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• (1105)

[English]

The Chair (Chris Bittle (St. Catharines, Lib.)): I call this meeting to order.

Welcome, everyone, to meeting number 13 of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs. Pursuant to Standing Order 108(3), the committee is meeting for its study of challenges regarding special ballot voting.

Today's meeting is taking place in a hybrid format, pursuant to the Standing Orders. Members are attending in person in the room and, potentially, remotely by using the Zoom application.

Before I continue, I would ask all in-person participants to consult the guidelines written on the back of the cards on the table. There's a QR code that links to a video. It's important to protect the health and safety of everyone present, especially our interpreters.

I'll make a few comments for the benefit of members. I remind you that all comments should be addressed through the chair—that's me. For members in the room, if you wish to speak, raise your hand. For members on Zoom, if there are any, please use the "raise hand" function. For witnesses on Zoom, you've all been told about the translation feature, as questions will be asked in both official languages.

I would now like to welcome our witnesses for today's panel. We have Élise Fraysse, associate professor; Toby James, professor of politics and public policy, the University of East Anglia, Norwich; Therese Pearce Laanela, head of electoral processes at International IDEA; and Holly Ann Garnett, class of 1965 professor of leadership, Royal Military College of Canada.

Each witness has up to five minutes to make their opening statement.

I start with Professor Fraysse for five minutes, please.

[Translation]

Élise Fraysse (Associate Professor, As an Individual): Thank you very much.

Members of the committee, it's a pleasure and an honour to appear before you today. Thank you for inviting me to testify.

I am representing the French perspective at this meeting, since I have in the past been interested in the voting of French expats around the world. I wrote a paper on the issue. I'm interested in the subject because there are 2.5 million French expats around the world, which raises interesting constitutional issues, in my opinion.

To begin, I can summarize by saying that French expatriates have a very bad name. France has constitutional mechanisms that make it possible to include expatriates very broadly in political decision-making processes, such as national and local elections.

French citizens residing abroad have been allowed to vote for a long time, since the early 20th century. This right was gradually strengthened as a result of World War II and globalization.

Today, one can say that it is very easy, at least from a legal standpoint, to vote abroad if you are French. Expats can vote from abroad if they're on the consular lists. For legislative elections, they now have the option of voting online, which is unheard of in France. They can also vote by mail or by going to a consulate or embassy.

They can also be registered, almost fictionally, on the electoral list of a French *commune*, or municipality, if one of their descendants has already been registered, or if one of their parents up to the fourth degree, such as an uncle or nephew, has already been registered. This allows for fairly broad participation of French expatriates in national, local and European elections.

There were quite a few challenges with expat voting in elections in France, which led to online voting. It also led to a number of challenges. So the question of generalizing the practice arises. I won't say more about that since my time is limited, but perhaps we'll come back to it.

The second thing that I think is quite interesting and that I wanted to talk to you about is the specific representation of French citizens living abroad. Since 2008, French expatriates have been specifically represented by members and senators in the French Parliament. They have 11 members of Parliament, representing 11 ridings around the world, and 12 senators. This also created a number of challenges, even though it wasn't the subject of much debate in 2008.

The first issue is voter equality, since some ridings have a lot more voters than others. It can happen that a member representing French citizens living abroad does not represent the exact same number of voters that another member represents.

More broadly, we can also question the legitimacy of this special representation of French citizens living abroad. They may never have lived in France, but nevertheless have representatives in the National Assembly and the Senate.

To conclude, I would add that, in my opinion, the issue of voting by French expats is linked to the issue of voting by foreigners. This is where the situation in France may differ from the situation in Canada.

In France, since 1992, European nationals have been able to vote in French national elections. In the interest of balance, we wanted to strengthen the ability of French expats to vote once foreigners were able to vote in France.

• (1110)

Thank you very much for your attention. I am available to answer any questions you may have.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you so much.

We'll move along to Professor James for five minutes.

Toby James (Professor of Politics and Public Policy, University of East Anglia, Norwich, As an Individual): Thank you so much.

I'd like to start by thanking the committee for the opportunity to contribute in a small way to this study, which is a great honour.

I am a professor of politics and public policy at the University of East Anglia in Norwich, in the United Kingdom. I think other witnesses are much better positioned than I am to describe the Canadian system and the experience of Canadian voters. Instead, I want to focus my comments on describing the U.K. experience of overseas voting, which I think might be helpful, alongside a few comments about the international experience as well.

The United Kingdom has recently removed a 15-year limit on the exercise of voting rights for citizens living overseas. This enfranchised, in theory, many voters in the 2024 general election. There are some estimates—they are only estimates, as there are no official figures—that there could be around five million people eligible to vote in U.K. general elections who are living overseas.

The U.K. system relies on two mechanisms to enable such people to cast their vote. The first is postal voting, where citizens can apply for a postal vote in advance. Importantly, these ballots do include a list of candidates. They are the same as normal ballots that are issued on election day. Therefore, they cannot be published or posted until very late in the electoral cycle. The second mechanism is proxy voting, where you can nominate someone you trust, who is a resident in the United Kingdom, to vote on your behalf on the day of the election. An individual can cast up to four votes on behalf of overseas voters.

The system works in one sense: It enables many people to vote who would not otherwise do so. At the last general election, 191,000 people were registered to vote in the election. Roughly half of those were registered to vote via post, and it's estimated that 52% were actually then able to return that ballot. Around 50,000 people were voting from overseas via the post. There's no data, unfortu-

nately, on the number of overseas proxy voters, but clearly proxy voting is very important in the United Kingdom to enable, in practice, people to cast their ballots.

There are also some problems in the United Kingdom, which will probably strike a similar chord to the Canadian story. Postal votes take a long time to be dispatched and returned around the world. Some votes, in practice, are not counted and are not included in the final results. The parliamentary timetable is a challenge. Overseas electors often have little knowledge about their electoral rights and the process. Out of that possible five million eligible people, very few actually have their vote cast and counted at the end of the process.

As a scholar of elections and electoral integrity around the world, I'll add a couple of other very quick observations. It's clear that measures such as special ballots, postal voting and proxy voting are very important in terms of enabling people to vote who might not otherwise be able to do so. It does bring greater inclusion into the voting process as a result. However, these measures inevitably bring complexity and administrative challenges for electoral officials.

