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Chair: Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal



Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration

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• (1625)

[English]

The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Keelan Buck): Honourable members of the committee, good afternoon. It's very nice to see everyone.

At this time I see a quorum.

I must inform members that the clerk of the committee can receive motions only for the election of the chair. The clerk cannot receive other types of motions or entertain points of order, nor can they participate in debate.

If everyone's ready we can now proceed to the election of the chair. Pursuant to Standing Order 106(2), the chair must be a member of the government party.

I'm now ready to receive motions.

Go ahead, Mr. Redekopp.

Mr. Brad Redekopp (Saskatoon West, CPC): I move that we make Sukh Dhaliwal the chair.

The Clerk: It has been moved by Mr. Redekopp that Mr. Dhaliwal be elected chair of the committee. Are there any further motions?

Seeing none, is it the pleasure of the committee to adopt the motion that Mr. Dhaliwal be appointed chair of the committee?

(Motion agreed to)

The Clerk: I declare Mr. Dhaliwal duly elected chair of the committee.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

The Chair (Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal (Surrey—Newton, Lib.)): Let me say a few words to start with.

First of all, Brad, thank you for proposing my name.

Thank you, all of you, for putting your confidence in me and electing me as your chair. I know many of you. We have worked together on the citizenship committee, and also on the Afghanistan committee when I was able to chair that committee. When we were on the Afghanistan committee we did really well together as members. I will continue to put in the effort to make sure we get business done efficiently and fairly.

To the outgoing chair, MP Salma Zahid, thank you for doing great work here. It was not easy to work under stressful circum-

stances sometimes, but I can tell you that you did fabulous work as the chair. Thank you for that.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

Mrs. Salma Zahid (Scarborough Centre, Lib.): Thank you, Chair. I'm looking forward to working with you.

The Chair: Here we go.

Madam Kwan.

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Congratulations on your position, with thanks, of course, to MP Zahid for her service to this committee as committee chair.

I welcome new members to this committee. Some faces are new, and there are returning members to the committee. I look forward to working with everyone in this new sitting of the House.

Mr. Chair, I have three items I would like to raise.

We started late today due to votes in the House. I've canvassed committee members loosely, and I believe that the Conservatives are okay for us to adjourn at our regular time. I believe the Bloc is as well, as are the Liberal members. To that end, first off, I would like to propose that we end our committee at our regular time, because we have planned for other events following the committee meeting.

After that, Mr. Chair, I have a couple of motions I would like to move.

• (1630)

The Chair: Do we have unanimous consent to go until 5:30?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Chair: Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe, you have the floor.

Ms. Jenny Kwan: I'm sorry, Mr. Chair, but I have a couple of motions I would like to put forward.

The Chair: I know, but it is on the same issue.

[Translation]

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): No, Mr. Chair, I'd like to introduce a motion.

First and foremost, I want to congratulate you on your new role as chair. I do not know if it's because I've gained some experience or that I'm lucky, but this is the second time I've had you as chair.

I'd like to move a motion, if I may. It reads:

That, pursuant to Standing Order 108—

[English]

The Chair: Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe, does this have something to do with the time slot? Otherwise, Madam Kwan is in front of you.

[Translation]

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: No, I wanted to see if I could get my motion in before Ms. Kwan moved hers.

[English]

The Chair: Can we go to Madam Kwan?

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I appreciate that.

I have two motions that I would like to move.

The first motion that I will move is related to this, for which notice has been given:

That, pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), the committee conduct a study on the government's progress around the regularization of undocumented workers; the impact of closed work permits for temporary foreign workers; and the findings related to Canada's Temporary Foreign Worker program by the United Nations Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery, Tomoya Obokata; that the committee invite the United Nations Special Rapporteur to appear before the committee for one hour; that officials from Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada and Employment and Social Development Canada also be invited to appear before the committee for one hour total; that the study consist of no more than five meetings; that the committee report its findings and recommendations to the House; and that, pursuant to Standing Order 109, the committee request that the government table a comprehensive response to the report.

