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Chair: Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia

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• (1615)

[English]

The Chair (Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.)): We resume in public with consideration of the draft report on fossil fuel subsidies.

I have a holdover list from when we were in camera. I have Mr. Bachrach, who I think was not finished.

Go ahead.

Mr. Taylor Bachrach (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Welcome, everyone, to our new public meeting.

Having looked through the report and having talked to my colleague, Ms. Collins, who was involved in the drafting of it, we are confident that the body of the report reflects very closely the testimony that was heard before the committee.

We have excellent staff who help our committees do their work. We have professional analysts and we have a professional clerk. Their work is always to the highest standard.

Certainly at the transport committee, of which I am a regular member, we go through the body of reports very quickly, because it is very rare that there are any errors in terms of the depiction of the testimony that was heard by the committee. It's a public fact, I believe, that this committee has met seven times in camera to discuss this report. That's unusually long for a report of a committee, especially given that we're not through it yet.

I feel the time would be better spent debating the recommendations, which is really the committee's work because, as has been said before, we hear testimony from different people with different perspectives on the topic at hand. The analysts try to summarize and accurately characterize that testimony in the body of the report, well referenced. Then, as a committee, we get to decide what we feel the government should do based on the testimony that was heard. In my view, that's the most important work the committee can do.

We also have the ability, as representatives of political parties, to write dissenting or supplementary reports, which, as accurately as we wish, can portray our particular perspective on the issue at hand.

Having said all of that, I would like to make a motion, Mr. Chair, that the body of the report on fossil fuel subsidies be hereby adopted in full and that the committee move on to a discussion of the recommendations.

• (1620)

The Chair: This motion is debatable.

I will start a new list, and I believe I have Mr. McLean as the first speaker on the new list.

Mr. Greg McLean (Calgary Centre, CPC): Thank you.

Now we're debating the motion to just ignore....

My NDP colleague walks into a committee for the very first time, looks at a report that he probably hasn't read a word of about fossil fuel subsidies, which is a misnomer, and he says, "I don't want to even talk about the body of what's in this report. I just want to go right to the vote and accept it as is."

I can see that his job in Parliament is probably a little suspect if he is going to think that somebody else is going to write the report that we have to sign our names to. He's a visitor at this committee. He can take a look at all of the input we've actually added along the way here, through the seven committee meetings that he has referred to. We've actually talked to the analysts about, "What did this witness say here? Can we reference it? Can we add some value. Can we include some data?" Inasmuch as it is this witness said this and this witness said this, in the end, we're presenting a report from Parliament that is supposed to be substantive.

Mr. Bachrach will know—I've had this discussion with my parliamentary colleagues before—I would question if he has ever participated in a report in Parliament that he can refer to any of his constituents referring...and that's because they're probably not worth the paper they're written on.

The fact is that we actually go through this and actually provide some detailed perspicacity to it and actually look at what's happening here. Where did these opinions come from? Where is the background? Who is saying what here, and where are the numbers that actually substantiate what is going on here?

Some of these opinions that we're reporting on here are indeed just that. Having those opinions—especially when they're counter opinions, one to the other—exposed with the sunlight of actual data and what is happening in the world, what's happening in the industry, what's happening in Canada is part of our job. We're parliamentarians. We're not here to just sit back in our chairs, smoke our cigars and say, "Yes, the analysts wrote this. The witnesses said this, and that's all our job is here."

In the end we have a parliamentary report from a parliamentary committee, the House of Commons Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development so we had better put some detailed work into this.

As for Mr. Bachrach's comments, who as I said, hasn't read this report and doesn't understand the witnesses, the references, the industry, he is coming in here and saying, "We should just flush it. Get it out there. Don't even ask any questions about what's in there." Well, I strongly differ with him.

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Ms. Pauzé, over to you.

Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ): I want to begin by pointing out that this was a motion put forward by the NDP, one that we spent four or five meetings debating, if I remember correctly. In addition, we have spent more than six meetings discussing the report. I would think that Mr. Bachrach came prepared, knowing that he would be participating in the committee. That's what I would do if I was standing in for someone else.

At another meeting, we spoke at length about the fact that things had changed since the report had been drafted and that we had the option of preparing a dissenting opinion or supplementary report. I think it's important for the parties to remember they have that option.

It's also important to remember that the witnesses who appear before committees are experts. They've done research on the subject and examined the situation. They aren't people who just walked in off the street. For all those reasons, I agree with Mr. Bachrach's motion. At Monday's subcommittee meeting, I actually made a similar suggestion. I proposed that we focus on the paragraphs that were the sticking points and adopt the rest. That requires a show of good faith on everyone's part.

I repeat, we have the ability to submit a dissenting or supplementary report.

The Chair: Generally speaking, reports are indeed fairly descriptive in nature. They describe what the committee heard. They aren't dissertations full of in-depth analysis.

Over to you, Mr. Longfield.

• (1625)

[*English*]

Mr. Lloyd Longfield (Guelph, Lib.): Thank you.

I also support the idea that Mr. Bachrach has brought forward.

Also, I support what Madam Pauzé is saying, which is that this was a motion from the NDP to do the study, and I appreciate the NDP now wanting to see us come to the next steps of discussing recommendations.

