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Chair: Mr. Robert Morrissey

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

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• (0845)

[English]

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

The clerk has advised me that those appearing virtually have had their sound tested and that it's okay to proceed with translation.

Welcome to meeting number 65 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. Committee members are appearing in the room and virtually. All witnesses are in the room with us.

I would remind those appearing that you have the option of speaking in the official language of your choice. Virtually, you have the translation icon at the bottom of your Surface. Here in the room, you have translation through the earpiece in your mike. If there's an issue with translation, please get my attention, and we'll suspend while it is being corrected.

I would also like to remind members that screenshots are not allowed at today's meeting. In-person shots in the room while the meeting is proceeding are also not allowed.

I would also like to remind you that if you could give your comments slowly, please, that would be great for the translators to deal with.

Pursuant to Standing Order 108(2) and the motion adopted by the committee on Friday, February 3, 2023, the committee will continue its study of Bill C-35, an act respecting early learning and child care in Canada.

Today we are resuming clause-by-clause consideration. I would like to provide members of the committee with some instructions and a few comments on how the committee will proceed with the clause-by-clause consideration of Bill C-35.

Members of the committee, we've gone through the particular material. I will go through clause-by-clause. Members who have provided an amendment will proceed to move that amendment when we get to that particular section.

Again, I would like to welcome, from the department, Michelle Lattimore, director general; Cheri Reddin, director general; Jill Henry, director, policy; Kelly Nares, director; and Christian Paradis, director.

(On clause 9)

The Chair: We will begin. As you are aware, at the last meeting, we concluded and carried up to clause 8, so we will begin with clause 9.

Is there an amendment to clause 9?

Ms. Michelle Ferreri (Peterborough—Kawartha, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

With regard to clause 9, we're looking at suggesting the following amendment or adding the following amendment. It would add after line 4 on page 6:

The members of the Council must be representative of all parts of the early learning and child care system, including private and home-based child care providers and public and not for profit child care providers.

Again, this goes back to what we are pushing for after listening to the witnesses, stakeholders and everyone around child care in Canada. The council is a great piece for having people give feedback and for chiming in, but right now, the way it stands, the council is not fairly representative of all child care sectors. What we're asking with this amendment is that the council be representative of all parts of the early learning and child care system—so to include those other representatives whose voices are currently not on the council.

• (0850)

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Ferreri.

Is there any discussion?

Ms. Saks.

Ms. Ya'ara Saks (York Centre, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I want to thank all the members for joining us today, as well as the officials who are here to help us navigate this process.

I can't say I'm supportive of this amendment, and it's for the simple reason that the approach of the council to date has been very clear in terms of selection for council participation. We've heard overwhelmingly from witnesses and from experts in the field in terms of an evidence-based approach and in terms of the stewardship of public funds to a not-for-profit and public-sector approach, which is what we're looking for.

I'd also comment to colleagues that it's a bit redundant, because, in clause 11 as it's drafted, the appointments request a representation of diversity. Diversity is a principle and an approach to the council. However, again, we want to ensure that the council is representative of the national system that is aimed to be built and to which the approach is well-rooted and clear.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Saks.

We will go to Ms. Ferreri and then Mr. Godin.

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: Thank you so much, Mr. Chair.

I think that's kind of contradictory to what we heard from witnesses. If it is diversity, then why wouldn't you put diversity on the council?

I'm not sure if the clerk can chime in, but how many witnesses put forth that they wanted to see this representation on the council? I understand that the bill has said, "not for profit" and "public", but if you don't have those voices at the table, you're not really getting a whole picture for child care in the country, because there are so many different forms of it.

I think this is just fair representation of all the different sectors of child care in the country. I definitely don't agree with my colleague. Just because it says diversity.... Right now, what we know is that there isn't diversity on that council. You're saying one thing and doing another thing.

There are a whole bunch of quotes, Mr. Chair. I'll give you just three.

"The current iteration of the CWELCC does not recognize the key role female entrepreneurs have played in the creation and development of Canada's early learning and child care sector." That's from the briefing note from the Association of Day Care Operators of Ontario.

"The current language directs funding in particular to public and not-for-profit providers, and it's much weaker than it should be." That's from the March 31 testimony of Dr. Susan Prentice, Duff Roblin professor of government, University of Manitoba.

"Championing home child care as a...part of CWELCC would increase access to a diverse array of child care options." That's from the April 18 testimony of Julie Bisnath, program coordinator, Child Care Providers Resource Network.

We're hearing that the Liberals want to have diversity on this bill, but then when you put forth an amendment to increase diversity, they say no.

It's just a little confusing to me, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Ferreri.

Monsieur Godin.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Joël Godin (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Good day to you all.

My colleague has mentioned that clause 11 already provides for representation on the council. However, as people who have worked with me on other committees will attest, I am fond of saying that you cannot be too careful. It is always better to have more than less and to be cautious.

This amendment is about avoiding too much interpretation of the bill's clauses and allowing all the stakeholders of the sector to participate. I think that we would be in a stronger position if we consulted representatives from all parts of this sector.

I believe this amendment is worth supporting. That said, I do not understand why the government is digging its heels in. We are cautious when selecting the members of various committees. I think it is important to define this. It would be an added layer of protection for us.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you.

Ms. Saks.

Ms. Ya'ara Saks: I'll keep my comments short.

There's nothing stopping the council from engaging with stakeholders from every aspect across the country in terms of getting information, just like we do in committees or any other framework, that enables us to have deep consultations with what is happening across the country.

In terms of diversity, we want the consultations that happen at the council to be reflective of Canadian society as a whole. However, as a council, the mandate of its work is clear and is true to the agreements that have been established, as well as the secretariat in its....

We don't want to see creep happening, as we saw in Australia and other places when.... Consultation is extremely valuable, and witnesses are important, but we also want to make sure that the mandate of the council is clear.

• (0855)

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Mr. Godin, you have the floor.

Mr. Joël Godin: Mr. Chair, I agree with my colleague when she says that consultations are important.

However, why should we limit ourselves by not making any room on the council for these people? I am of the opinion that this would strengthen the council. Something doesn't jive here. It has been shown on many occasions that even if consultations are done, the reports that come out of them are usually relegated to the bottom of the pile or the garbage.

