



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

45th PARLIAMENT, 1st SESSION

Standing Committee on Official Languages

EVIDENCE

NUMBER 003

Tuesday, October 7, 2025

Chair: Yvan Baker



Standing Committee on Official Languages

Tuesday, October 7, 2025

• (1105)

[*Translation*]

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

I would 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 would ask committee members to raise their hand if they wish to speak, whether they are attending in person or on Zoom. The committee clerk and I will do our best to maintain the speaking order.

Pursuant to Standing Order 108(3)(f) and the motion adopted by the committee on September 25, 2025, we are meeting today to study the renewal of the employment contract for parliamentary interpreters.

I would now like to welcome Alionka Skup, chair of AIIC-Canada, the International Association of Conference Interpreters for the Canada region, and Nicole Gagnon, conference interpreter and spokesperson, also from that organization.

You will have five minutes for your opening remarks. We will then go to questions and answers with committee members.

Ms. Skup, you have the floor for five minutes.

Alionka Skup (Chair, AIIC-Canada, International Association of Conference Interpreters - Canada Region): Good morning, everyone.

Mr. Chair and committee members, your decision to assess how new procurement rules will impact the availability and quality of interpretation services in Parliament and other high-level events is both important and timely.

As interpreters who have personally worked in Parliament for many years, we can address the question of how service quality will be affected by the new procurement requirements PSPC is about to put in place.

PSPC has shared with accredited official languages interpreters, who are potential bidders, their proposals for sweeping changes to the relationship between Canada and individual freelancers.

In turn, we have warned PSPC that their proposals would challenge the quality of interpretation services in Parliament. Today, our message is that you should be concerned about being understood when speaking your language of choice in Parliament if these proposals become requirements.

Next week, AIIC-Canada will release survey research that will make it clear that PSPC's proposals are likely to cause a critical mass of freelancers to refrain from bidding for Parliament work. This will make the shortage of accredited freelancers in Parliament even more acute, further constraining your work and the quality of interpretation services available to you.

Among other things, PSPC is proposing to introduce a “lowest price” system for assigning work. They call it best value procurement. It would replace all the measures in the current rules designed to ensure quality.

This is an antiquated approach other governments have long ago abandoned because it squeezes quality from the services being purchased. As Cal Harrison, who is a procurement expert, wrote in the *Globe and Mail* as far back as July 22, 2016: “It has been well documented internationally that price-based procurement wastes public money, both in the inefficiency of the process and in the low quality of solutions the bidders are forced to offer and implement.”

What PSPC is proposing will force freelance interpreters to cut corners. It will eliminate the most experienced interpreters whose knowledge about the high pressure and highly technical nature of interpreting parliamentary events will likely be lost.

PSPC suggests quality will be maintained because all freelancers will continue to be accredited by the translation bureau.

Yet, like other professionals, all interpreters are not equal and do not possess the same knowledge and experience.

Would you accept a newly licensed pilot as the captain of a 747 aircraft filled with hundreds of passengers? Would you hire a criminal lawyer to litigate a copyright matter? Of course not. The same realities apply to freelancers. Each of us offer different areas of expertise, experience and qualifications outside the realm of interpretation that will not be considered whatsoever under PSPC's lowest price system.

PSPC will probably tell you in a moment that something must be done to control the cost of freelance interpreters whose rates have apparently climbed by 70% since 2018 (as per amendment no. 3 published on July 3, 2025).

In fact, in 2023, PSPC accepted bids for the current procurement system that could be up to 70% higher than the median or midpoint of all bids. In all the previous iterations of the contract, contracts were only awarded to those suppliers whose bids fell within plus or minus 20% of the median.

If tighter limits on the definition of acceptable bid were put in place in the upcoming rules, there would be no need to include proposed lowest price requirements in the assignment of parliamentary work.

PSPC has also proposed hourly rates paid only when interpreters are “at the mike” in place of the current system of daily rates.

A daily rate is the standard for professional interpreters, here in Canada and in institutions around the world, and for good reason.

• (1110)

The Chair: You have 30 seconds left.

Alionka Skup: Interpreters working for the Parliament of Canada are tethered to the Hill for 13.5 hours each day. They spend considerable time preparing before each assignment. Federal officials suggest building standby and preparation time into freelancers’ hourly rates, but freelancers know that doing so would price them out of work in a lowest price system.

I am sure the minister is a very busy man. That said, it is regrettable that Minister Lightbound is absent today. The proposals of his ministry will effectively convert the Official Languages Act requirement for equality between French and English in Parliament to a guideline that may be followed or not.

Thank you for your invitation to appear and thank you to our colleagues in the booth today.

We will be happy to take your questions.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Skup.

We will now go to questions from members. For the first round of questions, each committee member will have the floor for six minutes. We will start with the Liberals.

Ms. Chenette, you have the floor.

Madeleine Chenette (Thérèse-De Blainville, Lib.): I would first like to thank the interpreters who are with us today.

We really do have to stress the important role played by interpreters in our two official languages here in Canada. The value and quality of their work is of the utmost importance.

I also want to stress what you said about experience and subject matter expertise in Parliament. This is important. That experience is put to use. From that perspective, we need interpreters who meet a high standard.

My question is about the changes we should be making when it comes to new technologies. I would like to hear your comments about that. We are in an environment—

Joël Godin (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, CPC): On a point of order, Mr. Chair.

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

Joël Godin: Mr. Chair, I see that when we voted on routine motions, the Conservative Party was to have the floor first.

The Chair: I am going to suspend the meeting for a few seconds to consult the clerk.

You are correct, Mr. Godin. Pardon me, that was my mistake.

What I propose is to give Mr. Godin the floor, in accordance with what was adopted.

I’m sorry, Ms. Chenette. I will come back to you later and let you start over from the beginning.

• (1115)

Madeleine Chenette: All right.

Joël Godin: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I have sat on this committee for several years. Whether that is an advantage or a disadvantage depends on your point of view.

I want to thank my colleague for starting the questions.

I would like to thank the witnesses for being here with us. I think this is important. Access to both official languages is a parliamentary right. It is essential that we have interpretation services.

What is going to change? What difference is there between the existing rules and the new ones? You are saying that the only eligibility criterion is the lowest bidder rule.

Is that right?

Nicole Gagnon (Conference Interpreter and Spokesperson, AIIC-Canada, International Association of Conference Interpreters - Canada Region): As in the past, the invitation to bid is still being sent to accredited interpreters. The new rules would be for accredited interpreters and would be based solely on the lowest bidder rule.

The most recent contracts were based on the interpreter's profile. There were five criteria that had to be met, including the ones related to quality. That has all gone away in the new rules. The new rules would be based solely on accreditation and lowest bidder.

Joël Godin: As I understand it, the rates for freelance interpreters used to vary based on their specialties and skills.

Is that right?

Nicole Gagnon: That's right, accreditation is the minimum requirement for working on Parliament Hill.

On top of that, and as is the case in Canadian society, interpreters have different experience and degrees. They have more expertise in some subjects than others. That is all taken into account when they bid. That is to be expected. If someone has more experience than a beginner, it is hardly surprising that they would ask for more.

Joël Godin: If we leave money out of it, what would the solution be in order to ensure that parliamentarians are better served when it comes to interpretation?

I have to say that we, as parliamentarians, are being short-changed, because we do not always have access to interpretation.

We have to understand that these are tough economic times and we are going to hit a wall.

What solution would ensure that we both respect the right of parliamentarians and are more effective when it comes to interpretation services?

Nicole Gagnon: The problem isn't money. Interpreters are not asking for higher pay.

I completely understand your concern about the Canadian government's current austerity program. However, the solution is not to make cuts to interpretation services. You want to increase capacity. We understand that. We commend the translation bureau for its efforts in recent years to expand the number of programs at various Canadian universities in order to attract new talent.

We are currently working to secure the next generation. I can tell you that in 2022, when AICC did a study on this, almost half of interpreters working today were preparing to leave the profession over the following five years. Some 30 interpreters have left since 2022. That tells you how important recruiting the next generation is.

You want to increase capacity for interpretation, which is understandable. It could be done as long as we returned to in-person meetings only. It was Parliament that decided in 2022 to hold meetings in hybrid format. Because of that, interpreters have been seriously injured. Many interpreters have simply left the profession for that reason. They want to protect their hearing.

The translation bureau has adopted a protocol to be followed for incidents. Most importantly, and thanks to pressure from AICC-Canada, it opted for what is called the precautionary principle: safer working hours. As a result, we are working fewer hours at the mike. Preparation time is the same, whether interpreters are at the mike for two or four or six hours. The number of hours at the mike was reduced so we would be exposed to virtual sounds on virtual platforms for as little time as possible.

If we went back, we could work more hours. But that decision is up to you.

• (1120)

The Chair: Mr. Godin, you have about a minute of your time left.

Joël Godin: What you are saying is that interpreters have been on duty and working fewer hours since the pandemic. This was caused by the pandemic. However, there were already committees

being held virtually before the pandemic. Witnesses testified virtually at committees before 2022.

Is that an exception?

On Parliament Hill overall, access to interpretation services could be expanded by eliminating virtual participation, but I don't think it can be completely eliminated.

Is it possible for it to work in hybrid format?

The Chair: Ms. Gagnon, I would ask that you answer briefly, in about 15 seconds.

