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• (1540)

[English]

The Chair (Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.)): I don't have the gavel, but we will start.

Welcome to meeting number 36 of the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development. Today we're dealing with Bill C-248, an act to amend the Canada National Parks Act, Ojibway national urban park of Canada, which was referred to us on June 8, 2022. More specifically, we are doing clause-by-clause today.

Replacing Ms. Collins, we have Mr. Bachrach. It's nice to have you back with us, Mr. Bachrach.

We have Mr. Benzen replacing Mr. Kitchen; we have Mr. Lewis replacing Mr. Kurek; and we have Madame Vignola replacing Madame Pauzé.

As witnesses, we have the sponsor of the bill, Brian Masse, MP for Windsor West; and from Parks Canada, Andrew Campbell, senior vice-president of operations, and Caroline Macintosh, executive director of the protected areas establishment branch.

I think that covers all the niceties. Unless I'm missing something, I guess we can go straight into clause-by-clause.

We have two proposed amendments. These are Liberal-1 and Liberal-2. I don't know who will be proposing these amendments. I await a proposer.

Mr. Patrick Weiler (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country, Lib.): Mr. Chair, I'll be proposing a couple of amendments.

Before I propose those amendments, I have a quick question for Mr. Masse.

Thanks for being here again today, and thanks to all of our witnesses for being here.

Could you assure the committee with 100% confidence that there are no private, municipal or provincial encumbrances on the lands that are referred to within this bill?

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Not that I'm aware, and if there were, then these things could be worked out later on, if there are negotiations that get carried out. I think that's one of the reasons that we have the amendments in front of us and why I support the amendments. They provide some more flexibility and clarity to allow those things to be worked out.

Mr. Patrick Weiler: I'd just like to ask the same question of Parks Canada, if that's possible.

Mr. Andrew Campbell (Senior Vice-President, Operations, Parks Canada Agency): Thank you.

We have not done the study area to look and make sure that there are no encumbered titles within it. At such time as the act would pass, immediately all of the areas within this bounded area would become part of a national park. That would mean that if there are private lands.... To give you a quick example, if you wanted to put a doghouse in your backyard, you would have to go to the field unit superintendent and ask permission. If you wanted to put a trap out for a mouse in your backyard, you would again need to go to the field unit superintendent for permission.

If you were the provincial government, you would have to go to the field unit superintendent for permission to do anything within the Ontario lands. The same would be the case with the Windsor lands.

Immediately upon passing, that would all come into force.

• (1545)

Mr. Brian Masse: There are no private lands.

Mr. Patrick Weiler: Thank you.

With that in mind, should this bill pass, what would that mean operationally?

Mr. Andrew Campbell: Again, because we don't know...and some of the boundaries do abut private lands, so we don't know whether you're out by a coordinate or two. First of all, it's speculative to say that there would be private lands or there would not, but we would have to administer the act as written, which would mean in all of those areas Parks Canada would have administration and control, even though we would not have ownership.

It's a bit of a strange legal piece. Very few times would you ever have a piece of land where you would have administration and control where you wouldn't have ownership, but in this case, that would be the case.

Mr. Brian Masse: I just want to take a little.... It's not speculative in terms of the geography that was done. It was done by all the experts. It was done by the geography of the City of Windsor, the province and the process. If there is a mistake, that's one of the reasons we have, again, the amendments.

It's not speculative. I think it's a pretty harsh term to use. We've identified these as all known public lands from the city, the province and the federal government to be assembled. We feel fairly confident on that, but again, that's why the amendments are there, to provide that flexibility.

Mr. Patrick Weiler: I very much appreciate that.

My concern with this bill is that it does seek to add lands under the Canada National Parks Act, in which the federal government, at this point, does not have a property interest. I'm just a little concerned that it won't follow the appropriate procedures. That's one reason I think these amendments are very important, to mitigate against that risk.

The Chair: Would you like to propose an amendment?

Mr. Patrick Weiler: Sure. I have two amendments.

