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Chair

Mr. Bernard Patry

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• (0905)

[Translation]

The Clerk of the Committee: Good day, ladies and gentlemen. I see that we have a quorum.

Pursuant to Standing Order 106(2), the first question on the agenda is the election of a chair.

[English]

I am ready to receive nominations to that effect.

Mr. McTeague.

[Translation]

Hon. Dan McTeague (Pickering—Scarborough East, Lib.): I nominate Bernard Patry as chair of this committee.

[English]

The Clerk: It is moved by Mr. McTeague and seconded by Mr. Bevilacqua that Dr. Patry be elected chair of the committee.

Are there any other motions?

Mr. Kevin Sorenson (Crowfoot, CPC): Mr. Chairman, I move that nominations cease.

The Clerk: Nominations cease.

(Motion agreed to)

The Clerk: I declare the motion carried. Dr. Patry is duly elected chair of the committee.

The next item is the election of a vice-chair from the official opposition.

Mr. Goldring.

Mr. Peter Goldring (Edmonton East, CPC): I move that Kevin Sorenson be nominated the vice-chair.

The Clerk: It is moved by Mr. Goldring that Mr. Sorenson be elected official opposition vice-chair of the committee.

Are there any other motions?

(Motion agreed to)

The Clerk: I declare Mr. Sorenson vice-chair, official opposition.

[Translation]

The next position to be filled is that of vice-chair for another opposition party.

Mr. Paquette.

Mr. Pierre Paquette (Joliette, BQ): I nominate Ms. Lalonde.

The Clerk: Moved by Mr. Paquette that Ms. Lalonde be elected vice-chair, other opposition party. Is it pleasure of the committee to adopt the motion?

(Motion agreed to)

The Clerk: I declare Ms. Lalonde vice-chair for another opposition party.

I invite Dr. Patry to take the chair as chairman of the committee.

The Chair (Mr. Bernard Patry (Pierrefonds—Dollard, Lib.)): Thank you very much for the trust you have shown me.

[English]

We're going to now proceed with some procedural and administrative motions.

You have in front of you what was done in last Parliament, the 37th Parliament. We have a subcommittee. We need to get a motion establishing a subcommittee on agenda and procedure.

The last time we had nine members. There was a chair, two vice-chairs, the parliamentary secretary, two Liberals, a Conservative, Bloc, and NDP. The other subcommittee had five Liberals, two Conservatives, one Bloc, and one NDP.

In the previous Parliament we had 18 members, and now we have 12 members. On the ministerial side, we're a minority. I propose that the subcommittee on agenda and procedure have five members: the chair, the two vice-chairs—the vice-chair from the Conservatives and the Bloc—the parliamentary secretary, who is Liberal, and the other opposition party will be the NDP.

Are there any comments regarding the subcommittee on agenda and procedure?

I want to remind the members that anything suggested by a subcommittee needs to be accepted by the full committee. That means it's not the subcommittee resolution; it engages the full committee.

Kevin.

Mr. Kevin Sorenson: When you went through who would sit on the subcommittee, you didn't continue saying that two additional representatives of the Liberal Party do compose... That's what's printed.

The Chair: No, that's the 37th Parliament. That's why. What I'm looking at is this one. We also gave you this one, just the single sheet. The previous one was the 37th Parliament and now it's the 38th. There were 18 members. The numbers were much higher.

It means that all four parties will be represented, plus the parliamentary secretary, who represents the government. But as I mentioned previously, all recommendations from the subcommittee come to the full committee to be accepted.

Ms. Phinney.

• (0910)

Ms. Beth Phinney (Hamilton Mountain, Lib.): Mr. Chair, are you looking for a motion?

The Chair: Yes, we're looking for a motion, but because I see there are some new members on the opposition side, I would just like to be sure they understand the procedure.

There will be two Liberals and one from every other party on the subcommittee, if you agree.

I would also like to let you know that the finance committee just accepted this motion with five members.

[Translation]

Mr. Paquette.

Mr. Pierre Paquette: I would like us to clarify the motion. I now understand that the motion being considered is the first one, the one which states that there would be five members. That suits us.

[English]

Mr. Kevin Sorenson: Do we have a motion?

The Chair: Mr. Paquette is ready to move it. Ms. Phinney just raised a question.

Mr. Kevin Sorenson: Are we discussing whether or not we are going with (a) or (b)?

