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# Standing Committee on Finance

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Chair: Mr. Peter Fonseca





## Standing Committee on Finance

Tuesday, December 10, 2024

• (1650)

[English]

**The Chair (Mr. Peter Fonseca (Mississauga East—Cooksville, Lib.)):** We're back.

I have MP Dzerowicz, then MP Hallan and MP Ste-Marie after that.

**Ms. Julie Dzerowicz (Davenport, Lib.):** Mr. Chair, on December 5, 2024, this committee received a Standing Order 106(4) request for an emergency meeting to discuss the possibility of inviting the Minister of Finance to appear at committee. The chair decided to accommodate the request using an existing in camera meeting of the committee, as opposed to requesting resources for an additional meeting. The clerk of the committee published a notice of meeting on December 6, 2024, outlining the agenda for the meeting, including that it was in camera.

The honourable member for Calgary Forest Lawn, Mr. Hallan, then posted on social media platform X, formerly known as Twitter, on December 9, 2024, an altered notice of meeting for the December 10, 2024, meeting, incorrectly showing the text “secret meeting” within the agenda. I have a printed copy of the post that I will share with the chair for his information.

*House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, third edition, specifically lists “deliberately publishing a false or misleading report of the proceedings of the House or a committee” as a form of contempt of Parliament. I would argue that a notice of meeting published by the clerk of the committee is a report of the proceedings of Parliament. It is exceptionally inappropriate for anyone, especially an honourable member of this place, to deliberately doctor a publication of Parliament to fit a political agenda and to utilize it in the Conservative Party's continued campaign of disinformation to Canadians.

I believe that this constitutes a matter of privilege and should be reported to the House, as this matter should be further investigated. I await your decision on the matter, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

**Ms. Julie Dzerowicz:** Do you need a copy?

**The Chair:** That would be helpful, MP Dzerowicz. Thank you.

Does anybody else want to speak to this? No.

I'm going to suspend. I have to speak to the clerk about this.

• (1650)

(Pause)

• (1700)

**The Chair:** We are back.

After some discussions with the clerk and understanding what is in the green book, it is a breach of privilege. That is my ruling. Now I'm looking to members for what you would like to do with this.

I have MP Kelly.

**Mr. Pat Kelly (Calgary Rocky Ridge, CPC):** Forgive me. I didn't bring my green book. I don't have one handy, but a question of privilege has to be made in the chamber. You cannot rule on a question of privilege.

A member can raise a question at the earliest opportunity in the House, and it would be for the Speaker to find whether or not the item raised is in fact a prima facie breach of privilege. Then the appropriate motion, if the Speaker has so ruled, could be made. It is not for a committee to debate a question of privilege or for a committee chair to make a finding of a violation of privilege.

**The Chair:** Thank you, MP Kelly.

I have MP Ste-Marie.

[Translation]

**Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ):** I share Mr. Kelly's interpretation of the situation.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Ste-Marie.

[English]

Go ahead, MP Davies.

**Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP):** I am also without my green book, but by my memory, I believe it's the case that the chair, when a question of privilege is raised at committee, does not rule on the merits. He just rules on whether it raises a prima facie case of privilege. If that's the case, which I think is your ruling, it then comes back to the committee to decide what to do with it. The technical thing is to send a report to the House, and that's where I think it's dealt with. That's my understanding of the proper procedure.

**The Chair:** That has been my understanding, MP Davies.

We'll just read from the green book.

Thank you, Clerk.

**The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Alexandre Roger):** Page 1,060 of Bosc and Gagnon says:

If a member wishes to raise a question of privilege during a committee meeting, or an incident arises in connection with the committee's proceedings that may constitute a breach of privilege, the committee Chair allows the member to explain the situation. The Chair then determines whether the question raised in fact relates to parliamentary privilege. If the Chair determines that the question does relate to parliamentary privilege, the committee may then consider presenting a report on the question to the House.

**The Chair:** I think that's how MP Davies spelled it out.

That's where we are right now. I'm looking to members.

I have MP Baker.

**Mr. Yvan Baker (Etobicoke Centre, Lib.):** I just want to understand the options. We can write a report to the House. I'd love to know what that involves. If we choose not to do that, what would the alternative be?

**The Chair:** There is no alternative. This would be presented to the House if members so decided. It would just go to the House, and then a member would be able to raise a question of privilege based on the report, if they so decided, in the House.

I have MP Dzerowicz.

