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Chair: Karina Gould



Standing Committee on Finance

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• (1100)

[English]

The Chair (Hon. Karina Gould (Burlington, Lib.)): Good morning, everyone.

[Translation]

I call this meeting to order.

Welcome to meeting number three of the Standing Committee on Finance.

[English]

I hope everybody had a nice weekend.

This meeting will take place in a hybrid format. I would just like to remind participants of the following points. Before speaking, please wait until I recognize you by name. Those participating by video conference, click on the microphone icon to activate your mic. Please mute yourself when you are not speaking.

[Translation]

I would like to ask the committee members participating in person or through Zoom to raise their hands if they wish to speak. The subcommittee clerk and I will do our best to maintain the speaking order. All comments should be addressed through the chair.

Mr. Garon, you have the floor.

Jean-Denis Garon (Mirabel, BQ): Thank you, Madam Chair.

Good morning, everyone.

I hope that you all had a great weekend and that it put you in a good frame of mind to continue discussing the motion that I moved last time.

I would like to move this motion again, Madam Chair.

Should I read it again, or can we consider it already read?

The Chair: Is there unanimous consent to resume the debate?

[English]

Ryan Turnbull (Whitby, Lib.): I'm sorry. This is consent on....

The Chair: This is on rebringing Mr. Garon's motion from Wednesday.

Ryan Turnbull: Is he going to read it into the record, or are you asking for consent to not read it in?

The Chair: It's for consent to resume debate.

Yes, Mr. Kelly.

Pat Kelly (Calgary Crowfoot, CPC): It is his right to move the motion. He doesn't need consent. If you're asking to dispense with rereading it, I'm not even sure that this would require consent. It would be, I suppose, a nice thing to ask, but he absolutely has the right to move the motion without.... It's not up to anybody else but him.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you, Mr. Kelly.

It belongs to the committee now, so the committee members have the right to decide whether they want to resume debate or whether we go to a vote. Do we have consent to move back to debate? Otherwise, we'll go straight to a vote.

Ryan Turnbull: Yes, we can move back to debate. I mean, he's moved his motion, right?

The Chair: Okay, great.

Seeing that we're moving back into debate, do I have speakers on the list?

Mr. Turnbull.

Ryan Turnbull: I'm not sure that we have copies of this motion. Do we have a copy? I know that Mr. Garon read it into the record last time. I'm just not sure whether I got a copy of it. Maybe I'm mistaken. I'm just looking through my stuff here. I need a written copy in order to react to it. We did have some debate on it in the last meeting, so I know that we spoke to it, but I would like a chance to review it. Maybe we could suspend and just get a copy of it so that I could review it.

The Chair: Sure. It was sent around, but we can send it around again today. We'll suspend for five minutes while we do that.

Thank you.

• (1100)

(Pause)

• (1115)

The Chair: We are resuming the meeting.

[Translation]

Mr. Garon, would you like to speak?

Jean-Denis Garon: No, it's fine.

The Chair: Okay.

Mr. Turnbull, the floor is yours.

[*English*]

Ryan Turnbull: Thanks, Chair.

Thanks to my colleague for moving this, and to you for the short recess to discuss it a bit among ourselves.

I think, for most of the motion, I get what Mr. Garon is getting at here. He's just looking for some clarity on the budget cycle. I think that's reasonable in terms of a request. What is a bit of a sticking point for us is that we don't believe that the minister will be able to attend with just about 48 hours' notice. That's pretty short notice for a minister who has a busy schedule and calendar. I think everyone can appreciate that the Minister of Finance has a pretty busy schedule.

This is an amendment I'd like to propose. I would just say that where it says "no later than Wednesday, September 24", we delete that. It would then read, "That the committee request that the minister appear to answer the committee's questions so that the committee can then carry out its work properly and effectively and fulfill its mandate".

I think that's reasonable, and that means the minister can appear at the earliest opportunity. I think there was some discussion about next week's committee meetings being a bit different because of truth and reconciliation day. Yom Kippur begins on Wednesday, as well, if I'm not mistaken, so that's a pretty important holiday. I think it's quite reasonable to assume that the following week would be a week that, especially if we're studying Bill C-4.... There was some discussion about the possibility of using some of our committee time wisely on a piece of legislation that I think there's no contention about.

I really think that, with this small change, we could get this passed. It would ensure that my Bloc colleague gets the clarity he desires, which is really just clarity on what the budget cycle will look like moving forward, and I think that's a pretty fair ask. Although there are a lot of words in the motion, I think it's a pretty simple request, and we can get him the clarity that he's looking for in due course. That's what I would suggest. I'll leave it there for the moment and see if there's any discussion. I know my colleagues will probably want to speak to this as well.

Thanks.

• (1120)

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Hallan, do you want to speak to the amendment?

Jasraj Hallan (Calgary East, CPC): No, not to the amendment.

The Chair: Mr. Leitão.

[*Translation*]

Carlos Leitão (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin, Lib.): Thank you, Madam Chair.

Good morning, colleagues.

I completely agree with what my colleague, Mr. Turnbull, just said. The date is the issue. Today is September 22. It's unrealistic to expect the Minister of Finance to appear before the committee on

September 24, two days from now, given the current situation. Last week, the minister wasn't even in Canada. He was in Europe attending meetings with our partners. It seems unreasonable to insist that he appear on Wednesday, September 24. The following week would be perfectly fine.

Knowing the Minister of Finance, I'm sure that he'll be perfectly happy to appear before this committee. It's really a matter of timing. It's really unreasonable to do so on such short notice. Afterwards, on October 6 or another date, we could have a good discussion about the budget cycle calendar. By convention, in our system, both federal and provincial governments generally table their budgets toward the end of the fiscal year. This isn't necessarily a hard and fast rule, but rather a convention. Normally, it's shortly before or after March 31.

That said, will this always be the case? Could it happen later? It would be good to have a proper discussion about this issue with the Minister of Finance. Why not? I'm sure that he would be delighted to do so.

I think that September 24 really isn't reasonable. If we give ourselves a few more days, we could have this discussion, which would be useful. The election and other factors have resulted in the 2025 budget being tabled as late as November 4. Will the 2026 budget be tabled in March or June? I don't know, but it would be good to discuss this matter with the Minister of Finance to see where he stands on this issue. I would like us to have this discussion.

We agree on practically everything. It's really just a matter of timing.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Leitão.

[*English*]

Mr. Sawatzky, you have the floor.

Jake Sawatzky (New Westminster—Burnaby—Maillardville, Lib.): To add to this, I'm aware that the minister is currently building ties in Europe, and it's important that we allow him to build these ties at this very important time. This is not the time to pull the minister in. I think 48 hours is not very much notice for us to expect the minister, with his busy schedule and all of the important duties he has, to be able to come in. It's such short notice.

Of course, it's very important that this budget is done with due diligence, precision and care. It's not something we want to rush. I think that's why some more notice.... Of course the minister is happy to come in, but I don't think it's reasonable to do so on such short notice.

Thanks.

• (1125)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Sawatzky.

Mr. MacDonald.

