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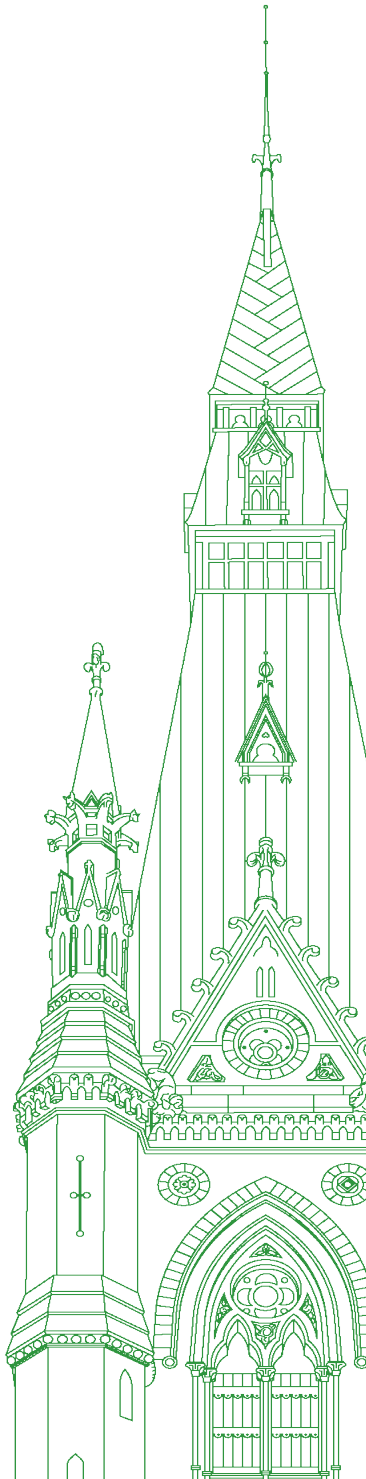

Chair: John Williamson

Standing Committee on Public Accounts

Monday, November 16, 2026

● (1530)

[*Translation*]

The Chair (John Williamson (New Brunswick Southwest, CPC)): I call this meeting to order.

Good afternoon, everyone. Welcome to meeting number 55 of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Public Accounts.

[*English*]

Today's meeting is taking place in a hybrid format, pursuant to the Standing Orders. Members are generally in the room, but of course they're welcome to join remotely as well.

[*Translation*]

The committee will now proceed to the consideration of matters related to committee business.

[*English*]

I'd like to remind members of the following points. Please wait until I recognize you by name before speaking. All comments should be addressed through the chair. Please raise your hand if you wish to speak, whether participating in person or via Zoom. The clerk and I will manage that as best we can.

I will remind members of where we left off. We are resuming debate on the motion of Mr. Hallan, which was moved on Thursday, November 5, 2026. We are considering the amendments of Mr. Hallan, which proposed to add the words “and Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance and National Revenue and to the Secretary of State (Canada Revenue Agency and Financial Institutions)” after the words “Deputy Minister of Finance”.

I had on the speaking list Ms. Yip, who adjourned the last meeting, and Mr. Osborne, who is not here today, so it goes back to Mr. Hallan. I see that already a little speaking list has begun, so if you want to be recognized, please let us know.

You have the floor, Mr. Hallan.

Jasraj Hallan (Calgary East, CPC): Thank you, Chair.

I will just recap where we're at.

As you said, Chair, I tried to move a motion at the last committee. We all know there was a scathing report by the Auditor General released in October 2026 about FINTRAC and the failures of the Liberal government, especially when it comes to money laundering and foreign interference as a whole.

What we're essentially trying to accomplish with this motion is to have the person responsible for that department, which falls under the government and falls under cabinet, the Minister of Finance, come and testify at this committee. The Liberals have tried their best to block that from happening.

We all know from the last committee that they voted down the appearance of the minister, who's responsible for overlooking FINTRAC and should be here to answer questions on behalf of Canadians on why they failed so badly and why FINTRAC is not doing the job that Canadians expect it to do. The Liberals blocked that from happening. They voted down him appearing.

