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Chair: Mr. David Sweet



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• (1535)

[English]

The Chair (Mr. David Sweet (Flamborough—Glanbrook, CPC)): Colleagues, we'll begin our meeting now.

I have two people on the speakers list right now, Mr. Angus and Madam Shanahan.

Go ahead, Mr. Angus.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'm looking forward to this meeting. We have spent much too long debating what we are going to debate as opposed to getting down to the work Canadians sent us here for.

In my region, there's an incredible amount of uncertainty with the second wave. People are looking to us at this time to show that we can make Parliament work and that we can rise above the partisan battles that, in other times, may seem perfectly okay, but right now we have an obligation to the Canadian people.

I've certainly tried to spend a lot of the last few weeks trying to see if we can broker some consensus to move forward. We all recognize that we had started a study on the pandemic spending that had gone awry with the WE project. That began in the summer. With the prorogation, we were unable to finish it, and we need to finish that.

We had a promise from the Prime Minister about a committee to look at pandemic spending issues, and that did not materialize, even though the Prime Minister committed to it, so it falls to our ethics committee to finish off some of these outstanding issues.

I brought forward a motion yesterday, and I was pleased to see the Liberals very supportive of it. The Liberals asked me to change some things in that motion, and I agreed. Why did I agree to change some things that I thought we should be discussing? It's that, if we are going to get where we need to be, we need to be willing to show some compromise here, so we moved off the issue of the judges. There are a lot of questions about whether or not partisan interests are being involved in the hiring of Canadian judges, but we set that aside.

I set aside the issue of Rob Silver, who's married to Katie Telford and was given the contract in terms of the rent review with small business. I think it's a serious issue in the context of the rent crisis we're seeing with small businesses that are still waiting and still calling for us, but I agreed to set that aside for the Liberals because they said that, technically, it had passed a review by the Ethics

Commissioner, so we do not need to relitigate it. I have questions about that, but I think, okay, fair enough.

What we have before us now, I think, is a working plan that I'm hoping we can vote on, and then we can get to our witness list. Just to recap, we've agreed to the commitment to finish off the WE study. I don't know how many more witnesses we need. I know the Liberals had a lot of witnesses when the study happened. It's up to them how many witnesses they'd want to bring. I have some areas we need to focus on, because we need to get our report to Parliament so we can close this off. It just looks too strange to not have it finished.

I'm very glad the Liberals, Conservatives and Bloc agreed with my request to look into the issue of Palantir. I am very concerned about this company, this massive data surveillance corporation. I think it has some very dark links in the work it's done in Iraq, its ties to the CIA and the fact that this kind of data mining has raised serious questions about civil rights and privacy rights, which is naturally within our committee's ambit but belongs within the pandemic study because of the role of David MacNaughton, our former ambassador to the U.S. and also the former co-chair of the Trudeau campaign. He was not registered to lobby and has been found guilty of trying to get gigs for Palantir in the middle of the pandemic, all the way up to the Deputy Prime Minister's office. I think that's very concerning.

In a pandemic we need to tell Canadians that, of the massive amounts of money that will need to go out the door to help people through this, this money is always focused squarely on making sure that people get through it and that whoever gets the contracts for these gets them because of merit, and that's it. It's not because of political connections.

That brings us to the other thing the Liberals, Conservatives and Bloc agreed to, which is that we were going to look into the contract of former ethics committee member, Frank Baylis, a man whom I worked with for many years. I have a lot of respect for Frank Baylis, but there are questions about how that contract was awarded.

Those are fair questions to ask. That's not cheap partisan politics. We have to know that the contract was given without political favouritism to reassure Canadians, so we have that agreement.

The Bloc amended the motion with the support that the chair gave them in terms of the documents. My understanding, when I was reading the room last week, was that we were set to get those documents.

Therefore, I don't see any reason to delay any further at this point. I'm encouraging my colleagues to pass this motion, to get this pandemic spending study done. We need to tell Canadians we are watching how the spending is being done. We're looking at it in the Conflict of Interest Act. We're looking at lobbying.

I will certainly not be supporting a continual extension of these hearings. We have an agreement to hold the hearings. I'd like to get down to the witness list. We have other things that we need to work on. Certainly, some of my colleagues have expressed interest in working with me on the facial recognition study. That is important right now. I think we can do good work.

In the last Parliament, I think the ethics committee set a super standard in working across party lines to establish a number of standards for the protections of Canadian citizens. The work of that ethics committee was recognized globally. We were seen globally as leaders on privacy issues.

We have a standard to reach at our committee. That means we're all going to have to rise up, to give up something, and that we have to start getting down to work.

I'm asking my colleagues to move this along. Let's get this to a vote so we can start picking our witness list.

Thank you, Chair.

● (1540)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Angus.

Currently I have Madame Shanahan, Mr. Sorbara and Mr. Dong on the speakers list.

Madam Shanahan.

Mrs. Brenda Shanahan (Châteauguay—Lacolle, Lib.): Thank you, Chair.

Thank you for clarifying the list.

Apparently, some of the telephone lines are not working. Can we have a look at the phone line that the staff would use?

The Chair: We're looking into it right now.

Do you want to continue your comments while we look at that, Madame Shanahan?

Mrs. Brenda Shanahan: Yes, I'll continue.

I appreciate the words of Mr. Angus. He summarized, from his point of view, the procedures and the progress of this committee over the last little while.

I would like to talk about the motion before us now because, Chair, it's no longer the same motion we saw yesterday at the first part of this meeting, as amended by Mr. Fergus.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Chair, I'll continue in French.

I really thought that, after the failure of Mr. Barrett's motion last week, we would be able to keep moving forward and to address other issues that really matter to Canadians right now. My colleague Mr. Angus referred to a few topics, including facial recogni-

tion, which I think is a very serious issue. I'll talk more about this topic.

However, there were other very important topics as well. I know that my colleague Ms. Gaudreau tabled motions regarding digital identity and ways to use this technology. There was even a general motion. However, this motion falls primarily within the purview of our committee. The goal of the motion is to look at the work of the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner and to see whether we can identify any shortcomings or add or recommend improvements to his work. We acknowledge the work done by the commissioner, especially recently.

I can refer to a few statements made by Commissioner Dion recently, in particular regarding Ms. Telford and her husband, Mr. Rob Silver. In the commissioner's view, the allegations were speculative and there were no facts to support the allegation of a conflict of interest violation. In the commissioner's view, the request made by Mr. Poilievre and Mr. Barrett from this committee didn't warrant an investigation.

However, I'm hearing today that my colleague Mr. Angus believes that there should be an investigation. Is there any reason to believe that there may be some deficiencies in the commissioner's work or a flaw in the Conflict of Interest Act that requires investigation? We could consider this. We were open to the idea, as Mr. Angus was saying, with regard to the motion that he moved yesterday with Mr. Fergus' amendments.

There's also the COVID Alert application. I must remind my colleagues that a pandemic is still ongoing and that it's still the main concern of Canadians who are tuning in right now. The Prime Minister announced that over \$5 million people have downloaded the application. I want to point out that, in my own family, we received an alert and the individuals concerned were able to get tested. This means that it's working. I'm so pleased that Quebec decided to adopt the application. However, could the application be even more effective? Should there be more information to go along with—

● (1545)

[*English*]

Mr. Charlie Angus: Sorry, I have a point of order.

The Chair: Yes, Mr. Angus, your point of order—

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Brenda Shanahan: Mr. Chair—

[*English*]

Mr. Charlie Angus: I don't think we're discussing the app. It has nothing to do with the motion.

If the member is going to speak, she should be speaking to the motion, because we've had to give up time and other meetings to be here. Rather than waste our time, let's stick to the motion at hand.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Angus.

I have a history of giving our members lots of breadth, but it is important to try to stick to the topic at hand.

Madame Shanahan, please go ahead.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Brenda Shanahan: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We're now considering the motion before us, to which an amendment was proposed. The amendment was defeated when it was voted on last week. Ms. Gaudreau says that she wants to study conflict of interest, but she wants to study only matters concerning the current Prime Minister and his spouse.

I wonder why the member, with whom I've already spoken both within and outside this committee, is saying this. She said that she wanted to study issues that are important to her constituents. Of course, I believe in her goodwill. However, this new amendment is an obvious attempt to study the WE case. She's trying to do this, even though the committee ruled on the issue.

I'll refer to the blues of the meeting on Monday, October 26. At the very end of the meeting, we discussed at length all the issues before us.

I'll read the part in question. Apparently, there was an attempt to change the facts contained in the blues. I'll change—

• (1550)

Ms. Marie-Hélène Gaudreau (Laurentides—Labelle, BQ): I have a point of order.

[*English*]

The Chair: We have a point of order from Madame Gaudreau.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Marie-Hélène Gaudreau: I want an explanation of the difference between looking at an amended motion, which we then must vote on, and the amendment that we all voted on at our last meeting. It's a good question.