Factors that are also important in terms of the safe delivery of elections are therefore ensuring that the electoral officials receive sufficient resources and investment in training to be able to run the elections, and making sure that the electoral timetable makes the election deliverable. Investing in voter education and voter understanding of the process—what's possible and what they need to do for their part of the bargain to make sure their vote is counted—is essential as well.

The committee might want to consider some options such as proxy voting, which is widely used in the United Kingdom, to enable more Canadians to cast their vote, but support for electoral officials and continued investment in the wider electoral framework in Canada are important as well.

Thank you for the time. I'm very happy to take any questions you may have.

• (1115)

The Chair: Thank you so much.

At four minutes and 57 seconds, that was excellent. I truly appreciate that.

Next, we have Professor Laanela, please.

Therese Pearce Laanela (Head of Electoral Processes, International IDEA): It is such a pleasure to be with you here today.

I'm calling in from Stockholm, Sweden. I'm the head of electoral processes at International IDEA. This is an intergovernmental organization of which Canada is a very prominent member. We're very pleased to work with Elections Canada, Global Affairs Canada, the election authorities in the provinces and your excellent academics in Canada. It's always a pleasure.

I should say, since I do work with electoral processes globally, that I want to reassure you that you can be very proud of Canada. Canada punches above its weight in election management, election research and election assistance abroad through Global Affairs Canada, so you can be very proud of that.

There are challenges worldwide, as you are noticing with calling this committee. On out-of-country voting, again, if I can reassure you, it is not just Canada grappling with it; this is something all over the world. Toby has just given you the example from the U.K., and Élise has given you information about France. It's really difficult to get it right. If we co-operate together or have the ability to look at global practice, you can get ideas to pull from from other parts of the world, and we're here to help with that.

I have sent, through the clerk, our handbooks on overseas voting. There are a lot of case studies, including some from this year, on experiments in overseas voting.

As I see it, there are two issues that are really important to solve in Canada. One is very similar to the one that Toby just described, which is the fact that voters, in good faith, register on the international register of voters with Elections Canada, receive their voting kits and send them back, yet the votes are not counted, because they arrive too late. This is a systemic problem. It is nobody's fault. Everybody's doing the best they can.

The fact is that Canada doesn't have fixed elections. An election can be called at any time, which limits the election calendar and makes the timing for sending out those voting kits and getting them back very tight. Add to that that you're dealing with two post offices—you're dealing with Canada Post and the post offices in Iraq, France, Senegal or Guinea—and the risk of those ballots not coming back on time is a real one. That's what Elections Canada seems to be very worried about as well.

The second problem that you've identified is getting people on that register. How do you know where those Canadians are? Where are the eligible voters, and how do you get them to be on that register?

I think that these two challenges also bring two great opportunities for Canada. One secret little trick that I'm going to tell you is that, for most countries, out-of-country voting is a little bit of a gateway to test or pilot innovations that might influence voting in the future. New ways of online voting or new ways of doing things are often tested in a small way with a group of out-of-country voters. I think this opens up an opportunity for you to solve one of these problems, which is your timing problem.

The other opportunity that this opens up for you is more international co-operation. We're seeing this trend globally, but the fact is that voters cross borders, as does money or influence, so working with agencies overseas and involving your diplomatic community intensely is one way of solving your reach problem.

I have just one minute, so I'll just open the conversation, but I hope we can continue the conversation about how to solve the timing problem. If you are going to pilot new voting arrangements, what would you consider? The postal system is in two transactions. One is getting the voting kits, and one is sending them back. If you could replace, for example, getting your voting kits with some kind of a digital option, that could be one experiment that you might want to try. The other experiment that you might want to try, perhaps with another group or a target group, would be to do both online: you get your voting kit online and you supply it online, as was the case in France. It's not optimal, and it doesn't work everywhere, but it is being experimented with throughout the world, and I think it is the way of the future, as much as we prefer to vote in our polling stations.

• (1120)

I'm at four minutes and 59 seconds, but I'd love to continue this conversation in questions.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

I think the members know that I'm not too much of a tyrant when it comes to time.

I wanted to let you know I think you'll be happy to learn that the streets in front of Parliament Hill are decked out in the Swedish flag. I'm sure it was in anticipation of your testimony and probably nothing to do with the king and queen being here.

I appreciate your opening remarks.

We'll move now to Professor Garnett for five minutes, please.

Holly Ann Garnett (Class of 1965 Professor in Leadership, Royal Military College of Canada, As an Individual): Thank you for this opportunity to speak to the committee today.

Unlike my colleagues, I am coming to you from just up the road in Kingston, Ontario.

My understanding is that this meeting is focused on the challenges faced by electors casting their ballots from abroad. Specifically, there are far more eligible electors living abroad than are being issued special ballots, and even fewer ballots are being returned on time, at an estimated 56%, with another 19% being returned too late to be counted and another 24% not being returned at all.

Why is this a problem worth looking at? I believe this committee would agree that these figures present a challenge to Canada's democratic electoral system: first, because robust turnout is required for democratic legitimacy, and second, because, as decided by the Supreme Court, all Canadians, including those living abroad, have a right to cast a ballot. As it is for Canadians living within Canada, there should be options that allow them to do so without facing undue barriers.

Why is this happening? There are a number of factors related to Canada's election laws and procedures that exacerbate the issue of unissued and unreturned special ballots from Canadians living abroad. The first is the short election period, as Therese mentioned, with as few as 37 days to receive and cast that special ballot. With minority Parliaments that can fall unpredictably, there can be very little notice of when an election will be called. The second is the reliance on the postal system to deliver the ballot, which can have variations in its reliability, both in Canada and abroad.

What can be done about this? What I wanted to do is present you a menu, so to speak, of the different options. However, I caution that each of these options comes with additional risks, and those have to be weighed in relation to the possible benefits.

Globally, I'd say there are three main ways of facilitating the voting of citizens living abroad: in-person voting, for example at embassies; postal voting, like our special ballots; and electronic voting methods by email, telephone or online.

I'm happy to speak about the in-person and the fully online voting options in the Q and A, but given that I'm not entirely sure there's a lot of interest in those being implemented in Canada in the future, I'll focus on some smaller changes that could improve the reliability of the special ballot voting system for electors abroad. Again, these all come with advantages and drawbacks.

First, currently, ballots must arrive at the Elections Canada office by election night. In some jurisdictions, however, ballots can still be counted if they are postmarked by election day. That's something you might want to look at, perhaps by looking at American jurisdictions that do that.