It's unfortunate, but things happen when you have a change in membership on a committee. Discussions are history by the time they're picked up. Also, time has gone since we've had our study and had witnesses, and we probably would get different testimony from witnesses if they were to appear today, given the length of time we've been studying this.

I think it's a great suggestion to go to recommendations. Within those recommendations, of course, they have to reflect the body of the report, but we can also make sure the recommendations are relevant to where we are today.

I hope we can vote on this motion soon so that we can get to recommendations.

The Chair: Ms. Taylor Roy is next.

Ms. Leah Taylor Roy (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'd like to thank Mr. Bachrach for his intervention.

I think you made a very good point, that we have very capable and skilled analysts, clerks and people who are helping us with this report.

I find it very disrespectful not only of the witnesses but also of the people who work with us to suggest that we have to go through every word with a fine-tooth comb. It is the job of the committee when we are conducting this study, when we have the witnesses here, to ask the questions of them and to check the credentials.

I don't understand why the member opposite doesn't trust the witnesses, doesn't trust the clerk and the analysts and doesn't trust even their own party members who were here during the study. They were here to do that job, and I think the member opposite also knows that our job during the study is to ask those questions.

When it comes to the report, it seems to me that our job is to go through and make sure that there are no misstatements, that we don't disagree, that witnesses were left out, etc., but not to question every fact and figure and the background of every witness, as you have been doing over the last six meetings.

I further question why the—

Hon. Mike Lake (Edmonton—Wetaskiwin, CPC): Mr. Chair, I have a point of order or privilege.

It's highly unusual for a member to talk about what has happened during in camera meetings, as we've discussed. It's super unusual for us to be doing this in public, and I'm glad we are, but it's highly unusual for a member to reference—

The Chair: We can't in any specific way go back to what has been discussed in camera, so yes, we'll just—

Mr. Greg McLean: I have a point of order.

Can I then ask the member to apologize for misrepresenting something I said in an in camera meeting?

Ms. Leah Taylor Roy: I referenced what you said actually in this meeting, Mr. McLean, not anything you said prior. When you started speaking, you were talking about not being able to—

Hon. Mike Lake: Point of order, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Wait a minute—

Ms. Leah Taylor Roy: Excuse me. I'm speaking, Mr. Lake.

On a point of order, Mr. Chair, could I continue speaking and answering the question that was asked of me?

The Chair: There are too many points of order. The chair is getting confused.

We're on the point of order that we have to stick to.... We can't talk in public about what has happened in camera with this report, so let's all keep that in mind.

Ms. Leah Taylor Roy: Thank you.

The Chair: I've forgotten what the other points of order were, so we'll have to finish. I'll stick to that point of order,

Ms. Taylor Roy, I'll let you finish. Then we'll go to Mr. Duguid, Mr. Lake, Mr. Ehsassi, Mr. Kurek and Mr. Bachrach.

Ms. Leah Taylor Roy: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'm sorry if it was interpreted.... I didn't mean to. I was referencing comments made earlier by Mr. McLean, that we're not supposed to sit back and smoke a cigar. I do find that insulting as well. I certainly do not sit back and smoke a cigar. I'm not sure if you do, but I have actually been working on this study from the beginning and listening to the witnesses and questioning them when they were here, with the Conservative members who were here at the time. I found the questions asked by the members who were here at that time to be very good, very direct, very insightful. They really challenged the witnesses who were here. I believe from my perspective that job has been done.

We also all agreed to have the opportunity to submit any comments we had in advance. That was not discussed in camera; that was before. We had agreed to that. We actually put our comments forward, so there was the opportunity to do that as well.

I'm saying our job is being done properly, and what our job is now is to look at the recommendations and weigh in, and not necessarily go through each of the paragraphs.

Thank you, Mr. Bachrach. I would support the motion as well.

• (1630)

The Chair: Mr. Duguid.

Mr. Terry Duguid (Winnipeg South, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'd like to start off by apologizing to you, Mr. Chair, and to the other members of the committee who were here on time. I was not, Mr. Chair. There were others, but I'll let other people speak for themselves. It is our responsibility to be here on time. It delayed the committee, and for that, I am sorry. I will, at least on my own behalf, ensure that that will never happen again. I won't describe all of the circumstances that went into that, but members on the other side did raise those points. I can't refer to what was said in camera.

Mr. Chair, I would like to call for a pause so there can be discussions. At least, I'd like to have some discussions with my colleagues and perhaps with other members. We seem to be stuck, and I'd like to see if we can collectively find a way forward.

Thank you.

The Chair: Yes, we can pause.

• (1630)

(Pause)

• (1635)

The Chair: We'll reconvene the meeting.

We were at Mr. Lake, I believe.

Are you done, Mr. Duguid?

Mr. Terry Duguid: Actually, I'm not, but I—

The Chair: But I can go to Mr. Lake now.

Mr. Terry Duguid: Yes.

The Chair: Go ahead, Mr. Lake.

Hon. Mike Lake: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Chair, it's a very strange circumstance that we find ourselves going clause by clause. It's called clause by clause for a reason. We typically go clause by clause as a committee, especially on legislation where, it is fair to say in this case, there are different points of view depending on perspectives across the country. It would be a very important part of the parliamentary process to go clause by clause. It's highly unusual to do it. I've never seen a report that would have as divided or as wide a range of views across the country on it. I've never seen a report just pass through without amendment. I've never seen that happen before.