The first one I would like to propose was shared with the committee previously. It falls under the reference 12053664.

It is that Bill C-248 be amended by adding before line 4 on page 1 the following new clause:

0.1 The Canada National Parks Act is amended by adding the following after section 38:

38.1(1) Sections 8 and 22 of the Rouge National Urban Park Act apply in respect of the Ojibway National Urban Park of Canada with any modifications that the circumstances require.

(2) In the event of a conflict between section 8 or section 22 of the Rouge National Urban Park Act as they apply to the Ojibway National Urban Park Act of Canada and this Act, the provisions of this Act shall prevail.

That's the text itself.

The importance of this is that the amendment would amend the bill to reference specific provisions of the Rouge Act to apply to this bill. Those include establishing an advisory committee and having incorporation, by reference, of different levels of government laws and bylaws that would still apply in the park.

The Chair: Thank you.

It's hard for me to see if anyone wants to speak to this amendment.

Maybe the clerk could guide me here. I have a ruling on the amendment. Does that pre-empt any debate? I think it would. Would it not?

The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Alexandre Longpré): It does, Mr. Chair. You can give your ruling now.

The Chair: That's what I'll do.

Bill C-248 enacts the new Ojibway national urban park of Canada act by way of geographical descriptions.

The amendment we're talking about here, LIB-1, seeks to apply section 8—involving the creation of an advisory committee—and section 22—involving incorporation by reference and regulations—of the Rouge National Urban Park Act to the provisions of Bill C-248. These would be new concepts that are not envisioned in the bill.

As page 770 of *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, third edition, states, “an amendment to a bill that was referred to

committee after second reading is out of order if it is beyond the scope and principle of the bill.”

Therefore, in the opinion of the chair, and for the above-mentioned reasons, the amendment is a new concept that is beyond the scope of the bill. Therefore, I rule the amendment inadmissible.

I don't see anybody. Again, it's hard for me to see if someone in the room has their hand up. I don't see anyone on screen with their hand up.

Mr. Bachrach, go ahead.

• (1550)

Mr. Taylor Bachrach (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Chair, I just wonder if the committee might see fit to hear from Mr. Masse with regard to his take on this proposed amendment and your ruling.

The Chair: I believe we can have debate on this.

Can we, Mr. Clerk?

The Clerk: No, Mr. Chair. There can't be debate on your ruling.

The Chair: Okay. There can't be debate on the ruling.

We'll go on to amendment LIB-2 if no one contests the ruling.

Mr. Philippe Méla (Legislative Clerk): Mr. Chair, we need to address clause 1 first.

The Chair: Yes, we need to vote on it, of course.

Liberal-1 is out of order, so we have to vote on clause—

Mr. Lloyd Longfield (Guelph, Lib.): Mr. Chair, the bells have started ringing. Should we get unanimous consent to go on until 10 minutes before the vote?

The Chair: I would like that, if we could continue, yes.

Would 10 minutes before the bells—in other words, 20 minutes into the bells—be okay with members to suspend at that point to allow for voting and then allow the statutory 10 minutes after the vote before resuming again? Is everyone okay with that?

Mr. Lloyd Longfield: It looks like it.

The Chair: Okay. That's good. Thank you.

The amendment is inadmissible. Do we go now to Liberal-2? Is that the procedure?

The Clerk: No, Mr. Chair. We have to go to clause 1.

The Chair: Okay. Yes, that's right.

Is there any discussion?

(On clause 1)

The Chair: Mr. Longfield, go ahead.

Mr. Lloyd Longfield: I think that because we've just voted to not have the proper oversight on clause 1, I wonder about the Walpole nation, whether it's included in the geographic boundaries. It sounds like they're not, even though they're directly adjacent to the lines.

For that reason, I wouldn't be supporting it.

The Chair: Okay.

Would anyone else like to speak to clause 1?

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoilou, BQ): Mr. Chair, I don't want to speak to clause 1, but I just want to remind my colleagues to approach their microphones when they speak, so that the interpreters can hear what's being said and so I can get their interpretation.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you.

