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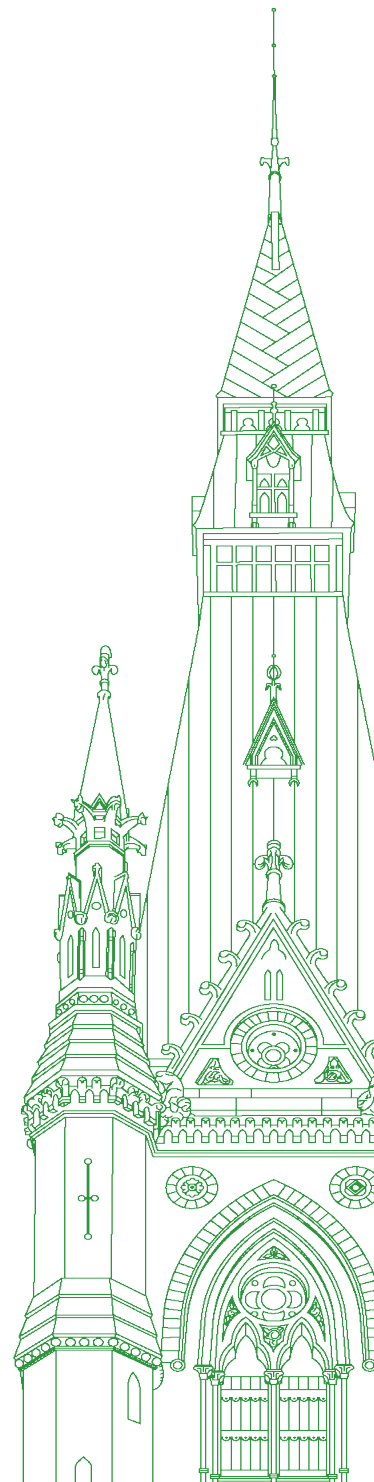
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Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities

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Chair: Mr. Robert Morrissey

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• (1100)

[English]

The Chair (Mr. Robert Morrissey (Egmont, Lib.)): I call the meeting to order.

Welcome to meeting number 27 of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities. Today's meeting is taking place in a hybrid format. Given the ongoing pandemic situation, I expect anyone who is attending in person to follow the proper procedures.

To ensure an orderly meeting, I would like to make a few comments for the benefit of the witnesses and members. Before speaking, please wait until I recognize you by name. For those participating by video conference, please click on the microphone icon to activate your mike. For those in the room, your mikes will be controlled in the room.

I would like to advise you that you have the option of speaking in the official language of your choice. For interpretation, go to the bottom of your screen to choose the language of your choice. If there is an issue with interpretation, please get my attention and I will suspend the meeting until it's corrected. You can do that by using the "raise hand" icon at the bottom of your screen.

I would also like to advise witnesses that you will be given the opportunity to make a five-minute prepared statement to the committee, after which we'll go into questions. I would also advise that I will indicate to you when you have 10 seconds left in your time, and then I will move to the next speaker.

Today, as you are aware, we are meeting pursuant to Standing Order 108(2) and the motion adopted by this committee on Monday, May 16, 2022, that the committee resume its study of the subject matter of part 5, divisions 26, 27, 29 and 32 of Bill C-19, an act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on April 5, 2022, and other measures.

I would like to welcome the witnesses. From the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, we have Leah Nord, senior director of workforce strategies and inclusive growth. From the Centrale des syndicats démocratiques, we have Luc Vachon, president. From Centrale des syndicats du Québec, we have Luc Beaugard, secretary-treasurer.

We will start with Ms. Nord for five minutes.

You have the floor.

Ms. Leah Nord (Senior Director, Workforce Strategies and Inclusive Growth, Canadian Chamber of Commerce): Good morning and thank you, Mr. Chair, vice-chairs and committee members. It's a pleasure to be here this morning to make an appearance regarding certain divisions of part 5 of Bill C-19.

I'm speaking today from Ottawa, the traditional unceded territory of the Algonquin Anishinabe peoples. I go by the pronouns "she", "her" and "elle". Today I am wearing a light blouse, grey sweater and grey glasses. My hair is pulled back and I am attending virtually with a blurred background.

I'm speaking on behalf of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, which is the voice of Canadian business. We represent 200,000 businesses across the country, across sectors and across sizes, including our network of 450 local chambers and boards of trade from coast to coast to coast.

Today, I have two interventions to make and the first is with regard to division 26.

It's very important to remind ourselves that the EI program is estimated to have a debt of \$29 billion for fiscal year 2022-23, and that is as it is, before we add any additional pressures into the system. The eligibility expansion for support measures and employment services within division 26 is no doubt well intended and might not look like much in and of itself. However, what has happened continually over the years—in fact, the past eight decades—is recurring drops in the bucket that have a cumulative burdensome impact on the program.

As the Government of Canada is starting phase two of its EI modernization consultations tomorrow, we at the Canadian Chamber have urged that this be a truly comprehensive review, not more nibbling at the edges, as it were. We have said that this is our once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to really look at the program and set it—and future generations of Canadians—up for success.

Importantly, this includes part II of the EI program, referred to as active measures, which involves the over \$2 billion transferred to the provinces and territories annually for employment services and skills training, alongside a plethora of pan-Canadian programs and initiatives. This is not to say that we don't think skills, education and training aren't important. It's quite the opposite.

When I appeared in front of this committee in the early days of the pandemic, back in May 2020, I stated, “we need to identify the reform needed to build a system that can respond to current and future workforce needs to ensure Canadians remain connected to the labour force, and that includes strong upskilling and reskilling training components.” It’s not the importance that we’re questioning; it’s the suitability and efficacy of having support measures and employment services funded by EI dollars. EI doesn’t need to—and can’t—fund everything, and if it does continue, the business community, which contributes seven-twelfths to the program, would like greater transparency and input into how that funding is spent.

The second intervention I have this morning is with regard to division 32 and the EI board of appeal. Our recommendation is to remove division 32 from Bill C-19 for a separate and focused review. This is not the first time you have heard this and it likely won’t be the last. Importantly, you have heard this from labour and business representatives. The institutional structures that underpin the EI system are critical for a well-functioning system that meets the needs and expectations of Canadians.

The employment insurance board of appeal would be complex, and the changes proposed in Bill C-19 are significant and do not necessarily align with the tripartite principles and framework that had been agreed upon before the onset of the pandemic. The changes included in division 32 are not the ones we thought we would see, and they need to be examined and discussed in a more deliberative manner.

Thank you, and I look forward to answering any questions.

