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Chair

The Honourable Judy A. Sgro

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• (1100)

[English]

The Chair (Hon. Judy A. Sgro (Humber River—Black Creek, Lib.)): I'm calling to order the meeting of the Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities of the 42nd Parliament. Pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), we are continuing our aviation study. We have a variety of witnesses from the Aéroports de Montréal with us today.

Mr. Badawey.

Mr. Vance Badawey (Niagara Centre, Lib.): Madam Chair, if I may, my intent was to move a motion today. I will look for your guidance as to whether I should be moving it now, or I can wait until later.

The Chair: Given the fact we have witnesses, I would prefer—

Mr. Vance Badawey: That's fine.

The Chair: If you want to read it, you can read it out now, but I would prefer that we deal with it at the appropriate time.

Mr. Vance Badawey: I'll deal with it then. That's fine. Thank you, Madam Chair.

The Chair: We will move to our witnesses. We're very glad to have Mr. Rainville here, the president and chief executive officer of Aéroports de Montréal, as well as Pierre-Paul Pharand, vice-president, airport operations, infrastructure and air services, by video conference.

Welcome to you both. We appreciate very much that you were able to fit this in today and are glad to have found an extra hour to have you come to the committee.

Mr. Rainville, I'll turn it over to you.

Mr. Philippe Rainville (President and Chief Executive Officer, Aéroports de Montréal): Thank you.

My remarks will be mostly in French, but we can answer, obviously, questions in both official languages.

[Translation]

Thank you, Madam Chair, ladies and gentlemen of the committee.

As you know, Aéroports de Montréal, or simply ADM, is the airport authority of Greater Montreal that was created after the transfer of airports in 1992.

My name is Philippe Rainville. Since January 1, 2017, I have been the president and chief executive officer. Accompanying me, by

video conference, is Mr. Pierre-Paul Pharand, who is the vice-president of airport operations, infrastructure and air services development. In that role, Mr. Pharand is in particular responsible for security at the Montréal-Trudeau airport.

ADM is financially independent and does not receive any public funding. Any surpluses that accrue must be reinvested in airport development. These costs are passed on to users. Our revenues are essentially from passengers and from three sources: airline companies, commercial activities, and airport improvement fees, or AIF.

ADM is a mature enterprise, as it is marking its 25th anniversary this year. We are proud of our successes and of the services we offer travellers. For the past 10 years, Montréal-Trudeau has grown by 5% per year on average, and there are no signs of this letting up.

With regard to airport security, ADM works and acts in close collaboration with the law enforcement agencies present at the airport, including: the Canadian Air Transport Security Authority, or CATSA; the Canada Border Services Agency, or CBSA; the RCMP; the Montreal city police, or SPVM; the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, or CSIS; U.S. Customs and Border Protection, or USCBP; and of course Transport Canada.

Let us recall that Transport Canada has the exclusive authority to issue or revoke passes.

ADM also complies with all Transport Canada measures and requirements, and the department audits us regularly.

We have created an additional procedure for the issuing of temporary passes. This procedure includes a security check of those applying for temporary passes, including a criminal record check.

In the past two years, we have invested \$50 million to build four permanent checkpoints for non-passengers and vehicles at entry points in the restricted area. These checkpoints were recommended by the International Civil Aviation Organization, or ICAO, and are required by Transport Canada. Airports do not receive any funding for their construction and operating activities, which run from \$3 million to \$4 million per year. The operating costs for CATSA are estimated at \$20 million per year for Montréal-Trudeau airport, and are funded under an agreement that will expire in just one year.

In addition to the agencies present at the airport, ADM has its own security service. Its mission is to protect passengers, personnel, and facilities from any illegal act that threatens civil aviation at airports. Our security service has more than 200 members in various specialized units. Its responsibilities include emergency response, enforcement of regulations, traffic control, explosives detection, and protection of the restricted area.

In 2003, the airport security service received its accreditation certificate from the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies, or CALEA, attesting to the quality of the operational and administrative management of the service. This certification has been renewed every three years since then.

ADM's airport security service is also the only accredited airport service in Canada, and the seventh in North America to obtain that accreditation.

We have also created a committee that meets monthly to share information with the law enforcement agencies present at the airport, which is also attended by the RCMP on-board safety officers, the Sûreté du Québec, Homeland Security, and the New York State Police.

We regularly conduct many exercises or simulations with our partners and evaluate our processes regularly.

In closing, you can see that Montréal-Trudeau airport has a high concentration of human and technical security resources. These resources are part of permanent and effective coordination structures. We work jointly with law enforcement agencies which are responsible for investigations, prevention, and analyzing various risks.

Madam Chair, members of the committee, rest assured that ADM has taken the necessary steps to protect our facilities, personnel, and the travelling public. Security is and will always be our top priority.

Thank you.

●(1105)

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you very much.

We'll go on to the questions from the committee, starting with Ms. Block.

Mrs. Kelly Block (Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek, CPC): Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

I, too, have a motion that I tabled on Tuesday, and I will take up the suggestion to quickly use the first 30 seconds to read it into the record.

The Chair: I believe we have it in the record from Tuesday. Is it the same motion?

Mrs. Kelly Block: I think it's just changed slightly.

The Chair: Okay, that's fine. Go ahead.

Mrs. Kelly Block: I move:

That the Committee immediately write a letter to the Minister of Transport, with the Government House Leader in carbon copy, requesting that the measures contained in Bill C-49—Transportation Modernization Act be split into the following parts, rail shipping, rail safety, air, marine, in order to facilitate

expedited scrutiny of those measures in C-49 that are designed to address the measures in C-30 which are due to sunset on Tuesday, August 1, 2017.

I do not expect that we will be debating that until committee business.

●(1110)

The Chair: Okay.

Mrs. Kelly Block: Thank you.

I am now going to pass my time on to Mr. Rayes.

The Chair: Go ahead, Mr. Rayes.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Thank you, Madam Chair.

Thank you, Ms. Block.

Thanks to both witnesses for being with us.

Like everyone else, we are concerned about airport security. We see what is happening in various parts of the world, and in Montreal in particular. My colleague, Mr. Luc Berthold, had intended to talk about this, but unfortunately he could not be here. He sends his regrets. His replacement is Mr. Deltell.

Mr. Berthold and I are very concerned by certain investigative reports that we have seen regarding the Montreal airport. I think the committee would like an answer to certain questions.

In various media reports, we have heard about the profile of certain employees, which could be worrisome. We hear all kinds of stories about individuals whose profile could raise questions. Far be it from me to scare people. I think you do a tremendous job and I am not in any way questioning the coordination of all the services. The information we have received, however, is that there are just six armed SPVM officers who work around the airport, and not necessarily in the restricted area. In fact, acts are not necessarily committed in restricted areas.

Is it true that there are six SPVM officers doing that work at the Montreal airport?

Mr. Philippe Rainville: There are six officers who do that work. They work on rotation, of course. They are not there just for an eight-hour shift; they are there almost all the time. My colleague Mr. Pharand can provide some details.

It is true that they are not necessarily in the restricted areas. They are also in public areas which, in my opinion, is reassuring to the public. They are dispatched all over the airport as the need arises.

I will ask Mr. Pharand to elaborate on this.

We indicated that there are monthly committee meetings and that this is all part of risk management by all police services, including our security service.

There are six of them and we think that is enough.

Mr. Alain Rayes: We know that, in Quebec, it is the Sûreté du Québec. Federally, it is the RCMP. You also have more than 200 members of your internal security service, if memory serves me well.

Are there other police services or security officers from your organizations that patrol the public areas of the airport, or is that the responsibility of the six police officers we are talking about?

Mr. Philippe Rainville: Our security officers are all over the site, in vehicles on the access roads and inside the terminal, in the restricted area as well as the public areas.

Mr. Alain Rayes: Okay.

Mr. Philippe Rainville: Interestingly, in Montreal, they use bicycles.

Mr. Alain Rayes: Okay.

Mr. Philippe Rainville: We also see them on bicycles inside the terminal, and of course they use motorized vehicles on the access roads.

Mr. Alain Rayes: I am referring to the public areas. Are there not other police services or security officers who also work in the areas where the SPVM patrols?

Mr. Philippe Rainville: The SPVM patrols on both sides. Our people are on both sides as well.

Mr. Alain Rayes: You might not have the figures, but for how long has there been the equivalent of six police officers on patrol? Has it been for five years, 10 years, or is it something recent?

