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Standing Committee on the Status of Women

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Thursday, February 4, 2016

—
Chair

Ms. Marilyn Gladu

Standing Committee on the Status of Women

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• (1535)

[English]

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

I must inform the members that the clerk of the committee can only receive motions for the election of the chair. The clerk cannot receive other types of motions or entertain points of order or participate in debate.

We can now proceed to the election of the chair.

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

I am ready to receive motions for the chair.

Mrs. Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): I nominate Marilyn Gladu, member for Sarnia—Lambton.

The Clerk: It has been moved by Ms. Vecchio that Ms. Gladu be elected chair of the committee.

Are there any further motions?

(Motion agreed to)

The Clerk: I declare the motion carried and Ms. Gladu duly elected chair of the committee.

Voices: Hear, hear!

The Clerk: I invite Ms. Gladu to take the chair.

[Translation]

The Chair (Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen, and welcome.

[English]

Thanks.

I'm hoping that we will get a lot of great work done. There is certainly lots of work to be done in the area of status of women, so I welcome you.

My job, as your chair, is to make sure that I facilitate our moving forward with positive progress. I'm not the critic, so my opinion here is only going to be about keeping the business rolling along professionally and in accordance with all of the rules that my clerk will advise me on.

Merci.

The Clerk: Thank you.

We'll now move on to the election of the first vice-chair.

[Translation]

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

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

[English]

Ms. Anita Vandenbeld (Ottawa West—Nepean, Lib.): I nominate Pam Damoff.

[Translation]

The Clerk: It has been moved by Ms. Vandenbeld that Ms. Damoff be elected as first vice-chair of the committee.

Are there any further motions?

[English]

Mrs. Karen Vecchio: I'd like to nominate Sheila Malcolmson, from Nanaimo—Ladysmith.

The Clerk: I'm sorry; can you repeat that, please?

Mrs. Karen Vecchio: I would like to nominate Sheila Malcolmson, from Nanaimo—Ladysmith.

The Clerk: I'm afraid the first vice-chair must be a member of the governing party.

Mrs. Karen Vecchio: Okay.

The Clerk: Are there any other motions on this item?

(Motion agreed to)

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

Voices: Hear, hear!

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

• (1540)

Mrs. Karen Vecchio: I am now prepared to continue adding motions today, and I would like to please put forward Sheila Malcolmson, from Nanaimo—Ladysmith, as our second vice-chair.

The Clerk: Thank you.

It has been moved by Ms. Vecchio that Ms. Malcolmson be elected the second vice-chair of the committee.

(Motion agreed to)

The Clerk: I declare the motion carried and Ms. Malcolmson duly elected second vice-chair of the committee.

Voices: Hear, hear!

The Chair: At this time we will go through the routine motions. This is a series of items that are typically done, and for each one of them I'll read out the item and then look for someone to move it.

There are copies being passed around, and while those are being passed around, I'd like to say a word of welcome to the students we have with us from Brock University and the students who have been following members around all day. I hope you enjoy our meeting.

The first item is about the services of analysts from the Library of Parliament:

That the Committee retain, as needed and at the discretion of the Chair, the services of one or more analysts from the Library of Parliament to assist it in its work.

Could I have someone move it?

Ms. Anita Vandenberg: I move...do I read it out?

The Chair: I don't think we have to read it out, do we?

The Clerk: It is best if it is read out.

The Chair: Okay.

Ms. Anita Vandenberg: I move:

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

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: Excellent.

Next is the subcommittee on agenda and procedure.

The Clerk: You can invite the analyst to come up.

The Chair: Oh, I can invite Laura up and introduce us.

We are extremely lucky. We have a bright analyst from the Library of Parliament who is at our beck and call. Welcome.

All right. Now we move to the subcommittee on agenda and procedure.

I'll ask Pam to do that.

Ms. Pam Damoff (Oakville North—Burlington, Lib.): I move:

That the Subcommittee on Agenda and Procedure be established and be composed of the Chair, the two Vice-Chairs, and one government member.

It would be a change from what the subcommittee was before.

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: We will move then to reduced quorum.

Can I have a mover?

Ms. Ludwig.

Ms. Karen Ludwig (New Brunswick Southwest, Lib.): I move:

That the Chair be authorized to hold meetings to receive and publish evidence when a quorum is not present, provided that at least three (3) members are present, including a member of the opposition and a member of the government.

The Chair: All those in favour?

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Can I ask a question about that?

The Chair: Sure.

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson: This is "a member of the opposition", so it could be either Conservative or New Democrat. Is that how this is interpreted, or does it mean the official opposition?

The Chair: It's either.

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: On distribution of documents, can I have a mover?

Mr. Fraser.