[*English*]

The Chair: It's another question of procedure, Madame Gaudreau. I think the speaker who has the floor has the option of speaking to a particular point in the motion rather than other points. I think that's what Madame Shanahan is trying to do.

Look, I'll let her proceed and make her point, because she is saying that she is going to cite the blues, so it would be germane to our meeting if she's citing the blues from a previous meeting. I'll let her go ahead. If I see that there's some digression, then I'm sure Madame Shanahan won't mind my interrupting her and getting her back on track.

Mrs. Brenda Shanahan: Thank you, Chair.

In English, it was at the point, Chair, when you recognized Mr. Warkentin, and Mr. Warkentin said—as the blues indicate—“I think that now having amended this motion extensively, having addressed what the Liberals have said are their concerns with the motion, I think it would be prudent to proceed to a vote. Obviously, anything other than moving to a vote would just extend the timeframes by which this committee would be delayed in receiving those documents. Having now given in to the Liberal's request for the seven-day extension, I would request that we move to a vote.”

Then we have the chair saying, “Okay. Colleagues, I'm just taking a look at the screen—” and Mrs. Julie Vignola interjecting, “I have a point of order.”

[*Translation*]

Ms. Vignola said, “I'm sorry, but there is no more interpretation. I understand what Mr. Warkentin said, but I would like to hear it in my mother tongue. I can't hear anything anymore.”

Mr. Angus responded, “I can hear the interpretation here.”

Ms. Vignola said, “I turned on the French channel...”

Mr. Angus responded, “Yes.”

[*English*]

The chair said, “I'm not getting any translation.”

[*Translation*]

Ms. Vignola said, “... in my language.”

Mr. Gourde said, “I can hear the interpretation very well, so maybe my colleague is having a computer problem.”

[*English*]

The Chair added, “Madam Vignola, go ahead and repeat what your concern was.”

[*Translation*]

Ms. Vignola said, “The interpretation just came back on.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.”

[*English*]

The Chair said: “Let me canvass the committee again. Do you want to move to a vote on the main motion as amended?”

Some members then agreed and the chair said, “It looks as if we have consensus. Madam Clerk, would you do the honours then, please, for a recorded vote.”

The motion was then amended with five nays, four yeas.

Then the chair moved to adjourn.

I think we know that the yeas were Mr. Barrett, Monsieur Gourde, Monsieur Warkentin and Mr. Angus, whereas the nays were Mr. Dong, Madame Lattanzio, me, Mr. Sorbara and Madame Vignola. Indeed, there was one abstention on the Liberal side, and that was Mr. Housefather.

This goes to the point, Chair, and I think you rightfully ruled on this, that there are no revotes in our parliamentary system. That is because each member has the responsibility to make their vote. It is a courtesy that no other member presupposes or anticipates or seeks to overturn the vote of another member.

I am bringing this outcome up—which we, of course, applauded—because we recall that Madame Gaudreau voted in support of negating a motion, not just once but actually twice in the last session, that aimed to open up an investigation of the “Trudeau II Report”. Madame Gaudreau voted, along with Liberal members at that time, to overturn that motion.

So this is not something that is never seen or untoward. I think we are able to accept—in fact, I am glad to see that this committee, through you, Chair, has accepted—the results of that vote, as rightfully we should. But now we see an amendment that is essentially bringing back the same motion that we defeated in committee last week.

• (1555)

This makes no sense whatsoever. This is a backdoor way to continue the review of the WE Charity matter even though this was already decided.

Mr. Chair, I don't have to remind you that the information being requested in this motion goes back not only to well before the time frame of the WE Charity matter, but well beyond the Prime Minister's time in government. It goes back to 2008 when he was first elected as an MP.

We have spoken to the fact that we do not see the relevance of going back to a time when, yes, the Prime Minister was a member of Parliament, as all of us here are, but he was not a public office holder. He was not a member of the executive. I fail to see the relevance of this type of request. When I look at the amendment that Madame Gaudreau brought forward, I would say that I can at least understand the original intention of studying the regime that we have for conflict of interest, because, as we have said in earlier meetings, this is an evolving area of practice. This is the managing or review or.... A regime and a code of conduct and legislation governing conflict of interest rules, not only in the workplace but also in public work places such as Parliament, 20 or 30 years ago simply did not exist. It is always important and reasonable to want to study how we can improve that regime, and I would support Madame Gaudreau on that element.

It is the scope of this motion that is rather bizarre, because on the one hand we're examining procedures that are in place to prevent conflicts of interest as they relate to the Office of the Prime Minister—and that seems like a legitimate course of action—but then we also have provisions that have no relevance to the stated topic of discussion. At minimum, I would challenge the relevance of establishing that we may want to look at a topic as part of this study being part of the terms of reference of this study. Why are no other matters that could serve as examples or as important areas to look at being given the same honour?

• (1600)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Chair, I regret to say this. However, since Ms. Gaudreau is reintroducing the gist of a motion that we defeated last week and the other opposition members of this committee agree with her doing so, this strikes me as a fishing expedition. It's a way of going through documents and hoping to find, even if it's almost nothing, a reference or a connection of some kind. Once again, we're talking about the privacy of individuals.

We can rightly look at conflicts of interest involving people who sit in government. However, in this case, we're looking at documents from a firm whose clients are people who give speeches, as we do as members of Parliament.

I'm often asked to speak somewhere. Afterwards, a committee of my peers could investigate my activities, even for years. No one here thinks that this is a good idea. In terms of the speeches that the Prime Minister has already given—as soon as he became the leader of the Liberal Party, he made a list of his engagements—it's really hard to believe that no one has had any issues with the list since that time.

We don't understand why this crusade is being waged. Why is the opposition so fixated on the idea that the Prime Minister was asked, even when he was a member of Parliament, to speak to organizations and citizen groups? There's something really strange about this fixation.

The fact that this involves his spouse is highly questionable. For over seven years, this list of speaking engagements has been public, and no one has said anything about it. However, now people like to talk about the private affairs of the Trudeau family. This issue is becoming more significant than the issues that are critical to Canadians right now.

This is unacceptable. We could easily look at other topics that are even more relevant to Canadians. I know that some of my colleagues, including Mr. Angus and Ms. Gaudreau, want to move other motions for consideration by the committee.

Ms. Grégoire Trudeau took all the necessary steps. She knows that she's under scrutiny as the spouse of the Prime Minister of Canada. When she had the opportunity to speak about mental health and empowerment, she approached the Ethics Commissioner, Mr. Dion, for advice. He told her that it was fine and that she could work with WE and get her expenses reimbursed. There was nothing secret about it. All these steps and actions were public.

• (1605)

It's unbelievable. The commissioner is being asked to rule on unfounded allegations, as I said earlier with regard to Ms. Telford and Mr. Silver. However, in the cases of Ms. Telford and Ms. Grégoire Trudeau, the proper steps were taken. If the committee thinks that there's an issue concerning these steps, the committee can study the issue and see whether there should be more or fewer steps. I don't know whether we're calling the work into question, but we will once we've studied several cases. I know that other cases involve different members of Parliament. Maybe we can learn from this.

I was very pleased when the committee finally gave up the idea of investigating Ms. Trudeau, Mr. Trudeau's mother and Mr. Alexandre Trudeau. We didn't make this decision right away, did we? We started this discussion at the beginning of the first session of this Parliament, and the discussion went on for hours. That's really the way to get all the questions out of the way.

Granted, things have evolved somewhat. We see in the United States, with Congress, that individuals are being investigated. This isn't part of our traditions, and I'm very happy about that. I think that the parliamentarians agree—I've already heard Mr. Angus speak about this topic—that our committee's role doesn't include investigating the personal lives of distant family members.

• (1610)

[English]

Mr. Charlie Angus: Mr. Chair, on a point of order, I don't want to be misrepresented on the record, but we agreed not to study the Trudeau family as a sign of good will. As soon as we agreed to that, Madame Shanahan just went and found another road block, so I think she needs to be correct. We decided not to continue the investigation into the Trudeau family as a sign of good will, to try to get the Liberals to actually stop filibustering. Now she's misrepresenting history. I think, on the record, we need to be clear that she has found every possible means to obstruct and to filibuster, and to deny our getting to our work.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Angus.

Continue on, Madame Shanahan.

[Translation]

Mrs. Brenda Shanahan: May I continue, Mr. Chair?

The Chair: Yes, certainly.

Mrs. Brenda Shanahan: I want to apologize to my colleague Mr. Angus if I didn't accurately convey his point of view.

I was still very pleased that we were able to work together to keep some parts of the preliminary motions and reach an agreement on the motion moved yesterday by Mr. Angus, which was amended by Mr. Fergus. I think that we found a middle ground.

