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## Standing Committee on Health

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EVIDENCE

**Thursday, November 15, 2007**

—  
**Chair**

Mrs. Joy Smith

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## Standing Committee on Health

Thursday, November 15, 2007

• (0910)

[*English*]

**The Clerk of the Committee (Mrs. Carmen DePape):** Honourable members of the committee, I see a quorum.

We can now proceed to the election of the chair, and I am ready to receive motions to that effect.

Mr. Fletcher.

**Mr. Steven Fletcher (Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia, CPC):** Madam Clerk, I would like to nominate Joy Smith for chair of the health committee.

**The Clerk:** It has been moved by Mr. Fletcher that Mrs. Joy Smith be elected chair of the committee.

Are there further motions?

(Motion agreed to)

**The Clerk:** I declare Joy Smith the duly elected chair of the committee.

Before she comes forward, congratulations.

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear!

**The Clerk:** If the committee wishes, we will now proceed to the election of the vice-chairs.

[*Translation*]

Before inviting Ms. Smith to take the chair, should the committee so wish, we can proceed to the election of the vice-chairs.

[*English*]

I am now prepared to receive motions for the first vice-chair.

Ms. Keeper.

**Ms. Tina Keeper (Churchill, Lib.):** Madame Clerk, I move that Lui Temelkovski be vice-chair.

**The Clerk:** It has been moved by Ms. Keeper that Mr. Temelkovski be elected first vice-chair of the committee.

Are there further motions?

(Motion agreed to)

**The Clerk:** I declare Mr. Temelkovski duly elected as first vice-chair of the committee.

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear!

[*Translation*]

**The Clerk:** I am now ready to receive motions for the position of second vice-chair.

Mr. Malo, the floor is yours.

**Mr. Luc Malo (Verchères—Les Patriotes, BQ):** Madam Clerk, I wish to nominate Ms. Christian Gagnon to the position of second vice-chair of the Standing Committee on Health.

**The Clerk:** It has been moved by Mr. Malo that Ms. Gagnon be elected vice-chair of the committee.

Are there further motions?

I declare Ms. Gagnon duly elected vice-chair of the committee.

(Motion agreed to)

[*English*]

**The Clerk:** I now invite Mrs. Smith to take the chair.

**The Chair (Mrs. Joy Smith (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC)):** Good morning, everyone.

Thank you so much for voting me as chair. It's a pleasure to be here. I'm very excited about being a part of this very, very important committee where health issues are being addressed for Canada.

We'll get right down to business with the routine motions. We need to have some movers for each of the motions. We will be dealing with motions 1 to 5 and then 9 and 10 first, because there are other some motions we will deal with later—numbers 6, 7, and 8. So we start with number 1, services of analysts from the Library of Parliament.

**Hon. Robert Thibault (West Nova, Lib.):** I'd like to ask a question.

Are these the standard motions, exactly the same as adopted by the committee last time?

**The Chair:** Yes, they are the standard ones.

**Hon. Robert Thibault:** There are no modifications to them?

**The Chair:** There are no modifications at all. Thank you for that question. They are exactly the same.

With the pleasure of the committee, could we start with number 1? The motion is 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 in its work.

Can we have a mover for that one, please?

**An hon. member:** I so move.

(Motion agreed to)

● (0915)

**The Chair:** Number 2: that the subcommittee on agenda and procedure be established and composed of the chair, the two vice-chairs, and a member of the other opposition party.

Could I have a mover for that one, please?

**An hon. member:** I so move.

(Motion agreed to)

**The Chair:** Number 3 is 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.

Could I have a mover for that one, please?

Ms. Davidson, thank you.

(Motion agreed to)

**The Chair:** Number 4 is distribution of documents: 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.

May I have a mover for that one, please?

**Hon. Robert Thibault:** Does that mean that if a witness brings some documents to the committee and they are circulated through the clerk or they are given to the clerk of the committee they have to be delivered in both official languages?

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Thibault. We can provide translation services.

**Hon. Robert Thibault:** Then there is no change.

**The Chair:** There is no change. It is exactly the same.

Could I have a mover for that particular motion, please?

