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Wednesday, October 20, 2004

—
Chair

The Honourable Roger Gallaway

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Standing Committee on Transport

Wednesday, October 20, 2004

• (1530)

[English]

The Clerk of the Committee: Honourable members,

[Translation]

I see a quorum.

In conformity with Standing Orders 106(2) we are here to elect a chairman. I'm ready to receive motions to that effect.

Mrs. Desjarlais.

[English]

Mrs. Bev Desjarlais (Churchill, NDP): I nominate Mr. Roger Gallaway.

[Translation]

Le greffier: Mrs. Desjarlais moves that Mr. Gallaway do take the chair of this committee.

[English]

Are there any other nominations?

All in favour of Mr. Gallaway?

(Motion agreed to)

The Clerk: I declare Mr. Gallaway elected chair.

Hon. Rob Nicholson (Niagara Falls, CPC): I move the name of Jim Gouk as vice-chair of the committee.

The Clerk: Mr. Nicholson moves that Mr. Gouk be elected vice-chair.

Are there any other nominations?

Mr. Raymond Bonin (Nickel Belt, Lib.): I second the nomination.

The Clerk: All in favour of Mr. Gouk?

(Motion agreed to)

The Clerk: We will proceed to the nomination of the second vice-chair of the committee.

Madam Desjarlais.

Mrs. Bev Desjarlais: I nominate Madame St-Hilaire.

[Translation]

The Clerk: Mrs. Desjarlais nominates Ms. St-Hilaire.

[English]

Are there any other nominations?

All in favour of Madame St-Hilaire?

(Motion agreed to)

[Translation]

The Clerk: I invite Mr. Gallaway to take the chair of this committee.

[English]

The Chair (Hon. Roger Gallaway (Sarnia—Lambton, Lib.)): Thank you very much.

For those of you who are not new here, you'll know that we have to move now to a number of routine motions. You should have a list of them before you at this time.

Does anyone want to move the first motion on services of analysts from the parliamentary information and research service of the Library of Parliament?

• (1535)

Hon. Rob Nicholson: I so move.

The Chair: Mr. Nicholson moves that the committee retain the services of one or more analysts from the parliamentary information and research service of the Library of Parliament, as needed, to assist the committee in its work at the discretion of the chair.

It is moved and seconded.

Are there any questions or debate?

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: The second motion is to establish a subcommittee on agenda and procedure. The motion, as printed, is that the chair, the two vice-chairs, the parliamentary secretary to the Minister of Transport, and a representative of the other opposition party do compose the subcommittee on agenda and procedure.

It is moved by Ms. Desjarlais.

Hon. Rob Nicholson: Just a clarification, Mr. Chairman.

The Chair: Yes.

Hon. Rob Nicholson: What do you mean by the representative of the other opposition party? I was under the impression there were three opposition parties here.

The Chair: It's the first I've seen it, quite frankly, so I'll find out.

The Clerk: That refers to the honourable member from the New Democratic Party. That makes sense.

The Chair: All right.

Mrs. Desjarlais.

Mrs. Bev Desjarlais: On this motion, in my past experience with the transport committee and subcommittees, we normally have just one representative of each of the parties, rather than two. That has worked well in the past. It makes for quicker decisions as to when meetings are going to be held, and those kinds of things.

I suggest that it be the chair, the two vice-chairs, and a representative of the other opposition party. So it could be amended by removing the parliamentary secretary—with all due respect to the parliamentary secretary. I just think it leaves representation from each party there, and it's never been an issue.

The Chair: Is there any other discussion or comment on Mrs. Desjarlais' point?

There are two ways of doing this, as you know. We can call the question because it's been moved.

Did we have a mover, George?

The Clerk: Yes.

Mrs. Bev Desjarlais: No, it's just an amendment.

Hon. Roger Galloway: Oh, I'm sorry, I misunderstood you.

So we've heard from Ms. Desjarlais.

Mr. Bonin.

Mr. Raymond Bonin: I wonder if the committee would consider keeping as a possibility the use of the committee of the whole whenever it's more expeditious for the chair. There are times when you will need a meeting, and we're all here anyway. This has also worked very well, not as the forum, but as an alternative whenever it's more useful.

The Chair: That's a point, but we have a motion that's been moved.

Mr. Raymond Bonin: We don't have to pass the motion forward if the intent is there.

