



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES  
CANADA

## **Standing Committee on International Trade**

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**EVIDENCE**

**Thursday, June 23, 2011**

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## Standing Committee on International Trade

Thursday, June 23, 2011

• (1155)

[English]

**The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Paul Cardegnia):** Honourable members of the committee, I see a quorum.

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.

[Translation]

So we can proceed with the election of a chair.

Pursuant to Standing Order 106(2), the chair must be a member of the government party.

I am now ready to receive motions for the election of the chair.

[English]

Mr. Cannan.

**Mr. Ron Cannan (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC):** Thank you.

I'd like to nominate my esteemed and honourable colleague, Mr. Merrifield.

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

**The Clerk:** Ron Cannan has nominated Rob Merrifield as chair of the committee.

Are there any other nominations?

**Mr. Ed Holder (London West, CPC):** I move they be closed.

**An hon. member:** I was just about to nominate you.

**Mr. Ed Holder:** Never mind then. I take it back.

**The Clerk:** The motion on the floor is that Mr. Merrifield be elected chair of the committee.

Is it the pleasure of the committee to adopt the motion?

(Motion agreed to)

**The Clerk:** Agreed and so ordered.

Congratulations, Mr. Merrifield.

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

**The Clerk:** Before I invite Mr. Merrifield to take the chair, I'm going to ask if the committee wishes that I proceed to the election of the two vice-chairs. Is there consent to do this at this time?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Clerk:** We will now proceed to the election of the vice-chairs.

[Translation]

Pursuant to Standing Order 106(2), the first vice-chair must be a member of the official opposition.

[English]

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

**Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.):** I would nominate Robert Chisholm.

**The Clerk:** Mr. Easter has named Robert Chisholm as first vice-chair of the committee.

Are there any other nominations?

The motion is that Robert Chisholm be first vice-chair.

Is it the pleasure of the committee to adopt the motion?

(Motion agreed to)

**The Clerk:** Agreed and so ordered.

We'll now proceed to the election of the second vice-chair.

[Translation]

Pursuant to Standing Order 106(2)—

[English]

**Mr. Glenn Thibeault (Sudbury, NDP):** I'd like to nominate Wayne Easter.

**The Clerk:** For second vice-chair, Mr. Thibeault has nominated Mr. Easter.

Is it the pleasure of the committee to adopt the motion?

(Motion agreed to)

**The Clerk:** Agreed and so ordered.

Thank you.

I'd like to invite Mr. Merrifield to take the chair.

**The Chair (Hon. Rob Merrifield (Yellowhead)):** I want to thank you all for the confidence of the committee. Campaign expenses will be disclosed.

Somebody just said that the first vice-chair was elected while in Vegas.

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**The Chair:** I think we're going to have an opportunity to do some very good things in this committee, so I'm looking forward to it. I'm also looking forward to earning the trust and confidence of the entire committee as we move forward.

My style will be that I will be rather tight on time, but I'll also be very fair. That's what I think you can expect, so there'll be no surprises on that.

We have to now move to some routine motions. The first one would be services of analysts from the Library of Parliament.

I don't know how you want to do this, Mr. Clerk.

**The Clerk:** One at a time.

**The Chair:** One at a time is what we have to do.

We need a motion for that one. We'll accept a motion.

Mr. Ravignat?

• (1200)

**Mr. Mathieu Ravignat (Pontiac, NDP):** Ravignat.

**The Chair:** Ravignat. I'll just think "revenue".

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Ravignat:** Actually, I've never heard that one before. That's good.

**The Chair:** So you move as presented?

**Mr. Mathieu Ravignat:** As presented, yes.

**The Chair:** Is there any discussion on that motion?

All in favour?

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

**The Chair:** On the subcommittee on agenda and procedure, Mr. Cannan.

**Mr. Ron Cannan:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'd like to propose some different wording.

As a member of the government operations committee...we were one of the first committees to meet, and I think the committee will probably agree upon the wording we used. I'll read it out for the clerk and for the record: that the subcommittee on agenda and procedure be composed of five members, including the chair, the two vice-chairs, the parliamentary secretary, and a member of the Conservative Party. Quorum of the subcommittee shall consist of at least three members. Each member of the subcommittee shall be permitted to have one assistant at any meeting of the subcommittee on agenda and procedure. In addition, each party shall be permitted to have one staff member from a House officer attend any meetings.