• (1105)

The Chair: Thank you, Madam Nord. That was in time.

We will now go to Monsieur Vachon for five minutes.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Vachon (President, Centrale des syndicats démocratiques): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Good morning. My name is Luc Vachon, and I am president of the Centrale des syndicats démocratiques, CSD. Thank you for inviting us and for taking the time to listen to our suggestions.

I want to begin by specifying that I will focus my remarks on division 32 of part 5 of the bill. It’s not that other divisions are not worthy of attention, but you will understand that division 32 is of special interest to us. For a while, we have been raising the issue of returning to the tripartite formula found in the division titled Employment Insurance Board of Appeal. For the CSD, there is no doubt that the government proceeding to a reform of the employment insurance appeal process is excellent news, especially nearly three years after that reform was announced. However, division 32 must be amended to ensure that the reform will be carried out according to the announced parameters, while learning a few lessons from the shortcomings of the Social Security Tribunal, SST.

Division 32 of part 5 should contain provisions providing that the new Employment Insurance Board of Appeal fall under the tripartite structure of the Canada Employment Insurance Commission, and not only its chairmanship.

We feel that returning to tripartism in the employment insurance appeal process must only be done when the insured person is heard from. The insured person must be present and represented in the entire appeal structure. That would actually be in line with the discussions that were held in the co-development committee by the government, in fall 2018, at the initiative of Minister Duclos. That would also correspond to the press release announcement made by Employment and Social Development Canada, on August 15, 2019, from which I will quote a short excerpt:

The Canada Employment Insurance Commission will become responsible for first-level EI appeals through the creation of a new tripartite decision-making tribunal called the Employment and Insurance Boards of Appeal. As a tripartite organization, the new Boards of Appeal will represent the interests of government, workers and employers, helping put first-level EI appeal decisions back into the hands of those who pay into the EI system (i.e. workers and employers).

We think that reports should be made directly to the Employment Insurance Commission to monitor how union and employer representatives are recruited, appointed and trained and how they fulfil their mandate on boards of appeal. The government must not repeat the mistake made in the case of the Social Security Tribunal, which practically has no accountability to the Employment Insurance Commission. At the worst of the Social Security Tribunal’s dysfunctions, the commission was actually powerless to request reports and to get adjustments.

In addition, provisions must be added to division 32 to grant employment insurance recipients the right to regional representation and a high likelihood of an in-person hearing. At the SST, the default hearing, so to speak, was held over the telephone. That trend must be reversed, so that in-person hearings would become the default. Concrete access to an in-person hearing has been recognized as a key aspect of any reform of the employment insurance appeal system.

Hearings must also be held as much as possible in the region of the insured person, so that it would be held by members who are familiar with the regional labour market realities, instead of by members who have a more detached view of the labour market, if you will, as it is too general. To give just one obvious example, the reality of regions is very different from the reality of major centres. Decisions must take that into account and reflect it as much as possible.

What’s more, division 32 should provide for all members of boards of appeal to have a part-time status. Assigning a separate employment status to different members of the board of appeal may lead to different levels of implication and effectiveness for full-time members and part-time members. That could create inequity, which would be reinforced by differences in status and compensation between full-time members and part-time members.

• (1110)

Full-time members of the board of appeal are deemed to be public service employees who also participate in the superannuation plan, but not part-time members. Full-time members can be appointed as chairs and co-chairs—

The Chair: You have 10 seconds left, Mr. Vachon.

Mr. Luc Vachon: In that case, I will close with the following. For the part on the part-time component, it's okay. As for the regional component, returning to tripartism is extremely important, not only for the CSD, but also for workers.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Beauregard, you have the floor for five minutes.

Mr. Luc Beauregard (Secretary-Treasurer, Centrale des syndicats du Québec): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I want to begin by thanking the committee for giving as an opportunity to speak.

My presentation today will essentially focus on division 32 of part 5 of Bill C-19.

My name is Luc Beauregard, and I am secretary-treasurer of the Centrale des syndicats du Québec, CSQ.

The CSQ represents 200,000 members, 125,000 of whom are education staff, including in higher education, which makes it the most representative organization in that sector in Quebec. It also has 11 federations, which bring together some 240 affiliated unions, and one retiree association. We are also present in the sectors of health and social services and early childhood education, as well as municipal, recreation, cultural, community and communications sectors across Quebec.

A few days ago, we shared our concern with Minister Qualtrough regarding division 32 of part 5 of Bill C-19, which pertains to the Employment Insurance Board of Appeal and the Social Security Tribunal of Canada, commonly known as the SST. We asked her to remove that division from the bill so that it can be analyzed separately.

The SST was created in 2013 as a single point of contact to replace four administrative tribunals, including boards of referees. Prior to that, tripartite boards rendered first-level appeal decisions for insurance employment clients, which ensured better access to justice and participation by sector representatives who were familiar with the labour market and their region.

In 2019, the government announced, in a press release, that, at the suggestion of the KPMG firm, in its report on the review of the SST, reforms would be made to the tribunal, including a return to true tripartism as of April 2021. The announcement assured us that people would be at the heart of the appeal process and that the process itself would be accelerated, simpler and better adapted to Canadians' needs. That announcement also implied that sector stakeholders would be consulted.

The bill provides that the SST will report solely to the chairperson of the Canada Employment Insurance Commission. It is essen-

tial for the structure to be tripartite in order to ensure monitoring of how union and employer representatives will be deployed and trained and to ensure that they will fulfil their mandate on the board of appeal.

The board of appeal will not be a truly tripartite institution if social partners are not directly involved in the selection and appointment of members, workers and employers. In addition, the right to regional representation and to an in-person hearing is missing from the bill. The necessary reforms should focus on the client, and they should be flexible and accommodating. Concrete access to an in-person hearing was recognized as a key aspect of any reform of the employment insurance appeal system, and the presence of a tribunal member with expertise and knowledge of local markets is necessary.

Finally, the board of appeal is supposed to consist of two types of statuses: full-time tribunal members appointed by the Governor in Council and part-time members from the community of employers and insured people appointed by the commission. That distinction between statuses is a concern for us, as it necessarily causes inequity among members, but also a different level of commitment. Full-time members will have the special status of public service employees, which is reinforced by the fact that they will be the only ones able to hold the positions of chair, co-chair and coordinating members. We feel that inequity is obvious.

In short, we would have liked to be consulted beforehand and given an opportunity to help develop the appeal process.

The provisions proposed in the bill do not reflect what was advanced and proposed by the government since the beginning of the process. Of course, we understand the delays caused by the health crisis, but that should not have limited the consultation of social partners in such an important file.