**An hon. member:** I so move.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

(Motion agreed to)

**The Chair:** Number 5 is about 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. Steven Fletcher:** I'll move that.

**The Chair:** I didn't even have to ask.

(Motion agreed to)

**The Chair:** Now we're going to move to number 6, witness 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 made at the discretion of the chair.

May I have a mover for that particular motion?

**Mr. Patrick Brown (Barrie, CPC):** I so move.

**The Chair:** Mr. Brown, thank you so much.

(Motion agreed to)

**The Chair:** We are going to go back to number 7 and number 8. We're going to do numbers 9 and 10 and then go back to numbers 7 and 8, because there are possible amendments.

Number 9 is about 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.

Could I have a mover for that motion?

**Mr. Lui Temelkovski (Oak Ridges—Markham, Lib.):** Is that the same as it has been?

**The Chair:** It's the same as it has been.

**Mr. Lui Temelkovski:** For how long will they be kept?

**The Chair:** They are kept for 30 years. Thank you. It's the same as it was before. There are no changes at all. Could I have a mover for that one?

**Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis (Winnipeg North, NDP):** I so move.

**The Chair:** Judy Wasylycia-Leis, thank you so much.

(Motion agreed to)

**The Chair:** Number 10 is on notice of motions: 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, and that the notice given on Friday be deemed to have been given on the following Monday.

Could I please have a mover for that motion?

**Hon. Robert Thibault:** I'd like to move that motion, but I'd like to ask a question first.

It has been my understanding that in practice, it's something that's being considered by committee that the chair has accepted motions on, but here it's not defined. It just says "except for those instances". I wonder if we shouldn't at some point define what that means and exactly how the chair should consider such motions.

**The Chair:** We've never had it. This is the same as it has always been.

Let the clerk go ahead.

**The Clerk:** When I receive a notice of motion, 48 hours, I normally put it on the notice for the next meeting when the 48 hours are past. Then I put it on the agenda under "committee business", and if it relates to a study, maybe under that study. That's the way the committee has normally proceeded.

The reason I underlined the last part you see there is because that's different from other committees, but it has been like that for a few years in our committee, that if I get a notice on Friday, I consider it to have been received on Monday, and I just want to bring that to your attention, whether you want that in the motion or not. We did have it before, but other committees don't have that.

• (0920)

**Hon. Robert Thibault:** But the supposition when I read this is that if the motion, although substantive, is on business that's already before the committee, then it's dealt with immediately.

**The Clerk:** Yes, and that's exactly what we had in the previous session.

**The Chair:** Are you happy with that, Mr. Thibault?

**Hon. Robert Thibault:** Yes.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Christiane Gagnon (Québec, BQ):** I would like to make a comment. If, for example, a strategic issue pertaining to health arises on Friday and we have to wait until Monday, that would bother me. Politics is also about strategy. If we have to obtain the approval of the committee at the next meeting, I do not see why the motion should be sent to all...

I do not really agree with that.

**The Clerk:** If a motion were sent on Friday, it would be considered received on Monday. Consequently, the motion could not be put on the agenda for Tuesday's meeting. However, should this sentence not exist, that could happen.

**Ms. Christiane Gagnon:** In that case, the motion could be put on Tuesday's agenda.

I do not really agree with putting it off until Monday. That would mean putting it off for nearly half a week, which is a long time in politics.

I do not agree.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** As the chair of the committee, I want to make a suggestion. This was put in and was the common practice, which doesn't mean we have to do it that way. It is open for discussion if you want to do something else.

It was assumed that because of the precedent that was set beforehand, we would continue in this way, but 48 hours' notice is something that is very common in a lot of the committees. So it's open for discussion and we can take a vote to see if the committee wants to change it.

Mr. Tilson.

**Mr. David Tilson (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC):** Thank you, Madam Chair.

It has already been discussed but I'd like clarified again what the words mean on the third line, "unless the substantive motion relates directly to business under consideration".

**The Clerk:** I can give you an example. In a certain study, such as the one we were doing before on childhood obesity, if there was a motion proposed at that meeting, it didn't need the 48 hours' notice if it had to do with the study we were doing, that subject matter.