Second, ballots could also be sent by the voter to an embassy, consulate or mission in-country and then counted and forwarded from there, rather than having to make their way all the way back to Canada by the election date. Examples for that could be New Zealand and Finland.

Third, other jurisdictions use private couriers to deliver ballots rather than the regular postal system, which could potentially be more reliable or trackable. I actually voted from abroad for both the Ontario and the Canadian elections in 2025, and I received my Ontario ballot via FedEx in just a couple of days.

Fourth, in some places, voters can print their ballots at home and mail them in, reducing the lead time required to receive a special voting package. Again, I'll highlight New Zealand's external voting procedures, which are really interesting in this regard.

Fifth, New Zealand also allows voters to scan their ballots and submit them via an online portal. Other countries will use email or fax. Some American states also require you to follow that up with

the physical ballot mailed in after the fact, but then at least your ballot is getting counted on election night.

Finally, just to mention something that has gone through this committee previously, there is the possibility of allowing all voters to complete a special ballot by writing in the name of the party, rather than the candidate, so they can return their ballot earlier, as was proposed in Bill C-65.

I want to highlight again that each of these changes would come with its own advantages and also potential risks, and I wouldn't necessarily recommend all of them, but this at least gives you an idea of some of the options that could be on the table. I am happy to elaborate on some of the pros and cons within the Q and A period that will follow.

Thank you.

• (1125)

The Chair: Thank you so much.

Everyone did very well on their five minutes, and the chair does appreciate it.

We will now go to questions, starting with Mr. Van Popta of the Conservative Party for six minutes, please.

Tako Van Popta (Langley Township—Fraser Heights, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you to all the witnesses for spending some time with us today on a very important topic. We appreciate your perspectives and your professional input.

I'm going to start with Dr. Garnett.

I looked at a University of Ottawa study by two professors, Daniel Stockemer and Michael Wigginton. It was a 2024 study that looked at Ontario's municipal voting processes, which now include, as an option for the municipality, Internet voting. The question the study's authors put to themselves was this: "How does the decision to adopt internet voting, the mode of adoption and the timing of adoption influence turnout?" Surprisingly, at least to me, the answer was, "Generally, we find that allowing internet voting, regardless of the availability of in-person voting, does not influence turnout over the long term."

Professor Garnett, I wonder if you have any comments about that. You might not be familiar with the study, but you would be familiar with the concept.

Holly Ann Garnett: Absolutely. Yes, in Canada, the best example we can look to in terms of Internet voting is how municipalities and even one territory have decided to adopt it. There's certainly research suggesting that convenience voting measures, be that Internet voting or other measures, may not improve overall turnout across the board.

When I study this, I think the interesting thing is to look at which population groups might be affected. How can different special voting measures make elections more inclusive for certain population groups that may not otherwise have the option to vote? For example, if I'm here in Kingston, whether I can vote online or I can go to a polling station, I'm going to vote regardless, but there are definitely individuals for whom, maybe due to a disability or because they're living abroad, that accessible measure is really the only measure they have to vote, and I'm really concerned about those people having a right to vote. While it might not improve turnout across the board, there are some population groups for which it might be essential.

Also, while we're talking about the Internet voting issue in Ontario municipalities, I think a really interesting case study would be to look at issues of security, privacy and other concerns we might have about introducing this form of technology into the voting process, which I can talk about as well if there's interest.

Tako Van Popta: That's good. Thank you.

This study actually did say that people who used Internet voting were most likely people who were already highly motivated to vote, so I don't know if your theory stands true that Internet voting makes it more accessible for people who otherwise might not vote. If you have some evidence or data or statistics that would point otherwise, I'd certainly be happy to see that.

Holly Ann Garnett: This doesn't always show up in large quantitative research, insofar as it may not show up across the board, but yes, we definitely see that a lot of accessible voting measures might be used by the people who are likely to vote anyway. What I'm always concerned about is whether there are certain population groups for which this might be the only option. Even if they don't show up in these larger statistical models, they're still very important voters.

I'll take a look at the study. Hopefully, I can take a look from there and see if there's anything else I can contribute.

Tako Van Popta: Yes, and if you want to give us something in writing, that would be very useful.

Holly Ann Garnett: Certainly.

Tako Van Popta: Mr. Chair, do I still have a couple of minutes?

The Chair: You have over two minutes left.

Tako Van Popta: Okay. That's a lot of time.

Professor James, I was very interested in your evidence, particularly concerning proxy voting. Perhaps you could give us more details on how that works and, importantly, whether that method of voting is generally accepted by the voting public in the U.K.

• (1130)

Toby James: Yes. Everyone is able to apply for either a postal vote or a proxy vote. This isn't just a measure for overseas voters. It

might be that they're away on election day and they've actually provisioned to apply for an emergency proxy vote up until 6 p.m. on the day of the election.

In the early 2000s, the U.K. introduced a range of measures to make voting more convenient and more inclusive. One of those measures was postal voting. Those experiments took a bit of time to get right. There were some concerns about electoral fraud and actually some high-profile cases of electoral fraud relating to postal voting in the early 2000s. Measures were then put in place to close some of those gaps.

As it stands, postal voting and proxy voting are used. Unfortunately, partly because of the way in which the U.K. is very decentralized as to how it runs elections, there is no central number of how many people actually use the proxy votes. One survey suggested that roughly 1% of people thought proxy voting was helpful. I think it is a useful tool for overseas voters, though.

Tako Van Popta: Good.

I also asked the question of whether it was controversial in the U.K. Was it generally accepted, or did people have to get comfortable with the idea?

Toby James: I think that initially there was widespread acceptance of both postal voting and proxy voting. These measures came in at around the same time. There was then some concern, after some high-profile cases were taken to court. Having seen those cases adjudicated on and reforms being made, I think proxy voting is not a source of public concern at the moment. I think people widely think that it's a useful way to enable people to vote who might not otherwise be able to do so.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Van Popta.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Deschênes, you have the floor for six minutes.

[*English*]

I'm sorry. I jumped the gun. It's Mr. Louis for six minutes, please.

Tim Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga, Lib.): Thank you very much to all the witnesses for being here.

It's an important study. This gets to the heart of our democracy and ensuring that every Canadian citizen, no matter where they live, has the opportunity to exercise their right to vote.

