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# Standing Committee on Official Languages

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Chair: Yvan Baker





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Monday, October 20, 2025

• (1835)

[*Translation*]

**The Chair (Yvan Baker (Etobicoke Centre, Lib.)):** I call this meeting to order.

Welcome to meeting number five of the Standing Committee on Official Languages.

Today's meeting is taking place in a hybrid format. For those participating virtually, please click on the microphone icon to activate your mike, and please mute yourself when you aren't speaking.

I would like to remind participants of the following points.

Please wait until I recognize you by name before speaking.

All comments should be addressed through the chair.

I would like to ask committee members to please raise their hands when they wish to speak.

For those participating in person and through Zoom, the committee clerk and I will maintain the speaking order as best as we can.

Pursuant to Standing Order 106(4), the committee is commencing consideration of a request by committee members to undertake a study of French in government communications.

Mr. Villeneuve, you have the floor.

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

I read the letter that was sent by my colleagues. First, I would like to table a notice of motion. I have to say that I'm a francophone. My accent shows that well. I'm proud to be a francophone, and I think it's important for French to be present at all levels of our government.

Mr. Chair, may I read the motion that I would like to move?

**The Chair:** Yes, I'll allow it.

**Louis Villeneuve:** Perfect. Thank you.

Since this is my first time, I wanted to make sure I was doing things properly. Here's what I propose.

That, following the Radio-Canada article published on October 9th, concerning the use of French by the Prime Minister, pursuant to Standing Order 108(3)(f), the committee undertake a study concerning the place of the French language in the public sphere and in government institutions;

That the committee invite the Minister responsible for Official Languages, officials from the department of Canadian Heritage, and the Clerk of the Privy Council to appear on this important subject, and;

That the committee allocate two meetings to this study.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve.

Do you want to add anything to the motion before I give the floor to the next speaker?

**Louis Villeneuve:** No, I have nothing to add. Thank you.

**The Chair:** The motion has been circulated in both official languages. I see that everyone has received it.

Mr. Beaulieu, you have the floor.

**Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ):** I'd like to ask for the vote to be called on the motion.

**The Chair:** Okay.

I see that Mr. Deschênes-Thériault has his hand up. If it's the will of the committee—

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

When my colleague asked for the vote, no one exercised their right to speak. If I'm remembering the procedure right, and correct me if I'm wrong, we have to go to a vote.

**The Chair:** Okay.

We'll suspend. I'll confer with the clerk.

• (1835)

(Pause)

• (1835)

**The Chair:** I call the meeting back to order.

I've conferred with the clerk.

Mr. Godin, you're once again right.

**Joël Godin:** Thank you for pointing that out, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** It may be the last time; who knows.

I've conferred with the clerk. It's true that, as soon as someone asks to call the vote, we have to go directly to a vote if I don't see any other hands up.

**Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault (Madawaska—Restigouche, Lib.):** I have a point of order, Mr. Chair.

My colleague has asked for the vote, but I'm wondering whether we have to consult the members to see if they're ready to vote.

I'm not sure of the procedure on the parliamentary side. However, according to the Morin Code on deliberative assemblies, two thirds of the members present have to agree to call the vote and confirm that there isn't any debate.

Is that the case when it comes to committees?

**The Chair:** I'm suspending the meeting.

• (1835) \_\_\_\_\_ (Pause) \_\_\_\_\_

• (1840)

**The Chair:** I call the meeting back to order.

Colleagues, I'm going to read Standing Order 116(2)(a):

Unless a time limit has been adopted by the committee or by the House, the Chair of a standing, special or legislative committee may not bring a debate to an end while there are members present who still wish to participate. A decision of the Chair in this regard may not be subject to an appeal to the committee.

Here's what I think. Mr. Beaulieu has asked for the vote. It's true that I didn't have any other names on the list, but when I looked across, I saw that Mr. Deschênes-Thériault wanted to speak.

I will therefore give the floor to Mr. Deschênes-Thériault.

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

As you said, and as I understand it, when there's a debate, the chair can't interrupt it.

There was no debate in this case. Mr. Beaulieu asked for the vote, and my colleague opposite raised his hand to speak. You even said just now that you didn't have any names on your list.

I understand your interpretation of Standing Order 116(2)(a), but it doesn't apply in these circumstances. I'm appealing to your judgment, as usual.

**The Chair:** Mr. Deschênes-Thériault, do you want to speak to the point of order?

**Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault:** I would like to mention the fact that we haven't had the opportunity to have a debate. When the chair mentioned Mr. Villeneuve's motion, he asked if people had anything to say. Mr. Beaulieu raised his hand. When Mr. Beaulieu took the floor, I raised my hand to speak, not knowing that Mr. Beaulieu wouldn't contribute to the debate. As a result, I didn't have the opportunity to express my desire to participate in the debate.

In itself, that happened within a few seconds, so I didn't necessarily have a real chance to raise my hand. I didn't think the debate was closed when Mr. Beaulieu asked for the vote. Our side didn't have the opportunity to express our desire to take part in the debate.

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

**Mario Beaulieu:** In my opinion, if the Standing Orders state that when no one has spoken and the vote is requested, we call the vote, then it's better to follow the Standing Orders.

If we start being flexible in interpreting the Standing Orders, that will become difficult at some point. I remember times when I was shocked by the chair's rulings here, but the Standing Orders prevail.

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

**Joël Godin:** Mr. Chair, I'll give you the facts. I understand the arguments of my colleague Mr. Deschênes-Thériault very well. However, it's important to understand that there was a silence. As they say in hockey games, call Toronto to see what happened.

Let's examine the situation. Mr. Beaulieu took the floor to ask for the vote, there was silence, and then Mr. Deschênes-Thériault raised his hand. In my opinion, Mr. Deschênes-Thériault won't be able to speak.

Mr. Chair, I'm already letting you know that I'm going to challenge your decision if you go against my arguments.

• (1845)

**The Chair:** We discussed a very important topic. Here's what I've ruled.

I'll start by reading again from the Standing Orders: "...the Chair of a standing, special or legislative committee may not bring a debate to an end while there are members present who still wish to participate."

I heard Mr. Beaulieu's request for the vote. I looked to see if any committee members still wanted to participate in the debate. There was a member who had their hand up. The Standing Orders also state, "a decision of the Chair in this regard may not be subject to an appeal to the committee."

**Eric Lefebvre (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC):** I have a point of order.

**The Chair:** You have the floor, Mr. Lefebvre.

**Eric Lefebvre:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

This is my first meeting here at the committee. When Mr. Beaulieu asked for the vote, no hands were raised. With all due respect for Mr. Deschênes-Thériault, I can tell you, Mr. Chair, that I was a spectator here, and it was his assistant behind him who was telling him to raise his hand.

In any case, a representative of his team was signalling to him to raise his hand, even though the request for the vote had already been made. There were no hands up from Mr. Deschênes-Thériault. I think it's very clear in terms of the Standing Orders.

**The Chair:** Okay.

There are a number of hands up.

Ms. Mingarelli, you have the floor.

**Giovanna Mingarelli (Prescott—Russell—Cumberland, Lib.):** Mr. Chair, since we all have questions about this, can we suspend for a few minutes to discuss it?

**The Chair:** Okay.

I'm suspending the meeting.

• (1845) \_\_\_\_\_ (Pause) \_\_\_\_\_

• (1845)

**The Chair:** I call the meeting back to order.

In the spirit of co-operation, the committee members have discussed the point of order that was raised and have reached an agreement.

Mr. Deschênes-Thériault, you have the floor.

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

I'd like to talk about why we support our colleague Mr. Villeneuve's motion.

The Liberal Party of Canada has always put official languages first. I represent the riding of Madawaska—Restigouche, which is 90% francophone. Our Acadian and Brayon communities are dynamic. The vitality and protection of our official language minority communities and the Canadian francophonie have always been priorities. They're partly what motivated me to run for federal politics, under the Liberal Party.

In 1969, the Liberals passed the first Official Languages Act, which made French and English our two official languages.

It was the Liberal Party that passed the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, including section 23, in 1982, to give us the right to education in French across the country.

It was also the Liberals who put in place the first action plan for official languages in 2003. In 2018, after a decade of stagnation, there was a reinvestment in our official languages through the action plan for official languages 2018–2023. More recently, in 2023, as part of the action plan for official languages 2023–2028, the Liberals made the largest investment, considering inflation, for official languages in the history of the country.

They also carried out an ambitious modernization of the Official Languages Act, which communities had been requesting for a long time.

The government met its francophone immigration targets, which hadn't been met for more than 20 years. The Liberal Party has a high standard when it comes to official languages, and it has to be maintained at that level.

Our two official languages are a fundamental part of our Canadian identity, and that has to be reflected at all government levels, particularly through the use of French in communications at every level of government.

We're also aware that there has to be a significant presence of French in the Prime Minister's communications.

I think all of that is reflected in the content of my colleague Mr. Villeneuve's motion, so that's why we support it.

