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Chair: Mr. René Arseneault



Standing Committee on Official Languages

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• (0930)

[*Translation*]

The Chair (Mr. René Arseneault (Madawaska—Restigouche, Lib.)): I call this meeting to order.

Welcome to meeting number 105 of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Official Languages.

For the benefit of those listening, I'd like to point out that there was a slight delay caused by technical difficulties. They have now been resolved by our excellent team of technicians.

I won't explain the instructions to prevent feedback incidents, as everyone here in the room, as well as those participating remotely, is now accustomed to them. You can always look at the little card on the table that indicates what you should do or avoid doing.

I will remind you of the context. We're resuming debate on the amendment that Mr. Samson has moved to Mr. Beaulieu's motion. We're still at that point in the discussion.

On Monday of this week, when we adjourned the meeting, the list of people who wanted to speak was as follows: Darrell Samson, Joël Godin, Mario Beaulieu, Francis Drouin and Marc Serré.

We will begin with you, Mr. Samson. The floor is yours.

Mr. Darrell Samson (Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook, Lib.): Thank you—

The Chair: I almost said that you had the floor for six minutes, but that doesn't apply in this case.

Mr. Darrell Samson: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I certainly want to thank the people who participated in the meeting of our committee's Subcommittee on Agenda and Procedure, which was held in the last hour. I know that the subcommittee sits in camera and that we can't get a lot of information on what's going on there, but I imagine you have nothing in particular to report to us, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: In fact, I was planning to take the last five minutes of the meeting to give you a report, but if the committee agrees, I can do it right away.

Mr. Darrell Samson: I'd like that, because it may affect my speech.

The Chair: Okay.

I'm just asking the committee: Shall I report at the end of the meeting or shall I report now?

Mr. Godin, I will let you speak to this specific issue.

Mr. Joël Godin (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, CPC): Of course, Mr. Chair. I'm listening to you religiously, so I will speak to the question you have just asked us.

Let's not waste our time and do it at the end of the meeting. That would be my suggestion.

The Chair: I did intend to take the last five minutes of the meeting to tell you about it.

However, I can tell you, Mr. Samson, that the subcommittee has not finished what it was supposed to do and that it still has a bit of work to do before it can make a specific report to the committee. I'm going to take the last five minutes of the meeting to talk about it in more detail.

You now have the floor, Mr. Samson.

Mr. Darrell Samson: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

It seems to me that the subcommittee is taking a long time to do its work. It's a bit like what's happening here at the table: There are a lot of discussions but very few conclusions at the moment. So I'm happy to hear what's happening on the subcommittee.

I want to pick up where I left off last time.

As I said, the purpose of my amendment is to reach out to my colleagues around this table so that we can take action on very important issues, such as the education continuum.

Really, it would be the first time in Canadian history that we would actually be talking about a continuum. The committee's analyst, who has a great deal of expertise, could confirm that. Indeed, that word has been used in the past, but it has never been recognized under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which is part of the Constitution Act, 1982. I am referring specifically to section 23, which deals with education. If I remember correctly, the Charter recognizes the right to minority language instruction for persons aged 5 to 18. Some might say it goes up to age 21. I'm not sure how it was described at the time.

I remind you that I started by talking to you about French in Canada. As you well know, the first French settlers in Canada arrived in Nova Scotia in 1604 and 1605. Some people wonder about the location of that piece of land, but, more or less, when La Sagouine tells us that it's the cradle of Acadia, who might well doubt it?

So the first French settlers arrived in Nova Scotia, not in Quebec. I just want to point out that Samuel de Champlain didn't go all the way from Nova Scotia to Quebec. I apologize for telling you that. I know some people would like to believe that, but that's not the case. Samuel de Champlain landed in our region in 1604. I hear my colleague talking about Isle Madame. In principle, of course, Samuel de Champlain also toured Isle Madame on his way to Quebec. You are no doubt somewhat familiar with the map of Nova Scotia and, of course, the road to Quebec City.

So I wanted to start with that. It's very important to say that the first French settlers arrived in the cradle of Acadia.

That said, in fairness to my colleagues from New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island, I must say that the land of Acadia at that time was not limited to the current territory of Nova Scotia, but also included the territory now occupied by New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island. The Acadians were deported in 1755 for reasons related to their lands.

I want to take you now to 1755; we're moving forward in time.

