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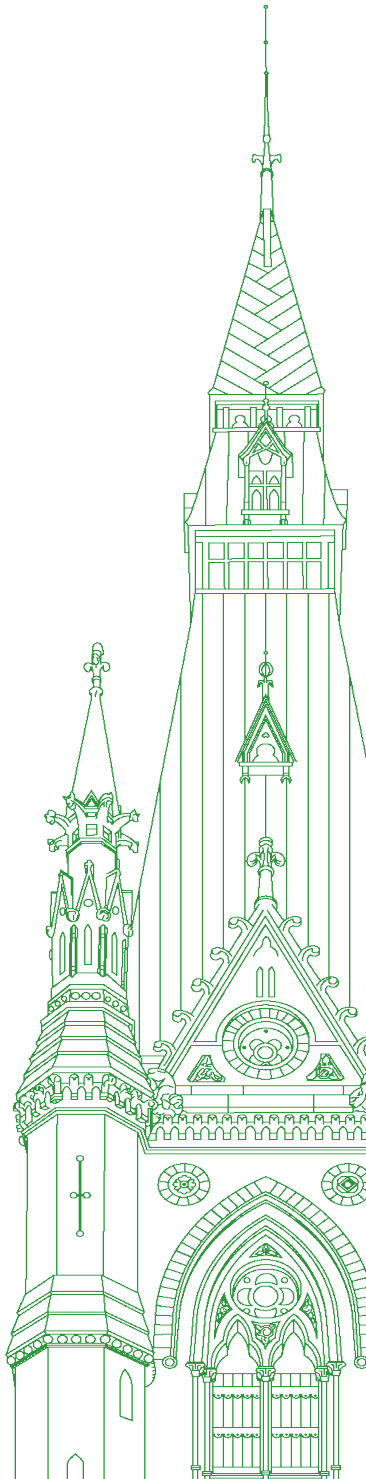
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Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food

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Chair: Michael Coteau

Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food

Thursday, October 29, 2026

● (1530)

[*English*]

The Chair (Michael Coteau (Scarborough—Woburn, Lib.)): Welcome to meeting number 49 of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food.

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

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

I'd like to make a few comments for the benefit of the members. Before speaking, please wait until I recognize you by name. For those participating by video conference, click on the microphone icon to activate your mic, and please mute yourself when you are not speaking. For those on Zoom, at the bottom of your screen you can select the appropriate channel for interpretation: floor audio, English or French. For those in the room, you can use the earpiece and select the desired channel.

I remind you that all comments should be through the chair. For members in the room, if you wish to speak, please raise your hand. For members on Zoom, please use the "raise hand" function. The clerk and I will try to manage the list to the best of our ability.

Pursuant to the order of reference of Wednesday, April 22, 2026, and the motion adopted by the committee on Thursday, October 8, 2026, the committee is resuming its consideration of Bill C-226, an act to establish a national framework to improve food price transparency.

I'd like to provide the members of the committee with a few comments on how committees proceed with clause-by-clause consideration of a bill. I'd also like to mention that we do have Mr. Chad Mariage from the Department of Industry. He is director of small business, tourism and marketplace services, and he's here to help us.

Thank you for joining us here today.

As the name indicates, this is an examination of all the clauses in the order in which they appear in the bill. I will call each clause successively, and each clause is subject to debate and a vote. If there are amendments to the clause in question, I'll recognize the member proposing it, who may explain it. The amendment will be open for debate. With no further members wishing to intervene, the amendment will be voted on. Amendments will be considered in the order in which they appear in the package each member received from the clerk.

In addition to having to be properly drafted in a legal sense, amendments must be procedurally admissible. The chair will be called upon to rule amendments inadmissible if they go against the principle of the bill and beyond the scope of the bill—both of which were adopted by the House when it agreed to the bill during second reading—or if they offend the financial prerogative of the Crown.

During the debate on an amendment, members are permitted to move subamendments. Only one subamendment may be considered at a time, and that subamendment cannot be amended. Once every clause has been voted on, the committee will vote on the title of the bill itself. If amendments are adopted, an order to reprint the bill may be required so that the House has a proper copy for use at the report stage.

I'd like to thank the members for their attention, and I wish everyone a productive clause-by-clause consideration of Bill C-226.

Pursuant to Standing Order 75(1), consideration of clause 1, the short title, is postponed, and the chair will go to clause 2.

Are there any questions before we begin? No.