We gave them another try by saying we could have the Secretary of State for Financial Institutions, Wayne Long, come instead, because that file also falls under him. We all know the failure of the CRA under him as well. We wanted him to come since the Liberals blocked the finance minister. Once again, the Liberals voted that down and blocked Wayne Long from coming, showing that they don't want accountability for anyone in their government when departments that fall under their purview fail.

We're currently at the parliamentary secretary for finance. We're trying to do whatever we can to get someone who can be accountable in this government to show up. I hope the Liberal government takes this seriously and that they are accountable for these departments and the absolute failure that the Auditor General has highlighted in her report once again.

I hope they will let this one pass so we can have some accountability for Canadians.

Thank you, Chair.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Blanchette-Joncas, you have the floor.

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski-Neigette—Mitis—Matapédia—Les Basques, BQ): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I was quite concerned at the last meeting when I heard my colleague Ms. Yip, the Liberal member for Scarborough—Agincourt, note that it wasn't our role at the Standing Committee on Public Accounts to invite the minister or ministers to appear. She mentioned that our role is only to examine the implementation of policies and the effectiveness of the federal administration. I think there's an odd view of what accountability in a government means.

As I understand it, when someone wants to solve a problem, they have to know what happened. I have done my prep, and I'm going to take the liberty of sharing some pretty inconsistent things.

Ms. Yip also felt that proposing to invite the deputy minister was sufficient. That meant we were unable to really get the whole truth. I'm talking about the catastrophic report that the Auditor General submitted to us and that we were able to study at the last meeting, the report on the activities of the Financial Transactions and Reports Analysis Centre of Canada, commonly known as FINTRAC.

I looked into the committee's history as part of my research. I noticed that, on a number of occasions, the same member who told us that it wasn't our role to invite ministers had voted in favour of motions to invite ministers. That's rather inconsistent. I would like her to explain that inconsistency today.

I would like to specify the dates on which this happened. On March 25, 2026, Liberal MP Jean Yip submitted her vote here in committee regarding the file on the mayor of Laval. For the people tuning in, I would remind you that this concerned a tax issue. It was the same minister, the Minister of Finance, Hon. François-Philippe Champagne, who was invited. I repeat; our committee studied this matter on March 25, 2026. Who voted in favour of a motion to invite Minister François-Philippe Champagne? It was the same member who said at the November 5 meeting that this was not our role.

I think that deserves an explanation. Why, on March 25, 2026, did that same member agree to have a minister appear?

I then dug a little deeper. There are also other people here who were at the committee meeting on November 5 and who agreed, on March 25, to have the minister appear. I would like to name them. There is Kristina Tesser Derksen, who supported a motion on March 25, 2026, to invite the Minister of Finance, François-Philippe Champagne. However, at the November 5 meeting, she agreed with her colleague that it was no longer necessary to invite the ministers, because that was not our role.

These government members have some explaining to do to the public. Why did they think it was important to invite the minister a few months ago, and they now think it's no longer our role, when the Auditor General has submitted a catastrophic report?

I dug a bit deeper still. My colleague Jean Yip, the Liberal member for Scarborough—Agincourt, also voted to invite another minister on April 11, 2024. This same member who told us a few days ago that it was not our role has voted twice to invite a minister. On April 11, 2024, following the audit on housing in first nations communities, this same member voted in favour of a motion to have Minister Patty Hajdu appear for at least two hours.

I'm baffled. How can a government member tell us something like that? She said that it was not our role at the Standing Committee on Public Accounts to invite departmental officials, meaning ministers.

I dug even deeper and saw something quite incredible. On December 4, 2024, something quite surprising happened. I hope that my colleagues in the government are listening carefully. A Liberal member of government, Iqra Khalid, personally proposed inviting a minister: François-Philippe Champagne, who was the minister of innovation, science and industry at the time. It was as part of the study of the Auditor General's report on the infamous scandal with Sustainable Development Technology Canada.

● (1535)

[*English*]

Kristina Tesser Derksen (Milton East—Halton Hills South, Lib.): I'm calling a point of order on relevance. How far is my friend going to take us back into committee history?

