



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

45th PARLIAMENT, 1st SESSION

Standing Committee on Official Languages

EVIDENCE

NUMBER 002

Thursday, September 25, 2025

Chair: Yvan Baker



Standing Committee on Official Languages

Thursday, September 25, 2025

• (1100)

[Translation]

The Chair (Yvan Baker (Etobicoke Centre, Lib.)): I call the meeting to order. Welcome to meeting number two of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Official Languages.

Before we begin, I'd like to tell you how fortunate I feel to be sitting with you all, from all the parties, on the Standing Committee on Official Languages. Ever since I was young, I remember my parents telling me that our official languages are at the heart of our identity as a country and as Canadians. I therefore look forward to working with you on this issue, which is so important to Canadians.

I need to read a few things before we move to our agenda and start our work.

I'd like to ask all in-person participants to consult the guidelines written on the updated cards on the table. These measures are in place to help prevent audio and feedback incidents, and to protect the health and safety of all participants, including the interpreters. You'll also notice a QR code on the card which links to a short awareness video.

Today's meeting is taking place in a hybrid format. For those participating remotely, please click on the microphone icon to activate the microphone and please put yourself on mute when you're not speaking.

I'd like to remind participants of the following points. Please wait until I recognize you before speaking. All comments must be addressed through the chair. I'd ask you to raise your hand if you wish to speak, whether you are attending in person or on Zoom. The committee clerk and I will do our best to maintain the speaking order. It is essential to ensure that only one person speaks at a time, not only to maintain order but also to assist the interpreters.

In terms of our agenda, we will start with committee business. The subcommittee's report was distributed to committee members yesterday, and we are meeting today to discuss it. I'd like to move that we begin with our discussion on this report. If there are any other matters that members wish to raise relating to committee business, we could discuss them after. Do you all agree?

Some hon. members: Yes.

The Chair: Agreed. The subcommittee report has been distributed. Is it the pleasure of the committee to adopt the report or would any members like to speak?

Mr. Godin, you have the floor.

Joël Godin (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, CPC): Mr. Chair, for the benefit of all the new committee members, I'd like to give a reminder.

As per our usual practice, the sub-committee is responsible for planning our fall agenda, and that is what my colleague Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault, Mario Beaulieu from the Bloc Québécois, you, Mr. Chair, the analyst, the clerk and I did on Thursday.

This plan outlines everything we discussed during our meeting on Tuesday. I therefore move its adoption so we can begin our meetings next week and move our cause forward.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Godin.

Mr. Beaulieu, you have the floor.

Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ): Mr. Chair, I have two amendments to move.

The first has to do with prioritization. We know that French is under threat in Quebec more than ever, as it is across Canada. All language indicators show that French is in decline. Even Statistics Canada's predictive study indicates that in Quebec, the percentage of French as the language used at home will decrease from 81.6% in 2011 to 73.6% by 2036. It was 83.1% in 2001. In the last census—the 2021 census—it was 79.1%. What's more, those forecasts were made in a context of lower immigration than observed in recent years, and they are probably overly optimistic. Over the past few years, several Liberal ministers recognized from the outset that the use of French is in decline, that French is under threat from all sides and that there are 8 million francophones surrounded by 360 million anglophones in Canada and North America.

These factors were partially reflected in the new Official Languages Act, even though there was a setback. Rather than promoting only French in Quebec, we've reverted to the old notion of parallelism in order to defend anglophones in Quebec as a minority.

Finally, we looked at the Action Plan for Official Languages 2023-2028: Protection-Promotion-Collaboration, and there is nothing new for French. Everything is about promoting English within Quebec. I looked at the Canada Public Accounts for 2024 and it's the same thing: I didn't see anything for French in Quebec, or practically nothing—\$100 million a year. If we go back a bit to what has been done since the Official Languages Act began, we are now at over \$3.6 billion that has contributed to anglicizing Quebec. In constant dollars, it's over \$5.5 billion.

So I think that the study on measures to promote French—we want to see what's coming—should be prioritized and done first. I so move and I would like to know if my colleagues agree.

I also have a second amendment to move, but I don't know if you want me to move it right away, Mr. Chair.

• (1105)

The Chair: Mr. Beaulieu, I've consulted with the clerk, and we'll proceed with one proposal at a time.

Just so it's clear for everyone, can you tell us what exactly it is that you're proposing?