Mr. Colin Fraser (West Nova, Lib.): I move:

That only the Clerk of the Committee be authorized to distribute documents to members of the Committee and only when the documents are available in both official languages, and that witnesses be advised accordingly.

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: With regard to working meals, could I have a mover?

Ms. Ruby Sahota (Brampton North, Lib.): I move:

That the Clerk of the Committee be authorized to make the necessary arrangements to provide working meals for the Committee and its Subcommittees.

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: That's good, because we don't want to go hungry.

On witnesses' expenses, can I have a mover?

Ms. Nassif.

Mrs. Eva Nassif (Vimy, Lib.): I move:

That, if requested, reasonable travel, accommodation, child care, other care that is needed, and living expenses be reimbursed to witnesses not exceeding two (2) representatives per organization; and that, in exceptional circumstances, payment for more representatives be made at the discretion of the Chair.

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: On time limits for witnesses' statements and questioning, could I have a mover?

Ms. Damoff.

Ms. Pam Damoff: I move:

That witnesses be given ten (10) minutes to make their opening statement; and that during the questioning of witnesses the time allocated to each questioner be as follows: for the first round of questioning, six (6) minutes to a representative of each party in the following order: Conservative Party, Liberal Party, New Democratic Party and Liberal Party; for the second round, six (6) minutes be allocated in the following order: Liberal Party, Conservative Party, Liberal Party; followed by Conservative Party, five (5) minutes; and New Democratic Party, three (3) minutes.

● (1545)

The Chair: Ms. Malcolmson.

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson: Is that the same model that PROC adopted?

The Chair: No. I believe that PROC suggested it would be seven minutes for round one for the Liberals, seven minutes for CPC, seven minutes for the NDP, seven minutes for the Liberals, and then five minutes for CPC, five minutes for the Liberals, five minutes for CPC, five minutes for the Liberals, and three minutes for the NDP.

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson: I'm trying to compare the two. I wonder if there's a rationale for moving beyond the precedent set by PROC.

The Chair: Is there any discussion?

Ms. Pam Damoff: I think the idea was to give more time in the second round as opposed to the first round. Rather than having seven minutes each in the first round, they would have shorter times, and as a result, in the second round each one would get more time than they had in the first round.

Ms. Anita Vandenberg: Just to clarify, this also gives the Conservatives, not the Liberals, the first question.

The Chair: Good clarification.

Is there discussion?

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson: I'm not in a position to compare the two side by side. I was really just looking for clarification on the rationale.

The Chair: Sure.

What you're suggesting is different from what PROC has put forward, but basically you've evened it out. Instead of everybody beginning at seven minutes and going down to five, you've said that it will all be six, start to finish, but Conservatives will get the first question. Is that correct?

Ms. Anita Vandenberg: Yes.

The Chair: All right.

Ms. Anita Vandenberg: Speaking as someone who's on PROC, I can say it's a half-dozen of one and six of the other. I think each committee can decide. I'm hoping this committee will work collaboratively enough that we won't be nitpicking about the number of minutes. We'll actually be questioning witnesses and working together.

The issue is how often we get to those last two questions. There also is a concern about having two Liberals back to back. In the end, the number of minutes doesn't really vary. In fact, this model gives the opposition more minutes than the other one, but the other one gives us the first question, so it's kind of a half-dozen of one or the other. It's whatever we choose.

The Chair: Ms. Sahota.

Ms. Ruby Sahota: Just to add to those comments, I'm also on PROC with Anita. I guess whatever we choose will be the will of this committee. In terms of the questioning of witnesses and whether we get to all the rounds and all of the minutes, so far we've been seeing that it depends on the leadership of the chair, but we've been having a lot of success in doing so.

It really depends on our will here. It depends on whether we want to adopt one model over another and on how much discussion we want.

The Chair: Awesome.

Is there any additional discussion?

Ms. Malcolmson.

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson: I'm happy with the explanation. I appreciate the members who have already been sitting on committees catching me up on the conversation, so thanks.

The Chair: Ms. Harder.

Ms. Rachael Harder (Lethbridge, CPC): Just to add one further comment to this conversation, I move that we do change it to the model that's presently being used in PROC. That would mean that the first four spots would be seven minutes each, the next four spots five minutes, and the last one three. We would go Liberal, Conservative, NDP, Liberal, Conservative, Liberal, Conservative, Liberal, NDP in order to accommodate.

One of the reasons for this is that I now serve as an alternate on the physician-assisted dying committee, and sometimes it can be quite challenging, actually, to make it through that first round, which then takes away from the second round. If we were to make this slight change, it could perhaps accommodate that.

The Chair: The motion on the table is for the six all the way through, with the reverse order....

Ms. Damoff.

Ms. Pam Damoff: I'm fine to remove the motion and go that way. If two people wanted to split time, they'd each get three and a half minutes.

I'm happy to remove my motion and go with that.