The Chair: I've been involved in committees where we've had no steering committee; we've actually had committee of the whole. In other words, the whole committee was involved. I would also point out that any actions of the steering committee must be ratified by the full committee. So I'm in your hands as to what you want to do.

Mr. Nicholson.

Hon. Rob Nicholson: Mr. Chair, you might want to hear from the parliamentary secretary. The motion is that inasmuch as there would be one representative of each party, it wouldn't be necessary to have the parliamentary secretary.

So I'd be interested in hearing from some members of the Liberal Party. We want this committee to work, and work in an expeditious manner. As you pointed out, Mr. Chairman, anything that comes from the steering committee presumably comes back to this body as well. I have no particular stake in it one way or the other, but it would be interesting to hear what they have to say.

The Chair: Okay.

Mr. Karygiannis.

Hon. Jim Karygiannis (Scarborough—Agincourt, Lib.): I take it that you do not want me on the steering committee.

The Chair: I don't think it's a question.... The motion has been moved, and the steering committee would be comprised of the chair, the two vice-chairs, and a representative of the New Democratic Party.

Hon. Jim Karygiannis: A chair, two vice-chairs—

The Chair: And a representative of the other opposition party. In this case it would be a representative of the New Democratic Party.

Hon. Jim Karygiannis: In all fairness, I think my colleague across the way would only find it fair that as the New Democratic Party wants to be part of the steering committee—given that the chair has to be non-partisan—that an individual from the Liberal Party should also be on that steering committee. I think that's only fair, unless my honourable colleague has another intent and doesn't want that to happen.

The Chair: We'll start with Ms. St-Hilaire, and then Ms. Desjarlais.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Caroline St-Hilaire (Longueuil—Pierre-Boucher, BQ): I know from experience that the chairman has a voice in the steering committee. If I am not mistaken, with the parliamentary secretary, that would mean two voices for you. I am of the opinion, as my colleague Bev, that we should stick with the chairman, both vice-chairs and a member of the NDP.

• (1540)

[*English*]

Mrs. Bev Desjarlais: There is no mal-intent in it; it's just a matter of getting the process done more quickly. Certainly I do this in recognition of the chair, as a Liberal member, having the same voice as any other member of the steering committee in decisions. That's how it has always worked in the past. I'm sure my colleague Mr. Bonin, who was chair on numerous occasions, would confirm that we worked very well together under that process.

The Chair: Are there any other comments before I put the question?

The motion, just for clarity, as moved by Ms. Desjarlais, is that the chair, the two vice-chairs, and a representative of the other opposition party—read that as the New Democratic Party—do compose the subcommittee on agenda and procedure .

Hon. Rob Nicholson: Is this the amended motion?

The Chair: If I understand it, she moved the motion and not what is printed. It's the amended one. That's why I read it.

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: Next is the motion to receive and publish evidence in the absence of a quorum.

Part (a) is 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.

Part (b) is that the chair be authorized to hold meetings to receive and publish evidence when a quorum is not present, provided that at least five members are present, including two members of the opposition.

Mr. Bonin.

Mr. Raymond Bonin: I move part (a).

The Chair: Mr. Bonin moves part (a) of the motion, as printed. It is seconded by Ms. St.-Hilaire.

Is there any discussion?

All in favour of (a)?

Mr. Raymond Bonin: They may have good reason for us to support part (b) or something else.

Hon. Rob Nicholson: If part (a) didn't pass, I thought (b) might be more reasonable, to have at least five members here and have a broader cross-section. If there is problem and we only have three, I'm not even sure if we should have a meeting, quite frankly. Since we're choosing between (a) and (b), I think (b) would be a better choice. It's up to the committee.

The Chair: Well, (a) has been moved, so let's vote on (a). I'll put the question one more time. I'm sorry.

All in favour of motion (a) as printed?

(Motion negatived)

The Chair: Mr. Nicholson.

Hon. Rob Nicholson: I'd be pleased to move option (b).

The Chair: Thank you.

It states that the chair be authorized to hold meetings to receive and publish evidence when a quorum is not present, provided that at least five members are present, including two members of the opposition.

Mr. Andrew Scheer (Regina—Qu'Appelle, CPC): I second that.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Scheer.

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: Mr. Karygiannis.

Hon. Jim Karygiannis: On a point of order, I'd like to go back to the motion to establish a subcommittee on agenda and procedure. I'm sure my honourable friends across the way will agree to something I have to mention: since you are the only Liberal on that committee, if the steering committee has to get together and you are available, that you designate somebody from the Liberal Party to be there.

