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—
Chair

Mr. Maurice Vellacott

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•(1535)

[English]

The Chair (Mr. Maurice Vellacott (Saskatoon—Wanuskewin, CPC)): I call the meeting to order.

You all have before you the agenda for today, which is pretty brief, and then as well the sample of routine motions, which in the past has typically been approved by committees at a meeting.

The very first one, if we can take a look at it—in no particular order, but these maybe are the quick, routine ones we can get at—the services of the analysts from the Library of Parliament.

Do you move that, Anita?

Hon. Anita Neville (Winnipeg South Centre, Lib.): Yes, I so move.

The Chair: With the same wording as there? Okay.

Do we need a seconder for that? No? Okay.

So you've all had a chance to look at that. We're looking at the services of the analysts for the Library of Parliament, which is 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 in its work.

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

The Chair: Okay, that one has been moved and adopted, so now Mary can step into her position here.

Do you want to at least say hello to us and introduce yourself? Marlisa is the other person who will be assisting and working with us in doing research. We appreciate her stepping up to the plate here; she's got considerable background and is primed and ready to go as well.

The way the last minority parliament shaped the subcommittee on agenda and procedure was that it be composed of the chair, the two vice-chairs, and a member of the other opposition party, which in this case would be the Bloc. Are there any other suggestions? Is that a fair and reasonable way to shape our subcommittee?

Hon. Anita Neville: I so move.

The Chair: Okay. Is there any discussion in respect to that? Is it okay by the Bloc and the NDP? Do I hear approval for that?

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: On the reduced quorum, the motion is 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 three members are present, including one member of the opposition.

The background to that is that sometimes it's a bit embarrassing if we have people come here from a distance and pay their expenses and make a great effort to have them here, and then because of conflicting schedules and so on, we don't have people here on time and we keep the witnesses waiting—or maybe we don't even establish quorum in the normal sense. So this motion allows the chair to proceed, if we wait a reasonable bit, to receive the evidence, and it allows it to be printed, provided that at least three members are present, including one member of the opposition. So there will be no funny games played with that.

Do we have any comments in respect to that?

Monsieur Lévesque.

•(1540)

[Translation]

Mr. Yvon Lévesque (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, BQ): Mr. Chairman, you refer to three members of the committee, at least one of whom must be from the opposition. Must those three committee members be the chair and the two vice-chairs?

[English]

The Chair: I was assuming that we meant including one member of the opposition.

What do we mean here? Can you help us in terms of what the understanding was the last time?

The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Roger Préfontaine): Well, there is no specification. We need a chair to start a meeting. The chair has to be here, in other words, because without quorum we cannot have a designated chair or an interim chair. The three would include the chair.

The Chair: So at a very minimum you would have the chair and a member from the government side, and you'd have to have at least one member of the opposition.

The Clerk: Or it could be the chair and two opposition members.

The Chair: Okay.

The Clerk: Or it could be the chair and one opposition and one government member.

The Chair: Right.

Nancy.

Ms. Nancy Karetak-Lindell (Nunavut, Lib.): I understood it to be any three members, because that's why we have vice-chairs. It could be Jean and two other members. In that case, I think I've seen cases where, of the three people who show up, one of them is designated as chair if for some odd reason the chair or the two vice-chairs don't show up. But you're there to listen to witnesses—and it should be the three, as long as one is from the opposition and someone is designated as chair. So I understood that to mean any three members, because it says “at least three members are present”, and it doesn't designate what positions have to be there; otherwise, it would defeat the purpose again.

The Chair: Yes, I think that's fair and I agree with that.

Is there some procedural technical reason why you talk in terms of a chair, or is there something we don't know?

The Clerk: No, but Nancy makes a good point. If the vice-chair is here and the members who are here wish to proceed, then the vice-chair would chair the meeting.

The Chair: There's no procedural requirement for the chair to be here that we know about from the *Robert's Rules of Order* point of view, is there?

The Clerk: There is none, to my knowledge, in the context of this reduced quorum motion.

Ms. Nancy Karetak-Lindell: You're going to be here for every meeting, aren't you?

The Chair: I assume so.

If we want to change that, it does say here, “That the Chair be authorized to hold meetings to receive evidence”. Is that right?

Ms. Nancy Karetak-Lindell: But the definition of the chair, if you look in those, could be a designate, as far as I know. But I could be wrong.

The Chair: We would want to be careful in these cases, because in the first one what does it mean when it says, “the committee retain, as needed and at the discretion of the Chair...”?

The Clerk: I think we'd probably have to add, “the chair or vice-chair”.

The Chair: Okay.

Nancy, and then I want to go to Mr. Lemay.

Ms. Nancy Karetak-Lindell: I have one more point.

As we see in the House of Commons, sometimes an ordinary member is designated to sit in that chair if someone is not available from the whole list. I would think that same pattern would be followed.

I don't know if we need to get hung up on exactly what definition of chair we're talking about here, because we would tend to follow the same rules as the House of Commons follows. I've seen ordinary members sit in that chair when none of the other designates are available, and it doesn't disrupt the routine proceedings of the House of Commons.

The Chair: Mr. Lemay, do you have a comment?

Yvon. Go ahead.

[Translation]

Mr. Yvon Lévesque: In this case, there are two vice-chairs and one chairman. One of the three should be present when we have a reduced quorum. It must, however, be possible to send the evidence from the meeting to the members of the committee afterwards. At least, that is what I understand.

In the case of an emergency meeting where witnesses appear and members of the committee cannot be present, do we send each of the committee members a transcript of the witnesses' testimony?

● (1545)

[English]

The Chair: Right. I think it's the normal custom or pattern anyhow to send out the blues to members who have not attended or were unable to be there.

A voice: The blues are sent to all the members.

The Chair: Yes, exactly.

Mr. Lemay.

[Translation]

Mr. Marc Lemay (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): In fact, the reduced quorum is an exceptional procedure. I would like to draw your attention to what it says here: “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 three members are present, including one member of the opposition”.

I don't know how this could be done, but I would like us to specify the following: the chair could hold the meeting, but should he not be able to attend, at least one of the two vice-chairs would have to be present.

I sat on the heritage committee when it carried out a study on cinema. We travelled from one end of Canada to the other, and quite often the chair of the committee could not be present. One of the two vice-chairs was then in charge of hearing evidence. We have to proceed in that manner.

[English]

The Chair: Do we want to say something like, “the chair or, in the chair's absence, the vice-chairs be authorized to hold meetings to receive evidence, and to have that evidence printed when a quorum is not present, provided three members are present, including one member of the opposition”?

Mr. Rod Bruinooge (Winnipeg South, CPC): Mr. Chair, I'd like to move that.

The Chair: That the chair or, in the chair's absence, one of the vice-chairs be authorized to hold meetings to receive...? You're moving that, Mr. Bruinooge?