**Mr. David Tilson:** Okay.

**The Clerk:** But let's say a member wants to bring forward a motion for a completely different study. Then you need the 48 hours.

**Mr. David Tilson:** I understand. Thank you.

**The Chair:** I hope that helps to clarify. It's not on every single thing. The substantive business would not require 48 hours.

Ms. Wasylycia-Leis.

**Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis:** Just to seek clarification on that last sentence, which seems to be the issue in question here, this would mean in my reading of it that if a motion was made and submitted to the office on Friday, the 48-hour period would begin on the Monday, which means that if there was an urgent matter on Friday, we really wouldn't get to it until the following Thursday. So I guess the concern is that if there's something new and urgent, we lose a day in terms of dealing with it. I guess that's the reservation. I think as a general rule there's nothing wrong with it, because in fact it means that staff may have gone by the time we send something over. So it's a courteous thing, and I appreciate that and support it.

If there was some way we could address the urgency issue, then I would also like to see that.

• (0925)

**The Chair:** One suggestion would be that we could simply take it out. The other committees don't have that last sentence. That might solve the problem, but I would have to go to the committee.

Ms. Davidson.

**Mrs. Patricia Davidson (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC):** Thank you, Madam Chair.

My question actually was exactly the same as that of Mrs. Wasylycia-Leis. I think with our meetings on Tuesdays and Thursdays, with the Friday hours not being counted in, we are pushing it back for a week. I would be in favour of taking it out.

**The Chair:** Mr. Fletcher.

**Mr. Steven Fletcher:** I guess we can go either way. Or can we just say something along the lines of "at the discretion of the chair"?

**The Chair:** Is that not unanimous?

Mr. Tilson.

**Mr. David Tilson:** I understand the concern, although the notice is just that: it's a notice of motion. So it's put on a list. It's put on the list for debate. It may not get debated for a couple of weeks. I understand the concern. But if you're in the middle of something, if you're having a whole pile of witnesses come, and someone serves you with a notice of motion, it may not get dealt with that day, and it may not get dealt with for a couple of weeks. It's not a big deal.

I suppose what would happen if it were a really serious motion is that there would be some negotiations, presumably, and we would be asking for unanimous... I don't know what it would take. Does it take unanimous consent or a majority? What would it take? It would take unanimous consent.

**The Chair:** I'm going to take one more and then—

**Mr. David Tilson:** Some of you have had more experience than I have on these things, but I haven't seen this sentence, this phrase on other committees. So I'm more inclined, if you're looking for a compromise, to take it out.

**The Chair:** I'm going to take one more, Mr. Thibault. Following that, we're going to have a vote on whether to leave it in or take it out. I think we can all agree on that, and then we don't waste a lot of time.

Mr. Thibault.

**Hon. Robert Thibault:** If everybody wants to take it out, I don't have a huge concern with it. But I have to tell you I've had 18 months' experience on this committee. Mr. Fletcher has had more than that, as has Ms. Wasylycia-Leis. I haven't seen it be a problem in the past.

What it does is give all of us the chance to get informed about these motions before we have to deal with them so that nobody can try to sneak one in on a Friday afternoon that we have to deal with on Tuesday. A lot of us sometimes are in our ridings on the Monday, so it creates a very difficult position. If it is a matter of great urgency, there is always an opportunity for a motion of unanimous consent. It hasn't been a huge problem in the past.

The other thing that it does is that if one party, any party, wants to block things and filibuster things, a very easy way is to have motions and debate them endlessly. If there's a report or a witness you don't want to hear on Tuesday, Friday afternoon you sneak in 20 motions, and on the Tuesday you debate them all. This clause takes that away and I believe makes the committee function a little bit better.

I used to be on the government side and now I'm on the opposition side, and I haven't seen this clause used for the advantage or disadvantage of either side. I think it's good for the good functioning of the committee, and for that reason I'd support it.

**Mr. David Tilson:** Is this in the red book?

**The Chair:** Order.

Could we make a decision on this? Shall we keep it as is?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

(Motion agreed to: yeas 7; nays 3)

**The Chair:** Motion carried; we'll keep it in as is. Thank you so much, and thank you for the discussion.

Now we'll go to number 7, time limits for witnesses' statements and questioning. I'm going to read it, and then I understand that there's some discussion around this one.