Then came the Great Upheaval, that is to say the deportation of the Acadians. As you well know, this was a very sad time in our history. The men had been invited to go to the church, where they were told they were going to be transported by ship. Ideally, they would have liked to return to France, but that's not what happened. They didn't know that. They were also promised that families would not be separated, but they were. We all know the damage that has caused. We're well aware of Evangeline and Gabriel's story. I could go into the details of that story as well.

So in 1755, the Acadians were deported. The homes on their land were burned down, and then anglophones came and took their land. The Acadians had cultivated that land at the time to make it more fertile.

Having said that, I don't want to get too far back in history. I want to go back to the basics, which is the education continuum, of course.

I'd now like to take you back to 1969. Between 1962 and 1968, my father said that we were doing good work in Parliament, in Ottawa. We weren't having fun talking about all kinds of things, but we were focused on establishing a bilingualism act. That act was going to assign certain powers. That's where my comments are related to the amendment I moved to Mr. Beaulieu's motion: The goal was to move forward and make progress.

● (0935)

Before I tell you what the Liberals did in 1969 under the leadership of Pierre Elliott Trudeau, I'd like to acknowledge the excellent work of Lester B. Pearson, who supported much of the work that resulted in the Official Languages Act. To my mind, that completely changed the situation on the ground in Nova Scotia. I also think I

can safely say it also changed the situation across Canada, especially outside Quebec. It also supported the good work that Quebec was doing and that it's still doing in order to be the master of its own house. We know that those were hard years in Quebec too.

So that was a major step forward. Nova Scotia, which, without that, would probably be a unilingual anglophone province today, is still increasing its influence, growing and becoming established thanks to its strong institutions, by which I of course mean its universities. Mr. Beaulieu has tabled a very important motion on post-secondary educational institutions. The Université Sainte-Anne has been an extremely important institution for Acadians, being the only francophone institution in Nova Scotia. That's why I say my colleague Mr. Beaulieu's motion is so important. This takes me back to the time when Acadians supported the idea of having the Université Sainte-Anne in Clare. I don't know if you're aware of it, but anglophones wanted to move the Université Sainte-Anne in Clare to Yarmouth. There was a big fight to prevent it, but we managed to make our case and to ensure that the university would stay in the community, then and for the future. This is important. Post-secondary education is an issue that my colleague Mr. Beaulieu had proposed as a topic for study. I'd like the committee to complete that study and then address the continuum issue as a whole.

We managed to ensure that the only francophone institution in Nova Scotia remained in Clare, but that's not what happened on Isle Madame. I'm going to tell you that story because I imagine most of you don't know it.

This is the story of St. Francis Xavier University, where, incidentally, Brian Mulroney studied. I imagine you know that since people have often talked about it. Before St. F.X. became the post-secondary institution it is today, it was Arichat College. So St. Francis Xavier University started out on Isle Madame. I don't know if Mr. Godin was aware of it, but St. F.X. was founded in Arichat on ISLE Madame. I went there and was very disappointed—

Mr. Joël Godin: It was a province before that.

Mr. Darrell Samson: Yes, it was. I could tell you about that too. Arichat is the capital of Richmond County, on Isle Madame.

In an article that was published in the 1930s, one writer claimed that, if Sydney continued to grow, its population would exceed that of Arichat. That's incredible.

In short, Arichat College became St. Francis Xavier University because anglophones moved it to Antigonish. Just imagine how busy it would be on Isle Madame today if its inhabitants still had that institution.

● (0940)

Now getting back to Mr. Beaulieu's motion.

I've been offended by one thing in this issue of francophone institutions in and outside Quebec. I mentioned the Université Sainte-Anne earlier. We've managed to keep it in an Acadian community, but we lost the battle on Isle Madame. It's one thing to lose something but at least to be recognized, but quite another to lose something and not even be recognized.

I visited St. Francis Xavier University about a decade ago. You can't imagine how disappointed I was to see that the card describing the university's history made no mention of its origins in Arichat, on Isle Madame. The history began with its establishment in Antigonish. That's an example that shows how we've lost ground.

Mr. Beaulieu's motion amplifies the entire issue of making progress on the ground. We can control our destiny in education. It's all well and good to have educational institutions, but those institutions require funding and tools. That's what troubles me, and that's why this motion is so important. We need to support the continuum.

