



House of Commons
CANADA

Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans

FOPO • NUMBER 001 • 2nd SESSION • 39th PARLIAMENT

EVIDENCE

Wednesday, November 14, 2007

—
Chair

Mr. Fabian Manning

Also available on the Parliament of Canada Web Site at the following address:

<http://www.parl.gc.ca>

Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans

Wednesday, November 14, 2007

• (1535)

[*Translation*]

The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Stephen Knowles): Pursuant to Standing Order 106(2), the first item on the agenda is the election of the chair. I am ready to receive motions to that effect.

[*English*]

Mr. Simms.

**Mr. Scott Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Wind-
sor, Lib.):** Thank you, sir.

I would like to nominate Mr. Fabian Manning.

The Clerk: It has been moved by Mr. Simms—

Hon. Gerry Byrne (Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte, Lib.): And proudly so.

Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Eastern Shore, NDP): I have a point of order, sir.

I don't have a list of the people who are on the committees. Are these the members of the Conservative Party who will be on our standing committee? I know Gerald is the parliamentary secretary, so he's gone, but is this—

Mr. Fabian Manning (Avalon, CPC): He's still on the committee.

Mr. Peter Stoffer: Oh, okay, very good.

Thank you.

The Clerk: It has been seconded by Mr. Stoffer.

Are there any other nominations?

Hon. Gerry Byrne: Oh please, no.

The Clerk: I therefore declare Mr. Manning as chair.

[*Translation*]

We will now proceed to the election of the vice-chairs.

[*English*]

The first vice-chair comes from the official opposition.

Mr. Kamp.

**Mr. Randy Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission,
CPC):** I would like to nominate Mr. Bill Matthews.

The Clerk: Are there any other nominations?

Mr. Matthews is declared the vice-chair for the official opposition.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

The Clerk: And finally, we have a vice-chair from another opposition party.

I believe Mr. Stoffer raised his hand first.

Mr. Peter Stoffer: Mr. Lévesque and I can do this together. We'd like to nominate Monsieur Blais as the second vice-chair.

[*Translation*]

The Clerk: It has been moved by Mr. Stoffer, seconded by Mr. Lévesque, that Mr. Blais be the second vice-chair of the committee.

Are there any other motions?

(Motion agreed to)

[*English*]

The Clerk: Would the chair like to take the chair?

The Chair (Mr. Fabian Manning (Avalon, CPC): Thank you very much. I thank my nominee and my seconder.

• (1540)

Hon. Gerry Byrne: Recount. Recount.

The Chair: —and the committee. We've spent some time in the House, so we're quite familiar with each other.

The work of the committee will go on, and I certainly hope we can cooperate on the very important issues we will be discussing from time to time. We're not going to reinvent the wheel.

We have a few new faces. We will take a moment to allow these two new people to introduce themselves. Then we'll discuss some procedures that we're hopefully going to be following as a committee.

I'll leave it in your hands.

The Clerk: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'm Stephen Knowles. I'm the clerk of the committee. I've been around the Hill a little. I've been with this committee before and it's a pleasure to be back again. My colleague is Erica Pereira, who might wish to say a few words. She is here to give us a hand on the first day of a committee meeting for probably obvious reasons.

Ms. Erica Pereira (Procedural Clerk): That's it. Hello.

Mr. Bill Matthews (Random—Burin—St. George's, Lib.): Greetings.

The Chair: To everybody who is on the committee, welcome back.

We have some procedures. Does everybody have a copy of those?

Some hon. members: Yes.

The Chair: Basically these are the ones we adopted in the past and I think we should run through them to make sure that everybody is satisfied with what we're doing here.

Everybody has a copy. We're going to go through each motion and if anybody has any questions or concerns, raise them, or if not, we'll adopt them at the end of the session.

On services of analysts from the Library of Parliament: that the committee retain, as needed and at the discretion of the chair, the services of one or more analysts from the Library of Parliament to assist it in its work.

I'll ask for a mover on each motion so we can follow through. Randy Kamp moved that one.

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Chair: On the subcommittee on agenda and procedure: that the subcommittee on agenda and procedure be established and be composed of the chair, the two vice-chairs, and a member of the other opposition party.

Mr. Kamp.

Mr. Randy Kamp: For what it's worth, in our last committee that motion read as it does here, with the addition of "and a member of the Conservative Party".

The Chair: Are you moving this, or just stating what was in the last...?

Mr. Randy Kamp: I'm telling you what we passed in May 2006. I wonder if there is a reason that we're presenting this motion, as opposed to what has been our tradition.

The Chair: As a point of clarification, on May 9, 2006, we adopted a motion that the subcommittee on agenda and procedure be composed of the chair, the two vice-chairs, and a member of the other opposition party, and a member of the Conservative Party.

It was a misprint on what you have here. This is what was adopted in May.

Mr. Lévesque, go ahead.

• (1545)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yvon Lévesque (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, BQ): Does adding a member of the Conservative Party mean that the chair loses the right to vote at subcommittee meetings?

[*English*]

The Chair: Okay, let's get it straight here.

I guess you're going to have days when you're going to have a job to understand me, and I'm going to have days when I'll have a job to understand you.

All I'm getting here is French.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yvon Lévesque: Are you receiving the interpretation?

[*English*]

The Chair: Yes, I'm receiving it now. Go ahead, Mr. Lévesque.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yvon Lévesque: Given the motion that is before us, I would like to know if adding a Conservative member of Parliament means that the chair loses the right to vote at subcommittee meetings?

[*English*]

The Chair: My understanding, Mr. Lévesque, is that the chair would only vote—any time, committee or steering committee—in the case of a tie.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yvon Lévesque: So by adding a member of the Conservative Party, in addition to the chair, at subcommittee meetings, you are breaking the government's minority. That is what you are doing.

[*English*]

The Chair: We'll go to Mr. Calkins.

Mr. Blaine Calkins (Wetaskiwin, CPC): I understand where my colleague is coming from on this. But the chair does not get to vote unless there is a tie. If there weren't a Conservative member on the subcommittee, the Conservatives wouldn't have a vote unless there was a tie. With a four-person system, which leaves three others who would be voting, you would never have a tie, which means that the Conservatives would never get to vote in the subcommittee.

Hon. Gerry Byrne: Hear, hear!

Mr. Blaine Calkins: So based on that, I don't understand what the problem is, because there would only be one Conservative voting in the event that there is a tie.

The Chair: I don't fully understand that in English, so let's go again. Okay? Can you try that one again? I'm not sure that everybody got it.

Hon. Gerry Byrne: Mr. Chair, you don't have to vote anyway, so don't worry about it—

The Chair: I'm going to read the motion again.

Hon. Gerry Byrne: —unless there's a tie.

The Chair: The chair doesn't vote unless there's a tie.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yvon Lévesque: I am satisfied with the explanation. I am prepared to support the motion at it stands.

[*English*]

The Chair: We'll just run it by you again and make sure that everybody is clear: that the subcommittee on agenda and procedure be composed of the chair, two vice-chairs, a member of the other opposition party, and a member of the Conservative Party.

Mr. Peter Stoffer: Hold on. I would change that to read "a member of the government party".

The Chair: All right.

Is everybody clear?

Could we have a mover for that motion?

Mr. Ken Epp (Edmonton—Sherwood Park, CPC): I so move.

The Chair: So moved by Mr. Epp.

Is there a seconder?

Hon. Gerry Byrne: I don't think we need a seconder.

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

The Chair: We'll go to the motion on reduced quorum: that the chair be authorized to hold meetings to receive evidence and to have that evidence printed when a quorum is not present, provided that at least three members are present, including one member of the opposition.

Hon. Gerry Byrne: I so move.

The Chair: So moved by Mr. Byrne.

• (1550)

Mr. Mike Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac, CPC): I'd like to make an amendment, Mr. Chair.

What I would suggest, in keeping with the consistency of the previous motion, is that we also include that three members be present, including one member from the opposition and one from government.

Mr. Ken Epp: That's very astute.

The Chair: Are there any comments on that?

Go ahead, Mr. Byrne.

Hon. Gerry Byrne: The requirement for the calling of the meeting would be the presence of the chair, which obviously would have to be a member of the government, so therefore I would argue —

Mr. Ken Epp: Or in his absence, one of the vice-chairs.

Hon. Gerry Byrne: Chair or vice-chair.

The Chair: This is true, Ken. You've caught me.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yvon Lévesque: In the motion that is before us, is quorum two people?