The Chair: All right. I'm not certain how that is a point of order.

Hon. Jim Karygiannis: We passed it. I'm just revisiting it. I'm seeking unanimous consent on this, should there be a problem from the other parties.

The Chair: I think we ought to continue. If you want to revisit a motion we'll come back to it, because that's been passed.

On allocation of time for questioning, witnesses have a standard ten minutes for their opening statements. I think many of us have seen this one before.

Can I get a mover? Oui.

• (1545)

[Translation]

Ms. Caroline St-Hilaire: I have a question. Aren't we going to indicate in which order the parties will speak? I see that the first member of each party to speak will get seven minutes. Is there a specific order namely that the Conservative Party, the Bloc, the NDP will speak or are we providing for intervention by the Liberal members? It seems to me that it would be a good idea to clarify the order of interventions. I do not know how the Standing Transport Committee operates.

[English]

The Chair: The normal order, in my experience, has been that we start with the official opposition; we then go to the government; we then go, in this case, to your party, back to the government, then to the New Democratic Party, and back to the government.

Do you want to amend the motion in some way, or are you satisfied with that?

[Translation]

Ms. Caroline St-Hilaire: Yes, we might. Wouldn't it be appropriate for the Conservative Party to speak first to be followed by the Bloc Québécois?

[English]

The Chair: Ms. Desjarlais has a comment.

Mrs. Bev Desjarlais: In the spirit of fairness, and knowing that the transport committee has always worked very well—I know you've been a member of that committee for some time—I think it's very reasonable to go to the Conservatives, then to the Bloc, then to the Liberals, and then to the NDP. That would be quite acceptable.

The Chair: If I understand what you've said, we would agree—I don't think we need this in a motion in any way—to start with the Conservatives. Second would be the Bloc, third would be the Liberals, fourth would be the NDP, and then it would go back and forth.

Hon. Rob Nicholson: At the discretion of the chair...between the opposition?

The Chair: Yes.

Mr. Bonin.

Mr. Raymond Bonin: We're not saying how long we will be allocating for each witness. If it's 30 minutes, the first round brings us to 32 minutes, with the 10-minute presentation. How much time are we allocating per witness?

The Chair: Are you saying per witness or per questioner?

Mr. Raymond Bonin: Per witness. If a witness is here for 30 minutes, we're two minutes short for our first round. We will have to give you leeway—

The Chair: That is normally the case. It's already written in there. Mr. Etoke, the clerk, has pointed out to me it's at the discretion of the chair. You're talking about a two-minute problem. I don't think we'll have that problem.

Was there another comment?

I need someone to move that motion.

It's moved by Ms. Desjarlais and seconded by Mr. Bonin.

Hon. Rob Nicholson: Is it the motion as printed that has been moved by Mrs. Desjarlais?

Mrs. Bev Desjarlais: Just for clarification, it's the motion as printed, with the clarification that we gave as to how it would proceed—

The Chair: That's been read into the record. Yes.

Hon. Jim Karygiannis: Could you go through that procedure again, Mr. Chairman?

• (1550)

The Chair: Just for clarity—absolutely.

The question that has been raised by Madame St-Hilaire is that the order of questioners in terms of parties would be: the Conservative Party first, the Bloc Québécois second, the Liberal Party third, and the NDP fourth.

Hon. Jim Karygiannis: They'd get seven minutes each.

The Chair: That would be at the discretion of the chair. As you well know, Mr. Nicholson, it always depends on how many witnesses there are and what time is allowed for at a particular meeting, in terms of the number of witnesses present.

Hon. Jim Karygiannis: I'm just wondering if we can do this in the situation, weighing the number of members and the chair. I am sure that since the Conservatives have four members, each one would like to have a fair amount of time to question the witnesses. If the NDP has only one member, it would certainly be unfair to the Conservatives if one or two members of the committee hog the airtime.

It would certainly be unfair to our colleagues who have four members there. I'm sure we can give some consideration to the weight of the parties. That is something we can certainly look upon, as to the amount of time.

The Chair: Just one second, because Mrs. Desjarlais was next.

Hon. Jim Karygiannis: The way we should go is one, two, one, back.... Certainly we can put some weight on the number of members who are on the committee.

The Chair: Mr. Karygiannis, on the intention of this motion, if you read it you will see that the first questioner for each party—and I stress each party—receives seven minutes. Subsequent questioners, regardless of party, each receive five minutes.