Now that I've told you that part of the story, let's go back to 1982.

The year 1982 was challenging. If I'm not mistaken, it was the year of the Night of the Long Knives in Quebec. Section 23 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms recognized, for the first time, the right to minority-language instruction; that is to say, in French in communities outside Quebec and English in Quebec. And that's where, to a certain degree, things broke down. I've forgotten the exact legal term that applies to the situation, but Quebec was entitled to invoke or not to invoke that section. The fact remains that 1982 was an exceptionally successful year for Acadians and francophones across Canada.

In the early 1990s, we witnessed the creation of francophone school boards. You can see how all these things are coming together. My colleague Mr. Beaulieu's motion concerns post-secondary education. We're now talking about the school level.

I remember that all Acadian schools in Nova Scotia were under the authority of the anglophone school boards. I obviously don't want to take anything away from the good teachers and community people who have done an outstanding job. However, it's really hard to achieve your full potential when you don't control the management of your own system or your own destiny. Once again, we had to appeal to the Supreme Court of Canada to determine whether the French-language education right should be subject to the authority of the anglophone school boards or whether francophone communities had a right to decide on their own destiny. The court ruled in favour of the francophone communities, and that's when we began to see the creation of francophone school boards.

The Conseil scolaire acadien provincial was established in Nova Scotia in 1996. The student population was approximately 3,800 at that time and is more than 7,000 today. In other words, the student population has doubled.

• (0945)

It wasn't easy at the time. One of the biggest problems was that, in most provinces, there was only one francophone school board among many anglophone boards. The arguments and discussions

around the table were becoming more complex. Needs weren't really understood as much as they should be. All of this greatly complicated the situation.

The Conseil scolaire acadien provincial in Nova Scotia has now been in existence for 28 years. So it's a very young institution, and it's still growing, but the going wasn't easy in the early stages. Let me explain the situation.

From 1999 to 2001, the government transferred old school buildings to our francophone school board and told it to do whatever was necessary to renovate them. At the same time, barely a few kilometers away, a brand new school offering all the new programs was being built and provided with all kinds of resources. Our francophone school board, which only had old buildings, didn't have the money or tools to provide the same services. It was a very complicated situation.

The students' parents subsequently sued the Government of Nova Scotia and, indirectly, our school board. However, as you know, our board had no control in the matter and couldn't proceed with purchases or renovations in the schools without the province's consent.

We therefore had to go to court to ensure that those schools, which were mixed, would become homogeneous schools. It was very hard and a real battle in which Acadian parents sued other Acadians. I'm talking about Acadians who were responsible for managing the school board but who weren't responsible for the construction and renovation of the schools. They wound up in court too. The case involved three schools and we ultimately won.

I'd like to acknowledge the key role that a certain individual played in that case. That person was Arthur LeBlanc, who is the current Lieutenant Governor of Nova Scotia. He's also the first Acadian to hold that office. Can you imagine that? An Acadian from Isle Madame no less was appointed Lieutenant Governor of the Province of Nova Scotia. It's a first. He still holds that office. It's virtually a miracle. The term is normally for five years, but he has occupied the position for seven. I think he's waiting for the Congrès mondial acadien to be held before he resigns. I'm very pleased with the work he has done. Many programs for Acadians have been implemented as a result of his vision.

Going back to the case I mentioned earlier, this man was the presiding judge in that instance.

All of which is related to the subject of post-secondary education. I'm talking about the school level, but there's also the preschool level, of course. It all lines up because, as you know, education is a continuum. It was in this context that Mr. Beaulieu moved that the committee study the subject of post-secondary education institutions. We're looking for answers on this side.

So the judge in the case I told you about was Arthur LeBlanc, who is now Lieutenant Governor of the province. Mr. LeBlanc did what no judge in Canada had previously done under the common law. Mr. Chair, I know that you're a lawyer and that you'll read up on what Judge LeBlanc has done before you go to bed tonight. He actually set a precedent.

• (0950)

As you know, the strength of the common law is that it allows us to evolve by relying on past decisions.

So Judge LeBlanc rendered his decision. He told the province that it had a duty to ensure that francophone schools were established in such and such a place and to provide homogeneous education in French to Acadians.

It was a good decision, and everyone was pleased. However, the judge went further and did what no other judge had done before him: He not only ordered the province to do the work; he requested that it appear again before the court every six months to inform him of progress made. Can you imagine?