Nicole Gagnon: You are absolutely right, Mr. Godin. Before the pandemic, before hybrid Parliament, witnesses appeared by video conference. The difference is that those witnesses had to go to a sound studio. There were technicians there to ensure sound quality and protect the interpreters' hearing health. Now, people are participating in meetings online, from their home or workplace. So we have no control over sound input.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Godin.

Ms. Chenette, you have the floor.

Madeleine Chenette: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you for being here with us, Ms. Gagnon and Ms. Skup. I commend you for the work you are doing.

You bring up the issue of technological change as it relates to the virtual aspect of your work. I think Mr. Godin also brought that up as well. It is impossible to go backwards. We are truly transforming every occupation in our society as a result of technology and artificial intelligence. Certainly, health and safety is important to everyone, and I don't think anyone wants to go back on that.

There are learning curves when it comes to protecting people. For your profession, how are you going to be able to adapt? You could optimize preparation time by using technology, for example.

Optimizing means seeing how to do more with the resources you have. How can you optimize the work involved in interpreting and the services offered to Parliament as a whole?

Does the competition you have to face have resources that raise concerns for you in terms of the lowest price?

What plan do you have for adapting?

Nicole Gagnon: Thank you for the question.

We agree that everybody is talking about artificial intelligence. We are not standing in the way of progress. AICC-Canada is not opposed to progress.

That being said, we have to understand that artificial intelligence does not have a mind of its own. Yes, it is a tool that can be useful for preparation, if interpreters receive the texts in advance—something that is happening less and less often, I have to say. When I started my career, the rule was that texts had to be provided 48 hours in advance; failing that, the interpreters would not do the work.

To come back to artificial intelligence, generative AI has no understanding of the context of what it is reading. It does not have a mind of its own; it is an algorithmic solution. It has trouble interpreting interpersonal dynamics, culture, humour and emotions. It is basically mimicry. Artificial intelligence is based on databases that record interpreters. Nine times out of ten, we say word A to translate word B.

When context has to be interpreted, humour doesn't come across, at this point. It is certainly possible to use it for preparation. However, artificial intelligence does not lend itself to interpreting in the House or Senate or in committee, at least not at this point.

Madeleine Chenette: You are clearly right about the limits of the technologies in use today. However, we can see that things are changing very rapidly. Given this, a contract has to last over time. That is why I asked about adapting. We are now seeing algorithms that allow for interpretation to be provided directly using a device worn in the ear.

Again, I am not saying this is the approach we have to adopt. I am just trying to understand the situation. You are the one doing the job of interpreting. You understand the full breadth of contexts possible and the experience it takes to interpret what is said.

How are you adapting to the technologies that can make us more efficient?

It is one thing to say we are not there yet, but from the standpoint of adapting, with the benefit of all the experience you have, how can you enable our government to optimize how the work is done?

● (1125)

Nicole Gagnon: As I said, at this point it is limited to using these technologies for preparation. I can't predict the future, but I think all these technologies have been created by men and women, who still have to be there behind all of it to ensure that the interpretation done is of high quality.

I know these devices that are worn in the ear and interpret "hello", "hola", into every language are very popular. However, we are talking here about discussions between human beings, where people apologize and explain if they make a mistake.

Interpreters work in booths without a safety net, and things move very fast. They do not have time to say they misunderstood, or apologize. My opinion is that we should use the technologies based on what is available to us right now: for preparation.

As for the future, we will let you know when the time comes. There are certainly improvements to be made in terms of virtual platforms. They are already much improved, as compared to what they were before, but the quality is still not up to par.

Madeleine Chenette: In terms of what the needs are for interpretation in Parliament, how can we work together to improve the service and to both protect people's health and safety and ensure that we have the skills and we adapt?

Nicole Gagnon: I will try to give you a better answer.

Madeleine Chenette: I would like you to tell us what can be done about this, by the government, to help you adapt.

Nicole Gagnon: I think the parties involved are doing what they can. Interpreters are using artificial intelligence to prepare their texts. The suppliers are working on their platforms, or so I hope, to improve them.

You have adopted measures or protocols to follow regarding the equipment to be used and how to keep the earpiece away from the microphone to avoid feedback. So everyone is doing what they need to do to keep things moving forward.

Madeleine Chenette: Thank you, Ms. Gagnon.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Chenette.

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

Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

My thanks to the witnesses for being here with us.

We often hear it said that there are two official languages in Parliament: English and interpretation from English. If interpretation gets tossed out, I don't know where we're going.

You are correct that the whole question of linguistic duality is back on the table. You said that if we used only the lowest bidder criterion, it would surely result in interpretation being lower quality, because less experienced interpreters could be used.

If I understand correctly, what you want is the status quo.

That being said, how can we make sure we are getting a service at less cost while maintaining quality?

Alionka Skup: At this point, it is not necessarily about maintaining the status quo.

On the question of interpreters' assignments, we currently use five criteria: availability, language profile, security clearance, quality index and professional domicile. Obviously, we start with people who live in the national capital region.

The quality index no longer exists in the new version, or is not mentioned in what we were presented with in the RFI, the request for information. We are not sure how the evaluation will be done.

For assignments to the various jobs, we have interpreters who have worked on Parliament Hill for a very long time. They have a law degree or have expertise in different specialties. It would therefore be logical for them to be assigned to committees that have a connection with their various subject fields, rather than just taking the list and choosing the lowest bidder. Interpreters would have to be assigned to committees in that order.

In addition, if it operates that way, the interpreters with the most experience will simply not be here in Parliament, because their rates will be too high, based on their experience, their various degrees, and everything else. They will no longer be included in the pool of available interpreters.

Mario Beaulieu: Basically, you are saying that the quality index and the interpreters' experience should also be taken into account in order to do a value for money assessment, rather than just taking price into account.

Is this new approach, as proposed by the government, not a clear illustration of how French and interpretation are increasingly seen by Parliament as less important? We see it here when members speak. There is less and less French. Recently, a press conference was held in English only. I know this is a difficult subject for you, but personally, I think it reflects a lack of political will on the government's part.

• (1130)

Alionka Skup: I don't believe it is our job to talk about politics.

Mario Beaulieu: I am going to address another subject.

You said that measures to protect interpreters' hearing health would be eliminated, particularly regarding sound quality. How is that going to change things? Do you think less attention will be paid to interpreters' hearing health in future, under the new terms?

Nicole Gagnon: First, let me make another comment about the previous question.

It is not just French that would be affected, Mr. Beaulieu. If francophones on the Hill speak French, your anglophone colleagues need to understand them in English just as much, and quality will not be up to par in English either.

Remind me of your last question, please.

Mario Beaulieu: It was about eliminating measures to protect interpreters' hearing health.

Nicole Gagnon: I would like to be clear, because I would not want to mislead you: There is nothing in the proposed rules that says the protocol and the measures taken to protect interpreters are going to be eliminated. However, those measures, which are already included in the current contract, do not appear in the new rules. As we know, even with the best of intentions, it is wise to get things in writing.

We are concerned that these measures are not spelled out in black and white in the next contract.

Mario Beaulieu: Yes, there have been a lot of hearing accidents, not to mention the interpreter shortage.

You also said that Zoom, the platform used by Parliament, is not made for interpretation. Are there other platforms that could be used? Have you seen any studies on this?

Nicole Gagnon: That is correct, Zoom is not an interpretation platform. It was not designed for that purpose. There are other platforms. I can't recommend one over another, but I know the translation bureau consults internationally and the European Union uses something else. There are other platforms, platforms designed for interpretation, which is not the case for Zoom or Microsoft Teams.

The Chair: You have about 40 seconds, Mr. Beaulieu.

Mario Beaulieu: I have also read that under the new rules, breaks would no longer be counted and it would be strictly interpreting time alone that would be counted. What do you have to say about that?

Nicole Gagnon: Yes, there was discussion last year about not counting breaks, for example when there are technical problems at the beginning of a meeting, but that problem has since been solved. We are paid by the day, at least for now, since one of the translation bureau's other proposals is to pay us only for the time we are at the mike. That is a bit like paying a teacher for their classroom time, not counting all the work they do before and after.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu.

We will now go to the second round of questions.

Mr. Dalton, you have the floor for five minutes.

Marc Dalton (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge, CPC): Thank you.

I would like to thank all the interpreters for their vital services, without which we would not be able to work. We are very grateful to them.

First, what is the difference between staff interpreters and independent interpreters? Do staff interpreters work year-round or only during the parliamentary session? How does it work?

Nicole Gagnon: Interpreters who are employees are represented by their union, the Canadian Association of Professional Employees, or CAPE. So I think that question should be directed to CAPE, but I can tell you briefly that staff interpreters are employed year-round, so they are at your service year-round when Parliament is sitting.

During the summer there is sessional leave, but otherwise they are available year-round.

• (1135)

Marc Dalton: Could you tell us a bit more about the preparation you do when you are not at the microphone?

Alionka Skup: As a professional interpreter, I can tell you that when we receive speeches and presentations before an event, we review them and take note of the terminology and we prepare so we are really ready by the time the meeting starts. When we have not received any documents, we do research online and try to find as much information as possible on the topic of the meeting.