Mr. Rod Bruinooge: Yes.

The Chair: Would you like any more discussion, Nancy? Does that capture the sense of what you're intending, or do you want it to be broader to apply to any member?

I guess we should realize as well here, to quickly capsulize, that we're not talking about decisions of any kind being made in these types of meetings. We're talking about not embarrassing ourselves when we hear witnesses, and taking into account the good witnesses who have come forth.

Does this capture the intent, Nancy? Is it okay to do it in the fashion that was suggested?

Ms. Nancy Karetak-Lindell: I have no objection. I'll just make the comment again that I think it's understood that every time you say "chair" it does mean that in your absence it's one of the two vice-chairs.

The Chair: Okay. Well, I guess we'll capture it specifically, then.

Mr. Albrecht, go ahead.

Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC): It's just a question of clarification. It mentions one member of the opposition. Is that any of the opposition parties?

The Chair: Yes.

Mr. Harold Albrecht: Secondly, if we're concerned about the image received on the part of delegations coming to us and there's no member of the governing party here, it seems to me that's also something that should be.... I know we can't make decisions, and I respect that, but I think if we're going to be sure that at least one member of the opposition is here, we should at least have one member of the party that's in power. This is new to me. There may be a reason that wasn't spelled out.

The Chair: Normally, except in the case of death or some other calamity, the chair is often there, and I intend to be here. I think it's more so there would not be any impression of any funny business going on, since the government has the chair, in this committee anyhow. If I recall correctly, in the past it was mostly so you couldn't just steam ahead and do something underhanded and to the exclusion of the opposition.

• (1550)

Mr. Harold Albrecht: Mr. Chair, I respect your response, but we just put an amendment in to say that the others could serve as the chair, so it is conceivable, although I admit very unlikely, that you could end up with no members on this side. I think that would give a negative impression to the witnesses who are coming here if we, as the government, aren't here.

The Chair: Mr. Mayes, go ahead, please.

Mr. Colin Mayes (Okanagan—Shuswap, CPC): I was just thinking that you really don't need to say, "in the absence of the chair". I think you could say "a chair or a co-chair be authorized to hold meetings to receive evidence".

The Chair: We don't term it "co-chairs", but.... Are you trying to amend the motion?

Mr. Colin Mayes: No, I'm not.

The Chair: Okay.

Mr. Lévesque, go ahead, please.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yvon Lévesque: We know that there is one vice-chair who is a member of the governing party and another who is a member of the

opposition. Now, we are saying that there must also be a member from...

The Clerk: The two vice-chairs are from the opposition side.

Mr. Yvon Lévesque: In that case, perhaps we should specify... If the governing party wants one of its members to be there when the chair of the meeting is already from the opposition, I would not be against amending the motion accordingly.

[*English*]

The Chair: Amending along the lines, Yvon, of saying that there should be one government-side member present too—is that what you're inferring? No? Okay.

Jean.

Ms. Jean Crowder (Nanaimo—Cowichan, NDP): I just want to point out that this rarely happens, and that there is a requirement of adequate notice of meeting. Presumably, if we have invited witnesses to attend, all members would have sufficient notice so that either they or a substitute would make every effort to be here. We're spending a significant amount of time on something that rarely happens, and I just want to point that out for the committee's information.

The Chair: We have a motion on the floor, and a little discussion with respect to that, aside from Mr. Albrecht's making an amendment to say "including one member of the opposition and one member of the government". If you're proposing that, we can—

Mr. Harold Albrecht: I just want to acknowledge that I'm new to the committee and I don't have any reason to push that as an amendment. I'm just wondering if it's a consideration that we should mention.

The Chair: It's not an invalid point of view, and if you want to put it forward, we can quickly—

Mr. Harold Albrecht: Okay, I will do it just to test the committee and so we can move on.

The Chair: Are there any quick thoughts on that? We can say up or down, yea or nay, on that one, and then we'll move to the main motion.

Anita.

Hon. Anita Neville: Mr. Chairman, I don't think it's necessary. It's incumbent upon each of us to make sure we're represented at a committee meeting, and I don't think it needs to be prescribed.

The Chair: Okay. Let's quickly go with that amendment, which is to say—and it's that last part—"including one member of the opposition and one member of the government".

(Amendment negated)

The Chair: So we've rendered an opinion there.

If we go back to the main motion, we had the discussion actually put forward by Marc, but then I think in terms of the mover, Mr. Bruinooge, which is to say that in the absence of the chair one of the vice-chairs be authorized to hold.... As Jean rightly points out, this seldom happens.

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

The Chair: Distribution of documents: that the clerk of the committee be authorized to distribute to the members of the committee only documents that are available in both official languages.

An hon. member: I so move.

The Chair: It is so moved.

Any thoughts, Marc?

Mr. Marc Lemay: I move strongly.

The Chair: Strongly. Okay, we have a strong mover.

Yvon.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yvon Lévesque: Can a member distribute documents directly to the members of the committee, or must that be done by the clerk of the committee?

[*English*]

The Chair: No, my understanding is that whatever is placed on the table here is through the clerk. I don't know if other committee members have a different understanding, but that's how documents get on your desk.

Nancy, you've chaired before. You'd understand it that way? Okay.

I guess this comes up, obviously, and those who have been serving here for a bit of time would know that sometimes we get groups on short notice, and they're making up their presentation on the airplane, that kind of thing. It may come in one of our official languages or even one of our aboriginal languages. Then we have that little bit of awkwardness, because you don't want to offend those people, but we need to then hold the line on that. The clerk certainly informs those people, as those witnesses are given notice that they can appear before the committee, their expenses are covered, and so on.

It is a bit difficult, and I do recall one time, when we had some people from, I think, Iqaluit or someplace, they brought documents that were not in both languages. This does occur, and you don't want to offend, but I think you probably need to draw the line.

Nancy.

• (1555)

Ms. Nancy Karetak-Lindell: I was just going to add to that.

I think we gave opportunities for them to be put on a side table but not necessarily distributed by the clerk, and those members who wanted to get up and pick up something could. But we also at one time gave unanimous consent, I think, but that didn't happen very often because we strongly felt that the committee should distribute material only in two languages.

I know there are cases, as you say, where we don't give very much notice for witnesses to come, and they don't have time for translation because French translators aren't always available in some parts of the country. But we did it as it occurred, trying to be sensitive of both sides.

Mr. Rod Bruinooge: Further to what Nancy said, I'd like to mention the last committee's language regarding that: "...that no document from a witness be distributed without the Clerk's approval;

but, at the discretion of the Chair, the question could be discussed by members of the Committee and, afterwards, the document could be distributed if it receives unanimous consent."

The Chair: Is that where you are finding this, Rod?