We can't always get everything that we want, and we fully understand this. That's how our parliamentary system works, especially with a minority government. I'm just a private member of Parliament. This isn't my profession, but I'm honoured to serve after a career in other fields, such as co-operatives, where we have a different way of working.

We were very happy to be making progress on Mr. Angus' motion, as amended by my colleague Mr. Fergus. However, we suddenly took a step backwards. You wanted to put back on the agenda the contents of a motion that this committee defeated the week before. I don't see how this could be positive for our committee.

In addition, we'll be bringing in representatives from Speakers' Spotlight to talk about the documents. Once again, Mr. Chair, I find this unfortunate. Some opposition members appear fixated on all the details of the Trudeau family's activities and affairs. They want to ask questions that are completely irrelevant and that don't in any way help us make progress on committee business.

I think that the Prime Minister has been open and transparent, and so has Ms. Grégoire Trudeau. The goal of a good conflict of interest regime is prevention, isn't it? It's about shedding light on the actions and activities of public office holders. In my opinion, Ms. Gaudreau's amendment just sets us back. The amendment has no purpose. Since the information requested has already been released to the public, it isn't necessary.

• (1615)

We can work very effectively and conduct a proper study based on Mr. Angus' motion, as amended by Mr. Fergus. At the same time, we can discuss issues that are important to Canadians, such as the fact that private companies are collecting information and bio-

metric data from individuals. I think that we should start looking at this issue. It's really time to get back to work.

I'll end on that note, Mr. Chair.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you very much, Madame Shanahan.

I'll now go over the speakers list. It's Mr. Sorbara, Mr. Dong, Madame Gaudreau, Mr. Warkentin and Mr. Angus.

Mr. Sorbara.

Mr. Francesco Sorbara (Vaughan—Woodbridge, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you, everyone.

It's great to see everyone today and get back to work, as always, during this sitting week before Remembrance Week. Remembrance Day happens next week, and I guess many of us are actually back in our ridings.

I just want to take a little walk down memory lane of where we're at. I was just going over MP Angus' motion that I have, dated October 22, where he put forward a motion. I wish to read it because I want to make sure I'm on the same page here. It reads:

That, pursuant to Standing Order 108(3)(h), this Committee undertake a study into issues of conflict of interest and the Lobbying Act in relation to pandemic spending; that this study continue our work relating to the Canada Student Service Grant, including this committee's work to review the safeguards to prevent conflicts of interest in federal government expenditures; government spending, WE Charity and the Canada Student Service Grant; and the administration of the Canada Student Service Grant and WE Charity; and, that this study include:

At that time, Mr. Angus' motion stated that we should include four components, as follow:

(a) an examination into MCAP and Rob Silver's involvement with the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy and the Canada...Commercial Rent Assistance program;

(b) the consideration of all aspects of the government's involvement with Baylis Medical Company Inc., as well as former Liberal Member of Parliament Frank Baylis, including the awarding of a procurement contract for medical devices;

(c) an examination into Palantir Canada's relationship with the government including the breach of the Conflict of Interest Act by its president and former Canadian ambassador to the U.S. David MacNaughton; [and]

(d) an examination of the use of partisan resources and processes in the appointment of federal judges that may have constituted violations of the privacy rights of nominees; and

that the Committee, report its findings to the House with recommendations to better permit the Government to conduct the business of government with public confidence in its integrity.

We started off with that motion. Mr. Chair, I will say this. I think the will of the committee is the will when the committee decides to undertake a study on a motion that's proposed. The committee's will will obviously be heard when it reaches that point.

I know there are a number of motions that MPs have put forward, and I think some are very relevant to our constituents and Canadian citizens with respect to privacy rights, the COVID-19 app, facial recognition and how it impacts marginalized communities and so forth. There are just so many things this committee should be doing.

However, right now we're focused on the matters at hand.

• (1620)

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Brenda Shanahan: I have a point of order, Mr. Chair.

[*English*]

The Chair: On a point of order, yes.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Brenda Shanahan: I'm on the French channel. I see that the interpreter must race to keep up with my colleague. It would be nice if he could slow down. I know that it's usually the role of another member to say this, but he's really speaking too quickly.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you for alerting us to that, Madame Shanahan. I've only known Mr. Sorbara for a couple of weeks and I would never have guessed that he would over-chat the translation services.

Mr. Sorbara, apparently that's the case, so be cautious in the cadence of your voice, please.

Mr. Francesco Sorbara: Thank you for that, Chair, and thank you, Deputy Shanahan, for that most reasonable intervention on the point of order.

I want to say to the interpretation services that, obviously we're in an extraordinary period of time, a unique period of time. Thank you for all you are doing for members of Parliament as we sit here virtually in our ridings. It's a unique time and I know these hours that our committee has been putting in have been very long and your patience and assistance and your service needs to be commended. So I do say a very big thank you for that.

I do wish to say that I will go a little slower. I'm a quite passionate person and tend to have a lot to say on a number of issues including the economics issues and in terms of my prior life and currently and stuff. I tend to like to express my opinion and sometimes when I shouldn't. Actually, I do the same and my colleagues know that, but I think that's what we get elected to do, to express our opinions both when it's popular and unpopular to do so.

I just wish to comment on the four bullet points from Mr. Angus' motion because two of them, I believe, Chair and clerk, we came to an agreement on. We worked together. We compromised with Mr. Angus, and I have a great deal of respect for MP Angus not only for his representation of his constituents in his riding.... And as they say, people vote with their feet, and the citizens of his riding have recognized MP Angus' contributions for being a strong voice of his residents in Ottawa, and that needs to be commended.

Having spent time with Mr. Angus, he's a stand-up Canadian and a stand-up individual.

I'm proud to call him a friend and an acquaintance, if I can call you a friend, Charlie.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Sorry, I have a point of order. On a point of order please, Chair.

The Chair: Yes, Mr. Angus.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Yes. I'd like him to repeat all of that please, just so that we have that on the record. I didn't know if the translation got it all.

Yes, and I do consider him a good friend.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Angus.

I think that Mr. Sorbara slowed down enough that the translation service probably caught that.

Please continue on, Mr. Sorbara.

Mr. Francesco Sorbara: Thank you. I will only add this, and then I will quickly return to the motion at hand. Growing up, I was fortunate enough to get to know—and it piqued my interest in politics—another member of Parliament from the New Democratic Party whom I probably agreed to disagree with on many things. I agreed on a few things with the former member of Parliament for Skeena—Bulkley Valley, the beloved Jim Fulton, who is no longer with us. For those of you who knew Jim Fulton or heard of him, he was an MP who really represented his constituents, and an individual with a lot of class and a lot of integrity.

Mr. Angus, I do know well the individuals that you follow in your party.

Going back to the motion at hand, we did reach an agreement. If my memory serves me correctly, we had voted to remove paragraphs (a) and (d) from Mr. Angus' motion. We did that. I think there was a lot of goodwill on all sides. I was actually very happy to do that, because I do think the quicker we can dispense with things and the quicker we can come to an agreement on how to move forward, the better off our constituents are and the better off we are as MPs, and the sooner we can get down to work.

I was really happy that we reached that compromise, because on the first paragraph regarding MCAP and Rob Silver's involvement with the Canada emergency wage subsidy and the Canada emergency commercial rent assistance program, we all know that the CEWS subsidy was a program that was benefiting millions of Canadians and millions of firms. We all know that the current Canada emergency commercial rent assistance program was run via CMHC, to which applications would be submitted, in partnership, I do wish to note, with the provincial governments, like the one here in Ontario, in terms of the signatories on that agreement and how it worked in terms of how rent would be covered in certain portions. A portion was contributed by the Province of Ontario, a portion by the Government of Canada and 25% by the renter, and then a portion was to be forgiven by the landlord. We understand now, and we've moved on from that and brought in a new program.

Going back to that bullet point, we knew that MCAP really did not have any role in that program. The program was set up by CMHC and our government. The uptake of the program was, yes, disappointing but we've learned from that, and I commend the government for taking the initiative to do the new program on its own and to pay renters and tenants directly. I think that speaks to the consultative nature of our government and frankly to the listening component. We've listened to opposition parties, listened to business organizations, and moved forward. It was great to see. We also knew that the Ethics Commissioner had opined—and if I'm wrong on this, somebody please point it out—that Mr. Silver had done nothing wrong. He had recused himself. There was a formal recusal. There was a proper, as we used to call it in investment banking, wall between members of the family. It was great to see that.

Finally, there is:

(d) the examination of the use of partisan resources and processes in the appointment of federal judges that may have constituted violations of the privacy rights of nominees.

I think, Chair, I was quoted, on that paragraph (d), in the paper, as saying that I was happy to see it removed, because I thought that was, not to overreach, something that did not lend itself to our committee. That could be brought up in other committees if need be. Also, it was something that crossed the line in terms of the privacy angle.

