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# Standing Committee on Finance

EVIDENCE

**NUMBER 054**

Tuesday, May 31, 2022

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Chair: Mr. Peter Fonseca





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• (1640)

[English]

**The Chair (Mr. Peter Fonseca (Mississauga East—Cooksville, Lib.)):** I call this meeting to order.

Welcome to meeting number 54 of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance.

Pursuant to the order of reference of May 10, 2022, the committee is meeting on Bill C-19, an act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on April 7, 2022 and other measures.

Today's meeting is taking place in a hybrid format, pursuant to the House order of November 25, 2021. Members are attending in person in the room and remotely using the Zoom application. Per the directive of the Board of Internal Economy on March 10, 2022, all those attending the meeting in person must wear a mask except for members who are at their place during proceedings.

I'd like to make a few comments for the benefit of the witnesses and members.

Please wait until I recognize you by name before speaking. For those participating by video conference, click on the microphone icon to activate your mike, and please mute yourself when you are not speaking. For interpretation for those on Zoom, you have the choice at the bottom of your screen of floor, English or French. For those in the room, you can use the earpiece and select the desired channel.

This is a reminder that all comments should be addressed through the chair. 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.

Pursuant to the motion adopted in committee on Monday, May 9, the committee will continue today with the clause-by-clause consideration of Bill C-19. We have witnesses from various departments here with us who will be able to answer questions as we move through the clauses of the bill.

Members, just before we go to clause-by-clause on Bill C-19, the clerk distributed two budgets for our pre-budget consultation travel. Last evening you should have received them around 6:31 p.m. We are looking for approval of those, as the clerk has to bring them to the Liaison Committee.

I am looking for approval.

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much for that.

(On clause 377)

**The Chair:** We are now on clause 377. You should have just received a new NDP-5 amendment.

I will go to MP Blaikie.

**Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP):** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I want to say thank you to the committee for having adjourned a little bit early in our last meeting to create some time to just get the wording right on this.

Obviously there is another complementary amendment to this one. The idea of them both is that the budget implementation act would establish some pretty important authorities for the minister in respect of the express entry system. We felt strongly, and I hope others around the table will as well, that there should be some checks and balances on that.

The idea there is to ensure that these new categories for express entry would not be established without having a robust and obligatory public consultation process with some direction as to how that process ought to unfold. As I said, the discretionary powers without this are considerable.

We've often heard the department and the minister talk about occupational categories, but in fact that's not in the legislation. The legislation just talks about groupings or categories of people. I think this public consultation process is an important component in order to make sure that a government or a minister can't make these choices willy-nilly, if you'll permit the phrase, but that they have to do that in consultation with others and get advice from people who have their feet on the ground and well understand the labour market needs of Canada as well as the situation of the folks who may well come under the express entry system and the special categories established by the minister.

The new amendment that I am presenting here is the first part of a two-part effort to establish that accountability through public consultation.

**The Chair:** Thank you, MP Blaikie.

I did see a number of hands. We have MP Beech, MP Ste-Marie, MP Albas.

**Mr. Terry Beech (Burnaby North—Seymour, Lib.):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I want to thank Mr. Blaikie for his work as well as echo his comments thanking the committee for their patience and allowing some of this good work to happen. It shows how many people are working on many aspects of this BIA, including other colleagues who aren't necessarily on this committee and numerous staff alike. We're very happy where it landed, and we're happy to support this clause and the consequent clause that will be forthcoming.

**The Chair:** Thank you, PS Beech.

We have MP Ste-Marie and then MP Albas.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

As I said at the previous meeting, I won't be proposing BQ-14 and BQ-15 because I think the NDP amendments will allow us to achieve our objectives.

I would like to ask Mr. Blaikie what the exact difference is between the new amendment that he's proposed to us and NDP-5. There seem to be only a few changes at the bottom. Can he explain what those changes are?

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Yes, we have MP Blaikie, please.

**Mr. Daniel Blaikie:** The main change in NDP-5....

[*Translation*]

The text of the amendment is different. In fact, it may not have been the same in French.