Mario Beaulieu: This motion calls for a study of measures that have been and will be taken to protect and promote French in Quebec. That is in the Official Languages Act, but nothing has been done. Moreover, this study is the last item in the motion, which suggests that, for the Liberals and the Conservatives, French in Quebec is a low-priority item. I believe it should be a high priority, and that's what we should start with.

The Chair: Okay.

If I understand correctly, you're proposing that we begin with this study.

Mario Beaulieu: Yes.

The Chair: Okay.

Mr. Godin, you have the floor.

Joël Godin: Mr. Chair, with all due respect for my colleague, I would like to say that I, too, acknowledge the decline of French, and not just in Quebec. I'm saying that because this is a federal Parliament. There are 10 provinces and three territories. Every one of them has francophone communities. I think that's important.

It's also important to remember that we wrapped up the 44th Parliament with a study on the education continuum. Our vision must be comprehensive and national in scope, and I'm not going to disrespect all those organizations across Canada, including in Quebec, by tossing that study aside. I think it's important to complete that study first. We have maybe four to six meetings left if I remember correctly, and I think it's important. We've done work on this. My colleague wants us to throw all that work in the trash and focus only on Quebec and the decline of French in Quebec. French is in decline across Canada. I think it's important to finish our study on the education continuum.

There's a habit in this kind of situation, unfortunately, and it's reasonable to understand the intentions of those responsible for bilingualism and the Official Languages Act. Two ministers have been invited, the Minister responsible for Official Languages and

the President of the Treasury Board, and I think it's important to hear what they have to say.

We've shown we are open to Mr. Beaulieu's proposed study by agreeing to it, but we disagree on how to prioritize things. I disagree with his proposal.

• (1110)

The Chair: Okay, thank you Mr. Godin.

Mr. Deschênes-Thériault, you have the floor.

Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault (Madawaska—Restigouche, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I completely agree that measures to protect and promote French across Canada are important. We acknowledge the decline of French, and we need to address this issue. I believe that's why the subcommittee agreed to our Bloc colleague's study proposal, which we amended to give it a Canada-wide scope. I think we need to look at the protection and promotion of French in every province and territory. This is an important matter, so we added the proposed study to our list of priorities.

However, we agreed to finish the study on the education continuum, which is also of critical importance because education is how people acquire the language of a culture. That's why education is so important in a minority francophone context. We undertook substantive work on that in the 44th Parliament. I believe the community stakeholders who appeared before us and those who have yet to appear are eagerly awaiting our committee's findings.

I feel that the order we proposed in no way detracts from my colleague's study, nor does it reflect how important we think it is. We recognize the importance of measures to protect and promote French. However, I suggest we keep the proposed order of business. We'll start with our education study. There's also a study on the digital transformation and the impact of AI on official languages, especially French, which is also a very timely and important topic. Those are three important topics. I would like us to maintain the proposed order of business.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Deschênes-Thériault.

Mr. Beaulieu, you have the floor.

Mario Beaulieu: The issue of francophones outside of Quebec is very important to the Bloc Québécois. That's why I agreed to move this motion yet again. One would think people here are allergic to Quebec. They never want to focus on Quebec.

Joël Godin: I have a point of order, Mr. Chair.

I don't think my colleague should be imputing motives. This is a federal Parliament, and we govern all of Canada. I would like him to withdraw his remarks.

Mario Beaulieu: I don't see how I imputed motives at all. I stated facts.

I presented the first study that was done on the promotion of French a few years ago, which took a very long time. As part of our study, we included francophones outside Quebec. We included anglophones. Then prorogation happened. It took two or three elections to get through the clause-by-clause study of the new Official Languages Act.

Assuming everyone around the table is acting in good faith, I am prepared to make a concession if necessary. I'm open to the idea of continuing the study on the education continuum and then studying the promotion of French in Quebec.

Clearly, if French continues to decline at this rate in Quebec, that will be detrimental to all francophones outside Quebec, be they Acadians or Franco-Ontarians, because the root cause is the same. However, 90% of francophones live in Quebec. Since the Official Languages Act came into force, the Canadian government has focused solely on promoting English in Quebec. It is as if they are trying to weaken French where it is strongest. I think this has gone on long enough. We need to move on.

I therefore propose that we study the Quebec issue after completing the education continuum study.

The Chair: We're still discussing the point of order.

