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## **Standing Committee on the Status of Women**

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**Chair**

**Ms. Anita Neville**

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## Standing Committee on the Status of Women

Tuesday, October 19, 2004

• (1110)

[English]

**The Clerk of the Committee:** Honourable members of the Standing Committee on the Status of Women, I see a quorum.

Your first order of business is to elect a chair, and I'm ready to receive nominations to that effect.

**Mrs. Susan Kadis (Thornhill, Lib.):** Madam Clerk, it's my pleasure to nominate Anita Neville as the chair and Jean Crowder as the vice-chair.

**The Clerk:** We'll deal with the election of the vice-chairs later.

Are there any other nominations for the position of chair?

(Motion agreed to)

**The Clerk:** We'll proceed to the election of the vice-chairs before I invite the chair to take her position. There are two positions for vice-chair. One shall be a member of the official opposition, and the second vice-chair will be a member of one of the other opposition parties.

I'm ready to receive nominations for the official opposition vice-chair.

Ms. Yelich.

**Mrs. Lynne Yelich (Blackstrap, CPC):** I nominate Nina Grewal.

**The Clerk:** Are there any other nominations for the official opposition vice-chair?

(Motion agreed to)

**The Clerk:** I declare Nina Grewal duly elected official opposition vice-chair of this committee.

For the third position, a vice-chair from one of the other opposition parties, we have a nomination from Ms. Phinney.

**Ms. Beth Phinney (Hamilton Mountain, Lib.):** I would like to nominate Jean Crowder.

**The Clerk:** Do we have any other nominations for this position?

(Motion agreed to)

**The Clerk:** I declare Ms. Crowder duly elected second vice-chair of the committee.

I invite Ms. Neville to take the chair.

**The Chair (Ms. Anita Neville (Winnipeg South Centre, Lib.)):** Let me begin by saying thank you very much for the support. As the clerk just said to me, we have routine motions but we don't have any routines yet. This is a new committee. I'm delighted that it has finally

come to be. I look forward to working together to try to make a difference, both on the Hill and in the country, in the lives of women.

Let's move forward with the routine motions.

Mr. Powers.

**Mr. Russ Powers (Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Westdale, Lib.):** Through you, Madam Chair, to the clerk, is it necessary to deal with them one at a time or are we able to deal with the routine motions collectively if there are no objections from everyone in attendance?

[Translation]

**Ms. Paule Brunelle (Trois-Rivières, BQ):** Madam Chair, I'd like us to adopt the motions one at a time.

• (1115)

[English]

**The Chair:** You prefer to do them one by one.

[Translation]

**Ms. Paule Brunelle:** Please.

[English]

**The Chair:** The first 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.

**Ms. Beth Phinney:** I so move.

(Motion agreed to)

**Ms. Beth Phinney:** Do we know who it is?

**The Chair:** Julie Cool has some material she's going to distribute as we continue with the routine motions.

The next motion has to do with the composition of the subcommittee on agenda and procedure. It's my understanding that traditionally it has been composed of the chair and the two vice-chairs. Is that correct? I need guidance.

[Translation]

**Ms. Paule Brunelle:** I move that the subcommittee be composed of four persons: the Chair, the two Vice-Chairs and one representative of the Bloc Québécois.

[English]

**The Chair:** Is that agreeable? Do we need a vote?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Chair:** That's agreeable by consensus.

Would the Bloc like to identify its member.

Ms. Bonsant.

[Translation]

**Ms. France Bonsant (Compton—Stanstead, BQ):** I'd like to nominate Ms. Paule Brunelle.

[English]

**The Chair:** So the subcommittee is made up of me, Ms. Grewal, Ms. Crowder, and Ms. Brunelle.

The next motion is that the chair be authorized to hold meetings to receive and publish evidence when a quorum is not present providing that at least three members are present, including one member of the opposition.

**Ms. Beth Phinney:** I so move.

(Motion agreed to)

**The Chair:** The next motion is that if requested, reasonable travel, accommodation, and living expenses be reimbursed to witnesses, one representative per organization, and that in exceptional circumstances, payment for more representatives be at the discretion of the chair.

