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Chair: Mrs. Salma Zahid



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• (1600)

[English]

The Chair (Mrs. Salma Zahid (Scarborough Centre, Lib.)): I call the meeting to order.

We will resume in public. We had two people on the speaking list. It's Ms. Lalonde, then Mr. Dhaliwal, and then we will come to Ms. Kwan.

Go ahead, Ms. Lalonde.

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde (Orléans, Lib.): Thank you, Madam Chair.

As we were having a conversation, we were talking about the motion that we are to study as soon as possible. There have been lots of efforts on the part of the clerk in trying to reach out to the ministers. I know one of our ministers has agreed. Maybe the clerk could clarify with this committee, through you, Madam Chair, whether the invitations to ministers were for specific dates or for a range.

My second question would be whether they could have the officials come for one hour next week in order to not lose our scheduled time. If no one is available on that specific day, members of this committee who want to work may just want to have it cancelled. For the officials next week—in order not to lose any scheduled time—would it be the plan to have officials come back for a second hour when the ministers appear? If the ministers, in the end, decline the invitation, the officials would come back for that second hour anyway.

I'll give an example, through you, Madam Chair. Was the Minister of Justice—and that's particularly relevant to my first question—given one date and was the next meeting date offered to GAC, etc., or was each minister offered one of the four dates?

I think it would be important to clarify that for our members.

Merci.

The Chair: I'll ask the clerk to please clarify that. Were the ministers given a range or some specific dates?

The Clerk of the Committee (Ms. Stephanie Bond): Thank you.

The way invitations are normally issued, it's per day. Upon a decline by the deadline, an alternate date is provided.

The Chair: To clarify for the members before we go further—and I have people on the speaking list—the schedule of the committees came out, I think, about 10 or 12 days before we resumed.

The clerk can start working on booking the ministers only once we know which days of the week we are meeting. The calendar was not very clear about whether it would be Tuesday, Friday, Monday, Wednesday or whatever day. When the calendar of the committees came, the clerk started going into it.

I have a speaking list. It's Mr. Dhaliwal, Ms. Kwan, Mr. Kmiec and then Mr. Redekopp.

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal (Surrey—Newton, Lib.): Thank you, Madam Chair.

Carrying on with what Marie-France said earlier about the dates, were the dates that were given to the ministers specific dates, or were they given a wide range of dates? That is very important. I don't think the clerk has clearly indicated that, even though she said that one date was given and then the alternate date was given. I would like to clear that up.

Secondly, as you said, Madam Chair, for this committee and its business, the number of days and the days we can work came out recently. I want to know, because I have previously seen the ministers appear here on very short notice as well.

This is the first time I'm hearing, on this committee, that ministers are not coming and that they're trying to avoid it. I don't think that is the case, because the ministers have always been accessible to this committee. Sometimes, in a month, I have seen the Minister of Immigration appear three times.

Hopefully, we will start working, and all of the ministers will be given ample opportunity to appear on different dates that are flexible and with enough notice.

• (1605)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Dhaliwal.

The clerk sent out the invites for February 6 to GAC, for February 13 to Justice and for February 15 to DND. These were the dates they were given. They have declined. Once a minister declines, only then can the clerk give them the second date and start working on that.

The Minister for IRCC has accepted for February 8, but the other three ministers are not available on February 6, February 13 or February 15.

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal: It's very clear, Madam Chair, from your deliberation, that the ministers were not given open days. They were given specific dates and probably less than two weeks' notice. It's very reasonable that we should give ministers open days for all those meetings. Give them to all the ministers and see which minister can fit them into their schedule instead of just going to one and then waiting for them to reject it.

We would not have this issue here in this committee if we had handled it that way. I think we should certainly give ministers leeway to put this into their schedule. I'm certain that they will be very happy to appear.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Dhaliwal.

We will try to work...but at times we have to give them specific days in order to get answers.

I have a speaking list. Next is Ms. Kwan.

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

Just to be clear, this motion was passed by the committee on October 7. Since that time the committee has had 12 meetings. One would assume that since the motion had passed we would be inviting these ministers to come to the committee.

What are we talking about? We're talking about Afghanistan—the report that was done by the Special Committee on Afghanistan. We're talking about the 37 recommendations that committee had made to the government, and their response to it.

Meanwhile, we have Afghans who are being hunted down by the Taliban. Their lives are in grave danger for the simple reason that they helped Canada with its missions.

Meanwhile we have a third country, Pakistan, which has issued an enforcement for people who are there without a visa or with an expiring visa. They will be jailed or sent back to Afghanistan.

I have information that has been provided to me that the police in Pakistan have raided a hotel where they generally know that some of the Afghans have been staying, waiting for the processing of their application to get them to safety.

The situation is very real. Some people have already lost their lives, by the way. Some of the family members have not had any contact with what's happened with these individuals. We're talking about a gravely serious and urgent situation.

The committee passed the motion to ask for four ministers—the Minister of National Defence, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Minister of Justice and Attorney General and, of course, the Minister of Immigration—to come before the committee for two hours each. That includes officials. So far we have had none. The only minister who has given a positive response is the Minister of Immigration. He offered to come before the committee, but that happened to be at the time when we needed to do the supplementary estimates as well, and we needed to deal with them in time.

Therefore, we deferred that time, so I'll give credit and recognition to the Minister of Immigration, but where the heck are the other ministers? Why can't they make their schedule available? How

many meetings do we need to offer them? I get it that in this new session we have now offered them four meetings—the 6th, 8th, 13th and 15th. Not one of them is available, with the exception of the Minister of Immigration.

I thought the Afghan file was a whole-of-government operation. The recommendations involve all these ministers. The Afghanistan committee no longer exists, so this is the only place we can engage in this dialogue to see where the government's at and see what's happening and what other action needs to be taken to bring people to safety. We owe these individuals this much.

I don't accept the idea that the ministers are not available. They are busy people. Well, we're all busy people, but let me say this: Most urgently the people who are being hunted down are people who are waiting, and what are they busy with? They're trying not to get killed.

