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Chair: Mr. John Brassard



Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics

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• (1530)

[English]

The Chair (Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC)): I call this meeting to order.

Welcome back to the information, privacy and ethics committee as we start in 2023.

Hopefully, Madam Clerk and analysts, you had a good time off. I know the analysts were busy with report writing. Welcome back, everyone.

Welcome to meeting number 54 of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics.

Today's meeting is taking place in a hybrid format pursuant to the House order of June 23, 2022. Therefore, members can attend in person and remotely using the Zoom application.

[Translation]

Should any technical difficulties arise, please advise me immediately. Please note that we may need to suspend the meeting for a few moments to ensure that all members are able to participate fully.

[English]

For members in the room, if you wish to speak, please raise your hand. For members on Zoom, please use the “raise hand” function. I see that we have one member on Zoom today.

The clerk and I will manage the speaking order as best we can. We appreciate your patience and understanding on this.

Now, you'll notice that we received an amended notice of motion. We're going to be dealing with one issue first, but Ms. Khalid has asked me for this.

Because you require a substitution for particular meetings, Ms. Khalid, that requires a motion by the committee. Perhaps you could place that motion on the floor now, before we start deliberating on the 106(4) request.

Thank you.

Ms. Iqra Khalid (Mississauga—Erin Mills, Lib.): Thanks very much, Chair.

Welcome back, everybody. It's going to be a great session, I'm sure.

Very briefly, Chair, I'd like to move that member of Parliament Annie Koutrakis have access to all of our digital binders, and that

she be included in all committee submissions and document circulation as well, as she'll be subbing in for me every Friday until June.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Khalid.

I don't see Mr. Green yet. Where is he?

A voice: He's here.

The Chair: Okay. That's fine.

We have quorum, so the motion is on the floor.

Are there any questions or comments? Do we have consensus on that?

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Khalid.

Pursuant to Standing Order 106(4), the committee is commencing consideration of the request by at least four members of the committee to undertake a study of the subject matter of the report of the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner entitled the “Ng Report”.

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

Mr. Barrett, we'll go to you first, sir.

• (1535)

Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC): Thanks very much, Chair.

I have some introductory remarks and am prepared to move a motion. I would just ask, through you, Chair, if perhaps the clerk can circulate that motion to all members. It's available in both official languages. Then they can have the opportunity to take a look at it.

The Chair: Mr. Barrett, my understanding is that the clerk has just distributed that motion to all members.

[Translation]

I also want to welcome Mr. Garon, who is replacing Mr. Ville-mure today.

Mr. Garon, is it just for today, or for Friday's meeting as well?

Mr. Jean-Denis Garon (Mirabel, BQ): It might be for the whole week.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you, Mr. Garon.

[*English*]

The motion has been circulated to the committee members, according to the clerk.

Mr. Barrett, you still have the floor.

Mr. Michael Barrett: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We've all received the letter calling for this meeting. I'm pleased we are able to have the meeting during our regular committee slot today, in order to take a look at this issue. We saw the Ethics Commissioner publish, late in 2022, the "Ng Report". It details how tens of thousands of dollars were paid, with authorization from a minister, to a contractor, and that it was done in an inappropriate way. In fact, the Ethics Commissioner deemed it was in contravention of our ethics act.

The issue here, of course, is the personal friendship between the principal at Pomp & Circumstance, Ms. Alvaro, and Minister Ng.

The situation in which we find ourselves is the fifth occasion on which a member of cabinet, a privy councillor, has breached Canada's ethics laws. It's important that Canadians be able to have confidence in their public institutions and get a full accounting of what went on. The members of the opposition have asked for this meeting, so we can initiate that process.

It's important to note, Mr. Chair, that this committee has a full agenda. We have lots of work to do this spring. Having spoken with other members, I hope this motion was crafted in such a way that it can be addressed in relatively short order, so we can continue to do the other work this committee has planned. That being said, this is some of that important work. That's why it rose to the level of using Standing Order 106(4) to trigger this meeting.

Canadians need to know that the expenditures the government undertakes are done on their behalf, not to the benefit of any individual in an inappropriate way. We're going to look at this case in order to find out what the details are. Ideally, we will find ourselves in a place, in 2023—it's a new year—where this series of ethical breaches has reached its conclusion. First, we need to get the details of what occurred up to this point.