If no amendments are made to the provisions in division 32, we think the division should be removed from the bill in order to be studied separately.

Thank you for listening.

• (1115)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Beauregard.

[English]

We will now move to opening the floor to questions beginning with Madam Kusie for six minutes.

Madam Kusie, you have the floor.

[Translation]

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I thank the witnesses for joining us today.

• (1120)

[English]

Ms. Nord, in a letter to the finance committee, you provided the recommendation to remove division 32 of part 5 from the bill. Can you elaborate, please, on why you think it should be studied independently of Bill C-19?

Ms. Leah Nord: Yes, that is our recommendation, one of those coming out of our response to Bill C-19 that I reiterated today for reasons that I can repeat. The changes that are proposed in division 32, part 5, of Bill C-19 are not what we expected. There is reference to the KPMG evaluation. There was also a 2018 codevelopment process that was truly tripartite.

On a personal note, I had the opportunity to participate in that process, and I laud it as an example of a tripartite discussion. There were two or three days where it was government, business and labour sitting together. We had principles, we went through a process, and we developed a framework.

You also heard reference to the 2019 announcement where all of us thought that those changes were reflected in the recommendations from KPMG and the process we had gone into. As you can hear from many here, this isn't exactly what we thought, and it doesn't align with the principles. We think that it should be taken out of an omnibus bill and that it deserves its own attention for those reasons as well as because it's an incredibly complex process. We want it to get the proper and deliberative attention it deserves.

Thank you.

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie: Thank you, Ms. Nord.

Would you say that the concerns you indicated here today are the same concerns reflected by your members, or would there be additional concerns to those you have raised today by your membership and your members?

Ms. Leah Nord: No, I am reflecting the views of our members. When it comes to the appeals process, I will say that it is the members of our labour colleagues who are more impacted. It's their members that it focuses on.

From the business community, our concerns were—and they've been discussed here by others as well—around the accountability piece and the way that it's structured. The idea is that this is a truly tripartite process from the business community. If and as business representatives are brought to the table, we want to ensure that the business community has a choice and vets those people rather than their being appointed on our behalf.

Thank you.

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie: Ms. Nord, what I'm hearing you say is that you thought adequate consultation and proper consultation was done in the 2019 process, and you feel that consultation process was not done for Bill C-19 for division 32.

Ms. Leah Nord: That's correct. It was in the fall of 2018; I believe it was October 2018. There was a framework developed to modernize the SST process. It did look very much like the previous one, to be honest. A lot of the ways did lead to that previous structure. Again, in 2019, through announcements, we were led to be-

lieve that framework was going ahead, and this is not what we're seeing in its entirety within division 32 of Bill C-19.

Thank you.

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie: Do you think the government should re-complete these consultations and evaluations, or is applying the result and the information as gathered in 2018-19 adequate? Do you think we need only look at the 2019 outcomes and recommendations, or do you think it's necessary to undertake the consultation process again, since we are three years further into the future after a pandemic? What do you think would be required at this time to adequately put forward good legislation?

Ms. Leah Nord: I don't think we need to revisit, consult or return to another consultation process. I believe, to be honest, that those consultation processes were well done. They were tripartite, and agreements were received together. Those recommendations that came into that framework in 2018 were by all three parties that are part of the EI Commission.

I would suggest—recommend—that, when we take it out, we look at what the framework was and what was put in. There might be some good explanations. I've heard some around the full-time and part-time, but we need to have a better understanding as a tripartite, all working together to bring it forward.

Thank you.

• (1125)

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie: Thank you.

Finally, Ms. Nord, you talk a lot about the tripartite approach, but you also mention in your recommendation the tripartite principles of government, business and labour. Can you elaborate on what those principles are and how they are not currently reflected in this new appeal board?

Ms. Leah Nord: Those principles were part of the framework of that codevelopment discussion. Again, this was all on paper and in my office, and I haven't been able to access them. They were things like client approach being first, simplicity, regionalism, in person. It was a really good process, because we would always go back to those principles as we led the development.

That's what we're looking for going forward.

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie: Thank you, Ms. Nord.

Thank you, Chair.

The Chair: Thank you, Madam Kusie.

Madame Martinez Ferrada, you have six minutes.

[Translation]

Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada (Hochelaga, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I thank the witnesses for participating in today's meeting.

I understand your fears, questions, concerns and recommendations on division 32, but I would like to discuss with you divisions 26 and 27 of part 5. I would like to know why you think legislative amendments are necessary, how those amendments will affect the programs currently provided under part II of the Employment Insurance Act and why eligibility needs to be expanded.

I don't know who would like to answer first, Mr. Vachon, Mr. Beaugard or Ms. Nord.

Mr. Beaugard, go ahead.

Mr. Luc Beaugard: You will understand that we focused our presentation and our analysis essentially on division 32. We did not consider division 27, as it concerns seasonal workers, and we don't have any of those.

I'm really sorry to give you an answer of so little use. The other two witnesses will probably have more to say on this. As I said in the beginning, our members are not affected by that division.

Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada: Thank you, Mr. Beaugard.

I will yield the floor to Ms. Nord.

[English]

Ms. Leah Nord: Thank you for the question.

What we as the Canadian Chamber of Commerce have argued for and very much encouraged, even long before the pandemic, is a comprehensive review. EI is a complex and expensive system. There's part I, which we're more familiar with, but there's also part II.

We've argued that the previous budget, not the one this year, had placed \$5 million in the budget for the review. This is really our opportunity to look forward and crack open the future of work. We would argue that you have to look at it all, look at what is needed and then decide where it goes. Not everything belongs in EI. Not everything can belong in EI. We've argued that as well.

The important part of part II is that a significant amount of funds are transferred to provinces and territories. We're not saying it isn't necessary. As to whether it belongs in EI or belongs outside of EI, what does it look like? We're just really encouraging that, as we've always sort of nipped at EI over the past 80 years, this is our real opportunity to open it up.

Our other concern, as I previously expressed, is that we're already \$29 billion in debt within the EI account before we do anything else. Through phase one of the consultations, and now as we lean into phase two, there's a lot more pressure coming on the system. I've been here before talking about increased eligibility and pieces around seasonal workers, which have just been announced in division 26. Again, it's not that they're not worthy in themselves, but these are all putting increased pressures on the system. This is the opportunity to look at the system and say what we need, what belongs in, what belongs out and what belongs in terms of costing.