Let's get on with it. I don't accept it. I want to know from the clerk, Madam Chair, through you, how many times we invited each of those ministers to come before the committee before the holiday break, since October 7, when the motion was passed? How many times have they rejected or said that they were too busy, that they couldn't come? What do we need to do to make sure they come?

• (1610)

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Kwan.

In regard to your question, for December the ministers were contacted to come on December 2, 6 and 9. Three dates were given to them—December 2 to DND, December 6 to GAC and December 9 to Justice. They were not available. Then they were given these dates—February 6, 13 and 15.

To clarify again—I have said it earlier also—we could start working on these January/February dates only once we knew when the committee would be sitting. We were not able to start immediately after the new year to start working on the dates available, because we had no idea which day the committee would be sitting.

I'll go on with the speaking list. Next is Mr. Kmiec.

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): It's not often I do this, but I'm going to agree with my New Democratic colleague. I know that's a shocker, but I was going to say many of the same things. The member is absolutely right.

This motion was passed on October 7. There have been many opportunities. The ministers have exempt staffers and directors of parliamentary affairs who literally know when the schedules of committees are. It's not a surprise that we meet between 3:30 p.m. and 5:30 p.m., or between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. There are set times in the week when that happens, and they've been offered many opportunities to appear. The immigration minister, to his credit, appears at this committee when it's requested, but on this particular file, like Ms. Kwan said, this is supposedly an all-of-government approach and because there is a foreign affairs component to it, the global affairs minister should be here. There is a component for many other departments and there's ministerial accountability and responsibility attached to it.

In the calendar, when you go through it, there are only four free days. I noticed that the main estimates are not in here, and the supplementary (C)s are not in here, where we should dedicate time for the Minister of Immigration to return to the committee and explain the spending, both for the end of the last fiscal year and for the upcoming fiscal year. That doesn't leave a lot of extra opportunities for other ministers to come in with their officials to explain themselves.

If the ministers haven't been willing to provide their time to appear before this committee—because usually in my experience here on Parliament Hill, committees request the appearance of a minister, and most ministers feel that they have an accountability role to play for any parliamentary committee—they could be summoned as well. If they have to be summoned, they should be summoned to appear by the committee. We're asking for accountability.

We haven't reached a target of 40,000 Afghans brought to the country yet. I have emails in my inbox from people all over Pakistan, people in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan who have fled the Taliban and are hiding and have made applications to IRCC that are not being processed. Some of them either worked directly for the Canadian government or worked for a third party organization that was partially funded by the Canadian government in Afghanistan.

It's incumbent upon us. These ministers have an accountability that has to be honoured not only for the parliamentary committee reviewing their department but also other parliamentary committees. We're not lesser parliamentarians because we're not directly involved in the day-to-day policy issues that they have. If they're refusing to appear or they are making it extra difficult, this committee doesn't have that many extra days to consider it. We have four according to what the calendar indicates here, four free days, and we have other motions to consider. Like I said, we have estimates and supplementary (C)s, and if they're refusing to appear, then this committee should consider simply summoning the ministers one by one to appear before the committee when it's convenient for us.

Thank you.

• (1615)

The Chair: We'll go to Mr. Redekopp.

Mr. Brad Redekopp (Saskatoon West, CPC): Thank you, Madam Chair.

On this issue of accountability, I also want to put in my two cents. We have an issue, as has been stated, with the Afghanistan situation, where we had people who worked for us. We all know the situation, as has been said today, of people who are literally worried for their lives and working to save their lives while we're, frankly, wasting time here with this.

The ministers have the responsibility to show up to talk to us. They've been given that opportunity. I just want to make sure they understand that they need to come here and that if they don't, we will work to summon them.

As has been said, this has been going on since October, so there have been lots of opportunities. There are a few constructive things that I would say.

I think we should offer them whatever date they want. We'll be happy to rearrange our schedule around them if that's what it takes. If that's the only way we can get the ministers here, then they should tell us what they can do and we will accommodate them if they can't accommodate us.

The other thing I would say is that on this issue of officials, I believe the motion said minister and officials together. That would mean two hours of both. I don't think there's any point in having one hour of officials. We want both at the same time. I think if we had the officials for one hour, that's just a waste of time in my mind, because we still have to get them back for two hours anyway, and we don't have a lot of extra slack in the schedule. I would say if we can't have the minister and officials together, then we can't meet on the subject.

As I said, we definitely need the Minister of Defence, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Minister of Justice. These are the three who have not responded to us. Those are the ones we need to respond and to actually come to the committee.

Madam Chair, while I have the floor, I would like to move a motion. It's the motion that I submitted to the committee on Friday. I don't know if you want me to read it or if we can—

The Chair: Yes, I would like you to read it.

Ms. Jenny Kwan: On a point of order, I just wonder if we can finish this business and get to the next, for consistency and cohesion purposes. We're just about done here in terms of giving direction as to what to do on the Afghan piece.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Kwan.

Mr. Brad Redekopp: Is there a motion on the floor?

The Chair: Mr. Redekopp has the floor. If he wants to move the motion, then we will have to go there.

Mr. Brad Redekopp: We'll try to do this quickly. I can read it:

That, pursuant to Standing Orders 108(1)(a) and (2), the committee order

(a) the Department of Citizenship and Immigration to provide the clerk of the committee, in both official languages and within three weeks of the adoption of this order, and notwithstanding any non-disclosure agreements which might be applicable, with respect to each contract entered into with McKinsey & Company since January 1, 2011—

Do I need to continue reading this?

The Chair: Yes, you can read it.

