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•(1110)

[English]

The Clerk of the Committee: Good morning. My name is Lucile McGregor, and I'm the clerk of the committee.

Honourable members of the committee, I see a quorum.

You may want to refer to the agenda that was circulated to you.

We're going to begin with the election of the chair.

[Translation]

Standing Order 106(2) provides for the following: [...] each standing or special committee shall elect a Chair and two Vice-Chairs, of whom the Chair shall be a Member of the government party, the first Vice-Chair shall be a Member of the Official Opposition, and the second Vice-Chair shall be a Member of an opposition party other than the Official Opposition party.

[English]

I am ready to accept motions for the election of the chair.

Mr. Reid.

Mr. Scott Reid (Lanark—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington, CPC): I nominate Gary Goodyear.

The Clerk: Are there any other nominations?

As there are no other nominations, I declare Mr. Goodyear elected chair of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs.

Before inviting Mr. Goodyear to take the chair, we'll proceed to the election of the vice-chairs.

Standing Order 106(2) stipulates that the first vice-chair shall be a member of the official opposition and the second vice-chair a member of an opposition party other than the official opposition.

I am now ready to accept nominations for the first vice-chair.

Mr. Owen.

Hon. Stephen Owen (Vancouver Quadra, Lib.): I nominate Marcel Proulx.

[Translation]

The Clerk: Are there any other nominations?

[English]

I declare nominations closed. As there are no other candidates, I declare Mr. Proulx elected vice-chair of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs.

We now have a motion, if a member wants to move one, for vice-chair from a member of an opposition party other than the official opposition.

Madame Picard.

[Translation]

Ms. Pauline Picard (Drummond, BQ): I nominate Michel Guimond.

The Clerk: Are there any other nominations?

As there are no other nominations, I declare Michel Guimond elected Vice-Chair of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs.

[English]

I now invite Mr. Goodyear to take his place as chair of the committee.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

The Acting Chair (Mr. Gary Goodyear (Cambridge, CPC)): Thank you very much, ladies and gentlemen. I look forward to a very positive and productive committee.

With the unanimous consent of the members, I'd like to move on to routine motions. Are there any objections to that? No? Perfect.

On the first matter, the services of analysts from the Library of Parliament, can I have a mover to adopt that motion?

Mr. Marcel Proulx (Hull—Aylmer, Lib.): I so move.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Gary Goodyear): Thank you, Mr. Proulx.

The second matter is the motion to establish a subcommittee on agenda and procedure.

Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Regina—Lumsden—Lake Centre, CPC): I so move.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Gary Goodyear): Thank you very much.

Moving right along, it's been suggested by the clerk that I read this motion on the striking committee: that the four whips be delegated the duty to act as the striking committee, pursuant to Standing Orders 104, 113, and 114, and that they be authorized to present directly to the chair in a report, signed by all four whips or their representatives, their unanimous recommendations for presentation to the House on behalf of this committee.

Mr. Marcel Proulx: I so move.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Gary Goodyear): Thank you very much, Mr. Proulx.

Mr. Scott Reid: I'm just wondering, are we coming back to these for a vote, or are we regarding these as adopted at this point? Are we going to return to these for adoption, or are we counting these as adopted as we go through them? I don't know what's going on here.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Gary Goodyear): It is my understanding that we can have a discussion.

Hon. Jay Hill (Prince George—Peace River, CPC): My thought was that perhaps we could just go through them all, Mr. Chair, with the agreement of all committee members. We could just vote on all of them at once at the end, after we discuss each one as we go through if anybody has any concerns about any of them. We could dispense with them all at once.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Gary Goodyear): I'll accept a mover, and if there is any discussion we could go back to discussing each motion. Is that acceptable? Okay.

On to motion number 4: to receive and publish evidence in the absence of a quorum. Is there a mover?

An hon. member: I so move.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Gary Goodyear): Motion number 5 is payment of witnesses' travel and living expenses. Mr. Lukiwski moves that.

The next motion is distribution of documents with translation. Mr. Proulx moves that.

Working meals. Do we want to discuss this?

Mr. Scott Reid: That's why I asked about how we were doing these things. Are we going to wait until the end and come back and discuss them?

• (1115)

The Acting Chair (Mr. Gary Goodyear): I think we'll come back. We'll get them all moved onto the record and then we'll come back and discuss those that we need to discuss and then vote on them all.

Working meals—Mr. Preston moves that.