We're quite often asked about whether government should return as a third party into the EI program and system. I can't make an informed response to that, because I don't know what's on the table. I don't know how much it costs. We have to do the costing that sur-

rounds it as well. Again, this is our opportunity to do so, and we will warmly participate in the next round of consultations.

• (1130)

[Translation]

Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada: Thank you, Ms. Nord.

I don't know whether Mr. Vachon would like to comment quickly before I ask my next question.

Mr. Luc Vachon: The Centrale des syndicats démocratiques represents seasonal workers. We have already lobbied for that, which may be why we have had less to say this time. The same goes for sick leave; it has already been done.

It is undeniable that the seasonal component is a source of concern, even though improvements have been made and pilot projects have been implemented, for some areas and some jobs—sometimes it's even more than regions—there will be seasonality that cannot necessarily be bypassed. We must always make sure to fix the black hole problem. We have to determine how to come back to a period of benefits that helps return to that.

I don't know whether this answers your question, but we have to accept that this system must meet the needs in some regions or in some areas of activity. Workers need to come back to work, and employers need people to come back to work. Otherwise, we have a cycle that starts over where we must constantly hire new workers. The expertise people have developed—

Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada: Mr. Vachon, I would like to come back to what you just said. Is that why you think certain temporary measures implemented in budget 2021 should not be kept? I am referring back to what you just said.

Mr. Luc Vachon: I'm not saying it shouldn't be done. However, the pilot projects that have been implemented have had some success, and the pandemic may have prevented us from having a longer-term picture.

I think we can give ourselves an opportunity to implement other elements and other pilot projects. There is labour training integration, which is not not insignificant in helping develop skills in this area.

We could try to give ourselves an opportunity to do a few trials to draw the best possible conclusions.

Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada: Thank you, Mr. Vachon.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Martinez Ferrada.

Ms. Chabot, go ahead for six minutes.

Ms. Louise Chabot (Thérèse-De Blainville, BQ): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I thank the witnesses for joining us.

I will make a short introduction by saying how relevant I think it is for the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities to have taken the time to hear from witnesses and for them to have accepted our invitation to testify on important provisions concerning employment insurance. Those provisions don't affect the budget so much, which is the purpose of Bill C-19. They are at the heart of an employment insurance reform, which concerns things like training and seasonal industry issues.

We are still waiting for the comprehensive modernization of the employment insurance act. Those key issues are now included in the budget—in other words, in Bill C-19, which is an omnibus bill that must be passed as quickly as possible. Those don't seem like winning conditions to me.

Concerning division 32, the witnesses the committee heard from—Mr. Vachon, Mr. Beauregard and Ms. Nord—and the witnesses we heard from on Tuesday, are unanimous on the reform of the Social Security Tribunal of Canada. While consultations have been held, recommendations have been made and foundations have been built, everyone is wondering why we are unexpectedly finding this today in Bill C-19.

Why is it important to remove this division from Bill C-19? Why will that be important moving forward in the reform?

Let's go in order. Ms. Nord, Mr. Vachon and Mr. Beauregard, you can take turns answering.

• (1135)

[English]

Ms. Leah Nord: Thank you. I believe your comments are very astute. Where we're talking about the budget and certain divisions and implementation, they are in the bigger EI comprehensive review. On that point, I would say I think it is worth taking these pieces out and not nibbling at the edges anymore—looking at it as a whole.

Regarding division 32, I said in my opening remarks—and I think it's important—that you're hearing this over and over again, both from labour and the business communities. There is agreement across the board that this really does deserve a measured and deliberative and more in-depth response.

[Translation]

Ms. Louise Chabot: Thank you.

Mr. Vachon, you have the floor.

Mr. Luc Vachon: Good morning, Ms. Chabot. Thank you.

We had initially asked for clause 32 to be considered separately so that the issues it covers could be examined in greater depth. Frankly, since its reform, the Social Security Tribunal has done major damage for several years. It has neither been efficient nor cost-effective.

You'd want to avoid making the same mistakes again when overhauling the tribunal and the way it operates. We'd like for things to be set straight, as they should've been from the start. There seems to be consensus on a tripartite model, which is excellent news. There were consultations, but will the outcomes of those consultations be taken into consideration?

We had asked for consultations because Bill C-19 is colossal, just huge. Our concern and the reason why we wanted to have clause 32 considered separately is that potential corrections have been discussed for years. Opportunities like these don't arise very often, so it's important not to fumble. Any misstep could be felt for years.

We called for a separate review of clause 32 out of a desire to achieve the best possible outcome. We would be concerned if that did not happen.

Ms. Louise Chabot: Thank you.

Mr. Beauregard, it's your turn.

Mr. Luc Beauregard: Thank you, Ms. Chabot.

Why consider clause 32 of Bill C-19 separately? It has been said, the bill is huge. It covers a lot of ground. We believe this section, which deals with employment insurance, should be dealt with on its own because of its importance to Canadians.

We saw quick action being taken during the pandemic. As a result, Canada was able to move forward and continue to operate despite the pandemic, which affected other countries' economies and workforces much more severely.

In our view, there are significant aspects of Bill C-19 that do not reflect the interests of workers.

We're referring to a tripartite approach, that is a departure from what existed before.

You shouldn't make the 2012 mistake of not holding consultations again. We need to get back on track, and the EI file needs to be worked on separately.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Beauregard and Ms. Chabot.

[English]

Madam Zarrillo, you have six minutes.

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I thank the witnesses for coming today. I, too, am going to ask about division 32.

Perhaps, I'll start with Ms. Nord, then Mr. Vachon and Mr. Beauregard. I have the same two questions for each. What do you feel will be the negative impacts to EI clients if division 32 remains? What do you feel will be the impacts to EI clients if division 32 is removed?

Ms. Leah Nord: I just want to make a comment that the first four questions have come from four female MPs and I think that's wonderful.

As far as the impact of its remaining versus of the impact of its being pulled is concerned, I'll leave it to my labour members because it's their members who are directly impacted. I would say that by removing it, though, in the end we'll have a better product for all Canadians, a truly tripartite product would be the hope. I do appreciate that this has been a long time coming. Discussions have been ongoing since 2018, and there have been issues that have predated that, even since the revised system.

I would then argue that we've waited this long. It's really worth it, because of the complexity, because of what you've heard over the past two meetings of testimony, to take this out and really get it done correctly. I think there's a real opportunity. I actually don't think it's a lot of work. We don't have to go into another few years of consultation. It's the parties sitting around a table, I would argue, and agreeing to the way forward.

• (1140)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo: Mr. Vachon, I'm listening.

Mr. Luc Vachon: I'm not sure I fully understood your question.