Kent MacDonald (Cardigan, Lib.): Good morning, everyone. It's my first time addressing the committee. [English]

I must say I'm a little confused by the motion. You refer to there having been no public consultations done. The summertime was spent hearing from the public. I attended a consultation in Charlottetown, P.E.I. We had Dairy Farmers of P.E.I. attend and present. We had Atlantic Beef Products, the P.E.I. Aquaculture Alliance, the P.E.I. BioAlliance, the P.E.I. Seafood Processors Association and the P.E.I. Fishermen's Association. We also had the poverty elimination council present to us, as well as members of the business community.

We have done a fair lot of consultation over the summer months, since the House rose in June. I was hopeful that we would come here and start hearing witnesses presenting the submissions that we received over the summer in our binders to the finance committee. I'm disappointed that we're not at that point yet. I hope we get to that point soon.

In regard to the motion and the minister coming on the 24th, I think they've all stated what they feel about that. It's just too quick a turnaround. The minister is willing to come. He presents the budget on November 4. He'll speak to our committee, either prior to that or shortly thereafter, as we do the review of the budget bill. Otherwise, there is other business that the committee could be hearing witnesses on, and that's Bill C-4, the making life more affordable for Canadians act. I hope that the committee will consider getting down to business and getting moving on what the Canadian people expect us to be doing here on this finance committee.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. MacDonald.

Mr. Turnbull, go ahead.

Ryan Turnbull: I concur with my colleagues. I spent a lot of my summer travelling the country and doing pre-budget consultations. Mr. Garon is laughing over there, but it was a lot of hard work and time I spent away from my young daughters and family.

[Translation]

Jean-Denis Garon: I have a point of order.

[English]

The Chair: One second, Mr. Turnbull.

Mr. Garon, go ahead.

[Translation]

Jean-Denis Garon: Madam Chair, sorry to interrupt the debate, but I really think that this is a point of order.

My colleague, who is filibustering his own motion, is accusing me of laughing at his comments and at the people of Quebec and Canada. If my colleague doesn't know what a good mood is, let's buy him a dictionary.

The Chair: Mr. Garon, that's the debate. That isn't a point of order. Thank you.

Mr. Turnbull, you may continue.

Ryan Turnbull: Listen, I just remarked on the fact that he seems to be smiling, but I'm talking about a serious thing, which is that we did pre-budget consultations the whole summer. Mr. Garon probably knows this. I travelled to Hamilton, Mississauga, Toronto, Vancouver, Whitehorse, Halifax, Cape Breton, P.E.I., Iqaluit, Regina, Saskatoon, Victoria, Windsor and Edmonton. Our team did 50 round tables and had 83,000 survey responses. We went to every province and territory. There were over 940 briefing submissions to this committee on the federal budget. To say that we didn't do any pre-budget consultations is just inaccurate.

I think the main point here is that there's reasonable and then there's unreasonable. We're trying to be very reasonable. We're even willing to vote in support of this motion, even though there's some partisan rhetoric in it that I don't agree with. In essence, there's really only one sticking point here. The committee could just invite the minister to come at his earliest opportunity. We're fairly confident that the minister...

Well, number one, we know that the minister will want to come; it's not a matter of that. It's just that the Minister of Finance has quite a lot of work. He was in Copenhagen recently. Again, as my colleague Mr. Sawatzky mentioned, he is deepening ties with the European Union. We know how important it is right now for our country and our trade relationships to ensure that we can diversify trade in Canada and that we can move to more of a resilient economy rather than being reliant on predominantly one trading partner, which has been the case for quite a number of decades.

I think the key here is that there are reasonable requests and there are unreasonable requests. For a Wednesday appearance from a minister, just to be clear, with today being the 22nd, that would be two days from now. I understand that Mr. Garon would like to see the minister sooner rather than later. We're saying that of course the minister would like to appear and answer any questions the committee has. They are more than willing to do that. It's just that I've been around Parliament for six years, and I know ministers often have busy schedules. I think it's well acknowledged on committee that sometimes they take up to two weeks, maybe more, to come to committee. We try to work with that and to plan our time accordingly.

As my colleagues have mentioned, we have a lot of important work to do in this committee. This is a clarification of a budget cycle moving forward that Mr. Garon would like. I'm not saying it isn't important; I understand it's important to him. I will say that I haven't had one single constituent request on this. My constituents are more concerned with us getting Bill C-4 passed; getting the budget through committee; perhaps studying some of the impacts on our economy before the budget comes down, which I think could be very useful; and perhaps hearing from some of the witnesses, as I suggested in the last meeting.

Again, I started us off trying to be collaborative. I actually mirrored one of the motions that Mr. Hallan had put on notice, made some changes and had some discussion beforehand. I was really trying to start us off on the right foot in terms of doing some work in this committee on pre-budget consultations. If we want to talk about economic security or economic sovereignty, I'm okay with whatever we name it. If we want to call it a pre-study or pre-budget consultations, I'm ambivalent. I don't care. It's whatever the committee members want, but I want some witnesses from Quebec to come before this committee and speak to their perspectives on this federal budget. To me, we're wasting valuable opportunities here by simply being unreasonable on a request.

Wednesday, September 24, is the sticking point. Literally, I've just amended the motion to take that part out and for the committee to invite the minister to come at the earliest opportunity. You certainly have my commitment to ensure that the minister comes to this committee at the earliest opportunity. I will do my very best to make that happen. I know that our minister is very, very competent when he comes to committee. He does a great job. He answers questions. He is forthright. He's even entertaining, because he's such a bubbly personality. I would love to have him here. I always appreciate him when he appears at committee. We'll have him in short order, but it's about being reasonable, my friends. There's reasonable and unreasonable. What you're sticking on is, I believe, an unreasonable request.

• (1130)

In most committees I've been on, whether it was PROC or the agriculture and agri-food committee.... I was on HUMA for a long time. I've been on the finance committee. I was on the industry committee with my colleague Jean-Denis Garon. He eventually changed his mind. He didn't like the tribunal and the legislation, but we worked together for quite some time with good rapport and good relations.

There was always an understanding that when ministers are invited to committee, it may take a week or two, or even longer sometimes, to get them to committee, and that doesn't mean they don't want to come. It doesn't mean they don't value Parliament. I sometimes hear opposition members say, "Well, the ministers don't want to come and do their duty in Parliament." That's not true. The truth is that ministers are more than willing to come and answer for their files and their portfolios and be held to account by Parliament. It's just that they also have to balance other duties and responsibilities that the Canadian public expects of them. I think those are more than reasonable expectations.

A timeline that's reasonable is really the sticking point here. It would be great if we didn't.... I don't want to assume the motivations for my colleagues, but to stick on such a pointed two-days-from-now timeline is, in the general practice at committees, definitely unreasonable.

I'm sure that many other committees.... We could go back in the records and look at how long it took for a Conservative minister to appear. We could look back in history and see that oftentimes it took two to three weeks to get a minister to appear.

Is this partisan throwing things in the air to try to distract from the important work we have ahead? I don't know, and I don't want

to speculate, because I generally hold my colleagues across the table in high regard, and I try to treat them with respect and not assume negative motivations.