In camera meeting transcripts.

An hon. member: I'll move that.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Gary Goodyear): The setting up of a subcommittee on private members' business.

An hon. member: I'll move that.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Gary Goodyear): Okay. Is there any discussion on motions 1 through 5?

(Motions 1 to 5 inclusive agreed to)

The Acting Chair (Mr. Gary Goodyear): Motion number 6, distribution of documents with translation.

Monsieur Guimond.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Michel Guimond (Montmorency—Charlevoix—Haute-Côte-Nord, BQ): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

In turn, I'd like to congratulate you on your election as Chair of the committee. It's no secret that this committee has a very important role to play because other committees cannot get down to business until the Procedure and House Affairs committee has met.

At this time, I'd like to jog everyone's collective memory. In terms of our obligation to distribute only those documents drafted in Canada's two official languages, following through with this requirement has at times been problematic. Most likely Mr. Hill will recall certain incidents, as may Mr. Reid and no doubt Ms. Redman.

I want to be clear from the outset that the clerk must resolve not to circulate documents that are not in both official languages. I'm fed up with acting as enforcer of the Official Languages Act. I no longer want to play the part. People were always seeking my consent to distribute a unilingual document. This rule in fact applies to both official languages, that is it applies equally to francophone groups or witnesses appearing before us who have not drafted their submissions in both languages.

I know that this committee has several unilingual members, including yourself, Mr. Chairman, with all due respect. Unless, of course, it's a well kept secret that you speak French. I haven't yet heard you speak the language, but perhaps we'll get the opportunity to hear you.

We've heard witnesses and ministers apologize because departmental staff weren't able to have documents translated in time for a meeting. I hope the new Conservative ministers will appreciate the importance of Canada's two official languages. Let me be clear. We mustn't do indirectly that which we cannot do directly. Let me explain what I mean by this.

I recall a memorable incident when I was at a meeting with Mr. Adams in the Railway Room, that is Room 253-D of the Centre Block. This committee is not supposed to be partisan. We operate a great deal by consensus, but occasionally, the debate can take on partisan undertones and things can get a little out of hand.

Quebec's motto is *Je me souviens*. And I must say that I have a good memory! I recall this incident with Mr. Adams where the witness had arrived with documents in only one official language. He left the documents on the table, claiming subsequently that he hadn't distributed them. However, Peter Adams, who represented the riding of Peterborough at the time, informed committee members that they could help themselves to copies if they wished. He maintained that he couldn't stop a witness from leaving copies of his submission on the table. Therefore, we mustn't do indirectly that which we cannot do directly.

As Chairman, you will have an important role to play. The same holds true for our clerk. A witness who shows up with documents in only one language mustn't be allowed to leave copies on the table so that members can help themselves to them. It's a matter of complying with the Official Languages Act and it's only fair to witnesses who do not have the good fortune of being perfectly bilingual like my colleague Marcel Proulx.

I'm asking this of you, for the sake of harmony among committee members. I'm not making any threats or resorting to blackmail. I simply want members to get along. You know that I'm always in a good humour.

• (1120)

[*English*]

The Acting Chair (Mr. Gary Goodyear): Thank you very much.

Mr. Reid.

Mr. Scott Reid: Monsieur Guimond's reputation for always being in good humour is of course known universally. However, I am somewhat concerned that taking the approach he recommends, of ensuring that no documents are ever distributed if they're not in the two languages, does not allow us to discharge our functions as required by the documents that we are all bound to follow, which are of course the Constitution and the Charter of Rights.

I draw everybody's attention to subsection 17(1) of the Charter of Rights, which says: "Everyone has the right to use English or French in any debates and other proceedings of Parliament."

It doesn't say every member of Parliament, it doesn't say every senator, it says everyone. Everybody who is brought before our committee has that right. The right to use these languages, or either of the languages, I would assume applies to both their written submissions and their verbal submissions. We've accommodated the verbal submissions by means of simultaneous translation, but with regard to written documentation, it's a little more complicated. I think this is Monsieur Guimond's point, that

[*Translation*]

we also have the right to speak whichever language we prefer.

[*English*]

It seems to me that the best way to deal with the apparent conflict between these two rights is for us to be not merely passive in our approach to witnesses—for instance, it's been the practice on this committee and every other committee I've ever participated in to just expect witnesses to figure this out on their own—but to engage them in an active offer. When we summon them as witnesses, we first should inform them of what the rules are, that we're not going to distribute documents that are in one language only. Second, we should make the offer not to ministers who have their own translation facilities but to someone else who comes as witness, perhaps from across the country, that we can translate documents of a reasonable length into the other language if they're given to us in enough time.

