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• (1540)

[*Translation*]

The Chair (Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Québec Centre, Lib.)): I call this meeting to order.

Good afternoon, everyone.

Thank you for attending meeting number 27 of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security.

Before we hear from the witness, I would like to ask the committee to adopt the budget that the clerk distributed to members this morning. It concerns the study of supplementary estimates (C) 2025-26.

Please note again that these amounts are estimates and that the committee could spend less on this study. Any funds that the committee does not spend will go back to the Liaison Committee. If there are any questions, the clerk can answer them.

Is it the will of the committee to adopt this budget?

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: Okay.

This enables us, pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), to move on to the motion adopted by the committee on September 18.

The committee is meeting on its study of Canada's ability to remove foreign nationals with a criminal record.

In that context, I would like to welcome the witness for this hour of the committee's meeting. From the International Centre for Criminal Law Reform and Criminal Justice Policy, we have Peter German, president and executive director.

Mr. German, you have five minutes for your opening remarks.

Peter German (President and Executive Director, International Centre for Criminal Law Reform and Criminal Justice Policy): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen.

[*English*]

Thank you for the invitation to appear before this committee.

Allow me to introduce myself briefly.

I was a member of the RCMP for 31 years, retiring as deputy commissioner. I also served as deputy commissioner of Correction-

al Service Canada. As president and executive director of the International Centre for Criminal Law Reform, or ICCLR, I have the privilege of guiding our institute as its associates undertake projects within Canada and abroad. We are a United Nations affiliate located at the University of British Columbia. We are the result of a treaty between Canada and the UN. Several years ago, we created the Vancouver Anti-Corruption Institute within ICCLR.

I applaud the committee for seeking recommendations on preventing the entry of individuals who pose public safety risks while strengthening the effectiveness of Canada's deportation mechanisms. Your work is both timely and important.

As indicated in the motion guiding this study, there are reports that 1,635 foreign nationals with criminal records are currently facing deportation. Of these, approximately 600 have failed to attend their deportation proceedings; their whereabouts are unknown. Another 431 have been found guilty of serious crimes, and 361 individuals have been avoiding deportation for more than two years. The numbers provided to this committee by the president of CBSA are even more shocking.

Imagine you are a foreign national with a criminal background facing an uncertain future in your home country or in another state. Where in the world might you choose to go? It would probably be a country that values multiculturalism, where large diaspora communities exist, where justice is fair, where the police do not abuse their authority, where health care and education are free and where individuals enjoy strong legal rights. In short, you may well choose Canada. Now imagine that after entering the country illegally, you are eventually discovered and arrested. You claim refugee status and seek your release while your case proceeds through the system. Would you sit around and wait for the CBSA to knock on your door?

Canada is an oasis for those seeking freedom and opportunity, but it can also become attractive to those seeking to exploit our openness for criminal purposes. We cannot allow ourselves to be taken for dupes. The brazen shootings in Surrey, Abbotsford and the regional districts around Toronto are examples in point.

Transnational organized crime is firmly rooted in Canada. Although it exists across the country, it is most visible in our major urban centres. That said, we are also aware of large-scale drug laboratories operating in rural areas. Canada has often been described as a high-value, low-risk country for transnational organized crime. The very qualities that make Canada a desirable place to live—stability, prosperity and strong legal protections—can also make it an attractive platform for criminal organizations.

At our borders, we rely heavily on the Canada Border Services Agency, which is a customs and revenue agency, not a police force. We have no port police and only private railway police. Ultimately, the fail-safe remains the RCMP, which is often expected to respond to a wide array of challenges across its federal policing responsibilities.

As you have heard from previous witnesses, many of the issues surrounding deportation stem from process. Canada's federal agencies work hard, and the people within them are dedicated professionals. Our Charter of Rights and Freedoms is fundamental to our democracy, and our criminal justice system—judges, prosecutors and police—functions with integrity.

What we lack, I suggest, is a sense of urgency. Complacency can be a killer. In an increasingly unstable world, in which events occurring halfway around the globe can affect Canada almost immediately, we must ensure that we remain vigilant.

The committee has asked for recommendations on how individuals with criminal backgrounds can be prevented from entering Canada in the first place and how deportation processes can be made more effective.

First, the challenges faced by the RCMP are not the result of having too many mandates. Much larger organizations operate effectively with multiple mandates. What the RCMP requires is a significant infusion of resources.

I endorse the comments of Mr. Brian Sauvé of the National Police Federation to this committee.

At present, the RCMP is tasked with a wide range of federal responsibilities. These include preventing drugs from entering and exiting the United States through border enforcement, protecting national security, combatting cyber- and financial crime and addressing transnational organized crime.

At the same time, the organization continues to face resource reductions as part of broader government spending constraints. Contract policing, largely self-funded through agreements with the provinces and municipalities, is not the issue. Creating new agencies is not the answer. The challenge lies in the underfunding of the federal policing mandate.

Second, we must consider the consequences of releasing individuals with known criminal backgrounds while their cases proceed through lengthy legal processes. Communities across Canada are already grappling with the repeated release of prolific property and violent offenders shortly after arrest.

A similar dynamic exists with foreign nationals facing deportation. The immigration system must be properly resourced to deal

with cases on a priority basis, eliminating the need to release high-risk individuals because of time delays inherent in the system.

Third, and closely related to these concerns, is the issue of border security. Our borders quite literally define Canada. A comprehensive and secure border strategy is essential, not only to protect Canadians but also to send a clear message to criminal networks that Canada is no longer an easy target.

Fourth, priority must be given to the removal of high-risk individuals through joint police-CBSA operations. Simply placing these individuals on the CPIC computer system, as we do with normal warrants, often means that no further action takes place unless the police happen upon the individuals.

Members of the committee, thank you again for the opportunity to appear before you. I appreciate the importance of the work you are undertaking.

I hope my remarks contribute to your deliberations. I would be pleased to answer any questions you may have.

● (1545)

[*Translation*]

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. German.

This allows us to turn to MP Caputo for six minutes, please.

Frank Caputo (Kamloops—Thompson—Nicola, CPC): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair, and thank you, Dr. German.

We've lived parallel lives in some respects, although you've had a much more interesting experience in many respects. I started out as a parole officer and you made it to deputy commissioner, so well done.

Your work in policing and criminal law cannot be overstated. It's a real pleasure and honour. I also want to commend you for the fact that you observed Mr. Sauvé's evidence.

One thing we have dealt with at this committee that surprises me is the current role of students within CBSA. I'm not saying this as a partisan issue. I think everybody around the table should at least raise an eyebrow to this idea. Make no mistake, CBSA needs students. It's good for mentoring, and it's good for experience. I started out in corrections as a student, for instance.