Unfortunately, it is the council that has the authority to make recommendations. I believe that we should let a wide range of stakeholders become members of the council so that we may do better work and reach the set targets.

[*English*]

The Chair: Madame Ferreri, you had your hand up.

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Listen, you can't have equity and equality if you're not sitting at the table. As a woman in politics, I would assume that my colleague knows that very well. If you have all men sitting at the table but they go and consult with a woman, does that count? No. You have to have that person at the table to include them in the conversation.

I think this is extremely unfair, to cut out some of the most important people—who are included in the bill, quite frankly—and not have their voice at the table. It just doesn't make any sense.

The Chair: Thank you.

Seeing no further discussion, Mr. Clerk, I will call for a recorded vote on the amendment to clause 9 from Madam Ferreri.

(Amendment negatived: nays 6; yeas 5 [*See Minutes of Proceedings*])

The Chair: The amendment is defeated. I'll now call for a vote on clause 9.

(Clause 9 agreed to: yeas 7; nays 4)

The Chair: Clause 9 is carried without amendment.

Now that the amendments have been referred, shall clause 10 carry? I see consensus.

(Clause 10 agreed to)

(On clause 11)

The Chair: We have Monsieur Godin.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Joël Godin: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

This segues well into what we were discussing earlier and I think it is essential that amendment CPC-7 becomes part of the bill, i.e., that Bill C-35, in Clause 11, be amended by replacing line 14 on page 6 with the following:

“representative of the diversity of Canadian society, in particular Indigenous peoples and official language minority communities—to.”

This is about the National Advisory Council of Early Learning and Child Care, and there should be a decent representation within that council. We would have wished for even more wide-ranging representation, but the amendment does at least give status to Indigenous peoples and official language minority communities.

We think that this should serve as basic criteria for the appointment of certain council members. We would have liked to go even further, but unfortunately, the government is opposed to that. In any event, we should at the very least stand up for both official languages and Indigenous peoples.

● (0900)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Godin.

Ms. Saks, you have the floor.

Ms. Ya'ara Saks: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I would also like to thank my colleague, Mr. Godin.

[*English*]

We seem to find common ground. If I can make a small subamendment to the proposal put forward by Monsieur Godin, I propose changing the words “in particular” to “including”. I'll explain the rationale behind that.

We always have to be cognizant of the fact that we want to make sure everyone is at the table, but also recognize that there is a parallel FPT table going on with indigenous leadership. We always want to be mindful—I've mentioned this before in other aspects of the legislation that we've discussed—to ensure that our tracks of dialogue, all of them, not only in terms of this process but in all of our relationships with indigenous communities...that we are respectful of the multiple tracks of discussions that are happening.

In that case, I would move the subamendment of changing “in particular” to “including”. That would be my suggestion.

The Chair: Madam Saks, the clerk has the subamendment. Do you want it circulated? It's a one-word subamendment.

It has been circulated. You should have it in your email.

We're now on the subamendment of Ms. Saks.

Go ahead, Ms. Gazan, on the subamendment.

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): For a reason different from that of Madam Saks, I think it's good that indigenous people and official language minorities are mentioned. I think that's very positive.

I do agree with “including”, however, just because, for example, children with disabilities are a very specific group with very specific educational needs. I just worry that it would exclude groups with specific needs in education.

I support the subamendment of “including”. I like what's been offered up by the Conservative Party in terms of a suggestion with the change of “including”, but for different reasons.

The Chair: Thank you.

Is there any discussion on the subamendment we're currently on?

I have Ms. Gray and then Ms. Ferreri.

Mrs. Tracy Gray (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Can we recess for just a minute?

The Chair: Certainly. We'll suspend for two moments while the members review the matters before the committee.

● (0900)

(Pause)

● (0905)

The Chair: We were on discussion of the subamendment to the amendment on clause 11.

Is there any further discussion?

Go ahead, Madam Ferreri, on the subamendment of Ms. Saks.

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: Thank you.

I just want to clarify, because I think there is some language....

To my colleague, when we say “in particular”, for us it was prioritizing. “Including” is a good word, too. One feels like it's prioritizing, and one feels more generic, but I think we're on the same page. From a language perspective, I just want to ensure that, and the comments of my colleague, Ms. Gazan, were well taken, too. This is just for clarification for the record.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Ferreri.

Go ahead, Monsieur Godin.

[Translation]

Mr. Joël Godin: Mr. Chair, in the spirit of transparency, I would like to tell my colleague from the government party that I am grateful for her openness. I would have liked to see such openness towards the previous amendment, but sadly, she was not receptive.

I just want to make sure that her subamendment to the change that we would like to make to clause 11, at line 14 on page 6 does not replace the entire line with the single word “*incluant*” in the French version. The subamendment must contain the entire amendment that I submitted and replace one word as my colleague is suggesting.

If we just add that single word to the bill, it will weaken it. We have to talk about Indigenous peoples and official languages.

Could we ask the legislative clerk to review the text?

Ms. Marie-Hélène Sauv  (Legislative Clerk): I can confirm that the wording of amendment CPC-7 would be added to the new version of the bill, except that the word “*notamment*” would be replaced by the word “*incluant*” in the French version.

Mr. Jo l Godin: And what would happen in the English version?

Ms. Marie-H l ne Sauv : The words “in particular” would be replaced by “including”.

Mr. Jo l Godin: Thank you.

[English]

The Chair: Seeing no further discussion, I will call the clerk to have a recorded vote on the subamendment of Madam Saks.

(Subamendment agreed to: yeas 11; nays 0)

The Chair: The subamendment of Madam Saks is carried. We will now vote on the amendment as amended of Mr. Godin.

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

The Chair: Shall clause 11 carry as amended? I see a consensus.

(Clause 11 as amended agreed to [See *Minutes of Proceedings*])

(Clauses 12 and 13 agreed to)

(On clause 14)

The Chair: Madam Ferreri, go ahead.

• (0910)

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'm requesting amendments as follows. I have a few here. First, I would replace lines 21 and 22 on page 7 with the following:

grams and services, funding and activities that support early learning and child care, as well as strategies to support recruitment and retention of a well-qualified workforce;

I would replace line 23 on page 7 with the following:

(b) regularly conduct engagement activities on matters relating

I would replace line 25 on page 7 with the following:

tem, including the availability of child care services, the number of families on waitlists for child care places and any progress made in reducing the number of families on waitlists;

I would add after line 28 on page 7 the following:

(d) prepare and make public an annual progress report.