• (1705)

**Ms. Julie Dzerowicz:** If we follow through on that and write a report based on your ruling, can we then adjourn debate after we decide you will do a report, or do we need to continue debate?

**The Chair:** We're going to suspend for a second.

• (1705)

(Pause)

• (1705)

**The Chair:** If the committee decides to do a report, once that decision is made—it's a yes or no—we would move back to our order of business, which is green finance.

Go ahead, MP Dzerowicz.

**Ms. Julie Dzerowicz:** I'm going to be very honest, Mr. Chair, because I don't want in any way not to be dealing with the 106(4) request today. I want to put that out there right now.

The reason I raised this question of privilege is that I thought you were going to say, "I will take it away and then I will come back to you at the next meeting and rule on this particular matter." That's what I expected you to do. You were highly efficient with our clerk in coming back with a ruling so quickly, but what I don't want to do at this moment is hinder our conversation about the 106(4) request. I just wanted to mention that.

Is there a way—I'm just asking this as a question—for us to adjourn the debate on this right now, shift over to the 106(4) request and then come back to it at the next appropriate moment?

**The Chair:** MP Dzerowicz, yes, it is your privilege to do that. Then you would be able to come back to this.

**Ms. Julie Dzerowicz:** Then, Mr. Chair, if I could, I would adjourn debate on this for right now, for you to bring this conversation back at a future meeting.

**A voice:** You have to say you move to adjourn, then.

**Ms. Julie Dzerowicz:** Okay. I move to adjourn debate.

**The Chair:** That's not debatable.

Do we adjourn debate, members?

**Mr. Pat Kelly:** On what? There was no motion.

**The Chair:** This is on the question of privilege.

Is everybody in agreement?

(Motion agreed to)

**The Chair:** Okay. Are we on green finance now?

**A voice:** We're on the 106(4) request.

**The Chair:** We're following the notice of meeting. There was a motion to go in public, and in the sequence we were in, we addressed that motion and went in public. We were on green finance when we left, so we're on green finance at this time, members

On green finance, pursuant to Standing Order 108(2) and the motion adopted by the committee on Tuesday, March 7, 2023, the committee is—

**Mr. Pat Kelly:** I have a point of order.

**The Chair:** What's the point of order?

**Mr. Pat Kelly:** You had consent from everybody around the table, it seemed, to go to the 106(4) request as opposed to—

**The Chair:** No, that is not correct. What we voted on, MP Kelly—

**Mr. Pat Kelly:** I understand, but I also heard Ms. Dzerowicz say, if I understood her correctly, that we could go straight to debating the 106(4) request since we are in public and this is the place to have that debate. I think you had consensus to move to that.

If you did not, we can determine that, but it seemed to me that you did have consensus to move to the motion that Mr. Hallan was going to move. He was actually next on the speaking list at the time that you recognized Ms. Dzerowicz for a second time.

• (1710)

**The Chair:** It was for the breach. That's when I recognized MP Dzerowicz.

I saw PS Bendayan's hand go up.

**Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Outremont, Lib.):** I'm just seeking clarification, Mr. Chair, as to whether we are in public or in camera.

**The Chair:** We are in public right now.

**Ms. Rachel Bendayan:** It is my understanding that we cannot discuss the green finance report if we are in public.

**The Chair:** PS Bendayan, you are correct. It is unusual to discuss a draft report in public, but given the sequence we left on when we were in camera and going in public, where we are right now is green finance.

[Translation]

**Ms. Rachel Bendayan:** That's great. It was just to clarify where we were, Chair. I see that my colleague Ms. Sophie Chatel is ready to discuss the report in question, if you don't mind.

[English]

**The Chair:** Thank you, PS Bendayan.

I have MP Kelly.

**Mr. Pat Kelly:** I move that we proceed to the 106(4) request.

**The Chair:** All those in favour of moving to the 106(4) request?

(Motion agreed to: yeas 6; nays 5)

**The Chair:** We are moving to the 106(4) request.

I see MP Hallan, PS Bendayan and MP Ste-Marie.

**Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC):** Thank you, Chair.

I'm glad that we're on the 106(4) request.

I move:

That the Minister of Finance be invited to appear at committee for two hours by December 17, 2024, and should the Minister not appear in accordance with this motion, the chair be instructed to report to the House the Committee's recommendation that it be empowered to order her attendance for two hours at a date and time the Committee fixes.

