted to start by following up on the records and the mandate. Are there any records that you requested to see that were refused to you?

**Hon. Thomas Cromwell:** No.

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Were there any records—

**Hon. Thomas Cromwell:** Mr. Julian, I can tell you that had that been the case, I would have not completed the mandate.

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Were there any records that you requested that were non-existent?

**Hon. Thomas Cromwell:** Yes, as I noted in the report, we obviously wanted to see any existing policy documents concerning any of the various funds that we studied, and we learned that there were no such documents. It wasn't a matter of the documents were missing. As far as we could understand, the documents had never been created.

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Thank you for that.

Were there any questions that you asked where you simply did not receive a satisfactory response?

**Hon. Thomas Cromwell:** No.

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Your final report was issued on October 31. Your report recommended that the current board not re-offer. On October 11, after the appearance here before the Heritage Committee, the current board announced that it was not going to re-offer.

Was there any communication made, prior to October 31, of your recommendation? Would it have been known to the board members on October 11 that you were recommending that the current board not re-offer?

**Hon. Thomas Cromwell:** No, I believe that my recommendation followed that appearance. We might have to double-check the chronology, but the two operated independently in my mind.

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Yes, I understand that, but is it possible that the board, or some members within Hockey Canada, were aware at that point that it was your intent to make that recommendation?

**Hon. Thomas Cromwell:** To the best of my knowledge, they would have had no indication that was coming from me until they received it.

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Okay. Thank you for that.

You mentioned earlier that your responsibilities did not include responding to specific cases, but we have these horrific allegations from 2003 and 2018. In terms of how Hockey Canada responds to these horrific allegations, the issue of how Hockey Canada handles sexual assaults or horrific allegations of sexual violence is extremely important.

Are there any elements, beyond your report, that you can tell us, as a committee, are important for Hockey Canada to do moving forward?

**Hon. Thomas Cromwell:** I think you'll see from the length of the report that I didn't leave too much out. I can't think of anything that I felt was important that emerged from my review that is not referred to in what I've provided.

• (1100)

**Mr. Peter Julian:** You mentioned earlier, you said—and I have quotation marks around you, so I hope I've recorded this accurately—that there was concern that the issue of the amount of the monies available in the funds could “invite claims, if people recognized the size of the reserve.”

Is that an accurate portrayal of how Hockey Canada saw the issue of governance in responding to these horrific allegations, in a way that was not forthcoming to the public?

**Hon. Thomas Cromwell:** In fact, you've referred to the reference I was searching for in response to Mrs. Thomas a few moments ago. All I can say is that was the explanation that was offered for the reluctance to disclose the size of those reserve funds.

**Mr. Peter Julian:** What is your response to that? Certainly we've seen the response of the Canadian public, the sponsors and the provincial federations to Hockey Canada's, quite frankly, stonewalling on information of this nature.

What is your response when you see what was an internal decision within Hockey Canada to try to handle these issues quietly rather than responding in a transparent way?

**Hon. Thomas Cromwell:** I've responded to that in many different ways. I think two of the most important are, number one, having a clear and robust policy framework to deal with these matters, and not dealing with them as ad hoc one-offs. Second of all, transparency is obviously important. The COC code suggests that financial statements ought to be made public. In my view, that's sound advice.

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Do you believe Hockey Canada should be releasing the victims who want or choose to do so from the NDAs that link them to the compensation they received?

**Hon. Thomas Cromwell:** I don't want to opine on that. I don't know all the facts. I certainly didn't study that issue at all.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Kevin Waugh):** Thank you, Mr. Julian.

We'll move to our second round. This will be a five-minute round that will start with the Conservatives.

Go ahead, Ms. Gladu.

**Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC):** Thank you, Chair.

Justice Cromwell, thank you for being here today. I'm going to be taking up questions with a view to trying to figure how to close the loopholes in order to prevent this sort of thing from happening in the future.

Now, speaking as a professional engineer who travelled globally and worked for national and global organizations, in every organization there would have been a governance description that would have a code of conduct and HR procedures for dealing with issues of harassment, etc. Did you find any such governance documents within Hockey Canada?

**Hon. Thomas Cromwell:** Yes, we did. I think we detailed them in the report.

We certainly also found that there were areas where, as you say, the policy framework was lacking, in our view. We made specific recommendations in that regard.

**Ms. Marilyn Gladu:** Yes. I did appreciate that. I thought you did an excellent job of detailing the gaps that were there.

The reason I'm so concerned is that I would have expected, if there were gaps at that level, that at the Sport Canada level, where Sport Canada is funding organizations, they would have had some policy requirements as well. I did go to the government website and print out quite an extensive policy document from Sport Canada, but nothing in there talks about actions or codes of conduct to prevent abuse or how to address the situation if someone comes forth with an allegation of abuse.

When I see the numerous sports organizations.... We've heard about swimmers and gymnasts. There's quite a list here that Sport Canada is funding. I think it's important to fund, but in order to make sure that this rampant abuse that is happening across all of these organizations is ended, do you have some recommendations for us on what ought to be done at the Sport Canada level, including with regard to the auditing of those who are funded to ensure that we have compliance and a safe environment?

**Hon. Thomas Cromwell:** As you'll understand, my task was to assess the governance of Hockey Canada, not to do a review of Sport Canada. I more than had my hands full in 89 days to do Hockey Canada. It was not practical to go further, and I had no mandate to do so.

I did set out in the report some of the current aspects of Hockey Canada's involvement in these issues. I wanted to set out the full legal context within which the governance of Hockey Canada has to be assessed. I noted some academic writing to the effect that Sport Canada perhaps ought to play a more robust role. I did note the sorts of conditions that were included in the contribution agreement, which is their behaviour modification tool. I also learned in the course of my review that, in that context, Sport Canada is in the midst of revising, as I think the minister and other officials indicated in their testimony before you.

I'm in no position to say what is the best or what they ought to do. I simply tried to note what the existing situation is and what is said is being done as we speak.

• (1105)

**Ms. Marilyn Gladu:** Thank you.



One of the other concerns I had throughout this was that I had previously been involved when the sexual misconduct in the military was being reviewed. It was troubling to learn there were incidents from 1994, and carrying on and on and on and on, without really firm action being taken. Even from the time the newest allegations came out, it took almost a year of getting the runaround before we had a new minister put in place. I believe she's going to provide an update today on what is happening there.

In terms of the Hockey Canada history, it seems to me that there were a number of payouts for assault from the different funds—the \$8.9 million in 1989, the \$7.6 million paid for nine other ones out of the national equity fund, and 12 additional claims through the insurance fund. During all this time, it didn't appear that there was any action taken.

Is that a fair statement, from your review of their activity?

**Hon. Thomas Cromwell:** I don't think it's entirely fair because certainly there were programs, both at the local level and assisted nationally. Whether, of course, they were robust enough or adequate is a whole other story, but I think it would be unfair to say that nothing was done.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Kevin Waugh):** Thank you very much.

We'll move now to the Liberals.

Mr. Housefather, you have five minutes.

**Mr. Anthony Housefather:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thanks again, Justice Cromwell.

I have a different line of questions, but before that, there was one section of your report that intrigued me that I want to delve into with you for one second.

One of the problems I identified that I was the most disturbed about was Hockey Canada's failure to minute important board decisions, whether taken during in camera meetings or otherwise. I noticed in your report that you said that wasn't necessarily a good practice, although you did note that there may be occasions where it might be appropriate. I can't imagine anywhere where it would be appropriate to not minute a decision of a board to settle a case. I can't see how that could be appropriate. Certainly, information related to the identification of a person could be excised.

Can you explain where you would think it would be appropriate for the board to actually make a decision to pay an amount to anyone and not minute that to have a future record of that decision?

**Hon. Thomas Cromwell:** I think the focus of my concern was on making sure the minutes were consistent with any legal obligation the organization had undertaken. Also, of course, one has to be cautious, as you would well appreciate, with regard to solicitor-client privilege issues because, presumably, the board is going to be acting on the basis of legal advice. I regret if I gave the impression that I thought there would be occasions where no minuting would be appropriate. I think I was trying to focus on some of the nuances of the practical difficulties of minuting, but as a general principle, I think you and I are on exactly the same page.

**Mr. Anthony Housefather:** No, I agree. That's why I was just... I didn't understand exactly how it was drafted, then, because obvi-

ously, of course, they don't need to explain why they made that decision based on the advice of their lawyer that could be given in private. I just want to make sure that we all agree and that no organization in the country thinks, after reading the report, that it's okay to not minute decisions to settle a case.

Can I ask you another question?

I was intrigued by one of the things that you wrote in the report. Where you talk about the people responsible, you write:

It is also time for other entities and stakeholders to reflect on their own roles and responsibilities. Some who have been quick to announce their loss of confidence in Hockey Canada have been slow to acknowledge their own past contributions to its troubles. The underlying causes of the current crisis are not of recent origin. The Members have controlled who is on the Board.

Could you speak about that to say why you put that in there?

• (1110)

**Hon. Thomas Cromwell:** Absolutely.

I think if you carry on in the same area in the report... It's in the introductory comments, page 13 of the English version. I apologize. I don't have the reference to the French in front of me. However, as you'll see, I say in that section that it certainly was not my role to point fingers or assign responsibility. The purpose of getting into this was to encourage all of the interveners, all of the stakeholders, sponsors, members, everyone at Sport Canada, everybody concerned about the health of sport in the country, to work together to solve some of these very tough systemic issues. It very much was not a finger-pointing exercise. It was a plea for people to work together on these systemic problems.

**Mr. Anthony Housefather:** Agreed. I just wanted you to be able to get that out there on the record. I think that's a very important thing. We all have to pitch in from all of our vantage points.

Another thing that intrigued me is that you mention in the report that Sport Canada essentially may have missed governance problems at the organization, which is likely to be true. I do note that, in its grades, for example, Sport Canada gave a grade of one out of five to Hockey Canada for conflict of interest. It did flag certain things that were of concern.