[*English*]

The Chair: No, a quorum is three: "provided that at least three members are present". This is a reduced quorum.

Go ahead, Mr. Epp.

Mr. Ken Epp: Quite clearly, this is a reduced quorum just for hearing witnesses. You cannot conduct normal business—

The Chair: No, just to gather evidence.

Mr. Ken Epp: It's just for gathering evidence. It just simply says, the way the motion is worded, that there must be at least three members of the committee present in order to hear it, and of those at least one must be from the opposition and one must be from the government side. It's totally clear.

The Chair: Mr. Stoffer.

Mr. Peter Stoffer: I was wondering if Stephen could advise us on what other committees do in this particular case and what examples we can follow from.

The Clerk: Mr. Chairman, I think that in most cases this question has not been brought up. It's usually just a member of the opposition, I think. This is just historically.

Mr. Peter Stoffer: So what is the makeup of that reduced quorum generally, in your view?

The Clerk: Usually the makeup of the reduced quorum is the chair, who is usually from the government party, but not necessarily, depending on the meeting. Usually it's at least a member from the government party and a member from the opposition. But unless the motion is clear, any combination is possible.

Mr. Peter Stoffer: Exactly, because my problem with this, and I don't blame the individuals who are before us, is we know how the previous government had done it, and we know that the current government has done this in other committees as well. We got the playbook last April from the whip of the Conservative Party on how to disrupt, and nothing is stopping the Conservative side from not showing up at all, period. And if they don't show up and you have the opposition here, the witnesses go home. So I think three members, regardless of the party makeup, is fair enough, because the government.... I'm not saying these people would do it, but they could be ordered to do so, and if they're ordered to do so, then we're here and the witnesses who have travelled all this distance. So I think we should keep it exactly the way it is.

The Chair: Mr. MacAulay.

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Cardigan, Lib.): I'm certainly not saying that the people here would, but if the government decided, whatever government it might be, that they don't want to hear a certain group of people, all they have to do is not come and that freezes the committee. They cannot operate if this passes.

Mr. Bill Matthews: And the opposition can do the same thing.

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay: Yes.

So if it's not in there at all, if you have enough people here for a quorum without stating that certain parties have to be here, then the committee can operate. If you pass this it means that one group can stop the committee.

If that's what the group wants, then okay, but I disagree with it.

The Chair: Mr. Blais.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Raynald Blais (Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine, BQ): I am going to call upon the logic that has always prevailed in this committee's work. Our previous procedure never caused any problems with respect to a reduced quorum. Its only purpose was to allow witnesses to be heard. So in my opinion, the proposed amendment is unacceptable. I would therefore invite colleagues to vote against the proposed amendment.

• (1555)

[*English*]

The Chair: Are there any other comments?

Mr. Blaine Calkins: On a point of order, Mr. Chair, are we still discussing the amendment that was proposed by Mr. Allen?

The Chair: We're still discussing the amendment, yes.

Are there any other comments?

Go ahead, Mr. Kamp.

Mr. Randy Kamp: I understand the comments that have been made, and it seems to me if we don't want to specify a member of the government being there then we should not specify a member of the opposition being there. We should just say three members.

The Chair: Any comment?

Okay. We'll deal with the amendment put forward by Mr. Allen first.

(Amendment negatived)

The Chair: Is there further discussion?

Mr. Blaine Calkins: I'd like to propose an amendment where we remove the last part of the motion that says "including one member of the opposition, where three members are present".

The Chair: Is there discussion?

Mr. Peter Stoffer: That's fair.

The Chair: Any discussion?

Okay, the motion would read that the chair be authorized to hold meetings to receive evidence and to have that evidence printed when a quorum is not present, provided that at least three members are present.

Some hon. members: Good.

(Motion agreed to)

Mr. Ken Epp: And that's on the amendment, right?

The Chair: Now we have to vote on the main motion.

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: Moving along to the motion on the distribution of documents, it reads: that only the clerk of the committee be authorized to distribute documents to members of the committee, and only when such documents exist in both official languages.

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Chair: You have to be patient with me, as I'm new here.

Hon. Gerry Byrne: Control yourself.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Chair: Yes. As a point of interest, my first parliamentary work was sitting side-by-side with Mr. Matthews in 1993, so some of the things I do today I learned by his knee. So if I make mistakes, they're part of it.

Now, to working meals: that the clerk of the committee be authorized to make the necessary arrangements to provide working meals for the committee and its subcommittees.

Mr. Bill Matthews: Can I make an amendment here?

The Chair: Feel free to do so.

Mr. Bill Matthews: As long as there are no sandwiches.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Chair: Moved by Mr. Matthews.

Is there any discussion?

Mr. Ken Epp: Now what are we voting on? On the amendment?

The Chair: No, the amendment is ruled out of order.

Mr. Ken Epp: Okay.

The Chair: You can take that under advisement, if you want.

Again, the motion reads: that the clerk of the committee be authorized to make the necessary arrangements to provide working meals for the committee and the subcommittees.

Moved by Mr. Matthews.

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: The motion on witnesses' expenses reads: 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 made at the discretion of the chair.

Is there any discussion?

Mr. Randy Kamp: I'd just like to point out that in May of 2006 we passed a motion saying "not exceeding one representative per organization", and with the following clause after it.

The Chair: Just so that it's clear to everybody, I'll read out what we adopted on May 9, 2006: that, if requested, reasonable travel, accommodation, and living expenses be reimbursed to witnesses, not exceeding one representative per organization, and that in exceptional circumstances payment for more representatives be made at the discretion of the chair.

So do we want to have one or two?

• (1600)

Mr. Bill Matthews: Mr. Chairman, may I ask where the two comes from? Who's proposing the two?

An hon. member: That's what we had before.

The Chair: These are the general ones for most committees, I think. Right?

Mr. Bill Matthews: Okay, but we accepted one in May?

The Chair: The clerk has informed me that really what we adopted May 9, 2006 is what we should be discussing today, but these ones slipped in. So basically there's a little discrepancy between exactly what we had adopted earlier versus what's on the table here. We're following what we have on the table, and if we need to make an amendment or adjustment to one of the motions we have, we'll just refer back to this one.

With this motion, we're either discussing one per organization or two. Is there any—?

Mr. Byrne.

Hon. Gerry Byrne: Mr. Chair, my own personal experience dealing with fisheries matters and fisheries representatives is that often the full story to be told really does take two representatives—quite often. Most of the organizations we hear from are fully volunteer organizations. They don't have paid lobbyists. They often don't really present position papers that have been drafted well in advance. From my own personal experience, hearing the full side of the story from a particular fishermen's organization or whatever often does indeed require two individuals to represent the full organization from that point of view, because quite often one individual represents one aspect of it and they come forward with a second expert witness from the same organization to represent another side of it.

I think that's where the practical wisdom of having two representatives per organization or having that allowance probably comes from.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Byrne.

Is there any other discussion?

Mr. Allen.

Mr. Mike Allen: I have just a quick question, and it may be something for the clerk. On the interpretation of accommodation and living expenses, depending on the nature of the witness who has to come and if they have other expenses, if they have child care expenses or something like that in order to be here, would the committee deem that part of it, or would it be a completely separate thing we'd have to move? Would that be at the discretion of the chair?

The Chair: It would be at the discretion of the committee.

As of now, we have “discretion of the chair” in the motion—Mr. Epp, you're correct. Do we want to leave it “discretion of the chair” or put it at the “discretion of the committee”?

Hon. Gerry Byrne: Discretion of the chair.

The Chair: Well, we're going to have a lot of visitors from the Avalon riding.

Go ahead, Mr. Lévesque.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yvon Lévesque: Mr. Chairman, are you still on the amendment?

[*English*]

The Chair: Yes, we are.

Mr. Allen put forward an amendment discussing one representative versus two per organization.

Mr. Kamp.

Mr. Randy Kamp: Question.

The Chair: Okay. Is everybody clear on what we're doing here?

We have a motion put forward that says “not exceeding two representatives per organization”. There's an amendment put forward referring back to our May 9 deliberations where we agreed on one representative per organization. So we have an amendment to change the motion that's before us to one representative per organization.

Is everybody clear?

(Amendment negated)

• (1605)

The Chair: We're back to the main motion now, which says two representatives. I'm not going to read it all over again.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Raynald Blais: I move that we adopt it.