You can see again, Mr. Chair, that I'm just trying to strengthen this bill, for a variety of different reasons.

Obviously, from witnesses and testimony that we've heard, the workforce has been a massive issue. The wait-lists continue to increase. We had one witness testify that they had 3,000 spaces, and 12,000 people were on the wait-list. Many centres are closing down because they just can't recruit the staff.

With these amendments, we're hoping we can strengthen that, as well as the progress report, because if there's no measurement for success, if there's no accountability, it's very hard to be successful or to change, adapt or pivot to ensure that what we're doing is in fact working.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Ferreri.

Before we open for debate, the committee should be aware that there's a line conflict between the amendment moved by Ms. Ferreri and amendment NDP-3 on the same. If Ms. Ferreri's amendment is adopted, the NDP amendment cannot be moved.

I have Ms. Saks on the amendment of Ms. Ferreri.

Ms. Ya'ara Saks: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I always appreciate the desire we all have here to ensure that we have a really good system and good legislation to ensure that the system we've built through these agreements with every province and territory has sustainability and longevity to impact families in the years to come.

This is why I can't be supportive of these amendments. They go beyond the advisory role of the council. The role of the council is to collect information and advice to guide the process, but the jurisdictional responsibilities that my colleague Ms. Ferreri is talking about in terms of employment workforce and also in the monitoring and reporting on wait-lists are part of the provincial agreements. It is their responsibility to bring that information up.

The role of this council is not that of oversight or as a supervisory body. We really need to be mindful that we're entering a unique space in education with provinces and territories, and we have to be respectful of the jurisdictional boundaries. The role of the national advisory council is exactly that, advising. It is not a monitoring body, and it is not a supervisory body.

Frankly, in terms of jurisdictional responsibilities, again with indigenous communities and other communities that are part of this process, to impose a supervisory role to the council is simply not its mandate. I can't support these types of amendments.

Thank you.

● (0915)

The Chair: Go ahead, Ms. Ferreri.

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Again, it's a bit frustrating. I don't understand what the role of the national council is if it's not going to implement strategies and suggestions on the biggest problems we see facing child care. Also, how are you going to monitor the data if you're not making thoughtful recommendations in the strategies around the workforce?

There have been words exchanged, saying that we care about ECEs, but then you're not approving this amendment to support the recruitment and retention of a well-qualified workforce.

I'm just not sure what the role of the national council is if there's no data reporting and there are no thoughtful recommendations.

Again, it isn't adding up in terms of what the role is.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Ferreri.

Seeing no further discussion, I'll call for a vote on the amendment of Ms. Ferreri.

We'll have a recorded vote, Clerk.

(Amendment negated: nays 7, yeas 4 [*See Minutes of Proceedings*])

The Chair: The amendment was defeated, so that will allow the amendment by Ms. Gazan to be moved.

Go ahead, Ms. Gazan.

Ms. Leah Gazan: Thank you, Chair.

This NDP amendment proposes that Bill C-35 in clause 14 be amended by replacing line 23 on page 7 with the following:

(b) consult broadly with individuals and organizations that have an interest in early learning and child care, including parents, the early childhood education workforce, child care providers, advocates and policy and research specialists, on matters relating

That's what we're proposing for an amendment. It's not that I didn't like some of the amendments that were proposed by the Conservative Party, but I felt like it might be a bit overly prescriptive in terms of allowing the council to make those kinds of decisions as specialists in the field. I thought the amendment would give more autonomy to the groups I mentioned.

Our amendment also supports having a report included in the minister's report, so it puts more responsibility on the minister.

I think we're going in a similar direction, but it's stronger.

I'll leave it at that, thank you.

The Chair: Is there any discussion?

We have Ms. Ferreri, on the amendment of Ms. Gazan.

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: I just want to be on the record on this. I think it is prescriptive, based on the issues that were put forward at consultation. I think that's what our job is here, to listen to the people who have come forward and shared their concerns. It's a little frustrating.

I just feel that the way this legislation is written is that the government—the Liberals and the NDP—are deciding what's best for everybody, rather than listening to everyone who's come to the table and all the people who have been left out.

I just want that on the record. It feels like we're not listening to people.

The Chair: Thank you.

Seeing no further discussion, I will call a recorded vote on the amendment of Ms. Gazan.

(Amendment agreed to: yeas 10; nays 1)

The Chair: We will now vote on clause 14 as amended.

We'll have a recorded vote, clerk.

(Clause 14 as amended agreed to: yeas 7; nays 0 [*See Minutes of Proceedings*])

The Chair: We now have a proposed new clause, 14.1.

● (0920)

Ms. Leah Gazan: Yes. Thank you, Chair.

What the NDP is proposing is that Bill C-35 be amended by adding after line 28 on page 7 the following new clause:

14.1 The Minister must, on request of the Council, provide the Council with any information related to the Canada-wide early learning and child care system that is in the Minister's possession and that the Minister is authorized to share.

This was something that came directly from advocates in the field in terms of accountability mechanisms for the minister. This amendment is merely echoing voices from leading advocates in the field.

The Chair: Is there any discussion?

Ms. Saks.

Ms. Ya'ara Saks: Thank you, Chair.

Thank you to my colleague. I agree with her. We do want to listen to experts in the field and the evidence that guides us towards a better system for kids across this country.

Chair, I have a small subamendment to what Ms. Gazan is proposing, which I'd like to read.

That the Minister may, on request of the Council, provide the Council with any information respecting the Canada-wide early learning and child care system that is related to the Council's functions and that is in the Minister's possession, if it is within the Minister's authority to share the information.

As always, we want to make sure that there is a collaborative effort and approach to this. We want to be supportive, rather than prescriptive, understanding jurisdiction and the roles that each level of government plays in creating this system.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Saks.

I'll just make sure the committee members have the subamendment. I have "amendment" here because this was a new clause that was moved by Ms. Gazan. We have a subamendment currently moved by Ms. Saks.

The legislative clerk has received the subamendment. It is in order. We'll move to a discussion on it as soon as the clerk has circulated it to all committee members.

The clerk has advised that the subamendment of Ms. Saks on the new clause 14.1, as moved by Ms. Gazan, is in order. You should all have it, so we will move to debate on the subamendment of Ms. Saks.