Mr. Chair, I would just speak to this motion for a minute. We heard over the course of the summer that the special rapporteur made comments about Canada's temporary foreign worker program, and called it modern-day slavery. The issue is significant, particularly for those without full status and what that means for them. Many of them suffer a whole variety of indignities. As well, they are subject to exploitation. We've all heard those stories. We've all witnessed those experiences by people who are caught out in that situation. I think it is absolutely essential that we invite the UN rapporteur to come to the committee to speak to it, and also that we give an opportunity to officials to respond to that.

In addition, part of the main issue, which I know my colleague MP Brunelle-Duceppe is passionate about—he also has a motion on the floor to ask the committee to look into the issue—is closed work permits. That is an absolutely critical issue related to this matter as well, but where we differ is that, in my opinion, it's an issue on not just closed work permits but also regularization. Ultimately, what is essential is for people to get full status here in Canada. To that end, I think it is important that we incorporate the regularization component into this study.

Mr. Chair, I would like to move this motion accordingly. I hope committee members will support it.

Finally, I would simply say that it is in the minister's mandate letter. Certainly in the previous minister's mandate letter regularization was something that the former minister was tasked to work on, and I assume that this is something that the current minister, from my conversation with this new minister, is also embarking on.

To address all these issues, we need to combine the study into one study. Hence, I move this motion.

The Chair: Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe, go ahead, and then Mr. Redekopp.

[Translation]

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I understand what Ms. Kwan wants to do with this motion. Unfortunately, I can hardly support that position, because the issue of work permits related to a given employer, or closed permits, is quite broad and extremely important to those who have that kind of permit. It's also important to our small farmers and to many sectors of economic activity in Quebec and Canada.

I feel it would be a mistake to add the regularization of temporary foreign worker status to the study. An individual who currently has a closed permit has status: They are a temporary foreign worker with a closed permit. It's a status, and we don't need to regularize it because that individual already has it.

The issue is not whether we should regularize the status of temporary foreign workers. We need to look at the impact of closed permits on workers. Do these permits give employers too much power over temporary foreign workers? Is there a way to phase out closed permits and create other kinds of permits, such as sectoral or regional open permits, or is that a bad idea and should the permits be kept closed?

What I'm proposing in my motion, which you have already received, is that we look into this matter and hear from experts so that they can tell us about the impact this has on workers and what it would mean to make changes to the status of closed permit holders. I believe we need to look at status regularization, but we mustn't confuse the two things.

Therefore, I would support a motion that we do a study on the relevance of closed permits and their impact on temporary foreign workers, and then do another study on regularizing the status of undocumented workers, which is part of the minister's mandate.

So we agree on the substance; I feel we have a difference of opinion on the form. I really feel we should do what I propose in my motion: first, a study with experts who would come and explain to us what closed permits mean and tell us whether and how we should make changes, and then a study on the regularization of undocumented workers' status to support the mandate given to the minister.

That's my position. I hope that my colleagues from the other parties will agree. Thank you.

• (1635)

[English]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe.

Mr. Redekopp, go ahead.

Mr. Brad Redekopp: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I would agree, broadly, with what Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe has said.

First, just broadly speaking, if we look at what we have in front of us on the committee right now, we probably have enough to keep us busy until Christmas, just with finishing up the studies we have already undertaken. We need to keep that in mind as we talk about doing new things. We're probably talking about a February time frame here.

Second, I think Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe is right. I don't think we can combine all of these things together. There is already a study on the books, a motion that has, I believe, been talked about that would involve six meetings to study regularization of immigrants. That's already there. That was, I believe, already proposed to this committee, so we're taking that, and then, with what Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe mentioned, potentially another four meetings. We're talking about a rather large undertaking.