[*English*]

The Chair: Mr. Blais moved that the motion be adopted as presented, “two representatives per organization”, “at the discretion of the chair”.

Is there any discussion?

What's that, Mr. Epp?

Mr. Ken Epp: If you accepted an amendment to this motion, surely the motion must have already been moved. So did he move it contrary to some—or was he the original mover? I don't remember that.

The Chair: No. What we voted on was the amendment put forward to refer this to one representative. That motion was defeated.

Mr. Ken Epp: Yes, I'm aware of that, but what I'm saying is he just moved the motion. However, if you have been accepting an amendment to the motion, that means you have already accepted the motion before; otherwise it couldn't be amended.

Hon. Gerry Byrne: He's accepted the existence of the motion.

Mr. Ken Epp: Yes.

If there was a previous mover, then we should not have a second mover. If it was the same person, then this is just a confirmation that he moved it before. This is just a little technicality, but I think it should be done right.

The Chair: Okay. Yes.

You're soon retiring, aren't you?

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Chair: The motion was moved in the beginning by whom?

A voice: I'm not quite sure, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: You're not sure, and I'm not sure.

Hon. Gerry Byrne: Let's just say Mr. Byrne did it.

The Chair: Mr. Byrne moved the motion in the beginning. Is that okay?

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

The Chair: It's for two representatives, and at the discretion of the chair.

Staff at in camera meetings: that unless otherwise ordered, each committee member be allowed to be accompanied by one staff person at an in camera meeting.

Mr. Bill Matthews: I so move.

The Chair: Is there discussion?

(Motion agreed to)

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

I realize it's earth-shattering, but does anybody have any...?

An hon. member: No problem.

The Chair: Mr. Lévesque.

[Translation]

Mr. Yvon Lévesque: I so move.

[English]

The Chair: It is moved by Mr. Lévesque.

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: On notice of motions, the proposed wording is that 48 hours' notice be required for any substantive motion to be considered by the committee, unless the substantive motion relates directly to business then under consideration; and that the notice of motion be filed with the clerk of the committee and distributed to members in both official languages.

[Translation]

Mr. Raynald Blais: I so move.

[English]

The Chair: Is there any discussion?

(Motion agreed to)

• (1610)

The Chair: We keep the best until last: allocation of time for questioning. That's on the back of your sheet. Does everybody have it?

That witnesses from an organization be given ten minutes to make their opening statement; and that, at the discretion of the chair, during the questioning of witnesses there be allocated ten minutes for the first questioner of the Liberal Party, seven minutes for the first questioner of the Bloc Québécois, five minutes to the questioner of the New Democratic Party, and ten minutes for the first questioner of the Conservative Party; and that if there is a subsequent round, the rotation be the same, except that all questioning be for five minutes.

Mr. Peter Stoffer: That's fair enough.

The Chair: Do we have a mover?

Mr. Peter Stoffer: I'll move it.

The Chair: Is there discussion?

Go ahead, Mr. Kamp.

Mr. Randy Kamp: Let me just point out, Mr. Chair, that although I know we followed this practice in the past, it has occurred to me in the past as we followed this practice that it certainly doesn't meet some of our objectives. It doesn't necessarily allow every member of the governing party to have a shot at it, and if you compare the amount of time in a normal two-hour meeting that any one member of either the Liberal Party or the Conservative Party has compared with Mr. Stoffer, as the only representative of the NDP, and if they have a five-minute opportunity in every round and Mr. Stoffer takes that five-minute opportunity, which he normally does, he might well have 15 minutes in a meeting when some of our members might not have any.

As well, of course, if you look at the percentages compared with representation in the House—which I think is one of the goals we try to approximate, at least—this approach, with the amount of time both the Bloc and the NDP get, is nowhere near the representation in the House.

I think we should open it up for reconsideration. I know many other committees take a different approach to this in order to address some of these concerns I have raised.

The Chair: Do you want to move an amendment or are we going to discuss first?

Okay, Mr. Stoffer.

Mr. Peter Stoffer: I remember when I was on the defence committee, we had ten, ten, and ten. The NDP had fourteen seats and we had ten minutes in the opening question period, and nobody seemed to worry about it back then. The reality is there's nothing stopping the Conservative side from splitting their ten minutes to go five and five. They usually have four members show up, and by the end of the day each and every one of them can have their five, or even more, minutes.

I've been on this committee now for ten consecutive years and I've never seen wanting of a question from the government side, especially when the Liberals were here.

So no, I like it just the way it is, thank you very much.

The Chair: Is there any other discussion?

Mr. Randy Kamp: Mr. Chair, under the current arrangement, Mr. Stoffer—the NDP, in fact—would get 20% of the questioning time, all of that by one member. The fact that we might be able to divide up our opening ten-minute block so that each of us gets five minutes—None of us is going to get fifteen, which is what Mr. Stoffer gets at every meeting. To me there's something wrong with that, and that's why other committees, in subsequent rounds—I know you can point to committees that might have equal tens on the opening rounds, but you can be sure they don't maintain that equality in subsequent rounds. Most do not.

So I'd like to hear some suggestions for a change. I can make one, if you like.

The Chair: We'll have some debate first.

Mr. Epp.

Mr. Ken Epp: For what it's worth, I've seen different patterns over the years that I've been here, but I do remember way back in 1993 when I first came here—well, I guess we didn't start committee meetings until 1994—there were a few committees that I substituted on or attended where they actually just went back and forth all the time. It was opposition—and always the opposition started. I remember that, because in the finance committee I was the point guy for our party, so whenever there were witnesses I had to really work because I had the first opportunity for questions. I had to listen, unlike some other members who were reading the paper, and then I asked the first question. Then it went to the government, and then back to the opposition, and always back and forth, with a rotation between the members. Of course, on the government side, they could choose whoever they wanted to take their slot when it came. They made that arrangement among themselves.

It's a little more difficult on the opposition side, where you have the different parties and there would have to be some way of allocating those. My suggestion would be to have it in proportion to the number of members on the committee. Basically what would happen is you'd all get an equal share as members of Parliament, and I think that's good. Committees ought to work that way. There's a certain amount of partisanship that's unavoidable, but at the same time in committee work we do really try, as members of Parliament, to do what's good for the country and for our constituents and for the issues the committee is seized with.

So that's what I would recommend—as an outsider here today, a substitute for Mr. Keddy. That was my experience and it worked very well.

Thank you.

•(1615)

The Chair: Are there any comments?

Mr. Byrne.

Hon. Gerry Byrne: I think we could probably resolve the principle of this in a lengthy discussion, if we so chose, but until there's something concrete in terms of an alternative on the table for us to discuss, I really don't get the sense that anyone on this side of the table is necessarily.... There seems to be an interest in what was previously established by the committee. I think those on this side of the table would be interested to hear a concrete alternative, but in the absence of anything specific, I'd rather call the question.

The Chair: Okay.

Mr. Kamp, you raised the issue. Would you like to make an amendment?

Mr. Randy Kamp: Yes, I would, and I think it depends on whether we're trying to fill an hour or two hours. Often we do have meetings split into two, so let's assume we're trying to fill a rotation for an hour, including some time for witnesses' presentations.

That being said, I think in our May meeting our motion read that the presenter would have up to fifteen minutes, and I think we're talking about ten here. That aside, we could have a rotation something like seven minutes for the Liberals, five for the Bloc, five for the NDP, seven for the Conservatives. And then the next round would be five for each from the Liberal, the Bloc, and the Conservatives. Then a following round would be, say, four minutes for the Liberals, four minutes for the Conservatives. That is generous for the Liberals; it gives them sixteen minutes in that round. The Conservatives get sixteen minutes, the Bloc ten minutes, the NDP five, with the relevant percentages as well, which I can share with you. That, with the presentation time, would be about an hour.

If we had a two-hour meeting, we'd have to figure out what we would do, perhaps, to start that whole rotation over again. That might be one way to do it.

The Chair: To make sure I'm clear—and that doesn't mean everybody else will be clear—what Mr. Kamp is proposing here, as I understand it, is for a one-hour block of a meeting—let's use that—with a ten-minute presentation. Is everybody clear on that one?

There would be two sets of questions around the table. The combination of those questions will give sixteen minutes to the

government, sixteen minutes to the Liberals, ten minutes to the Bloc, and five minutes to the NDP, for a total of 47 minutes. There's a total of 57 minutes for your hour.

Hon. Gerry Byrne: Did you say five minutes for the NDP?