The Chair: The proposition now is for (a).

Mr. Kevin Sorenson: With five members?

The Chair: Yes, five members, because we're just 12 members. It's not that many compared to 18. On the steering committee we're just discussing the agenda, what we're going to be looking at, and we're all working on a consensus basis. In the past three years the steering committee never had a vote.

Mr. Kevin Sorenson: For the agenda, I think—

The Chair: That's the agenda.

Mr. Kevin Sorenson: That's why I'm waiting for a motion. To me, five is—

The Chair: That's fine.

You have a motion, Mr. Paquette? Do you move it for five? Is it agreed?

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

The Chair: Now we have another motion concerning the services of an analyst from the Library of Parliament. The motion is that the committee retain the services of one or more analysts from the

Library of Parliament, as needed, to assist the committee in its work, at the discretion of the chair.

An hon. member: I so move.

The Chair: We have the CVs of the analysts. The clerk will pass them to every member.

Madam Lalonde.

[Translation]

Ms. Francine Lalonde (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ): Mr. Chairman, will they be the same ones as usual?

• (0915)

[English]

The Chair: Yes. It's the same as the last Parliament.

Next is a motion to receive and publish evidence in the absence of a quorum: That the chair be authorized to hold meetings to receive and publish evidence when a quorum is not present, provided that at least three members are present, including a member of the opposition.

Mr. Sorenson.

Mr. Kevin Sorenson: I missed madame's question there. I'm not sure if she asked if the last one was the same as the last Parliament. Are you assured that all of these are the same as the way you did it in the last—

The Chair: These are the last Parliament. What we're going through now is the same as the last Parliament. If you want any changes from the last Parliament, you just tell me.

Mr. Kevin Sorenson: Okay. So there are no amendments or changes from what you did last time.

The Chair: No amendments.

Madame Lalonde's question was regarding the people who will assist us. You see it will be Mr. Schmitz, Mr. Pistor, and Mr. Lee. They are the same people who worked with us in the last Parliament. That was her question, and I answered yes.

Okay, Kevin?

Mr. Kevin Sorenson: Thank you.

The Chair: Now, on the motion to receive and publish evidence in the absence of quorum, we could have a meeting with three members present, including a member of the opposition.

An hon. member: So moved.

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: Now to the time limit for witnesses' statements and questioning: That witnesses be given ten minutes for their opening statements; that during the questioning of witnesses there be allocated ten minutes for the first questioner of each party when a minister appears before the committee, and five minutes for other meetings; and that thereafter five minutes be allocated to each subsequent questioner, alternating between opposition and government party at the discretion of the chair.

An hon. member: I so move.

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: Payment of witnesses' travel and living expenses: That if requested, reasonable travel, accommodation, and living expenses be reimbursed to witnesses, not exceeding two representatives per organization, provided that in exceptional circumstances payment for more representatives may be authorized by the chair.

An hon. member: So moved.

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: Distribution of documents with translation: That the clerk of the committee be authorized to distribute to the members of the committee documents only when they exist in both official languages.

Madame Lalonde.

[Translation]

Ms. Francine Lalonde: I have an amendment. I move that we add the words "and that no document submitted by a witness be distributed without the authorization of the clerk". I know that that amendment was passed by the Committee on Agenda and Procedure, which is Don Boudria's committee. I can refer to him by name, since we are not in the House.

Hon. Dan McTeague: It happens that documents come to us from parts unknown. They suddenly arrive, without any explanation. So I have no hesitations here; I will support the amendment.

[English]

The Chair: I think it's fair. I think it's good. I have no problem with this amendment from Madame Lalonde.

Mrs. McDonough.

[Translation]

Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP): I am ready to support this motion, but we have to have the assurance that this information will always be provided to the groups' representatives. Will that be the case?

[English]

The Chair: Yes. We ask most of the people who are coming as witnesses to provide their brief in both official languages. Sometimes they just come in one official language; most of the time it's in English. At that time, we don't proceed to the distribution. Now it's going to be amended, just to be on the safe side, that it's only the clerk who can distribute these documents. Sometimes the witness gave a copy to one member and not all the members, and not in the official languages.

[Translation]

Ms. Alexa McDonough: I understand, but I want to ensure that all of our guests will understand that before accepting the invitation. Thank you.

[English]

The Chair: Merci, Madame McDonough.

Mr. Sorenson.