It appears that no one else wants to speak to clause 1, unless I've missed a hand.

What is it, Mr. Clerk?

[*English*]

The Clerk: Mr. Chair, you have hands up. You have Mr. Bachrach, and then Mr. Weiler.

The Chair: Okay.

Mr. Bachrach, go ahead.

Mr. Taylor Bachrach: Mr. Chair, you'll have to excuse me. I'm new to a lot of this content.

Mr. Longfield just made a comment about clause 1, I believe. I wonder if he could expand a bit on his comment and explain to those of us who are subbing in on the committee why he feels that this is an issue.

• (1555)

The Chair: I'm a little perplexed here. Can we have this kind of discussion or are we basically...?

I don't know if it's a Q and A at this point, but go ahead, Mr. Longfield, if you want to give a short answer.

Mr. Lloyd Longfield: I think Mr. Weiler was up next.

The Chair: Go ahead, Mr. Weiler.

Mr. Patrick Weiler: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I think the concern about this—and this will be noted in the next amendment that I want to bring forward—is that it relates to the coming into force of this act and ensuring that we do have appropriate processes that will have taken place to ensure consultation and, where appropriate, accommodation of all the potentially impacted first nations, which includes the Walpole Island First Nation, which Mr. Longfield mentioned as well.

That was the idea behind the second amendment, which I'll be putting forward very shortly, but we'll be voting on this one before having the ability to debate and potentially vote on that one. I'll be getting ahead of myself and our committee here, but it would ensure that there is the appropriate space for that process to take place before this act comes into force and before the park is established.

The Chair: Are there any other speakers?

Mr. Longfield, did you have your hand up?

Mr. Lloyd Longfield: No.

The Clerk: There are no more speakers, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Okay, so we'll go to the vote on clause 1.

(Clause 1 agreed to: yeas 6; nays 5)

The Chair: The clause carries.

We'll go now to amendment Liberal-2, which I believe is for new clauses 2 and 3.

Who is proposing amendment Liberal-2?

Mr. Patrick Weiler: Mr. Chair, that is me again.

I'd like to move an amendment referenced as 12053406, which reads as follows: That Bill C-248 be amended by adding after line 28 on page 20 the following new clauses:

Amendment of Park Description

2 The Governor in Council may, by order, amend the description of the Ojibway National Urban Park of Canada set out in Schedule 1 of the Canada National Parks Act, as enacted by section 1 of this Act, by altering the description of that park to remove any land on which His Majesty in right of Canada does not have clear title to or an unencumbered right of ownership in the lands within that park.

Coming Into Force

3 Section 1 of this Act comes into force on a day to be fixed by order of the Governor in Council, but that day must not be before the day on which the Governor in Council is satisfied that

(a) His Majesty in right of Canada has clear title to or an unencumbered right of ownership in the lands to be included in the park;

(b) the government of the province in which those lands are situated has agreed to their use for that purpose; and

(c) the Government of Canada has held meaningful and effective consultations with the Caldwell First Nation and the Walpole Island First Nation and has provided accommodations, where appropriate.

That's the actual text of the amendment.

The rationale behind this is that it will allow the coordinates to be amended as necessary. As I mentioned before in response to the question that Mr. Bachrach brought up, it will provide the timeline for the coming into force of this act, to enable proper consultation for all the potentially impacted first nations that might be impacted by the acquisition of the land that will be within the traditional territory of that nation.

It also provides for provincial land not to be transferred to the federal government without the prior agreement of the provincial government as well.

• (1600)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Weiler.

You'll be interested to know that I have an opinion on this proposed amendment as well.

Bill C-248 enacts the new Ojibway national urban park of Canada by way of geographical descriptions. The amendment seeks to add a power to the Governor in Council to alter the boundaries of the park by order in council and also to provide for a coming into force of the bill, conditional to certain events happening, both of which are new concepts not envisioned in the bill.

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

That's the first thing.