Mr. Rod Bruinooge: I'm referring back to some information we got regarding last year's amendment to the routine—

The Chair: The *Minutes of Proceedings* from October 2004?

Mr. Rod Bruinooge: I believe that to be the case, yes.

The Chair: Do you want to read that again? Others don't have the benefit...at least, I'm assuming the other members don't.

Mr. Rod Bruinooge: It is "...that no document from a witness be distributed without the Clerk's approval; that, at the discretion of the Chair, the question could be discussed by the members of the committee and, afterwards, the document could be distributed if it receives unanimous consent."

The Chair: I guess that captures what Nancy was saying.

Go ahead, Marc, and then Jean.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Marc Lemay: We will never accept discussing documents here that have not been tabled in both official languages, for the good and simple reason that if we start that, they will never be translated. I know, because I have been through this situation in two others committees on which I sat.

I understand the chair's position. I can accept that someone who comes here from Iqaluit, for instance, read notes he or she has prepared in English or in Inuktitut before the committee. However, official documents that are tabled with this committee must be in both official languages. I am sorry, because I know that this does not suit everyone, but the practice has to be enforced. We will not agree to opening the door. We have to get used to it, because this is how it works in all of the other committees. I don't know why we should open that door here.

Documents that are tabled must be in both official languages. That said, I understand that this need not always be the case for witnesses' briefing notes.

• (1600)

[*English*]

The Chair: Marc, just be aware of the motion that's on the floor and what we're discussing now, which will go to a vote. It also cuts the other way, in the sense that if we had a representative from Quebec, from some place where they didn't have access to English services, who came and wanted to share a document, you would be of the view that that should be declined then too. If they only had it in French and not in English, that document should also be declined; it should not be accepted.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Marc Lemay: Absolutely, Mr. Chair. We must distribute those notices. All those who are to appear before the committee must be informed that if they have documents to distribute they must be in English and French. Unless I am mistaken and things have changed recently, those are the two official languages of Canada. We must not open that door. I know, because I have experienced that situation.

[*English*]

The Chair: Okay. Unless Mr. Bruinooge wants to withdraw that, be aware that if this motion were to pass, Marc, Yvon, and anybody whose first language is French, if that ever comes into the discussion in the committee, based on that motion, you would have to have unanimous consent. All you would have to do is say no and you could shut it down; that would be the end of it right there. Do you know what I'm saying?

Jean.

Ms. Jean Crowder: I would like to agree with Monsieur Lemay. I think a motion that opens the door to exceptions is not a message we want to send to witnesses. We need to be firm in our policy that all documents must be submitted through the clerk in both official languages.

The Chair: Anita.

Hon. Anita Neville: I would concur. To do otherwise is the thin edge of the wedge, whether it requires unanimous consent or not. This is a bilingual committee and we move accordingly.

The Chair: Are there any further comments?

Rod, would you like to comment?

Mr. Rod Bruinooge: In light of the fact that this is a motion from the previous committee, I didn't appreciate that there would be this much dissent, so I will withdraw the motion and perhaps we could have another motion come forward.

The Chair: That being the case, we're back to this: "That the Clerk of the Committee be authorized to distribute to the members of the Committee only documents that are available in both official languages."

That is the motion on the floor, and if there isn't any more discussion with respect to that, we can move directly to a vote. We have a fair sense of what the room wants.

Yvon.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yvon Lévesque: I move the motion.

[*English*]

The Chair: The motion is moved.

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: On working meals: that the clerk of the committee be authorized to make the necessary arrangements to provide working meals for the committee and its subcommittees.

Ms. Nancy Karetak-Lindell: I so move.

The Chair: Is there any comment on that in terms of menu choices or what you would like to have served?

Jean.

Ms. Jean Crowder: I'm vegetarian.

The Chair: Well, we should certainly be sensitive to that.

You mean that, right?

Ms. Jean Crowder: I do mean it.

The Chair: Let's be sensitive with respect to that. I think we can take that under advisement as that arrangement is made by the clerk.

Do you want that in there?

Ms. Jean Crowder: No.

The Chair: It makes sense to be respectful of that.

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

The Chair: The next one is with respect to the witness expenses that you have before you: that if requested, reasonable travel, accommodation, and living expenses be reimbursed to witnesses, not exceeding two representatives per organization, and that in exceptional circumstances payment for more representatives be made at the discretion of the chair.

Any comment with respect to that? Are we agreeable to that? It's fairly standard, I'm told by Roger.

Jean.

• (1605)

Ms. Jean Crowder: I have a question. I presume that in other committees, when we've had witnesses, we've had a budget that the committee had approved. I assume that's standard procedure when we do this.

The Chair: Anita.

Hon. Anita Neville: I notice in the motion the words "if requested". My experience on another committee was that members attending as witnesses did not know they had to request compensation for their travel. I think it's important that people know they are entitled to compensation for up to two people from each organization. I don't know how the clerk manages that, but I don't want to deny people access because they don't have the dollars to come.

The Chair: Anita, you would know, as would other members who have served here before, that sometimes you will have groups that are in town on other business—their association meeting or whatever occurs here—at the last minute or a week in advance only, so they don't request because they're already covered by their organization.

Hon. Anita Neville: That's fair enough. My concern is that if somebody is not coming to Ottawa for any other purpose but wants to attend before the committee to make a presentation on whatever topic, they be advised that there is a travel allowance available to them.

The Chair: Are there any other thoughts or comments with respect to that?

Mr. Albrecht.

Mr. Harold Albrecht: Mr. Chairman, I want to affirm the previous comments. However, I do have a concern about the wording here in that it could leave a chairman in the difficult position of deciding how many additional people could be requested, and it would be a judgment call. I think it might be wise on our part to put a maximum there, so I would suggest wording that would include “to a maximum of three”, for example.

The Chair: You want to tie my hands then, I guess. That's okay.

I agree, and in fact I don't know if I'm fully comfortable with an open end there anyhow. So I would say that's a point.

Nancy.

Ms. Nancy Karetak-Lindell: The only time in the past we allowed more than two was with elders who needed someone to accompany them while they travelled, or a veteran who needed help travelling. It was in very rare cases. The committee did leave that discretion up to the chair and trusted their good judgment, that there would not be very many cases and only in extraordinary cases.

The Chair: Mr. Albrecht, were you suggesting that we set a limit? For example, if there were two elders and they each needed an attendant or assistant—

Ms. Nancy Karetak-Lindell: They could be coming from two different places.

The Chair: Precisely. So then you would have two additional....

Ms. Nancy Karetak-Lindell: What I'm saying is that we leave it to the discretion of the chair, because it would be in extraordinary cases, and I don't think there'd be any other case very often.