Mr. Godin, you have the floor.

Joël Godin: I was done with my point of order.

Regarding Mr. Beaulieu's remarks, I see that he's not withdrawing them. I respect that; it's perfectly fine.

That said, we're putting the cart before the horse. We have to be realistic. What we have on the agenda for this fall is finishing the education continuum study, meeting with the President of the Treasury Board, meeting with the Minister responsible for Official Languages and the AI study.

Let's also keep in mind that we will have to rearrange our schedule to prioritize the Official Languages Act regulations once they're tabled this fall. I think and I hope that the regulations will include tools to combat the decline of French across Canada, including in Quebec. I'm sure they will. It's been three years, and I'm sure the people drafting them have sharpened their pencils and will come up with a great set of regulations. Fingers crossed.

I therefore suggest that we wait and see what's in the regulations. I stand by my position. I'm very comfortable with what was discussed and what was proposed by the subcommittee today.

• (1115)

The Chair: Thank you. Give me a moment to consult the clerk.

Mr. Dalton, you have the floor.

Marc Dalton (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge, CPC): I'm pleased to be a member of this committee again. Regarding Mr. Beaulieu's motion, my take as a member from British Columbia is that we need to look at what's going on across Canada because the decline is being observed everywhere.

Last year, we did several studies at the same time, and it was a little confusing. This time, I think we should proceed more system-

atically. We should finish the education continuum study, then move on to other studies.

The Chair: Thank you.

Ms. Chenette, you have the floor.

Madeleine Chenette (Thérèse-De Blainville, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'm very happy to be part of this committee, which is so important for our official languages. I'm a proud Quebecker, and I think that, if we want to work well as a committee, we have to keep in mind that, as Quebeckers, we also represent our federation. I'm concerned about both languages in Quebec, especially French, but, as my colleagues have said, it's important that we address concerns that affect Canada's francophonie as a whole. I therefore fully support what my Conservative colleagues said.

I know my colleagues agree about the education continuum study, but I'd like to talk about the proposed study on the repercussions of the digital transformation on official languages. I would like to congratulate the people who did such excellent background work on this for the committee and who came up with this proposal. That's important work, and it makes our lives easier.

I understand the importance of discussing those repercussions. A major digital transformation is under way, and we can't wait until it's too late to discuss the impact on official languages. It's important to be proactive about having those discussions and to think about those impacts. This may also help us have a more informed discussion afterward.

That's why I was partial to the order the proposed studies were in. We'll look at draft regulations and the digital transformation our society is going through, which will impact our official languages. We'll see whether those impacts are positive or not, then we can have a conversation once we've gathered all the necessary data. If we follow the order the subcommittee came up with, we won't have to rehash things when we talk about the digital transformation.

The Chair: Mr. Beaulieu, you have the floor.

Mario Beaulieu: I'd like to point out that the Bloc Québécois has been raising this issue for years. All the federal government has done so far is strengthen English and anglicize Quebec. The Official Languages Act anglicizes Quebec because its official language support programs subsidize English almost exclusively. French is declining. The more time we waste like this, the more it will decline and less will be done to address that.

I agree that we should finish the education continuum study, but then we'll have the AI study and everything else. Ministers will send us their availability, and their appearances might happen right in the middle of our studies.

In short, my position remains the same, and I'd like us to vote if nobody else has anything to add.

The Chair: If there are no further comments, let's vote.

(Amendment negatived: nays 8; yeas 1)

The Chair: Mr. Beaulieu, you have the floor.

• (1120)

Mario Beaulieu: Thank you.

We agree with recommendation (b), pertaining to interpreters. However, we know a new contract is going to be signed. Interpreters and the International Association of Conference Interpreters are concerned about this new measure because it will probably have fewer requirements. Interpretation quality, which often leaves something to be desired as it is, will further decline, so we must address this urgently.

Once we've voted on the main motion, it will be very difficult to amend this specific recommendation, so I suggest we modify it now by replacing "as soon as possible" with "no later than Tuesday, October 7". We can send that amendment in writing if you want.

The Chair: The clerk would like your amendment in writing.

Is that all, Mr. Beaulieu?

Mario Beaulieu: Yes.

The Chair: Would anyone like to speak to Mr. Beaulieu's proposal?

Joël Godin: I'd like the analyst to help me find the recommendation, which I don't see in the report.