If we go to pages 773 and 774 of *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, third edition, we'll see the following: “An amendment intended to alter the coming into force clause of a bill, making it conditional, is out of order since it exceeds the scope of the bill and attempts to introduce a new question into it.”

In the opinion of the chair, for the reasons stated above, the amendment brings two new concepts foreign to the bill. Therefore, the amendment is inadmissible.

As I understand it, we now go to the title of the bill.

Shall the title carry?

(Title agreed to: yeas 11; nays 0)

The Chair: Shall the bill carry?

An hon. member: Is there debate?

Mr. Patrick Weiler: I would just like to lay this out here. I have some very real concerns about the bill, about the constitutionality of the bill, if it's going to be enacted before there is the space to have the consultation and accommodation, where appropriate, with the potentially impacted first nations. That raises some serious questions about Canada's duty toward first nations and upholding the honour of the Crown.

I similarly have some concerns about the immediate enactment of this bill before there is the potential to have that process for getting the consent of the provincial government before those lands would be transferred. That was really the rationale for these amendments: to make sure we can follow those proper processes so that it can be constitutional.

For that reason—given that those amendments are ruled out of order and are not in the act—I am going to be voting against it.

The Chair: Does anyone else wish to intervene?

• (1605)

Ms. Leah Taylor Roy (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, Lib.): Yes, thank you.

I do think those are both serious issues.

I think we all agree that this park is a good thing. This is a great thing for us to create, but the way we are doing it right now does call into question both provincial rights and indigenous rights. I don't know how we can proceed without being assured that those things have been appropriately consulted on. We really don't have assurance of that. We did not have Walpole Island First Nation here, so I can't vote for this in good conscience because I don't think we've fulfilled our obligations as parliamentarians.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.

Is there anyone else?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): I'd like to say something, Mr. Chair.

I am grateful to each and every member who has made a comment. We are all entitled to our opinion. I believe that our colleague Mr. Masse, the sponsor of the bill, would also like to say a few words.

I know he's not here as a member of Parliament, but as a witness. However, I see him chomping at the bit, and I wonder if the members of the committee would agree by unanimous consent to allow him to make his comments.

[*English*]

The Chair: Do I have the consent of the committee to allow Mr. Masse some brief comments?

I don't see any objections.

Mr. Masse, can you be very brief?

Mr. Brian Masse: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you to the committee members for their concerns.

First of all, these amendments were prepared by the minister's office. I'm a little surprised to come here and find that they are ruled out of order and that due diligence wasn't done on that. It was done in complete co-operation over the last number of weeks, including in the last few days. That included the minister's staff, so it seems unusual that I would show up at committee today and find that these amendments, which are largely redundant in many respects.... They appear more to be putting lipstick on a pig for the position that the Liberals had about this, versus that of the actual sincerity of getting things done.

On top of that is the suggestion that first nations have not been consulted, when they sat in this very place, right here, with witness Chief Mary Duckworth and Caldwell First Nation as rights holders and title holders of the land. To suggest that there wouldn't be first nations consultations is I think disingenuous at best. I have tried hard to find and build bridges in this, even after the last vote in the House of Commons, where there was still a lot of misinformation. The bottom line is that at the end of the day we have limited opportunities in this House. That's why I went out of my way to work with the minister's office. I had several meetings, including with the parliamentary secretary.

To have the Liberals come here today and not be prepared to even challenge the chair or a decision is rather perplexing. I've only spent 20 years here, but I know what goes on.

I can tell you this much: When we have so many problems going on and so many issues, to hear people talking about how we all want the same thing done but we just can't do it for some other technical reason or some other thing that's already been covered over, is very surprising and disappointing.

I'll continue to go on. I hope that perhaps the government will change its mind.

I'll conclude with this, Mr. Chair. My first statement in the House of Commons after the vote against it, when I had some Liberal members support it, was actually to work together. That's where I'll continue to try to go, because there are 200 to 500 endangered species in Canada here.

I appreciate my colleagues' interest in this, but I'm rather shocked and surprised, after trying to work with the government over the last couple of weeks, that we come here and that this is what has happened.