Mr. Brad Redekopp:

(i) requests for tenders or other procurement requests related to each contract, (ii) tenders, bids, proposals or other applications received in respect of those procurement requests, (iii) contracts entered into, including any amendments thereto, (iv) all correspondence and electronic communications, including emails, text messages, message app communications, and handwritten notes pertaining to these contracts, (v) statements of work performed by McKinsey & Company under each contract, (vi) all work product provided by McKinsey & Company under each contract, (vii) invoices provided by McKinsey & Company, (viii) records of all payments made to McKinsey & Company, (ix) the hourly and/or daily rates McKinsey & Company charged for each employee working under each contract, and (x) the names of project managers and/or project authorities from McKinsey & Company in relation to each contract, provided that these documents shall be circulated to the members of the committee forthwith upon receipt; and

(b) McKinsey & Company to provide, to the clerk of the committee within three weeks of the adoption of this order, and notwithstanding any non-disclosure agreements which might be applicable, with respect to each contract entered into with the Department of Citizenship and Immigration and the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada since January 1, 2011, copies of (i) all records referred to in paragraph (a), (ii) all records concerning the details and descriptions of work performed under each contract, (iii) time sheets documenting work done under each contract, (iv) the hourly and/or daily rates McKinsey & Company charged for work performed under each contract, (v) the names of project managers and/or project authorities from McKinsey & Company in relation to each contract, (vi) all records concerning subcontracts issued by McKinsey & Company in relation to each contract, including tenders, contracts, or memoranda of understanding (including any amendments thereto), invoices, payments and evaluations, (vii) all correspondence and electronic communications including emails, text messages, message app communications, and handwritten notes pertaining to these contracts, and (viii) the complete client list of all organizations McKinsey & Company has worked with since January 1, 2011, provided that these documents shall be circulated to the members of the committee forthwith upon receipt and translation into both official languages; and

That the committee report the foregoing to the House forthwith with a recommendation that it concur in and adopt the same, provided that

(c) references to “clerk of the committee” be read as “Speaker of the House”; and

(d) references to “circulated to the members of the Committee” be read as “laid upon the Table of the House and stand referred to the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration”.

This is a very critical thing. We all know about the McKinsey situation with this government, which has given tens of millions of dollars, maybe \$100 million or more. We heard in question period today that the Prime Minister refused to answer that question of how much was given.

We know there has been a significantly large contract given out to the IRCC department. That's specifically what we are after here, to look into those contracts and be able to have that information.

It's critical that we be able to do that here and that we get this information. That's the reason I want this motion to be adopted by our committee.

• (1620)

The Chair: Mr. Redekopp has moved a motion.

I need to suspend to get some advice from the clerk. The meeting is suspended for a few minutes.

• (1620)

(Pause)

• (1625)

The Chair: I call the meeting to order.

Mr. Redekopp has moved a motion. We are on that motion.

Ms. Rempel Garner.

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Thank you, Chair.

It's my understanding, upon conferring with you and the clerk, that in order to make this very important motion fly, for it to be technically correct, there needs to be a small amendment, which I will move.

I move to amend the motion to delete the entirety of the motion read after the word “and” in section (b)(viii). That would strike the following words from the motion:

That the committee report the foregoing to the House forthwith with a recommendation that it concur in and adopt the same, provided that

(c) references to “clerk of the committee” be read as “Speaker of the House”; and

(d) references to “circulated to the members of the committee” be read as “laid upon the Table of the House and stand referred to the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration”.

It's my understanding that this amendment is necessary, but I will continue to speak to the main amendment. What the amendment functionally does is ensure that the production of these documents is made to this committee. I would like to talk to my colleagues about why it's so important for these documents to be produced to this committee. My colleague, I believe, is going to speak to this as well.

These documents came to light and these contracts came to light due to something called an Order Paper question that another one of my colleagues put forward, where it came to light that there were close to \$30 million of contracts put in place with this consulting company—which is not an insignificant amount; it's a very large amount for a consulting company to get—specifically around the issue of service transformation strategy.

Now, this committee has spent a long time, Chair, reviewing the very large backlog in Canada's immigration processing system. We've heard from witnesses, experts, over the last session, really hearing about the impact of the backlog on the Canadian economy and on our social and cultural fabric. For me, when we see the amount of money that was spent to bring in an external consultant to transform service delivery, and then we see service delivery get functionally worse, part of our jobs as members of Parliament is our fiduciary responsibility to the taxpayer. We are the board of directors for the taxpayer, and to me it seems that service delivery got worse in spite of the government's paying tens of millions of dollars to a consulting company specifically for consulting that would ostensibly have made the backlog in the processing system better.

Something went wrong here. To me, on the surface there is a very big value for money issue that goes beyond just the taxpayer issue and actually affects lives. These are people who are languishing overseas; these are people who are unable to reunite with family members; these are businesses that can't get workers. The reason it's so important that this committee look at these documents is that we must be able to ascertain whether or not there was value for money that was spent, and whether or not the recommendations in this report or whatever deliverable this company purported to achieve actually would have made a material impact on the service delivery of immigration. I would argue at this point no, but I'm happy to be proven otherwise by this document. Also, if there were recommendations put forward by this company, where did they go? What happened to them?

This is a lot of money; this is an issue that is integral to the functioning.... For everybody in this room who does not have a government appointment, our number one job regardless of political stripe is to hold the government to account on issues like this so it doesn't happen again. We have the responsibility and the authority to produce documents as, in fact, that's one of the most important functions of parliamentary committees. We need to be looking at these contracts, we really do. The correspondence that my colleague has outlined in this motion is also integral to understanding how and why these contracts came about.

• (1630)

I'll close with this.

I would hope that everybody in this room understands that this company had to pay a lot of money in settlements due to its role in the opioid crisis in the United States of America. That is unconscionable. We also should be questioning whether or not it is right and just for our government to be giving taxpayer dollars to a company that has had a hand in activities like promoting the opioid crisis.

I understand that this company has also had other scandals abroad. I believe there are some issues around election interference allegations.

If we as parliamentarians do not request documents like this and do not undertake to correct situations like this, nobody will. The check and balance for public service officials who are involved in procurement is us. It's the people in this room. They have to know that they can't just rubber-stamp things and let tens of millions of dollars of contracts go through to a company with questionable ethics and then not have a deliverable and let service delivery get worse.

We are the check and balance. The public service is not managing to profit and loss in this situation, but it is managing to our diligence. That's why this is so important.

The amendment I am making here allows the committee to get these documents and this correspondence, to undertake this diligence and hopefully to provide some recommendations to the government to ensure better business practices, better value for money—for tax dollars—and some accountability for ensuring that service gets better and not worse in some of the most critical components of our government.

