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Tuesday, February 16, 2016

—
Co-Chairs

Mr. Brian Masse

Mr. Dan Ruimy

Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Technology

Tuesday, February 16, 2016

•(1550)
[English]

The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Roger Préfontaine): Honourable members of the committee, I see a quorum.

I must inform 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, cannot entertain points of order, nor 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 government party.

I am ready to receive motions for the chair.

Mr. Longfield.

Mr. Lloyd Longfield (Guelph, Lib.): I nominate Dan Ruimy.

The Clerk: It has been moved by Mr. Longfield that Dan Ruimy be elected chair.

Are there any further motions?

There being no further motions, I declare Mr. Ruimy duly elected chair of the committee.

(Motion agreed to)

The Clerk: The chair being in agreement, I will proceed with the election of the vice-chair. The first vice-chair must be a member of the official opposition.

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

Mr. Nuttall.

Mr. Alexander Nuttall (Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte, CPC): I'd like to propose Earl Dreeshen.

The Clerk: Mr. Nuttall has moved that Mr. Dreeshen be elected first vice-chair.

Are there any further motions?

There being no further motions, I declare Mr. Dreeshen first vice-chair of the committee.

(Motion agreed to)

The Clerk: I am now prepared to receive motions for the second vice-chair, who must be a member of an official party other than the official opposition.

Mr. Arya.

Mr. Chandra Arya (Nepean, Lib.): I propose Brian Masse as second vice-chair.

The Clerk: It has been moved that Mr. Masse be elected second vice-chair.

(Motion agreed to)

The Clerk: We can now proceed to the routine motions.

•(1555)

The Chair (Mr. Dan Ruimy (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge, Lib.)): Thank you very much, everybody. Welcome to sunny, snowy Ottawa.

We're going to move ahead now and proceed with routine motions that we can adopt. Does everyone have a copy?

Mr. Arseneault.

[Translation]

Mr. René Arseneault (Madawaska—Restigouche, Lib.): The motion reads as follows:

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

[English]

The Chair: Is the motion adopted?

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: I'd like to ask Mathieu Frigon and André Léonard to come up to the front.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

The Chair: We'll move on to motion B, Subcommittee on Agenda and Procedure. Does anybody want to move that?

Mr. Arya.

Mr. Chandra Arya: I move:

That the Subcommittee on Agenda and Procedure be composed of 5 members, including the Chair, the 2 Vice-chairs, and 2 Government Members; that quorum of the Subcommittee shall consist of at least three (3) members with at least one being from the Opposition; that each member of the Subcommittee shall be permitted to have one assistant attend any meetings of the Subcommittee on Agenda and Procedure; and that, in addition, each party shall be permitted to have one staff member from Whip's Office attend any meetings.

The Chair: Mr. Dreeshen.

Mr. Earl Dreeshen (Red Deer—Mountain View, CPC): On that particular point, there have been precedents in other committees to not actually hold a subcommittee but to have it as part of the general discussion. I've seen five members there versus the 10 that we have here. I think that we should be able to handle future committee business using that approach. I would suggest that maybe we rethink it. I know that this has been there in the past, but it isn't necessarily standard.

The other point I would look at is to read through that "at least one being from the Opposition".

I am not sure whether that was clear. Perhaps Mr. Masse would like to speak to that and whether that means the official opposition or anybody who is on the opposition side.

Mr. Chandra Arya: This morning, I had a meeting with the public accounts committee chaired by a Conservative member, and we did have the subcommittee on agenda. The operations of the subcommittee are usually by consensus. If there is disagreement there on any particular issue, it comes to the committee as whole and will be discussed again. The opposition member can be any opposition member, Conservative or NDP.

• (1600)

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): To me, it's not a big deal either way. There were very few subcommittee meetings on agenda and procedure in the past, because it was seen as another meeting. The attempt was to include all members so that we all had the same information.

A lot of times, the chair would decide whether to bring it right to committee or not. I would prefer not to have that, unless it's necessary. If we implement this, I think it would be for exceptional circumstances, as opposed to creating an extra, redundant meeting.