We know, through the PBO's report, that the finance minister has blown past her projected deficit of \$40 billion. This was supposedly forced by the Prime Minister.

We also know that she indicated, in her own words, that she would be blowing past her own deficit. This is very concerning at a time when GDP per capita has been declining for six straight quarters, there are two million Canadians lined up at food banks every single month and Canadians are struggling to make ends meet today.

Canadians need to know the truth. It's very shocking that, for the first time that I know of, a fall economic statement and the public accounts will be released on the last sitting day of a session. It's concerning because it seems like the government might have something to hide. Canadians need to know how bad the deficit is and how much pain it's going to cause.

I'll leave it at that. I hope we can get to a vote quickly.

• (1715)

**The Chair:** Thank you, MP Hallan.

I have PS Bendayan next, and then MP Ste-Marie and MP Davies.

**Ms. Rachel Bendayan:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I appreciate the intervention of my colleague. I appreciate the sentiment with which he is bringing up the motion today.

I would note that it is December 10 and the motion is essentially requesting the minister to appear sometime during the next five days. As all members of this committee are well aware, we are planning to table publicly the fall economic statement on Monday, December 16, and I am very much looking forward to hearing the reaction and questions that folks around this table will have on that document.

I would like to ensure that people have those numbers before questioning the minister. I think that would make the appearance of the minister most productive. The minister has appeared prior to the fall economic statement, both before the Senate and before the industry committee, and as the record shows, there was not a lot we could delve into during those rounds of questioning because we did not yet have the numbers before us.

I would also note that we have always had the Minister of Finance appear for the economic statement's implementation bill, for the budget implementation bill or for a finance bill that comes to the finance committee. We have not had a bill come to the finance committee over the last two and a half months—since we started the fall sitting. For various reasons, including most notably that the House of Commons has been obstructed by the Conservative Party, we needed to move alternatively to get the GST bill through the House of Commons in an unusual way.

I would like to reaffirm the interest of the minister to appear at this committee. I have an amendment to propose to colleagues around the table, which I would like to circulate at this time. I will move it verbally and then circulate the paper copies so that all members may see it in writing.

I move:

That the Minister of Finance be invited to appear at committee for two hours at the next available opportunity, with the intent that this appearance take place before the House rises for the winter recess.

I would now invite debate on that amendment.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** Thank you, PS Bendayan.

**Ms. Julie Dzerowicz:** On a point of order, do we have a copy of the original motion?

**The Chair:** It just went out through email.

**Ms. Julie Dzerowicz:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** You can take a look.

Next to speak is MP Ste-Marie.

[Translation]

**Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie:** Thank you, Chair.

I'd first like to ask my colleagues who are submitting proposals or amendments to send them in advance to the clerk, so that the interpreters can provide the fairest interpretation possible.

Having said that, I signed the request for a meeting under Standing Order 106(4), because I think it's important that the Minister of Finance appear before this committee at least once in the fall, which she hasn't done yet. We have a lot of questions for her.

I'm thinking in particular of the change made last June to the capital gains inclusion rate. We still don't have the proper ways and means notice. We didn't pass the bill, let alone the timetable for implementing this major change introduced last June. It's mid-December and we're still in the dark.

The media today are reporting that there seem to be tensions between the Prime Minister's office and the Deputy Prime Minister's office about economic action. Personally, I think those are election-eering measures. The government has proposed sending a cheque to people earning up to \$150,000 a year in net income, but it isn't offering any assistance to low-income people who would need it more. As for the proposal to remove the GST on restaurant bills, alcohol and junk food, we have to wonder.

Now we've learned that there are tensions surrounding those measures. I think it's important that the minister appear before this committee to answer those kinds of questions. This is a major concern for us, as public representatives, but also for the media that are following this issue.

The minister broke a record: she'll be delivering the 2024 fall economic statement almost in the dead of winter, which is to say, on the second-last sitting day of the House, while the landscape is covered with snow. I think this isn't only a personal record, in her case, but also a record in the history of the House. So it's to be delivered next Monday, on December 16.

The House will adjourn next Tuesday. So a meeting with the minister is possible next Tuesday. I'd be quite comfortable if the minister made a commitment to come before the committee next Tuesday. She'd have to come, because she didn't appear before the committee once this fall. In fact, I think we last saw her in May. Where was the minister yesterday? She was at the Standing Committee on Industry and Technology. Frankly, she's laughing at us. This shows a profound lack of respect for the Standing Committee on Finance. I want her to appear before our committee.