We were left with the two other aspects with regard to Baylis Medical. For full disclosure, I got to know Frank as a member of Parliament when he served. There were a few times when I had dinner with him and we chatted about business, entrepreneurial individuals in Canada, his entrepreneurial spirit and his parents, the fascinating story of his mom and dad. I found him to be a very sincere and very smart individual who had started a business here in Canada. He employs hundreds of people in Ontario pre- and post-COVID in good middle-class jobs and is a global leader in the medical device sector pre- and post-COVID. He's someone I looked up to as a friend and also someone who is a job creator.

● (1625)

I don't mind talking to former MP Baylis. I think his record speaks for him as an individual. He is definitely someone who has a lot of integrity, someone who represented his constituents and so forth. His company is amongst the thousands of companies across Canada helping Canadians and producing the personal protective equipment we need to weather the COVID-19 pandemic. Now we are in the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, and we know what's happening in Europe with the—from my understanding—mutations in the strain, how it has come back with a vengeance and how we all need to heed the public health officials.

Going back to paragraph (b) in Mr. Angus' motion, I have no problem at all speaking to Mr. Baylis and asking him about his entity, about his company, about how he's operated in Canada and kept all the jobs here in Canada for many, many years and continues to invest in his operations. God bless Mr. Baylis and God bless all of his employees who go to work every day making those medical devices that we need for Canadians. I look at that and I welcome that.

The opposition should be, I think, very happy that in the first part of the session we get to study the Canada student service grant, in-

cluding the committee's work to review the safeguards to prevent conflicts of interest in government expenditures. I think it's very important that we look at “WE Charity and the Canada Student Service Grant; and the administration of the Canada Student Service Grant”. We know there's been quite a bit of disclosure made, and a number of people have come to present to committees, whether it was during the summer at the finance committee.... We had the Prime Minister come for three or four hours. If we wish to go down that road, we have a lot of the information.

Then there's paragraph (c), “an examination into Palantir Canada's relationship with the government including the breach of the Conflict of Interest Act by its president and former Canadian ambassador to the U.S. David MacNaughton”. What I say to this is very simple: Mr. MacNaughton's record, at the level of the provincial and the federal government and serving as the Canadian ambassador to the United States at the most extraordinary, unique time in Canadian history is very, very important, and I think his record speaks for itself.

We adopted MP Fergus' amendment to Mr. Angus' motion. Then the next step with the motion was MP Gaudreau's amendment, about which I, not jokingly, but fundamentally, said that a mulligan had taken place.

I know MP Shanahan had read into the record the blues of our prior committee meeting, and I'm not here to question decisions. I do not wish to go down that route, Chair. All I know is a mulligan had taken place where an amendment was put forward with a number of portions of that amendment going into MP Angus' motion. The amendment was then voted on. Much to my—I don't want to say much to my disappointment, because I understand the motive. I just wish that we had continued as a committee to work in the spirit of co-operation. I wish we had continued the path of MP Angus' motion with Mr. Fergus' amendment and that we had begun debating the amended motion, and that was my comment there.

● (1630)

In that light, it just seems to me, Chair, when I look at Madame Gaudreau's amendments.... I just don't agree with them, even to the comment...and I vehemently stated this during the initial part of the first few weeks of the ethics committee. When I was asked to join the ethics committee, I wasn't sure what this meant, but I had some sort of idea. I sure hope we can get to other things that are, in my view, of much more importance.

What I still find concerning is the date of October 14, 2008. This states, “That an Order be issued to Speakers' Spotlight to obtain a copy of all records related to speeches organized since October 14, 2008”. I believe this part of Madame Gaudreau's motion was voted on, on the amendment—namely, “to obtain a copy of all records related to speeches organized since October 14, 2008, for Justin Trudeau and Sophie Grégoire Trudeau—including, for each speech, the amounts paid, any expenses reimbursed and the name of the company, organization, person or entity that organized it”.

Chair, I have no issue at all with the opposition asking questions on the Prime Minister and the Prime Minister's wife. Frankly, I cannot say it's something that is wrong. I think it's something that I would expect and anticipate; no problem there. I do have an issue with going back 20 years, 10 years, five years. Going back to 2008 almost reminds me of....

You know, I am a member of Parliament, and I have the privilege of being Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Revenue. Let's say somebody asked me, "Who did you work for in 1997? What did you do in 1999? What did you do in 2002, or 13 or 15 years before you decided to enter public service?" I worked. I made a living. I saved for my family. We bought a house. We did things. We filed our taxes. We travelled. It just seems to me that this part of the motion is very, very wide in breadth and somewhat, as I called this before, of a fishing expedition. It raised much concern for me, and it still raises concern for me. That's in large part why, when I look at the amendment, and then now the amended motion, or the amended amendment that we went through once, the second amendment.... We have a motion that's been an amended amended motion, if I understand that correctly. It's like your fourth cousin fifth removed, or third removed, or second removed, or something like that. It's just keeping track of all that wonderful stuff.

I'll go back to my friend Mr. Baylis. I say that proudly. He was a great person and he did a great job, not only for his constituents but also employing hundreds of Canadians across the country in his company.

I put together some notes, Chair, that I'd like to read. It pertains to the motion, the amended amended motion, at hand.

The motion before us is calling for a study on the role of Baylis Medical in regard to a contract that was awarded to a company that engaged Baylis Medical to assist them in providing needed ventilators for the COVID pandemic. I was looking into Baylis Medical, and I found this release regarding the company. I think it might be worthwhile to read it into the record so that we can see what independent groups think of Baylis.

Before we engage in yet another what I would say...not fishing expedition, because I actually welcome interest in looking at companies that invest in Canada, that employ Canadians, that grow our middle class, that create a stronger economy, and that employ engineers and researchers and recent graduates coming out of our great universities here in Ontario and across Canada. Before we engage in yet another what I will call fishing expedition, which seems to be what the opposition I think—I think—wishes to do, I will err on the side of the opposition wishes to act in the spirit of co-operation and compromise. I think MP Angus said it at the beginning, that, you know, we all kind of gave up a little bit when we started.

MP Angus, thank you for commenting on that, because that's the way I feel. I want to move on. I personally would like to move on, move forward, get to where we have to get to and get to the compromise that works for everyone.

● (1635)

We're not always going to be able to have our ice cream and cake, both things, or whatever the saying is, but we want to get to a point where we are studying and we will begin to study the issues

at hand, which are related to facial recognition, privacy and all the things that are very pertinent to Canada these days, especially in the technological environment that we find ourselves in.

I just want to do a quick shout-out again to the interpreters.

[*Translation*]

Thank you for your work.

[*English*]

It is very well appreciated.

To continue, the concern is that another fishing expedition may result in causing this Canadian success story irreparable harm, somewhat akin to what the opposition did to the WE Charity.

Now, I say this because I think we need to be very careful when we bring up Canadian companies and Canadian success stories like—

Mr. Charlie Angus: On a point of order—

Mr. Francesco Sorbara: Yes, sir.

Mr. Charlie Angus: —the Liberals are blocking our ability to draw witnesses. It's not fair that they're using this filibuster as propaganda for Frank Baylis. If we have a study, they can bring witnesses who can speak of Frank Baylis, but they can't use a filibuster to seed a narrative when we're being denied, as opposition, the chance to actually investigate this.

This is again duplicity on the part of the Liberals, in that we make an agreement, they break that agreement, and then they say, "Well, we really want to talk about Frank Baylis." That's after their agreeing yesterday to have this as a study, but now we are allowed to study it only through their lens of propaganda. We don't know who this person is they're citing. We don't know where it came from. These are not witnesses; this is filibustering.

● (1640)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Angus.

Continue, Mr. Sorbara.

Mr. Francesco Sorbara: Thank you, Chair, and thank you, MP Angus, for your intervention.

The press release came out on March 5. The headline is “Baylis Medical is honoured to be recognized as one of Canada's Best Managed Companies for the third consecutive year”. It continues: “The prestigious award program, which is run by Deloitte”—not known as being a politically motivated group—“recognizes Canadian companies that invest in technology and sustainable practices, have strategic development processes centered around their core strengths and are committed to building a strong corporate culture.” It states: “Behind Baylis Medical's continued success is a long-standing culture of social interaction and collaboration amongst its employees.”

It continues:

“We are thrilled to have won this award for the third year in a row,” said Deb Douma, Vice President of Human Resources at Baylis Medical. “Personal growth, employee development and continuous improvement are at the forefront of the work we do every day. As a company, it's critical that we give our employees the necessary tools and support they need as they continue to improve the lives of people around the world.

This year, Deloitte deliberately reduced the Best Managed winners list to half (in comparison to the 47 winners in 2019) in order to continually evolve the program and increase [the] competition to showcase the very best across Canada.

Baylis Medical looks forward to further innovation across all areas of the business as it continues to grow its range of products, expand into new and existing markets and add to its workforce.