Could you talk just briefly—because I know we only have a minute left—about the Sport Canada process?

I know that Ms. Gladu asked, and you said it wasn't your purview, but what can we do as a committee to give guidance to Sport Canada on how it can improve its process, based on what you learned with respect to Hockey Canada?

**Hon. Thomas Cromwell:** Far be it from me to advise parliamentarians on how to carry out their functions.

Let me simply say that the whole nature of regulation of sport and tying the issue of regulation to funding is a very important issue. It raises lots of issues about resources to carry out a regulatory function. Certainly we heard from individuals that they would favour a more robust regulatory environment. As I say, that was not something I felt competent to give an opinion on, but we certainly heard that from a number of sources.

**Mr. Anthony Housefather:** Thank you.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Kevin Waugh):** Thank you very much, Mr. Housefather.

We will move to the Bloc.

We have Mr. Lemire for two and a half minutes.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Sébastien Lemire:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Cromwell, allow me to go back to the issue of the makeup of the board of directors.

Should the nominating committee have taken into account the apparent conflict of interest of certain candidates, such as close ties with instances of gang rape in 2003, 2016 and 2018?

**Hon. Thomas Cromwell:** I can't make any comments on the issue of conflicts of interest, because I'm not aware of the facts.

**Mr. Sébastien Lemire:** Thank you.

You were a judge within the justice system. You have a ton of experience.

Given the number of times that you name some Hockey Canada directors in your report, such as Mr. Glen McCurdie, and in light of all the facts that you noted, do you believe that there is sufficient evidence to enable participants to launch a lawsuit against Hockey Canada for having concealed funds, three to be precise?

Would it be worthwhile holding an inquiry on the way they have mismanaged funds throughout the years?

**Hon. Thomas Cromwell:** I will refrain from making comments on third-party liability.

**Mr. Sébastien Lemire:** Thank you.

We have done some digging, and it appears that Hockey Canada has not indicated whether or not it will adhere to the Canadian Sport Governance Code.

As a result, do you still recommend that Hockey Canada should adhere to the Code of Governance for Canadian Sport?

**Hon. Thomas Cromwell:** Yes.

**Mr. Sébastien Lemire:** Did you witness funds being used for real estate, such as the purchase of condominiums?

**Hon. Thomas Cromwell:** I have no knowledge of such dealings.

**Mr. Sébastien Lemire:** All right.

• (1115)

[*English*]

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Kevin Waugh):** You have one minute.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Sébastien Lemire:** Thank you.

I already have the answer for the next question that I was going to ask you.

I was not expecting such brief and punchy answers.

Thank you.

[*English*]

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Kevin Waugh):** Are you done?

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Sébastien Lemire:** Yes.

[*English*]

**Mr. Kevin Waugh:** All right. Peter gets the extra time.

We'll go for two and a half minutes to the NDP.

Mr. Julian.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I would like to thank my colleague from the Bloc Québécois.

I do hope you will give me that extra minute.

[*English*]

Justice Cromwell, I wanted to come to an issue that has been festering out there. I first asked Hockey Canada about this in the month of August, which is the issue of the compensation given to board members. A whistle-blower indicated there were luxury lunches of \$5,000 for a board of 12 people, luxury hotels and fine jewellery, championship rings, at \$3,000 each, provided to board members. We finally received an answer about the jewellery, which was that the whistle-blower was correct on the rings. For the luxury dining, the \$5,000 board lunches, we have never received a response from Hockey Canada.

You point out in your report very clearly that you recommend that the board not be compensated, but what is your feeling about this type of compensation the board has received? Did you come across these examples? Is there any confirmation of these fairly significant amounts, particularly when we talk about hockey parents across the country who scrimp and save to put their daughters or sons into Hockey Canada programs?

The allegations seem a bit rich in terms of board spending.

What is your reaction to this, and is this why you were suggesting it is important that the board not be compensated?

**Hon. Thomas Cromwell:** That's a big question. I'll try to be as succinct as I can.

Number one, as I mentioned earlier, I was certainly not engaged in any kind of forensic audit, and I was not engaged in any review at the level of expense policies of board members, so I really can't be of much assistance to you on that.

What I can say, though, at the more general level, is that it's important for a not-for-profit organization to have a robust policy framework so that what is permissible and what isn't is transparent and known to all directors. This particular issue did not play into my thinking about the advice I gave that the current directors not put their names forward for re-election.

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Thank you for that.

I'd also like to—

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Kevin Waugh):** You have time for a very short question.

**Mr. Peter Julian:** I still have a minute, Mr. Chair.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Kevin Waugh):** No, I have 2:33 here, but go ahead.

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Thank you.

You cited the meetings of Canadian heritage committee on July 26 talking about Sport Canada not having “a process that allows it to verify that the NSOs abide by the obligations set out in their contribution agreement.” You quote a member of the committee saying that “[as] long as an organization says it did everything it was supposed to, it gets the funding”.

What is your opinion of the importance of the federal government actually playing its key role of oversight and verification with national sports organizations, including Hockey Canada, so that they have to put in place and implement these policies?

**Hon. Thomas Cromwell:** I think you're a bit modest, Mr. Julian, because I think it was you whom I referred to in that passage of the report.

As I mentioned, of course I was not there studying what would be the best regulatory model for sport in Canada at the governmental level. I did try to set out the existing legal context and also set out some of the information we had about what was coming.

The role of government as a regulator in sports is a very complex legal issue in a federation, as you would appreciate. It also has a lot of resource implications. I can't really offer you any specific advice other than to say that we heard from various sources in the course of our work that there was a real interest in Sport Canada having a more robust regulatory role.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Kevin Waugh):** Thank you.

We'll move on now to the Conservatives and Mr. Shields.

**Mr. Martin Shields (Bow River, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'll take some of the time, but I'll split it a little bit with you. I know you're substituting in the chair today. I will give you a little time at the end of my time. Thank you.

Thank you, Justice. I really appreciate your being here today and for the obvious extensive knowledge of what you've written about.

On page 201, you've written:

There is no doubt that Hockey Canada has been served by directors who are passionate about hockey, deeply committed to the organization's mission, vision and values and who donate large amounts of time and energy—often unreasonably large amounts—to the organization's governance. However, confidence is not only a matter of objective fact, but of reasonable perception and there is an over-

whelming perception on the part of important stakeholders that the leadership of Hockey Canada does not deserve their confidence.

You made a statement. You talked about looking for facts. However, you've made a judgment here about what people were contributing to an organization and that their contribution, though you suggested it was “unreasonable”, went astray.

Can you give me some of the judgment analysis that you made to make that kind of statement?

• (1120)

**Hon. Thomas Cromwell:** Certainly.

Number one, there was a lack of robust policy framework for many important areas of governance of the organization. I think we set that out in quite considerable detail. Those are the kinds of larger-picture governance issues that I think need a great deal of attention in the organization.

**Mr. Martin Shields:** It's critical in the sense of when you're talking about culture. Culture is sometimes hard to define in fact. A lot of it is the perception you get when you're interviewing people, talking to people and talking to stakeholders.

Can you go a little bit more into what you found in that perception of the culture?

**Hon. Thomas Cromwell:** I don't really feel I'd be comfortable trying to talk about culture. There's the old saying, “Culture eats policy for breakfast”, so I don't want to ignore it in any sense.

What I was trying to say in the passage you referred to was that I feel that people were doing their best as they saw it at the time. With the benefit of hindsight some of the [*Technical difficulty—Editor*] wrong and the approach to governance needed to be made more robust.

**Mr. Martin Shields:** In a sense, the culture then was maintained. What you heard from stakeholders and from the people you were talking to was that in the culture that was developed by this board, they lost the confidence that people had, so the perception became the reality.

**Hon. Thomas Cromwell:** Yes. The only slight nuance I'd put on your statement, if I might, Mr. Shields, is that I don't think it's fair to say that nine people created the culture of hockey or any other sport in this country. That's why, at the beginning of the report, I made what you could call a plea for all of the folks to work together to try to solve this very tough systemic problem.

I don't think it's fair—and perhaps you didn't mean this—to suggest that all of our problems with culture in hockey and other sports rest on the board table.

**Mr. Martin Shields:** I would probably agree with you, and that's not what I was suggesting in the sense that, as you did a tremendous in-depth job in a very short time, you found some other situations that led to people's lack of faith because of the culture of a particular board and the structure they were operating under.

**Hon. Thomas Cromwell:** That's correct.

**Mr. Martin Shields:** The recommendations that you work throughout your report would suggest that there are things they should do and could do.

What was the most critical thing that you believe needs to be done so that a new board will say, "We have a new piece of paper here that we've just reviewed, 200 pages. Somebody spent an incredible amount of time getting us a really good document as an agenda moving forward"?

What's the number one thing a new board, which is going to be drinking from a fire hose as a whole group, really needs to pay attention to in your thorough analysis?

**Hon. Thomas Cromwell:** I'd like to say two things that I think are critical.

One is who is around the table. As you know, we made a lot of recommendations about the nomination process. Ultimately it's the decision of the members as to who is around that table. I don't want to usurp their role, but we made a lot of recommendations about that. That's critical.

The second is to have a much more robust policy framework that's transparent and will contribute to consistency of decision-making.

• (1125)

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Kevin Waugh):** Thank you, Mr Shields.

We'll move to the Liberals for five minutes.

MP Coteau, the floor is yours.

**Mr. Michael Coteau (Don Valley East, Lib.):** Thank you so much, Mr. Chair.

Thank you, Mr. Cromwell, for being here with us today.

To get this report done in a couple months is quite the accomplishment. I think you were engaged in August—it said in the report—and you delivered it in early October, which is just an incredible feat.

In the middle of this organizational crisis specifically related to an issue outside of the governance structure, it was an issue that the entire nation was paying attention to. Why do you think, in the middle of such a crisis, there was value for the organization to do a governance review?