**Mrs. Susan Kadis:** I so move.

(Motion agreed to)

**The Chair:** I'm sorry, I missed a paragraph of that one. It is that if requested, reasonable child care expenses of witnesses be reimbursed. We can accept that as a friendly amendment.

**Ms. Beth Phinney:** Has that been added for all committees or just this one? I've never seen that before.

**Hon. Maria Minna (Beaches—East York, Lib.):** If it's just being done in this committee, then it should be recommended to the other committees as well.

**Ms. Beth Phinney:** Yes, we should recommend that for all committees.

**The Chair:** I'm told that the human resources committee has it as well.

[Translation]

**Ms. Paule Brunelle:** Yes, this motion is also before the Human Resources Development Committee.

[English]

**The Chair:** It's an excellent precedent.

The next motion is 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.

**Ms. Jean Crowder (Nanaimo—Cowichan, NDP):** I so move.

**The Chair:** Ms. Brunelle.

[Translation]

**Ms. Paule Brunelle:** I'd like to move an amendment to the motion, namely that the words "and that no witness document be distributed without the authorization of the Clerk" be added after the words "official languages". Why is this amendment necessary? Because we've often observed situations in many committees where witnesses hand out unilingual English documents while the meeting

is underway. We want assurances that these documents will be translated. This is one way of achieving this objective.

[English]

**The Chair:** Ms. Yelich.

**Mrs. Lynne Yelich:** Madam Chair, I would really encourage that it be distributed even if it does exist in only one language, either French or English. I would have no problem if it just came in French and we received our English translation later. I think it does a real disservice to our witnesses, who have travelled and we are paying their expenses and their child care, when they come prepared. Many times it's very difficult to get translations done. I am having a lot of problems with my translations right now. It takes time. I think it's a matter of being considerate of the witnesses so that we can review their work. They're only given seven minutes, and they can't read it all in that amount of time. I really feel that it's in the best interests of this committee to consider that.

• (1120)

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Beth Phinney.

**Ms. Beth Phinney:** I feel that it should be in both languages. I suppose you can't stop somebody from distributing it outside the room. When the notice is sent out by the clerk, they are told it must be in two languages. There could be an agreement at a meeting because somebody was given very short notice to come to the meeting and may not have had time to have it done. But if reasonable notice has been given to the person to provide it in both languages, I think it should be in both languages.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Next is Jean, followed by Minna.

**Ms. Jean Crowder:** I'm speaking in favour of having documents in both languages. Adequate notice goes out in most cases. I think it's important that we maintain our status of two official languages.

**The Chair:** I have Madame Brunelle first and then you, Lynne.

[Translation]

**Ms. Paule Brunelle:** Having both languages is an asset, but so too is getting the documents in advance which sometimes affords us the opportunity to do a preliminary study or to better acquaint ourselves with a document's contents. It's no secret that the House makes its translation services available and that persons can access these services very quickly. Arrangements are made with the Clerk to have documents translated.

[English]

**The Chair:** Ms. Yelich.

**Mrs. Lynne Yelich:** I never for one minute suggested it shouldn't be in both official languages. I was specifically referring to the witnesses coming and not having it translated in either language, either English or French—the other official language. We have had that happen as well, and it certainly makes sense to me to allow it to be handed out.

However, yes, we do have those translation services, but they are behind, because I am waiting right now to have some translation done and I find that they are behind. There are some realities here. Some of these people do come in a hurry, and it is very difficult to get it translated.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Mr. Powers.

**Mr. Russ Powers:** One of the other committees that I serve on dealt with the same issue raised by Madam Brunelle. The wording they utilized was that only the clerk of the committee be authorized to distribute to members. In other words, if the designated clerk is comfortable with the material, and it should, as outlined here, be in both languages, then he or she should ensure that it's in keeping with the direction we're comfortable with and in the format we're looking for. The responsibility is vested with the clerk to ensure it's in keeping with what is desirable for us.