Ms. Gazan, did you have your hand up on that?

• (0925)

Ms. Leah Gazan: Yes.

The Chair: Okay, you have the floor.

Ms. Leah Gazan: I just want to say that changing "The Minister must" to "The Minister may" is a major amendment. I accept that this is probably as far as we're going to be able to take it. I'll accept that subamendment in the spirit of trying to move this forward, but I just want to have on record that there is a massive difference between saying, "The Minister must," and saying, "The Minister may."

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Gazan.

Next is Ms. Ferreri and then Ms. Gray.

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: This gets more and more frustrating, to be honest with you.

In the last amendment, we're going to be too prescriptive, and now we're doing this. It's like we listen when it's convenient for whatever it is we want to achieve.

It's a major issue, what my colleague has just said, but in the spirit of moving it along.... That's so frustrating. Maybe the minister will and maybe the minister won't.

The biggest problem we have right now with this government is that there's no accountability. There are no consequences for any-

thing. If we're caring for children and if the nucleus of this conversation is children, but she can or can't depending on how she feels, or maybe doesn't, it's ridiculous.

I think this is majorly watering it down, so I am frustrated with my colleague for saying in the spirit of moving it forward, when she's just said it's a major difference. Now you're passing the buck on accountability in the name of child welfare. None of this makes any sense.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Ferreri.

We'll go to Mrs. Gray and then Monsieur Godin.

Mrs. Tracy Gray: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

This one-word change completely changes the context of this. The NDP might as well withdraw it, because ministers may do anything at any time. There's really no purpose to this. It completely removes the transparency and the accountability that I think were part of the purpose of this amendment, which made sense.

To even suggest this is completely removing anything the government would be mandated to do. You might as well not even bother having it. It's very frustrating that this would even be considered. It's absolutely unbelievable.

Thank you.

The Chair: Monsieur Godin.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Joël Godin: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

As my colleague has just said, the amendment put forth by the NDP seeks to create a requirement. Nothing in the act would require the minister to share information with the council and vice versa at any point in time. However, the NDP proposed an amendment seeking to require the minister to provide information at the request of the council. There's no choice involved, but rather a requirement. And yet Ms. Saks has submitted a subamendment that changes the meaning of the amendment. The NDP has just said that it will support the subamendment. Is it because the NDP is in bed with the Liberal Party? I believe so.

We saw the exact same thing on the Standing Committee on Official Languages. The Liberals wanted to speed things up. However, they did not submit their amendments to the committee, but did so after the report was tabled in the House of Commons. We've lost time yet again. We haven't even reached the third reading stage. We have to vote on the report. In the case of the official languages committee that I was referring to, the Liberals did exactly the same thing: they tabled a motion to add the word "may". We wanted to make the government take positive steps, but the Liberals preferred to say that the government "may" take these positive steps.

We are seeing the same tactic being deployed today. Something is wrong here: the NDP submits an amendment, and the Liberal government tables a subamendment to weaken the amendment, which the NDP will then support. The NDP sought to require the minister to provide information. As one of my colleagues was saying, in the bills that are drawn up by the Liberals, there is sadly no obligation to be accountable.

I am not a regular member of this committee, but I am just as frustrated as my colleagues.

● (0930)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Godin.

Ms. Gazan.

[*English*]

Ms. Leah Gazan: Since Mr. Godin is talking about who I'm sleeping with, talking about being in bed with the Liberals, I think we should watch that language. In any case, I'm going to be honest: I'm not happy with this subamendment. In the spirit of moving this forward and not losing the recommendations coming from the field, it's very clear that this is the last straw on this particular amendment. I will support the subamendment, with the recognition that it is a significant change.

I agree with my colleagues to the right, no pun intended, but I think this is as far as it's going to go. I just wanted to have that on record.

The Chair: Thank you.

Ms. Falk has her hand up, but Ms. Gray has asked for a momentary suspension. I'm going to suspend for a couple of moments at the request of Ms. Gray. We'll suspend for two minutes.

● (0930)

(Pause)

● (0930)

The Chair: We were discussing the subamendment of Ms. Saks, but the first hand I had up when we suspended was Ms. Falk's, which is now down.

Ms. Falk, do you want the floor? You had your hand up when we suspended, but I see it's down now, and Ms. Ferreri has indicated she wants the floor. Is your hand down?

Ms. Falk, can you hear me?

● (0935)

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster, CPC): I can hear you now.

That's fine. Yes, my hand is down.

The Chair: Ms. Ferreri, on the subamendment of Ms. Saks.

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: Thank you so much, Mr. Chair.

Listen, I've said a lot of what I wanted to say, which is on the accountability and transparency piece of this. At the end of the day, if the people who are in charge of children have nobody to answer to, that's a major issue in terms of the welfare of the child. That's what this comes down to.

To my colleague down the way, whom I respect greatly and with whom we work really well together, this is really upsetting. If you say you want to move this forward, then don't do this with them, because your amendment is better. This subamendment is going to water down accountability and transparency.

Mr. Wayne Long (Saint John—Rothesay, Lib.): Mr. Chair, on a point of order, comments should be through you.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Long.

Continue, Ms. Ferreri.

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: I'm sorry, Mr. Chair, and thank you, Mr. Long, for reminding me.

It's what agreement is in place, so I.... It's just infuriating that you're saying you want to move this along.... Let's move it along. If you vote no on their subamendment, then we can keep your amendment, which we agree with, and we can move forward and keep this bill moving forward.

There's no accountability, there's no transparency and, at the end of the day, guess who suffers as a result of that, Mr. Chair? It's the child. If we want to help our future, that's what we're here for—children.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Ferreri.

I have Ms. Falk, Ms. Gazan and then Monsieur Godin.

Monsieur Godin, do you have a point of order?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Joël Godin: Yes, I am rising on a point of order, Mr. Chair.

My colleague from the NDP previously accused me of talking about her personal life. I would like to play back what she said because I can guarantee that she did not understand what I said. I did not make anything up: her leader said he was very proud of the coalition between the NDP and the Liberal Party. I was speaking of that coalition.

I would like my colleague to withdraw her comment.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you, Monsieur Godin.

Madam Gazan, do you want to comment?