**Hon. Thomas Cromwell:** As I tried to express in the report, my view is that governance is the foundation of everything else the organization can do. I would be the first to concede, of course, that you need more to have a successful organization that's carrying out its public interest mandate than a sound governance framework. I do make the claim and truly believe that it provides the foundation for everything the organization does.

It also became very clear that there were some important governance issues that the organization needed to address, so my hope is that our work will be a very good investment for the future health of the organization.

**Mr. Michael Coteau:** There was a history of different reports and recommendations to the organization over the years. From your review of those recommendations and reports—I know there are a couple of pages just listing reports way back to the turn of the century—did you find that there was an alignment between the recommendations either the board or third parties made and where the board was today from a governance perspective? Were there lost opportunities?

**Hon. Thomas Cromwell:** Frankly, I didn't try to assess the success or failure of previous efforts. I did study them in the hope that they would enlighten me in terms of possible recommendations.

I think it's fair to say that the first significant review that I was aware of was focused on the new not-for-profit corporate legislation that was coming into force. That was very much focused on those kinds of issues. I think it's fair to say that the reviews that I looked at were very much more in line with a normal consultant-board relationship, whereas what I was tasked to do was to provide an independent assessment simply to provide advice.

We certainly did have a look at earlier work and tried to take into account any insights that had been developed in the course of that work.

**Mr. Michael Coteau:** One of the roles of a board is to look for ways to mitigate any type of potential risk that comes to the organization.

Over the years, we've seen complaints come in stemming from a range of issues, including instances of sexual assault but also allegations of racism. Boards need to respond by putting in place good governance structures that allow for the processing of those complaints and to minimize the risk to the organization but also to do what's morally correct.

Do you believe that there was a failure in putting in place a governance structure, the right types of systems, to respond to these incidents, these complaints and, in some cases, these criminal activities that were taking place?

**Hon. Thomas Cromwell:** As you know, and I don't want to repeat it ad nauseam, we didn't study specific responses to specific incidents, but as you will know from the report, what we did say is that there was a serious gap in the policy framework for the organization about what funds could be used for what, under what circumstances, and governing or setting out guidance for each board and its staff members as to how these matters should be dealt with at the policy level. We've recommended, as you know, that this be done.

**Mr. Michael Coteau:** I guess my question is more specifically on the governance structure and policies that the board put in place and have had as part of their organization. Do you think the board structure, governance and policies that were in place served the stakeholders well in responding to these controversial issues?

• (1130)

**Hon. Thomas Cromwell:** Clearly, they did not. That's why we're here.

**Mr. Michael Coteau:** Yes.

Would you say that there was a failure on their side to put in place a structure to allow for the proper processing of those complaints?

**Hon. Thomas Cromwell:** Yes.

**Mr. Michael Coteau:** Okay.

I notice in your report that you don't talk about racism or systemic racism. I would argue that systemic racism finds its way into Hockey Canada. Why, throughout this entire governance review, was that issue not addressed at all?

**Hon. Thomas Cromwell:** I think the short answer, as I tried to explain earlier, is that my view is that sound governance is the foundation of everything the organization does. Clearly, every organization has to confront issues of sexism, racism and homophobia. In order to do that effectively, they have to have a sound governance model in place. I was very much trying to work on that foundation.

I wasn't trying to indicate how that would lead us in various important directions as the organization came to terms with those important issues.

**Mr. Michael Coteau:** Thank you for your time.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Kevin Waugh):** Thank you, MP Coteau.

We'll move now to the Conservatives. Actually, I'm going to take the five minutes, if you don't mind.

Justice Cromwell, thank you for all your work. I think that around the table here we were really disappointed right from June, when we first had Hockey Canada officials here. They were, as you know, very secretive when talking about their funds. Then we found out they don't have only one fund but three funds.

You've done a very good job with your report here. Going forward, you've mentioned the serious gap between the board and the staff. Would you recommend that Hockey Canada hire somebody who's not there today to deal with this gap you talked about for the last hour, the robust framework and great deal of attention that are needed?

It's obvious, from what we've seen, that there is nobody in our estimation—at least, in my estimation—in Hockey Canada today as an employee who would deal with the serious gaps you mentioned in your report. Have you recommended to Hockey Canada that they look outside the organization to deal with the gaps identified by your report?

**Hon. Thomas Cromwell:** First of all, I think I indicated in the report that the first job of what I've called the "interim" board of directors is to hire a new CEO. The short answer to your question is that undoubtedly, yes, a new CEO needs to be recruited, and it will be that person's responsibility to make sure that the rest of the staff of the organization is made up of the sorts of people who are needed to carry out the mandate the board has given them.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Kevin Waugh):** I think Canadians were shocked that this is a not-for-profit, yet has \$153 million in three different funds. You exposed the third fund, which did not become transparent when Hockey Canada officials were here in June or even in July.

What are your thoughts on the trust factor of Canadians in Hockey Canada? The not-for-profit hiding money in three different funds, as we know today, and the officials transferring money from one to the other because they were scared that the insurance rates would go up or that people would come forward with requests, with more insurance to be paid for injuries and such from sexual assault or harassment, is troubling for Canadians. Would you agree?

**Hon. Thomas Cromwell:** I would refer back to my second interim report to the board in early October, in which I indicated that, in my judgment, the confidence of stakeholders had been irreparably compromised. That's why my advice to the board was not to stand for re-election when their terms expired.

I don't think I could say that any more clearly than I did in that document.

• (1135)

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Kevin Waugh):** They had to clean house. Your report mentioned that they had to clean house.

I will say that the nine people they appointed yesterday.... It's interesting because there is no representative from the Atlantic region. There is no representative now from Manitoba. There is no representative from Saskatchewan or the northern territories or such, and you recommended up to 13.

They took the first step on nine, but there are gaps that I see of the nine who were appointed yesterday, seeing that there are none from Saskatchewan, Manitoba or the Atlantic region. Could you comment on that? We have one minute left.

**Hon. Thomas Cromwell:** The first thing I think it's important to remember is that my recommendation was that an interim board be put in place with a mandate to act on recommendations promptly. However, as you pointed out, my recommendation was also to expand the size of the board.

As a point of legal precision, the election of those directors will happen this weekend by the members. They have not yet been appointed as directors. They are, at this point, simply nominees.

I don't want to comment on the specific slate, but I think it is fair to say that, if the rest of the recommendations are put into effect, it should be much easier for the nominating committee to ensure geographical representation from across the country.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Kevin Waugh):** Thank you. That's five minutes.

We will go to the Liberals and Ms. Hepfner.

**Ms. Lisa Hepfner (Hamilton Mountain, Lib.):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Through you, I would like to thank Justice Cromwell for being here with us today and for answering questions.

I will pick up on what my colleague MP Waugh was talking about when it comes to the new board at Hockey Canada.

How do we know that the process to bring in new leadership has been changed, so that we have more diversity in leadership at Hockey Canada?

**Hon. Thomas Cromwell:** We will have to, first of all, examine whatever supporting documents they provide. I'm not in a position to assess how effectively my recommendations have been put into effect. My mandate ended on October 31, when I submitted the report, so I'm not sure that I can be of much assistance in advising you as to how you can be certain that all of these recommendations are put into effect, other than by observing what the organization does.

**Ms. Lisa Hefner:** I have heard concerns from some people involved that it's the same people at Hockey Canada making the same decisions and that nothing's really changing.

What has your perception been, watching the fallout since your report was released?

**Hon. Thomas Cromwell:** I certainly don't want in any way to usurp the role of the members in the election that's upcoming, but I feel comfortable saying that just looking at the bios of the people who have been nominated to the board, I conclude that the nominating committee has made serious efforts to implement the sorts of recommendations that I made. I can't comment on individuals, obviously, but it's apparent that a serious effort was made to improve diversity, improve gender balance, improve the range of experience, and so on and so forth.

It is clear efforts were made. It will be for the members and others to decide if those efforts have been successful.

**Ms. Lisa Hefner:** Thank you.

Out of all your recommendations, which do you think are the most important for Hockey Canada to implement to see a brighter future going forward? Which of your recommendations would you say are the most important to implement right away?

**Hon. Thomas Cromwell:** I have no trouble coming up with that list.

Number one is that the whole nominations process is vital, because if you don't have the right people around the table, it's going to be a problem.

Second of all, it's to work hard on a transparent and detailed policy framework for the kinds of tough decisions that the board will have to make and to provide that framework for staff so that the board can monitor their work.

• (1140)

**Ms. Lisa Hefner:** I heard you talk about not wanting to blame Hockey Canada for all of the problems with culture in hockey.

I'm wondering if you would opine on how much of the toxic culture was supported or maintained by the culture at the top at Hockey Canada. To what extent did the leadership at Hockey Canada perpetuate the problems with the toxic culture?

**Hon. Thomas Cromwell:** I'm sorry, but I can't offer any informed view on that.

**Ms. Lisa Hefner:** Okay. I think I'm good.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Kevin Waugh):** You still have a minute and a half.

**Ms. Lisa Hefner:** That's fine. Thank you.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Kevin Waugh):** We'll go to the Bloc for two and a half minutes, with MP Lemire.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Sébastien Lemire:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Given your experience with Hockey Canada and what you have gleaned about abuse in the world of sports, do you think that athletes would stand to gain from a judicial inquiry that would seek to create a safe and healthy sporting environment?

**Hon. Thomas Cromwell:** The decision to launch a commission of inquiry is one of public policy.

I have no expertise in that field and no opinion on the subject.

**Mr. Sébastien Lemire:** Did you sign a confidentiality agreement with Hockey Canada regarding certain issues?

**Hon. Thomas Cromwell:** Absolutely not.

**Mr. Sébastien Lemire:** Do you think sponsors were right to abandon ship?

**Hon. Thomas Cromwell:** With all due respect, it is not my place to give you an opinion on that.

**Mr. Sébastien Lemire:** Did you have access to all of Hockey Canada's financial statements? Did you check the transfer of funds, such as those between Hockey Canada and the Canadian Hockey League, as well as detailed transactions between the National Hockey League and Hockey Canada?