Everything is related in immigration, yet it's not. We all know, just with what I said already, that we have a whole three months' worth of work ahead of us on things we've already started. If we start another study that has a very broad mandate, probably none of us on this committee will be here when we actually finish that study. It will take a long time.

I would suggest that we amend this motion to split it up into the original motions that were there, because that's, essentially, what this is doing—combining together several motions. I think we're far better off to do it in bite-sized chunks. We'll actually get it done and move on. Otherwise, we could just go with a motion that Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe might propose.

Those are my thoughts. I don't like this the way it's written.

The Chair: Thank you.

If there are no other comments, I can suspend the meeting for two minutes so everybody can talk together on this and things can go more quickly.

Mr. Paul Chiang (Markham—Unionville, Lib.): I agree with Ms. Kwan's motion. It gives an opportunity to investigate, in depth, closed and open work permits with officials, so perhaps we can look at that. Perhaps both Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe and Ms. Kwan can look into this and maybe speak to it. We can take a break and discuss it further.

This issue is important. It affects Quebec but it also affects the rest of Canada, so we have to look at both sides of how we could handle this.

Thank you.

● (1640)

The Chair: Instead of going back and forth, I will recommend—I'll give you a couple of minutes—that you all talk and then come up with something.

I'm going to suspend the meeting for a couple of minutes.

● (1640)

(Pause)

● (1650)

● (1655)

The Chair: I hope all sides have come to a conclusion.

Madam Kwan, you have the floor.

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Yes, we've come to an agreement on collaboration. To that end, I will withdraw the motion that I just moved and cede the floor to Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe to move a motion.

After that, Mr. Chair, if I could have the floor to make an amendment to Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe's motion, I would appreciate it.

The Chair: Thank you, Madam Kwan.

I will need unanimous support to withdraw the motion.

(Motion withdrawn)

The Chair: The floor is still with Madam Kwan, and then Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe.

Madam Kwan, do you have anything to add?

Ms. Jenny Kwan: No.

The Chair: Okay. Go ahead, Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'd like to move the following:

That, pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), the committee undertake a study of closed work permits issued by IRCC and their impact on temporary foreign workers; that the committee devote at least four meetings to conduct this study; that the committee invite the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship and IRCC officials to testify for one hour each, and invite any other witnesses the committee deems necessary; and that the committee report its findings and recommendations to the House.

[*English*]

The Chair: Go ahead, Madam Kwan.

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I would like to propose an amendment to Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe's motion by adding the following words: “and the findings related to Canada's Temporary Foreign Worker program by the United Nations Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery, Tomoya Obokata; and that the committee invite the United Nations Special Rapporteur to appear before the committee for one hour”.

I would further amend it by adding that in addition to IRCC officials being invited, we would also invite officials from Employment and Social Development Canada to come to the committee for one hour.

Finally, we would reduce the four meetings to three meetings.

The Chair: Thank you.

Is there any further debate?

Mr. Redekopp.

Mr. Brad Redekopp: Just looking at that, are we sure we want to go down to three meetings on that, with all that we've added into that one? We have the minister there and two different officials.

The Chair: Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe, you have the floor.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

That's exactly why I wanted the committee to hold four meetings. However, now that we've discussed it, it seems that everyone has agreed on three meetings. I sincerely believe that, with all the people we are inviting, that is to say the rapporteur, the officials, the minister and the witnesses we want to hear from, we should devote "at least four meetings", as my motion states. That would enable us to devote than four if we want.

Ms. Kwan's amendment will shorten the study to three meetings, unless she uses the wording "at least three meetings", which would make more sense. That would be fine with us because we could add one if we feel so inclined, and we could hear more witnesses. I think my Conservative and Liberal friends will agree with that suggestion.

• (1700)

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Redekopp is next.

Mr. Brad Redekopp: Yes, I'd like at least three. If we can do three, great—I'm all for that—but I don't necessarily want to hamstring us into not being able to have somebody there. I would be okay with at least three. The goal would be to do it in three. That would be the point.