As was said, Mr. Chair, we have circulated a motion. It's in both official languages. I'm going to read it into the record in just one moment. The occurrences we've seen, of course, are five violations of the ethics act: "The Trudeau Report", the "Trudeau II Report", the "Morneau Report", the "LeBlanc Report" and the "Ng Report". Canadians are rightly concerned. We've heard an awful lot from them. Certainly, my office and those of other opposition members have heard a great deal from them over the last week, since the release of this report.

The motion we circulated is as follows:

That, pursuant to Standing Order 108(3)(h) and in relation to the Ng Report, the committee undertake a study into Minister Mary Ng's violations of the Conflict of Interest Act; that the committee dedicate two meetings to the study; that the

committee send for, in unredacted format, all documents related to contracting with Pomp & Circumstance PR, including: time sheets and statements of work performed by Pomp & Circumstance PR under each contract, all work product provided by Pomp & Circumstance PR under each contract, and dates and locations of work performed by Pomp & Circumstance PR under each contract; that these documents be provided to the clerk of the committee in electronic format no later than 12:00 noon on the 10th business day following the adoption of this motion; that the committee invite the following witnesses in addition to any further witnesses the committee may consider relevant to appear: Minister Ng, Amanda Alvaro and the Deputy Minister for International Trade; that the committee report its finding to the House; and that the government table a comprehensive response to the report.

Mr. Chair, I think, with the number of meetings detailed in this and the other particulars requested—the document production order—that it's very narrow.

• (1540)

The number of meetings is limited. We are not looking to do an examination of any of the other reports dealing with the Conflict of Interest Act from the commissioner or any other reports with respect to the code for members. This is very narrow, very focused. I hope to find a path forward this afternoon so that we can undertake this work, get answers for Canadians, dispose of it and then move on to the other work of this committee.

Thanks.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Barrett.

The motion is in order.

I have Ms. Khalid speaking next.

Ms. Iqra Khalid: Thank you so much, Mr. Chair. I appreciate this.

First, I appreciate my colleagues across the way for engaging in conversations about what we were expecting today with this meeting. I appreciate Mr. Barrett's taking some of our feedback into account in drafting this motion.

However, this is the first time we are looking at the exact wording of the motion. Seeking your indulgence, Mr. Chair, perhaps we can suspend for five minutes while I confer with my colleagues on exactly what documents are being requested and the timelines and the logistics of such. Is that okay, Mr. Chair?

Mr. Michael Barrett: Thanks. That's fine with us.

The Chair: We will suspend to give you that chance to look over the motion, and we'll be back in five.

• (1540) _____ (Pause) _____

• (1550)

The Chair: We're going to resume the meeting. We had a bit longer than a five-minute suspension.

Ms. Khalid, when we left you had the floor. I'm going to go back to you, please.

Ms. Iqra Khalid: Thank you very much, Chair.

I appreciate the suspension. We've been able to have discussions among ourselves. Hopefully we'll come to an amenable conclusion at the end of this.

I have proposed—I'm not sure if Mr. Barrett would like to take this as a friendly amendment or if you want me to move a formal amendment—to delete the words “that the committee report its findings to the House; and that the government table a comprehensive response to the report”.

That is the only amendment we'll propose, if it's agreeable to everybody around the table.

The Chair: I'm not going to accept that as a friendly. I'll accept that as an amendment and see if there's any discussion on the amendment that's proposed.

Mr. Michael Barrett: There's consensus for it to pass.

(Amendment agreed to)

The Chair: It's a new year, Mr. Green. Everybody's working together.

Now that we have the motion as amended, we'll deal with that.

Do we have consensus on the amended motion?

(Motion as amended agreed to)

The Chair: I went to committee chair training over the break and it's worked out well.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Chair: And I have a great clerk and great analysts to rely on.

We'll go to committee business now, to determine.... In the context of committee business, you've asked that there be two meetings on this particular motion.

For the committee's information, we have the lobbying commissioner coming in on Friday. We've already scheduled that. She has agreed to come in for two hours to deal with the proposals she came up with on changing the Lobbyists' Code of Conduct.

In addition to that, I've had numerous requests on the ATIP study. Since the tabling of the ATIP report in the House of Commons by the Treasury Board president, the Information Commissioner has asked to come back to this committee. We have had other requests to reappear before the committee. That's dealing with the ATIP.