We're just debating right now the process on a motion put forward by the NDP, and members from the Liberals and Bloc have indicated they're going to support it. First of all, I find it completely unacceptable that I don't have the opportunity on behalf of my constituents in Edmonton—Wetaskiwin, on an issue which everybody in this room could understand would be important to them, to even talk about the individual clauses of a report. I've never been a part of a process in my 17 years as a member of Parliament on something that would have such a wide range of views. You see things that are unanimous where there's unanimous approval of something, maybe, but not on something like this.

It sounds like this is where the committee is going. It sounds like members from the Liberal government, the NDP and the Bloc are united on moving this forward without any possibility to have amendments.

Mr. Chair, let me put on the record—and I'm glad we're in public for this so Canadians can see this process unfolding—that I am very concerned about the precedent this sets.

The Chair: Before we go to Mr. Ehsassi, I would say that the report contains all points of view on this. We're describing what different witnesses said, and sometimes—

Hon. Mike Lake: No, Mr. Chair—

• (1640)

The Chair: I'm not finished.

Sometimes you'll have one view and right beneath it an opposing view.

What's also very important to keep in mind is that the recommendations are where we state our viewpoint as a committee, and, if not everybody is in agreement with the recommendations that the majority of the members agree with, they can produce a minority report so everyone's voices will be heard.

Hon. Mike Lake: You've entered into debate as a chair with me, fairly—

The Chair: No, I'm just describing what's happening.

Hon. Mike Lake: It's a very odd circumstance that we're having a public conversation, and you've been put in a very difficult position, I understand. Just to be clear, because of your comments, the analysts who we have working for us—because this is an open door to a process that usually happens in camera—do phenomenal work writing a draft report, but at the end of the day, members of Parliament own that report and put it forward. I don't want to leave anybody with the mistaken notion that it would be unusual to discuss each clause and move clause by clause. That is what's normal. What's normal is for us to go through and take a look at each clause of a report.

What's happening right now is very unusual, especially for a report like this. I want to make sure it's very clear that this very unusual.

Mr. Taylor Bachrach: Mr. Chair, can I make a point of order?

The Chair: If it's a point of order.

Mr. Taylor Bachrach: I listened very intently to Mr. Lake's remarks, and that may well be his view, but he did refer to this as going clause by clause, and he called it legislation. I would like, for the benefit of the public who may be watching, to clarify that this is not clause-by-clause review of legislation. This is paragraph-by-paragraph review of a parliamentary report, a report that has already undergone seven meetings' worth of review in camera.

I appreciate the points he's making, and I think those are fair points to make in this meeting. I would just ask for some clarity around—

The Chair: We'll go to Mr. Ehsassi now.

Hon. Mike Lake: The member brought up a point of order, and I'm going to weigh in on the point of order.

If we're going to have the conversation, I'll withdraw the contentious language “clause by clause” and say “paragraph by paragraph”. Whatever the case is, it is highly unusual—

The Chair: I believe they do understand that this is a report and that it's paragraph by paragraph.

Hon. Mike Lake: Right. Thank you.

The Chair: We'll go to Mr. Ehsassi now, please.

Mr. Ali Ehsassi (Willowdale, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

First of all, I want to thank you for your patience and your perseverance. This is my first opportunity to sit on this committee. I have

to say that, after almost eight years, I have never seen anything this dysfunctional.

I say this because we have Mr. Bachrach, who comes here in good faith and tries to offer a solution to make sure that this report is moving forward, and then we get all of this vitriol from the members opposite. It's a suggestion. It doesn't need to be pointed out that this is the first time he's at this committee or that he doesn't know what he's doing. He obviously is an incredibly experienced parliamentarian. He put it on the table as a good faith effort to move things forward.

I think all of us can agree that this report has been stalled. It's pretty evident after considering the fact that you have had in camera meetings for six weeks. Instead of actually saying that they agree or disagree with what he has to say, they personally attack him. If that's not bad enough, they're attacking the analysts and taking issue with the tremendous work that analysts do.

I've sat on a lot of committees. I can say that I have nothing but the utmost respect for analysts, who sit there, go through all of the testimony, and try their very best to do it. However, six weeks of reviewing their work can only suggest that you have disdain for the work they do. That, in my opinion—

Mr. Greg McLean: On a point of order, Mr. Chair, is there something that you can read us from the minutes where any of my colleagues on either side of the bench here have said anything about the analysts' work? Mr. Ehsassi is all bent out of shape about something that hasn't been said.

The Chair: I don't think he's literally referring to someone who made a statement saying—

Mr. Ali Ehsassi: Mr. McLean, we know that this report has been stalled.

I'm not going to get into exactly—

Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Mr. Chair, I have a point of order.

I believe what's happening here pretty clearly is referencing in camera work.

• (1645)

The Chair: No, Mr. Ehsassi has not been party to the in camera work.

Mr. Greg McLean: With regard to my point, Mr. Chair, could you, or the analysts or the clerk, read something back that Mr. Ehsassi must be referring to here that says that anybody in the NDP, the Bloc, the Liberals or the Conservatives has said anything negative about the analysts' work?

The Chair: He's not saying that, as far as I understand.

Mr. Ali Ehsassi: I'm not saying that you said anything expressly negative about them, but the—

Mr. Greg McLean: I have a point of order again, Mr. Chair.