I am sure you will agree with me that, depending on the complexity of the subject, providing interpretation for Parliament and various departments is one of the most complex events an interpreter can be assigned to. So we have to spend several hours on preparation if we want to provide you with the quality service you certainly deserve.

Marc Dalton: Since the COVID-19 pandemic, and even since our last meeting, how have working conditions changed? Has demand for interpretation services remained stable, or has it increased?

Alionka Skup: That is a multi-faceted question.

Obviously, we have to take into account the fact that the work is being done in hybrid format and there is a greater cognitive load involved in working with the sound.

In hybrid format, sound that goes via the platforms is inevitably lower quality. It therefore calls for a higher degree of concentration. In addition, it is very often the case, unfortunately, when witnesses are not present in person, that it is a bit easier for them to forget to send their texts. So we are receiving fewer texts in advance, and this has effects on preparation.

In addition, some of our colleagues have to be on the platform with the technician; these are things they have to do at the same time as interpreting, and this adds even more to the cognitive load. This makes the work more demanding and harder to do.

Marc Dalton: On the subject of tenders, will there be a grid or will the lowest bidder be the only one whose services are selected? Have you been told how things were going to work?

The Chair: You have 55 seconds of your time left.

Alionka Skup: The way the contract is prepared is that under the open contract or invitation to bid, the interpreters selected are those whose pay falls within a certain range from the median. For assignments to various events, however, the interpreter selected will be the lowest bidder.

Marc Dalton: I have one last question for you.

You said that if the government decided to implement the new procurement rules, interpreters would stop offering their services.

Is that kind of a threat?

The Chair: The answer would have to be very short, because time is already up.

Alionka Skup: It isn't a threat.

Some freelance interpreters also work for the private sector, where working conditions are not the same as the government offers. Interpreters therefore no longer have any incentive to work for Parliament if conditions are better in the private sector. So they would simply not offer their services.

Marc Dalton: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Dalton.

Mr. Villeneuve, you have the floor for five minutes.

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

Good morning and welcome.

I would like to thank all the interpreters.

French-speaking Canadians in minority communities, and some who live in Quebec, may experience linguistic insecurity.

How can interpretation services counteract that insecurity?

Nicole Gagnon: My answer would be that the best way to counteract insecurity is to honour the nation's desire to be a bilingual nation where people can function in both official languages, English and French. I would also say that your job, as parliamentarians, is to carry out the desire of Canadians to function in both official languages.

It is not sufficient to do it symbolically. The two languages are equal; there isn't a first language and a second language. They are on an equal footing and all Canadians should receive quality service, whether in English or French. With all due respect, there should not be a two-tier system in which parliamentarians are entitled to higher quality than ordinary Canadians, than their fellow Canadians.

● (1140)

Louis Villeneuve: Thank you.

I want to come back to the contract being proposed. I think you said earlier that quality was probably going to decline. Did I understand you correctly?

Nicole Gagnon: It's like everything else: The cheapest one ends up being very expensive. You are going to get lower quality. In the existing rules, I would say that the quality index and everything related to quality take up between four and six pages of text. You risk seeing quality decline if you are inevitably going to exclude your most qualified interpreters, who have experience and are going to go and work for the best employers.

You are going to get lower quality because the next generation is still being trained. As I said earlier, I congratulate the translation bureau on hiring new interpreters, but they are just starting their careers. They need mentoring and it is one of our responsibilities, as experienced interpreters, to mentor them in their new positions. That is how it has always been done. However, if you get rid of your seasoned interpreters, these new interpreters will be learning the job at your expense. It makes a big difference when there are experienced interpreters who specialize in the various fields and are members of a team and able to mentor new interpreters.

You are going to get lower quality if you adopt the idea that we are all interchangeable. We are not. Our ranks include people who have degrees in business administration, who have been in the military, who have studied biology. That will all be lost if you decide that Ms. Skup, who is very good and of course is accredited, but is starting out in her career, has to sit in the booth and provide interpretation in a field she has no expertise in. As a professional, she will prepare as well as she can. However, if Ms. Gagnon, who works at it to get more experience than Ms. Skup has, happens to be assigned to this committee, she will obviously do a much better job. That would not stop Ms. Skup from working with Ms. Gagnon. We never work by ourselves when we are in the booth. We work in teams of two or three people.

You are also going to get lower quality if you get rid of the measures for protecting our hearing. At present, we work in groups of three interpreters for four hours, because we are working on platforms. If we go back to six hours a day, which was the case before the pandemic, before hybrid Parliament, you will not only lose interpreters, you will inevitably suffer because quality will not be up to par. You can't work six hours in hybrid format. You just can't do it. The work is too demanding. The sound transmitted to us is not good enough. So that lowers the quality too.

I apologize for giving you such a long answer, but I think the question deserved that kind of answer.

The Chair: Mr. Villeneuve, your time is up.

Louis Villeneuve: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve.

Mr. Beaulieu has the floor for two and a half minutes.

Mario Beaulieu: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Is there quality control for interpretation at the moment?

Nicole Gagnon: I think that is a question you will have a chance to ask the next panel, the representatives from the translation bureau.

I can answer in general terms. There has always been quality control. We have what we call TR-04s, who are interpreters with long experience, whereas the ones who work in the booth are TR-03s. The TR-04s check quality. There has always been quality control in the past.

Now, I can't tell you what the future holds, but I am sure the translation bureau representatives will seize the opportunity to address your concerns.

• (1145)

Mario Beaulieu: In that case, I will save these questions for them.

Was your association consulted about the possibility of a new contract before the changes were implemented?

Nicole Gagnon: AIIC, the International Association of Conference Interpreters, is a professional association. We are not a union. The contract is not signed by the translation bureau. The relationship is between PSPC, Public Services and Procurement Canada, which issues the contract, and the individual interpreter. Whether to agree to what is proposed to them by PSPC is up to each interpreter.

No, there was no consultation with AIIC on the new rules. There has never been. It is up to the Government of Canada, as is ordinarily the case, to say that it needs interpreters and propose its terms. The interpreter accepts or rejects them.

Mario Beaulieu: Up to now, has there been any reaction to your issues or concerns?

The Chair: You have 45 seconds.

Nicole Gagnon: There was an industry day. Two hours were set aside for us to ask our questions. Freelance interpreters asked more than 400 questions about the new procurement rules. Some have been answered, others have not.

Mario Beaulieu: That's good.

I have one more quick question. Have all the sound incidents and injuries had an effect on access to interpreters or the availability of freelancers?

The Chair: Answer very quickly, please. There are ten seconds left.

Nicole Gagnon: Certainly. The interpreters who have been injured are working less. The ones who are afraid of being injured are offering only two days a week instead of working four days, and this jeopardizes interpretation capacity. If we are asked to work more hours on the hybrid platforms, you will lose more of them.

Mario Beaulieu: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu.

Mr. Bélanger will now have the floor for five minutes.

Jim Bélanger (Sudbury East—Manitoulin—Nickel Belt, CPC): Good morning.

[*English*]

I have a question for Ms. Skup.

In your Hill Times column on August 21, you stated that eliminating the “quality index” for interpreters would open “the door to favouritism” and “unfair...dangerous procurement practices.”

Can you elaborate on that for me, please?

Alionka Skup: Yes. What we were referring to is not only the quality index but the procurement system. If it is closed to just the lowest bid, and we have no other controls as to who is obtaining the different assignments, that's where it can get tricky and also affect the quality of the interpretation per se, which makes it more difficult for government proceedings.

[*Translation*]

Jim Bélanger: You spoke earlier about interpreters who have a lot of experience. Are they favoured in awarding contracts?

Nicole Gagnon: Favouritism is not the issue at the moment. Take the Standing Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs, for example. I think it makes sense to send an interpreter who has practised law or specialized in law. At the moment, the system is based on the best interpreter profile. Yes, it would be logical to use someone who is well versed in law or is often a lead interpreter at that committee. It is not favouritism. It has nothing to do with someone having 30 years in the profession as compared to someone who has ten. If an interpreter with ten years on the job is well versed in law, it makes sense to assign them to that committee.

Jim Bélanger: Right.

Is there a shortage of interpreters today, yes or no?

Nicole Gagnon: Yes. There has been a serious shortage for many years.

As I said, we are in next generation mode. The translation bureau has redoubled its efforts to find new interpreters. Yes, I think we have reached the limit of what we can provide.

I can give you an example. Last Thursday was a very busy day on the Hill. The translation bureau did not have enough interpreters for all the meetings, so it sent out an SOS to its full-time employees, offering them overtime. It is entitled to do that, just as employees are entitled to agree to work overtime or not. I don't know how many of those employees did or didn't accept the offer. Again, that jeopardizes interpreters' hearing health. There is a reason why we have safe hours of work when we work in hybrid format.

Last Thursday, did the translation bureau call on all freelance interpreters who have an open contract in Ottawa, or even outside the city? Did it call on interpreters with one-time contracts, the ones who have piecework arrangements? You will have to ask the translation bureau those questions, because that is not within AICC's purview.

What I do know is that the translation bureau was short of interpreters last week. I don't know whether it was able to provide all the services.

• (1150)

Jim Bélanger: Do interpreters on contract work with parliamentary interpreters?

The Chair: There is one minute left.

Nicole Gagnon: Yes, sir. We work together. We are teams made up of employees and freelancers. Freelancers do between 50% and 60% of the work on Parliament Hill at the moment.