On this issue, here's what I'd like to do, if we can, to deal with this next week. On Friday, we have the lobbying commissioner. We

have next Tuesday and Friday to deal with this motion that just passed, and then we can move on.

This is where the discussion needs to take place. We have a lot of irons in the fire here. It's whether we focus on the ATIP study.... We still have the Lobbyists' Code of Conduct. We have the foreign interference study that we're waiting to start. I appreciate the fact that everybody has submitted their witness lists on that.

We also have two other issues that we need to dispose of. One is the ArriveCAN app, which is still hanging, and the other is the Roxham Road study, which is still out there as well—it has been suspended. Those are the things we're dealing with.

My suggestion to the committee—and I think the clerk and the analysts can deal with this—is to deal next week with this motion that just passed and then move forward with some of the other issues.

To me, the priority would be the ATIP study, because there's a lot of interest. I expect that when the lobbying commissioner comes on Friday, there will be some others.... We've heard from others who want input on the proposed changes to the Lobbyists' Code of Conduct.

The decision we have to make in terms of the priority is between the ATIP and the Lobbyists' Code of Conduct. I hope that the committee agrees with me that we'll deal and dispose of this matter next week on Tuesday and Friday. Then we can come back and deal with either the ATIP or the Lobbyists' Code of Conduct.

Ms. Khalid, you have your hand up.

• (1555)

Ms. Iqra Khalid: Thanks, Chair.

I have some remarks on the list we have pending.

On the motion we've just passed, obviously it would depend on the minister's availability as well, I would assume. Pending the minister's availability, I don't think it should be a problem.

I have a point of clarification that I'll perhaps put to you, Chair.

With the foreign interference study, we said it was the first thing we were going to do. Procedurally, how does that work when we've all agreed on a motion that says this is the first study, and now we're delaying it a bit further? That's another one.

With respect to Roxham Road, I know we adjourned the debate or the discussion on that specifically because members were not really interested in pursuing it. I would appreciate it if we could wait for Monsieur Villemure to return before we pick up any discussions on that one, because I know he was interested in that.

That's all I have for now. Thanks, Chair.

The Chair: I'm going to deal with some of the questions Ms. Khalid asked.

This is where we stand right now: We have the ATIP study, and we have the Treasury Board report submitted to Parliament. There's lots of interest in that. We have the Lobbyists' Code of Conduct. The commissioner is coming Friday, and there's lots of interest in that. Then, of course, there's the China interference. That is what I'm trying to juggle. I'm seeking the committee's consensus on where we want to go after next week, and what the priority is.

I've spoken with Mr. Villemure, and I know he would like to start the foreign interference study as quickly as possible.

However, I will ask you this, Madam Clerk: In the motion on the foreign interference study, if I recall, the word "immediate" was in there, or something to that effect. Is that correct?

• (1600)

The Clerk of the Committee (Ms. Nancy Vohl): It was actually an amendment that was moved and adopted, so it could be a priority of the committee. However, at the end of the meeting, some of the members said that notwithstanding the fact they'd said it was a priority, they would give the committee a bit of leeway to work around it.

The Chair: That's what I recall.

For the benefit of the committee, we have up until the House is set to adjourn in June. I know it's early to be talking about that, since we just got back, but we have 30 meetings scheduled for this committee, from this point forward. With everything in the air and all the studies asked for, we have to be mindful and try to fit all of that in. My goal is to fit all of it in, but if I were to have priorities right now, as chair, they are ATIP and the Lobbyists' Code of Conduct.

I'll remind the committee, as well, that we sent a letter to the Lobbying Commissioner, asking her to hold off on gazetting that, because there was interest—on the part of the committee and others outside the committee—in understanding a bit more about what some of those proposed changes are. That's where things stand right now.

Go ahead, Mr. Barrett.

Mr. Michael Barrett: The meeting on Friday makes sense as it's scheduled.

I'd like to see, as I indicated, the 106(4)-directed pair of meetings disposed of quickly. Obviously, as Ms. Khalid said, we'll need to see when we can get the minister.

Recognizing that the foreign interference study is a priority... There are competing priorities with ATIP and others. I know there are other motions in the names of other members. They have a new interest in those. They would likely want to address those in this session, as well.