(On clause 2)

The Chair: We'll go to clause 2 and amendment BQ-1.

Monsieur Lemire, go ahead.

[*Translation*]

Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

For us, there's the issue of responsibility regarding prices that are under the aegis of the Department of Agriculture and Agri-Food. Couldn't we, at the very least, include both departments so they can take action? A shared responsibility will lead to greater accountability and, ultimately, maybe better outcomes for consumers.

[*English*]

The Chair: Are there any comments or questions?

Mr. Barlow, go ahead.

John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Thank you, Chair. I appreciate the amendment by my colleague. However, I think there are a couple of concerns here with the suggestion.

The first one is that, based on how I read this, it is changing the responsibility, in the act, from the Minister of Industry to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, not adding that to it, as both ministers would be responsible for this act.

The other concern would be this: We certainly heard from the sponsor of the bill himself. We had asked him questions initially about where this would fall in terms of responsibility, into whose portfolio. He himself said during his testimony that this was under the Minister of Industry, not the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food. If the sponsor of the bill himself does not think that this belongs within the Minister of Agriculture's portfolio, I guess we could then question why we are the ones dealing with it and not the industry committee. However, I guess we do not always make those choices, Chair.

The two concerns I would have with that amendment are that, number one, it does not clearly state in the amendment that it is asking to add the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food to the list of ministers. It is replacing the Minister of Industry with the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food. Secondly, as was said of the testimony....

Perhaps, since we have somebody from Industry here, Mr. Mariage could clarify to ensure that this is the case, that this bill would belong under the purview of the Minister of Industry and not the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food.

● (1535)

The Chair: I just want to make sure.... Who moved the amendment? It was Mr. Lemire. Is that right? Did you move the amendment?

[*Translation*]

Sébastien Lemire: Yes.

[*English*]

The Chair: Okay. Thank you.

Chad Mariage (Director, Small Business, Tourism and Marketplace Services, Department of Industry): Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you to the member for the question.

Certainly, my reading is along the same lines as yours, that the amendment as proposed would substitute Agriculture for Industry. As was testified at the meeting previously, protection for consumers is a shared responsibility, and the Minister of Industry, under the industry act, has some responsibilities as it relates to the protection of Canadian consumers. Under that purview, it would be appropriate to keep it where it is.

The Chair: Have you finished? Yes.

Mr. Louis, go ahead.

Tim Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga, Lib.): I appreciate the time, but I think I heard what I needed to hear. Those are the same questions I had, so we're good. I think this is a consumer protection and marketplace issue, so I just needed to hear it. Thank you.

The Chair: Mr. Gobeil, go ahead.

[*Translation*]

Daniel Gobeil (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, Lib.): Yes, that was also our understanding. It's clear the governance proposed in this bill falls under the Department of Industry, so we definitely can't support the amendment.

[*English*]

The Chair: Is there anyone else? Okay. We will vote on BQ-1.

(Amendment negatived [*See Minutes of Proceedings*])

The Chair: Is there further discussion on clause 2? No.

(Clause 2 agreed to)

(On clause 3)

The Chair: We'll go to clause 3 now, and we do have an amendment.

I'll go to Mr. Lemire for BQ-2.

[*Translation*]

Sébastien Lemire: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We recommend removing the words “responsible for consumer affairs”, because we don't feel it's necessary to specify that provincial governments would delegate those responsible for consumer affairs as their representatives. I would remind everyone that we are studying a bill that elaborately encroaches on Quebec's jurisdictions when it comes to consultations with provincial government representatives as part of this national price policy.

[*English*]

The Chair: Are there any comments?

Mr. Louis, go ahead.

Tim Louis: Thank you, Chair.

Maybe I can ask this to the department official. My understanding of this clause would be that the provinces would be able to decide who represents them, which would give some added flexibility. Is that correct?

Chad Mariage: Yes, that's correct.

Tim Louis: Thank you, Chair. That's all I needed here.

The Chair: Are there any other comments?

Mr. Barlow, go ahead.

John Barlow: Again, I want some clarification from the legislative clerk. We will be coming to the problematic clause in this, which is subparagraph 3(2)(a)(ii). I think that was the problematic....

The Liberals have an amendment there, and I just want to get some clarification from the legislative clerk. If we make this change, does that impact the Liberals' proposed amendment to clause 3?

The Chair: Our legislative clerk is indicating no.

Are there any other comments?

(Amendment agreed to)

The Chair: We're still on clause 3. There's a second amendment. We'll move to G-1.