**Hon. Thomas Cromwell:** Mr. Lemire, it is obvious that I am not an auditor. I did not do any forensic auditing, as I stated earlier.

**Mr. Sébastien Lemire:** Do you think that that could be useful?

**Hon. Thomas Cromwell:** I requested the documents I needed to do my work within the framework of a governance review of the organization.

**Mr. Sébastien Lemire:** Do you think it would be useful to make these transactions public, that is to say to inform the various partners?

**Hon. Thomas Cromwell:** It would not have been relevant within the confines of my inquiry.

**Mr. Sébastien Lemire:** Mr. Chair, if you allow, I'm going to move a motion that was sent to all political parties. It reads as follows:

“That, as part of its study on safe sport in Canada, the committee study the directions and implementation framework for the Canadian Sport Policy Renewal (2023-2033) from Sport Canada (Sport Information Resource Centre) that will come into effect in 2023...”

[*English*]

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Kevin Waugh):** MP Lemire, you can't move the motion. You haven't been subbed in.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Sébastien Lemire:** Mr. Chair, could you please repeat that?

[*English*]

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Kevin Waugh):** You can't move the motion. You haven't been subbed in yet. According to the clerk, you haven't been subbed in.

We haven't heard from the Bloc on your replacing Mr. Champoux, actually. You haven't been subbed in.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Sébastien Lemire:** Okay.

We will check that and get back to you.

[*English*]

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Kevin Waugh):** While you're trying to get that, if you don't mind, we have about 16 minutes. I know it's a hard stop for the Honourable Thomas Cromwell and his team.

We have two five-minute rounds for the Conservatives and Liberals. Plus we have the NDP for three minutes. I'm going to give you the extra time he had, Mr. Julian.

Is it fine if we just go around the table?

Tim, you'll get your chance.

Marilyn, you'll get your chance.

We'll go with the NDP right now. I'm eating your time, Peter. We'll start the clock fresh.

For two and a half minutes, we'll have MP Julian for the NDP. Go ahead.

**Mr. Peter Julian:** You had said three minutes.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Kevin Waugh):** I can afford that.

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Okay. Three and a half...?

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Kevin Waugh):** It's three minutes. I'm giving you half a minute too much.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Cromwell, this is a sorry state of affairs. As you know, we are often hearing about crises in which Hockey Canada is involved.

Hockey is our national winter sport.

Today, an inquiry was launched in Drummondville about allegations of a violent sexual assault. Two former Drummondville players have already been found guilty.

When we read the reports on homophobia and racism with Hockey Canada, we're reminded of how huge the problem is.

• (1145)

[*English*]

We're seeing increased concerns around homophobia and racism. Some of the news articles that came out, in the last few weeks, have been profoundly disturbing.

I note, Justice Cromwell, that you flagged the issue of lack of diversity on the board of directors. You mentioned there isn't a lot of diversity. In fact, your figures are very compelling. Of the eight directors of the board who are stepping down, 87.5% are white. One of the directors identified as a member of the LGBTQ+ community, and one director is of South Asian descent. We have, on one hand, disturbing levels of homophobia and racism, and, on the other, a lack of diversity on the board.

Do you make a connection between the concerns so many people have raised around hate and discrimination expressed in hockey, through Hockey Canada programs, and the lack of diversity on the board?

**Hon. Thomas Cromwell:** I'm not sure I'd feel comfortable talking about some sort of causal connection.

However, I feel very comfortable saying a more diverse board would be much better equipped to deal with the realities being faced. Of course, as we all know, it's not simply a hockey or sport issue. We have racism, sexism and homophobia in our society at large, so it's a societal issue. What I feel very comfortable saying is, the breadth of diversity I recommend for the board would be better equipped to understand how to deal with those realities, in the context of the governance of an organization like Hockey Canada.

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Thank you for that comment.

On page 22 of your report, you mention Hockey Canada's mission statement, which is "A positive hockey experience for all participants, in a safe, sportsmanlike environment".

Do you feel Hockey Canada has fulfilled that mission or mandate? If not, how critical are you of the fact that they haven't respected this fundamental mission or value?

**Hon. Thomas Cromwell:** Again, I have to go back to what I was trying to do, which was to help set up a firm foundation for governance for the organization. I was not there to assess their performance on every operational issue. I firmly believe the sorts of governance recommendations I made—as I say in the report—would greatly assist the organization in fulfilling its mission.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Kevin Waugh):** Thank you.

We'll move to the Conservatives for five minutes.

Go ahead, Ms. Gladu.

**Ms. Marilyn Gladu:** I believe Mrs. Thomas has a couple of questions, then she'll give me the residual.

Thanks.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Kevin Waugh):** Okay.

Go ahead, Mrs. Thomas.

**Mrs. Rachael Thomas:** Thank you so much, Mr. Chair.

My question is for Mr. Cromwell.

You highlighted that the 2022 audited financial statements will be known on December 17. That's coming up towards the end of this week.

In your estimation, should Hockey Canada make those audits public?

**Hon. Thomas Cromwell:** Yes.

**Mrs. Rachael Thomas:** Why is that?

**Hon. Thomas Cromwell:** It's consistent with the COC standards for national sport organizations.

**Mrs. Rachael Thomas:** Why has Hockey Canada gotten away with not doing that for so long, if it's the standard?

**Hon. Thomas Cromwell:** I'm not sure "gotten away" is the correct term, exactly. There is no legal obligation to do that. It's a standard—

**Mrs. Rachael Thomas:** However, it is the standard.

**Hon. Thomas Cromwell:** —and not a legal regulation. There are filing obligations. Why they chose not to do this.... We commented on this in the report. My advice to them is to adhere to that standard.

• (1150)

**Mrs. Rachael Thomas:** This is the third full governance review done and paid for by Hockey Canada since 2014. There was very little measurable change based on the first review, and very little measurable change based on the second one.

Do you have confidence we're going to see change based on this review?

**Hon. Thomas Cromwell:** Respectfully, I don't think it's up to me to have confidence or not. What they'll do with my recommendations.... My task—

**Mrs. Rachael Thomas:** I'll ask it this way, then. Do you have evidence that suggests the Canadian public will see measurable change based on your report?

**Hon. Thomas Cromwell:** What I can say is that my interim report was adopted by the members at a special meeting, and it's clear the nominating committee has made serious efforts to go in the direction that I recommended. It will be for the members to decide on the weekend whether they want to continue to go in that direction.

There are certainly steps that have been taken that are directly and promptly responsive to my recommendations.

**Mrs. Rachael Thomas:** I wonder how much of that has to do with the fact that sponsors pulled so much funding and that this organization was finally publicly shamed for their misconduct versus how much that has to do with your report, but I'll let that question sit there.

I just want to come back around, because I want to make sure you understand that I'm requesting something in writing, and that is on the question I asked toward the end of my time last time. I asked you if there was any evidence of Hockey Canada wanting to join OSIC before the Minister of Sport imposed this obligation on them in order to have their funding reinstated. You said there was evidence, but that you didn't have those notes in front of you.

**Hon. Thomas Cromwell:** No, I'm going to correct myself—

**Mrs. Rachael Thomas:** I just want to make clear that I'm requesting a written statement with regard to this evidence.

**Hon. Thomas Cromwell:** I think perhaps I misunderstood your question. I apologize. There's no evidence that there was an intention to join before the Minister of Sport intervened. That is clear, and I believe I have that in the report.

**Mrs. Rachael Thomas:** Okay. I'm going to give you an opportunity to correct the record then, because before you said there was evidence that they had perhaps considered it, but that they had de-

ecided they didn't want to because they didn't want their financial statements to be made public.

Do you want to go back on that statement now, Mr. Cromwell?

**Hon. Thomas Cromwell:** I think I want to clarify it at least. I'm not sure I completely understood the chronology of the question.

We have in the report the evidence of.... I think we're maybe talking about two different things here, but if the question is whether I have evidence about the Office of the Sport Integrity Commissioner before the government acted to freeze the funding, the answer is no.

**Mrs. Rachael Thomas:** I'll let that sit there. I'll give it to my colleague.

**Ms. Marilyn Gladu:** Thank you, Chair.

I have two quick questions. First of all, on the transparency of financial reporting, I think you were clear that, with these three funds that existed, there was some concern that if people had known how much money was really there, there might have been more claimants come forward. Definitely transparency will be important. I know that when it's removed, like it was in the first sitting of Parliament with Bill C-2.... The financial transparency for indigenous reporting was removed with some negative consequences.

Is there a way of perhaps combining the way the funds are reported, so that they are insurance and uncovered or uninsurable liabilities? Is that a way of reporting with transparency without necessarily dangling a carrot for others?

**Hon. Thomas Cromwell:** I think I'm out of my depth on that question, because how matters are reported on audited statements is a special skill of people who are trained in auditing. As you'll see from the report, the organization was given some specific advice about these funds.

If I may speculate a little bit, it seems to me the next steps would be for the board to say that this is the policy direction they wish to move in, in terms of transparency, and then ask advice from their auditors, among others, on how best to do that consistent with generally accepted accounting principles.

**Ms. Marilyn Gladu:** I fully agree. The federal government requires HR policies in place to ensure organizations indicate and educate on what's acceptable behaviour, set out the timely follow-up that's required—third party or court interventions—and set out the sanctions for those who offend. Sports Canada has to have a role in oversight to ensure that these fundamentals are in place, with the ability to withdraw funding for non-compliance.

Thank you so much, Justice, for your help.

• (1155)

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Kevin Waugh):** Thank you, MP Gladu.

Our final round of five minutes will go to MP Louis from the Liberal Party.



**Mr. Tim Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga, Lib.):** Thank you, Chair. I appreciate that.

I also want to thank you, Justice Cromwell, for being here and for your time and your work on this report. You've probably been closer than any of us to this situation, so it's really valuable that you're here. I appreciate it.