“The all-encompassing nature of Canada's Best Managed Companies program really speaks to the diverse work we do at Baylis”, said Kris Shah, President of Baylis Medical.

“From the conception and development, to the production and distribution of our innovative devices, every single person plays a role in the success of our company. I want to thank everyone at Baylis for the important work they do every day and for helping us win the Best Managed award.”

[The] 2020 Best Managed award winners will be honoured at the annual Canada's Best Managed Companies gala in Toronto on April 1, 2020.

It goes on to say:

Baylis Medical is a leader in the development and commercialization of innovative medical devices in the field of cardiology, with a focus on left-heart access. Headquartered in Canada, and with offices world-wide, our clinical solutions have been Improving the Lives of People Around the World for over 30 years.

Now, let's take a quick look at the contract that was given for the ventilators. Let's get it clear on the record from the onset that this contract was not with Baylis Medical. The contract was with FTI. Baylis Medical was not brought into the fold until after the contract was awarded. The Government of Canada is acting on the recommendations of an expert panel at the request of the Public Health Agency of Canada. PSPC officials awarded the contract to FTI for 10,000 ventilators. PSPC has no involvement with the agreements reached between FTI and its suppliers.

Let's talk a bit about FTI ventilators for Canadians. V4C, as stated:

is a consortium of entrepreneurs, philanthropists, industrial, technology and engineering businesses that have come together to identify and pursue solutions to help Canadians through the challenging COVID-19 healthcare emergency. Rick Jamieson coined the term “Ventilators for Canadians” and launched this website in March 2020.

The co-founders of the consortium are: Rick Jamieson, president and CEO of FTI Professional—

Mr. Chris Warkentin (Grande Prairie—Mackenzie, CPC): I have a point of order.

The Chair: Yes, go ahead on your point of order.

Mr. Chris Warkentin: The commercials have been going on for quite some time. It's probably time to move back to the committee and then to a commercial break.

The Chair: Please continue on, Mr. Sorbara.

Mr. Francesco Sorbara: Thank you.

And thank you for the interjection. I think it was—

Mrs. Brenda Shanahan: I have a point of order, Chair.

The Chair: Yes, Madame Shanahan.

Mrs. Brenda Shanahan: When we are speaking, are we not to be visible on the camera when we are speaking?

The Chair: Yes, that is correct, Madame Shanahan.

Mr. Chris Warkentin: I can repeat that with the video on for certain.

The Chair: I think that's not quite necessary, Mr. Warkentin, but I appreciate it.

Thank you very—

Mrs. Brenda Shanahan: And while I have you, Chair, could you just clarify the speaking order because, of course, there are people in the room and so on.

The Chair: Yes, I was going to do that once we changed the speakers, but I can do it now.

Once Mr. Sorbara has finished his intervention, it will be Mr. Dong, Madame Gaudreau, Mr. Warkentin, you, Mr. Barrett, and Mr. Drouin.

• (1645)

Mrs. Brenda Shanahan: Thank you.

The Chair: Mr. Sorbara, are you still there?

Mr. Francesco Sorbara: Yes I am, sir. You'll have to excuse me, my lovely and intelligent wife has just come to pick up our daughter, so I just had to say good evening and good night to them, of course.

Mr. Barrett, I do have about another 20 pages to get through, so I'm sure you'll have some patience there for my comments with regard to the motion and everything and so forth.

Let's talk about about FTI ventilators for Canadians.

Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC): I have a point of order, Chair.

The Chair: Yes, Mr. Barrett, on a point of order.

Mr. Michael Barrett: Mr. Sorbara just asked if I would be patient with his getting through this. I've yet to interject on his off-topic and flighty ongoing filibuster, and we know that we've already heard from his colleagues on the same documents that he's reading and—

Mr. Francis Drouin (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, Lib.): I'm sorry, Mr. Chair, that's not a point of order.

Mr. Michael Barrett: —that he believes them to be sacred like the blacked out WE documents. We know that for this Liberal government, corruption is sacred, but we've been at this for another hour and fifteen minutes. We're nearing 20 hours into their filibuster. The points they raise don't further their argument, Chair. We have—

Mr. Francis Drouin: Mr. Chair, that's not a point of order. I would ask you that you kindly intervene. When a point of order is raised or clear clarifications are made when a point of order is raised, that's not a point of order. That's a matter of debate. I know the member is taking a cue from the member from Carleton, but I would tell him that this Parliament has traditions and rules in place, and this is not a point of order.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Sorry, Chair. This member is not a member of our committee and he's speaking over another member. At least let the original member speak.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. Angus. I was about to intervene.

Mr. Drouin, it has been the practice of this committee for all members, Liberal, Conservative, Bloc, NDP, and anybody else who's visiting and who has the right to intervene that I allow them to finish their point before I rule on whether it's a point of order. Should I change that, it would mean that I would do the same for your members.

I'm going to be consistent and allow people to make their point, as long as they don't carry on for a large portion of the meeting. Then I will rule on the fact, and I have ruled a couple of times today and just told the speaker to go on as they were. So thank you for that.

Each committee has its own culture and tradition and that's the one here.

Mr. Barrett, do you have some more concise comments to complete your point?

Mr. Michael Barrett: Chair, I'll conclude by saying that while the member Mr. Drouin is very eager to point out procedure and offer tips to the chair, he'd be well served to offer those to his colleagues and perhaps remind them of the point of relevance in debate, and once that's done I'm sure that we can move past the cover-up and on to truth for Canadians.

Thank you, Chair.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Barrett.

I know, colleagues, there have been many hours that might test our ability to be patient with one another, but I'd encourage you to do that.

Mr. Sorbara, it's back to you now.

Mr. Francesco Sorbara: Thank you, Chair, and on to the matters at hand.

I believe, Chair, we are going through the committee's business right now; we are speaking to a motion that was put forward by MP Angus. The amendment by Mr. Ferguson was passed and approved by the committee, and then another amendment by Madame Gaudreau was passed by the committee.

Within that motion there is a section with regard to the Baylis Medical Company, and I am speaking to that company and that part of the motion at hand. I will continue along that part. It is on topic, it is relevant and I do wish to have it on the record. If at any time it is not, then please let me know, but at the same time that is the direction I will continue.

As to the opposition colleagues, we are all elected to do our jobs. You have my utmost respect and all members of Parliament who know me, know me in that manner. That's the way I operate and always have operated, and those are the values I purport to have as an individual and that have been instilled in me by my parents.

The co-founders of this consortium are Rick Jamieson, president and CEO of FTI Professional Grade and ABS Friction; Paul L'Heureux, CEO of Crystal Fountains; and Scott Shawyer, president and CEO of JPM Solutions.

Rick Jamieson, the president and CEO, is a Conservative. He supported Peter MacKay's failed leadership bid and donated \$450 to the Conservatives in the past year. Will Mr. Jamieson be dragged down to this committee—even though he is a long-time Conservative supporter—because he engaged in helping Canadians in this crisis and teamed up with Baylis Medical, one of the most respected companies in its field?

Let's take a brief look at others who have been awarded contracts for needed supplies:

In March 2020, Canada's Thornhill Medical, a leading innovator in medical technologies, is proud to have joined the national effort to fight COVID-19. The Toronto-based company, founded by researchers and engineers originally from Toronto's University Health Network, has received a letter...from the Canadian federal government as part of Canada's new plan to mobilize industry to fight COVID-19.

Thornhill Medical is ramping up production of its groundbreaking, proprietary MOVES SLC portable life support and ventilator unit which will support hospitals and health care facilities across the country to deliver much-needed life-saving treatment to patients requiring urgent care.

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Federal Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry Navdeep Bains have each cited Thornhill Medical as one of the companies working hard in the fight against COVID-19.

"We are honoured to join the effort to help save lives in these unprecedented circumstances," explained Thornhill Medical CEO Lesley Gouddie. "Thornhill's purpose is to produce the best leading-edge medical equipment to save lives, and we are proud to take part in the Canadian government's fight against COVID-19."

To follow the logic of the motion, or one of the components of the motion before the committee, the fact that Thornhill Medical director Wen Chen made donations totalling \$2,300 to the Conservatives should perhaps cause them to be examined here.

I don't think so, Mr. Chair.

• (1650)

Mr. Charlie Angus: I have a point of order, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Yes, Mr. Angus. What is your point of order?

Mr. Charlie Angus: We are seeing that the Liberals are blocking us from doing our work. They have filibustered, but they are using a filibuster now to do propaganda and denying us the right to have witnesses. If Mr. Baylis' company is so fantastic then they should stop these games and bring the witnesses so we can deal with it.

They're obstructing the work of Parliament and treating this as a mockery. We should not have hearings run by Liberal press releases. We have the right to witnesses. We have wasted almost a month of time with these shenanigans from the Liberals.

Propaganda statements and press releases that are obstructing our work are not germane to what we need to do. We need to get to a vote. If the Liberals want to vote to bring Baylis, then let's get to the vote.