I've been on this committee for about eight years off and on during my years here, and it has a good history of co-operation. It's one of the ones that's known for that. With discretion, I think that we can sometimes avoid the subcommittee elements. Again, I'm open to doing it or not. I think it would be better for all of us if we had fewer of those meetings rather than more.

The Chair: Mr. Nuttall.

Mr. Alexander Nuttall: My understanding was that, with regard to opposition members, it just said that it could be any opposition member, not necessarily an official opposition member. That is what I read on the piece of paper with the large O. Can we just confirm that?

Mr. Chandra Arya: Yes, any opposition member.

The Chair: Mr. Masse.

Mr. Brian Masse: If we do move forward with this, I would like two vice-chairs of both opposition parties. The intent has always been there with this is to include that. I would like that to be clear as part of the motion because it does us no good having one party out in the dark fighting to get space at a committee and then chewing up time with our witnesses because you are now dealing with things that were discussed without all parties being involved.

That's what has happened in the past sometimes in some committees. It hasn't happened in this committee, but that would

be my concern. Obviously, if I'm not included in subcommittee meetings, then I'm going to have lots of questions about things that take place in the subcommittee.

The Chair: Mr. Dreeshen.

Mr. Earl Dreeshen: Having read that, I agree with what Brian has said. When it does talk about the two vice-chairs, I haven't been in this position as a vice-chair very long, so I wasn't thinking about that. I believe that it would probably cover it.

It still doesn't change my original feeling about five of us working together there when there are only 10 of us that could be dealing with the issues. That means then that you don't have to continually update the group. My position is still the same on the other, but I can handle the word "opposition", recognizing that I'm actually one of those who is going to be on this committee, should it be held.

The Chair: Mr. Baylis.

Mr. Frank Baylis (Pierrefonds—Dollard, Lib.): I appreciate the interesting points, but maybe we can move on.

Can we have a vote on that?

The Chair: Any other comments?

Mr. Masse.

Mr. Brian Masse: I'd like to add an amendment that the two vice-chairs include both official opposition parties because, as it is worded there, it could be the official opposition and the government that take the vice-chair positions. Again, I'd raise that as a way of compromising.

The Chair: As I understand it, there are already two vice-chairs from the opposition.

Mr. Brian Masse: Thank you for that correction.

• (1605)

Mr. Chandra Arya: With that being clarified, my motion still stands. Can it be put forward?

The Chair: In the interest of trying to get consensus, would we consider perhaps postponing this one to a time that it is necessary, and move on?

Mr. Chandra Arya: I think we should go ahead and put it forward. As for calling the subcommittee meeting, that you can take it as amended as required.

Mr. Brian Masse: There is no amendment.

The Chair: If there is no other discussion, we shall put it to a vote.

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: Moving onto the next one (c), meeting without a quorum.

Mr. Lloyd Longfield: I'll just read that section:

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 four (4) members are present, including one member from the government and one member of the Opposition; and that, in the case of previously scheduled meetings taking place outside the Parliamentary precinct, that 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, regardless of whether opposition or government members are present.

The Chair: Mr. Dreeshen.

Mr. Earl Dreeshen: I guess the question, again, is that in this particular scenario you're speaking of a situation where it could be either one from the Conservative Party or one from the New Democrats. If that were the case, then for a meeting without quorum—I understand it has other ramifications—you would be able to hold that meeting. Is that what I am to understand? It doesn't say. The word "opposition" is there; it doesn't give the two options.

Could you expand on that?

The Chair: As a reminder, no decisions are made. It's just so that evidence can be heard.

Is the motion adopted?

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: Okay, we'll move on to the next one on the acting chair.

Mr. Majid Jowhari (Richmond Hill, Lib.): I propose motion (d) on the acting chair:

That, when the Chair and Vice-Chairs are unable to act as Chair 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.

The Chair: Is it agreed?

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: The next one is on document distribution.