Mr. Philippe Rainville: That has been the case for a long time.

Mr. Pharand, perhaps you can elaborate on the work of the SPVM and the number of officers on patrol.

Mr. Pierre-Paul Pharand (Vice-President, Airport Operations, Infrastructure and Air Services Development, Aéroports de Montréal): Hello everyone.

The police presence actually dates back to 1998. When Transport Canada announced a change in its security program and the devolution of certain responsibilities to airport operators, we signed agreements with local police services. When I say “we”, I am referring to ADM and other airports that are subject to the same regulations.

I would like to pick up on something that was mentioned. The six police officers who are on contract at the Montréal-Trudeau airport are not the only law enforcement officers present. They are the officers we hired on contract to perform certain specific tasks. The Montreal police is still responsible, however, for crimes committed at the airport. During their shift, officers from the local police station also come to patrol the public areas of the airport, because that is their normal patrol area.

If something happens, the SPVM is of course the first to respond and has primary responsibility. Officers of the RCMP, the Sûreté du Québec, the CBSA, and private security officers—it is not just ADM that has security personnel—are all part of a plan and have a role to play. So you should not just think of six officers as to the protection measures in place.

• (1115)

Mr. Alain Rayes: That's perfect.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you very much.

We move on to Mr. Iacono.

[Translation]

Mr. Angelo Iacono (Alfred-Pellan, Lib.): Thank you, Madam Chair.

I would like to thank the witnesses for being with us this morning.

Thanks also to the clerk for inviting these witnesses again. I am a bit surprised, and even a bit disappointed, that Mr. Berthold was not able to be here today, since he was so adamant about inviting these witnesses. It is unfortunate.

My questions are for either one of you; it is up to you.

As to the incidents reported in the media about employees whose access to the restricted areas was revoked, is that not proof that the system in place is working very well?

Mr. Philippe Rainville: Quite right. From our point of view, if this did not happen, we could certainly wonder.

You have to remember that ADM is just the operator. We are accordingly notified that the passes had to be taken away from those people. We are informed directly by Transport Canada and we can carry out those orders. So that is proof that there is monitoring.

It is not because we reported something. It comes to us from the intelligence service.

To our minds, this really proves that the system is working.

Mr. Angelo Iacono: Mr. Pharand, do you have anything to add?

Mr. Pierre-Paul Pharand: No, not really.

The system does indeed work because the coordination among the agencies works. You have to remember that there are a lot of stakeholders in aviation. There would be reason to question this coordination if there were no such incidents to prove that the stakeholders talk to each other and coordinate their efforts.

Mr. Angelo Iacono: Very well.

In the media reports about the incident in Montreal, the spokesperson for your airport said he did know the identity of the employees whose access had been revoked.

How can it be that the airport itself does not know the identity of the persons who can access restricted areas? Who has that information? Is it well enough communicated to ensure that no one can inadvertently access those areas?

Mr. Philippe Rainville: I need to explain what we're talking about.

Without our knowledge, all of a sudden, we're notified that there is a pass holder whose licence we need to revoke. When we say that we don't know, it's because we didn't know in advance that we had to revoke this person's licence. Obviously, we know who it is as soon as we receive the order to go and get the licence from the person concerned. It's not as if all this was done behind our backs. We're the operator; it's up to us to revoke the pass.

It could be an employee of one of our subcontractors, for example. Obviously, we don't know all of them. Not all of them are ADM employees. In this case, we don't know them personally. However, since we administer the passes, certainly, the moment we're notified, we'll collect the pass.

I think Mr. Pharand answered the question about employee identities.

Mr. Pharand, I think I explained what you meant when you said that we didn't know those employees. Have I?

Mr. Pierre-Paul Pharand: Absolutely. If we aren't the ones to report it, we don't know when an investigation is launched.

Basically, we're at the end of the chain. At first, there's someone who makes a disclosure. Then there's an investigation and risk assessment process. Transport Canada then processes the information and, if there is any action to take, we are informed of the person's identity. That's when we revoke the pass.

Mr. Angelo Iacono: Improvements can always be made when it comes to safety. What priority aspects of airport safety do you think should be focused on? Do you have any specific recommendations for the committee?

Mr. Philippe Rainville: I think we are satisfied with the level of security in place because of the risk management practised and the committees that Mr. Pharand oversees at Aéroports de Montréal.

There may be improvements that could be made to some processes, but I think that has already been brought to the committee's attention. For instance, the waiting period for file assessment, when people apply for temporary passes, varies from three to five months, depending on the case. We feel that period is a little long.

Some previous speakers have made some statements about this, and we recognize the facts. When they said that some airports had added a security measure for temporary passes, they were actually talking about us. Aéroports de Montréal added a criminal background check of people before a temporary pass was issued, because we thought it was a bit too long. I think it was discussed in committee.

So, the efficiency of the process for issuing temporary permits stemming from an application could be improved.

• (1120)

Mr. Angelo Iacono: Perfect. Thank you.

During one of our meetings, your colleagues from the Canadian Airports Council mentioned that the improved program conferred more credibility on Canada with its international partners.

Could you explain what the difference is between the improved program and the former one? What aspects give us international credibility?

Mr. Philippe Rainville: I'm not sure.

[English]

The Chair: Make it as a short response to that difficult question, sir.

[Translation]

Mr. Philippe Rainville: As for the improved program, I imagine that we may be talking here about non-passenger screening. This was an ICAO recommendation that Transport Canada began implementing in 2016. We have just completed this implementation. There is now much tighter control of non-passengers. This is clearly an improvement, but at a really high cost. We are still talking to

CATSA about who should pay the bill. However, the security measures have basically been considerably strengthened because, obviously, all the employees—

[English]

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. Rainville.

Monsieur Aubin.

[Translation]

Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP): Thank you, Madam Chair.

I'd like to welcome the two ADM representatives.

I would like to mention that it really was the unanimous desire of the members of this committee to receive them as part of this study. So I thank them for being with us. The absence of one of the committee's permanent members in no way changes our desire to want to hear from them.

Mr. Rainville, in your opening remarks, you mentioned \$50 million for the construction of four screening points. Are these four screening points in addition to others, or are they screening points you've modernized? Were there fewer, too few or none before?

Mr. Philippe Rainville: There were screening points, but they were markedly strengthened. We are now doing much more systematic and meticulous searches.

Mr. Pharand, I'll let you explain about the non-passengers.

Mr. Robert Aubin: In fact, I have another question for you that may guide your answer. It was my next question.

When airport employees go through one of the screening points to a secure area, do you systematically search or check each pass, or is the search random, like a person presses a button for instance and, if the light turns green, they are exempt from the check and, if it turns red, they have to stop? How does it work?

Mr. Pierre-Paul Pharand: The non-passenger screening program was established in 2014. The process was implemented slowly starting in 2014. Today, regulations require that employees have their identities validated and then undergo a random search. That's the case for permanent pass holders. People waiting for a pass or with a temporary pass systematically have their identities validated and undergo a full search.

Mr. Robert Aubin: Thank you.

It'll seem like I'm jumping from subject to subject, but it's because I have a range of things I'd like to discuss in these five minutes.

In recent weeks and months, we've heard representatives from airport administrations and municipal councils take a position on future privatization of Canadian airports. The City of Montreal council, among others, has said it is against it.

Has Aéroports de Montréal taken a position on this?

Mr. Philippe Rainville: Absolutely.

First, I'd like to point out that airports have already been privatized. What we're talking about is the opening of capital to airports. Indeed, we are 100% financed by the debt. We could eventually open up the capital. In this way, we could have shareholders and change our status as an NPO. I don't want to talk in overly technical terms, but that's what we're talking about.

So we are totally independent and privatized. And we are very proud of our status.

It's very clear to us at ADM: if the opening of capital allows us to improve our services and reduce our costs, we will be in favour of this change. However, I admit that it hasn't yet been demonstrated that services would be improved or costs would be reduced.

We know what paying for equity costs. Investors will demand a significantly higher return on investment than current debt holders. At present, our interest rates for financing are less than 4%. But private investors would ask us for a rate of 7% or 8%. Since interest rates are low in Canada at this time, it would not be appropriate to finance them with equity.