The Chair: Yes. Sixteen minutes for the government, sixteen for the Liberals, ten for the Bloc, and five for the NDP, for a total of 47 minutes, and ten minutes for the presentation, which is 57 minutes.

Mr. Simms.

Mr. Scott Simms: Mr. Chair, I would suggest at this point, understanding the numbers, and I think we understand the issues as we've gone through this before, can we please put the amendment to a vote and then get to the main motion?

The Chair: Are you satisfied with the way I explained that?

Mr. Randy Kamp: That's the way—

The Chair: Does everybody understand what Mr. Kamp has put forward?

(Amendment negated)

Mr. Ken Epp: They must be expecting never to be on the government side again.

The Chair: Back to the main motion moved by Mr. Stoffer. Has everybody heard the main motion? Is everybody clear on the main motion?

Mr. Kamp.

•(1620)

Mr. Randy Kamp: Last year it was fifteen. Do we think ten is better?

The Chair: Time for the witnesses is what you are talking about now?

Mr. Randy Kamp: Yes. It was always fifteen. It was in our motion. I think the practice was fifteen as well. Is ten enough, do you think, for a guy who comes all the way here from Timbuktu and we give him ten minutes? It seems—

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay: Fifteen.

The Chair: Back on May 9 it was moved by Mr. Byrne that the committee's order regarding time limits for witnesses' statements and questions be rescinded and that witnesses be given ten minutes for their opening statement, that during the questioning of witnesses ten minutes be allocated for the first questioner of the Liberal party, seven minutes to the Bloc, five to the NDP, and ten minutes for the first questioner of the Conservative Party, and if there were subsequent rounds the rotation would be the same, except that all questions would be for five minutes.

Mr. Simms.

Mr. Scott Simms: Do you want to repeat that, using the numbers again, the party numbers, just in case—

The Chair: Basically, what I read out is what you have here.

Mr. Scott Simms: Okay, that's fine.

The Chair: Witnesses have ten and then questioners come after.

Mr. Kamp.

Mr. Randy Kamp: I understand that clarification. I think it was amended later. But does this mean with two witnesses it's twenty minutes, a twenty-minute presentation?

The Chair: No.

Mr. Randy Kamp: If two witnesses come from one organization, we'll now have a 20-minute presentation. Is that what this—

The Chair: No. My understanding—and I seek clarification on this from the committee—is that the witness, whether it's one, two, or five, has ten minutes to make their case. Then we open up the floor for questions. Then we flow back and forth. That's how I understand it.

Mr. Blais.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Raynald Blais: I, too, am happy with my colleague Peter's proposal, because it clearly indicates—and I have had the opportunity to take the chair on several occasions—that the procedure is nevertheless at the discretion of the chair.

There can be situations for one reason or another, in exceptional or specific cases, where 10 minutes is not enough. In general, it is. The other advantage is that it allows for a better exchange. The witness is not necessarily here to make a speech; the witness is here to converse with committee members.

The more time we have for an exchange with that person, the better it will be for him or her. In fact, if we allow 30 or 40 minutes for the presentation, the witness will not be better off, in my opinion. So I am very comfortable with the initial proposal.

[*English*]

The Chair: Just as a follow-up to what Mr. Blais said, most witnesses I've had the opportunity to hear have also presented briefs prior to the committee or at the meeting. So there's not necessarily an opportunity to expand in under ten minutes. Also, we have the brief beforehand.

Mr. Kamp, you had a comment?

Mr. Randy Kamp: No.

The Chair: Mr. Epp.

Mr. Ken Epp: There was a question just moments ago about whether if there were two presenters from an organization they would then have twenty minutes. The motion clearly says it's ten minutes per organization. It's quite clear there. So I don't think we'll reword it.

The Chair: Is everybody clear on that?

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: Mr. Stoffer.

Mr. Peter Stoffer: Thank you.

As is the custom within the committee, when an outgoing chair leaves and we get a new chair, it's usually customary—and I hope the committee will agree—that at your discretion we write a letter to the previous chair thanking him for his service to the committee.

The Chair: Is that in the form of a motion, or do we need a motion right now?

Mr. Peter Stoffer: We've never had a motion before.

The Chair: Okay, we won't need one now.

• (1625)

Hon. Gerry Byrne: The leaving chair has to buy the beer.

The Chair: That's a debatable motion.

Mr. Peter Stoffer: Usually after an election you thank the previous chair. In this case, he'll still be here. But I thought Gerald did an okay job when he was the chair, and we should as a committee unanimously—I can't speak for others—just offer our thanks for his work and carry on.

Mr. Bill Matthews: So there you go.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Stoffer. I think we all have agreement on that.

In regard to Mr. Byrne's comment, my family is a distributor for both breweries in Newfoundland. I'm sure we can arrange for that.

Mr. Peter Stoffer: We'll be in your office tonight.

The Chair: Those are the motions that are before us.

I guess the question now is whether anyone has any other motions to put forward or discuss besides the ones we have on the list.

Mr. Kamp.

Mr. Randy Kamp: It might be helpful to have a motion about minority reports. I know some committees have such a motion on their books. I don't see it on this list. If I missed it, I apologize. But it would be a motion something like that every party shall have the right to attach as an annex a dissenting opinion on any report to be presented to the House of Commons by the committee, and that this dissenting opinion shall be submitted to the clerk of the committee within 72 hours of the passing of the report by the committee. I know we've operated with that practice in the past.

I have a couple of other motions as well that we could consider.

The Chair: We have a motion here that I think is along the same lines as what Mr. Kamp is putting forward. It's a proposal of a motion that's used on some committees: that every party shall have the right to attach, as an annex, a dissenting opinion on any report to be presented to the House of Commons by the committee, and that this dissenting opinion shall be presented to the clerk of the committee within 72 hours of the passing of the report by the committee.

Go ahead, Mr. Byrne.

Hon. Gerry Byrne: There's a technical issue about the exact result of describing a minority report as an "annex", and whether or not that impacts on the minority report actually being a part of the committee's report to which the government must respond, or simply an attachment—in other words, not actually a part of the committee's report. The system we were under allowed opposition members, if they had a dissenting view from that of the majority of the committee members, to include a dissenting report as part of the text of the majority report, but to actually differentiate it accordingly so that the government would still be tasked with the responsibility of responding to both the majority report and the minority report.

So unless there's a clear definition of what an "annex" is and whether or not that requires the government to still respond, and whether or not it's actually still part of the report, that would be very helpful. Without that clarified, I don't think I'd be able to support this.

If the issue here is just providing support to the clerk after the formulation of a report—there's a certain desire by all committee members to get it tabled in the House—it does take time for a minority report to be given. If the spirit of this is just simply to say that minority reports must be transmitted to the clerk within a 72-hour period, I don't think that's unreasonable. But the whole notion of the definition of an "annex" or an "attachment" to a report I think is very relevant and needs to be explored a bit further.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Byrne.

The clerk has informed me that there's no such thing referred to as a minority report now, even though that's how it's titled here. So basically it would be an annex to the existing report.

The Clerk: Mr. Chairman, the Standing Orders only permit a dissenting or a supplementary opinion to be annexed to a report. "Minority report" is not parliamentary terminology.

The Chair: Okay. That doesn't necessarily address what Mr. Byrne was saying.

Hon. Gerry Byrne: Mr. Clerk, would you be able to advise the committee as to whether or not the government still has a responsibility to reply to the minority report, to the minority annex?

The Clerk: The government has a responsibility according to Standing Order 109, Mr. Chairman, simply to table a comprehensive report. The standing order reads this way:

Within 120 days of the presentation of a report from a standing or special committee, the government shall, upon the request of the committee, table a comprehensive response

No mention is made of a dissenting or a supplementary opinion, and the Speaker has never made any pronouncement on the nature of the response or what is in the response.

• (1630)

The Chair: Okay.

Mr. Lévesque.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yvon Lévesque: Mr. Chairman, if I understand correctly, this is a new motion being tabled with the committee today. But based on what we have just adopted, a notice of motion must be tabled at least 48 hours in advance, in both official languages. If our colleague wants to present such a motion, he should perhaps send it to us in both official languages and we can discuss it at a future meeting.

[*English*]

The Chair: That sounds fair enough.

Mr. Stoffer, would you care to make comment?