• (1850)

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Do any other members want to contribute to the discussion?

Since there isn't anybody, let's call the vote.

(Motion negatived: nays 5; yeas 4)

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

**Joël Godin:** We don't really have the same understanding of how sensitive the Liberals are to the French reality. I've been here for

10 years. I took part in the modernization of the Official Languages Act, and we unfortunately brought forth a mouse.

However, I'm pleased that they recognize that the Prime Minister has to speak the language of Molière more.

In my opinion, the motion they tabled follows the same model of thinking as when the Official Languages Act was modernized. We've brought forth a mouse. They're trivializing the French reality in Canada.

I want to talk to you about the motion that I'd like to move.

For that reason, I'm distributing the text of the motion. I can also email it to the clerk.

**Voices:** We all have it.

**The Chair:** You can also send it by email after your remarks, Mr. Godin.

The floor is yours.

**Joël Godin:** Thank you.

It's important to take the necessary measures. The Liberals appointed a bilingual Governor General, but she doesn't speak one of the two official languages. The list of actions demonstrating that they're trivializing the importance of the francophonie, the use of French and respect for francophones and francophiles is very long.

I travel all over Canada. Last week, I was in Kelowna at the conference of the Fédération nationale des conseils scolaires francophones. Those people greatly appreciate the work that we, the Conservatives, have done to prevent a step backward in the Official Languages Act, but they would have liked us to do more. I'll just give the example of the number of rights holders that were counted as opposed to the estimation. I won't belabour the point this evening, but it's important to remember that, in the last census, 300,000 rights holders were found out of the 600,000 in Canada. That's why there was a multi-party battle over this in 2019.

Now, Mr. Chair, I will read my motion:

That, pursuant to Standing Order 108(3)(f), and in light of recent findings by Radio-Canada indicating that Prime Minister Mark Carney delivers only 17 percent of his public remarks in French despite prior commitments to improve his proficiency:

a. The Committee invite the President of the Treasury Board...

To enrich your culture and for your information, I'd like to note that the only person who, under the Official Languages Act, is responsible for defending the French reality and respect for the French language in all departments is the President of the Treasury Board. Did you know that the Official Languages Act doesn't confer any powers on the Minister of Official Languages?

Anyway, I'll continue:

...and the Minister of Official Languages to appear for no less than two hours each, separately and at two distinct committee meetings, to discuss the state of official bilingualism in Canada and the Government's plan to uphold the equal status of French and English in federal communications;

b. The Committee hold a second meeting to hear from a panel of witnesses proposed by each recognized party, composed of experts, academics, and community representatives who can speak to the decline of French in Canada and the importance of its use at the highest levels of government;

c. That, pursuant to Standing Order 108(1)(a), the Committee order the production of all documents showing Prime Minister Mark Carney's calendar entries since assuming office, including any records related to French-language tutoring sessions, to be provided to the Committee in both official languages and in electronic format within 21 days, in order to assess the extent to which the Prime Minister has fulfilled his commitment to improve his French-language proficiency.

This has to be taken seriously. All the critics who will tell us that we have to focus on the economy, not bilingualism in Canada, are completely wrong. This is an important issue. Let's be proud of our French-English bilingualism. I always say "French-English" because, with all due respect to Ms. Simon, we have a Governor General who doesn't speak French, one of the two official languages. We have to take concrete action, and that's why we've reacted.

I would remind you that Stephen Harper started all his speeches in French and that Pierre Poilievre opened question period by asking half of his questions in French. That shows a willingness to respect both official languages. That is what's expected of the Prime Minister. Francophones and francophiles are quite resilient. They won't demand 50% French or perfect French, but they want to see the willingness. That has to change.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

• (1855)

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

**Mario Beaulieu:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Overall, we support Mr. Godin's motion. We agree that Mr. Carney speaks less in French than the prime ministers who were in office before him. A head of state who uses little French reinforces the message sent to government employees that French is a second-class language. It's always been very difficult.

I'd like to come back to what my Liberal Party colleague said about the bilingualism model. The Official Languages Act has major flaws. Since its implementation, there has been a decline in French and the assimilation of francophones outside Quebec.

Following the Laurendeau-Dunton commission, André Laurendeau wanted Quebec to have a special status in order to strengthen French. He was a federalist, but he considered French to be the heart of French-Canadian society.

However, the opposite happened: Pierre Elliott Trudeau came along and gave Quebec special status by instead supporting English and recognizing Quebec's anglophone minority. He conveniently created a law to protect the linguistic minorities in the provinces, even though Quebec suffered the same treatment as francophone communities outside Quebec, albeit to a lesser extent. Of course, French schools weren't banned everywhere in Quebec, as had been the case outside Quebec. However, our francophone education system suffered from over 200 years of underfunding and attempts to hinder it. When the Official Languages Act was passed, the federal

government at the time—the English Government of Canada—decided to support its own language.

• (1900)

**Giovanna Mingarelli:** Mr. Chair, I have a point of order.

**The Chair:** Go ahead, Ms. Mingarelli.

**Giovanna Mingarelli:** I apologize, Mr. Beaulieu.

Mr. Chair, we didn't receive the motion beforehand. Could we suspend a few minutes so that we can receive and discuss it before continuing?

**Mario Beaulieu:** Mr. Chair, I think there's a debate going on.

**The Chair:** Ms. Mingarelli, Mr. Beaulieu has the floor, but you're next on my list. When you have the floor, you can ask to suspend the meeting.

Mr. Beaulieu, you have the floor.

**Mario Beaulieu:** I'll shorten it up.

In short, Mr. Carney should speak in French more, and he should also take action for French.

He's doing the opposite right now. He's challenging Quebec's Bill 101 and Bill 96 in the Supreme Court. He said he would. The Liberals said they wanted to protect French in Quebec, but their official languages support program shows that they're continuing to promote only English in Quebec. The federal government announced funding only for English-language health services, while it's getting harder and harder to get French-language health services in Montreal.

I support Mr. Godin's motion as a whole, but I'd like to propose an amendment to it. Can I move it now, Mr. Chair?

**The Chair:** Yes.

**Mario Beaulieu:** In point a, which ends with "in federal communications;" I propose to add, "particularly the use of French in federal institutions in Quebec, given that the Charter of the French languages stipulates that French is the only official and common language;"

I'd then like to move a second amendment.

**The Chair:** Excuse me, Mr. Beaulieu. Could you send your amendment to the clerk? That would be helpful.

**Mario Beaulieu:** We'll email her the amendment. In the meantime, we could debate the substance and come back to it afterward.

**The Chair:** Please send it to the clerk so that she can distribute it to all our colleagues.

**Mario Beaulieu:** Okay.

Overall, it's important to broaden the study by going a bit further than Mr. Carney's French, even if that's important and symbolic. It has to be expanded so that it covers the impact of the predominance of English in federal institutions in Quebec.

We can talk about it again.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu.

You're proposing two amendments to the motion on the table. I've asked you to send your amendments to the clerk for distribution. Normally, according to the rule, we deal with one amendment at a time. I'm suspending the meeting to give members a chance to read the motion and the amendments.

• (1900) \_\_\_\_\_ (Pause) \_\_\_\_\_

• (1915)

**The Chair:** I call the meeting back to order.

Ms. Mingarelli had the floor before the break.

Do you want the floor back, Ms. Mingarelli?

**Giovanna Mingarelli:** Were you finished, Mr. Beaulieu?

**Mario Beaulieu:** I spoke with the clerk earlier. We could merge the two amendments, so I'll just finish the other amendment.

Mr. Godin's motion says, "composed of experts, academics, and community representatives who can speak to the decline of French in Canada". Before "Canada", I propose adding, "Quebec and".

**Giovanna Mingarelli:** We could vote on both amendments together.

• (1920)

**The Chair:** Mr. Dalton, you have the floor.

**Marc Dalton (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge, CPC):** I didn't want to speak to Mr. Beaulieu's amendment, but to the main motion.

**The Chair:** You wanted to speak to the main motion.

**Marc Dalton:** Yes. I wanted to speak to Mr. Godin's motion.

Are we continuing this debate or are we talking about Mr. Beaulieu's amendment?

**The Chair:** We're discussing Mr. Beaulieu's amendment.

**Dominique Vien (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC):** We're talking about Mr. Godin's motion.

**Marc Dalton:** Are we talking about Mr. Godin's motion or Mr. Beaulieu's amendment?

**Joël Godin:** We were discussing the subamendments.

**Giovanna Mingarelli:** We're talking about the subamendments. We want to vote on the subamendments.

**The Chair:** That's right. We're debating the subamendment.

**Marc Dalton:** Okay.

I didn't want to speak to the subamendment, but to Mr. Godin's motion.

**The Chair:** You'll have the floor when we get back to the amendment, then.

**Marc Dalton:** That's right.

**The Chair:** Okay.

Ms. Mingarelli, did you want to speak?

If not, we'll move on to the next person.