What we're hearing in the study is that far too few Canadians living abroad are participating effectively. I think we had about one in 30 Canadians abroad requesting a ballot. Out of those, only about one in six had their vote counted, so we're looking to address this large gap.

What we're seeing in the study.... I'm glad our witnesses are here. Is this a logistical issue? Is this informational? Is it systemic? What is preventing Canadians from voting when they're abroad? At the same time, we're trying to balance convenience, security and inclusivity.

Maybe I'll start with Professor Laanela. You mentioned the phrase "election assistance abroad through Global Affairs Canada". Can you elaborate on that and explain how Global Affairs Canada reaches out and how that compares to other countries?

Therese Pearce Laanela: Sure.

I really like your framing of the trade-offs between convenience, inclusivity and security. As Professor Garnett was saying, each of these options comes with some kind of trade-offs between them. Your role is to see where these are.

Global Affairs, or I should say Canada through Global Affairs Canada, has been actively involved in elections for maybe 35 years. It's an interesting history that you may not know. Of the Western democracies, it was really Canada, Australia and India that had strong election commissions before anybody else. Western Europe did not have this. Toby and Élise can vouch for that. There were no independent election commissions here, but Canada had that.

In those early days of democratization, Elections Canada was asked to supply its knowledge and expertise and has influenced the rise of independent election commissions all over the world. You can be very proud of that heritage. That, of course, has gone through CIDA before and Global Affairs Canada now. This is assistant to transitioning democracies.

One of the changes or trends we're seeing is that it used to be transitional countries, as in the global south, that were curious about strengthening their electoral systems, and now it is squarely our own democracies in Western Europe and in North America, for example, that are looking to protect and safeguard their own elections.

Canada is part of that journey by, for example, investing in a global package on protecting elections from harm. It's being launched at the United Nations as we speak. Holly has been part of that journey as well. This is a global package to protect elections from disinformation, from the harms of climate change, money, politics and so forth.

• (1135)

Tim Louis: Following up on.... Right before you were saying this, I had typed in whether ballots mailed in both directions can be sent electronically one or both ways, and maybe seconds after I had typed that, you mentioned it.

You can see the advantages speedwise, but what would be the challenges with safety and security?

Therese Pearce Laanela: I'll follow up on the examples that Holly was giving. There is the possibility of getting your voting kit electronically. This is what she was describing in New Zealand, for example, and Élise was describing it in France. Many countries have this, like Estonia and the Philippines. The ballot paper can be printed where you are and not sent to you. This can be done in a number of ways.

The other possibility is that once you have filled out your ballot, it can go back electronically. There's a possibility of combining these: For example, you download your ballot but you send it back by mail after signing the various forms.

There are many permutations that are being tried out there. What you end up landing on depends a lot on the trust and technology that you have in your own country. That's, I think, where the sticking point is. It isn't that it's not technologically possible; it's whether people would trust those systems. I think that's why Elections Canada has been cautious.

I would advise that this particular population is a good one to test it on. When you start looking at these options, it is often with your out-of-country voters that you start to test and see what works.

Tim Louis: I have less than a minute.

It may have been Dr. Garnett who mentioned it, but since I'm talking to you, maybe you can address this. Sending the ballot electronically but then also mailing it physically, is that something that some countries are doing as a backup?

Therese Pearce Laanela: I'll let Holly answer that one, because she said that.

Holly Ann Garnett: Yes, there are some American states where there are options, kind of like backups, that you can use. There is a backup form so that if you don't get your ballot in time, you can fill out the backup form and send it in. There are also cases where you can, say, email your ballot, but then follow that up with the actual physical one to be mailed in. There are a couple of states—I can't name them off the top of my head—that choose that option.

As Therese mentioned, there's a huge variety of permutations in the use of email or online systems that can be tried in terms of being able to get people's ballots to them more quickly and get them back from them more quickly.

Tim Louis: Thank you very much.

The Chair: Thank you.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Deschênes, you have the floor for six minutes.

Alexis Deschênes (Gaspésie—Les Îles-de-la-Madeleine—Lestiguj, BQ): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Good morning, everyone.

I am pleased to participate in this interesting discussion on our electoral system.

Ms. Fraysse, I listened to your presentation on how the French have managed expat voting. It's very different from what we do in Canada. However, it is worthwhile comparing the two, and that's what I'd like to do with you.

Currently, French expats who are outside Canada typically go to vote in their last place of residence. That raises the possibility that the vote could be targeted and that there could be a concerted movement. People's last addresses aren't checked very well. This risk may be hypothetical, but there is still a risk in certain ridings where the vote might be closer.

The French approach of having specific ridings for expats would reduce that risk.

That said, I sensed that you were somewhat critical of France's solution. You said there were challenges in terms of legitimacy and representation.

Are there any advantages to having specific ridings for citizens who live outside the national territory?

• (1140)

Élise Fraysse: Thank you for your question.

French expats can in fact vote in two ways. They can vote in their home municipality, their last place of residence or where their parents or ancestors were registered, for example. So they are buried in national ridings and vote for members of metropolitan France. They can also decide to vote abroad, in which case they are affiliated with the 11 “international ridings”.

The main benefit that was raised in 2008 at the time of the constitutional reform is certainly visibility and specificity for French citizens living abroad. I think that is definitely related to the idea that France should have some influence abroad, that it is an economic benefit to have expats, and that they are therefore given a more specific voice in Parliament.

I think that is why this change was readily adopted in 2008 by the executive branch and the legislative branch.

Alexis Deschênes: My next question might seem rather subjective.

When members of the French political system speak on behalf of expats from a sector such as Oceania or Asia, are they considered relevant and listened to?

Élise Fraysse: I think so. There was even a French member from abroad who later became a minister, which hadn't happened for a long time.

However, given the size of the ridings, especially when you're talking about Oceania, it seems difficult. In fact, that riding extends from Russia to Australia. There's only one MP who represents that entire international riding. It can also raise questions about the advisability and legitimacy of speaking on behalf of all French citizens living abroad.

Alexis Deschênes: Yes, that's bigger than my riding.

Élise Fraysse: Yes, I think so.

Alexis Deschênes: I think it's too big as it is.

How does it work in terms of representation?

How do those people get in touch with the people they elected?

