



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

44th PARLIAMENT, 1st SESSION

Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage

EVIDENCE

NUMBER 141

PUBLIC PART ONLY - PARTIE PUBLIQUE SEULEMENT

Monday, November 25, 2024

Chair: The Honourable Hedy Fry



Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage

Monday, November 25, 2024

• (1550)

[English]

The Chair (Hon. Hedy Fry (Vancouver Centre, Lib.)): I call this meeting to order.

Pursuant to Standing Order 108(2) and the motion adopted by the committee on Wednesday, September 18, 2024, the committee is resuming its study on the protection of freedom of expression.

All witnesses have completed the required connection tests in advance of the meeting. I would like to welcome our witnesses.

As individuals, we have Karim Bardeesy, executive director of the Dais at Toronto Metropolitan University; Arnaud Bernadet, associate professor at McGill University; Father Raymond J. de Souza; and Charles Le Blanc, full professor at the department of philosophy at the University of Ottawa. From the National Council of Canadian Muslims, we have Nusaiba Al-Azem, director of legal affairs. From Queer Momentum, we have Fae Johnstone, executive director.

Some witnesses are on video conference. We have two witnesses in the room: Father de Souza and Monsieur Le Blanc.

I'll quickly tell you how we run the show. Each individual has five minutes. If there's more than one person for a group, the group still has five minutes. I will give you a 30-second shout-out, literally. I will say, "30 seconds", and then you'll have to wrap up. If you didn't finish what you had to say, you can expand on it during the question and answer period, when committee members begin to ask you questions.

I would like to begin with Karim Bardeesy, executive director of the Dais, for five minutes, please.

Mr. Karim Bardeesy (Executive Director, the Dais, Toronto Metropolitan University, As an Individual): Thank you, Madam Chair.

Thanks to the committee for undertaking this important study.

My name is Karim Bardeesy. I'm the executive director of the Dais, a policy and leadership think tank at Toronto Metropolitan University looking at the key digital drivers to shared prosperity and citizenship for Canada. In this conversation and throughout the time I'll be drawing a bit on our policy and opinion research that we've done in this space by the Dais and our predecessor of the organization, the leadership lab at Ryerson and TMU, since 2019.

I understand there's particular interest in some of the freedom of expression issues as they pertain to current Canadian legislation be-

fore Parliament at the moment, so I'll touch a bit on that, in particular the online harms act, which is before Parliament.

We know that expression on online platforms is bounded by a few things: by the charter, potentially by this prospective piece of legislation, and by the activities of people on the platforms as well as the choices and the algorithms of the platforms themselves.

I've just come back from Washington, D.C., from the Summit on the Future of the Internet, which was brought together by a number of players who are interested in the space. The technology that is moving, that empowers the incumbent platforms, in particular the incumbent social media platforms, to be ever more choiceful about the algorithms and what's being presented to people online continues to get more powerful. However, I think it's really important for this committee to remember that the charter is still the ultimate defender of freedom of expression, and that the online harms act, while being pretty specifically carved out to a few key sets of harms, is still in deference to the charter.

You're probably aware that the online harms act refers to seven categories of harms, with an exemption for private messaging platforms. We think the remedies that are proposed in that bill by and large are the right ones: the tabling of a digital safety plan and take-down provisions for the most egregious harms.

We believe at the Dais and in the civil society community that's following this really closely that freedom of expression can very successfully coexist with this proposed piece of legislation, and that it's important that Canada look to govern the online space appropriately in a targeted fashion while being respectful of our fundamental rights and freedoms. I'll note that Canadian public opinion in favour of action in this space is strong and growing. Some of our research finds that the desire for legislative action to counter deep-fakes has increased now to a 68% level in our survey. This is a survey we've done pretty much every year since 2019.

The Canadians who are concerned about what's happening online acknowledge that it's.... Forty-six per cent of Canadians believe that the people who are producing content online are primarily responsible for the content, and 49% of them believe that it's the platforms themselves that have the responsibility to fix the problem. A plurality of Canadians believe that people who are making the content online are responsible for the problem, but a plurality of Canadians believe that it's the platforms themselves that have the responsibility for fixing the problem. That doesn't happen on its own. It happens through the give-and-take, the social licence that these platforms have with their users and with the countries in which they operate, but there's also a potential role for targeted legislation. We believe, at the Dais, based on our research, that the online harms act does a good job, in a targeted way, of dealing with the most egregious harms and of helping to set up a more healthy and safe online ecosystem for everyone.

I gave my presentation in English, but I'm happy to answer questions in English or in French.

• (1555)

The Chair: Thank you very much.

You did not use up your five minutes. That's great. Thank you.

Now I go to Arnaud Bernadet, associate professor at McGill.

Go ahead, Professor Bernadet.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Arnaud Bernadet (Associate Professor, McGill University, As an Individual): Thank you, Madam Chair.

Members of the committee, thank you for your invitation.

My name is Arnaud Bernadet, and I'm a professor in the French literature department at McGill University. I'm also a member of the Observatoire sur la liberté d'expression. In recent years, my work, books and articles have focused on freedom of expression and academic freedom, the state of democratic conversation in the face of cultural wars, and the cancel culture.

My remarks will focus on expressive freedoms in academia. On the one hand, it's because of its specificity, since it involves two types of public freedoms—academic freedom and freedom of expression—which are distinct, of course, but also have certain areas of intersection. On the other hand, it's because, over the past 10 years, the university has been a breeding ground for experimenting with what is going on in the rest of society, that is to say a renewal or even a radicalization of cultural wars, from taking down statues to social media to the tragedy at the University of Waterloo, where a stabbing took place in June 2023 during a gender theories class.

I understand how important it is for members of Parliament to consider possible legislative safeguards to protect freedom of expression. Based on my work, it seems to me that what is weakened is a culture of contradiction on which the dynamics of debate are based, in favour of a culture of division. Often demonized, cancelling practices may be less the cause than the symptom. It is important to remember what the action of cancelling represents, particularly for minority groups, who, by definition, have few means

of reversing or rebalancing the balance of power in society, often in a symbolic way.

What we're seeing is that, increasingly, scenes of cancelling are based on a triangle between the target who is the subject of the cancelling, the claimant who applies pressure by holding the dominant parties to account, and a third force that comes between the two and that actually carries out the act of cancelling.

In the case of universities, the main culprits are the administrators themselves, who, for reasons of reputation or customer calculations, will give in under pressure, without supporting the faculty. I could give many examples. Think of the Frances Widdowson lectures at the University of Lethbridge that were cancelled or disrupted or the one given by gay lawyer Robert Wintemute at McGill University.

Institutions are increasingly relaying some damaging confusion around freedom of expression to meet the demand of their audiences. This was revealed by the controversy over the “n” word at the University of Ottawa in 2020. In this specific case, there was a failure to distinguish between a word in usage and mention: reflecting on the history of a word or quoting a book title containing a racist term, as we have learned from formal logic and linguistics, is not using that word in the true sense.

However, an even more serious conflation has developed between hate speech, which is a firm limit on freedom of expression, and hurtful or offensive speech. If there was something of a legal nature to be done, it would perhaps be to reaffirm this dividing line between the two types of discourse.

In summary, both in the university and the public space, what is known as cancel culture takes various forms that do not necessarily translate into censorship, which implies the exercise of power. However, it creates, alongside state censorship, which still exists, forms of horizontal, reticular censorship, microaggression mechanisms and even micropowers that rely on non-state authorities, such as university administrators, business executives and social media moderators. This is where the culture of contradiction has perhaps regressed the most.

It would obviously be naive to think that there is no link between vertical and horizontal censorship. As for the “n” word, for example, the continuum is clear between the pressure exerted by the CRTC on Radio-Canada and the pressure exerted by the University of Ottawa administration on a single member of its faculty, precisely in the name of the same confusions and arguments.

Thank you. I am ready to listen and take your questions.

• (1600)

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Bernadet.

I'll go to Father de Souza, please, for five minutes.

Father Raymond de Souza (As an Individual): Thank you, Madam Chair.

I'm grateful for the invitation to address the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage and to express my esteem for Parliament and those who serve here for the common good.

Freedom of expression enjoys a prominent place in the Canadian Constitution and the fundamental freedoms of the charter. It is listed second, along with freedom of thought, belief, opinion and the press. Only the freedom of conscience and religion has a more important place in the charter.

The charter guarantee prevents governments from restricting expression. The usual way governments might do that is by statute, with citizens then seeking relief in the courts.

I wish to highlight other methods used by governments to limit freedom of expression. These are methods that make it more difficult or even impossible for citizens to seek relief in the courts. This represents a new danger to freedom of expression. I offer three methods.

The first method is the use of the government's spending power. The government might offer a benefit with conditions that limit fundamental freedoms. For example, such was the case with the Canada summer jobs program when initially the federal government program required applicants to attest that they assented to the government's views on abortion. For example, a landscaping business that otherwise took no public policy positions would have to assent to the government's view of Canada's abortion licence. Widespread objection led the government to revise the required attestation in an implicit recognition that the original requirement violated fundamental freedoms in subsections 2(a) and 2(b) of the charter.

A second danger arises from regulatory bodies that have been granted vast powers by the state. For example, professional accreditation and licensing bodies may use their power over citizens' livelihoods to restrict freedom of expression. The Jordan Peterson case has brought this to prominent attention, but the problem is older than his particular case. Medical professionals in particular face restrictions on freedom of expression, as well as other fundamental freedoms, for reasons of ideological conformity, not professional competence. This has been a particular problem in the health care field in relation to euthanasia.