If Mr. Ehsassi wants to back up anything he's saying here as far as criticisms of the work that's presented to us—

The Chair: Colleagues, the chair has the floor.

Mr. Ehsassi is not suggesting that anyone said—

Mr. Greg McLean: Mr. Chair, what you think Mr. Ehsassi is saying and what Mr. Ehsassi is saying are two different things.

The Chair: Somebody has to be an arbiter here.

Ms. Leah Taylor Roy: I have a point of order, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: What Mr. Ehsassi is saying is that the fact that it took six or seven meetings suggests that—

Mr. Ali Ehsassi: I'm not going to divulge what was said in camera, but I think the only conclusion one can come to is that they don't know what they're doing if it has taken six weeks.

All I mean to say is that, if anyone does—

Mr. Greg McLean: I have a point of order, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Ali Ehsassi: I get it. Mr. Lake, you're saying—

The Chair: Excuse me, colleagues.

Ms. Leah Taylor Roy: Mr. McLean, I had a point of order before you—sorry.

The Chair: I think these are all points of debate. None of these are points of order.

Ms. Leah Taylor Roy: I actually have a point of order.

The Chair: Everything else is a point of debate. We're all debating what Mr. Ehsassi means.

Mr. Ali Ehsassi: What I keep hearing from the members opposite is that—

The Chair: Excuse me, Mr. Ehsassi. Ms. Taylor Roy has what I hope is a point of order.

Ms. Leah Taylor Roy: My point of order is simply that, when you are making a ruling, when you are saying something, I believe that members are supposed to respect that. My point of order is that I don't see that happening right now. I'd just like to point that out and ask all members, when you are talking and making a response, to wait until you are done.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Ehsassi, continue. Then we'll go to Mr. Kurek, Mr. Bachrach, Mr. Deltell, Mr. McLean and Mr. Duguid.

Mr. Ali Ehsassi: I'd like to plead with every member here that surely it's appreciated there are some disagreements in so far as the substance of this report is concerned, but you have to find a way forward. I'm sure that constantly making sure that this report is not adopted is not in the best interest of anyone on this committee. I just say this as someone who has never seen anything this dysfunctional in the eight years that I have sat on many committees. I'm hoping that everyone will decide to see the light.

Even if you can't agree on things, if someone does come up with a suggestion, there's no point in trying to bring him down, question his motives and say that he has no right to say that because this is the first time he's sitting here. Surely, we can agree to that.

Thank you.

The Chair: Mr. Kurek.

Mr. Damien Kurek: Thank you, Chair.

I'm not sure what we're in would be considered uncharted territory. I'd have to reference the vast array of parliamentary proceedings that have predated the happenings of today, but certainly some of the accusations and insinuations that have been made by the members opposite are very concerning.

For everybody watching, the move to do this in public is unusual. Generally, the standard practice is there are conversations about work the committee does. There are the analysts, the clerk and translators, a whole host of people to put reports together. Reports are in the name of members of Parliament. We work together to put together these reports.

There is often disagreement. Disagreement, quite frankly, is okay. In our democratic system, it's actually key. When we have a circumstance where there is that disagreement, that's when generally a vote is called and a path is decided by a majority.

I find it troubling—and I would reference we may be setting a precedent here—that a committee would limit the opposition's ability to meaningfully engage in subject matter that we find very, very important. We have a report that has been before us for more than a year. During that time there have been a host of other studies that have actually taken place, so to suggest somehow that members of the opposition are the reason we have seen this report delayed is simply a rewriting of history.

Look at a number of weeks ago when we had a very important study that all members of this committee agreed to.

To Mr. Ehsassi, who is joining this committee for the first time since I've sat here as the vice-chair, we had an incredibly productive study. For other accusations that have been made, I'm concerned that the precedent that is being set is to basically say that the voices of members of Parliament, and by virtue of that those of our constituents, are not able to be heard.

I don't expect that everybody agrees. I would love for everybody to agree with those of us in east central Alberta, but I know full well there is a wide variety of opinions other than that of those whom I represent.

Mr. Chair, as we come to address the motion that would basically adopt this report and move on to recommendations, I would caution every member here. For members of Parliament in the committee process this is one of those opportunities where we can have that engagement, where we can make sure that we look at the evidence, look at the facts, look at what government has done on any range of issues and ensure that we make that case to our colleagues. Then a decision is made one way or the other.

Tempers have flared—certainly in the House of Commons today—and there have been a few references to that. I could get very political on that if there was—

• (1650)

Ms. Leah Taylor Roy: Mr. Chair, on a point of order, I believe I was admonished for referencing things that happened in camera, and I believe that Mr. Kurek just did the same thing.

Mr. Damien Kurek: I was referencing the House.

Ms. Leah Taylor Roy: No, you said that we had referenced here.

Mr. Damien Kurek: No, I said that the House had been referenced and Mr. Ehsassi did it.

Mr. Ehsassi referenced the House just a moment ago.

Ms. Leah Taylor Roy: I don't believe so.

The Chair: Let's just be careful about that.

Ms. Leah Taylor Roy: When did he reference the House?

Mr. Damien Kurek: Just a few minutes ago.

Ms. Leah Taylor Roy: I think you asked for some script or some context, and later maybe we could see the notes on that too and find out when he referenced the House.

Mr. Damien Kurek: Fantastic.