That was the way we dealt with it in another committee, but it is Madam Brunelle's motion, so I'll leave it up to her to decide what she wants to do with it.

**The Chair:** Ms. Minna.

**Hon. Maria Minna:** There are two things. There are the advance briefs, which are delivered to us as a result of the notices that go out, and then there are usually the one, two, or three pages that people bring in with them as part of their presentation for the ten minutes they're allowed to speak. If they wish to share that with people, I suppose that might be okay, because it would just be a reduced version of the actual brief.

But the briefs that are presented ought to be in two languages. In other words, we can't have a dialogue if some members of this committee do not have access to the material in the language they are comfortable with. It seems to me that any material as a result of meetings should be translated before they're distributed, with the exception possibly of the piece they bring with them that day, which isn't really the official brief.

I think I would stay with the motion as is.

**The Chair:** Madame Brunelle, you heard a friendly amendment from Mr. Powers. Would you agree to that, or do you wish to put forward another amendment?

[Translation]

**Ms. Paule Brunelle:** If all members concur about leaving this up to the Clerk, I think I'd go along with that so as to get off on a very positive note from the very first meeting.

• (1125)

[English]

**The Chair:** So we would add the word "only". Perhaps I can view that as a friendly amendment. Let's vote on a motion, because I know there are differing views on this. The motion is that only the clerk of the committee be authorized to distribute to the members of the committee documents only when they exist in both official languages.

(Motion agreed to)

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

**Ms. Beth Phinney:** I so move.

(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.

**Mr. Russ Powers:** I so move.

(Motion agreed to)

**The Chair:** The next motion is that unless otherwise ordered, each committee member be allowed to have one staff person present at in camera meetings.

**Ms. Jean Crowder:** I so move.

(Motion agreed to)

**The Chair:** The next motion has to do with time limits for witnesses, and we have blanks to fill in here. The motion is that witnesses be given whatever minutes you suggest for their opening statement and that at the discretion of the chair, during the questioning of witnesses, there be allocated  $x$  minutes for the first questioner of each party, and that thereafter  $x$  minutes be allocated to each subsequent questioner.

Ms. Yelich.

**Mrs. Lynne Yelich:** I suggest that the witnesses be given 10 minutes for their opening statement and that at the discretion of the chair, during the questioning of the witnesses, there be allocated for the first round seven minutes; second round, five minutes; third round, five minutes; and fourth round, five minutes; that for the first round of seven minutes it would be the Conservatives, Bloc, NDP, Liberals; the second round of five minutes, the Conservatives, Bloc, Liberals; the third round of five minutes, Conservatives, Liberals, NDP; and the fourth round, Conservatives and Liberals.

**The Chair :** A suggestion has been made. I'll read it so that you can see whether you agree with it: the first round of seven minutes, Conservatives, Bloc, NDP, and then Liberals; the second round of five minutes, Conservatives, Bloc, Liberals; the third round, Conservatives, Liberals, NDP; and the fourth round, Conservatives, Liberals.

Ms. Crowder, followed by Ms. Minna.

**Ms. Jean Crowder:** Forgive me, because I am new to this process. My understanding is that on other committees, in the second round all members get to speak for the five minutes. Each party gets to have one speaker. I'm wondering what's different about this committee compared to other committees.

**The Chair:** Maria.

**Hon. Maria Minna:** It gets too complicated when we try to prescribe it that way. I think the 10 minutes is a good idea, and seven minutes is a good idea as well. For the first round it would be Conservatives, Bloc, Liberal, NDP. With respect, there are four members on this side of the table. Then the second round would be five minutes back and forth, opposition, Liberal, opposition, government. Then just keep going until everybody has had a chance to speak. That's what we do at the finance committee. The idea of a committee is to allow members around the table to provide input, not to minimize input. The first round is more regularized, and the second round is back and forth, to allow every member around the table to be able to have a say. If you start prescribing it this way, halfway through the meeting the chair is going to get very confused.