I have no issue with that. The problem is that, at any given time—I'm not sure if you're aware of this—up to, I believe, 50% of the staff on the front lines at YVR, Vancouver airport, and other places are students. They are indistinguishable from somebody who's gone through the 20 weeks or whatever it is of training to be a CBSA officer. The student has three weeks, one of which is use of force, so that means there are two weeks of training. This is the principal point of entry for some of the people we are talking about today. I'm at a loss as to why this is permitted. I think it's all about money and staffing.

Could you comment on that, please?

Peter German: Let me trade compliments. We have the best parole officers in the world. Kudos to you for having done that job, which is not an easy job.

I would answer that in short by asking, do we allow student police officers to patrol our streets? We don't. We expect our police officers to complete training before they're out there.

There is a real role for students. The student program at customs and CBSA has been around for a long time, but the issue is, why is there a disproportionate number at the airport? I've heard this from the union publicly. Are they working with a trained CBSA officer or are they working, as you say, on their own? There's a role for students, but there's no question that there's also a place for students. I would draw the analogy to police forces. We expect our police to be fully trained before they hit the road.

• (1550)

Frank Caputo: You give an excellent example. My understanding, Dr. German, is that students are expected to be under somebody's supervision. Everybody's under someone's supervision, but when I say that, I mean they're tethered. Whenever there are practicum students.... Even in Parliament, we have interns, and generally, they go with somebody. They would certainly never do the work of a parliamentarian. My understanding is that they are working independently, but a member of the public would have no idea about that. Obviously, somebody coming in has no idea about who they're dealing with, and I think this should alarm Canadians.

Moving on, one thing I found interesting about your opening comments was your highlighting that we have this issue that brings us here today, but really, there are many contributing factors. One thing you spoke about was bail, and I can tell you there's been a huge change in bail.

One of the things I attribute it to is that the laws of bail on the books haven't changed, but the common law of bail has. What I mean by that is the courts come out with decisions, and they're often favourable to the accused, because they will challenge them. They're sometimes favourable to the Crown—when I say favourable, I mean they promote more detention—but often to the accused. We have not seen Parliament legislate in light of those decisions. We've seen it just straight as it goes.

Do you think it's an issue that we haven't had any meaningful bail legislation in light of various serious common law decisions from the Supreme Court of Canada?

Peter German: I've personally worked with municipalities in the Lower Mainland of British Columbia that are very concerned

about the current state of bail. I think we have to deal not only with the repeat violent offenders but also with repeat and prolific property offenders. That is a real issue in this country, and we have to deal with it.

Frank Caputo: It's interesting for you to say that, because a lot of the time, we talk about violence.

Violence is unacceptable, but what people don't realize is that in something like a small business, the owner maybe makes \$60,000 net. If they're victimized by 10 shoplifters at \$10 a day, it doesn't sound like much, but it's \$100 a day, \$500 to \$600 a week, \$2,000 to \$2,500 a month and up to \$30,000 a year. We say, "Oh, it's just a bag of chips", or whatever. My experience is that the bail system is no longer dealing with those people. Some people might call them small-time criminals, but their impact is profound. It's disproportionate. They take up innumerable resources, and they're no longer being referred to detention. Often, they're released at the scene.

Do you have any comments on that?

Peter German: I agree 100%. London Drugs on West Georgia Street in Vancouver is gone because they can't maintain that business. It's going to become a police training academy. There's an interesting irony in all of that.

It's definitely a problem in Vancouver, but it's not just in Vancouver. It's in Kelowna, Surrey, the suburbs, etc. Abbotsford would have the same thing. There's a very small number of prolific property offenders, and they have to be put in the same category as the violent offenders. Oftentimes, they're suffering from the same issues. These are not necessarily bad people. A lot of them are people with mental health issues, drug issues, addictions, etc., but the net result is what they cause on the streets, as you've indicated.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. German.

We'll now turn to MP Acan for six minutes, please.

Sima Acan (Oakville West, Lib.): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

First, I want to thank you, Dr. German, for your service in the RCMP for over three decades. Having been deputy commissioner of the RCMP, you have certainly had a distinguished career, and it's a privilege to have you here, especially as you are an academician today.

As you know, we are studying the removal of foreign nationals with criminal records. The goal of this study is to understand and improve our ability to action those removals and the enforcement against visa overstays and even criminal inadmissibility.

In your testimony today, you highlighted the importance of the resources and the tools our law enforcement requires, some of which are included in Bill C-14, on bail reform, and Bill C-2, on stronger borders. Additionally, our government introduced Bill C-12, which is now in the Senate. Bill C-12 focuses on improving asylum claim processes and eligibility requirements to support the CBSA in removing individuals from Canada who are involved in criminality, including extortion.

As an academic and a lawyer, how would you evaluate the effectiveness of Bill C-12 in supporting the removal processes?

● (1555)

Peter German: First of all, thank you for your kind comments.

I don't profess to be an expert in the legislation under way in the Commons and the Senate, but anything directed at these issues is good.

The proof will be when the legislation is passed, has royal assent, is in force and we see the results on the street. All efforts in that direction are good, and it is nice to see attention being paid to this issue. It's been far too long in coming, but we're there now, so that's a good thing.

Sima Acan: To follow up, are there any legislative reforms you would recommend to us today?

Peter German: I'm not too sure I'm the right person for that. There are all sorts of recommendations that could be made. I would be reluctant to go further than I have gone in my comments, which are fairly general.

The RCMP, the CBSA and the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police are definitely the experts in dealing with this. They can get into the minutiae.

I want to emphasize that process is very important. My fear with regard to the removals is that there are thousands of removals, but are we getting the right people? These are the people who don't want to be found because they're the ones with criminal records and so forth. It's very difficult. As I mentioned, we don't want to just put people on a police computer system and hope they get stopped in a traffic stop. We need to go after them.

Sima Acan: You have done extensive work regarding anti-money laundering in British Columbia. From your experience in the RCMP... I understand that crime is often transnational and complex, which you also mentioned in your speech. In the context of your work, in some cases foreign persons are linked to and involved with transnational money laundering. Given this, could you speak to any legal challenges that are faced when individuals are linked to transnational crime and subject to a removal?

Peter German: We find that a lot of organized crime groups are ethnic-based. They operate out of their own diasporas. If you think about this, the problem is that if you are involved in criminal activity and you come to a country like Canada, you're not necessarily able to speak English well, so whom do you prey on? You prey on

people within your own community and within your own diaspora. It's only after you become familiar with the language and with how things operate that you start to spread your wings. We've seen this with one organized crime group after another. They tend to start out being quite ethnically based, whether it's Iranian organized crime, Vietnamese organized crime or, as I always say, Caucasian Canadian organized crime, which is our biker gangs. They tend to start in their own little area and then they spread their wings.

I don't know if this answers your question.

Sima Acan: Do I have time, Mr. Chair?

The Chair: You have one minute.

Sima Acan: Yes, you definitely answered that.