The third way the state might restrict freedom of expression is by establishing and funding institutions that seek to restrict expression. For example, Kimberly Murray, the independent special interlocutor for missing children in unmarked graves and burial sites associated with Indian residential schools, has called for so-called "denialism" regarding burial sites to be subject to government sanction and even criminal penalty. That would include even asking scientific questions.

Having funded the interlocutor, the Attorney General at the time—this was June 2023—the Honourable David Lametti indicated his openness to deploying the criminal law in such manner. That is government directly supporting those who wish to restrict fundamental freedoms—in fact those the government itself set up and funded. It is true that Mr. Lametti was fired from the cabinet soon after that, but I don't think the two things were connected.

Those are three non-statutory ways in which the government could restrict freedom of expression that leave less redress for citizens to go to the courts. I look forward to your questions.

Thank you.

• (1605)

The Chair: Thank you very much, Father.

I'll go to Mr. Le Blanc from the department of philosophy, University of Ottawa.

You have five minutes, please, Professor.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Charles Le Blanc (Full Professor, Department of Philosophy, University of Ottawa, As an Individual): Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

Honourable members, thank you for the invitation to appear before you today.

I must admit that I find it rather surprising that, in a country like Canada, with an excellent Constitution, a Charter of Rights and Freedoms and an authoritative tradition of jurisprudence, we had to address the issue of freedom of expression today and in recent years. It should be a no-brainer, so it seems to me that the first question we should be asking ourselves is, why do we need to look at something like this today? What's changed in this country that makes freedom of expression a problem? That's the first question that I think is philosophically important.

I'll highlight two things, since my time is quite short.

The first is the confusion between freedom of expression and freedom of conscience. This question might seem a little trivial if it had not been asked at the highest levels of government, such as the Prime Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs, who said after the unfortunate Bedford school case in Quebec, that this was an issue of freedom of expression. On the contrary, it was freedom of conscience, but never freedom of expression. Never once have Muslim teachers who have somehow taken over a school in Quebec done so in the name of freedom of expression. No, they did so on the basis of their somewhat particular idea of what freedom of conscience is.

We all have freedom of conscience, which is the foundation of freedom of expression. Our freedom of conscience is everything that seems important to us. These are our convictions, our opinions, our diverse beliefs, and that's fine. The problem arises when we have to express and make public what is in the private domain: beliefs. That's where the difficulties are going to arise.

It should be noted that freedom of conscience isn't infinite, either; in its external expression, it knows limits. In fact, none of us in this room could say that we won't pay our taxes in the spring, because that goes against our freedom of conscience.

So it seemed to me that there is confusion, which is often found, between the freedom to believe what you want and the freedom to say whatever you want. It's the confusion between freedom of expression and freedom of conscience. I think that's something that needs to be revisited.

The second element is academic freedom. I think that freedom was addressed before this committee by one of my colleagues at the University of Regina in a way that created a bit of confusion. I don't want to criticize another witness who appeared before me, but we still need to show a little rigour.

Professors' academic freedom—I took a few little notes—is subject to an administrative neutrality in terms of professors' fields of research. It involves the independence of professors in choosing their research subjects, as well as an unfettered expression of their ideas. Furthermore, it doesn't depend on colleagues. If my colleagues in my department feel that my research in philosophy or literature isn't valid, it's not for them to judge. I'm the one who, by doing research that may not make sense, will ultimately be set aside by the scientific community. So this isn't at all the same as submitting an article for peer review of its quality.

I would like to make one last brief point and then I will stop. Today, we saw an article in *La Presse* talking about the academic freedom of CEGEP teachers. Again, there is confusion. In my opinion, CEGEP teachers do not have academic freedom, but rather pedagogical autonomy. They must follow a program enacted by the state, Quebec in this case. However, given their pedagogical autonomy and based on their skills and personalities, teachers can make the program more interesting.

• (1610)

That's about it. I look forward to your questions. Thank you, ladies and gentlemen.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you very much.

From the National Council of Canadian Muslims, Nusaiba Al-Azem, director of legal affairs, you have five minutes, please.

Ms. Nusaiba Al-Azem (Director of Legal Affairs, National Council of Canadian Muslims): Thank you very much.

Good afternoon. I'd like to thank the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage for the invitation to speak today and for all the important work you do.

My name is Nusaiba Al-Azem. I'm the director of legal affairs at the National Council of Canadian Muslims. I'm pleased to be here today during this important study in this committee on the protection of freedom of expression. The question of this committee in looking at the means for government to protect freedom of expression is a profound one, as it forms our major and main concern around what is, in our view, the most fundamental challenge to free expression in Canada today.

Our submission is quite simple. The most pressing challenge to free expression in Canada has become the wanton use of the notwithstanding clause—that is, section 33 of the Canadian Charter

of Rights and Freedoms—by governments across Canada to derogate from our charter rights, including freedom of expression.

In our view, the overuse of section 33 has become nothing short of a constitutional crisis. We all learned in grade school civics—even I learned in law school—that the usage of the notwithstanding clause, if used improperly to attack fundamental freedoms like section 2 of the charter, would mean the end of that government. I recall my professor using the words “political suicide”. Unfortunately, our grade school civics lessons were wrong. That professor was wrong.

We at NCCM warned of this at what we viewed to be the beginning of this crisis, when we went to court some years ago to challenge Bill 21, for which we currently await leave to the Supreme Court of Canada. Bill 21, of course, to us, remains the enshrinement of stripping away the rights of minorities and the right to free expression and freedom of religion, backed by the notwithstanding clause, to make it so that Muslims, Jews and Sikhs cannot freely express their faith by wearing a turban, a hijab or a kippah and be, for example, a public school teacher. Multiple courts in Quebec have agreed that the ban is discriminatory but is saved by the notwithstanding clause.

While NCCM and the Canadian Civil Liberties Association previously successfully went to court to stop Bill 62, which in some ways was a predecessor and prohibited women wearing a niqab from riding a bus or getting a library card in Quebec, thus far, the notwithstanding clause has become a tool raised by governments in Ontario, Saskatchewan and Quebec as a constitutional get-out-of-jail-free card to evade judicial review. Its use has been threatened in many more provinces as well.

Our recommendation to this committee is the following: that this committee begin a specific study on the appropriate use of the notwithstanding clause. Make no mistake: the very future of our federation is at risk when quasi-emergency powers become normalized in this way.

Our second concern, which we view as a current fundamental risk to the freedom of expression in Canada, relates to the need to protect freedom of expression in this austere House. We support pieces of legislation that have been put forward to better protect freedom of expression, like the Conservative private member's bill, Bill C-257, which would protect against discrimination based on political belief.

We have seen too often attacks on freedom of speech against those who would speak for controversial causes, as somehow support of Palestinian human rights is regarded to be and has been over the last year. We have seen many cases, for example, of people losing their jobs for simply raising public concerns about the Israeli military invasion in Gaza. We have seen a concerted suppression of Palestinian expression and narratives, and we think that's wrong. We recommend that the government explore ways to make sure that the critique of any foreign government, whether that's Israel, China, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Russia or India, is always protected.

I look forward to the questions from committee members. Thank you.

• (1615)

The Chair: Thank you very much.

I go finally—but not really finally—to Queer Momentum and Fae Johnstone, executive director.

You have five minutes, please, Ms. Johnstone.

Ms. Fae Johnstone (Executive Director, Queer Momentum): Thank you so much.

Good afternoon, committee. My name is Fae Johnstone. I am the executive director of Queer Momentum, a national LGBTQI+ advocacy organization. I have dedicated my career to advancing the freedom, rights and overall equality of two-spirit, queer and trans people in Canada. I am grateful for the opportunity to address you today within this study on protecting freedom of expression.

To begin, I would invite members of the committee to reflect on the long and proud history of queer and trans people advocating for freedom, inclusive of freedom of expression. Our legacy as a country includes the criminalization of LGBTQI+ people, the denial of our human and civil rights, inaction from our government during the AIDS crisis, government-led efforts to remove us from the public service, police raids on our establishments, Canadian customs targeting our businesses, censorship of our literature and so much more. We are a community that has been subjected to a horrifying legacy of discrimination, dehumanization, violence and inequality that continues to this day. Those most marginalized in our community are often those whose voices are most silenced.

In my work today, I stand on the shoulders of giants: gay men, lesbians, queer and trans people, and our allies who fought for and won human rights for my community. Because of those advocates, I grew up in a Canada that was more welcoming and more inclusive. The Canada I grew up in filled me with hope. I believed we were on the cusp of something incredible, a Canada where we could shed our age-old hostility toward gender and sexual diversity and where we were ready to embrace a more diverse, inclusive and equitable future not just for queer and trans people but for all Canadians.

In the past five years, I've unfortunately lost that hope. I've seen the resurgence of homophobia and transphobia all across this country as part of a broader global backlash against queer and trans people. Now I am fearful of the trajectory we're headed in. I'm worried that we're headed toward a future where my community's rights and freedoms, including our freedom of expression, and our overall

equality will be stripped away in a political era defined by fear, anger and misinformation.

Each year for the past three years, Statistics Canada has reported increases in hate-motivated violence targeting queer and trans people. CSIS has warned that the "anti-gender movement", a term that describes a range of anti-LGBTQI+ groups, poses a threat of extreme violence in Canada. Across this country, drag performers, LGBTQI+ activists, pride festival organizers and parents of queer and trans kids have been targeted with hate, with death threats, and with other forms of harassment, both online and in real life. Rhetoric that demonizes, dehumanizes and strips dignity away from my community has created a culture of fear among queer and trans people.