Mr. Peter Stoffer: One clarification I have is that usually when this or any committee does a report, other committees are doing their reports as well, and there's a mad rush to get the translation done. My concern with the 72 hours' notice is, to be very clear, that if I presented or if anybody presented a minority opinion or a

supplementary opinion to a report and we gave it to the clerk within 72 hours, either in French or in English, normally you'd have to have the French or English report translated within the 72 hours. Sometimes that's very difficult to do because the people who do that are usually strained and they don't have enough time to get it done. If you can't get it translated within the 72 hours, according to our motions here, you wouldn't be able to submit that report.

So I'm asking for clarification. If a person submits a minority or a supplementary opinion to a report to the clerk, can it be in English or French, or must it be in both?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Raynald Blais: Mr. Chairman, I have a point of order.

Given what Mr. Lévesque has just said, what I heard you say, and the fact that no notice of motion was tabled, all further discussion on the issue would be out of order.

I don't mind discussing topics that could help us prepare for next time, but in this case, we are discussing issues that are out of order on a topic that has not been presented as such.

[*English*]

The Chair: Mr. Calkins, speaking to the point of order.

Mr. Blaine Calkins: Mr. Chair, I believe that this is a standard routine motion. Just because it wasn't on the papers that were presented to us at the table, I do believe that this is a routine motion and it is completely within order at this committee meeting.

The Chair: This is not on the list that was presented to us today because it was not on our list in our previous sitting as a committee. The motion has come forward from Mr. Kamp. The question has been raised by Mr. Lévesque with regard to a previous motion that we had regarding translation. I guess it will be the decision of the committee whether we want to go forward. The committee would have to go along with accepting this as an addition today. But as Mr. Lévesque pointed out, we just adopted a motion earlier about a 48-hour notice. It would have to be a decision of the committee to go around that.

Mr. Blaine Calkins: That would make every motion that we discussed before that motion out of order.

The Chair: I know.

Hon. Gerry Byrne: The Standing Orders, Mr. Chair, do require, I understand, for routine motions to be considered. However, this would not be considered routine. This would be considered non-routine because, as the clerk has pointed out, this committee has never had a specific motion guiding the committee on the issuance of annexes or dissenting reports.

The Chair: It's in addition to what we have been working with for the past couple of years, really.

Mr. Kamp.

Mr. Randy Kamp: The way I understand the Standing Orders is that a motion relating to matters at hand does not require notice. The matters at hand are the routine proceedings of this committee. This seems well within that purview. I don't see how this requires 48 hours' notice.

•(1635)

The Chair: Mr. Kamp, there's a possibility you're right.

Mr. Randy Kamp: That's what my wife says too.

The Chair: When we're dealing with matters at hand we're trying to set the course for where we're going here now. These were put forward to us today for this discussion. We've changed some of the old ones and we have adopted some new ones. Again, it's not, as such, a decision of whether we want to accept the motion put forward or whether we can defer it until we get it in both official languages. It's not something we have to stick to today in regard to the rules because it's basically a baptism here today, to get this thing started.

Mr. Matthews.

Mr. Bill Matthews: I respect the opinions of all parties, Mr. Chairman. I think in the interest of congeniality that this committee has demonstrated over the years—and we do get along very well—it would be best to come back and deal with this probably at our next meeting, after due notice, when we have it in both official languages.

I'm looking at it translated here, but it wasn't dealt with in the same way as the other routine motions were, where it was in both official languages. I have a copy somewhere—I don't know where it came from—where it is translated, but I would suggest that we deal with it at a later date. That's not going to cause the committee to not function. We're not close to having a report completed yet. So let's come back and do it in a proper manner with due notice and when duly translated would be my suggestion.

The Chair: Mr. Calkins.

Mr. Blaine Calkins: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I believe ultimately that what we're discussing here today is a matter at hand. In the interest of congeniality, and I understand where Mr. Matthews is coming from, as a new parliamentarian who has only been serving on committees for a short time and on a small number of committees, this has been a matter of routine motions that are discussed. I don't think this is a secret or a blind-sighting type of motion that should be taking any parliamentarian at this table off his guard. Simply put, this is typical in most other routine committee motions. It's one that I've seen certainly in other committees I've been at. I would hope that other members of this committee would have seen it in other committees as well.

Because the matter is at hand, Mr. Chair, I believe you have to make a decision as to whether or not the motion is in order. The mover of the motion is no longer in the room right now. I don't believe he is able to withdraw the motion, so we have to deal with it and discuss the motion.

The Chair: Mr. Lévesque.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yvon Lévesque: Mr. Chairman, we are more than prepared to vote on his motion, but unfortunately, he is exposing himself to defeat, because we do not have the text of the motion in both official languages in front of us. He will not be able to table it again. We are proposing that he withdraw it today and send a notice of motion, so that we can discuss it at a future committee meeting.

[*English*]

Mr. Peter Stoffer: And hold off.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yvon Lévesque: It is your choice.

[*English*]

Mr. Peter Stoffer: We can do it next time; there's no rush. You can withdraw....

The Chair: Any other comments?

Mr. Peter Stoffer: Just for my clarification for later on, if the clerk can't answer that question now, maybe he could get back to us at a later date regarding the 72-hour presentation of reports—but not now, later on.

Mr. Blaine Calkins: Mr. Chair, given that I proposed a unanimous consent of the committee to withdraw the motion—

Mr. Peter Stoffer: Done.

The Chair: No, that was supposed to be postponed. The motion still lays there, and in the spirit of cooperation any motion that we didn't bring forward I think we all should agree should be brought forward in both official languages in due time. I think that would further the work of the committee from getting bogged down with something of that nature. So basically we're not going to withdraw the motion.

Go ahead, Mr. Blais.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Raynald Blais: I will try to be as clear as possible. The members of the Conservative Party have chosen to introduce this motion today. In the end, I do not mind putting it to a vote today. It could have been tabled today or tomorrow, and it would have had a better chance of being adopted tomorrow. However, since it was tabled today, we are going to vote on it today.

•(1640)

[*English*]

The Chair: Mr. Calkins.

Mr. Blaine Calkins: Mr. Chair, I would like to propose unanimous consent to withdraw the motion.

The Chair: Is there unanimous consent to withdraw the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Chair: Mr. Stoffer

Mr. Peter Stoffer: Mr. Chair, I will bring forward a motion in both official languages that when department officials or the minister appear before the committee we have it in one of the rooms where there are cameras. That's normally how we operate when they appear before us—we don't often get the minister—so that it can be televised for those outside this room who like to listen in. I'll move that at a future date.

The Chair: Is there any other discussion, or does anybody have a motion in both official languages?

Some hon members: No.

The Chair: All right.

I'm going to throw this out for discussion and see where we go. With regard to issues we want to discuss, at our last sitting we were starting work on small craft harbours. We had just got it off the ground before the House closed.

There are other issues I'm sure we'd like to discuss, and maybe we could talk about that and get some ideas today. If we need some preparation work, then the clerk will have to do that for us.

The only thing outstanding that I'm aware of at the present time is our work on small craft harbours. I'm certain that's of interest to everybody, and I want to get some clarification on where to go on that.

Mr. Matthews, please.

Mr. Bill Matthews: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

We've started on small craft harbours. We don't have a lot of time before the Christmas break; we're probably talking about a month. I think we should get at that as quickly as possible to try to finalize a report. I think we all would agree that we need to give the minister some ammunition going into budget preparations. I think that's very important.

As a side note, I don't know if it has been determined when the committee is going to sit—whether it's Tuesday and Thursday as we've always done—but I think that's something else we need to clarify.

The Chair: Okay. We can clue up on this one for now and that's a point we'll have to get to.

Mr. Byrne.

Hon. Gerry Byrne: I think it's important that if there has been a significant amount of work on the issue of maintaining and improving small craft harbours, the committee should take the completion of that work and the tabling of a report in the House as a priority. But in terms of future business, there are also some other issues I'd like to raise in advance of a meeting of the steering committee.

Do we call it the steering committee?

The Chair: The subcommittee.

Hon. Gerry Byrne: The subcommittee on future business. Another issue would be an examination of the high Canadian dollar and the impact on the fisheries industry economics. There is also the consequence of the Larocque decision. I know the committee has done some work on that particular issue already, but I think there's other evidence that could be gathered in that regard.

Finally, I think the committee had requested that the minister give the committee an opportunity to review a draft of the new fisheries act prior to tabling in the House. The minister declined that opportunity and instead tabled the fisheries act in the House on December 12. Of course we know the fisheries act is defunct as a result of the proroguing of Parliament. However, the committee still has the original draft that was tabled in the House. We understand the minister intends to retable a new fisheries act at some point in time. He has indicated that there will be adjustments to some of the wording of the act relative to the way it was first tabled, but I understand it will just be regarding the preamble of the bill.