Once we get past the next three meetings, and in order to ensure we prioritize the work we plan to do on foreign interference, I suggest—if it's the will of the committee—we populate only foreign interference meetings until we dispose of that study. We then dedi-

cate one meeting per week, after next week, to foreign interference, then populate the other meeting each week to wind down those other priorities. The different studies rank in different spots for different folks, but we have stakeholders who are interested in all of them. This way, we can do that.

Disposing of the 106(4) meetings next week... Since we determined we are not issuing a report, it would then be closed.

We have an awful lot of loose ends. I think this is something that—once we've had this discussion, which informs the clerks and analysts with respect to our priorities, and you've had those conversations with Mr. Villemure, and we have a draft work plan come forward, in the short term—we can then plan to conclude some of those studies.

I will also flag, in Mr. Villemure's absence, that the foreign interference study will be "number one with a bullet" for him. I won't speak for his colleague, who's here in substitution, but I share that. That was the sentiment in the room when the motion was passed in December.

The Chair: I appreciate the input, Mr. Barrett.

I think we have consensus, then, about what we're trying to do for next week.

[*Translation*]

The Commissioner of Lobbying will be joining us on Friday.

[*English*]

Then, next week—again, subject to the minister's schedule—we will plan on having the subject matter in the motion that was passed earlier today in those two meetings.

Then, following that, if I'm hearing everyone correctly...

[*Translation*]

Mr. Garon, I will give you the floor in a few seconds.

[*English*]

The foreign interference was a priority for this committee. The fact is that Mr. Villemure is not here, and I know it is a priority for him that we start that as well, so my suggestion—and I agree with Mr. Barrett—is that we start it in the following week, which would be the week of February 14.

If we're all in agreement on where we go on Friday and where we go next week, the only thing we have to discuss and finalize is where we go in the following week, that week before the two-week break.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Garon, you have the floor.

• (1605)

Mr. Jean-Denis Garon: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you to the committee for welcoming me today.

At the risk of repeating what has already been said, I can confirm that the study on foreign interference is a priority for Mr. Villemure. It needs to be conducted in the very short term. I am replacing him this week, but he will be back next week. There is nothing forcing us to wait for Mr. Villemure to plan things. He will be the one who is here.

A relevant motion was tabled today, and we would agree with starting the study right away. The agenda for this Friday's meeting is already set, but we could have the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner and the minister appear next week.

I have one reservation about examining foreign interference once a week. While it is perfectly fine to dedicate one day per week to foreign interference, we should not box ourselves in by making it every Tuesday or every Friday. We should find a way to keep some flexibility since witnesses, particularly European Union witnesses, will undoubtedly raise other topics.

That being said, making it a priority is exactly what Mr. Villemure expects.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Garon.

For my part, if we decide to dedicate one meeting a week to our study on foreign interference, I would prefer it to be every Tuesday or every Friday. The Information Commissioner wishes to come back to talk about the report tabled before Parliament in December. We could start our study on foreign interference on the Thursday of the week after next week.

[English]

I'm sorry. Did I say "*jeudi*"? I meant "*mardi*". It was Tuesday and Friday, which are our new meeting days.

My preference is to start on the Tuesday after next week on the foreign interference.

Go ahead, Iqra.

Ms. Iqra Khalid: Thanks, Chair.

I'm just wondering, are there any deadlines or any other urgencies with respect to the ATIP report that's been tabled or anything else that's on our agenda?

The Chair: No, there are no particular deadlines.

I will remind members of the committee that the analysts were charged with writing a draft report. If we're going to pick up on the ATIP study again, then my suggestion would be—and I've had discussions with the analysts as well—that we just add on to that report before tabling it in Parliament, especially if we get to that very quickly.

That's the only thing we have, and that report is due on February 10 or 11 or somewhere around that range.

Ms. Alexandra Savoie (Committee Researcher): It should be distributed by the end of next week.

The Chair: Okay. That's the only thing, I would think. On the other issues, other than the prescribed meeting dates up to a maximum or a minimum, we have no deadline on any of these other reports. Okay?

Go ahead, Monsieur Garon.

[Translation]

Mr. Jean-Denis Garon: I just want to come back to the question you asked me, because I had to get some information.

The committee is under some constraints, and I don't want to get in the way, but there will be time zone issues, particularly when we hear from witnesses in Europe. It would be easier to meet on the study on foreign interference on Friday mornings than on Tuesday afternoons. I am told that that would make it easier to schedule the witnesses.

The Chair: I personally agree with that; I won't object to it. It may be more complicated for some witnesses to appear in the morning, but we will see how it goes.