Jim Bélanger: I am trying to understand how an interpreter with less experience manages to gain experience if they are not working with other people.

Nicole Gagnon: As I say, we work together. Employees are not the only new interpreters. There are also new freelance interpreters. We work as a team. If the team is composed properly and an experienced interpreter, one who is familiar with the field a particular committee is studying, is included, that interpreter can oversee two new interpreters. Practice makes perfect, but there still has to be the right skills in the booth, experienced people to oversee the new ones while they are learning the job.

The Chair: There are ten seconds left.

Jim Bélanger: Thank you, Ms. Gagnon.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Bélanger.

Colleagues, we will not have time for a third round of questions. We are going to finish this round. Ms. Mingarelli has five minutes, and we will then conclude our conversation with these witnesses.

Ms. Mingarelli, you have the floor.

Giovanna Mingarelli (Prescott—Russell—Cumberland, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I would like to thank the witnesses and welcome them to the committee.

Ms. Gagnon, you talked about interpreters who work six hours a day. That is too much. I wondered what good working conditions for an interpreter in a hybrid environment would be.

Nicole Gagnon: Interpreters are not currently working six hours a day on the Hill. They work four hours a day on a three-person team and three hours a day with two people in the booth when it's in hybrid format. Six hours works fine when you are working in person. That is the time at the microphone. It does not take into account preparation time. A parliamentary interpreter receives their assignments between 6:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m. the evening before their working day. At that point, they are ordinarily assigned to two committees. Depending on the committees they are assigned to, they may or may not receive documentation. If they do, they spend the necessary time preparing for the next day's meeting.

Good quality interpretation calls for a certain amount of preparation and we have to be able to work safely without fearing for our hearing. That is why our hours of work have been cut.

So it is not just the work in the interpretation booth; there is also all the work we have to do ahead of time in order to provide you with the best service.

Giovanna Mingarelli: Thank you.

How many hours of work per day, for preparation and in the booth, are you asking parliamentarians to allow for, in order to have good quality work?

Nicole Gagnon: Preparation time varies by committee and our knowledge of a committee's subject matters. If you are assigned to a committee you are not familiar with, or if you are just starting out, you will ordinarily want to prepare more, because you are not as confident. It depends on the documentation you receive. There are so many factors that I can't give you an exact number, but it is easily two to three hours every day.

• (1155)

Giovanna Mingarelli: Thank you.

Can artificial intelligence help you?

I imagine that the more experience you have as an interpreter, the less preparation you need; but if you have less experience, can new technologies make it easier to prepare for interpreting?

Nicole Gagnon: If we use translation software for documents we get in advance, that can certainly be helpful, absolutely. Again, the problem is that the software does not have a mind of its own. It will match words in French or words in English, but there absolutely has to be a human being to look over it to make sure the concepts have been properly understood and grasped. If we don't get the texts in advance, which is sometimes the case, then we can review the transcripts from previous meetings of the committee we will be interpreting. We can communicate with colleagues who are used to working for that committee to find out whether they have vocabulary that could be useful to us.

In other words, yes, it can cut preparation time, but it will never completely eliminate it.

Giovanna Mingarelli: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.

That concludes our discussion with the first panel. On behalf of the committee, Ms. Skup and Ms. Gagnon, thank you for being with us today.

We will suspend for a few minutes to allow the new panel to get settled.

• (1155) _____ (Pause) _____

• (1200)

The Chair: Resuming the meeting.

I would like to welcome the second panel, who represent the translation bureau. With us are Jean-François Lymburner, president and chief executive officer; Lucie Levesque, vice president, policy and corporate services; and Annie Plouffe, vice president, services to parliament and interpretation.

You will have five minutes to make your opening statement. We will then have a question and answer period with committee members. You can share your time or designate one person to present your remarks.

You can go ahead.

Jean-François Lymburner (Chief Executive Officer, Translation Bureau): Mr. Chair, honourable members of the committee, I thank you for your invitation.

I recognize that we are gathered on the traditional territory of the Algonquin people.

With me are Annie Plouffe, vice president, services to parliament and interpretation, and Lucie Levesque, vice president, policy and corporate services.

As you have all done, for which I thank you, I would like to thank our interpreters Karine Doiron, Tara O'Brien and Sara Vafai, who are in the booth today.

The translation bureau of Public Services and Procurement Canada is proud to meet the language needs of the House of Commons. During the last fiscal year, we translated 44 million words for you, which is equal to nearly 150,000 document pages; we also provided you with some 12,000 hours of official languages interpretation, covering all of your regular meetings. At the same time, we continued to support major events like the G7 summit in Alberta in June 2025.

Our parliamentary interpreter team consists of 60 employees supported by 70 private sector suppliers, who enable us to manage peak periods efficiently and adjust our resources during less busy times.

The health and safety of our employees and suppliers and of all of you in the room remains a priority for the translation bureau. We are currently preparing a study on interpreters' exposure to noise, and we are continuing to raise awareness about the protection of interpreters, as the committee chair did when the meeting started. Thanks to your collaboration and that of your colleagues, the number of incidents has decreased by 60% in comparison to 2020, and we are maintaining our efforts to improve our protective measures for interpreters and also for participants.

• (1205)

[English]

With respect to technology, we are exploring artificial intelligence in accordance with the AI strategy for the federal public service. The National Research Council of Canada has been providing the translation bureau with AI tools to support our parliamentary translators.

We also recently launched GCtranslate, a prototype, in six federal departments and organizations. This AI tool, which has enabled the translation of over 70 million words since we tested last summer, complements the work of our language professionals.

We are also investing in the next generation with new interpretation programs at Université Laval and Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières, which attracted 38 new students this year alone. Scholarships were also awarded in the amount of \$1,000 to six first-year students and in the amount of \$7,000 to 13 new graduates for a total of \$97,000 this year. We are hiring five new graduates this fall.

[Translation]

Finally, we are renewing our procurement process for private sector interpreters who supply professional services. While taking into consideration consultations with the industry, health and safety requirements, and best practices, this process also targets financial accountability, as the costs of professional services have increased, as is the case in a number of sectors in our society.

Mr. Chair, honourable members of the committee, I hope that this information will be useful to you for your study. My colleagues and I are available to answer your questions.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Lymburner.

We will now go to the question period.

Mr. Godin, we will start with you, and you have the floor for six minutes.

Joël Godin: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Lymburner, Ms. Plouffe and Ms. Levesque, thank you for joining us and taking part in this exercise.

You know that our objective is to improve the services provided to parliamentarians. You have highlighted your accomplishments, the 44 million words translated and the number of conferences you interpreted. I don't recall how many meetings.

However, I would like to hear what you have to say about what did not get done. I don't want to know what you did well. I want to know how you could be better. Even if 44 million words were translated, could you tell us what did not get done? I ask this question because there is no such thing as a perfect system. What is missing in order for the translation bureau to score 100%?

Jean-François Lymburner: Providing services to Parliament obviously involves a daily gymnastic routine. We have a huge number of challenges to meet, particularly when meetings get extended or cut short.

As I said in my opening remarks, I took up my position at the translation bureau in January 2024. We had reached the end of the pandemic and the bureau's resources had become problematic. We heard the witnesses before us talk about times being cut. So that is another gymnastic exercise.

As we said, we have not had ordinary meetings cancelled since I have been at the bureau. We have to remember, too, that the bureau supports the Senate and the Supreme Court, and we have other clients outside the government as well.

Our priority is always to provide high quality services, provided by interpreters accredited by the translation bureau, to support your work.

Joël Godin: I'm going to stop you.

My question is clear. What part of your mandate were you not able to achieve when it comes to translation? Surely there are services that were not provided. Maybe some portion was not covered. Maybe there are groups that did not have the privilege of receiving this service. That is really what I want to know.

Jean-François Lymburner: You are talking about translation, but I think I understand that you want to know about the interpretation situation. In talking about the work the translation bureau does, I often refer to a team sport. We work with the clerks of the House of Commons to find out the weekly schedule. To come back to—

• (1210)

Joël Godin: Forgive me for interrupting you, but I sense that you are dragging things out and not wanting to answer my question. So I will go on to something else.

What mandate did the department give you for the new interpreter services contract? What is the specific mandate you were given for renewing the contract?

Jean-François Lymburner: When the translation bureau contracts, it uses several types of vehicles, depending on whether it is for sign language, international languages or Indigenous languages. This morning, I heard about a contract renewal—

Joël Godin: Forgive me for interrupting you.

You were here for the first hour of this meeting, when the International Association of Conference Interpreters gave its presentation. It said publicly that the government had initiated a contract renewal process.

Let's talk about that contract. What mandate did you get from Public Services and Procurement Canada? What is the mandate? Is it true that you are in the process of renewing it?

Jean-François Lymburner: We are in the process of renewing it. We are at the stage of consulting the industry. The contract has not yet been published, which is standard practice in contracting. We have consulted the industry. My colleagues in the Association—

Joël Godin: Forgive me for interrupting you.

I don't want to get into a fight. I understand that you are in the process of renewing the contract and I am not asking for you to give confidential information. What I want to know is the mandate from the government that was given to the translation bureau. Is it a

regular renewal? Did you get good, clear instructions from the government? The information we are hearing is that the only criterion considered is the lowest bidder. Is that the case? Can you be clearer about the mandate the department gave you?