Following up on this, given that Bill C-12 strengthens Canada's anti-money laundering and anti-terrorist financing regime by enabling FINTRAC to share supervisory information with members of the financial institutions supervisory committee, would you say these measures enhance Canada's ability to identify federally regulated financial institutions that are involved in illicit financing?

Peter German: We've had a whole string of amendments to the proceeds of crime and money laundering legislation over a number of years, and it is getting strengthened over time, more and more.

I am very pleased by what we are seeing from FINTRAC now. They've put their big boy pants on, so to speak, and they're issuing fines. It's taken 25 years to get to this point, but they're doing it.

I think we're seeing, with the legislation in Bill C-12, as you've indicated, and with how the agencies are operating, that they are starting to take this seriously. It's because they have to, quite frankly. Money laundering is a huge issue.

● (1600)

The Chair: Thank you, MP Acan.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. DeBellefeuille, you have the floor for six minutes.

Claude DeBellefeuille (Beauharnois—Salaberry—Soulanges—Huntingdon, BQ): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. German, thank you very much for your testimony.

At the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security, we are working to find solutions. In your presentation, you said that one of the solutions was to better fund the RCMP or the Canada Border Services Agency, for example, so that they would have the means to conduct investigations, so that there would be officers on the ground and so that information would be shared.

You know that the government is currently hiring 1,000 RCMP officers and 1,000 border services officers, but at the same time, it is making budget cuts to the RCMP, the agency and Correctional Service Canada, which is also difficult for the ecosystem that manages criminals, so to speak. So a foreign national who is well aware of Canada's shortcomings can take advantage of that. There are currently criminal foreign nationals in the country who have been charged, are awaiting trial and are subject to a removal order, but they cannot be found.

To avoid that, as soon as a foreign national is arrested, facing allegations and awaiting trial, could they be placed in preventive custody? Would that be a good solution?

[English]

Peter German: It's always a balance, isn't it? This is what I tried to stress with my comments: It would be nice if we could keep people in detention until their case was dealt with, because once they're out, you may not see them again. Certainly, you won't see the ones we're interested in again.

On the other hand, we have to balance this with fairness, the Charter of Rights and all the principles we believe in. Ultimately, it comes down to resources, having enough people to process them and prioritizing cases, making sure that those cases with high-risk individuals go to the top and are dealt with as quickly as possible so that you don't run into issues of fairness, charter rights and so forth.

[Translation]

Claude DeBellefeuille: If a foreign national commits a violent crime on our soil, they should be tried here and receive the sentence they deserve. Some members think that, as soon as a person commits a violent crime, they should automatically be sent back to their country. Personally, I think that, if a person commits a crime in Quebec or Canada, they should be tried and incarcerated here, and then sent back to their country of origin after serving their sentence.

Do you agree with the principle that foreign nationals should be tried under our laws and serve their sentence here before being removed?

[English]

Peter German: I agree that they should be judged by our courts. If they commit a criminal offence in this country, they answer to the courts here, and then, presumably, there would be immediate deportation afterwards.

[Translation]

Claude DeBellefeuille: Should those who are convicted, who have served their sentence in a federal or provincial prison and who, at the end of their sentence, are subject to a deportation order, be a priority, or should they automatically be accompanied by law enforcement or a border services officer to ensure that they leave the country?

[English]

Peter German: When we say “automatically deported”, I think we have to be alive to our charter and the fairness issues. There could be reasons you can't deport a particular person to a third country. I mean, there are those issues. I don't think we could say “automatic”, but I think, when you have a person with a criminal background committing a criminal offence in this country, we don't want that person, so they should be deported. They answer to our courts, and then they're deported. I would probably remove the word “automatic”, but there has to be a process to do it, an efficient process.

• (1605)

[Translation]

Claude DeBellefeuille: Do you have any suggestions for amendments to the Criminal Code to better regulate foreign nationals who commit a crime in Canada, are found guilty, then incarcerated, but there are difficulties with accompanying them on deportation?

Are there possible legislative amendments?

You talked about the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, but do you think an effort needs to be made at the legislative level?

[English]

Peter German: I'd have to reflect on that, to be honest with you. In terms of the Criminal Code, as is often the case—and my friend from Kamloops mentioned that in his comments—we have the laws. The laws tend to be pretty good in this country. How they're interpreted or enforced is almost of greater importance. It's great to have laws on the books, but if you don't enforce them or they get interpreted in such a way that they're ineffective, it becomes a problem.

I don't necessarily think changes have to be made to our Criminal Code. There may well be to the immigration legislation, but I'm not an expert in that, and wouldn't pretend to be.

[Translation]

Claude DeBellefeuille: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Mrs. DeBellefeuille.

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

[English]

Sukhman Gill (Abbotsford—South Langley, CPC): Thank you, Chair.

Thank you, Dr. German, for being here today. It is truly appreciated, and I want to recognize, again, your service with the RCMP. This whole team appreciates your service as well.

I want to highlight the important topics you mentioned when you were talking specifically about the community that I represent—Abbotsford, the Lower Mainland itself and Surrey—and how crime has run rampant in British Columbia.

In British Columbia, where we are both from, 14 individuals were charged with extortion and then immediately filed for asylum claims after being charged. Do you believe Canada's asylum system should be available to individuals who have already been charged or convicted of serious violent crimes?

Peter German: That's a good question. I feel your pain. We are all feeling that pain in the Lower Mainland, particularly in Surrey and Abbotsford, where all the shootings have been taking place. I don't think we can be totally black and white about this and say, no, people in this group are not entitled to asylum; I would say it should be the exception. Our immigration laws, regulations, you name it, should be fashioned in such a way that it is the exception to the rule that a person could seek asylum in a situation like that.

It defies logic. Mind you, they're innocent until proven guilty, and therein lies the balance we have to keep in mind.

Sukhman Gill: I recall that you said there was a need for priority in certain cases. We need to prioritize certain high-risk individuals, because they are abusing the loopholes that allow non-citizens who are convicted of serious crimes to remain in Canada longer than they should. Do you have anything further to say on that?

Peter German: No, I really can't add anything more to that. I think we acknowledge the fact that we have issues. There is a problem. Certainly it's been highlighted in the Lower Mainland and in Ontario, in the regional districts.

Sukhman Gill: With your expertise given, I would like to ask you what specific legislative reforms you would like to see or recommend that we implement in our asylum system that would not be misused by individuals involved in serious criminal activities?

Peter German: As I've already stated, asylum in those circumstances should be the exception to the rule. Everybody is judged equally in this country. If you start shooting up a place using guns, being threatening and using extortion, you answer to our courts. You're a foreign national. You're convicted. You should be gone.

However, we have processes that we have to follow—I get that. Oftentimes these processes take a long time. That's why I'm saying it's almost more about process than legislation. It's having the people who can do the job, giving priority to the serious cases, moving the system along.