The Chair: Ms. Tesser Derksen, that is not a point of order. The member has the floor for as long as he likes. I don't sense that this is a filibuster of any sort. If it's making members of the government uncomfortable, I suppose you could take out your earpiece.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Blanchette-Joncas, you have the floor.

● (1540)

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Do you see the Liberal hypocrisy? We have proof of it today. I hope that the people tuning in will understand.

When we dig deeper, we can see the facade of this government's lack of transparency and consistency. I mentioned three facts. That information is entirely public. I understand that, today, my colleague is trying to silence me because she is uncomfortable with the idea of justifying that inconsistency or even because she is unable to do so.

How is it that, on November 5, 2026, my colleague Ms. Yip told us that it wasn't our role in the committee to invite a minister, when, in recent history, she herself has supported motions to invite ministers, and members of her own government have moved motions to invite ministers? How can we trust these people, given that kind of inconsistency?

I look forward to seeing how things unfold, but I think the public deserves an explanation. Why was it important to invite ministers just a few months ago and then, all of a sudden, once some tinkering has secured a majority, it's no longer important? The government members want to protect their colleagues and are unable to be accountable.

I think it's important to invite Minister Champagne, because there are two things we want to ask him. At the last committee meeting, we spoke at length about the damning report on the Financial Transactions and Reports Analysis Centre of Canada, or FINTRAC. That organization is practically incapable of fulfilling its own role, and there are abnormal delays in the disclosure of information needed for it to do its job properly.

We have two questions we would like to ask the minister, given that he is the minister responsible for the organization. We want to know when he was informed of the shortcomings that the Auditor General reported and what he did in response. That's all I want to know. If we can't find out what happened, how can we solve the problem?

Mr. Chair, I hope that our colleagues who are with us today and who voted to invite ministers in recent months will clearly explain to us and the public why, today, they don't think it's justified to invite ministers as part of the work of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

[*English*]

Ms. Tesser Derksen, do you want to add anything?

I see Ms. Yip has her hand up.

Go ahead, Ms. Yip.

Jean Yip (Scarborough—Agincourt, Lib.): First of all—to my friend—I don't believe we've ever not permitted you to speak. You certainly spoke well today, and then some. I want to clarify that some of the remarks were not accurate.

To invite ministers is sometimes to politicize the situation. That's why, in this committee, we look at implementation, not at whether the policy is right or wrong. It's about the implementation of the process. That is the mandate of public accounts. That is why we requested that the deputy minister come. He or she is responsible for the implementation of the process. Also, this committee routinely invites officers identified as accounting officers to speak to issues related to the implementation of policy. We feel that it is more relevant to the topic at hand to have people who are directly responsible, like the deputy ministers, come to speak.

The Chair: Thank you.

I have Mr. Hallan, and then I'll go back to Ms. Tesser Derksen.

Jasraj Hallan: Thanks, Chair. I'll make it short.

I want to respond to some of Ms. Yip's comments.

First, I want to thank my friend Maxime for laying that out very clearly and so well.

With regard to politicizing ministers being here, they are literally the ones responsible for a department's failures. If there are failures in a department, as my friend from the Bloc said, Canadians deserve to know what the plan is going forward. The deputy minister is not responsible for that. The minister is responsible for that. That's why we have a thing called ministerial accountability in Parliament.

Obviously, by voting down and blocking ministers from appearing in this committee, the Liberals are making it very clear that they don't want to uphold the tradition of ministerial accountability in this place. It's shameful that we can't have the people who are responsible for those departments show up and answer for themselves.

The deputy minister still reports to the minister at the end of the day. That is how it works. The deputy minister's boss is literally the minister of that department. It's the minister who's directly responsible, not the deputy minister. That's why we hope that we can get the finance minister here so that he can at least answer for what his game plan is going forward with all the failures highlighted in the Auditor General's report.

Thank you.

● (1545)

The Chair: Before I go to Ms. Tesser Derksen, I'll just remind members that the amendment to the motion is to invite the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance and National Revenue and the secretary of state. I know that several of you have mentioned the Minister of Finance. We've already dealt with that. This is for the parliamentary secretary.

Ms. Tesser Derksen, you have the floor.