Jean-François Lymburner: I will try to answer quickly.

The existing contract is expiring in December. So, like any good organization, we have initiated the renewal process. That is the usual practice with our colleagues in procurement. We consulted the industry over two days, not just the International Association of Conference Interpreters. There are a number of interested parties. I believe AIIC referred to this in its testimony. Most suppliers are sole proprietors. There were also companies that participated in our consultations. All of these people voiced their fears and their reactions to what we are proposing in order to move forward.

Joël Godin: You just said you are engaged in a consultation process and you consulted AIIC. Is that what you said?

Jean-François Lymburner: An AIIC representative was there. There were a number of people at the meetings—

Joël Godin: That was not my question. My question was clear: Did you consult AIIC?

Jean-François Lymburner: No more than the other suppliers who were present.

Joël Godin: What do you mean by “no more”? Did you consult them or not?

Jean-François Lymburner: The invitation process for industry days is open to everyone who wants to ask questions.

Joël Godin: Mr. Chair, I would like the witness to answer my questions.

Mr. Lymburner, you are engaged in a consultation process. You are renewing your contract in December; that is what you just said. I have asked you two easy questions.

First, you said you have consulted people in the industry, including AIIC: Have you actually consulted AIIC? Second, is the renewal process the same as in the past? I want to know whether nothing has changed or you have received more detailed, specific instructions.

The Chair: Mr. Godin, you have 20 seconds left.

Jean-François Lymburner: I will answer quickly: It is a normal process.

You also talked about what has changed. You talked about the lowest bidder. I am sure I will have a chance to answer that in a question to come, but it is not the case.

Joël Godin: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Godin.

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

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

I would like to thank the witnesses for your presentation and for participating in the committee's proceedings today.

We have discussed the renewal of interpreters' contracts. As we know, French and English are the two official languages in Parliament. Under the Official Languages Act, we can use either language in our proceedings. We are therefore entitled to high quality simultaneous interpretation, and that calls for a level of human resources that is sufficient to meet the needs.

We also know today that things are changing. Various technological advances have come about and they will be continuing over the years to come. Hybrid Parliament is here to stay; we will not necessarily be going back to the way things were. Given technological advances and the need for rigorous management of public funds, Parliament has to optimize the way it uses its resources.

How do you think we can protect and promote the profession of interpreter while at the same time taking the various demands I have referred to into account?

Jean-François Lyburner: Obviously, resources are central to our concerns. As the previous witnesses said, regarding the next generation, we are working with two universities in Quebec to add interpretation programs. We are very active in that area.

Regarding transformation, to attract young people to the field, we have to admit that artificial intelligence may deter some people who would have liked to become interpreters or translators. So we are working very closely with the universities to develop modernized courses. Obviously, the way technology is used is changing rapidly. In fact, to give you a bit of background, I think that in interpretation we are about two years behind what we are experiencing in document translation, where the tools have improved immensely. They are changing at top speed and the translation bureau is part of that transformation.

You will certainly have already used interpretation tools on your phone when you were on vacation. Mention was made earlier of the headsets that are starting to emerge. At present, however, this is mainly limited to use that is not risky and is not protected. For now, there are no cases where artificial intelligence can be relied on to provide a service like the one we offer here, other than for subtitles, maybe. This may change, because the quality of these tools is improving rapidly, so it is important to take them into consideration. Ms. Levesque, who visited our colleagues at the European Parliament, could also tell you about that.

The fact remains that we still have to find interpreters who are interested and, in most cases, are able to come and work here on site. That is the first criterion: location. Second, we need people who are accredited by the translation bureau. On that point, the pool has not grown much. We have held several new exams, and last time the success rate was 0%: No one passed the interpretation exam, which is one of the most rigorous in the world. But we are not giving up. We are continuing to work with them.

We hope that new employees will be joining us over the next few years, because we do not just have freelancers. As was clearly explained before me, freelancers often have other options and we can't be sure they will say yes every time we call. So responding to peaks in demand is something that has to be done every day.

• (1215)

Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault: Thank you.

I am going to take you in a different direction now. As you know, a modernized Official Languages Act has been enacted. It was a lengthy process, and federal institutions now have new obligations in respect of official languages that need to be interpreted in accordance with the substantive equality standard.

Has the advent of these new obligations created new needs in terms of translation and interpretation? Have you identified any, and do you have the necessary resources to help institutions meet their obligations under the Official Languages Act?

Jean-François Lyburner: The translation bureau offers services to departments and agencies, but it can also serve other clients on an optional basis; that is, the organizations can come to us.

At the moment, we are seeing a drop in demand for the traditional translation done in the translation bureau. Certainly there is more content being created every day, but it is a relatively expensive service. So the bureau is continuing to translate its clients' very important documents, but demand from departments and agencies for traditional translation has been declining for several years. In Parliament, on the other hand, demand is on the rise. You are creating more content and there are committees that are working very hard, and that generates a lot of documents. That is why we have a dedicated parliamentary team to meet your needs, and yes, we use translation tools.

In terms of interpretation, sign language interpretation is increasingly in demand in the world. That is the case not only for foreign languages, Indigenous languages and Canada's official languages, but also for sign languages. There are lots of climate change events and press conferences, the population is diverse, and private sector firms are also seeing an increase.

At the translation bureau, our efforts are mainly directed to supporting Parliament, but we also offer services to departments when possible and when they request it, since it is optional.

Regarding your question about official languages, I meet regularly with the Commissioner of Official Languages and we believe it to be very important that an equal level of quality in both languages be provided. It may be too soon, however, to see whether the new tools are going to have a negative effect on quality. You might be surprised to learn that some tools that people have access to and consider reliable enable them to improve the quality of both their oral and written work. It is still too soon to say, but we are monitoring the quality of our services. This is very important. At the moment, our three major focuses in the bureau are the next generation, quality and modernization.

Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault: My time is up. Thank you.

• (1220)

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Beaulieu will now have the floor for six minutes.

Mario Beaulieu: Thank you.

Mr. Lymburger, if I understood correctly, freelance interpreters account for about 60% of the interpreters who work in Parliament. Is that correct?

Jean-François Lymburner: That is a very good question. I should have been clearer on that point.

As was said earlier, the translation bureau has about 60 employees—public service employees—who provide interpretation services, as is the case in the booth today.

I want to clarify that of the 70 freelancers whose services we use, it may be for only one meeting in the year. At present, a majority of interpretation services is provided by our employees.

We are trying to correct the situation, but we do plan on working with freelancers, because they are part of the solution. Since expertise in the field of interpretation is limited, some of our freelancers are former translation bureau interpreters. Freelancers account for a little under 70%. We are trying to correct the situation.

In cases like the G7 summit, however, where services have to be provided in several languages, we sometimes retain other freelancers from elsewhere, depending on needs.

Mario Beaulieu: Thank you.

Do you believe that a contract that gives precedence to the lowest bidder could mean, for example, that an interpreter who has no experience or who is not familiar with parliamentary work could be selected, if more experienced interpreters were available but were more expensive?

Does the translation bureau think that parliamentarians would be equally well served in either case?

Jean-François Lymburner: First, the procurement process that was discussed this morning is one of the processes we use, depending on need, but is not the only one.

I do not entirely agree that only the lowest bidder would be selected. As was said earlier, our interpreters first have to be accredited by the translation bureau. We believe that is a guarantee of quality. So not necessarily all bidders would be selected. Security clearance, which is an important factor, also has to be taken into account. Because we need interpreters in a variety of situations, we evaluate them and they have to get their security clearance.

The fact remains that we are also managers. A bit like everyone in society, we work under pressure and we have to take the price and value of the services into account.

In the past, we used a variety of methods in order to recognize certain interpreters' expertise. I could give Ms. Plouffe the floor afterward, so she can provide more details on that subject. However, when we analyze the work, we assign the resources each day based on a finite capacity planning model. It truly is a puzzle. We allocate our people and our resources.

It is not really accurate to say that we only use the services of the lowest bidders. Interpreters make up a small group. We know most of them. Some of them are assigned to certain committees and others to new committees. The price of the services is not the only factor we take into account when we use a freelancer.

Mario Beaulieu: Do you think saying that the new procurement rules are going to favour the lowest bidder is false?

Jean-François Lymburner: You have to look at the facts. Lowest bidder is often associated with lower quality. It happens that quality management is my field of expertise.

Quality assurance was mentioned earlier, and you are involved in that. If you have complaints about certain interpreters, I suggest that you make them. We take complaints very seriously and we make sure that our services get improved. Obviously, we ensure the quality of the services within our team by overseeing all of the services we provide. This year, there have not been many complaints. The services provided at the G7 summit were excellent.

Is this easy, in a situation where there is a limited number of interpreters? No. We are working on this at the moment, because we are still at the stage of analyzing feedback from organizations like the International Association of Conference Interpreters. There are more than 17 organizations that govern interpreters all across Canada.

Mario Beaulieu: When you choose interpreters for an outside event, do you take their knowledge or experience into account?

Jean-François Lymburner: Certainly. We try to make up three-person teams by matching full-time employees.

Ms. Plouffe did a very good job at the G7 summit. It was very difficult. In fact, I am going to give her the floor to explain how she manages interpreter assignments on a day-to-day basis to support parliamentarians.