It just helps clarify if you need any assistance from the staff level. It's worked well.

**The Chair:** Okay. That's your motion.

**Mr. Glenn Thibeault:** Can I just hear the first part of that motion again?

**Mr. Ron Cannan:** Sure. It is that the subcommittee on agenda and procedure be composed of five members, including the chair, the two vice-chairs, the parliamentary secretary, and a member of the Conservative Party.

**The Chair:** I can tell you, from the chair's perspective, that I don't intend to use steering committees very often. Steering committees work when we can't come to agreement here. I don't see that happening very often.

**Mr. Ron Cannan:** I was just going to echo that. I've been on the committee for five and a half years, and I don't think we've ever used the subcommittee.

**The Chair:** The only reason you use a subcommittee is if things really break down here, but I don't see that happening.

Go ahead, Mr. Thibeault.

**Mr. Glenn Thibeault:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

You say that it hasn't ever really been used in the past. It's not something this committee has had to use. That's great. In the spirit of cooperation, that's a great thing to hear. It just seems that if it's not something you truly use, why do you need to load it up, so to speak, instead of just having the chair and the two vice-chairs in this subcommittee? Just keep the status quo.

**The Chair:** Is there any other discussion?

Mr. Cannan.

**Mr. Ron Cannan:** Let me just comment based on other committees I'm on. It is, ultimately, the committee of the whole that decides the results of the subcommittee. To try to get a true reflection of the main committee, the standing committee, I think it's important to have more representation, equal representation, around the table of the subcommittee. Otherwise, the subcommittee meets for an hour or two and then comes back and redebates everything that was discussed.

I guess in the spirit of efficiency it's probably better to have a microcosm of the main committee.

**An hon. member:** I don't need to add to that.

**The Chair:** Okay, fine.

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

**The Chair:** Now we'd entertain a motion on a reduced quorum.

We have a motion from Mr. Easter.

**Hon. Wayne Easter:** Yes.

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

**Hon. Wayne Easter:** It's extremely important.

Mr. Chair, witnesses prepare briefs, and sometimes, as it happens, there isn't a full quorum. It's a waste of their time, the witnesses' time, if their briefs have not been presented and heard. That's why it's reduced.

**The Chair:** From the chair's perspective, I want to know exactly what you're moving.

The previous committee had two paragraphs, I believe. Which one is it you're moving, Mr. Easter?

**Hon. Wayne Easter:** It is that we be able to receive evidence and have that evidence printed when a quorum is not present, provided that at least three members are present, including one member of the opposition.

**The Chair:** We'll go to Mr. Cannan for discussion of the motion.

**Mr. Ron Cannan:** Thanks.

I'd just like to add a friendly amendment and some additional clarification at the end. It would say one member of the opposition and one member of the government.

**The Chair:** Okay.

Mr. Shory, was that your comment as well?

**Mr. Bandler Shory (Calgary Northeast, CPC):** Yes.

**The Chair:** That is a friendly amendment.

**Mr. Ron Cannan:** Sorry. The previous committee, in the past, had scheduled meetings taking place when we were outside of the parliamentary precinct, especially on international trips, and even when delegations travelled within Canada.

The way it was worded was that "In the case of previously scheduled meetings taking place outside the parliamentary precinct, the committee members in attendance shall only be required to wait for 15 minutes following the designated start of the meeting before they may proceed to hear witnesses and receive evidence", so long as one member from the government and one member of the opposition was present.

• (1205)

**The Chair:** Is that fair?

**Mr. Ron Cannan:** If we're on an international trip and somebody gets held up or something, at least we can hear from the witnesses, as long as there are two people there.

**Hon. Wayne Easter:** That's fine for me.

**The Chair:** Okay, we'll accept that, all inclusive, as part of the motion.

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

**The Chair:** Are we to entertain a motion on the rounds of questioning?

Go ahead, Mr. Cannan.

**Mr. Ron Cannan:** Thank you, Chair.

There's been somewhat of a set pattern from the other committees, and I just put it forward for discussion.

The first round would be for seven minutes. It would start off with the NDP, then go Conservative, Liberal, Conservative. The next round would be NDP, Conservative, Conservative. The third round would be NDP, Conservative, NDP, Conservative, Conservative, Liberal.

The first round would be seven minutes and subsequent ones would be five minutes.

