



House of Commons
CANADA

Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Technology

INDU • NUMBER 001 • 2nd SESSION • 40th PARLIAMENT

EVIDENCE

Thursday, February 5, 2009

—
Chair

The Honourable Michael Chong

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

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

Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Technology

Thursday, February 5, 2009

• (1535)

[English]

The Clerk of the Committee (Ms. Michelle Tittley): Honourable members of the committee, I see a quorum.

I'd like to introduce myself. My name is Michelle Tittley. I will be the clerk for the Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Technology.

I am accompanied today by my colleague Erica Pereira, who is also a committee clerk.

We can now proceed to the election of the chair.

Pursuant to Standing Order 106(2), the chair must be a member of the government party. I am ready to receive motions to that effect.

Mr. Masse.

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): I move that Michael Chong be nominated.

The Clerk: Mr. Masse moves that Mr. Chong be nominated as chair of the committee.

Are there any further motions? Is it the pleasure of the committee to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Clerk: I declare the motion carried and Mr. Chong duly elected chair of the committee.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

The Clerk: Before inviting Mr. Chong to take the chair, I will proceed to the election of the first vice-chair. Pursuant to Standing Order 106(2), the first vice-chair must be a member of the official opposition. I am ready to receive nominations for first vice-chair.

Mr. Mike Lake (Edmonton—Mill Woods—Beaumont, CPC): I move that Mr. Rota be first vice-chair.

The Clerk: Mr. Lake moves that Mr. Rota be elected as first vice-chair of the committee.

Are there any further nominations? Is it the pleasure of the committee to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Clerk: I declare the motion carried and Mr. Rota duly elected first vice-chair of the committee.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

The Clerk: I am now prepared to receive motions for the position of second vice-chair. Pursuant to Standing Order 106(2), the second vice-chair must be a member of the opposition other than from the official opposition.

Mr. Marc Garneau (Westmount—Ville-Marie, Lib.): I move that Robert Bouchard be named second vice-chair.

The Clerk: It has been moved by Monsieur Garneau that Monsieur Bouchard be elected second vice-chair of the committee.

Are there any further motions? Is it the pleasure of the committee to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Clerk: I declare the motion carried and Monsieur Bouchard duly elected as second vice-chair of the committee.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

The Clerk: I now invite Mr. Chong to take the chair.

The Chair (Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC)): Thank you very much.

[Translation]

My thanks to all members of the committee for their support. Some members are new to the committee. Welcome to the Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Technology.

[English]

Thank you for electing me as your chair.

The first thing the clerk is going to do is distribute the routine motions that were used in the last Parliament, so that we have something to refer to and can start a discussion about the routine motions to see whether we can adopt them today.

Before we begin on the routine motions, I thought it would be good.... Maybe we will do this after we adopt the first routine motion, but once everybody is up here at the front of the table, we would ask each of you to introduce yourself, so that people know who you are and can put faces to names.

Is it the will of the committee to begin the discussion on routine motions? It looks as though we have agreement to do that.

Does everyone have a copy of the motions that were adopted in the last Parliament? We are distributing two copies of routine motions. One is a copy of the routine motions as adopted by this committee in the last Parliament. The second copy of routine motions that you'll receive is a generic one that is distributed to all committees by the House of Commons staff.

Go ahead.

• (1540)

Mr. Chris Warkentin (Peace River, CPC): I'd like to move the first of the routine motions as it looked in the previous Parliament, so that the committee retain the services of one or more analysts from the Library of Parliament, and so on.

The Chair: Is it the will of the committee to adopt the motion to retain the services of analysts from the Library of Parliament as it was adopted in the last Parliament?

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: It seems to be unanimous, so I invite the analysts to join me at the table.

Perhaps at this point, just before we go to the next routine motion, would you each introduce yourself to the committee and tell a little about yourself, and then we can put faces to names.

The Clerk: My name is Michelle Tittley. I'm the clerk of the Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Technology. I'll be happy to work with all of you. If you have any questions, don't hesitate to contact me.

You can also contact the committee assistant who works with me, and her name is Nancy. The best way to get in touch with us is through the committee's e-mail account rather than through personal e-mail.

It will be my pleasure to work with all of you.

Mr. Dan Shaw (Committee Researcher): My name is Dan Shaw. I'm an economist and I've been assigned to this committee for about 10 years now. I think it's my anniversary right now.

I have a team. Now and then it involves a lawyer when there's legal work, a scientist when there's science work, and I also have Terry Thomas, also an economist, who is assigned to this committee at this time.

Mr. Terry Thomas (Committee Researcher): Thank you very much.

I am Terry Thomas. Dan has told you the truth.

It's a pleasure to be here.

The Chair: All right, moving on then, the next motion to be discussed is to create the subcommittee on agenda and procedure. I'm sorry, just to clarify this, it is as presented in the last Parliament?

Mr. Brian Masse: Yes.

Mr. Mike Lake: Can I get some clarification? Can we make sure we're working off the same page? Should we just assume throughout this discussion that we're going to be working off what was presented in the last session and not the default page? Is that fair to say?

Could we make an amendment on that routine motion, that at the end it would just add "that each member of the subcommittee shall be permitted to have one assistant attend at any meeting of the subcommittee on agenda and procedure". Is that fair?

(Amendment agreed to)

(Motion as amended agreed to)

The Chair: We are moving on to the third routine motion regarding reduced quorum.

Mr. Mike Lake: Just to get clarification, it is a bit different from what I've seen before. Can I get the clerk to explain what happens in a reduced quorum situation? Some members on the committee are brand new to Parliament, let alone the committee process, and it probably would be good to have a quick explanation of that.