Hon. Jim Karygiannis: Is it one questioner or the party?

The Chair: No. As stated, the first questioner has seven minutes—for each party. So if Mr. Nicholson were to lead off, he would receive seven minutes. Ms. St-Hilaire, assuming she were to lead off for the Bloc, would receive seven minutes. Mr. Bonin would receive seven minutes, and Mrs. Desjarlais would receive seven minutes. Then it would move to five minutes.

Hon. Jim Karygiannis: But if you're going to have somebody here for thirty minutes and, in all fairness, more than one individual wants to ask some questions, certainly the parties amongst themselves can weigh this as to the—

The Chair: That's true, but that is why there's always an exculpatory clause and it says, at the discretion of the chair.

Hon. Jim Karygiannis: But in all fairness, at the discretion of the chair...in the situation we find ourselves in, I think we have to make these things transparent so that down the line you don't have a dysfunctional committee because one individual, one party, just doesn't allow questions to be asked of the witnesses—and they might have valid questions to ask. So maybe we want to weigh the time as to the party, even in the first round.

The Chair: I've heard what you've had to say, but once again I would point out that it's always at the discretion of the chair.

We're all talking about this half-hour witness before us here, but I can't remember when we've ever had a witness for half an hour. Some of you may have experienced that in the past; it might be my age, but I can't remember it.

So I don't see how this is a problem. We're trying to insert some sort of mathematical precision into a motion that is not precise. It talks about discretion. In certain cases it might be less than seven minutes; it might be less than three. It is always a factor, and it's always contingent upon time.

Mr. Nicholson.

Hon. Rob Nicholson: Mr. Chair, inasmuch as you have the discretion to do this, if one party even wanted to split its time, it seems to me that might be reasonable in terms of allocating. If we have four members here and we want to make sure....

I wonder if we could do this. I'd prefer to leave it after... I don't think we're going to get past the first thirty minutes or so. I don't remember, unless something has changed in terms of the allocation of witnesses, and statements, and times.

I'd like to make a motion that there be allocated seven minutes for the first questioner of each party, and that thereafter five minutes be allocated to each subsequent questioner, period, so we don't get into whether we're alternating between the government and the opposition. We'd just play it by ear as to what you think is fair. It seems to me that would be reasonable.

The Chair: I think the objective is that everyone present will receive equal treatment in terms of time, understanding that the first questioner will receive a longer period by about two minutes.

Hon. Rob Nicholson: I'd like to make a motion—if there's a motion on the floor—to remove the phrase, “alternating between government and opposition parties” from the allocation of time for questioning. I'm prepared to leave it in your capable hands so you can judge how many people are here from each party, from which side, and treat everyone equally.

The Chair: That's always the way.

Mr. Bonin. We're getting motions stacked on motions here.

Mr. Raymond Bonin: Very briefly, Mr. Chair, I have two points.

One is that we be clear that we have seven minutes for the question and the answer.

The other point is that when we say “at the discretion of the chair”, I would ask the chair to insist, whenever you make a ruling... so we don't debate this for half an hour when there is a witness here. If there are problems with your ruling, they should be solved in the steering committee; we shouldn't debate them here.

•(1555)

Hon. Rob Nicholson: I have no problem with that, Mr. Bonin.

As a matter of fact, I wouldn't question the discretion of the chair in public. Once we got past the initial seven minutes for each of the political parties, at the five minutes at the discretion of the chair, if there were four Liberals and one Conservative member, I would give it to him to figure it out and be fair. Even if I disagreed with him, I would take it up with him in private or at the steering committee.

The Chair: I want to point out that our clerk has an advanced degree in math and always carries a stopwatch with him.

Mr. Wrzesnewskyj.

Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj (Etobicoke Centre, Lib.): Perhaps we could leave the wording of the motion as is and just add at the end, “at the discretion of the chair”. Then the result would be the same.

Hon. Rob Nicholson: It's not quite the same. The motion before you says he's directed to alternate between government and opposition parties. I'm asking the chair to take into consideration that on any given day, mathematically, we know there will be more opposition members—perhaps, but maybe not. I'm willing to leave that.

Once we get past the initial round of seven minutes for each of the political parties—and they can split their time however they want—the subsequent questioners should be given five minutes, at the discretion of the chair. He can figure out how many people are here from each side, or how critical the issue is. I'm prepared to leave it at that.

If I could add that as an amendment, I would so move it.

The Chair: If I understand what you're saying then, Mr. Nicholson, you want the phrase “alternating between government and opposition parties” removed.