I'm not clear on what you mean by “eliminate”. Dealing with it separately is one thing. The reason we'd like to deal with it separately is to make sure it includes the right provisions.

When you say “eliminate”, do you mean keeping the status quo? If so, I can say that experience over the last few years has demonstrated that the current Social Security Tribunal of Canada is a failure. It has caused problems for workers and led to catastrophic results for them.

We need to get back to a tripartite model, which has proven itself in the past.

Although there is likely room for improvement, we need to get back to a system that ensures accountability and is more people-centred, of course. Individuals who appear before the tribunal often face problems and are in precarious situations. The Social Security Tribunal of Canada is a very different type of tribunal.

Mr. Luc Beauregard: Thank you for your question.

What would happen if Bill C-19 did not pass? In the short term, we'd be left with the same system. That would be a problem, but it would be an even greater problem to make the wrong changes to the bill. This is what Mr. Vachon just said. We need to be careful about that.

While it's true that we've been making these requests for some time now, a few more months won't make or break things. In my opinion, the goal is to do the work, take the time to consider everything, ensure there's a real tripartite appeal board, with regional representation and people who have a good understanding of the area. Over the medium and long term, we'd have devised a system with a more effective structure that is more representative of the three groups within it.

Let's put in the work to find the right answer, so we don't have to start again from scratch in two years time.

[*English*]

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo: Thank you.

Mr. Beauregard, I would just like to ask about the appeal board and the appointment process. Can you share any positives or negatives that you're seeing with this new way of appointing members to the board or this new appeal board in general?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Beauregard: We believe the appeals process needs to revert back to the way it was before 2013. At the time, actual labour representatives were the ones making the appointments. Each of the groups had real representatives. This meant that everything was in line, decisions stood unchallenged and were acceptable to all.

Thank you.

• (1145)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Beauregard and Ms. Zarrillo.

[*English*]

Now we'll move to Mr. Liepert.

You have the floor for five minutes.

Mr. Ron Liepert (Calgary Signal Hill, CPC): Thank you very much, Chair.

Thank you to the witnesses for being here today.

Not much of what we've heard today is dissimilar to what we heard from the two sets of witnesses who appeared at our previous meeting.

However, I would like to make this comment. I do recall the 2015 election. A particular Liberal leader campaigning against the Conservative prime minister, Stephen Harper, was very critical of omnibus legislation. I don't think we have seen a bill in this House in the last six or seven years that has more stuffed into it than this particular budget implementation act. I think this is just another example of broken promises by the Liberal government.

I think we will find out later today whether the members of this committee—the new Liberal-NDP coalition—will listen to what the witnesses have said relative to division 32 and having it removed. Obviously, we are only making a recommendation to the finance committee. It will be interesting to see whether the finance committee will be listening to this committee and then ultimately whether the finance minister and Prime Minister will be listening.

Thank you, everybody, for making your presentations, but my suggestion would be not to get your hopes too high.

I want to actually focus on the comments of Ms. Nord on division 26 because we haven't heard very much about the other divisions in our testimony.

I just wanted to ask...more for clarification than anything. It's my understanding, and correct me if I'm wrong, that EI does not operate independently, like the Canada pension plan. It's out of general revenue. When you're talking about a \$25-billion or \$29-billion debt, that's part of the federal debt, if I'm correct.

Can you elaborate on that at all, Ms. Nord?

Ms. Leah Nord: I can. I'm not sure it's my place to, but the EI program is funded separately. It's funded by employers and employees. Employers pay seven-twelfths into the system. The employee community pays five-twelfths. It is a separately funded program.

Mr. Ron Liepert: I do understand the separate contribution side. I think the problem with EI right now is that it all goes into general revenue and then it may operate as an individual program within the Department of Finance, but I do not believe it operates independently like the Canada pension plan.

If, in fact, we have this huge debt in EI and if the program does in some fashion operate somewhat independently with five-twelfths of the amount coming from workers and seven-twelfths from employers, if we're going to try to clear off that debt, we're likely to see what I would call another tax. If EI premiums go up for both employers and employees to try to pay off this debt, that's going to be a significant hit to both workers and businesses.

Would you agree?

Ms. Leah Nord: Yes. It is also my understanding that within the current debt structure those rates were frozen for all contributors during the pandemic. We are grateful for this, but that is set to lapse this September 2022. The concern is that you can actually legislatively only increase the rates over a seven-year period by a certain amount. To cover the current debt alone, those rates would have to rise at a rate higher than the legislated amount. Again, this is before we do anything else about expanding eligibility with the expansions that are discussed in sections 26 and 27.

We have strongly urged, as we move forward, not to look at all of these little compartments, but to look at the EI system as a whole in that process of modernizing it.

There's a whole piece as well—an important piece—around modernizing the software and the platform that form the basis of this. There are a lot of costs going on and on, and we're not seeing how that's going to be covered or what's coming off the books.

• (1150)

Mr. Ron Liepert: I have very little time for just one quick question.

If you were sitting in my chair, what would you recommend we do with section 26 going forward?

Ms. Leah Nord: It's a word of caution that these continual drips in the bucket will continue to burden the system. I would look to that larger EI consultation process as an opportunity to truly reform and bring us forward for the rest of this century and into others.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Liepert and Ms. Nord.

Before we move to Mr. Collins, I wanted to say that, within the time we have left, we will conclude after Mr. Collins with Madam Chabot for two and a half minutes and Madam Zarrillo for two and a half minutes. That will take us a little beyond our hour, to be fair.

Mr. Collins, you have five minutes.

Mr. Chad Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'll be sharing my time today with my friend and colleague, Mr. Coteau.

Welcome to the witnesses and thank you for the information that you've provided today.

Mr. Chairman, I'll start with Ms. Nord.

Welcome back to the committee. You assisted us with our labour shortage study, so welcome back. I listened with interest to the comments that you made in your opening statement related to division 26 so I'd like to take us to that issue.

You highlighted the financial pressures that have come with increasing eligibility over time and I think your comment was along the lines of "EI resources shouldn't fund everything". However, in the same statement, you also recognized the importance of investing in skills, education and training programs. I think you had a line there that spoke to that.

Having participated in our labour shortage study, we consistently heard about widespread labour shortages and a historically low unemployment rate. Those issues have forced the government to re-think how it meets these challenges. I think it's led us to decide on a program that is expanded as it relates to eligibility and provides more resources to the provinces and territories, which you recognized in your opening statement with the \$2-billion investment.