• (1610)

Sukhman Gill: Given that we've seen a rampant increase in extortion, all of a sudden, in the Lower Mainland, do you think presenting Bill C-12 with FINTRAC involved had the right implication, or do you think more can be done, as I have been informed by constituents? There are loopholes being abused, currently, such as in money exchange businesses where money is laundered.

Is there anything you could expand on regarding that?

Peter German: There's a lot we could do.

In British Columbia, now, we don't use our proceeds of crime legislation. This is legislation that deals with money laundering and the proceeds of crime. We use civil forfeiture—taking away what people shouldn't have in the first place. It works effectively, but we do not use the money-laundering legislation on the books. This is largely due to one or two adverse court rulings and the fact that civil forfeiture seems so much easier.

There are a number of these mechanisms out there that we're not using, and the criminals know this. Organized crime knows this. They know the weak spots. For example, the RCMP eliminated its proceeds of crime unit a number of years ago, as it eliminated its drug unit. It went to a different model—an organized crime model. The specialists in proceeds of crime and money laundering essentially disappeared.

FINTRAC is an intelligence agency. FINTRAC gathers intelligence, but it has to know what the police—

The Chair: I have to ask you to wrap up. Thank you. I'm sorry for interrupting.

MP Powlowski, you have five minutes.

Marcus Powlowski (Thunder Bay—Rainy River, Lib.): A government document says that foreign nationals who wish to enter Canada are screened by IRCC before they can enter the country, primarily to make sure they have not committed serious crimes, don't post a security risk and are in good health. Part of the determination is made by CSIS. We're talking about people who've committed crimes not only in Canada but also in their home country.

Now, I certainly believe there are bad apples coming into this country—people we don't want. You'd have to be naive to think all immigrants are good people. However, since the beginning of these meetings, I've had this unease about who we're calling “criminals”.

You lead an institute on criminal law reform. You have a centre for corruption. I take it that you do international work and advise people from other countries. Certainly, we all know that there are many countries in this world where the police and judiciary are corrupt. If you have money, you're not going to be charged. If you're charged, you're going to be found innocent. However, if you belong to the wrong political party or oppose the leadership of the country, you may find yourself convicted of a crime—it happens pretty regularly in Russia, for example—and end up doing serious time in jail.

We're talking about CSIS and people who've committed crimes, but how do we know? Do we trust the Russian government or so many African countries to say who's a criminal and who isn't? I'm wondering how fair this system is to people who've been accused of being criminals but, for all we know, are just opponents of the government in power in those countries.

Peter German: Thank you. You make a very good point.

I guess that's why we rely on the expertise of agencies such as CSIS and the immigration authorities when vetting people coming into our country. There's no fail-safe, and obviously, what is a criminal act in Canada may not be a criminal act elsewhere, or vice versa, so I hear you.

Marcus Powlowski: The problem I have is this: Even I, a member of Parliament, cannot get answers when somebody is deemed a security risk for national security reasons. I've been very involved in trying to help Afghans who helped our forces come into Canada. You hear that somebody is a security risk. That is an iron door. After that, you have no ability to question it. I ended up hearing that a person was a security risk, and it seemed to be because he owned a used car dealership that sold cars to the Taliban. I'm pretty sure that, as a used car salesman, you don't care who you sell your cars to.

What's the transparency of this process, and what's to protect criminals from being railroaded when even elected officials like me don't really have the capacity to question whether somebody is a criminal?

• (1615)

Peter German: There are two concepts that we don't want to mesh together, and they are security risks and criminal behaviour.

If someone is convicted of a criminal offence in another country, at least it is something tangible that you can examine. Presumably our authorities can say they consider it a criminal activity as well, and you don't want this person in the country. Being a security risk is a lot more amorphous, as you've indicated. What exactly does it mean? Those are really two different issues.

I'm not in any position to give you advice on your client, but there are review agencies for CSIS decisions and so forth. I don't know how effective this would be for your situation.

Marcus Powlowski: You've been in policing for quite a while. You talked about crimes within ethnic communities, which certainly seems to be an issue at the moment.

First, what's the best solution to that?

Second, I'm pretty certain we're not the only country that has similar problems within ethnic communities. Can you give some examples of countries that you think have been particularly effective? I would think part of the solution is getting police officers who come from those ethnic communities, but doesn't this open the door to the possibility of influence and corruption by members of their own community?

The Chair: Answer very quickly, Mr. German.

Peter German: Our police forces are quite representative of the communities right now. There are multiple languages and multiple ethnicities in our police force, so I don't really see it as an issue.

Sorry, I missed the first part of your question, but I think we're out of time.

The Chair: That's why, at committee, we'll be able to come back at a different moment.

[Translation]

Mrs. DeBellefeuille, you have the floor for two and a half minutes.

Claude DeBellefeuille: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

My questions are always focused on finding solutions.

Mr. German, at the outset, you told us that the secret is to have as many officers as possible investigating to find the people who are wanted. You've actually repeated that on a number of occasions since your testimony.

Do you also see a challenge with collaboration among the various law enforcement agencies? In Quebec, there's the Sûreté du Québec; there's also the Ontario Provincial Police, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, or RCMP, and the Canada Border Services Agency, or CBSA.

Do you think there could be better collaboration and intelligence-sharing in order to find more foreign nationals who, for example, are wanted because they have committed a crime?

[English]

Peter German: There are two things there. First, I would say in la belle province, the police work very well together. In my experience, the Gendarmerie royale du Canada, the Sûreté du Québec and the Ville de Montréal work very closely on organized crime cases. This has never really been an issue that I know of.

When talking about the issue before this committee in terms of immigration, I mentioned in my remarks that we should have joint CBSA-police task forces. Mr. Sauvé also said this to the committee. There's expertise at CBSA, but they are not police officers, and the police have a much wider scope. Working in an integrated fashion is the way to go.

[Translation]

Claude DeBellefeuille: As you know, in Quebec, on the Côte-Nord, the RCMP, the Sûreté du Québec and even the indigenous police are currently fighting organized crime together.

Would you agree that one of the recommendations of this study should be that all police forces in Quebec and Canada, in collaboration with the RCMP and the CBSA, must form a specific force to address the problems of foreign criminal nationals on our soil?

Would you make that a recommendation, Mr. German?

• (1620)

[English]

Peter German: The police work quite well together. There's this theory of integration of police forces, and they work closely together, so I think we already have that. We're very fortunate in this country. We're not in a situation in which the police are keeping their secrets to themselves, not sharing and that sort of thing.

It really is prioritizing the work we do. In your earlier question, you mentioned that I said we need resources, and we do, but we have to target them as well. We have to be smart in how we use those resources and go after the priority cases.

[Translation]

The Chair: Thank you very much.

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

[English]

Chak Au (Richmond Centre—Marpole, CPC): Dr. German, I'm glad to see you again. I've seen you speak on several occasions. I represent the Richmond Centre—Marpole riding. I used to be a city councillor, and you spoke to city council a few times.