The Chair: I'm just saying that under the circumstances you described—

Ms. Nancy Karetak-Lindell: If we start to maximize, if you say—

The Chair: You don't need three attendants per person; you'd need one per person. If you had two witnesses and they were at opposite ends of the country, they'd each have an attendant, say. So you'd have an additional two.

Ms. Nancy Karetak-Lindell: I was just referring to his comment about having a maximum of three people. That means two witnesses and one attendant, the way I understood it.

The Chair: I thought it meant one for each.

Marc.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Marc Lemay: Since budgets are finite as the governing party has just demonstrated, two representatives per organization would suffice, but they would have to know that in advance. If I am coming from Puvimituk and I am the director or the assistant, I know that two representatives per organization is the rule, period. Exceptionally—but this is not the rule—a request can be made to the chair, who would decide. Since budgets are limited, we must be accountable for the money we allocate. I think that we should reimburse the expenses of, at the most, two representatives per organization. Let's be careful, otherwise we run the risk of hosting a lot of visitors at our expense.

[*English*]

The Chair: So we don't have a subamendment here, unless somebody is willing to put one forward. The motion reads, “not exceeding two per organization...exceptional circumstances...payment for more authorized at the discretion of the chair”.

Do we want to suggest some limits?

Mr. Albrecht.

Mr. Harold Albrecht: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I'm only trying to help the chair not be put in a difficult position. So I'm prepared to just leave it, unless other committee members feel it's important.

The Chair: Are there any other thoughts? Leave it as is?

Monsieur Lévesque.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yvon Lévesque: If there are no further comments, I move the motion as tabled. We will see in the course of our work whether it needs to be changed.

[*English*]

The Chair: Okay. Are we all agreed then?

(Motion agreed to)

• (1610)

The Chair: The next one is on staff at in camera meetings: that, unless otherwise ordered, each committee member be allowed to be accompanied by one staff person at an in camera meeting.

Is there some difference in the French there? No, so that's okay.

Marc then moves it, I guess.

Are there any comments on that? Are we all agreed that those attending in camera meetings can be accompanied by one staff member? It doesn't need to be from your own member of Parliament office.

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: Next is in camera meetings transcripts: that one copy of the transcript of each in camera meeting be kept in the committee clerk's office for consultation by members of the committee.

That is so moved by Nancy.

Are there any comments or questions on that?

For our newer members here, so that none of us is in breach of what was shared at an in camera meeting, the transcript is kept at the clerk's office. You can consult it there. It's not a document that is available to the public. Also, we are in breach if we share things outside this meeting room when there have been in camera discussions. There are sanctions that can be brought if that does occur.

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: Next is the notice of motions: that 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.

Roger, just to be clear for me again, is it 48 hours from the time you receive it?

The Clerk: Well, it depends. If it's substantive and I receive it in only one language, I have to have it translated.

The Chair: So it may be 45 hours by the time it's distributed.

The Clerk: Maybe. If I receive it past 6 o'clock, I'm not at my office very much, so I would send it out the next morning.

The Chair: Are there any thoughts from those who have chaired committees you've served on before? Anita, Nancy, Jean?

Yvon.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yvon Lévesque: If, according to the motion, it is 48 business hours, this would be in keeping with the practice that the clerk is not to exceed a 48-hour limit for translation. In the case of an 8-hour day, for instance, it takes 6 days to reach those 48 hours.

The Clerk: No, it is just 48 hours, period.

Mr. Yvon Lévesque: Is the clerk in a position, in a period of 2 times 24 hours, to have the motion translated?

The Clerk: Usually, the motions are relatively short, and so are the translation deadlines.

[*English*]

The Chair: So if we have a scenario where a motion comes in after 6 o'clock on Friday and you pick it up in your in-box on Monday, when do the 48 hours begin?

The Clerk: That would be up to the committee to decide. My interpretation of it in the past has been that it's 48 hours as it leaves my office—

The Chair: So 48 hours from the point it leaves your office.

The Clerk: When the members have it in hand.

The Chair: Yes, 48 hours in advance.

The Clerk: About 48 hours.

The Chair: Okay.

An hon. member: I would agree.

•(1615)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Marc Lemay: That's exactly it.

[*English*]

The Chair: Do you accept that, Jean? Okay?

It's from the time it leaves the clerk's office, which means the onus is on the clerk to get it together quickly and get it out, so there is no delay and great frustration or upset from any of our members who got it in. The clerk has his work cut out to get it done quickly.

So with that understanding—which will be entered into the Hansard records—it is from the point the clerk gets it out that the 48 hours will be required.

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: And then we have a motion on the allocation of time for questioning. You have before you the proposal. I don't know if anybody has done research in terms of other committees; I did some myself.

Jean.

Ms. Jean Crowder: Mr. Chair, I looked at a number of committees, and I know this was set for this particular committee in the last sitting of the House, but most other committees have a round of ten minutes for their opening statements and then seven minutes allocated for each of the opposition parties in the first round, with five minutes in the second round. That's fairly standard across a number of committees, and I do have the various committee descriptions here, so I would propose....

Did we actually move this?

The Chair: It has not been moved as yet, but if you have another motion, could you state it clearly and loudly for us so we can understand it.

Ms. Jean Crowder: I would propose that where it says, “during the questioning of witnesses there be allocated nine (9) minutes for the questioner of official opposition, seven (7) minutes for the questioner of the other parties”, it be amended to say, “there be allocated seven (7) minutes for the questioner of the official opposition, seven (7) minutes for the questioner of the other parties....”

The Chair: And did you want it to read the same thereafter, “starting with the Bloc Québécois, the New Democratic Party...”?

Ms. Jean Crowder: Yes.

The Chair: So it would be starting with the Bloc, the NDP, and you're coming back then to the Conservative Party here, I guess. So instead of saying the Liberal Party, it would be the Conservative Party. Right? We've got to change that word.

Ms. Jean Crowder: Yes.

The Chair: Okay, Jean. So you're moving a motion that it be amended to say... Well, we don't really have a motion, so you're not amending anything, but it would read, “ten (10) minutes for the questioner of the official opposition...”.

Ms. Jean Crowder: And then “seven (7) minutes...”.

The Chair: Oh, I'm sorry, you're saying that there be—

Ms. Jean Crowder: I'm saying that we leave the ten at the top, and the first number, where it says nine, put seven, and then the rest of the numbers would stay the same.

Hon. Anita Neville: I have a question, Mr. Chairman.

The Chair: Okay, go ahead.

Hon. Anita Neville: My question is about the round of speakers. Is it the intent that it be done in a manner that each member has an opportunity to speak, rather than...?

The Chair: The party thing, right?

Hon. Anita Neville: Yes.

The Chair: Well, this does talk in terms of giving everybody the chance. Is that okay?

Hon. Anita Neville: My wish is that everybody has an opportunity.

The Chair: Okay. That's what this does seem to represent here.

