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## Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs

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EVIDENCE

**Thursday, November 15, 2007**

—  
**Chair**

**Mr. Rob Anders**

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## Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs

Thursday, November 15, 2007

• (1110)

[English]

**The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Alexandre Roger):** Honourable members of the committee, I see a quorum.

We can now proceed to an election of a chair. I am ready to receive motions to that effect.

Mr. Stoffer.

**Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Eastern Shore, NDP):** Yes, sir. On behalf of our great party, and I'm sure others, we'd like to nominate Rob Anders to continue his great job as chairperson of this great committee.

**The Clerk:** It has been moved by Mr. Peter Stoffer that Mr. Rob Anders be elected as chair of the committee.

Are there any further motions?

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

**Some hon. members: Agreed.**

**The Clerk:** I declare the motion carried and Mr. Rob Anders duly elected the chair of the committee.

I'm now prepared to receive motions for the first vice-chair.

**Mr. Todd Russell (Labrador, Lib.):** I'd like to nominate Brent St. Denis.

**The Clerk:** It has been moved by Todd Russell that Monsieur Brent St. Denis be elected first vice-chair of the committee.

Are there any further motions?

Mr. Gaudet.

[Translation]

**Mr. Roger Gaudet (Montcalm, BQ):** I move that Mr. Peter Stoffer be elected first vice-chair.

**The Clerk:** The first vice-chair must be a member of the official opposition.

**Mr. Roger Gaudet:** Right. I withdraw that.

[English]

**The Clerk:** Are there any further motions?

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

**Some hon. members: Agreed.**

**The Clerk:** I declare the motion carried and Mr. St. Denis duly elected first vice-chair.

I am now prepared to receive motions for the second vice-chair.

Mr. Gaudet.

[Translation]

**Mr. Roger Gaudet:** I nominate Mr. Peter Stoffer.

[English]

**The Clerk:** It has been moved by Mr. Gaudet that Mr. Stoffer be elected second vice-chair of the committee.

[Translation]

Are there any further motions?

[English]

I declare the motion carried and Mr. Stoffer duly elected second vice-chair.

I will now invite Mr. Rob Anders to take the chair.

**The Chair (Mr. Rob Anders (Calgary West, CPC):** First off, I'd like to welcome some new members to the committee.

We used to have Mr. Cummins, as you well remember. He was a member, but he was busy. Now we have Mr. Cannan, who is with us on the government side. Welcome, Mr. Cannan.

As well, I remember—and, sir, I hope you don't hold this against me, but I had a fond time when I was in your riding for the byelection; it was a great neck of the woods, and I was very impressed. Mr. Russell is joining us for the official opposition. Welcome.

What I'd like to discuss is where we're going now as a committee. We wrapped up the last time....

Oh, I'm sorry; let's forget that. Let's do routine motions. It's more exciting, of course.

Mr. Perron.

[Translation]

**Mr. Gilles-A. Perron (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, BQ):** Before we move on, perhaps we could solve a small problem, and take another look at it.

[English]

**The Chair:** Is it okay if we deal with routine motions first, or do you want to deal with this first?

**Mr. Gilles-A. Perron:** It's up to you. The thing I want to talk about is mainly “off meeting”. It could be on the minutes, but....

**The Chair:** If I may suggest, let's get the routine motions out of the way, and then we'll move to you, Mr. Perron. Is that all right?

**Mr. Gilles-A. Perron:** That's okay.

**The Chair:** All right.

I have just discussed with the clerk whether or not these routine motions were all previously agreed to by the committee. We all reached previous agreement with regard to these things.

I can't do these all at once—I have to go through each one separately—so bear with me.

If you don't mind, we'll start with services of analysts from the Library of Parliament. I'll read the motion:

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 it in its work.

Mr. Stoffer is moving that. I don't require a seconder.

(Motion agreed to)

**Mr. Brent St. Denis (Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapuskaing, Lib.):** Again, Mr. Chair, these are as on the record right now.