It's hard for me to understand why we would be so stuck on this Wednesday, when a couple of weeks from now, the committee could have the minister here. Why wouldn't that be sufficient? What is so important that we can't continue the important work of this committee? Why do we have to hang it up, meeting after meeting, instead of agreeing to something we could achieve consensus on? Have the minister appear, have Mr. Garon get the clarity he desires and move forward with important work that Canadians expect of us.

I don't want to waste our committee time. I feel like I'm being put in a position to have to speak to something I feel adamantly about, which is the part of this that is definitely an unreasonable request.

Thank you.

• (1135)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Turnbull.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Garon, you have the floor.

Jean-Denis Garon: Thank you, Madam Chair.

I feel compelled to share an observation about my colleague, whom I hold in high regard. He said that we've worked together in other committees. He added that it hasn't always been an easy relationship. However, since we don't have the same logo on our election signs, naturally we don't agree on everything. I find it rather amusing that he finished by saying that he doesn't want to waste the committee's time, when he and his three colleagues have been filibustering on their own motion for 29 minutes.

We may not have the same definition of the words "laugh" or "smile." We most likely don't have the same definition of "wasting time." Maybe that's why we don't belong to the same political party.

That said, I welcome the fact that some progress was made over the weekend. At last Wednesday's meeting, we gave the minister almost 10 days to set his schedule. My colleague knows that the minister will be coming. We didn't give him two days. We gave him 10 days.

Last Wednesday, my colleague considered the entire motion unreasonable. I said that it was unacceptable to rush through the process of hearing from the too few witnesses during the study of the budget implementation bill. My colleague said that my comments were completely unreasonable. He referred to his extensive six years of experience as a seasoned parliamentarian and noted that, in previous years, witnesses continued to appear during the pre-budget period while work proceeded on implementing the budget. He could confirm this.

We had these statements verified. In the past, during the budget implementation period, the pre-budget period for the following year had already started. I gather that my colleague, Mr. Turnbull, has trouble reading calendars. He doesn't find it easy. He finds it complicated. There are years, months, days and boxes in a calendar. It's complicated. He took the weekend to think about it, which I understand. His opinion changed.

That said, we must meet with the minister, Madam Chair. My colleague says that the only part that remains unreasonable is the date. He's proposing a date, but he doesn't want us to vote on it. He's wasting our time.

According to my colleague, if we looked at the history of committee business, we would see that ministers typically take from one to five weeks to appear before the committee. This brings us to the eve of the budget. That's exactly what we're worried about. He then confirmed that we need to have a date.

We should also look back at times other than wartime and see which ministers left ambiguity surrounding the presentation of a budget in the spring, to the point that, on the first day of Standing Committee on Finance proceedings, committee members were unable to set a schedule and invite witnesses.

Perhaps we should ask the analysts to find the last time that this happened. If we're listing historical firsts, I would like to know which minister, upon taking office, didn't table a budget before an election; which minister didn't table a budget after the election; and which minister tabled a budget in November while being unable to say whether he planned to change the budget cycle, even though no one asked him to do so. We could play around with historical firsts.

My main concern lies in the fact that Mr. MacDonald, whom I also like, and Mr. Turnbull say that consultations took place, but that the opposition members weren't invited. These members were in their constituencies, and nobody was paying any attention to them.

The government is currently in a minority position. Yet the members say that they travelled by plane at the taxpayer's expense. They went to Vancouver, Kitchener and all over the place. They met with farmers from Prince Edward Island and had a good time, and ministers were there too. They had a Liberal gathering with everyone in Canada, but without the committee or opposition members. There were consultations. That's enough for them, and they're telling us to take a hike.

The word "indecent" is virtually the same in both official languages. I apologize, Madam Chair, but I must say that these remarks are indecent. We're asking for one thing, and we're ready to set a date for a meeting. All we want is for the Liberals to stop fili-

bustering and to stop going on and on when it comes to their own motion. That way, we can vote on it, set a date and let the minister simply tell us whether he'll do the bare minimum required by his job description, meaning the minimum required by the union.

Will there be a budget in the spring, so that we can set a schedule? I'm ready to vote on their motion.

● (1140)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Garon.

Mr. Leitão, you have the floor.

Carlos Leitão: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Our colleague just made a number of, shall we say, interesting remarks.

True, I'm a new member of Parliament. The rules here don't necessarily match the rules that I was used to in another Parliament, where I served for a number of years. However, in the other Parliament, I never saw anything like this. I never saw a minister being summoned to appear before a committee, or a parliamentary committee in Quebec City, with only two days' notice. I find that unreasonable.

We already said we were willing to meet with the minister to discuss the next budget cycle and all sorts of other issues. We just need to give him a bit more time to clear his schedule. He has a full schedule and he must find a time to come see us. It could be next week or the week after. We all agree that the minister should appear before the committee. I don't know why we're discussing this. We can find a date, but we don't think that September 24 works.

Last week, the minister was in Europe, in Copenhagen, to discuss the geopolitical situation with his European counterparts and the implications for the Canadian and global economies.

He said that we must understand that the current situation in Canada and around the world is somewhat similar to the situation in 1945 in terms of the global economic order. We're emerging from a time of great distress. We're trying to rebuild what our American neighbours unfortunately decided to destroy, which is a global economic order based on predictable rules.

How can we switch our focus? How can we find a new way of working with all the countries that share our vision, as the Prime Minister has already said?

The current situation is quite complex. Parliamentarians must show some leniency. In other words, the minister must be given more than two days' notice to appear before the committee. Ten days would be enough. I think that we could be a bit more flexible in this area. I don't really see why we couldn't give him more time.

Furthermore, our colleague, the member for Mirabel, said that a big Liberal gathering was held during the summer and that we carried out pre-budget consultations with friends. It would have been nice to see him at some of our consultations in Quebec. It certainly wasn't a gathering of friends. The discussions were interesting and important. We would like these individuals or groups to come here to speak to the committee and to share the information contained in the briefs that they submitted to us.

Again, we're dealing with a new world. It isn't simple. It's complex. It requires equally complex decisions, findings and actions. It all takes a bit of thought and time.

• (1145)

We believe that it's reasonable to insist that the meeting with the Minister of Finance and National Revenue take place a few days after September 24. I don't understand the insistence on September 24. I'm a bit surprised by this request.

It's unfortunate. We would also like to discuss both the pre-budget consultation process and Bill C-4. The parties in the House have already expressed their preliminary support for the bill. We now need to take the opportunity to look more closely at the bill by carrying out a clause-by-clause consideration. That way, we can move forward with this bill.

I remember that, as colleagues, we discussed the need to make adjustments to certain aspects of Bill C-4. We're totally open to discussing this and seeing how we can make progress on this work.

I don't understand why we can't walk and chew gum at the same time. While we wait for the minister to come meet with us next week or the week after, we could easily start working on Bill C-4. This would give us a chance to move forward with our discussions, which is really important. We would need to go back a long way to find anything that remotely resembles the current situation.

Let's be efficient and find ways to make progress on our parliamentary business while we wait for the minister to come see us in a few days. I don't think that this is such a big obstacle.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Leitão.