**Giovanna Mingarelli:** No. That's fine.

**The Chair:** Mr. Deschênes-Thériault, you have the floor.

**Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault:** I just want to clarify. There isn't a subamendment on the table. We're talking about Mr. Beaulieu's amendment.

**Mario Beaulieu:** You're right.

**The Chair:** The clock is ticking away. If no one wishes to speak to the topic, we'll go to a vote on Mr. Beaulieu's full amendment.

Let's put the question.

(Amendment agreed to: yeas 5; nays 2 [See *Minutes of Proceedings*])

**The Chair:** Let's come back now to Mr. Godin's motion.

Is there any discussion?

Mr. Dalton, you have the floor.

**Marc Dalton:** I would just like to briefly reiterate the importance of Mr. Godin's motion.

What worries me about Mr. Carney is that, according to the Radio-Canada study that examined 500 of the speeches he's given, only a small portion of them were in French.

I'm therefore grateful to all my colleagues here today who believe that French is important for them and for their ridings. I'm the only representative from the west of Ontario, but I've been on this committee for a number of years. We've heard from many witnesses who have talked about the importance of the French language for hundreds of thousands of Canadians out west and outside Quebec.

The fact that our Prime Minister uses very little French outside Quebec is a signal. I think it's important to focus on managing the direction he's taking, because he's our country's biggest and most important representative, and he needs to set an example.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Dalton.

Ms. Chenette has the floor.

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

I want to say that there is no doubt that our Prime Minister wants to promote French and share it. There should be no doubt about that.

Our two official languages are at the heart of Canadian identity. That's been said, and it has to be said again with confidence. They're an integral part of what makes Canada strong. It's all the more important today, when we need to promote our Canadian economy and ensure that our two languages are used as part of our economic development. At the same time, it should be recognized that the growth of the French-speaking world is very real and that it's here to stay.

It's important, then, that Mr. Carney's economic leadership, which has a clear consensus in Parliament, be exercised in both official languages. There's no doubt about that.

I also want to say that our government is committed to protecting and promoting French across the country. That's why we modernized the Official Languages Act so that all—

• (1925)

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

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

**Joël Godin:** I'd like my colleague's comments to stay relevant to the motion at hand. She's currently promoting her government, which is supposedly very sensitive to both official languages. However, that isn't our opinion, and she won't be convincing us this evening. All the examples have already been given.

Could she bring her comments back to the motion at hand?

**The Chair:** I will give members a chance to say what they want to say about the amendment.

I'll give the floor back to Ms. Chenette.

**Madeleine Chenette:** I'd like to qualify what you said, since it's necessary to understand the importance of our two official languages and put it in perspective with our Canadian reality.

In this context, then, it's important to respect our Prime Minister's commitment to improving his French proficiency. I'm also confident—as I'm sure he is too—in the importance of both official languages, since we feel it's our duty to enforce the Official Languages Act in an exemplary manner, as you've already mentioned, to ensure that our leader sets the tone.

Regarding the proposed motion, it's clear that the first thing to do is think about the best way to assess compliance with the commitment of improving French proficiency. That's really the aspect that has to be considered.

I want to be clear that learning French isn't something that can be done simply in a training room. It's done through practice. As the saying goes, you learn by doing. Beyond training, it's important to practise the language during discussions and by reading, for example, briefing notes, which have to promote both official languages.

In short, I'm wondering about those elements in relation to the proposed motion. Indeed, it's a matter of ensuring that the commitment to improving French proficiency is honoured and that leaders set an example. The motion that has been put forward isn't just about the Prime Minister. It also applies to all federal communications.

In a previous life, when I was Canada's ambassador to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, or OECD, I saw a clear improvement in government representatives' French proficiency. If we want a study to see how the French progress is going, it's important to study that progress in all its forms.

I'm a proud Quebecker, and I want to promote French, without a doubt. However, I also want to promote francophonie not only within Canada, but also on the international stage. That's the Prime Minister's role, of course, but it's also the role of all deputy ministers and all government teams. The goal is to make it clear that both official languages are alive and well in government relations.

In this context, I want to emphasize the relevance of the comments that have been made about the importance of conducting this study, since we need one to validate what exists. However, it's also important to have the right means to assess progress in French. That's what I'm wondering about in relation to the proposed motion.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Mr. Deschênes-Thériault, you have the floor.

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

The motion moved by my colleague Mr. Godin proposes, at point a, “to discuss the state of official bilingualism in Canada and the Government’s plan to uphold the equal status of French and English in federal communications”. Those objectives are at the heart of the Official Languages Act.

I'd like to continue along the same lines as my colleague, who mentioned the important work that has been done to modernize the Official Languages Act. That modernization wasn't just superficial. It made a number of substantive changes, such as recognizing the need to protect and promote French in every province and territory, given the fact that French is in a minority situation in Canada and North America.

That led us to talk earlier about the importance of using French at all levels of government. We agree on that aspect, on the fact that French has to be promoted in communications—

• (1930)

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

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

**Joël Godin:** Mr. Chair, according to the notice of meeting, the current meeting was scheduled to take place from 6:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. Because of the infomercial the Liberals have been making for the last 10 minutes, it's now 7:30 p.m.

Unfortunately, some of my colleagues won't be able to stay any later this evening. Therefore, we need to make a decision.

What shall we do? Shall we go to a vote forthwith? Are we going to shortchange our witnesses who have been invited to appear tomorrow as part of the committee's study on the education continuum? Are we going to cut into their time to deal with this issue, which appears to have been resolved, give or take a few commas?

The Liberals don't seem to want to co-operate, and they're trying to trivialize the subject before us right now.

**The Chair:** On the point of order, I turn the floor over to Mr. Beaulieu.

**Mario Beaulieu:** I hope we'll have time to finish. Otherwise, we will move to suspend the meeting and continue it tomorrow.

**The Chair:** Mr. Deschênes-Thériault, you have the floor.

**Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault:** I don't believe the debate is closed. Some members still have things to say, and the time allotted for debate is not over. From my perspective, there are still things to add to the debate.

Also, we didn't receive the motion in advance. We only got it this evening, so we haven't had—

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

**Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault:** I haven't finished speaking to the point of order.

**The Chair:** Mr. Deschênes-Thériault is speaking to your point of order, Mr. Godin.

**Joël Godin:** I know. He's saying that he didn't receive our motion in advance, but this is the usual course of procedure.

I would also like to remind you that his colleague Mr. Villeneuve moved an identical motion, which we received at the beginning of this evening's meeting, at the same time as ours, so he can't fault me for that.

**Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault:** I'll finish what I was saying on the point of order.

**Joël Godin:** He should also not blame the Conservatives and make it look like we're acting in bad faith. It's quite the opposite. My Liberal friends are acting in bad faith.

**Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault:** I'm not done on the point of order.

I didn't mean to accuse anyone of bad faith. I just wanted to mention that, since we didn't receive the motion as such, according to procedure, we still have things to add to the debate.

We agree on some aspects of items a), b) and c), but we disagree on others. This evening, we didn't use all the time allotted for debate on this motion, which, as mentioned, was not received beforehand, that being the usual procedure. From my perspective, we're not ready to vote. If we haven't made use of all the time allocated this evening, we have to continue the debate because it's not closed and some colleagues around the table want to continue the discussion on the subject.

**The Chair:** Mr. Godin, would you like to add something on this point of order?

**Joël Godin:** Mr. Chair, what's unfortunate about what my colleague just said is that we're going to penalize tomorrow's witnesses and undermine the study on the education continuum. Witnesses have travelled to come and testify, and we risk cutting into their speaking time.

The Liberals will have to live with their decision.

**Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault:** On a point of order.

We were discussing a point of order, but I find that it has become a debate. We're no longer on a point of order right now.

**The Chair:** As I mentioned earlier, the chair has no right to stop a debate if people still want to speak. If members want to speak to the motion, they have the right to do so. I have no right to curtail the debate.

Mr. Deschênes-Thériault, you had the floor.

**Joël Godin:** Except, Mr. Chair, that—

**The Chair:** Do you have a point of order?

**Joël Godin:** I have a point of order.

A notice of meeting was filed. We have busy schedules, and some of my colleagues need to leave. The meeting was scheduled from 6:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. We thought it would be an easy issue to resolve, but unfortunately, because of our Liberal colleagues' attitude, it is not yet resolved, even though it is now 7:33 p.m.

Mr. Chair, you have to make a decision, but I must tell you that if you don't have unanimous consent, we can't continue the meeting.

**The Chair:** Mr. Godin, I want to be clear. I don't have to make a decision, because as chair, I don't have the right to shorten the length of a debate. If members want to continue to speak, they have the right to do so.

If no one else wants to speak, we can proceed to a vote.

Mr. Lefebvre, do you want to speak to the point of order?