**Hon. Wayne Easter:** Could you run that by me again, a little slower?

**Mr. Ron Cannan:** Sure. It would be NDP, Conservative, and then Liberal, Conservative; NDP, Conservative, Conservative; NDP, Conservative, NDP, Conservative, Conservative, Liberal.

That way everybody gets to speak at least once.

**Hon. Wayne Easter:** It's not been the traditional—

**The Chair:** Just a second.

Okay, Mr. Easter.

**Hon. Wayne Easter:** That hasn't been the way it's been traditionally done. Certainly the first round is fine, but I know with the committees I've been on, we always gave both the third and fourth parties the opportunity to come in prior to that. Sometimes they didn't use it and sometimes they did.

The government has the majority. I see the point. I know when we were on the government side, sometimes it was disappointing that you'd have three members of the governing party not getting the opportunity to question.

The opposition party's job is to hold the government to account. I think the questioning from the opposition side is crucial, so I would argue against having the Liberal's second round down that far.

**The Chair:** Mr. Holder.

**Mr. Ed Holder:** Thank you, Chair.

In response to Mr. Easter, I recall having been on this committee since I was elected in 2008, when the NDP, frankly, only had one question on international trade each time. To be honest, the fact that there's actually a second question, even if it's far down the list, I would say is certainly significantly augmented from what the NDP enjoyed in the last session.

I've seen committees where the third party is now limited to one representation in the first round and that's all. My sense in looking at it is that the Liberals now have a second question in there, and hopefully there will be time for all of us to be able to get all of our questions in.

What is key, though, and I think the point was made earlier, is that it is important that all members have their first opportunity to ask questions. This isn't so much about the opposition trying to hold the government to account; this is getting to the truth.

Frankly, the opportunity to ask questions of our witnesses is a privilege that we should all enjoy. I'm comfortable with supporting the motion as it stands.

**The Chair:** The other point of clarification, from the chair's perspective, is whether the first round is seven minutes. Is that what the motion is? Then it's five minutes. The Liberals would have seven minutes. Is that it?

**An hon. member:** Yes.

**The Chair:** Okay.

Mr. Thibeault.

**Mr. Glenn Thibeault:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I don't see any problem with the first round whatsoever. I sit on the industry committee as well, and it's very similar.

We've been hearing how other committees have been working, so I think the first round is something we could all agree on. It's the second and third rounds...and I think I'll look to those who have been on this committee before to clarify a few things first. Then, if we want to, we can try to have some discussion into the second round.

How often do you get to a third round in this committee? Is it something you get to often? Is it something you don't get to too often?

If it's only seven minutes per...that's 28 minutes in, in the first round. I think we should be looking at having more questions in the second round. Then in the third round you can start all over again. If there is an opportunity, leave it to the discretion of the chair, or something along those lines, in relation to having the third round.

What we've been talking about in other committees is trying to do NDP, Conservative, NDP, Conservative, and, if possible, having a Liberal question in there and having more of a load-up on the second round. And then leave the third round to the discretion of the chair, or something along those lines.

•(1210)

**The Chair:** Are you looking at change?

**Mr. Glenn Thibeault:** Well, I'm putting that out there for discussion. I'd really like to see some discussion about changing the second round.

**The Chair:** Okay.

Mr. Shory.

**Mr. Devinder Shory:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

In response to Mr. Easter, I have one thing in my mind: that all members are equal. Every member should have an opportunity to ask a question before we go to the Liberals for a second time. As a matter of fact, I would suggest that we should restart after all members have asked their questions.

**The Chair:** Okay. The discussion will go to Mr. Ravignat.

**Mr. Mathieu Ravignat:** I think in the interest of making sure we have a well-balanced view of all parties present...there are seven spots for six; membership is six, right? I see six people here. You have seven. I'd be in favour of making a proposal that one additional slot be given to Mr. Easter.

**The Chair:** Mr. Keddy.

**Mr. Gerald Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Just for clarification, the lineup as suggested reflects within one percentage point the representation in the House. The point of members speaking at committee comes directly from representation in the House.

The other point, with respect to Mr. Easter...I remember when Mr. Easter was chair of a committee. I sat on that committee as a rump party of 20 members and we got one chance to speak in the first round and no chances in the second round or the third round. Once in a while we got to speak at the discretion of the chair, but seldom.