● (1540)

[*Translation*]

Daniel Gobeil: Yes, we propose an amendment. We move Bill C-226, in clause 3, be amended by replacing line 14 on page 1 to line 5 on page 2 with the following:

> (a) to develop national standards for the grocery retail sector respecting unit pricing for food and other household goods, including the accuracy, usability and accessibility of unit price displays for consumers; and

This wording is to clarify the original wording.

[*English*]

The Chair: Mr. Lemire, go ahead.

[*Translation*]

Sébastien Lemire: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We just want clarification on the French and English versions. In English, it says “to develop national standards”, whereas in French, it says “*fixer des normes nationales*”. The words “*fixer*” and “*développer*” do not necessarily mean the same thing. Obviously, we sense in the Canadian dynamic the desire to set what is “Québécois” and develop what is Canadian, but I don't think that's the government's objective in this national strategy policy.

We simply invite you to find a neutral term that would apply in both official languages. It could be “establish” national standards. Otherwise, we could use “develop” in both languages. The word "develop" might be the right one to use in French as well.

[*English*]

The Chair: Are there any comments on that? Is that fine with folks?

Mr. Barlow, go ahead.

John Barlow: Yes, Chair.

I agree with my Bloc colleague. I'm glad he caught that. I did the same. I want to make sure that wasn't just an English-French translation issue.

Later on, as we get into some of the amendments proposed by my Liberal colleagues—I don't want to get into it yet—they are basically weakening this from being a framework that the minister “must” do to the Liberal minister “can look at” developing. I want to make sure that the wording in there is succinct, that this is to set, to establish this framework, not develop it, as this is an aspirational document.

The Chair: Are there any other comments?

Mr. Louis, go ahead.

Tim Louis: I'm just looking for clarity, because in English it is “establish”. We're looking to change it to “develop”.

John Barlow: Since you're changing it, we want to make sure that the words are matching. To establish—

Tim Louis: Yes, but what are the two matching words? I just want clarification, that's all.

The Chair: I'd like to just suspend for a few minutes, if that's okay. Thank you.

● (1540)

(Pause)

● (1550)

The Chair: I call the meeting back to order.

I am going to turn it over to the clerk.

Go ahead, please.

[*Translation*]

Andrew Wilson (Legislative Clerk): The jurilinguists told us that, legally, the terms “develop” and “establish” can both be equivalent to “*fixer*”, since the focus is on the outcome of the process, not the process itself.

[*English*]

The Chair: Mr. Lemire.

[*Translation*]

Sébastien Lemire: I'm not sure about that explanation. Indeed, “*développer*” refers more to a process, but “*établir*” refers more to an outcome. It's a bit like in a couple: The woman will talk more about the process and its importance, while the man will focus on the outcome. The woman won't be happy, because we're talking about the outcome, not the process.

Voices: Oh, oh!

Marianne Dandurand (Compton—Stanstead, Lib.): Can we make a clip of that for social media?

[*English*]

The Chair: Order.

An hon. member: We're in public here, aren't we?

The Chair: We're in public.

Mr. Lemire, you have the floor.

[*Translation*]

Sébastien Lemire: I'm done, Mr. Chair.

[*English*]

The Chair: Okay. Are there any other comments?

An hon. member: No, please, no.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Chair: Shall G-1 carry?

An hon. member: What is the...?

The Chair: It remains the same. We heard back from legal interpretation. They say that it's the correct translation. The word *fixer* can be used to describe that. That's officially what our translators in the legal department have told us.

Mr. Lemire.

● (1555)

[*Translation*]

Sébastien Lemire: Could the word "*élaborer*" be used, as the Liberals' suggest?

[*English*]

The Chair: We've heard back. That's the advice we received from interpreters who have a legal lens. They've come back and said this.

Mr. Lemire, I don't speak French. You understand the language, of course, much better than I do, but this is what they've come back with. It's up to the committee to decide whether we follow the expert advice from that department. They say that it's the appropriate term.

There is a suggestion on the floor. There hasn't been a formal motion to make an amendment. What we have on the floor is advice to stick with the status quo.

Mr. Lemire, do you want to move a motion to make a change to that?

[*Translation*]

Sébastien Lemire: First, Mr. Chair, I want to point out that you make a lot of effort to speak French and you practise virtually every day, so, obviously, I'm not saying your French is inadequate.