**Eric Lefebvre:** Yes, Mr. Chair.

I'd like to know if you have any other names on the list of members who wish to speak. If only Mr. Deschênes-Thériault wants to speak and he only needs a few minutes, we can let him finish and proceed to the vote. If other colleagues want to speak, tomorrow's witnesses will be penalized, as my colleague said. Therefore, I'd like to know if you have any other names on the list.

● (1935)

**The Chair:** Right now, there is no one else on the list, but members have the right to participate in the debate if they wish.

Mr. Deschênes-Thériault, you may continue.

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

I want to point out that my opposition colleagues requested this evening's meeting to discuss this subject in full knowledge of the facts, knowing that a meeting was scheduled for tomorrow to continue discussing the important topic of the education continuum.

We worked in good faith to set an agenda and priorities. We planned a study on the education continuum as well as a study on the digital transformation and the impact of artificial intelligence on official languages and French within the government.

In and of themselves, I believe that these are important current topics for our official language communities across the country. It's too bad, because two weeks ago, we agreed that these are current topics and that we need to debate them. If we had really wanted to act in good faith, we would have passed Mr. Villeneuve's motion, which dealt with exactly the point we wanted to discuss and agreed on.

This motion introduces elements on which—

**Joël Godin:** On a point of order.

I request that the meeting be suspended, because we have obligations.

**The Chair:** I can't suspend the meeting in the middle of the debate, just because you no longer want to listen to the member who is speaking.

**Joël Godin:** Does that mean he can keep us here until 3 a.m.?

**The Chair:** I will suspend the meeting for a few minutes. I'll confer with the clerk.

• (1935) \_\_\_\_\_ (Pause) \_\_\_\_\_

• (1935)

**The Chair:** I call the meeting back to order.

I'm sorry, Mr. Deschênes-Thériault, but we won't be able to continue for long, because the meeting was supposed to end at 7:30 p.m. and resources have been set aside accordingly.

We have two options.

If we adjourn the meeting now, the discussion will continue during tomorrow's meeting, which was scheduled for another study.

We could also adjourn the debate and agree to resume the discussion another day, so as not to interrupt tomorrow's study. I'll leave it up to the committee members.

Mr. Deschênes-Thériault, you have the floor.

**Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault:** I move to adjourn debate to a date on which we have not yet called any witnesses.

**Mario Beaulieu:** Mr. Chair, I had also asked to speak—

**Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault:** I wasn't finished, Mr. Beaulieu.

**The Chair:** Mr. Deschênes-Thériault asked to speak, and I gave him the floor. Now it's Mr. Beaulieu's turn.

**Mario Beaulieu:** I move to suspend the meeting. That's what Mr. Deschênes-Thériault—

**Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault:** On a point of order.

No, I didn't say that at the beginning of the meeting. I didn't use those words during the meeting. I just moved to adjourn the debate. Those were the words I used when we resumed the meeting. We'll be able to see that in the minutes.

**Mario Beaulieu:** In any case, tomorrow we'll be able to speak and move motions. No one will be able to stop us from doing that. It's more a matter of agreeing about the witnesses.

• (1940)

**The Chair:** Therefore, what Mr. Deschênes-Thériault proposed—

**Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault:** I move that the debate be adjourned.

**The Chair:** Okay.

That is a dilatory motion, which means we'll go straight to a vote.

(Motion negatived: nays 5; yeas 4)

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

**Joël Godin:** Mr. Chair, we have just witnessed the Liberals taking some very concrete action. They are trivializing this action. When a debate is adjourned, we don't know when we're going to resume it. They are the ones who took this action, so they will bear the brunt of this decision. This is unacceptable.

That said, I would ask that we suspend the meeting and resume it as soon as possible.

**The Chair:** Mr. Deschênes-Thériault, you have the floor.

**Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault:** Before Mr. Godin's point of order, I hadn't finished my speaking time. As I understand it, I still have the floor.

**The Chair:** You have the floor.

**Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault:** Without restricting my right to speak, I move that the meeting be now adjourned.

I'm not talking about the debate. I'm talking about the meeting. Earlier, I moved that the debate be adjourned. Now I'm moving that the meeting be adjourned.

**The Chair:** Mr. Deschênes-Thériault, you are moving a dilatory motion.

Madam Clerk, let's put the question.

(Motion negatived: nays 5; yeas 4)

**Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault:** May I continue with my time?

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

We're imposing obligations on interpreters and technicians. This is unacceptable, and my colleague is being stubborn.

Mr. Chair, I ask that we suspend this meeting immediately. Let's call the vote.

**The Chair:** As long as someone has the floor, I can't shut down debate.

Mr. Godin, other members have raised their hands.

As long as a member has the floor, I can't adjourn the meeting. Nor can I do so without all of our colleagues agreeing to it.

I'm going to ask for a break, and I'm going to consult the clerk on what you're asking for, Mr. Godin.

The clerk has just informed me that Mr. Godin's motion is dilatory. So we have to vote on this motion.

The motion is that the committee meeting be now suspended.

• (1945)

**Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault:** Mr. Chair, I have a point of order.

Is it really a dilatory motion?

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

We're in the middle of a vote—

**The Chair:** I call for order in the room.

During a vote, there can be no debate, and there can be no points of order.

The clerk is in the process of holding a vote on a dilatory motion by Mr. Godin to suspend the committee meeting.

(Motion agreed to: yeas 5; nays 4)

**The Chair:** The meeting is suspended.

[*The meeting was suspended at 7:47 p.m., October 20, 2025*]

[*The meeting resumed at 11:02 a.m., October 23, 2025*]

• (8300)

**The Chair:** We are resuming meeting number five of the Standing Committee on Official Languages.

I'd like to make a few general comments before we begin.

I would like to remind participants of the following points. Please wait until I recognize you by name before speaking. All comments should be addressed through the chair. For members in the room and on Zoom, if you wish to speak, please raise your hand.

The committee clerk and I will manage the speaking order as best we can.

The committee is meeting to resume the meeting of Monday, October 20, 2025. A motion had been moved by Mr. Godin, and an amendment moved by Mr. Beaulieu had been adopted. The debate on the motion as amended was before the committee.

Before we begin, I wanted to clarify a few procedural points, because there was some discussion of this at the last meeting.

First, a number of dilatory motions have been moved. I consulted with the clerk, and I just wanted to clarify that a dilatory motion can only be moved by a member if they have the right to speak. A dilatory motion cannot be moved during a point of order.

Second, the chair cannot call a vote if there is still someone who wants to speak. We had a lot of discussion on this last time. I will always do my best to make sure that everyone who wants to contribute to the discussion has a chance to do so before we go to a vote.

I see that you have your hand up, Mr. Beaulieu.

The floor is yours.

**Mario Beaulieu:** I just wanted to clarify something with regard to dilatory motions. Can they only involve calls for a vote or calls for a suspension?

Is that correct? I'm told it's broader than that.

**The Chair:** If I may, I will ask the clerk to answer your question. She can clarify.

**The Clerk of the Committee (Madeleine Martin):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

A dilatory motion is a motion that is non-debatable and non-amendable. Usually, a very short phrase is used to decide the issue at hand.

Dilatory motions contain phrases like “that the committee do now adjourn”, “that the debate be adjourned” or “that the commit-

tee proceed to another order of business”, if there is more than one item scheduled, to move on.

A vote cannot be called. That's not a dilatory motion, because, as the chair said, Standing Order 116(2) states that debate cannot be closed if there are still people who wish to speak. A vote cannot be called, because someone might wish to speak.

• (8305)

**Mario Beaulieu:** That's what I understood previously, except when no one asks to speak.

**The Clerk:** If there is no one else on the speaking list, the debate is considered to be closed and it is understood that no one wishes to speak.

It's up to the chair of a committee to check whether there are still people on the speaking list and to determine whether the committee can proceed to a vote.

A vote cannot be called. That is an observation being made, that there is no one left on the speaking list. Then the committee can proceed to a vote.

**The Chair:** Mr. Dalton, I see your hand up. Do you wish to speak to this?

**Marc Dalton:** Yes, Mr. Chair.

When the start and end times for a committee meeting are set, can the debate continue until no one else has any points to raise?

**The Clerk:** The schedule established by a committee is intended to guide business. It's not set in stone. Committees are in charge of their own affairs. That means that if a committee wants to organize itself differently from what is on the schedule, it can do so.

There's also the issue of resources. We don't have endless resources. If we go over our allotted time, we can simply make a request to our services for resources.

So it's not necessarily just a matter of procedure, it's also a matter of resources. As I said, a committee is in charge of its affairs. If it's the committee's will to continue the meeting because the debate is not closed, the committee has the power to make that request and continue the meeting.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Dalton.

Mr. Godin, did you want to speak to this?

**Joël Godin:** Mr. Chair, I would like to ask the clerk a question.

Madam Clerk, you said that the committee decides how long the work will take.

Last Monday, was it our committee that decided that the meeting would be one hour long?

**The Clerk:** I said that the published schedule is a guide for the work of a committee. The schedule that was published on Monday showed a one-hour meeting.