[*English*]

Mr. Sawatzky.

Jake Sawatzky: Thank you, Madam Chair.

The thing we all have in common here is that we want things to move. However, we also need to be realistic with our timelines. If we're not being realistic, then we're inadvertently going to just slow things down, because we're expecting things that just can't happen.

For the Minister of Finance to come here.... There are a lot of things at stake. These are topics that can move markets. This is very sensitive information, and it's important that adequate time is given to prepare any kinds of documents or confidentiality reviews. There are legal considerations sometimes. Of course, there are notifications with stakeholders sometimes that are at play here as well. There are a lot of things that the Minister of Finance needs to prepare in advance of coming to the committee. Of course, there's also

the translation of official documents, and there's really just the professional courtesy of giving the Minister of Finance more than two days, which I think is quite important.

Now there are a lot of other things that we could be discussing as well. We have over 940 pre-budget consultation requests that we could be spending our time looking at and discussing, so it's really important that we find a consensus. We don't want to spend time going over things when we know they're not realistic.

I would just say that I really hope we can find a way forward here, a compromise that is a bit more realistic with regard to the timeline for the finance minister.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

• (1150)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Sawatzky.

Mr. Turnbull.

Ryan Turnbull: Thanks.

I violently agree with Mr. Sawatzky, as usual.

All my colleagues on this side, I think, are trying to put their best feet forward and express to colleagues across the way how reasonable we're trying to be, essentially saying that this motion Mr. Garon put forward is a reasonable request with one slight hang-up, a minor detail, which is a date that's embedded into it. We know that the minister cannot appear by that date, which is this Wednesday. It's two days away.

It's pretty well known around here—and I don't want to insult my colleagues at all by suggesting that they haven't been around long enough to know this, but they literally have—that ministers often take a little longer than two days to clear their calendar, prep and come to committee. It's just professional courtesy, as someone said, and I think that's a good term for it.

With high-profile ministers, such as the Minister of Finance for Canada, you can imagine that the minister has been all over Canada and the world. Right now, obviously, Canada is at a pivotal moment. There's a lot at stake for our economy. We see our country being subjected to unjustified tariffs from our southern neighbour, who had been our most trusted ally and trade partner for many decades. We're now in this moment where we really need to defend our economy.

You've seen the Prime Minister, the Minister of Finance and other ministers who have key portfolios travelling the world and demonstrating very publicly their commitment to shoring up and strengthening relationships and economic ties with other countries, such that we can replace some of the demand for our exports with other trade relationships. That could be very beneficial for Canada.

I think those conversations are really at the forefront of the government's approach to strengthening and building the strongest economy in the G7 in Canada, which is our commitment. It's what we won the last election on. It's certainly a message that's resonated across Canada in every pre-budget consultation that I have had the opportunity to host and facilitate. Canadians are stepping up and are interested in feeding into the federal budget-making process. That was clear from the hundreds of conversations we had over the summer.

It would be great if this committee would hear from some of those witnesses, because there are so many thoughts, suggestions and ideas. Some of them are not even costly, which is something that I really appreciate, especially at this moment in time. Yes, we're going to be making generational investments in housing, defence and infrastructure, but we also see Canadians coming forward with proposals and ideas for how we can do things better, how we can tweak programs, investment tax credits or the indigenous loan guarantee program, so that these things can be more successful. There's a recognition that some of these things work well, but if only we had these small regulatory or even legislative changes in some cases, we would get further faster. We would enable the partners and strategic relationships across the country that we already have to move faster, be more effective and get more results for Canadians. I have many examples of these conversations that I've had.

To me, it's technical things associated with some of our investment tax credits. For example, if we were to tweak or change those ever so slightly, there would be some technology or application of green technology for mining, for the nuclear industry, for the battery storage industry or even for the petroleum producers, who have said that those investment tax credits are key for them to decarbonize their operations.

• (1155)

These are tweaks to pre-existing programs and tax credits that could be very, very useful. Again, it's another example of how, if this committee chose to use its time to hear from those witnesses instead of being stuck on a very unreasonable timeline for the minister to appear, we could actually hear from key witnesses who are making suggestions that would directly impact the budget implementation act.

For all the Canadians who are watching—I know there are not that many, but if you are watching—the budget implementation act is the bill that goes along with the federal budget. It's usually a fairly significant document, full of all the details. They're often small legislative changes. Sometimes they can have a big impact, but there are often lots of small changes made to tax law and other acts. This committee will be responsible for debating and moving through and getting it back to Parliament when the time comes. We

could be hearing from some of the witnesses who have key suggestions. There are 940 or more. I think the list is probably growing.

I don't know, Madam Chair; have we received any more briefings to the committee other than the 940?

There are 940 groups. Some of the briefs were jointly submitted, so there actually could be three or four groups in each case who prepared or took the time to submit a brief. I'm sure many of them are from Quebec as well. I see the Université de Sherbrooke in here. It would be great to have some of them come before the committee to make their submissions in public, here at a committee hearing. I know that many of them expressed the desire to do so.

There's the Black Opportunity Fund. There's Food Secure Canada. I've known that organization for a long time. The Conservatives mention food insecurity regularly in question period. It would be great to hear the thoughts and views of the national organization that studies and has been advocating for policy change for decades. That's Food Secure Canada. It's a fantastic organization in Canada here that can talk about how to end food insecurity in Canada.

There are so many groups on this list that I would love to hear from. Breakfast Club of Canada is a great advocate for the national school food program. They probably have good advice for us on how we could continue to roll out and improve the delivery of that essential program, now that our government has made the commitment of \$1 billion over five years to feed over 400,000 more kids per year.

In terms of inputs and suggestions, Summerlunch+ is another organization that I know well. The Growcer is another one. They've started essentially vertical grow operations in shipping containers. They're expanding across Canada. They've actually been able to decrease the price of food in northern and remote communities. There's a solution for food insecurity, but committee members here don't seem to want to hear from those witnesses. They would rather get stuck on a two-day timeline, when it's completely unreasonable for a minister to appear within two days, than hear from potentially 940 groups. It's actually more than that, because many of these, again, are group or joint submissions, so you could have three or four groups.

There's also Thrive Impact Fund, Purppl and Scale Collaborative. These groups I actually know from out in the B.C. area. They're doing fantastic work in food insecurity and using unique financial models and innovations to scale up solutions to food insecurity. I mean, these would be great to hear from. There are so many others here that would be really helpful for us to hear from. I would really value their input.

I want them to know, if any of them are watching, that on this side of the table, we really value those witnesses and what they have to say. We'd love to make time in this committee, if the opposition members are willing, to study some things. We would love to hear from some of these witnesses. I think we're wasting an incredible opportunity here to hear from witnesses who could feed directly into the budget implementation act. Consideration of that is still ongoing, I assure you.

• (1200)

Co-operatives and Mutuels Canada has an event on the Hill tomorrow. Credit unions like Desjardins, Vancity, Meridian and many of the others do incredible work, a lot of it in community finance. It really excites me to see them on the forefront and to see how we could work in collaboration with them to ensure that many of our rural communities can benefit from some of the investment they need, I think, so that while we're focused on these big major infrastructure projects, we ensure communities right across Canada will get access to capital and to help in growing their enterprises.