As a trans advocate, I have personally experienced the price of speaking out for my community. Last year I was subjected to an international hate and cancel campaign for my inclusion as a transgender woman in a Hershey's Canada International Women's Day ad initiative. My participation in this campaign sparked global backlash. Figureheads of the far-right and anti-LGBTQI+ groups, including individuals like Tucker Carlson, Matt Walsh, Ben Shapiro and others, targeted me. They published my dead name, shared pre-transition photos of me, created and circulated disgusting caricatures, and otherwise directed vitriol my way. The degree of hate and risk to my safety that this backlash unleashed was such that I was accompanied by security guards for six days straight.

Words cannot adequately convey the psychological impact of being targeted by the combined might of hate groups and far-right leaders across the country and around the world. While I am indeed an activist, at the end of the day I am simply a young woman, who happens to be trans, who is speaking out for what she believes is right. What happened to me is unfortunately an extreme example, but it is one of many other examples happening to members of my community all across Canada.

After the Hershey's fiasco, I was invited to be a keynote speaker at a women's rights gala in Regina. Rebel News took issue with my inclusion. This so-called media outlet created an online petition to have me fired, powered by a website called, literally, www.fire-fae.ca. They also published my dead name in another attempt to shame me.

As if this wasn't enough, days before the gala, a Rebel News reporter found me in a park across the street from my hotel. She made the irresponsible and dangerous decision to publish a video disclosing where I was staying—this after weeks of propagating hate and harassment toward me—and put my safety at immediate and real risk.

Rising anti-LGBTQI+ hate is both morally repugnant and a direct threat to freedom of expression. What happens when you as a queer person or the parent of a trans kid or an ally risk being doxed, personally targeted and subjected to hate and harassment if you speak out for human rights, equality and freedom? What happens when Canadians are unable to express their political opinions or speak out on political issues without significant and potentially safety-compromising repercussions?

What scares me most in Canada today is witnessing hate jump from a social phenomena into mainstream politics.

• (1620)

In the last year we've seen three governments in Canada use misleading slogans and deceptive language to sow division, normalize hate and cue their support for anti-LGBTQ2+ groups. There is no more egregious example than what we're seeing with Premier Scott Moe in Saskatchewan suspending the charter-protected rights of Saskatchewan children to put forward legislation that denies freedom to trans kids.

This divisive rhetoric isn't happening in isolation. It has given cover for these elements of draconian legislation on the provincial level. Beyond the specific impact of the policies themselves, they've created a culture of fear. In many ways, it's akin to the "don't say gay" laws that we're seeing in America, where teachers in classrooms, school administrators and students themselves are afraid to mention, touch on or talk about gender and sexuality.

What happens in a country where, instead of bringing people together, we normalize division and difference, with even the leader of Canada's Conservative Party, Pierre Poilievre, fanning the flames of conspiracy with his allusion to gender ideology?

I don't have all the answers. I'm not a lawyer, but I am a Canadian committed to defending freedom, equality and rights, because they're each dependent on each other. I believe in a Canada where my community is truly free, truly equal and truly safe. That cannot happen when elected officials flirt with hate. 2SLGBTQI+ people, at the end of the day, are human beings, not political props to be maligned and targeted to gain power. I urge us all to reject hate and unite in a shared vision of a better future for all Canadians.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Johnstone.

Now we'll go to the question and answer segment. The first round is a six-minute round.

We'll begin with Kevin Waugh for the Conservatives.

Kevin, you have six minutes.

Mr. Kevin Waugh (Saskatoon—Grasswood, CPC): Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

Thanks to all six of you who have appeared here in committee this afternoon.

Father de Souza, I'm going to start with you.

Your primary concern right now is about challenging freedom of expression in Canada. I'm not going to talk to you about Bill C-11

or Bill C-18 or even the online harms bill. I just want to know your view on this, your concerns on the freedom of expression. You talked about three issues. I'll delve into those in a moment, but, overall, what is your concern?

Father Raymond de Souza: I chose three examples. Traditionally, in terms of defending freedom of expression, you have a government statute, and then, if you think the statute is limiting your rights, you can appeal to the courts for relief. The examples I gave are ones that make that more difficult because it's not a statutory act; it's a regulatory thing. It's a spending power. The last example was creating a lobby for restricting freedom of expression.

Some of the other witnesses also addressed things that don't fall under the realm of a government statute, like professional organizations, universities, etc.

That's why I chose to highlight those things. That seems to be where more of the threats to freedom of expression come today. That's why I highlighted those.

Mr. Kevin Waugh: I think the one you highlighted first was interesting. It was the Canada summer jobs program. This government demanded faith-based organizations sign off on an attestation. In my riding of Saskatoon—Grasswood, I had a number of non-profit organizations that I truly support, and many of them couldn't sign off on the attestation. I give them credit for it. I give them credit because of their moral obligation. They had a moral obligation on this issue. Yes, they could have taken the money. Yes, they could have given Canada's students an opportunity, but many of them did not.

I was very proud of them, to be honest with you. I've dealt with them for many years. Like I said, my first one is non-profits. Non-profits are struggling right now, and they've struggled in the past. When they said, "Thanks, but no thanks," that spoke a lot about the organizations, if you don't mind my saying.

Perhaps you could comment on that, because you did mention that off the top.

• (1625)

Father Raymond de Souza: I did. The example I used was actually not a faith-based group. It would be just a generic landscaping company. Everybody was required to make that attestation in the first instance.

It does touch on, for some, freedom of conscience and religion, as it may have for some of the faith-based groups, but the requirement for that program was that you had to express an opinion. It happened to be an opinion on a specific subject in agreement with the government's policy, but the very fact that you had to express an opinion to qualify is itself a violation of freedom, thought, opinion and belief. That was the problem there.

You're right. It put some groups in the position of having to make a difficult choice. For those that made a principled choice, I would share your view that it required some courage to do so, but they shouldn't have to be in that position.

The difficulty there was that redress against that was very difficult. Had it been a statute, you could have gone to court and maybe gotten an injunction right away. It's possible. We'd have to see whether that was possible. However, when it becomes an attestation and part of the apparatus of the application process, redress was very difficult. There were some court initiatives and then later there was a revision.

If the government had passed a law saying that you had to make that attestation, you could have been in court the next day to seek relief and maybe, if the judge agreed, had some kind of injunction. However, this is a more nebulous requirement and therefore harder to seek redress.

Mr. Kevin Waugh: There are three major hospitals in the city of Saskatoon.

One is a faith-based, Catholic hospital, which is St. Paul's. They don't believe in MAID. They will not do that. They've been run by the nuns in the past and they're faith based. They're a Catholic hospital. They are a very integral part, I would say, of our city.

I give them credit also on MAID. They spoke out right away. They did not agree with it. There has been some backlash in our city toward them because of their position on this.

What are your thoughts on that?

Father Raymond de Souza: I think that would come under the primary freedom outlined in the charter, which is freedom of conscience and religion. Freedom of expression comes in the second part of the fundamental freedom, so I would agree that they should not be coerced against their conscience in that case.

My concern here is actually more in professional associations where what a doctor, physician, nurse, pharmacist or whoever might say is being policed. It's not because of the professional competence of that medical practitioner, but because of the view that, in this case, the professional body might take. That power is given to them by the government, so they hold the livelihood of that professional in their hands.

In fact, in a way, a professional body has more power over it than maybe the provincial government, which has more blunt instruments. To limit your livelihood is a pretty powerful power given to regulatory professional bodies.

As well, when you seek redress against them, it's harder because courts give them more deference—because what they're supposed to be doing is professional regulation—than they would to the government if the government did the same thing.

The Chair: Thank you.

Now I'll go to the Liberals and Taleeb Noormohamed.

You have six minutes, please.

• (1630)

Mr. Taleeb Noormohamed (Vancouver Granville, Lib.): Thank you very much.

I was expecting one of my colleagues to be going. I thought Michael was going first.

Mr. Michael Coteau (Don Valley East, Lib.): Yes, I'll go first, Taleeb.

Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

The Chair: We have a list that was given to us, so we follow the list. If you change your mind, can you let us know before the meeting begins or before you do that?

Who is going to speak?

Mr. Taleeb Noormohamed: Dr. Fry, that list was shared by your staff—

The Chair: I know, and we have it written here. The clerk has cited it.

Mr. Michael Coteau: I'll just go, Madam Chair.

The Chair: We will not argue. If you are speaking now, it's not Mr. Noormohamed. It's you, Mr. Coteau.

Mr. Michael Coteau: I want to thank all of our witnesses for being here today.

We have many different opinions, and a great thing about our country is that we have the ability to express our different opinions and bring different perspectives. I think that's what makes this country a great country.

If you go to any of the lists of different freedoms and liberties and comparators across the globe, Canada always seems to land in the top, I would say, 3% to 4% of countries when it comes to liberty and freedom. I've always thought of Canada as a place where one can express themselves without worrying about repercussions. However, I do agree with Professor Le Blanc that something has changed in our country over the last decade, maybe the last 15 years.

What has changed in this country, and why are we here today having this conversation about the ability to express ourselves? What has changed?

I'll start with Mr. Bernadet.

[Translation]

Mr. Arnaud Bernadet: Thank you.

What's changed? That's a very broad and complex issue. I would say that there are phenomena that we're familiar with and that are sometimes described as polarization or sometimes radicalization, which is another thing. Clearly, there's a growing trend towards polarization, which is probably, first of all, due to an import of the paradigm of the American democratic model and its influence. American society is very polarized right now. We saw it recently during the election. I think there's this strong influence effect and the fact that the United States is—let's face it—a sort of laboratory for liberal democracies in the rest of the world. Exporting their model more or less is part of their ability to convince. I think there's an effect of that kind.