Annie Plouffe (Vice-President, Services to Parliament and Interpretation, Translation Bureau): I am going to describe how we organize the work day-to-day and talk a bit about quality.

We have our pool of employees, who provide 60% of the hours of interpretation we provide to committees. Our employees have expertise in each committee. Lead interpreters are assigned to ensure continuity of services and to collaborate with the freelancers.

We start by assigning our employees and we then check the availability of freelancers who have the necessary quality index and security clearance and reside in the region. That is how we do it. All freelancers have the same quality index at the moment, based on the evaluations done by our internal experts.

• (1225)

Mario Beaulieu: So I understand that all freelancers are subject to the same evaluation, including outside ones.

Annie Plouffe: For the moment, all freelancers who have a contract with us have the same evaluation. Our employees have their own evaluations.

Mario Beaulieu: That doesn't seem reasonable to me.

Annie Plouffe: It is because they start with accreditation. When we have concerns, then we do analyses. Since we have had the quality index, we have revoked two accreditations. So we monitor things very closely. There is excellent co-operation on this. What gives us the guarantee of excellence is the accreditation.

Mario Beaulieu: Is it possible that in future you might hire interpreters who do not have accreditation?

The Chair: I would request a very quick answer because time is up.

Annie Plouffe: For Parliament, no, that is not the case.

For the government, in some cases, the G7 summit for example, I did not have interpreters on contract who could work at the G7, because they had to speak four languages. But some freelancers are accredited by the United Nations and have done G7 and G20 meetings in the past. So yes, we do hire interpreters in some cases who do not have our accreditation.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu.

Mr. Bélanger, we will now go to you for five minutes.

Jim Bélanger: Good afternoon.

I am trying to understand the difference between the current process and the one that is going to be proposed. Is the only difference that the contract will be awarded to the lowest bidder?

Jean-François Lymburner: Price is a consideration, but bidders also have to meet all the requirements: They have to have their accreditation and security clearance and they have to live in the region before they can submit a bid.

We are in that process right now, so I am going to limit my remarks to prices per se. People spoke earlier about a 70% cost increase. That is what we have experienced at the translation bureau since the pandemic because there are a limited number of interpreters and they have different rates. Most of the time, we use pretty much all of them when we need interpreters.

I am going to ask Ms. Levesque to talk about the process, which also includes an evaluation of the suppliers. I really want it to be clear that it is the same thing for all professional services. We are required to evaluate performance and we follow the criteria set by the department.

Lucie Levesque (Vice-President, Policy and Corporate Services, Translation Bureau): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Regarding the current process, we have talked about the availability, language profile and security clearance criteria. Those are the criteria that will be remaining in the next process as well.

Regarding the quality index, that will not necessarily be a criterion, but it is still going to be measured. It will just be done a little

differently. Cases of inadequate performance or breach of the code of conduct will be taken into consideration in the next process. Where qualifications, accreditation, security clearance and so on are equal, we will really select the person who offers the best value for money.

Jim Bélanger: Right.

When a request is made for interpretation services, why can you not decide what it is worth and what can be paid?

Jean-François Lymburner: That is not how today's marketplace works and that is not what we do. What we do is offer availabilities. You heard earlier that according to surveys and other trends, we cannot guarantee that there will actually be private firms that are interested. However, I would like to note that while these private firms do include sole proprietorships, they also include firms made up of several interpreters.

Jim Bélanger: Do you intend to increase the number of government employees for interpretation? Is there a shortage of interpreters?

Jean-François Lymburner: That is a very good question.

We face that challenge on a daily and also an annual basis. I am well aware that the translation bureau is not the only one in this situation. Take an example like the extension that happened earlier this year. We were able to meet all the needs, because Parliament continued to function, largely with our employees. However, with the G7 summits that come back around to Canada every five or six or seven years, we also have to use private firms. There are special requests. There are commissions that have been held recently and in the past. We then have to supplement our staff, in partnership with private firms. I think that is a sound capacity management approach that enables us to deal with fluctuations in demand. That is what the bureau does.

• (1230)

Jim Bélanger: I would like to ask a question about artificial intelligence.

At the moment, I do not have the impression that interpretation would be done properly in all situations. How long do you think it will take to incorporate it into the system?

The Chair: You have about 45 seconds left, Mr. Bélanger.

Jean-François Lymburner: There are several aspects. Obviously, there is security, which is important; that is one thing.

There is also the issue of conveying emotion, humour, intent and tone of voice. At the UN and the European Parliament and in Switzerland, human conference interpreters do the work.

Is progress being made? Yes. I attend many conferences at which we are shown the advances made. At the bureau, we are following the conversation closely, together with our colleagues in the House. Subtitling is also evolving. You have surely seen that it is getting a lot better. There are people who prefer to read. We are monitoring the situation, and all of this is being driven by advances in artificial intelligence.

That being said, we at the bureau want to assure you that it respects our language, Canadian French and Canadian English, based on translation bureau data.

The Chair: Mr. Bélanger, your time is up. Thank you.

I will now give the floor to Ms. Mingarelli for five minutes.

Giovanna Mingarelli: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Lymburner, I am going to carry on from Mr. Bélanger's question. In your presentation, you talked about GCtranslate, a tool that can help translators and improve the federal government's translations. What departments have access to it? Will the general public have access to it soon?

Jean-François Lymburner: That is a very good question.

I would first like to say that the translation bureau has been using artificial intelligence for decades. Weather reports have been translated automatically by the bureau for over 20 years now. Since 2017, the bureau's language professionals have been using artificial intelligence in their work at the bureau, but, like society, we have evolved. We get a lot of requests for self-service, but not at any price.

We have worked on a prototype that we were able to train using the data accumulated by the translation bureau, and not just Hansard. The translation bureau actually has data by subject field. We trained the tool, and our language professionals determined that the quality was better than the tools. What the employees had to do is what you maybe do on vacation: go to Google, do a translation here and there, and give it a try. Now, the employees who are able to use our tool know it is secure and is based on the translation bureau's Canadian language, but also that it is easy and fairly simple to access.

Regarding departments, I don't want to misspeak, but I think there is the Privy Council, the Department of Finance, Canadian Heritage, the RCMP and the Financial Transactions and Reports Analysis Centre of Canada. They are the first federal institutions we have shared the tool with. We have already tried it at Public Services and Procurement Canada, and in the space of four months, in a department with 20,000 employees, we translated over 70 million words using our tool.

The translation bureau continues to get mission-critical requests for important documents that call for the expertise of a language professional.

I hope that answers your question.

Giovanna Mingarelli: Yes, thank you.

Will the public have access to it?

Jean-François Lymburner: Yes. I am the CEO of the translation bureau. We spoke earlier about francophone minorities outside Quebec or anglophone minorities in Quebec. The translation bureau uses a language portal to reach out to Canadian families where there are a number of tools. It is one of the pages most often visited on the government websites. These are tools in English and French that deal with writing and languages. On the portal, there is a tool called Termium, a terminology tool that is known worldwide. When I leave Canada, people do not always talk to me about what

we are doing, but they talk a lot about Termium, a tool that is similar to a dictionary.

Would it be possible to have a translation tool made available to Canadians? I think that in this field, it is not all that crazy to think about possibly offering that service. At the moment, we are trying to serve the 350,000 employees in the public service and 100 departments and agencies, but it is still high quality English and French. There are no other countries with two official languages such as French and English and have translation bureau data. I would like to be able to participate in an effort to make it available to Canadians in future.

• (1235)

Giovanna Mingarelli: Thank you.

The Chair: Are you finished, Ms. Mingarelli?

Giovanna Mingarelli: Yes.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Mingarelli.

Mr. Beaulieu, you now have the floor for two and a half minutes.

Mario Beaulieu: I would like to come back to my earlier question. Would it be possible to use interpreters who are not accredited for services to departments?

Jean-François Lymburner: That is a good question.

I think the previous witnesses talked about how there was a shortage of staff one day. When a committee meeting lasts an extra 21 minutes, a whole series of actions are taken and we have to send a new team. So we sometimes have to deny departments the services of our interpreters, who are, I repeat, the best. We know them and we are proud of them.

In those situations, the department is left to its own devices. There are very good firms that offer interpretation services, but they do not use the same criteria as the ones used by the translation bureau. For some services, like a team meeting, there are no security requirements. There are services that can be purchased externally that are appropriate for the type of interpretation needed.

Ms. Levesque is going to talk about this. She is our security expert.

Lucie Levesque: I am not really going to address the security issue. I would actually like to add a qualification.

The services we offer other departments are optional.

If you like, I would suggest that you visit the CanadaBuys website. You will see that tenders for interpretation services are issued directly by other departments. Some departments are already using the interpretation services that are available. They put their own contracts in place in order to get those services.

Mario Beaulieu: At the moment, you have no say about quality, is that right?

Lucie Levesque: No.

Jean-François Lymburner: We are sometimes consulted.

There are other types of interpretation, such as community interpretation. We have colleagues in passport offices and so on who need other kinds of interpreters. That is not what we offer at the translation bureau. However, we certainly have the expertise needed to give them advice and guidance. The same is true for sign languages. Demand is increasing, as I said. The bureau does it to support you, but we do not have the capacity to support all departments and agencies.

The Chair: You have 20 seconds left, Mr. Beaulieu.