The second thing is the 10-minute rule at the beginning, what the background of that is and why.

• (1545)

The Clerk: Committees sometimes adopt a routine motion such as this one to permit the committee to receive evidence so as not to delay the witnesses, to enable the witnesses to make their presentations regardless of whether there's quorum or not. So that's why the reduced quorum is there.

In terms of the amount of time granted to witnesses to make opening statements, 10 minutes is a baseline amount of time; however, it is at the committee's discretion or at the discretion of the chair, if the committee delegates the chair that discretion, to be able to alter the time for opening statements as necessary. For example, should the meeting be divided into two one-hour panels, sometimes it's appropriate to be able to hear more witnesses to reduce the time. So that is something the committee can amend within this routine motion or can give the chair the discretion to do as needed.

Mr. Mike Lake: This motion, though, doesn't really deal with witness opening statements. It's more to do with the 10-minute waiting period before the meeting starts, in a case of reduced quorum, if there are not enough people present. Is that right?

An hon. member: Yes.

Mr. Mike Lake: Not enough people? Okay.

An hon. member: We all wait for 10 minutes.

Mr. Mike Lake: Okay. And in this case the chair is one person who has to be there—yes, because obviously they can't hold meetings without the chair there—and then just two other members, one of whom must be opposition.

So to clarify, you could have the chair, one member from the government, and anyone from any of the other three parties?

A voice: Yes.

Mr. Mike Lake: Okay.

The Chair: Monsieur Vincent.

[Translation]

Mr. Robert Vincent (Shefford, BQ): I move an amendment for the sentence to end at "...dont un membre de l'opposition". We can remove the words that talk about the 10 minutes.

[English]

The Chair: So we have an amendment to the motion. Is there any

Mr. Mike Lake: What was the amendment?

The Chair: I'm sorry, did the translation not come through?

Mr. Mike Lake: It wasn't clear.

The Chair: Monsieur Vincent, could you repeat it?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Robert Vincent: I move an amendment to remove everything after "...dont un membre de l'opposition". Everything after that, everything talking about the 10 minutes, would be removed.

[*English*]

The Chair: So we have an amendment to the motion. I assume the translation picked that up. Is there any discussion on the amendment?

Monsieur Bouchard.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Robert Bouchard (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, BQ): It seems reasonable to me that one of the three people present would always be a member of the opposition. If there are three members of the Conservative party, we really need a member of the opposition. I feel that we would be quite justified in not starting a meeting without a member of the opposition present.

The Chair: Mr. Rota.

Mr. Anthony Rota (Nipissing—Timiskaming, Lib.): Is Mr. Bouchard asking for a person from each of the opposition parties to be present, or a person from any opposition party?

Mr. Robert Bouchard: No, I am asking that the three committee members include at least one opposition member.

[*English*]

Mr. Mike Lake: So it actually makes sense without the amendment, then, just to leave it as it is written. The amendment actually takes away the requirement for an opposition member, so let's just leave it as it is, maybe. Does it make sense to leave it as is?

I think the amendment you're moving actually takes away that requirement to have an opposition member, and I don't think you intend to do that. With your amendment, we could meet with three government members if we wanted to. I'm not sure that's what you intended. I'm thinking probably not.

The Chair: If I could clarify, what Monsieur Vincent is proposing is to eliminate the last part of the motion, so from the clause that starts with "and provided that if no member of the opposition is present 10 minutes after the designated start of the meeting, the meeting may proceed".

● (1550)

Mr. Mike Lake: No, he said after the comma, the comma is after the word "present", at least in English. He said after the comma; that was what we heard.

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Mr. Vincent, can you read your amendment?

Mr. Robert Vincent: I will read the motion in full and I will tell you where I want it to end:

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 (3) members are present, including one member of the Opposition.

[*English*]

The Chair: So can we continue the debate on the amendment?

An hon. member: So moved.

Mr. Mike Lake: You can't just move it. Now you're saying, basically, that if no one from the opposition shows up, you can't have a meeting, right?

An hon. member: Yes.

Mr. Mike Lake: So I mean, if—

[*Translation*]

Mr. Robert Vincent: I did not say anything about that. The motion specifies that "...si au moins trois (3) membres sont présents, dont un membre de l'opposition..."

We take out everything that follows, that is "...et que, s'il n'y a aucun membre de l'opposition, dix minutes..."

The Chair: Mr. Rota.

Mr. Anthony Rota: I would like to ask the clerk a question, please.

When do we use a reduced quorum? Are decisions made with a reduced quorum?

[*English*]

When do you use a reduced quorum, and what exactly is its purpose? Are there any meaningful decisions made during a reduced quorum?

The Chair: I think the whole idea behind a reduced quorum is to not waste the witnesses' time. Often we have witnesses who come from across the country to see us, and for whatever reason, we may not have an exact quorum at 3:30. We have four witnesses who are at the table, members aren't here because they're tied up in other committees or in other business, and if the meeting doesn't start to receive their testimony, then it's wasted time for them.

I think the whole idea behind a reduced quorum is to allow the witnesses to read testimony into the record, while at the same time ensuring that no votes can take place and that no other debate or votes can take place. The whole idea behind this motion is just to allow the committee to receive testimony in the event that, for whatever reason, we don't have enough people here for an official quorum.

Mr. Anthony Rota: That was my understanding, so I'm wondering what difference it makes whether we lop that wording off or keep it there. At least we can keep going, I guess.

The Chair: There is a difference.

Mr. Anthony Rota: Okay, very good.

The Chair: Mr. Garneau.

Mr. Marc Garneau: I believe it is important to keep that 10 minutes in there, because if the idea is to hear witnesses who've come from across the country, but nobody has shown up after 10 minutes, I think we should proceed.