Are there any other suggestions with respect to this motion to adjust it or to change it?

Colin.

Mr. Colin Mayes: Mr. Chair, let's say there is not full attendance of a party. Would somebody have the opportunity to speak for somebody who's absent? I think it's important to use the word "present", that time allocation be given to only those who are present at the meeting. That is kind of understood, but I think it's important.

The Chair: Well, it is, because if there were no Bloc member, I would pass to the NDP, or vice versa. If there were no Liberals here, then I'd move to the Bloc.

Mr. Colin Mayes: But if each person were given an opportunity, and there were two Liberals missing and there were two here, would they have the option to speak for the other two who weren't present, to take their allocation?

Voices: No.

Mr. Colin Mayes: Do you think that's clear enough?

The Chair: I think so.

If we're all okay with that, that's how I would understand it, and I would rule it that way.

Marc.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Marc Lemay: As in any committee I have sat on, the members present are the ones who speak. They are the ones who, with the chair, ensure that there is a second round after the first.

For instance, the Bloc Québécois gets the floor twice. Afterward, if on your side some members have not spoken, you get the floor until the time has elapsed. However, you cannot speak in lieu of a committee member who is absent. That's clear.

[*English*]

The Chair: Right. *Merci*.

Jean moves the motion...

You have a question, Todd?

Mr. Todd Russell (Labrador, Lib.): The purpose of the committee is to fully examine witnesses, if we take our duties seriously. From my own perspective, I'd just like to ask the person who moved this quasi amendment—

•(1620)

The Chair: Well, it's not an amendment, because we.... It's just the original motion. Jean moves that.

Mr. Todd Russell: What's the purpose of taking away time from a party to ask questions?

The Chair: Jean.

Ms. Jean Crowder: It's actually a method to make the time more equal rather than taking away time. If you make sure everybody has seven minutes, then you are actually allowing more voices to be heard at the table.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Marc Lemay: I agree entirely with Jean. In several committees, it becomes quite frustrating very quickly to be the third or the fourth member of the team to get the floor. You will very shortly be experiencing this yourself. That is the case, for instance, when there is an interesting debate to which only one hour has been allocated. As we know, those who have the floor rarely speak for less than 10 minutes. According to my experience, it very rarely goes otherwise.

In short, in order to make it possible for members of the committee to be able to speak more often, I am quite ready to support Ms. Crowder's motion.

[*English*]

The Chair: Are there any other comments?

I guess we could go to a vote on that as the motion is, unless there is a further amendment to it. It will simply read, then, as I understand it:

That an organization be given up to ten (10) minutes at the discretion of the Chair for their opening statement; and that, at the discretion of the Chair, during the questioning of witnesses, there be allocated seven (7) minutes for the questioner of the official opposition, seven (7) minutes for the questioner of the other parties, starting with the Bloc Québécois, the New Democratic Party and the Conservative Party, and that thereafter five (5) minutes be allocated to each subsequent questioner until each member had the chance to question the witness (alternating between the Opposition Parties and the Government), and leaving at the discretion of the Chair the possibility to reduce the time limits of the second round of questions if time is running out.

We'll take that to a vote. It is moved by Jean.

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: Those are the basic routine motions, unless somebody has something else to suggest in terms of an additional motion that hasn't been the norm.

Mr. Bruinooge.

Mr. Rod Bruinooge: I have a couple of other relatively routine motions that were with the committee last year.

I'd like to move that whenever the main estimates or the supplementary estimates are tabled in the House, the committee invite the minister and any relevant senior officials of a department to appear at a meeting of the committee, which is televised, if possible.

The second part is that whenever a chapter of a report of the Auditor General refers to a subject under the mandate of the committee, the committee invite the Office of the Auditor General of Canada and any relevant senior officials of a department to appear at a meeting of the committee, which is televised, if possible.

The Chair: Do we have any questions?

Jean.

Ms. Jean Crowder: In the future, it would be really helpful if we could have this in writing before the committee.

The Chair: That would make a lot of sense, obviously. I guess my hands are a bit tied when additional ones come.

These are ones that have been done in the past. Actually, this was out of the last one, but no matter, your point is well made.

Can I read it again? Is this verbatim from the last...? It simply says that whenever the main estimates or supplementary estimates are referred to the committee, the committee invite the minister and any relevant senior officials of a department to appear at a meeting of the committee, and, if possible, that it be televised.

The suggestion from the clerk is that this can be perceived as routine, but it may also be considered as a future business thing.

The other motion, which I will read quickly so that we can get to the comments, and it was adopted by the committee last time, is that whenever a chapter of a report of the Auditor General refers to a subject under the mandate of the committee, the committee invite the Office of the Auditor General of Canada and relevant senior officials of a department to appear at a meeting of the committee, and, if possible, that it be televised.

So the member is within his right to propose that as a routine motion. It's for you as a committee to dispose of it yea or nay, or for it to be brought up at a future meeting, as you choose.

Yvon, go ahead.

•(1625)

[Translation]

Mr. Yvon Lévesque: Whether we are talking about the present motion or others to come, it would be preferable, as Jean mentioned, that we have them in writing and that we debate them at the next meeting.

[English]

The Chair: Absolutely, and by virtue of the 48-hour notice, that is a requirement. So if you judge today that you would rather it come in a written form.... Mr. Bruinooge is proposing it as a routine motion, that this be standard operating procedure for our committee. He's proposing it as a motion. You as a committee have an option then to approve it. If you sense that you need the text—I read it off, but if that wasn't clear or you want it in writing, in French, you may want to delay it until the Monday meeting. I am at your pleasure as you choose with respect to this.

Ms. Nancy Karetak-Lindell: Just out of courtesy, that's why we have staff here. I know he's new, and we all go through these when we're new members. We're not aware of all the services available. But when we do walk in and there's a motion that we want to share and it is routine, it can be photocopied before it's read out, so that we are looking at a written copy, for the courtesy of all the members. Sometimes it's very difficult to just do it by hearing the motion.

Thank you.

The Chair: Okay, we have a motion on the floor. Are there any other comments? At your pleasure, we will vote this yea or nay, up or down, or defer it to another meeting.

Todd.

Mr. Todd Russell: Have you already made a ruling that this is routine business, this particular motion? Because from my own

perspective I would call it more of a substantive matter, seeing that it determines the business of the committee and somehow binds the committee to go through. I'm not saying I don't want to, but I would see it as more of a substantive matter.

Secondly, it is planning the future business of the committee. That would be the second agenda item, which we haven't gotten to.

The Chair: Okay. I'll let you vote up or down or whatever, as you choose. If you want to have it tabled, that's another possibility.

As I read it from the minutes last time, it just follows the whole string of motions here, the routine motions. It follows right after this that the copy of the transcript be kept in the committee. There's no differentiation as to.... It's just one of that string of routine motions here.