Mr. Chandra Arya: I move:

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 amongst the Committee members must be in both official languages, and that the Clerk advise all witnesses of this requirement.

• (1610)

The Chair: Is it agreed?

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: The next one is on working meals.

Mr. Baylis.

[Translation]

Mr. Frank Baylis: The following motion concerns working meals:

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.

[English]

The Chair: I'm told that's very useful.

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: On access to in camera meetings, Monsieur Arseneault.

[Translation]

Mr. René Arseneault: I move the following:

That each Committee member in attendance shall be permitted to have one staff member attend at any in camera meeting and that, in addition, each party shall be permitted to have one staff member from a House Officer attend in camera meetings.

[English]

The Chair: Is the motion agreed to?

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: On transcripts of in camera meetings, Mr. Arya.

Mr. Chandra Arya: I move:

That in camera meetings be transcribed and that the transcript be kept with the Clerk of the Committee for later consultation by members of the Committee or Members of Parliament who attend the specific meeting.

The Chair: Mr. Masse.

Mr. Brian Masse: I just hope that we have fewer rather than more in camera meetings. In municipal politics, it was for property, staff issues, or conflict of interest that we would move in camera. I've said that sometimes if somebody sneezes at committee we can go in camera.

I will support the motion because it is important to go there at times, but I'm hoping that we have fewer of of them.

Mr. Lloyd Longfield: Mr. Chair, just to add to that, I think it also reflects on the subcommittee. The ideal is that everybody be in the room at the same time. If we have to refer to another committee or subcommittee or in camera that's second best, but it's there if we need it.

The Chair: Is this motion carried?

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: Now we're on to the notice of motion.

Mr. Alexander Nuttall: I move that 24 hours' notice shall be required for any substantive motion to be considered by the committee, unless the motion relates directly to business under consideration; and that the motion shall be filed and distributed to members by the Clerk in both official languages; and that motions that are received by 5:00 p.m. shall be distributed to members the same day.

The Chair: Mr. Arya.

Mr. Chandra Arya: I would like to amend that motion as follows: "That 48 hours' notice shall be required".

Mr. Alexander Nuttall: If I could speak to my motion before an amendment is taken.

Mr. Chandra Arya: Sorry about that.

Mr. Alexander Nuttall: I think we have an opportunity right now to set up this committee.

First of all, we have to recognize that this is an incredibly important committee that we all have been given honours by our parties to sit on. It has some very substantive business to undertake over the next little while. In speaking to my colleagues who were here in previous parliaments, it is my belief that there are going to be cases where this committee will be required to act based even on the events of the week prior. We need to have the opportunity to be able to respond to those situations, and have as much time and leeway to do so as possible. I think we're all knowledgeable and talented enough in this room to be able to put together all of the resources to come prepared to a meeting with 24 hours' notice. Certainly, that was the expectation within the municipal world, which I came from, and certainly that was the expectation in my private sector job. I hope that we get unanimous support for this, and that we're able to proceed and cover as much business over the next four years as possible.

The Chair: Mr. Masse.

Mr. Brian Masse: I support this motion. The format of committee has changed significantly with regard to our access to witnesses. We use teleconference a lot more than ever before, so it's less prohibitive to get witnesses to us right away. I think that's an important part of the change that's taken place, and it's why I think this motion is reasonable.

We do have to act quickly on some initiatives that take place. There's no doubt about that. We have a broad range of huge topics to deal with on a regular basis.

I find that the 48 hours can extend things to one week, two weeks, depending upon the scheduling, and also depending upon whether the House sits or not. We are sitting right now for less time than we've ever sat for the session.

I would encourage us to at least adopt this motion and try it out for this session. If we find problems with it, we can always revisit this and change it for the next session. We're going to go into a number of periods where we are gone for two weeks, then we are back for a couple of weeks, then we are gone for two weeks. All those things are going limit our opportunity to engage other constituency issues and national issues. I would support it for that reason.