That's something that's available, but witnesses aren't informed of this right. When I was a witness before a committee some six years ago, I was not informed that I had this right. I turned up with a presentation that relied upon people turning to tabs in the written presentation. Had I known I had the right to submit that for translation, I would have done so. When you bring someone all the way across the country, it seems it's a very poor use of taxpayers' money to have them come here with a presentation that can't be distributed to members and that therefore causes everyone in the room to waste their time.

So what I would like to suggest as a practice is that we notify all witnesses in advance, in writing, and that the clerk develop a standard letter that is sent out from the committee to all witnesses. The letter would inform them of the right to have their documents translated, up to a reasonable length, to ensure that we don't have the situation that causes Monsieur Guimond such justified fear.

• (1125)

The Acting Chair (Mr. Gary Goodyear): Mr. Proulx.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Marcel Proulx (Hull—Aylmer, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, esteemed colleagues, it may come as somewhat of a surprise to you, but I fully support my colleague Guimond on this point, despite his marked capacity for hiding his good humour most of the time. I support him 100 per cent.

My colleague Mr. Reid made a reference to the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. While I have no desire whatsoever to minimize the Charter's import, I would like to remind him that we are in the process of voting on our committee's internal rules of procedure. The committee would not be allowed to consider a document that hadn't been translated. We're not saying that witnesses must translate their submissions.

I'm very surprised by Mr. Reid's comments. To my knowledge, each time a witness is summoned to appear before a House committee, our staff, be it the clerks or the research officers, explain clearly that if the witness wishes to table a brief or some other document, it must be bilingual. The witness is advised that if he cannot table his brief in both languages, arrangements can be made to have the document translated, provided the witness supplies a copy in advance.

I chaired the Legislative Committee on Bill C-38 and that's how we always went about our business. Naturally, the committee did encounter some problems. For example, one time a witness submitted a 185-page brief 18 hours prior to testifying before the committee and that caused a bit of a problem.

The fact remains that I'm extremely surprised by Mr. Reid's comments. To my knowledge, the standard rule is that documents are systematically tabled in bilingual format. Therefore, I don't see why we wouldn't adopt this standard.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[*English*]

The Acting Chair (Mr. Gary Goodyear): Mr. Jennings. Oh, Ms. Jennings, my apologies. I didn't see your hand up, Ms. Jennings.

Hon. Marlene Jennings (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine, Lib.): That's okay. I appreciate your using the term Ms., but not Mr. To my knowledge, I have not undergone a sex change operation.

[*Translation*]

I concur with what my colleagues Mr. Proulx and Mr. Guimond have said.

I've been an MP for eight and a half, almost nine, years and all of the committees on which I've served have always abided by the internal rule whereby documents are not circulated to members unless they are available in both official languages.

Mr. Reid mentioned the Charter. Obviously, witnesses who testify before the committee as well as members and staff have the right to use either official language and to draft documents in their preferred language. However, as an MP and citizen, I have the right to receive documents or to hear testimony in my preferred language. That's why some committee members rely on the interpretation services. It is my right to speak French or to switch from French to English, but the other members present have the right to listen to my comments in their preferred language.

Mr. Proulx is quite right in saying that witnesses are entitled to draft their submissions in their preferred language. However, we certainly can adopt the internal rule in force in the other committees on which I've served. The clerk would not be authorized to distribute to committee members a document that is not in both official languages. That should be a minimum requirement.

Therefore, I wholeheartedly agree with Mr. Guimond and I hope the committee adopts this internal procedural rule.

Thank you.

[*English*]

The Acting Chair (Mr. Gary Goodyear): Thank you.

Mr. Godin.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yvon Godin (Acadie—Bathurst, NDP): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

First off, I'd like to congratulate you on your election to the Chair. Congratulations also to Mr. Proulx and to Mr. Michel Guimond.

Quite frankly, it's a shame that the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, which sets the tone for other House committees, finds itself having to discuss this matter yet again. It's a shame that MP Scott Reid, who has served on the Official Languages Committee, continues to argue the same point. It's almost as if minority or official languages carry too hefty a price tag for Canada.