Today you talk about the process problem and the lack of a sense of urgency. To be honest, this is not something new; it has been going on for quite some time.

My question for you is this: Is this a lack of resources or a lack of political will? My assumption is that, if there's political will, then there will be resources allocated. What are your comments?

Peter German: Richmond is one beautiful city. I lived in Richmond for well over 20 years.

It's very good to see you again.

I often talk about both political will and bureaucratic will. I don't blame the politicians for everything. Politicians come and go with elections and so forth. Bureaucrats stay for a long time. You need bureaucratic will at the municipal, provincial and federal levels as well to carry programs through. That's critical. We see that in policing. Priorities change and so forth. I guess I'm in agreement.

Chak Au: I have a follow-up question. You first wrote about dirty money in 2018, the money laundering problem in the Lower Mainland, the Vancouver model and that kind of thing. In these past years, have you seen any tangible, measurable improvements in these areas?

Peter German: For context, I wrote two reports, "Dirty Money" and "Dirty Money—Part 2". They were related to casinos, real estate and cars—organized crime generally—in British Columbia in 2018 and 2019. The primary focus was casinos.

I think it's fair to say that we've seen a dramatic change in casinos, but not just because of my work. The Cullen commission came after me. We had excellent reporting by various media outlets.

When the heat is on organized crime, they move somewhere else. The important thing is that we effectively got them out of the casinos. It's important to keep them out of there now, but where did they go?

Now we're dealing with cryptocurrency. We're dealing with money exchange businesses. We're dealing with the supply chain for marijuana and competing with legal marijuana.

Unfortunately, organized crime doesn't just go away; it will move. However, I think we've seen a marked change, at least with respect to the casinos.

Chak Au: I want to put my question into context. Today we are talking about foreign criminals committing crime in our country. In your work, do you see foreign criminals and local criminals interacting to pose a danger to our communities through drugs, money laundering and all kinds of criminal activities?

Peter German: Yes, definitely.

Foreign criminals come over here because they know somebody. Whether it's people in the same gang, people in the same community or whatever it might be, they have connections. They don't just pop up out of the blue in Canada. Definitely, there are connections.

With the high-profile shootings and so forth, you will occasionally see people from Canada being charged. It's not just foreign nationals. It can be Canadians as well. They may well be connected to gangs.

We don't talk about organized crime anymore. We talk about transnational organized crime. Virtually all organized crime has a transnational component.

• (1625)

Chak Au: In your opening remarks, you talked about the fact that there should be more effective strategies for border security. Can you elaborate on that?

Peter German: Well, I'm a bit of an old record on this, but we have no port police. We have no police in our ports. Deltaport and Vancouver port, the largest port in the country, have no port police. They are regulated by fencing and security guards. That's a problem, because we've had reports for a couple of decades of organized crime in our ports. It's not a good thing. CBSA cannot be expected to police our ports as well. That's just one example.

I mentioned railways as well. We now have a railway system from Canada right through to Mexico.

We have to get as serious about this as we are in the airports. We all go through screening in the airports, but it's wide open in the ports. This is why I talk about needing a border strategy.

Chak Au: Thank you.

[Translation]

The Chair: Thank you for that interesting exchange.

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

Stéphane Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. German, thank you for being with us today. Your career spanning nearly three decades is very impressive.

You talked about investments. Every witness who appears before pretty much any of our committees tells us about the importance of increasing funding. You've been following these matters for generations. Money is not the only thing that has evolved. Technologies, innovation and, today, artificial intelligence have also evolved. You touched on that briefly.

Can you tell us how, as a government, we could take advantage of investments in new technologies to achieve our ends today and apprehend offenders?

[English]

Peter German: It's a very good point.

We talk about how criminals are always one step ahead of our system, our laws and so forth, but we're at such an early stage with AI that we haven't tapped its potential yet. I mean, I love it. It really has made life a lot easier. There's no doubt.

I can't speak with personal knowledge. I'm not in policing currently. I'm sure the police are using AI, but we have to recognize that criminals are using cryptocurrency, for example. When that first happened, the thought was, "Oh my God, how can we ever deal with crypto?" However, law enforcement is dealing with crypto. There are ways of following the chain, blockchain and that sort of thing.

It's a constant push-and-pull with new technologies, but it's a very good point.

[Translation]

Stéphane Lauzon: Thank you, Mr. German.

You also talked about the good collaboration taking place. You gave the example of Quebec and its police forces.

How could we improve collaboration among the provinces and territories, as well as with municipalities? There's a lot of security. Basically, it is the municipal police that first arrests offenders, whether for speeding or for running a red light. I think they are well informed and know whom to apprehend on the ground. You gave that example.

We recently learned that, at truck inspection centres, some drivers change a letter of their name to game the system and that the authorities couldn't get information on offenders from other provinces. What is your view on that? How can we bring all these police forces together and include road controllers?

[English]

Peter German: We could talk about using technology.

Police officers working in municipal roles and in traffic roles have access to the national computers and so forth. That's where a lot of this data is loaded. There's no doubt that police at senior levels work very well together, but they also work well together at a very low level, at the working level. It really is a matter of prioritiz-

ing: What are we looking at? That's why I say that CBSA and police should be working jointly in removals.

Your specific example really deals with a bit of a corruption issue. We've seen a lot of it in Quebec, but Quebec has also dealt with corruption through the years, whereas other provinces are now witnessing the same thing and are not as advanced as Quebec in dealing with corruption. You have your own agency in Quebec. It's a multi-faceted issue that you're raising.

• (1630)

[Translation]

Stéphane Lauzon: I don't have much time left, but I want to hear you quickly talk about police training. We have talked about technologies, the need to invest more money, and about software and artificial intelligence. What about the training of all these police forces, which seems to be insufficient? You emphasized the fact that laws exist, but interpretation doesn't keep up with the laws.

Tell us how we could recommend, in our report, something on training in general to improve statutory interpretation.

[English]

Peter German: I did a report on training. I looked at the major police academies right across the country. Generally speaking, most provinces have fairly good police training academies. We can be proud of that. There are exceptions, but it's fairly good.

I think what you're talking about is training in issues such as integrity, ethics and so forth. We may not be doing enough of that. Maybe it's what we should be doing.

It's a matter of explaining to police, in their training, that their job is not simply to deal with, let's say, traffic or whatever. It's the broader picture of immigration and the other things going on in our country. It's how police can contribute to the bigger picture.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. German.

[Translation]

Thank you, Mr. Lauzon.

Ms. Kirkland, the floor is yours for five minutes.

[English]

Rhonda Kirkland (Oshawa, CPC): I have learned a lot today. I am appreciative of all the questions asked, including those from my colleagues on the other side.

I appreciated some comments you made in your introduction, especially with regard to this: Why wouldn't the folks we're studying in this study pick Canada? I found that interesting because yes, generally they would.