The times are changing. At ADM, we must think about profitability. There are other things that are dragging on in our region. We would like to reopen our agreement with Transport Canada on rent, so that adjustments can be made. For example, we pay the same rent for our industrial park in Mirabel as for the Montréal-Trudeau airport, where there is—

• (1125)

Mr. Robert Aubin: I'll interrupt you there, since it may be related to the next question I want to ask you.

People always say that, proportionately, the costs are higher at the Montréal-Trudeau airport than at other Canadian airports.

Is it related to the money you have to invest in security, or is it the situation you're talking about?

Mr. Philippe Rainville: The same Transport Canada regulations apply to the Montréal-Trudeau airport. All things being equal, the costs of safety and security are the same as elsewhere.

The fact of having two airport platforms represents an additional cost. That is what I wanted to emphasize. We inherited this situation. We would like to reopen the agreement with Transport Canada.

Mr. Robert Aubin: Thank you.

During our study of aviation safety, many witnesses told us that a great number of incidents had happened at the end of the runway. I'll broaden the scope of the subject here; we're not in an airport, but still, the planes land and take off in your region. The Transportation Safety Board has even made a recommendation that the runways be extended so that a type of gravel trap can be installed. I don't know what that is, exactly.

Has that been done already?

If not, in practical terms, given the land available, is it possible to do this in Montreal?

If it isn't possible, what can we do?

Mr. Philippe Rainville: We already have what we call the RESA. I'll let Mr. Pharand tell you about it.

Mr. Pierre-Paul Pharand: The standards for our RESAs, that is, our runway end safety areas, already exceed those of Transport Canada and are in line with those of ICAO. Space isn't a problem for us. In fact, the situation at the end of the runway is not a problem at the Montréal-Trudeau airport.

Mr. Robert Aubin: As for the—
[English]

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. Aubin. I'm sorry, but you're out of time.

We'll try to get back to you, if we can.

Mr. Badawey.

Mr. Vance Badawey: I think Mr. Aubin is on a great line of questioning. I'm interested in what more he has to ask and some of the answers, so I'm going to allow my time for Mr. Aubin.

The Chair: Do you mean all of your time?

Mr. Vance Badawey: Yes.

Robert, go ahead. Keep it going.

[Translation]

Mr. Robert Aubin: Thank you, Mr. Badawey.

I wanted to ask one or two more questions. It has to do with fire services at airports.

When landing or taking off, we see many fire trucks. People really like it when they're in the garage, because it means that everything is good.

Does the same fire service handle both the service on the runways and in the airport itself?

Mr. Philippe Rainville: I'll let Mr. Pharand explain this to you in detail.

Mr. Pierre-Paul Pharand: Our service specializes in runway operations, in other words, all operations related to aircraft. However, if there was an incident in the terminal, which is essentially our livelihood, firefighters would intervene. They are trained and equipped to act in both cases, but their main mission is focused on runways and aircraft.

Mr. Robert Aubin: I'll rephrase my question so it's more specific. If there was an attack at the airport, something no one wants to happen, would the Montreal firefighters be the first responders or would it be the airport firefighters?

Mr. Pierre-Paul Pharand: In all cases, both services are called. They work together.

Mr. Robert Aubin: Do they have a joint communications system? As we saw on Parliament Hill during an event that I don't necessarily want to recount or recall, the various police forces, be they the municipal police, the RCMP or the police officers in the House, did not have the same communications system, which made the operation rather difficult.

Mr. Pierre-Paul Pharand: In our case, the problem of communication doesn't exist because the principle of confidentiality among firefighters doesn't exist, unlike the police.

Our firefighters and the city firefighters are called to respond to incidents extremely frequently. So they are used to working together, not to mention the many exercises that we hold regularly.

So there is no problem when it comes to communication and coordination.

•(1130)

Mr. Robert Aubin: What are the delays if you have to use the municipality's services, either police or firefighters? I'm assuming the municipal fire station isn't necessarily close to the airport.

Mr. Pierre-Paul Pharand: Actually, the municipal fire station is on the other side of the Dorval roundabout. Firefighters can be on site in three or four minutes if they're at the station.

Mr. Robert Aubin: Thank you very much.

[*English*]

The Chair: You have three and a half minutes left, Mr. Badawey.

Mr. Vance Badawey: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Great questions, Robert, in terms of the tiered responses.

My question has a lot to do with that communication. How well do the different services work together, the RCMP, CBSA, and the local services, such as the police, ambulance, fire? Is it a tiered response that happens? Do they all get tiered, or is it just one communication that goes out?

Then once an incident is under way, are they in constant communication? Are they constantly working together? Is there a protocol? How does that work? How well does it work? Is it working at all?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Philippe Rainville: I took the position on January 1, 2017, and one of the first things I looked at was our emergency measures. Although I had been at ADM for a decade, I was still concerned about this because of my new role.

The events in Fort Lauderdale showed us the coordination required in cases like that. There were also the incidents in Brussels. In both cases, we sent our people there to learn lessons. I was reassured by what was reported to me.

I would ask my colleague, Mr. Pharand, to summarize the coordination efforts to reassure you, as he managed to reassure me.

Mr. Pierre-Paul Pharand: Indeed, to ensure that our emergency response plan is functional, it is validated on a regular basis through exercises, audited by Transport Canada and verified by CALEA. In fact, our security service is accredited by CALEA, as Mr. Rainville mentioned.

Both the exercises and the actual incidents, which are then the subject of feedback, allow us to improve and ensure that the communication channels and the alerting system are always at the cutting edge of technology and meet the needs.

When an incident is triggered, all key players in the response systems and services have access to a radio that allows them to listen and exchange communications immediately, pending the establishment of a command system.

A number of years ago, we adopted the widely-recognized incident command system, the international standard for these kinds of events. The system is regularly validated and tested, either in real events or by exercises.

[*English*]

Mr. Vance Badawey: Good. That's fine.

The Chair: We have Mr. Ellis for six minutes.

Mr. Neil Ellis (Bay of Quinte, Lib.): Good morning, and thanks for coming.

I just want to go back to your accreditation. You say you are accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies. Could you basically explain that organization? Is there a cost to accreditation? It says, basically, it's every three years. I know they have different levels of accreditation. When you go through that accreditation is there a score? How do you fix any outliers? Have you ever failed accreditation?

You say you're the only agency in Canada that has received this accreditation.

The second question would be, is there a reason that other establishments and airport-type agencies haven't applied for this?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Philippe Rainville: You ask quite a relevant question.

We evaluate the situation each time we want to renew our accreditation. Of course, there is a cost attached to it. At Aéroports de Montréal, we have always decided up to now to follow CALEA.

I will ask Mr. Pharand to explain the reasons for our accreditation.

•(1135)

Mr. Pierre-Paul Pharand: You have to see the CALEA system like an ISO system. The commission was established in the United States a number of years ago. It has set standards for police services, law enforcement services, training centres and telecommunications centres, in order to raise the level of professionalism in those organizations.

When we at Aéroports de Montréal were establishing our airport security, we did not want to limit ourselves to the minimum standards or the basic measures in Canadian regulations. We wanted to push that a little further in order to ensure that we were providing the best possible service to the travelling public.

We received that accreditation for the first time in 2003. There are some 400 standards to comply with. In our case, after the third accreditation, as we had obtained excellent results, we became what CALEA called a "flagship" at the time, a standard bearer, if you will. This means an organization that has been accredited on several occasions, that has reached a certain level of excellence, and that becomes a model for other agencies to follow.

However, you will understand that, because it is an ISO-like system, it operates on a voluntary basis. No organization is obliged to submit to the process; it is the result of a business decision. In fact, investments have to be made each year in order to maintain the level of excellence that the commission recognizes.

[English]

Mr. Neil Ellis: Is there a cost involved in this? With the cost, is there a certain amount for different agencies?

[Translation]

Mr. Philippe Rainville: The only answer I can give you is that safety costs make up a considerable part of our operating costs. From year to year, they represent from 5% to 7% of our operating budget. So the costs are very high.

As for the exact cost of what we have to do to conform to the CALEA standards, I imagine that the cost of the accreditation itself must be public. However, the costs go beyond that, because you have to consider all our related training programs.

I can tell you that we spend from 5% to 7% of our annual budget on safety matters. So we're talking about a little more than \$10 million a year.

Am I right on that, Mr. Pharand?

Mr. Pierre-Paul Pharand: Yes.

[English]

Mr. Neil Ellis: Another thing is, you say that Transport Canada does a regular audit of you. Is it yearly, every three years, every four years? I guess, with that answered, I'll have another question on this, depending on the answer.