I would encourage members of this committee to take the original draft of the fisheries act and to begin immediately hearing witnesses, so we have significant and sufficient time to review the consequences of the new fisheries act on fisheries management policy in Canada.

• (1645)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Byrne.

Mr. Blais.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Raynald Blais: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

As you know, you will not have to twist my arm to convince me that the small craft harbours file is a priority. I do not know exactly how it works, but I have the impression that we can ask the clerk to work on a file for the next steering committee meeting. We have already had a series of public consultations and planned a trip on the small craft harbours file.

I would like to ask the clerk to start updating the file. The current context is rather unique, given that the next budget will be brought down in February or March, and as we all well know, the decisions will be made at one point or another in January, perhaps even before that. We feel that it is important for the committee to submit the report before adjourning in December, otherwise we will come back in February, and it will be too late to meet our objective.

Might I remind you that the objective is to give a lot more weight, particularly to the minister, to possibly influence cabinet and the Prime Minister's Office, and to obtain additional funding in the next budget. Presently, any additional delays in terms of weeks or days reduces the possibility of tabling the report by Christmas.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Blais.

We had a proposal, as I mentioned earlier. We have completed some work on the small craft harbours file, and as a matter of fact we had planned a visit on June 14, 2007, to Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island, and we didn't get to do that. So that will be part of our discussions too, whether we want to travel. We haven't done much travelling in the past, but that was a proposal put forward at that time.

François, in regard to witnesses, is there anybody who is on the list to be called as witnesses on small craft harbours? I know we had the directors general in from across the country. Did we have them all?

Mr. François Côté (Committee Researcher): We had them all, and in addition we had a gentleman by the name of Matthew Bol, who informed us on a study that he did eight years ago about this situation in other countries relative to small craft harbours.

I think that from the workplan I had presented before the committee in early June, we had heard of the witnesses possible for Ottawa. The next step was to travel to the different regions, and we had two or three travel plans, going to Newfoundland, Labrador, P.E. I., Nova Scotia, and Quebec.

The Chair: Okay.

Mr. François Côté: And we were talking about Nunavut as well.

The Chair: Mr. Stoffer, and then Mr. Calkins.

Mr. Peter Stoffer: Just to follow along—and if the researcher could refresh our memory—I think we're fairly on our way on that small craft harbour initiative. It would be good to be able to finish that and put that one to bed.

There are a couple of other issues I'd like to bring forward that we need to discuss, several issues. One is that the government is in negotiations with NAFO right now. We're not quite sure when those discussions will be finalized, but they may—and I say may—have consequences for Newfoundland-Labrador and the east coast in terms of international discussion of the so-called custodial management.

As the committee knows, the minister, when he was in opposition, moved a motion that was passed by the House that said we would extend custodial management to the nose and tail on the Grand Banks or the Flemish Cap. That hasn't happened, and now they're in discussions with NAFO. It would be great to have a clearer understanding from those who are in those discussions—for example, David Bevan—and those who are raising questions, like George Applebaum, to get a thorough understanding in the committee, to really find out what the government is discussing.

The other concern I have, of course, is that on April 1, when the draft of the coast guard report came out, there was no mention of the fact that two vessels would be leaving my province of Nova Scotia and be sent up to Newfoundland-Labrador. They said the report was only a draft and that it would be in the final one, which it was.

Also, in the final—and I'll stand to be corrected—I didn't see anything in there that said the coast guard would find \$12.2 million for the restoration of some coast guard buildings in Quebec. I don't have a problem with that. I think those buildings needed to be restored for the 400th anniversary, and it was a good thing. The reality is they couldn't find \$6 million to fix a wharf in Halifax, and they're going to move those vessels to Newfoundland.

The figures they're talking about—and this should be of great interest to the Conservatives, who like to mention that they're fiscally responsible—the amount of money that the department is saying it will cost to move those vessels to Newfoundland is simply not on. We have reports from other people who are saying it's going to cost much, much more. I know, Mr. Chair, you and Mr. Hearn and Mr. Simms and I may all be having disagreements on this, because no one wants to object to having jobs being moved to their riding. But at the same time, if the reverse situation were true, you'd be raising these questions as well.

So I'd like to have an opportunity eventually, whenever possible and the committee can agree, to bring that discussion back to the forefront as well.

I would agree with Mr. Blais—if we can finalize the coast guard report it would be important—and also with Mr. Byrne. If and when the fisheries act gets re-tabled, it would be very important that we discuss that.

You realize, of course, the estimates are coming, and when the estimates come they'll be the first order of business.

Thank you for allowing me to rant on a bit, sir.

• (1650)

The Chair: We're allowing some ranting today, but we'll be curtailing that when we start our regular business.

I've been informed by the clerk that a business plan for the redeployment of the coast guard ships was received by him two days ago, but now that we're established that business plan will be available to all members of the committee.

Mr. Peter Stoffer: May I ask, then, was there a business case for the moneys allocated in the final coast guard report for the restoration of the buildings in Quebec in that report?

The Clerk: I can't comment on the content of the report, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: He can't comment on the content of the report.

Mr. Peter Stoffer: Very good, no problem.

The Chair: Now we're going back to Mr. Calkins.

Mr. Blaine Calkins: Well, thank you, Mr. Chair.

I certainly listened with great interest to my colleagues as to what they proposed for areas of work for the committee. I thought I would add my two cents.

I agree there are a lot of issues out there. The one area I do disagree with, though, is that I think it wouldn't be in the committee's best interests to call witnesses to testify on a bill that's not even on the table of the House of Commons. I don't think that makes a whole lot of sense, given the fact that we don't know when the bill's going to come back, or if it's going to come back, and in what form it's going to come back. We would certainly, I think, just be adding an opportunity to lend confusion to a situation and not making very good use of the committee's time.

However, if and when that legislation comes, I certainly would expect that all members of the committee would want to move to that legislation as soon as possible.

I do have a recommendation, Mr. Chair. Earlier today we did pass a motion on the subcommittee on agenda and procedure. Perhaps what we should do is utilize that subcommittee. I know we don't often do that, or that hasn't often been the practice, but if there are a number of new members on the committee who would like to have an agenda set up, perhaps we should have this discussion in that subcommittee and bring back some recommendations to the committee for discussion.

If I can add my two cents, as a matter of preference, as a good Alberta farm boy who likes to go fishing I never like to leave any task undone. We did expend some time, effort, and money pursuing a small craft harbour study. I think it would be in the best interest of everybody if we were to bring some conclusion to that.

• (1655)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Calkins.

Basically my purpose in throwing it out for discussion there is just to get some feedback from committee members. My plan was to suggest exactly what you have—that the subcommittee come together and discuss some issues and bring it back to the full committee. It was just to get some ideas, some flow of information. Hearing from the members is always a positive thing.

Is there any other discussion on that, on referring it back to the subcommittee to discuss some work that we can do as a committee from now until Christmas? That's our most important period of time for the present. Then we'll have time to plan what we'll do if we come back in late January or early February.

Is that okay with everybody? We have a fair number of things on the agenda now. Is anybody else aware of—?

As I said, we know who the subcommittee is made up of.

Go ahead, Mr. MacAulay.

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay: Did you settle the meeting times?

The Chair: That's next. We're just taking care of that right now.

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay: Okay.

The Chair: We're doing our best to keep ahead of you.

Now, as to meeting times, we've been given a rotational committee schedule. I don't know if everybody has this. It came to my office; I think everybody has it.

Basically our time slot for the committee is to meet from 3:30 to 5:30 on Mondays and on Wednesdays. Basically that's it. That's the schedule we've been given. It's 3:30 to 5:30 on Mondays and on Wednesdays.

Mr. Peter Stoffer: Is that in this room?

The Chair: I suppose it's in this room, unless otherwise.... It will be this room or wherever else, but they are our time slots. Most likely most of our meetings will be held here unless there's a....

It's 3:30 to 5:30 Mondays and Wednesdays.

Is there any discussion?

Go ahead, Mr. Matthews.

Mr. Bill Matthews: We've met Tuesday and Thursday mornings pretty much since I've been here.

Mr. Peter Stoffer: Is that ten years?

Mr. Bill Matthews: It's a long time.