However, that had never happened. You know better than me that, ultimately, decisions that judges render don't always achieve their objective. Some people can make genuine efforts, and perhaps parallel efforts as well, to move cases forward, but, in this instance, the party representing the province never had to report to the judge.

Do you think the Province of Nova Scotia agreed with the judgment ordering it both to take measures and to report on progress made? No, it naturally refused to do so. Instead the province appealed to the Supreme Court of Canada. As a result, the matter was no longer within Judge LeBlanc's jurisdiction, and he therefore lost the necessary authority to compel the province to report from time to time. I bet you can guess what happened next.

The Chair: Mr. Samson, allow me to interrupt for a moment.

I understand where you are headed with your comments, but I would remind you that the debate must address the amendment that you have moved to Mr. Beaulieu's motion. As I understand it, the purpose of your amendment is to delete the part of the motion requesting that the committee "report to the House", to delete all of point a), which requests "that the Chief Government Whip and member of the Liberal leadership team immediately remove MP Francis Drouin from the Standing Committee on Official Languages" and to delete the part of point b) calling for Francis Drouin to resign from his position as Chair of the Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie and instead to propose that the committee write to the clerk of the Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie—section canadienne to convene a meeting in order to vote on the presidency of that assembly.

Based on our previous meeting, I believe that the connection between the education continuum and the amendment we're debating was that debate on that motion and amendment would deprive the committee of the time it should devote to this topic of study. However, I would nevertheless like us to go back to the subject of the amendment, if that's possible.

• (0955)

Mr. Darrell Samson: Thank you for reminding me of that connection. Actually, the connection is extremely important, and I'm going to tell you why.

A few weeks ago, as you may remember, the operative word was "choice": we talked a lot about choosing a French-language education, choosing to attend a francophone university, choosing the place and so on. Now the operative words are "area of jurisdiction". Mr. Chair, your intervention reminded me of the other connection that should be made, so I thank you very much for that. My colleague Mr. Beaulieu's motion is inadmissible because the committee doesn't have the necessary authority to do what it asks it to do. The committee cannot compel Mr. Drouin to resign. The Canadian section of the Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie actually held an extraordinary meeting, but it wasn't convened as a result of this motion. It was all done in accordance with recognized procedures. The meeting was properly conducted, and the outcome was decisive: Mr. Drouin will continue his excellent work both nationally and internationally.

Having the necessary authority to act: that's the connection with my remarks about Judge LeBlanc. Judge LeBlanc rendered a decision in his jurisdiction, but the province claimed he didn't have jurisdiction in the matter and appealed to the Supreme Court for it to decide the matter. However, as it turned out, Judge LeBlanc actually did have jurisdiction, and he also set a precedent, as a result of which anyone can now use that approach. This is a big deal. It can completely change the law. You know that, Mr. Chair, because you're a lawyer. Why couldn't I advance another argument concerning areas of jurisdiction relying on that common law precedent?

You reminded me to go back to the subject of the debate, Mr. Chair, but what I was going to say is directly related to the motion because it requests that the committee take measures which it doesn't have the authority to take. It seems to me you've previously discussed that. I can't tell my neighbour what to put behind the house on his property. It's his property, not mine. I don't have the authority to act on his property. In the same manner, the motion asked the committee to take measures that it doesn't have the authority to take.

As I've said many times, the members opposite should look at themselves in the mirror and acknowledge that we're wasting time when we should be on the job. That job, which stems from an important motion tabled by Mr. Beaulieu, is to complete our study of post-secondary educational institutions. I believe we still have some time to pursue that study and provide officials with some findings. That would help us focus on the topic that Mr. Beaulieu himself has proposed. It's an extremely important study, and we must be able to conduct it.

• (1000)

I must say I'm disappointed with this situation. The Commissioner appeared here the other day, and I don't know what water the opposition members had drunk, but I want to congratulate them for at least agreeing to hear the Commissioner and to take action. It's helped us forge ahead.

Now I'd like the members opposite to say that they've now finished playing games and want to hear from the minister. I know the minister said that his schedule left him no time to appear before the committee again. If we could spring into action, we could move forward. I would remind my colleagues that the minister previously came to see us but that no one could hear him.