Mr. Kevin Sorenson: We have had it in committee where witnesses who have appeared have sent in their testimony, and for one reason or another it wasn't translated quite on time. They were still allowed to speak. They did have it in English. The clerk

wouldn't pass it around, but still people could pick that up. They would still be allowed to do that?

● (0920)

The Chair: No. I cannot stop you if you get a copy the day before. But officially, no, it needs to be distributed by the clerk. It all depends. If we receive their speech, their allocution, within five or six days, it's all right, we'll have it translated into both official languages. But sometimes we receive it by e-mail the previous evening and that is not sufficient time for it to be translated.

On the other hand, it depends on the witness and on the members. You could always ask for unanimous consent from the members present as to whether it can be distributed or not. If you get unanimous consent, it could be distributed.

Mr. Kevin Sorenson: There have been cases in the justice committee where people have been called in on a certain subject on very short notice. They have sent in their briefing and it wasn't translated. They would hand it out before you actually came into the meeting; they apologized, it was in translation, but that was still allowed. This would still be allowed.

Would it be by unanimous consent or would it be at the discretion of the chair?

The Chair: When the meeting is open, you need to get unanimous consent regarding this.

Madam Lalonde.

[Translation]

Ms. Francine Lalonde: Mr. Chair, Mr. Sorenson just referred to the Justice Committee. I think we are not talking about a technical question but a matter of principle: whether you are a French-speaker or an English-speaker, you are entitled to have documents in your own language. That is the principle. Normally, you cannot do indirectly what you cannot do directly. That seems clear to me. What I understand about this amendment is that this is a mandate given to the clerk, as he or she receives the documents. Here, we are confirming that no document may be distributed without the clerk's authorization. His mandate is contained in the first part of the sentence. Of course, the committee can choose to do whatever it likes; it is master of its procedure—but to change things you need unanimous consent, do you not?

The Chair: Yes, that's what I said.

Mr. Paquette.

Mr. Pierre Paquette: I want to get back to what Ms. McDonough was saying. It seems to me that when we send notices to witnesses we should be much more explicit. I myself testified before committees when I was with the CSN. We ask witnesses to send their documents in French and in English. Could we also let them know that if their documents are not submitted in both official languages they will not be distributed to the committee? Then it would not be a suggestion but an obligation that we will place on the witnesses. But to respond to Ms. McDonough's concerns, we could when we invite witnesses tell them very clearly that if they come here with a document that is not in both official languages, the document will not be distributed until it has been translated.

The Chair: Mr. Bevilacqua.

[English]

Mr. Maurizio Bevilacqua (Vaughan, Lib.): Mr. Chairman, I'm sure we'll be guided by common sense when dealing with these issues. As it happens, I have been on the justice committee, the finance committee, and on other committees where people have been asked to appear immediately, or they came from another city, or another country for that matter. I think it would be unreasonable to say that just because it's not available in English or French these individuals cannot make a presentation.

The Chair: No, no. Mr. Paquette's point was not that they would not be able to appear. It's just that when we send an invitation to appear, we'll say the brief has to be presented in both official languages or it will not be distributed. That was Mr. Paquette's point.

Mr. MacAulay.

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Cardigan, Lib.): Don't we do the translation if they send a presentation in? In my opinion, they should be informed that it needs to be sent in time to be translated when we invite people to appear before the committee.

The Chair: I agree.

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay: If something happens that somebody has to come in in a day or two, then it's up to the committee to decide whether they want to distribute it or not.

The Chair: I get your point, and that was Mr. Sorenson's point. If they send it in a week before, there is no problem. If we request it the day before, we just cannot do it, and that could be a problem.

I think the amendment is good, and I think we can accept it. We will work by consensus. We didn't have any problem previously. I think we can go along with this. Agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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

● (0925)

The Chair: The next motion is that the committee be authorized to purchase documents for its use.

An hon. member: So moved.

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: The next motion is that the clerk of the committee be authorized to make the necessary arrangements for working meals for the committee and its subcommittees.

An hon. member: So moved.

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: We're now dealing with the motion that unless otherwise ordered, each committee member be allowed to have one staff person present at in camera meetings.

An hon. member: So moved.

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: The next motion is that one copy of the transcript of all in camera meetings be kept in the committee clerk's office for consultation by members of the committee.

An hon. member: So moved.

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: The next motion is that the committee be authorized to purchase gifts to be presented to foreign hosts while travelling and as well to foreign delegations visiting Ottawa.