Mr. Francesco Sorbara: Chair, can I continue on now?

The Chair: Yes, please continue, Mr. Sorbara.

Mr. Francesco Sorbara: Thank you very much, Chair.

Again, thank you to Member of Parliament Angus for his intervention.

I just want to repeat this last sentence before I continue to the next paragraph. I've jotted down a few notes on the political expedition or fishing trip, or the order of the day, it seems, for the opposition.

CAE Inc.'s Michael Fortier is a former CPC senator and minister of PWGSC. His company, CAE Inc., received a contract for ventilators for some \$282.5 million. Again, I ask the committee, does this mean this committee should drag Mr. Fortier and his company before us? I believe, Mr. Chair, the answer is no. I would suggest not, because that would be, I think, in my humble opinion, abuse of the committee's power.

Now take a look at Medicom's Shawn Fried, director of business development, former chief of staff to the CPC minister of state for finance. In August, Medicom entered into a contract with the Government of Canada valued at \$382 million over a 10-year term. Medicom is focused primarily on making N95 respirators and other key PPE items. Mr. Fried, however, has donated multiple times over the past several years.

Mr. Chair, there is no issue, and I encourage Canadians to participate in the political process in whatever manner they wish to do so, and are able to do so, whether it's volunteering their time or making donations to political parties. I encourage them considerably.

Mr. Fried has donated multiple times over the past several years: \$1,200 in 2013, \$1,000 in 2012, \$1,100 in 2011, \$500 in 2010, \$1,100 in 2009, \$1,820 in 2008. Colleagues, should we have this individual come before us to talk about his contracts and his past involvement with the Conservative Party of Canada? How appropriate would that be to have him here? The fact is it would not be appropriate at all. In fact, it would be inappropriate.

However, I do not think this concept has sunk in for my colleagues across the aisle yet, so I'm going to continue on with a few more examples because I think this context is very important for FTI and for Baylis Medical.

• (1655)

Mr. Michael Barrett: A point of order, Chair.

The Chair: Go ahead, Mr. Barrett.

Mr. Michael Barrett: Chair, the member has said that bringing Canadians before this committee and discussing their relationship with the government would jeopardize their privacy, their corporate interests, their reputation, and yet he continues to bring up names of individuals because of their affiliation, or reported affiliation, with the Conservative Party. He is effectively looking to smear them in hopes he will wear out the opposition, and somehow, by saying the names of Conservatives, we'll be convinced to not call these witnesses.

If the member has the courage of his convictions, Chair, I would ask, through you, that he stop those tactics and vote on the motion to call the individuals named based on the reasons stated in the motion.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Barrett.

Mr. Sorbara.

Mr. Francesco Sorbara: Thank you, Chair.

Thank you for the intervention, MP Barrett, and for your comments. I will say that all of the information I'm reading into the record today is, of course, public information, and my understanding is that it is the belief and the desire of said opposition members to look at FTI and to look at Baylis Medical because the individual happens to be and happened to be a Liberal. I'm bringing up examples of companies that are undertaking business for the benefit of providing personal protective equipment during one of the most unique and extraordinary periods of time in our modern history, the COVID-19 pandemic.

So, it's very important that we get this on the record. Canadians need to know that we are debating this and they need to know that people representing different walks of life, including different political parties, who contribute to the betterment of Canada, who contribute to our government in many different ways, whether they're chief of staff, former ministers or former members of Parliament, are contributing to fighting COVID-19, to ensuring that our front-line and essential workers receive the equipment they need and that, for people who actually unfortunately get COVID-19 or a COVID strain and need to be hospitalized, ensure that there is equipment on hand to ensure that those people are able to recuperate. These are very serious matters at hand. We know that across the world countries are really scrambling to ensure that they have an appropriate supply of ventilators, and I think we really need to be careful when we start looking at companies producing personal protective equipment.

Of course, I'm all for transparency and accountability. Again, I want to turn everyone's attention to Wazana Clothing and Jacob Wazana, its founder. It made a number of contributions and donations to the CPC in 2013 and 2014. Clearly, he is a supporter of the Conservative Party of Canada. There's nothing wrong with that, and I'm not sure that is at all relevant during a pandemic. During a pandemic, we wouldn't focus on the political affiliation of businesses. We would focus on made-in-Canada businesses that can deliver. I know a number of businesses in my riding have stepped up to the plate, and I've never said to them, "Are you Liberal or Conservative?". I've just said, "Thank you". Wazana has received nearly \$100 million in government contracts during this pandemic to supply important personal protective equipment needed throughout this country, yet we do not see the proprietor of this company, Mr. Wazana, on our witness list to testify, because there is simply no valid reason to have him here.

My colleagues in opposition, I'm curious: Why do we not have someone who will receive that contract, much as other individuals or other businesses that may have owners or representatives with a political affiliation, on the list?

Where do we go with that? It just makes me think.

Let's focus now on another entity. Turn your attention to Trudell Healthcare Solutions Inc. George Baran is the executive chairman. What does he have in common with the other individuals and companies that I've mentioned? Well, he's a donor to the Conservative Party of Canada. His company received \$18.1 million in pandemic-related spending. Mr. Baran generally supported colleagues across the way with donations in 2015 and 2016. The financial support to the Conservatives isn't limited to Trudell's executive chairman, Mr. Chair. Mr. Gerald Slemko, their CEO and a director on the board, has also donated over \$3,500 to the CPC in the past. I wonder if they should be called before us in the coming days and weeks to provide insight in regard to their past political support, and how they think it relates to the recent government contracts they received.

I do wish to make this point, because the members of the opposition have raised this in the House of Commons. They mentioned Baylis Medical and they mentioned it repeatedly, and we may want to check Hansard to see how many times that's been mentioned and how many times—but not once have they mentioned any of these other companies.

• (1700)

It just strikes me as—I don't know if hypocrisy is the right term. Maybe it is. Maybe it's not. Maybe "selective referencing" is the right term. I'm not an English scholar, but maybe selective referencing or selective looking at companies or individuals. Breathe Medical Manufacturing is another Canadian company that stepped up during COVID-19 and manufacturers surgical masks. Again, I applaud them. I applaud every company that's stepped up, whether it's the Woodbridge Group here in my riding or any company across Canada that has assisted. Their company president, Warren Jones, donated \$500 to the Conservative Party in 2017. I'm not sure how it would be relevant to have him testify, but if we keep up with the logic of my dear opposition colleagues, we should definitely call

him to testify before us. The relevance of his appearance really isn't important.

Chair, I want to turn my colleagues' attention to another entity. BOMImed Inc. is based in the beautiful city of Winnipeg, Manitoba. BOMImed produces essential medical equipment and has received \$12.5 million in government contracts for much needed medical equipment, which is being used to combat COVID-19. What the public and colleagues may not know, Chair, is that David Olivier, president of BOMImed, donated \$1,500 to the Conservative Party in 2015. It's also not just Mr. Olivier. BOMImed's vice-president Brandon Guyot also donated to the Conservatives in 2016. Is any of this relevant to the procurement of needed medical supplies during the pandemic? Absolutely not. Of course not, but the opposition again, Chair, in the motion has referenced Baylis Medical, Frank Baylis.

I'm scratching my head, Chair—no, of course not—but the opposition doesn't mention companies like BOMImed because they cannot score or attempt to score political points instead of offering substantive policy prescriptions to Canadians to assist them to weather the storm and to reinforce the bridge on COVID-19.

We're talking about an individual company producing ventilators, much needed personal protection equipment for Canadians, and the only reason we're referencing that individual company is for one simple reason. An individual had the privilege to serve as a member of Parliament, in the last session of Parliament, from a company that is over 30 years old, employs literally hundreds of Canadians and is one of the best managed companies in Canada. That is what we should be talking about, and that issue would be applauded, independent of who this individual may support politically and what his beliefs are.

NMC Dynaplas is another great example here. NMC is a medical product manufacture company based in Scarborough, Ontario, not too far from where Mr. Dong is and not too far from where I am, and where we have some wonderful colleagues representing the five or six ridings out there.

They received a government contract valued at just over \$2.5 million for the production of face masks. Company president Jason Foulds is doing a huge job producing personal protection equipment for Canadians including our frontline workers, the ones we applaud every day, the ones we care about and we purport to care about so much. What Canadians may not know about this individual is that he donated \$1,000 to the Conservative Party back in 2010. What does that matter you may ask? Well, it doesn't. But Jason and his company stepped up during the pandemic and are helping to produce much needed medical equipment. Why haven't we heard his name before? Well, because he isn't a Liberal, and it doesn't suit the narrow partisan angle or interest of the opposition. That is why he hasn't been mentioned, Chair.

And Chair, in terms of the motion and the amendment Mr. Ferguson put forward, we obviously worked with Mr. Angus, and conversations were had in terms of how we can come to a compromise. I believe we will eventually need to come to a compromise. We'll continue talking and coming up with ideas.