Élise Fraysse: I think it's very difficult. In fact, it works largely through the parties. First and foremost, people vote for a party to be

represented in France. They don't really vote for someone who is going to defend their expatriate interests in Australia or New Zealand within France, for example.

That's why the abstention rate is still quite high. I don't think all expatriates are really represented in spite of those specific MPs.

Alexis Deschênes: Indeed, it is an interesting solution, because expats may have more in common than those at their last known address.

For voters, I get it, but the representatives fare well also. They are elected by people they will probably never meet in their lives.

Élise Fraysse: Some international ridings are more important. I'm thinking of Canada and the United States. However, it still makes more sense in Europe, since the majority of expats live there. I'm thinking of Benelux in particular. I think it's easier to have a connection with the member in question and the three small countries that make up Benelux. They're smaller than France alone.

For some ridings, it does seem a bit pointless.

Alexis Deschênes: Based on your reading and observations, what do you think is the best option?

Is it the option currently in place here? People vote in a riding that exists in Canada.

From what I understand, France has adopted a hybrid model.

In your opinion, which option is more conducive to voting by special ballot?

Élise Fraysse: I don't know if I will answer your question directly. The fact that France allows people to vote in national and local elections even though they have never lived in France is quite problematic, in my opinion.

To my mind, it is problematic. I think it is really a fiction to say that people are attached to France through *communes*. I'm not on board with that.

• (1145)

Alexis Deschênes: You have to understand that, in Canada, the Supreme Court said that there was no time limit.

Thank you, Ms. Fraysse.

Élise Fraysse: Thank you very much.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you.

I was drifting a little, but we're a bit over. I appreciate the time.

We will now go to Mr. Jackson for five minutes, please.

Grant Jackson (Brandon—Souris, CPC): Thank you, Chair.

Thank you to the witnesses for being here.

It's nice to see you again, Dr. Garnett, and to the rest of you, it's nice to meet you virtually for the first time.

My first question is for Ms. Laanela.

In Canada, as you know, there is a constitutional separation between federal government responsibilities and provincial government responsibilities. We're talking a lot about equal representation and decision-making at the federal level. I wonder if you have any comment about the fact that there are constitutional authorities that are strictly the responsibility of provinces and whether Canadians living abroad.... How would that work? We don't necessarily have relationships with Canadian embassies abroad at the provincial level. In terms of encouraging voters abroad, if they're going to be allowed to vote in provincial elections as well, what would that look like? Who is going to facilitate those elections? If we're talking about equality of representation, is it not important that Canadians abroad should be voting in provincial elections as well? What would that look like?

Therese Pearce Laanela: That's an excellent question.

You picked on something that has to do, in a way, with identity and what being Canadian is or what being British Columbian is. A rule of thumb is that, for those abroad, it's your national identity that is the one that is key. The smaller you get in terms of jurisdiction.... If you go down to the municipal level, that would be for residents, so even if you weren't a citizen but were a resident, you should be able to vote where you live, because that's things like the swimming pool, the parks and so forth, whereas the national decisions are to do with you as a Canadian. That tends to be the rule of thumb.

Now, the thing is that Canadian provinces are so big that they are almost like some states, so they come in that grey zone. Therefore, it becomes an identity issue a little bit there, as well. You can look to the United States—and I think Holly has more examples of that, of what is allowed if you're a Californian overseas and so forth—with regard to these provinces that are almost as big as some countries.

I want to just give an example of what Élise was saying, and that is that in Cape Verde, for example, they see Cape Verde as beyond its geographical boundaries. This is a kind of a national philosophy. A Cape Verdean is a Cape Verdean, no matter what they are, so they take out-of-country voting extremely seriously, whereas other places—like India, for example—don't allow voting abroad at all.

It's really to do with identity and where people belong.

Grant Jackson: Thank you for that answer. It's sort of leading me to my next question, which goes very well with it.

In the House of Commons just recently, a bill passed to remove the first-generation limit on citizenship for folks born abroad. I have no doubt that this will pass in the Senate, as well, and likely be in effect for the next election. Right now, though, despite that, the bill does nothing to address the fact that the Canada Elections Act currently requires voters living abroad to vote in the last constituency that they lived in. However, when this bill comes into effect, you will have many generations of Canadians eligible to vote here who have never lived in the country.

I wonder, Dr. Garnett, if you have some recommendation as to how to address that. Where should the votes...? Obviously, we won't have foreign constituencies, like France, established for the next election, yet you'll have multiple generations of foreign Canadians—that's not the right term, but you know what I mean—who have never lived here, so they can't register in the last constituency they lived in. Where should those votes be tallied?

Holly Ann Garnett: That's an excellent question, and it's something that I don't think there's an easy solution or answer to. I think what you could look to is where the family member through whom they got citizenship last voted. Otherwise, I don't have an easy or perfect solution.

I wonder if perhaps Ms. Fraysse has a solution from the French context.

• (1150)

Grant Jackson: Sure.

Ms. Fraysse.

[*Translation*]

Élise Fraysse: I'm sorry.

Can you repeat your question?

[*English*]

Grant Jackson: I apologize.

Right now, Canada has a law in place that requires Canadians living abroad to vote in the last constituency in which they lived. However, we're going to have many generations of Canadians who have never lived in Canada, who have always lived abroad, so they can't register in a Canadian constituency.

Where should their votes be counted if we don't have the foreign constituencies created by the time we have another election?

[*Translation*]

Élise Fraysse: In the case of France, even if a person has never lived in France, they can vote if they have French citizenship.

That person must be attached to a *commune*, a municipality, which may be the municipality of their last residence, the one where their ancestors, such as a father, grandfather or great-grandfather, were registered. That *commune* can also be the one where a fourth-degree relative, such as a nephew, cousin or uncle, was registered. It might even be possible if the person's spouse is on the voter list.

It is a given that, even if you have never lived in France, you can definitely take part in national and local elections.

[*English*]

Grant Jackson: Thank you.

Do I have a little bit of time?

The Chair: You are over a minute.

Grant Jackson: Okay, no problem.

The Chair: Thank you so much.

We'll move on to Mr. Wilkinson for five minutes, please.

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (North Vancouver—Capilano, Lib.): Thank you all for being here.

Maybe I'll let each of you take a crack at this.

One of the reasons we're studying this is effectively the very low rate of participation of Canadians outside of the country, which is less than 2% of those who are actually eligible to vote. There are other countries that clearly are doing better. France, I think, is about 35 times better than Canada. The United States is eight times better than Canada, and there are others.