That said, we also need to put these phenomena into perspective. There's a lot of talk about cultural wars, which are the subject of much debate. The media are the first to relay this machine of tension or antagonism, with the idea that there are identities that are irreducibly opposed to each other. These media tend to feed off each other, sometimes even going so far as to blame social media for this reality, even though they themselves cultivate or maintain it. I think that's the effect.

The third point is that there are indeed ideological trends unfolding. We see this in the practices of cancel culture that is present and that we see emerging at universities. It's important to remember that cancel culture takes very heterogeneous forms, but that its basis is a struggle over values. From that perspective, it's a legacy of culture wars. For minority groups or groups that want to advocate for a given cause, this struggle over values doesn't mean a power grab, but at least it's a way of asserting these values on a symbolic level. In some cases, we know that this can lead to gag orders.

As I was saying, the problem is often that the people who cancel something aren't necessarily the activists. In the case of certain cultural shows, such as Kanata and SLÄV, which were presented in Montreal, it wasn't the activists who took the action to cancel. Activists exercised their right of expression by challenging the fact that Black and indigenous characters weren't being played by Black and indigenous people. Whether you agree with it or not is another matter, but it was actually the organizers of the show who ended up cancelling it. So it's quite complex from that perspective.

I don't know if I'm answering your question, but these are some avenues.

• (1635)

[English]

Mr. Michael Coteau: Thank you so much.

Mr. Bardeesy, Karim, do you want to take a shot at that question? What has caused this change for us to even have this conversation today?

Mr. Karim Bardeesy: I want to pick up on Professor Bernadet's commentary.

It's really the power of these social media platforms to target and to identify issues that resonate with people's identities or their choice of identities and serve them content that appeals to their in-group, their identity in-group, or has them serving information, serving content, that targets an identity out-group. I think it's really important to understand that the information ecosystem, the way in which we consume information, has changed so significantly.

Most Canadians are more likely to cite a social media channel rather than a non-social media channel as their main source of news these days. That's just a phenomenon that we didn't see even five or 10 years ago. Those social media channels are personalized and are serving content that is intended to speak often to one's identity or one's choice of identities, and the identities, again, of people in the in-group and the out-group. That reduces the shared space we have for shared conversations, for shared information and for shared reasonable political debate.

Mr. Michael Coteau: Ms. Al-Azem, thank you so much for bringing attention to this group around Bill 21. I actually—

The Chair: I'm sorry. You have three seconds left, Mr. Coteau.

Mr. Michael Coteau: Thank you for being here.

The Chair: I'll go to the Bloc Québécois and Martin Champoux.

You have six minutes, Martin.

[Translation]

Mr. Martin Champoux: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Mr. Le Blanc, earlier, my colleague Michael Coteau asked the question I wanted to ask you and Professor Bernadet: What has changed and why are we here today discussing this issue?

Mr. Charles Le Blanc: It's all of us as Canadians, as citizens of a pluralistic democratic country, who are retreating, who are afraid, who show little courage. I'll just use the example of the University of Ottawa and my president as an absolute example of lack of courage. I think that's the main reason. It's that we're moving backwards and are prepared to make concessions on words, first of all. As soon as we make concessions on words, then we're going to make concessions on things, on concepts, because words don't mean nothing. Words carry meaning. A word alone is a definition. It takes on its meaning in a sentence.

When we dance around the word beginning with the letter “n”, there's no one in the room right now who doesn't know what word the letter “n” refers to. To me, it's nothing more than hypocrisy. I absolutely agree that the word has a racist connotation. I agree that we must be mindful not to hurt others. However, as Albert Camus said, when you name something wrongly, you add to the world's misery. We start by retreating on things like words. It starts with something as simple as a word we won't say. Then, it's a concept that we won't confront. Then it's a course we won't teach. That's what happens after that. Then there's a professor who says that he is thinking of taking a sabbatical this session because he needs rest and doesn't want to be in constant confrontation.

So what has changed is us. At some point, all we have to do is put our fists on the table and not back down. I taught a philosophy course that covered big philosophical questions. These big philosophical questions—

Mr. Martin Champoux: Mr. Le Blanc, give me a moment, please.

Madam Chair, it's very difficult to focus. I'm having trouble hearing the witness's answers because I'm hearing conversations in the room. Would it be possible, please, to ask people to respect the witness who is speaking?

[English]

The Chair: Committee members, if you have to speak about something, can you please go into a far corner of the room? It's not fair to disturb the testimony of witnesses.

Thank you.

• (1640)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Martin Champoux: I'm sorry, Mr. Le Blanc.

Mr. Charles Le Blanc: It's okay. I'm sorry if that bothered you. As a university professor, you will understand that I am used to these things.

Mr. Martin Champoux: You must be more used to it.

Mr. Charles Le Blanc: I was saying that I have a philosophy course on big philosophical questions, and I change the philosophical question every year.

I raised the issue of God's existence and gave authors like Holbach and Lucretius, authors who are atheists, coming to the conclusion that God does not exist. I taught that. I had students who were diverse—to use a buzzword—and it went very well. There were no problems, because students are intelligent enough to be able to distinguish between concepts being taught and an ideology being pushed. I refused to back down. I could just as easily have used my course on the great philosophical questions to talk about issues that had nothing to do with anything, and kept my head down.

Mr. Martin Champoux: Mr. Le Blanc and Mr. Bernadet, you mentioned some criticism of institutional administrators.

Mr. Bernadet, you mentioned earlier that the directors are to blame. We just heard Mr. Le Blanc talk about fear, about the fear that teachers probably have of being censored in a certain way. Perhaps we're becoming more apprehensive about the topics we want to discuss with students. The administration of universities and educational institutions also has an important role to play here, and Mr. Le Blanc highlighted the case of Ms. Lieutenant-Duval and the lack of vigour in her defence by the president, Mr. Frémont. Is that something you see in general on your side too?

Mr. Arnaud Bernadet: Yes, this is the general trend in universities and administrations. Some deny it, but indulge in the practice quite extensively.

I'll give you a simple example, that of Frances Widdowson, who was supposed to give a lecture on the culture of awakening, I believe, at the University of Lethbridge and had to deal with 700 students. At the outset, the rector, Michael Mahon, made it clear that there could be disturbing ideas in lectures on which we could totally disagree. He made a clear distinction, which I mentioned earlier, between speech that propagates hatred or may cause harm—that's what's in the Criminal Code—and offensive or hurtful speech that you don't necessarily want to hear. I can easily understand that. However, two days later, just as the protests were gathering momentum, along with protests from certain colleagues, Mr. Mahon finally relented. Sometimes you can cancel a conference for security reasons, but in this case, that wasn't the case at all.

That's the trend we're seeing. The problem is that universities are places where you can't guarantee the safety of ideas. We have an obligation to ensure the physical safety of individuals, that's true, but it's a place where ideas clash. This ties in with what Mr. Le Blanc was saying. There are ideas that are unpleasant, but it's impossible to ensure safety on the level of emotions or ideas.

The great tendency, which is linked to the managerial, neo-liberal and client-centred logic of administrators, is to accede to the de-

mands of a group that is not necessarily in the majority and that may be on the fringe of the student public. This undermines the foundation—

[*English*]

The Chair: Professor Bernadet, we have run out of time.

I'm going to the New Democrats and Lindsay Mathysen, please, for six minutes.

Lindsay, welcome.

Ms. Lindsay Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Thank you, Madam Chair.

I appreciate being given the time at this committee.

I want to get right into the fact that in this conversation about freedom of expression and the protection of it, I think we need to be very careful about the legal limits to the freedom of expression and ensure that it doesn't devolve into hate speech.

Ms. Johnstone, you were very specific and very clear in terms of what's occurred, what you've seen and the dangers that have existed for you because of who you are and how you identify and the dangers that have evolved because of a great deal of extremism and hate speech coming forward. Ms. Al-Azem, you have been an incredible spokesperson in our community after the terrorist attack that happened to our London family. I know that has come with a great consequence in many cases as well because of the dangers and the violence that both of you have seen.

You both mentioned the use of dog whistle politics and politicians using that against people in minorities and vulnerable people. You both mentioned the use of the notwithstanding clause and the dangers of its use by politicians. I'd love to hear both of you talk about the impacts and the dangers of that and either Islamophobia being used for political gain or the attacks on transgender people and LGBTQ2+ folks and what that means for the impacts on both those groups.

Ms. Johnstone, you can go first, and then Ms. Al-Azem.

• (1645)

Ms. Fae Johnstone: I think it ties into the previous question. We're in an era of polarization when Canadians are having a harder time paying their bills, making ends meet and supporting their families. When you have that environment where life is harder, it becomes easier to channel that anger and to take advantage of that anger to gain power.

In Canada right now, we're seeing this language around so-called parental rights and this reference to gender ideology. We're using these as a distraction instead of delivering on healthy schools and happy kids and happy families. We are trying to restrict the rights of some and create a false equivalence. This is not about parents versus kids. It's about creating a school environment where all kids have the freedom to be themselves, are treated with dignity and are raised in healthy communities.

When we see politicians engaging with this divisive rhetoric, it cues to that playground bully that they can do the same. It encourages people to walk up to and sometimes cross that line. We've seen that across Canada with the rise of anti-2SLGBTQI+ hate.