[Translation]

Mr. Philippe Rainville: The lease that governs our relationships with Transport Canada involves all airport activities. They include safety and security, but there are other things. The annual audit looks at all activities.

In terms of safety measures alone, is there anything other than the annual audit, Mr. Pharand?

Mr. Pierre-Paul Pharand: Actually, Transport Canada has inspectors on site seven days a week year round, to make sure that safety practices conform to the regulations. So we do not just have a periodic audit, we also have continuous oversight from Transport Canada.

Mr. Philippe Rainville: Previously, I was responsible for construction engineering, and I can tell you that the violations pointed out by Transport Canada are part of airport administrators' daily work, not just in Montreal, but everywhere in Canada. Transport Canada issues violation notices whenever it feels that there is a safety flaw.

[English]

Mr. Neil Ellis: I'm confused by that answer on the auditing. I guess the confusion might be in the translation.

An audit usually is a surprise audit: they call you up yearly or every two years and they drop by. What I'm seeing here, in this sentence, is that the auditing is done regularly, that you're auditing things every day. I'm confused by that answer.

Mr. Philippe Rainville: I think it's a question of inspection versus auditing. Auditing as far as we're concerned is the standard annual process.

Mr. Neil Ellis: That's the process I want to ask about.

Mr. Philippe Rainville: That's what we call the Transport Canada audit. What Pierre-Paul is talking about is day-to-day inspections.

Mr. Neil Ellis: Yes, so how often are you audited?

Mr. Philippe Rainville: Annually, there's a formal annual audit by Transport Canada, but there are daily safety inspections by it as well.

Mr. Neil Ellis: Okay.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Ellis.

Mr. Rayes.

[Translation]

Mr. Alain Rayes: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Before I start, I would like to draw your attention to the fact that my friend opposite had no reason to point out my colleague's absence, nor any right to do so. I think it was inappropriate on his part. That is all I want to say on the matter. Personally, I prefer to show my colleague some understanding because I know how very important he feels this topic to be. My intentions were good. I can assure you that he wanted to be here, but he had to be away for an urgent personal matter. That is all I wanted to say about it.

Now, here are my questions.

You said that traffic is increasing by about 5% per year. If we go by what we read in various articles, and the fact that people are going on vacation, especially in the winter to get a little bit of sun, I doubt if the traffic is going to decrease. You confirm that yourself.

Does the level of people's security also go up each year? Is it in proportion to the increasing traffic and the budgets allocated? I would like to know if you take that into consideration. I imagine that that the presence of more and more people also requires more surveillance, more training, and more resources in order to ensure security.

• (1140)

Mr. Philippe Rainville: Our operating costs correspond to the demand. We have to provide the service. I think that some speakers referred to that at your last meeting. It's not that we are short on resources, it is rather that the level of service is going down, both with customs, where adjustments are being made, and with CATSA. The lineups are a little longer as the agencies adjust.

We certainly meet periodically with people from those services. We tell them about the passenger numbers we expect in the upcoming periods. The Canada Border Services Agency knows when flights are arriving and can make adjustments. However, it is taking longer, I admit. Those agencies have to be given the resources that will allow them to adjust to the increase in the number of passengers.

You have to realize that civil aviation is undergoing phenomenal growth, especially in Montreal. Imagine an annual increase of 5% for infrastructure like jetways. It is not long before the increase becomes 20% or 30%. That is what is happening in Montreal. In the last two years, the number of passengers has grown by 7%, and 2017 is predicted to be another record year.

The agencies take some time to adjust. However, in their defence, I have to tell you that we have discussions and we put a lot of energy into trying to encourage them to follow us and to follow the evolution of the industry.

Mr. Alain Rayes: So, if I follow your reasoning, are you saying that to decrease the line-ups that are more and more frequent at Montreal-Trudeau airport without adversely affecting security, all we need is more staff?

As I understand it, in order not to decrease the level of security, financial resources have to be allocated to hiring staff or to new technologies. Perhaps there are technologies that can achieve that result. Otherwise, the travellers automatically bear the brunt, either in the quality of the service or in the time they have to wait.

Mr. Philippe Rainville: You make a good point. In terms of technology, there is CATSA Plus that revolutionizes the way in which checkpoints are managed. So we have the solution to improve the flow while still maintaining the same level of security. However, resources are needed to deploy the system, and no one has come up with them yet.

Right now, we either get longer lineups or better technology. It basically comes down to that.

Mr. Alain Rayes: That's great.

As I understand your comments, your level of security is very high. Would you say that it is higher than at other Canadian and international airports?

Of course, I am talking about major city airports. There is no need to compare situations that are not comparable.

Mr. Philippe Rainville: I will talk about North America and Canada.

For Canada, you see the efforts that Montreal is making. We have obtained CALEA certification. We have safety officers. We even have firefighters available. Montreal tends to do everything that is reasonable to do to ensure safety—

Mr. Alain Rayes: Let me ask the question again. Compared to the security services in airports like New York, Fort Lauderdale, Paris, Barcelona or Toronto, are those at Montreal Airport above average or at the average?

Mr. Philippe Rainville: Everything revolves around risk management. Each country, each city determines its own security level in terms of risk management. Everyone involved is part of that. Mr. Pharand spoke earlier about the monthly meeting and I will mention it too. In terms of the risks we manage at Montreal airport—

• (1145)

Mr. Alain Rayes: If the risks to be managed were the same at all those airports and an international incident occurred, would our level of security be higher than or the same as at other airports?

Mr. Philippe Rainville: Our level is the equivalent of what is found elsewhere, given the risk.

Mr. Alain Rayes: Thank you.

I imagine that you go and see best practices elsewhere. Can you tell me about the practices used in Montreal that set you apart from the airports with which you are in competition?

I suppose “competition” is not exactly the proper term. Let's just say things that are done elsewhere, internationally.

[English]

The Chair: Can you give a short answer if at all possible?

[Translation]

Mr. Alain Rayes: You can just give me one example, if you want.

Mr. Philippe Rainville: In Montreal, we have a canine unit that can detect explosives.

Mr. Alain Rayes: So not all airports provide that service.

Mr. Philippe Rainville: Correct.

Mr. Alain Rayes: Thank you.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Go ahead, Mr. Iacono.

[Translation]

Mr. Angelo Iacono: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Mr. Rainville, we have often heard about wait times, sometimes very long, that people have to put up with before going through security. As this summer looks like it will be busy in terms of tourism, I was wondering how ADM was planning on reducing the wait times in peak periods.

You answered a question about this from my colleague, but I personally would like to know how, with the financial resources at your disposal, you are planning to reduce the wait times this coming summer.

Mr. Philippe Rainville: Clearly, we are very involved in managing customs, given that the airport provides physical locations for customs. That being the case, we are working together with the Canada Border Services Agency and we have to coordinate what we do. That is what we did following the incident—what happened last year can indeed be described as an incident.

You have to understand that Montreal-Trudeau Airport is extremely busy during the summer. Montreal airport has a European focus. Flights to Europe are concentrated at the end of the day while aircraft returning from Europe almost all arrive at the end of the afternoon. That is the time when the bottleneck causing the wait times tends to occur.

We have met with the people from Canada Border Services Agency in order to set up an action plan for the coming summer. We have established a temporary processing centre, which will become permanent, for passengers in transit. For their part, they have made sure that they are going to have officers on duty at peak times. We also post the wait times.

Despite all those efforts that we are making together, there will still be wait times longer than 30 minutes this summer during that very busy time. That situation, which really is unusual in Montreal, will be particularly acute in August, which is our busiest period of the year.

Mr. Angelo Iacono: You mentioned just now that the solution lies in CATSA Plus. How is that going to help you in the long term?

Mr. Philippe Rainville: CATSA works at every departure checkpoint. The problem I was referring to involves customs at arrivals.

For departures, Montreal does not really have unreasonable line-ups. The CATSA Plus program is partly operational in Montreal. At departures, things are going well, they do not have the problem. The situation is completely different in some other Canadian airports, but, in Montreal, things are going relatively well.

For us, the bottleneck is in customs for arrivals. As I was explaining to you, we are in the process of taking care of it.

[English]

Mr. Angelo Iacono: You mentioned before that the communication lines are pretty good between the different levels of organizations at the time of a crisis. Is there cross-communication among airports across Canada, as well as internationally?