It's broken up and is a direct representation of the parties in the House.

**The Chair:** Mr. Easter.

**Hon. Wayne Easter:** It's very seldom you can get to the third round. Sometimes you'll start it, so with respect to the Liberal's second questions, it's probably a moot point anyway.

On the second round, give us that list again, Ron. It's NDP, Conservative, Conservative?

**The Chair:** Just do it through the chair, and then we've got it. Do you have it here?

Mr. Cannan.

**Mr. Ron Cannan:** The revised...?

**Hon. Wayne Easter:** The one you proposed. I'm talking about the second round.

**Mr. Ron Cannan:** It was NDP, Conservative, Conservative.

**Hon. Wayne Easter:** It's up to the NDP to make their own arguments, but I really do think that...in your first two rounds you'll have really had four Conservative and only two NDP... I really think you need another NDP in that second round.

**Mr. Ron Cannan:** Mr. Chair, Mr. Thibeault had asked for a friendly amendment, so I can go back to NDP, Conservative, Liberal, Conservative. That's seven minutes in the first round. The second round is NDP, Conservative. Then we go back to NDP, Conservative, Conservative.

**Hon. Wayne Easter:** Okay. If that's the way it is, that's fine.

**The Chair:** And NDP, Conservative. It looks as if we're getting a consensus here.

**Mr. Gerald Keddy:** This formula should allow for every member to speak in the first two rounds.

**The Chair:** Okay.

**Hon. Wayne Easter:** I think that's a better balance.

**The Chair:** Are we all right with that?

Go ahead, Mr. Thibeault.

**Mr. Glenn Thibeault:** Thanks. Just for clarification then, Mr. Cannan, for the second round we are then.... I was going to move a motion, but if you are talking about going NDP, Conservative, NDP, Conservative in the second round, and then leaving the third round, if you have that time, to the discretion of the chair, or something along those lines...or does that even matter? If you have that time, then....

•(1215)

**Mr. Ron Cannan:** It would be Conservative, NDP, Conservative, to give everybody a chance to speak.

**Mr. Glenn Thibeault:** Got it.

**The Chair:** I want to be clear on the order.

The first round...

**Mr. Ron Cannan:** It's seven minutes: NDP, Conservative, Liberal, Conservative. Then we go to five minutes: NDP, Conservative, NDP, Conservative, Conservative, NDP, Conservative.

**The Chair:** We're good? All in favour? It looks as if we've got consensus here.

**Hon. Wayne Easter:** And some of that is at the discretion of the chair anyway.

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

**The Chair:** We need to entertain a motion on the distribution of documents.

Mr. Thibeault.

**Mr. Glenn Thibeault:** I will move the motion as presented.

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

**The Chair:** Working meals? Mr. Easter moves it.

Ms. Péclet, did you have something to add?

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Ève Péclet (La Pointe-de-l'Île, NDP):** My name is Péclet.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Ms. Péclet, do you have something to add?

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Ève Péclet:** I know that I am the only woman on this committee.

[*English*]

I'm sorry. I'm the only woman on the committee, so I would just like.... I don't know how to say it in English, so I'll say it in French.

[*Translation*]

I simply want to ensure respect for equality, during questions. I am the only woman. I just wanted to mention it, that is all.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** I'm sorry, as the chair I didn't have my mike in, so I'm not exactly sure.... It didn't come through in English or French.

I'll carry on. Is there any other discussion on it? We're all good?

**Ms. Ève Péclet:** It's not a choice of my party. It's me only. It's my feminine side.

**The Chair:** Okay. We're talking about working meals. That's the motion.

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

**The Chair:** I will entertain a motion on witness expenses. It is moved by Mr. Holder.

Is there any discussion?

Go ahead, Mr. Keddy.

**Mr. Gerald Keddy:** With regard to witness expenses, I and all of us at committee have seen that sometimes an organization will send two witnesses when it doesn't really have to send two. Wherever possible, one witness from an organization usually is enough expense for the committee to pay. If we sometimes need two, at the discretion of the chair, that would be fine, but whenever possible, I think one witness per organization is generally enough if we're paying expenses for them. If they're paying their own expenses, they can bring as many as they want.

**The Chair:** Okay, but that's not changing this motion.

**Mr. Gerald Keddy:** Yes. It would be at the discretion of the chair.

**The Chair:** It's just determining how many we need, which you wouldn't put here, but that's a good debate.

Go ahead, Mr. Shipley.