The Chair: I understand, but here's an opportunity to see if the bill will pass and get your bill back into the House.

The Clerk: Mr. Chair, you still have a few speakers on the list. You have Mr. Lewis, Mr. Weiler and Ms. Taylor Roy.

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

Mr. Chris Lewis (Essex, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'll be brief.

I just wanted to let the committee know that I, along with Mr. Masse, have done extensive consultation with the mayor of LaSalle, with the mayor of Windsor and with the residents who back up to this piece of property. I have yet to find one person who isn't in complete support of this proposed legislation.

I raise my glass to Mr. Masse for doing all of the work and the heavy lifting along the way. It's discouraging, perhaps, and I can only imagine it, Mr. Masse.

I will tell you with full confidence that I'm quite confident that it's the best thing for the region. It's a great thing for Canada. Conservatives will be supporting it.

Thank you, Chair.

The Chair: Is Mr. Weiler next?

• (1610)

The Clerk: It's Mr. Weiler, and then Ms. Taylor Roy and Madame Vignola.

The Chair: Okay.

Go ahead, Mr. Weiler.

Mr. Patrick Weiler: I don't want to dispute today that we had one of the impacted first nations here to speak in support of that. I think that's a very powerful message, but we didn't have the other first nation that would be impacted by this, and that should be concerning to all committee members here.

I think everybody around this table wants to see this park established. In fact, there is an ongoing process to do that very thing. The concern here is about passing a bill that could be unconstitutional and that wouldn't reflect the duty that we have with the relationship we have to first nations.

I just wanted to say that. I am certainly disappointed that these amendments were ruled out of order, but I'll just leave it at that.

The Chair: Ms. Taylor Roy, you have the floor.

Ms. Leah Taylor Roy: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I take offence at the insinuation that we're doing this for some backroom reason. That's not it at all.

I agree with you. I'm obviously concerned about our environment and biodiversity as well. There's nothing backroom going on. Quite frankly, we all want this park. We know that this is already in process. I feel like we have to follow the proper procedure. While we did hear from the chief of the Caldwell nation, we did not hear from the Walpole nation, nor did we hear from any of the provincial counterparts. I think we have to respect provincial jurisdiction as well as first nations.

The Chair: I believe we need to suspend for the vote. We'll come back 10 minutes after the vote.

As I said, I don't have the hammer in front of me, but it is deemed struck.

I'll suspend now. Thank you.

• (1610)

(Pause)

• (1640)

The Chair: We can start.

We have Madame Vignola, and Mr. McLean is after her.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Vignola, you have the floor.

Mrs. Julie Vignola: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I would like to briefly review the positions of the Bloc Québécois, since I was asked about this earlier, in an aside.

The rest of the Canadian provinces can do what they want. In Quebec, however, we are opposed to the creation of new federal parks, and we have trouble understanding why the highest level of government should be involved in managing municipal land. That's our opinion, but we accept that others elsewhere think differently, which I personally don't understand but respect.

I agree wholeheartedly with the idea of consulting first nations that have not been consulted and with the fact that the municipal government and the Government of Ontario must also be consulted.

In this situation, what floors me is that the people from the minister's office who worked on two amendments to allow for these consultations were not aware that these amendments would be out of order. Personally, I can't believe that. How is it possible that members of the minister's office aren't aware of the procedures?

I seriously wonder if the work that was done wasn't more of a political game. I find it strange to use the word "game" when talking about politics, since we get paid well and do serious work. That's why I don't like the word "game".

That said, I hope this isn't a political game to take credit away from a member of Parliament and give it to a minister who is about to make an announcement at the UN Biodiversity Conference about the creation of more than a dozen urban parks in Canada. I hope this isn't some cheap political game, because I would be very disappointed. I hold the work of the committee in very high regard. This committee does important and good work. I don't see the point in playing politics when it comes to the environment.