Mr. Mike Lake: Keep in mind that there is no voting during that time. We're not going to pass anything.

Mr. Marc Garneau: It's just to hear witnesses; that's where I was going.

Mr. Mike Lake: Exactly.

The Chair: Does anybody else have any further debate on this?

Mr. Bouchard.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Robert Bouchard: As far as I am concerned, I am in favour of removing the requirement for the 10 minutes. A member of the opposition has to be present, and, if there is none, it implies that the session will not take place.

Given the number of people that the opposition can call on, I feel sure that this situation will not arise. However, we have to make sure that the committee always has this balance, that the three members do not always come from the government side and that we always need one member of the opposition. If there is no opposition member among the three, the session should not be held. That should never happen, in my opinion, given how many of us there are.

• (1555)

The Chair: Are there any other comments?

[*English*]

Are there any other people wishing to speak to this amendment to the main motion?

I'll put the question.

(Amendment negated)

Hon. Michael Chong: Returning to the motion for reduced quorum, are there any further amendments to it?

The amendment proposed by Monsieur Vincent was defeated, so we're now returning to the motion as originally worded.

Are there any further amendments to this motion or is there further discussion?

Seeing none, I'll call the question.

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

The Chair: I will move to the fourth proposed routine motion,

[*Translation*]

about designating a chair.

[*English*]

I'll just read it out so that everybody understands the motion:

[*Translation*]

That when the chair is unable to act in that capacity at or during a meeting of the committee, the chair shall designate a member of the committee to act as chair at or during the said meeting and that such an acting chair shall be vested with all the powers of the chair at or during the said meeting.

[*English*]

We need a mover for the motion.

Mr. Chris Warkentin: I'll move it and then add some clarification.

Obviously you as chair would defer first to the first and second vice-chairs. It's an unusual motion. That's the only concern I have: to get assurance that the first and second vice-chairs would first be asked.

The Chair: This motion is there because normally, in the event that the chair cannot act, the vice-chair or the second vice-chair takes over, but in the event that neither one of those two individuals is available, this motion empowers the chair to designate another person of the committee to sit in the chair.

Mr. Chris Warkentin: Thanks for the clarification; that's great. As long as that's the assurance, I don't know that we need to include it.

The Chair: Just to clarify, normally in the event that the chair cannot act as chair, the vice-chair assumes the chair; or in the event that the vice-chair is not available, the second vice-chair assumes the chair. But in the event that neither one of those two vice-chairs is able to fill the role of chair, this motion empowers the chair to designate another member of the committee to sit in for the chair.

Mr. Anthony Rota: I went through it and put a question mark next to it. That's not what I read into it. It's almost as though the chair can assign anyone. I'd just scrap it completely.

The Chair: Mr. Lake was next.

Are you done, Mr. Rota?

Mr. Anthony Rota: Actually, I was just going to suggest that we have some kind of amendment stating exactly that if first and second vice-chairs are not available, then it would be done.

The Chair: If you'd be willing, Mr. Rota, to move an amendment to the motion, I'm sure the committee will adopt it.

Mr. Anthony Rota: We'll let Mr. Lake go ahead.

Mr. Mike Lake: I can move it, because it's pretty straightforward: that when the chair and both vice-chairs are unable to act in that capacity. And you could then just go from there.

• (1600)

Mr. Anthony Rota: I think that would cover the ground.

Mr. Mike Lake: Yes, it's not explicit enough in the wording here.

The Chair: We have an amendment to the motion to add the words, "and vice-chairs are" in the first sentence. I'll read the motion as it's been amended, and we can vote on the amendment:

That when the chair and vice-chairs are unable to act in that capacity at or during a meeting of the committee, the chair shall designate a member of the committee to act as chair at or during the said meeting; and that such an acting chair shall be vested with all the powers of the chairman at or during the said meeting.

Mr. Anthony Rota: The only change I would suggest is that, rather than "and"—because it sounds as if we're all going to be chairing this committee—it be "or".

The Chair: I'll read the amended motion one more time, and then we can vote on it:

That when the Chair or Vice-Chairs are unable to act in that capacity at or during a meeting of the Committee, the Chair shall designate a member of the Committee to act as Chair at or during the said meeting; and that such an acting Chair shall be vested with all the powers of the Chairman at or during the said meeting.

Mr. Mike Lake: I'm sorry to get sticky on the wording, but just to get it right, when we say "in that capacity", it works in the original wording, but it doesn't work when you're saying "chair or vice-chairs". You're going to have to say "act as chair at or during a meeting".

I'm sorry, but we have to be accurate. If you say "in that capacity" once you've said "chairs or vice-chairs", "in that capacity" refers to something different from what it did in the first instance.

The Chair: So what are you proposing?

Mr. Mike Lake: We're going to have to change the wording from "unable to act in that capacity" to "unable to act as chair". Otherwise, it refers to chairs or vice-chairs.

The Chair: Is there any more discussion on the amendment to the motion?

Mr. Brian Masse: The only thing is that I think that's been the general practice at all the committees I've been at. We can add it if we want to, but I had faith in the chair and vice-chairs that this would take place.

The Chair: We'll vote on the amendment to the main motion.

(Amendment agreed to)

(Motion as amended agreed to)

The Chair: The fifth proposed routine motion concerns the distribution of documents. I'll read it and then ask for somebody to move it:

That only the Clerk of the Committee be authorized to distribute documents to members of the Committee, and that all documents which are to be distributed among the Committee members must be in both official languages.

This is moved by Mr. Warkentin.

Is there any discussion?