• (1610)

[English]

I want to respect Mr. Garon speaking on behalf of Mr. Villemure. Is there any problem if we deal with the foreign interference studies on Fridays, then, consistently? Is once a week a problem? Is that okay?

Go ahead, Ms. Khalid.

Ms. Iqra Khalid: Thanks, Mr. Chair.

I'm just wondering if and would humbly suggest that perhaps we can look at a proposed work plan for the next 30 meetings. That way we'll have a better idea. If we're going to be doing multiple studies at the same time, then obviously I want to prepare myself, and I'm sure other members want to prepare themselves, for what is next on the agenda.

Mr. Chair, I provided a notice of motion. I will also seek your guidance on when would be the best time to table that.

The Chair: On the work plan, the challenge we have right now is really getting through the next couple of weeks. Everything stopped in December. We knew where we were going to stand on Friday. Next week we know where we're going to stand, pending the minister's schedule. It really is for the following week that I want to get down as having those two meetings on the Tuesday and Friday, because it helps the analysts and the clerk contact witnesses.

I will make a commitment to the committee that we will have a work plan set out. I'll sit down with the clerk and the analysts so that after those weeks we'll know what the schedule is going to be like and they'll know what the schedule is going to be like. That way, we can determine who is going to appear in front of the committee and determine the timelines based on the motions and how many meetings were scheduled for that. I will make that commitment to the committee.

Given that—I see you, Mr. Fergus—in the week following next week, if we've determined that we're going to deal with foreign interference on the Friday, I would like to invite the Information Commissioner to come before the committee on Tuesday afternoon to discuss the tabling of the ATIP report by the Treasury Board president. That would set us up for the next three weeks as far as where we're going with meetings. The work plan will be presented to the committee after that.

Mr. Fergus, I saw your hand. I just wanted to reiterate what my preference would be before you spoke. Please go ahead.

Hon. Greg Fergus (Hull—Aylmer, Lib.): I support your preference, Mr. Chair. I trust you and the clerk and the analysts to make the appropriate decisions, but if on occasion in our foreign interference study a particular witness is not available to come on a Friday but is available to come on a Tuesday, I hope that you would have the flexibility from members from time to time to adjust accordingly.

The Chair: I appreciate that, Mr. Fergus. I know how important that study is to this committee. We will try to accommodate the witnesses as much as possible. Even if we have one hour of a witness because they couldn't be accommodated for a Friday, we'll make every attempt to do that. Thank you.

That is our work plan for the next three weeks. Is everybody is okay with that?

Madam Clerk, you're good?

Analysts, you're good?

This brings me to your next issue, Ms. Khalid. I know you put in a notice of motion and submitted it to the clerk. We're in committee business, if you want to deal with that now.

Ms. Iqra Khalid: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Although I admit that I have not canvassed my colleagues to see their interest in this, I think this is something that is becoming a bigger and bigger issue in our communities in terms of our youth engaging in digital activities and how data is being used. I think this is the perfect committee to study this issue.

With your indulgence, Mr. Chair, I move the following:

That, pursuant to Standing Order 108(3)(h), the committee undertake a study of the use of TikTok and its parent company, ByteDance Ltd., and their involvement or use of the private information of Canadians for the objective of data harvesting and unethical/illicit sharing of personal information with foreign entities; that the committee study whether this private data and information of Canadians is adequately protected and stored; that the committee invite relevant witnesses from the Canadian Communications Security Establishment, key executives from ByteDance Ltd., relevant cybersecurity experts and watchdogs to testify; that the Committee devote a minimum of three meetings with witnesses to this study; and that the committee report its findings to the House.

• (1615)

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Khalid.

The only thing I would ask is that, again, given the tight schedule that we have with the 30 meetings, there be some discretion left to the chair to schedule those meetings at a later date. It's not something we're going to get to immediately.

I don't want to diminish or dismiss the importance of what you're proposing here, because I think it's important.

The motion is on the floor. Are there any comments?

Mr. Green.

Mr. Matthew Green (Hamilton Centre, NDP): I certainly concur with the importance of finding ways for us to examine the inherent privacy protections for Canadians on social media platforms.

What I caution against, though, is limiting it in scope to one particular company. I'm a firm believer that what we witnessed with Cambridge Analytica, with Facebook and what Mark Zuckerberg was capable of with the various insurrections around the world, and with Twitter with Elon Musk.... We would probably benefit from broadening the scope to all social media platforms.

