



House of Commons
CANADA

Standing Committee on the Status of Women

FEWO • NUMBER 001 • 1st SESSION • 39th PARLIAMENT

EVIDENCE

Tuesday, May 9, 2006

—
Chair

Hon. Judy Sgro

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• (0910)

[English]

The Clerk of the Committee: We will now proceed with the election of a chair. I am ready to receive motions to that effect.

Hon. Anita Neville (Winnipeg South Centre, Lib.): I nominate the Honourable Judy Sgro.

The Clerk: It has been moved by the Honourable Anita Neville to nominate the Honourable Judy Sgro as chair.

Mrs. Joy Smith (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC): Do you need a seconder for that motion?

The Clerk: Are there any further motions?

Is it the pleasure of the committee to adopt the motion?

(Motion agreed to)

The Clerk: The Honourable Judy Sgro is duly elected as chair of the committee.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

The Clerk: Before inviting the chair to take the chair, we will now proceed to the election of the vice-chairs.

Mrs. Nina Grewal (Fleetwood—Port Kells, CPC): I would like to nominate Joy Smith as a vice-chair.

The Clerk: Nina Grewal has nominated Joy Smith for the position of vice-chair.

Are there any further motions?

An hon. member: I move that nominations be closed.

The Clerk: There being no further motions, Joy Smith has been duly elected as vice-chair.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

The Clerk: Are there any motions for second vice-chair?

[Translation]

Ms. Diane Bourgeois (Terrebonne—Blainville, BQ): I nominate Ms. Irene Mathyssen.

The Clerk: Diane Bourgeois moves that Ms. Irene Mathyssen be the second vice-chair.

Are there any other nominations?

[English]

A voice: I move that nominations be closed.

The Clerk: I declare Irene Mathyssen duly elected as second vice-chair of the committee.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

The Clerk: Now I'll invite the chair to take the chair.

The Chair (Hon. Judy Sgro (York West, Lib.)) Thank you all very much.

Joy, you wanted to say something. I'm sorry, I mean, Mrs. Smith. I'm a pretty informal person, so you'll have to catch me when....

Mrs. Joy Smith: That's just fine, Judy—oops, Ms. Sgro, I mean.

I would move that we have the elections today and then move to adjourn. I understand we're going to be having a subcommittee looking at the agenda and things like that. So I would move that after the elections today, which have been completed, we adjourn until Thursday and agree to meet as a subcommittee before Thursday to talk about the agenda.

The Chair: Should we deal with some of the standard and routine motions first, the housekeeping items, which is the normal procedure, and then adjourn and do the subcommittee work, unless you have issues with some of the routine motions we have?

Mrs. Joy Smith: I would prefer to adjourn just after the elections today. There are a few things I need to go over in terms of the routine motions. So if that's all right, we can do the routine motions the next day very quickly.

The Chair: Ms. Minna.

Hon. Maria Minna (Beaches—East York, Lib.): I'm not sure what there is in the routine motions that is so unusual. They're pretty standard, and they've been adopted in previous committees. Generally, the practice is that you do them right after the elections so that you can move on, and then we can start addressing some other issues in the subcommittee. Routine motions are generally not dealt with in subcommittee. They're dealt with by the committee.

The Chair: Is there a particular area in the routine motions you have difficulty with or that you want to look at further? Maybe we can adopt the other ones and separate that particular one.

Mrs. Joy Smith: There is one we're looking at right now, number 10, but I thought today, mostly because of things that are happening in the House right now—one of my colleagues has a speech she needs to do.... I know that normally routine proceedings are done at committee right after the elections, but I'm appealing to this committee—just so I can help my colleague get ready for her speech, and things like that—that we adjourn after the elections today and proceed on Thursday.

The Chair: Ms. Neville.

Hon. Anita Neville: Thank you, Madam Chair.

I would suggest that we move forward with routine motions. We all have other commitments and obligations, and we can move through these pretty quickly.