Mr. Brown.

• (0930)

**Mr. Patrick Brown:** Ms. Smith, I have a motion for this one. Would it be appropriate to read it now?

**The Chair:** I'll read the motion first, Mr. Brown, then you can read your motion. We'll proceed that way.

That all questioning of witnesses be limited to five (5) minutes per member and that the Chair direct the first two (2) questions to members of the Official Opposition, followed by five (5) minutes for the Bloc québécois, five (5) minutes for the Conservative Party, five (5) minutes for the New Democratic Party; and that subsequent questions be alternately shared between government and opposition members at the discretion of the Chair, with the principle of allowing all members who wish to speak that opportunity;

That during the appearance of a Minister, the Chair direct the first fifteen (15) minutes to members of the Official Opposition, ten (10) minutes to the Bloc

québécois, ten (10) minutes to the New Democratic Party and ten (10) minutes to the Conservative Party during the first round of questioning; and that thereafter five (5) minutes per party be allocated alternating between the opposition and government members, at the discretion of the Chair.

Is there a mover for that?

**Hon. Robert Thibault:** I so move.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Thibault.

Mr. Brown.

**Mr. Patrick Brown:** I have an amendment regarding the timing and questioning of witnesses in relation to questions during the appearance of a Minister.

**Rounds of questioning:** That the witnesses from any one organization shall be allowed ten (10) minutes to make their opening statement. During the questioning of witnesses, there should be allocated seven (7) minutes for the first round of questioning, and thereafter five (5) minutes shall be allocated to each questioner in the second and subsequent rounds of questioning.

**Speaking order:** The order of questions for the first round of questioning shall be as follows: Liberal, Bloc, NDP, Conservative. Questioning during the subsequent rounds shall alternate between the opposition members and government members in the following fashion: Liberal, Conservative, Bloc, Conservative, NDP, Conservative, Liberal, Conservative, Bloc, Conservative, NDP, Conservative, for so long as time allows.

This would allow all members of the committee an opportunity to speak, rather than just one political party.

**The Chair:** Just one moment, Mr. Brown. First of all, we need copies of that motion for everybody, please. Then we'll discuss it.

Can we have a moment to get those copies handed out? We do have it translated, as well.

Mr. Brown, proceed please.

**Mr. Patrick Brown:** Madam Chair, the point of this would be to allow all members of the committee to speak. I know in some set-ups, where the political party is smaller, it might allow a disproportionate number of questions for one member. This would allow members of the official opposition and the government to give all their members an opportunity to ask a question.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Brown.

Is there further discussion?

Mr. Thibault.

**Hon. Robert Thibault:** I can't support this motion. When we have a minister or the Auditor General it has been the practice that we have longer sessions, that a round goes for fifteen minutes. It gives us a reasonable chance to ask questions. In seven-minute rounds, asking questions to a minister on supplementary estimates or the auditor general on a report is not sufficient. The existing system has worked a lot better with fifteen minutes for the government side and ten minutes for all other parties in the first round.

• (0935)

**The Chair:** Is there further debate, anybody?

Mr. Fletcher.

**Mr. Steven Fletcher:** I'll let the Bloc go first.

**The Chair:** Madame Gagnon.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Christiane Gagnon:** Mr. Thibault is referring to the appearance of a minister. We could make an exception when a minister comes, and we could extend the time allowed for questioning. As for the rest, I think that it is more equitable to give everybody seven minutes. In the past, when they had seven minutes, we had five. We had scarcely enough time to deal with the issue in such a short amount of time. I think that the motion on the table right now is more equitable. Perhaps we could ascertain whether there is some flexibility in the case of a minister, but if these are witnesses... In other committees, ministers' appearances were viewed as specific cases.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** We now have Mr. Fletcher.

**Mr. Steven Fletcher:** Mr. Thibault, the motion that Mr. Brown is presenting only deals with the first paragraph of motion number 7. There is a second paragraph that says that “during the appearance of a minister, the chair direct the first fifteen minutes to members of the official opposition, ten minutes to the Bloc Québécois”, and so on. That remains. It's just to the first part that Mr. Brown's motion applies.