The challenge I have when we single out one particular company is that—while I think they're all villains in this regard—we're going to miss some of the other hostile actors. I'm just wondering if around the table there would be an appetite to broaden the language of the motion to include references to all major social media platforms. When a security analyst comes, I would suggest that they come prepared to speak on all of the companies, because they likely would have done security-intelligence threat assessments on them. I think it would be better for the House to receive all the information. That would be my preference.

I would say that I'm also cautious that sometimes we fall into rabbit holes, doing what I'll call “red-baiting” around China in particular. China's not the only hostile actor in the world. Let's be very clear about that. There are many hostile actors. I'm not suggesting that it's not one, either. I don't want to just always have the attention on China. I think we should look around the world. Referencing the on-device tracking that we had.... We found that there are numerous countries involved in this. It would be interesting to see where the other ones fit into this discussion as well, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Green.

Did you move the amendment? I'm sorry. I was talking to the clerk.

Mr. Matthew Green: It's so moved.

The Chair: It is so moved...about all other social media platforms.

I'm just going to go, Mr. Green, to the analysts.

Alexandra, I know that in 2017 there was a study done on social media platforms and the issue of privacy, etc. Maybe for the benefit of the committee you could talk about what the study included, perhaps what some of the findings were, and whether, in fact, this would be a repeat of something we've already done.

Ms. Alexandra Savoie: Sure. I will have to jog my memory.

What Mr. Green referred to was when the Cambridge Analytica affair was brought to the public eye. It also involved AggregateIQ, which is a Canadian firm that was involved in that. The Privacy Commissioner did an investigation on this, and then our study was a broader look on how data breaches from different social media platforms could have an impact in many ways but also on the democratic process. As you will remember, Cambridge Analytica had some links with the Brexit vote. It led to a study that lasted almost a full year. It also created this grand international committee, which grouped different parliamentarians from different Parliaments. We went to London, and they came here. It led to two reports—a preliminary report and a final report—with many recommendations. I would have to go back to tell you exactly what the recommendations were. It was a very broad study, and it focused on Cambridge Analytica as well as on broader recommendations as to how to better regulate social media platforms.

The Chair: I have Ms. Khalid, and then we'll go over to you, Mr. Green, after that.

Ms. Khalid.

Ms. Iqra Khalid: Thanks, Mr. Chair.

Building on that, I realize that we just had a fulsome discussion about how limited our schedule is and how much we have on our plate. What I'm proposing in this motion is just three meetings and a report. I would like for us to spend those three meetings doing a deep dive into something that I don't think this committee's looked at before: specifically TikTok and its parent company.

I know we've had many discussions, not just in this committee but in many committees around the House, on various social media platforms. I just feel that TikTok is one that is quite new and one that we haven't really done a deep dive into. With three meetings, I think it's better for us to narrow the scope as opposed to broadening it. I'm sure we can reference other reports that have been commissioned by this committee in the past in our findings. However, I think that we should limit it to TikTok as it stands.

• (1620)

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Khalid.

Mr. Green, go ahead on the amendment.

Mr. Matthew Green: Thank you.

A lot's happened since then. We had the January 6 insurrection, the convoy and the insurrection in Brazil. We just had, in the news, Facebook selling information to Home Depot.

I'll just put this very clearly to my friends in the Liberal Party: I will support this only if I have the latitude to ask other questions. That's what I'm interested in. It's that when we have subject matter experts, I have the latitude to include companies besides TikTok, given what has happened over the last two and a half years. A lot has happened since Cambridge Analytica.

If it's three meetings, that's fine. If it's four meetings, whatever, but if we're going to do this, let's do it well. Let's take our blinders off and realize that there are a bunch of hostile actors. Surveillance capitalism is real. AI and Moore's law mean that we are light years

ahead of where we were when that report came out. I think it would be incumbent on us to take that seriously and to be open to those discussions when the time arises.

The Chair: Mr. Green, you moved an amendment, so are you withdrawing...?

Mr. Matthew Green: No, the amendment is to include all social media platforms, drawing on the same witness list that Ms. Khalid put forward. I want the latitude to be able to have a full discussion and not just put blinders on around TikTok.

The Chair: Thank you.

Ms. Khalid, I saw your hand up.