Mario Beaulieu: We emailed it.

Joël Godin: Okay. Sorry, I was confused. As I said earlier, these are our first meetings, and I have to get back into the swing of things.

I agree with my colleague, and I'm glad I put forward this recommendation to study the interpreter situation and emphasize how important it is for parliamentarians to have access to their services. As long as we have a Canadian Parliament and a bilingual, French and English country, I think all parliamentarians should have access to interpretation services.

In recent years, we've seen these services decline in quantity, though not in quality. Also, we learned this summer that the government launched a bidding process that, as my Bloc Québécois colleague said, could tie our hands as of January 2026, based on my understanding. I think it's important to deal with this.

I'm the one who put forward this recommendation, so I agree with my colleague, but we need some flexibility to replace the October 7 date with a later date. We may have to check with the clerk to see when the ministers are available before we lock that date in.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Godin.

Ms. Chenette, you have the floor.

Madeleine Chenette: Once again, we're in favour of having that discussion about interpreters, which is a very important issue to all of us.

I share my colleague's concern about the October 7 date. Obviously this has to happen in October, but we need some flexibility around scheduling the meeting. We can see when the witnesses are available because a lot of things are happening at once.

We're ready to talk about it.

The Chair: Mr. Godin, you have the floor.

Joël Godin: My colleague has invited me to consult the calendar. We must remember that today is September 25. The committee will not meet on September 30, but will meet on October 2 and 7. We must also check the dates on which Minister Guilbeault and Minister Ali are required to appear, but that will be before October 7. Mathematically, what my colleague from the Bloc is proposing is therefore impossible. That is why I suggest extending the deadline to Thursday, October 23, but without limiting myself to that date.

• (1125)

Mario Beaulieu: We could agree on a date between October 7 and October 23.

Joël Godin: Yes, absolutely. I am open to that.

Mario Beaulieu: There is a good chance that the ministers will refuse the proposed dates or delay their appearance, as we have seen in the past. So, we could say that the goal is to hold the meeting before October 7.

Joël Godin: Excuse me, Mr. Chair, I misled the committee: The ministers must appear before November 7, not before October 7.

Mario Beaulieu: So, if we want more flexibility, we can set the deadline for October 16, or indicate that this is a target date.

Joël Godin: There is no parliamentary business during the week of October 13. How about October 21?

Mario Beaulieu: Agreed. So the meeting must be held no later than Tuesday, October 21.

The Chair: Before we continue, I want to clarify what you are proposing. You are proposing that the meeting regarding interpreters be held no later than October 21.

Mr. Deschênes-Thériault, you have the floor.

Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault: I believe this is in line with what was proposed to the subcommittee. There was talk of holding this meeting in early October, between two meetings of the study on the education continuum. That way, we would have time to invite additional witnesses to this study, if we wished to do so.

I therefore support my colleague Mr. Beaulieu's proposal to hold the meeting on interpreters by October 21.

The Chair: Mr. Beaulieu, you have the floor.

Mario Beaulieu: It would be preferable to hold the meeting before October 21, because there is a risk that October 21 will be too late. If the government adopts its new rules before October 21, we are told that it will be too late. The die will be cast.

The Chair: Agreed.

I would ask the clerk to read the text as amended by the proposed amendment.

The Clerk of the Committee (Madeleine Martin): Following the amendment moved by Mr. Beaulieu, the first part of paragraph 1(b) of the subcommittee's report would read as follows:

That, pursuant to Standing Order 108(3)(f), the Standing Committee on Official Languages hold a two-hour meeting to examine the situation surrounding the renewal of the interpreters' contract, as long as the meeting is held no later than Tuesday, October 21;

...

The Chair: Is the committee in favour of this amendment?

Mr. Godin, you have the floor.

Joël Godin: I have a question about procedure, Mr. Chair. I believe that a member cannot propose a subamendment to modify his own amendment.

What do you think, Madam Clerk?

The Chair: You are correct, Mr. Godin. This is one of my first meetings as chair.

Joël Godin: I wasn't criticizing you, Mr. Chair.

I will therefore propose the subamendment that amends Mr. Beaulieu's amendment.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Does the committee wish to adopt the proposed change?

(The amendment as amended agreed to)

The Chair: Are there any other comments on the subcommittee's report?

Mr. Beaulieu, you have the floor.