(Motion withdrawn)

The Chair: The motion is to go with the PROC recommendation of seven for the first four, and then five for the next four, and somebody said three.... You would know, because you're on PROC.

The motion, then, is as follows:

That witnesses be given ten (10) minutes to make their opening statement; and that during the questioning of witnesses the time allocated to each questioner be as follows: for the first round of questioning, seven (7) minutes to a representative of each party in the following order: Liberal Party, Conservative Party, New Democratic Party, Liberal Party; for the second round, five (5) minutes be allocated in the following order: Conservative Party, Liberal Party, Conservative Party, Liberal Party; followed by New Democratic Party, three (3) minutes.

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

The Chair: The next motion is on staff at in camera meetings.

Ms. Damoff.

• (1550)

Ms. Pam Damoff: I move:

That each Committee member in attendance shall be permitted to have one staff member attend at any *in camera* meetings. In addition, each party shall be permitted to have one party staff member attend *in camera* meetings.

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: Excellent.

Can I have a mover on in camera transcripts?

Mr. Fraser.

Mr. Colin Fraser: I move that:

One copy of the transcript of all *in camera* meetings be kept in the Committee Clerk's office for consultation by members of the Committee.

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: Excellent.

Can I have a mover on notice of motions?

Ms. Vandenbeld.

Ms. Anita Vandenbeld: I move:

That forty-eight (48) hours' notice be required for any substantive motion to be considered by the Committee, unless the substantive motion relates directly to business then under consideration; and that the notice of motion be filed with the Clerk of the Committee and distributed to members in both official languages; and, that completed motions received by 4:00 p.m. Monday to Friday be distributed to members the same day.

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: All of the routine motions have now been adopted.

From there, do members have any items they would like to add to the committee business?

Ms. Vecchio.

Mrs. Karen Vecchio: I think it would be wonderful if we could have the actual Minister of Status of Women come in and share her mandate with us so that we all know what pages we're on and how we're going to move forward as a team.

The Chair: Is there any discussion on that?

Ms. Pam Damoff: It's not discussion, but to just add to that, maybe we could formally send an invitation to her to attend our first meeting when we're back to see if that would accommodate her and if we could get this committee into her schedule as well. Perhaps you could send an invitation to her for that first meeting.

The Chair: Absolutely. Do I need a motion for that? All in favour?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Chair: We vote without a motion. How do you like that one? Such a rebel.

Voices: Oh, oh!

The Chair: One of the things committees do in addition to the business of the government of the day is to study things that we think are of particular interest. If people have ideas about what they think this committee should be working on or studying, I thought it would be good if we could get a list of them.

Ms. Pam Damoff: I have a number of things that I think we should look at. I wouldn't mind waiting until we've had the minister here. Then we can perhaps have a discussion following that to see what she wants to do. We can talk about what we want to do and see if there's alignment or if there are different things that we think we should pursue. We could just have her come in and then have a discussion after that, if that's okay with the committee.

The Chair: Yes, I'm fine with that. I think that's your homework, then, while we're on our week of recess time back at the constituency offices: think about what items you would like to bring forward for the committee to work on.

Seeing that all the business of the committee has been completed, I would ask for a motion to adjourn.

Nobody wants to leave...?

Voices: Oh, oh!

The Chair: Mr. Fraser.

Mr. Colin Fraser: So moved.

The Chair: Ms. Nassif.

Mrs. Eva Nassif: I have a question. I've heard that there is a subcommittee for pay equity between women and men. Is that committee going to be working with our committee or not?

The Chair: My understanding is that there will be a special committee based on the motion that was voted on, but I believe that we are not the ones who appoint that committee. I think it's appointed by the House.

Ms. Malcolmson.

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson: I'm delighted to see the support in the House for the motion we put forward on pay equity. By the time we have the opportunity to have the minister meet with us and address us, I imagine that this detail will become clear, since the motion passed only yesterday.

Regardless of that, I'd like people to think about it. Although it would be a separate committee, what kind of involvement do we want to have or what kind of linkages do we want to create? If we could have that as a discussion item for when we next convene, I think that would be most constructive. I appreciate your raising it.

Mrs. Eva Nassif: Because it is related to women, so it should be

The Chair: Absolutely. It's something that we should be working on.

Mrs. Eva Nassif: I thought it should be a subcommittee of the Status of Women Committee. I don't know who decides on how it works. This is my first time here. That's why I raised this point. It was see how we're going to work together.

The Chair: There will be a separate committee that will be given the mandate to look at the recommendations from the 2004 report, but if there are other items that they don't cover in the scope of their committee, this committee is well able to take on those items, if we agree. All right?

The motion to adjourn was moved by Mr. Fraser. All in favour?

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: See you after the break.

Thank you, ladies and gentleman. The meeting is adjourned.

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