At the same time, I need to make the fair point of why I don't agree with what's in this motion and with the mulligan that was provided to another member of the committee.

• (1705)

It's a similar situation with regard to Ultra Manufacturing Limited, Mr. Chair. Ultra, like NMC Dynaplas, manufactures products with plastics and rubbers.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Waterloo-based company began manufacturing face shields and received just over \$1.1 million from the Government of Canada to manufacture this essential PPE. Like for the other companies mentioned above, company president Joe DiAngelo is a past Conservative donor, having donated \$1,500 in 2017. However, his past financial support for the CPC and his personal political preference have no bearing on whether or not his company receives, or does not receive, government contracts—and nor should they.

During this pandemic, Canadians, including Canadian businesses in my riding and in almost every single committee member's ridings that they have the privilege of representing, stepped up to the plate. They didn't ask if they were Conservative, Liberal, New Democratic, Bloc, Green or any other political party that may be on the ballot when election time comes. They just stepped up to the plate, and that's what Canada is about.

The last example I want to turn our attention to is that of a great iconic Canadian company called Stanfield's, which manufactures numerous clothing articles. The company can trace its origins back to Nova Scotia in the 1850s. Former company chairman and CEO [*Inaudible-Editor*]

Mr. Charlie Angus: I have a point of order.

The Chair: Yes, sir.

Mr. Charlie Angus: I don't remember that anybody has had any interest in underwear as part of this pandemic study. If the Liberals are going to continue to drag us down the hole of filibustering, the issue that they agreed to is with regard to Mr. Baylis, because he's a former member of Parliament, which makes it pertinent.

If they're going to start to now talk about underwear, Mr. Chair, they are certainly wasting our time and taxpayers' time.

• (1710)

Mr. Francesco Sorbara: Okay. Thank you, Mr. Chair, and actually—

The Chair: Go ahead, Mr. Sorbara.

Mr. Francesco Sorbara: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I will say to....

I think there's a little bit of echo coming. Is everything back to normal now?

The Chair: We're all good.

Go ahead, Mr. Sorbara.

Mr. Francesco Sorbara: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I will say to MP Angus that I will be finishing up in a few minutes so the focus of our attention will not be turned to underwear, or as I commonly refer to them, boxers. I think that boxers are better than underwear, but that's a whole different story.

For the last example, I want to turn our attention to Stanfield's, iconic Canadians who manufacture numerous clothing articles. The company can trace its origins back to Nova Scotia in the 1850s. Former company chairman and CEO, Frank Thomas Stanfield, was a member of Parliament from Nova Scotia in the 1940s and 1950s. The current Stanfield's retooled as part of the effort to combat COVID-19 and began manufacturing essential PPE and, in particular, gowns.

They were awarded a Government of Canada contract for \$27.9 million to manufacture gowns for distribution throughout Canada, including to front-line workers. The current CEO of Stanfield's Limited is Jon D.F. Stanfield. Mr. Stanfield, being the son of a former Nova Scotia premier, Conservative MP and leader of the Progressive Conservative Party, has done great work at the helm of his company.

Considering his family relation, perhaps we should invite him to testify. Perhaps the simple fact that his father was a Conservative MP is good enough reason to have him here to explain why he received this contract. Of course we wouldn't want to do that, Chair, because that would just be an absurd venture, much like the Conservatives and opposition position in regard to Baylis Medical, which has been in existence for over 30 years.

I could keep going with a few more examples, Chair, because I continue to find it interesting how my opposition colleagues push this narrative in relation to Baylis Medical, particularly in the House of Commons. I think during that hour of every day, the opposition has to keep the government accountable, and I do believe in the question period. I do believe in substantive questions and substantive answers, but sometimes I wish it was more so. They continue to ask questions that really have, in my view, no relevance. Instead of focusing on the issues at hand like making sure that Canadians are protected and we're getting Canadians back to work, which we are arguing for, but we must do so safely while heeding the public health officials, the opposition tends to look at things that I think are not of relevance.

I will bring this full circle for my colleagues and end this discussion by discussing Mr. Rick Jamieson. You cannot simply make this up. Mr. Jamieson, who is a well-known Conservative donor and supporter, has had close ties with the Conservatives for years, not just with the candidacy of Mr. MacKay, but with many other prominent Conservatives.

Chair, we should call Mr. Jamieson to testify. Perhaps he has knowledge or can answer questions on who my colleagues on the other side have close relationships with. I think Mr. Jamieson may have some interesting information about the Conservative Party and their dealings that he can inform us about.

Chair, I have about 40 or 50 words left. It's just absolutely outlandish that we are even contemplating studying that section of the motion, but in compromise with the honourable colleague on the other side of the aisle who represents the riding in northern Ontario.... We compromised, Chair. We were working together. While my colleagues on the other side continue to point fingers and focus on issues that have no relevance to the pandemic, we, including myself and all colleagues, for that matter, will double our efforts and focus on delivering for Canadians and ensuring they have the support they need throughout this pandemic.

I would like to stop at that section and yield the floor to the next speaker, who I believe is my beloved friend from Don Valley North.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Sorbara.

I will let you know that the speakers list is Mr. Dong, Madame Gaudreau, Mr. Warkentin, Madame Shanahan, Mr. Barrett, Mr. Drouin—

Mr. Charlie Angus: I have a point of order.

The Chair: Yes, go ahead.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Two turns ago, I think you had me on the list after Madame Gaudreau.

The Chair: I apologize, Mr. Angus. You're absolutely correct. You had waved to me, yes. I apologize for forgetting that. It's the challenge of looking at an electronic screen versus paper, but that's my responsibility and I take full accountability for it.

Colleagues, another place where I will take full responsibility is the role of the committee chair. I just reviewed it in our procedural book.

Look, I think there's never a time when it's fair to limit speech at a committee. However, we do that for studies and routine motions. For the collegiality of the committee and for the spirit of working together, I just want to advise you that there are 15 minutes left in our scheduled meeting, and only three members of the committee have spoken. There are 11 members on the committee, 10 excluding the chair. I am not in any way suggesting that I would limit the speech of individual members, but I would ask individual members to take it into consideration that other members may want to speak. You could limit your comments and get back on the list. That way, you would not be limiting your debate, but you would be yielding, in a spirit of collegiality, to your other colleagues. I would just encourage you to do that.

We'll continue on with Mr. Dong.

• (1715)

Mr. Han Dong (Don Valley North, Lib.): Thank you, Chair.

I heard Mr. Angus ask about the speaking list. He can go before me if there are some new point he wants to bring forward to the

committee. I want to offer that option to Mr. Angus. If not, I can start my remarks.

The Chair: If you were going to make that offer—again, this is my responsibility, being the referee—I think I would have to yield to Madame Gaudreau first, who was on the list right after you, and then Mr. Angus. If you wanted to file in after that, then that would be acceptable.

I don't know if I could bump Mr. Angus on the request of a....

Well, let me take the names out of it: I couldn't bump one member on the request of another member.

Mr. Charlie Angus: All things are possible these days.

The Chair: That's right; it's COVID, so anything is possible. But I have to adjudicate what's fair, so—

Mr. Han Dong: No, that's fair. I promise I'll bring some new points in my argument.

I want to thank all my colleagues for their patience. I want to take a few moments to speak on the amended motion before us today.

I have to admit that I was pretty surprised that this motion, or some version of it, was before us again. To be fair, I thought after the defeat of the motion last week, and again yesterday, we might finally be moving on from this matter to things that are important to my constituents, and important to average Canadians, given that COVID-19 is on hand and there's quite a bit of stuff we can discuss.

I can talk about anti-Asian racism. That's still at the top of my mind and the mind of many other Canadians across the country. We've seen increased violence and just chaos taking place in different parts of the world. But it is what it is.

Chair, before getting to that, I must say that I have some concerns—

The Chair: We have a point of order from Monsieur Gourde.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC): Mr. Chair, I didn't want to interrupt my colleague, but he can probably pick up where he left off.

Before I continue, I want to know something. It seems obvious that the Liberals still have a great deal to say. Can you take a few minutes to give us some insight into how the committee will run in the future? Will we be meeting for longer than two hours, or will we be meeting two or three times a week in the hope that we can come to an agreement before Christmas, if that's possible?

For example, will today's meeting end at 5:30 p.m.? Will we reconvene on Thursday? Will we get into the habit of holding two-hour meetings more often, or will we hold seven to eight-hour marathon meetings, as we've done in the past? It's becoming difficult to make decisions and plan our schedules. In the long term, some people may even be deterred from coming to the committee given the lack of predictability. Can you rule on this matter and give us a few minutes to talk about it?