I want to ask a question that's a little bit adjacent to that. Folks have picked Canada, come here and committed a crime after they arrived. I'll give you an example of what I'm talking about. I asked a question about this in the chamber, but I thought it would be appropriate here.

I'm from the Toronto area—Oshawa, Ontario. In the GTA, for instance, a man tried to pay \$140 to sexually exploit a 15-year-old girl. He was caught with the cash in hand. He received a conditional discharge and no criminal record. This was essentially because the judge took into account his immigration status.

Do you believe immigration consequences should ever justify lighter sentences in a case—specifically involving the sexual exploitation of a minor? Is it fair for Canadian citizens if we have a two-tiered system?

Peter German: I'm not familiar with this particular case, but I get your point. Without understanding or reading the decision and so forth—I'm not questioning the judge—I would basically agree with you that it's a matter of what the relevant considerations are in sentencing.

We look at aggravating circumstances. We look at mitigating circumstances. There's a lot of leeway given to the courts in that respect. Should the fact that you're going to lose your job or maybe get deported be considered a mitigating factor? When it comes to the immigration one, I would say no, but I'm sure some might say yes.

• (1635)

Rhonda Kirkland: I would agree with you. I would say no, in these cases.

To be clear, I'm not talking about other mitigating factors that change the sentence. I think that, potentially, loopholes in our immigration system allow for this, such as when we suggest sentencing “less a day” for certain amounts that will change their immigration status.

Do you have a thought on that?

Peter German: In this country, we don't have minimum sentences, in most cases. When we did have minimum sentences, it was quite obvious that the courts didn't like them. Most of them went by the wayside.

In place of minimum sentences, we have to look at specifying in the provisions within the Criminal Code what might be relevant factors and what might not be.

A good example, if I may, is threats against politicians, which is an issue that has been raised. Why should this not be listed as an aggravating factor? The fact that you are a politician and a threat has been made against you could be put in the Criminal Code as an aggravating factor. We could do that.

Rhonda Kirkland: Thank you. I appreciate that.

While I have the floor, since we're near the end of our time with you, I want to thank you again for being here.

I'd like to move a motion that I put on notice on Friday, March 6, regarding a study that would be prudent for our committee to study. I understand that—

The Chair: This is the time for this particular study. If you would like to come back to the motion after the witness has left us.... You have more time, if you want to keep exchanging with the witness. Would you like to do that?

Rhonda Kirkland: Can I be assured that I will be given the floor before we adjourn?

The Chair: Yes, you can be assured. Since you raised your hand, you'll be first to speak. Before you finish your time, you have one more minute if you want. I will then turn to MP Ramsay, and then we'll turn to your motion.

Rhonda Kirkland: Okay.

The Chair: Okay.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Ramsay, would you like to have the floor for five minutes?

[*English*]

Jacques Ramsay (La Prairie—Atateken, Lib.): You still have one minute, Ms. Kirkland, do you not?

[*Translation*]

The Chair: It looks like it's your turn.

Go ahead.

[*English*]

Jacques Ramsay: Mr. German, thank you very much for your testimony today.

In your opening remarks, you portrayed Canada as a country where every criminal would like to go. I would submit to you that every other country I looked at, especially in the Five Eyes, has a similar situation to what Canada is experiencing right now. For instance, there are over 53,000 people in the absconder pool in England. There are 21,000 in New Zealand. I could go on with France, Spain, Australia, etc.

How is Canada different from these other countries? I'd like to hear your thoughts on that.

Peter German: My comment was “you may well choose Canada”. I'm not by any means saying Canada is the only attractive country; there are lots of attractive countries.

I returned from Australia on Friday. Australia is a beautiful country and faces many of the same challenges we do, but geopolitically, we are located in a key spot. We are just north of the United States, the largest illegal drug-consuming country in the world. There are reasons for transnational organized crime to find it very comfortable to be in Canada. This is not to say that Norway, Finland or Denmark would not be attractive for different reasons as well.

Jacques Ramsay: You're well travelled. You were in Australia—lucky you.

What could we learn from what these countries are doing regarding foreign national offenders?

Peter German: That's what happens when your daughter marries an Aussie.

What we can learn is that, quite frankly, we should look outside our borders. Too often, we don't do that. We look internally for solutions. There's a lot of expertise outside our country as well and a lot of tried solutions to problems.

For example, in Australia, the federal police there do an excellent job when it comes to money laundering. There have been numerous cases involving the Australian police and the Canadian police. Their intelligence gathering is excellent. They've worked with CBSA. They move information to CBSA and to the police here. Yes, we can learn, and to a certain extent we do, but we could probably learn even more from countries such as Australia.

• (1640)

Jacques Ramsay: I'll switch to French, if it's okay.

[Translation]

You mentioned that one of the important things was to prioritize the people who need to be deported first.

We had Aaron McCrorie and Erin O'Gorman here telling us that this is exactly what is being done in Canada. Every case is looked at one by one and the most serious cases are processed first.

On the other hand, we have the 600 cases that were mentioned, in addition to the 351 individuals who are on the run. We were told that, even if the figure remained, it was still volatile data, in the sense that those 351 individuals or 450 individuals are not necessarily the same ones who are wanted at all times.

As far as we know, Canada may be doing a very good job. It may have already deported those 450 individuals, and others since then. The statistics we have, from The Globe and Mail's article, are from July 2025.

[English]

What are your thoughts on this?

Peter German: I read President O'Gorman's testimony, and of course, it was very good testimony with a lot of numbers.

My point is that we are concerned about those criminal offenders who are in our country and are a threat to our country. They're the ones who are presumably shooting up businesses. It's a case of prioritizing and going after them. The raw numbers, you know, 1,000 removals or whatever, don't really tell me very much. What I'd like to know is, on these high-risk individuals, are we actually going after them? It might be more important to pull one of them off the street than 10 others. I think this is where you have to work closely with the police of jurisdiction.

Jacques Ramsay: Do we not have enough data to assess the situation properly?

Peter German: I wouldn't say that. I don't know. I'm not an expert on what CBSA has in terms of data. It does gather lots of intelligence. I don't have the expertise.

[Translation]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay.

Mr. German, that brings me to thank you for the time and effort you've put into coming to speak to us and share your expertise. We thank you again for coming to testify.

[English]

We wish you all the best. Perhaps we'll be able to invite you back and benefit even more from your expertise and experience.

Mr. German, thank you for coming. We look forward to seeing you again.

We won't suspend, given that there is only Mr. German to thank. You've heard our thanks quite clearly.

[Translation]

Ms. Kirkland, we're moving on to the motion that you wish to propose.

[English]

Do you want to move a motion?

Rhonda Kirkland: Yes, I do. Thank you.