Mario Beaulieu: Since our meeting is public and people in Quebec are following our work, I would like to point out that the study on new measures to protect and promote the French language has been postponed several times. Once again, it has been put at the bottom of the list.

The Chair: Ms. Chenette, you have the floor.

Madeleine Chenette: I would like to say that we are all aware, around this table, that French has an important place in Quebec and throughout Canada. We also need to establish our priorities in order to foster an even richer discussion on the subject, which we must debate this year, as we all agree.

• (1130)

The Chair: There do not seem to be any other comments.

Is it the committee's wish to adopt the subcommittee's report?

Mario Beaulieu: I am abstaining because of the priority of studies.

The Chair: Very well.

Mr. Godin, you have the floor.

Joël Godin: I withdraw my speaking request.

The Chair: Very well.

We have two options: Either we adopt the report on division, or we proceed to a recorded division.

Joël Godin: I request a recorded division.

The Chair: Very well.

Madam Clerk, can you please proceed to the recorded division on the subcommittee's report?

(Motion agreed to: yeas 8; nays 0. [*See Minutes of Proceedings*])

Are there any other topics the members would like to discuss?

Mr. Godin, you have the floor.

Joël Godin: Mr. Chair, this is not something I do, and I don't want to surprise anyone.

I had a chance to look at this quickly with my colleagues, and I request unanimous consent to introduce a motion.

The Chair: Mr. Godin, since we are discussing the business of the committee, you do not need unanimous consent to present the motion. However, if you decide to present it, I ask that you send it in writing to the clerk, and that you read it.

Joël Godin: Mr. Chair, I want to reassure my colleagues. It is not my habit to proceed in this manner. We are at the beginning of our work and there have been some staff changes. You will notice that the chair behind me is empty, and I invite anyone interested in working on the Standing Committee on Official Languages files to contact my office to help Mr. Godin do his job. This is a part-time position. There you have it, I've advertised and posted my job offer.

Let's get right to the heart of the matter. Last week, an article mentioned that Cogeco Media wanted to broadcast less French-language music. That is a reality. Coming from a television and radio broadcasting background, I am aware that this is a problem for companies from an economic standpoint. However, given the decline of French in Quebec and across Canada, I am not prepared to see a decrease in the proportion of French-language music.

I therefore invite the committee to consider the following motion. I move that, pursuant to Standing Order 108(3)(f), the Standing Committee on Official Languages hold a two-hour meeting as soon as possible to examine the situation regarding the recent request by Cogeco to reduce quotas for French music content as required by the conditions in their broadcasting licence. That, as part of this meeting, the committee hear from: broadcasters such as Cogeco, Bell, RNC or Leclerc Communication, as well as from a representative from ADISQ, the Association québécoise de l'industrie du disque, du spectacle et de la vidéo. That the purpose of this meeting be to understand the current situation and to evaluate other possible solutions in order to respect the objective of stopping the decline of French.

I think it is important to consider this issue. It is a problem that has been going on for several years, and it is in the interest of everyone here on the committee to promote measures to halt the decline of French. That is the committee's objective.

Here, we are dealing with a very specific current issue. Cogeco is before the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission, an emergency situation similar to the one my colleague was talking about. This study is not very time-consuming, and I think it can be included in the committee's schedule. This could make it easier for the clerk to plan our work. I think that's important.

We are not here to attack broadcasters. We are here to work with them to find solutions that are profitable and viable for them, without their attacking the French language and francophone music.

• (1135)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Godin. We will now suspend the meeting.

• (1135)

(Pause)

• (1150)

The Chair: We are resuming the meeting.

Before continuing the discussion on this topic, I would like to mention that at 12:30 p.m., the Franco-Ontarian flag will be raised in front of the Parliament Building. I know that many of the members here would like to attend. Ultimately, it is up to the committee to decide, but I wanted us to be aware of this so that we could see if it would be possible to resolve the issues we still have to discuss today. It would be great to be able to attend the flag-raising ceremony.

Mr. Villeneuve has the floor.

Louis Villeneuve (Brome—Missisquoi, Lib.): Thank you.

This is my first time participating in committee work, and I see that there are people here who have a lot of experience.

I wanted to start by saying that I am a strong advocate for our two official languages throughout Canada. I am a francophone from the Limoilou neighbourhood in Quebec City. We are not that far away.