Thank you, Chair.

The Chair: Thank you, Mrs. Rempel Garner.

Mrs. Rempel Garner has moved an amendment to the motion moved by Mr. Redekopp. We are on that amendment.

I have a speaking list.

Mr. Dhaliwal.

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal: Thank you, Madam Chair.

I want to continue with Madam Kwan's suggestion about the ministers. I agree with her. In fact every member on the Liberal side agrees with her that these meetings are important. The Afghanistan study is very important as well. Some of us worked together on that

committee, which is not sitting anymore. This is the committee the ministers should come to.

In fact, Madam Chair, I would like you and the clerk to put some time into that thought process. Go to these ministers together and find out the dates they're available, even if we have to make a bit of a change in our schedule, as Mr. Redekopp said. He's very gracious, and I'm sure his members on that side will be. On this side, we will probably co-operate with that as well, so we get that important study out of the way.

Madam Chair, that is what I wanted to stress.

• (1635)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Dhaliwal.

We are on the amendment to the motion moved by Mr. Redekopp.

We will now proceed to Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Thank you, Madam Chair.

Actually, there are two conversations. In the beginning, before Mr. Redekopp moved his motion, we were talking about the calendar and the ministers who should come before the committee. I am first going to talk about the motion and the amendment that were proposed by the Conservatives.

I agree with everything my colleague Ms. Rempel Garner said about the importance of these documents. For us as parliamentarians, it is important to know that we are working for the people who elected us, the taxpayers, those who give 50% of their taxes to Ottawa. In any case, Quebeckers do.

When she spoke, my colleague asked how we would get the documents if we, as parliamentarians, did not ask for them. However, parliamentarians have already requested these documents from the Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates. A motion was proposed in that committee that is a carbon copy of the one we are talking about right now, with the exception of Ms. Rempel Garner's amendment.

I think this motion is important, but parliamentarians have already tackled this issue in another committee. I would not want us to do the same work twice. I understand that it is important for our committee to have access to these documents, but, as they will be produced for another committee, we will have access to them in some way.

On the other hand, if we are not satisfied with what happens in the Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates, then the Conservative motion will become very important, and we can propose it again. At that point, we can revisit our motion.

So I would suggest to the committee that we keep this motion alive by adjourning debate on it, in case we really need to vote on the motion. According to what I am hearing today, if we vote on this motion right away, it may be defeated. I want to keep it alive until we know the outcome of the work on the same motion that has already been started by the parliamentarians who sit on the Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates. I repeat: the wording is exactly the same. If we are not satisfied with the result, at least the motion will still be alive. It will still be in our binder and, having adjourned debate on it, we will be able to proceed. So I move to adjourn debate on the amendment and the motion that have been proposed.

Now, Madam Chair, can I go back to the discussion we had on Afghanistan? We had not finished it, according to the schedule. Maybe the clerk can tell me. Since I have the floor, logically, I should be able to get back to it.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe. Just to be clear, to make sure the translation is clear, what I am getting is that you're proposing to adjourn the debate.

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner: Could we have a recorded vote?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: As I have said on multiple occasions, I move to adjourn debate on the Conservative motion, while keeping the motion alive until we find out what will happen in the committee that has adopted an identical motion and is looking at this. I certainly don't want us to lose a vote on this important motion.

After that, will I be able to resume the debate on the schedule of meetings set aside for the study on the situation in Afghanistan?

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe.

Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe has moved to adjourn the debate. That's a non-debatable motion, so now we will have to go to the vote.

(Motion agreed to: yeas 7; nays 4)

The Chair: Thank you. The debate on the motion is now adjourned.

We are back on committee business.

Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe.

● (1640)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: I would like to go back to the schedule and the ministers' attendance.

Since we have had several refusals and it is critically important that the ministers come and testify on the issue before the committee, I very candidly suggest the following to the committee. I am echoing a bit of the idea put forward by my colleague Mr. Kmiec.

If, by Friday, we have received no confirmation that the ministers will appear before the committee, we will make sure that we sum-

mon them to appear before the committee. If they do not give us a response by Friday and do not confirm their attendance, we will compel their appearance.

That is my proposal to the committee. Maybe one of my colleagues could rephrase that, to make it a formal motion, but I think it's common sense. Most importantly, we would waste less time; we have a lot to say.

[*English*]

The Chair: We have Ms. Kwan, then Ms. Lalonde.

Ms. Kwan.

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

I have just a quick comment on the issue. First, around the importance of the McKinsey contracts, there is no doubt that we need to get to the bottom of it. The New Democrats support that, and of course, that work is under way at the OGGO committee. From what I understand, another committee, public accounts, is also looking into this as well. From what I understand, because some \$25 million of the contract is related to immigration, we have a vested interest in seeing what happened with those contracts.

That said, because essentially the same documents have been requested at these other committees, we should wait for that material to appear, and because that ongoing work is being done at OGGO and other committees, we should see what happens. If the answers are deficient or the actions are deficient, no doubt we will come back to this committee.

I thank my colleagues for moving it and putting this on the table, and I thank my colleague for also saying that we should not vote against this motion but rather wait and see what the results are.

That said, on the schedule here today, I am frustrated, Madam Chair, with the lack of response or prioritization of key ministers on the Afghanistan file. I don't know why the ministers who were invited on four occasions prior to the holidays have said no, they can't come because they are too busy. Then, in the new year, they were also extended invitations to come, and they again said they were too busy. I am in agreement with saying that we need to move this forward and to compel the ministers to come.

It is important to note that the only minister who has accepted our invitation is the Minister of Immigration, but because this is a whole-of-government response, all the relevant ministers need to come as well. We are inviting only four of them, by the way, not all the cabinet ministers. It's only the four who are most relevant to the issues at hand.

To that end, Madam Chair, I would like to move the following motion:

That the committee invite the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Minister of National Defence and the Minister of Justice and Attorney General to appear before the committee for two hours with their officials consistent with the Afghan motion passed on October 7, 2022, by the committee; and if the ministers do not accept the invitation by Friday, February 3, 2023, the committee undertake to summon the ministers to appear before the committee based on the committee's schedule.