I'm trying to reconcile those two comments that you've made. It shouldn't fund everything, but we need to be cognizant of how much money is being invested, specifically to the point of expanded eligibilities.

Can you elaborate on that in terms of emphasizing that training programs are important—we have a labour shortage—but warning us to be cognizant of eligibility and how many resources are being invested into the program?

Ms. Leah Nord: I welcome the opportunity to clarify that. Skills training, upskilling and re-skilling are definitely the way of the future. There were so many trends before the pandemic and the pandemic accelerated a number of them, this included. The point is that I think, through an EI reform-modernization process, we should take a look at this.

To say that training is important doesn't mean necessarily that it belongs in EI. We could argue about expansion in part I of special benefits—absolutely—but we have to recognize that all of these pieces.... There are conversations going around about the self-employed and gig workers as well. We can all agree this is important. I think that the first step is piecing this all out.

We have to remind ourselves that employment insurance is an insurance program. There are those principles as well. It would offer the opportunity to look at all of these pieces, cost them out and then look at where they best lie. Is it within the system or outside of the system? How is the system funded?

This is exciting. This is our opportunity to be able to do that. Thank you.

• (1155)

Mr. Chad Collins: Thanks, Ms. Nord.

Mr. Chair, I'll cede the rest of my time to my colleague, Mr. Coteau.

Mr. Michael Coteau (Don Valley East, Lib.): Thank you very much.

Thank you so much to all of the witnesses today. This is such an important conversation. I want to say thank you for being here with the committee.

I have a general question with the little time left, and it's around your opinion on what's taken place over the last few years. We've had a pandemic, we've had a shift in the workforce and pressures, and of course big changes when it comes to how government responds to some of those pressures.

I wanted to get anyone to respond with an opinion on shifting attitudes and urgencies with files connected to EI, such as paid sick leave.

I'll stop there. Anyone can answer.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Vachon: That is a very broad question. You're referring to everything that has happened with respect to employment insurance and support measures. Let's just focus on the last two years. As I always say, we know how much we spent on the measures that got us through the last two years, but it's hard to quantify what it would have cost not to have them nor what effect that would have had. I believe that's what the programs are designed for and that they've had a tremendously positive effect.

In terms of sick leave, our organization's position is that a minimum of 10 days of sick leave should be offered. There are a lot of factors at play, but women often bear the burden of having to take time off work, while being in the most precarious situations and generally earning less. So, if there were programs that could help reduce these challenges, they should be implemented.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Vachon.

Ms. Chabot, you have the floor for two and a half minutes.

Ms. Louise Chabot: What I find interesting about this discussion is that we are talking about employment insurance, and the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities is the place to do it. If we are dealing with issues that affect something other than the divisions before us, it is because they are part of the long-awaited comprehensive reform of employment insurance. This is actually part of the mandate of the Minister of Employment, who was to present us with a framework for employment insurance reform before June 2022.

There is hope, at least I hope so, because there is a lot of discussion, and it concerns the main stakeholders, those who pay into EI: workers and employers. So I thank you for your testimony. It will enrich our future discussions. At least, we hope so.

What worries me is that we go to the trouble of consulting with employers and workers on what a reform of the appeals process should be, we turn off the lights for two years and nine months, perhaps for good reason, and then all of a sudden we think of a reform and put it in a budget implementation bill. It leaves an odd impression about the government's intentions.

If I understand correctly, it is imperative that we recommend to the Standing Committee on Finance that Bill C-19 be split to allow for a real discussion on reforming the appeals process based on the recommendations that you worked on and were consulted on at the time, before 2019. You can simply answer yes or no.

Mr. Luc Beauregard: Yes, it has to be separate.

I would like to add a comment, because there is an important element to consider, which is that this does not meet the needs of workers. It's true that things were done during the pandemic. Mr. Vachon wondered what would have happened if the same measures had been taken without a pandemic. I think there is a study to be done on this, because changes and additions are needed.

We're talking about the Social Security Tribunal and the Employment Insurance Board of Appeal, but there are other things to consider in the employment insurance file, and I think a complete analysis is needed. It will not be complete if one part of the reform falls under Bill C-19 and another part is studied elsewhere. We need to look at the whole issue and it needs to be done separately.

• (1200)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Beauregard and Ms. Chabot.

[*English*]

Now we have Ms. Zarrillo for two and a half minutes.

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

[*Translation*]

I would like to put a question to Mr. Beauregard and then to Mr. Vachon.

[*English*]

Will there be positive impacts to EI clients, to workers, if division 32 stands as is in the current budget implementation act?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Beauregard: For us, there will be no positive effects. We are heading towards a process that is defined as tripartite, but which is not, in reality. We will not have representatives who know the environment. There are differences between the situation of an unemployed person in Alberta and an unemployed person in Quebec. It is not true that the situation of the unemployed is uniform.

We need to go back to the structure that existed, that is, by involving people who know the community. We need people who know the community and we need a tripartite process that is truly tripartite, that is, that represents all parties. As I said earlier, when a decision is made, there will be far fewer disputes afterwards with a tripartite process, because the work will have been done by groups that know the community and the workers.

Mr. Luc Vachon: We could not see any positive effects. I agree with Mr. Beauregard.

The issue is extremely important. The employment insurance system is not a trivial system. The stakes are extremely high. When you make a reform, you have to make sure you know the scope of it and what the objectives are. The fact that all this is being buried within a number of other subjects, which are just as important, worries us because not enough importance is being attached to it.

This regime is at a crossroads. It needs to find a structure that is more oriented towards those who should benefit from it. I am not just talking about the workers, but also the employers, who contribute to this scheme. It must be brought closer to the people on the ground. As my colleague said, there is a difference between the situation of an unemployed worker in Alberta and an unemployed worker in Quebec. I would add that there are even major differences between regions in Quebec. Unemployment in Montreal and unemployment in Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean are not the same, given the industrial fabric.

The Chair: You have 10 seconds left.

Mr. Luc Vachon: There are extremely different realities and the current structure does not allow for them. It is the men and women who are struggling with this problem who suffer. So we have to go back to the fundamental objectives. We have to ask ourselves why this structure existed before. We need to go back to the old structure.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Vachon and Ms. Zarrillo.

[English]

That concludes the first hour of witness testimony. I want to thank Mr. Beauregard, Mr. Vachon and Ms. Nord for appearing today to give their perspective on the subject matter.

We will suspend for a few minutes while the witnesses leave, and then we will move to the second hour, which is to get the input of committee members on their suggested recommendations or amendments.

We will suspend for five minutes.

I will go to Madame Chabot before we suspend.