I'll use an analogy to try to get my point across to my colleagues: when a ray of sunshine breaks through the clouds and hits the ground, it not only lights up the circle it hits on the ground, but the whole landscape as well. The amendments we have worked on allow the sunlight of the bill to shed light not only on the sponsor of the bill, but also on the entire committee and the Minister of Environment and Climate Change.

If I may digress for a moment, it is rather strange that the government is authorizing drilling in a protected marine environment, but seems to be preparing to do some greenwashing in Montreal by announcing the creation of protected urban parks. It's my little brain that makes these connections.

Whether we're on a committee or in the House, we're not there for our own glory or to outshine the other; we're there for our constituents, including those who aren't born yet. In my opinion, this is even truer for the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development, because we're not just working for the people of today, but for the people of tomorrow, too.

I would hope that the work that was done by the minister's office wasn't an intentional waste of time to take credit for the bill from one person in order to give personal glory to another.

• (1645)

I hope that's not the case. I hope the work was done in good faith. I don't understand how we could put so much work into this bill only to ignore it.

I'm wondering how else these amendments could be in order, and the municipality and the Ontario government could allow this bill to go forward with the agreement of the people involved, those first nations who haven't been consulted. I hope there's another way than to pull the rug out from under us today.

• (1650)

[English]

The Chair: Go ahead, Mr. McLean.

Mr. Greg McLean (Calgary Centre, CPC): I thank my colleague for that intervention. I agree. I raised my hand to intervene before I heard her words, obviously.

I wanted to point out to my colleagues on the other side that the words I've heard here today are exactly what I think we need to consider here. That's coming from that side of this discussion, from my colleagues in the Liberal Party. They talked about the constitutionality of this bill, which should have been covered long before now, as we're in the final reading.

I also heard my colleagues say, and I think I'm going to be able to quote them going forward, that we shouldn't be enacting this

without provincial consultation on so many of these matters. That is part of what has been missing from this government's approach on so much of their legislation—consultation with the governments that actually deliver services across this country.

I will recall those and I will bring them up repeatedly in this committee's discourse. I want to make sure they know that they can't say this in one instance, regarding this legislation, and then ignore it in the rest of the legislation that they are moving forward through this House and through this committee.

I'll rest on that, Mr. Chair. Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.

Are there any other speakers? I can't see from here.

Mr. Clerk, perhaps you could tell me if anyone else is lined up.

Go ahead, Ms. Taylor Roy.

Ms. Leah Taylor Roy: Thank you.

Just very quickly, I'd like to thank Madame Vignola and Mr. McLean for their comments.

I want to ask just one question. I think what was called into question was whether we all want this park to actually come to be. I believe we do. I know I do.

Could I ask Parks Canada whether this very park that is actually being considered is under way right now? What stage are we at?

Thank you.

Ms. Caroline Macintosh (Executive Director, Protected Areas Establishment Branch, Parks Canada Agency): Thank you for the question.

We have people from our team on the ground right now in Windsor. They are actively in consultations. They have been for over a year. We have a policy designation process that is intended to establish new national urban parks across the country. We are well under way with the pre-feasibility phase of Windsor.

We also have secured an agreement. We have an MOU in place with Transport Canada so that the most sensitive land, the Ojibway Shores piece of land, is effectively managed right now. It is not officially protected, but it is being reserved to be transferred to this eventual national urban park.

We do have an urban parks policy draft that is in consultation. It will be released for public consultation shortly. I think it's important to understand that the national urban parks program was really only launched in 2021. The team has made remarkable progress in a very short period of time to formalize the policy, prepare it for the public consultation that is imminent, and advance projects across the country in five different municipalities where we are actively working through the finalization of the pre-feasibility stage.

It includes consultation with the relevant first nations and NGOs. Provincial parties are at the table. There's a partner committee for Windsor in particular that includes members of all those different groups. We are actively working with both Caldwell and Walpole first nations to support their participation in the process. We expect that upon establishment of the agreement for the national urban park, we will be pursuing co-governance with first nations to ensure that they have an active part in managing a national urban park that is on their traditional territory.