• (1645)

The Chair: Ms. Kwan has moved the motion. I just need to clarify something with the clerk.

Just to clarify, in regard to the motion that has been moved by Ms. Kwan, I will read from chapter 20 of *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, page 982. It reads:

There is no specific rule governing voluntary appearances by Members of the House of Commons before parliamentary committees. They may appear before a committee if they wish and have been invited. If a Member of the House refuses an invitation to appear before a standing committee and the committee decides that such an appearance is necessary, it may so report to the House, and it will be up to the House to decide what measures should be taken.

Based on that, I will rule Ms. Kwan's motion inadmissible.

Members, please speak through the chair and do not have direct conversations.

Based on this part of chapter 20, which I read, I will rule that motion inadmissible.

Ms. Kwan.

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Thank you very much.

I'll move a new motion, Madam Chair.

I will move that the committee invite the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Minister of National Defence and the Minister of Justice and Attorney General to appear before the committee for two hours with their officials, consistent with the Afghan motion passed on October 7, 2022, by the committee; and if the ministers do not accept the invitation by Friday, February 3, 2023, that the matter be reported to the House.

I'm sorry. I don't have the language that you read out from the section.

The Chair: I will read it again. It says:

If a Member of the House refuses an invitation to appear before a standing committee and the committee decides that such an appearance is necessary, it may so report to the House, and it will be up to the House to decide what measures should be taken.

Ms. Jenny Kwan: We will then just say, "report the matter to the House consistent with section...."

The Chair: This is chapter 20, page 982. I think that based on what the clerk is recommending, you would just say "report...to the House".

Ms. Jenny Kwan: All right, we'll just report the matter to the House and then we'll see whether or not the House deems it important enough for the ministers to appear before the committee for the matters to be addressed.

The Chair: We have a motion on the floor, moved by Ms. Kwan.

Mr. Dhaliwal.

• (1650)

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal: I think this is reasonably doable. I'm sure the ministers, along with the clerk and the chair of the committee, should be able to make that schedule work for them, because we work together.

Madam Chair, I earlier sat on the Afghanistan committee. I tell you, every minister and every witness that we asked for was able to appear there. If we had to make minor changes, we did it at that time. We are willing to do that.

We should make sure that, instead of going through all these hoops like going to the House.... Between you, the clerk and the ministers, you should be able to figure out which days work for them. We as members will be willing to accommodate.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Dhaliwal.

Mr. Ali and then Ms. Lalonde.

Mr. Shafqat Ali (Brampton Centre, Lib.): Thank you, Madam Chair.

The committee said just one date; some ministers are not available and one minister is available. That doesn't mean they don't want to appear before the committee. I don't think we should go to the House saying a minister will not show up. I think if we give them an opportunity, a minister would be willing to come before the committee, and then we wouldn't need that summons or to send those suggestions to the House. I think we should give them an opportunity.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Ali.

Ms. Lalonde and then Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe.

[Translation]

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: That is exactly what we are doing through this motion, Madam Chair.

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: It is my turn to speak.

[English]

The Chair: It's Ms. Lalonde and then Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe.

I said Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe after Ms. Lalonde.

Ms. Lalonde.

[Translation]

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: Thank you, colleagues. I will be brief.

Madam Chair, I would like to make a clarification and perhaps find a consensus among our colleagues.

Is this motion meant to confirm the dates that were previously proposed? Perhaps we can give some latitude to the ministers to appear before this committee as their schedule permits between now and the end of the session?

I would like to understand that. I don't think anyone here is refuting or questioning the importance of the Afghan motion and the fact that we need to hear from the ministers. However, we do not have control over their schedule. I know it took a long time for this meeting to be confirmed. Early this month, we didn't know exactly when this committee was going to meet. I believe it wasn't until two weeks before Parliament resumed that we received the meeting schedule.

Would we agree that the proposed schedule should be subject to the ministers' availability to give them the best possible opportunity to appear before us? I do not think it is reasonable to ask ministers or a parliamentarian to appear on a specific date. I would like to see a consensus among my colleagues to at least leave it up to the ministers to find a date in their schedule to appear. I think we all agree that that's important.

I am concerned that, if they are asked to appear on a specific date, as we had proposed, it will not work. We have no control over a minister's schedule.

So I would like to get some consensus and feel an openness to this.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Lalonde.

Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe.

[Translation]

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: First of all, I want to reassure my colleague, and hopefully ease her concerns.

The motion moved by Ms. Kwan does not specify a date. However, it does require that we get confirmation by Friday. So—this will answer my colleague Mr. Shafiqat—we are giving them an opportunity to appear before reporting to the House. We are giving them a week. That's fantastic. They have the whole week, from Monday to Friday, to give us confirmation, and there is no specific date mentioned. On the other hand, we want confirmation on when they will have chosen to come to the committee to testify.

So I think that what I just said should reassure my Liberal colleagues. Therefore, I think we should all vote in favour of Ms. Kwan's motion, which is a reasonable motion that would bring this wonderful committee to a consensus.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

• (1655)

[English]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe.

We now have Mr. Kmiec and then Mr. Dhaliwal.

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Yes, Madam Chair, I was just going to add that I support the motion, obviously because basically the idea that I had is just to compel them in some manner to decide when they will appear, so it's not an optional thing to do. It's a very reasonable motion. It doesn't tell them when they're supposed to appear. They're just supposed to inform us of the date that they're picking to appear before the committee. Should they fail to do that, we're basically asking for the House to be made aware of it so the House itself can act upon it.

This has been done many times, either when witnesses refuse to appear and you really want their testimony before the committee so you can put it into the record, or when they make it difficult by cancelling out or saying their schedule is very busy. We're all very busy. We all have busy schedules, but accountability works. Ministers are accountable to Parliament. This committee was created by Parliament to hold ministers accountable.

Accountability flows down to us. We're not accountable to the ministers. That's not the way it's supposed to work. It's based on what our schedule says and when our meetings are, which have been designated by the whips' offices and by the House, and the ministers should find the time in their schedules to make themselves available.