Ms. Leah Gazan: I'll withdraw that comment.

I was making a side joke just because we were talking about being in bed with the Liberals and things like that. I'm sorry if it offended, but I was making a cheeky response in response to being accused of being in bed with the Liberals.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Madam Gazan.

I'll just remind members that disrespectful language towards another member is not allowed. It's out of order.

Thank you, Monsieur Godin and Madam Gazan.

We'll go to Ms. Falk.

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk: Thank you very much, Chair.

In discussion of the subamendment, through you, Chair, the NDP's original amendment is better. It is better, and I sure hope that the NDP does not settle for less in this case.

I just want to put on the record that it's frustrating for me, because I'm hearing a lot about moving things along—and we've heard this a lot, actually, throughout this study, since this has been in committee—and about working in collaboration and getting things done, but at what cost? That is my question, through you, Chair, for the NDP.

This NDP amendment is stronger than the Liberal subamendment and, through you, Chair, I would ask that our NDP colleague sitting at the table not settle for what the Liberals are wanting her to settle for. As my colleague Ms. Ferreri said, this language matters. The original amendment is very much stronger. It holds the accountability and helps with transparency.

At the end of the day, it's for the kids. This legislation is supposed to be for the children, for the next generation to come into this country and, through you, Chair, I'm just letting our NDP colleague know that her amendment is much better than this subamendment that's being offered by the Liberals.

Thank you.

● (0940)

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Falk.

Seeing no further discussion, I'll call for a recorded vote on....

Ms. Gazan, you have the floor.

Ms. Leah Gazan: I appreciate all the feedback.

The reality is that it is the NDP that put this whole amendment forward in the beginning to have any sort of accountability and transparency in the bill. We have been very clear that we're getting direction from people in the field in terms of what is satisfactory to them—people who are working in the field and advocating in the field.

My fear—to my Conservative colleagues, through you, Chair—is that, with support with members from the field, should we not accept this amendment, there will be nothing. I don't like it, but I will be supporting the Liberal amendment.

The Chair: Ms. Ferreri.

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: To my colleague.... I'm having a hard time understanding the math there, because if you vote no to their subamendment, your amendment.... We've all told you we'll vote for it, so that makes no sense.

You're settling—

Mr. Tony Van Bynen (Newmarket—Aurora, Lib.): I have a point of order, Mr. Chair.

Comments should be through the chair.

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: I know. They should be through you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you, Mr. Van Bynen.

That argument makes no sense. You have the numbers on this side. There are 11 people. One, two, three, four, five, six.... It makes no sense.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Ferreri.

I'll remind members again to direct their comments through the chair.

I call a recorded vote on Ms. Saks's subamendment.

(Subamendment agreed to: yeas 6; nays 5)

The Chair: Ms. Saks.

Ms. Ya'ara Saks: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I've heard everyone around the table. We have a goal here to put in place legislation that will support the agreements that have already been put in place. We want to make sure we have a process and a system that incorporates stakeholders and an open conversation with the federal government and the minister and the national advisory council to ensure that we're getting the best information while the provinces and territories also meet their obligations under their agreements in terms of accountability, transparency and implementation.

In the spirit of that, of strengthening the relationship to ensure that our system is one that is accountable and listening to those in the field, I'd like to propose the following subamendment to new clause 14.1:

The Minister may, on request of the Council, provide the Council with any information respecting the Canada-wide early learning and child care system that is related to the Council's functions and that is in the Minister's possession, if it is within the Minister's authority to share the information.

The Chair: We'll suspend for a moment. The committee will suspend for two minutes.

● (0940)

(Pause)

● (0945)

The Chair: Okay.

Ms. Ya'ara Saks: I'm sorry, Mr. Chair and legislative clerks. We're okay to move ahead with new clause 14.1 as amended. I apologize. I withdraw....

The Chair: Now we're voting on—

[Translation]

Mr. Joël Godin: I would like to be allowed to speak.

[English]

The Chair: —new clause 14.1 as amended.

Mr. Godin.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Joël Godin: Mr. Chair, I have a question for my colleague from the NDP.

I would like to know what she was seeking to do when she proposed her amendment and what made her change her mind and made her vote in favour of the Liberals' subamendment, which actually weakened her own amendment.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Godin.

Mrs. Gray.

Mrs. Tracy Gray: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Now that we have a newly revised amendment here, it completely changes what is before us, what was sent in previously, which was a good and strong amendment dealing with accountability and transparency. This newly amended amendment really doesn't say anything, because saying that the minister may do something.... The minister may get someone a coffee. What's in here.... There's absolutely no accountability that the minister has to do anything. The minister may, if the minister wants to.

It's a completely redundant clause now. There's no purpose to it. You could list anything after this, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Wayne Long: I have a point of order.

With the greatest respect, we've already voted on this.

The Chair: We have not adopted new clause 14.1.

Mr. Wayne Long: I'm sorry.

The Chair: Mrs. Gray has the floor and is in order.

Mrs. Tracy Gray: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I know it's sometimes a little challenging to follow along, with all these subamendments being dropped at the last minute, without prior notice.

The Chair: Let's speak to the clause currently on the floor.

Mrs. Tracy Gray: This dramatically changes the context of it. There's really no purpose to it anymore. There's no accountability, no transparency and no requirement that the minister do anything. It has completely changed the whole context of it.

The Chair: Seeing no further debate, Mr. Clerk, we'll call the vote on new clause 14.1, as proposed by NDP-4 and amended.

(Amendment as amended agreed to: yeas 6; nays 5 [*See Minutes of Proceedings*]).

The Chair: We're still on clause 14.1.

Madam Bérubé, do you wish to move an amendment?

Do you have an amendment you'd like to speak to?

[*Translation*]

Ms. Sylvie Bérubé (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, BQ): Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I propose that Bill C-35 be amended by adding after line 28, page 7 the following new clause:

14.1 Quebec retains sole responsibility for implementing, evaluating and adapting its early learning and child care policies and programs in Quebec, and therefore the council's functions do not extend to early learning and child care, or any other related activity, in Quebec.

This amendment serves to reiterate Quebec's sole jurisdiction in this area. Quebec does not wish to be evaluated or monitored by some council that answers to Ottawa. This area, in which Quebec is a pioneer, falls under provincial jurisdiction. The amendment comes at the request of the Cabinet of Quebec's Finance Minister, and we hope that everyone will support the amendment.