Mr. Mike Lake: I have just a minor amendment. This has come up at various meetings that I've been at. I just want to add, at the end of the motion, the following: that the clerk shall advise all witnesses appearing before committee of this requirement.

This way, the witnesses will know ahead of time.

(Amendment agreed to)

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

The Chair: The sixth proposed routine motion concerns working meals. I'll read it and ask for someone to move it:

That the Committee hereby authorize the Clerk of the Committee, in consultation with the Chair, to make the necessary arrangements to provide for working meals as may be required, and that the cost of these meals be charged to the Committee budget.

This is moved by Mr. Warkentin.

Is there any discussion on the motion?

(Motion agreed to)

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Staff at in camera meetings.

Each committee member in attendance shall be permitted to have one staff member at any in camera meetings. In addition, each party shall be permitted to have one member of the Whip's staff attend in camera meetings.

[*English*]

This is moved by Mr. Masse.

Is there any discussion on the motion?

(Motion agreed to)

[*Translation*]

The Chair: In camera meetings 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.

• (1605)

[*English*]

That's moved by Mr. Rota.

Any discussion?

Mr. Bouchard.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Robert Bouchard: I so move.

[*English*]

The Chair: I think Mr. Rota has moved it.

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: Routine motion nine is with regard to 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.

This is moved by Mr. Masse.

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: Motion 10 has to do with witnesses' expenses:

That as established by the Board of Internal Economy and if requested, reasonable travelling, accommodation and living expenses be reimbursed to witnesses who are invited to appear before the Committee up to a maximum of two representatives from any one organization, and that if requested, reasonable child care expenses of the witnesses shall be reimbursed, and that in exceptional circumstances, payment for more representatives be made at the discretion of the Chair.

That's moved by Mr. Masse.

Is there any discussion?

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: We're on number 11.

[*Translation*]

Allocation of time for questioning.

That witnesses be given up to ten (10) minutes for their opening statement and that, at the discretion of the chair, during the questioning of witnesses, time and sequence be allocated as follows, and that a member may yield their time to another:

Round 1, six (6) minutes:

Liberal Party

Bloc Québécois

Conservative Party

New Democratic Party

Round 2, five (5) minutes:

Liberal Party...

[*English*]

It is moved by Mr. Warkentin.

Is there any discussion on this motion?

Mr. Lake, and then Mr. Masse.

Mr. Mike Lake: In recognition of the fact that this time around the committee structure is a little different from what it was last time in terms of the number of people at the committee, there are a couple minor changes I think we could consider.

The first change would be very minor. We were looking at the possibility of changing round one from six minutes to seven minutes to give a more fulsome round of questioning. That's been fairly typical of the committees that I've been a part of.

The second change regards the order of questioning. Round one is fine the way it is, but I would propose that we merge rounds two and three to be one round. You may want to write this down so you can view this as we're discussing it. The order of questioning would be Liberal Party, Conservative Party, Bloc, Conservative Party, New Democratic Party. I would propose then that the independent get his round, and then it would be Liberal Party and Conservative Party to finish. In the first two rounds this order would ensure that every single member of the committee would get one round of questioning and that the NDP member would get an additional round just because that's typically been done on most committees. I know that has usually wound up being a bit of a bone of contention during committee meetings we've been at. That's been the conventional way we've done things. Of course, we did it in the last Parliament, and the NDP's share of seats has gone up, so it would seem to make sense to continue with that practice.

In the third round or subsequent rounds as we go, in committees I've been on, typical procedure has been that we go with an opposition round and then a Conservative round then an opposition round and then a Conservative round. The third part of the proposal would be to just go opposition, Conservative, opposition, Conservative. Typically, if anything, there's only time for two more question rounds, if there's time for any at all.

• (1610)

The Chair: This is to clarify the amendment being proposed here and then we can have a discussion on it.

Mr. Lake has proposed that the motion be amended by changing the first round from six to seven minutes; by creating a second round of five minutes that would consist of the following order: Liberal, Conservative, Bloc Québécois, Conservative, NDP, independent, Liberal, Conservative; and by creating a third round of five minutes that would rotate between the opposition and the government.

Is there any discussion?

Mr. Masse.

Mr. Brian Masse: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The reason this round was created from the original one is that the Conservatives had Mr. Arthur sit with them as an independent member. When you look back at the history, they actually gave up one of their spots for Mr. Arthur, to make it more fair. The original one here recognized the fact that the Conservatives had given up one of their spots for Mr. Arthur.

The problem we have with the new amended proposal by the government is that you want to make sure each member has a chance and that an independent is not going to be shut out of a committee here. At the same time, if you have it this way, their waiting will be extremely heavy compared to that of the other parties, especially if you use a model at the end that goes opposition, Conservative, opposition, Conservative. It doesn't take into account that the original spot was actually given up by the Conservatives to fit in the independent because they chose to have that person sit with them on their side.

I have a few reservations with the model being presented. With the other model we often got through, and if we could get those rounds of questioning in, it would work out. This one gives me concern because it really adds another Conservative spot in there.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Masse.

Mr. Lake.

Mr. Mike Lake: Yes, to address that, one of the things you may have missed a little of in terms of what I presented is that I did not add a Conservative spot. For whatever reason, the way you had it set up last time, the Conservatives had one extra spot for the members on the committee. I recognize that. I haven't added a Conservative spot. The only change actually has been to my Liberal colleagues. I've taken away one Liberal spot because there's one less Liberal member. That's the only change I made. We're giving up our fifth spot in questioning for the independent, according to the plan I put forward, but in the last Parliament we had the same number of spots anyway.

Mr. Brian Masse: I'm sorry, but I have to leave. Glenn is going to take over for me. I have to be on a panel show.