• (1130)

**The Chair:** The chair will get very confused.

**Hon. Maria Minna:** With respect to the chair. I'm not trying to suggest that the chair is not capable. I just don't think we need to prescribe it to that extent. So I would suggest that we keep the 10 minutes and the seven minutes. The first round would be Conservatives, Bloc, Liberal, NDP. The second round would be opposition, government, opposition, government. Just go back and forth till everybody has had a chance and everybody is in. I find that when we do it that way, nobody is left out. The idea of a committee is to try to get consensus and information. It's not an attempt to exclude people around the table.

**The Chair:** Mrs. Yelich.

**Mrs. Lynne Yelich:** Madam Chair, the NDP should be before the Liberal, though, in that first round.

**The Chair:** I don't think that was an issue. Was it? I'm sorry.

Go ahead.

**Hon. Maria Minna:** I suggested, with respect, that the four members would be Conservative, Bloc, Liberal, NDP. That would be the first round. Then the second round would be back and forth.

**The Chair:** Further discussion?

[Translation]

**Ms. Paule Brunelle:** I admit that this is a rather unusual combination. The first proposal is the most interesting and most acceptable, as far as we're concerned.

[English]

**The Chair:** We have two proposals on the table, one put forward by Mrs. Yelich and one by Ms. Minna. I guess we could have a show of hands on those, unless there is a third alternative.

Those are enough alternatives? Okay.

My hope is that we can operate this committee in a fairly relaxed and collegial way. There are important issues we have to deal with, and my hope is that we can move forward that way.

Let's deal with Mrs. Yelich's proposal, first of all.

**Mr. Russ Powers:** Can it be read again, please, Madam Chair, just for clarity?

**The Chair:** That the witnesses have ten minutes; that the first round be, at seven minutes, Conservative, Bloc, NDP, Liberal; the second round, at five minutes, Conservative, Bloc, Liberal; the third

round, Conservative, Liberal, NDP; and the fourth round, Conservative, Liberal.

**Ms. Beth Phinney:** I hope we have a calculator here.

**Hon. Maria Minna:** With respect, this is getting confusing. You're actually knocking out the NDP from two rounds. That's not the intention of this committee and of debate. That's why I'm suggesting that the second round alternate back and forth, and you include all parties. You keep going back to opposition. You finish up the round; you don't exclude.

The objective here is not to exclude members from participating. So I would hope that people would consider—

**Mrs. Lynne Yelich:** But with all due consideration, you used your Liberal numbers to get that first round. We'll use our opposition numbers to have our rounds.

**Ms. Beth Phinney:** I don't understand that.

**Mrs. Lynne Yelich:** You said that the reason you wanted it in your specific order is that you have four members. Well, we have three members in the opposition, and—

**Hon. Maria Minna:** Usually there's some generosity. Even when we were in the majority in the finance committee we didn't bicker this way. What we said... and the opposition, you'll always get your first round. That's not taken away from you in any way whatsoever. The Bloc get its second round all the time, so that's not taken away whatsoever. And this is when we were in majority on finance. Then it comes to the Liberals—we had the majority, and could have done it differently, but we didn't—and then the NDP. The second round includes everybody back and forth all the time. Nobody is excluded.

I don't think what I'm recommending is unreasonable. That's exactly what we had in finance and what we've had before in other committees. Even when we had the majority at the table last Parliament, this is what we did at finance. We didn't cut down on people's participation.

So I don't understand at this particular time why it's necessary to prescribe it in such a way.

**The Chair:** I'm going to put the question on the proposal put forward by Mrs. Yelich. I'm going to call it proposal A, just to be clear.

All those in favour? All those opposed?

It's tied, so I have to vote. I'm opposed to it.

Let's go on to the second proposal.

Maria, do you want to put forward your proposal? There may yet be a third one.

• (1135)

**Hon. Maria Minna:** My suggestion was that it would be ten minutes, presentation, and seven minutes for the first round—that doesn't change—Conservative, Bloc, Liberal, NDP; second round, still five minutes, but it would be opposition, government, opposition, opposition, government, and then it would just keep rotating.

My objective is that everybody gets in during that second round. Every party gets in a shot at it. No party is left off the list.