There are two separate pieces. One is obstacles to voting and whether there are ways to make it more accessible. The other is the engagement of the community. Let me take first the obstacles. There's a lot of interesting feedback in terms of different options. There's the idea of actually taking a fairly restrictive Canadian system right now in terms of mail and having the kit made available online and making it much more widely available to vote at consulates and embassies. There's the proxy voting—which is really interesting—all the way to electronic voting.

If you were advising us about the best way for us to actually simplify the process to get higher levels of turnout, what would that be?

We could start with Professor James, and then go to Professor Pearce Laanela, Professor Fraysse and finally Professor Garnett.

Toby James: That probably gives me about a minute and a half.

There are multiple factors that shape voter turnout. Simplified voter registration procedures are important. The literature says that flexible deadlines are important.

In that case, I think that looking seriously at proxy voting, but also electronic voting, in the ways that we've heard about earlier from other witnesses, is really important.

The other thing that's been mentioned is overseas constituencies. Generally speaking, if you have an overseas constituency, then turnout is probably going to be higher. It gives a focus or a container, if you like, for overseas voters to go into. It gives a meaningful contest. You have candidates who actually compete for that. Therefore, there is an incentive for them to reach out and engage.

Some things are going to be very difficult to change. They might be related to people's connections with the country. If someone has recently left Canada, it's very likely that they'll want to vote. If they have not lived there for a long time, it's less likely that they'll want to vote.

The other thing is the role of important focusing events. In the U.K., for example, we had a lot more interest in overseas voting when we had the Brexit referendum. The registrations increased. When there are important international focusing events, I think the way that politicians can campaign is important.

Of all these things that the committee can probably recommend, I would say that a single overseas constituency could make a big difference, and looking at proxy voting and Internet voting.

• (1155)

Therese Pearce Laanela: Great. I'll go next.

I think that those ways of getting the vote home more quickly may not help with the turnout and engagement, because I think a lot of Canadians don't know that they can be on the international register or how to get on it. For that, you really need to figure out where your Canadians are. That's not so easy, because Canadians don't tend to be like a distinct community or a distinct subculture as other communities may be. They're often not a distinct language group, and so forth.

I'd say, work very closely with your diplomatic communities, because they know approximately the patterns of where people are. They know when Canadians interface with the government to renew their passports or to renew various documents. That is when—not just at election time—you want to make sure that there's a flyer or a folder that goes in there that asks, “Are you on the register?” With every single interface, that folder, flyer or banner should be there.

I'm sure a lot of Canadians overseas listen to CBC radio or follow Canadian sports and so forth. I was even wondering if there's a possibility of doing a public...a banner on top or something that says, “If you're overseas, do you know that you can be on the international register?”

I also think it's fine that voter turnout isn't as high as it is domestically. That would be normal, as Toby described.

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson: Professor Fraysse.

[*Translation*]

Élise Fraysse: Thank you for your question.

Let me say two things about France.

First of all, I don't know if this is the case in Canada, but there is a culture of the francophone, French schools, a francophone life at consulates and embassies. It allows expatriates to participate in French life while abroad. So that must certainly be considered part of political and democratic engagement.

Second, everything is in place for French expats. They can vote directly at the embassy. If they can't get there, they can also vote by proxy through the embassy. They can also vote by mail. For members, electronic voting has been available since 2012. During the recent parliamentary elections in 2024, electronic voting provided for a big boost in the electoral participation of French expats.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson: I don't think Dr. Garnett got a chance.

The Chair: She didn't, but you are well over.

We have lots of time, and we can definitely come back to it.

Because this is one giant meeting, I think it's fair to—and I'm just going to do it anyway, at my discretion—offer Madame Normandin six minutes for the panel. Then we'll have a five-minute suspension after the six minutes.

[*Translation*]

Go ahead, Ms. Normandin.

Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): You're very generous, Mr. Chair. I appreciate that.

I'd like to thank all the witnesses for being with us. I imagine my colleague has already acknowledged them. I'll take the liberty of doing so as well. I hope my questions won't be redundant. I did however listen to the exchanges during the previous round of questions.

Ms. Fraysse, I'd like to continue the discussion on the hybrid model. You seemed to be somewhat uncomfortable with the idea of voters being attached to a *commune*. From what I understand, French expats really have a lot of leeway when it comes to choosing the *commune* where they vote.

Could your discomfort relate, for example, to the fact that it is possible to select a jurisdiction, meaning that people can choose the place where they want to vote, especially given that there is clearly a range of choices available?

Where a person can vote is not limited to their last address of residence. It can ultimately be located anywhere that the person can exercise their right to vote.

Élise Fraysse: Thank you very much for the question.

Yes, I completely agree with what you're saying. We know that, in France, voting in a small or large *commune* does not carry the same weight. So I don't know whether, in practical terms, this is a case of choosing a jurisdiction, but the act allows it.

• (1200)

Christine Normandin: When they have to choose between voting in a local *commune* or a geographic *commune*, do French voters have to register on the electoral list well in advance?

Can they wait until the last minute? On the eve of an election, it can be a very tight race.

Can you then, as a French expat, register at the last minute to go and vote? How does that work?

Élise Fraysse: No, they can't do that. Expats must follow the same rules as those established for traditional domestic voters. Generally, they have to register a few months in advance. For the June election, for example, people typically have to register in March.

On the other hand, for those voting abroad, at embassies, there is more latitude in their final choice if a person is registered on the lists, whether they vote by mail or electronically, for example.

Christine Normandin: Thank you very much.

I want to follow up on that.

When the model was changed in 2008 and the geographic *communes* were created, do you know why people were still able to vote in the riding where they were born rather than in their local *commune*?

What were the reasons that led to the creation of this model, knowing that expats would be given the opportunity to be represented by an elected official who would be responsible for the geographic files of their region of residence?

Élise Fraysse: I would say that it was not discussed at all. Before 2008, at the national level, French expats were represented in the Senate, our upper chamber, but not in the National Assembly.

So there has been an alignment. During this alignment, there was no discussion of the fact that French expats could already vote as part of their French *commune*.

Those French people would typically have said that they were considered half-citizens, that they were poorly represented, that they had a weak representation, because they didn't have their own members.

That's what was considered, completely ignoring the fact that they could already vote in the past.