The Chair: Let's just be careful not to delve into what has been said in camera.

Let's proceed.

Mr. Damien Kurek: Mr. Chair, I think it behooves us all to be careful. I'm not going to get into what happened in the House today, because I think that's a debate that would devolve quickly. It certainly was extraordinary for those who were watching. We would be setting a precedent, I think, especially for members of the government, who need to acknowledge that it's up to the Canadian people to decide who sits on the government benches and that, at some point, they may find themselves on the opposition benches. To deny the opportunity for meaningful engagement in an important part of the parliamentary process, I think, is a troubling precedent that we should all take pause over.

I appreciate Mr. Duguid acknowledging he delayed the committee proceedings. I would also like to apologize to the committee. There was a circumstance related to that, which led to a couple of members from our side, as well, being a couple of minutes late. Therefore, I would likewise offer this committee an apology for that.

With that, I cede the floor.

The Chair: Go ahead, Mr. Bachrach.

Mr. Taylor Bachrach: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I find this discussion is getting more productive by the minute, so I hope we can vote before 5:30 rolls around.

I want to speak briefly to the intent behind this motion because, based on my colleague's earlier words, I fear the intent has been misunderstood.

Certainly, from my experience on the transport committee, my understanding is that the purpose of the body of the report is to accurately depict what was presented by the witnesses. In this report, there are many statements from witnesses that we disagree with, or that we think might be based on faulty assumptions or faulty data. That doesn't mean the witnesses didn't present those views or what they feel are facts. As I read through the report, what I see is that any claims made or facts presented are referenced back to the witness who presented those facts.

In terms of wanting to debate the body of the report more, I think that's in order. The motion on the floor simply proposes that we adopt the remainder of the body of the report in whole. Mostly, I made that motion on account of how much time the committee has already dedicated to the report.

However, if there are areas where my colleagues feel the language in the report or the way in which the analysts have characterized the witness testimony is not accurate or true to the records, I think those kinds of amendments would be very much in order and I would welcome them. I think the committee could do that work.

This is all based on my experience in other committees, where occasionally there are words used that we feel maybe don't reflect the testimony as accurately as they could. In those cases, we go back to the testimony. The analysts look up which witness presented those facts and we—

• (1655)

Hon. Mike Lake: I have a point of order, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: I don't know whether it's going to be a point of order, but—

Hon. Mike Lake: No, actually, the substance of his motion is to pass this without debate. He seems to be amending his motion. If he's moving an amendment to his motion, it would be important to know that, because the substance of his motion doesn't allow for what he's arguing for right now.

The Chair: He's just showing that he's flexible and wants to get the report done. He's open to other suggestions, but I don't think he's dropped the intent of his motion.

Mr. Taylor Bachrach: There are some rules that are not amendable or debatable, but this is not one of them. Certainly, if there are paragraphs my colleagues feel do not reflect the witness testimony, an amendment to this motion would certainly be welcome and we can debate that amendment.

I did not mean to preclude any such debate, only to move along to what I believe to be the real work, which is going to be the recommendations. Those are going to be tough conversations and, I think, interesting ones.

I'll leave it at that.

Mr. Greg McLean: I have a point of order.

The Chair: Yes.

Mr. Greg McLean: I know that Mr. Bachrach has never before attended while I've been on this committee. There was a work plan done where we were supposed to finish debating the body here today. Nothing has happened as far as the body goes. That would have finished by the end of today if we hadn't been so distracted.

The Chair: This is debate. It's not a point of order.

Mr. Bachrach.

Mr. Taylor Bachrach: Mr. Chair, that was my only remark.

I didn't want it to be characterized as an unwillingness to look at potential changes in the remaining paragraphs. It's simply that we feel the remaining paragraphs in the report accurately reflect the testimony heard by the committee and we're willing to proceed to the recommendations at this time.

The Chair: Remember there will also be a version two. We have a chance to go over this again. If we were to adopt Mr. Bachrach's motion, it doesn't mean we couldn't have another look at the report.

Sorry, I realize the motion is actually more definitive than that. It's to adopt the report once and for all. I thought it was to just adopt this version and then we do the recommendations.

We go now to Mr. Deltell.

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Thank you so much, Mr. Chair.

First of all, I want to start my comments by saying I appreciate and want to thank the member, Mr. Duguid, who said a few minutes ago that what happened was not correct. I deeply appreciate that.

[Translation]

As the former prime minister of Canada the right honourable Jean Chrétien used to say, when you paint yourself into a corner, your only way out is to walk on the paint. It might not be pleasant, but there's no way around it.

• (1700)

[English]

I want to pay all my respects to Mr. Duguid.

If you see the right honourable Mr. Chrétien this weekend, say hello to him.

Mr. Terry Duguid: I will.

Mr. Gérard Deltell: He will be very proud to know there was a Conservative who was talking about him.

Mr. Speaker, seriously, the motion we have in front of us is not a time allocation one, but it looks like a time allocation one. There is no victory when we talk about time allocation or closing a debate, especially when we're talking about a report.

We all know and recognize that the first loser of that will be democracy, because there is exchange that we have in the committee. When we study it paragraph by paragraph, for sure sometimes we won't share the same point of view. This is what democracy is all about.

Shutting down the study of a report when two-thirds of the report has been done and there are around 50 paragraphs to study, there is no victory there at all.