[*English*]

In the English, it referred to a "committee", and there was some language around an advisory committee. That language has changed to language about "a public consultation process", which is laid out rather specifically in the next amendment that we'll be presenting. It's a little bit of a change in language, but I think the spirit of that amendment is still very much the same. I think the next amendment does a good job of prescribing how that public consultation should unfold.

• (1645)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie:** Thank you.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Thank you.

MP Albas.

**Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Certainly the time that has transpired since the earlier meeting and today gave me a chance to reflect a little bit. While I certainly have expressed concerns based on some of the testimony we heard that the government would essentially give the minister too much discretion in regard to establishing categories on whatever criteria that particular minister, he or she, would want, this may not always

just apply to the current minister. It will apply to future ones. I really didn't like the arbitrary design of the legislation. I certainly appreciated that MP Blaikie sought to make an amendment. The original amendment, where you would have a committee process, at first seemed to be more ideal than just the minister deciding on a particular category with very little warning as to what he or she was thinking.

The problem, though, with that is that, when you have a committee you ask yourself who this committee would consist of. If it's at the discretion of the minister, then it could be a committee of staff members. It could be a committee of Liberal supporters. It could be a committee of experts at large. That may or may not be a good thing, depending on the composition. Ultimately, if a minister was simply just to say, "Well, it's actually the committee that is the reason why I'm putting this group category together," that would be less than ideal because ultimately I think what MP Blaikie is looking for is a little more accountability. If you just say you're doing this because they told me to, you're pointing the finger at someone else when you're the decision-maker. I do think that having some sort of consultation process is key, but the question is what that is.

With your permission, Mr. Chair, I would like to ask the officials who are present here today about this. Currently, under the immigration and refugee protection regulations or the act, IRPA itself, is the use of the term "public consultation process" defined?

**Mr. Philip Somogyvari (Director General, Strategic Policy and Planning, Department of Citizenship and Immigration):** Thank you for the question.

Offhand, I don't believe it is, but we'll have to look into that and perhaps get back to the committee.

**Mr. Dan Albas:** Okay.

Maybe I'll talk for a moment, Mr. Chair, because if it's not defined in the act itself then it converts to, in my understanding, the dictionary interpretation. Again if the consultation process is ultimately decided by the minister as to what form that will take, I'd be very interested to see what the minister would believe that to be. Because if you put 20 immigration consultants in a room, I'm sure you'd probably get 20 different opinions of the word "public" and the word "consultation", and maybe even more.

I see that MP Blaikie has signalled that he might have an answer to my quandary, and I would certainly appreciate his enlightening me.

**Mr. Daniel Blaikie:** Thank you.

I am going to give full credit to our immigration critic, Jenny Kwan, for her good work on this. Jenny probably shared some similar concerns about the vagueness of what a public consultation entails.

In the next amendment that I believe we'll be discussing, it makes modifications to the budget implementation act in order to flesh out very specifically what public consultation would mean in the context of this specific provision. For instance, the next amendment states that:

For the purpose of establishing categories of eligible foreign nationals under subparagraph 10.3(1)(h.1)(iii), the Minister must engage in a public consultation process with stakeholders

Then it names what those stakeholder groups ought to be:

including provinces and territories, industry, unions, employers, workers, worker advocacy groups, settlement provider organizations and immigration researchers and practitioners, to obtain information, advice and recommendations in respect of the labour market conditions, including occupations expected to face shortage conditions, as well as on how categories can be formed to meet economic goals.

It also stipulates that, in the course of that public consultation process, it has to be based on written submissions, so it can't just be informal, verbal exchanges that the minister happens to have with some people and then says, "We did it, and it's done. Isn't that great?" There will be documentation for that consultation process.

Then I believe the next clause also has a reporting requirement to Parliament on what categories of eligible foreign nationals issued from such a consultation process, the selection criteria and the process applied for the establishment of those categories.

I definitely hear your concern. Jenny has heard your concern from afar and has done a good job of clearly stipulating what this public consultation ought to look like so that it doesn't end up being the kind of pro forma, informal style consultation that we have too often seen take the place of a proper process.