Technically, I think that during the time I had the floor, I did move the motion, but I'll say it again. I would like to move a motion that I put on notice on March 6. In terms of a study, I would like our committee to undertake examining "the policies, procedures and criteria used by the Parole Board of Canada and the Correctional Service of Canada governing the issuance" of conditional releases.

Colleagues, the reason for this motion is something that happened last week in my riding. It provided some questions for me, and I thought it was a good opportunity for our committee to study it and find some answers to these questions. It's about public safety transparency and accountability in our corrections and our parole systems.

On March 2, the Durham Regional Police Service issued a public safety alert to my community in Oshawa, but it wasn't about a storm, a missing person or a crime that was being committed in a particular area. It was about a convicted murderer who had been temporarily released into our community. This released individual was a man serving a life sentence for first-degree murder after he raped, tortured and killed Darren Pepin, a 14-year-old boy in Scarborough.

We see headlines all the time, and they're meant to make people feel safe. The headline here said, "Man...handed life sentence for sex slaying of teenage boy." When the community sees those headlines, they expect that a "life sentence" means we're safe from the person now, because he has received a life sentence. I hesitate in some ways to show you a photo, because it shows the man's face when, really, the face we should consider is the face of Darren, the young boy who was murdered and raped at 14. It's horrifying for me, as a mother with young children walking in my neighbourhood in Oshawa, to think that this man would be walking the same streets. I believe that everyone in this committee would feel the same way if this happened in their community. He was a 14-year-old boy, this child.

The brutality of the crime makes me question how this man was granted a 72-hour unescorted temporary absence, which allowed him to hang out in Oshawa for 72 hours completely unescorted. Durham Regional Police did the right thing. They warned people to stay vigilant and watch their backs, but my question is, why is it my job to watch my back and stay vigilant when authorities have chosen to let this man out? I want to look at why. If he were alive today, Darren would be 52, quite young. Maybe he would be a dad. Maybe he would have a family.

When police are warning residents to stay vigilant because a murderer has been released into their community, Canadians deserve to know how and why a decision like this is made.

I want to highlight very briefly.... I won't go on for too long, but folks in my community reached out when I expressed concern about this. More importantly, folks in young Darren's life started reaching out and making comments: family, friends and those he went to school with. I thought it would be appropriate for me at this time to read out a couple of those thoughts.

One person said, "If the community is at risk, why on earth was this guy released?" Another said, "Disgusting, how can they let him roam free when he's supposed to serve a life sentence?" Another person said, "This monster did this on my street a long time ago, but he should never be let out for any reason. The little boy he murdered can't come back. This is just disgusting. Canada should do better and know better." Someone else said, "Darren was such a good soul. He was funny and enjoyed to be in the company of his family and friends." Another said, "His name was Darren Pepin. He was 14 years old. He was here for a short time and then he was gone. Some of us were privileged to know him, his good nature, his infectious laughter and being the class clown." Yes, I can relate. "He had a name and a face and he mattered."

• (1645)

A lot of his family and friends felt as though he didn't matter last week.

One person said, "I'll never forget the day that young man was murdered. It's something that stayed with me and always will. I knew him personally and he was genuinely a good young man."

Then a corrections officer reached out. It is very rare for someone to make a comment, but they did: "Of the 34 years I worked as a corrections officer, he is one of the few who always stood out in

my mind. He was one of the first inmates who I realized was a genuine psycho, void of remorse, empathy and compassion."

We have to figure out why these decisions get made. How do they get made, and what's missing—what's happening? The study would be very important to report back to the House. I trust that all my colleagues will vote unanimously for the study and will support this motion.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Madame Kirkland.

Go ahead, Madame DeBellefeuille.

• (1650)

[*Translation*]

Claude DeBellefeuille: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

It's quite troubling to hear this statement from our colleague. I fully agree that we should study this issue. I think that's very important.

I have an example myself about a lady named Roxane Granger. I'm saying her name because she has made it public. She was raped by a serial rapist named Jacques Groleau. He recently got out of prison. He's a long-term offender for 10 years.

I made a commitment to her, and what isn't understood is that he's under a long-term supervision order. When he got out of prison, he committed another offence, but he is currently in a provincial prison. The 10-year supervision order is uninterrupted. That means that he is currently in preventive detention for indecent assault, I believe, and is being kept in a provincial prison. There's no interruption on his federal long-term supervision order, and we have a problem with that.

I think the topic of discussion proposed by our colleague will enable us not only to elucidate and better understand how the system works, but also to propose solutions so that victims or victims' families are better informed and understand how decisions are made about people who have committed serious and violent crimes.

So I am quite supportive of my colleague. However, you will understand that I am proposing an amendment that will make it possible to deal with the matter in a broader, less personalized way. Ultimately, the important thing is to understand the system, identify its flaws and propose solutions.

I still want you to know, Mr. Chair, that I sent the text of my amendment to all committee members in both official languages. I believe the clerk has a copy.

I will read it to you so that you understand that the subject my colleague wants to discuss is virtually intact. We just need to depersonalize the specific case that my colleague wanted to discuss. I will read the text of my amendment:

That the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security undertake a study, pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), to examine the policies, procedures and criteria used by the Parole Board of Canada and the Correctional Service of Canada to govern the issuance conditional releases, the conditions surrounding long-term supervision orders and related release measures, particularly for individuals convicted of first-degree murder and serving life sentences;

That the study examine these releases, including the transparency of the decision-making process, the adequacy of information and community supervision, alignment with the provincial justice system, as well as the impacts on victims and victims' families, and community confidence in the justice system;

That the study include a minimum of five meetings;

That the committee invite the Minister of Public Safety, the Minister of Justice, the Secretary of State (Combatting Crime), the Chairperson of the Parole Board of Canada, the Commissioner of Correctional Service of Canada, experts in correctional matters and risk assessment, as well as any other witnesses the committee deems appropriate to call; and

That the committee report its findings and recommendations to the House.

We all have our own reasons for studying this important issue. We have names in mind, so I think that justifies this study.

In proposing my amendment, I hope to bring together as many colleagues around the table as possible so that we can meet for an in-depth study of how the system works for our victims and victims' families.

The Chair: Thank you, Mrs. DeBellefeuille.

Mr. Caputo, go ahead.

Frank Caputo: I agree with Mrs. DeBellefeuille.

[*English*]

My proposed friendly amendment was encapsulated by Madame DeBellefeuille's amendment. I wrote a paper on long-term supervision orders way back when, so I look forward to working with her on this very important issue.

The Chair: Thank you.

To summarize, we have a motion moved by MP Kirkland, to which an amendment has just been submitted by Madame DeBellefeuille.

I turn again to Madame Kirkland.

• (1655)

Rhonda Kirkland: Thank you very much.

I appreciate the comments made by Madame DeBellefeuille and our conversation beforehand, so I have no problem with the amendment we spoke about.