If committee members decide during the meeting that they want to continue the meeting beyond the established schedule, that is the committee's prerogative. It also depends on the services available.

**Joël Godin:** Does it require unanimous consent, procedurally speaking? Or is it a discretionary decision that any member of a committee or the chair can make?

**The Clerk:** The chair has the power to suspend a meeting. He has to have the consent of the committee to adjourn a meeting. That's why, at the end of every meeting, the chair asks, "Is it the will of the committee to adjourn the meeting?"

Unanimous consent doesn't apply here. If a majority of committee members wish to continue the debate, it's considered that it's the will of the committee to do so.

**Joël Godin:** I'm going to ask you a clearer question.

Let's take the example of the notice of meeting sent to members of our committee for a one-hour meeting. We know that all members from all parties have very busy schedules, and this isn't a partisan thing. If I go back to last Monday evening's meeting, some MPs replaced committee members because they were busy elsewhere. Those replacements came here knowing that the meeting would last one hour.

I think that if committee members want to extend the meeting, we need the committee's unanimous consent.

Since our committee has several new members, I'd like to take this opportunity to ask you to clarify this point for future meetings.

**The Clerk:** Unanimous consent is required when it comes to deviating from rules. The notice of meeting isn't one of them. That's why unanimous consent isn't used in this context.

As I said, the will of a majority of committee members is considered to be the will of the committee. In a situation where a committee does not wish to continue the meeting beyond its scheduled time, the committee has a few options.

The chair can use his prerogative to suggest to the committee that we adjourn the meeting. With the consent of committee members, he can do that.

He can also make a decision to suspend the meeting, which isn't encouraged, because a suspension is usually used when it's a temporary break during the meeting. It's not used to suspend a meeting for several days.

Committee members may also, by informal decision, suggest that the chair adjourn the meeting and agree to resume the discussion at the next meeting.

As clerk, I can formalize the decision by putting it in the minutes. The item will then be added to the notice of meeting for the next meeting.

The options we're suggesting to members are to make a proposal and agree on the next steps.

• (8310)

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

**Joël Godin:** We won't dwell on this, because we don't want to waste taxpayers' money, which is important. We have a book that explains these procedural concepts. It's up to us to do our research.

What I understand is that, when we show up at a committee meeting, we're not sure if we're going to leave at the scheduled time.

Is that correct?

**The Clerk:** It depends on the will of the committee.

**Joël Godin:** Thank you.

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

**Mario Beaulieu:** At the last meeting, I understood that the chair could decide to extend a meeting and that he didn't need unanimity or the majority of committee members to do so.

**The Clerk:** If the majority of the committee wants to end the meeting, it is the will of the committee to do so. The notice of meeting is a guide. We assume that committees have set time slots. For example, today's meeting was scheduled to take place from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. That's the information that was published in the notice of meeting.

If, at 12:55 p.m., the majority of committee members wish to continue, there is no mechanism to prevent that, unless someone moves a motion to adjourn, and it is adopted by the majority of committee members.

**Mario Beaulieu:** At the last meeting, I got the impression that the majority of committee members wanted to end the meeting, but that it continued. In the end, the chair made a ruling and suspended the meeting.

If not, does that mean that it wouldn't have proceeded?

**The Clerk:** In fact, last Monday night, the question was about adjourning or suspending the meeting. The majority of the committee members wanted the meeting to end. As I interpreted it, the question was how it was concluded, whether by adjourning or suspending the meeting.

Mr. Godin moved a dilatory motion to suspend the meeting. The majority of the committee voted in favour of that motion. The meeting was therefore suspended.

**Mario Beaulieu:** Normally, if it isn't the will of the majority of committee members, we can't go beyond the scheduled end time.

**The Chair:** Mr. Deschênes-Thériault, you have the floor.

**Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault:** As I understand it, the motion to adjourn that we proposed, with the agreement of the majority of committee members, would have allowed us to end the meeting. I believe we proposed it at 7:32 p.m., two minutes later. If it had passed, it would have ended the meeting, but it wasn't the will of the committee. Instead, the decision was made to suspend. That's why it's continuing now.

**The Clerk:** That's my interpretation.

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

**Joël Godin:** If we're done with this, I want to get clarification from the clerk on some other procedural things.

On Monday evening, we suspended the meeting, while a meeting was scheduled for the next day, at 11 a.m.

What should a committee do in such a case?

**The Clerk:** I don't want to get too technical, but when there's a suspension, we're stuck in the meeting at hand. Since we suspended the meeting on Monday, meeting number five, we had to cancel the meeting with witnesses that was supposed to take place on Tuesday, meeting number six.

The committee could have decided to resume the meeting at another time, but it is the role of the chair to call the meetings. He decides when the second part of a suspended meeting takes place. However, subsequent meetings are automatically postponed, because the suspended meeting is still in progress.

For example, today should have been meeting number seven, but it was cancelled because we are in the second part of meeting number five.

After a suspension, the committee retains its time slots and associated resources, but it's up to the chair to call the second part of the meeting.

• (8315)

**The Chair:** Mr. Deschênes-Thériault, you have the floor.

**Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault:** I have a question about Mr. Godin's comment.

Meeting number five was called at Mr. Godin's request under Standing Order 106(4). If we had adopted a motion to adjourn instead of suspending this meeting, Mr. Godin—Mr. Godin being the one who requested it—could have requested at the start of meeting number six that we immediately resume debate. That would have taken priority over the study on the minority-language education continuum.

Is that correct?

**The Clerk:** Unless a motion is already before a committee, a member of that committee can always use their time to move a motion.

In the case you raise, the motion to resume debate is a dilatory motion, so there wouldn't have been any debate on that motion. It would have been voted on immediately if the member had the floor. You can't do that on a point of order.

**The Chair:** Mr. Dalton, you have the floor.

**Marc Dalton:** There have been many times when we've had witnesses appear for a study, and they haven't had an opportunity to speak because we've been debating something completely different from the topic on the notice of meeting. It's not ideal, but it can happen.

**The Chair:** Seeing no other hands up and no one else on the list, I move that we move on to the matter at hand that we're supposed to be discussing today.

Mr. Godin, you have the floor.

**Joël Godin:** Actually, Mr. Chair, regarding the second part of meeting number five, something happened between Monday evening and today, and I would like some clarification.

I have in my hands the Standing Orders of the House of Commons, consolidated as April 29, 2025, including the schedules.

Is that the most recent version, Madam Clerk?

**The Clerk:** The consolidated version as of June 5, 2025, is the most recent version.

**Joël Godin:** Mr. Chair, I would like to ask the clerk a question.

Were any changes made to section 106 of the latest version of the Standing Orders of the House of Commons?

**The Clerk:** I don't have the answer to your question. I will check.

**Joël Godin:** I will answer you, Madam Clerk. There were none.

Unfortunately, I didn't get the latest version. Maybe we'll ask for the update.

Thank you, Madam Clerk.

Mr. Chair, on Monday evening, October 20, 2025, we, parliamentarians from two parties in the House of Commons, had signed, in advance of that day, a tool available to parliamentarians invoking Standing Order 106.

In Standing Order 106(1), under the heading "Clerk of the House to convene meetings", it reads, "Within 10...days...". I won't read it all, because we're going to waste time discussing procedures.

Standing Order 106(4) reads as follows: "...the Chair of the said committee shall convene such a meeting provided that 48 hours' notice is given of the meeting. For the purposes of this section, the reasons for convening such a meeting shall be stated in the request."

Everything was done in accordance with the rules, and it was validated by the clerk.

Mr. Chair, you called the meeting on Monday evening, pursuant to Standing Order 106(4). Under the heading "Chair to convene meeting upon written request", it reads, "Within five days of the receipt, by the clerk of a standing committee, of a request filed by any four members of the said committee...".

That is parliamentary privilege. It's a right. We, as elected members in the 343 ridings in Canada, have tools, including *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*. It is the bible that helps us to comply with the Standing Orders of the House of Commons and use every opportunity available to us to put forward our ideas.

Mr. Chair, after suspending the meeting, why didn't you call a meeting on Tuesday, October 21, at 11 a.m., to follow up on the meeting on Monday, October 20?

The staff and the room were already arranged. I know you cancelled the witnesses in order to free them up, which made perfect sense.

Why didn't you hold the Tuesday morning meeting at 11 a.m.?

• (8320)

**The Chair:** You and I, as well as colleagues from all parties, have already had the opportunity to discuss this.

I just want to say that my goal as chair is to make sure that all colleagues from all parties work as collaboratively as possible to discuss the issues before us that are important to Canadians. That's my priority.

**Joël Godin:** Mr. Chair, I think you have had the co-operation of all members of this committee up until today.

As you mentioned, this allows me to disclose—if you don't want to—the reason you gave me for cancelling Tuesday's meeting. If you don't say so, I have it down, and I will say it.

Do you want to say that?

**The Chair:** I just told you.

**Joël Godin:** Mr. Chair, you told me that you don't want to spend public funds. You said it was a waste of money to continue on the topic that was discussed at the Monday meeting.