Earlier, Mr. Godin said that it was rare for him to propose a motion at the last minute. I must say that I am in favour of what he proposed. I think it is very important to have a significant percentage of French-language songs in our media. That said, I will now give the floor to Mr. Deschênes-Thériault, as we have a few minor amendments to make.

The Chair: Mr. Deschênes-Thériault has the floor.

Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We agree with the motion and would simply like to add online broadcasters such as Netflix or Amazon Prime, among others, to the list of suggested witnesses, as well as a representative from the Alliance des radios communautaires du Canada. I believe an email has been sent to the clerk with this proposed amendment. We believe this is an opportunity to broaden the discussion on the nature of online broadcasters' obligations to provide French-language content. This is also a timely topic. Inviting the Alliance des radios communautaires du Canada could broaden the discussion to include the entire country, since this organization represents community radio stations from coast to coast.

The Chair: Mr. Dalton has the floor.

Marc Dalton: I don't understand how the amendment can control the percentage of French-language music online. People can choose what they listen to. It's a bit confusing.

The Chair: Mr. Beaulieu has the floor.

Mario Beaulieu: The fact that a French-language broadcaster in Quebec is asking to reduce the quota for French-language music demonstrates the urgency of the situation.

I am in favour of the proposal, but I did not quite understand: Would this involve inviting representatives from Netflix, among others?

• (1155)

Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault: You're right, there is a little confusion.

We propose inviting online broadcasters to talk about their French-language content. It's not necessarily a question of quotas for French-language songs, but rather of obligations to produce and broadcast French-language content. That's the idea behind the amendment. If the committee agrees, I would simply propose inviting online broadcasters to talk specifically about their French-language content, not necessarily French-language songs.

Mario Beaulieu: In that case, I would propose a subamendment to indicate that the committee will hold "at least one meeting" on the issue. Indeed, if we invite several guests, at least one meeting would be necessary.

The Chair: Before continuing, since Mr. Godin reminded me earlier that there are rules to follow, I would like to ask Mr. Deschênes-Thériault to clarify his amendment.

Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault: Basically, the proposed amendment mentioned online broadcasters such as Netflix and Amazon Prime, among others, and we also proposed inviting a representative from the Alliance des radios communautaires du Canada. I propose clarifying that we would invite online broadcasters such as Netflix and Amazon Prime, among others, to talk to us about "their French-language content."

I'm thinking out loud, but I think Mr. Godin has a suggestion I'd like to hear.

The Chair: I would just like to clarify that we are now discussing the amendment only.

Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault: I think Mr. Godin wants to propose a better wording for my amendment.

The Chair: Very well.

Joël Godin: Mr. Chair, I do think it is unnecessary to consult broadcasters who are not necessarily concerned. I think that by replacing the reference to Netflix and others with "online broadcasters of French-language content," we would eliminate those who are not involved in this issue.

This is a relevant request, because the objective of this mini-study is to find possible solutions and work with people and artisans to see how we can further promote the French language. I am comfortable with that.

I therefore move my subamendment, which would allow for broader application.

The Chair: Since we must follow procedure and the rules, I would like to ask the clerk if everything is clear to her regarding the initial amendment proposed by Mr. Deschênes-Thériault.

The Clerk: Mr. Deschênes-Thériault, I would like to clarify something.

If I understand correctly, your initial amendment proposed inviting online broadcasters such as Netflix and Amazon Prime, among others. Mr. Godin's subamendment consists of removing this reference to Netflix and Amazon Prime and instead inviting "online broadcasters of French-language content."

Could you repeat the second part of your initial amendment?

Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault: I suggested we invite a representative of the Alliance des radios communautaires du Canada.

The Chair: Right now, we are only discussing Mr. Godin's subamendment.

Mr. Godin, you have the floor.

Joël Godin: In fact, Mr. Chair, my colleague from the Bloc Québécois has a very pertinent comment: "a representative of the Alliance des radios communautaires du Canada that broadcasts French-language content."

Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault: We do not need to add this clarification, as the alliance's members are francophones in a minority situation. It is a francophone organization. The Alliance des radios communautaires du Canada has been managing community radio stations in French-speaking communities in Canada since the 1990s.

However, with regard to the subamendment proposed by Mr. Godin, I would suggest that we proceed by....

• (1200)

Madeleine Chenette: That's because—

The Chair: Ms. Chenette, I will give you the floor in a minute, but, once again, we must follow the proper process.