Ms. Leah Taylor Roy: Thank you.

● (1655)

The Chair: Is there anyone else on the list of speakers?

The Clerk: I see no other speakers in the room, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Okay, can we proceed to a vote on the bill? I don't think we've done that. We've voted on the title.

Shall the bill carry?

(Bill C-248 agreed to: yeas 6; nays 5)

The Chair: Shall the chair report the bill to the House?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Chair: Okay, great. That's wonderful.

Of course, we don't need a reprint of the bill because it wasn't amended. Is that correct?

The Clerk: Yes, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Good, okay. I'm finally getting the hang of this.

I see that the witnesses are leaving. Thank you for your input.

In terms of our next meeting, I sent out a notice to suggest that we continue with the review of the first draft of the fossil fuels report, the report from the study. Should I assume that it is the will of the committee that we proceed to the fossil fuels study on Friday?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Chair: Are there any comments?

I don't see anyone with their hand up.

The Clerk: Mr. Chair, Mr. Weiler would like to speak.

The Chair: Okay. Go ahead, Mr. Weiler.

Mr. Patrick Weiler: Sorry if I'm jumping ahead here, but there was an email sent out to the committee a few weeks ago asking committee members to send in their recommendations in advance. I want to remind folks of that, just so we can be more efficient when we start looking at the drafting of the report on Friday.

The Chair: The plan was to proceed with Bill S-5 on the 22nd. Does that meet with the will of the committee?

[*Translation*]

Go ahead, Mrs. Vignola.

Mrs. Julie Vignola: Mr. Chair, I would suggest, on behalf of my colleague Monique Pauzé, that consideration of Bill S-5 be postponed until November 29, because 48 hours to find witnesses,

when Ms. Pauzé herself isn't even on Canadian soil, is very short. I will avoid repeating what was said in our email exchange.

[*English*]

The Chair: Would anyone else like to speak to that?

[*Translation*]

Go ahead, Mr. Deltell.

Mr. Gérard Deltell: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I agree with my colleague from Beauport—Limoilou. Forty-eight hours is very short, and we don't think it's enough. We would have liked to take part in the discussion on this, especially since these people must be consulted on their availability before being invited to appear, and this requires technical preparation. We therefore support the request of our Bloc Québécois colleague.

The Chair: Are there any other comments?

[*English*]

Yes, Mr. Longfield.

● (1700)

Mr. Lloyd Longfield: Given the importance of Bill S-5, I think we will have multiple meetings on this and we should try to move forward with it. We, in the committee, all knew that this was coming. We watched it go through the House. I would look forward to getting on to it at the next meeting on Tuesday.

The Chair: Does anyone else have comments? We've heard from three parties here.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Julie Vignola: Mr. Chair, if I may, I'd like to come back to this.

Bill S-5 is indeed a very important bill, if not an extremely important one. We need to take the time to get it right.

It's not a matter of delaying it indefinitely. We're asking for it to be postponed for one week so that everyone has the opportunity to submit a full list of witnesses.

In the committee that I normally sit on, it seems to me that this discussion is taking place as part of planning committee business. All the partners have to agree on the decision. In other words, it's not a unilateral decision made by whoever.

This is about getting it right and making sure that everyone has time to find witnesses. There is a list of witnesses, yes, but sometimes we have to call them back to see if they want to participate in our study and if they have something relevant to say.

It is precisely in order to do things properly and to not rush anything that we're asking for it to be postponed until November 29. That would give us a little more time to prepare the list of witnesses.

Also, I'm sure the clerks and analysts will be just as pleased to have a little more time to get in touch with the witnesses. I don't know if any of my colleagues have done this before, but it's a huge task to call people and make sure they have the right equipment if they're going to participate remotely.

We want to ensure the quality of the process and the witnesses. In fact, I would even go so far as to say that we should be concerned about the mental health of analysts and clerks, who are entitled to a quality of life at work with a little less stress.

I don't think it's too much to postpone the study for one week because it would give everyone a chance to get it right. This is an extremely important bill.