There's one suggestion I would make in the interests of working this through to be fairer. Once again, the independent spot is now up in the ranks really high, and that used to be a Conservative spot. I would suggest that maybe we could have the next Conservative spot be an opposition spot, so that would allow all the opposition to get in, and then have the two Conservative spots after that in round three.

That would be my suggestion. It would guarantee a little more balance if you go through it that way.

The Chair: Mr. Masse, are you proposing an amendment to the amendment?

Mr. Brian Masse: Yes, I would propose that the third round would be opposition, opposition, opposition, followed by Conservative, Conservative.

The Chair: Just to clarify, you're proposing that the third round be...?

Mr. Brian Masse: Basically, it would be Liberal, Bloc, NDP, Conservative, and Conservative.

The Chair: Just to clarify, we're now on discussions about the amendment to the amendment. Mr. Masse has proposed that we amend the third round so that its order is Liberal, Bloc Québécois, NDP, Conservative, and Conservative.

Is there any discussion about this amendment to the third round?

•(1615)

Mr. Mike Lake: I just want to reiterate the fact that this proposal actually puts our party, despite the fact that we gained 20 seats, in a lesser position than we were last time. Under my proposal, we have exactly the same number of questioning rounds as we had last time, and we were first in the last round.

If you'd be amenable to it, my suggestion would be to make round four as it is written here the round three for the new rounds, and we'd just go with that. Does that sound that reasonable?

Mr. Brian Masse: Yes, that's fair.

The Chair: Go ahead, Mr. Lake, and clarify that.

Mr. Mike Lake: Yes. On the third round, instead of opposition, Conservative, opposition, and Conservative, we would just make round four as written last time our third round.

An hon. member: I'm confused.

The Chair: I'll clarify this.

What Mr. Lake is proposing is the following order. Round one would consist of seven minutes: Liberal, Bloc Québécois, Conservative, and New Democratic Party. Round two would consist of five minutes: Liberal, Conservative, Bloc Québécois, Conservative, New Democratic Party, Independent, Liberal Party, and Conservative Party. Round three would consist of five minutes: Liberal Party, Conservative Party, Liberal Party, and Independent.

Mr. Mike Lake: No. Sorry. Are you talking about as amended with his amendment?

The Chair: No, with what you've proposed.

Mr. Mike Lake: Or what I've proposed just recently? It would just be that round three then would be Conservative, Bloc, Liberal, and NDP, like round four looks right now.

The Chair: Okay, I see.

Go ahead, Mr. Simms.

Mr. Scott Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windor, Lib.): I have just a quick suggestion so that we get clarification, because this conversation between the two of you kind of loses the rest of us. I won't chalk it up to our abilities, but nonetheless, shouldn't we have a discussion based on each individual round, come to some sort of agreement on round one, and then move to round two? Can't we work something out that way?

The Chair: Why don't we do this? Why don't I read out the amendment to the amendment, as Mike Lake has proposed, and then we'll pause for five minutes. You can all discuss amongst yourselves what you want to do. Then we'll reconvene and see if we have a consensus.

Mr. Mike Lake: Do you want me to propose it again? One more time?

The Chair: Yes, if you could start from "round one" and go all the way to the end.

Mr. Mike Lake: Okay. Round one, seven minutes: Liberal, Bloc, Conservative, NDP; round two, five minutes: Liberal, Conservative, Bloc, Conservative, NDP, Independent, Liberal, Conservative. At that point everybody has had one chance to ask a question, and the

NDP has had two. Round three would be Conservative, Bloc, Liberal, NDP.

There's one quick clarification that I'd like to get, because I understand Mr. Rota is concerned. It's just a clarification. If we don't have time for everybody in round three, we don't have time for anybody, right? That would be an important principle. I can understand Mr. Rota's concern if we only had time for two rounds. The Conservative and Bloc would go, and the Liberals wouldn't get an extra round. So I would say, for round three, if you don't have time to complete the round, then no one gets any questions.

That would probably address part of the hesitation you have there. Is that fair?

Mr. Anthony Rota: That sounds like a step in the right direction.

An hon. member: It's all or none.

Mr. Anthony Rota: Exactly.

The Chair: We'll suspend for five minutes.

Committee members can discuss this during the break, and we'll see if we can come to an agreement.

• _____ (Pause) _____

•

•(1625)

The Chair: I'm calling the meeting back to order.

We're discussing the routine motion concerning the allocation of time for questioning. Do we have a consensus on this motion? If so, is somebody willing to propose that motion?

Mr. Rota.

Mr. Anthony Rota: I'd like to propose....

I'm sorry, is yours now off the table or on the table? Or what are we doing here?

Mr. Mike Lake: That's what we're discussing. That motion's on the table.

Mr. Anthony Rota: Very good.

The seven minutes works well, I think. That gives us enough time, so I don't think that's the issue. For round one, I think what we have there is acceptable: Liberal, Bloc, Conservative, New Democratic Party. For round two we're proposing Liberal, Conservative, Bloc, Conservative, NDP, independent, Liberal. Round three would be Conservative, Bloc, Liberal, NDP.

Let me explain the reasoning for that. When we look at the independent, what we've seen is that really, for all intents and purposes, it's a Conservative interjection. And that was given in by the Conservatives.

The Chair: Are there any discussions on the amendment to the motion that Mr. Rota has proposed?

Mr. Lake.

Mr. Mike Lake: Again, that goes against the fundamental principle that everybody at the committee gets an opportunity to ask a round of questions. If the independent weren't on this committee and we had a Conservative seat on this committee, where it says "independent" it would say "Conservative". We would need five rounds, because we would have five people sitting on this side of the table. We only have four rounds. There are four of us sitting at the table; the independent is not here today.