• (1205)

[Translation]

Ms. Louise Chabot: I wanted to ask you to take a real five-minute break, but you just said it. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Luc Beauregard: Thank you very much.

Mr. Luc Vachon: Thank you.

[English]

The Chair: We will suspend for five minutes. We will reconvene at around 12:10 p.m.

• (1205)

(Pause)

• (1210)

The Chair: The committee will resume and proceed to a discussion of the recommendations to be proposed to the Standing Committee on Finance.

The first hand up I see is Madame Chabot's.

[Translation]

Ms. Louise Chabot: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

First of all, I want to thank all the members of the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities for allowing this study on important sections of the employment insurance system. This is within our area of expertise and jurisdiction. I look forward to dealing with the much needed comprehensive reform. At the moment, we have heard witnesses primarily on division 32.

I want to inform you that we have tabled a notice of motion. It is in proper form and we have forwarded it to the clerk in both official languages. My point is this. In light of the testimony heard on division 32 of part 5 of Bill C-19, the best recommendation we can make to the Standing Committee on Finance is to withdraw division 32 of part 5 of omnibus Bill C-19 for separate study.

If I were to summarize the comments of all the witnesses we heard from on Tuesday and Wednesday, including Mr. Bolduc of the FTQ, they believe that division 32 of part 5 of Bill C-19 should be part of a separate bill and therefore removed from this omnibus bill so that the reform can be the subject of thorough review and deliberation. The same is true for the Mouvement autonome et solidaire des sans-emploi, MASSE. This morning, the three witnesses were unanimously of the same opinion.

There is a consensus among employers and workers. They say that they were consulted and that a report was arrived at, but that what was put in Bill C-19 does not correspond to the consensus established after many consultations. The government, in an August 15, 2019, Employment and Social Development Canada news release, for which Minister Duclos was responsible at the time, made the following commitment:

The Canada Employment Insurance Commission will become responsible for first-level EI appeals through the creation of a new tripartite decision-making tribunal called the Employment Insurance Boards of Appeal.

This is a cry from the heart that it is extremely important that this be done. Moreover, we do not understand why the government included this in Bill C-19. One witness told us that it could not have done a better job of clouding the issue. Even I, as employment critic, was surprised to see this section in Bill C-19. There was no mention in the budget of any intention to extend pilot projects for workers in the seasonal industry. At least it looks good, because it has a cost impact. If we had done nothing, it would have meant abandoning a measure that provides interim support until comprehensive EI reform.

In short, the wisest proposal we can make to the Standing Committee on Finance is to withdraw division 32 of part 5 of Bill C-19.

I will read the motion:

Based on the evidence received and heard in committee, in considering divisions 26, 27, 29 and 32 of Bill C-19, An Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on April 7, 2022, and other measures, the committee recommends to the Standing Committee on Finance that division 32 of Bill C-19 be split.

• (1215)

[English]

The Chair: Have you concluded your remarks for the moment, Madame Chabot?

[Translation]

Ms. Louise Chabot: Yes, Mr. Chair.

[English]

The Chair: Madam Kusie, are you speaking on Madame Chabot's motion, which is now before the committee?

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie: I will, Chair.

I hope that after the motion we can also get an update on the appearance of the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development since May 31 is approaching rapidly. I notice that she's actually making an appearance at the anti-poverty caucus today, which I don't believe takes precedence over committee business or House business, or certainly matters as important as the Service Canada deficiencies that we're seeing. I do hope that we will return to that matter and get a date as to when she will be appearing. I wanted to address that before I addressed Madame Chabot's motion.

Yes, we are in complete support of the motion that division 32 be separated from the bill and introduced as separate legislation. It has become evident, I think, although there are certainly significant other faults within divisions 26, 27 and 29—many of which I hope will be addressed as the government continues what seems to be an extensive process of EI reform as they head into the secondary process of consultations this week—that we cannot turn a blind eye to division 32, based on the compelling testimony we've received from a number of witnesses this week.

We will be supporting Madame Chabot's motion.

Thank you.

• (1220)

The Chair: Thank you, Madam Kusie.

Does anybody else want to speak?

You have the motion. It's in both languages.

The motion is order, Madam Clerk, am I correct? Okay.

Madam Zarrillo, you have the floor.

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I thank Madame Chabot for the motion. I do believe that there's consensus among the witnesses that this needs to be removed.

I wanted to get some clarity on what the word “split” would mean in regard to the removal of this portion of the budget imple-

mentation act or how “split” would be interpreted by the government.

The Chair: I cannot answer that. The term was used by Madame Chabot. It's not referred to in the letter we received from FINA.

I don't believe that the clerk or I can answer that question, Madam Zarrillo.

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo: Okay. I would—

The Chair: Maybe Madame Chabot could speak to her thoughts. Although it was not used in the motion currently before us, I believe Madame Chabot used it in her comments.

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo: It seems to be in the motion in English. I'll take a look in French.

The Chair: Are you referring to Madame Chabot's motion? I do not see the word “split” in the.... I'm sorry. You are correct. It says that division 32 of Bill C-19 be “split”.

Madame Chabot, do you want to address that?

[Translation]

Ms. Louise Chabot: Mr. Chair, it is important to understand the meaning of the word “scinder”. In fact, I believe the meaning is the same in English.

The word “scinder” means that this part of Bill C-19 is going to be treated separately. We want this part to be split so that it is dealt with separately, by another committee, and there is discussion. That's what I got from the consensus and the comments from the workers' representative, the Employment Insurance Commission representative. This is no small thing.

The Employment Insurance Commission, which has a worker representative and an employer representative, sent a joint and unanimous letter to the ministers concerned. It asked that the debate be held in a different framework than that of Bill C-19.

In Bill C-19, the translation does not match that used in the unanimous committee report. The word “scinder” means “to treat separately”.

Recommending to the Standing Committee on Finance that this part be split up means that we are recommending that this part be treated separately, in the way the government would like us to treat it. It is essential that it be treated separately. That is what the word “scinder” means.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you, Madame Chabot. That is my understanding of the term as well, that it would be removed from the bill.

[Translation]

Ms. Louise Chabot: I haven't written it in other recommendations, but the best place to address this issue is here, Mr. Chair.

[English]

The Chair: Madame Chabot, we will deal with the motion you have.

We will go to Ms. Martinez Ferrada, then Ms. Gladu and then Mr. Van Bynen.

Madame Martinez Ferrada.

● (1225)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I would like to thank my colleague Ms. Chabot for bringing this motion forward. I think we recognize that all the evidence we have heard in the study leads us to suggest to the Standing Committee on Finance that we withdraw this section so that we can deal with it separately. We are very pleased to support my colleague's motion to make that recommendation to the Standing Committee on Finance.