I'm happy to see that the Conservatives do not have the required majority to pass a rule like this this morning. That isn't going to happen, because you do not respect our country's official languages. My colleagues' comments were very clear. Under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, I'm entitled to receive documents in my language, and at the same time as other members receive them. The Official Languages Act is clear on that score. As Ms. Jennings said, I have the right to hear testimony from witnesses in my preferred language. That is the law in Canada.

It's insulting to have to argue this point each time testimony is given before a committee. I look forward to the day when both of our country's official languages are treated with due respect and the question no longer comes up for discussion, Mr. Chairman. I think I've said enough on the subject. It's a personal affront to have to defend legislation passed years ago by Parliament.

As an MP, I want to receive documents at the same time as members seated opposite. I want the same advantages that they have. I look forward to the day when we stop debating this question. I'd like my colleague to think twice and stop talking about this. He needs to show us some respect, once and for all.

• (1130)

[*English*]

The Acting Chair (Mr. Gary Goodyear): Thank you.

Mr. Hill.

Hon. Jay Hill: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Perhaps I could encourage all my colleagues from all parties to just take a bit of a breather here.

Mr. Yvon Godin: I'll take a breather if they stop insulting us, that's all. I'm sorry about this, but...I apologize.

Hon. Jay Hill: Mr. Chairman, I had hoped we would start out this Parliament at least with some civil discussion instead of taking things so personally. I didn't think, to use the term that we're arguing about....

My understanding—unless I misread something in what Mr. Reid is proposing—is that he's not opposed to our adopting what has become quite a standard motion for committees to operate under. What he is suggesting, or at least what I heard, is that there should be some onus on us as the committee to ensure that witnesses who might travel all the way here from Whitehorse, Yukon, get here with a document in one of the languages and then be informed that they.... I think there should be some onus.

I see that what he was saying was actually supportive of this motion, that in addition to this motion we should have a policy, probably not only on this committee but on all committees, whereby the onus is on us through our clerks, through our staff, to ensure that witnesses appearing before us are well aware that is the policy. We're not saying it shouldn't be the policy. I don't think that's what he was saying. He was saying that the onus should be on us so that a witness doesn't appear here, as he was trying to point out, with a document similar to what's in front of us, with tabs, trying to walk through a presentation that they've put hopefully a lot of time and effort into presenting, and realize that they can't give a document like that to the members of the committee because, unknown to them, it has to be in both official languages.

I think it behooves us, Mr. Chairman, whether we need an addition to this or we just need it by common agreement and not have it in writing, to have some policy—and I think this is what my colleague Mr. Reid was referring to—whereby we are assured that, without exception, witnesses who appear before us are aware that this is the policy. That's what I heard him saying.

So I don't see where anybody should be insulted that we're having this discussion. I think we're all coming from the same place here on this issue.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Gary Goodyear): Thank you, Mr. Hill.

Indeed, that was my impression, that we were being asked by Mr. Reid to tighten the motion up a little bit to make sure everybody was in fact aware that there is an obligation to present in both official languages, and that the onus is in fact on this committee to make sure they're aware of that; and in an attempt not to restrict any evidence or decrease the value of any presentation, that in fact perhaps the committee should, when it has to, provide the financing and the translation services to witnesses. That's sort of what I understood.

Let's carry the discussion on a little bit further. We'll go back to you, Monsieur Guimond, and see how you feel now.

• (1135)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Michel Guimond: We haven't started off on a very positive note. I've been a member of this committee since 2000. As I said earlier, I look upon this committee as a quasi apolitical body, one that is less partisan than other committees.

I have considerable respect for my colleague Mr. Hill, because we've worked together a great deal. However, I have to say that seeds of discord were sown by Mr. Reid when he quoted from the Charter of Rights and Freedoms at the beginning of his comments. There is not a single person here who does not respect the Charter.

How odd and how ironic is it that a separatist finds himself in the position of defending the application of the Official Languages Act in Canada. You must find this very strange indeed. We want out of Canada, and here I am defending the use of two official languages.

Mr. Hill mentioned the witness from Whitehorse. If that individual arrives here with a document that he is unable to table in both official languages, then he'll make an oral presentation, rather than circulate his document. The same will hold true for a witness from Forestville on the North Shore. This community in my riding is 99.9 per cent francophone. If that witness arrives with a unilingual French document, then he'll hold on to it and make his presentation in his preferred language, as the Charter entitles him to do.