We have had rotations suggested before that put us at Mondays and Wednesdays, and we went and arranged to do it Tuesdays and Thursdays in this room. That would be my preference, but I'd be interested in hearing the views of my colleagues.

The Chair: Go ahead, Mr. Calkins.

Mr. Blaine Calkins: Mr. Chairman, I don't know that we were given any other options. I know the committee does have the ability to do this, but I hope it would be with the unanimous consent of all committee members, because unfortunately I do have another committee that I'm obligated to be on during the time slot that we moved to last time, which was Tuesdays and Thursdays from eleven to one, so I would be unavailable. I would certainly like to remain a member of this committee. I'd hate to be put in that position.

The Chair: Go ahead, Mr. Blais.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Raynald Blais: I understand Bill's concern regarding meeting times. However, if I remember correctly, the reason we sat Tuesday

and Thursday mornings was to meet the needs of committee members who had long distances to travel.

For me, Monday and Wednesday afternoons cause a lot fewer problems than any other change. So I am in favour of the idea. Given what Blaine has just said, I would like to clarify that the committee can always sit in a room other than the one already reserved, but that finding available rooms might well be very difficult. However, if the room is already reserved for Monday and Wednesday afternoons, it will be much less complicated.

[*English*]

The Chair: Is there any other discussion?

Mr. Peter Stoffer: I can live with it.

I'm just thinking that Mr. Kamp has to come all the way from B.C. He could be a tired puppy on a Monday.

Mr. Randy Kamp: I'm always a tired puppy.

• (1700)

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay: We're trying to make it more acceptable for you, Mr. Kamp, so you will be rested and able to be more open to suggestions from the opposition.

Mr. Randy Kamp: I'm open to whatever.

The Chair: We either go 3:30 to 5:30 on Mondays and Wednesdays, or we try to change it, and I guess that has to come from—I'm kind of getting a mixed message here, so I need to—

Mr. Bill Matthews: It has been changed before, so that's not an obstacle, but maybe we need to do what's in the best interest of the committee members, you know.

The Chair: Mr. Stoffer.

Mr. Peter Stoffer: I would just move that Mondays and Wednesdays are fine.

Mr. Randy Kamp: Could we start with that and try that at least?

Mr. Peter Stoffer: Yes, we could try it, and if Blaine finds that he can't make it, then maybe we'll change it for his schedule again.

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay: He can make it now, but he can't make it in the future.

The Chair: Mr. Lévesque.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yvon Lévesque: As regards the schedule that has been presented, the parties must delegate people who are available on those days. Changing the schedule today could delay committee schedules, since the two might not necessarily match up.

It was the members of the procedure committee who agreed to the proposed schedule, and the people representing the parties on those committees.

[English]

The Chair: We have a time slot. We have a motion by Mr. Stoffer. We have a time slot anyway, so I guess we don't need a motion. Thank you all the same.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

The Chair: We're going to start with our slots as they are now, and if it causes a problem for the committee, we'll reassess that after a week or two and see how things are going. Would that be okay with everybody?

Mr. Matthews.

Mr. Bill Matthews: Are we going to start meeting on Monday—

The Chair: That's the next thing now we have to figure out.

Mr. Bill Matthews: And would the subcommittee meet before Monday?

The Chair: Yes, that's exactly where we're going now.

So we're settled on the slot that we have—3:30 to 5:30 on Mondays and Wednesdays—until we determine that we can't do that for some reason or other.

Everybody's okay? All right.

Now, today is Wednesday, and our next meeting is Monday. What's on the agenda there?

A voice: Nothing.

The Chair: Okay, do you want to leave Monday for the steering committee to meet? Can we do that? I don't even know if we're allowed to do that. We're allowed to do it here, but where's the meeting? I'm the chair.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

The Chair: The subcommittee will be meeting on Monday, and we'll be reconvening here on Wednesday at 3:30 for a full committee meeting, and we'll bring back a report of the subcommittee to discuss.

In the meantime, we know pretty well there's a consensus, I think, around the table from our discussions, that we will conclude our small craft harbour report. So after our Monday subcommittee meeting, we'll discuss the subcommittee report on Wednesday, and we'll try to gear something for the following Monday to start the process of clearing up our...because we only have two weeks left, four days to put.... And that's just if we need to hear anybody, and then we have to try to determine if we want to do any travelling.

I should address the situation with the travel. Should we resubmit a plan for travel?

I'm just trying to get some direction on where we go on the small craft harbour file because I sense the desire to clear that up, if possible, before Christmas. The clerk informs me that this would maybe be very tough because—correct me if I'm wrong—the subcommittee will report back to the main committee with a plan for travel. The main committee then would pass that plan to whom?

The Clerk: It would go to the liaison committee. That is the committee of chairs of committees, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Okay, it would go back to the liaison committee, who will basically have to make a presentation to—Holy God—now we know what the problem is.

An hon. member: Now you know why you're getting the big money.

The Chair: Then that would have to come back, so our time slot here is very limited, and I don't think we can arrange it, really. Can we? No.

Mr. Matthews.

• (1705)

Mr. Bill Matthews: Looking at the time crunch we're in—and it's really that—we want to get something tabled in the House before Christmas. Otherwise the budget will be prepared and finalized before we table our report in the House, so we won't get the impact that we hoped for with the minister and his officials and so on.

I'm wondering if we can't consider a subcommittee meeting tomorrow, and then report to the full committee on Monday. Next week is going to go without any work—

The Chair: Yes.

Mr. Bill Matthews: It's just a thought.

The Chair: Yes.

Mr. Bill Matthews: Whether that presents problems for other members....

The Chair: Okay, the subcommittee meeting—We'll meet back here at the regular committee meeting on Monday. I'm available. I'll make myself available. We'll work out the time with the subcommittee members.

The clerk has informed me, and I think we should have known this—We started this process on small craft harbours. Really, there's a consensus around the table, pretty well, that we finish that file. We don't necessarily have to have a subcommittee meeting to determine that we're going to continue. The decision was made here today to continue. So they can begin work. If we need to bring—

Basically, if the committee is in agreement that our priority should be to continue with our small craft harbour report and try to get that finalized, as Mr. Matthews said, and get it back to the minister, and if that negates travel, well, that's all we can do. Time is of the essence with the report.

We can ask our people at the table and their staff to process them. Maybe as early as next Wednesday we could have somebody in.

Go ahead, Mr. Calkins.

Mr. Blaine Calkins: Mr. Chair, in the spirit of what you just said, I don't know if it's possible for the clerk to get anybody here for the Monday meeting. But if we were able to, and if we did have some consensus here today to proceed with the completion of the small craft harbour study, I would suggest that we forgo the need for the subcommittee to meet on Monday.

If we were able to get anybody in here, whether it's a department official or anybody who could get here in time for Monday, we should perhaps try that and continue on and get the report done.

We also have the ability, as a committee, to offer an interim report at any point in time to meet any constraints that we have as far as getting the report in front of the minister. So we do have some tools available to us.

But if it is the general consensus of the committee, I would propose that we try going full steam ahead on small craft harbours, starting on Monday.

The Chair: We'll go to Mr. Blais.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Raynald Blais: I too am looking for a way to ensure that things move as quickly as possible. The discussions that have taken place lead us to conclude that over the next few weeks, what could cause problems is the trip.

If that is the only problem and we do not in fact have time to travel, nothing prevents us from calling the witnesses here, to Ottawa, to debate the situation of small craft harbours. That would take nothing away from the way we proceed. I also think that instead of devoting time to how we should proceed, it would be preferable for the steering committee to meet at the same time as the full committee on Monday afternoon to get right down to work.

Our time is limited. If we subtract next week from the four remaining weeks, we only have three weeks left to complete our work. If we cannot travel, we won't, but nothing prevents us from inviting people here to tell us about situations that we deem relevant. The first person I would like to hear from on this file is the new...

• (1710)

[*English*]

Mr. Peter Stoffer: Deputy minister.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Raynald Blais: So the first person we should meet with is the new deputy minister. She undoubtedly has her own way of proceeding. We had discussed the file with Larry Murray, the former deputy minister.

[*English*]

The Chair: Just before I go to François, I think we have a consensus that we complete this file on small craft harbours, just to hurry the process—or to move the process might be a better word to use. I'd like to have a motion from somebody pursuant to Standing Order 108.(2) that the committee continue its study on small craft harbours that began during the last session of the 39th Parliament.

