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**Chair**

**Mr. Brent St. Denis**

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## Standing Committee on Industry, Natural Resources, Science and Technology

Thursday, October 21, 2004

•(1530)

[English]

**The Chair (Mr. Brent St. Denis (Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapuskasing, Lib.)):** Bonjour. Good afternoon, colleagues.

I'd like to officially call to order the Thursday, October 21, meeting of the Standing Committee on Industry, Natural Resources, Science and Technology.

We have a couple of pieces of business that we will do in open session, and then we will move in camera for purposes of doing our future business, which is the practice of all committees, certainly this one, so that we can have an open debate on the future requirements for the agenda.

I'd first like to say on the record that we have a really great team here. From time to time we'll have substitutions, as we have with James and Brian today. Welcome. We have a very good core team, and I'm sure we can be a model for how committees can work in a minority Parliament. We will have our partisan times, no doubt, by the nature of our business. At the same time, I'm sure all of us are in agreement that we want to make this work as best we can for the people of Canada.

On that note, the first item of business is that we have two motions by Mr. Werner Schmidt. One is on the main estimates and one is on the Auditor General. Do you want to introduce those, Werner, or speak first to the main estimates motion?

**Mr. Werner Schmidt (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC):** I think it has been circulated to everyone and we all have them. I assume everyone has read them.

It's really a routine motion to make sure that when the estimates are before us we invite the minister, and that when the minister is here the committee's proceedings be televised.

**The Chair:** Is there any discussion? Otherwise we'll call the question.

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

**The Chair:** Thank you, Werner.

Do you want to speak to the second one?

**Mr. Werner Schmidt:** It is exactly the same point there: that when the Auditor General has a report that deals specifically with the industry committee's mandate, that when she appears the meeting also be televised.

**The Chair:** Does anybody want to comment?

Andy.

**Mr. Andy Savoy (Tobique—Mactaquac, Lib.):** Very briefly, I thought we'd agreed that we would want to say that we "may" invite them. Because there are times when we may have a minor mention, and we don't want to want to spend our time on the Auditor General if it's a very minor issue, that's all.

**Mr. Werner Schmidt:** She wouldn't be invited. That's good. The point in here is the phrase "when possible".

**Mr. Andy Savoy:** Yes, when we agree around the table. In most cases on a major issue, we're going to agree on the Auditor General being here.

**Mr. Werner Schmidt:** We're not going to ask her to come on a minor issue anyway.

**The Chair:** Excuse me, I thought of that—

**Mr. Andy Savoy:** This binds us. It says here, every time we're mentioned.

**The Chair:** It's understood it doesn't bind us. The committee could choose not to—

**Mr. Werner Schmidt:** Oh, sure.

**Mr. Andy Savoy:** Do we have to amend it, or do you think it's okay?

**The Chair:** Are we all agreed to that?

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

•(1535)

**The Chair:** Thank you, Werner.

The next item is Werner has a proposal, not as a motion but just as a proposal, concerning the order of witnesses. You all have a copy of what Werner proposes. I took the liberty of sending something out, as your chair. There's really not a huge difference between Werner's proposal and my own.

I can tell you that even if we didn't make a rule, I would try to get everybody in as much as possible. Brian knows that in the past we've got him in over and above the required time, and when it came time even for my spot at the tail end of a question, if I had a chance to give it to somebody around the table who had something to say, I would do so.

I leave it in your hands. If you want, we can go with either scenario. Let's try it out.

Werner.

**Mr. Werner Schmidt:** Mr. Chair, you have been more than fair in the past. You strike me as a very fair person. I looked at your proposal, and I'm quite prepared to accept your proposal.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Werner.

Brian.

**Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP):** I concur.

I do have a small concern, and we can monitor this. I've always been able to get a second round of questioning, and I'm only concerned if it dragged whether or not I would get on round three. There are 40 minutes between the first round and the fourth round. That's 40 minutes before I can participate again, and that's a long time to be in a meeting without participation. I don't know if there's a possibility to switch into the third round or not.

**The Chair:** What I will do, Brian, if you let me try it, is since by then that would probably be the chair's question, I would always defer to a member. We can try it. With the agreement of my colleagues here, when we get down there I will be glad to give you my question.

**Mr. Brian Masse:** I appreciate that, and I have great confidence in your fairness.

**The Chair:** Is that okay? So we won't do it by motion, if that's okay.

Jerry.

**Hon. Jerry Pickard (Chatham-Kent—Essex, Lib.):** I'm trying to get things straight.

I have sat with Brent on several committees as well, and I think, as Werner has said, he's been more than fair with all committee members in allowing everyone to speak.

If we tie into this too tight, if that is the gospel prayer and the only way, sometimes there are some parties and some individuals who have really hot issues and they would like to speak more, and I think we should allow the chair some flexibility. As long as that's an

understanding behind this, rather than this being gospel, I think it will work well.

**The Chair:** Could I respond?

Jerry, if it's okay with you, if I see somebody who has a question and I look over to the next questioner and they say they're okay, and if I go out of order, but sort of seeing in eye contact that everybody's fine, I would change the order.

**Hon. Jerry Pickard:** I'm happy with that, if the chair has that—

**The Chair:** Then if there's an objection, we'll deal with it at the time.

**Hon. Jerry Pickard:** Sure.

**The Chair:** All right.

**Mr. Werner Schmidt:** Just use this as a guide, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** Yes, fine, it gives us a starting point. So we won't do a motion.

I was going to go just five minutes right from the get-go. If somebody takes six, another time four, we have to be.... I put a watch on, but it's never exactly five minutes. We try to balance it out.

Thank you, colleagues. If at some point if you don't like what's happening, just say so and we'll deal with it at that time.

At this point I would ask that we go in camera. For that purpose, each member is entitled to have a staffer here. I have to ask that the room be vacated. Sorry you came all the way here just for a short meeting.

We'll suspend for 30 seconds while the room is being cleared.

*[Proceedings continue in camera]*

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