Will we have meetings that last two hours, with one meeting every other day, or will we free up our schedule for a meeting that could last all night or even 24 hours? If that's the decision, then so be it. However, at some point, we must find a solution and come up with something. Today, there will surely be no tangible results. The parliamentary system is such that our Liberal friends can talk all night long if they want to.

I'd like some clarification, Mr. Chair.

• (1720)

[*English*]

The Chair: Mr. Dong, I'll just respond to that quickly.

To Mr. Gourde and all of my colleagues, we're in an interesting situation right now where we have only had one meeting a week and we are trying to fight for some extra resources. That's why we have the meeting today. It's my hope we'll have two regularly scheduled meetings after the Remembrance Week recess. That will be more consistent and you will be able to plan for it. If we go over time, that's generally the decision of the committee. Even as far as recessing or adjourning is concerned, I can call an adjournment or somebody can move a motion to adjourn, but it can always be challenged.

I'll do the best I can to make sure that you're advised as early as possible and try to keep it on a predictable basis, but because of the nature of the business of the committee, there are aspects that aren't predictable. I will try my best to manage them, but that's not always possible.

Mr. Dong.

Mr. Han Dong: Thank you, Chair.

I'll keep the comment of my colleague Mr. Gourde in mind as I go forward. I'll try to be concise with my concerns.

I do have some concerns about the way this motion has been reintroduced and what that means for this committee going forward. I believe I talked about our having a structure here and my opposition to running a parallel investigation or running an investigation before the commissioner has a chance to make a ruling. I still believe that. My stance is consistent on that point.

In this matter, I understand, Chair, you have made a ruling. Although I didn't agree with it, I respect your decision and the will of the majority of the committee in supporting you. I need to ask what that will mean for the motions that will come forward and be voted down in the future. I'm talking about procedures. What's the precedent that we're setting here if the committee votes down a motion and it can simply be reintroduced in the next meeting, or if it's voted down again and it can be moved as an amendment in a new motion? What if it's defeated again, Mr. Chair? Can a motion be

brought back for the third, fourth or fifth time? What is the cut-off? We as a committee have to consider that. That's something I'm quite curious about, Mr. Chair, and something that I hope you can speak on at some point today or in the next meeting. I'm going to leave that for a minute.

Mr. Chair, I want to discuss the redo of the redo on this motion. Mr. Barrett spoke yesterday about the will of the committee and the wishes of the majority of its members. He said that this amendment reflects the will of the committee in its current composition. I need to ask Mr. Barrett what merits he is basing that on, because as I go back and look at the results of the votes that took place previously, I see there was a vote on an identical motion taken on October 26 that was defeated by a vote of five to four. Fast forward to a week from yesterday, the same thing was put forward as a motion, again defeated five to four. Now we have this text in front of us a third time as an amendment, and the member opposite is saying that it reflects the wishes of the majority of the committee. The results don't bear that out, Mr. Chair. We've seen the result of the voting twice already, five to four. I wonder what the member means by it bearing out the will of the majority of this committee.

Going back through those votes, I can't help but think about all the work we've done here as a committee over the last year. While we sit here debating a motion on an amendment for the third time, I start to wonder what other motions have been debated at the committee since the last election, since the election in 2019. We've been here for almost a year. All the way back in February at our second meeting, after the election of the chair, Mr. Barrett led things off with a motion "That the Committee commence a study on the Trudeau II Report. That the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner be invited to the first meeting of the study to brief the Committee on his Report and that he be given 30 minutes for a prepared statement", and so on and so forth.

• (1725)

That motion was defeated.

Next up was Mr. Angus, whom I have a lot of respect for. I was willing to support the amended motion before Madame Gaudreau introduced her amendment. Mr. Angus moved a motion to review judicial appointments. That motion was eventually withdrawn.

Then the chair called Madame Gaudreau. She moved a motion that the committee study the possibility of reforming the identity system and separating the SIN, the social insurance number, by recommending the development of a new solution and that the committee study the solutions deployed in other countries, such as in Europe, with a smart identity card. This motion was passed, I believe, with unanimous consent.

Finally, in a meeting, Mr. Angus moved the following motion:

That...the committee study the use or possible use of facial recognition technology by various levels of government in Canada, law enforcement agencies, private corporations and individuals....

I'm sure that permanent members of this committee would remember that the motion was passed as well with all parties supporting it.

At the next meeting, Mr. Chair, Mr. Barrett was up again, this time moving a motion that the committee commence a study on the report by the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner entitled "Trudeau II Report" published on August 14, 2019. Mr. Chair, that wasn't a typo, it was just the same motion presented again, but this time with a lengthy filibuster that lasted two meetings.

So while Mr. Barrett chided us on this side that we are filibustering and we are trying to stall the committee proceedings, I can't help but think inside, seriously? This was done. He did this not too long ago when he brought forward that motion.

Now I know you weren't the chair at the time, so I will not hold you responsible for the decision of your predecessor, but the chair did eventually rule that motion in order. After some debate, it was defeated again.

So we can see that's Mr. Barrett twice, Mr. Angus and Madame Gaudreau.

There was quite a bit of time until our next committee business meeting, Mr. Chair, but when we did come back in the summer-time, it was Mr. Barrett who led off the meeting with a motion again. No, Mr. Chair, this time it wasn't a study on the "Trudeau II Report". The motion this time was the following:

That...the committee review the safeguards which are in place to avoid and prevent conflict of interest in federal government procurement, contracting, granting, contributions and other expenditure policies; and that, to provide a case study for this review, an Order of the Committee to issue to Speakers' Spotlight a for a copy of all records....

Next we had a motion from Mr. Kurek, a former member of this committee. He wanted to write letters to all members of the cabinet. This motion eventually was withdrawn.

In the next meeting, we had Mr. Fortin, not a permanent member of this committee, move a motion that the finance minister should resign even before any report came from the Ethics Commissioner. The motion was defeated.

● (1730)

Following that was a motion by Mr. Green—again, not a member of this committee—who moved that we conduct a study on conflict of interest, that we call witnesses from PCO, PMO and ministers. Oddly enough, none of these witnesses included the Ethics Commissioner, whose job is to do these investigations, to hold a standard and be the watcher—

[Translation]

Ms. Marie-Hélène Gaudreau: I have a point of order, Mr. Chair.

[English]

The Chair: Madame Gaudreau on a point of order.

[Translation]

Ms. Marie-Hélène Gaudreau: It's a matter of procedure. It's after 5:30 p.m. I gather that, as long as there's no adjournment, we'll continue.

I suggest that we take a break so that we can start our beautiful evening listening to each other rather than watching what will happen in North America.

[English]

The Chair: Madame Gaudreau, we actually have another committee coming in next. I'm just trying to find out who that is. We need to make sure there's an hour to wipe things down as well, because of the situation we're in with COVID-19. I don't have that information readily at hand. We're just obtaining it right now.

If you think you'd like a break, we can take a pause for a couple of minutes.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Sorry, but because we'd listed it for 5:30, I have other work I have to attend to.

I would suggest that we start looking at the next date for when we can continue this meeting and listen to the Liberals talk about underwear and everything else other than the issue. At a certain point, they will probably get tired and we can get to the vote.

Could we look at another time or date for us to continue this discussion?

The Chair: Okay.

Mr. Dong.

Mr. Han Dong: Mr. Chair, I believe I have the floor. If the members of this committee decide to adjourn the meeting today, I would like to be the first speaker for the next meeting in order to continue my comments.

The Chair: You are on right now, Mr. Dong. If you want to move a motion to adjourn, you can with your time. Right now you have the floor. I don't have any instruction to end the meeting at the moment, while you have the floor.

Mr. Han Dong: Okay. So do you need a motion to adjourn the meeting, or...?

The Chair: I don't need one, sir, but if you want to make one, I mean, it's....

I need nothing other than to see your lovely faces and to make sure that I'm doing the best I can to be fair. Other members have suggested what their needs are. You're obviously just as conscious of them as I am, because you heard them.

● (1735)

Mr. Han Dong: I can move that motion with respect to Madame Gaudreau's.... I get that.

I move to adjourn the meeting.

The Chair: There's been a motion to adjourn the meeting. It's not debatable.

We'll take a vote. The clerk will look after that vote.

(Motion agreed to: yeas 6; nays 4)

The Chair: Colleagues, I will notify you in regard to the next meeting. I believe that the resources of the House have been depleted for this week. I will likely see you either when we have an opportunity during the break week or after that.

Mr. Michael Barrett: Mr. Chair, I have just a quick question.

With respect to the Standing Orders, the general practice is that gentlemen wear conventional or standard business attire. Is it the

opinion of the chair that gentlemen respect that in this committee? Do gentlemen wear a jacket?

I would just note that Mr. Drouin looks like he's on his way out for the evening and hasn't found his jacket.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Barrett. That is a normal presumption, but a motion has been passed and we need to adjourn the meeting. I will send a note to clarify that.

The meeting is adjourned.

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