Mr. Chair, I have a question about the operation of the committee. I apologize for that, but this is the first time I've been on a committee where a particular section of a bill is being studied. I am wondering how we should frame this response to the Standing Committee on Finance.

I would like to understand the procedure to follow. Will a letter be sent on behalf of the committee? Will it be written as a result of the addition of my colleague's motion? I would like to understand how we will agree on the content of the letter.

[*English*]

The Chair: It's my understanding that, when we conclude discussion on recommendations, I will ask for a motion instructing the chair to write a letter to the chair of the Standing Committee on Finance outlining the recommendations on subject matter five.

As you recall, the request from finance was to ask the committee to review and to forward this committee's recommendations to the finance committee. As we deal with them here today, I would ask at the end for a motion instructing the clerk to prepare a general letter outlining that the committee did meet on two occasions, heard from witnesses on the subject matter, and attached are the following recommendations from the committee. That is my understanding, Madame Ferrada.

I will now go to Ms. Gladu, and then Mr. Van Bynen.

Ms. Gladu.

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

Certainly I do support the removal of 32, but I want to be clear, because if we say we want to split it, normally what that means is that the Speaker of the House will split the bill and you will vote Bill C-19 separately from division 32. I don't know if that is exactly the intent of Ms. Chabot. I think she agrees that this needs further consultation, which is what we heard from the witnesses, and there's a full review of the EI process that's going to go on. If that's the case, perhaps the word "remove" would more accurately reflect the intention that she expressed.

The Chair: I appreciate your comments, Ms. Gladu, but we are not reporting to the House through the Speaker. We are simply sending a letter to FINA on our recommendations, and they will report to the House on the specific language and that would be clarified there. Madame Chabot's intentions are clear when you use the French translation, so it will be up to finance, in my opinion, unless

the total committee disagrees, to instruct differently. We are providing a recommendation; we're not providing instructions to change.

Mr. Van Bynen.

Mr. Tony Van Bynen (Newmarket—Aurora, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

My comments are relative to the motion as well. I want to be clear as well that, if this is separated from the bill, division 32 doesn't simply disappear. I think the consensus is that we would like to have that looked at separately. That's the assurance that I was seeking as well. If the language would reflect that the section would be considered separately, then that's what I would like to accomplish.

The Chair: Mr. Van Bynen, since Madame Chabot has moved the main motion, would you like to make a friendly amendment with the clarification?

Mr. Tony Van Bynen: For clarification, I wonder if Madame Chabot would consider adding the words "for separate review and consideration".

The Chair: Madame Chabot.

● (1230)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Louise Chabot: Actually, I think that's what the word "scinder" means. Mr. Chair, you said it right, we are making a recommendation to the Standing Committee on Finance. I think that if we add these words to the word "scinder", it will mean the same thing. I don't mind adding it, but I don't think it's helpful. If we split this section, it is necessarily with the intention that it should be dealt with elsewhere. However, if we want to make this clarification, I have no objection to it. It is not for us to specify the word "elsewhere".

While I have the floor, Mr. Chair, I would like to say that I agree with your formula. I think this is the first time that several of us have been on a committee that makes recommendations to another committee. We will have to write a letter.

That said, we have had witnesses, and I would like to know if the letter is going to include the testimony that leads us to make this recommendation.

The letter could explain that the recommendation we are making to the Standing Committee on Finance as part of our study is to split the division, so that there is a separate treatment and a separate discussion on it. First, are you going to put some flesh on the bone?

Also, will our committee be able to see the draft of the letter or do we decide to trust those who will write it and leave it alone? I wouldn't have a problem with that. It's a simple question.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you, Madame Chabot.

We are in a time situation, too. It would be my desire that the letter be very general with what we heard from witnesses. Once we get into editing, it's only fair that the committee would have the chance to review what would be written in it. If we're going to take the testimony of some of the witnesses, then that becomes a time process.

The letter will simply indicate that the committee heard from witnesses on the various sections and that the recommendations the committee chose to forward to finance are attached. We could include the clarification for those members you indicated that the committee anticipates that division 32 would be dealt with in detail on its own.

Seeing no further discussion, does the committee want to move on consensus?

I see consensus on the only motion that's currently before the committee from Madame Chabot, on the key part. I see thumbs up.

Ms. Zarrillo, you have your hand up. Everyone else has their thumb up.

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo: I'm sorry, Chair. I just have one question.

I have another potential motion for the implementation act, but it's outside of this part 5. It has to do with the disability tax credit eligibility criteria.

Is this something that I could share with the committee at this point?

The Chair: Ms. Zarrillo, this committee is simply dealing with anything related to divisions 26, 27, 29 and 32.

You could raise it at a future meeting of the committee, but at this time we're currently discussing the letter back to FINA.

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Seeing no objections, again, do we have thumbs up to Madame Chabot's motion?

Okay. Seeing no other motions that want to come to the floor of the committee....

Madam Gladu.

Ms. Marilyn Gladu: In terms of other things we heard from the witnesses, we did hear a bit about some of the service-level issues. We may want to make a recommendation that the government en-

sure that there are adequate resources to provide service on these additional changes or something like that.

The Chair: Do you want me to incorporate that into the letter going to FINA?

• (1235)

Ms. Marilyn Gladu: Yes, if the committee agrees.

The Chair: I think we can get agreement. It looks like we have agreement on that, Madam Gladu.

Madam Clerk, do you have the comments from Madam Gladu?

The Clerk of the Committee (Ms. Danielle Widmer): I'm going to ask her to repeat it, please, so I can take a note.

The Chair: I understand where you're going, Marilyn.

Ms. Marilyn Gladu: Based on hearing from witnesses about some of the backlog, we recommend that the government ensure adequate resources for these additional changes.

The Chair: That's pretty clear. I'm seeing no dissent and no discussion, so Madam Gladu, we will incorporate your comments verbatim. We have two recommendations to go back to FINA.

Seeing no other discussion at this particular time, I will adjourn the meeting. Thanks very much for your input. It's been most informative.

Madam Kusie, the indications are that the minister will be appearing on the 30th. We'll be sending the notice out.

The Clerk: Mr. Chair, the Minister of Families confirmed this morning her availability on the 30th. She'll be appearing from 12 to one o'clock on the 30th.

The Chair: Thank you, Clerk.

That was the issue you raised, Madam Kusie.

With that, the meeting is adjourned. Have a good rest of the week.

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