That's moved by Mr. Blais. Do I have a seconder for that motion? Mr. Stoffer.

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: Okay, so we're clear on where we're going. Now just help us get there.

Mr. François Côté: Just to remind members what we did—

[*Translation*]

Mr. Raynald Blais: Mr. Chairman...

[*English*]

The Chair: Mr. Blais.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Raynald Blais: The interpreter is telling me that some people are using their BlackBerrys, and that they are causing terrible feedback for the interpreters. Please avoid using BlackBerrys for the next few minutes, or for the rest of the meetings.

[*English*]

Mr. Peter Stoffer: Hear, hear. If you don't have one you don't have to worry about it.

The Chair: I think we had that discussion before, and I hope we won't need to have it again.

Hon. Gerry Byrne: We're going to have some mad cusses if they can't use their BlackBerrys.

The Chair: Anybody who's caught using a BlackBerry will have to pay a \$25 fine.

Hon. Gerry Byrne: Hear, hear.

The Chair: François, go ahead.

Mr. François Côté: I just want to remind the members what we've done so far. I recall four relevant meetings. One was a long time ago, I don't remember when exactly, when we discussed volunteer fatigue, which was one of the issues you wanted to discuss. Then in May, we had three meetings in a row. At the first one, we met Carl Hegge, who is the *sous-ministre adjoint* responsible for small craft harbours; Robert Bergeron, who is the director general of CHS; and Micheline Leduc, who is the engineer responsible for harbour operations and engineering. Then, two days later we had three directors general for small craft harbours for the regions from Newfoundland and Labrador, Quebec, and Central and Arctic. The last meeting was with Matthew Bol, on the international situation.

The next step, according to the plan you had agreed on, was to go to the regions to try to see for yourselves the state of disrepair of the small craft harbours in each region; the need for funding as a government priority, and you wanted to identify the most critical needs; review of the formula for allocation of capital funds to each region; volunteer fatigue, which we addressed in part; development of new CHS infrastructure in Nunavut; consistency of management across the different regions by region; and a look at success stories in divesting harbours by transfer to a local interest. I believe Mr. MacAulay had a specific example in mind for a success story.

That is that. There is a lot in what we've heard so far that we could use already. Now it's for you to decide where the gap is, and how we should fill that gap. Do we need to travel for that?

• (1715)

The Chair: I don't think time would allow us to travel if we want to present the report before Christmas. That's basically where we're at now. Organizing the travel and getting the okay for the travel I think is going to be next to impossible between now and Christmas.

So I think we have to take the advice of Mr. Blais and try to bring some witnesses here from the regions we talked about and have the harbour authorities, people who are involved with the harbour authorities, the volunteers themselves, not necessarily someone in government. Just let them tell us how tired they are and the frustrations they have and the concerns they have.

Maybe we should develop a list. Maybe we should get together as a subcommittee and talk about that and develop a list and have some people here. Maybe what we can do on Monday....

Go ahead, Mr. Calkins.

Mr. Blaine Calkins: I appreciate what you were saying, Mr. Chair. The question I had was this. I believe the committee was asked to prepare a list of places where it would like to go, and in lieu of the fact that we're going to instead invite people to testify before the committee, I would like to know the mechanism by which I, as a committee member, should be proposing people to come here rather than go there.

You've suggested that it be through the subcommittee. I'm not sure whether the committee is in agreement with that or not, but I'd certainly like to have some agreement and some mechanism to do it.

The Chair: Okay.

Mr. MacAulay, go ahead.

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay: I would like to follow that by saying that he could use this as a guide to those whom we might take in here, or what witnesses we might have. I fully agree with you, and we can use this as the guide—

The Chair: Yes.

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay: —when we have the subcommittee meeting, or whatever we're going to do to decide who we're taking in to listen to.

The Chair: Would this be a plan—I'm just trying to move for today—that the subcommittee get together tomorrow, have a discussion on this, report back here on Monday, and advise the clerk who we would like to begin as witnesses, and if anybody has a name, feel free to pass it on?

We could try to come up with a plan for our Wednesday meeting of next week, and if it's possible to get a witness here next Wednesday, we would. If it's not, we would come up with a plan for our meeting to address one of the other issues we laid out and then have our witnesses come in the following week.

Mr. Raynald Blais: Would this be tomorrow morning?

The Chair: Mr. Matthews? It's three of us—

An hon. member: Are you okay with a meeting of the subcommittee tomorrow morning?

Mr. Bill Matthews: That's fine with me. Just tell me when.

The Chair: Is it okay with you, Mr. Blais?

And Mr. Stoffer, is it okay with you?

Mr. Peter Stoffer: It depends what time. We have scheduled meetings already at 9:30 with DFO and at 11 o'clock with our veterans committee. But one of the things I'm asking for, sir, for Wednesday, if it's possible, is to send Mr. Blais' request to have the

new deputy minister appear before the committee to ask her questions about what the government needs from us regarding coast guard concerns.

It's also a good way for us to—

The Chair: Do you mean small craft harbour concerns?

Mr. Peter Stoffer: Yes.

Then, it's also a chance for her to get to meet us and for us to get to meet her—to pay a courtesy call. I think she'd appreciate it, and we would appreciate, as well, seeing how she's finding it and what she needs from us, in terms of coast guard...I mean, small craft harbour recommendations, to go forward.

The Chair: You're hooked on the coast guard—

Mr. Peter Stoffer: Yes.

The Chair: —but she's on the hook for the wharves in Nova Scotia, so don't worry.

Mr. Peter Stoffer: It's a big craft harbour down there.

The Chair: Okay, this could be a possibility. We can discuss it at the subcommittee tomorrow, and then....

What?

Mr. Bill Matthews: Lunch time in your office.

The Chair: It will be at lunch time at my office.

Mr. Peter Stoffer: Done; that's fair enough.

The Chair: Oh, we're not allowed to have a meeting in my office. There's no translation.

Mr. Peter Stoffer: Who said so?

The Chair: The clerk just—

Mr. Peter Stoffer: Well, if you get unanimous consent from us, we can change that, can't we?

The Chair: Is it okay, Mr. Blais?

I think Mr. Blais—

[*Translation*]

Mr. Raynald Blais: I need interpretation.

• (1720)

[*English*]

Mr. Peter Stoffer: If we have unanimous consent, Mr. Blais, why not meet in his office? I don't have a problem. Do you?

The Chair: Mr. Blais—

Mr. Peter Stoffer: He has no problem.

Hon. Gerry Byrne: Yes, he does.

Mr. Peter Stoffer: Oh, he does? Oh, okay.

The Chair: Yes. I think Mr. Blais has explained that he needs to have interpretation.

I don't necessarily blame you, sir.

Mr. Bill Matthews: Bring an interpreter with him; then it will be fair.

The Chair: How do we deal with this now?

If we want to meet as a subcommittee and Mr. Blais needs interpretation, then we need to be in a committee room.

Is this committee room available?

The Clerk: We can always find a committee room, Mr. Chairman—or most of the time.

The Chair: Okay. I need some direction here. Do we need to settle on a time and then figure out where we're going to meet afterwards?

Is 12 o'clock tomorrow fine, Mr. Matthews?

Mr. Bill Matthews: Yes.

The Chair: Mr. Blais?

Mr. Stoffer?

And one other government member...?

Okay, it's 12 o'clock tomorrow. You'll be advised tomorrow morning where we meet.

Mr. Peter Stoffer: Motion to adjourn.

The Chair: A motion to adjourn has been put on the table.

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Chair: Thank you very much for your cooperation.

Published under the authority of the Speaker of the House of Commons

Publié en conformité de l'autorité du Président de la Chambre des communes

**Also available on the Parliament of Canada Web Site at the following address:
Aussi disponible sur le site Web du Parlement du Canada à l'adresse suivante :
<http://www.parl.gc.ca>**

The Speaker of the House hereby grants permission to reproduce this document, in whole or in part, for use in schools and for other purposes such as private study, research, criticism, review or newspaper summary. Any commercial or other use or reproduction of this publication requires the express prior written authorization of the Speaker of the House of Commons.

Le Président de la Chambre des communes accorde, par la présente, l'autorisation de reproduire la totalité ou une partie de ce document à des fins éducatives et à des fins d'étude privée, de recherche, de critique, de compte rendu ou en vue d'en préparer un résumé de journal. Toute reproduction de ce document à des fins commerciales ou autres nécessite l'obtention au préalable d'une autorisation écrite du Président.