Mario Beaulieu: Do you do regular evaluations of the quality of the work done by interpreters in Parliament?

The Chair: Please answer the question very quickly.

Jean-François Lymburner: I am going to let Ms. Plouffe answer.

Annie Plouffe: Yes, evaluations are provided for.

As we said earlier, our senior interpreters oversee quality. They are often in the booth with freelancers. They note it if there are problems or whatever else there may be. If there are complaints or comments, we deal with them more specifically.

Mario Beaulieu: Are the reports made—

The Chair: I'm sorry to interrupt you, Mr. Beaulieu, but your time is up.

Thank you.

I now give the floor to Mr. Gill for five minutes.

[*English*]

Dalwinder Gill (Calgary McKnight, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I read a report which said that interpreters' pay will be moved away from a daily rate and replaced with an hourly rate. Why is the government moving from a daily rate to an hourly rate for interpreters?

Jean-François Lymburner: Maybe I'll start, Mr. Chair.

As we mentioned, we consulted the industry. That is a standard practice when we establish procurement. Around the world there are best practices, and we saw areas that are looking at an hourly rate and others that are looking at a daily one. I would say that it's too early because we've just consulted with the industry. We took their feedback, and we're looking. We definitely want to find a solution that is going to continue to provide our services.

We heard that and other things, and that's part of the feedback process. I'd say that some people would prefer an hourly rate, and some would prefer a daily rate. At the end of the day, we're going to try to find what is acceptable.

Just to go back to best practices around the world, I spoke about sign languages, for example. There are a lot of services in interpretation that are hourly rates. If you call someone, there are services where you get access to an interpreter for an hour to order something online. They will charge you by the minute or by the hour. It depends on the use case.

Dalwinder Gill: Okay.

Earlier this year, Air Canada flight attendants went on strike because they were being paid by the hour and were not fairly considered for the other tasks that their job requires. Is there a way to know whether our interpreters and translators could end up in a similar situation where they are expected to take on a professional workload without fair pay for all the preparation, practice and research that goes into it?

• (1240)

Jean-François Lymburner: If I understand well, Mr. Chair, last year—everybody heard about it; it was in the paper—some interpreters were not happy that we were trying to identify the time. Today you heard that initially, before the pandemic, they were mainly working six hours a day in cabin when the sound became.... We were not as good as we are now. We have been working with the House of Commons. The systems are all better. We have people on Zoom. If you go back five years, none of that existed. We put in all kinds of measures, including testing and, at that time, it was an attempt by us to try to make sure that all the tests were done. That was removed from the contract at that time, and that's not something that we do.

In terms of the daily rate or the increase in costs of 70% that we spoke about, you also heard that in some cases, we're down to three or four hours. We're very conscious of that aspect. We also want to make sure that health and safety remain our top priority.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Plouffe, do you want to add anything about the tests that can be done?

[*English*]

Annie Plouffe: Yes, I can add on the testing.

Right now, the way the contract is set is that there is a provision for about an hour of non-interpreting time that includes tests, breaks or pauses for different reasons, four hours of active interpretation time at the mike and a provision for if we go over the time.

When we go over by 21 minutes, we're looking at a daily fee. If we go over by 46 minutes, we're looking at double the daily fee of the interpreter. We're looking at that. This is the cost in mind.

In terms of fair pay, I would say that the pay is fair in that respect, and we're also taking into consideration their preparation. It's how they submit their price. That is all taken into account in their daily rate, but active interpretation is about four hours. They are paid for the equivalent of four hours irrespective of the number of hours that they work. If they do one hour or four, they are paid the same rate.

The Chair: Mr. Gill, you have about 55 seconds.

Dalwinder Gill: I read a report which mentioned that a quality index is being used to measure interpreters' performance. Can any one of you explain how interpreters are evaluated and how their performance is measured?

Jean-François Lyburner: Maybe [*Technical difficulty—Editor*] the evaluation of the quality of the interpreters—

[*Translation*]

The Chair: I'm stopping the clock.

Can you not hear anything?

Marc Dalton: The interpretation has been interrupted.

The Chair: But you have interpretation.

Marc Dalton: I can't hear anything. There is no sound.

The Chair: Can you hear me? Is it working? Yes, okay.

We will continue. There are 25 seconds left.

Jean-François Lyburner: I understood the question, Mr. Chair. I will give Ms. Plouffe the floor.

Annie Plouffe: I'm sorry to take a bit of your time, but could you rephrase the question?

[*English*]

Mr. Chair, can we have the question again? I'm very sorry.

The Chair: Do you want to repeat your question, Mr. Gill?

Dalwinder Gill: I read a report which mentioned a quality index is being used to measure interpreters' performance. Can any one of you explain how interpreters are evaluated and how their performance is measured?

The Chair: I will need that answer in about 15 seconds. Maybe there will be another time to answer it.

Annie Plouffe: I'll be quick.

Our senior interpreters are responsible for the program of how they evaluate. They evaluate accuracy and the way the message is being translated. They look at the fidelity with what's being said. They look at the pace also. There are different indexes.

I myself am not an interpreter, but we could provide more information on what they are looking at. The criteria used are similar to when we're giving the accreditation process.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

[*Translation*]

Thank you.

[*English*]

Mr. Gill, I want you to know that I gave you a little bit of extra time, given the interruption and the disruption.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Villeneuve, you have the floor for five minutes.

Louis Villeneuve: I would like to thank all three of you for being here.

We are talking about renegotiating a contract. My question is twofold.

What tools do you need for doing the work? Are there any new ones that you need? Can you see any needs in this regard?

I would like to come back to the technology, because there is a lot of talk about it. It is changing at a rapid pace. What are you doing, at the translation bureau, to plan for the future? How will technology influence the work over the next few years?

• (1245)

Jean-François Lyburner: That is a good question, Mr. Chair.

I will start by answering the question about the rapidly advancing technology.

The translation bureau acts as a convener in the language industry in Quebec. We have created coordinating bodies that bring together not only interpreters, but also translators, terminologists and universities: All the key actors in the field of languages in Canada.

Most of the time, we put out joint messages cautioning people about the value and ethics of the tools. We have spent months discussing security. Sovereignty over the tools has become an issue not just for us, but also for private firms. There is an effort to coordinate. Obviously, we keep abreast of the latest technologies, which are often used first by the general public. That is a good thing. We often hear about them in the industry.

Technologies that are installed on our phones are getting better and better. Some already have eyeglasses and earpieces. Once a service is offered that is accessible and secure all across Canada, the translation bureau may look like it is dragging its feet.

For example, ensuring the sound quality at this meeting is a team effort. So I work with my colleagues in the House of Commons and the Senate to get the best consoles and the best tools.

I am going to come back to your question about technology, Mr. Chair. The safety rules that are applied here require ISO-certified mikes: mikes that provide good sound. That is an example of what we are putting in place.

Regarding the tools that are used for preparing interpreters, they are evolving. There is software that will enable them to prepare for the work and also manage the meeting. We have not said much about that today, but remote interpretation is becoming increasingly common worldwide, and it is supported by quite a few tools. Some schools are delivering courses remotely only; others are in person. Interpreters have told me that they prefer to work remotely, in their own work environment, rather than in a booth, for interpreting. Everyone does not have the same.... There is also the issue of how we support interpreters in using tools while at the same time abiding by the safety rules.

Louis Villeneuve: Thank you, Mr. Chair. That will be it for me.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve.

We will start the third round of questions.

I would ask my colleagues to keep to their times. That way, we will be able to finish the third round with a member from each party having the opportunity to ask questions.

We will start with Mr. Dalton for five minutes.

Marc Dalton: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Tell me whether I have understood correctly, Mr. Lymburner. Previously, an interpreter might have been at the mike for six hours. Since the pandemic, it is now four hours, but consideration is being given to going back to six hours. Is that correct?

Jean-François Lymburner: That is a very good question.

During the pandemic, working conditions.... The interpreters were here in Parliament, and parliamentarians were working elsewhere. At the time, they were using several methods of communication, including by telephone and several other tools. A number of injuries happened and the sound quality was very poor. We recognized those problems. My predecessors also determined that the number of hours had to be reduced in order to understand the extent of the problem.

I can assure you that there are limiters in the booths. The consoles are.... The fact remains that in Canada we have something truly unique. While I am speaking to you here today, I am not wearing an earpiece. I can do that because there are loudspeakers. When there is a loudspeaker and a mike, there can be feedback loops. That is what can cause acoustic injuries, and it is that aspect that we are giving our full attention. We are working with scientists to try to really understand what is going on.

Marc Dalton: My question was about changing the number of hours at the mike.

Jean-François Lymburner: I'm getting there. Every committee has asked the same question.

During 2024-25, the Labour Program at Social Development Canada declared Parliament to be a dangerous area because of the various acoustic injuries. We have worked on this with our colleagues in the department.

At the moment, we are talking about hybrid interpretation. The four-hour block was associated with hybrid interpretation. We are also speaking with our counterparts in other countries to see whether we can increase the number of hours to six in certain situations. For example, here, right now, we are not holding a hybrid meeting. The participants are here in the room. No one is participating in the meeting online. That could be a situation where an interpreter could work for six hours. Other parliamentary committees will have witnesses online. So that will be a four-hour period.