**The Chair:** Yes. Well, technically there is no record right now, but they were on the record as of the last.... You understand.

The next motion is with regard to the subcommittee on agenda and procedure:

That the Subcommittee on Agenda and Procedure be established and be composed of the Chair, the two Vice-Chairs and a member of the other opposition party.

Mr. Stoffer, do you want to move that?

**Mr. Peter Stoffer:** I so move.

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

• (1115)

**Mr. Brent St. Denis:** I probably raised this last time too, but did the subcommittee ever actually meet? I think we generally conducted the subcommittee-type business with everybody. And I like that. I think regular members who....

So if it's understood that, yes, this is the rule, but if the chair is willing to continue, as we have, involving everybody as a member of the subcommittee—because we're not talking hundreds of people here—then I think that works well.

**The Chair:** I agree with you, Mr. St. Denis, largely because I don't want another committee meeting in my life—and I think you're the same.

**Mr. Brent St. Denis:** So we just suspend or adjourn one meeting, go into a subcommittee, and everybody stays—except for those who, you know—

**The Chair:** Yes. I think we'll carry on as before.

Anything other than that, Mr. Shipley?

**Mr. Bev Shipley (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, CPC):** Only one point, that we've just come out of...or we are setting up committees, and one of the ones....

There may be a time when you want to have it, and how you arrange that to happen is entirely up to the committee, but likely the parliamentary secretary should be part of that standing committee.

**The Chair:** Okay, now we're into new territory.

**Mr. Bev Shipley:** But if you're willing to stay after, or however you arrange for those....

**The Chair:** Now the circus begins.

Mr. St. Denis.

**Mr. Brent St. Denis:** I think it worked well with the chair simply not ever convening a meeting like that, and having it as a group. The simpler thing, if Bev's idea has any support, is that we just don't have a subcommittee, that the subcommittee is deemed to be the whole committee. That's how we have functioned.

**The Chair:** We're taking a speaking order list now.

Mr. Perron.

[Translation]

**Mr. Gilles-A. Perron:** As I read this motion, I am reminded that, in the past, when the Conservatives formed the official opposition and the Liberals were in power, we had the same discussion. The Conservatives were against the parliamentary secretary being a member of the subcommittee and the Liberals were for it. It is the same battle, but everyone has switched sides.

Do we have to start from scratch because we are on different sides of the fence, because we put our hats on differently? It worked well in the past, so why not carry on as before?

[English]

**The Chair:** Ms. Hinton.

**Mrs. Betty Hinton (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC):** In terms of the subcommittee structure, it's lined up quite nicely in the procedural data here: "be composed of the Chair, the two Vice-Chairs and a member of the other opposition party". If you're going to go to the entire committee, I think you defeat the purpose of having the subcommittee on agenda and procedure.

Now, whether or not the parliamentary secretary is part of that is entirely up to this group, but I think we should maintain what we've had from the beginning so that you don't have long, extended meetings that are out of control. We just need to have what we had on here before. We just elected two vice-chairs, we have a chair, and with one member from the opposition, that would do it up right.

**The Chair:** Mr. Shipley.

**Mr. Bev Shipley:** Mr. Perron, I wasn't here at that time. I only came when we won.

I raised that because I know other committees have done it in terms of the functionality of the committee. That was why I raised it.

**The Chair:** I take it that wasn't a formal amendment; it was a discussion about a potential amendment and we're letting it die.

**Mr. Bev Shipley:** Sure.

**The Chair:** Good. That's great. I like that.

As it stands, there is no addition of a parliamentary secretary. It's exactly what you read—same old, same old.

Is there any other discussion? No?

Mr. Stoffer moved it. Now, the question:

That the Subcommittee on Agenda and Procedure be established and be composed of the Chair, the two Vice-Chairs and a member of the other opposition party.

(Motion agreed to)

• (1120)

**The Chair:** That's wonderful. You can see when we stick to the script how easy it is.

On reduced quorum:

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 (3) members are present, including one member of the opposition.