An hon. member: So moved.

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: The next motion has to do with the Subcommittee on Human Rights and International Development. In the last Parliament there were five Liberals, two Conservatives, one Bloc member, and one NDP member on that subcommittee, a total of nine members. We suggest seven members: three Liberals, two Conservatives, one Bloc member, and one NDP member. It's according to the fact that we're a minority, and the minister decided that there would be three Liberals and four opposition members.

Ms. Beth Phinney: So you're suggesting (c).

The Chair: Yes.

It will be the same for the Subcommittee on International Trade, Trade Disputes and Investments.

Ms. Beth Phinney: I so move.

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: The next motion is that except for amendments to bills, 24 hours' notice be given before any substantive motion is considered by the committee; that the motion be filed with the clerk of the committee and circulated to members in both official languages; that the clerk put the motion on the agenda of the committee's next meeting; that for motions requiring 24 hours' notice the chair be authorized to defer consideration until 15 minutes prior to the adjournment time for the meeting as indicated on the notice of the meeting.

An hon. member: So moved.

The Chair: Are there any questions?

Ms. Lalonde.

[Translation]

Ms. Francine Lalonde: We understand each other. That means that the chair may be authorized to postpone their study to the last 15 minutes of the hearing. However, if the committee wishes to study them at the beginning and says so, it can always do that.

The Chair: Yes, with the unanimous consent of the committee. Out of respect for the witnesses, we asked that the resolution stipulate that they be examined during the last 15 minutes. It has happened that we convened witnesses for an hour and discussed a motion during the whole hour. There was no time left to hear the witnesses, who had travelled here from elsewhere. So it was out of respect for the witnesses that we wanted to specify that.

Ms. Francine Lalonde: Except when dealing with urgent matters.

The Chair: Yes. We understand each other very well.

[English]

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: Are there any other things you would like to discuss this morning?

If not, I just want to tell you that the steering committee will probably meet next Tuesday morning about the agenda.

Ms. Francine Lalonde: We were told that the meetings will be on Mondays and Wednesdays.

[Translation]

The Clerk: Mr. Chairman, Ms. Lalonde is probably better informed than I am. We did not get the list from the whips' offices indicating the schedule for our committee.

Mr. Pierre Paquette: We were told that we would meet Monday afternoons and Wednesday afternoons.

The Chair: There is a vote next Monday.

[English]

There is a vote at two o'clock on the amendment of the Conservative Party. We could do it after the vote.

Hon. Dan McTeague: Can we get clarification on that?

[Translation]

Could you ask the clerk to make sure that it is indeed Mondays and not Tuesdays?

The Chair: You will be receiving an invitation to the Subcommittee on Agenda and Procedure on Monday afternoon or Tuesday.

[English]

I just want to pinpoint that the clerk has just shown me that with Monday afternoon and Wednesday afternoon, those are not good slots. As far as we're concerned, Monday afternoon is difficult for every member. That doesn't mean that we cannot try for Tuesday and Thursday morning. We just need to ask the clerk to find a room. I think sometimes we will try Tuesday morning and Thursday morning instead of the Monday, mainly for the Monday. Wednesday afternoon is not that bad, but Monday afternoon is bad for all, like the members coming from out west. I think it's a bad day and a bad slot.

Any comments?

• (0930)

Mr. Kevin Sorenson: Just recognizing that we have members on the committee from British Columbia and Halifax and all over.

The Chair: That's why Monday afternoon is very difficult for you members from B.C., out west.

Madame McDonough.

Ms. Alexa McDonough: I'm just wondering, if we're waiting for some indication of when other committees are meeting, whether we can forestall a definite decision about the permanent slot for this meeting. I'm sure I'm not the only one, by any means, who has more than one committee responsibility. I'm wondering if we can agree on something tentatively, but subject to review once other committees are also locked down. I realize this is always a logistics problem at the beginning.

The Chair: I just want to pinpoint that this is the official committee schedule. They're the ones who decide where we go. At that time there are some rooms available. We could be in Wellington on Tuesday morning instead of Monday afternoon. It's up to us to

find another room. If we can find another room, we'll be able to attend meetings on some other date.

I just want to let you know that this is till Christmas. When we will be back the first or second week of February, it will change, and we are going to get Tuesdays and Thursdays. That's the way. I prefer to have maybe six weeks on Monday and Wednesday and be on the old from February to June, on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Madame Phinney.

