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**Subcommittee on the Status of Persons with  
Disabilities of the Standing Committee on Human  
Resources, Skills Development, Social  
Development and the Status of Persons with  
Disabilities**

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**Chair**

**Mr. Ken Boshcoff**

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## Subcommittee on the Status of Persons with Disabilities of the Standing Committee on Human Resources Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities

Wednesday, December 1, 2004

•(1525)

[English]

**Ms. Miriam Burke (Procedural Clerk):** Honourable members of the subcommittee, I see quorum.

Pursuant to Standing Order 106 and Standing Order 108(1), your first order of business is to elect a chair. I'm ready to receive motions to that effect.

**Mrs. Carol Skelton (Saskatoon—Rosetown—Biggar, CPC):** I would like to nominate Ken Boshcoff, please.

**Ms. Miriam Burke:** Are there any other nominations? No?

(Motion agreed to)

**Ms. Miriam Burke:** I declare Mr. Boshcoff chair of the subcommittee and invite him to take the chair.

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

**The Chair (Mr. Ken Boshcoff (Thunder Bay—Rainy River, Lib.)):** Members of the committee,

[Translation]

I hope you will pardon my French during the next few months and that one day I will speak French fluently.

[English]

Members of the committee, I think we have a tremendous opportunity to actually make some significant yards federally on issues of disability. I'm so pleased we have such a keen and eager committee. I know many of us will be putting forward ideas we have, and we will also be entertaining some of these special interest groups, so not only will we learn more, but we will be able to actually do something very significant.

Are there any discussions or any items members of the committee would like to bring up at this time?

Ruby.

**Ms. Ruby Dhalla (Brampton—Springdale, Lib.):** I think you wanted issues; I actually just have a concern.

In regard to our meeting time for the committee, perhaps we could have the chair entertain the possibility of starting at 3:25 or 3:30, because after we finish QP and get out, there's at least a ten-minute walk. If we could delay the meeting perhaps by about ten minutes, that would be great.

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

**Mrs. Carol Skelton:** Is it always going to be on Wednesdays?

**Ms. Miriam Burke:** It cannot sit at the same time as the committee.

[Translation]

**The Chair:** It's a good idea.

[English]

**Ms. Miriam Burke:** The committee can decide when it wants to meet, but Wednesday is good for everybody.

**Mrs. Carol Skelton:** How about 3:30?

**Ms. Ruby Dhalla:** I'd like to make a motion to have our committee meetings start at 3:30 on Wednesdays.

**The Chair:** It's been seconded by Monsieur Vincent.

(Motion agreed to)

**The Chair:** Chantal has prepared a suggested temporary work plan for us. I would ask if members would like to have this distributed at this time.

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Chair:** Please take the floor.

**Ms. Chantal Collin (Committee Researcher):** My idea was to suggest this to the committee, since most members—except for Mrs. Skelton, who's worked on the subcommittee before—are new members.

There are a lot of issues, obviously, that deal with people with disabilities. I thought it might be a good idea, since there isn't too much time from now until the Christmas break—the 15th may not be a likely date, but I'm respecting the calendar—to at least get things started by having a briefing from the Office for Disability Issues. They can inform the committee on what they do, what some of their issues are, and what they're looking at in the upcoming year.

Then I thought we could have a round table with the national organizations on disabilities and hear what their concerns or their priorities are. I've listed quite a few issues, as you will see at the bottom, that have been raised in recent conferences I've been at. They are numerous, as you can see.

There's the issue of disability support, which is really a key concern, and there's the new multilateral framework for labour market agreements as well. There's the technical advisory committee on tax measures. In fact, I e-mailed the committee and have received a response back. They have a report that will be tabled in December, and that's something that may be of interest to the committee as well since part of their work was in response to prior work from this subcommittee on the disability tax credit. It might be something that might be of interest to the committee.

This is just a suggestion. I thought it might be a way of getting things going before the Christmas break. Then when we come back members can decide what they really want to focus on.

**Mrs. Carol Skelton:** I questioned December 15 too, but I wonder if there's enough time to do the round table and get the people we need to hear within this timeframe just before Christmas. I'm was wondering if it would be possible to get the minister or the departmental people instead for that meeting and then move the round table to after Christmas. I just wonder if that might be easier. I don't know.