[Translation]

This has absolutely nothing to do with the quality of the work done by the analysts or the people who support them. If we can't debate the report, we might as well give the analysts carte blanche and hand over the keys. Listening to the comments, asking appropriate questions and eliciting the answers provided is an integral

part of our job. The analysts do truly outstanding work. I have been a member of Parliament for seven years, and like everyone, I am in awe of the work they do. Their unwavering neutrality is inspiring and should serve as an example to us all. Once a report has undergone the scrutiny of parliamentarians—who, it goes without saying, have the final word—whatever the study, a balance on both sides of the issue always emerges, which is a win-win for everyone.

If, by chance, the committee were to adopt this motion—we do know, after all, that the members of the Liberal Party intend to vote for it—no one would come out a winner, and it would likely undermine the work we have left to do.

Moreover, I feel it is my duty to recognize my fellow members who have been working diligently on this issue, especially Mr. McLean. No one here can accuse Mr. McLean of filibustering. As parliamentarians, we know all about that. At one time or another, we have all had to filibuster to support our party or challenge our opponent. We say things that aren't germane to the topic in order to take up time. However, Greg McLean has never done that once, not here or anywhere else. Every time he speaks, he provides evidence, relevant information, references and facts to back up what he is saying. His remarks are never short on substance. Members may disagree with him—which has never happened in my case, other than to make a clarification—but Mr. McLean does his job well. I will never stand for anyone accusing Mr. McLean of filibustering on this issue. On the contrary, he is doing his job as a member.

I will conclude with this. Earlier, someone described the work of parliamentarians on this committee as dysfunctional. Like me, Mr. Chair, you have been around a while, so you probably recall the frequent state of dysfunction of parliamentary committees during the 33rd Parliament. Some members—the member for Hamilton West, in particular—even got on chairs and tables in an attempt to physically tower over their political opponents.

The Chair: Thankfully, we haven't come to that yet.

Mr. Gérard Deltell: No, we haven't, Mr. Chair, but some of my fellow members will likely cross paths at the conference this weekend with some folks who were part of what they called the Rat Pack back then. Please give them my best regards.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Our challenge is to find a way to not dwell eternally on every paragraph or the veracity of every number, and not make the witness question their thinking and research methods to ensure that the witness is not spreading misinformation. Otherwise, this could go on forever.

Mr. McLean, you have the floor

[English]

Mr. Greg McLean: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I've been trying to quickly get through this. I know that we talked about a work plan for this, where we were supposed to be done with the body of this today, yet as opposed to addressing anything within the body, we've been, I don't know.... People who haven't been in this committee have come in and talked about just ignoring everything in here, yet we have all kinds of technical questions to ask, and those are technical questions we have been asking of the analysts.

Mr. Ehsassi has talked about six weeks. I'm not sure he knows that we've been interrupted by other studies as well, including the clean water study, where we looked at what was happening in Fort McMurray at the Kearl oil sands site, which was very important. That did interrupt the work of this committee.

There are only a handful of technical things.

I do note what Mr. Ehsassi said, and I think he's wrong, because I have seen many committees that are far more dysfunctional.

Mr. Chair, I think you do a good job on this committee. I have seen chairs who do not do nearly as good a job as you do. You hold this committee together, and I thank you for that.

I do take exception to the point that anybody on any side of this House, in questioning the words that are on paper and how they might reflect the reality as presented, or the reality that needs to be questioned in the presentation, is assaulting the work of the analysts. Such is not the case. We are here to ask questions. We are here to make sure that what we present in a parliamentary report is exactly what is pertinent to the Canadian people, on both sides of it. We know that the witnesses have provided information, and those witnesses come from different walks of life.

Histrionics from Mr. Ehsassi aside, I think it was out of order, but nevertheless, it is what it is. I know there are only a few other things in the report that we had questions about. That should have started an hour and a half ago.

Mr. Chair, I could name just a couple, like paragraph 93, when the IMF talks about \$43 billion—

• (1705)

The Chair: I appreciate your willingness to complete the study, but we have Mr. Bachrach's motion.

Mr. Greg McLean: Yes, I know, but we have Mr. Bachrach saying that if there was anything to potentially amend in front of his motion, it would be okay.

Mr. Taylor Bachrach: Then make an amendment.

The Chair: We could do that.

This is what we could do: We could give ourselves a time limit. Then, if we agree with—

Mr. Greg McLean: I thought we had at the beginning of this meeting—

The Chair: We tried to do that in the steering committee. If we give ourselves a time limit and everyone agrees to it, then that shows good faith on all parts.

Why don't we give ourselves one more meeting just to talk about the body? If we don't finish it by the end of the meeting on May 8,

we will go straight to the recommendations on May 11. If everyone agrees in front of the Canadian public here, then I think we can do it.

I think we can do it. I can't tell anyone what to do, but it would be kind of useful if somebody suggested an amendment—

Mr. Terry Duguid: I'll suggest an amendment, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: —that it's what we'll do. We give ourselves one more meeting to finish the body of the text. If it's not finished, we adopt it and we go to the recommendations on the 11th.

Mr. Terry Duguid: I would move that, Mr. Chair, but I would add the proviso that if the suggested changes could be—

The Chair: —given in advance—

Mr. Terry Duguid: —given in advance so that we would have a chance to digest them, I think that would make the work go quickly.