There's something else that troubles me. As you know, the study on post-secondary educational institutions isn't the only thing we haven't yet completed. That's also true of the study on economic development of the Acadian and francophone communities outside Quebec, which would really help us advance matters. Don't you think there would be more action in the post-secondary field if the economy was good and the vitality of the official language minority communities was strong? If we complete our study on post-secondary institutions, that would address the concerns that Mr. Beaulieu raised when he proposed that topic for study.

Mr. Chair, I must say I wish we could put an end to these games sooner rather than later and get a move on.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Samson.

According to my list, the next speaker is Mr. Godin.

Just a reminder that I am reserving five minutes at the end of the meeting to inform the committee about work that the subcommittee has done to date.

Go ahead, Mr. Godin.

Mr. Joël Godin: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I didn't think I'd have the floor today, but I'm glad to speak. I think our colleagues opposite are showing some openness to our request to proceed with the vote as soon as possible.

I would note that this is the seventh meeting where the Liberals have asked us to stop wasting our time, but they're the ones who are filibustering. Once again, I'm proving how inconsistent the Liberals on this committee are.

All I ask is that we go to a vote as soon as possible so we can make official language minority communities our top priority.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Godin.

I needn't answer your question because you know the chair's answer. As long as there is debate on the motion, the chair must observe the democratic decorum provided for under our procedural rules.

Mr. Beaulieu, the floor is now yours.

Mr. Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ): Actually, everyone's waiting to vote. We want to exercise our democratic right to decide and vote. We're therefore waiting and ready to vote.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu.

I won't repeat the comments I just made to Mr. Godin.

Mr. Drouin, go ahead.

Please note that there are five minutes left for today's discussion. We can resume debate later.

Mr. Francis Drouin (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, Lib.): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I will comply with your orders.

Please remove my name from the motion. What the opposition is requesting is like the Montreal Canadiens asking the Toronto Maple Leafs if they would agree to put in a particular fourth line player on the ice. It's the principle of the motion. That's why it's inadmissible.

I could discuss the conduct of many other members. For example, I clearly remember a situation a few years ago in which Mr. Berthold accused another Quebecker of speaking French too often in the House of Commons. As far as I know, Mr. Berthold is still a sitting member in the House of Commons. Can he be asked to withdraw from the House of Commons? No. He's still here; he's still present. I'm reminding you of that incident: A Quebec MP told a Quebec minister that she spoke French too often. I'll stop there for that comment. It's up to him to judge the situation. However, I would point out that Mr. Berthold apologized and is still sitting as an MP. He has maintained his parliamentary right and may sit on all the other committees.

If the opposition members want to consult our whip to determine who we can put on the ice, then I can't wait to see the letters from the Bloc Québécois whip, the Conservative Party whip or the NDP whip. Can anyone confirm that we haven't received any letters from the whips? No, we've received no letters from any one of the whips wanting to know whether it's all right for a particular member from one of the opposition parties to sit on the Standing Committee on Official Languages.

I would also remind you that, a few days ago, a committee chair made unparliamentary comments about a minister. I invite Canadians and anyone else who follows us to watch the appearance of Minister Boissonnault before the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics. The chair behaved more like a Conservative MP than a committee chair. Was he asked to withdraw? Did the Conservative Party whip consult the Liberal Party whip to determine whether the chair could continue to sit on the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics? As far as I know, there has been no such consultation to date.

That's the basis of the motion.

Furthermore, my dear colleague Mr. Samson, who has treated us to a chapter of the history of Acadia and its founding, very clearly explained the concept of competent authority. Like all other committees, the Standing Committee on Official Languages doesn't have authority to censure anyone or to do anything of that kind. You clearly said so, Mr. Chair. However, we're at a numerical disadvantage here. As in hockey, there's been an offside, but it's as though the referee couldn't do his job. The majority said no and expressed its disagreement. They think they scored a goal, and that's how things will stand.

That's why we rely on a fundamental principle. Take me out of this equation. This has nothing to do with me. It's related to the fact that we won't start consulting the other parties to determine who we can put on the ice. That makes no sense.

I see you're signalling to me that I have two minutes left, Mr. Chair.

Calling for a vote when there's been an offside or relying on a rule that, in principle, can't be found in the green book, our green bible, *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, is something that we can't do. We won't accept it. Remove my name from this motion because this is simply unacceptable.