I know ministers are very busy. They know parliamentary committees will ask them to appear. They've known since October that, at some point in the future, they would be asked to appear before this committee to explain themselves on Afghanistan and what happened there. Then there's an outcome for all these refugees and displaced persons all over the world who are looking to come to Canada.

It's just part of that accountability and transparency work that we're trying to get done. At the very minimum, this is a very reasonable motion. We're not immediately reporting to the House that they failed to reply and failed to satisfy this committee, but that they simply made it difficult to do our work, that they're frustrating the work of this committee by making it difficult to schedule it with our calendars. I don't care about their calendars. I care about the calendar of this committee to make sure we can fulfill our work plan.

As I said before, we have only four free meetings thus far, which will make it very difficult to ensure that we can also look at all the spending plans of the government, both for the end of the past fiscal year and for the next fiscal year. I think it's an infinitely reasonable motion. We're giving the ministers a last chance to give us a date when they'll appear with their officials.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Kmiec.

Go ahead, Mr. Dhaliwal.

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Again, I just want to make sure every member of the committee on the other side understands that members on this side fully support the study and fully support the idea that Ms. Kwan has on the importance for this committee to study this important issue on Afghanistan. In fact, as I said, many of us worked together on the committee on Afghanistan, and we did not have a single issue when it came to the appearances of the ministers or the witnesses.

Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe and Mr. Redekopp, from two different parties, both said that we are willing to accommodate. We just want to give them the dates, but not as Marie-France said, to postpone it to the end of the session. It should be in the near future. They should be able to give us those dates.

We as members are also willing to work, as this is not an important issue for only one party or one member. It is an important issue, a humanitarian issue, and it concerns, I'm sure, every single riding and every single member in this room. Every single member in Parliament believes in the same cause.

I think we should put this to an end and let me work on this, and I'm sure, Madam Chair, that you and the clerk along with the ministers will be able to figure out the schedule by the end of Friday, so I appreciate that.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Dhaliwal. It's really an important issue, and I want to reiterate also that it's a very important issue for me, and I want to thank you for all the work you did as the chair of the special committee on Afghanistan. I think there were five of us from this committee who were sitting on that committee. We did some very important work, and it's an issue that is important to me also, personally.

Now we will proceed to Ms. Rempel Garner.

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner: Thank you, Chair.

I can't wrap my head around this notion that somehow the ministers are too busy to appear at a parliamentary committee after having months of notice. Their entire existence is predicated on Parliament's holding them to account for their spending, for their actions.

It's actually their number one job to come to this committee. I think Ms. Kwan's motion makes so much sense, because when you think about the severity of the bungling on Canada's Afghan response, to have the Minister of Global Affairs or the Minister of Defence say, I'm sorry, I'm a little busy to be held to account while there are countless people who have been failed by our response to this.... I just really hope colleagues understand that again, even though you might have a political stripe that you are attached to, our job here is to hold the government to account. We have to be parliamentarians first.

I say to my colleagues who are part of the governing party—you guys—that it is completely unacceptable for a minister to not show up to this committee and not make an effort to attend. In fact, I would argue there are many Liberals in this room who could be cabinet ministers and who would probably avail themselves of such an opportunity. To hide from this committee, to not make themselves available.... Yes, of course Ms. Kwan's motion makes sense. We should be seeking remedy for that. We should be holding them to account for their recalcitrance and bad behaviour. It's not for us; it's on behalf of the people we're trying to serve with immigration policy through Afghanistan.

I just find it completely unconscionable that we have the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mélanie Joly, just completely reluctant to come to this committee.

Who is the Minister of Defence?

It's Anita Anand. Right.

What's to hide? If it's such a great response, come on over. Let's talk about it. The reality is they need to be here. There's nothing more important than this committee. If they do not come, I believe we should summon them.

Thank you.

● (1700)

The Chair: Next is Ms. Kwan.

I just wanted to let the members know that I wanted to discuss the travel plans also today. If we have to travel, we have to submit to the liaison no later than February 8. In case we don't come up to that discussion today, we will have to have a subcommittee meeting to have that discussion. I just wanted to lay that out.

Ms. Kwan.

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

I appreciate the committee member's comments in support of the motion I moved. The intent here is to really light a fire under the ministers by way of response.

You know, the reality is this. They were invited prior to the holiday break on four occasions. They did not come, except for the Minister of Immigration, who offered to come. Because of supplementary estimates, we had to change our schedule accordingly.

In the new year, the clerk has just reported to us that four dates were offered to these ministers and they did not take them up. It's not like they haven't had a chance.

The Chair: I just want to clarify.

It's not that four dates or four options were given to the ministers. We selected four dates and each minister was given one date. It's not like every minister was given four options. The clerk started to work with their offices once we had the schedule of the committee.

Yes, we made one request in December. The second request was made in January. Each minister was given one date. I want to clarify that.

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Okay.

We're now, Madam Chair, expanding the number of dates that we're giving to them. In fact, our whole schedule is open. We'll accommodate them, but they need to confirm with us by Friday on a specific date of our schedule on when they can show up. If they don't, we'll report this matter to the House. We have to get on with it. We can't just keep lingering around as though the lives of the people who depend on the actions of parliamentarians and the government don't matter.

I don't believe that's the case. As you indicated, Madam Chair, a number of us sat on the Special Committee on Afghanistan. We worked really hard at that committee. We heard witnesses on that committee. The situation has not improved. In fact, if anything the situation has gotten worse. It's more urgent than ever that we get on with it.

I appreciate the committee member's support. Let's hope we get some dates and get these ministers before us so we can move forward with this file.

Madam Chair, after this, I just want to flag for the committee by way of scheduling issues that the committee also passed a motion to invite the Minister of Immigration to come before the committee on the levels plan. That is also important. I just don't want to forget it. I noted on the draft schedule that's been sent around that it does not show up anywhere. We just need to make sure we don't forget it.

• (1705)

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Kwan.

I have two more people on the speaking list: Mr. Redekopp and then Mr. El-Khoury.

Go ahead, Mr. Redekopp.