Most of the questions have been asked. That just shows how important these issues are. I don't mind saying it again.

In your report, you found a third reserve fund. Now we know that there are three funds to date—the national equity fund; the participant legacy fund and then that undisclosed subpart of the insurance rate stabilization fund.

After you interviewed Brian Cairo, the Hockey Canada chief financial officer, you said:

Hockey Canada became concerned that this change on the financial statements inflated the NEF balance artificially, which might signal a large pool of funds set aside for potential claimants and thus might increase the likelihood of additional claims.

We're talking about transferring money from one fund to another due to the concern with optics. You've said today that confidence in that board was gone. Do you feel that Hockey Canada now understands the level this was at? What level of confidence do you have, moving forward, that things will change and that these reserve funds will change? What message do you think has been sent to Hockey Canada?

**Hon. Thomas Cromwell:** I really don't want to speculate or say what my personal level of confidence is as to whether my recommendations will be put into effect. I was asked whether I had evidence that action was going to occur, and I related the steps that I know, as all of us know, have been taken.

I really don't feel comfortable expressing a level of confidence one way or the other, because my task was to lay out what I hoped was a good path forward, and it's very much up to the members in the organization to decide whether it agrees with my assessment.

**Mr. Tim Louis:** I do respect your saying that. Thank you. I think what you said a few minutes ago was that some of the recommendations in your interim report had already been taken under consideration. Hopefully that's a positive step.

Earlier we touched on it briefly. What about the issue of players who are injured but unaware of some of these reserve funds? Hockey Canada stated that some of these funds were specifically set aside for non-insured injuries. With the lack of paperwork or the lack of information available, what message is being sent to these players who were paying into these funds but not able to access them?

**Hon. Thomas Cromwell:** I think there are a couple of things. One is that, as I've said probably too many times already, one of the critical recommendations we came up with was to have a much more transparent and clear policy framework around these issues.

I don't want to get too technical, but I think it's also perhaps worth noting that we can be talking about different kinds of insurance coverage. For example, when you have a moment, you can have a look at the little chart that we have at page 150 of the report.

[Translation]

That can be found on page 165 of the French document.

[English]

In table form, it sets out the kind of insurance that was in place, according to our information. One of them was liability insurance. In other words, if someone does something and is at fault and might be held legally responsible for being at fault, that's the kind of insurance that would deal with that. We also note that there's accidental death and dismemberment insurance. That's the kind of coverage that would be available for people who are injured in a true accident. In that instance, nobody is legally at fault. I think it's important not to mix up those two kinds of coverage. It's clear, I think, from what we've heard, that there needs to be greater clarity on the part of Hockey Canada as to what is available in both baskets and how the board is, ultimately, going to decide what's going to happen.

**Mr. Tim Louis:** You mentioned that transparency in policy is critical. Also, financial transparency is obviously critical. The public doesn't have access to Hockey Canada's financials, but the members do. When you spoke, Hockey Canada said its members were free at anytime to ask directors of the management team for financial information. According to your report, "Members can only raise issues if they are able to identify them."

What were some of the issues regarding communication between Hockey Canada and organizations under Hockey Canada?

• (1200)

**Hon. Thomas Cromwell:** I think, as you'll see from the report, the information we got from members was a bit of a mixed bag. Some members felt that they were well advised and that they understood, in general terms, what these funds were available for. Other members felt they were much more in the dark. We also note, of course, that Hockey Canada is a national umbrella organization. Tens of thousands of people operate under that general umbrella up through their local and provincial organizations.

I think it's pretty tough to take the temperature, collectively, of how people are feeling about what they know. We discovered, as I say, that it was a mixed bag, if I can use that expression, and we have recommended that further steps be taken to try to make sure the information gets through and there's consistency in decision-making.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Kevin Waugh):** Thank you, Mr. Louis.

We're now going to wrap up the hour and a half. We want to thank the Honourable Thomas Cromwell for his time.

I know you had to get up very early in B.C. I would also like to acknowledge your associates who are with you today, Ms. Effendi along with Ms. Prince.

Thank you to all three witnesses for your candid answers concerning Hockey Canada.

Honourable Cromwell, I think your report was very timely reading as we move forward to Saturday in terms of what happens with Hockey Canada and their board. I know they have nine people nominated but, as you mentioned, they will decide on Saturday if, in fact, those nine or others will join them around the board table.

Thank you very much. We'll let you go now.

Mr. Lemire, on your motion—

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Sébastien Lemire:** Ms. Belmore, can you please tell me if it is my turn to speak or that of Mr. Champoux ?

Mr. Champoux, it seems it is your turn.

[*English*]

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Kevin Waugh):** Mr. Champoux, do we have permission to distribute your motion to members?

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ):** Yes, Mr. Chair.

[*English*]

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Kevin Waugh):** Okay.

We'll suspend after this for five minutes or so in order to get the room ready for the in camera session.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Martin Champoux:** Mr. Chair, would you like me to read the motion?

[*English*]

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Kevin Waugh):** I would.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Martin Champoux:**

That, as part of its study on safe sport in Canada, the committee study the directions and implementation framework for the Canadian Sport Policy Renewal (2023-2033) from Sport Canada (Sport Information Resource Centre) that will come into effect in 2023;

That, in order to do so, the committee:

(1) pursue as its primary objective to ensure that the directions and actions to be taken by Sport Canada under the Canadian Sport Policy Renewal will result in a significant shift in the culture and mindset of sport;

(2) allocate two meetings after the holidays, on January or February 2023, to invite Sport Canada and the Minister of Sports, the Hon. Pascale St-Onge, to testify for a period of two hours each;

(3) request an update from Sport Canada on its consultation and planning for the renewal of the Canadian Sport Policy for the next decade, as well as a detailed plan for the new Policy, setting out the strategic directions and objectives to be pursued and the measures to be put in place as part of the implementation of the Canadian Sport Policy Renewal 2023-2033;

(4) request that such documents be filed with the clerk of the committee and forwarded to the members of the committee no later than 48 hours prior to the testimony of Sport Canada and the Minister of Sport;

(5) report its observations and recommendations to the House on the new Canadian Sport Policy 2023-2033.

• (1205)

[*English*]

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Kevin Waugh):** Okay.

The interpreter didn't have a copy of the motion but we all heard it.

We'll go to Ms. Gladu first and then Mr. Bittle.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Marilyn Gladu:** Mr. Chair, I would like to clarify something.

I like your motion, Mr. Champoux. Having said that, we want to have two meetings after the holidays, but we don't want to confirm the exact dates, because sometimes witnesses can't come.

Is that clear?

**Mr. Martin Champoux:** Yes, absolutely.

By the way, I should point out that I made a small mistake, because there was an annotation on my sheet. The committee's second request should read: "set aside two meetings after the holidays, either in January or February 2023."

Ms. Gladu, perhaps that makes it clearer. We leave ourselves an open door for the availability of witnesses.

**Ms. Marilyn Gladu:** That is excellent.

Thank you.

[*English*]

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Kevin Waugh):** Thank you.

Mr. Bittle.

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

Just to clarify, are we continuing on with this in public or are we moving in camera? You had mentioned moving in camera.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Kevin Waugh):** What do we want to do? It's the committee's choice, right?

**The Chair (Hon. Hedy Fry (Vancouver Centre, Lib.)):** Yes, and then we can move in camera for the business part of the meeting.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Martin Champoux:** I'd like to raise a point of order, Mr. Chair.

Ms. Fry's microphone is not open and the interpreters cannot interpret.

[*English*]

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Kevin Waugh):** What Dr. Fry said is that we'll deal with this now, then suspend and go into committee.

Mr. Bittle, the floor is yours.

**Mr. Chris Bittle:** Thank you so much.

I have a number of concerns with the motion. I've addressed a lot of them in camera, so I will be very careful about what I say, but I've also been public with my concerns about the direction this committee is heading in.

It comes back to a situation where, after one of the meetings we had with Hockey Canada, I was in scrums, like many of us were after the committee meeting, and one of the reporters asked me questions. What are your recommendations for Hockey Canada? What are your recommendations from this committee? What do you think the committee is going to do going forward? I see that is point (v) in the motion. It was almost embarrassing to say, “We don't have any.”

We've heard from Hockey Canada witnesses, and we've been very good at showing to Canadians in a non-partisan way that Hockey Canada wasn't an organization that could be trusted. There was outstanding work done by members of the media to amplify that and to give us more information to go after and press Hockey Canada on, but we haven't even scratched the surface of the problems in sports in this country.

We haven't heard from experts. We haven't heard from academics. I know—and I don't know who else is the audience—that we have a representative from Gymnasts for Change in the gallery. We're not even mentioning other sports.

I know that it's Canada and it's hockey and that's the sport that's most likely to get the attention. It's the sport that's most likely to get the members of the media here to cover our committee meetings, which, with respect to them, can be occasionally dull—not when we're dealing with Hockey Canada but on other topics we've dealt with.

We owe it to kids to truly expand this. I don't know if for any meeting we've had we can really say to ourselves that we've made sports safer for kids. I think that was our goal. I think that, for all of us, when we started down this path and we heard about the horrific sexual assaults, we wanted to take action.

I don't want to speak for other members. Maybe I'll just speak for myself. I wanted to take action. The more that we heard about it... We heard about the toxic culture in hockey. We heard about the issues in Hockey Canada. We've gone in a lot of different directions on Hockey Canada, especially in relation to their governance and in relation to how they operate and reserve funds and so on and so forth, but have we made hockey safer for kids? I don't know. I guess we'll see what the new board does, but I don't know that I have any recommendations for Hockey Canada.

We've just heard from Justice Cromwell, who made a number of recommendations and who is a highly respected jurist but ultimately has been paid by Hockey Canada to do this summary. I would love to hear from academics who study this, who have looked into Hockey Canada and who have looked into the hockey system in this country for decades and have things to say and things to tell us.