I would like to ask the clerk to explain where we are at this point. We had an amendment and a subamendment, and I believe we need to consider the subamendment at this time.

The Clerk: At this time, the Standing Committee on Official Languages must vote on Mr. Godin's subamendment, which seeks to replace the reference to online broadcasters such as Netflix and Amazon Prime, among others, with a reference to online broadcasters of French-language content.

Then we will return to Mr. Deschênes-Thériault's amendment, amended or not, depending on the committee's decision. After that, there may be other subamendments.

The Chair: I therefore propose that we dispose of this subamendment by adopting it or not. If members wish to propose further subamendments afterwards, they may do so.

Ms. Chenette, you have the floor.

Madeleine Chenette: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I didn't know it was a subamendment. I'm learning something new.

Mr. Godin, I would just like to clarify the concept of "online broadcasters of French-language content." Does this refer only to broadcasters that air exclusively French-language content? Would it be better to refer to online broadcasters that offer French-language content, as is the case with Cogeco?

I don't know if you can amend your subamendment.

Joël Godin: Mr. Chair, that is exactly what I meant. I would like to amend my subamendment as suggested by Ms. Chenette, because it is very important to make that distinction. It will be up to the parties to decide which witnesses they want to hear.

The Chair: I will try to summarize the situation, and our clerk can help me if I am mistaken.

We are discussing the first part of the amendment presented by Mr. Deschênes-Thériault, which aims to invite broadcasters such as Netflix or Amazon Prime. Mr. Godin's subamendment proposes instead to invite online broadcasters of French-language content. If the subamendment is adopted, this is how the first part of Mr. Deschênes-Thériault's amendment would then be worded.

If we want to add what you are proposing, Ms. Chenette, we must first adopt Mr. Godin's subamendment and then propose a new subamendment. Another possibility would be to reject the subamendment and then adopt another one. Either way, we must follow the rules.

Mr. Godin, you have the floor.

Joël Godin: Mr. Chair, I propose that you ask if there is unanimous consent to withdraw my subamendment so that Ms. Chenette can move hers.

The Chair: Is it the will of the committee to withdraw the subamendment?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Subamendment withdrawn)

The Chair: Are there any other subamendments?

Madeleine Chenette: Mr. Chair, I move instead that we invite "online broadcasters with French-language content."

• (1205)

The Chair: I will ask the clerk to read the first part of Mr. Deschênes-Thériault's amendment as amended by Ms. Chenette's subamendment.

The Clerk: This part, as amended, would end with "online broadcasters with French-language content."

The Chair: Does everyone agree with this subamendment?

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

The Chair: We now return to the amended amendment.

Mr. Beaulieu, you have the floor.

Mario Beaulieu: I move another subamendment. I would like the committee to “hold up to two meetings,” because if additional stakeholders are added, it will be difficult to accommodate them all in a single meeting.

Joël Godin: Are you proposing to include the words “up to two meetings” or “two meetings”?

Mario Beaulieu: We could add the words “two meetings,” but if we are able to have three, we will need to....

Joël Godin: We should therefore write “at least two meetings,” because otherwise we won't be able to have three.

Mario Beaulieu: Agreed. I move that we write that the committee “hold at least two meetings.”

The Chair: I have consulted with the clerk. First, we need to decide what we want to do with the original amendment. Then, if you wish, you may move a subamendment.

Mario Beaulieu: I thought we had adopted it.

The Chair: We adopted a subamendment. Now we are discussing the amendment as amended. I will ask the clerk to read back what is being proposed.

The Clerk: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

It has been moved that the committee hear at this meeting: (a) broadcasting companies such as Cogeco, Bell, RNC, and Leclerc Communication; (b) a representative from ADISQ, the Association québécoise de l'industrie du disque, du spectacle et de la vidéo; (c) online broadcasters with French-language content; and (d) broadcasters from the ARC, Alliance des radios communautaires du Canada.

Points (a) and (b) were already there, points (c) and (d) have been added.

The Chair: Are we ready to adopt this amendment?

Is there unanimous consent to adopt Mr. Deschênes-Thériault's amendment, as amended?

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

The Chair: I now return to you, Mr. Beaulieu.

Mario Beaulieu: I move that we replace “one meeting” with “at least two meetings.”