The Chair: Go ahead, Madam Kwan.

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Mr. Chair, the reason why I'm suggesting reducing it to three is that I'm also looking at the variety of studies that we need to complete and at other things that will come up as well. Following this, there's another study, which we have already passed. That one calls for five meetings. I will have some suggestions to make to deal with that, so then you're looking at—if we go with four—nine meetings already.

There's another motion that I'd like to move to invite the minister to come to give the committee the minister's perspective on their priorities, along with four officials to come and give us an update on the fraud scam for international students, and that's going to take another meeting. We actually have another piece coming up that we can fully anticipate, which is that the minister, as well as officials, will need to come back for a discussion on the immigration levels numbers. That will be coming up this fall.

Then we have the fall economic statement, and then we're into the budget. Also, then, we still have a couple of outstanding items that we have to get through.

We just have a lot of items to get through, which is why I'm trying to save that one meeting. If we do three meetings, even with the minister—the minister and officials—that would take up one meeting, and then we'd have the UN rapporteur for one hour. You'd still

have one and a half hours to complete. Then we have to write the report.

The closed work permit issue is very much related to the issue around regularization, so my subsequent suggestion to the committee on the motion that got passed on regularization and we will be studying is that we incorporate the evidence on closed work permits into that study as well. Then, through that study, if there are additional witnesses who want to speak specifically on the closed worker permit item, they would be able to do so under that new study. This is what I propose, just because I think that we don't have a lot of meetings.

The Chair: I have Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: I understand. However, I think Ms. Kwan and I don't agree on the fact that regularization is closely linked to closed permits.

I want the committee to conduct a study on the impact of closed permits. My friends in the NDP should be sensitive to this issue. We've heard horror stories about workers with closed permits being exploited by employers. It has nothing to do with regularizing undocumented workers. It has to do with the status of temporary foreign workers with closed permits. As parliamentarians, I don't feel we should botch a study on such an important subject and on an issue where there are clearly serious consequences for human beings who come here, on Canadian soil, to work, send money to their families and make a better life for themselves.

I sincerely believe that we should hold at least four meetings, as my motion proposes. I feel we have no right to rush through a study on such an important issue. I will ask my friend Ms. Kwan again: I agree with the amendment she is proposing, but I suggest that we say "at least three meetings". That way, if we feel that we need an extra meeting, at least we'll have that flexibility; it will be reflected in the wording of the amendment, which will officially become the motion.

I urge my colleagues to join me so that we can settle this once and for all and move on to something else.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe.

I have Madam Zahid and then Madam Kwan.

Mrs. Salma Zahid: Thank you, Chair.

I agree with Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe and Mr. Redekopp about adding at least three meetings. Then in case we need to add another meeting, we already have that provision while we are undertaking the study.

In regard to the undocumented workers, the motion has already been passed. Once this motion is passed, then we can work on what study we will undertake and when. We have a few things in the pipeline for the committee to finish.

• (1705)

The Chair: Thank you, Madam Zahid.

Madam Kwan, you have the floor because it's your motion. Do you want to amend it, or do you want to ask me to go to the vote?

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

If I'm understanding it correctly, if we change the wording to have at least three meetings, we would aim to finish the study at three meetings, and if we needed to come back to have an additional meeting, the committee would then make that determination. However, on this basis we're proceeding with three. Is that correct? ? If that is the proposal and understanding as to how we would like to proceed, I would agree to that.

The Chair: Thank you, Madam Kwan. Do you want to see...? Is it already amended?

Ms. Arielle Kayabaga (London West, Lib.): She's just asking a question. I don't think she's making an amendment.

Mrs. Salma Zahid: A friendly amendment has been made by Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe.

The Chair: Now I have it all straightened out. This is good. It seems as though everyone was nodding their heads. It seems as though everyone is in agreement.

Go ahead, Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe, and then we'll have Mr. Redekopp.