As for the rest, I'll look at the motion that's been moved and the amendment, and then I can speak to it.

• (1720)

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Ste Marie.

[*English*]

Next I have MP Davies, MP Chambers and PS Bendayan.

**Mr. Don Davies:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

My perspective is maybe slightly different from that of my colleagues who have appeared.

First, by my research, the last appearance of the minister before this committee was May 2024. That's over seven months ago.

Second, this committee, on September 26, passed an omnibus motion setting out our agreed-upon, consensus schedule for the fall. We all remember the torturous negotiations and the difficulty we

had in reaching that. In fairness, the Conservatives were filibustering at this committee and wasting some time, and it took a lot of effort from all parties to come up with a schedule that satisfied everybody. Everybody had to concede something. My colleagues will remember that this included agreeing on eight pre-budget meetings and proceeding with some of the CRA issues my colleagues from the Bloc and the Conservatives wanted. We talked about writing the two reports, one on green financing and a report on the financialization of housing. We remember all of that.

Included in that motion from September 26 was the following:

That the committee hold Pre-Budget Consultations for the 2025 Budget, and that:....

b. The Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister and departmental officials be invited to appear before the committee.

c. That these meetings be prioritized with the goal of tabling a Pre-Budget Consultations report by Friday, December 13th, 2024.

I can only assume, Mr. Chair, that you extended that invitation to the finance minister. This means there has been an open invitation for the minister to appear before this committee for over two months. As my colleague pointed out, the minister found time to appear before the Senate banking committee, and properly so. She also appeared before the industry committee yesterday, but has not found time to appear before what I consider to be her primary committee—the finance committee. That's why I support the 106(4) request to call her before this committee.

My Liberal colleagues have said that one of the reasons she's been late to issue the fall economic statement is that there is a filibuster in the House. That is partially true, but there's nothing stopping the Minister of Finance from issuing the fall economic statement at Château Laurier, if she wants to, or anywhere else she likes. It doesn't have to be in the House.

Now, if we really want to talk turkey here, the Minister of Finance might drop the fall economic statement on the second-last day before we break for the holidays. If rumours can be believed, we might expect the public accounts to be dropped on Tuesday next week, which is the last day. I don't know this for sure, but that's the speculation I'm hearing. Were we not to hear from the Minister of Finance before then, we're talking about reconvening in February—months later—to hold the minister accountable for two of the three most important documents she's responsible for tabling in Parliament besides the budget.

I was initially sympathetic to my Liberal colleagues' position that the Standing Order 106(4) request was filed relatively late. It left only three meetings for the minister to appear at. Generally, we know how busy ministers are. However, when I went back and researched this, I thought, "Well, she's had an open invitation for two and a half months. There's been ample time for her to find time in her busy schedule." To me, it's a fundamental issue of accountability to Parliament.

I have a feeling there is good news in the fall economic statement and bad news. I think there might be more bad news than good news in the public accounts, if they come out. I would point out as well that the public accounts, by my research—there are people in this room who have far more experience in finance than I do—are typically filed in September or October. They're not filed on the last day. By the way, if they're not filed on Tuesday next week, they won't be filed until I don't know when—the end of the year or maybe next year.

• (1725)

Let's remember that the public accounts provide the final state of affairs, fiscally, of the government as of the last fiscal year, which ended March 31, 2024. I think it's a matter of primary responsibility to Parliament and to this committee that the Minister of Finance appear before this committee and that she be prepared to answer questions.

The fact that she appeared before the industry committee as well is no comfort to me because that's a different committee, which doesn't have the experience or expertise that this committee has. I was thinking to myself, "If the Minister of Industry appeared tomorrow and I had to ask questions of him, I would not be in nearly as good a position to ask questions of him as my colleagues on the industry committee would be." This committee has been seized with financial matters for a long time—since the beginning of this Parliament—and we are best placed to put what are going to be necessary questions to the minister.

I will say that I'm attracted to Ms. Bendayan's amendment to this extent. What I find a bit heavy-handed about the Conservatives' motion is the idea of reporting to the House and then having us order the Minister of Finance back here. That is very unusual for me to see. I'm more comfortable inviting the minister. If I read Ms. Bendayan's motion, she's invited to appear "for two hours at the next available opportunity". By the way, the two hours is also a bit of a concession. I can't remember a minister who has ever been in a committee for more than one hour. I may be mistaken, but the norm is one hour. Then it says, "with the intent that this appearance take place before the House rises for the winter recess." It's a clear invitation to the minister from this committee that we want her to appear before Tuesday, without the heavy-handed threat of reporting back to the House and then for us to be able to order her here.