Agriculture is a topic that I'm really interested in, to see how we can do an even better job of working with our credit unions. They do a lot of the lending to our agricultural and agri-food businesses. They do a lot of the lending within the smaller communities along those main streets. We need thriving business environments for our towns and hamlets in all the areas across Canada, which should not be forgotten in this federal budget.

It would be great to hear from the credit unions on what they think are the big opportunities for this budget and how we can ensure that while we build big infrastructure, we can simultaneously scale up small and medium-sized enterprises and have them trade with some of the diverse trading partners whose relationships we're strengthening every day, as our Minister of Finance, the Prime Minister and the Minister responsible for One Canadian Economy—Minister LeBlanc, who I think has another portfolio now—are doing internationally to strengthen those relationships. The work they're doing is incredible. I note that the Prime Minister was in conversations with some of the countries in Africa just recently—I think I saw a notice about that—which is another set of very important trading partners for Canada to continue to diversify.

I really hope that the committee can get back on track, that we can have a reasonable timeline and that my colleagues across the way will come to their senses and merely accept a reasonable request to have the minister appear, which we're more than willing to pass and move forward on. I hope we can see some sign of progress on the other side. I hope our colleagues will be reasonable and work with us to ensure that this committee can do valuable work on behalf of Canadians.

I'll stop there for now, Madam Chair, though I do have more thoughts on this subject.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Turnbull.

Mr. Leitão.

[*Translation*]

Carlos Leitão: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Again, I don't think it's reasonable to think that we can find a way to hear from the Minister of Finance in just two days, or convince him to appear. That's really not reasonable.

Let's take, for example, the Minister of Finance's schedule last week, from September 17 to 20. First, there was the meeting in Europe of the Economic and Financial Affairs Council, or ECOFIN. It usually brings together ministers in charge of economic and financial issues from European Union countries. However, this year, Canada was also invited.

So it was an extremely important meeting for Canada, and it was essential that the Minister of Finance be well prepared before appearing. Let's not forget that the Prime Minister's first trip after being sworn in was to Europe. He went to France and the United Kingdom. Canada really wants to strengthen economic and diplomatic relations with its European partners. So such a meeting was very important for Canada and for the Minister of Finance, who travelled to Copenhagen to participate in it.

Participation in such a meeting is not just about listening to what other participants have to say. It also means actively taking part in discussions to find solutions with European partners. As has already been said, the world we currently live in is very different from the one that existed before the November 2024 election in the United States, which has a new administration. The world is no longer the same. So we have to prepare and organize ourselves to deal with this new world.

The government got to work, and the Minister of Finance is at the heart of that work. He wants to appear and he will certainly do so, but two days' notice is just not reasonable.

I would like to add that, following that meeting in Copenhagen, the minister also met with Mr. Eby, the Premier of British Columbia. He met with the G7 finance ministers, as well, to consider ways to put in place support mechanisms for Ukraine. All of those meetings have dealt with very important issues, which require significant preparation. It's not just a matter of showing up at a meeting to discuss Ukraine. He has to be well prepared and have important things to say.

It's in the context of all that hustle and bustle that the minister will also appear before us. I tell you that he will do so, but two days' notice is not reasonable. This leads me to believe that the proposal is an attempt to delay the study of Bill C-4. Everyone seems to agree on the bill. However, given that we are unable to move forward with the work related to the study of this bill, I wonder if everyone really agrees. I think this question is legitimate, since the work isn't moving forward.

I'd like to add one last thing. Of course, we all know that a federal budget is very complex. Various aspects need to be taken into account and a lot of things need to be analyzed before a budget is established. It's not just a matter of forecasting expenditures and revenues. In the current context, it's also about providing direction and proposing new ways of doing things, as well as finding new paths to take in the next year and subsequent years.

• (1205)

We used to live in a world where international trade rules were very clear, an environment where trade was based on laws and rules that everyone understood. The world is now a little more complex, but negotiations are still going on. The Minister of Finance sometimes has informal conversations with Scott Bessent, the U.S. Treasury Secretary. So we continue to try to find at least some common ground with our American neighbours. They're still our neighbours; we can't change geography.

The Government of Canada also announced that the consultation process for the review of the Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement, or CUSMA, would begin soon. In Canada, we will begin this review process by asking ourselves what we would like to see in this new version of the agreement, which will be negotiated in 2026 with the United States.

This work is extremely important, and the Minister of Finance has a key role to play in the negotiation and review process for CUSMA.

I repeat that, for all these reasons, it is entirely reasonable to postpone the Minister of Finance's appearance by a few days.

September 24 is 48 hours away. Given the context we're in, 48 hours is really unreasonable.

• (1210)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Leitaio.

[*English*]

Mr. MacDonald.

Kent MacDonald: Members opposite, again, I'm feeling like I'm not fulfilling my commitment to my constituents. I really want to get to work. I hope that we can find common ground on the date the finance minister can appear. I think the rest of the members have presented the complications with that.

If the chair would indulge me, as a representative of the agricultural community I would like to read part of the Canadian Federation of Agriculture's presentation. I think their recommendations should be read to the committee. The member from Quebec mentioned that he didn't get to have any input. I can share some of this with him now, if you'd like—if I can read it.

The CFA recognizes the importance of targeted, efficient spending. Accordingly, our recommendations emphasize low- or no-cost—

Pat Kelly: On a point of order, the member asked whether it was appropriate or not, and I guess my view on this would be that reading somebody else's pre-budget submission is not relevant to the motion at hand and that he should stick to the motion.

Ryan Turnbull: May I speak to that?

The Chair: Mr. Turnbull.

Ryan Turnbull: I've been on this committee, in this very room, when many members opposite read things into the record when they had a chance to have the floor. I'm sure that we can all agree that pre-budget consultations are part of the motion, and what Mr. MacDonald is attempting to share with the committee are important views from constituents that he cares about that relate to pre-budget consultation. I believe it is relevant.

The Chair: Mr. Kelly.

Pat Kelly: What we are debating right now is the amendment to the motion. We are debating whether or not to delete the words "no later than Wednesday, September 24". I don't believe that there's anything possibly relevant to the debate about deleting the words "no later than Wednesday, September 24" in an agriculture stakeholder's submission to the committee. Typically, when people read into the record.... It's not the reading into the record that's the objection; it's the relevance.

I'll leave it in your hands to rule on this, Chair.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Kelly.

Mr. MacDonald, can you tie it into the motion at hand?

Kent MacDonald: Actually, I'll take the advice of the committee if they feel that it's not part of the motion.

I do want to reiterate that if we want to get down to work, then I don't have to represent the submissions. We can start hearing them here at committee. That's what I would encourage us all to do. Let's pick a date for the finance minister that's reasonable, and let's get down to work.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. MacDonald.

Mr. Sawatzky.

Jake Sawatzky: I'll also agree. It would be great if we could move forward and find a common date, so I'll cede my time, and hopefully we can move forward with something.

Thanks.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Sawatzky.