[Translation]

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: Just to be clear, the text of Ms. Kwan's amendment will say "at least three meetings". Is that correct? If not, we can defeat this amendment and she can move another amendment that says "at least three meetings". It's just a matter of procedure.

[English]

The Chair: Let Mr. Clerk add that wise wording and read it to you.

Mr. Clerk, go ahead.

The Clerk: Perhaps I'll read the motion as I've understood it, to make sure everyone is on the same page if we're deciding on it.

The way I put it together with the amendment, it would be as follows:

That, pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), the committee undertake a study of closed work permits issued by IRCC and their impact on temporary foreign workers and the findings related to Canada's Temporary Foreign Worker program by the United Nations Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery, Tomoya Obokata; that the committee invite the United Nations Special Rapporteur to appear before the committee for one hour; that the committee devote at least three meetings to conduct this study; that the committee invite the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship and IRCC and ESDC officials to testify for one hour each, and invite any other witnesses the committee deems necessary; and that the committee report its findings and recommendations to the House.

The Chair: Go ahead, Mr. Redekopp, and then we'll go to Madam Kwan.

Mr. Brad Redekopp: That made sense to me. The only question I have is about the officials. We have the IRCC officials plus ESDC officials. Are they all coming at the same time for one hour, or do we want there to be two separate hours?

The Chair: Madam Kwan, go ahead.

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Thank you.

As I intended, it will be the minister who will come for one hour. Then it will be IRCC and ESDC officials for one hour.

Mr. Brad Redekopp: You mean together.

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Yes, they would be together, not in two separate hours.

The Chair: Thank you.

I don't see any debate on the motion or amendment. Is everyone in favour of the motion?

(Amendment agreed to)

(Motion as amended agreed to)

Ms. Jenny Kwan: It's carried, so I'm going to raise two separate items now.

The Chair: Ms. Kwan, can I take 20 seconds? We are still in public. I forgot to tell you, just in case any of the members want this meeting to be in camera.

Ms. Jenny Kwan: I don't care.

The Chair: Okay. We'll continue in public.

Madam Kwan, the floor is yours.

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Thank you.

To that end, Mr. Chair, the committee has passed a motion already, and I'm going to read it into the public record so people know what we're talking about:

That, pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), the committee conduct a study on people with temporary status and undocumented people in Canada, including those who are subject to removal from Canada and/or have a warrant for their arrest, examine their experiences and contributions to Canada's economy, options on how to regularize their status, and explore regularization initiatives implemented in other countries; that the committee invite government officials and expert witnesses in this field; that the study consist of up to five meetings; that the committee report its findings to the House; and that pursuant to Standing Order 109, the government table a comprehensive response to the report.

I would like to move a motion for the committee to incorporate the evidence we have received from the motion that we just passed on the UN rapporteur's comments and on the closed work permit motion to also be allowed to be considered under this study.

• (1710)

The Chair: Mr. Redekopp has the floor.

Mr. Brad Redekopp: I have a technical question. Are we limiting the evidence to just that piece of the evidence, or is it all the evidence from the study? If the minister talked about something that's relevant, can that be pulled, or is it limited to that UN part?

Ms. Jenny Kwan: It's that all the evidence we received from that study be allowed to be incorporated and considered under this study.

The Chair: Ms. Zahid is next.

Mrs. Salma Zahid: Yes, I think we should not restrict it to certain testimony. We can just have a motion that the evidence from the closed work permits study, as is needed, can be added to the study on the undocumented workers.

The Chair: Thank you.

I have Mr. Redekopp.

Mr. Brad Redekopp: I agree with that.

Jenny, the way you worded it sounded restrictive to me. I think it could just refer to the study. I don't think it needs to say, "the study of blah blah blah". I think it's just that study, as long as we know it's the evidence from that study. That's all.