You also have to consider the precedent that would be set for all other committees. If a member indicates that he or she disagrees with remarks someone else has made, the majority of members could decide, because a motion has previously been tabled in the Standing Committee on Official Languages to prevent such a member from sitting on that committee. There will be no end to it. So you need to consider the precedent that would be set.

All of you will experience a similar situation at some point. It will happen to all parties. It's cyclical. The reds and blues take turns at being in power. The Bloc Québécois will never have a chance to be in power, but it nevertheless isn't immune to this kind of situation. As for the NDP, it may one day spend a little time in power, at least I hope it does. In other words, this kind of situation will happen to all of you at some point.

In short, our committee would be setting a dangerous precedent. That moreover is why the Standing Orders don't condone this kind of thing.

• (1005)

That's the problem with this motion. It's why an amendment to the motion has been moved. As my colleague mentioned earlier, we have no authority in this matter. It's our whips, and only our whips, who decide.

If we want to change the way things are done in committee and to start consulting opposition party whips, or vice versa, I can only extend a hand to the opposition: We're waiting for the opposition party whips to come and consult us to determine who can sit on the committees. Then I'll state my opinion on this issue, and I'm sure my colleague Mr. Samson and the parliamentary secretary to the Minister of Official Languages will want to do the same.

It is now 10:10 a.m. I will stop there, Mr. Chair, since you told us you would need five minutes at the end of the meeting.

• (1010)

The Chair: That's perfect. That being said, I won't disrupt your momentum; you'll be able to continue at the next meeting.

I just wanted to clarify something since the committee is waiting for a finding from the subcommittee. So before—

Mr. Joël Godin: On a point of order, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: I'm listening, Mr. Godin.

Mr. Joël Godin: I just want to verify something: Did Mr. Drouin finish speaking?

The Chair: No, he didn't. That's what I just said.

Before adjourning the meeting, I want to inform you of the list of members who wish to speak to this matter next time.

This is also how I'm going to proceed until further notice. By that I mean that, technically, I'm going to adjourn the meeting, but, at the next meeting, we will resume debate exactly where we left off, according to the speakers list at that time. We will begin with Mr. Drouin next time.

Mr. Francis Drouin: On a point of order, Mr. Chair.

I just wanted to acknowledge that Mr. Gagné is an excellent shot. He was on my team a few days ago. I wanted to offer that compliment on this Thursday morning.

The Chair: It's an excellent comment, but I don't know what Standing Order could confirm that that's a point of order.

For the benefit of people watching us, I'd like to go back over the last seven meetings to which Mr. Drouin and Mr. Godin referred in their comments.

The discussion initially focused on a motion tabled by Mr. Beaulieu. The chair then ruled that motion *ultra vires*, in other words that it wasn't consistent with the rules since the committee didn't have the necessary authority to address it. Under those same rules, the committee may overrule the chair's decision and continue debating Mr. Beaulieu's motion, and that's what happened.

When a motion is before the committee, an amendment, and then a subamendment, may be moved. In the case before us, Mr. Samson moved an amendment to Mr. Beaulieu's motion. When that occurs, the committee always holds a debate on the motion in question. Under the Standing Orders, the chair may not interrupt debate regardless of whether it concerns a motion, an amendment or a subamendment.

Here's where we stand chronologically speaking. I wanted to clarify this objectively so that people know what's going on here.

With that, I close discussion on Mr. Samson's amendment.

I would now like to say a few words to committee members about this morning's subcommittee meeting.

The subcommittee had an extremely productive meeting on the matter of how to build the list of witnesses to be heard in the context of the education continuum study, a study topic that Mr. Godin proposed. The subcommittee also discussed how the witness list would be ordered. After spending half an hour on it last week and an hour this morning, we have yet to complete this task, but we're getting there.

The subcommittee will meet again next Thursday. I think we will finish up within an hour at most. As of the following Monday, we will be able to provide the committee with the ideal list of witnesses to appear in the context of our education continuum study. At best, I think we will begin this study this coming fall, in fall 2024.

That's where things stand.

I will now adjourn the meeting. However, next week, we will be able to resume debate on the amendment that Darrell Samson has moved to Mr. Beaulieu's motion.

On the speakers list, we have Mr. Drouin and Mr. Serré, then Mr. Beaulieu, Mr. Samson and Mr. Godin have added their names to the list.

With that, I wish you all a good weekend.

The meeting is adjourned.

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