We're just asking for everybody to get a shot to ask a question. I'm sure that would be the same thing as you would ask for in the same circumstance. There's nothing worse than sitting on a committee for two hours and not even taking a round of questioning.

This reflects the balance in here. I've done some calculations, and based on what I've proposed in the first two rounds, the percentage of minutes, 25%, compares exactly, bang on, with the percentage of seats Liberals have in the House, 25%. Even with my proposal, we have 46.4% of the seats in the House and we have 39.7% of the minutes in committee. We're the only one of the three parties that has actually a smaller percentage of minutes than we have percentage of seats in the House.

So to cut out a full round of questioning on our part—that's not going to happen. That can't happen.

Mr. Anthony Rota: What if we added another Conservative at the end of round three? How would that work?

Mr. Mike Lake: No, Anthony, no, it can't work. We're the only one—with my proposal as it stands—that has a smaller percentage of minutes than we have percentage of seats in the House.

Mr. Anthony Rota: So if we put the independent back at the bottom and brought the Conservative back up, would you do that?

Mr. Mike Lake: It's absolutely fine if you want to do that. I'd put it that way only because generally when we're questioning, I think it makes sense for the last word to go to the two major parties. But if you want to do it that way, that's fine with me.

Mr. Marc Garneau: So if we understand correctly, the independent would go to the end of block three.

Mr. Mike Lake: No, block two. This is the only committee he sits on, so if he's going to be sitting on the committee, he has to have the right to ask questions. You have to give the independent a chance to ask questions.

Mr. Anthony Rota: I think you guys were really generous the last time I sat on the committee in letting him get on. I think you'll take care of him.

Mr. Mike Lake: But I think he needs to be at the end of round two. Everybody should get a chance. If you're going to sit for two hours, everybody should get a chance to ask questions. It's a fundamental principle of committee.

Mr. Anthony Rota: I think with the nature of Parliament, with independents, I don't particularly agree with you.

• (1630)

Mr. Mike Lake: You know if it were a Conservative member he'd be getting a round of questions.

Mr. Anthony Rota: He is a Conservative member, for all intents and purposes.

Mr. Mike Lake: No, he's not. He's a member of the committee. He's one of twelve members of the committee, like you, or like me, or like anybody else on the committee. When he's here, he should get a round of questions.

I don't mind moving him to the end of round two.

The Chair: Perhaps I could try to ease this logjam here.

I think maybe part of the confusion is that we don't have full attendance at committee today. The fifth member, the independent member, is not here today. He would not substitute in for one of our Conservative members right now. I just give that to the committee as a point of fact. If you're looking at the table right now, you might think that the independent is substituting in for one of the four members here.

Mr. Simms.

Mr. Scott Simms: Could you clarify that?

The Chair: If he were here, the four Conservative members on the committee would be here as well.

In other words, I think what was originally behind the first two rounds of questioning was the simple idea that every member of this committee should have their own slot so that they can ask witnesses questions. As the first two rounds are proposed by Mr. Rota, everyone on the committee would get a chance to ask questions except for one member.

Mr. Anthony Rota: We're prepared to leave it the way it was and leave maybe seven minutes at the beginning, or make it seven minutes for the first round and leave it the way it was proposed originally before any amendments were made.

The Chair: Mr. Rota, for the benefit of the committee, could you go through the rounds as you're proposing them?

Mr. Anthony Rota: Certainly.

Basically, if you look at what was originally written, the only change would be in round one.

The Chair: We have so many different copies of what's happened here. If you could read the rounds and the timing per round, that would be beneficial.

Mr. Anthony Rota: Okay. Very good.

This is the one that came with the binder from the clerk's office: round one would be changed from six to seven minutes, and then it would be Liberal, Bloc, Conservative, and New Democratic Party; round two would be Liberal Party, Conservative Party, Bloc Québécois, Conservative Party, and New Democratic Party; round three would be Liberal Party, Conservative Party, Liberal Party, and independent MP; and round four would be Conservative Party, Bloc Québécois, Liberal Party, and New Democratic Party.

The Chair: Are there any discussions on this proposed round?

Go ahead.

Mr. Glenn Thibeault (Sudbury, NDP): I wouldn't be in favour of this one. If you're looking at what the discussions were about earlier, it's moving us from the opportunity of having those questions earlier.

My suggestion would be that if the independent member is here, I would go back to the initial proposal by Mr. Lake, and round two is what I'm talking about here. I want some clarification on round two. Liberal, Conservative, Bloc, Conservative, New Democrat, Liberal, Conservative, and independent: is that what was proposed?

Mr. Mike Lake: Yes, with just one exception: Independent was bumped up two spots. But there's the same number of speaking spots for each one. Independent wasn't last, though; it would be before the last Liberal spot. I'll read it out to get it right: Liberal, Conservative, Bloc, Conservative, NDP, independent, Liberal, and Conservative.

The rationale here is that as much as I respect the independent's right to speak at the committee, I think there's a huge advantage to having the cleanup spot at the end. I don't believe he should be in that spot. That is the rationale behind the change.

The Chair: Just to clarify, we're on the discussion of the round as proposed by Mr. Rota.

Mr. Bouchard.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Robert Bouchard: Earlier, my Liberal colleague, Mr. Simmons, mentioned making a motion on each round. It seems to me that it would be simpler if we agreed on round 1, round 2, round 3, rather than having one overall motion.

• (1635)

[*English*]

The Chair: Mr. Bouchard, thank you very much.

Is there agreement from the committee to proceed on this motion on a round-by-round basis? I don't see agreement here to do that from some members of the committee.

To go back to the discussion of Mr. Rota's proposal, is there any further discussion on his proposed order of questioning?