As to the agenda, Madam Chair, it's usually the practice in committees that all members of the committee put forward their ideas as to what the agenda will be before a subcommittee meets. I hope we will have that opportunity as well, as a committee, to discuss the issues under consideration by this committee.

The Chair: Ms. Mourani, go ahead, please.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Maria Mourani (Ahuntsic, BQ): Good day, everyone.

I agree with Ms. Smith, quite simply because the new members are not familiar with these motions. I have just learned something, right here at this table, but I have not had the time to read the motions. I think that we should each take the time to do so. Some members are not new here, and I understand that. Those of us who are new do however want to take the time to read the motions, understand them, and see what we are committing to before voting on anything.

Furthermore, as for the agenda, we want to know what the procedures are. We all have a very specific agenda. We would like to be able to discuss it before the agenda is passed. Thank you.

[*English*]

The Chair: Ms. Mathysen, go ahead, please.

Ms. Irene Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Yes, Madam Chair.

I am a new member as well, but it seems to me that these standard motions are quite clear. I think we can indeed go through them at this point in time. They are very workable, and I would like to get on with the work of this committee as expeditiously as possible. Getting this taken care of now would be my preference.

• (0915)

The Chair: Ms. Smith, go ahead, please.

Mrs. Joy Smith: I would like to call for a vote on adjournment. I agree that we all need to discuss agenda and all be a part of it, but I do think today Maria Mourani really has a very good point. I know I've heard that brought up on my side of the House with the new members as well. It takes only about three minutes to go through these proceedings. I would like to get off to a really good start and make everyone feel very much included. So if I could call for a vote on adjournment, I would appreciate that.

The Chair: Is there any other discussion further to this?

Ms. Minna, go ahead, please.

Hon. Maria Minna: Madam Chair, I understand the fact that there are new members, but also generally it's incumbent on members, when they do the training, to be exposed to this sort of thing. This is very straightforward. We could take the time now. If it takes a couple of minutes per item, it shouldn't take that long to understand what they are. They are fairly straightforward. Then the committee can move on, rather than having another meeting and

coming back to do the basics, before getting on with the issues. Otherwise we would be postponing it to another meeting until those issues are discussed, and we won't get going until two meetings from now, which is unfortunate because there are a lot of issues that are outstanding from work that was being done by the previous committee, and other pressing women's issues that I think we would want to get into.

As the member for the NDP said, she is new as well, but none of these is that complicated. We can discuss them now. It wouldn't take long for each one. I suggest that we could do number 10 and give it a bit more time than the others and then move on. This is the first time in I don't know how many years that I have seen this kind of thing not discussed at the very beginning. Usually it's done immediately, and this is very straightforward. There is nothing unusual about it.

The Chair: Ms. Mathysen and then Ms. Bourgeois, go ahead, please.

Ms. Irene Mathysen: My point was the same as Ms. Minna's. This is not complicated. It takes a couple of minutes to go through them; we can afford to do that now. I think we should do it now.

The Chair: Ms. Bourgeois, go ahead, please.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Diane Bourgeois: First, I want to apologize, Madam Chair, for the incident with my cell phone.

I want to know, Madam Clerk, if you sent these documents to everyone.

I see that that is the case. Everyone should therefore, in principle, have read them, as I did. Furthermore, everyone knew that the committee was meeting this morning. Everyone should therefore have set aside two hours for that purpose, correct? Under those circumstances, there is no reason to delay the adoption of motions.

Thank you.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you.

Is there any further discussion?

Ms. Neville, go ahead, please.

Hon. Anita Neville: Thank you, Madam Chair.

I agree with my colleagues Madam Bourgeois, Ms. Minna, and Ms. Mathysen that there is no reason to delay this. It is false to portray this as a means of cooperation. This is in fact an attempt to stall the efforts and the work of this committee.