Ron McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam, Lib.): I have a point of clarification. You're saying that that is the amendment we're debating at this time.

The Chair: Yes, Mr. McKinnon, that is correct. It is for the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance and National Revenue. We've already dealt with the minister.

Ms. Tesser Derksen, please go ahead.

Kristina Tesser Derksen: Thanks, Mr. Chair.

I don't want to rehash this too much, but just to respond to my colleague's comment, I'll say there have been times around this committee table when we have voted in favour of bringing in ministers, just as Ms. Yip said, and times when we haven't. It's based on the threshold, as Ms. Yip said.

There is serious work to be done at this committee. We have reports we're trying to get done and work we're trying to do for Canadians, who expect us to do that work. I know that our opposition colleagues like to use this opportunity at times—this committee table is a little television studio—to get their clips out. I'm sure that within 20 minutes of the end of this committee, we're all going to be on their Twitter feeds being clipped out of context.

I'm not going to support this amendment. I hope we can get on with the serious business of this committee and complete the reports that we have been trying to get done for quite some time.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Blanchette-Joncas, you have the floor.

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I have heard my colleagues' arguments. They're unable to justify the unjustifiable.

I would again like to bring my colleague's attention to one point. I will name it, because it's important to record this in the archives. It's the Liberal member for Milton East—Halton Hills South, Kristina Tesser Derksen. This is the same member who just told us today that she doesn't agree with inviting the minister. I would like to remind her that she agreed, on March 25, 2026, to invite that same minister as part of the study on the mayor of Laval file. The Canada Revenue Agency asked the City of Laval to cover former mayor Gilles Vaillancourt's taxes on money that he had misappropriated. Even Ms. Yip agreed to invite the minister. These two members of the Liberal Party, and thus the government, who are here today, no longer want to invite the minister.

What changed between March 25, 2026, and November 16, 2026? It's that the government now has a majority. On March 25, 2026, the government knew that it would lose the vote if the opposition parties moved the motion. The truth, then—and I will name it clearly and explicitly—is that, since winning a majority, the government has not allowed us to fulfill our role as opposition members, which is to invite ministers to understand what happened and what they did when problems were reported to them. That is the truth.

We currently have before us people who, a few months ago, supported a motion to invite the same minister—that's a strange coincidence—and who, today, are opposed to inviting him. I would again like to point out, since my colleagues seem unable to explain why they were in favour of it a few months ago and are against it now, that it was members of their own government who actually invited ministers.

Today, we are witnessing a sad bit of theatre orchestrated by the government. Our colleagues just want to protect the Minister of Finance, because if he answers simple questions from opposition members, he's going to have to admit that there were problems or that he never acted on them.

I find it unpleasant to have to take time just to do my job, which should be logical. When we want to invite people to solve problems, we have to ask them questions, and when we can't ask the questions, we don't have the information.

Today, November 16, 2026, the people tuning in know full well that the government is once again shirking its responsibility. In a healthy democracy, people have to be able to ask questions to those in charge. It's a democratic principle called ministerial accountability. This government is incapable of shouldering its own governance responsibilities. That erodes public confidence in our institutions, which is already very low. I'm not making that up; Statistics Canada is the one saying that. I encourage my government colleagues and even the general public to consult its data, which demonstrate that a very large majority of Canadians do not trust our institutions. Unfortunately, it's only going to get worse, since this government doesn't want to shoulder its responsibilities or allow for the people who make decisions to simply come and answer questions.

● (1550)

The Chair: Thank you very much.

[*English*]

Mr. Hallan, you have the floor again.

Jasraj Hallan: Thank you, Chair.

I fully agree with my friend Maxime on everything that he's pointed out. Canadians are losing their faith in democratic institutions under the Liberal government. Today's committee and the last committee are clear examples of why that is happening, as the Liberals have blocked accountability under the guise of it somehow being turned into politics, even though that's the field we're in, and they think they're going to get a clip for social media.

This is a public forum. We are in public and we should act in the public's interest. It's clear that the Liberals are not doing that, because they're avoiding accountability.

Ms. Yip mentioned that we don't look at whether things are right or wrong, and that's clear to see with all the scandals under the Liberals. That's what we're trying to do here. We're trying to bring out the failures under the Liberals and the minister who is responsible.