Mr. Turnbull.

Ryan Turnbull: I think we could pass this extremely commonsensical amendment, have the minister appear shortly and then move on to other committee business.

It would be great if we could talk about Bill C-4, which was unanimously passed in the House of Commons in the spring. It contains an income tax cut, a GST cut on housing and the famous repeal of the consumer carbon tax, which I know some members opposite had long advocated. We could get right into that business, which would be great.

Maybe that's what we should do. It would be great to see a sign from committee members that we agree to move on to discussing other committee business after we agree to a very reasonable amendment.

• (1215)

The Chair: Okay. Thank you, colleagues. That was a fascinating debate on the amendment.

I don't see anyone else on the speakers list, so I'm going to confirm that the amendment is to delete “no later than Wednesday, September 24”. There was also a suggestion to change “request” to “invite”.

Is that correct? Is everyone okay with that?

Pat Kelly: No. The amendment we're going to vote on is to delete the words “no later than Wednesday, September 24”.

The Chair: That's what we shared with....

Pat Kelly: Okay, but then I heard you say something about substituting another word.

The Chair: There was a brief mention of that.

Pat Kelly: That could be moved as a subamendment—

Ryan Turnbull: I didn't move that. You're right.

Pat Kelly: Okay. Is that clear? Yes.

The Chair: All right. We can begin the vote.

(Amendment negatived: nays 5; yeas 4)

The Chair: The amendment is defeated.

We'll return to Mr. Hallan.

Jasraj Hallan: Thanks, Chair.

It is our intention to have this motion wrapped up. As I said at the last committee meeting, it's a good motion. We should have the minister appear and give us some more clarity on the budget cycles.

I'd like to put forward an amendment as well. I'd like to change the date from September 24, so that it reads, “no later than October 6”. That gives the minister a lot of time, even though he's had close to 10 days since this motion came out. I'd like to put that forward. Hopefully, we can get this to a vote and close this.

I also want to add that after this is done, I would like to propose for committee business something that would incorporate Bill C-4, to get that moved relatively quickly, and another piece of business, so I'm hoping we can wrap this up.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Hallan.

Is there anyone who would like to debate this? Seeing no one, we will go to a vote on this new amendment.

(Amendment agreed to: yeas 9; nays 0)

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Congratulations.

[*English*]

Now we're going back to the main motion as amended. Mr. Hallan, you were on the list. Are you good now? Okay. Is there anyone who would like to enter debate on the main motion?

• (1220)

[*Translation*]

The vote is on the main motion as amended.

(Motion as amended agreed to: yeas 9; nays 0)

[*English*]

The Chair: Mr. Hallan, the floor is yours.

Jasraj Hallan: Thank you, Chair. In dealing with the committee business that we have put forward, we have a few items. We know that Bill C-4 is still continuing on. It is a reminder that the ways and means has been passed, so there's nothing holding back the tax cut from happening. It's already happened, because the ways and means motion was passed for housing and the consumer carbon tax, thanks to the Conservatives, and the pressure has been taken off Canadians.

While we're collaborating here, and in the spirit of collaboration, I'd like to bring forward a motion that incorporates both Bill C-4, so that we can get that passed out of this committee, and another really pressing issue that's taken a lot of resources out of Canada but is also very concerning due to the alarming rate at which it's increasing. I'll read the motion—it's long—and we'll email it to the clerk:

That the committee immediately undertake a study of Bill C-4, an act to make life more affordable for Canadians, and that for the purposes of this study:

a. the committee invite the following witnesses to appear for one hour each on separate panels:

1. the Minister of Finance and National Revenue, as the sponsor of the bill;
2. the Minister of Housing and Infrastructure, in relation to part 2; and
3. the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, in relation to part 3;

and that each minister appear for one hour on separate panels and be permitted to be accompanied by departmental staff;

b. the chair be permitted to schedule a meeting for clause-by-clause consideration of the bill only after all of the ministers listed above have appeared as requested;

c. the committee invite additional stakeholders it deems appropriate and hold a minimum of two meetings to receive their testimony; and

d. immediately following the conclusion of the study, and once the bill has been reported back to the House, the committee undertake a subsequent study on the use of offshore tax havens, given that Canada's weak rules on offshore subsidiaries, tax treaties and limited enforcement by the Canada Revenue Agency have made our country both a conduit and a destination for tax avoidance, costing taxpayers billions of dollars in lost revenue each year and inviting white-collar crime into Canada, and that, for the purposes of this study, the committee hold no fewer than six meetings and invite the following witnesses:

1. officials from the Department of Finance;
2. officials from the Canada Revenue Agency;
3. the Parliamentary Budget Officer;
4. representatives from law enforcement agencies with expertise in financial crimes;
5. tax policy experts; and
6. any other witnesses the committee deems relevant.

That's the motion that I'd like to put forward.

The reason this is important is that the Conference Board of Canada estimates that tax evasion and avoidance costs the federal government \$8.9 billion to \$47.8 billion each year. Tax fairness advocates and even CRA whistle-blowers have raised concerns that Canada's weak rules on offshore subsidiaries and tax treaties and limited enforcement by CRA have made our country both a conduit and a destination for tax avoidance.

We've seen the Liberal crime wave and weak enforcement of anti-money laundering rules that also don't help. We've had officials testify at this committee that even though they catch the people either laundering money or committing these crimes, the enforcement is not there. Not only that, but this ties into the fact that the Liberals have dragged their feet for two years on the review of the Proceeds of Crime (Money Laundering) and Terrorist Financing Act as well, even though two years ago, then finance minister Chrystia Freeland wrote to this committee to have that review done, as well as a review of the Bank Act, which needs to be updated.

Crime is getting more and more sophisticated, and with the Liberals dragging their feet on this important review, Canada cannot keep up with that sophistication of crime. The officials do not have the tools and are not able to keep up with what we need. More importantly, the enforcement of it—the rules, the fines and the update to the Criminal Code—needs to be done so that those who are committing these crimes get punished for them. These are big numbers, costing \$8.9 billion to \$47.8 billion each year. Canada also still hasn't prosecuted anyone for their involvement in the Panama papers or the Paradise papers.

• (1225)

That ties into the Liberals' soft-on-crime policies that won't punish those who are avoiding tax, evading tax or committing these crimes.

The CRA “has identified more than \$76 million in taxes owed by Canadians named in the Panama and Paradise Papers”. How can Canadians...and how are the government workers who are supposed to enforce tax rules supposed to take their job seriously when the Prime Minister has been involved in tax havens himself? When he was chair of Brookfield, he used offshore tax havens in Bermuda to stash his company's profits beyond the reach of the CRA.

For the Liberals, there's a two-tier tax code. One is for the rich, like the Prime Minister and his friends, and one is for the rest of us. While we double-check our tax returns to make sure we don't make a mistake and end up getting audited, the Prime Minister's friends dodge taxes while his government taxes us more to make up the difference. While the CRA and the government let this go on, the CRA writes off over \$5 billion in corporate taxes and then goes after small businesses and charities instead.