Teleconferencing has really taken off over the last number of years. Today, for example, people would be cancelling their flights and we'd be putting them on teleconference. Of course, the 24-hour notice of motion is protected for our two official languages. It is very important, so you're going to have to subscribe to that. I support the motion.

•(1615)

The Chair: Monsieur Arseneault.

[*Translation*]

Mr. René Arseneault: I have several questions about that.

First, are we talking about 24 hours during working days or 24 hours during a seven-day week?

Mr. Clerk could perhaps clarify that for us.

The Clerk: Usually, that is interpreted as 24 hours during working days.

Mr. René Arseneault: So from Monday to Friday?

The Clerk: Yes.

Mr. René Arseneault: In other words, if we voted for a 24-hour notice and the notice of motion was given on Friday, we could expect to have the motion on next Monday and not on Saturday. Is that correct?

The Clerk: The committee is free to specify what it means by 24 hours, but usually, that is interpreted as working days.

Mr. René Arseneault: For me, working days cover only the period from Monday to Friday, excluding holidays and weekends.

Is that what you mean, Mr. Clerk?

The Clerk: Yes.

Mr. René Arseneault: I am new to the committee, as I was just elected. I have a second comment on the same matter.

I am currently a member of a joint committee. It is not so easy to get a witness to appear by teleconference within 24 hours. They could be stuck at the airport if there is a storm. That time frame seems very short to me, especially if a motion concerns a new topic and not an existing topic.

I can understand what my colleague Mr. Nuttall is saying about the 24-hour time frame for a subject this committee is already discussing. However, that time frame seems short to me for a motion on a new issue.

I don't want to be a bad guy, but I will vote against the motion because of this aspect or this concern of mine. I feel it's much more prudent to amend it to make the time frame 48 hours.

[*English*]

The Chair: Mr. Baylis.

Mr. Frank Baylis: I'm very uncomfortable being rushed to make any decision. If I read this correctly it's saying "new business", so it's René's point—not even something that we know about.

Brian, you say you had a lot of experience. What would need to be dealt with in 24 hours by this committee? Do you have any concrete examples?

Mr. Brian Masse: Yes. Right now we're going towards an emergency motion that has been tabled at environment committee related to the deep geological repository that's going to be built within a kilometre of the Great Lakes and has over 20 senators and U.S. congresspeople opposed to it; hundreds of thousands of people. It hasn't been addressed by Parliament. They're trying to move it, but it's now been delayed to a point where the decision is closing in on the time the committee could do so.

For here in this committee, there have been plenty of things, whether auto investment, whether aerospace development.

Mr. Frank Baylis: But to understand this, between 24 and 48 hours is 24 extra hours. An investment in auto or aerospace is a huge decision. This is about new stuff, and you're saying I've got to make a huge decision on something new in 24 hours. I'd actually want to see it be weeks, to be honest. I even think 48 hours is ridiculous.

Mr. Brian Masse: That's been the tradition in some committees, 48 hours, and some are 24.

Mr. Frank Baylis: I think your example, say aerospace industry needs investment, and you're going to say it's new business—

Mr. Brian Masse: Can I finish?

I'm going to let you go ahead, but it's just that we sometimes have issues that are time sensitive. You have a majority on committee, so you can turn down anything you think is unreasonable on the spot.

Mr. Frank Baylis: Give me a real example of something that's time sensitive.

• (1620)

Mr. Brian Masse: We've had aerospace, and we've had issues related to, for example, the Tesla airbag situation. There are plenty of things that have been brought forward, and they've taken too long. We have a history. If you look at the previous motions that were passed here, we never got to them because of time.

I understand about the time sensitivity of getting to Ottawa, but I can assure you that anyone who is interested in a subject matter will get to Ottawa. It's more than 24 hours between when the committee meets, whether we have something done on a Tuesday and we decide we're going to meet on a Thursday. If the members have done the proper work on the issue and have to prove that case when they come here, then they'll showcase witnesses for and against an issue.

Mr. Frank Baylis: But Brian, if you read this, it says it has to be new business, so how can they have done any prior work?