I'll remind the Liberals that FINTRAC was here, and they rejected the Auditor General's report. Does that mean the minister also rejects the same report? That's what we want to know. If the department that the finance minister is responsible for is saying that they don't agree with the Auditor General, then the minister should come here and tell us whether he agrees with it or not.

I find it very interesting that Ms. Tesser Derksen says that they came up with their own threshold for whether a minister should be here or not. That's a made-up threshold. I've never heard of or had a discussion about what threshold we are talking about. It seems like the only threshold they have is whether it's going to look politically bad for the Liberals if a minister is here or not, or if the government is going to look bad, and that gets decided by the Liberals. That's why they've worked so hard in these last two committees to block any type of accountability for any minister to show up here. It's because it will make them look bad. That is the only threshold that we can clearly see, and it's out in public. We don't need to clip those. Everyone in the public is seeing that.

That's why my friend from the Bloc is very right. The faith Canadians have in this government, and especially in our democratic institutions, is weaker than I've ever seen before. We need to have the minister come here to answer whether he also rejects the Auditor General's report, because if the department that he is responsible for is saying that he rejects it, then he should come here and answer to that.

I hope the Liberals can bring some accountability back to this place, put the politics of trying to make their government look good aside and actually show Canadians that we can be accountable and transparent in this place.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Clerk, would you call the roll, please, on the amendment to the motion?

Just to remind members, it is to add “and Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance and National Revenue and to the Secretary of State (Canada Revenue Agency and Financial Institutions)” after the words “Deputy Minister of Finance”.

(Amendment negatived: nays 5; yeas 4)

The Chair: We now return to the motion as amended. We amended it previously to strike “Minister” and add “Deputy Minister”, with the 60-day horizon.

Mr. Hallan, I saw you indicate. Again, if members would like to speak to this, we're back to the amended main motion. After a period of debate, there will be a vote on it, assuming there are no other amendments.

You have the floor.

● (1555)

Jasraj Hallan: Thank you, Chair.

It's clear now that the Liberals are trying to block any type of accountability on themselves. We tried to bring in the Minister of Finance, who's responsible for these departments. The Liberals blocked that. We tried to get the Secretary of State for Financial Institutions, who is also in charge of these departments. The Liberals blocked that as well. We even gave them a chance to bring the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance and National Revenue here, and they blocked that as well. It's very clear for people to see that there's no accountability with the Liberals.

We're going to give it another chance. I want to make another amendment and invite the Minister of Public Safety, Gary Anandasangaree, to the committee. I'll explain why.

In the Auditor General's report, the police were waiting up to four months for financial intelligence from FINTRAC. We know it can hinder an investigation, and it can also hinder the charges that get laid on the criminals or people who are committing money laundering. In fact, at one of the other committees, officials actually said that Canada has become a hotbed for foreign interference and money laundering, and it's because our laws are not effective. We want to call the public safety minister because Public Safety's financial crime coordination centre is responsible for supporting the coordination between FINTRAC and law enforcement and getting that information to the police or any law enforcement authorities that need the information in order to do their investigations.

This ties directly to the audit as well. The departments all work together, so any types of delays should be addressed. These are things the public safety minister may be able to address. He can address some of the issues that were highlighted in the Auditor General's report and tell us what his plan is going forward to make investigations easier and tell us how the information sharing between FINTRAC and the departments for law enforcement can be made more efficient and faster so that we're not getting the delays we're seeing.

We're giving this a fourth shot so that someone in the Liberal government can finally come to show some accountability for the failures in FINTRAC. I hope the Liberals won't block this one as well.

Again, this is the fourth time we're trying. Let's see if this works.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Can you please call the roll on that, Clerk?

This is an amendment to the motion as amended to add the Minister of Public Safety to appear, along with the deputy finance minister, but we're voting on just the addition of the Minister of Public Safety.

(Amendment negatived: nays 5; yeas 4 [*See Minutes of Proceedings*])

The Chair: I will now return to the motion as amended from the last public meeting.