● (0950)

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you.

Before we go to debate, my role as chair is to ensure that the committee follows the rules and orders that are adopted by the House of Commons.

Having said that, Bill C-35 sets out the Government of Canada's vision for a Canada-wide early learning and child care system. The amendment proposes to allow the government of Quebec to retain sole responsibility for its early learning and child care policies and to exclude Quebec from the functions of the national advisory council on early learning and child care created by the bill.

As House of Commons *Procedure and Practice, 3rd Edition* states on page 770, "An amendment to a bill that was referred to committee after second reading is out of order if it is beyond the scope and principle of the bill."

In the opinion of the chair, as advised by the legislative clerk, the amendment is contrary to the bill's stated principle of creating a Canada-wide system. Such a council's function would not extend to the province of Quebec; therefore, I rule the amendment inadmissible. My ruling is not debatable, but it can be challenged.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Sylvie Bérubé: Mr. Chair, I am challenging your decision.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you, Madame Bérubé.

The ruling of the chair has been challenged. I have to put it to the committee.

Is it the committee's wish to uphold the ruling of the chair?

(Ruling of the chair sustained: yeas 10; nays 1)

The Chair: My ruling was on the inadmissibility of the amendment by Madame Bérubé.

We'll now go to a vote on new clause 14.1, as amended.

Mr. Michael Coteau: Are we voting on that, Mr. Chair, if it's ruled inadmissible?

The Chair: New clause 14.1 has already been adopted by the committee, as amended by the subamendment.

Shall clause 15 carry? No amendments have been submitted.

(Clause 15 agreed to)

(On clause 16)

The Chair: We will now move to clause 16. I believe we have amendments.

Madam Ferreri, you have the floor.

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The amended clause put forward replaces line 31 on page 7 with the following:

The Minister and the Minister of Labour must prepare and make public

and line 35 on page 7 with the following:

system, and respecting a national labour strategy to recruit and retain a qualified early childhood education workforce.

I certainly feel like a broken record here, Mr. Chair, with what we continue to bring to the table and with what I've said repeatedly from listening to everybody. The reality is that if there is no consequence for a bad job, if there is no measurement tool for success, how in the world can you ever expect any operation to complete its duty? What is the incentive to do the job?

If the minister and the Minister of Labour are not preparing and making public these annual statements, how are we supposed to measure the success of the program?

It will never work without it, and we need to have that data. If there's anything I've seen in this place—in Parliament, in doing studies in committee—it's that there is a massive lack of data in understanding how things are working. It really removes the emotional part of a lot of these topics that are extremely emotional, to be honest with you. When you have the science, the data and the reports, it speaks volumes in itself.

I would really urge everyone at this table to think long and hard about what we're saying to everybody. We are in a bit of a crisis, quite frankly, in this country, where there is no accountability and no transparency. We see constant ethics violations every day in this country.

If there are no consequences and no measurements in place, what is the point? What incentive is there for anyone to do anything legally, correctly or well? The bar has just continued to slide in this country in terms of doing a good job and of having the welfare of people—in this instance, it's children, our country's most precious resource—at the forefront.

That is my amendment, Mr. Chair.

• (0955)

The Chair: Before I open the floor to discussion, if the amendment by Ms. Ferreri is adopted, then NDP-5 cannot be moved.

Is there discussion on the amendment by Ms. Ferreri?

Madam Saks.

Ms. Ya'ara Saks: Thank you, Chair.

Through you, I would just say that we all want good legislation. We all want what's best for our kids when they head off to day care and have the best possible start. That is why the agreements that we put in place with every province and territory in this country have very specific frameworks in terms of workforce, in terms of reporting to the secretariat, and so on and so forth.

Through you, Chair, naming the Minister of Labour would actually be in conflict with clause 4 in terms of the designation of minister that's in this legislation. I would remind colleagues that at the federal level, the labour minister can only act jurisdictionally on federally regulated workforces. The ECE workforce is a provincial workforce, and appropriately so, through the agreements. Education is also jurisdictionally under provincial purview as part of our Constitution, and the ECE workforce, I would remind colleagues, is part of the provincially regulated system.

That being said, I support our continuing to work with provinces and territories to ensure that there is a strong and capable workforce, respected but also high quality, and to ensure that those mechanisms through the agreements are in place. Frankly, the Minister of Labour simply doesn't have jurisdictional power here. It would be really beyond the scope of the Minister of Labour to engage in such activity with a non federally regulated workforce, because it's really not within their responsibilities.

The Chair: Thank you.

Before we go on, I will clarify that if CPC-9, currently under discussion, is adopted, neither NDP-5 nor BQ-3 can be moved. There's a line conflict with both.

We'll return to the discussion on the amendment of Madam Ferreri.

Ms. Ferreri, you have the floor.

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Why are we ducking accountability? I guess that's the first question. We already did that in the last amendment. What is the other agenda, if we're ducking this? Make the legislation stronger. I mean, there is no doubt—you can't dispute what we've heard—that there's a massive labour problem. You can't fix the child care waitlist if you don't fix the labour shortage. Make the legislation stronger and address this issue.

Respectfully, we're way past jurisdiction. This has already bled into every province and territory. This is done. These are signed. These agreements are already done, and now every witness we've had that was Liberal-leaning has said, yeah, well, it's going to be the responsibility of the provinces and territories. You've set the provinces and territories up to fail without having any accountability and transparency as a federal government to ensure that they're supported for a strong workforce. Again, you're talking out of both sides of your mouth.

Through you, Mr. Chair, it just doesn't make any sense to me that we're passing this. I think there's an opportunity here to be leaders federally, and to help our workforce, and to tell these important workers that we "have their back", which is one of the Liberals' most famous sayings. Again, strengthen the legislation, then, and show that the workforce strategy is important to you. Don't just pass the buck to the provinces, because right now, the way this legislation is written, it is set up to fail.

• (1000)

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Ferreri.

Madam Falk, go ahead on the amendment of Ms. Ferreri.

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk: Thank you so much, Mr. Chair.

Through you, Chair, honestly, the hypocrisy is so frustrating here, hearing from the Liberals that it's provincial jurisdiction and out of jurisdiction. This government does not care about jurisdiction. We know that from looking at previous legislation or even just their telling the provinces what to do with the carbon tax, for example. You do it the Liberal government's way or they enforce it and make you do it anyway.