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Yes, I was identifying that study and referring to the study about the closed work permits, the UN rapporteur, the officials' comments and the minister's comments, etc. That is the study that I am referring to.

The Chair: Is there any further discussion? Should we take...?

Mr. Brad Redekopp: Can we have it read so we can understand it?

The Clerk: In the minutes, it would appear as "that evidence received in the context of the study on closed work permits and the United Nations Special Rapporteur"—the study will need a name eventually—"be included in the study of people with temporary status and undocumented individuals".

The Chair: Is it all good?

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: Madam Kwan, again the floor is yours.

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Thank you very much.

I have a new motion, Mr. Chair. I would like to move:

That pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), the committee invite the newly appointed Minister of Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship to appear before the committee for one hour to brief the committee on the Minister's priorities and objectives for the department, and that, in the context of the committee's study of the exploitation scheme targeting certain international students, the committee request that the task force officials from Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada and the Canada Border Services Agency subsequently appear before the committee for one hour, for a total of two hours, to update this committee on actions taken to address the exploitation scheme.

The purpose of this, of course, is that we now have a new minister appointed to the portfolio, and I think it would be very good for committee members to understand, from the new minister's perspective, what his priorities are so that we would have discussion here with the committee.

Committee members will also recall that in the last session there was a significant international student fraud scam that took place, impacting many international students. The former minister ap-

peared before this committee and indicated that he would initiate a task force to address the issue, particularly to ensure the students who had been impacted would receive protection and they would not be subject to deportation as a result of the fraud scheme to which they were subjected.

We have not had any updates from officials with respect to this. In fact, I talked to the minister's office and asked for an update, and the minister's office promised me that there would be an update, but to date I have not received one. I suspect that's the case for all other committee members as well, so it would be important for us to get that update while the minister is present for this appearance.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Redekopp, the floor is yours.

Mr. Brad Redekopp: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

These two pieces of this motion are good. I like them. I think the reason I like them is that the first piece actually came from Tom Kmiec and the second came from me. I appreciate that you've incorporated our ideas into your motion.

I'm not sure that they should be in one big motion. I don't really know why we would connect them. I guess I'd have to understand if there's an implication to connecting them or not.

Certainly, on the exploitation scheme, I, like you, have not been updated by the department. In the summer, I did visit with some of the students in Toronto and learned some disturbing things. That's why I suggested this initially. I really do want to understand what's going on, because there are things I learned in talking to these students—in August, I believe it was—that concerned me. There were definitely things that maybe hadn't transpired the way they were supposed to. I think it's important that we have the officials come in and talk to us. It's part of the study we are undertaking and that is ongoing at the moment anyway.

I guess my question is maybe for us: Is there a downside to combining these two motions together? Should we have separate motions? Do we have to schedule them on the same day, for example? How does that work?

• (1715)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Redekopp.

Parliamentary Secretary Chiang, go ahead, please.

Mr. Paul Chiang: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Just to give you an update, there was a study done on the task force over the summer. They are ready to give us an update on it as we proceed with the committee. The minister and IRCC are ready to come in and speak about that. Whenever we schedule them in, an update will be provided.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Chiang.

I have Madam Kwan next.

Ms. Jenny Kwan: We won't rehash that with respect to the motion that was passed in my name prior to the end of the last session with respect to the international students. On the question around why I would want to....

It's customary, by the way, for new ministers to appear before committee. That's been the case previously, and certainly it's the case now. That's why I have it in this motion.

I thought it would also be important, though, for it to be connected to this appearance with the minister, so that the minister and officials are aware that this is top of mind for committee members. It is not just a separate study. It's also a clear signal to the minister that this ongoing issue needs to be resolved. Promises were made and promises need to be delivered. I hope to hear from officials in terms of that update with respect to that and how the issues and concerns have been properly addressed with respect to the students.