Second, what's important is to ensure the term is the same in French and English. I believe the current version proposes two different interpretations. Obviously, if the law clerks believe both terms work, I have no objection. The proposal is essentially meant to be constructive. If that's the law clerks' conclusion, I'll agree with it.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Are there any other comments?

Mr. Casey.

[*Translation*]

Sean Casey (Charlottetown, Lib.): I'm not a francophone; I'm a francophile. Based on Mr. Lemire's presentation, I'm convinced there's not much difference between English and French when it comes to the word "*développer*". I am not against his idea of changing the word, even though he might not have a lawyer's point of view.

I can suggest a subamendment. It's quite easy. It would simply require adding, in the French version, the first line of this paragraph.

I also don't think it's worth prolonging the debate on the definition of "*fixer*" as opposed to "*développer*". I'm happy to accept his version and move on.

[*English*]

The Chair: Mr. Lemire, do you want to bring forward a motion?

[*Translation*]

Tim Louis: I can do that, if you like.

Sébastien Lemire: Yes, with the word "*développer*".

[*English*]

The Chair: No, that's not up to me. It's up to the committee.

We're going to vote on G-1 either as is or as amended. It's up to the committee. At this stage, there's no subamendment. I can call the question on G-1.

Shall G-1 carry?

[*Translation*]

Sébastien Lemire: I apologize Mr. Chair. I was taking a moment to listen to the interpretation.

Yes, I propose a subamendment to use the word "*développer*" instead of "*fixer*" in the French version.

Andrew Wilson: Actually, Mr. Lemire, if you want to change the word, the jurilinguists suggest "élaborer".

Sébastien Lemire: That's perfect.

I suggest we use the word "*élaborer*" instead of "*fixer*", Mr. Chair.

[*English*]

The Chair: Are folks okay with that?

Mr. Lemire, are you okay with that word?

[*Translation*]

Sébastien Lemire: Not so much now, because I wouldn't want to give that power to my colleagues.

That said, yes, that's fine with me, Mr. Chair.

(Subamendment agreed to)

[*English*]

The Chair: Shall G-1 as amended carry?

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

The Chair: We'll go to BQ-3.

[*Translation*]

Sébastien Lemire: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Here, we're talking about the notion of labelling practices that mislead consumers or distort competition. In that sense, there are some important elements to consider.

A number of people around the table may have met with egg producers today, among others. I did earlier, in my office. The justification for this amendment is that we need to protect consumers against products whose prices are designed to deceive them. For example, a consumer who regularly buys the same box of cakes may find themselves in a bit of a bind. We agree on the whole shrinkflation issue. For egg producers, however, there's the whole issue of Just Egg products. The name implies that the product contains only eggs, but they contain no eggs, despite being located near eggs in grocery stores. They are plant-based products, more specifically beans. When you see a product called "Just Egg", you may think you're buying eggs, but you're not.

This amendment proposes to regulate misleading advertising. Of course, there's the whole issue of size and content. The goal is to bridge the gap between reality and consumer expectations. There's also the example of France. If the consumer is used to buying a box of six energy bars, for example, and there are only five bars per box now, how can they know that if their habits don't change?

We want to be able to talk about advertising practices that mislead consumers or distort competition so such practices can be prevented.

● (1600)

[*English*]

The Chair: Mr. Barlow.

John Barlow: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Again, I agree with my colleague that these are very real concerns in terms of misleading labelling on some of these products, such as eggs, milk, burgers and things like that. However, I am concerned—and this may become a redundant thing we'll be discussing in a few of these amendments—that this is quite beyond the intended scope of the bill. There are some rules that, once you get past second reading, you cannot go beyond the intended scope of the bill. This bill is intended to talk about unit pricing at grocery stores, so I think this goes well beyond the intended scope of the bill.

I would certainly ask the legislative clerk if that is the case, if this does go beyond the scope of the bill. I would vote against this, as I do believe it goes well beyond what is intended.

The Chair: The advice I've received is that BQ-3 is in scope. That's the advice I received from the legislative clerk.

Go ahead, sir.

[*Translation*]

Daniel Gobeil: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

My comments are somewhat along the same lines. For me, the Competition Act is already the national framework for business practices that can mislead consumers. This adds redundancy and we don't think it's necessary at this stage of the study.

[*English*]

The Chair: I'll go to the vote.

Shall BQ-3 carry?

(Amendment negatived [*See Minutes of Proceedings*])

The Chair: We'll go to BQ-4.