So in answer to your question, that's how it was handled in the last Parliament. So based on that, I have no reason to rule it out of order, because it was not approached as a substantive motion from the previous committee. But if you feel it is, then obviously you may be advised to simply vote it down. Or actually somebody could move to table, I guess, until Monday, as they choose.

Mr. Todd Russell: I move that we table it.

The Chair: Okay. Jean first.

Ms. Jean Crowder: I was just going to support Mr. Russell's comment about the fact that I think this is part of future business and the committee could determine at the time that these matters come forward about how they want to deal with it. It will depend on what their agenda is and all of those other things. So I would be prepared to vote against this. We have a motion to table now, though. It's not debatable.

•(1630)

The Chair: Have you moved to table? It's tabled until our next meeting then. At that point, I assume we would have French and English sets, but it has its 48-hour notice by that point too.

Are there any other issues that we want to discuss as we conclude here? I should say that already we have some other material in.

Monsieur Lemay, you had a motion that has come in, but you have not moved it. Do you want to do anything with respect to that today? Is it in both languages? I'm not even sure if it is.

[Translation]

Mr. Marc Lemay: I don't think it was distributed.

[English]

The Chair: It's not circulated, that's correct. You're right.

[Translation]

Mr. Marc Lemay: I tabled the motion in accordance with Standing Order 108. The motion you will be receiving reads as follows:

That, pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), the committee recommend that the government implement the Kelowna Accord, entitled: First Ministers and National Aboriginal Leaders Strengthening Relationships and Closing the Gap.

That the committee adopt those recommendations as a report to the House and that the Chair present this report to the House.

We will have to debate the motion, obviously, but it would have to be presented to the government. I was expecting that it would be presented in both official languages so that we could debate it, probably next Monday or Wednesday. I think that we will have enough time to have it translated between now and Monday, unless Mr. Clerk tells me that this has been done.

The Clerk: It has been done.

Mr. Marc Lemay: So, we could debate it on Monday.

[English]

The Chair: In effect, I would judge that this is like a notice of motion at this point. It will have to be in French and English, available for committee members with the 48-hour advance notice we have agreed to.

There was also something I received. Again, I'm not sure if that's translated. So this one also then would be a notice of motion. No?

I'll refer it quickly to Mr. Bruinooge then. This letter has been disseminated to the committee in French and English from the World Wildlife Federation. Can you explain what your intent with that is, so we can dispense with that?

Mr. Rod Bruinooge: Yes, Mr. Chair.

I received this letter. I believe it was also sent to everyone else on the committee. It seems that the WWF is going to be in town for only a brief period of time and would like to meet with the committee. I felt that it might be an appropriate opportunity for us to hear what they have to say. I'm asking if the committee might be interested.

The Chair: The date they're requesting and you're proposing is May 10, which is next Wednesday.

Mr. Rod Bruinooge: Correct.

The Chair: Go ahead, please, Anita.

Hon. Anita Neville: Mr. Chair, I don't know what the past practice of this committee has been, and I have no objection whatsoever to hearing from this group, but I do know that in a previous committee I served on, many interested groups or groups that had relevance to the topic of the committee asked to come and make a presentation, and these often interfered with the agenda and the program of the committee.

I don't know whether this committee has a policy or practice on hearing or responding to requests from interested groups. The practice we established in that committee was that I, as chair of the committee, set up an informal meeting opportunity for members of the group. I can see us potentially being inundated with requests from individuals or groups who want to make a presentation to this committee on an issue of concern. I think the committee needs to deal with this as a policy matter before we agree to this.

The Chair: Mr. Lemay, it's moved that we hear them as things stand, but we've got the 48-hour requirement. We could waive it if there's consent.

Madam Neville makes a very good point, and it's true, in particular once we have a work plan together and we are proceeding down a certain course of action, that we will get all kinds of requests—I'm beginning to get them already—and you will have to direct me as your committee chair as to what you want me to do with them. If Anita's practice as a past committee chair was to have these off-site or evening meetings and so on with these groups instead, then we could proceed in that manner. We don't have a work plan yet. I assume by Monday there will be Mr. Lemay's motion on the floor. This, I take it, is of that nature as well. So we will form our work plan, unless that is something we want to get at with great haste today. But for substantive motions we have the 48-hour advance notice requirement.

• (1635)

Hon. Anita Neville: This is for follow-up, Mr. Chair. I did receive this in my office, but I noticed that this is a matter that went to the clerk of the committee, not to the executive branch of the government. I am wondering why this is being brought forward by the parliamentary secretary rather than being put on the agenda by the clerk for discussion, or the chair, or you.

The Chair: This was received as well, as you know, by all the members, and in this case the parliamentary secretary, Mr. Bruinooge, put forward a motion to have these people heard. That's the manner by which it comes before this committee. It was received by all of us, you're right. The clerk received it as well, and Mr. Bruinooge moves that we see these people, or hear them, next Wednesday.

Hon. Anita Neville: Mr. Chair, I would reiterate my previous comment that I have no difficulty in hearing them, but if we allow this group to come and make a presentation to the committee, we are setting a precedent for many other groups who are going to write asking to make a presentation to the committee. We have to understand that we may not be able to get the business of the committee done because of requests from various interest groups.

• (1640)

The Chair: Monsieur Lemay.

[Translation]

Mr. Marc Lemay: I think we are going off-topic. According to the agenda, we have finished examining motions. If there are others, such as mine, we will study them on Monday. We should now move on to the planning of future business, unless I cannot read properly. I think we should, all together choose the topics we want to debate in committee and then decide on the order in which those matters will be studied. Of course, as we proceed with our meetings, urgent situations may arise, and we will make room for them.

With all due respect to the parliamentary secretary, I do not think it is urgent that we hear my good friends from the WWF. They wrote to us, we examined their letter and they are very nice. However, I am not willing to give them an hour to have them come to tell us what those who have been following Indian and northern affairs have known for at least five years. According to me, there is nothing new here.

I would like us to come up with a work plan. For instance, I am speaking on behalf of the Bloc Québécois, and I just informed you that one of the priorities of my party is the Kelowna Accord. Housing is another of the Bloc Québécois' priorities. We are really getting down to serious business when we talk about priorities like those. Another one of the Bloc Québécois' priorities is health. We heard a lot about it in the debate on the Speech from the Throne, from all three sides of the House.

I expected us to discuss things like that this afternoon. I thought that when we got to the second point on the agenda, we would each present our list of topics and put those topics in order so that we could begin our work as early as next week. This would have allowed us to give direction to our clerk and our Research Branch and let them know that we need an overview of these topics and that we want to work on them during the coming weeks.

That is how I see things. I hope that others share my point of view.
[English]

The Chair: Anita.