[Translation]

Mr. Philippe Rainville: Mr. Pharand, can you answer, please?

Mr. Pierre-Paul Pharand: When a risk is identified, airports share information, both formally and informally. That does not just happen between airport operators. Police and security forces also communicate with each other, such as the RCMP, Transport Canada and CSIS. They make sure that information is shared when an airport or a geographic location becomes overcrowded.

[English]

Mr. Angelo Iacono: This question is for Mr. Pharand.

You stated in an interview that “We do conduct, on a continuous basis, threat analysis, risk analysis, vulnerability analysis, just to make sure we can face any kind of threat”.

Can you please elaborate on all these types of analysis, including with respect to the time frame, and how you proceed in these different types of threat, risk, and vulnerability analysis? What do you mean by that exactly?

• (1150)

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre-Paul Pharand: It happens on two levels.

First, we analyze the threat based on the information that Transport Canada, or other law enforcement agencies provide us, because we are not an intelligence agency.

Then we assess the vulnerability of our physical facilities, which provides us with a risk assessment. We mitigate those risks through measures that may involve personnel, material resources, or technology. This strategic situation assessment is done almost annually.

It is also done tactically. Take an incident like the one in Fort Lauderdale, or in Brussels. We immediately conduct an assessment to find out whether the threat for us has changed. Does the way an incident took place somewhere else expose a vulnerability for us that perhaps we may not have seen? We study the response. We go and look. We have discussions with our colleagues in the other airport and law enforcement agencies to see how they reacted and how their response worked, so that we are improving ourselves on an ongoing basis.

[English]

Mr. Angelo Iacono: I have one last question.

The Chair: Make it very short.

Mr. Angelo Iacono: When something happens at an airport somewhere in Canada, or around the world, what do you do?

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre-Paul Pharand: First, we talk to our partners to find out whether the threat level has immediately changed. If something leads us to believe that the threat level has immediately changed, we have to implement measures to protect ourselves against that threat.

If there is no demonstrable threat, we will monitor the situation. We will first let our colleagues at the affected airport handle their own situation and, at the appropriate time, we will be in touch with them to find out whether they are prepared to share information. Generally, we pay them a visit.

In the aviation world, fortunately, airports do not compete with each other. Consequently, it is much easier in our industry to share information about best practices in security, in terms both of threats and of actions.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you very much for that valuable information.

Go ahead, Mr. Deltell.

[Translation]

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

My thanks to the witnesses. I am glad to meet you.

Mr. Rainville, a few moments ago, Mr. Iacono and Mr. Rayes asked you about CATSA Plus, but I would like to go back to the subject.

You say that there is no problem with departure checkpoints. But that does not mean that there could not be if the service were to increase. We are heading in that direction, with an annual growth rate of 7%.

It is the same with any new technology: if you buy anything brand new, anything on the cutting edge, you pay a lot. If you wait five years, you can get it at half price. But, after seven years, it is not worth a thing.

How do you assess the best time to acquire CATSA Plus? Do you have to invest in CATSA Plus or are you going to wait? How do you see CATSA Plus working in the future?

Mr. Philippe Rainville: Our first concern is the level of service. I'm going to sort of stand up for the other Canadian airports that are really waiting for CATSA Plus in order to increase the level of service. The CATSA Plus program has truly been tested for a long time, and it significantly increases the efficiency of the process, while maintaining the same level of safety. It has been extensively tested in Vancouver, among other places. CATSA has that assurance, and it is up to them to determine that. The solution is ripe, in our view, and it is ready to be implemented.

Mr. Gérard Deltell: How much would it cost?

Mr. Philippe Rainville: I do not know.

Mr. Pharand, do we have an idea of the costs for Montreal?

Mr. Pierre-Paul Pharand: No.

Mr. Deltell, I would like to point out that we are not responsible for the process and the equipment. It belongs to CATSA. All we can do is put pressure on the federal agency to improve its processes and services. When it comes to CATSA Plus equipment, all we have to provide is the physical space. CATSA decides on the number of machines, the equipment to be used, and how the equipment is used.

Mr. Gérard Deltell: Pardon my ignorance, but how does CATSA Plus compare to what we have right now? What would it be able to bring? How does it facilitate the movement of passengers?

• (1155)

Mr. Pierre-Paul Pharand: Actually, CATSA, which is the organization, has decided to call the new equipment, or the new process, CATSA Plus. The equipment itself has some improvements, but the difference between CATSA's regular service and the CATSA Plus program is the way the luggage and passengers are handled.

Let me give you an example. Right now, if someone enters the regular line, there is one place to drop personal belongings. In the CATSA Plus line, four passengers can drop their belongings at the same time.

Also, at the inspection end, when a suspicious item is detected, there is only one line. The luggage comes out and it has to be intercepted. In the CATSA Plus line, when something is detected, the luggage is automatically sent to a second line, thereby not hindering the movement of luggage that doesn't pose a problem.

So the technology is improved, but also the process is significantly improved.

Mr. Gérard Deltell: That's interesting, but I'll be very honest with you: I do not know anyone who likes to go through security. It is really unpleasant for a passenger; people don't feel like flying because of it. The system you are describing may be more user-friendly. It actually cannot be worse than the current experience. It's not your fault, it's the international rules. Regardless of the airport, that's what happens, and it's really unpleasant.

Do you have a suggestion on how to make it a little more pleasant? Have any studies or work been done on making the experience less unpleasant for passengers?

Mr. Philippe Rainville: The service is provided to us; we have no choice. In some countries, the airport itself manages it. You are asking if we have any suggestions. If one day we were given the funds and the responsibility, we would try to improve the process, but that is not the case at the moment.

Mr. Gérard Deltell: I do not know anyone on this planet who enjoys taking off their belt, shoes, and putting everything on the floor quickly.

Mr. Philippe Rainville: It's the same everywhere, I assure you.

Mr. Gérard Deltell: What is your plan for customs? What investments are needed? What would you like from the federal authorities?

Mr. Philippe Rainville: This summer, as I said, it will not be easy. We are investing \$8 million in the short term to remove transit passengers from the lineups. We are doing that this summer. It should give us a good boost.

In August, we must also manage the arrival of students. That is also complex. We will try to let them know that they must have the required documents ready, not in their suitcases, but in their possession. That will also help us.

From a more permanent point of view, at ADM, we are going to establish a connecting passenger processing centre, a permanent centre—

[English]

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Mr. Rainville, may I please interrupt.

Monsieur Aubin, we've managed to get you two last minutes.

[Translation]

Mr. Robert Aubin: I want to hear the rest.

Mr. Philippe Rainville: As part of ADM's preliminary budget, about \$20 million is earmarked to establish a permanent transit passenger processing centre. We will also be displaying the wait times. For us, I would say that our plan is clear as to what we are going to do.

The authorities need to improve processes and invest the necessary resources. They made a commitment to invest resources for the summer. However, as I said, in spite of that, we must still be reasonable and consider the high peak period in Montreal where wait times should be about 30 minutes. This is not unreasonable, and it's pretty much the norm across Canada and around the world. A 30-minute waiting period at customs is not unreasonable. That is what we should be seeing this summer.

In the longer term, each side must—

Mr. Robert Aubin: Let's go back to this summer. You're talking providing the resources, but are you able to assess the missing money that the federal government should be investing?

Mr. Philippe Rainville: As I said, I'm doing my part. We agreed on a game plan. It is up to the other agencies to do their part and to invest the resources. They said that they would put the resources in place to achieve a reasonable wait time. They hired people for the summer. Everyone has their share of things to do and we agree on that. Everyone is doing their part. We will see how it will play out in the summer.

Mr. Robert Aubin: I have often heard that, at the Montreal airport, despite the wait time when we return, the baggage is still not there once we clear customs. It has happened to me personally.

What is the problem? Is it because there are also security measures for the arriving baggage?

Mr. Philippe Rainville: No, it has nothing to do with that.

As you know, there are a lot of people involved at an airport, but it is still an airport. Actually, the airlines are the ones unloading the baggage. As the airport administrator, we put the baggage on the plane and run the explosives detection. Earlier, I mentioned the canine unit; that is not for baggage, but for the public areas.

• (1200)

Mr. Robert Aubin: Yes.

Mr. Philippe Rainville: I wanted to clarify that, to make sure you understand.

To go back to your question, I must say that unloading the baggage is the responsibility of the airlines.