Ms. Beth Phinney: I just wanted to mention that it's decided anyway, when the committees are going to meet, so there's no point in taking time here.

The Chair: We could try.

[Translation]

Ms. Francine Lalonde: Mr. Chairman, allow me to point out that since the committees alternate, using the various time slots in turn, and since the session is already relatively far along, it might be better to accept Mondays and Wednesdays so that we can have Tuesdays and Thursdays later. Perhaps that is what you want.

The Chair: Indeed, Ms. Lalonde.

[English]

I just want to let you know you'll receive a note for the steering committee for next week.

Mr. Kevin Sorenson: I think each one should tell their whips that we prefer Tuesday and Thursday in the best room available, and I'm sure we'll get it.

An hon. member: Whips always listen.

The Chair: Mr. McTeague.

Hon. Dan McTeague: In the last session a number of members had questions concerning Canadians abroad, and those were not part of the discussions within this committee. What the committee does is entirely up to itself, but please feel free, all of you, to call me if there is any issue I can handle for you on your behalf. It happens to be that some of these issues come back from time to time.

[Translation]

I have noticed that this committee works by consensus. I have sat on several committees and I was really quite surprised when I arrived here after eight years. I am here simply as a resource person for all of the members of the committee, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. McTeague.

Ms. McDonough.

[English]

Ms. Alexa McDonough: In the spirit of that consensus of cooperation—and I know we've reminded ourselves we can do anything we agree to—I'd just like to raise a matter to try to get our work underway. I'm mindful of the fact that notices of motions are needed for us to make any substantive decisions.

In February 2003 this committee agreed that the ambassador for disarmament should be called before the committee. Not only was that agreed, but in fact his mandate requires that he come annually. In February 2004 we passed another motion to say that we should invite the ambassador. We're now coming up to 2005, so he's in violation two years in a row of never having appeared, and we've failed to make that happen.

I'm wondering, with consensus here today, whether that invitation could now go out. It seems like a reasonable thing to do, because there's still a scheduling issue about when he comes.

The second thing is that both times those motions were adopted, it was also agreed that in tandem with his coming before the committee, the Canadian Network to Abolish Nuclear Weapons would be invited to appear as well. I'm just wondering—rather than saying that we can do nothing about any of this until we meet again—if we could, by consensus today, agree that the invitation to those two groups should go out, in compliance with decisions made two years in a row that it be done in compliance with what is a requirement for his mandate in the first place.

It's starting to get embarrassing to answer questions of why it is that the foreign affairs committee doesn't want to meet with the ambassador. I don't think that's the case on anybody's part. So if we could just advance that today by consensus, I think it would be a good idea.

● (0935)

The Chair: Mr. McTeague.

Hon. Dan McTeague: Mr. Chair, it may be helpful to clarify, for the benefit of most of the members here who were not here before, about when those motions were passed. I understand you're not going to be able to pick it out of the actual motion.

Ms. Alexa McDonough: February 6 of 2003; again February 17 of 2004; and as a matter of fact, I think on a third occasion we passed a notice of motion that I brought forward, reinforcing those two things and agreeing yet again that we would it do.

Hon. Maurizio Bevilacqua: I was just wondering whether the steering committee should meet and look at some of the possibilities so that we could all look at what we need to do in this session, or at least have suggestions as to what studies and what subject matter we will handle.

The Chair: The main thing we are probably going to study during the session is the foreign affairs review, including defence and development. That's what the government intends to give us to do.

But before we get some ideas from the government.... It's not going to come before the second or the third week of November. This is why in the meantime time I think the steering committee will meet on Monday or Tuesday, and nothing stops the clerk from trying to do phone calls before, to see when these people could be available.

I know your perseverance. We all agree, it was a consensus. I have no problem at all to have these people appear in the next ten days or two weeks; I have no problem at all. That will be fine, and I think it will be unanimous from the members.

Adopted? Yes, it's adopted. That's fine, no problem.

Mr. Kevin Sorenson: To initiate the discussion.

The Chair: Yes, to initiate the discussion, because if we wait till next week it will be the week after. We could make phone calls to see if they will be available, let's say ten days from now, the week of October 25.

Mrs. McDonough, your perseverance is always there. We know you very well. That's good, great.

[Translation]

Thank you.

The meeting is adjourned.

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