Like other committee members over the course of the summer, I too have been in contact with a student who's been impacted. For some of them, the issue has not yet been resolved. I cannot get an update from officials on what's happening with those cases. That's not acceptable. This has to be dealt with in a serious way. The minister will appear before us, and I'm sure he will also hear those concerns from committee members.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Kwan.

I would now love to welcome Mr. McLean to the committee.

The floor is yours.

Mr. Greg McLean (Calgary Centre, CPC): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Thank you to everybody for welcoming me to this committee. It's been a pleasure to meet many of you here today and to discuss what I think are some of the most important issues facing Canada going forward here—that is, the way we deal with our immigration system, much of which is straining greatly at this point in time and causing all kinds of effects throughout society.

I am going to challenge why we are combining what would be two motions and two approaches and putting them into one meeting. I think when we talk to the minister about his mandate, the mandate he's been given by this government and by this Prime Minister, that will be a full meeting. We're actually going to find out where the government is going. I don't think it should be limited to the one issue that we're talking about here right now, even though it is a very important issue.

We can have another meeting. It will stress the importance if we actually schedule one full meeting for addressing this second issue. The minister can talk at one meeting about his new mandate and where he's going with his department at this point in time. Then we can have a full meeting to discuss the very important issues around what's happening to the students who have been defrauded coming into Canada.

I think it warrants a full meeting on its own, as is indicated in the motions that were initially put on our agenda here. I think we should stick to that and actually do this work separately. That would give much more prominence and much more importance to the issue of the students who have come from overseas, some of whom have been defrauded of their money. That signifies more importance than combining the two meetings.

Thank you.

The Chair: Go ahead, Mr. Redekopp.

• (1720)

Mr. Brad Redekopp: This is just a technical question on the implication of having it in one motion. I'm just curious about whether or not the minister and the officials have to be in the same two-hour slot. Can they be separated?

The Chair: The committee itself decides how we want to handle that meeting. If that's what you're asking, the motion is on the floor and the members will decide.

Are we ready to take the vote yet?

Mr. Brad Redekopp: Yes. Take the vote.

The Chair: Okay. I will take the vote. If there is not unanimous consent, then I would ask the clerk to take the vote.

Go ahead.

Mr. Greg McLean: Could the motion be read, please?

The Clerk: The motion as moved by Ms. Kwan is:

That, pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), the committee invite the newly appointed Minister of Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship to appear before the committee for one hour to brief the committee on the Minister's priorities and objectives for the department and that, in the context of the committee's study of the exploitation scheme targeting certain international students, the committee request that the task force officials from Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada and the Canada Border Services Agency subsequently appear before the committee for one hour, for a total of two hours, to update this committee on actions taken to address the exploitation scheme.

(Motion agreed to: yeas 11; nays 0)

The Chair: Madam Kwan, we have five minutes.

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Perhaps we can quickly get through the order of things.

We've just passed three motions or studies to be undertaken. In the order of things, one would assume, then, that the appropriate thing to do is to have the minister come first, whenever he is available. Hopefully, he can come first.

It then would be to move forward with the study that Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe has moved, and then for the third study to follow on the motion that has already been passed with respect to regularization. Then, of course, just prior to that, I think we also have to deal with the draft report that's sitting on our desks.

The Chair: Thank you, Madam Kwan.

I have Madam Zahid next and then Mr. Redekopp.

Mrs. Salma Zahid: Thank you, Chair.

We have passed the motions, so I think we should have a sub-committee meeting to schedule meetings.

As Ms. Kwan mentioned in regard to the minister's appearance, we will extend an invitation, but we don't know on which day he will be coming. We really need to go through our schedule to figure out what Thursday's meeting will be and then, going forward, what we are undertaking. I would say that I think we should have a sub-committee meeting to figure out the business of the committee.

The Chair: I have Mr. Redekopp and then Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe.

Go ahead, Mr. Redekopp.

Mr. Brad Redekopp: I hadn't thought about the subcommittee meeting, but just on the reality of what we have here, first of all, we have the exploitation scheme....