I would like to say that, even though I'm accepting this amendment, the one line that we removed from here—and I believe it was a recommendation from the Liberals across—was to remove “That the study examines the public safety risk associated with these...releases?”. It is exactly our job to study the public safety risk associated with the releases. I think this is what we'll do anyway: We will study the public safety risk associated with these releases.

I am okay with the amendment as presented by Ms. DeBellefeuille, and I hope we have unanimous consent for this study.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Kirkland.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Ramsay, you have the floor.

[*English*]

Jacques Ramsay: Indeed, we support the amended motion.

The Chair: Thank you.

Jacques Ramsay: We look forward to studying the matter. It's an important matter.

[*Translation*]

The Chair: I forgot Mr. Lauzon.

You have the floor, Mr. Lauzon.

Stéphane Lauzon: Thank you.

We will support the amendment and, by extension, the motion as amended by Mrs. DeBellefeuille. I would recommend that it be a friendly amendment. I think everyone agrees on that.

The Chair: Yes, that is what we'll see pretty quickly.

Is there any further discussion on the proposed amendment to the motion?

No.

Shall the amendment to the motion carry?

(Amendment agreed to)

The Chair: Now let's go back to the motion.

Is there any debate on Ms. Kirkland's amended motion?

No.

Shall the motion as amended carry?

(Motion as amended agreed to)

The Chair: Very good.

Ms. Acan, did you also want to move a motion?

Go ahead.

[*English*]

Sima Acan: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I would like to move a motion regarding emergency management. The motion has been circulated to all members.

I have engaged in discussions on its importance. Our colleague, Dane Lloyd, is very keen on this issue. I know emergency management is one of his focus areas. I have spoken to Madame DeBellefeuille. She is also giving an important point to this motion. I trust that all members recognize its value and support my motion for this study.

I would like to read the motion. In case you don't have it, I have a hard copy and we can distribute it. Please let me know. I move:

Pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), the committee undertake a study on strengthening national emergency preparedness in Canada, including the federal approach in enhancing risk communication, public readiness, and coordination with all levels of government, Indigenous Peoples, and emergency partners to ensure Canadians are better equipped before disasters occur and how to respond safely when emergencies happen; that the committee dedicate at least four (4) meetings to this study; that the committee reports its findings and recommendations to the House; and that, pursuant to Standing Order 109, the committee request the Government to table a comprehensive response to the report.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Madame Acan.

Go ahead, MP Caputo.

Frank Caputo: Thank you.

With respect to Ms. Acan's motion—I just received a copy of it—where it reads, “dedicate at least four (4) meetings to this study”, I would add “that the Minister of Public Safety be invited”. I'm just asking to add the minister as a witness.

The Chair: Thank you, MP Caputo.

That's a—

Frank Caputo: I'm sorry; it's the minister of emergency preparedness. What was I thinking? It should actually be both: the Minister of Public Safety and the minister of emergency preparedness.

Thank you.

• (1700)

The Chair: Are there any others you would like to add?

Voices: Oh, oh!

Frank Caputo: The Prime Minister...?

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Mr. Clerk, the floor is yours.

[*English*]

The Clerk of the Committee (Paul Cardegna): Mr. Caputo, can I just ask where in the motion you want to add that section so that I can be assured that I have it?

Frank Caputo: Put it after “study;”, please.

Sima Acan: Mr. Caputo, we're going with only the Minister of Emergency Management, I believe. Is that right?

Frank Caputo: I would love to see both here. They're both wonderful people.

Voices: Oh, oh!

The Chair: Unfortunately, I have to follow the advice of the clerk and ask you to choose whether we want.... You're free to choose whether you—

Frank Caputo: Let's go with both.

The Chair: We'll go with both Public Safety and emergency preparedness, and that will be after the meetings to.... We then divide the ministers of public—

Jacques Ramsay: Can you do two amendments?

Frank Caputo: I'm doing one amendment with the ministers.

The Chair: I'll just make sure with a nod from you, Clerk, that after the word “study”, we have “and invite the ministers of Public Safety and emergency preparedness”.

That is your will, MP Caputo? That's good.

That's an amendment to the motion moved by MP Acan.

Go ahead, Madame Acan.

Sima Acan: Can I make a friendly amendment to Mr. Caputo's amendment?

The Chair: You can make a subamendment to the amendment.

Sima Acan: Frankly, I believe that the Minister of Public Safety may not have too much to add at this point. I believe that the Minister of Emergency Management is the person who can come to study with us. They are better for this study. Plus, Minister Anandasangaree has appeared at this committee a number of times. I don't really believe it would be beneficial for this study. That's why I recommend having only the Minister of Emergency Management.

The Chair: Just to be perfectly clear, Madame Acan, you're proposing a subamendment to MP Caputo's amendment, which would be to remove “Minister of Public Safety” from the amendment.

Sima Acan: We will agree on that.

The Chair: It's all very friendly until now.

Let's see whether Madame DeBellefeuille also has a friendly intervention.

Go ahead, Madame DeBellefeuille.

[*Translation*]

Claude DeBellefeuille: I agree with Ms. Acan's proposal to invite the minister, and I sincerely think that the minister we need to invite is the one who deals with emergency preparedness and emergencies. I can't imagine the Minister of Public Safety participating in this study. We're having trouble getting him here to talk about the votes. So if we invite him to talk about emergency situations, we can imagine how long it will take for him to come and sit at our table.

I don't know if Mr. Caputo is adamant about that, but I would suggest that we stick with one minister. That's my position.

[*English*]

Frank Caputo: Okay. That's fine.

The Chair: Let's make that easy.

Is there unanimous consent to withdraw the amendment?

Frank Caputo: I accept the friendly subamendment.

The Chair: OK, so let's move it another way.

Is the subamendment adopted?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Chair: Good. That means that we're coming back to the amendment. The amendment is that we're adding the minister of emergency preparedness to be invited, but not the Minister of Public Safety.

The amendment is to invite the minister of emergency preparedness.

That would be the amendment to your motion, MP Acan.

Is there debate on the amendment?

Go ahead, Madame Acan.

Sima Acan: I'm ready for debate, Mr. Chair, but I respect the timing for everybody. I don't think—

An hon. member: No, we're good.

Sima Acan: I think we're good.

The Chair: Yes. Okay, so that's all right.

Is the amendment as amended—on the minister of emergency preparedness being invited—adopted?

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

• (1705)

The Chair: Now we go back to the motion of MP Acan. The motion has the addition of inviting the minister of emergency preparedness.

Are there any interventions on the amended motion?

Is the amended motion adopted?

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

The Chair: Is that all right, Clerk?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Ramsay, you have the floor.

Jacques Ramsay: Mr. Chair, may I ask that the meeting be adjourned, please?

The Chair: It's a dilatory motion.

Does the committee wish to adjourn the meeting?

Mr. Clerk, we'll have a recorded vote.

I see that we all agree to adjourn the meeting. In that case, we'll see each other again next Thursday.

The meeting is adjourned.

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