How should I interpret that, as a parliamentarian?

You're telling me that, even if we have a guide on procedures, you won't apply it, unfortunately, because the subject being discussed doesn't suit you.

Is that correct, Mr. Chair?

Are we in a dictatorship or a democracy?

Can you confirm that what I just said is what you told me in our conversation?

**The Chair:** I don't think you're saying exactly what I said.

**Joël Godin:** What did I say, exactly?

**The Chair:** I don't have my notes in front of me, but we're not going to start that. I wanted to make sure that we use the committee's time effectively and that we encourage collaboration among members from all parties.

I think the best way to do that is for colleagues to commit to discussing how to reach an agreement to allow the next meeting to be productive.

**Joël Godin:** So you're saying that your party didn't have time to propose amendments between the suspension of the meeting on Monday evening at around 7:50 p.m. and Tuesday morning at 11 a.m. I take it that's why you cancelled Tuesday's meeting.

What was the reason for cancelling Tuesday's meeting? Was it a discretionary decision on your part?

**The Chair:** Mr. Godin, I've already answered that question.

I'm not aware of the party strategy. As the chair of the committee, I do my best to ensure collaboration among members and to allow the committee to discuss important topics.

**Joël Godin:** You referred to our telephone conversations after you sent the cancellation email at 9:30 a.m. on Tuesday morning. On Monday evening, in my office, you, other party representatives and I talked about how we could work together. I already said that we worked together before to properly serve the interests of our topic of official languages.

Now you're telling me that it was normal to cancel Tuesday's meeting and to meet today, on Thursday, for the second part of meeting number five.

Is that right?

• (8325)

**The Chair:** Ms. Chenette and Mr. Deschênes-Thériault have their hands raised.

I simply want to say that my goal is still to promote collaboration in order to achieve results on the topics before the committee.

**Joël Godin:** You think that this collaboration is a waste of taxpayer dollars because you aren't interested in the topic and you didn't plan the follow-up to Monday evening's meeting for Tuesday at 11 a.m.

Is that right? Is that what you call collaboration?

**The Chair:** Your statement is inaccurate. That's not what I said.

**Joël Godin:** I'm asking you the question.

**The Chair:** That isn't what I told you privately. I already answered the question and explained my reasoning.

Ms. Chenette, you have the floor.

**Madeleine Chenette:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Our colleague is talking about past events. We need to really address our topic if we want to have a discussion.

Furthermore, when a party calls for constructive dialogue during a break, I find it unfortunate that this dialogue isn't open and constructive. I hope that our discussion will be constructive.

I suggest that we continue the meeting and hold our discussion as planned for today.

**The Chair:** Mr. Deschênes-Thériault, you have the floor.

**Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault:** I simply want to reiterate the comments made by my colleague, Ms. Chenette.

Can we work collaboratively and begin our discussions on the topic at hand?

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

**Joël Godin:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Discussions took place before Monday at 6:30 p.m., and we worked well together. We understand that most of the people here are new committee members.

However, I'm being criticized for failing to show a willingness to work together, even though after the break on Monday, no meeting was scheduled for Tuesday.

I'm sorry, but I don't accept that. I would like to ask my colleague to withdraw her comments.

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

**Madeleine Chenette:** Collaboration is a two-way street. We need to put everything on the table during discussions. When a motion is moved without certain parts having been discussed, we need to point that out. We need to go back and open up the dialogue, and not just criticize something. We can pass the buck back and forth, but that won't be constructive.

We basically all agree that the Prime Minister must use French and speak it forcefully, as he did yesterday in remarks to young university students. I think that this is what we need to talk about.

We basically want the same thing. We now need to discuss the details. I'm not commenting on the topic of the current motion, but I wanted to make this point.

**The Chair:** Ms. Mingarelli, you have the floor.

**Giovanna Mingarelli:** Can we continue the meeting and discuss the topic at hand?

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

**Joël Godin:** Mr. Chair, the Liberals want to be seen as good sports and they say that they work collaboratively.

We reached out to them on Monday evening. Why did they filibuster? Today, they want to make the opposition parties look like the bad guys.

With all due respect to my colleagues....

I'll stop there.

• (8330)

**The Chair:** Would any other members like to speak on this matter?

Mr. Villeneuve, you have the floor.

**Louis Villeneuve:** Thank you.

Mr. Godin, as you said earlier, there are a number of new members here. That's true.

We can all agree, on both sides, that things didn't go as planned last week. They didn't go well. We're all here to serve our constituents. In my view, this isn't a matter of good guys versus bad guys or of intelligence or lack thereof. If we all want to act in good faith, we could turn the page and start over in a collaborative spirit.

Obviously, we aren't members of the same party and we won't always agree on everything. However, as long as we remain respectful towards one another, I believe that we can reach a consensus on all the issues under discussion.

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

**Joël Godin:** Mr. Chair, my colleague is quite wise.

We, the members of the Conservative Party of Canada, are ready to work collaboratively. However, I must tell you that we were burned at the last meeting. An agreement, which you witnessed, wasn't honoured by the opposing party.

Let's turn the page and move on to the main topic. I hope that these people will work together on the topic at hand.

**The Chair:** Does anyone else want to talk about this topic?

**Mario Beaulieu:** I didn't take part in this agreement. I didn't know anything about it.

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**Mario Beaulieu:** It may be funny, but it also says a lot.

**The Chair:** Thank you for that clarification, Mr. Beaulieu.

If it's the will of the committee, we can continue the discussion on the motion before us.

When the meeting was suspended, the next person on my list to speak was Ms. Mingarelli.

Ms. Mingarelli, you have the floor.

**Giovanna Mingarelli:** Thank you.

Colleagues, I think that we all agree that the Prime Minister should speak French more often. He did so yesterday evening in his pre-budget remarks. As Ms. Chenette said, he has often spoken in French.

My colleague, Mr. Deschênes-Thériault, said it at our last meeting. We support some parts of the motion. However, I'm worried about paragraph (c). He'll be moving an amendment on this.

I'll give him the floor.

**The Chair:** Mr. Deschênes-Thériault, we're listening.

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

As I said on Monday evening, in my last comments, we agree on a number of things. We all agree that the two official languages lie at the heart of Canadian identity. We also all agree that this must be reflected at all levels of government, including at the level of the Prime Minister.

For this reason, on the whole, we agree with paragraph (a) of the motion. It proposes to invite various government officials to "discuss the state of official bilingualism in Canada and the government's plan to uphold the equal status of French and English in federal communications". We plan to support this part of the motion.

Paragraph (b) moves that "the committee hold a second meeting to hear from a panel of witnesses proposed by each recognized party, composed of experts, academics, and community representatives who can speak to the decline of French in Canada". Since our party spearheaded the modernization of the Official Languages Act, we obviously agree on this point as well.

• (8335)

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

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

**Joël Godin:** I would like to correct my colleague's statement.

He is indeed reading my motion. However, on Monday evening, we voted on an amendment from the Bloc Québécois. He should include it in what he's reading.

**Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault:** Mr. Godin is absolutely right.

I wanted to focus on the gist of the text, but I agree that it was amended by my colleague from the Bloc Québécois. This was done on the recommendation of my colleague, Mr. Beaulieu, and was voted on by the committee.

For our part, we agree with paragraphs (a) and (b) of the motion, as amended on Monday evening.

However, our issue is with paragraph (c). It states the following: “the committee order the production of all documents showing the Prime Minister's calendar entries”. We can't do this for a number of reasons.

We need only think about national security issues to understand what learning and using French means for the Prime Minister. Paragraph (c) asks for “the production of all documents showing the Prime Minister's calendar entries”. This seems to go beyond the scope of the motion. It goes further than what we initially intended.

I'm moving an amendment to Mr. Godin's amended motion, which is simply to delete paragraph (c).

I'm sending the clerk the text of my amendment right now so that she can pass it around.

**The Chair:** Okay.

Have you finished speaking, Mr. Deschênes-Thériault?

**Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault:** Yes, I'm finished. The text of my amendment has been sent to the clerk.

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

According to my list of speakers, it's now your turn, Mr. Dalton.

**Marc Dalton:** We're waiting for the text of the motion. Is that right?

I also have a motion to move, and I need to wait.

**The Chair:** Okay.

Now it's Mr. Villeneuve's turn.

**Joël Godin:** Mr. Chair, I would like to add that Mr. Dalton asked for the floor, but the situation changed.

I simply want to make your job easier, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** Okay. Explain what you mean.

**Joël Godin:** My colleague, Mr. Dalton, has an amendment to move. However, I think that we should first discuss the amendment moved by my colleague, Mr. Deschênes-Thériault.

Please hold Mr. Dalton's turn so that he can speak once we've addressed Mr. Deschênes-Thériault's amendment.

Let's discuss Mr. Deschênes-Thériault's amendment.

Is that okay with you, Mr. Chair?