I think the CHL has gone almost completely unscathed from our view and, having seen reports, having seen issues and having heard evidence and stories about what's going on, there are some serious problems there. Hockey Canada doesn't control them. Hockey Canada borrows those players for a period of time.

My recommendation... I guess I'll stop talking, because I see a number of others on the list, but let's go in camera. Let's really figure out a reasonable study. Let's expand it so that we have opportu-

nities to call witnesses and opportunities to really build this and to have the minister appear if we have a broader study.

She has already appeared on the Hockey Canada issue, but I think that in terms of the study, which is “Safe Sport in Canada”, let's bring this forward. We need to have more than two meetings. I'm not the minister's parliamentary secretary. I don't know if she is available on these days.

● (1210)

Let's actually have a broader study. Let's protect kids. Let's talk about things like gymnastics, rugby, soccer, bobsleigh and all of the sports we're hearing about. This is a horrible incident. This is athlete-on-fan violence. That's a terrible thing. It deserves Parliament's attention. I commend all of my colleagues for the incredible work that they have done on this.

Most of the other stories that we're hearing from the other sports are coach-on-athlete violence, harassment and torment. Why aren't we dealing with that? Why isn't that at the centre of these motions?

I truly think we need to expand this. This is my plea to members of the committee. Let's go in camera. Let's expand this. Call the minister and Sport Canada officials as part of that study. Let's also arm ourselves with the knowledge to ask those questions. Let's hear from academics. We're saying Sport Canada needs to do better. It probably does or it maybe does, but how?

We're asking Sport Canada to do our work for us to create a report. Then we'll critique the report and report back to the House of Commons. I think that's the reverse order. I think it should be incumbent on us as members of Parliament to be asking those questions, bringing in those witnesses and coming up with those recommendations.

I hope there isn't disagreement. Calling the minister and Sport Canada officials can be and should be part of a broader study on this. Let's hear from some of the other organizations as well. Let's actually do what we said we were going set out to do and protect kids.

I don't think we're doing that. I think we're falling well short of our goal. I don't think that's the intention and I don't want to suggest otherwise. I know Mr. Lemire has been steadfast in his desire and push for changes in sport. I think this is an opportunity where we can expand the study, not step on the toes of the status of women committee and actually have a broad study.

Now that we don't have any legislation in front of us—thank goodness—we can actually do a more thorough job of getting to the bottom of this by giving opportunities for witness lists and really digging down into the problems with sport.

I'll cede the floor because I see other hands up. We'll go from there.

● (1215)

**The Chair:** Chris, you moved the motion to go in camera.

Is that what you moved?

**Mr. Chris Bittle:** I didn't move the motion. I'm hoping to hear from other members.

**The Chair:** If you move a motion to go in camera, there's no debate. We just go in camera.

We vote on it. That takes precedence over Martin's motion.

**Mr. Chris Bittle:** I didn't move it. I don't want it to appear that the government is trying to shut things down. I'd like to hear from my colleagues.

It is my request that others support that so we can really dig down into doing this and doing this properly.

**The Chair:** It's not a formal motion. All right.

You've ceded the floor. I think we have Ms. Gladu, Martin again and then Peter.

**Ms. Marilyn Gladu:** Thank you, Chair.

Absolutely, I think Mr. Bittle makes exactly the points of why we need to support this motion. I'm not at all opposed to adding more time. I think the intent to shine a light on what went on with Hockey Canada brought a lot more to light than maybe we were expecting.

One thing that will be really important is that this will be very similar to the sexual misconduct in the military investigations, where it was at defence committee at the same time that it was at status of women. We had to be very clear about the scope of what one was going to cover and the scope of what the other was going to cover. I think we would have to wait for the chairs to have that discussion.

My suggestion would be that this committee would be more appropriate to look at the governance that is needed. What is the governance from the federal government's point of view down to Sport Canada's point of view? Perhaps that lets status of women take a different direction, which may be the protection of survivors and some of the other things that go in place.

Definitely, I think we can just agree that we were going to have at least two meetings. It's going to start next year. Then at one of those meetings, perhaps we could get an update from the chair, who's had discussions with the chair of the status of women committee, to see where we will go from there. From there, we'll know how many witnesses, who we should call and that sort of thing.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** Go ahead, Martin.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Martin Champoux:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

I was listening to Mr. Bittle speak earlier, and we all agree. I think we all have the same goal.

In my view, Mr. Bittle sees this motion as something much more restrictive than it actually is. On the contrary, the motion is exactly in line with the arguments we have just heard.

The Minister of Sport is going to table a policy on sport that will be in place for about ten years. The least we can do to serve the athletic community and the sport community in Canada is to ensure that this new sport policy is as rigorous as possible and as responsive as possible to the expectations of the community.

We would like to know what is going to be in this policy. We are not asking for a final report, but we believe it would be highly relevant and useful to be able to make recommendations before the final version of this policy is tabled. This is our role as a committee. On the one hand, it allows us to ask questions of the minister and, on the other hand, as Ms. Gladu said earlier, it allows us to add meetings to meet with other sports organizations and federations.

We are expecting documents and minutes from several sports organizations by the end of the week. These will certainly give us new insights and arguments. So I don't feel at all that the two meetings we are requesting will close the file on safe sport in Canada. On the contrary, I think that it is in keeping with our work. This is not at all a way to shortcut the work.

In fact, I would venture to say that the more time passes on this sports issue, the more I feel that there should be a special committee formed by the House of Commons to get to the bottom of these things, because it takes much more time than the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage can give it. I believe we should be focusing more on this with a special committee, but maybe we should be making that request elsewhere.

When we come back from the holidays, what we are asking for as a committee is not complicated. We are not asking to restrict the right to speak or listen to sports federations, athletes' groups and people in the community. On the contrary, we want to know what is currently on the table for Minister St-Onge and what she intends to put in her sport policy. We will be living with this policy for 10 years, so we need to make sure it is done right. That is the one and only purpose of this motion, which is very open-ended and very much in line with the spirit of the committee's work on the issue of sports over the last few months.

That's all.

• (1220)

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Go ahead, Peter.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

I have listened carefully to Mr. Bittle, Mr. Champoux and Ms. Gladu, and it seems to me that this is in line with what we are doing.

It is time to ask the minister to come back to the committee. It's a bit of a reporting stage. We had a discussion with the minister this summer. Now it's a matter of having another discussion with the minister early in the year.

This is also part of a larger study, and in this way we will be able to talk to the minister about the Canadian Sport Policy and see the changes that have been proposed for months. It seems to me that this will allow us, at the same time, to continue to broaden the scope of the discussion around national sports organizations beyond Hockey Canada. Unfortunately, it is not the only organization that has been implicated in the safe sport crisis.

Asking the minister to come back to our committee and report on the actions she has taken, since all of these shocking announcements and events were made public last spring, makes perfect sense to me.

[English]

I'll be supporting this motion because I think it's good to have this report back. I certainly understand Mr. Bittle's concerns, but I think we can incorporate this motion into the larger work that we have to do. Hopefully, we can vote on it and get this in place. Then we, of course, will have that important committee discussion about how to build around the minister's appearance, for the coming months.

I think all of us work very effectively together, Madam Chair, under your leadership, and I appreciate that about this committee. I think we can do what Mr. Champoux suggests and what Mr. Bittle suggests and build something that will allow us to get to the bottom of things and to where Canadians want to see us go, which is to keep pushing on the issue of safety in sports so that young athletes, all athletes—regardless of what sport they're involved in—are in an environment that is safe and that provides the kinds of supports that we all hope they would enjoy. That way, they can practice their sport without any concerns about some of the tragic consequences that we've seen in the last few years.

Thanks, Madam Chair.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Peter.

Does anyone else want to weigh in on Martin's motion?

Go ahead, Chris.

**Mr. Chris Bittle:** Thank you so much, Madam Chair.

Again, there seems to be a lot of discussion and goodwill that we need to do all of these things, but no one seems to do this. I apologize, but I think this is unintentionally the lazy way to do this.

First, I don't think the committee has the authority to demand a 10-year policy from the minister's office. I'm happy to be corrected on that. Why aren't we the ones recommending where Sport Canada should be going rather than a rushed report? If there even is the authority, we'll have a rushed report. We have the Christmas break coming. We'll have a rushed report and bring in the minister to then question her about the rushed report that is supposed to set out a 10-year policy plan for Sport Canada.

Why don't we hear from academics? Why don't we hear from experts, people with lived experience, about what they want to see rather than some officials, rushed over Christmas, trying to come up with a report that...? Because it's rushed, we're going to be critical of the minister when she appears, if she's even free these days.

We found out about this motion today, I believe, during the meeting, and I don't—

[Translation]

**Mr. Martin Champoux:** Point of order, Madam Chair.

[English]

**The Chair:** Yes, Martin.

[Translation]

**Mr. Martin Champoux:** Madam Chair, allow me interrupt Mr. Bittle to clarify the content of the motion.

I don't know if it is in the interpretation that the definition is lost, but we are not asking for the production of a report. What we are asking for is the draft sport policy that the minister has announced she will table in February, which will be in place from 2023 to 2033. We are not asking the minister to make a policy for 10 years; she has to table that already. So it's not a matter of a report, it's a matter of having the draft of what she will table so that we can come up with recommendations before this policy is formally put in place.

I just wanted to correct my colleague Mr. Bittle, because I hear him talking about a report. We do not want a report, we want to have the Canadian policy directions that the minister is working on and is due to table in February. There may be some confusion about the motion, so I wanted to clarify it.

• (1225)

[English]

**The Chair:** Chris, are you satisfied with Martin's explanation?

**Mr. Chris Bittle:** I appreciate the explanation. I think it goes back to our PROC days. I don't know if anyone was on PROC during the Simms protocol and the friendly interventions. I always appreciate Monsieur Champoux's interventions.