• (1650)

**The Chair:** Thank you, MP Blaikie.

**Mr. Dan Albas:** If I could just respond—

**The Chair:** Go ahead, MP Albas.

**Mr. Dan Albas:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'd certainly like to thank MP Blaikie for the explanation. Just for future reference, if he had just said, "Flip the page over, Dan", I probably would have been able to read that, but I certainly appreciate his reading it out, because the people who are watching us... Believe me, Mr. Chair, there are people who watch us, so hello to people who are watching us. I appreciate that you take an interest in Bill C-19.

I am going to just again thank MP Blaikie. I am more satisfied now that this is more of a public process because it has been defined, and I extend thanks to the member.

**Mr. Daniel Blaikie:** I might just add, Mr. Chair, that it was indeed for the people at home that I preferred all of that detailed information. Of course, I know that Mr. Albas is quite capable—

**Mr. Dan Albas:** No, I was enlightened.

**Mr. Daniel Blaikie:** —to read that for himself, but I didn't want anyone to miss a beat.

**The Chair:** I thank all of you. Thank you, MP Blaikie.

I also want to thank the legislative clerk for helping get this done, prepared and ready.

Members, shall the new amendment NDP-5 carry?

**Mr. Yvan Baker (Etobicoke Centre, Lib.):** I'd like a recorded vote.

(Amendment agreed to: yeas 11; nays 0 [*See Minutes of Proceedings*])

**The Chair:** Members, Bloc amendment BQ-14 has been withdrawn, and Bloc amendment BQ-15 is withdrawn.

(Clause 377 as amended agreed to on division)

**The Chair:** We now are at new clause 377.1, and we have NDP new amendment NDP-6.

Go ahead, MP Blaikie.

**Mr. Daniel Blaikie:** Thank you very much.

I am very happy to motivate this amendment. However, having just read the lion's share of it, I think committee members are well aware of its content, so I will leave it at that, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** Shall the new NDP-6 carry?

**Mr. Yvan Baker:** What are we voting on, Chair? Can you repeat it, please?

**The Chair:** We have the new clause 377.1. For new clause 377.1, there is an amendment from the NDP. It's the new NDP-6, which is what we are voting on.

**Mr. Yvan Baker:** Could we have a recorded vote?

(Amendment agreed to: yeas 11; nays 0 [*See Minutes of Proceedings*])

**The Chair:** Members, there are no amendments submitted to clauses 378 to 455. Clauses 378 to 455 are all in part 5 of the bill.

Do we have unanimous consent to group them for the vote?

• (1655)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie:** Mr. Chair, we adopted the new NDP amendment 6, but we haven't adopted the new clause 377.1, if I'm not mistaken.

I therefore move that it be adopted on division.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Ste-Marie.

[*English*]

The clarification from the legislative clerk is that the amendment is the clause itself, so it is all captured.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie:** My apologies, Mr. Chair. You learn something every day.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

[*English*]

Go ahead, MP Blaikie.

**Mr. Daniel Blaikie:** I think we could group the clauses up to clause 378, but there will be some discussion around clause 379, as well as clause 381.

**The Chair:** Okay. Clause 378 is the first one.

(Clause 378 agreed to on division)

(On clause 379)

**The Chair:** Go ahead, MP Blaikie.

**Mr. Daniel Blaikie:** Again, with tribute to the work of my colleague Jenny Kwan, my plan is to oppose this particular clause. The reason for that is that the government projects certain service standards within Citizenship and Immigration. One of the few accountability mechanisms that there are.... I won't belabour the point too much, but all anyone has to do is to tune in to question period, and they don't even have to do that. They could probably just go to the local coffee shop, hockey rink or wherever, and they're going to hear people talking about some of the very real frustrations they've had with getting timely service from the immigration department, whether it's for their permanent residency, citizenship, travel visas or whatever it happens to be.

One of the few modicums of accountability for the government—which is clearly insufficient already—is that there is an obligation for the government to reimburse some of the fees that people pay to IRCC under certain circumstances and when service standards aren't met. My understanding of clause 379 and, consequently, clause 381 is that they would absolve the government of its obligation to reimburse people when there have been extraordinary delays in processing their immigration request. We simply feel that's not appropriate.