Mr. Brian Masse: It's easy. It happens every single day.

Mr. Frank Baylis: But it says it cannot be, “unless the motion relates directly to business then under consideration”, so it cannot be something we're considering; it has to be new.

You're saying that for something like, for example, an investment in aerospace, I'm going to be told I've got 24 hours to read a bunch of stuff, get here, and vote. It makes no sense.

Mr. Brian Masse: No, you have to listen to witnesses and hear them out, and it's up to the committee to decide what the length of the meetings will be. They will be prepared there.

Mr. Frank Baylis: Your argument is that the 24 hours—

The Chair: Gentleman, if I could interject, we should be focusing through the chair.

Mr. Brian Masse: I'm being cut off in answering questions.

The Chair: If I can interject, I think it is not clear what this motion really is. If we can get the clerk to expand on it, so we have a better understanding of what it means, it might help us to understand this and move forward.

The Clerk: The objective of this motion is to establish a requirement of a delay before a committee can consider a new motion by a member of a committee. For example, if a member wishes to move that the committee study the Broadcasting Act, then

I would circulate the motion to all members. They'd have it in their possession for either 24 or 48 hours. Then at the next meeting the motion would be receivable, the member could move that motion. At that time, the committee would debate the motion and make a decision on the motion. It's a requirement to make the motion receivable; that is what it is really.

Mr. Alexander Nuttall: Just to clarify through you, Mr. Chair, to the clerk, in the event of the governing party around the table not agreeing with the motion, would they not be able to (a) shoot it down, or (b) move it to another meeting if they needed to table it in some fashion?

The Clerk: Could you repeat your question, sir?

Mr. Alexander Nuttall: If there were concerns from the governing side of the table when there is a motion that was put in 24 hours earlier, and they didn't feel prepared enough to debate the item, would they (a) not be able to then vote it down once it comes to a vote in a meeting—

The Clerk: Yes, sir.

Mr. Alexander Nuttall: —or (b) if they have the votes, could they also push it or table it to other meetings?

The Clerk: Correct.

Mr. Alexander Nuttall: What we're arguing over here is whether something makes it on to an agenda and how long we need to do so. I'll give you an example. If there's an immediate matter that comes up on Wednesday, and we're meeting on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and we're going to break for the summer, we can do a couple of things. We can stick to a 48-hour time period—and I hope my colleagues would stay here through the weekend, and we can meet the next week—or we can have a 24-hour time period, and if we aren't at the place where people think they can support or object or determine an outcome that we can get behind it as a committee, that's another thing.

We're not arguing over something very complex here. It's just how long it takes to get something on the agenda.

The Chair: Mr. Arya.

Mr. Chandra Arya: I understand our members' concerns for the efficiency and effectiveness, but I still feel 24 hours is rushed. At the minimum, 48 hours' notice is required.

Can I present an amended motion?

The Chair: Sure, yes.

Mr. Chandra Arya: I move:

That 48 hours' notice shall be required for any substantive motion to be considered by the committee unless the motion relates directly to business then under consideration, and that the motion shall be filed and distributed to members by the clerk in both official languages, and that motions that are received by 5 p. m. shall be distributed to the members the same day.

• (1625)

[Translation]

Mr. René Arseneault: Mr. Chair, I understand the amendment to the motion proposed by our colleague, but the debate will be the same. I think we have covered the issue. If it's in the procedure, I would ask for a vote on the amendment immediately.

The Chair: Mr. Bernier, we are listening.

Hon. Maxime Bernier (Beauce, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I just want to let my colleagues know that a similar proposal was adopted by the industry committee in 2006-2007. When I was in office and was the industry minister, the industry committee had a 24-hour time frame. It was very productive. I think Brian was on the committee at that time. I just want to tell my colleagues who are new that committees have adopted such 24-hour time frames in the past.

The Chair: Okay, thank you.

Mr. Baylis, go ahead.