Mr. Robert Aubin: Thank you.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you all very much.

Thank you to our witnesses. I think we got valuable information from you.

I will suspend momentarily for the witnesses to leave.

• (1200)

_____ (Pause) _____

• (1220)

The Chair: Resuming our meeting, we have Mr. Badawey.

Mr. Vance Badawey: Thank you, Madam Chair.

As I started to do at the beginning of the meeting, I would like to introduce the motion I was speaking about at the last meeting and that I submitted to the clerk as a notice of motion in both official languages on May 30. I move:

That the Committee meet from Monday, September 11, 2017, to Thursday, September 14, 2017, inclusively, for the purposes of the consideration of Bill C-49, An Act to amend the Canada Transportation Act and other Acts respecting transportation, and to make related and consequential amendments to other Acts, provided that the order of reference is received prior to the adjournment of the House for the summer; and, that each party send their lists of proposed witnesses for the purposes of this study to the Clerk of the Committee by Tuesday, August 1, 2017; and that the Chair be empowered to coordinate the necessary witnesses, resources, and scheduling to complete this task.

Madam Chair, may I speak on this motion?

The Chair: Please do.

Mr. Vance Badawey: As I alluded to at the last meeting, colleagues, you will recall that we conducted a study on freight rail transportation in 2016 and, more specifically, the transportation of grain and agricultural products. We heard from numerous stakeholders that the measures in Bill C-30, also known as the Fair Rail for Grain Farmers Act, including extended interswitching, were not in fact ideal. The legislation was often characterized as a temporary band-aid, hastily applied after the grain-handling crisis in 2013 and 2014, a piece of legislation with many flaws.

Many farmers and other shippers felt that the 160-kilometre extended interswitching did not go far enough. Notably, sectors such as mining and forestry, in particular, pointed out that they too would like to benefit from interswitching but were usually outside the 160-kilometre radius. At the same time, rail companies objected to the rates not being determined on a commercial basis and argued that this would be a disincentive to them as regards making needed investments in their infrastructure.

In the absence of a solution that could address these various conflicting interests, this committee ended up passing a motion calling on the government to extend the provisions for interswitching that were due to sunset for one year, until August 2017, but only until such time as the minister could find a better—and I want to stress this point—longer term solution.

The good news is that with Bill C-49, the proposed transportation modernization act, the minister is proposing just such a long-term solution, including a new measure, calling for longer haul interswitching, which will be available to captive shippers within a 1,200-kilometre radius.

I understand that the initial reaction from shippers, including farmers, has been very positive thus far. However, there will be a legislative gap between when the interswitching provisions in Bill C-30 sunset in August 2017 and when Bill C-49 receives royal assent, assuming it does, likely sometime later this year, depending upon how long it takes to get through the House and, of course, the Senate. Some shippers are understandably concerned about this gap and would like to start benefiting from the new and improved measures contained within Bill C-49 as soon as possible. I know our government has heard these concerns and wants to help, and I'm sure that members of the committee, especially those in sensitive areas such as Saskatchewan, have heard the same concerns.

I understand that the government House leader has indicated a willingness to deal with Bill C-49 at second reading and get it to our committee before the summer adjournment. If that in fact happens, I propose that our committee meet prior to the House's returning in the fall to study Bill C-49. This would provide us an opportunity to hold extended meetings and do a lot of work in a relatively short period of time. Ideally, we could even complete our study before the House gets back in September.

●(1225)

I think this would go a long way to speeding up the process and delivering results for our grain farmers and other captive shippers who are eagerly awaiting the passage of this bill and will certainly be supportive, in our view, of the certainty that this bill will provide.

Bill C-49 also includes a number of other important measures, notably a passenger rights regime for air travellers that is long overdue and that I'm eager to start studying.

I hope our colleagues in opposition will join me and the rest of the members of the committee in supporting our farmers and agree to hold the meetings prior to the return of the House in September. I know that on this side of the table we're prepared to do that work. We're prepared to bring this bill forward, we're prepared to support our farmers, and we're prepared to expedite this process to hopefully get Bill C-49 through and fill the gap between the August 1 sunset and the passage of this very important bill.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Badawey.

Mr. Aubin.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Robert Aubin: Thank you, Madam Chair.

My thanks to Mr. Badawey for this motion.

The first thing is that the date of our work does not matter to me. We are elected to do this work. As soon as it is necessary, we will be there. It could be in July, August or September. That's not really the issue.

However, there are some questions I cannot find an answer to.

First, let's face it, Bill C-49 is an omnibus bill because it amends 13 pieces of legislation. If we meet before work resumes in September to answer questions about Bill C-30, we will be late because the deadline is August 1 or July 31. I do not understand why we would meet in September to solve a problem for which we would already be late.

If I were told that we would be meeting for one or two weeks, holding two to four meetings to deal urgently with what needs to be done for grain transportation, it would be one thing. However, I also see that we want to study Bill C-49 in the interval between the dates proposed in the motion and the return to the House for the new session. In that case, I say no.

Before I vote in favour of the motion, I would like to get an idea of how many hours we want to spend on Bill C-49. No less than 13 pieces of legislation are affected. There is no way that we will manage to do it properly in four meetings. That doesn't quite make sense. I wonder where the urgency to work in September comes from if we are already late.

Can we have an idea of the time that we want to spend on Bill C-49, to see if we have time to cover all the topics? I know that the first come, first serve game works, but there is also a motion coming up that proposes that the minister be asked to split the bill so that we can quickly study what is urgent and take the time we need to study the rest of the bill.

If I have to vote on those motions in the order in which they are moved, because I do not have the information I need and the ruling has not been made to ask the minister to divide his bill so that we can deal with what is most urgent and study the rest afterwards, I will unfortunately have to take issue with that. However, that's not because I don't want to work in September.

●(1230)

[*English*]

The Chair: Mr. Badawey.

Mr. Vance Badawey: Those are great questions, Mr. Aubin, and I think they're valid. Of course, with the motions we have coming up after this motion, we can deal with some of those issues, such as the possibility of splitting up the bill.

The one thing I want to make very clear is that the bill is deliberate, with respect to a lot of what we've been hearing. It started with the review of the Canada Transportation Act. It's basically amending the Canada Transportation Act based on a lot of what that report actually highlighted, what it looked at it, what it did for, I guess—and correct me if I'm wrong—close to two years of discussions that Mr. Emerson had. The minister took time this year to travel around and talk to the very same people. This legislation reflects what those thoughts were; hence the reason the bill touches a lot of areas.

As I mentioned, although I had a tough time pronouncing the word—I should have said it in French—I think a big part of this is the thoughts of the market; I'll use that word. Rail companies in particular objected to the rates not being determined on a commercial basis and argued that this would disincentivize their abilities. That's a key part as well.

It goes beyond just the obvious, then; it goes into other areas that the review of the Canada Transportation Act in fact identified. This is not new. It is something that has been looked at for quite some time in the past two to three years. We're just bringing it to a head now. We're getting it done.

Yes, it is a big bill. I get that, but I think the size of the bill is simply reflective of the work that needs to be completed based on the review of the Canada Transportation Act and now, moving forward, to amend the Canada Transportation Act.

The Chair: Before I go to Ms. Block, just to try to answer your question, Mr. Aubin, it's my understanding, based on an overview of the witnesses who would probably want to speak to Bill C-49, the committee would have to spend an estimated 23 hours on this however we choose to roll it out—and they're all amendments to the current Transportation Act.

So I'll go now to Ms. Block, and then to Mr. Berthold.

Mrs. Kelly Block: Thank you very much, Madam Chair, and perhaps it would have been helpful to deal with our motions before we dealt with Mr. Badawey's just because the questions that Mr. Aubin might have been answered first.

There are two observations I would make. While I do somewhat appreciate.... In response to what I'm hearing from Mr. Badawey, creating this sense of urgency to meet outside of the session to deal with Bill C-49, I think it should be stated that the fact of the matter is producers are already negotiating their contracts for this year. They're doing that. So if we meet in September, that isn't going to impact the contracts they're negotiating today.

I think the second thing to recognize is that the time frame that we're establishing to do this study is probably coming at the busiest time for some of the producers whom we might want to invite to be witnesses for our study. I'm sure you're aware that harvest happens in August and September and into October, and sometimes into November.