We Conservatives included in our platform a commitment to closing tax loopholes for the wealthy and well connected, like this Prime Minister. We committed to redirecting CRA resources away from harassing small businesses and charities, instead focusing on cracking down on offshore tax havens. We committed to creating a name-and-shame list for wealthy multinational corporations that are dodging taxes and refusing to pay their fair share. Just last week, our colleague, Conservative MP Adam Chambers, introduced a PMB in the House that would create a sunshine list exposing corporations who get CRA tax write-offs.

These are good policies, but we need to hear from more experts on how to address the gaps in enforcement and legislation. Canadians are struggling now more than ever with the cost of living, the debt burden and the rising crime under the last 10 years of the Liberals. Closing the tax loopholes that allow for avoidance and the use of tax havens will save Canadian taxpayers from higher taxes and could prevent even larger deficits.

This study gives an opportunity for this committee to show Canadians that we believe in fairly enforcing tax rules and not letting wealthy, connected people and Liberal insiders get favourable tax treatment. This is a way for Canada to get serious. Canada has become a playground for criminals. It's become more and more known around the world, under soft-on-crime Liberal policies, that Canada is the place to be if you're a criminal. There are more rights for criminals, and we've seen that under the soft-on-crime policies.

I hope we can get this passed. As I said, it incorporates Bill C-4, and we want to get through Bill C-4. As I said before, there's nothing holding back those tax credits, because they were already passed in the House through the ways and means motion, but if we need to hear from witnesses and from officials and ministers, then this gives us an opportunity to do that quickly to get it out of this House. Then we can move on to the tax evasion and tax haven study.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Hallan.

I'm going to suspend the meeting for five minutes, just so that the clerk can send it around and so that everyone has a chance to read the motion. We'll come back in five minutes.

Thank you.

• (1225) _____ (Pause) _____

• (1235)

The Chair: We're resuming the meeting.

Monsieur Garon, you were next on the speaking list. I apologize.

[*Translation*]

Jean-Denis Garon: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Thank you for your patience. I'll make sure not to call on it too often so that your patience doesn't become legendary.

We are debating a motion that I think is very substantive. Obviously, as far as Bill C-4 is concerned, we prefer to study it clause by clause. We understand that the ways and means motion means that the policy is already applied.

We're not making any assumptions about what might happen. However, the government has occasionally managed its ways and means motions somewhat inadequately in the past. As a result, the Canada Revenue Agency has difficulty managing tax policies implemented under certain ways and means measures. We know that the Canada Revenue Agency is already sufficiently confused these days when it comes to its internal affairs.

Obviously, it's good to carry out a clause-by-clause study. It's good to hear from ministers. I think we passed this bill on division in the House, and a number of things will be consensual.

As far as tax havens are concerned, I will briefly say that the Bloc Québécois's work on this subject has been recognized internationally since 2015. It's undeniable that Canada has fallen behind, and that the Canada Revenue Agency is doing work that, at the very least, should be questioned on this aspect.

Take, for example, KPMG's aggressive tax avoidance schemes. That firm was criminally charged in the United States, and in Canada it was the subject of a secret deal with the Canada Revenue Agency under the previous government.

Right now, we have a minister responsible for national revenue, and that's good. In the previous government, Ms. Lebouthillier basically told us that the agency was independent and that it was like a virus, that it fed itself. She said she didn't want to touch it. Then there was Ms. Bibeau, who was punished as a result of her appointment as minister responsible for the agency. Today, we have a real minister who, for the first time in my time in Parliament, is taking action. For example, he is asking the agency for a 100-day action plan.

At the time, we told Ms. Lebouthillier that she had the right to launch an investigation under the act. She told us to join the police force if we weren't happy. That's what she told us here in committee.

On top of that, we have the Prime Minister's own words. During the election campaign, he said that the fact that these companies are in tax havens was not a problem, that it was just because of withholding taxes. According to him, when money intended for pension funds is managed and remitted to pension funds, taxes are paid by pensioners. That's absolutely correct. However, the Prime Minister

forgot to say that there are more than just pension funds in tax havens.

In addition, the institutions that manage money also coexist with family trusts. Those are immense riches that often stay there forever and are never returned to the beneficiaries. That wealth is used to guarantee loans, borrow money and ensure that institutions never pay taxes. That kind of a situation requires us to ask questions about the mechanisms involved and about those institutions. I think these issues are of interest to the taxpayer. What's more, the agency's tax recovery rate is low and the agency does not perform well by international standards. That remains the case when we compare these results to those of Revenu Québec. That is why, obviously, Quebec should have a single tax return. That's a very good thing.

I just want to make sure of one thing, and I'm appealing to my Conservative colleagues on this. It's good to hear from ministers first and then do the clause-by-clause study. We've heard today that ministers have very complicated schedules. I understand that it could take some time for them to appear before the committee.

In terms of drafting the motion, I just want to make sure that we can start the study on tax havens while we wait for ministers to appear. That would prevent us from getting stuck and not being able to hear from ministers or start the other study.

I would like my colleague to confirm that this is the intent of his motion. My understanding is that we would begin this study concurrently. I just want to make sure that we will be able to begin the study on tax havens while waiting for ministers to appear.

• (1240)

[*English*]

The Chair: Does anyone object to Mr. Hallan answering that question?

An hon. member: I don't object.

The Chair: Okay.

Mr. Hallan.

Jasraj Hallan: Thank you for bringing that up, Monsieur Garon. That is the intention. It's so that the committee continues its business. Previously in this committee, we've had different studies going on simultaneously, at the same time, one after the other. It is my intention that the committee not come to a halt until the ministers appear here for Bill C-4. We can get started on the tax haven study.

I'll look to the clerk for confirmation on whether that needs to be added in there. How does that work when it comes to committee?

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Hallan.

Mr. Turnbull.

Ryan Turnbull: I noticed that the language says, “immediately following the conclusion of this study, and once the bill has been reported back to the House, the committee undertake a subsequent study”. That definitely implies that the one has to be finished before the other begins.

To Mr. Garon's point, maybe we want to clarify the language there, so we know whether the intention is to do them concurrently or to have.... If the committee can't move forward on something related to Bill C-4, it can fill a portion of the time with some work on the tax haven study.

• (1245)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Turnbull.

Mr. Kelly, you're next on the speakers list.

Pat Kelly: I don't know if we need to make.... I was going to speak to the main motion, but I would also like to try to solve the problem that we—

The Chair: We would need to make an amendment.

Pat Kelly: I don't know if this would be sufficient. In the room, there seems to be concurrence on that. Committees can do just about anything when there's unanimous consent.

The Chair: Someone would still need to propose language.

Pat Kelly: I'll amend this. I'm doing this on the fly.

How about, “e. notwithstanding d. if scheduling of witnesses....”? Let me think about this.

The Chair: Would we like to suspend for two minutes to come up with language and then come back?

Pat Kelly: I would consent to that, yes.

The Chair: Okay. Let's do that.

We are suspended for two minutes.

• (1245)

(Pause)

• (1245)

The Chair: I call the meeting back to order. We're back to business.

Mr. Kelly, let's hear it.

Pat Kelly: Delete the words “immediately following the conclusion of this study, and once the bill has been reported back to the House” and substitute them with “concurrently with this study”.