Mr. Mike Lake: Are we talking about Mr. Rota's motion right now?

The Chair: Yes. We have a motion in front of us for the allocation of time for questioning.

Mr. Mike Lake: Yes.

The Chair: Mr. Rota, could you just reread the order of questioning so that we can focus on your proposal and continue the discussion or call it to a vote?

Mr. Anthony Rota: Round one, seven minutes: Liberal, Bloc, Conservative, NDP; round two: Liberal, Conservative, Bloc, Conservative, NDP, independent, Liberal; round three: Conservative, Bloc, Liberal, NDP. Then round four would be exactly as in here: Conservative, Bloc, Liberal, NDP.

The Chair: Mr. Lake.

Mr. Mike Lake: I'm going to go back to talking about why this doesn't work. In my original motion, all I did was take the allocation of time from the last time around. In my own motion, I didn't add any time to what it was last time for the Conservative Party despite the fact that we added 20 seats in Parliament. I guess I added one minute by changing from six to seven minutes. That's it.

Mr. Rota is actually proposing that we take away one Conservative round, so the Conservatives, despite the fact that we

added 20 seats, would lose a round of questioning. That is absolutely ridiculous. I'm not sure how he would possibly have the gall to even ask for that.

I would point out that in my original proposal, just going through the four parties, the Conservative Party, which has 46.4% of the seats in the House of Commons, would have 39.7% of the minutes, a 7% smaller share of the time. The Liberal Party would have exactly the same, with a 25% share of the seats and a 25% share of the minutes. The Bloc would have a 15.9% share of the seats, but 17.6% share of the minutes, so they would have a higher share of minutes in committee than they would seats in the House of Commons, which I think is reasonable. The NDP would have 12% of the seats in the House of Commons and 17.6% of the minutes of questioning.

The only party that would have less is the Conservative Party, and the Liberals are actually proposing to cut that down. I think any reasonable person listening to these proceedings would say that's obviously not reasonable, and there's no possible way we could support that motion.

The Chair: Monsieur Garneau.

Mr. Marc Garneau: I accept that you didn't add anything, but you did do a redistribution. So if we keep the same percentage, but we take one of the Conservative spots or the independent spot in round two and put it into round three or round four, you'll still have the same percentage, but it'll be a distribution that we'll accept.

Mr. Mike Lake: Say that one more time.

Mr. Marc Garneau: You presented the argument that you didn't really add anything, but you did do a redistribution. So if you look at what you propose in round two, we had suggested just taking the Conservative off the bottom of round two. But to try to be fair and to go in your direction, if you were to take that Conservative spot and put it into round three or four, we could live with that. Or if we put the independent in round three or four, then we'd have the same number.

Mr. Mike Lake: With respect—I understand you've not been on a committee before—under this proposal, we'll almost never see a round three or four. We'll have rounds one and two, and with the minutes once you get through your witnesses, we'll almost never have a round three or round four. So what really matters in terms of distribution are rounds one and two.

Beyond that, if we do go further than that under the proposal I'm making, it actually hurts us more, because we get only 25% of the questions from there on in. So if we go beyond that, our percentage is going down. Rounds one and two are really the important ones to get right, because typically they will be the only ones we get.

• (1640)

The Chair: Mr. Warkentin, then Mr. Simms and Mr. Garneau.

Mr. Chris Warkentin: I thought I might have a compromise, but I'm sensing that I haven't come up with one.

The Chair: Mr. Simms.

Mr. Scott Simms: Would the percentages Mr. Lake used apply to the first two rounds, or are you using—

Mr. Mike Lake: They apply to the first two rounds.

Mr. Scott Simms: They apply only to the first two rounds?

Mr. Mike Lake: They're for the first two rounds. They go down after the first two rounds for us, but stay the same for you, and go up for them.

Mr. Anthony Rota: Which we never get to.

The Chair: Can I suggest that we suspend for five minutes again and try a second stab at this to see if we can get some agreement on how this round is going to work? Is the committee agreeable to suspend for five minutes?

Some hon. members: No.

The Chair: No, there's no agreement? Okay. Let's continue discussion, then.

Is there any further discussion on the proposal from Mr. Rota?

Seeing no further discussion, I'll call the vote on Mr. Rota's proposed motion. If I could just repeat it again to clarify, it is that the witnesses be given up to 10 minutes for their opening statement, and that at the discretion of the chair, during the questioning of witnesses, time and sequence be allocated as follows, and that a member may yield their time to another: round one, seven minutes, Liberal, Bloc Québécois, Conservative, New Democratic Party; round two, five minutes, Liberal, Conservative, Bloc Québécois, Conservative, New Democratic Party, independent, Liberal Party; round three, five minutes, Conservative, Bloc Québécois, Liberal, New Democratic Party; and round four, five minutes, Conservative, Bloc Québécois, Liberal, New Democratic Party.

Mr. Mike Lake: This is the amended motion, right, the Liberal amendment we're voting on?

The Chair: All those in favour of the motion as I just read it.

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

The Chair: So we've finished the adoption of routine motions.

Mr. Mike Lake: No, that was the voting on the amendment.

An hon. member: It passed.

Mr. Mike Lake: Well, we haven't voted on the motion yet.

An hon. member: Well, we decided that this would be the motion for the—

Mr. Mike Lake: No, I asked if we were.... Of course you have to vote on the amendment before you vote on the motion.

The Chair: We will vote on the motion as amended.

Mr. Mike Lake: No, no, excuse me. Now we go back to debating the motion.

The Chair: No. Just to clarify, when we came back from the suspension, we agreed that we would table a brand new motion, and that's what we just did.