So I think that sense of urgency being created now should have been there a few months ago. I agree totally with my colleague that what we are dealing with here is an omnibus bill. It's addressing numerous modes of transportation, and I can tell you that since Bill C-49 was introduced in the House not quite two weeks ago—maybe it will be two weeks tomorrow—my schedule has been challenged to accommodate the requests I'm receiving from numerous stakeholders who want to discuss this bill. What I'm hearing from them is that the devil is in the detail, as always, and that these are complex sectors and they need time to take a look at this legislation to determine exactly what their positions will be coming out of that review.

Moreover, I think we have to talk about the timing of this bill. As I indicated at our last meeting, we, the members of the official opposition, have been highlighting the need to address these measures for quite some time. In this regard, let's take a look at the facts of some of the things Mr. Badawey has presented. Yes, this is coming out of the review of the CTA. That began under our government, as you pointed out, with a couple of years of review by the Emerson panel. The minister was given that report on Christmas Eve of 2015. We undertook a study of it in September 2016. Before we undertook the study, the extension had already been granted, I think, at a request of this committee. We undertook a study recognizing that we were going to be bumping up against a deadline of August 1, 2017.

So now here we are. We are bumping up against that deadline in spite of all of the efforts we've made to create a sense of urgency to deal with it and to do the study as a committee and get the recommendations before the minister long before this sunset was to take place. However, the minister chose to wait until six weeks before the session ends to introduce his omnibus bill. Given the assertion made by the House leader that Bill C-49 is a priority, I think some of the responsibility for this has to land at that individual's feet, for not getting this onto the agenda a little sooner, although she has said it is a priority.

In light of Mr. Badawey's suggestion that the committee extend our sittings by coming to Ottawa during the summer recess, I think splitting Bill C-49 to review the measures that address the sunset measure seems like an appropriate undertaking. I think if we were to have that conversation, we would better know what kind of time we have to allocate outside of the meetings that are already scheduled to the end of this session, and however many days we might feel need to be added at the beginning of the next session.

●(1235)

Those conversations need to happen, but as far as creating a sense of urgency now goes, I think it's a little late for that. We need to do justice to this piece of legislation and not try to rush through it.

I certainly support the notion of breaking it out so that we can deal with the measures you have highlighted in your own motion.

Thank you.

The Chair: Mr. Berthold.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

I will not expand on everything my colleague said. I fully agree with what she is saying about the urgent need to begin studying Bill C-49. I think there is indeed urgency, but it is as if we were going to put out a fire and realized that we had to buy a fire truck. We could have bought the fire truck earlier.

What are we going to do in a situation like that? We are not going to wait for the fire to go out before we buy a fire truck; we find another fire truck.

This other fire truck is my colleague's motion to split Bill C-49 to deal with the measures for grain farmers out west as quickly as possible. We do not have to wait until September. We can do it while the farmers are available.

I really wanted to share my concern about that with my colleagues on the committee. We are going to study this important bill during the busiest time for grain farmers. It will be very difficult to get witnesses like that to appear. Those days would cost them a great deal. They cannot really miss a day and leave their grain to meet with the committee in Ottawa. It may well be very complicated. We should be sensitive to that. It is not a policy issue.

So, if necessary, let's move up this study to the summer, I have no objection. However, we must consider the fact that witnesses may not be available.

If we manage to split Bill C-49 quickly, it will probably not take that long. We could study that issue quickly. That would be for the benefit of those for whom we work. If we had to study Bill C-49 in its entirety solely to deal with the urgent case of grain farmers, I think we would be making a big mistake.

Let me give you an example. The government has just announced that a committee is being created to review the Railway Safety Act. This very day, some people are meeting with government officials. Representatives from FCM are here. Pauline Quinlan, Mayor of Bromont, has been appointed by your government to this committee, which is undertaking some very serious work. However, Bill C-49 already contains measures that will amend the Railway Safety Act, particularly in terms of cameras being installed in locomotives. That has implications. I think it is important to wait for this review committee to finish its work.

I do not want to talk about this for too long. I just wanted to support my colleague's comments.

I want to salute my colleague Mr. Iacono, who apparently missed me very much during the first hour of this meeting, since he pointed out my absence. When I heard that, I rushed off to the committee meeting so that he could enjoy my presence, Madam Chair.

•(1240)

[English]

The Chair: Monsieur Aubin.

[Translation]

Mr. Robert Aubin: Thank you, Madam Chair.

For the sake of consistency, I would like to say this. You gave me an idea of what the study of Bill C-49 might entail in scope. You mentioned 23 hours. You probably relied on your experience, since we have not even sent our list of witnesses. However, we know that there will be a certain number of witnesses. In my opinion, 23 hours is the equivalent of roughly four weeks of meetings. That does not even allow us to meet the objective of starting earlier to get this study done before the work resumes.

I feel that everyone is tugging on the blanket and I see no consistency. We are ignoring the only real emergency. So I can hardly support the motion.

[English]

The Chair: All right, we have Mr. Badawey's motion on the floor. We should have a vote on the motion now. It's appropriate.

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: Next in committee business we have a variety of things that we can do now. We have several other motions that we have to deal with.

Would you like to move it?

Mrs. Kelly Block: Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

I would like to move my motion that I put on the order paper on Tuesday, so I know we have it.

It's the one I read it out earlier today, so I won't read it again. I know it's been circulated to all the members.

In introducing and speaking to my motion, I made a lot of the comments I wanted to. I'll just reiterate that I introduced this motion for two reasons: the first being that we are dealing with an omnibus bill addressing a number of issues within numerous modes of transportation. The second would be that the members opposite, the government members, wanted to see us expedite the study of this bill, which I think demonstrated the need to address certain measures in the bill in a more timely way than others perhaps. That led me to ask at the last meeting if the members would be willing to break out the part of Bill C-49 that addresses the measures that are due as a result of the sunset of Bill C-30. As I was not able to get an answer then because of time constraints, I introduced the motion.

I want to respect and believe in my colleagues' desire to provide clarity and certainty to our producers. As I've pointed out, I don't think the time frame he's outlined within his motion will make any difference. That window has closed. I think the only way to redeem it is to break out this section of Bill C-49 and do a study as expeditiously as possible.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

•(1245)

The Chair: Does anyone want to speak to Ms. Block's motion? I'm not seeing any hands go up.

(Motion negated)

The Chair: We have a few minutes now, and we could talk about committee business for next week. I was hoping we could meet as the official subcommittee at some point next week. I think our clerk is going to see if that's possible.

At the moment, the following items before us are outstanding. There is the draft report on the infrastructure study that we did. We could review that. Mr. Bratina's motion is also outstanding; we have to put an hour of discussion toward it as well. These are suggestions of things that we could be doing next week, next Tuesday, or we can have a committee business session with the entire committee if that's what the committee would prefer.

Ms. Block.

Mrs. Kelly Block: Thank you, Madam Chair.

If we would like to take an hour to deal with Mr. Bratina's motion, it would probably be appropriate to get that done in this session. If you wanted to take the second hour of one of our committee meetings to meet as a subcommittee, if that would help with the scheduling for the members who are sitting on the subcommittee, that would make good sense to me.

I'm reluctant to get into too many other things when we're trying to put our time and attention to the aviation safety study. I don't know the time frame for the infrastructure study or report, but to remain focused it may be better not to take on too many different things now at the end of the session.

The Chair: I think we're just trying to clean up a bit. We do have this draft report that the analysts have put together, which we have yet to review or figure out if we're going forward.

I have one question before I go to Mr. Badawey. In the second hour on Tuesday, is there anything you would like us to review on the first draft of the aviation report? Would it help you if we saved that second hour on Tuesday?

Mr. Alexandre Lavoie (Committee Researcher): I will not have the first draft, but if I had the recommendations, I could come back with an estimate of the time. I will be able to estimate the number of pages and we can have a short discussion, and maybe you could decide then when you wanted to get it. That would instruct me if I have to be very short, or...

The Chair: I think we should make sure we allocate a bit of time for that discussion within that second hour.

Mr. Badawey.

Mr. Vance Badawey: Thank you.

I'm going to go into another issue, Madam Chair.

I appreciate the comments by Ms. Block because this is the transport, infrastructure and communities committee and we have a pretty big mandate with these three files, especially with respect to Minister Garneau's announcement of transportation 2030, and everything that falls under that. We're looking at focusing on that now, with the earlier motion that passed and, of course, bringing forward Bill C-49 as part of that discipline in bringing forward the minister's vision.