That's why, if members look at clauses 379 and 381, what they'll see is that the coming into force date, if I am not mistaken, is 2017. That's because it is deliberately going back in order to retroactively absolve the government of its responsibilities.

That's why I intend to vote no on this clause and would encourage other members of the committee to consider doing the same. Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you, MP Blaikie.

I have MP Beech and then MP Albas.

**Mr. Terry Beech:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I have a question for the officials. I'm wondering if they could describe what the impact of deleting this clause would be.

• (1700)

**The Chair:** MP Beech, can you perhaps repeat what you're looking for from the officials?

**Mr. Terry Beech:** No problem. Based off of the intention that Mr. Blaikie just described, I'm wondering if the officials could describe for us the impact of deleting this particular clause.

**The Chair:** Do we have an official with us?

**Ms. Julie Chassé (Director General, Financial Strategy, Department of Citizenship and Immigration):** Mr. Chair, I'm sorry. I was having some issues.

The four fees in question are related to four services for which an exemption is being sought today from the Service Fees Act. These four services are very exceptional in nature. They mostly address a situation of inadmissibility or criminal record for an applicant.

These four fees are usually, as I said, exceptional. Processing times for these applications may vary from a month to up to 92 months, or even 120 months, in processing, because they require

public servants to obtain information from various countries in terms of criminal records and to assess the applications accordingly. It's also highly dependent on applicants providing this information to us in terms of being able to process the application in processing times. The issue at play is our inability to provide meaningful service standards and predictable service standards for these four specific fees.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Chassé.

MP Beech, you now have the information.

Go ahead, MP Albas.

**Mr. Dan Albas:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We will be voting with the NDP on this. I think Mr. Blaikie has laid out the argument.

**The Chair:** I see no other hands.

Shall clause 379 carry...?

Yes, MP Beech.

**Mr. Terry Beech:** Actually, I think I just got my answer.

This is a little bit of a surprise for me. Could I just ask the committee's indulgence for a two-minute suspension?

**The Chair:** We'll suspend for two minutes.

• (1700) \_\_\_\_\_ (Pause) \_\_\_\_\_

• (1705)

**The Chair:** We are back.

I see that MP Beech has his hand up.

Go ahead, MP Beech.

**Mr. Terry Beech:** We're good to vote, Mr. Chair. We'll be opposing.

**The Chair:** Okay.

Go ahead, MP Blaikie.

**Mr. Daniel Blaikie:** This is mostly, I guess, just a request for information.

My understanding is that the citizenship and immigration committee sent a letter to us coming out of the.... I don't know if it has been received yet. I don't think it's been circulated. It did actually recommend voting down these changes from the committee as a result of the process we had initiated to split the bill and get the subject expert recommendations of other committees.

Perhaps we can ask the clerk to verify whether or not that was sent. My understanding is that these clauses were discussed at the citizenship and immigration committee.

**The Chair:** You are correct. It was circulated on Thursday, May 26, at 11:57 a.m.

Members, you may have missed that. Do you want to take another minute to take a look at that?

Yes, MP Albas.

**Mr. Dan Albas:** Would you be okay to read part of it into the transcript?

**The Chair:** I think members can just take a look at what they've received.

**Mr. Dan Albas:** Okay. I'll make my intervention, then.

I just want to do Parliamentary Secretary Beech a favour and tell him that if he opposes this, then he's actually voting against his own legislation. He might want to support it.

**The Chair:** Thank you, MP Albas.

I see that MP Ste-Marie's hand is up.

Go ahead, MP Ste-Marie.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie:** Mr. Chair, we did receive the letter. The part corresponding to clauses 379 and 381 states that some members proposed that our committee consider withdrawing clauses 379 and 381.

It wasn't a unanimous agreement, but it was pointed out. Of course, I accept the arguments of my colleague Mr. Blaikie.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** We will go to a vote.