**Hon. Robert Thibault:** That's not clear from what he's presenting.

Madam Chair, could I recommend this to the committee—

**The Chair:** One minute, Monsieur Thibault. Mrs. Wasylycia-Leis had her hand up first.

Madam.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

It seems to me that Mr. Brown's motion is very reasonable. Further to the explanation given by Mr. Fletcher, who indicated that the rules were very specific for ministers' appearances, I agree with Mr. Brown's motion. In my opinion, this motion will enable this committee to be run very well.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Is there further discussion?

Monsieur Thibault.

**Hon. Robert Thibault:** The motion as presented by Mr. Brown and the interpretation by Mr. Fletcher aren't clear. This motion doesn't say “striking this paragraph” and replacing with that paragraph, and that the second paragraph remains.

Could I suggest that rather than dealing with this today, Mr. Brown have the opportunity to put the motion in the proper form so that it would be understandable, that we circulate it as quickly as you have it so that there can be discussions among the parties, and that we bring it back for consideration at that point?

**The Chair:** Mr. Fletcher.

**Mr. Steven Fletcher:** I think we could do it right now. We're all agreeing on the second paragraph of what exists now, and if we just insert what Mr. Brown has for the first paragraph, that's it. I don't think there's any reason that we need to drag this out. We've already heard from the NDP and I believe the Bloc, and I don't see why the Liberals would have any problem with it either.

So we just insert what Mr. Brown has said in the first paragraph and leave the second paragraph on ministerial appearances, because I agree that you guys should have ample opportunity, knowing our democratic nature, to ask the minister a question.

Why can't we just do it right now? I think it's very clear.

**The Chair:** Before we continue, I want to clarify everything for everyone. Mr. Fletcher had another suggestion here, and there are a couple more who want to speak.

Just looking at it, it isn't very different from what we did before. There are seven minutes for the opposition party for the Liberals, there are seven minutes for the Bloc—this is what is being recommended—and the NDP have seven minutes on the first round, and then the Conservatives seven minutes as well. So it's all equal speaking times. Then, in the subsequent round, again the opposition Liberals start off, and then it's the PCs, the Bloc, the PCs, the NDP, PCs, and Liberals. It's not much different from what is done in other committees.

Having said that...

Mr. Thibault.

● (0940)

**Hon. Robert Thibault:** Mr. Dryden would also like to speak.

[*Translation*]

There is a difference. First of all, we have had a parliamentary tradition here for at least seven years, namely since I have been sitting here. According to this tradition, the official opposition is given a little bit more time to ask witnesses questions.

According to the current rules, when a minister or the Auditor General appears, for example, we are given 15 minutes as opposed to 10 minutes for the first round. For the other meetings, the official opposition is given two five-minute blocks during the first round, which makes 10 minutes. Ten minutes to question a witness who has made a 10-minute presentation is not a great deal of time. And now we are reducing the time given to the official opposition. I think that this constitutes a change.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Mr. Dryden.

**Hon. Ken Dryden (York Centre, Lib.):** It's really the same point. It would seem on the face of it that you're saying everything is the same, if worded differently, except that in the first round of questioning the official opposition, instead of getting ten minutes of questions, would get seven minutes of questions. The other two opposition parties would get seven minutes of questions as opposed to five minutes, which seems incongruous in terms of tradition, as Mr. Thibault has said, and in terms of the role of the official opposition.

Your motion could just as easily have said that instead of getting two rounds of five minutes each, the opposition party would get two rounds of one minute each, and add those numbers to the other opposition parties. Why would they oppose it; why would you oppose it? We would end up with so many minutes less. It seems quite inappropriate.

**The Chair:** Mr. Fletcher.

**Mr. Steven Fletcher:** The official opposition has more members, so that's where the time could be made up, especially if we did it on a rotation basis. It would actually be in everyone's interests, and the democratic process would be fulfilled.

We've already heard from this side, and the Bloc and the NDP seem to be in favour, so why the delay? I wonder how we should proceed. Do we call a vote?

**The Chair:** We'll have some further discussion, and then we'll call a vote shortly and bring it to an end.

Ms. Wasylycia-Leis.

**Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis:** Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

I haven't been around as long as someone like Bill Blaikie, but I have been around for ten years. In all that time I have never, as a committee member, experienced a two-tier system where the official opposition got more time in every round than any of the other parties. I don't think we want to begin to change that here.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Is there any further discussion, or are you ready to go?

Mr. Brown.

**Mr. Patrick Brown:** If it would be helpful, I'd certainly view it as a friendly addition if we added that this was to strike paragraph one. In terms of Mr. Dryden's comments that you could just reduce it to one minute, that is a bit of an exaggeration, because this is very typical of what happens in other committees. No committee has ever suggested to go to one minute per round, so I think that's just making an unfortunate exaggeration.

**Mr. David Tilson:** You can't say your name in one minute.

**The Chair:** Order.

Mr. Tilson, do you have something?

• (0945)

**Mr. David Tilson:** No, I'm just agreeing with Ms. Wasylycia-Leis. In all committees we're all equal. I know there are parties, but all members are equal. It's as simple as that.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Tilson.

I want to clarify it and take it to a vote now.

We can do one of two things. There was talk about getting rid of the first paragraph and replacing it with the amendment. There was also talk of keeping the second one as well.

Mr. Brown, can you clarify which one you are looking at doing with your motion?

**Mr. Patrick Brown:** It would be my suggestion, Madam Chair, that it's a choice of one of two things—one, this amendment, which

strikes paragraph one and replaces it with what's been handed out, or to do nothing.

**The Chair:** So that's keeping the second paragraph as well.

**Mr. Patrick Brown:** Yes.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Mr. Fletcher.

**Mr. Steven Fletcher:** I would second that: insert Mr. Brown's motion for the first paragraph and keep the second.

**The Chair:** Okay, so we're going to vote first on the amendment by Mr. Brown.

(Amendment agreed to)

**The Chair:** We will then change the first paragraph with what we have just accepted, and we will keep the second, so thank you, committee.

Mr. Tilson.

**Mr. David Tilson:** What Mr. Brown has done is amended the.... I think we still have to vote on it, as amended, don't we?

**The Chair:** Yes, we're getting to that, Mr. Tilson.

(Motion as amended agreed to)

**The Chair:** Now we're down to number 8, 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.

I need to have a mover of that.

Ms. Davidson.

**Mrs. Patricia Davidson:** I have an amendment.

**The Chair:** Okay. I need someone to move the motion first.

**Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis:** I so move.

**The Chair:** Ms. Wasylycia-Leis, thank you very much.

Ms. Davidson.

**Mrs. Patricia Davidson:** I would like to propose an amendment, and we have copies of it for the committee.

I would like to move the following amendment to motion 8:

That, unless otherwise ordered, each committee member be allowed to be accompanied by one staff person from his or her office; and in addition one staff member can be designated from the respective parties (i.e. one representative from the respective whip's office) at in camera meetings.

I'd be glad to speak to it if it's appropriate at this time.

**The Chair:** Please speak to it, Mrs. Davidson, yes.

**Mrs. Patricia Davidson:** I think that most of us who have been on this committee before have felt that it has been beneficial for us to have someone here as a resource from the different parties and I think this will put that in place. I don't think it is going to be detrimental to anyone. I think it will help us all equally.

• (0950)

**The Chair:** Is there further debate?

(Amendment agreed to)

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

**The Chair:** Now, Mr. Fletcher.

**Mr. Steven Fletcher:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

Thank you all. That went fairly well, those motions.

I do have a statement I'd like read to the committee, Madam Chair.

I wish to indicate to all my colleagues on the health committee that, with regard to supplementary estimates A, if the committee wishes the Minister of Health to personally appear before the committee, I've been advised by the minister's office that the only date available on the minister's schedule is Tuesday, November 22. Therefore, if we wish to have the minister appear on supplementary

estimates A, he needs to be officially invited for that date. Pardon me; it is Thursday, November 22.

**The Chair:** Does the committee agree to this?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Chair:** Okay, all agreed.

Thank you, Mr. Fletcher.

Is there anything else?

All right, we've had our first meeting, ladies and gentlemen, and it's just been a pleasure.

The meeting is adjourned, and we will see you next Tuesday.

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