The second is Minister Sohi's vision with respect to infrastructure. It's nice that we all come from somewhat the same background. We've all dealt with infrastructure as former mayors, councillors, and municipal representatives, and we do understand how saddled municipalities are with respect to infrastructure; but most importantly, we know how to do infrastructure right, to make those proper investments so that they're sustainable.

This weekend, for example, we have the Federation of Canadian Municipalities in town. I've already started to speak to a lot of the mayors from big and small cities in the past day or so. One of the messages I'm getting loud and clear, Madam Chair, is their appreciation for not only Minister Sohi's budgetary commitments, at \$180 billion, but also for the comment he made in the House most recently when he committed to having a sustainable infrastructure funding envelope for municipalities. That is big news for municipalities, since, Madam Chair, you were one of the authors of the new deal for Canada's cities back in 2004, I believe, with the gas tax.

The Chair: Yes.

Mr. Vance Badawey: You're starting to see now the ability as an enabler to invest in infrastructure.

Madam Chair, if I may, I would like to keep us focused both on transport, as we are now, and infrastructure. Although some might feel their shoulders are getting a bit heavy, I think it's incumbent upon this committee to take on that responsibility. That's just the nature of this committee and I think we should keep rolling in the fashion we are now.

Madam Chair, I did put a motion forward earlier and I would like to table that motion right now. I'll leave it to your discretion when you want to tackle this. The motion doesn't say exactly when, but it does state:

That the Committee resume its study on Smart Cities by holding an additional 4 meetings, with specific focus on synergies that the Federal Government's infrastructure investments could provide in order to support other levels of government, as they undertake integrated land use planning, asset management, and sustainable funding projects, and that the Chair shall be empowered to coordinate the necessary witnesses, resources and scheduling to complete this task.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

• (1250)

The Chair: Thank you.

All right, we'll have Mr. Bratina, Mr. Berthold, and Ms. Block.

Mr. Bratina.

Mr. Bob Bratina (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, Lib.): Madam Chair, I'm not sure whether my brief comments will relate to my colleague's motion or not.

On May 8, the *Ottawa Citizen* reported, "The almost 1,000 federal workers at the former Nortel campus on Carling Avenue can now drink the water." Since April 27 tests found that unacceptable levels of lead and other chemicals have been in the water.

The important part of this is the comment by the Department of National Defence reassuring employees. It says:

Short-term exposure to drinking water that contains levels slightly higher than the Health Canada guidelines for drinking water quality is not expected to have health effects since the...guidelines are based on a lifetime of exposure....

That is false.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Berthold: Madam Chair, I would like to raise a friendly point of order.

Mr. Badawey has moved a motion. For his part, Mr. Bratina wants to discuss his proposal for an hour. However, I would like us to deal with the motion first.

This is a friendly comment. I do not want to prevent Mr. Bratina from speaking, but, since we are dealing with the motion, I think it would be appropriate for us to finish that before we go to Mr. Bratina's proposal.

[*English*]

Mr. Bob Bratina: I'm not finished.

My question is—

Mr. Luc Berthold: What is the relevance, Madam Chair?

The Chair: I'm listening for the question.

Do you have a comment specific to the motion that's been put on the floor, Mr. Bratina?

Mr. Bob Bratina: Mr. Badawey's motion involves infrastructure. I'm wondering whether the committee would consider incorporating into his motion the infrastructure issues relating to my motion. I just put that out for discussion now. I don't need to get into a two-way....

The Chair: Okay, thank you.

Mr. Vance Badawey: I can answer that very quickly, Madam Chair. The answer is yes. One of the reasons I brought it up now is the comments made earlier about bringing up Mr. Bratina's motion. They go hand in hand.

The Chair: Okay, thank you.

We'll go to Mr. Berthold, then Mr. Rayes, and then Mr. Aubin.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Berthold: Since we agreed to devote one hour to Mr. Bratina's motion, I do not understand why it would be added to the other motion. I think his bill deserves the committee's full attention.

Second, I will give the floor to my colleague Mr. Rayes to address the content of Mr. Badawey's request. That being said, whenever the government moves a motion, it says that the chair is empowered to coordinate the necessary witnesses, resources and scheduling. However, we have a subcommittee, and I would like us to take that into account. I would also like the subcommittee to meet whenever we undertake or continue a study. That way, we could discuss it. Subsequently, once you know our opinion on how it works, you could make a decision. That power ultimately comes back to you. However, to include those words in each motion is sort of like saying that the motion before us is being organized for us.

I suggest that, in order to demonstrate goodwill, we agree on having the subcommittee meet whenever we undertake or continue a study. Following that meeting, you could consider the views of both opposition parties and the government members, and then set the schedule. I am not opposed to that. At least, we would have an opportunity to lay out our expectations and to specify the number of witnesses we want to hear. I think that would help the committee operate more smoothly.

• (1255)

[English]

The Chair: I certainly, as always, reach out and ask you for your witnesses and your direction. For Mr. Badawey's motion, the date, and the times, I will be reaching out to both of you to have a discussion on that before it's finalized. I attempt to do both, to work with my vice-chairs and other members of the committee, as we move forward and make these decisions.

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Berthold: However, I think accomplishing it in subcommittee, in the presence of the clerk, gives us all momentum. That is why I am insisting on this part of the work that we will be doing in the coming weeks, if I am still with you.

[English]

The Chair: We try to work well together. Actually, most of the time we work well together.

According to my clock, we have one minute left. Mr. Rayes, Mr. Aubin, and then Ms. Block are still on the agenda. That clock completely throws everybody off. Check what the time is, folks. We have a couple of minutes left.

Go ahead, Mr. Rayes.

[Translation]

Mr. Alain Rayes: Thank you, Madam Chair.

I see no problem with Mr. Badawey's motion. I think we all agree that smart communities are important and that it would be desirable for everyone to talk to each other, be it at the municipal, provincial or federal level.

In the motion, it says: "...other levels of government, as they undertake integrated land use planning..." I do not know whether it is a translation problem, but in French, the term "aménagement des terres" is used. I just want to understand what is meant by "aménagement des terres". Actually, land use planning is ongoing. All communities work on land use planning.

I wonder whether I missed something. Could we just clarify that? However, I completely agree on the substance.

[English]

The Chair: I think it's an issue of translation in the way that rolls itself out.

Mr. Vance Badawey: If I may say, Madam Chair, Alain you're absolutely right, but at the same time we want to respect that the municipalities will in fact be partners in this process. Here we are today, for example. We have six mayors sitting here. It's almost like an alumni session of FCM. When we were mayors, we appreciated it when the federal level or any upper level of government respected our official plans, the land use policies that we had in place, while at the same time articulating the investments that would be needed for that land use. It could be industrial, it could be open space, or it could be residential, which all have to do with infrastructure investments.

It just gives credibility to the ask, to then bring infrastructure up to par based on that land use planning.

[Translation]

Mr. Alain Rayes: Madam Chair, if you agree, I would like the translation to be revised. What Mr. Badawey is saying is perfectly correct, but it is not reflected in the French version. For the rest, I agree on the substance.

[English]

The Chair: Do you have an amendment to try to improve the—

[Translation]

Mr. Alain Rayes: I don't think it's necessary. We agree on the principle, but if you are in agreement, I would at least like it to be translated correctly according to what was mentioned.

[English]

The Chair: Okay. Thank you.

We'll go to Mr. Aubin, and then we have to close.

[Translation]

Mr. Robert Aubin: Madam Chair, I'll be quick.

First of all, I fully support my colleague Mr. Berthold's comments. If we make our approach a little more formal, it will have a direct impact on our collegiality.

As for the motion, it deals with an old study that is already under way. Mr. Berthold, we have not necessarily changed our rules.

What I find most interesting is that, with this motion, I feel that we are finally giving direction to the study. Our study on smart cities was a little all over the place when we started it. It is now much more focused. So that's very nice. As to the number of meetings, that depends on the number of witnesses we still have to meet, but I'm in favour of that.

[*English*]

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Thank you all for—

Mr. Vance Badawey: A vote.

The Chair: Oh, you want to have a vote. Okay. All those in favour of Mr. Badawey's motion, please raise your hands.

The Chair: Oh my gosh, it's unanimous. I think we better go get some wine, or maybe it's Scotch. I'm not sure.

The meeting is adjourned.

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