Are there any other comments?

Mr. Wrzesnewskyj, go ahead.

Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj: I think it's quite a sign of goodwill that the seven minutes are allocated among all the parties equally. When it comes to the subsequent questioning, there should be an acknowledgement of our relative weights. It seems to be a pretty open forum here, and I think the chair will use his discretion.

But what this does signal is that there is the government and there is the opposition. I believe we should maintain this wording, but we could add “at the discretion of the chair”, so that if there is a situation where there are two of us and three of you, or five of us and one of you, it will be at the discretion of the chair. But I believe we have to maintain this principle that there is a government and an opposition.

Hon. Rob Nicholson: To be sure.

Hon. Jim Karygiannis: I think we're both speaking on the same wavelength.

The Chair: One second, Mr. Karygiannis, we want to keep the order here.

Mr. Nicholson is next, and then you can go.

Hon. Rob Nicholson: The chair is an individual with long-standing political and parliamentary experience. Inasmuch as the opposition comprises a greater number of individuals than the government, I don't want to be giving directions to the chair one way or the other.

It seems to me we would rarely get into some sort of a subsequent round of questions, in any case. If we get past the 28 minutes and the 10 minutes for the speaker, we're up to 38 minutes in any case. It seems to me he should take anything beyond that into consideration.

We have enough of these hearings. You'll find that on a given day you'll have all the government members here and few of the opposition, or it might be quite the opposite. Rather than have a direction to the chair that he must alternate between the others, I think it's a reasonable suggestion that after the seven minutes for each of the political parties, it's in the hands of the chair. I'm prepared to do that.

As I indicated to your colleague, even if I disagreed with the chair on his allocation of time, I wouldn't mention it to him in public; we would mention it at a steering committee to make sure we were all, as Mr. Karygiannis said, on the same wavelength.

That's the motion I have, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: There are others who want to make comments.

Mr. Karygiannis, do you want to say anything further?

Hon. Jim Karygiannis: As I was saying, we're on the same wavelength. I don't think we're going to go past the thirty minutes, and by the time we all finish the 38 minutes there are going to be other people waiting. We'll either stay here all day or get the questions over with.

The Chair: Mr. Carrier.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Robert Carrier (Alfred-Pellan, BQ): I support the amendment moved by my colleague the Honourable Rob Nicholson. I feel that this proposal obliges the chairman to follow a process which could be detrimental to the right to speak of all the members around this table. Therefore, if we are going to rely upon the discretion of the chair for the allocation of time for questioning, I think it would be a simpler approach than to impose a rigid structure.

•(1600)

[*English*]

The Chair: Madame St-Hilaire.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Caroline St-Hilaire: I am not quite sure I understand. I should like some clarification. We seem to agree on both sides of the table but that wasn't at all the impression I got. Let us be clear on the first round the Conservative Party, the Bloc, the Liberal Party and the NDP would each have seven minutes. On the second round this order would be left to the discretion of the chair who would still follow an order with fairness of course while taking into account the members present, the political parties as well as the makeup of Parliament today. I want to be sure that this is the wish of the parliamentary secretary. If this is the case, there is no problem.

[*English*]

The Chair: I would never presume to speak for the parliamentary secretary, but I think I'm detecting here that everyone is in agreement. We're trying to inject precision into contingencies when we don't know who's going to be here tomorrow or the next day. We've always had that in committees, and despite this great worrying and the precision that some people are looking for, it always works.

I'll now put the question on the motion, as amended, which will be as printed, with the last line and a half that reads "alternating between government and opposition parties" deleted.

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

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Nicholson.

Hon. Rob Nicholson: Before we leave that, just so there's complete clarification and to be fair, would you accept another amendment that we put the words "at the discretion of the chair" at the end? Or is that necessary?

The Chair: I don't think that's necessary. Besides, the motion has been carried.

Hon. Rob Nicholson: All right. I'm in your capable hands, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.

Let's move on to the motion on 48 hours' notice. I'm going to read it into the record, and then I'm going to ask for a mover.

The motion reads 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. Upon receipt of the notice, the clerk shall put the motion on the agenda of the committee's next meeting.

Mr. Sheer.

Mr. Andrew Scheer: I so move, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Mr. Bonin seconds that motion.

Is there any discussion?

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: Thank you.

In camera meetings: that unless otherwise ordered, each committee member be allowed to have one staff person present at in camera meetings.