We'd best settle this matter right now. Why is Mr. Reid citing Charter provisions? We're operating on the assumption that the committee respects the provisions of the Charter. Freedom of expression is a right that we have no desire to limit.

We're saying to witnesses that if they wish to table their documents, these must be in both official languages. If a witness has not arranged to have a document translated, for example, because he was not able to find a translator in Whitehorse or in Forestville, the community in my riding, then the witness will not be allowed to distribute that document.

Enough already with citing Charter provisions. I'm a lawyer and I enjoy legal quibbling. I enjoy citing decisions of the Queen's Privy Council. However, I have to say that we're going nowhere fast. We've gotten off on the wrong foot. When he was seated on the other side, Mr. Reid was particularly skilled in getting on our nerves by making such comments.

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Reid is entitled to his own opinions. However, we are also entitled to block this committee's work. I'm not making threats. I'm only saying that we need to get off on the right foot. Easy

does it, as we say back home. Let's take a few deep breaths and calm down, starting with yours truly.

I just think we really started off on the wrong foot.

[*English*]

The Acting Chair (Mr. Gary Goodyear): Thank you very much.

Mr. Lukiwski is next.

Mr. Tom Lukiwski: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'll add my congratulations on your election as chair.

• (1140)

The Acting Chair (Mr. Gary Goodyear): I appreciate that very much.

Mr. Tom Lukiwski: I know you'll be earning the big bucks. You already have during the first 40 minutes.

All I'm trying to say here is this—and I agree with almost all of the comments advanced on the other side of the table. I'll obviously let Mr. Reid speak for himself, but my interpretation is that we are all on the same side on this issue. We're all trying to ensure that all documents that arrive at this committee are in both official languages. I certainly don't sense any opposition on this side of the table.

As for whether or not members have taken offence to Mr. Reid's reference to the charter, you may or you may not, but I think the intent and the spirit of what Mr. Reid was trying to say, unless I totally misinterpreted his comments, is that we agree with what you're suggesting, that we should absolutely ensure that all documents presented to this committee are presented in both official languages. I would wholeheartedly support that. I just want to make sure that's on the record.

So I see no basis really for any disagreement here if that in fact is the spirit of what Mr. Reid was saying.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Gary Goodyear): We are going around in circles a bit, so I am going to wrap this up. With all due respect, I think we have had enough discussion on this.

There are only two speakers with their hands up, so I'm going to be very fair and say three, if somebody else wants to make a further comment. Then we're just going to wrap it up, because it sounds to me as if we're saying the same things.

Please.

Mr. Yvon Godin: Just very quickly, Monsieur Hill knows me very well. For a long time we've worked in committees, and that doesn't happen in our committees; he knows that. We have a good relationship, I think he would agree. But when it comes to the way this was put, we don't need to put it that we need to use the charter here. When you use that, it seems that you would allow people to come in and leave a document if they didn't have a chance to have it translated. We already have in place the mechanics for when they send communication to our witnesses. It's already there, that if they send it here to Parliament, the translation will be done. Everything can get done.

The point is that if they're going to come in, as Michel said, at the last minute and try to say, "Here, I didn't have time to do it," then that's when we say, no, that's not what's going to happen.

So it's something that comes from another place, another meeting. I've heard those stories before, and I have to say to you that this is what gets me upset. I hope that in this committee we don't have to get upset, because we could do good work together.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Gary Goodyear): Thank you.

Ms. Jennings.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Marlene Jennings: Could someone clarify something for me? Our colleagues on the government side claim that Mr. Reid in no way intended to deprive committee members or witnesses of the right to express themselves in their preferred language. That's all well and good. However, I'd like Mr. Reid to enlighten me, as he alone can answer this question. He's suggesting that a letter or form be sent to all potential witnesses to let them know that documents must be in both languages before they can be circulated. I was under the impression that this committee was run like every other committee and that when the clerk invited a person or organization to testify, he or she advised them as a matter of course that documents needed to be in both languages before they could be distributed to committee members.

Here's my question. If potential witnesses are so instructed in writing and if some arrive here claiming not to have received the information or to have received it too late to have their submissions translated, do you want them to be allowed to distribute their documents? Is that what you would like?

I'm beginning to doubt the motives of just about everyone on your side. As I see it, there's no other reason for your suggesting that these instructions be in writing. When a witness arrives here and claims that he received only 24 hours' notice, obviously he hasn't had time to have his submission translated into French. Even if the witness was able to forward his document electronically to the clerk, translation services and the clerk probably wouldn't have time to translate it and print it up for distribution to all committee members.