**The Chair:** I'm happy to proceed this way.

**Joël Godin:** You can see the collaboration.

**The Chair:** Yes, I can see it. It's great.

The clerk will also help me keep track of the list of speakers.

Mr. Dalton, I'll put you—

**Mario Beaulieu:** We haven't received the text yet. We may receive it later.

**Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault:** I move to delete paragraph (c).

**Mario Beaulieu:** You're proposing to delete paragraph (c) entirely.

**Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault:** Exactly.

**The Chair:** To clarify, Mr. Dalton's name is on the list of speakers. He wishes to move an amendment once we've decided how to proceed with Mr. Deschênes-Thériault's amendment.

The next speaker on the list is Mr. Villeneuve.

You have the floor.

**Louis Villeneuve:** Actually, I would like to speak when we get back to the general motion.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** Okay.

Ms. Martin, Mr. Villeneuve is asking that his name be added to the list when we get back to the general motion. I believe that Mr. Dalton also wants his name on the list to move a motion.

Is that right, Mr. Dalton? Okay.

I'll suspend the meeting for a few minutes.

• (1135) \_\_\_\_\_ (Pause) \_\_\_\_\_

• (1140)

• (8340)

**The Chair:** We'll resume the meeting.

Before the meeting was suspended, Mr. Deschênes-Thériault moved an amendment.

I see that Mr. Godin wants to speak.

Mr. Godin, you have the floor.

• (8345)

**Joël Godin:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I believe that there are indeed grounds for making an exception in paragraph (c) in order to protect national security. We're open to this idea. However, we can't agree to delete paragraph (c) from the motion entirely.

We're putting our cards on the table. I'm now reaching out to the people from the party on the other side to adapt paragraph (c).

Unfortunately, Mr. Chair, I don't have a written text.

**The Chair:** I'll check with the clerk. Give me a minute.

**Joël Godin:** Mr. Chair, I would like to move my amendment.

**The Chair:** You would like to move a subamendment. Is that right?

**Joël Godin:** Yes.

**The Chair:** Okay. Go ahead.

**Joël Godin:** I'll speak slowly, Ms. Martin. I'm sorry. I have a new employee and he's wonderful. However, the information technology service has left him without a computer this morning. It's quite difficult to correct or write text on a telephone. Thank you for your understanding.

I understand what my colleague said regarding paragraph (c). However, we won't drop the requirement for the Prime Minister to provide information here to the committee.

That said, I propose to amend it. After the words "showing Prime Minister Mark Carney's calendar entries since assuming office", the following text should be inserted: "regarding activities related to French, excluding meetings or other activities that could be related to national security".

**The Clerk:** Mr. Chair, I would like to ask Mr. Godin a question.

Would this mean removing what comes after your addition?

**Joël Godin:** No. It's an insertion.

**The Clerk:** Okay.

So we would add the words "regarding activities related to French, excluding meetings or other activities that could be related to national security" and we would keep the rest of the paragraph, which starts with "including any records related to French-language tutoring sessions".

**Joël Godin:** Yes.

**The Chair:** Mr. Deschênes-Thériault, you have the floor.

**Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault:** I want to thank my colleague, Mr. Godin.

Could we suspend the meeting until we receive the subamendment and get a chance to review it?

**The Chair:** Yes. I'll suspend the meeting for a few minutes.

• (1145) \_\_\_\_\_ (Pause) \_\_\_\_\_

• (1155)

• (8355)

**The Chair:** We'll resume the meeting.

We were discussing the subamendment moved by Mr. Godin.

On the list of people who wish to speak, we have Mr. Godin, followed by Mr. Deschênes-Thériault.

Mr. Godin, you have the floor.

**Joël Godin:** Mr. Chair, during the break, I had a discussion with the Liberal members. Before responding to their proposal, I would like to know your interpretation of Standing Order 108(1)(a).

Ms. Martin, what would be the impact if the public had access to this information, compared to a situation where the public didn't have access? We need this answer in order to make an informed decision.

**The Clerk:** I'm reading Standing Order 108(1)(a). I don't have the answer to your question right now, but I'll look into it.

**The Chair:** Mr. Godin, would you like to continue while the clerk looks up the answer to your question?

**Joël Godin:** I'll wait for the answer to my question before continuing.

**The Chair:** Okay.

Mr. Dechênes-Thériault, you have the floor.

**Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault:** Actually, my remarks will depend on the answer to Mr. Godin's question, so I can't really comment right now.

That doesn't mean I want to proceed to a vote, because I don't think we're done debating the matter, but I'll wait until Mr. Godin's question has been answered.

• (8400)

**Joël Godin:** No, you can't ask for the vote, otherwise, I'll have to object.

**Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault:** That's why I'm clarifying. I'll leave my name on the speaking list, but it's not to end the debate.

**The Chair:** I will suspend the meeting for a few minutes, so the clerk can find the answer to Mr. Godin's question.

• (1200) \_\_\_\_\_ (Pause) \_\_\_\_\_

• (1210)

• (8410)

**The Chair:** We are resuming the meeting.

We were debating Mr. Godin's subamendment.

On the list of those who wish to speak, we have Mr. Godin and Mr. Deschênes-Thériault.

Mr. Godin, you have the floor.

**Joël Godin:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Once again, I have a few questions for the clerk. We're just putting the finishing touches on the proposed wording. My colleague came to me with a motion, but it has yet to be formally proposed. I will ask the clerk my question, and then my colleague across the way can propose his motion.

In paragraph (c) of my motion, if we remove "pursuant to Standing Order 108(1)(a)", will the committee still have the same power to order the production of documents?

• (8415)

**The Clerk:** The committee has the power to order the production of documents, with or without the reference to Standing Order 108(1)(a). The use of the word "order" indicates that the committee is using its powers to order the production of documents.

**Joël Godin:** Mr. Chair, I have another question for the clerk.

If the party in question refuses to comply with the committee's order, our procedures definitely give us the tools to take action. Is that correct?

**The Clerk:** Would you like to know what options the committee has?

**Joël Godin:** No. For the moment, I only want to know whether our procedures give us the tools to ensure that our orders are followed, for example, if a party refuses to respect a set deadline. In such a case, do we have any recourse?

**The Clerk:** Give me a moment.

**Joël Godin:** I don't want to know what the tools are. I only want to know whether we have tools.

**The Clerk:** I just want to look at my source document to make sure I'm quoting it correctly.

Here's what I found in the *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*: “No statute or practice diminishes the fullness of that power [to order the production of papers] unless there is an explicit legal provision to that effect, or unless the House adopts a specific resolution...”.

If a party refuses to comply with an order, the committee has three options. “The first is to accept the reasons...put forward to justify the refusal.... The second is to seek an acceptable compromise with...the authority responsible for access to the record.” The committee could decide to consult the document in a confidential manner, such as by meeting in camera or making limited copies. That would have to be decided later. “The third option is to reject the reasons given...and uphold the order to produce the...record.”

In such a case, committees have no disciplinary power to sanction, but “they can choose to report the situation to the House and request that appropriate measures be taken.”

**Joël Godin:** Thank you, Mr. Chair

**The Chair:** Mr. Deschênes-Thériault, you have the floor.

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

We discussed various options during the break. Everyone is working in good faith. We are waiting to see whether our fellow members are okay with Mr. Villeneuve's putting forward an amendment. If so, I would be comfortable withdrawing mine, depending on what we do with the motion we are on now, Mr. Godin's subamendment to my amendment.

The answers provided to the clarification questions that were asked are in line with the amendment Mr. Villeneuve wanted to propose. We have the option of withdrawing an amendment or subamendment, and we would be comfortable doing that if everyone shares that interpretation. I proposed my amendment, and then Mr. Godin proposed a subamendment. He must therefore withdraw his subamendment—if he so wishes, of course—so that I can then withdraw my amendment. After that, we could propose another amendment, one I think would bring us closer to an agreement.

I'd like to hear what the opposition members think.

**The Chair:** Go ahead, Mr. Godin.

**Joël Godin:** I'm actually going to show my hand, Mr. Chair. On this side, we would be willing to remove the part that says “pursuant to Standing Order 108(1)(a)” at the beginning of paragraph (c) of my motion. The beginning of the paragraph would then read “that the committee order the production”, but with my addition, which would address what my colleagues were asking for.

**The Chair:** All right. Give me a moment to consult with the clerk.

It's fine. We can continue.

Next on my list I have Mr. Deschênes-Thériault, Mr. Villeneuve and Mr. Godin.

Over to you, Mr. Deschênes-Thériault.

• (8420)

**Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault:** I'll skip my turn, because I'd like to hear what Mr. Godin wishes to add first.

**The Chair:** Go ahead, Mr. Villeneuve.

**Louis Villeneuve:** I want to do exactly what Mr. Deschênes-Thériault did, to hear what Mr. Godin has to say first.

**The Chair:** The floors yours, Mr. Godin.

**Joël Godin:** Mr. Chair, currently before the committee is my subamendment, which seeks to amend the amendment of the member opposite. I wish to withdraw my subamendment to make way for another motion, once the wording has been reworked to remove what isn't suitable.