In particular, the pre-emptive use of the notwithstanding clause gives me great concern. In Saskatchewan, prior to allowing a court to review and look at the policies of Premier Moe, we saw this clause used. It means that one of the few checks and balances on government is now overridden. It creates an environment where, again, we're not able to have conversations that are nuanced and that require expert input on the best interests of kids and the best interests of families. It becomes a whack-a-mole or a sledgehammer, using a slogan to ramp through legislation and policies that restrict the freedom of trans kids and their families.

I think every day about the kid who isn't fortunate to be safe at home, who has their one space where they are to be themselves, their school, taken away by a government that is pretending to be invested in the well-being of families but is really cueing their support of an anti-2SLGBTQ lobby that wants to take my rights away and force my community back into the closet.

Thank you.

Ms. Nusaiba Al-Azem: The question is on impacts, so I'll answer it in two parts: first, the impact of the law, Bill 21, and then the impact of the notwithstanding clause.

To give us context about what we're talking about, we have a law that says that Muslims, Jews and Sikhs who wear religious symbols cannot become teachers in Quebec. That's the law. The impact of this was explained both in court and in a study that followed our court appearance. A report found that one in five Muslim women in Quebec has experienced physical threats or aggression at work, and 54% of Quebec Muslim women have heard racist or prejudicial remarks about their religious identity from their colleagues at work compared to 9% of the general population.

When we were in court, the court heard from many witnesses as to the harms they endured. Women teacher candidates, most of them Muslim, lost their jobs and vocations, and an aspiring Crown prosecutor had their plans derailed. I know of people on personal levels who have been impacted by the bill. Individuals expressed concern about their financial security and fears for the future of their children. Many Muslim women described increasing incidents of verbal and physical harassment against them in public spaces. One woman, overcome with emotion, simply wept on the stand as she described how it felt to be excluded from a society that she had once seen as a model of acceptance. That's when we were talking about the impact of Bill 21.

When we talk about the impact of the notwithstanding clause, it's clear in just looking at how readily other provinces are now to either use or threaten the use of this clause to pass populist legislation. Wielding this power in this way threatens the very fabric of our rights, reducing them from inalienable, fundamental human rights to mere permissions that are granted and taken away on a whim. That's on the impact.

I'll leave it at that.

• (1650)

Ms. Lindsay Mathysen: There's been a lot of work done on anti-Palestinian racism and how that's fallen into this idea, this rubric, around hate speech and challenging the norms.

Ms. Al-Azem, you specifically referenced that in your testimony, those fired from jobs because of it.

Could you give some further examples of that and the dangers of what that has meant over the past year? Can you talk about Palestinian suppression as well?

Ms. Nusaiba Al-Azem: Absolutely. Thank you for the question.

This committee has heard many people in other sessions, such as Dr. Yipeng Ge, provide first-hand accounts of some of what we call Palestine suppression.

In my role at NCCM, I hear from Muslim Canadians and other Canadians across the country. I've seen instances regarding Palestine suppression from disproportionate police response at protests—including physical force against pregnant women who were doing nothing more than peacefully participating in a protest, as is their right—to the censorship of Palestinian content online, whether that's being shadow banned or censored through other forms of online suppression, to such egregious suppression as folks losing their jobs, as you made reference to, and their livelihoods for either being Palestinian or speaking in support of Palestine.

I've seen some cases of literally just quoting scripture or speaking in Arabic and they lost their jobs as a result. These are real cases that we've seen here in Canada. That's what's happening on the ground. We've seen lawyers publicly advocate that students shouldn't be employed. We've seen forced attestation letters to make students distance themselves from student movements.

The Superior Court of Justice found earlier this year that the fears around the risk of a new form of McCarthyism are not without foundation. This has serious implications for the robustness of what our expression freedoms mean and what they mean for people who hold them.

This is all linked into this greater—

The Chair: Thank you. Can we wrap up?

Ms. Nusaiba Al-Azem: Yes.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Mathysen.

The second round is a five-minute round.

We'll begin with Mr. Kurek for the Conservatives for five minutes.

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

Father de Souza, thank you for your testimony. I know you've written extensively across a whole host of different topics.

I'd ask for your input about how, as Canadians, we ensure that the public sphere in this country is one where we can have robust dialogue, debates and discussions, and be able to sometimes—to use the old expression—just agree to disagree. I would suggest that is one of the foundational elements of what a free and democratic society should look like.

Could you comment on that?

Father Raymond de Souza: There are parts of our common culture where that's not unusual, like in our newspapers and airwaves. It's been mentioned by other speakers. Online, almost everybody can say anything they want. There's very little restriction, although some concerns have been raised in some legislation.

There are areas of our common culture and common life where that is shrinking. We've had two professors talk about the environment on campus. There are the professional bodies that I spoke about. There are other places where the freedom to speak out is under pressure or even restricted.

You have to figure out which part of the culture you're looking at. I mean, I'm a newspaper columnist. There's no problem. I write whatever I want. I don't have any obstacle to that. There are places and professionals in our country—professors, university professors in some circumstances, medical professionals and so forth—where there's a problem.

There's this other issue of people feeling chilled or under pressure. Depending on the issue, that can be more of a cultural thing. It doesn't have a legal expression.

Are there concerns? I think there are concerns, but they're not widespread. We don't have to worry about the freedom of the press disappearing in Canada, but there are important places in our common life together, especially professional places, where it's under restriction.

• (1655)

Mr. Damien Kurek: Thank you for that.

As a man of the cloth, you're walking this line. Your faith is a big part of your public life and the opinions that you share in that regard.

You mentioned the prioritization in the charter about freedom of religion and conscience and then freedom of expression.

I'm wondering if you could expand a little bit on how key it is to ensure that—in this case, it's lawmakers sitting around this table, but there's the larger context of Canadians who might be engaged in this subject—when we talk about freedom in Canada, it not be lost in the need to take into account that freedom of religion and freedom of conscience and how that impacts freedom of expression.

Father Raymond de Souza: There's a list in the charter. They could have written it in a different way, but that's how they chose to write it, that the first freedom is of conscience and religion. As Professor Le Blanc mentioned, conscience and religion are where those ideas often form, which are then expressed in thought, belief, etc. If you don't protect the inner sanctuary of the person, it's very hard to protect the outer expression of the person. That's why it's not accidental that they're in there first. They're not optional. There is a hi-

erarchy. I mean, they're all fundamental freedoms, but there's a reason that was chosen.

When it comes to our public life together, people of faith should not feel that, because their views on a particular public issue are formed in their faith, they're somehow secondary or less worthy of consideration, as if a secular idea, somehow, has greater validity because of its origin. That's not usually a legal problem. However, it is often the case that, even in our public debates, arguments that proceed from conscience and religion are sometimes treated as second-class arguments.

Mr. Damien Kurek: I appreciate that.

I have one quick question. I think I have about 30 seconds.

When it comes to discussions surrounding faith, I hear from pastors, priests and other faith leaders that they're worried there are some within our society who would say that you're free to say what you want within your church but not to take it outside the doors of that church.

Is that what the charter means?

Father Raymond de Souza: That's not what the charter means. That would be like saying that you're free to think what you want in your classroom, barbershop, bar, tavern or house, but you can't bring that into public life. People don't say that. There shouldn't be a special category that says if that's what you think in your temple, church or mosque, it's not allowed. That's not what freedom of religion or conscience is, and that's not what freedom of expression means.

Mr. Damien Kurek: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

I do not know which Liberal member I have next.

I think it's Mr. Noormohamed, but I will stand corrected.

Mr. Taleeb Noormohamed: That is correct, Madam Chair. Thank you.

I was struck by a number of comments made today about the importance of freedom of expression, particularly when it comes to matters of faith.

Ms. Al-Azem, when you spoke, one of the things you didn't touch on—and I'm wondering if you could—was the chilling impact on the freedom of expression of Muslim women during the time Conservatives proposed a ban on the niqab. It was not long ago.

Can you share your views on the propriety of a ban like that and what it does when it comes to freedom of expression nationally?

Ms. Nusaiba Al-Azem: Certainly, and I thank you for the question.

In many ways, it builds on what we were just hearing about how freedom of conscience is the beginning. There is inward thought. Then freedom of expression is how that ends up manifesting. That's in fact what a Quebec court found on Bill 21. It violated not only freedom of religion but also freedom of expression.

Any legislation that seeks to prevent, effectively, Muslim women or folks from being able to express their religious identity while participating in public life is certainly something NCCM feels very strongly about. We are against it, particularly in a robust democracy, where everybody has the ability to participate, as full members, in all facets of public life.

On that, I will note that NCCM successfully supported the challenge to that legislation at the time, in 2015. Were we ever to see something like that in future, we would, of course, also look to litigate and challenge it, because we think it's fundamentally contrarian. We had many conversations with, at the time, the Conservative government that passed it.

We've also had many conversations with Conservative MPs whose views, as I understand, have really evolved on that matter since then, which gives us some reassurance. We're happy to continue to work with all members on all sides to make sure everybody has the ability to fully show up as themselves in all areas of public life.

• (1700)

Mr. Taleeb Noormohamed: Thank you.

Father de Souza, would you agree that something like a niqab ban would be ill advised?

Father Raymond de Souza: You're referring to Bill 21 in Quebec. My view is that it was not a legitimate restriction of religious liberties. It didn't apply principally, as the witness mentioned, to Muslims, Jews and Sikhs. It actually applied to everybody. Christians have less prominent symbols, but it applied to everybody. I think, for example, the police force in Montreal, in the last few years, prohibited some of their presumably Catholic members from wearing a St. Michael emblem, or something like that.