Do you wish to allow an exception to the rule? It seems this committee has made exceptions in the past.

[*English*]

The Acting Chair (Mr. Gary Goodyear): Mr. Reid.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Scott Reid: I did not move an amendment to this motion. That's a direct answer to a direct question from Ms. Jennings.

Contrary to what you said, this wasn't standard practice in the past. I know that for a fact because I testified before a committee and I did not receive any instructions. I think we need to practice what we preach. We must ensure that prior to arriving here, all witnesses receive instructions, either in writing as I suggested, or by e-mail. We must let witnesses know that we can arrange to have documents of a certain length translated for them. That's all I suggested.

Quite frankly, I fail to understand why my comments are sparking such controversy.

• (1145)

[*English*]

Just to repeat it in English, I think the idea of ensuring that all witnesses be universally assured, that they receive notification that their documents will be circulated and the translation will be available, seems to me to be a good practice. As I said, it hasn't been universal. It should be universal, and all I proposed was that we make it a practice at our committee to ensure that it is universal.

I had no idea it would be so controversial.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Gary Goodyear): Monsieur Guimond.

Mr. Michel Guimond: Scott, maybe the problem is that when you start speaking by referring to the Charter of Rights... Ensuring that every witness can speak the language he wants, that all members can speak the language they want to speak—everybody agrees with that. Everybody agrees. I think we must work hard on our disagreements at this committee, not on facts upon which everybody agrees. This is the problem that started this discussion.

[*Translation*]

Regarding your second point, I have complete faith in the clerk, so much so that I would even give her my debit card and my PIN number.

Mr. Chairman, could you ask the clerk what instructions she gives to the witnesses when they are invited to give testimony before the committee? Does she advise them that if they plan to table a document, they need to ensure that it is in both languages or that if they cannot afford or do not have access to translation services, we can arrange to have the document translated for them? Does she tell them that if deadlines are short and there is no time to translate the document, it will not in fact be tabled? Finally, does she let them know that they can make their presentation in their preferred language, as per the freedom of expression provisions in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms? Does the clerk impart this information to potential witnesses? If not, I'll draw up suitable instructions for her.

[*English*]

The Acting Chair (Mr. Gary Goodyear): Thank you very much.

I've allowed a lot more speakers on this issue, and I think we're getting to the front of it and we all agree. But I will take one last speaker on this, unless there is something very seriously....

Mr. Hill, please. And please remember we have all agreed now.

An hon. member: Don't rock the boat.

Hon. Jay Hill: It wasn't my intention to rock the boat at all. It's never my intention to rock the boat about anything. Everybody knows that about me.

Mr. Chair, I would agree with my colleagues that it is an unfortunate beginning for our committee. But I think we are all on the same page, and with the suggestion of Mr. Guimond that our clerk try to ensure that all witnesses appearing before us be aware of this agreed-upon stipulation, if I can call it that, then we can move forward.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Gary Goodyear): Is there more discussion on that? Looking around the room, I see there is not.

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

• (1150)

The Acting Chair (Mr. Gary Goodyear): Trust that I will make sure that happens, and the clerk is aware of that.

Thank you for a lively discussion. I think it was a great start to a meeting.

Mr. Yvon Godin: The next one will be worse.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Gary Goodyear): Let's hope not.

Is there any discussion on working meals?

Hon. Jay Hill: We all like to eat.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Gary Goodyear): How surprising.

Thank you very much. It is so moved.

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

The Acting Chair (Mr. Gary Goodyear): On in camera meeting transcripts—again, trying to get the committee back to focusing on some of the other motions here, is there any discussion on this motion?

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

The Acting Chair (Mr. Gary Goodyear): Finally, there is the Subcommittee on Private Members' Business.

Mr. Hill, please.

Hon. Jay Hill: I would nominate my colleague Joe Preston to be the chair of that subcommittee to deal with private members' business.

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

The Acting Chair (Mr. Gary Goodyear): Thank you very much.

Yes, Mr. Hill.

Hon. Jay Hill: Mr. Chair, I'm not sure of the exact process we just used, so perhaps we'd just put a motion to ensure that all of the previous motions are carried unanimously by the committee. Would that be appropriate?