Hon. Anita Neville: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I also share the concerns of my colleague.

I would like to add that we are most interested in following up on the work of the committee last year on matrimonial property rights and Bill C-31, as well as land claims issues and many of those issues identified by my colleagues. I think it's important that we establish a work plan to know where we're going and what we're doing.

Mr. Rod Bruinooge: Mr. Chair, I think I may have misspoken. I intended to bring this forward as a motion for Monday, but I was only bringing it forward today to advise the committee of the intention to possibly have this group speak to us. It seems that there is maybe some dissent on having them speak before us, so I would like to clarify what I intended.

The Chair: Okay. I appreciate it.

Mary is noting the BQ priority of the housing issue. It's valid to have brought this forward, but it's something that would not be given consideration at this meeting here today.

We'll let Jean speak, and then it may simply be the best suggestion, as Mr. Lemay says, that we come back on Monday with a list that is thought through, collaborating with our party colleagues or across party lines to get a sense of it. Then we'll come forward and hash that out in terms of what the priorities will be.

Some specific motions may also be the best way to undertake it, if you can get in a quick motion on something. That has already been done by Mr. Mayes. So we are obligated to deal with that on Monday, have a discussion in respect to that, and a vote. There may also be other things.

Anita, in a formal manner you're actually putting something forward, but I know that we have at least one thing that we're obligated to discuss and other work plans as that meeting proceeds.

Jean.

Ms. Jean Crowder: First of all, I want to support the comments on having groups request to make presentations at the committee. It needs to fit within our work plan.

Since everybody else is talking about their priorities, I want to throw out a few of my own. I want to support the others that have been put forward, but I also want to talk about indigenous children in care, certainly the land claims, and education, with specific reference to the Berger report on Nunavut that came out. I would also like to see some kind of timetable on the residential schools agreement, how it's going to unfold, the discussion on the interim payments, and so on.

The Chair: Okay, we'll have an interesting time navigating and sorting out the parties on that.

Nancy.

Ms. Nancy Karetak-Lindell: I have a question for the parliamentary secretary. I'm wondering if he can let us know what pieces of legislation we can expect in this Parliament before we adjourn for the summer.

I understand there were some outstanding pieces that we did not finish before the election came, or that this present government might want to be introducing that would go to this committee. Our understanding always was that any legislation has precedence over any other study we happen to be doing, so I wonder if he can give us a heads-up as to what legislation to expect. As Jean said, I'm very interested in the Berger report on Nunavut.

The Chair: So the question is, do we have some latitude to undertake some studies, or is legislation—

Mr. Rod Bruinooge: I intend to inform the committee as soon as possible, and I hope to come very soon to a future meeting with any information on legislation that may be coming.

The Chair: So I take it we have a little leeway for some study of some possible topics or subjects, as may be suggested here already. We would have that latitude, it would seem?

Mr. Rod Bruinooge: I think that's fair.

The Chair: Mr. Lemay.

[Translation]

Mr. Marc Lemay: Mr. Chairman, as a matter of fact, I brought my grocery list, so to speak. We all know how to use email. And so you could between now and Monday, for instance, send us an outline of how the Conservative Party, the Liberal Party, the NDP and the Bloc Québécois see things. Then we could begin to determine the order of the topics on which our future business will focus.

I would like the parliamentary secretary to inform us on certain points. I would like to begin my work by putting questions to the minister. That minister, who is new, is responsible for a very important portfolio. In order to avoid taking initiatives willy-nilly, I would first like to know something about the minister's vision and the mandate entrusted to him for the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. Can we organize that quickly? That type of overview would be helpful.

Although I already know the topic in part, I would also like us—and I want to insist on this point—be given a profile of the department. Someone could inform us about the number of branches and their names, as soon as possible, so that we have them in mind when we begin to discuss education, housing, territorial rights and so on. It would be good if we had a briefing on this topic. If possible, I would like the parliamentary secretary to inform the minister of that.

However, I do not want us—and I say this sincerely—to invite the minister to give him a hard time. My purpose is to get to know his vision of his department for the next few months, if not the next few years. All of this is of course related to the Kelowna Accord.

Finally, I would like a briefing on the department, because we no longer know who does what. We do know that 40 per cent of the budget is allocated to administration. I would probably have quite a few questions to ask about that.

And that is the end of my rant.

• (1645)

[English]

The Chair: Okay, that's a fair comment.

If I understood you correctly, this is the shopping list, the additional things we're adding here. What I would suggest, before we go to Mr. Bruinooge, is that we do get those all in to the clerk of the committee, and we'll get an extensive list of all these different ones. We can attach names; I guess it would probably be a good idea as well to know who was suggesting the idea and the nature of it. Then we will proceed and figure out a way of prioritizing those in what could be an extensive and lengthy meeting as well.

So I'm hearing you say as well, and I think we've duly recorded it here, that we get a look at.... Well, we have the departmental officials in at a point in terms of sketching what's all there with the department, the various facets of it. Also, the minister will be in to report on his vision—the Kelowna accord, I think, you've referenced there as well. We've noted those things, all for our list in respect of the work plan come the Monday meeting.

Mr. Bruinooge.

Mr. Rod Bruinooge: Mr. Chair, I agree with Monsieur Lemay. I think at the next meeting we're going to be talking about our vision as a government, and of course we want to hear the suggestions of others as to what the committee's business should be.

That is likely the agenda for the next meeting. Maybe I'm wrong.

The Chair: Are there any other comments or thoughts?

I think there are some good suggestions there, and the consensus is to move on getting a list of all of these and submitting them, as has been done already by different ones. I'm sure you'll have additional ones.

Jean, I think we have yours on record here. If you have additional ones, certainly submit them. Monsieur Lemay had several things suggested and we've noted that. If there are additional ones from the Bloc, and from the Liberal members as well, you'll have that in, individually or as a consensus among your respective parties.

If you can make an effort to get them in so we can get the translation done by the end of the day tomorrow—they don't have to be long, a sentence or two with respect to the particular subject that we undertake to look at. Is that reasonable? If we can make every effort to have it in so the translation can be done on Friday, it would be distributed on Friday, hopefully, to our respective offices. If we could try to get it in by the end of tomorrow, we'll undertake to have those out to you by the end of day Friday, translated, so you have them well in advance of the Monday meeting.

Would that be fair? Okay.

Are there any other comments or questions?

I'll let the researcher speak. She'll explain probably better than I could.

• (1650)

Ms. Mary Hurley (Analyst, Law and Government Division, Library of Parliament): Maybe I can just remind you of what you've already told me, which I've taken note of, and if there are additional things you can add them.

[Translation]

For the Bloc Québécois, I have the Kelowna accord, housing and health.

[English]

For the Liberals, I have essentially follow-up topics from the 38th Parliament, including matrimonial real property. You also mentioned, I believe, Bill C-31 and land claims.