Bill C-226 seeks to establish a national framework to improve food price transparency. The amendments seek to include measures related to mandatory labelling of food products related to countries of origin, traceability, and products and production methods.

As *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, fourth edition, states in section 16.74:

> An amendment to a bill that was referred to a committee after second reading is out of order if it is beyond the scope and principle of the bill.

It is the opinion of the chair that this amendment introduces new measures that are beyond the scope of the bill. Therefore, I rule the amendment inadmissible. That's my judgment on that.

I'm going to move to BQ-5 now. I'll open it up for discussion.

[*Translation*]

Sébastien Lemire: I was wondering about something. Actually, I have a comment to make about amendment BQ-4. The scope of the bill is already very limited. If regulating deceptive practices isn't necessary at this point, and if the issue of mandatory labelling is too broad for the bill, what is the purpose of this bill? I seriously wonder if, at the end of the day, we're not watering down even more an already limited bill.

We're on amendment BQ-5 now, aren't we, Mr. Chair?

● (1605)

[*English*]

The Chair: Yes, we're on BQ-5.

[*Translation*]

Sébastien Lemire: It's about the requirement to disclose the use of dynamic pricing. During our meetings, we heard Option consommateurs, among others, say this practice could make its way into grocery stores and really hurt consumers. Therefore, we are targeting the disclosure of the use of this type of pricing to address a concern raised by consumers.

Groceries are already very expensive. Again, dynamic pricing is about leveraging consumer needs in times of high demand to essentially make more money. The same thing is happening with gasoline. In peak periods, for example during the construction holiday, gas prices suddenly increase. Once the holiday period is over, prices go back down. In this system, consumers are used to improve a company's profit margins during key periods, obviously to their own detriment.

Dynamic pricing could be a positive thing. A company could target needs—Hydro-Quebec, in particular, talks about this—or offer discounts to consumers through certain procedures when there are fewer consumers to increase peaks, as Horacio Arruda would say.

That said, the most important thing for us is transparency. If the retailer discloses its use of dynamic pricing and explains how it works, it will help consumers make more informed decisions. As I said earlier, that was Option consommateurs' concern.

[*English*]

The Chair: Mr. Barlow, go ahead.

John Barlow: I guess my argument would have been the same, but you have not ruled this one to be out of order.

I do have some concerns with dynamic pricing. This is not something I was super aware of until earlier this spring, when some constituents sent me some information on it. I would not support retailers doing this without, certainly, informing customers that, by the way, if they walk by this shelf and they have the Aeroplan Visa card, they're going to get a cheaper price than the person behind them. I find that to be completely abhorrent.

I thought this would be ruled out of order. I still do think it is out of order. I do believe that dynamic pricing and how retailers actually do that would be completely provincial jurisdiction. That would be my opinion.

Certainly, again, I think dynamic pricing is something this committee or the industry committee should take a look at. It's in the United States. There's no question it's going to come here at some point, so I think we should take a look at this down the road. I'm not too sure that this is the place for that; however, I certainly would be willing to hear from colleagues on their thoughts.

I think this is provincial jurisdiction and not in order in this bill.

The Chair: Are there any other comments on BQ-5?

Shall it carry?

(Amendment negatived [*See Minutes of Proceedings*])

The Chair: We'll go to BQ-6 now. It's the opinion of the chair that this amendment introduces new measures that are beyond the scope of the bill. Therefore, I rule amendment BQ-6 inadmissible.

I will now go to BQ-7.

[*Translation*]

Sébastien Lemire: Thank you—

[*English*]

The Chair: Please wait for the chair to recognize you before you speak.

In the opinion of the chair, this amendment introduces new measures that are beyond the scope of the bill. Therefore, I rule amendment BQ-7 inadmissible as well.

I'd like to go to BQ-8. Is there any discussion?

Mr. Lemire.

[*Translation*]

Sébastien Lemire: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I didn't mean to cut you off. I thought you were giving me the floor by naming amendment BQ-7.

Obviously, if we can't talk about traceability, percentage of Canadian products or size, I wonder, once again, what the purpose of this bill is.

That said, amendment BQ-8 addresses a fundamental issue, namely the funding of consumer rights organizations. Now, I have to wonder. If we can't rely on legislative changes to make this bill more relevant, then we need watchdogs. These watchdogs include consumer rights advocacy organizations, such as Option consommateurs, which are there to defend consumers. We know they've had budget cuts, but their role remains to inform consumers and help them. This help doesn't necessarily go through the federal government; there are organizations on the ground, in contact with consumers. Option consommateurs plays a crucial role in Quebec. By funding this organization, we ensure it is working to support consumers. No organization is better known for that than Option consommateurs. Their representatives came here. You saw how rigorous they are.