Mr. Brad Redekopp: Thank you, Madam Chair.

I wanted to clarify something with everybody. The reason Ms. Kwan had to put this forward is, I think, a core issue of trust. We've asked these ministers to come here a couple of times and they haven't.

What I thought would have been reasonable is for the minister to say, "I can't come that day, but I would suggest that I come this day." That would, to me, be something that I could accept as an act of good faith. They literally can't come. I could believe that, because they'd say they could come on another date. However, what they've said instead is just, "I can't come." I think that has caused us to not trust them, and that's the whole reason this motion is coming up.

For the Minister of Defence, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Minister of Justice, that is the issue here. We don't trust the fact they're going to come at all. That's why we need to bring this forward and we need to have some mechanism we can use to try to compel them.

I would like to amend this motion. It's very minor.

At the very end, it says "report...to the House". I'm thinking, why "report...to the House"? I've come up with the words "so appropriate measures can be taken", to give a bit more purpose to why we're reporting it to the House. We're not reporting it to the House for everybody to hear it; we want actions to be taken. We're not telling the House what to do; we're saying, "so appropriate measures can be taken".

I would like to move that amendment. Maybe that's a friendly amendment we can all agree to.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Redekopp.

Mr. Redekopp has moved an amendment. Now we have an amendment on the floor.

Next on the speaking list is Mr. El-Khoury.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Fayçal El-Khoury (Laval—Les Îles, Lib.): Thank you, Madam Chair.

Through you, I would like to ask our colleague Ms. Kwan if there is a written version of her motion. I think it is in the best interest of this committee that all of its members receive a written copy.

Can it be provided to us?

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. El-Khoury.

Ms. Kwan, please send your motion to the clerk so that it can be distributed to the members.

We have an amendment on the floor, which was moved by Mr. Redekopp.

Go ahead, Ms. Lalonde.

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: I'm certainly looking forward to seeing the written motion, but on the amendment, maybe my colleague, through you, Madam Chair, could clarify what he means. I was trying to "report to the House", and I still missed the other portion that he's asking.

What exactly does he mean by this? Could he clarify?

The Chair: Thank you.

Go ahead, Mr. Redekopp.

Mr. Brad Redekopp: Thank you, Madam Chair.

The specific words are report to the House "so appropriate measures can be taken". The reason for that is to make it very clear to the House that we, as a committee, expect them to do something. We're not telling them what to do. They can figure that out themselves.

We're not just telling them this for their information; we would like them to do something.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Redekopp.

Go ahead, Mr. El-Khoury.

Mr. Fayçal El-Khoury: I don't think, Madam Chair, we can tell the House what to do. We report to the House, and then it's up to the House to decide what kinds of measures have to be taken.

Thank you.

The Chair: Go ahead, Ms. Kwan.

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

A written version of the motion is available in English only, which we have sent to the clerk. I apologize. This motion was unanticipated from the perspective of the schedule. I did not think the answer coming back would be that none of these ministers would be available, which is what propelled us to move forward.

If I could ask the clerk's office to ensure that the motion is in both languages and provided to committee members, I would appreciate it. I apologize for that.

With respect to the amendment, I am good with either. I am good with making clear the intention. That was my original approach to it. I was told by the clerk that it's best to leave it to say that it's reported to the House, and that it would be understood. I respected that and accepted that.

I'm good with it either way. I thank Mr. Redekopp for offering the amendment to indicate the seriousness of the situation, and I'm hopeful that action will be taken by the ministers so that we don't, in fact, have to go to this length. I would rather not have to do that. I would rather they just showed up.

• (1710)

The Chair: Thank you.

I see no further speakers on the list...

Yes, Ms. Lalonde.

[Translation]

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: As a proud francophone, I don't think this was translated by our translation services. But I fully understand that my colleague did it on the spot and in this way. We really like this motion.

I am still having a little bit of trouble understanding the meaning of my colleague's friendly amendment when he says:

[English]

“so appropriate measures can be taken”.

[Translation]

I was just wondering if it would be possible to have both the French and English versions emailed to us before we vote on this motion.

[English]

The Chair: Ms. Lalonde, thanks for raising that. The clerk has already sent it to translation. I'm not sure if we'll receive it before 5:30 p.m.

Yes, Ms. Rempel Garner.

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner: On a point of order, Chair, for the purposes of debate and voting, per our Standing Orders, translation counts when an amendment or a motion is read, because we do have simultaneous translation. I understand that it's preferable to have it written, but part of the function of this committee is to amend motions. That's why we debate. I would say that there's no reason we can't proceed.

Thank you.

The Chair: Go ahead, Mr. Dhaliwal, and then Ms. Lalonde.

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal: Thank you, Madam Chair.

As Madam Michelle Rempel Garner has said, the motion has come and amendments have come. Why don't we just read the complete motion slowly so that the translation is done and the members who are French-speaking can know it? They should be able to understand clearly what they are voting on. I think it's perfectly fine.

The Chair: Thank you.

Go ahead, Ms. Lalonde.

[Translation]

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: I would like to thank the interpreters who are going to interpret it for reading it slowly, but I would still like to have the French version. I am still trying to figure out what my colleague Mr. Redekopp means in the following passage, and I will say it in English, for lack of a translation:

[English]

“so appropriate measures can be taken”.

[Translation]

I'm trying to figure out what he means by that.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you.

Yes, Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe.

[Translation]

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: I can translate right now. He is asking that appropriate action be taken.

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: I'm trying to understand. What kind of action should the committee members take? I would like him to explain why he wants to put that in his motion.

[English]

The Chair: Just to clarify, from what I read, what we can do is report to the House. Then it is up to the House to decide. As a committee, the maximum we can do is report to the House. That's what we can do. Then it is up to the House to take a decision. Once we report to the House, we cannot do further on that.

Ms. Kwan—

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal: Let's vote.

Ms. Jenny Kwan: All right. I just want to test this very quickly on the floor: Are we ready to vote on the main motion?

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal: Yes, we are—on the main motion.

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Is that on the amendment and then the main motion?

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal: I would say—

The Chair: Can we please have one conversation at a time? If you want, I can suspend.