I think you should be accommodating to people's religious expressions. There might be some things where, in very specific circumstances, there is a need for limitation, but I think that would be hard to imagine. It's certainly not on a general level. On limiting people's religious expression in terms of clothing, I am against that.

Mr. Taleeb Noormohamed: I'd like to go back to Ms. Al-Azem for a second.

One thing that becomes more and more pervasive as we are seeing the Gaza-Israel war continue is the idea of freedom of expression, regardless of which side of this conflict you sit on, and that somehow we need to do a better job of policing what is reasonable in terms of expression and in terms of how people respond to the tragedy and horror that is currently unfolding.

What are your views on those restrictions on freedom of expression?

Ms. Nusaiba Al-Azem: I'm sorry. Can you clarify your question? Is it their expressions for protests?

Mr. Taleeb Noormohamed: Whether it's in the workplace, whether it's peaceful protests—and I'm not for one moment condoning violence, just so we're clear because we seem to conflate these things—whether it's positions that are taken, or whether it's conversation.... By the way, this applies equally to members of the Jewish community who feel afraid to express who they are, and

certainly members of the Muslim community and others who have been speaking out for the Palestinian cause.

How do we navigate this in a very fraught environment? How do we hear each other?

Ms. Nusaiba Al-Azem: I think we're coming to the heart of the question that people have been raising at this session and in other sessions. It's about how do we agree to disagree or how do we have conversations. There is a legal framework for when speech crosses a boundary that we have all determined to be criminal, to incite hate, or speech that otherwise needs to be regulated.

For the most part, most people are aware and alive to the fact that speech can be, for example, hurtful but not necessarily hateful. It can be lawful but awful, right? That is something—

The Chair: Ms. Al-Azem, I'll ask you to wrap up, please.

Ms. Nusaiba Al-Azem: Okay.

Responsible leadership is where I was going with that.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.

Who will we go to next? I keep chopping and changing this list.

Martin, go ahead, please.

[*Translation*]

You have the floor for two and a half minutes.

• (1705)

Mr. Martin Champoux: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Mr. Le Blanc, I saw you react earlier when we talked about Bill 21. There's a lot of misinformation and propaganda being circulated about the Act respecting the Laicity of the State in Quebec. This makes me wonder, since you yourself spoke of freedom of conscience. Earlier, Father de Souza also talked about the fact that this legislation applies uniformly to all religions. Some religions have more conspicuous signs than others, and their followers are more concerned.

Could you tell me whether freedom of conscience can or should take precedence over a society's values, over democratically voted laws? I'd like to have your point of view on this, because every possible nonsense has been said, over the last few months and years about this law.

Mr. Charles Le Blanc: I think we should welcome the broad use of freedom of expression in this committee. I'm going to say two things, quickly.

I'll come back first to the notwithstanding clause. I'd like to tell you right away that there is no derogation provision in Saudi Arabia, Iran or China. Do you know why? Because they are dictatorships. We have a notwithstanding clause in Canada because we're a democracy. So we're not going to start saying that the notwithstanding clause is bad in itself. We can argue about its use, but, in and of itself, it's not bad.

In answer to your question about Quebec's Bill 21, the Act respecting the Laicity of the State, personally, having had a Christian training, being a son of the Jesuits, I feel that conscience is fundamental. It's an inviolable place. However, we live in society and we have to know where we stand. I've just come back from a month's teaching in Poland, where I sort of bent to the cultural customs and taboos found there. In a society, when there's a broad democratic consensus, the thing to do is to bow to that democratic consensus if you're a democrat. If you're not a democrat, that's another story. But if you are, you have to go along with the democratic consensus, and you may not like everything in a given democracy. That, however, is the game of democracy.

As for Bill 21, I think it's a concession to make. It's not true that people are fired for wearing the hijab. Those who already had a hijab in school had a grandfather clause, and could continue to wear it. What's more, it's only limited to very specific categories of employees who represent the state. For the rest of the employees, there's no problem.

Mr. Martin Champoux: Do I have two minutes left, Madam Chair?

[English]

The Chair: We've gone over time, Martin. Thank you very much.

I'll go to Lindsay.

Ms. Lindsay Mathysen: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Ms. Johnstone, I have a short period of time, but I want to ask two questions.

Do you currently think that our hate speech laws are sufficient? About seven years ago, our gender identity and expression laws were changed to add protected grounds under the Canadian Human Rights Act, which means that gender identity and expression are no longer legal reasons to discriminate against folks. Do you think that limiting someone else's ability to spout hate speech has improved your rights?

Ms. Fae Johnstone: The passage of Bill C-16 was an incredible moment that was celebrated by queer and trans people across this country. I think that we have seen improvements in terms of acceptance, inclusion and equality since that change.

When it comes to hate speech laws, I would say that I am not a lawyer, and I'm not going to imagine that I have the legal expertise to assess what does or doesn't constitute hate speech. What I would say, rather, is that I think there is dangerous speech in our social and political environment and that this is becoming more normalized. That's harder to manage when it's not a politician, a public figure or a far-right figurehead explicitly engaging in hate but when they're creating a culture where that hate is more normalized, where the environment is poisoned against members of certain communities.

That is the space where we need moral leadership from our politicians, from our political party leaders, to actually choose to unite Canadians, to protect these fundamental rights and to understand that what's at stake here isn't just one community. I'm here to support the rights of trans and queer people, but I also fundamental-

ly believe that Canada is a better place when we respect our neighbours and see their humanity, even if their lives and families look different from ours. I think that's fundamentally what's at stake here.

Yes, there might be some space to strengthen hate speech laws, but it's the moral leadership that we need in this moment from our members of Parliament.

• (1710)

Ms. Lindsay Mathysen: There was some confusion with regard to what two of the witnesses said in terms of Bill 21.

Ms. Al-Azem, you talked about women wearing the hijab being fired, yet there was a contradiction there. I just want to clarify that a little bit. Could you clarify that in terms of what you said?

Ms. Nusaiba Al-Azem: Thank you very much for the opportunity. I do think there was a misrepresentation here that made it seem like a hijab-wearing woman would be grandfathered in, and it was therefore not a problem.

To be clear, they would be grandfathered into their particular role only if they were hired before the passage of the bill, meaning that nobody had an opportunity to enter that labour market since the passage of the bill and there was no opportunity for growth in their position since the passage of the bill. You could not be promoted. You could not be moved laterally. You could not decide suddenly about your career that you had more skills in XYZ. There was no movement. It was strictly the position you had at the time of the bill's passage.

I think there was a little bit of misrepresentation there that made it seem like there very much was opportunity. To be clear, the facts on the ground are that indeed it did impact the vocational aspirations and abilities of Muslim women and other minorities. That's why a lot of minorities in Quebec have started to leave Quebec, in fact, in order to at least create some kind of economic security for their families and their children.

Thank you for the opportunity to clarify about that grandfathering piece.

The Chair: Thank you.

We'll begin the next round with Damien Kurek from the Conservatives.

Damien, you have five minutes, please.

Mr. Damien Kurek: Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

I certainly appreciate the opportunity to have what is a wide-ranging discussion. There has been a showcase of what freedom of expression is in Canada by the fact that those with divergent opinions, in some cases, can sit around the table and discuss civilly these very important issues.

Madam Chair, I will move a motion here in a moment. First, I'd like to follow up on the discussion we had at the committee meeting this morning about the situation with the CBC and the fact that in the last fiscal year, the CBC awarded more than \$18 million in bonuses to executives, managers and other out-of-scope employees at that organization. It's unbelievable, at a time when Canadians are suffering, that this would be the attitude we heard this morning, with no regret put forward and no offers of dealing with that in a way that would acknowledge the challenges.

With that, I hope we can deal with this expeditiously and simply make a clear statement when it comes to Ms. Tait and the bonuses she may get along with the severance package which it sounds like is forthcoming for her. I would like to move the motion that was put on notice on Monday, November 18, as follows:

That the committee report to the House that it calls on the Liberal government's Privy Council Office to not approve any bonuses, performance pay, or severance package for the outgoing President and CEO of the CBC, Catherine Tait.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

The Chair: Mr. Kurek, you can go ahead and speak to your motion.

Mr. Damien Kurek: Thank you very much.

It's a straightforward motion. It highlights how it is unbelievable that even today Ms. Tait refuses to rule out accepting bonuses, calls her tenure as CEO of the national broadcaster a success and refuses to take responsibility for so many of that organization's failures. I think this committee has an opportunity to show Canadians that this sort of abuse of tax dollars is simply not acceptable.

With that, I would suggest that this is pure and simple common sense. Failure should not be rewarded with big bonuses. Therefore, the motion simply expresses that opinion to the House in a straightforward manner.

Thank you.

• (1715)

The Chair: Thank you.

Is there any discussion on this motion?

Anna.

Ms. Anna Gainey (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Westmount, Lib.): I'm wondering if we could suspend for a moment on this.

The Chair: I will suspend for a minute so that you can discuss this amongst yourselves.

• (1715)

(Pause)

• (1715)

The Chair: We are back.

Is there any discussion on the motion?

Go ahead, Mr. Noormohamed.

Mr. Taleeb Noormohamed: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Whatever our views of Madam Tait may or may not be, there are a couple of things that are important to note. One is that she's end-

ing her term at a normal juncture for appointments. There's no exit package. There's no severance. This is a matter of public record.

We also heard and discussed time and again the importance of an independent CBC and board. To put this committee in a situation in which all of a sudden we are dictating the terms of compensation and directing the Privy Council Office on the terms of compensation for an independent Crown corporation sets a very dangerous precedent. Whether or not we like the performance of Madam Tait or of the CBC, whatever the story may be, we have a role as parliamentarians and running the Crown corporation is definitely not it, and certainly, deciding the compensation of any Crown corporation, however we may feel about it, is not it.