[English]

Mr. Frank Baylis: Not to belabour this, but I come from the medical industry and there were a few things we did that were life and death. That means if we didn't act within 24 hours some patient would die. When we had emergencies, or someone sent an email out like it was an emergency, our whole operation stopped because, for me, that's an emergency.

I say that just to put it out there as we move forward as a committee. I'm not at all comfortable ever being rushed, and I accept being rushed when it is necessary. I would be against this. I thank you for the explanation, Brian, but I see nothing there that says 24 hours would mean life or death for a car company or an investment. I think 48 hours is fairly sufficient, but I'm going to stick with that.

The Chair: Mr. Nuttall.

Mr. Alexander Nuttall: You know, I've heard this. Mr. Arseneault speaks about 24 hours not being enough. It was incredible the last time we were sitting, the Prime Minister of Canada, who I would say is probably one of the busiest people in the country, was able to change his plans and rush to Montreal regarding energy east in about 12 hours. Surely the members of this committee can formulate a position in 24 hours. He's the Prime Minister and we're just members of a committee.

The last thing I would leave with you is this. I remember out of the Prime Minister's mouth, at event after event, how arm's length committees would become, and how they were going to be put back to what they were meant to be, providing advice, hearing witnesses, doing what they were always meant to be as part of our democratic systems. I look around, and I wasn't here the last four years, but I see whips' offices trying to run the show here and not the members of this committee.

The Chair: Mr. Arya.

Mr. Chandra Arya: Mr. Chair, I resent the reference to whether the Prime Minister rushed to Montreal or not, because in here it was

a pre-arranged visit, and trying to bring in the Prime Minister here, I don't think is appropriate for the motion on hand.

Referring to the whip's office is also not good at this point.

The Chair: Mr. Masse.

Mr. Brian Masse: I'm actually glad Frank's here, with his medical experience; that's the first thing I'm grateful for.

At any rate, I just implore that we have the time right now to test drive this through a session. I'm really worried because, say for example there's going to be an investment in Bombardier, it could be held off for three weeks given our schedule coming up.

I think you're going to find you have lots of decisions that are going to be made really quickly here on the Hill. Again, I think it would be a good compromise to test drive this. We go into camera to do new business, so you have the chance at that time to knock it down if you feel it's appropriate, or consider whether or not it is worthy enough for us to pursue.

It just gives us increased opportunity, and in a day if you're not comfortable with that, you get to knock it down.

I've seen this. There have been auto company issues and other things like that where you get very little notice in advance of what's taking place, and then we have no comment on a lot of things.

Especially during the session, I would suggest that a good compromise would be to try to test drive this. If you don't like it, you bring us back here and then you change it. It's a simple thing.

I think eliminating options is always a bad thing on committee.

• (1630)

The Chair: I'll just bring to the attention of the committee that, in the last government, it was still 48 hours' notice.

Mr. Alexander Nuttall: It was 2006-2007-2008 he was speaking about.

The Chair: The last committee did adopt the 48 hours.

Okay, a vote has been asked for on the amendment of the 48 hours.

(Amendment agreed to)

The Chair: Does the motion as amended carry?

Mr. Alexander Nuttall: Can we get a recorded vote for this?

The Chair: Yes, we can.

(Motion as amended agreed to: yeas 5; nays 4)

The Chair: Okay, we'll move on to the next one: travel accommodation and living expenses of witnesses.

Go ahead, Mr. Jowhari.

Mr. Majid Jowhari: I move:

That, if requested, reasonable travel, accommodation 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.

The Chair: Is the motion carried?

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: All right, we'll move on to the next one: time for opening remarks and questioning of witnesses.

Mr. Chandra Arya: I move that the witnesses from any one organization shall be allowed 10 minutes to make their opening statement.

The rotation for the committee members for round one is as follows: Conservatives six minutes, Liberals six minutes, NDP six minutes, and Liberals six minutes. For round two it is Liberals six minutes, Conservatives six minutes, Liberals six minutes, Conservatives five minutes, NDP three minutes. This will be a total of 50 minutes.

The Chair: Mr. Masse.