• (1250)

Ryan Turnbull: You have to delete “subsequent”.

Pat Kelly: Yes. That's correct. It also deletes the word “subsequent”.

The Chair: Hold on. What you're proposing is to delete from d. “immediately following the conclusion of the study, and once the bill has been reported back to the House”, and replace it with “concurrently with this study”, and then after the “committee undertake a”, delete “subsequent” study. Is that correct? Okay.

I have Monsieur Garon and then Mr. Turnbull.

Pat Kelly: They're speaking to the subamendments. I was next on your list to speak to the motion.

The Chair: That's correct. They're speaking on this. They both raised their hand on this suggested amendment.

Pat Kelly: I also have the floor. I can speak to the subamendment.

The Chair: Sure. If you want to, you can. I'm sorry. I thought you were done.

Pat Kelly: I don't think I need to. This seems to be what we all agreed to.

The Chair: Would you like to add anything further?

Pat Kelly: No, it's just on.... Well, okay, it'll take me a minute, because the amendment is.... It's still germane to it. It's the importance of both of these studies. Yes, we have a responsibility. I wanted to be clear that, yes, we have a responsibility as a committee to undertake a clause-by-clause on this. We're not trying to rush anything through on Bill C-4. It has taken effect.

Yes, Monsieur Garon is correct that the CRA, as well as the Department of Finance, has a history of not implementing that which is *votum*. I could go to Larry Maguire's private member's bill, which the finance department wouldn't implement, and to the chaos we had around the capital gains tax that was proposed, but on the tax evasion issue, it's also extraordinarily important.

The Auditor General, in 2019, found that the CRA grants extensions for months and sometimes years to tax filers simply if they are filing in an offshore tax jurisdiction, whereas any normal person who does not concurrently file in a tax haven will automatically have their taxes assessed to them if they fail to comply with an instruction or request from the CRA within 30 days. The inequality of tax fairness for ordinary Canadian tax filers and those who do choose to file in offshore jurisdictions using complicated corporate schemes, and the unequal treatment by the CRA, were remarked on by the Auditor General.

That was six years ago. I don't think very many Canadians have seen evidence that there's been any improvement. With that amendment, we can do both of these at the same time. I hope we'll adopt both the amendment and the motion.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Kelly.

Monsieur Garon.

[Translation]

Jean-Denis Garon: Thank you, Madam Chair.

I'll be brief. I agree with the amendment, but I just want things to be clear: In supporting it, we have to keep in mind that, when we know whether a budget will be tabled in the spring, when the minister will be able to make himself available and communicate his intentions, and when he has done a minimum amount of work, we will be able to schedule pre-budget consultations.

Bill C-4 is important because we have to do the legislative work first. In the meantime, we can also do a very important study on tax avoidance. I commend my Conservative colleagues for their initiative in this regard.

Once we know what's going on in the minister's mind, we can adjust as we go.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Garon.

Mr. Turnbull, you have the floor.

[*English*]

Ryan Turnbull: I really appreciate this effort at the end of our committee to come together. It looks like we're landing on something that we'll all be able to agree to.

I have two really minor subamendments. They're just deletions of language that I consider kind of loaded. My preference would be to just take out these small phrases that don't matter to or affect the substance.

One is "weak rules on". I would suggest that is a judgment. I get that we'll all have our different views around whether the rules are weak or strong or need to be improved. I imagine that we'll all probably agree that they need to be improved. I would delete "weak rules on". This is in (d).

I'm just making sure that we have the clerk's attention for—

• (1255)

The Chair: I'm sorry, Mr. Turnbull. I think that is a separate amendment to the motion, as opposed to a subamendment to the amendment that has just been moved.

An hon. member: Yes.

Ryan Turnbull: Okay. If you prefer, I can introduce it later.

The Chair: Yes. We can vote on the amendment. Then you could introduce a second amendment.

Ryan Turnbull: Fair enough.

Just to clarify, in the amendment that Mr. Kelly introduced—because I didn't hear, so I may have been mistaken—were the words "subsequent study" deleted as well?

The Chair: That's correct.

Ryan Turnbull: Were they? Okay, then I'm good to vote on it.

The Chair: Okay.

Is there any further debate, or can we take the vote on the amendment to the main motion?

Clerk, it's over to you on the amendment of Mr. Kelly.

(Amendment agreed to: yeas 9; nays 0 [*See Minutes of Proceedings*])

The Chair: Thank you. The amendment is adopted.

Mr. Kelly, we're back to debate on the main motion.

Pat Kelly: I have nothing further to add to my remarks.

The Chair: Thank you.

Go ahead, Mr. Turnbull.

Ryan Turnbull: We're now on the main motion. I would like to present an amendment, which has two deletions.

The first is in (d), where I would suggest deleting "weak rules on", which doesn't affect the substance of the study but is more of a value statement about the rules. We may all agree, at the end of it, that they're too weak, and that's fine, but I'd like to delete "weak rules on".

Second, I would like to delete "and inviting white-collar crime into Canada", which is later in the motion.... Actually, it's still in (d). Again, I don't think anyone is intentionally inviting white-collar crime into Canada. The rules may allow for it to happen too frequently, and we may all agree on that, but I think that's more loaded language. I would like to preserve fairly objective language in the actual motion that doesn't affect the substance of the study. I hope that members, in the spirit of collaboration, which I think that we've achieved here in this committee, would vote those changes through.

The Chair: To clarify, in paragraph (d) it would be the deletion of "weak rules on", and then a couple of lines later "inviting white-collar crime into Canada".

Does anyone wish to debate this?

Mr. Hallan, go ahead.

Jasraj Hallan: To give a bit of context as to why it was written in there, it's that, when officials testified, the responses they gave led towards those exact things: We do have weak rules. They said themselves that they're not being enforced, and that's why we put enforcement in there. White-collar crime has gone up quite a bit, and you can see that in the numbers: It's in the billions. Overall, if we're all in agreement—and we're almost there, landing in a good place—I think we would agree to take those out. That's fine.

The Chair: Is there anyone else who would like to intervene? Otherwise I'll be happy to move to a vote.

A voice: I say we pass it by unanimous consent.

The Chair: Okay, let's go.

Jasraj Hallan: We're all in agreement.

The Chair: We're all in agreement, so we can do that by UC.

(Amendment agreed to [*See Minutes of Proceedings*])

The Chair: Unless anyone would like to speak to the main motion, let's go to a vote on this, please.

(Motion as amended agreed to [*See Minutes of Proceedings*])

The Chair: Gentlemen, it's 12:59. Look at that.

I'm sorry, but there's one other thing I would like to put on the agenda. Let's see whether we can get concurrence on this. I mentioned last Wednesday that the Governor of the Bank of Canada had requested to discuss his annual monetary policy report with this committee on November 5.

Is there agreement to have the Governor of the Bank of Canada come and address this committee on November 5?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Chair: That's fantastic.

• (1300)

[*Translation*]

Thank you very much.

[*English*]

Have a great day.

With the consent of the committee, I will adjourn.

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Chair: Okay. Have a great day.

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