[English]

It's not binary. It's kind of—

• (1250)

[Translation]

Marc Dalton: I have heard that the situation would be changing in the near future and there would be improvements, and so on.

However, according to the testimony we heard, if the number of hours at the mike is changed by raising it from four to six hours, it will not only cause problems, but it will also pose a threat to the interpreters' work. We also heard that you would be losing interpreters.

Is that true? Can you tell us more about that?

Jean-François Lymburner: I am speaking about both interpreters who are employed in the translation bureau and freelancers.

Yes, sound quality is the tool of their work. Before we proceed with increasing hours in the booth, we want to make sure we have considered all of the health and safety aspects. It has to be safe to do it.

Marc Dalton: We heard that there will also be changes in terms of the quality of interpreters and their skill level. For example, freelancers will not be paid based on their skills.

Can you tell us a bit about that?

Jean-François Lymburner: This is about bureau certification.

I am going to ask Ms. Plouffe to provide some clarification about quality. There was a question about that earlier.

Annie Plouffe: I thank the member for his question.

At the moment, the way the contract and assignment of resources are done, we do not take a freelancer's expertise, experience and profile into account—whether they are a former lawyer or a biologist, for example—when we assign them.

I am proud to say that we have employees with varying backgrounds. We are certainly going to know this anecdotally, but it is not one of our criteria. In exceptional cases, we may need a freelancer who has specific skills for a study a committee is doing. We will then look at freelancers' up-to-date profiles and resumes so we can assign them to the committee in question. This is de facto invisible to us. Interpreters are deemed to be of a certain quality. That is how we will assign them.

For the moment, when we select a person, we do it randomly. Price is not a factor at this time. We rely on their expertise in assigning them.

Marc Dalton: I would like to give Mr. Godin a few seconds.

The Chair: There are only 15 seconds left.

You have the floor, Mr. Godin.

Joël Godin: In that case, I will get right to the point.

Before the pandemic, shifts were six hours. Today, they are four hours.

Is it realistic or utopian, with improvements in technology, to go back to six hours if there are no virtual meetings, excluding committees where witnesses were present as in the past?

The Chair: Please give a very short answer.

Jean-François Lymburner: Mr. Chair, it is not utopian.

There are countries that have ways of calculating the number of minutes when people are participating virtually. That is what enables them to manage capacity. So that is a very good question. Obviously, it calls for certain systems. We are working very hard on this with the House of Commons.

The Chair: Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Godin and Mr. Dalton.

Ms. Chenette, you have the floor for five minutes.

Madeleine Chenette: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you for that excellent clarification.

I am going to go back to preparation, because we were told earlier that preparation would no longer be paid for. So I have three questions about that.

First, is that the case?

Second, in terms of preparation, is there really a difference today between people who have experience and people who use technological tools to look up all the fine points on a subject?

Third, how is this preparation work recognized? I ask this question because it is actually important in terms of quality.

Jean-François Lyburner: I am going to let Ms. Plouffe answer.

Annie Plouffe: Thank you for your questions.

Regarding preparation, at the moment, freelancers assigned to Parliament get their assignments, as the previous witnesses said, between 6:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m. the day before. So there is a certain amount of time for the preparation they have to do.

In addition, regarding expertise relating to committees, our employees work with the freelancers to help them and enable them to catch up when they are assigned to those committees. These are people who are involved in our parliamentary work. They actually do have some general information.

Regarding preparation time, I would say that everyone includes it in the rate they bid. That is how it is accounted for at the moment. For parliamentary work, we do not have a figure for preparation time.

Let's look at an example in another area.

If we are covering conference x or y , in some very specific cases, such as the G7 summit, for example, we gave interpreters a preparation day. They had consultations, documents to read, and so on. It was paid, but it was a requirement, because we didn't know what the participants would be talking about.

So for conferences, it varies. Sometimes, we can anticipate it well in advance.

• (1255)

Madeleine Chenette: If I understand correctly, preparation was not paid, even before. So it is included in the rate requested. In that case, everyone determines the amount to be billed for preparation, based on their experience or the research that needs to be done.

Given this, what tools will soon be made available to our interpreters to help them optimize their preparation time?

Jean-François Lyburner: That is a very good question.

I have seen several kinds of tools. There are some that can give you the text almost instantaneously. The interpreter will be able to read it at the same time. If they missed something, they will be able to make adjustments. We are talking about the text in this case.

For subtitling and transcription, a lot of progress is being made.

For research, we now have tools that make it possible to search for expert opinions on a specific subject.

For a discussion like the one today, there are the opening remarks, which the interpreters have in advance, but then there is the question period. The interpretation is a function of the questions and answers.

There may eventually be tools that might be somewhat more advanced for voice. When it comes to voice, enormous progress is being made at present. Work is being done on accents, tone and humour. A lot of things are being done. Sports commentary is starting to be done using artificial intelligence. We are not there yet, but we have to keep an eye on things.

Madeleine Chenette: I am going to change the subject.

I would like to talk about how confident we can be in the interpretation. It is nice to see these tools; it is fascinating. They are available for interpreting and they improve both quality and efficiency.

In Canada, our two official languages are important and we want to show them to be valuable, but people who are not fluent in the other language do not see how the quality of the language is being diminished because of the use of these tools. What is being done in Canada to ensure high quality interpretation?

What could our government do in this regard that would be important? What are you doing?

Jean-François Lyburner: That is a very good question.

First, I make sure that the translation bureau uses its expertise to develop tools that represent Canadian French and English, which will help to enhance confidence in interpretation services.

I know from experience that there is not always speedy access in the public service to the many meetings held in English or French. Since facilities like the ones we have access to here today are not always available, there are tools that could help a colleague who is not as comfortable in French to better follow the discussions taking place today, for example.

Those tools even include software that could have evaluated the quality of my French today, if they had listened to me. Those tools are somewhat different from the services we offer at the bureau, but they are starting to be available. Some colleagues will be using them to evaluate themselves and monitor their progress.

Tools like the Zoom app, which you are familiar with, are changing from month to month. In the public service, we use a different one of the same type. Some tools even offer the option of selecting a language for subtitles.

I think these tools are going to enhance confidence in our services.

When people have good tools, they use their mother tongue more. I am the first to do that. Using artificial intelligence makes it possible for me to improve the quality of my translations.

In addition, we work a lot with groups of scientists on developing scientific tools in French, because, as we know, the working language in the sciences is mainly English.

We are noticing that people are using their language of choice more often, thanks to the tools, in which they have increasing confidence.

The tools do not have only negative effects.

The Chair: Thank you. Your time is up.

I will now give the floor to Mr. Beaulieu for two and a half minutes.

Mario Beaulieu: Earlier, you said you did regular evaluations of the quality of interpretation services but there was no report.

Do you prepare reports internally, at least, to get an idea about how quality may be changing?

Annie Plouffe: Thank you for your question.

The reports are compiled by the deputy director, the director of interpretation, who reviews them and ensures that the training and mentoring provided by the teams are adjusted, where necessary.

Mario Beaulieu: Have you observed a connection between the advent of hybrid Parliament and the quality of interpretation?

Jean-François Lymburner: The main problems associated with the advent of hybrid Parliament relate to health and safety.

I have taken part in meetings where interpreters were asked whether the content of what was said, the tone, and the vigorous debate bothered them, and their unanimous answer was no. What bothered them and affected them the most were the incidents in the booth.

In that regard, we have made pretty good progress and we are providing much more stable conditions. I spoke earlier about the decline in incidents—

• (1300)

Mario Beaulieu: I have heard about the report of a study commissioned by the translation bureau at the University of Ottawa that made a connection between hybrid meetings and the rising prevalence of hearing injuries.

Is that in fact the case?

Jean-François Lymburner: That is a good question.

Yes, we worked with the University of Ottawa to collect data about sound.

Regarding the standards relating to occupational diseases and on-site sound limiters, we meet all those standards, because the booths are done properly.

Now, we need to know what the impact of sound that comes in by phone is, but there is just no data on that subject available anywhere in the world.

So we worked with the University of Ottawa, which measured interpreters' hearing health. We are now measuring sound pressure. I won't go into the details, but dosimetry is going to be used to measure the quality and pressure of sound on the ear.

We are working on acquiring knowledge about which data does not yet exist.

The Chair: You have 15 seconds left.

Mario Beaulieu: The International Association of Conference Interpreters is concerned because the new contracts no longer include provisions on protecting interpreters' hearing health.

The Chair: Be very brief.

Mario Beaulieu: Do you think there is a reason for that?

Annie Plouffe: I can guarantee that every measure that has been put in place to protect interpreters' hearing health and safety apply to both employees and freelance interpreters. It applies to everyone. Whether or not it is in the contract, the measures are here to stay. All interpreters benefit from the technological innovations arising from the studies we do.

Yes, the reference to them is brief, but we did not feel a need to describe them, since they are included in the commitments we have made and we will never be going back on those measures, for anyone.

The Chair: Thank you. Time is up.

On behalf of the committee, I would like to thank the witnesses.

Thank you very much, Mr. Lymburner, Ms. Plouffe and Ms. Levesque.

Colleagues, our next meeting will be on Thursday, October 9, and will deal with the minority-language education continuum.

Is it the pleasure of the committee to adjourn?

Some hon. members: Yes.

The Chair: 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>