It is important to remember that the federal government abolished the office of consumer affairs, which was responsible for funding these organizations. We can't, on the one hand, say we're going to inform consumers while, on the other hand, mortgage their best ally. The purpose of the bill is to provide a little more information. However, if Option consommateurs no longer has funding to do its work, it will have a catastrophic impact.

It is therefore important that the bill reflect to some extent the critical role these organizations play and that, at the very least, it recognize them. We want these organizations, particularly Option consommateurs, which are the only real consumer rights advocacy organizations, to continue improving Quebec regulations and proposing recommendations and amendments that improve things, in this bill or elsewhere. If we do not take action, in April 2028, Option consommateurs will lose the funds that have helped it change things and allowed them to appear before this committee, among other things.

● (1610)

[*English*]

The Chair: I have MP Gobeil, MP Louis and then MP Barlow.

[*Translation*]

Daniel Gobeil: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Indeed, like my colleague, I recognize the importance of these organizations for consumer protection. I also acknowledge all the work they do to defend consumer rights.

However, we cannot support the amendment. It concerns the funding of organizations. We cannot accept an amendment without a funding source. There are financial management issues, and from the perspective of Crown financial management, this becomes difficult to interpret.

[*English*]

The Chair: MP Louis.

Tim Louis: I'd like to echo my colleague and say we support the consumer advocacy organizations, but this basically creates an undefined funding commitment without identifying where the money would come from.

The Chair: MP Barlow.

John Barlow: Again, I would reiterate much of what my colleagues are saying. Nowhere in this bill did it talk about funding to different groups. When you have a private member's bill that's asking the government to spend money, it's usually ruled out of scope by the Speaker or before it even gets to that point.

We're past second reading. Asking the government to commit funding to these groups is not what I think was intended with this bill. It's certainly not what I would have seen in the original version.

The Chair: Mr. Lemire.

[*Translation*]

Sébastien Lemire: Mr. Chair, I accept the consensus reached by my colleagues.

There is, however, one point here that the parliamentary secretary could address. We're currently in the pre-budget consultation period, so I would be delighted if he could convey this message to the Minister of Finance. That would be an honourable defeat for me. At least the witnesses' demands will have been heard.

[*English*]

The Chair: Shall BQ-8 carry?

(Amendment negatived [*See Minutes of Proceedings*])

The Chair: We're on BQ-9.

Mr. Lemire.

[*Translation*]

Sébastien Lemire: Essentially, we propose that this framework not apply to provinces that have already enacted legislation on this issue. We know that Quebec has already enacted legislation in this area. This was stated by the witnesses and is also acknowledged by the bill's sponsor. Government officials told us that this was the provinces' sole responsibility.

Therefore, we propose, essentially, that the framework not alter the regulations of provinces that have already taken action, especially if doing so would weaken the regulations of provinces that wish to adopt stricter measures to protect consumers. Quebec must retain control in this area.

Our amendment is along these lines. As officials have pointed out to us, unit price labelling is up to the provinces; it's their choice. Therefore, if they choose to legislate, they do not need a national framework that would tell them to do what they've already done or that could create further confusion. This is what could also be described as asymmetrical federalism.

● (1615)

[*English*]

The Chair: Mr. Barlow.

John Barlow: Thank you, Chair.

We certainly heard from the witnesses during the testimony that there was some concern about this being a piecemeal process. I find it counterintuitive, then, to have a national framework—as much as I love frameworks—that will now have exemptions for provinces that have their own system. I don't see why we would support a national framework if we are amending it so that every province does not have to abide by this framework if it has its own system. Most of us have argued right from the beginning that this is provincial jurisdiction, not federal.

If you're going to go down this road, I think we commit to a national program or a national framework and not do it piecemeal, where there are exemptions for province A, province B, territory A or territory B.

The Chair: Thank you.

MP Dandurand.

[*Translation*]

Marianne Dandurand: I agree with my colleague. I mean, one of the testimonies we heard mentioned that it would be very beneficial if the regulatory frameworks were similar from one province to another. That would make things easier for businesses. There would likely be less pressure on prices.