Mr. Chair, I just need to highlight the fact that the hypocrisy is ridiculous. Using the reasoning that this is out of jurisdiction and it's actually up to the provinces is absolutely ludicrous. I can't believe the Liberals are using that as an excuse to not support this amendment.

The Chair: Mrs. Gray and then Ms. Ferreri.

Mrs. Tracy Gray: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

With regard to this amendment, there's nothing in here about ministerial jurisdiction or provincial jurisdiction. One of the most important parts of this is talking about making public the reporting that will be done. Why would we not want data and reporting to be public?

It eventually does become public, but it's a long and convoluted process. There's a report, and then a member of Parliament has to submit an Order Paper question, or maybe someone in the media has to request an ATIP—access to information. Reports eventually make their way into the public realm. It's just that it takes a lot more effort and work, and in the meantime people don't have information in order to make good decisions.

One of the most important parts of this is to make public the data and reporting that the government will be using in order to make its decisions. Also, presumably, these reports will be used for future negotiations with the provinces, because they'll see what's working and what hasn't worked. This simply makes that information public, so that parliamentarians—whoever the parliamentarians of the day

are—can see that and hold the government to account—whoever the government of the day is—and move forward with better policies.

I can't see why someone wouldn't want to support this, so that there's openness and transparency as to how this child care program is working across the country and so that better decisions can be made. That's really what the premise of this is for.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Ms. Ferreri.

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I think, for anybody watching at home, it's blatant that the Liberals are trying to dodge accountability here. The rationale provided to this committee.... Why wouldn't you want to provide public documents on this? I just want to read this, because I think it's timely when we have the largest federal strike in Canadian history outside the doors here.

This was to committee. It's testimony from the Canadian Union of Public Employees, and it encourages the Government of Canada to develop and implement a workforce strategy that is informed by frontline workers and child care advocates. It says a workforce strategy must result in concrete actions and deliverables on how to make the early learning and child care sector a safe, secure, well-qualified and well-compensated career option.

I'm pretty sure that's the federal government's job, and that's what we're asking for. Again, I'm not sure how many times you can say it in one committee, but it doesn't make any sense.

• (1005)

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Clerk, we'll call a vote on the amendment, CPC-9, of Ms. Ferreri.

(Amendment negated: nays 7; yeas 4)

The Chair: With CPC-9 defeated, we'll now move to NDP-5.

Ms. Gazan.

Ms. Leah Gazan: We're talking about accountability, and I think my amendment is stronger in terms of forcing accountability on the government.

The other thing—just as an aside to one of the reasons I couldn't support...and am proceeding forth with my amendment—is that we don't have a workforce strategy in place. This is problematic, and it's something that I've been bringing up—that this isn't going to work without a workforce strategy. Unfortunately, they haven't put one on the table yet.

What I'm proposing for this one is that Bill C-35, in clause 16, be amended by replacing lines 31 to 35 on page 7 with the following:

16(1) At the end of the fiscal year, the Minister must prepare a report that contains

(a) a summary of information in the Minister's possession relating to the federal investments made in respect of the Canada-wide early learning and child care system during the fiscal year;

(b) an assessment of the progress being made respecting that system, including information on the quality, availability, affordability, accessibility and inclusiveness of early learning and child care programs and services; and

(c) a summary of the advice provided by the Council under paragraph 14(a) and the work of the Council during the reporting period.

(2) The Minister must cause the report to be tabled in each House of Parliament on any of the first 15 days on which that House is sitting after the report is completed.

The Chair: Thank you.

Before we begin discussion, I'd remind committee members that if NDP-5 as moved by Ms. Gazan is adopted, BQ-3 cannot be moved, due to a line conflict.

We will proceed with discussion on the amendment moved by Ms. Gazan.

Ms. Saks, do you want the floor?

Ms. Ya'ara Saks: Thank you, Chair.

I want to thank my colleague from the NDP. She and I have had many conversations about the workforce and the need for really getting it up to speed and making sure that child care.... I know she, herself, was an ECE for many years, and the level of respect for the high-quality training, long hours and strong commitment to our children really needs to be reflected. That's something I continually hope to do in our working tables with the provinces and the Grits. I know that's not the perfect answer, but it's one that's true to the agreements we have today.

I appreciate her efforts in strengthening this. I'd like to make a small subamendment, if I can, in paragraphs (a) and (b), which would be:

(a) a summary of the information in the Minister's possession and within the Minister's authority to disclose relating to the federal investments made in respect of the Canada-wide early learning and child care system during the fiscal year;

and

(b) a summary of the progress being made respecting that system, including information relating to the quality, affordability and inclusiveness of early learning and child care programs and services and to the access to those programs and services;

I'll highlight the reason for these slight changes.

We want to make sure that there are agreements in place; that there's information being shared—some of it is fiscal; and that it's not always within the authority of the minister to be able, as per the agreements, to disclose at certain times when it's under review. We also want to make sure we respect the agreements and the communication we have with the provinces in building out this system, while at the same time making sure that there is an information flow-through that can allow for the right improvements that need to be made based on the data that's being provided.

Thank you, Chair.

• (1010)

The Chair: A subamendment has been moved.

Ms. Ya'ara Saks: I believe that's been submitted to the clerk.

The Chair: Is it in order?

Ms. Ya'ara Saks: Oh, Chair, I'd just like to add, in terms of the other aspects of Ms. Gazan's amendments, we are supportive. It's just paragraphs (a) and (b).

The Chair: We have a subamendment moved by Ms. Saks. I've been advised that it is in order. I will just check before we get into debate that all members have it.

The Clerk: It's been sent.

The Chair: It's been sent to your P9, so all committee members have a copy of the subamendment of Ms. Saks.

I'll go to Ms. Gazan and then Ms. Gray on the subamendment.

I'm sorry, just a moment. Are you asking to suspend before we debate?

Ms. Tracy Gray: Yes.

The Chair: That's fine. Thank you, Ms. Gray and Ms. Gazan.

We'll suspend for two minutes.

• (1010)

_____ (Pause) _____

• (1020)

The Chair: I think we're good to go.

I'm going to go to Ms. Saks.

Did you have your hand up, Mrs. Gray?