The reason I don't think the heavy-handed approach is necessarily appropriate is that, quite honestly, the Minister of Finance will have a lot of questions to answer if she doesn't appear next Tuesday. If she's dropping a fall economic statement on the nation and the public accounts come on Tuesday, and then she decides that she's not coming to the finance committee on Tuesday to answer questions and be accountable to Parliament just before it breaks until the last couple of days of January, but effectively until February, then I think that's going to be a very difficult case for her to maintain. If we do accept the Conservative motion and report it to the House, I don't think we're going to be able to call her back to this committee until February anyway, unless we reconvene, I guess, at a different time.

Those are my thoughts. I've not yet made up my mind on the amendment or the motion, but I'd like to hear what my colleagues have to say.

I'll conclude with this. One would hope that any minister of finance from any party in the House, when faced with a request by the finance committee to appear that's been outstanding for two and a half months, when important documents are being filed and given the state of the Canadian economy.... Mr. Hallan could have gone on longer about this, but I agree with him that there are serious issues across this country for many Canadians, for our businesses, for our economy and for our provinces and territories, so I would very much hope that any finance minister would take his or her responsibilities seriously, would come before this committee to face the music and would be prepared to answer the tough questions that are obviously going to come and that need to be asked.

Those are my thoughts, Mr. Chair.

• (1730)

**The Chair:** Thank you, MP Davies.

Next I have MP Chambers and then PS Bendayan.

**Mr. Adam Chambers (Simcoe North, CPC):** Thank you Mr. Chair.

I'll start my intervention with a question for the clerk. Maybe by the time I'm done, he'll have the answer. I'm wondering if the clerk could confirm how many invitations the minister has accepted to come to committee that are not on legislation.

While I'm talking, perhaps the clerk would provide to committee members, for the benefit of new members, that the minister has not accepted one invitation from the committee to come to committee unless she's here to motivate legislation. There is a track record of the minister ignoring invitations to come to committee based on past motions with a request to invite.

I have great sympathy for my government colleagues who have to defend a minister who has chosen multiple times to not come to committee. In fact, the only reason the minister was at the industry committee yesterday was that it was a House order. Had the industry committee just sent the minister an invitation, which they had done in the past, she would not have come.

The only reason this minister comes to committee is for two objectives—to pass legislation and to avoid a contempt of Parliament. Every other time the minister has been invited by any committee in this Parliament she has not attended.

I respect Mr. Davies's immediate positions about his concern with what he calls the "heavy-handed" language in the Conservative motion, but the facts bear out that if that part of the motion is withdrawn, we will not get the Minister of Finance. History is not on the side of the government on this. I actually think the toughest job in Parliament is being Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, because you have to constantly play defence on avoiding accountability.

The truth is that tabling the public accounts on the last day, which is the speculative rumour, is being done solely for the purpose of avoiding parliamentary scrutiny. It's being done in connection with the fall economic statement. Mr. Davies is right; they could table the public accounts any time they wish. They could also release the fall economic statement at any time or venue they choose.

There have been two ways and means motions dropped in Parliament. One was with respect to CRA rules and charities. The other was an updated version to the capital gains legislation that we have yet to receive. There are legitimate questions that I think all members believe the minister ought to be available to answer. The bottom line is that this committee has had significant challenges in the past with getting the attention of the minister and having the minister accept invitations.

I had a wonderful exchange with the minister yesterday. She is very capable of handling questions, even very tough questions. I don't expect we'll get lots of answers, but in my view, the reason that reporting to the House is in this motion is integral to ensuring that the minister shows up before Tuesday.

I would go further. I believe Ms. Bendayan, the parliamentary secretary, has made a good suggestion that the minister appear after the fall economic statement. This could have been easily solved if the minister had shown up in the last two months from the open invitation, but this is the position the minister has put herself in by waiting until the last minute.

● (1735)

She could have come here three weeks ago. She could have taken the opportunity to sit on the hot seat, not provide any answers and just say, "You'll have to wait for the fall economic statement." It's the decision to not appear that is now causing us to force her to appear on basically the last day we are here. Frankly, I think it's the most reasonable path forward now.