Again, at the end of the day, we're still in the same spot. We're calling the minister. Maybe she's available, maybe she's not. Maybe she's available for one hour, or maybe two. Again, why don't we put our heads down and put forward a proper study, so that we can hear about it?

I take Ms. Gladu's point on not wanting to step on the toes of our colleagues at the status of women committee and the important work they're doing on sexual misconduct, but what we've heard in various sports goes well beyond sexual misconduct. We heard from Mr. Coteau on systemic racism in sport. Why are we so laser-focused on this when there are so many people who want to testify to our committee to tell us what's going on? They're desperate. I'm sure your offices are the same as mine, having heard from people who really want to be here before the committee.

We've called Hockey Canada now five or six times. It's important that we did, don't get me wrong. Again, the changes at Hockey Canada are directly related to the work of this committee and the work of journalists doing exceptional work out there.

There didn't seem to be any support to go in camera, which I appreciate. It's good to keep things open. However, I often find it's better when the cameras are off. Then the work can get done a lot quicker and bring us all together to try to figure out a study.

I will have to then move amendments on the fly, which I don't really want to do.

I would like to move a subamendment to the motion by removing section (1) and changing section (2) to allocate at least six meetings after the holidays to the study of safety in sport. I would then remove the rest. I would have a third point, which would be to invite the Minister of Sport, Ms. Pascale St-Onge, to testify before the conclusion of the study.

That might actually get us closer to where we need to be and to start hearing from experts to give the committee something really tangible to discuss. Then we can meet with the minister and discuss those tangible things.

• (1230)

**The Chair:** We have an amendment on the floor to Martin's motion. The amendment suggests that we remove (1) and change (2) to allocate six meetings after the holidays in January and February—including asking the Minister of Sport to testify for a period of two hours with bureaucrats—and that we remove (3) and (4).

Is there any discussion on this amendment?

Martin, you have the floor.

[Translation]

**Mr. Martin Champoux:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

[English]

**The Chair:** Do we want to continue this in public?

[Translation]

**Mr. Martin Champoux:** Yes, absolutely.

[English]

**The Chair:** We don't want to go in camera. We've spent half an hour not deciding where we want to go, so let's focus because we only have half an hour left.

[Translation]

**Mr. Martin Champoux:** I would like to speak to the subamendment, Madam Chair.

If I understand correctly, there is either a misunderstanding of the spirit of the motion I tabled, or there is a genuine desire to ensure that the Minister of Sport does not appear before the committee before the release of her policy on the safe practice of sport in Canada.

In either case, I find it a bit of a shame. Personally, I think that the motion we are tabling today allows us to continue the work we have begun. It is a motion that is completely open and that will al-

low us, one day or another, to add other meetings, if we deem it relevant.

However, there is one point that is very important, and there is an argument that I want to put to the committee. Knowing what the minister has in mind in terms of her sports policy is going to be extremely relevant to the groups that we will want to receive and question. Knowing where the government is headed is going to allow those involved to make a lot more relevant comments about the recommendations we will have to make to the government.

Inviting witnesses, specialists and experts before we know what the minister plans to put in her sport policy is a bit like doing the job in reverse. Afterwards, we may want to invite these people back and ask them what they think. Knowing this in advance would give us much better tools to interview experts, groups and individuals and find out if it meets their expectations or confirms their fears. We would ask them if they think the sport environment will be improved by this policy, among other things.

In my view, the motion, without the subamendment, is complete. It is open-ended and does not limit the work of the committee in any way, quite the contrary.

I will not vote for the subamendment.

[English]

**The Chair:** Does that include expanding it to six meetings?

[Translation]

**Mr. Martin Champoux:** This includes the entire subamendment, absolutely.

Just because we're asking for two meetings doesn't mean we're obliged to limit ourselves to those two meetings afterwards. We are asking for two meetings to study what is in the sport policy that Ms. St-Onge will table in February.

We cannot wait until April to receive Ms. St-Onge, since she will have tabled her policy. We want her to testify before her policy is tabled, so that we can improve it with the testimony and expert advice we will have received beforehand.

[English]

**The Chair:** Thank you, Martin.

Go ahead, Marilyn.

**Ms. Marilyn Gladu:** Thank you, Chair.

Certainly I think there are probably more meetings needed, but I agree with Monsieur Champoux that there's a policy about to come out, as you heard from my list.

It's not rocket science. The government has a responsibility to make sure the organizations we're funding have HR policies that comply with the law. They educate on what's unacceptable behaviour. They set out the timely follow-up required. They set out sanctions for those who offend, and there's a description of how Sports Canada will oversee that through audit or other measures.

I support the extra meetings, but I don't support the removal of the first part that says that the objective of the committee is to ensure that the directions and actions to be taken by Sports Canada under the Canadian sport policy renewal will result in a significant shift in the culture and mindset of sport. That is what we're trying to accomplish.

I do agree that there's more discussion to be had about who we should hear from, but this policy that the minister is going to roll out is certainly not going to be created on February 1. It's probably already in draft, and she can certainly speak to it. That will give us an idea of whether there are gaps or areas on which we would want to call more witnesses.

Then, as far as the rest goes, these are standard arguments that you make on reporting back to the clerk and making sure the recommendations make it to the House.

I will also not be supporting the subamendment by Mr. Bittle.

• (1235)

**The Chair:** Chris, are you ready to speak again?

I would like us to get this done before we rise, before one o'clock.

Go ahead, Chris.

**Mr. Chris Bittle:** Thank you so much, Madam Chair.

It really is disappointing, because, again, we've said as a committee that we want to protect kids and that we want to hear from other groups. We want to hear from other sports organizations. Why don't we say right now before we break for six weeks that we're going to do that work as opposed to showing the survivors and victims that we'd like a few partisan jabs first and we'll get to you in the new year, maybe, possibly, hopefully?

Here's an opportunity to expand the study. I agree that the minister should come and report back to the committee, and I think that's a reasonable request by the opposition. That's why I've included it or made sure that it stays within the subamendment, but the committee doesn't control the minister's schedule. What if she's not available?

If we pass this motion today, history probably tells us that we won't be here on Friday, although I have no inside information on that subject. As Mr. Shields said, then we just cancel the meetings, and we don't have time to call any witnesses. We'll just come here and twiddle our thumbs, start from scratch and say that we need to call these witnesses, when we can do the work right now and we can show victims groups, survivors, that we care and that we want to look into this and do some work on it.

The minister still needs to be accountable. That's the role of Parliament, to ensure that the executive is held to account, but I don't understand the rationale of refusing at this point to expand the

study so that we can have recommendations, because, based on this, we have two meetings and then are required to report back. Report back on what? That we didn't like it...? Then it just becomes a review of the minister's testimony. We still don't have any expert opinions. We still haven't heard from any victims, survivors or other organizations out there, and we're just going to report. Report back what?

I take the other members at their words that they will want to expand the study. Why don't we do that now and get the work done so that, over this period of time, we can submit a list of witnesses so that the clerk has time? We put a lot of pressure on her and she does incredible work, but if we show up—I think there's unanimous consent on that point—and if the minister reports back that she can't attend these two days, the clerk just can't go calling witnesses without a witness list.

We'll show up on January 31. We will then start this all over again to try to figure out the schedule, and we may or may not be able to have witnesses appear on the Friday, so we'll have burned two meetings when we could be talking to people who wish to express a concern to Parliament, who I'm sure have been calling everyone's offices to say that they want to appear before Parliament and do a study that looks at and protects kids.

Even if it's on hockey, we have touched just the tip of the iceberg on this issue of sport. We need to do better. I'm hoping that the members can agree that this is the opportunity, given the schedule, given that we probably won't have a Friday meeting to get this done and set it out, rather than do it piecemeal, rather than the minister's office saying that they don't have time, that they may be able to do it another week and that they may not be able to do it this week when we return back from the break. Then we will have burned a couple of meetings.

There's a Status of the Artist Act study I guess we can probably dig into. I don't know what other business is before the committee that we can use at that point, but we'll have already burned two more meetings. Why don't we take this opportunity and show those who are out there that we care enough to plan into the new year to hear from these organizations and people who have faced a horrific power imbalance?

• (1240)

Again, it's not just sexual misconduct. There is harassment. There is systemic racism. There are issues with seemingly every sports organization that we look at because there seems to be a monopoly. These organizations have monopolies over the sports. We love sport, and few people question anything that goes on. Many of these organizations have never really been looked at, and I think it's really a good opportunity to have a plan. This is an incomplete plan.

I see Mr. Julian with his hand up. I would really like to hear what he has to say.

As a suggestion, perhaps we can suspend... We can hear from the other members, but hopefully, we can suspend for a few minutes to actually come up with something substantive.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

**The Chair:** Before we go any further, I have three names down. We are going around in circles. We are not coming to any conclusions. I just want to tell the committee that I think we should come to a conclusion of some kind.

I don't see both ideas as being... They are interrelated, really. I think Mr. Bittle made a point. I just want to point out to the committee that we could ask the minister to come, and the minister may not be able to come, so then we're stuck.

I think we need to come to a conclusion soon. I'm going to have to stop people if they keep making the same points over and over again. Let's come to a conclusion here.

Go ahead, Marilyn.

**Ms. Marilyn Gladu:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

First of all, I want to say that for Mr. Bittle to cast aspersions that other members of the committee don't care about helping children, that is not only not true but also unhelpful.

Second, this motion—

**Mr. Chris Bittle:** I have a point of order, Madam Chair.

That's not what I said at all. I specifically said that I think the intention of the committee is to look after children but that this motion doesn't do that and that we should just get to work on that.

I specifically said that it is the intention of all the members to do that, but that we need to put our money where our mouths are.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Bittle.

Go ahead, Ms. Gladu.

**Ms. Marilyn Gladu:** Apology accepted. Thank you.

This motion also invites the Minister of Sport and doesn't give her specific dates. We said January or February in this motion. It's the Minister of Sport. With a number of scandalous things going on in all kinds of sports, do you think she would be too busy to come in January or February? I would suggest that she's writing a policy on this. This is a priority, and she would definitely be able to come.