Well, first of all, we have the backlogs report that we have to go through. Then we have the exploitation scheme study, for which we've added a meeting here, and we need to close that up and write a report. Then we have the Afghanistan report, which is partially started. There's potentially a meeting left there, and then we have to write a report on that. Also, then, we have, as you've said, the minister and some of these things like a supplementary estimates (B) meeting, etc., and there will be a few other things.

We have all of that business that's already under way before we even get to Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe's first motion, which we discussed today, so maybe we do need to look at it off-line and schedule it. I think we have potentially several months' worth of work on just what's on the table, regardless of what we talked about today.

• (1725)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Redekopp.

Before I go to Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe, can we have a consensus on having a subcommittee meeting on Thursday instead of the full meeting, depending on the Speaker situation? We will not know, so just give some thought to that.

The floor is now open for Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: Mr. Chair, I would not want to forgo the two-hour meeting scheduled for next Thursday, because we have so much work to do.

The members of the subcommittee can very well talk informally before next Thursday. We could take the first 15 minutes of Thursday's meeting to meet in camera and formally agree on the upcoming schedule. Then we could spend the rest of Thursday's meeting starting the report on backlogs and processing times, for example. Since we will have agreed on the schedule at the beginning of the meeting, we wouldn't waste the full two hours, but I don't know how my colleagues feel about this.

[*English*]

The Chair: I would like to know the will of the committee.

Madam Kwan, the floor is yours.

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Yes, I was trying to see if we can save it for the subcommittee because time is of the essence. Given that we had agreed on the studies, I thought we could move through them in the order I proposed. In light of the fact that others may have some outstanding items that they want to bring forward, I would agree with Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe's proposal that we do the subcommittee for the first part of the meeting and that we then move forward to entertaining the draft report.

The Chair: Madam Zahid.

Mrs. Salma Zahid: As mentioned, a subcommittee meeting for 15 minutes.... Are we proposing a separate subcommittee meeting

for 15 minutes, or are we proposing a meeting of the whole committee in camera for the first 15 minutes to go through the calendar and then go...? If we are doing the consideration of a draft report, that will also be in camera.

The Chair: Do we have unanimous consent for Madam Zahid's...?

Mr. Redekopp.

Mr. Brad Redekopp: I'm fine with that.

What would help is if maybe somebody undertook to make a proposal of what's out there, so that we have it all in front of us and are not speculating about what's to do and what's not to do. I don't know if that's something you can pull together as the chair, or if you guys want to do it—or I can do it. However, I think it would be helpful to know everything that's out there so that we can then.... It'll just make it more efficient.

Keelan, you might be able to do that.

The Chair: We'll do that. We'll make sure the clerk does that, and you will have it.

It's almost 5:30, and it seems like we have consent for that.

Madam Kwan, do you have some final thoughts?

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Yes, I have a final comment.

In the document from the clerk, it would be very useful to include the actual wording of the motions that were passed and the status of where they're at, so that committee members can consider how best to proceed. In some cases, committee members may even entertain the idea that they may not carry through with what is necessary, but that will be up to the committee to decide.

The Chair: Thank you.

Go ahead, Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: I have a question for the clerk. Would it be possible to propose a schedule?

A voice: No.

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: Apparently that's not possible.

[*English*]

The Chair: We'd be surprised. I mean, it's not an easy task, Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe, because it's going to take a while for the clerk to—

The Chair: —figure it out.

An hon. member: He has some skills.

The Chair: Oh, I know, but we still have to give him some time.

If there's no further discussion....

Go ahead, Mr. Redekopp.

Mr. Brad Redekopp: One thing we neglected to do is to welcome our new parliamentary secretary, Paul Chiang, to this meeting.

Welcome.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Paul Chiang: Thank you, Mr. Redekopp.

Finally, somebody recognized me.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Chair: With that, I will adjourn the meeting.

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