**Mr. Yvan Baker:** I'd like a recorded vote.

(Clause 379 negated: nays 6; yeas 5)

(Clause 380 agreed to on division)

(Clause 381 negated: nays 6; yeas 5)

• (1710)

**The Chair:** Members, that brings us to clause 382. I believe there are no amendments proposed for clauses 382 to 455. They are all in part 5 of the bill.

Do we have unanimous consent to bundle them for a vote?

**Mr. Daniel Blaikie:** Before we agree to that, are we sure that none of those pertain to the employment insurance appeal board? I think you will find that certain members want to vote down the clauses on the EI appeal board. It may be useful to be able to group those together by unanimous consent.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie:** I would like a clarification, Mr. Chair.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** I'm just getting clarification on that, MP Ste-Marie, from the legislative clerk.

Is it the appeals board you're asking about, MP Blaikie?

**Mr. Daniel Blaikie:** Yes, that's right. That's division 32, and it looks like it starts at clause 454.

**The Chair:** That is correct.

**Mr. Daniel Blaikie:** Okay, so we could go up to—

**The Chair:** Let me rephrase what I just said.

It's not that there are no amendments. It's just that, before we reach the employment insurance appeals board section, we would be able to go from clause 382 to clause 453.

Members, I am looking for unanimous consent to be able to group those.

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Chair:** Okay, clauses 382 to 453 are grouped. Shall clauses 382 to 453 carry?

**Mr. Dan Albas:** Can we debate them?

**The Chair:** Do you want to debate all of them?

**Mr. Dan Albas:** Oh, those are not the EI ones. The EI is coming up after.

**The Chair:** Yes, the EI is coming up after.

**Mr. Dan Albas:** I'm sorry, Mr. Chair. I missed that.

Yes, we can group them...and on division, please.

(Clauses 382 to 453 inclusive agreed to on division)

**The Chair:** Now we are moving, members, to clause 454.

I see a hand up.

Go ahead, MP Blaikie.

**Mr. Daniel Blaikie:** I wonder if I might just make a proposal, Mr. Chair, and perhaps the legislative clerks could help us in determining, from clause 454 on, if all of the remaining clauses are part of division 32. If so, perhaps we could just group the remaining clauses and then deal with them as a group, if there is no objection from anyone on the committee.

The utility of that would be that it corresponds well to the conversations that have been had around these reforms. To put it succinctly, I think these reforms have not been very well received within many affected stakeholder groups. I think some of the concern, certainly on my part for just voting down these provisions, is that, while people were disappointed in the particular content of what was presented in the budget implementation act, there was a high degree of excitement around changing the EI appeals board. It's just that people want to get it right.

That's something we were hoping the government would hear. I note that the minister did tweet just before this meeting that she is interested in not only going back to the drawing board on some of these changes, but she also committed in that tweet to presenting new legislation in the fall. I think that was a major concern of stakeholders out there, that this not simply be voted down and go away, but that, if it were to be voted down, there was a clear commitment from the government that they would bring legislation back in the near term so that this is not a discussion that dies with this particular budget implementation act but a discussion that continues in the life of this Parliament so that we can find a satisfactory reform to the EI appeal board.

Given that the minister is clearly on the public record at this point committing to bringing that legislation forward in the fall, I certainly think that I would be content to lump these provisions together and to vote no.

Of course, if any member of the committee feels differently, they're welcome to say so, and we can deal with them clause by clause, but if that's a satisfactory outcome to other members of the committee, I'm sure it would save us a fair bit of time. That would be my proposal, Mr. Chair.

Thank you.

• (1715)

**The Chair:** Thanks.

We can discuss this as a whole, but we will have to go clause by clause as there are amendments that we would have to address as we go through it.

MP Blaikie.

**Mr. Daniel Blaikie:** If I may, on the procedure there, I wonder, because we would only be able to lump them together and vote either yes or no on that as a package, if it were with the unanimous consent of members to proceed by lumping them together and having a single vote, we could interpret that as meaning anyone who had suggested amendments for these provisions would not move those, in which case we would be okay. Certainly if a member did want to move one of those amendments—I don't want to stop anyone from doing that—the appropriate thing for them to do at that point would be to deny unanimous consent. If they provide unanimous consent, it would be fair to surmise that they don't intend to move those amendments.