**Mr. Bev Shipley (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, CPC):** I don't know if it has to be noted or not, but some other committees are using video conferencing. Having video conferencing is as appropriate, quite honestly, as having somebody sit at the end of the table. Sometimes votes will come on in the middle of a committee, and they sit, and we've paid thousands of dollars to bring them in. If we can use video, I think we should be doing that.

**The Chair:** Yes, it respects their time and our funding a lot better.

**Mr. Bev Shipley:** I don't know if it has to be, Mr. Chair—

**The Chair:** It's not in the motion, but that's a good debate that we can have at another time.

As far as the motion goes, are we all in favour?

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

**The Chair:** The next routine motion concerns staff at in camera meetings. It is moved as it is presented here by Mr. Cannan.

Mr. Cannan, do you have anything to add to that?

**Mr. Ron Cannan:** No, I simply moved the motion.

• (1220)

**The Chair:** Which motion...?

Mr. Ravnat, could you just read out what you would like to have? That would help us.

**Mr. Mathieu Ravnat:** The motion reads as follows: that unless otherwise ordered, each committee member be allowed to have one staff member present from their office and from their party at in camera meetings.

**The Chair:** Is it “and from their party”? That's the question.

**Mr. Mathieu Ravnat:** It's “or”; it's “or from their party”.

**The Chair:** Let's open that up to debate. Which is it that you are putting, “and” or “or”?

**Mr. Mathieu Ravnat:** I'm putting “and”.

**The Chair:** It's “and”.

Go ahead, Mr. Shory.

**Mr. Devinder Shory:** If we agree to a staff member of the member and a member of the party, as clarification, will that basically allow us to bring six staff members and six members from the party?

**The Chair:** That's hardly in camera, is it?

**Mr. Devinder Shory:** No, that's too many.

**The Chair:** Go ahead, Mr. Cannan.

**Mr. Ron Cannan:** I was just looking at the proposed wording and I have a slight change at the end, because in our past experience we had to look at bringing in some House officers.

It reads that in addition, each party shall be permitted to have one staff member from a House officer attend in camera meetings.

**The Chair:** Are you moving that as an amendment?

**Mr. Ron Cannan:** Yes.

**The Chair:** Is everyone clear on the amendment?

Just repeat that again, please.

**Mr. Ron Cannan:** Sure.

The wording you have in front of you says, in the last sentence, that in addition, each party shall be permitted to have one staff member from a House officer attend in camera meetings.

**The Chair:** Okay. I don't see a lot of debate here.

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

**The Chair:** Now we're talking about in camera meetings transcripts. Are we to entertain a motion?

Mr. Easter moves as presented. It looks as if there's some confusion here as well. Which one are you presenting?

**Hon. Wayne Easter:** It's that in camera meetings be transcribed and that the transcription be kept with the clerk of the committee for later consultation by members of the committee.

**The Chair:** Are we all good?

**An hon. member:** Or by their staff?

**The Chair:** No.

Mr. Cannan

**Mr. Ron Cannan:** By members of Parliament, instead of members of the committee?

**Hon. Wayne Easter:** I think it should be members of the committee because it was an in camera meeting of members of the committee—

**Mr. Ron Cannan:** All MPs are ex-officio to committees anyway.

**Hon. Wayne Easter:** They are, but I don't know why anyone else who wasn't at the meeting would want to see what's in there. If there's a leak from a committee, it's those who were at the committee.

**The Chair:** Let's just do this through the chair.

I think what is being presented, and the clerk is saying that this would include all 308 members if it was that—

**Hon. Wayne Easter:** Mr. Chair, what I'm saying is that the motion I presented says “for later consultation by members of the committee”. That's only the members of the committee. It's not staff; only members of the committee.

**The Chair:** Okay.

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

**The Chair:** Notice of motions.

Are you going to entertain a motion, Mr. Cannan?

**Mr. Ron Cannan:** The wording we have, and then I have to ask for the committee to clarify it, is this: that 48 hours' notice shall be required for any substantive motion to be considered by the

committee, and that the motion shall be filed and distributed to members by the clerk in both official languages. Completed motions that are received by close of business day shall be distributed to members the same day.