I agree with my Liberal colleagues who would like to have the fall economic statement tabled before we hear from the minister. I support that 100%. After we dispense of the amendment one way or the other, I'll move an amendment on that, but to keep it simple, we'll deal with one at a time. I'll ask that the minister appear at the committee following the fall economic statement, but that she appear before we leave for the holidays—for Chrismukkah or whatever religious holiday people observe.

Bottom line, every invitation that has been extended to the minister in the past has been ignored. The only reason the minister showed up at the industry committee was that there was a House order. Therefore, the only way we're going to get the minister before we leave for the holidays is to have that order written into this motion.

I suspect that others may have differing views on this, but make no mistake that potentially taking the House order out of this motion will mean that we will not get the minister. A vote to do that is a vote to not get the minister. That is my basic reading of it, having been so lucky to be on the committee for three years.

This is what we've evolved to. This is the only way we're going to get the minister on the timetable that I think people would like.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

PS Bendayan is next.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Rachel Bendayan:** I thank my colleague. I get the points he's making, but I have a hard time understanding why opposition members seem to be waking up today when only five days are left before the break. My Conservative colleague just said that we could have addressed this issue much earlier, and I agree. However, I believe that if meeting with the Minister of Finance was a priority for the Conservatives, my colleague would have made that point before today.

Furthermore, I understand that committee members want to meet with the minister after the economic update has been tabled. As I said earlier, it will be tabled on December 16 and the House will adjourn on December 17. I'm not in a position to confirm the minister's availability during the 12 hours of December 17.

● (1740)

**Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie:** There are 24 hours in a day.

**Ms. Rachel Bendayan:** Discussions among colleagues took place behind closed doors, and I believe that some committee members wanted to hear from Ms. Bibeau, the Minister of National Revenue. I was able to find a date, which is next Thursday. Chair, you sent a notice to all committee members that Minister Bibeau would be available on Thursday. If the committee had said it was Minister Freeland, not Minister Bibeau, with whom they wanted to meet on an urgent basis, I could have arranged that, but here we are.

I moved the amendment in good faith. I understand my colleagues' concerns and comments. I also understand that it's important for everyone to be in their riding, with their families, during the holidays. I'll see what we can do to have the Minister of Finance come and answer questions on the economic update. However, I wanted to point out that Minister Bibeau could meet with us on Thursday. That being said, if we continue to discuss this issue and fail to hold a vote, then we'll have to cancel the minister's visit scheduled for Thursday. I think that would be unfortunate. We can continue the discussion or vote on what's being proposed.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Thank you, MP Bendayan.

Just before I go to MP Dzerowicz and then to MP Davies again, I would like to answer MP Chambers's question. I want to thank the hard-working clerk for having gathered the information.



Every time the minister has been requested to come to a committee on a study, she has appeared. I'll give you an example. I note that the committee adopted a motion on September 21, 2023, to undertake a study on the increasing cost of buying or renting a home in Canada. The Deputy Minister and Minister of Finance said she was available to appear before the committee along with officials on this study for one hour. She appeared on December 7 and came with officials for that study, remaining for the additional hour.

She has appeared before for all legislation. She has always appeared.

**Mr. Adam Chambers:** That's not true.

**The Chair:** She has. We looked into it, MP Chambers, based on what you asked.

When we've requested—

**Mr. Adam Chambers:** I have a point of order.

**The Chair:** When the committee has requested that the minister come before it for a study, the minister has appeared.

This study has not even concluded. We're concluding the PBCs today.

**Mr. Adam Chambers:** Whatever.

**The Chair:** I have speakers. I have MP Dzerowicz and then MP Davies.

I just wanted to let you know this, because MP Chambers asked and we looked and searched through what has happened. The minister has appeared when requested.

Now I'm going to MP Dzerowicz and then to MP Davies.

**Ms. Julie Dzerowicz:** Mr. Chair, you stole my thunder. I was going to say almost exactly the same thing.

**The Chair:** It was the clerk.

**Ms. Julie Dzerowicz:** He also stole my thunder.

I was going to respond because this is a public meeting, and I believe exactly what you said is true. The Deputy Prime Minister has always appeared before committee when she's been asked. The issue we always had was for how many hours. Sometimes she's been asked to appear for three hours or two and a half hours. I pointed out at a number of other previous meetings that the minister has appeared more times and for more hours than previous finance ministers, including Conservative ones.