We are coming to the end of the meeting. Right now, procedurally we have the amendment that has been moved by Mr. Redekopp. If it is not taken as a friendly amendment, we will have to vote on the amendment. Then we will go back to the main motion.

So right now we have an amendment on the floor that has been moved by Mr. Redekopp. That's where we are.

• (1715)

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Madam Chair, I'm just trying to get a sense here and to test the floor on whether we're ready to vote on the motion. If we're ready to vote on the motion, I can dispense—

The Chair: We have to deal first with the amendment, because—

Ms. Jenny Kwan: I understand that. On the amendment and the motion, if we're ready to vote, I think we can stop the discussion and move forward. If we're going to keep on talking about this, then other actions may need to be taken.

I just want to test the floor. Perhaps we can suspend for one minute. I would like to talk to my Liberal colleagues to see where they are.

The Chair: Ms. Kwan, can you please read the motion? I think that's what the members are looking for. Can you read the motion slowly, so that everyone is clear? Once you read the motion, we will have Mr. Redekopp read the amendment. Then we can proceed further.

Go ahead, Ms. Kwan.

Ms. Jenny Kwan: I move "That the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration"—

The Chair: Can you speak a bit more slowly?

Ms. Jenny Kwan: I move:

that the committee invite the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Minister of National Defence and the Minister of Justice and Attorney General to appear before the committee for two hours with their officials, consistent with the Afghan motion passed on October 7, 2022, by the committee; and if the ministers do not accept the invitation by Friday, February 3, 2023, that the matter be reported to the House.

The Chair: Thank you.

I hope all the members are clear about the motion.

Mr. Redekopp, please read the amendment.

Mr. Brad Redekopp: It's for all of that plus "so appropriate measures can be taken".

The Chair: Mr. Redekopp has moved an amendment "so appropriate measures can be taken".

Are members ready to vote, or do you want the meeting to be suspended?

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal: Madam Chair, can you suspend the meeting for two minutes so the members can talk amongst themselves?

The Chair: We don't have unanimous consent to suspend the meeting.

Mr. Fayçal El-Khoury: Madam Chair.

The Chair: Wait just one second.

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal: Madam Chair.

The Chair: Please speak through the chair.

Can I have everyone's attention? Do members want to proceed on the vote on the amendment, or does the meeting need to be suspended?

Ms. Jenny Kwan: I am ready for a vote.

The Chair: We will vote on the amendment first.

Mr. Shafqat Ali: This vote is for the amendment, and not for the actual....

Can you clarify, Madam Chair, please? I understood there would be two votes.

The Chair: Yes. Right now, the first vote is on the amendment.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Shafqat Ali: All right. Can I have everyone's attention, please?

As you read it from the vote, the committee has no jurisdiction to take any measures, so I'm voting based on what you have read. As a committee—

The Chair: We can report to the House.

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner: On a point of order, we are trying to vote.

The Chair: We are voting on the amendment, so we will take the vote without clarification. We need to proceed with the vote.

(Amendment agreed to: yeas 10; nays 1)

The Chair: Now we will vote on the motion as amended.

(Motion as amended agreed to: yeas 11; nays 0)

The Chair: Could I have everyone's attention, please? Please speak through the chair. Don't have side conversations.

Before we adjourn this meeting, I have one thing with regard to the proposal for visits for spring 2023. Does the committee wish to propose site visits for spring 2023? That will be for the period between April and June.

• (1720)

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Site visits?

The Chair: It's the travel of the committee outside Canada.

Mr. Tom Kmiec: I was going to say that all actions have consequences. Everybody should talk to the Liberal House leader or the Liberal whip.

I'm saying no. The committee should not travel. This committee has tried twice or three times before to travel. As far as I know, it's been refused every single time. Why are we asking again?

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Kmiec.

To make it clear to the members, we were approved by the liaison committee twice, but when it came to the agreement between the whips in regard to the motion in the House...the last time, the Conservative whip did not agree with the travel. Only the travel of three committees was approved, and our committee was not one of them.

Now we have again been asked if the committee would like to travel. If we have to travel, we have to submit our proposal to the liaison committee by February 8.

We'll go to Ms. Kwan and then Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe.

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

The reality is that we put a whole lot of work into this. The clerk and the analysts did a whole lot of work on this and it went through twice.

Even though it went through liaison, it ultimately got rejected because parties have a veto power to reject this. Clearly one party here does not want this to happen. I'm not willing to go through more work to make a proposal where it's ultimately going to be rejected.

It's a lesson learned, you know. Those are the kinds of things I live by. I'm not willing to go through this again.

The other thing I should point out is that, aside from the work that the clerk and the analysts have put into this, we also wasted time at our committee, because a schedule was premised on this trip. We wasted a bunch of meetings, which I'm super grumpy about. When you lose time, you can't get it back.

I'm not willing to do it again, because one party has that veto power and exercises that veto power accordingly, so I'm not willing to submit any more requests.

The Chair: We don't have a consensus to submit our travel request for February 8.

Thank you to all the members. I will work with the clerk on the calendar for this committee.

In regard to that, go ahead, Ms. Lalonde.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: On our behalf, I would like to thank the clerk and the analysts, who once again produced documents for us. There are also two reports and all sorts of things coming up. There were a lot of delays in the last session for all kinds of reasons that we know about. I got some extra work in my mail box in case we need it. This is a lot of work, and I know they are overworked.

So I would like to thank them from the bottom of my heart for all the great work they have done.

Thank you so much.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thanks a lot.

Yes, the analysts and the clerk do an amazing job. Thank you for all the work you do.

Before we end this meeting, I want to let everyone know that the draft for the Roxham Road study will be sent to you on Monday, February 6. Once you have it, we will then try to schedule the consideration of the draft report sometime in the second week of February. We will have to work on the calendar.

We also have on our agenda the study of Bill S-245. The witnesses for Bill S-245 are due March 10 and amendments are due on March 31 at noon.

Clause-by-clause can be completed on April 17. We will begin consideration of the Afghanistan draft report after that.

With that, the meeting is adjourned.

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