The Chair: I think we can do it in the two hours. I mean, we have 20 pages left.

Mr. Terry Duguid: I agree.

The Chair: I don't know how we do that procedurally. I'll suspend for a minute to figure out how to do that.

• (1705)

(Pause)

• (1710)

The Chair: I think we have a solution.

Mr. Damien Kurek: Mr. Chair—

The Chair: I want to finish what I'm going to say.

I'm reading Mr. Bachrach's mind.

I think he's amenable to withdrawing his motion and presenting an alternative motion, which would give us one more two-hour meeting to finish our review of the last 20 pages. If we don't finish in the two hours or by one o'clock Monday afternoon, then we will adopt the text as is and we will go to recommendations on May 11.

I think that's what he wants to do. Am I correct?

Mr. Taylor Bachrach: I'm happy to do that, Mr. Chair.

If the aim of the subcommittee is to adopt the body of the report at the end of the next meeting and we get through the amendments that the Conservatives have suggested they're willing to present in writing, which we can debate at the next meeting in a timely, efficient way, and if, at the end of the next meeting, we consider the body of the report adopted, then I'm happy to entertain that.

The Chair: It's done, regardless of whether we get to page 75 or we're on page 70.

Hon. Mike Lake: On a point of order, is a motion to withdraw debatable?

The Chair: No. He hasn't withdrawn it yet. I'm suggesting that he might want to do that.

Hon. Mike Lake: Okay, so we're in the midst of a—

The Chair: When he does decide to withdraw, he has to have unanimous consent.

What I'm getting at is that if we really are in good faith, we're going to agree that he can withdraw his motion with unanimous consent. We're going to agree to the motion that I think he wants to present, which is that we'll give ourselves another two hours to finish the last 20 pages. Everyone will submit their changes in advance of Monday's meeting. We will get it done Monday by one o'clock, and we will go to the recommendations next Thursday.

If everyone agrees to that, I take that as a sign of goodwill on the part of all parties.

Mr. Taylor Bachrach: Mr. Chair, if I may, it's my motion. I won't withdraw my motion, but I will amend my own motion.

The Chair: I think it's easier if you withdraw it. I was speaking to the clerk. Procedurally, it's easier if you would withdraw it.

Mr. Taylor Bachrach: It's only easier if the entirety of our membership allows it to be withdrawn, and I'm not sure we have the—

The Chair: I sense the goodwill in this room.

Hon. Mike Lake: [*Inaudible—Editor*]

Mr. Taylor Bachrach: What I'm hearing, Mike, is that your crew would like to propose amendments. I would like to accommodate that by extending my motion to the end of the next meeting. I think what you suggested is fair, and so I would—

The Chair: Okay, somebody has to propose that.

Mr. Taylor Bachrach: I'm happy to. I'm trying.

An hon. member: You can't amend your own motion.

The Chair: Somebody other than you will have to propose that amendment.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Pauzé, you have the floor.

Ms. Monique Pauzé: I'd like to move an amendment to Mr. Bachrach's motion.

The Chair: Mr. Bachrach, we could read the motion as amended, but we need the text.

[*English*]

Mr. Bachrach, can you send the text of your original motion to the clerk, please, or at least read it out slowly?

Then Madam Pauzé will propose her amendment slowly and we'll know exactly what we're voting on.

Do you want to read it?

• (1715)

Mr. Taylor Bachrach: Sure. The wording of the original motion was that the body of the report be adopted as amended, because there were amendments already made to the body of the report.

The Chair: Yes, it's as amended.

Mr. Taylor Bachrach: I'm happy to welcome an amendment that would extend the time to the end of the next meeting, if the committee so chooses.

The Chair: Basically it would read, "That the report be adopted no later than May 8 at...."

[*Translation*]

Ms. Monique Pauzé: It would be by no later than May 8 at 1 p.m.

The Chair: ...as it will be at that time.

Ms. Monique Pauzé: We don't need to specify "as it will be" if it says "as amended".

The Chair: Perfect.

We ask all members to submit their suggested amendments in writing before Monday's meeting. I don't believe we need to include it in the motion because it's understood. It's quite simple.

Ms. Pauzé, do you wish to speak?

Ms. Monique Pauzé: May I ask that we take the amendment to a vote? We've been talking about it since—

The Chair: We will therefore take Ms. Pauzé's amendment to a vote.

[*English*]

Hon. Mike Lake: Could you please read the overall motion as amended right now?

The Chair: The clerk will read it, because there's a suggestion to amend it.

The Clerk of the Committee (Ms. Nancy Vohl): Without having an official text, I will do my best to summarize it.

Madam Pauzé and Mr. Bachrach, tell me if I'm incorrect.

My understanding is that the motion with the amendment would read, in its final wording, "That the body of the report be adopted as amended in full no later than on May 8, 2023, at"—

The Chair: It is "at one o'clock".

The Clerk: —"one o'clock."

The Chair: Yes, we meet at 11.

The Clerk: Did you say 11?

The Chair: We meet between 11 and one.

The Clerk: Okay. It will be at the end of the meeting, at one o'clock.

The Chair: It will be at the end of the meeting on May 8, or whatever.

The Clerk: Is that for the body of the report and not the recommendations?

The Chair: Yes, and we'll proceed to the recommendations on May 11, I guess.