Mr. Mike Lake: What? No.

The Chair: We agreed because we had a number of motions and subamendments to the motions on the table when we suspended.

When we came out of the suspension, we agreed to discuss the motion. We went through a number of subamendments that weren't agreed to, and we have just adopted the last motion.

• (1645)

Mr. Mike Lake: On a point of order, then, Mr. Chair, I don't recall ever withdrawing my motion, which was my motion at the beginning. I don't recall ever having a vote on withdrawing my motion. It's not anyone's decision to make to withdraw my motion but mine, and I never withdrew it.

The Chair: The motion, as Mr. Rota put it, was the motion that we discussed. It was adopted by the committee, and I am ruling that this is the motion that was voted on and that the committee has adopted. There were no other—

Mr. Mike Lake: On a point of order, which authority, what rules of the House say that you can withdraw my motion? We never withdrew my motion. I never withdrew my motion. My motion is what we were discussing.

The Chair: Mr. Lake, as a member of the committee, you can propose any motion. Are you proposing a motion?

Mr. Mike Lake: Right now?

The Chair: Yes.

Mr. Mike Lake: I would propose then, if that's the case, that our allocation of time for questioning be that the witnesses be given up to 10 minutes for their opening statements, and that at the discretion of the chair, during the questioning of witnesses, time and sequence be allocated as follows, and that a member may yield their time to another—

An hon. member: I have a point of order.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Robert Vincent: A point of order, Mr. Chair.

The last motion has already been put to a vote and agreed to. So even if he moves another one, it is going to be defeated. In addition, I feel that we are getting nowhere. If Mr. Lake is not happy with the chair's ruling, he can challenge it. But he cannot challenge the motion that we have just passed.

[*English*]

The Chair: Just one moment as I consult with the clerk. Thank you.

The clerk has informed me that routine motions that have been adopted cannot be amended unless there is unanimous consent. The clerk has also informed me that the committee, coming out of suspension, gave its consent that we would start with a clean motion, which was proposed by Mr. Rota and adopted by the committee. It is now one of the routine motions.

So is there unanimous consent on the part of the committee to—

Mr. Mike Lake: On a point of order, Mr. Chair, when did we adopt the routine motions?

The Chair: We voted on it—

Mr. Mike Lake: No, we didn't. We haven't actually voted on the routine motions yet.

The Chair: We voted on each motion individually.

Mr. Mike Lake: We haven't voted on adoption of the routine motions yet.

The Chair: We've voted on each of the 11 routine motions individually and they have been adopted. Unless there is unanimous consent to reopen the routine motions, they will remain as adopted. So I ask the committee: is there unanimous consent to reopen the routine motions, and in particular, routine motion 11? Seeing no unanimous consent, we will move on to other committee business.

I have two things that I think the committee should discuss. We have some time left. First, the committee has an opportunity to examine the supplementary estimates (B) next week, on Tuesday, at our regular scheduled time, if the committee so wishes. My understanding is that if the committee does not wish to examine supplementary estimates (B) next Tuesday, they will be deemed adopted some time that week, possibly on Wednesday.

Is it the wish of the committee to examine the supplementary estimates (B) next Tuesday?

Monsieur Vincent.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Robert Vincent: I think that we could study the estimates. But we need the minister here. If he is not here, then no.

[*English*]

The Chair: Mr. Lake.

Mr. Mike Lake: The minister is prepared to be here on Tuesday. I would suggest that an hour would probably be a reasonable amount of time for the minister to be here on Tuesday. Is that reasonable for everybody?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Robert Vincent: If the minister appears, it should be for the entire session. It is not enough to have an hour at the beginning to make motions and tell him everything we have to say. Tuesday's session should deal with the estimates.

[*English*]

Mr. Mike Lake: No worries. Yes, I agree.

The Chair: Is it the wish of the committee to examine the supplementary estimates (B) on Tuesday?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Chair: That's what we'll do, then, next Tuesday.

The other item of business that I think the committee should have a discussion about is what we do after Tuesday, on Thursday of next week. I think it might be a good idea for the committee to continue with its science and technology study that had been started in the last Parliament. In my discussions with the clerk and the analysts, I understand that they would need only two more meetings with witnesses to complete the report. If the committee so wishes, that could occupy our time next week on Thursday and also on the Tuesday of the week that we return from recess.

Mr. Rota.

• (1650)

Mr. Anthony Rota: Would it be possible to get a recap? There are three of us on this committee who weren't here for the bulk of it, so it would be kind of hard to continue on a study for which we weren't here. Could that be done in either a separate session or the session on Thursday, to fill us in on what's been done to date and what our findings are so far, so that we can act responsibly?

The Chair: We certainly can do that. We can schedule Thursday of next week for discussion of what work has been done to date. We can ensure distribution of documents before Thursday's meeting so that you come prepared.

Mr. Anthony Rota: Thank you.

The Chair: Mr. Lake.

Mr. Mike Lake: I totally agree with that. I think that's a good way to go. Then that gives us the break week to digest some of it and come back.

The Chair: There seems to be consensus to do that. I think that helps give the clerk some direction to schedule the next couple of meetings.

Are there any other items for business today?

We'll schedule a 30-minute portion of one of next week's meetings to discuss future committee business. Once we've finished with the witnesses for science and technology, which will be in the week after the break, we'll need to tackle something else.

The clerk would like some direction. Should we meet as a full committee here to discuss future business, or would you rather the subcommittee meet? The subcommittee is the smaller group of five members. Are there any preferences? We could meet as the full committee. We're all here, and we're scheduled to meet.

Seeing no further discussion, I thank you very much for your attendance, and I adjourn the meeting.

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.