Christine Normandin: Is there any discussion currently about revisiting the decision that was made and not allowing voters to vote in their own local *commune*?

I imagine that would probably be met with indignation.

Élise Fraysse: Yes, indeed. There is very little discussion of that in general. In France, greater emphasis is being placed on French expats and French influence around the world, so everything is pointing to giving French expats more importance, and not the other way around at all.

Christine Normandin: Thank you very much.

I would like to continue on this topic.

As I understand it, one of the cornerstones of the 2008 reform was that, for a person to be considered a full citizen, the person had to have a representative, a member of Parliament. As you said, though, there was also the idea of affording French expats specific representation.

How did the argument take hold that they were not really citizens even though they had the right to vote?

If I understand correctly, for many French people, citizenship is not related to the right to vote, but rather to the right to have an elected member who represents them specifically.

Is that correct?

Élise Fraysse: That's exactly right. That's what the article I wrote on this topic was about. I said that citizenship was no longer understood solely as the right to vote, but as the right not only to be represented, but to be represented specifically, and therefore to have special representation.

At the end of the day, it's as if women also had their own representative in the National Assembly, for example, when that's not the case. That's kind of the idea.

Christine Normandin: Attachment to the country of origin and paying taxes are aspects that are completely excluded from the thinking on representation, for instance.

Is that correct?

Élise Fraysse: Yes. It would even be frowned upon to say so.

Christine Normandin: Thank you. I've reached the end of my six minutes.

Élise Fraysse: Thank you.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you so much.

We're going to take a short biobreak. For the witnesses, please stay logged on. We will just briefly suspend the meeting, but we will be right back momentarily.

This committee is suspended.

- (1200) _____ (Pause) _____
- (1210)

The Chair: I call the meeting back to order.

We'll now proceed to Mr. Van Popta for the Conservatives, for five minutes.

Tako Van Popta: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Professor Fraysse, my next question is for you.

You testified that a person living abroad and wanting to get onto the consular list must be tied to a specific municipality. If I understand this correctly, it can go back several generations, but they do have to be tied to some geographic place in France. However, isn't it true that the person who's voting abroad has their own ballot of people who want to represent that region, whether it's East Africa or South Asia? The voting isn't actually tied to the municipality to which they are tied.

[*Translation*]

Élise Fraysse: Thank you for the question. I believe that I understood it correctly.

There are two possibilities. The person can either register on the French voters list, and their vote will be counted alongside the votes of other French citizens living in mainland France, or they can register on the consular lists. In this case, they will participate in the selection of representatives for French citizens living abroad specifically.

[*English*]

Tako Van Popta: The choice is the voter's to make, whether they want to get on the consular list or the other way.

[*Translation*]

Élise Fraysse: Yes. The choice is the voter's to make.

[*English*]

Tako Van Popta: Okay.

I'm going to ask the same question of Dr. James.

Canada, I believe, follows Britain's model of representation by region. For example, I'm the member of Parliament for a specific area in British Columbia. I'm a member of a political party, but I represent the people of my region, my electoral district. I believe it's the same in the U.K.

How does a person living abroad who doesn't have a lot of connection to the United Kingdom get tied to a specific constituency or electoral district?

Toby James: It would be the last location at which they were resident when they left the United Kingdom. Wherever they were last living, they would state that postal code so that the electoral officer could register them, and they would remain located in that parliamentary riding going forward.

Tako Van Popta: It's where they were last living, but what if it's somebody who has never lived in the U.K.? Maybe their parents or grandparents did.

Toby James: That's a very good question. I'm not sure of the answer immediately, but I can happily locate that and provide that to the committee.

Tako Van Popta: Yes, if you could do that, please do. It's pretty critical to the study we're undertaking.

I'll pass the mic over to my colleague Mr. Jackson, for a quick question.

Grant Jackson: Thank you.

This is also for Professor James.

Of course, as we do follow the Westminster system, we have an appointed Senate—you folks have the House of Lords—and so it strikes me that this conversation is about equal representation in the Houses of Parliament, which are making decisions. Has the government in the United Kingdom taken any steps to ensure that foreign United Kingdom residents are represented in the House of Lords? How might that apply to our appointed Senate as well, if we're having this discussion about equal representation, not just in voting, but in the two Houses of Parliament that make decisions for all Canadians?

- (1215)

Toby James: I may also have to come back to the committee on that question. Obviously, there's a different system here. The lords, as you rightly point out, are not elected. It is via an appointment mechanism on the recommendation, basically, of the Prime Minister of the day. I'm not sure what the residency requirements would be there, but I can happily provide that to the committee subsequently.

Grant Jackson: Thank you.

I have no further questions.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Though the chair cannot provide evidence, I can point to Lord Black of Crossharbour, Conrad Black, the Canadian who was appointed to the House of Lords, who is not a resident of the United Kingdom.

Clifford Small (Central Newfoundland, CPC): He's a great guy.

The Chair: I'll take your word for it, despite his convictions for fraud, I believe. Mr. Small is here to defend him.

Clifford Small: He was caught.

The Chair: He was caught. Yes, that's how crime usually works.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Brière, you have the floor for five minutes.

Hon. Élisabeth Brière (Sherbrooke, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I want to thank all the witnesses for joining us today to discuss this important topic.

I'll continue the discussion on electronic voting. People are really quite keen on electronic voting. This tool is used in a number of countries.

Electronic voting obviously improves access to voting for citizens living abroad. However, it still requires access to the Internet. Electronic voting is also part of the drive to modernize voting methods and embrace technological advances. It also meets the expectations of voters, who are increasingly using all sorts of electronic tools in various aspects of their lives.

However, there are risks, which I would describe as significant. These risks pertain to security, the integrity of the voting process and public confidence, for example.

Cybersecurity and interference risks may be related to malware, vote traceability, secret ballots and the vulnerability of votes to the manipulation of results.

I would like to hear your comments on these aspects.

Professor Garnett, would you like to begin?

[*English*]

Holly Ann Garnett: Thank you for this question.

You're right. There are a great number of advantages to using electronic voting methods, such as the convenience or the time aspect, and it can save costs. There are also all of the cons that you mentioned, such as security issues or the reality that, oftentimes, it will also involve being posted—for example, like a specific code—so it might not completely eliminate some of the concerns. There are issues of manipulation. We've been talking a lot about foreign interference, and so, especially for voters living abroad, there could be some challenges. All of those are really well heard.