I'd like to confirm with the committee that the House rule normally is two sleeps, or 48 hours. As the close of business, do you want to put in 5 p.m. or 6 p.m.?

• (1225)

**The Chair:** Normal closing is 6 p.m. Is that what you're saying?

**The Clerk:** Six p.m. is the last time when you can submit a notice into the House for the next day, the notice period. Some committees have adopted 4 o'clock because it allows time for translation and then we can send it the same day.

**The Chair:** At 4 o'clock.

Mr. Hiebert.

**Mr. Russ Hiebert (South Surrey—White Rock—Cloverdale, CPC):** I would just want there to be a situation where if notice were given there would be time for the clerk to receive notice, confirm notice was received, and notify other members the day it was received.

Does 4 o'clock give you enough time to get back to everybody, so we know Tuesday and not wake up Wednesday with this on our...?

**The Clerk:** If you submit it before 4 o'clock Tuesday, it should be sent to members before Wednesday morning, in the sense that before I leave on Tuesday I should send it out.

**Mr. Russ Hiebert:** Make sure you give enough time to do that.

**The Clerk:** If it's 4 o'clock, we'll have time for translation and distribution.

**The Chair:** It sounds like if it's by 4 o'clock of the previous day we're good.

**Mr. Mathieu Ravignat:** That's fine.

It's just to make sure that the motion that was read out by Mr. Cannan did include “in both official languages”. Why you didn't speak to it—

**Mr. Ron Cannan:** To the members, via the clerk, in both official languages.

**Mr. Mathieu Ravignat:** I just want to make sure it's there.

**Mr. Ron Cannan:** Okay.

**Mr. Russ Hiebert:** *Absolument.*

**The Chair:** That's two sleeps, 4 p.m.

Have we got it?

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

**The Chair:** This is from the last one. I don't know if we need this one or not. It was part of the procedures, I believe, at the last committee in the last Parliament: priority of legislation.

Mr. Easter.

**Hon. Wayne Easter:** Mr. Chair, on that, it is standard procedure that government legislation takes priority anyway. I don't think the committee needs a motion to that effect. That is just the reality of the world, although we might disagree. Government legislation has to take priority. It just has to.

**The Chair:** Okay, let's leave it.

There is one more thing I want to talk to the committee about, something that came up with regard to the last Parliament.

There was a sort of half official invitation from the Australian government, the high commissioner, for a potential trip to Australia. Is that something we would...? I don't know what to do with the letter, in a sense. We could pursue it. They have left a series of dates that would be optimal.

**The Clerk:** We could distribute that after the meeting, to be translated, if the members want to consider it.

**The Chair:** We could do that. It is either pursue it or kill it, one or the other, and pursuing it doesn't necessarily mean it's going to happen, but we could work along that line.

Mr. Easter.

**Hon. Wayne Easter:** What was the purpose of the trip to be?

I have an issue I want to raise as well. You probably have to adjourn the meeting, but what was to be the purpose of the trip to Australia?

**The Chair:** In the letter they say they could actually fill up the schedule in Australia and look after the costs for the committee in Australia and set up what I guess is a relationship between their equivalent committees and ours. It is a link between parliamentarians, and on—

**Hon. Wayne Easter:** Is it on international trade issues?

**The Chair:** We'd be talking about international trade. We'd be talking to the Senate committee as well as the House committee there. That is what their intent is, but the only way they could do it and pick up the costs in Australia would be if it were seen as an official trip, so we'd have to get clearance from the Speaker to see it as an official trip.

**The Clerk:** You also need authority from the House to travel.

**The Chair:** Yes, there are those two things. That's what I said. Either we just nix it or we pursue it, one or the other.

Mr. Chisholm.

**Mr. Robert Chisholm (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, NDP):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I have a couple of points. One is that certainly Australia has made some changes to its trade template and to how it is going about it. I am finding it interesting to look at the way it is beginning to approach trade and has been approaching trade of late.

I don't know what discussion there has been about what is going to happen this fall, but is this timely? Is there something coming up with respect to the relationship with Australia that we should know about, that would make this something we should deal with right away?

• (1230)

**The Chair:** Yes, before we get into the nuts and bolts of it and debate on it that way, all I was looking for today was either that we flesh it out and talk about it in the fall and determine whether or not it is something that's appropriate or we just say thanks but no thanks.

Mr. Keddy.