Cogeco's proposal has a major impact. We should not reduce the quotas for French-language music, as they are already not being fully respected.

The Chair: Are there any comments or discussions on the amendment moved by Mr. Beaulieu?

Are you ready to give unanimous consent?

Joël Godin: I have a flag to raise.

The Chair: We should raise flags more often. The committee would be more effective.

Joël Godin: I'm not sure it will always work like that.

The Chair: Are we agreed?

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

The Chair: We must now deal with Mr. Godin's amended motion as a whole, and to make everything clear, I will ask the clerk to read the entire amended motion. Then we will decide whether we want to adopt it in its entirety.

Madam Clerk, you have the floor.

The Clerk: Thank you.

The motion reads as follows: That, pursuant to Standing Order 108(3)(f), the Standing Committee on Official Languages hold a two-hour meeting as soon as possible to examine the recent request by Cogeco to reduce quotas for French-language songs as required by the conditions of their broadcasting licence. That as part of this meeting, the committee hear from: (a) broadcasting companies such as Cogeco, Bell, RNC, and Leclerc Communication; (b) a representative of ADISQ, the Association québécoise de l'industrie du disque, du spectacle et de la vidéo; (c) online broadcasters with French-language content; and (d) broadcasters from ARC, the Alliance des radios communautaires du Canada. That the purpose of this meeting be to understand the current situation and to evaluate other potential solutions in order to achieve the objective of halting the decline of French.

• (1210)

The Chair: Mr. Beaulieu, you have the floor.

Mario Beaulieu: Basically, I don't think that the concept of “French-language broadcasters” closes the door to other organizations, but could even open it: there is ADISQ and ARC, but there could also be UPA. In fact, I am referring to UDA, the Union des artistes, and not the Union des producteurs agricoles.

Joël Godin: Mr. Chair, I think my colleague's comment is relevant.

For my part, I interpret this concept in the same way as he does. It does not limit us, and we can go beyond it. In fact, there is only one representative from the arts community, and the companies that make a living from French-language music. So I don't think this concept limits us.

Madam Clerk, can we call witnesses other than those who have been identified, but who are related to the subject? Can we justify this?

The Chair: Colleagues, I am aware of the time we have available. I know we want to finish the meeting, but we will need a few minutes to resolve this issue. Our first option is to spend a few minutes on it now. Our second option is to resolve this issue at another meeting.

Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault: Could we amend the motion by adding a point (e) specifying that other stakeholders could be added?

Joël Godin: We are moving quickly, but I propose a subamendment specifying that there are no restrictions on the choice of guests. This would protect us. If, for example, we invite a representative from the Union des producteurs agricoles, people could judge the relevance of such a choice. The example is easy, but I think we are all responsible.

The Chair: Mr. Godin has moved a subamendment.

Joël Godin: I don't know how to word this subamendment. Should we use the term "without restrictions"?

Mario Beaulieu: We could just add the words "and other representatives," which would mean the same thing.

The Clerk: Point (d) concerns broadcasters from the Alliance des radios communautaires du Canada. We could add "and other stakeholders in the field."

Joël Godin: That's fine.

The Chair: We will now vote on this subamendment.

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

The Chair: We must now adopt Mr. Godin's entire motion as amended. Does the Clerk need to read it back?

Some hon. members: No.

The Chair: Do you agree to adopt the motion?

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

The Chair: Are there any other matters we should discuss?

Mr. Godin, you have the floor.

Joël Godin: That's what happens when you want to go fast.

Do we have any indication of the topic that will be discussed next Thursday?

The Chair: The subcommittee's report will dictate our work. The first item in this report is our study on the education continuum.

Given the time and the fact that we want to conclude this meeting, I would ask the clerk to send you all a schedule so that you can see what she is planning. If there are any concerns, we can discuss them at future meetings.

• (1215)

Mario Beaulieu: A consultation is currently under way at the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission. I don't know if it's possible, but perhaps the analyst or the clerk could check to see if this consultation is ending soon. I think everyone agrees that the process should be fairly quick. We could then invite the people who are listed, and move on to other business. The analyst and the clerk will see what's going on. We'll give them some leeway.

The Clerk: We will get back to you on this matter.

The Chair: Thank you.

The meeting is adjourned.

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

SPEAKER'S PERMISSION

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

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

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

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

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

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

PERMISSION DU PRÉSIDENT

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

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

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

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

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