The Chair: Mrs. Vignola, if I understood correctly, you are moving a motion?

Mr. Gérard Deltell: I'd like to add something, Mr. Chair.

The reason we need to take the time to do the work is because the bill, our work and the testimony are important. We need to respect the people who are going to come and testify, and all the people who make this committee work. We need to extend the deadline by a few days. We can't put together a list of witnesses and ensure their attendance in 48 hours.

If people happen to think that a week's postponement is too long, I would remind them that the bill was introduced in the previous Parliament. If the process is already a year late because of the Prime Minister's personal decision to call an election, those people can wait a few more days to hear testimony. This is the right thing to do in an important, serious parliamentary process, and one in which we must be proud guardians of fairness in our work.

The Chair: Mrs. Vignola, am I to understand that you are moving a motion to start on November 29?

Mrs. Julie Vignola: It can indeed be considered as such.

The Chair: Okay. So we have the choice between November 22 and 29.

Would anyone else like to add anything before we go to the vote?

[*English*]

You're back, Mr. Kurek. Go ahead.

Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Thank you, Chair.

Forgive me, being new to a vice-chair role, but I was surprised in the meeting prior to the break when the Liberals moved to adjourn the meeting when committee business was scheduled at the end. It came as a bit of a surprise.

We have been working and are continuing to work on Bill S-5. I hope we can find the collaborative spirit that I'm told is important at this committee to ensure that we can find that path forward.

I think the 29th...especially since a week was lost because of that early adjournment a little over a week ago. I think an extra week to ensure that we have the time to do this right is entirely reasonable. There's a lot of other work as well that could be done during the meetings. I think there are two draft reports, if I'm recalling the schedule properly. I think lots of things can be done.

I would support the motion, but I would hope that we could just come to an agreement as a committee that this would be a very reasonable path forward and it fits the best interests of certainly where Conservatives are coming from, as Monsieur Deltell has said, but also the Bloc and our friend who is not here.

• (1705)

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Julie Vignola: I'll continue along the same lines as my colleague. Another important project for the committee to complete is the report marking the end of its study on fossil fuel subsidies. I'll be doing some of that with you, since I'm replacing my colleague.

We need to finish this report so we can free our minds to focus fully on the study of Bill S-5. This bill was passed unanimously in the House of Commons, so I don't think there are a lot of political or strategic obstacles.

That's the other reason I'm asking that the start of the study of Bill S-5 be postponed until November 29. This will allow the committee to complete its report before beginning its work on Bill S-5 with a clear mind, quality witnesses, and analysts and clerks who are not exhausted.

[*English*]

The Chair: Go ahead, Mr. Bachrach.

Mr. Taylor Bachrach: If I may, on behalf of our team, I think the sense from our side is that the 22nd represents a good compromise. On behalf of Ms. Collins, I'll be supporting moving forward in that way.

The Chair: Thanks.

Is there anyone else?

Seeing no other hands, we'll go to the vote.

The vote is to start Bill S-5 on the 29th.

(Motion negatived: nays 6; yeas 5)

The Chair: So we won't be starting Bill S-5 on the 29th. We will proceed as it was said in the notice that went out. We will start on the 22nd.

In terms of our first round of witnesses for the panels for the 22nd, and I guess the 25th, I believe the clerk sent a note yesterday asking for some initial suggestions. That doesn't mean you can't submit others, but have some initial suggestions tomorrow morning.

What time was that?

• (1710)

The Clerk: It was tomorrow at 10 a.m.

The Chair: It's tomorrow at 10 a.m., so please submit some names, but of course there will be an opportunity to submit more names for the many meetings that we're going to have on this.

Thank you for today's meeting. We'll see everyone on Friday to continue with our review, the report from the fossil fuels study.

Would anyone like to call for adjournment?

Mr. Terry Duguid (Winnipeg South, Lib.): I call for adjournment, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: It looks like there is a consensus in the room, so the meeting is adjourned. Thank you.

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