Are there any comments or debate points that members would like to make or, dare I speak too soon again, are there any other amendments?

Mr. Falk.

● (1600)

Ted Falk (Provencher, CPC): Thank you, Chair.

I have a question for my Liberal colleagues about accountability. I think Mr. Blanchette-Joncas very eloquently explained the inconsistencies—and perhaps even a bit of the hypocrisy on the Liberal side of this committee room—in when to invite a minister to be accountable and when not to. They apparently claim they have a threshold for that. I'd be curious to know what that threshold is.

We know that ministerial accountability is important to Parliament. Our constituents certainly expect us to hold ministers accountable for the departments they oversee and direct. We have now tried, with three different ministers and a parliamentary secretary, to ask them to appear at committee to take responsibility for the departments that directly impact their roles here as ministers.

Somebody needs to be accountable for the dismal report on FINTRAC that the Auditor General provided to this committee, other than just the deputy minister. A deputy minister is accountable to the finance minister, who really should be answering to this committee. I'm a little surprised that Liberal backbenchers are willing to prevent the minister....

I guess my question is this. Do they not have confidence in the minister to adequately defend his department's position or his department's response to the Auditor General's report? What is it that they're scared of? Why do they refuse to have a minister come here and be accountable? These would be the questions I have.

I think we've provided ample argument for having a minister here to respond to the department's response to the Auditor General's findings about FINTRAC, especially in light of the fact that FINTRAC disputes the findings of the Auditor General. That's something that the minister needs to be held accountable for, whether he agrees with his department or whether he doesn't agree. Also, why not?

That's something this committee should hear, so I would be very curious to know from the Liberals exactly why they don't want a minister here and what their threshold is. I'd be curious about that.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Falk.

Ms. Yip, you have the floor.

Jean Yip: I think we need to distinguish between ministers and deputy ministers. Ministers are accountable to Parliament for the general management and direction of their departments. They may provide general direction in areas where the accounting officers possess statutory responsibility. Ministers, though, cannot provide direction on specific activities in these areas. That's why we have deputy ministers, who are responsible for the implementation of the process. We're not here to decide whether a policy is right or wrong.

Also, we haven't even asked the financial officers in the departments to come and discuss the FINTRAC report, so perhaps we should start there.

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Mr. Blanchette-Joncas, you have the floor.

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

It's clear that the government members are trying to come up with anything to justify the fact that they refuse to allow the Minister of Finance to appear. They're explaining to us what their responsibilities are and what a minister or deputy minister does. I hope they will listen carefully to what I'm about to say. This is from a document from their own government. It's a Privy Council Office document entitled “Open and Accountable Government”. Page 52 states that “[m]inisters…should appear regularly before their respective parliamentary committees…to discuss departmental performance and results.”

[*English*]

The Chair: There's a point of order.

Go ahead, Mr. McKinnon.

Ron McKinnon: I believe the debate is engaged, at this time, on whether or not a minister should come. We've already voted against that on two amendments. The matter is over as far as I'm concerned.

The Chair: I would agree with that, Mr. McKinnon.

I will let you finish, Mr. Blanchette-Joncas.

[*Translation*]

The current debate is on the motion, which has already been amended to invite the deputy minister. That's the issue before the committee. Please limit your remarks to that issue.

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: Of course, Mr. Chair.

I understand that my colleague Mr. McKinnon is uncomfortable when I quote a document from his own government that reminds him of his own responsibilities.

● (1605)

[*English*]

Ron McKinnon: I have a point of order.

The Chair: Hold on a second.

Yes, Mr. McKinnon.

Ron McKinnon: Monsieur Blanchette-Joncas has explicitly misrepresented what I just said. I pointed out that the matter was out of order.

The Chair: He has heard your protest so I will stop you there. I'll add you to the list, Mr. McKinnon.

[*Translation*]

You have the floor, Mr. Blanchette-Joncas.

[*English*]

Could you be judicious with your words, please?

[*Translation*]

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: Mr. Chair, I just want to move that we invite Tom Osborne, Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board. We have seen on a few occasions that the government doesn't want the ministers to appear. I think it would be legitimate for this person, who has a role related to public finances, to come and give us a concrete explanation of what is happening within the government so that we can simply get answers to our questions.