Hon. Anita Neville: And I might put at the top of our list the Kelowna accord.

Ms. Mary Hurley: For the NDP, Ms. Crowder has added indigenous children in care, land claims, and education, with a particular reference to the Berger report, as well as an update on what's happening with the residential schools agreement—the timeline, who gets what when, etc.

Ms. Jean Crowder: I would add lands claims and treaties. I'm from British Columbia.

Hon. Anita Neville: If I might, Mr. Chairman, my colleague would like to add others.

I would also emphasize that we are in accord with just about everything my colleagues here have identified.

The Chair: What was the one you were adding, Anita? Mothers?

Hon. Anita Neville: Gary Merasty has....

The Chair: Gary.

Mr. Gary Merasty (Desnethé—Mississippi—Churchill River, Lib.): I think the Kelowna accord will cover most of the topics around health and education, that side. I think we're covered there, but I think specifically aboriginal justice issues is a major topic in light of some of the recent developments. There is also support for Métis, because there was zero there.

The Chair: You didn't say “mothers”; you said “others”?

Hon. Anita Neville: Others. This isn't where we talk about mothers.

The Chair: I know women had an issue with the Kelowna accord.

I thought I understood the Bloc member, Mr. Lemay, to say something about having department officials in to sketch out the breadth and the different facets of the department. Is that correct?

[Translation]

Mr. Marc Lemay: Quite so. I would like us to be briefed on the organizational chart and the way in which the department operates.

[English]

The Chair: Okay. The minister's vision is also what I thought I heard you to say, with respect to Kelowna and the general vision.

[Translation]

Mr. Marc Lemay: I want us to ask him how he sees his new role as Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development.

[English]

The Chair: Are there other comments?

Mr. Lévesque, and then we can conclude our meeting.

[Translation]

Mr. Yvon Lévesque: A certain number of topics to be examined during the next meetings have just been proposed. Moreover, it was suggested that we send in our own list of topics. Would it be preferable to include all of the discussion topics or to remove those which have already been suggested from the list?

[English]

The Chair: We already have these on record, the various ones that have been verbally recounted here. So those will be on that list that we attempt to prioritize on Monday. If there are things that come to you and you think of after having departed here and you say "Oh, I forgot that I want that", then give an email to the clerk of the committee and we'll get those on the list. It's a long list, a growing list as well, but the things you've mentioned here today I think we've captured, and those will be on the list that we attempt to prioritize come Monday.

Do we have somebody, Gary, willing to move adjournment shortly?

Mr. Gary Merasty: Just quickly on the land claims, we're talking, of course, about specific and comprehensive, but I think the parliamentary secretary brought up issues here that are going to lead into land claim discussions, the whole duty-to-consult discussions, and I'm just hoping that is part of the land claims under that topic.

•(1655)

The Chair: Nancy.

Ms. Nancy Karetak-Lindell: I have just one follow-up question. I haven't read the whole Federal Accountability Act, but I'm a little concerned about the implications on first nations bands and whether that may be an aspect we might want to look at, too, at some point, because there is some fear of it going against some of the responsibilities that a band has.

The Chair: You're talking about the Federal Accountability Act with respect to how it impacts first nations.

Ms. Nancy Karetak-Lindell: Obligations.

Go ahead, Anita.

Hon. Anita Neville: What I would like to follow up on that is perhaps for you, as chair, to request a joint meeting with the special committee that is dealing with the Federal Accountability Act to look specifically at the issue of accountability for first nations on reserve and the measures that the government intends to introduce.

The Chair: To meet with them?

Hon. Anita Neville: To have a joint meeting with that special committee to look at the matters.

I'm not putting this forward as a motion. I'm asking you to explore it, to look at a potential joint meeting with that special committee when it looks at aboriginal accountability and the matters related to it. It's a serious issue for many communities throughout the country, and I think we need to follow up on that.

The Chair: Okay. We can make some queries on that, because I'm a little unsure of how we would undertake a meeting.

When you say a joint meeting, we have no status at that committee, as best I understand. Are you proposing that we attend as observers?

Hon. Anita Neville: No, I'm proposing that we have a joint meeting of both committees. I know it has been done before. I'm just asking you to explore it, but for the specific purposes of looking at first nations, how the proposed Federal Accountability Act affects first nations.

The Chair: So whereas these members have full status at that committee, at that particular hearing, is that what you're suggesting we explore?

Hon. Anita Neville: What I'm suggesting is that we all have full status at that committee, that we join them or they join us. But they're seized with the review of that act, so perhaps we could join them for an official meeting when they deal with that aspect of the Federal Accountability Act.

The Chair: Okay. I would suggest as well, Anita, that you put a motion together to that effect. So I can make the query—

Hon. Anita Neville: Before I do that, I'm asking you to explore the possibility of it.

The Chair: I'm just thinking potentially down the road, if we get rebuffed to say, no, that isn't permitted or isn't the norm, then I would think we may have to proceed as a committee, if we make inquiries or whatever. We can make the initial queries, but I'm just preparing us so that if that's rebuffed, we'll have to take another approach on that. But with the clerks, we can undertake to make a query.

Okay, Monsieur Lemay, are you proposing that we adjourn the meeting?

[Translation]

Mr. Marc Lemay: We have to remember that we only have about eight meetings of two hours each left. I have a suggestion to make to my colleagues. In the shopping list we are going to be sending to our extraordinary clerk, each party could choose the topic it feels is the most important of them all. I suspect that my colleagues from the Liberal Party will want to talk about the Kelowna Accord, and I respect that choice.

The Bloc Québécois may prioritize housing. We would have to begin as early as Monday. After Monday's meeting there will only be seven meetings left unless our colleagues extend the session until the end of the month of June. That would surprise me, however.

• (1700)

[*English*]

The Chair: I think I'll direct our clerk to actually list all those things so people can indicate their choices from one to twelve. It would be kind of nice to have those back in by Monday, but I don't know if we're going to be able to manage that time-wise. If we do, you'll probably see on your desk, as we come to that meeting, all of the things listed that we discussed today, in addition to whatever email suggestions come in on topics we'll undertake as a committee. I'm suggesting you list choices one to twelve, or whatever, in the

order you want, and we will try to do a tally of those things that rank the highest, down to the bottom.

Does that make sense? Hopefully out of that you'll get a clear picture of what the top two or three will be. Obviously we'll run out of time by June.

Hon. Anita Neville: We may be sitting into July, though, Mr. Chairman.

The Chair: We may be sitting in July, that's true.

Mr. Yvon Lévesque: Have a nice summer.

The Chair: Nancy.

Ms. Nancy Karetak-Lindell: I move to adjourn.

The Chair: We'll adjourn until our Monday meeting at 2:30.

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