The Acting Chair (Mr. Gary Goodyear): That is appropriate.

Mr. Hill puts a motion forward that all these motions be so carried.

(Motion agreed to)

The Acting Chair (Mr. Gary Goodyear): Thank you.

I think we are finished. Are there any other comments?

Yes, Mr. Guimond.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Michel Guimond: Other committees will be struck and I'm calling on my three whip colleagues. As soon as we're ready for business, we can approve the list of committee members. I'd like to advise my colleagues Mr. Hill, Ms. Redman and Mr. Godin that we still don't have the rotating committee schedule. It hasn't yet been

adopted. Among other things, It determines when Members are on duty here at the House in Ottawa.

Could you attend to this without further ado and get in touch with Ms. Marie-Andrée Lajoie to signify our agreement? The NDP officials and myself have already done so. However, in so far as the committee rotation is concerned, we're waiting on the government members and on the Official Opposition to act.

[*English*]

The Acting Chair (Mr. Gary Goodyear): Mr. Hill.

Hon. Jay Hill: Yes, I'm prepared right now to agree to that schedule for the meetings of the other committees, if that's acceptable to the official opposition whip.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Gary Goodyear): Ms. Redman.

Hon. Karen Redman (Kitchener Centre, Lib.): I just received it, Jay, so I'm just having a look at it. I guess my only question is that group three doesn't have any new committee and there are on two occasions where group two has two new committees. I'm assuming that was logistical, for rooms and other things.

Hon. Jay Hill: I don't even know who drew it up. I've had it for quite some time, because as I work through assigning...some of my members obviously will be sitting on multiple committees. You obviously need to use that, because you can't have one member of Parliament sitting on two committees that are meeting at the same time. The old proverb "You can't be in two places at once" I'm sure would apply even to members of Parliament. I was using that when I went through that, so I don't understand why you had not received it earlier. I think it was just suggestions that were put forward by perhaps the clerk's office. I don't know where it came from.

Do you know, Michel? I've had it for well over a week—I think for a couple of weeks.

Hon. Karen Redman: If you look at the groups, there are generally six meeting. Having not studied it, I don't have a problem with it right now, as long as I could reserve the right to come back to it if we saw some anomaly.

Hon. Jay Hill: It might be problematic for you if you've already worked through assigning some of your MPs to more than one committee. As I said, it obviously dramatically alters that if you presently have them scheduled to be on two committees that are meeting at the same time. You might want to check that out.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Gary Goodyear): Given that this is a decision the whips can get together and discuss, I think the intention was to just get it done as quickly as possible and you can report back to the committee.

Are there any other matters we need to discuss today?

Mr. Yvon Godin: There is the one we just dealt with, the private members' business. When do we have to send in the names for the committee to take place? We just elected the chair, but the other parties have to send names in.

• (1155)

The Acting Chair (Mr. Gary Goodyear): Do you want to do that now? If you're not prepared, that's fine. There's no rush for that. I understand that some parties are not prepared to do that today.

My understanding is that the draw for private members' bills is tomorrow, but the committee doesn't have to be struck that quickly, so there's no rush. I'm sure we can get that arranged.

Yes, sir.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Michel Guimond: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I want to let the clerk know that Ms. Pauline Picard, the Member for Drummond, will represent the Bloc Québécois on the Subcommittee on Private Members' Business.

[*English*]

The Acting Chair (Mr. Gary Goodyear): Thank you.

Mr. Yvon Godin: You can put my name down for the NDP.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Gary Goodyear): Okay. It looks as if we did that.

Is there any other business?

Members, I don't want to interrupt—everybody is obviously getting ready to leave—but we also need vice-chairs for the subcommittee on agenda and procedure. Is anybody prepared to put forward names today?

The Clerk: It's the chair and two vice-chairs of the committee, and you need one person from the NDP. It would have to be Monsieur Godin.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Gary Goodyear): Okay. I think that puts you in there. You stood up and volunteered.

We need two vice-chairs now?

The Clerk: No, it's the two vice-chairs from the committee and Monsieur Godin.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Gary Goodyear): Okay, fine.

The subcommittee on agenda and procedure we'll decide at the next committee—

Mr. Yvon Godin: I'm sorry, I was not looking to be vice-chair. I was just looking to be—

The Acting Chair (Mr. Gary Goodyear): No, you're just a member.

Is there any other business we need to deal with today?

Since there is none, the meeting is adjourned.

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