It is moved by Madame St-Hilaire and seconded by Mr. Bonin.

Are there any questions or comments?

(Motion agreed to)

• (1605)

The Chair: Next is 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; and that in exceptional circumstances, payment for more representatives be at the discretion of the subcommittee on agenda and procedure.

It is moved by Ms. Desjarlais and seconded by Mr. Bonin.

Are there any questions? Is there any discussion?

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: Distribution of documents: 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, and that no document from a witness be distributed without the clerk's approval.

Madame St-Hilaire moves it, and Mr. Bonin seconds it.

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: On working meals—now we're getting down to the important stuff—that the clerk of the committee be authorized to make the necessary arrangements to provide for working meals for the committee and its subcommittees.

Mr. Karygiannis moves this and Ms. Desjarlais seconds it.

(Motion agreed to)

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

It is moved by Mr. Bonin and seconded by Mr. Batters.

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: Thank you.

Now, that concludes the—

Hon. Jim Karygiannis: Mr. Chair, if I can go back to what I mentioned before, we proposed a motion—establishment of the subcommittee of agenda and procedures—that if you are unavailable to be at the steering committee, you will designate a member of the Liberal Party to be on that.

The Chair: That's a given. I've attended steering committee meetings for chairs who were unable to make it.

Hon. Jim Karygiannis: So we're all in agreement then?

The Chair: We're all in agreement.

An hon. member: It's not only for the chair; it's for any member.

The Chair: That's true. It could be the same for Madame St-Hilaire.

Hon. Jim Karygiannis: I know we have two dates given by the clerk as to attendance, but should there be a conflict with some of our colleagues we might want to go to another date. Can I ask that you canvass the committee chairs to make sure the dates set right now are appropriate, and if not, that we ask the clerk to try to find alternative dates?

The Chair: I think Mrs. Desjarlais has something to say about that for starters.

Mrs. Bev Desjarlais: From previous experience, I know that our whips have had meetings, and schedules have been set out for all committee meetings, based on availability of rooms. People have already worked those dates into their schedules, so I think we'd be creating problems for our whips if we suggested changes. It's enough of a challenge for each and every party right now. I certainly would not support changing the dates.

The Chair: First, for members, particularly new members, this committee is slotted to be on Tuesdays and Thursdays of each week, from 3:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.

I think what you're saying, Mr. Karygiannis, is that you're looking for flexibility.

Hon. Jim Karygiannis: I'm asking, Mr. Chair, through your leadership, that we canvass the members of the committee, and if everybody is agreeable to Tuesday and Thursday, that is fine. If not, some people may want some changes if there are conflicts.

The Chair: I think that's a matter for the steering committee, most properly. We can canvass through that.

Hon. Jim Karygiannis: Definitely. By all means. I think you need that flexibility.

The Chair: Fine. Thank you.

Are there any other matters that anyone wants to raise?

Mr. Bonin.

Mr. Raymond Bonin: I move that we adjourn.

The Chair: Just before we move to that, Mr. Batters wants to say something.

Mr. Dave Batters (Palliser, CPC): Mr. Chair, thank you.

Mr. Scheer and I were just discussing that on Thursday evenings the last flight to Saskatchewan leaves at 5 o'clock. I appreciate Madam Desjarlais' comments that it might make it difficult for our whips, but perhaps we could explore the possibility of ending a little bit earlier on Thursdays. That would be helpful. It's nice to spend Fridays in the riding.

The Chair: We all live with that problem. I'm not certain that anything can be done to address that. That's usually a matter between you and your whip. It's called finding a substitute.

The other matter that members should be aware of is that the juggling of committee rooms is a very precise science. It's a very complex science, and when you start trying to play with it, it's not a question for whips; it's a question for House management. You will find that it's very difficult to find a committee room if you start playing with times. I don't want to get down that road at this point.

It may be that some slight accommodation can be made from time to time, but if you want to get on a plane and leave, you're going to have to find a substitute. I'm not your whip and I'm not telling you what your whip's going to say, but I suspect that will be the answer.

●(1610)

Hon. Jim Karygiannis: In all fairness, Mr. Chairman, I think everybody is supposed to be here five days a week.

The Chair: Mr. Batters.

Mr. Dave Batters: How long is this tentative schedule in place?

The Chair: This is not a tentative schedule; this is the schedule until December. Then it's re-juggled.

Mr. Bonin wants to adjourn. All in favour?

Thank you. This meeting stands adjourned.

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