We are starting later than any other committee, Madam Chair. The time is running out, unless we're sitting into July, as has been touted. We have a lot of work to do in this committee, and I think it's time to move forward.

If members opposite have a problem with number 10, I have no difficulty delaying it until the beginning of next week, but I'm not prepared to delay all of it. I think it's important that we move on, if not today, then first thing Thursday morning, with prioritizing the agenda items for all of us.

The Chair: Are you moving a motion that we deal with all of the items other than item 10?

• (0920)

Hon. Anita Neville: Well, there's a motion on the floor to adjourn.

The Chair: I think it's really important that we listen to each other and make sure we're being as reasonable with each other as possible. I have no problem either way. I hear Ms. Mourani's issues, but I also hear issues around the fact that there is a lot of work, with lots of opportunity for us to move forward together on these issues.

We don't want to waste another whole meeting going over things that maybe most of you are comfortable with. Maybe some of the new members would look to the people sitting to the left or right of them on some of those issues. If there's a particular issue raised, maybe we should try to go through it.

A request for a vote is on the table.

Ms. Smith.

Mrs. Joy Smith: My understanding is that if it's the consensus that we should go through the routine motions, that's fine, but this was done in the spirit of cooperation, by some requests. I think that no opinion around this table should be minimized. When people are new—and people are old, too, because if truth be told, I think a lot of the veterans haven't read the routine motions right now—we need to reach a consensus in terms of what we want to do.

There was no hidden agenda. It was cooperation. Around this table, no matter who is new or old, or what experiences we have, we're here together as women to work in cooperation. Quite simply, I did make a motion to call for an adjournment. If it doesn't happen, that's just fine with this side of the House. But we will be voting for the adjournment, to be mindful of the questions that other people have. It's only in the spirit of cooperation.

That's why I voted for you, Madam Chair, to be chair of this committee.

I would wish that maybe we could enter this. It's a very simple request. Adjournment is not the end of the world, but it will help us to be mindful of each other's needs and wants, and to work together.

This side of the House is certainly ready to work together, but there is a motion on the floor right now.

The Chair: Ms. Mourani.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Maria Mourani: Madam Clerk, I want to know when you sent these documents.

The Clerk: Yesterday.

Mrs. Maria Mourani: At what time?

The Clerk: Around 2 p.m.

Mrs. Maria Mourani: By email?

The Clerk: Yes.

[*English*]

The Chair: All right. Is that the end of the discussion?

Yes.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Maria Mourani: I have another comment, Madam Chair.

It would be appreciated if, in future, you could send us the documents before the eve of the committee meeting. Thank you.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you.

So do we go forward with a vote on this motion? The motion is that we postpone dealing with the standard routine motions until the next meeting, which will be Thursday morning.

• (0925)

Hon. Maria Minna: Could we have a recorded vote, Madam Chair?

The Chair: A recorded vote has been requested.

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

The Chair: The next thing I'd like to mention prior to adjourning the meeting is that my thought was that if you e-mailed the clerk of the committee or me the ideas and issues that you would like to have the committee look at, we could bring those together for Thursday's meeting, rather than have to put together a subcommittee right now. Given the way everybody's schedules are, would you e-mail the clerk of the committee the issues that you'd like to see the status of women's committee work on, and then on Thursday we could discuss those and develop a work plan? That is a thought that I put out for the committee.

Yes, Ms. Guergis.

Ms. Helena Guergis (Simcoe—Grey, CPC): First, congratulations, Madam Chair.

I think it is an excellent idea for Thursday.

The Chair: Thank you.

We will adjourn the meeting. In spite of the fact that we've started this out already in a little bit of a...let's remember that the women of this country and the families of this country expect us to work together and to move those kinds of agendas forward, so I look forward to working very closely with all of you.

Thank you.

The meeting is adjourned.

Published under the authority of the Speaker of the House of Commons

Publié en conformité de l'autorité du Président de la Chambre des communes

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