Ms. Iqra Khalid: That should be okay, although I am concerned about whether three meetings will be enough for us to really bring in the witnesses we would need in order to study all of that.

The Chair: Is there any further discussion on Mr. Green's amendment?

(Amendment agreed to)

(Motion as amended agreed to)

The Chair: Ms. Khalid's motion passes. That's where we are right now.

I want to thank the committee, because I think we have a good game plan for the next three weeks, and then we will deal with the work plan. I commit to having a work plan sent out by the end of next week to all members of the committee, so it's very clear where we're going up until June 30.

Keep in mind as well—and this is something to consider—that there may be pieces of legislation that we're required to deal with at the committee, which may upend some of those studies, as we move forward, for a day or two or whatever the case is. The work plan may have to be fluid, keeping in mind legislation.

Yes, Ms. Khalid.

Ms. Iqra Khalid: I apologize, Chair.

I know that we have a deadline of February 8 to submit any travel plans. I'm not sure if you wanted to canvass the room on whether the committee wants to go travel somewhere.

• (1625)

The Chair: I will canvass the room to see if the committee needs or wants to travel anywhere as a result of the work that we do in this committee.

Mr. Barrett.

Mr. Michael Barrett: The committee is undertaking a study on Roxham Road. I think that provides an interesting opportunity for members of the committee to travel to that site and speak with officials who are now established and entrenched there.

That being said, the committee schedule at this point does not support travel. I would say that even though that would take up a day, it would require analyst support and support from our clerk, as well as translation services.

I don't think there's any travel that the committee must undertake at this time.

The Chair: Go ahead, Mr. Fergus.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Greg Fergus: I don't want to disagree with the honourable member for Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes. However, before the holidays I had suggested that, for our study on access to information, we take advantage of how close we are to Library and Archives Canada, which is in Gatineau, just across the Ottawa River.

I mention it because witnesses talked about access to archives and historical documents, and how long it takes for these types of documents to be made public. It would be a good idea, therefore, to go over and speak with the librarian and archivist of Canada, who works there. It's not far.

The Chair: No, it's not far.

Hon. Greg Fergus: It'll cost one bus ticket.

The Chair: We could perhaps use Mr. Gourde's minivan if he offers it up.

Mr. Fergus, we have until February 8 to propose a trip to the Liaison Committee. After the meeting, I'll speak with the clerk, and we'll come up with a proposal. If the committee approves of the idea of going to Library and Archives Canada's Gatineau location and we can all agree, that would be good.

Mr. Gourde, did you want to add anything?

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC): It would be relatively easy to meet right at the Gatineau location on Friday morning. We wouldn't have to organize transportation; people who live in Ottawa could take a taxi and those who live in Gatineau could go straight there.

Since our meeting is scheduled for 8:45 a.m., our workday would start with the visit. Those who need to get to the House of Commons after the meeting would have time to do so.

The Chair: Thank you.

Madam Clerk, do you have anything to add?

The Clerk: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Gourde, thank you for your comment.

If the committee wishes to take some meeting time for this visit, it can do so. However, if the committee wishes to travel outside Parliament Hill, it must submit a request to the Liaison Committee and the Subcommittee on Committee Budgets, even if it isn't far.

If the committee wishes to travel during meeting hours, that can be part of the request to the Liaison Committee.

The Chair: I am on the Liaison Committee. If the committee wants to submit a request for a trip by February 8, I can work with the clerk to do so.

Does that work for everyone?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Chair: You have the floor, Mr. Garon.

Mr. Jean-Denis Garon: I'm being told there is a preference for making the trip outside committee meeting time. I understand that the logistics would be simpler if we went during meeting hours. However, since there is much work to be done, I think we could simply keep the time scheduled for committee meetings and travel to our fellow member's riding, just next door.

The Chair: All right.

Proposing a trip doesn't mean that we have to go. We have until February 8 to make the request. I would rather ask for it, and if the committee decides that it doesn't have time to go to Gatineau for the study, we won't. However, we first have to get approval.

• (1630)

[*English*]

All right, so we're all in agreement. We'll make sure we propose something to the committee.

I thank you, Mr. Fergus, for reminding me of that.

Is there any other business?

Ms. Khalid, you're good...?

Voices: Oh, oh!

The Chair: Seeing no further business, I will move to adjourn.

Thank you. The meeting is adjourned.

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