**Mr. Gerald Keddy:** Just as a little background for the new committee members, this comes out of a meeting we had last year with the trade committee and the High Commissioner of Australia. He put the invitation forth to the committee as a whole and the committee chair. The intent here would be to strengthen relations between Canada and Australia, and Australia is a major player in that Pacific forum. It would be important.

The other issue that I will end on is that this trip takes a lot of planning and a lot of work. Obviously, if we have government legislation before committee, that could nix it, but we have to give the chair time to explore it and put it together, if it's possible to do.

**The Chair:** Mr. Easter.

**Hon. Wayne Easter:** I do think, given that the kind of trading relationship Australia has with the rest of the world differs from ours, it is at least useful to pursue and for the chair to come back with at least a proposal that's fairly concrete, which we can vote up or down.

**The Chair:** I am seeing consensus to initially pursue this. Is that agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Chair:** Fair enough.

Very good. Other than that, I don't see anything else on our agenda.

**Hon. Wayne Easter:** Mr. Chair, it's not on the agenda, and I know we're only looking at the election officers, but we have a bit of a dilemma with the CETA. The next-to-final round of negotiations could be in July.

The European Parliament demands that negotiators keep Parliament informed. That's not the case here...and again, the consent of Parliament. I do think that we may need to, even as a committee...

Now, certainly four opposition members could write a letter to the chair and ask for a meeting, but I think we ought to seriously consider a meeting to find out where these negotiations are really at on CETA sometime this summer.

There are a lot of implications here. There's the additional pharmaceutical costs to Canada if we go with the European pharmaceutical approach; \$2.8 billion it would cost our health care system or insurance companies or whatever. There is the issue of supply management. There is the issue of procurement.

Those are the pretty serious issues that I see, and I think the committee has a responsibility to delve into those issues and try to find out what they are. We need to know what's on the table.

I think July 11 to 15 is the last round in Brussels, Gerald, is it not? Or is the next round in Brussels—

**Mr. Gerald Keddy:** I don't think it will be the last round, but...

**The Chair:** Why don't we leave that now? I mean, there is a mechanism to do it if you sense that there's a need for it, so let's just leave it. You've flagged it. Let's see where it goes.

**Hon. Wayne Easter:** Okay, because it takes....

To the clerk, it takes four members to request a meeting, is that correct?

**The Clerk:** It's under Standing Order 106(4).

**The Chair:** Yes.

So we have the tools there.

Go ahead, Mr. Chisholm.

**Mr. Robert Chisholm:** Thank you.

I don't know that you've discussed....

I wasn't here; my apologies.

**Mr. Ron Cannan:** We watched you on TV. You did a good job.

**Mr. Robert Chisholm:** Oh, surely you had something better to do.

I was thinking of some of the work that was under way before the election, before the committees were dissolved. In particular, I was thinking of any work that was done on India and the relationship with India, and whether we can get that work going again.

**The Chair:** Well, I think there again it's something that's certainly going to be on our agenda as we move into the fall. I don't think it's something that's going to be dropped.

**Mr. Robert Chisholm:** I would just—

**The Chair:** I would certainly sense that we'd do it. I don't think there was an awful lot of work, from what I understand, on India, so....

Go ahead.

**Mr. Gerald Keddy:** Mr. Chair, we were in the process of trying to plan committee travel to India. It didn't happen. We were unable to put it together.

**The Chair:** The clerk has just indicated to me that you had adopted a motion but he hadn't been able to do any work on it.

**Mr. Gerald Keddy:** That's right.

**The Chair:** Okay, fair enough; that's something we can pick up in the fall.

• (1235)

**Mr. Mathieu Ravignat:** We've just approved two analysts for the committee. We could get them to work on outlining the *croquis le rapport*.

**The Chair:** Well, I'm sure we can....

There was a motion of the last.... Did we want to give direction to pursue any information they can get on India?

**Mr. Alexandre Gauthier (Committee Researcher):** There was no meeting done on it. But that being said, we could look at some suggested themes, challenges, etc.

**An hon. member:** So moved.

**An hon. member:** Yes, some background on it.

**An hon. member:** Yes. I mean, it's—

**The Chair:** Okay. They'll prepare a briefing note for the committee when we come back in the fall.

Fair enough?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Chair:** Very good.

With that, I don't see anybody needing anything else, so I'll call the meeting adjourned.

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