I find it worrying for a government to prepare a document to explain to us what the minister's role and responsibilities are. I would again encourage my colleagues in the Liberal Party, the government, to consult their own document, which is called “Open and Accountable Government”. On page 52, this document explicitly calls for the ministerial team to appear regularly before parliamentary committees. That's what we're doing today.

It was in that spirit that we asked to invite François-Philippe Champagne, the Minister of Finance, to appear, a request we have already been refused. We're now trying to invite other people from the ministerial team, even parliamentary secretaries or secretaries of state, to understand what happened.

[*English*]

Ron McKinnon: On a point of order, the member persists in debating the matter of whether a minister should come. I believe the chair has already ruled on that.

The Chair: Give me 30 seconds. I'm just speaking with the clerk about something.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Blanchette-Joncas, once again, please limit your remarks to the motion, which has already been amended. If you want to propose another amendment, you may do so. It's your choice.

The floor is yours.

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: I'm just providing information. That's called using arguments to support what you say, which the government members were unable to do when we asked them to explain why they thought it was a good idea to invite the ministers six months ago and it's no longer a good idea now. That's what we're trying to clarify today, and they have no justification.

I will repeat my amendment, Mr. Chair. I move that we invite Tom Osborne, the Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board, to appear.

[*English*]

The Chair: We now have a new amendment to the motion. I believe I caught it, but the clerk can correct me. It is to invite the Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board.

I have another speaking list, but I usually break off for an amendment. I'll keep you all on the original one, but I'll break off now for the amendment to the motion.

Mr. Hallan, you have the floor.

Jasraj Hallan: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I want to address some of the things Ms. Yip was saying. She was trying to make a distinction between the role—

The Chair: Just one second. You're on the list to get back to the main motion, but now we're addressing the amendment from Monsieur Blanchette-Joncas.

I will just remind everyone that his amendment is to invite the Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board.

As long as you're focused on that, you're welcome to continue.

Jasraj Hallan: Absolutely. I'm going to wrap it all into one so that I cover what Ms. Yip was saying and also get to the point of the amendment at hand by our friend Maxime.

Ms. Yip was trying to explain the difference between what a deputy minister does and what a minister does. Once again, she tried to do a good job for the government to cover up for them, but it's almost like a Walmart store. You could have different departments, but ultimately there's a manager at the store and there's an owner at the store. It doesn't fall on just the department manager. It depends on what the manager of the entire store is doing. That person has to overlook all the departments. The general manager has to make sure that all the departments are functioning. If they're not, that is the person who is responsible.

In this case, he's responsible to Canadians. We're not seeing that type of accountability to Canadians right now. The people who are responsible for those departments are being blocked from coming here by the Liberals. We've tried multiple times to get different ministers here. We want the minister here.

● (1610)

Ron McKinnon: I have a point of order.

Jasraj Hallan: In this case, we want the parliamentary secretary—

The Chair: I heard “point of order”, so I will hear it.

Ron McKinnon: I would ask the member, Mr. Chair, to stick to the—

The Chair: During debate, if a member says “minister” when we're speaking about a parliamentary secretary, I'm not going to jump in and correct it every time. He's speaking about an elected cabinet minister.

Your point is taken, but we are debating right now an amendment that would see another elected member of the House of Commons who's part of—at least indirectly, in this case—the treasury department come. “Minister” is shorthand for that.

Do you have another comment, Mr. McKinnon?

Ron McKinnon: I agree that this is what we're voting on now—or will be. However, that's not what the member is saying. He's talking about the decision this committee has already made twice.

The Chair: While I've been lenient, I don't want things interrupted with points of order, which I suppose are technically correct. Members can just refer to “the parliamentary secretary” or “an elected member”.

Thank you.

Jasraj Hallan: The blocking of anyone responsible in this Liberal government is what we keep seeing over and over again.

I want to remind the committee that there's a member sitting here who said, “A good governance process requires supervision, checks and balances and scrutiny throughout the project.” That member is Mr. Ma. I don't know whether he still agrees with that, because this was before he became a Liberal. It's just a question. Does he still believe in that? On this side, we all believe in that. We think that all the Liberals should believe in the same thing as well.