So, as far as possible—even though it's not mandatory—ensuring the greatest possible consistency across provinces would, I think, be an advantage. We would likely look to Quebec for guidance, since Quebec is the only province that has this type of framework. I think there's an advantage to maintaining this consistency among the provinces, if the provinces decide to implement this framework.

[*English*]

The Chair: Shall BQ-9 carry?

I guess we know what the answer is.

(Amendment negatived [*See Minutes of Proceedings*])

(Clause 3 as amended agreed to)

(On clause 4)

The Chair: We'll go to clause 4.

Is there any discussion on G-2?

Mr. Gobeil.

[*Translation*]

Daniel Gobeil: What we're proposing is that Bill C-226, in clause 4, be amended by replacing lines 10 through 11 on page 2 with text that would state that, within eighteen months after the day on which this Act comes into force, the Minister must prepare a report on the results of the consultations carried out in accordance subsection 3.

This is the amendment we are proposing. I would say that it is consistent with the spirit of the other proposed amendments that have been debated today.

[*English*]

The Chair: Is there any discussion?

Mr. Barlow.

John Barlow: Thanks, Mr. Chair.

My concern with this amendment is that it is watering down the proposal. My opinion from reading the proposed recommendation is that it takes the focus from what is an initial 18-month timeline that is asking the minister to come forward with a completed framework on how they're going to do this price-unit transparency and changes it to only "report on the results of the consultations". It eliminates the onus on the minister or the government to do a framework at all.

I find it a bit frustrating that this is a government private member's bill—so, their own member is putting it forward—asking for 18 months to build a framework around unit-pricing transparency, a bill that the government is now watering down to, "Well, we're not actually going to have a framework. We're just going to have a report on the consultations that the minister and the department do with various stakeholders."

Either you want a national framework or you don't. I would vote against this and keep it as it is: with a very distinct timeline to come up with very distinct results.

The Chair: Are there any other comments?

Mr. Gourde.

I'm sorry. I know you're on my list. I apologize. Go ahead.

[*Translation*]

Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC): Thank you.

Would it be possible to ask Mr Gobeil to repeat what he said? The amendment states "based on the results of consultations conducted under," but he told us that the text would read "consultations conducted in accordance with." In any case, there is one more word in Mr. Gobeil's presentation than in the document we currently have. I'd like him to reread the amendment to make sure everything is correct.

● (1620)

[*English*]

The Chair: Mr. Gobeil.

[*Translation*]

Daniel Gobeil: Yes, I can read it again: Within 18 months after the day on which this Act comes into force, the minister must prepare a report on the results of the consultations carried out pursuant to subsection 3.

While I have the floor, I'd like to take this opportunity to say, in response to Mr. Barlow's comments, that this is not an amendment without results. However, since this is, ultimately, a process in which the provinces and territories are asked to work together on an issue and sit down at the same table, if there were no results within 18 months, a report could be submitted.

[*English*]

The Chair: Okay.

[*Translation*]

Jacques Gourde: The exact words weren't there, but if they were repeated twice, they'll probably be added. I see it says "carried out under," but Mr. Gobeil said, "conducted pursuant to." It may not make much difference, but there might be an error in our documents. That's not what's written in the document I received. If the government members said "pursuant to," it may be that their documents say "pursuant to." I don't see the words "en application" in the French version.

[*English*]

The Chair: Okay. Are there any other comments? No.

Shall G-2 carry?

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

The Chair: BQ-10 seeks to change the department responsible for publishing reports to the Department of Agriculture and Agri-Food. If BQ-10 is adopted, it may be incoherent in the bill. That's just a note.

Monsieur Lemire.

[*Translation*]

Sébastien Lemire: Given the stinging defeat I suffered with amendment BQ-1, I will not be proposing amendments BQ-10 and BQ-11, in order to maintain consistency with the positions previously passed by the committee.

[*English*]

The Chair: Okay. That's great. Thank you so much.

We're now going to a vote on clause 4 as amended.

Mr. Louis.

Tim Louis: Can we suspend for a minute, so that I can catch up?

The Chair: Absolutely.

● (1620)

_____(Pause)_____

● (1625)

The Chair: I'll bring the meeting back to order. We're on clause 4.

Shall clause 4 as amended carry?

(Clause 4 as amended agreed to)

(Clause 5 negatived)

The Chair: Next is G-3. I'll turn it over to Mr. Gobeil to comment.

[*Translation*]

Daniel Gobeil: Thank you.