I think one thing we need to consider is that it's not necessarily all or nothing. It's not necessarily completely moving into everything happening online or completely using an analog paper-based system. I point to the example of New Zealand, where you can download your special ballot kit, but then you have to post it in.

If I can go back to the question that was asked previously, “What would you start with?”, I would start with chatting with Elections Canada about whether that might be a possibility. We've tried on-line registration. Maybe we could start with something that you can download—even just as a backup—like a special voting kit, see what some of the logistical issues might be and move from there. It's not necessarily an “all or nothing” issue. There are small things to start with that could maybe test the waters to see whether Canadians are amenable to introducing some more technology into the federal voting system.

Hon. Élisabeth Brière: Thank you.

Dr. James.

Toby James: It's just to echo that, really.

Back in the early 2000s, I think there was a lot of excitement around the world about Internet voting and how it could pose the solution for voter turnout problems and make voting much more exciting, especially for young people. In the U.K., for example, we had some pilots where people could actually vote via the Internet. They could also vote on their mobile phones or their Sky digital boxes.

I think those experiments and some of that innovation didn't tend to show big increases in turnout overall, as I think Professor Garnett was saying earlier. At the same time, for some specific communities, that can have a real, meaningful advantage. If we're just looking at the net aggregate figure, then we might not see much, but if we're looking at what that means to an individual voter, for a few thousand voters, that can really make a difference as to whether or not they buy into democracy.

In the context of overseas voters, Internet voting could potentially play a very important role. We are in a dangerous era where there are greater risks on the international stage. Widespread Internet voting for the whole national election is not something that I think many people would seriously recommend, but for specific groups for which that makes a difference as to whether they can vote, Internet voting is quite an attractive option.

● (1220)

Hon. Élisabeth Brière: Thank you so much.

Dr. Laanela.

Therese Pearce Laanela: Thank you.

I think the case that people look to on Internet voting is Estonia, where it is an option to vote from your computer at home. The uptake has been high. Over 40%—I think almost 50%—use it. It's just more convenient, and it works well. Remember that Estonia is one of the places that are the most targeted in terms of cyber-attacks, but they've managed it very well.

It's not that it isn't possible, but I would agree with Holly, Toby and you that you wouldn't want to go quickly on something like this. Elections Canada is, understandably, very prudent on the introduction of technology.

However, just like Holly and Toby have just said, I think that out-of-country voting is the place where you want to experiment with this, just because the postal system is not working. As you've seen, the valid votes are not arriving back in time, and something has to shift. You have these digital options, so why not use them?

In terms of exploring new avenues of voting, which will come someday—this is the way the trend is going—you want to experiment in very small pilots first. I would recommend that out-of-country voting be one of those. Use a small subset of out-of-country voters, either geographically or one group, say the military, one particular group that you can test on in a very limited fashion.

The Chair: Thank you so much.

We'll now go to Madame Normandin, who has asked for two and a half minutes.

It will be a very generous two and a half minutes, so please take your time.

[*Translation*]

Christine Normandin: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'll turn back to you, Professor Fraysse. I'll then ask Professor Garnett some questions.

I would like an idea of the level of public support for geographic representation in France.

Do you know of any statistics showing voter behaviour?

Do they prefer to register to vote for an elected official who represents them geographically?

Do they prefer to register under the old system, meaning the one used before 2008, and be represented in a municipality of attachment?

Élise Fraysse: Honestly, I couldn't answer that question. I haven't seen any figures on this topic.

Nevertheless, I can say that it seems that French citizens living abroad were particularly enthusiastic about the launch of electronic voting for legislative elections. Some are even calling for electronic voting for presidential elections as well, but I don't think that will happen.

French people living abroad are particularly enthusiastic about this aspect.

Christine Normandin: Can you tell us why?

Élise Fraysse: Could you clarify your question?

Christine Normandin: Why are French people living abroad particularly enthusiastic about electronic voting?

Élise Fraysse: Electronic voting eliminates the need to make a number of trips.

A few years ago, we had a major national debate that gave many French people, especially people living abroad, the opportunity to express their views.

Indeed, French people living abroad must go to the embassy or even send a family member to the embassy to vote by proxy. This incurs costs. They may need to take a day off work, and this requires a great deal of organization. All this costs money.

Electronic voting has given people who, I think, didn't vote before the opportunity to cast their ballot.

Christine Normandin: Thank you.

I would like to ask you a somewhat philosophical question, Professor Garnett.

Professor Fraysse spoke earlier about the French concept of citizenship. People are citizens not because they have the right to vote, but rather because they have an elected representative.

I would appreciate your comments on this topic.

In some cases, a citizen is a person who pays taxes, lives in the country and files tax returns.

To guide our discussions, could you tell us, from a philosophical perspective, what constitutes citizenship?

What are the foundations?

• (1225)

[*English*]

Holly Ann Garnett: Thank you for that question.

That is a really broad question. What I'll focus on, I think, is what it means for democratic citizenship. What is the point of even having a democracy? What is the point of even running an election, for that matter?

In a forthcoming book, Dr. James and I talk about how elections and democracy are designed to empower citizens and to empower them over potentially more powerful or richer voices. The voting, then, is really the great equalizer in Canada, insofar as people can participate in other ways, to greater or lesser extent, in terms of how much they can donate to a campaign or how much time they have to spend on something. The “one person, one vote” is really a great equalizer and it provides for that equality. If someone is a Canadian citizen, then I can understand why that great equalizer can be very important to them, regardless of where they're living.

I know that you're trying to get into the broader conception of what it means to be a Canadian citizen if you happen to be living abroad. I think that's above my pay grade, and maybe I would refer to what the Supreme Court has said. I think we're in a situation where that decision has been made: Having that right exists. Now, it's a question of how we best allow people to exercise that right.

[*Translation*]

Christine Normandin: Thank you.

[*English*]

The Chair: I'd like to thank our witnesses today.

Our next meeting will be on Tuesday, November 25. We're continuing with the Chief Electoral Officer, the Department of National Defence and Global Affairs Canada.

I would request that members submit their preliminary list of witnesses to the clerk in relation to the foreign election interference

study—more specifically, on the matter of the implementation of the foreign influence transparency registry—by end of business on Friday, please.

Seeing that we have no further business, the meeting is adjourned.

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