**The Chair:** I quite appreciate this co-operation between members.

Go ahead, Mr. Deschênes-Thériault.

**Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault:** If there is agreement for Mr. Godin to withdraw his subamendment, I would like to withdraw my amendment.

**The Chair:** We will deal with things one at a time.

Unanimous consent is needed for an amendment or subamendment to be withdrawn.

Does the committee wish to let Mr. Godin withdraw his subamendment?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

(Subamendment withdrawn)

**The Chair:** Now, does the committee wish to let Mr. Deschênes-Thériault withdraw his amendment?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

(Amendment withdrawn)

**The Chair:** I will now give the floor to Mr. Godin.

**Joël Godin:** Since it is my motion, my colleague Mr. Bélanger will propose my amendment.

**Jim Bélanger (Sudbury East—Manitoulin—Nickel Belt, CPC):** I propose the following wording for paragraph (c):

c. That, the Committee order the production of all documents showing Prime Minister Mark Carney's calendar entries since assuming office, regarding activities related to French, excluding meetings or other activities that could be related to national security, including any records related to French-language tutoring sessions, to be provided to the Committee in both official languages and in electronic format within 21 days, in order to assess the extent to which the Prime Minister has fulfilled his commitment to improve his French-language proficiency.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Bélanger.

I'm going to ask the clerk to send out the amendment, so everyone has it in writing.

Does anyone want to speak? If not, we can proceed right to the vote.

Go ahead, Mr. Godin.

**Joël Godin:** Mr. Chair, I just want to make sure that everyone understands that the amendment uses the wording from my sub-amendment but removes the part that says "pursuant to Standing Order 108(1)(a)".

If there's no debate, I think we can go ahead and vote.

**The Chair:** Is there consent to proceed to the vote?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Chair:** I'm going to ask the clerk to conduct the vote on the amendment.

**Joël Godin:** Actually, Mr. Chair, can we just proceed by unanimous consent, like we did to withdraw the motions a moment ago?

Do we have to have a vote?

• (8425)

**Mario Beaulieu:** No, not necessarily.

**The Chair:** The clerk is confirming that we can proceed by unanimous consent.

Does the committee wish to adopt Mr. Bélanger's amendment, which is based on Mr. Godin's?

(Amendment agreed to)

**The Chair:** That brings us back to Mr. Godin's motion as amended.

You may go ahead, Mr. Dalton.

**Marc Dalton:** I have an amendment to Mr. Godin's motion as amended by Mr. Beaulieu's amendment.

At paragraph (a), after it says, "and at two distinct committee meetings," I would like to add "within 21 days".

Then, after paragraph (c), I would like to add this:

d. That the committee report its findings to the House".

**The Chair:** I'm going to suspend just long enough for the clerk to send out Mr. Dalton's amendment.

• (1225)

(Pause)

• (1240)

• (8440)

**The Chair:** We are back.

Before we go any further, I want to point out that we have about 20 minutes left in the meeting. We are scheduled to meet until one o'clock. I realize that everyone is busy and has other obligations.

That said, I'm not sure whether we are going to get through this by one o'clock. If the debate is not over, the committee could agree to adjourn the meeting with a commitment from the chair to pick up the discussion at our next meeting. The clerk would take note of that.

I have my eye on the clock, so I want to be sure that we have a plan for how to proceed, if necessary.

The floor is yours, Mr. Godin.

**Joël Godin:** I have a question about that, Mr. Chair.

Why wouldn't you suspend the meeting?

**The Chair:** I'm going to ask the clerk to explain why I'm suggesting adjourning the meeting instead of suspending it. She can explain it better than I can.

**The Clerk:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

It comes down to the technical implications. Suspending the meeting creates a lot of work behind the scenes, for the technicians, for us, for the website. We can't publish new meeting notices, because we have to shift the meeting times in the system, which means that all the codes for our upcoming meetings will have to be changed. Suspensions create more administrative work. They also give rise to ambiguity, because the status of the meeting is unclear.

Conversely, adjourning the meeting means that the committee can move on to the next meeting and put the debate on the agenda. It's a commitment that is clear to everyone.

**The Chair:** Go ahead, Mr. Godin.

**Joël Godin:** I just want to make sure that, if there is unanimous consent to adjourn the meeting, we will pick this up at the next meeting and deal with it first. If that's the case, I'm fine with it.

I see you are confirming that, so thank you.

**The Chair:** Over to you, Mr. Beaulieu.

**Mario Beaulieu:** It's just a comment. They would have to work out the technical issues.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu.

**Mario Beaulieu:** The fact is that this has been a problem for some time.

**Joël Godin:** He's gained an ally in the clerk.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

We are back on Mr. Dalton's amendment.

Go ahead, Mr. Villeneuve.

**Louis Villeneuve:** Further to Mr. Dalton's amendment, I would add a paragraph (e). It would read as follows: "Pursuant to Standing Order 109, the committee request a comprehensive response from the government".

Thank you.

**The Chair:** We can send out the amendment if members wish, but I think it's pretty straightforward.

**Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault:** We are ready to vote.

**The Chair:** Is the committee ready to vote? Does anyone want to say anything?

**Joël Godin:** Again, I'm being very careful.

A comprehensive response will not satisfy what paragraph (c) is describing. It won't eliminate the information that will be provided under paragraph (c). There's no connection.

**The Chair:** I'm going to check with the clerk.

• (1240) \_\_\_\_\_ (Pause) \_\_\_\_\_

• (1245)

• (8445)

**The Chair:** Mr. Godin, I want to say two things in answer to your question.

First, the government will respond to what the committee reports to the House. That should answer your question.

Second, I will explain the procedure. Mr. Dalton proposed an amendment. What Mr. Villeneuve proposed is not considered a sub-amendment; it's considered another amendment. That means we have to make a decision on Mr. Dalton's amendment first. Then we can move on to Mr. Villeneuve's amendment.

We are looking at Mr. Dalton's amendment. If there's no debate, we can adopt it.

Is the committee ready to vote? Is there unanimous consent?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Chair:** Now we can move on to Mr. Villeneuve's amendment.

**Louis Villeneuve:** Do I need to read it again?

**The Chair:** No, that's not necessary.

Is there any debate on Mr. Villeneuve's amendment? Is there unanimous consent?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Chair:** We are now back on Mr. Godin's motion as amended.

Would anyone like to comment on the motion?

**Joël Godin:** I'll try to summarize it, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** Very well, Mr. Godin.

**Joël Godin:** Mr. Dalton's amendment adds "within 21 days" to the first paragraph of my original motion.

Mr. Beaulieu's amendment adds the following to paragraph (a): "particularly the use of French in federal institutions in Quebec, given that the Charter of the French languages stipulates that French is the only official and common language".

At paragraph (b), as amended by Mr. Beaulieu, this is being added to the third line: "the decline of French in Quebec and".

At paragraph (c), "pursuant to Standing Order 108(3)(f)" is being removed and the changes decided on a moment ago regarding activities related to French and national security are being added.

Then a paragraph (d) is being added. It reads as follows: "d. That the committee report its findings to the House".

Lastly, Mr. Villeneuve's amendment also adds a paragraph (e), which calls for a comprehensive response.

Is everyone on the same page?

**The Chair:** I asked the clerk to send out the amended motion, so everyone can read it one last time. If everyone agrees to proceed to the vote without seeing a written version, we can.

**Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault:** We are ready to proceed to the vote.

**The Chair:** Is everyone ready to proceed to the vote?

**Joël Godin:** Mr. Chair, the committee has hit its co-operative stride again.

What was discussed is on the record. If there's a problem with the language, we can follow up.

We, too, are ready to proceed to the vote.

**The Chair:** I just want to check what the committee wants to do.

Does the committee wish to proceed by unanimous consent or by vote?

**Marc Dalton:** We've worked way too hard not to vote.

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**The Chair:** I have a request for a vote.

If no one else has any comments, we will proceed to the vote.

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

• (8450)

**The Chair:** That concludes the meeting called pursuant to Standing Order 106(4).

I wanted to let you know that our next meeting will take place on Tuesday. We will be conducting a study and hearing from witnesses. I just wanted to make that clear for everyone.

Go ahead, Mr. Beaulieu.

**Mario Beaulieu:** I will have a motion to propose on Tuesday, so I will send out the notice of motion. It won't take long. I think everyone will agree, but we'll need to set aside about 15 minutes at the beginning of Tuesday's meeting.

**The Chair:** Mr. Beaulieu, since we have witnesses to hear from on Tuesday, I suggest you propose your motion at the end of the meeting.

**Mario Beaulieu:** Whether it's at the beginning or end of the meeting makes no difference.

**The Chair:** It's simply out of respect for the witnesses that I'm suggesting it. Thank you.

The meeting is adjourned.







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