**The Chair:** Thank you for that, MP Blaikie. Yes, that would be up to the members who have those amendments before us.

We do have hands up.

We have MP Ste-Marie, who does have a number of amendments in front of us.

Then we have MP Beech and MP Albas.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I fully agree with Mr. Blaikie's proposal to reject all the clauses in division 32.

I gave a notice of motion to committee members. This notice was an echo of the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities, which studied division 32. This committee was unanimous in saying that what is in division 32 is not satisfactory and must be thoroughly amended.

My amendments to division 32 were an effort to improve the bill. That being said, if the government would agree to withdraw division 32 from Bill C-19 and introduce a bill that better meets the needs of the community, that would be ideal. It would also be consistent with the unanimous will of the human resources committee and the testimony we heard.

I would like to point out that experts from the Employment Insurance Appeal Board appeared before the committee. They told us that they were not at all satisfied with division 32 as worded.

I asked Terry Beech whether the government would agree to withdraw this division from the bill. If he agrees with Mr. Blaikie's proposal, that means that the government will have agreed. The unions also told us that this does not work, and the experts on the Employment Insurance Appeal Board, both those representing workers and those representing employees, told us that they were not satisfied with the Employment Insurance Appeal Board proposed in division 32.

I think the right thing to do would be to put all of this together and vote against it, so that this division would be removed from Bill C-19. Later this fall, the minister will be able to introduce a bill that will better reflect the needs, requests and consultations, as well as the needs of the Employment Insurance Appeal Board.

I would like to acknowledge the exceptional work of my colleague Louise Chabot, the Bloc Québécois member who sits on the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills Development, Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities. As soon as she became aware of Bill C-19, she warned us that it was not working. She was able to call on all the stakeholders in the Employment Insurance Appeal Board so that they could see that it was not working.

With her proposal, she managed to generate a consensus within the human resources committee that this did not make sense and should be withdrawn. She did the same thing here in the Standing Committee on Finance; she suggested certain witnesses, and she came to ask certain questions. She has done an exceptional job, and I tip my hat to her.

I would like to thank Mr. Blaikie for his suggestion. I also want to thank Mr. Beech. In fact, I asked him about this division in front of witnesses. If he agreed with what is being proposed, it would show that he managed to get his government to act and that it decided to wait a little while.

Ultimately, I'm sure that we would have a better bill, a bill that would better serve the needs of the community.

I'm in favour of unanimous consent for Mr. Blaikie's request.



• (1720)

[English]

**The Chair:** Thank you, MP Ste-Marie.

Just before I go to MP Beech, MP Ste-Marie, are you asking for the withdrawal of Bloc amendments BQ-16 to BQ-23? You would be okay with that. Is that correct?

[Translation]

**Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie:** Yes, absolutely.

If there is unanimous consent to combine all the clauses of division 32 and to vote on a block, I agree to withdraw these amendments.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

[English]

Go ahead, PS Beech.

**Mr. Terry Beech:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I want to thank Mr. Blaikie for his proposal and Monsieur Ste-Marie for his comments just now. We are in favour of this proposal and will support unanimous consent.

Pending any further surprises, this is my last planned, at least, interjection for today. That being the case, I just want to say thank you to all the members of this committee and the substitutes who have served over the time. There has been a growing and tremendous appreciation from me personally for the amount of work that every member of this committee does, and for the staff who support you behind the scenes—in the MINOs, in the department and of course in the opposition offices. The public doesn't see the members sitting at endless briefings with officials, sometimes 50 or 60 officials at a time, trying to understand each and every aspect of the BIA.

I just wanted to pass on that appreciation and conclude by saying that we'll support this unanimous consent.

**The Chair:** Thank you, PS Beech.

Now we have MP Albas.

**Mr. Dan Albas:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

While I have to concur with regard to all the public officials as well as all the people who have worked hard around this table on Bill C-19 to make sure it receives proper scrutiny, I think we need to take a step back and take a look at many of the changes that have happened here.