The amendment proposes that Bill C-226 be amended by adding the following after line 32 on page 2:

> Coming into Force
>
> 6 This Act comes into force on the first anniversary of the day on which it receives its royal assent.

[*English*]

The Chair: Is there any discussion on G-3?

(Amendment agreed to)

The Chair: Shall the short title carry?

An hon. member: [*Inaudible—Editor*]

The Chair: No. G-3 is new clause 6, so we don't have to vote on that. That was a good catch, though.

Shall the short title carry?

Some hon. members: No.

The Chair: Just so you know where we are—then I'll turn it over to you, Mr. Lemire—I was just going to go into the title section and ask whether G-4 shall carry. That's where I was going to go.

I'll turn it over to you.

[*Translation*]

Sébastien Lemire: I just want to make sure that amendment G-4 will be adopted. Have we debated this amendment? It's not clear to me.

Some hon. members: No, not yet.

Sébastien Lemire: So, we can't adopt the short title if we haven't yet included amendment G-4, since amendment G-4 deals with the short title, right?

[*English*]

The Chair: That's correct. G-4 is what we're on now.

Shall G-4 carry?

I'll wait for Mr. Lemire. He's having a conversation. I just want to make sure he's....

Mr. Barlow.

John Barlow: This is what I'd mentioned earlier. I would like some rationale from maybe my government colleagues. I'm referring to the difference between “respecting the development of a national framework” and “to establish a national framework”. You're changing those words.

To me, “establish” means it's going to happen, while “development” means this could go on. Now, I know you've added the 18 months, as in the previous amendment, but to me, “development” means this could go on for an indefinite amount of time. There's no impetus on the government to actually establish this national framework.

To my Liberal colleagues, I'm just curious to know why it was changed from “establish” to “development”.

The Chair: That's a question that's been put to the committee. Unless someone wants to answer it—

John Barlow: It's their amendment.

The Chair: Yes.

Marianne Dandurand: I guess originally it was “establish”.

John Barlow: It was “establish”. You're changing it to “development”.

The Chair: MP Dandurand, do you want to speak to it?

Marianne Dandurand: I think it's probably the same as the conversation we had earlier regarding the French part, where we said in French that establishing was going a bit further than developing.

John Barlow: Okay. Can we just make sure that the wording we changed previously is the same as this, then?

Daniel Gobeil: Yes.

John Barlow: Okay.

Marianne Dandurand: Within the bill, it was already “develop” in English.

John Barlow: As long as they match, I'm okay.

The Chair: I'm being told that they will match.

Shall G-4 carry?

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

The Chair: Shall the title as amended carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Chair: Shall the bill as amended carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Chair: Shall the chair report the bill as amended to the House?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Chair: Shall the committee order a reprint of the bill as amended for the use of the House at report stage?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Chair: I think that's it.

Thank you for your patience. This is the first time I've done this, so I appreciate your patience.

I have Mr. Lemire, and then I'll go to Mr. Barlow.

● (1630)

[*Translation*]

Sébastien Lemire: Mr. Chair, it may be a little too late, but can we adopt it on division? Perhaps I should have spoken up sooner, but can we agree that it is adopted on division?

[*English*]

The Chair: Yes.

[*Translation*]

Andrew Wilson: Mr. Lemire, are you referring to the bill?

Sébastien Lemire: Yes. I'd like the bill to be adopted on division.

Andrew Wilson: Agreed.

[*English*]

The Chair: Is that fine? Is everyone fine with that?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Chair: Mr. Barlow.

John Barlow: Thanks, Mr. Chair. You guys did a great job getting that through.

Since we have a little bit of time, I would like to reopen the debate on our Alto motion. I believe this is something that is extremely important. My concern with this is that the longer we wait and the more decisions are made, that—

Tim Louis: I have a point of order.

This is a dilatory motion here. You can't debate something—

The Chair: This is a dilatory motion. You have to move a motion, Mr. Barlow.

Tim Louis: Thank you.

John Barlow: I will move a motion that we resume debate on the Alto motion.

The Chair: Okay. There's no debate. We'll go right into the vote.

John Barlow: I would like a recorded vote, please.

The Chair: I'll turn it over to the clerk.

(Motion negatived: nays 6; yeas 5)

The Chair: Go ahead, Mr. Casey.

Sean Casey: I move, Mr. Chair, that the meeting be adjourned.

The Chair: There has been a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Chair: The meeting is adjourned.

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