You will see that in this motion there is no end date for when the committee report has to be submitted. We have said that we are

willing to add meetings, but we have to be clear on what we will do in those meetings.

We know what we want to do with the minister. We want to hear about what she's proposing in order to address the things that are going on. I think that is where we can start, and then the committee can always add on.

**The Chair:** We have 15 minutes left. I really would like to see us come to some kind of decision before we leave. I don't know if we're going to have a meeting on Friday or not, so it would be nice to come to some kind of decision.

If everybody wants to make a new point, that's great, but I really feel that we're going around in circles, repeating the same things over and over again.

Go ahead, Martin.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Martin Champoux:** I won't repeat what Ms. Gladu said, but that's pretty much what I wanted to say.

The Minister of Sport is working on the most important file of her mandate so far. If this file is not important enough for her to make room in her agenda, I think priorities need to be reframed.

If you wish, Madam Chair, there is the amendment to be voted on, followed by the motion.

As far as I am concerned, I have nothing else to add.

• (1245)

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Thank you, Martin.

We have Peter and Chris again.

I really want us to come to a conclusion here. I'm going to have to call the vote very soon.

**A hon. member:** I appreciate that.

**The Chair:** Go ahead, Peter.

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Thanks, Madam Chair.

I don't actually understand the filibuster. I have a lot of respect for Mr. Bittle. He's somebody who contributes a lot to this committee and brings a lot of wisdom and expertise, but in this particular context, I don't understand delaying the vote. I too am reluctant about the subamendment and the six meetings. I'd like to go beyond that. I think that is a discussion we need to have amongst all the parties.

Again, regarding the principal motion that Mr. Champoux has moved forward, it makes sense to bring the minister and the officials back. We need to touch base with them in any event. I think it is wise for us to do that as part of the broader study.



On reporting it to the House, that isn't, as I see it, a comprehensive report. I see that as something that allows the House to take knowledge of what the committee is doing. There is a lot of interest in the work we are doing, not only from the public but also from other parliamentarians and even other committees. I think touching base makes sense. I think that is our responsibility.

Of course, Mr. Bittle is the master of his own destiny, but if could, I would suggest that if he withdrew the subamendment, we could vote on the principal amendment. I do think that would give us time to go in camera for 15 minutes or so, start the discussions around the broader study and the work that we need to do in February, March and April, potentially, of next year, as well as touch on the private members' legislation that we have received as a committee.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Peter. That was the intent, but I don't know when we're going to get there.

Go ahead, Mr. Bittle. Please be succinct.

**Mr. Chris Bittle:** It's seldom what I am, Madam Chair, but I will do my best.

I won't burn out the clock. This isn't a filibuster. I really, truly wish to convey my points. I really don't think we're that far apart. I truly don't understand the reluctance to actually say what the committee's plan is going forward or the reluctance to go in camera and hammer out a business plan or even suspend for five minutes to come up with a genuine plan.

I want to clarify my comments. I truly think the members of this committee wish to help kids. It just doesn't appear in this motion, and that's sad. I hope we get there. Again, if the minister is not here on these two days....

The motion doesn't say January and February. The motion—

**The Chair:** Mr. Shields, I'm sorry. Mr. Bittle has the floor.

Are you raising a point of order? No...?

Thank you.

**Mr. Chris Bittle:** There's one....

I'm sorry. Is there a point of order?

**Ms. Marilyn Gladu:** It's not a point of order, but it's a clarification.

I don't believe Mr. Bittle understands that the motion was amended to take away those two specific dates that were there and to say January and February. That was accepted as a friendly amendment by Mr. Champoux.

**The Chair:** That's a point of clarification, not a point of order.

**Mr. Chris Bittle:** I have two separate motions here.

**The Chair:** We now have 10 minutes left in this meeting.

**Mr. Chris Bittle:** I have two separate motions here. Is it the motion in the email or is it the motion we received from the Bloc?

**The Chair:** I have the motion from Canadian Heritage, which was sent on Tuesday, December 13.

**Ms. Marilyn Gladu:** It's the email.

**Mr. Chris Bittle:** It's the email. Okay.

There's one day in January—

**An hon. member:** Come on.

**Mr. Chris Bittle:** Come on...? There is one day in January. We come back on January 31.

Anyway, this is not going where I want to go. I thought there would be collaboration. I thought there would be a desire to hear from other organizations rather than what I think is unfortunately a few partisan jabs. Why don't we call the minister at the end of our study rather than at the beginning if this is going to be a new change in the direction of the study?

I don't know, guys. This is—

• (1250)

**The Chair:** All right. I'm going to have to call the question on the subamendment.

**Mr. Chris Bittle:** Madam Chair, I have the floor.

**The Chair:** I know you have, Mr. Bittle. I think you're making the same points over and over, but go ahead. Keep making them and we will come to no decision.

**Mr. Chris Bittle:** There's no desire for there to be any movement on it. We heard from the members that maybe we will have an expanded study in the new year. However, there doesn't seem to be any desire to actually put that into writing, so I don't know what that means going forward.

I don't know why there's this weird divide. We've worked so well together on this study to this point. Again, I'll let it come to a vote. I won't talk out the clock. I don't know if that's appropriate.

I've expressed my concern and I've been begging for us—I'll focus on my public comments—for the last number of months to actually do the work that we need to do to protect kids. Calling the minister in advance of a report, when maybe she can attend or maybe she can't, is not protecting kids.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Tim, we're speaking to the amendment.

**Mr. Tim Louis:** Thank you. I just wanted to understand a little better.

In my experience, the ministers usually come at the end of studies. I think that's quite helpful, isn't it? To have witnesses come.... It seems to be reversing the order here.

I'm just a bit confused. I don't have as much experience as some members, but I thought we would have witnesses, we'd have studies and we'd extend that. When the minister comes at the end, there's a bit of a chance to—

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Martin Champoux:** Point of order, Madam Chair.

We are not talking about the amendment at all.

[English]

**The Chair:** I'm sorry. This is what Mr. Bittle is suggesting.

However, Mr. Champoux's motion suggests a specific study.

Mr. Champoux.

[Translation]

**Mr. Martin Champoux:** I was just saying, Madam Chair, that we are wasting time by giving explanations on something that was quite clear. It is not a question of deciding whether we receive the minister at the beginning or at the end. We have a clear request, namely that the minister present to us the outline of her policy on sport. We are not asking for a report. We are asking to receive the minister to get arguments and tools, and to be better informed for the work we are doing, and what recommendations we can make before the policy is put in place.

I think that was very clear and that we are wasting time, deliberately.

[English]

**The Chair:** I will call the question on the amendment.

(Amendment negatived: nays 6; yeas 5)

(Motion agreed to: yeas 7; nays 4)

**The Chair:** We have five minutes. I think we could go in camera for those five minutes. No, it's too late.

Do we have any time after that? We have a hard stop at one o'clock, so I guess we will move forward.

Yes, Martin.

• (1255)

[Translation]

**Mr. Martin Champoux:** Madam Chair, as we have spent more time than expected discussing the motion, I would respectfully suggest to the committee that we schedule a meeting of the subcommittee prior to the start of the session in 2023 so that we can discuss the topics that we would like to address in the next few weeks—we could have done that today—and submit a report from the subcommittee to the committee at the first meeting after our return.

I therefore suggest that the Canadian Heritage subcommittee meet, sometime in the last week of January, to plan the schedule for our return.

[English]

**The Chair:** All right. It is the last week in January that you're suggesting, Martin.

Is anybody opposed to this suggestion that the subcommittee meet then?

**Mrs. Rachael Thomas:** I have a point of order, Chair. I just want to clarify the proposal in terms of it being the last week of January. Are we talking about the first week that Parliament is back in session?

**The Chair:** It would be when Parliament is not in session. We're talking about sometime during the last week in January.

**Mrs. Rachael Thomas:** I believe that might be difficult for some members due to caucus meetings that are taking place. I might suggest that in lieu of our first meeting in that week when Parliament resumes, perhaps the planning committee should meet instead. This is common practice in other committees.

**The Chair:** We have a motion on the floor. No one opposed it.

You opposed it, so shall we call a meeting?

I don't know when we can call that meeting. The clerk is going to have to tell us when she has time and resources. We could be in touch with everybody, if that's okay.

Are you moving an amendment, Mrs. Thomas?

**Mrs. Rachael Thomas:** Madam Chair, I wasn't aware that it was an official motion. I thought it was simply a friendly conversation.

If it's an official motion, then yes, I'm offering an amendment. It would be to say that we take the first meeting that would be scheduled when Parliament resumes, and instead of holding a full committee meeting, we hold a planning committee meeting.

**The Chair:** That's not really an amendment, that's an entirely new motion.

Mr. Champoux.

[Translation]

**Mr. Martin Champoux:** The suggestion I submitted was to have an open discussion.

By the way, I appreciate Ms. Thomas' suggestion. I understand that each party has its own commitments before Parliament resumes.

I could clarify my suggestion by proposing the date of January 31 for the subcommittee to meet. That is a Monday. I think that might be a good day for us to meet. Then, at the first meeting of the committee, we would have a work program to propose.

So I propose January 31, if that is convenient for everyone, pending the availabilities that the clerk will offer us.

[English]

**The Chair:** Is there any opposition to January 31?

Chris.

**Mr. Chris Bittle:** It's not opposition. It's just that the schedule is going to change, so we may not be meeting on January 31. It would be that our first scheduled meeting back be the subcommittee meeting.

**The Chair:** Is there any opposition to the first scheduled meeting back being the subcommittee?

**Some hon. members:** No.

(Motion agreed to)

**The Chair:** I will hear from the clerk with regard to when this is going to be, etc., and we will contact the members of the subcommittee to attend.

Thank you very much.

It being one o'clock, I declare the meeting adjourned.

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