We have changes to the DTC, the disability tax credit, when it comes to life-sustaining therapy. We have changes to direction and control elements of the bill. Couple that with the Excise Act changes as well as the foreign buyers changes. We've hit the express entry changes, and now we've hit EI.

This used to be a government that prided itself on consultation, yet we have had witness after witness come and say that the government didn't do its work. We have also heard commitment after commitment from the government to modernize the EI system. What do we see? We see, in this case, that they obviously didn't do their homework.

While I certainly can appreciate that PS Beech will be joining in taking away from the bill this section, the HUMA committee and this committee have found the government's work on this particular element of the file to be atrociously lacking in both depth and consultation. I certainly have never seen a budget implementation act.... This is a very large one, coming from a government that originally said it would not do omnibus bills. They've certainly thrown in many measures that I believe don't belong in a budget implementation act. For the government to try to proceed so haphazardly, without having the support of a program that so many Canadians depend on, really shows how much of a tin ear this government now has.

Again, this is from a government that said it would consult and be open and transparent. Now they are suddenly having to vote out large segments of their own budget implementation act. I really hope the Minister of Finance does a good debrief post-mortem, because Bill C-19 is no longer the bill it once was.

Again, I would simply point out that the finance minister, while she does have...and I do appreciate her ongoing service and commitment to Canada. I would say that the Prime Minister, by giving her two main focuses of being both Deputy Prime Minister and finance minister.... I would say that it shows there's just too much on her plate. She's not focused well enough that they can write EI legislation and at least be able to get it through their committees.

Mr. Chair, I really do hope the government takes the summer to reconsider this and spend the time necessary to actually find a path forward on these EI changes. It is an important program. Canadians put in a lot of money and a lot of time, and they have a lot of faith that, when they need that program, it will be there for them. So far the modernization efforts of this government are all political rhetoric and not enough action.

I think members get the flavour that Conservatives will be voting against.

Thank you.

• (1725)

**The Chair:** Thank you, MP Albas.

Members, shall clauses 454 to 502 carry?

(Clauses 454 to 502 inclusive negatived)

**The Chair:** Shall the short title carry?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**An hon. member:** On division.

**The Chair:** Shall schedule 1 carry?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**An hon. member:** On division.

**The Chair:** Shall schedule 2 carry?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**An hon. member:** On division.

**The Chair:** Shall schedule 3 carry?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**An hon. member:** On division.

**The Chair:** Shall the title carry?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**An hon. member:** On division.

**The Chair:** Shall the bill as amended carry?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**An hon. member:** On division.

**The Chair:** Shall the chair report the bill as amended to the House?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**An hon. member:** On division.

**The Chair:** Shall the committee order a reprint of the bill as amended for the use of the House at report stage?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Mr. Adam Chambers (Simcoe North, CPC):** I have a point of order, Mr. Chair. Perhaps this is an inappropriate time, but I wanted to mention, given this is the second time I've gone through clause-by-clause, that I did find it helpful when there were a couple of interventions by the officials that flagged some challenges with the drafting. I just wanted to say that I certainly appreciate their expertise.

We all end up having to live with poorly drafted legislation and some that gets done by individuals with less drafting experience, so I appreciate the interventions, certainly, by Mr. D'Sa and others and would empower them to feel free to highlight challenges in the future as well. I think that makes things go more smoothly for us, and prevents us from having to come back and amend the legislation after it has been passed.

I just wanted to say thank you to the officials from that perspective.

● (1730)

**The Chair:** Thank you, MP Chambers.

You bring up a good point. Officials are aware, or should be aware, that they can reach out to the clerk electronically. They can send an email, etc., to the clerk. We receive that and distribute that, so that we are ahead of things, hopefully, when we do this again down the road.

Let me say, members, I thought it ran very smoothly for the most part. I want to thank the legislative clerk, the clerks, the interpreters and everybody here who really came together, especially all the members for all their interventions that got us to this point.

On that, I think we have a beautiful spring evening out there.

I declare the meeting adjourned.

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