**The Chair:** I would have to agree. There are two weeks until that meeting, and just knowing the schedule and things, I think that may be a little bit more difficult than something else we could plan.

For that day, though, might it be a good day for us as a committee to talk about the kinds of issues we would like to see coming forward, and maybe give some idea to our staff and support system here? It would also be very valuable for us to hear from you, Ms. Skelton, about the previous committee and some of those things that would help us prepare for what we have to do.

Go ahead.

**Ms. Chantal Collin:** I forgot to mention the Centennial Flame Research Award. That is a very important thing, and we need to address it as soon as possible. There's a news release that must go out, and it usually goes out around December. We must look at this news release, because for the last one we apparently had problems with the applications that were coming in.

That would be next week.

• (1530)

**The Chair:** Sorry to interrupt. We might have to go in camera.

**Ms. Chantal Collin:** No, it's just about the guidelines and the news release. I think Ms. Skelton is used to this. Last year we had a problem with some of the applications that were coming in. We had very few that met all the criteria, so the members of the main committee, when they looked at it in the fall, said we needed to clarify this and we needed to have a clearer news release as well, with requirements.

A document has been prepared and it's going to be translated by next week. That's something that won't take very long, but this needs to be addressed.

**Mrs. Carol Skelton:** That could be at the next meeting.

**The Chair:** We could meet with the Office of Disability Issues next week, but then the 15th is going to be a very crammed day. I think we're all going to be feeling under a lot of pressure because of different types of events. I would like to leave that as an open day for

members of committee to discuss their goals, their objectives, and things they would like to bring forward. On that day we can discuss a possible timetable for a round table.

**Mrs. Carol Skelton:** There's one comment I'd like to make. We should look at the tax issues and everything before the budget too.

**The Chair:** That could help us set our priorities in terms of how we're going to go about it, and then we can sort these out in terms of that pecking order.

Carol.

**Mrs. Carol Skelton:** Maybe if we went back to our offices, made a list of what we would like to see, and submitted them all to you, Mr. Chair, then we could look at the whole list and rate them. At times we've done that before in committees.

**Ms. Ruby Dhalla:** I would agree with Carol. If we could, let's make up a tentative list and forward that to you, as she's saying, and have discussion and debate at a subsequent meeting about the type of direction we want our committee to head in. Due to scheduling, it looks like we won't really be able to get to the real gist of the work until after we've reconvened, so perhaps if there is any time left next week on the 8th, we could have some of that discussion. If we can, let's get our list in to you before that.

Also in regard to the 15th, I know it is a jam-packed day in terms of a lot of events, especially for the Liberals, and I think for everyone else as well. Not for it to be a sign of anyone's work ethic, but if we could, perhaps we might look at reconvening a little bit earlier.

**The Chair:** Let's talk about the 15th now.

Peter, welcome. Is that day a full day for you?

**Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP):** Yes, but given the wait we've had to go through to have this subcommittee struck, I think it's important that we get going on the work. My preference would be that we do meet on the 15th.

[Translation]

**The Chair:** Mr. Vincent.

**Mr. Robert Vincent (Shefford, BQ):** Yes, it's fine.

[English]

**The Chair:** So we're on for the 15th, and we'll have to make everything else fit. Then we will be able to go back to our constituencies knowing we have an agenda planned for the next session and we are full of energy and ideas.

If I can, then, I'll confirm what has been suggested. If you could, submit the types of things you would like to see on our agenda to me—or to the clerk would be even better. Then we would be ready for that.

**Ms. Ruby Dhalla:** Mr. Chair, this is just a suggestion. What we did in one of our other committees was that each of us gave a list of five topics we were interested in to the clerk; the clerk then distributed them back to us, and we ranked our top three.

**The Chair:** Well, we'll end up with at least 25 if we follow that process. We'll see what comes in that's in common, and we look forward to that.

Mr. Julian, just for your records, we've amended the starting time of this committee to 3:30. We were all pressed to boot it out of where we were.

•(1535)

**Mr. Peter Julian:** I appreciate that because I was unable to attend for 3:15 today.

**The Chair:** You weren't the only one *en retard*.

There being no further business, we'll adjourn until Wednesday, December 8.

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