**Mr. Adam Chambers:** That happened to coincide with legislation on December 7, conveniently.

**Ms. Julie Dzerowicz:** Anyway, all of that is to say, Mr. Chambers, that it's not true to state she has been avoiding coming here. She has been coming here—

**Mr. Adam Chambers:** It was to pass Bill C-2, Julie.

**Ms. Julie Dzerowicz:** She's come to committee when we've requested it of her. When we've had a debate in the past, it was about how many hours.

In any case, ladies and gentlemen of the committee, the proposal by my esteemed colleague is very logical. I think we should accept it. It reads:

That the Minister of Finance be invited to appear at committee for two hours at the next available opportunity, with the intent that this appearance take place before the House rises for the winter recess.

That is very reasonable. We could finish the debate, vote on this and then move on to bigger and better things in our lives.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you for that, MP Dzerowicz.

I have MP Davies.

**Mr. Don Davies:** I know that the minister last appeared before this committee in May, because I was appointed in April. She came in May, and she hasn't been here since. I know that she has not appeared since the motion was passed on September 26, so that's a couple of months.

I think we all are in agreement with this, and I'll speak to what I think. I want the Minister of Finance to appear before this committee on Tuesday of next week. That's what I want, and I think that's what my colleagues want. The question is this: How do we compel that? The issue with the Conservatives' motion is that it doesn't get us there. It says, "That the Minister of Finance be invited to appear at committee for two hours by December 17, 2024," which is next Tuesday, "and should the Minister not appear in accordance with this motion," which we'll only know on December 17, "the chair be instructed to report to the House the Committee's recommendation that it be empowered to order her attendance for two hours at a date and time the Committee fixes."

It has to go to the House, and then the House has to deal with it. The House then, after debate and assuming the House agrees, which would provide the House with the authority, has to issue the order for the finance minister to appear. That's what happened at the industry committee yesterday. It wasn't from the industry committee; it was from the House.

No matter what we do today, whether we vote for the Conservative motion or vote for the Liberal amendment, we cannot compel the finance minister to come before next Tuesday. I will support Madame Bhandari's amendment because the spirit of it is that we invite her to appear "at the next available opportunity, with the intent that this appearance take place before the House rises". However, I will put down my marker now. If the minister does not come before this committee on Tuesday, I will vote for the strongest possible motion, when we come back, to order her to come before the committee. I hope it won't be necessary for the committee to go to the House so the House can order the finance minister to do her duty and appear before the finance committee. She should not have to be ordered to do that. That's her job.

Voting for either of the motions won't matter, so I'd rather get this motion passed today. If we don't pass it today, then there's no chance of the minister coming before that date anyway, I think. I support Madame Bendayan's motion. Let's get an invitation to the minister. The last thing I'll say is that there will be a heavy political price to pay for the minister if she chooses to skip this committee before Tuesday and not come and hold herself accountable.

Thanks.

● (1745)

**The Chair:** Thank you, MP Davies.

I think that's it for the speaking order.

Members, we're voting on the amendment of PS Bendayan.

(Amendment agreed to: yeas 7; nays 4)

**The Chair:** Okay, so we're on debate on the motion as amended.

Go ahead, MP Chambers.

**Mr. Adam Chambers:** We have an amendment: that she appear on December 17. It has to be after the fall economic statement, as the parliamentary secretary suggested.

**Ms. Rachel Bendayan:** The amendment that I circulated you have in front of you. I moved no other amendment.

**Mr. Adam Chambers:** Okay, that's fine.

I withdraw it, Peter.

**The Chair:** It's withdrawn. Okay.

Are there any others? No.

We will vote on the motion as amended.

(Motion as amended agreed to: yeas 11; nays 0)

**The Chair:** That's excellent.

Go ahead, MP Chambers.

**Mr. Adam Chambers:** I want to confirm, just to clear the air, that the appearance by the minister on December 7, 2021, was in relation to Bill C-2. It was a twofer, if you want to call it that. It was for legislation. She answered questions about housing, as she is very capable of doing. She still only comes to speak about her legislation.

● (1750)

**The Chair:** All right, MP Chambers.

Is there anyone else? Are we good? Okay.

Members, we have a budget that we need to approve. It was circulated. Is everything good there? I have to take it to SBLI tomorrow.

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Chair:** Thank you. That's approved.

Now we're adjourned.

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