Mr. Brian Masse: I just hope that the meetings are being run efficiently so we can get the second round of questioning. Traditionally we've had seven minutes as opening, but this change in format was very positive in many elements because it got all members in for good discussions. In the past, it was cut down. What I worry about is losing my space at the end, so I hope we can run as efficiently as possible so that I don't get cut off.

That's why it changed. We would have more members of the committee getting better time to address the witnesses, and it was a better balance.

The Chair: Mr. Dreeshen.

Mr. Earl Dreeshen: Through the Chair perhaps to Brian, because he has dealt with this before, there are a couple of aspects to it. I suppose when you have everyone with six minutes so that you have everybody included in the discussions, sometimes that gets a little drawn out. In that last little bit, people are simply trying to find something to fill in their six minutes. It doesn't allow that to happen.

What had happened before, from what I understand, is that on the first round you had time that you could flesh things out, with seven minutes. I have a feeling that you'd be able to get more in-depth discussion at that particular point in time.

The other thing I would like to have on the table so we could discuss it is the order. I'd like to see a different order, with the governing party being first, and then the Conservatives, the NDP, and the governing party on the first round. I do have an order that I would suggest beyond that: the first round being Liberal, Conservative, NDP, Liberal, and then Conservative, Liberal, Conservative, Liberal, and NDP.

•(1635)

Mr. Chandra Arya: Sorry, what are the times?

Mr. Earl Dreeshen: The total times would be the same.

Mr. Chandra Arya: The total time you are suggesting is that in the first round we go for seven minutes, and in the second round five minutes for—

Mr. Earl Dreeshen: Oh, I'm sorry, it's five minutes for everyone on the second round, except for the NDP; instead of being three minutes, it would be two minutes.

Mr. Chandra Arya: Once again, to confirm, you're suggesting that the first round is Liberal, Conservative, NDP, Liberal, each for seven minutes.

Round two is Conservative, Liberal, Conservative, Liberal, for five minutes each.

Mr. Earl Dreeshen: Yes.

Mr. Chandra Arya: And NDP with three or two minutes?

Mr. Earl Dreeshen: Two minutes, to make it add up to 50.

Mr. Chandra Arya: Let's make it 51.

Mr. Earl Dreeshen: Then you have to make the other nine.

The Chair: Mr. Masse.

Mr. Brian Masse: Obviously I can't support reduction of time. That's not a—

Mr. Alexander Nuttall: It's the same thing: seven and two.

Mr. Brian Masse: Oh, seven and two. Okay, I didn't hear the first

Mr. Alexander Nuttall: You still get nine, but you're guaranteed seven up front.

Mr. René Arseneault: I have seven and three.

Mr. Brian Masse: It's seven and two, so you're moving the one minute there.

Okay, there we go. That's clarification.

The Chair: Mr. Arya, are you okay with that?

Mr. Chandra Arya: Can I amend my motion? Is it permissible?

If the committee agrees, based on the discussion from Mr. Dreeshen, I move that the witness from any one organization shall be allowed 10 minutes to make their opening statements. The rotation by time: round one, Liberal, Conservative, NDP, Liberal, seven minutes each; round two, Conservative, Liberal, Conservative, Liberal, five minutes each, and NDP with two minutes.

The Clerk: Is that round one seven minutes?

The Chair: To clarify, to make sure we're good here, the amendment speaks to the order: round one, Liberal, Conservative, NDP, Liberal, and round two, Conservative, Liberal, Conservative, Liberal, NDP. That's for order. Then for time, it's round one, seven minutes, round two, five minutes, and the last, NDP, would be two minutes.

Mr. Chandra Arya: Correct.

The Chair: Are we all agreed?

Mr. Chandra Arya: Yes.

Mr. Brian Masse: Can I make an amendment for the final round for me to be 20 minutes?

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Chair: No.

The motion is carried.

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

The Chair: Is there no other business for today?

An hon. member: No, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Okay. Then our next meeting would be on Thursday from 3:30 to 5:30.

We're adjourned.

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