While I appreciate what Mr. Kurek is seeking to do, I will certainly be voting against this motion because of the very dangerous precedent that it seeks to set in terms of parliamentary committees determining, dictating and instructing independent Crown corporations on compensation.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Noormohamed.

Is there any other person wishing to debate this?

Go ahead, Michael.

Mr. Michael Coteau: Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

I agree with my colleague. We've all taken a position on this committee that the CEO should reconsider the so-called bonus packages. We had five meetings with the CEO. I expressed my specific concern, I think what I said back then was that it doesn't sit well with Canadians to issue a bonus structure when so many people are struggling. We were very clear about that, but to ask a committee to intervene specifically on a compensation package for the CBC doesn't seem like the right step for a committee to take because, in the long term, this just sets us off in a direction, and politicians are going to be entering a space where, clearly, this is the role of the bureaucracy, the folks within it and, of course, the minister responsible.

I will be voting against the motion, but I need to be on the record saying that I do think that CBC should reconsider their entire compensation package when it comes to those bonuses.

• (1720)

The Chair: Thank you.

Seeing no other hands up, I call the vote.

(Motion negated: nays 6, yeas 5)

The Chair: I think we are supposed to end this meeting at 35 minutes after the hour because we started late.

Go ahead, Martin.

[Translation]

Mr. Martin Champoux: Madam Chair, since we easily spent 10 or 15 minutes discussing Mr. Kurek's motion in camera before starting the meeting with the witnesses, I would like us to make sure we have a full two hours with them. Do we have the resources to extend the meeting, and does everyone agree?

[English]

The Chair: It would depend on the resources.

[Translation]

Mr. Martin Champoux: Yes, absolutely.

[English]

The Chair: I was going to suggest a two-minute round for everybody. That would eat up the time until 5:35, but we'll check.

Mr. Michael Coteau: Chair, I don't want to extend the time.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Coteau, for that input.

We can check to see if we have time, but in case we're told no, I would like to go to a two-minute round for everybody.

That would start with.... Who would go? The Conservatives...?

Well, you had Damien, so it would be Mr. Noormohamed.

Mr. Taleeb Noormohamed: Madam Chair, I am happy following this. Mr. Kurek just had a full round, a full five minutes.

The Chair: Well, you'll have a full round, and then we go to the two minutes after that, two and a half.

Mr. Taleeb Noormohamed: Thank you, Madam Chair.

I'd first like to go to you, Ms. Johnstone, because I think you have a lot to contribute to this conversation that we haven't yet heard.

One of the things that has troubled me is that there has been a consistent pattern among the Conservative Party of voting against the rights of 2SLGBTQI+ Canadians, whether it was the consistent votes against conversion therapy or running a candidate in the by-election right now in Cloverdale—Langley City who has said that you can “pray the gay away”. There are these types of tropes, these types of ideas that trans people have “mental health disorders”, which is a quote from the Conservative Party convention in 2023. In my view, while people are using their freedom of expression, I think there would be a profoundly negative impact on the LGBT community.

Can you share a little bit from your work of what you have seen when politicians engage in rhetoric like that and put their names on ballots and what message that sends?

• (1725)

Ms. Fae Johnstone: Absolutely.

I have been disappointed to see the trajectory of Canada's Conservative Party in recent years.

I remember Michelle Rempel Garner, I think it was, and the deputy leader, Melissa Lantsman, who have both been proponents of bringing the Conservative Party into the 21st century and shedding this legacy of homophobia and transphobia, and I miss those days.

I remember seeing that evolution when the opposition to marriage equality was removed from the Conservative Party policy book. I looked on with dread when, at their last convention, we saw two anti-trans policies pass with overwhelming support and no Conservative members of Parliament were speaking out in opposi-

tion. We've seen no Conservative speak out with Premier Smith denying health care access to trans kids and their families, with her government literally putting itself between parents and the health care their kids need.

The impact is, as you know, folks living in fear, and the reinforcement of stigma and shame. Many generations of queer and trans people grew up in schools and communities that taught us to hate ourselves. It's only in the last decade that we've seen this shift, but now this period of backlash is recreating that environment of stigma, of hostility. I can't stop thinking about the mom in Alberta who might have to leave her province to get her kid access to health care. I can't help but think about the kid in Saskatchewan who simply wants to be themselves and is hearing a schoolyard bully parrot the language of their premier in order to mistreat and bully that child.

I hope that the Conservative Party comes into 2024 and stops taking issue with my community, who simply want to be ourselves, to contribute to society and make Canada a country where freedom includes everybody.

Mr. Taleeb Noormohamed: You talk about freedom, and I would love your thoughts, because there's something that I have never really understood. Why are Conservatives so triggered by pronouns?

Ms. Fae Johnstone: I wish I knew.

Often there is this oversimplification. I'm stumped, honestly, on why. At the end of the day, it's basic dignity and basic respect. I like to joke that I have a trans spouse. I've screwed up their pronouns and we still got married. The world did not end. People make mistakes, but what's happening right now is that they're trying to use these as wedge issues. They're trying to use these to propagate fear and to create this illusion that we're pushing an agenda.

My agenda is the same agenda that gay people and trans people have been pushing forward for generations: That is one where society stops discriminating against us, where we stop experiencing socio-economic disadvantage.

There's nothing radical about that agenda. There is simply the idea of extending this dream of what Canada can be to include a new group of Canadians.

Mr. Taleeb Noormohamed: I would argue that it isn't a question of new or old. I think that if we're all equal and we all have the right to be who we are, some people have the right to be ignorant. Some people have the right to do whatever they feel.

I guess the question at the end of the day—and I know there are some really good people on this committee from all parties and I do enjoy serving with them—is, what would you say to them? What would you say to them as an opportunity to go back to their party leadership and members of their party who have increasingly taken positions that are certainly anti-trans?

You know, it's an easy community to bully, right? It's a small community. You've historically been part of a community that's not had the same protections and freedoms afforded to you. What would you say to them? What would you say to them on behalf of kids, on behalf of adults, on behalf of members of the trans community who just want to be left alone?

Ms. Fae Johnstone: I would say, speak with us and don't speak over us. I would say, listen to the voices of trans people and understand what's at stake.

There are many Conservatives who are reticent around this direction for the party, and I think that many don't understand what's really going on here.

There is a powerful anti-LGBT lobby. It's tied into a powerful anti-choice lobby and they're trying to use trans people as a scapegoat to mess with access to reproductive health care, to legitimize government putting itself between, again, young people, and families or everyday Canadians and health care that social conservatives simply disagree with.

They're using trans people and anti-trans rhetoric to normalize overriding the charter-protected rights of Canadians. That includes, yes, queer and trans people, but that also includes workers and that includes racialized Canadians and people of various faiths.

I hope folks understand what is at stake here, because, yes, it's my community's equality and rights, but if you allow one community to be stomped on in an environment polluted by hate speech, it takes away the rights of everybody.

• (1730)

Mr. Taleeb Noormohamed: In the minute I have left, I would like to go back to Ms. Al-Azem.

You've just heard—

The Chair: Mr. Noormohamed, you do not have a minute left. You're at five minutes. I'm sorry.

I'm going to Mr. Champoux for two and a half minutes.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Martin Champoux: Professor Bernadet, earlier we talked about the fear of university leaders and professors, who don't feel adequately supported when overly sensitive students feel they have the right to protest against things that offend their values.

Earlier, you said something that really resonated with me about artistic creations—SLĀV and Kanata, in particular—that have been subject to popular pressure leading to the cancellation of performances. You said it wasn't the activists, but the organizers who cancelled everything. You're right, it was indeed they who made the decision not to present the shows in question.

Don't we see the same phenomenon when artists censor themselves to avoid facing, precisely, this growing popular pressure of people who protest against everything and anything according to their personal convictions and hypersensitivity? Aren't we experiencing the same problem in the arts as you are, particularly, in academia?

I know we don't have much time, but I find the issue extremely important. Can you elaborate on this?

Mr. Arnaud Bernadet: That's a difficult question, because we're not talking about the same environments, obviously.

What we're witnessing in the artistic field is perhaps a form of moralization or politicization of art. But this is nothing new. These are perfectly normal movements. It's a possible type of aesthetic.

If there's one place where freedom of expression can be found, it's in the creative world. I think that's where it's found in its maximum form.

Conversely, there are also difficulties on the other side, i.e., fears about forms of literary or artistic expression that may be transphobic or pedophilic, for example. This raises a number of questions. We no longer look at texts in the same way we did 20 or 30 years ago. From this point of view, we're seeing a mutation, and that seems normal to me.

That said, the question again arises from exchanges, for example, on texts of pedophilic inspiration. We then have to ask ourselves whether we're on the side of hatred or incitement to this kind of thing, which could legitimize prosecution or challenges.

[*English*]

The Chair: You have eight seconds.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Arnaud Bernadet: I think it's hard to put things on the same level, including the issue of so-called sensitive readers.

Mr. Martin Champoux: Thank you very much, Professor Bernadet.

[*English*]

The Chair: Ms. Mathysen, you have two and a half minutes, please.

Ms. Lindsay Mathysen: Thank you, Chair.

Ms. Johnstone, you spoke to it and many others have spoken to it in different ways. It's about the leadership that is shown by specific politicians, and that linking, that walking up against that line of what is hate speech, what is freedom of expression, and the use of certain language, how that's adopted and how, from certain far-right hate groups, there are those dog whistles.... It speaks to them, and it may not be outright, but it exists there.