The Clerk: Do I need to repeat that?

Hon. Mike Lake: Is that part of the motion? You ended it with "I guess". I'm not sure that "I guess" is part of the motion.

The Chair: Would somebody propose that, because I can't.

Mr. Terry Duguid: I'll propose that, Mr. Chair.

Okay, she can do it.

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Ms. Pauzé, would you like to add a few words to your amendment?

Ms. Monique Pauzé: I believe the clerk—

The Chair: We want to ask that everyone submit their suggestions in writing before the meeting.

Ms. Monique Pauzé: Okay.

We would add "and that the amendments be submitted before the meeting scheduled for May 8".

The Chair: Ms. Pauzé's amendment just got a bit longer, but I believe we all understood.

Ms. Monique Pauzé: We need to add "2023" to include the exact date.

The Chair: That's right.

So, that's the motion as amended. Is that clear and can we take it to a vote?

Mr. Deltell, would you like to make a comment?

Mr. Gérard Deltell: Mr. Chair, I'd like to say that this is a form of time allocation, even if that isn't the right expression. That's exactly what it is: We're setting the duration of the debate.

The Chair: We'll have plenty of time, frankly. That seems reasonable to me.

I believe we have goodwill on all sides and that's the strength of the Standing Committee on the Environment and Sustainable Development.

Does it please the members to vote on Ms. Pauzé's motion as amended?

• (1720)

[*English*]

Hon. Mike Lake: Are we voting on the motion as amended or on the amendment?

Mr. Taylor Bachrach: Can I ask for a point of clarification from the clerk?

The Chair: Let's do the amendment first and then the motion.

You're right. I'm sorry.

Mr. Taylor Bachrach: Can I ask for a point of clarification from the clerk?

The Chair: Yes.

Mr. Taylor Bachrach: Does this amendment reflect the intent of the subcommittee?

The Chair: Yes, it totally does.

Mr. Taylor Bachrach: I'm seeing nodding from the clerk and nodding from the chair.

I ask because I'm hearing it being construed as some kind of closure. That's not the intention. The intention is—

The Chair: We agreed to that in the subcommittee.

We're voting on Madam Pauzé's amendment first.

(Amendment agreed to: yeas 7; nays 4 [*See Minutes of Proceedings*])

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

Hon. Mike Lake: Technically, we should debate the motion.

The Chair: We can if you want to, but I would take that as....

Hon. Mike Lake: No, we're going to vote. We're going to get to a vote today. I just—

The Chair: We have some goodwill here. Let's not spoil it.

Hon. Mike Lake: We did vote against this, and we're voting against the motion.

The Chair: It's okay. I know that in your heart you're fine with it.

Hon. Mike Lake: I do think it's important, though. There's been the insinuation that this is somehow...six weeks we've dragged this out for. Just to be clear, this study started over 400 days ago, way, way before any of us on this side were on the committee.

The Chair: We're looking forward. We're forgetting about the six weeks.

Hon. Mike Lake: Mr. Chair, no, no. I just want to make that point, because the point was made pretty forcefully over there. I think the last meeting when we heard witnesses was 364 days ago. It's just important that we're talking about this on the record because it's been in public.

We're going to vote. We'll have one more meeting, which is—

The Chair: Before we go to the recommendations.

Hon. Mike Lake: —still unusual. However, I just want to point out that the committee itself, far before any of us were a part of it, decided to delay, delay, delay the adoption of this report.

The Chair: Well, we had legislation. There was a lot of stuff going on.

Hon. Mike Lake: Yes, and other studies.

The Chair: Yes.

(Motion as amended agreed to [*See Minutes of Proceedings*])

[*Translation*]

Ms. Monique Pauzé: I sense that someone will soon be moving to adjourn the meeting. However, before we finish, I just have one request to make and I don't believe a motion is required here: Documents and graphs were uploaded to the digital binder and I'd like them to be posted on the public portal. Is that done automatically?

The Chair: What exactly are you asking? There are documents—

Ms. Monique Pauzé: There are documents on the investigation. They contain information about the motion we worked on for three meetings.

The Chair: I believe we need to get them translated, right?

Ms. Monique Pauzé: They are translated if they are already in the digital binder.

The Chair: No, they haven't been translated yet.

Ms. Monique Pauzé: Once they have been translated, will they automatically be posted on the public portal?

The Chair: Once they have been translated, we can release them to the public.

Ms. Monique Pauzé: Okay.

[*English*]

The Chair: Mr. Weiler.

Mr. Patrick Weiler (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country, Lib.): I just want to remind all members of the

committee that, in the subcommittee report, there's direction to submit all of their suggestions for recommendations by the end of today. That will greatly assist us in being able to move through the remainder of the report—

The Chair: No, we changed that to the end of tomorrow.

Mr. Patrick Weiler: End of tomorrow?

The Chair: Yes, today made no sense, so we changed it to the end of tomorrow.

An hon. member: We said Monday, May 8, didn't we?

The Chair: We said May 5, end of day tomorrow.

Is that good?

Okay.

Mr. Longfield.

Mr. Lloyd Longfield: We've had good progress today. Thanks to Mr. Bachrach for coming in.

I think the more we get in writing beforehand, the better prepared we can be. I'm glad to see that we're doing that with the recommendations as well.

The Chair: Okay, it's 5:30.

The meeting is adjourned.

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