**The Chair:** Just for clarification, would you see that on subsequent rounds as well?

**Hon. Maria Minna:** Yes. It just keeps going that way. That's how we've done it before, and it works. Usually people exhaust their questions, and there are no real arguments. The issue is to try to get as much information on the table as possible from our witnesses.

**The Chair:** Any further discussion?

Before I call the question, I'll ask Ms. Minna to repeat it.

**Hon. Maria Minna:** Ten minutes, as was discussed; that doesn't change.

Seven minutes, as was discussed; I'm not changing that.

First round: Conservative, Bloc, Liberal, NDP.

Second round: opposition, government, opposition, government, opposition, opposition, government. It keeps going until everybody has a chance to speak. Nobody is being denied anything here.

For the subsequent rounds, same thing; you just keep going so that all the people around the table who want to have a say do have a say.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

**Mrs. Lynne Yelich:** Just for clarification, every time the opposition speaks, the Liberals match?

**Hon. Maria Minna:** Only at first. Then it's opposition, opposition, back to Liberal. You go two or three times.

The idea is to try to get everybody on both sides to have a say right to the end. Every member around the table, in subsequent turns, can have a say.

**Ms. Beth Phinney:** Every single person gets a say in the second round?

**Hon. Maria Minna:** Yes, pretty well. Every party gets in.

**Ms. Beth Phinney:** Every person gets in.

**Mrs. Lynne Yelich:** It's Conservative, Bloc, NDP, and then Liberal in the second round.

**Hon. Maria Minna:** No, I'm not prescribing the second round.

**Mrs. Lynne Yelich:** The first round is like that, and the second round is going to be the same.

**Hon. Maria Minna:** No, the second round will be—

**Ms. Beth Phinney:** Everybody left over.

**Hon. Maria Minna:** Yes.

**The Chair:** Do you have a question?

**Ms. Helena Guergis (Simcoe—Grey, CPC):** Yes, I do have a question. Is what I'm hearing that it would be an opposition member, then a Liberal, then another opposition member, and then another Liberal?

**Hon. Maria Minna:** No, I said two opposition, then you come back. You skip. The second round would follow the same thing, but it's five minutes. You just keep going around.

**Ms. Helena Guergis:** So it's not an opposition member then a Liberal, and then another opposition member and then another Liberal?

**Hon. Maria Minna:** It's two opposition, then Liberal. Two rounds.

**Ms. Helena Guergis:** Two opposition, then Liberal.

**Hon. Maria Minna:** Yes. I don't want to take control. That's not the objective. The idea is to try to give people a chance to speak, as we did in finance.

**The Chair:** Are there any further questions on this?

Ms. Phinney.

**Ms. Beth Phinney:** This is just so that by the end of the second round, everybody has had a turn to speak. Or it could be the third round, whatever it takes for everybody to speak.

**Ms. Helena Guergis:** Obviously that would be the point. I would just think that maybe every party would have a chance before another came up and had another opportunity. That would make sense to me.

● (1140)

**Ms. Beth Phinney:** Yes, it would—if you can. But if we run out of Liberals, then you'd have to have all opposition because there'd be no Liberals left. That way everybody gets one turn.

**The Chair:** Are you in favour?

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

**The Chair:** The final routine motion is notice of substantive motions: that, except for amendments to bills, 48 hours' notice be given before any substantive motion is considered by the committee; and that the motion be filed with the clerk of the committee and circulated to members in both official languages.

That is moved by Mr. Powers.

Any discussion?

(Motion agreed to)

**The Chair:** I'm just trying to see if there are any other official things we have to do.

Lynne, go ahead.

**Mrs. Lynne Yelich:** I was just going to adjourn the meeting.

**The Chair:** Adjourn the meeting? Great.

The next meeting will be at the call of the chair in our next allocated time slot...

Jean, do you have a question?

**Ms. Jean Crowder:** Yes, just a question about the subcommittee on the agenda.

**The Chair:** It will meet shortly.

Thank you, everybody. I hope we can have a good time.

I adjourn the meeting.







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