Can you talk about the impact that's had and what you've seen in terms of walking that line? We see it often in social media. We see it as politicians ourselves and how it's used against us, but how should we, as the leadership, fight against that as well?

Ms. Fae Johnstone: Often, we use simple language because it resonates with the public and it's easy. We have this ability to use a term like “parental rights”. It creates an environment where we're therefore opposed to parental rights, which is far from the truth.

It takes nuance out of the conversation, and I think it forces us into a black or white equation where it's us versus them. That is actually where a lot of danger comes in. I think that is what contributes to this environment of polarization, where people's dignity and human rights are becoming political issues, when they should be just a baseline.

I think we are seeing Conservative politicians, particularly Premier Smith in Alberta, but also Mr. Poilievre federally, using this language because they know it will go over the heads of many folks who hear that term. It resonates with them, so they think, “Yes, of course. Who wouldn't support the rights of parents?” However, this anti-LGBTQ lobby is hearing that language, and they're saying, “Oh, this guy's in our camp. He's going to back us up,” and they're going to go and knock on doors and expect Poilievre to deliver on their issues and priorities.

That agenda is one that sees regression on my rights and on my freedom, and sees a Canada where parents of LGBTQ kids have to be worried about putting their kid on the bus, about getting their kids health care and about their kids being safe to grow up as healthy, thriving adults.

• (1735)

Ms. Lindsay Mathysen: What does that distraction accomplish at the end of the day?

Ms. Fae Johnstone: It takes away from the issues that most people want our governments to act on. My priorities in Canada for our federal government are actually housing, affordability and health care. When politicians have a hard time delivering on those issues and don't have solutions to the big problems facing Canadians, they dabble with these divisive politics and these wedge issues because they don't want to answer questions about the real solutions and priorities Canadians have and want to see their government act on.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Ms. Johnstone.

Now we'll go to Mrs. Goodridge for two and a half minutes.

Mrs. Laila Goodridge (Fort McMurray—Cold Lake, CPC): Thank you.

Thank you to all our witnesses for being here today.

Because I have very little time, I'm going to get right to it.

Father de Souza, do you believe the government should be censoring speech?

Father Raymond de Souza: Generally, no. There are obviously certain things like national security issues, and we have quite complicated jurisprudence in Canada about hateful speech. Some other witnesses made distinctions there, but I think, generally, no. That's why we have section 2(b) of the charter.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Laila Goodridge: Mr. Le Blanc, do you think the government should be in favour of or in charge of censorship?

Mr. Charles Le Blanc: I think “censorship” is not the word you want to use.

I agree with Father de Souza, but I would add that, in any case, there are rules that determine hate speech, speech that attacks the dignity of the person and speech that attacks the concept of equality. Personally, I think we already have the tools to deal with these things. In a functioning democracy, we need to encourage the most open exchanges and debates possible, not just at university, but everywhere.

Mrs. Laila Goodridge: Do you think the Liberal government is going too far?

Mr. Charles Le Blanc: Maybe the question should be put to the Liberal government.

[*English*]

Mrs. Laila Goodridge: Father de Souza, do you think this Liberal government has gone too far in censoring speech here in Canada?

Father Raymond de Souza: The first of the three examples I used was a case in which I think it was in error in limiting freedom of expression.

The third example I mentioned was a prospective recommendation from a committee that it set up that seemed to meet with approval, but it hasn't acted on that. If it did, it would be improper, in my view.

Mrs. Laila Goodridge: I really appreciate the ability to have a diversity of views. We've had a variety of people with a variety of different views, yet we've managed to have a civil conversation at this meeting for the most part. There have been some slightly less civil comments made, but I think this just goes to show that we don't need the government to set the regulations and limit what people can and can't say. That can be left to different mechanisms.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

I'm going to go to Anju Dhillon for the Liberals.

You have two and a half minutes.

Ms. Anju Dhillon (Dorval—Lachine—LaSalle, Lib.): Thank you, Madam Chair.

I'm going to share my time with MP Louis.

My question is for Mr. Bardeesy.

You spoke about the growing demand from Canadians to work on regulating online harms and how it's the responsibility of the platforms to make sure that no one is harmed.

Can you talk to us about the legislation very quickly—because the next question has to go to my colleague—and about foreign interference?

I know it's huge, but please answer as quickly as you can.

• (1740)

Mr. Karim Bardeesy: Bill C-63 has provisions for the tabling of a digital safety plan by the major platforms. We think that's an appropriate measure that helps them share their plan in a manner that we can understand for dealing with some of the online harms.

Foreign interference is a large issue, which is definitely something that threatens freedom of expression here in Canada. If we have foreign interference in elections and people are fearful of using their voices in Canada, that's a real problem.

Ms. Anju Dhillon: Thank you.

Go ahead, Tim.

Mr. Tim Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga, Lib.): Thank you.

I'll continue with Professor Bardeesy.

You mentioned that you just came back from a conference in the States. What are the responsibilities of the social media companies? What specific measures should the social media companies take to prevent hate speech without infringing on free speech? You mentioned that people are getting their news more and more from social media. We control what we write on social media, but we don't control what we read on social media.

Mr. Karim Bardeesy: Yes. Part of that is having strong trust and safety teams with humans on those teams who are complementing whatever technology they're using to help screen for inappropriate content, or in the case of Canada, content that would be in defiance of the proposed online harms act.

There are lots of measures that can be taken by platforms to be more transparent around the way their algorithms work and to help individuals shape those algorithms more themselves, rather than just being presented with, "This is the way your feed is going to work."

There are some platforms that are now experimenting with measures and approaches that put more of the ability to curate what you see in the hands of the user rather than the hands of either an algorithm or the company itself, and we think that's definitely progress.

The Chair: Thank you very much. That brings our meeting to a close.

I would like to thank the witnesses for coming and sharing some very interesting and complex answers to our questions, because none of this is black or white, as Ms. Johnstone said. It's all complex.

Thank you very much. Thank you for your patience while we voted.

I will now adjourn the meeting.

Published under the authority of the Speaker of
the House of Commons

SPEAKER'S PERMISSION

The proceedings of the House of Commons and its committees are hereby made available to provide greater public access. The parliamentary privilege of the House of Commons to control the publication and broadcast of the proceedings of the House of Commons and its committees is nonetheless reserved. All copyrights therein are also reserved.

Reproduction of the proceedings of the House of Commons and its committees, in whole or in part and in any medium, is hereby permitted provided that the reproduction is accurate and is not presented as official. This permission does not extend to reproduction, distribution or use for commercial purpose of financial gain. Reproduction or use outside this permission or without authorization may be treated as copyright infringement in accordance with the Copyright Act. Authorization may be obtained on written application to the Office of the Speaker of the House of Commons.

Reproduction in accordance with this permission does not constitute publication under the authority of the House of Commons. The absolute privilege that applies to the proceedings of the House of Commons does not extend to these permitted reproductions. Where a reproduction includes briefs to a committee of the House of Commons, authorization for reproduction may be required from the authors in accordance with the Copyright Act.

Nothing in this permission abrogates or derogates from the privileges, powers, immunities and rights of the House of Commons and its committees. For greater certainty, this permission does not affect the prohibition against impeaching or questioning the proceedings of the House of Commons in courts or otherwise. The House of Commons retains the right and privilege to find users in contempt of Parliament if a reproduction or use is not in accordance with this permission.

Also available on the House of Commons website at the following address: <https://www.ourcommons.ca>

Publié en conformité de l'autorité
du Président de la Chambre des communes

PERMISSION DU PRÉSIDENT

Les délibérations de la Chambre des communes et de ses comités sont mises à la disposition du public pour mieux le renseigner. La Chambre conserve néanmoins son privilège parlementaire de contrôler la publication et la diffusion des délibérations et elle possède tous les droits d'auteur sur celles-ci.

Il est permis de reproduire les délibérations de la Chambre et de ses comités, en tout ou en partie, sur n'importe quel support, pourvu que la reproduction soit exacte et qu'elle ne soit pas présentée comme version officielle. Il n'est toutefois pas permis de reproduire, de distribuer ou d'utiliser les délibérations à des fins commerciales visant la réalisation d'un profit financier. Toute reproduction ou utilisation non permise ou non formellement autorisée peut être considérée comme une violation du droit d'auteur aux termes de la Loi sur le droit d'auteur. Une autorisation formelle peut être obtenue sur présentation d'une demande écrite au Bureau du Président de la Chambre des communes.

La reproduction conforme à la présente permission ne constitue pas une publication sous l'autorité de la Chambre. Le privilège absolu qui s'applique aux délibérations de la Chambre ne s'étend pas aux reproductions permises. Lorsqu'une reproduction comprend des mémoires présentés à un comité de la Chambre, il peut être nécessaire d'obtenir de leurs auteurs l'autorisation de les reproduire, conformément à la Loi sur le droit d'auteur.

La présente permission ne porte pas atteinte aux privilèges, pouvoirs, immunités et droits de la Chambre et de ses comités. Il est entendu que cette permission ne touche pas l'interdiction de contester ou de mettre en cause les délibérations de la Chambre devant les tribunaux ou autrement. La Chambre conserve le droit et le privilège de déclarer l'utilisateur coupable d'outrage au Parlement lorsque la reproduction ou l'utilisation n'est pas conforme à la présente permission.

Aussi disponible sur le site Web de la Chambre des communes à l'adresse suivante :
<https://www.noscommunes.ca>