Mrs. Tracy Gray: On a point of order, Mr. Chair, this subamendment, I believe, goes against the intent of the bill because it is in fact removing two of the core principles of the bill. The core principles are quality, availability, affordability, accessibility and inclusiveness, and it's removing "availability" and "accessibility".

I believe this subamendment is out of scope. It should be deemed inadmissible.

The Chair: I'll suspend for a moment while I consult with the legislative clerk.

• (1020)

_____ (Pause) _____

• (1020)

The Chair: Mrs. Gray, the subamendment impacts only the content of the annual report, not the bill itself. It does not impact the bill or its reporting processes.

The subamendment by Ms. Saks is in order and is debatable.

We'll go to Ms. Saks, who had her hand up, on the subamendment, which is in order and is debatable.

Ms. Ya'ara Saks: Thank you, Chair.

There has been some discussion, as Mr. Godin, Ms. Gazan and Madame Bérubé know. It is always my fervent effort to make sure we find more common ground rather than disagreement here. I'm not sure procedurally how we do it, but perhaps we can do it on unanimous consent.

I'd like to suggest that we put words back in section (b). It should read, "quality, availability, affordability and accessibility" so that those values and principles are part of that paragraph. If we could do it by UC, that would be great, so we can move on with the work of the day.

The Chair: Before I go to Ms. Ferreri, are you asking to withdraw parts of your...?

Ms. Ya'ara Saks: I'm asking to put back in "availability" and "accessibility".

The Chair: Put them back in.

How was it removed?

Ms. Ya'ara Saks: In the subamendment that we proposed, the words "availability" and "accessibility" were removed.

The Chair: Do you want to withdraw phrasing from your subamendment?

Ms. Ya'ara Saks: No, we're not withdrawing.

We are asking if there is UC here to put in "availability" and "accessibility".

The Chair: Are you adding to your subamendment?

Ms. Ya'ara Saks: I am adding to the subamendment.

The Chair: Okay, that's fine. It's clarified.

Ms. Ya'ara Saks: I'm wondering if we could do it as a friendly update, as a UC, rather than belabouring what is clearly an important issue for all of us at this table.

The Chair: You are asking for unanimous consent to add phrasing to your subamendment.

• (1025)

Ms. Ya'ara Saks: It would be adding the words "availability" and "accessibility".

The Chair: I would like to see that in writing.

We will suspend for a few minutes.

• (1025)

(Pause)

• (1030)

The Chair: I call the meeting back to order.

The clerk has received the subamendment of Ms. Saks. All committee members should have it.

We'll return to the discussion on the subamendment of Ms. Saks.

Give me just a moment.

This is where we are. Ms. Saks moved a subamendment and she requested unanimous consent to add additional verbiage, which you now have.

Does Ms. Saks have unanimous consent to add the phrasing to her subamendment, which you now have?

• (1035)

Mrs. Tracy Gray: Mr. Chair, can I ask a question, even though we've been asked for unanimous consent?

For clarification, are the point (a) changes that were sent earlier still applicable?

The Chair: I'm getting it.

Mrs. Tracy Gray: What was sent to us wasn't the entirety of the newly revised subamendment. It was just (b), so I wanted to clarify that (a) still holds.

Ms. Ya'ara Saks: It still holds.

Mrs. Tracy Gray: Okay.

Ms. Ya'ara Saks: I want to thank the committee for allowing for the time to get it in. It has been heard very clearly at this table and at many other tables about the terminology of availability and accessibility. In the interests of working together, it's presented as such.

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk: I have a point of order, Chair. I could not hear Ms. Saks at all. I wonder if she could speak louder, or if the volume could be turned up.

The Chair: I think her mike was off. She was responding, Ms. Falk, to a question from Ms. Gray, but I'll ask her to rephrase the answer that she provided Ms. Gray.

Do you hear me now, Ms. Falk?

Okay. Go ahead, and then we'll go to Ms. Ferreri.

This is a request for unanimous consent, so I'll have a limited discussion on it.

Ms. Saks, if you could, clarify for Ms. Falk what you just clarified.

Ms. Ya'ara Saks: I will be brief in time to answer Ms. Gray. This is a request for unanimous consent only on (b) to ensure that "availability" and "accessibility" are incorporated as part of the language, as per what's been heard at this table.

Thank you.

The Chair: Go ahead, Ms. Ferreri.

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Obviously, the five pillars in this bill are quality, availability, affordability, accessibility and inclusiveness. The Liberals put forth a subamendment that cut out two of those, which were availability and accessibility. They were caught by the Conservatives. Now they've put them back.

My question is why they were not there to begin with. To my colleague's point, she said, "We consulted," but you never came to us. You said you consulted with the NDP and the Bloc, but you never came over to the Conservatives, so I'm curious on that comment, as well. You want to work with everyone, but there was no consultation over here.

My other question is why they were not in there to begin with?

The Chair: Before we go, there was a request for unanimous consent. Do we have unanimous consent to debate the addition?

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk: I'm sorry, Chair. My hand's up.

I think there's a typo in this. I think it should say "a summary", not "an summary".

The Chair: That's correct, Ms. Falk. It depends on...what is the English manifest does not change the substance, but it is a typo. I'll ask the clerk to recognize that.

Thank you, Ms. Falk.

I need to see if the committee gives unanimous consent to Ms. Saks to add the verbiage before we continue the discussion on it. We cannot discuss it until it's unanimously agreed by the committee to adopt it. Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Chair: I see unanimous consent, so now we will go to the subamendment of Ms. Saks. The subamendment includes the verbiage that we just circulated.

Ms. Falk, do you still have your hand up, or is it...?

• (1040)

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk: I do.

I'm just wondering, since there have been changes now, if the clerk could please send out the updated subamendment with all the parts. As Ms. Gray pointed out, we didn't have letter (a) sent out.

That's just so we know exactly what it is we are discussing at this point.

Thank you.

The Chair: To do that, we'll have to suspend for a couple of minutes.

• (1040) _____ (Pause) _____

• (1045)

The Chair: The committee is resuming from suspension.

I believe that the document requested by Ms. Falk has been circulated, but given that it's 10:45, I will adjourn the meeting.

The first order of business at the next meeting will be a resumption of the clause-by-clause discussion.

The committee is adjourned.

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