We are here to get accountability and transparency for Canadians out of the Liberals. The reason we're trying to get the parliamentary secretary in—and this is our fifth try at this as a collective on the opposition—is to get some accountability for Canadians. We hope that even Mr. Ma will stick to his own words and find that scrutiny is what a proper opposition does.

If the Liberals are blocking the minister, the secretary of state and the parliamentary secretaries from coming here, we and Canadians want to know if anyone elected on that side in government agrees with the department that they are responsible for.... In this case, it's FINTRAC. FINTRAC is saying that it doesn't agree with the Auditor General's report, which is the crux of this motion. That is what the main Auditor General's report was about. It was about failures at FINTRAC.

Someone in the government who is in charge of those departments needs to come here and answer for that. We have that before us: to have the parliamentary secretary for the Treasury Board come. I hope the Liberals will stick to their own words and agree with the opposition that accountability and scrutiny are part of good governance.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.

Ms. Tesser Derksen, you aren't on the list. Do you want to speak to this amendment to the motion?

You have the floor, Ms. Tesser Derksen.

Kristina Tesser Derksen: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I just want to point out that the Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board is on this committee. He's here at every meeting, and I know he's been very open to discussing resolutions with our colleagues on numerous occasions. Sometimes that yields a beneficial result for everyone, and sometimes it doesn't.

As far as accountability, scrutiny and transparency go, those are baked into the process. That's why we have an Auditor General. That's why we have this committee. The Auditor General's team was here sitting next to the officials from FINTRAC and answered our questions for two hours.

I'll allow my committee colleagues to correct me if I'm wrong, but I don't ever recall FINTRAC officials saying that they didn't accept the report. In fact, I have the report in front of me, showing that they accepted all the recommendations. We have an action plan from them in which they address the recommendations.

Again, I'll allow a correction if I'm missing something, but I have only what's in front of me. In black and white, I have the report saying that they accepted the recommendations of the Auditor General. The action plan is laid out with the actions they plan to take to correct the measures that the Auditor General said they should address.

The Auditor General's team said that these are retroactive, retrospective-looking reports. There has been a lot of progress made in the meantime, between the date of the report being released and when FINTRAC came here. To mislead the people watching by saying that nothing is being done and that there's no accountability, transparency or scrutiny is incorrect. It is misleading.

That's all I have to say about that, Mr. Chair. Thanks.

● (1615)

The Chair: Thank you.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Blanchette-Joncas, you have the floor.

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: I'd like to move a subamendment, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: You can't amend your own amendment.

[*English*]

I'm going to ask the clerk to call the roll on this amendment to the motion. This is to add the Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board.

(Amendment negatived: nays 5; yeas 4)

The Chair: I had a previous speaking list. I'm going through it right now so that you're aware of it. You're welcome to speak, or you can move off.

It begins with Mr. Hallan, and then it's Ms. Tesser Derksen and Mr. McKinnon.

We are now back to the motion as amended to invite the deputy finance minister. I will pre-empt others by recognizing that we have dealt with four elected officials coming in. This amendment is not debating that. It is debating the amendment before us, which is to invite the deputy finance minister.

You have a point of order, Mr. McKinnon.

Ron McKinnon: You can take me off that list. That was a protest that I think has been registered.

The Chair: All right.

Mr. Hallan, you have the floor.

Jasraj Hallan: I'll come back on the list.

The Chair: I'll go to Ms. Tesser Derksen, then. I can put you both down.

Ms. Tesser Derksen, you can have the floor if you'd like it.

Kristina Tesser Derksen: I don't think I need it, Mr. Chair.

Actually, I do, because I fear we're going to end up with a very long list of proposed ministers, parliamentary secretaries and who knows who else.

At this point—and I'm sure this will be clipped out there in social media land before long—I'm going to move to adjourn debate.

The Chair: That is non-debatable.

(Motion agreed to: yeas 5; nays 4)

The Chair: We will now suspend the meeting to go in camera for the consideration of draft reports. This will take about five to seven minutes.

[*Proceedings continue in camera*]

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