Thank you, Mr. Stoffer, for moving that.

Is there any discussion on that? No? Wonderful.

(Motion agreed to)

**The Chair:** On the distribution of documents:

That only the Clerk of the Committee be authorized to distribute documents to members of the Committee and only when such documents exist in both official languages.

Mr. Stoffer is moving that.

Is there any discussion?

(Motion agreed to)

**The Chair:** That was easy.

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.

Mr. Gaudet is proposing the motion.

Mr. Perron.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Gilles-A. Perron:** That's a part of the discussion that I wanted to kick off.

First, I would like to congratulate you on your reelection to the chair. It is a lot easier to win an election here than in our constituencies.

You are all aware that I have a problem with my health; I have diabetes. At noon, I have to have a bite to eat so that I can keep working in the afternoon. The only problems I see are that I will have to arrange for my snack and not ask questions with my mouth full. It is my problem. So I am sort of asking permission to bring something to eat to this table around 11:30 a.m. or noon so that I can look after myself. I am looking for the consent of the group, really. How can we go about it? I have talked to Alexandre, and he has some suggestions that I would like him to share with you, so that I do not make any mistakes.

Can you talk about the solutions you suggested?

**The Clerk:** There are three options.

[*English*]

The first option is that Monsieur Perron can bring his own meal to the table and deal with that personally.

Another option is that we order meals for every single meeting of the committee, which would come out of the committee budget. That's the second option.

The third option is that we change committee sitting blocks. The clerk is not authorized to do so. It's up to each member to see their whip, and it's up to the whips to decide on that matter. Every committee sits during a particular block. We have switched. We were sitting at 9 to 11; now we are at 11 to 1. We can't sit in room 112 north because the procedure and House affairs committee has to sit there. That's why we're here today, and that's why we'll never be able to sit in the veterans room.

Those are the three options.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Gilles-A. Perron:** Since this is my problem, I will not speak or vote on your decision.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** We have a speaking order.

I think I know where this is going to wind up, but we'll go through the exercise anyway.

Mr. St. Denis.

**Mr. Brent St. Denis:** I'm sure there wouldn't be anybody who wouldn't agree to accommodate Gilles. If it's okay with Gilles, perhaps he could, as he sees fit, snack. There will be times when we have to have a group meal, say during an evening sitting or something like that, but it would probably take more time out of our meeting to pause and have a lunch for everybody. If Gilles is okay simply to manage his own eating during the meeting, certainly I think people would understand.

**The Chair:** Mr. Sweet.

**Mr. David Sweet (Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Westdale, CPC):** Mr. Chairman, I certainly sympathize with Mr. Perron. In my own case as well, I've come from a committee that met for two hours prior to this. That makes it quite a stretch, even for someone who does not have physical challenges like Mr. Perron. I'd suggest, if we are going to meet at this time, that we have lunch brought in for meetings that span the eleven to one o'clock timeframe.

**The Chair:** My thoughts on it would be that I certainly prefer the meeting time of 11 a.m. as opposed to 9 a.m. Of course, we would love to have the veterans room. I think for some of the committee members who enjoy smoke breaks and that type of thing, it's a more convenient location, and it has been named as the veterans affairs room. Of course, it would all be good, but it may be very difficult to arrange.

We may have to take a vote on this, but I'm guessing that if we are forced to meet from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., we're probably better off to actually bring in lunches, and I'm certainly sympathetic to the idea they be diabetic friendly and high protein, hopefully. That's my thinking.

Monsieur Gaudet.

• (1125)

[Translation]

**Mr. Roger Gaudet:** I agree completely with my friend David. It makes no sense to go to lunch at 1:00 p.m. because some members have other commitments and we have to get ready for question period. That would mean having lunch at 1:30 p.m. That makes no sense either, especially if breakfast was at 7:30 a.m.

I would be in favour of having a full lunch at all our meetings. That's it. I so move.

[English]

**The Chair:** I'm certainly not fighting you on it.

Ms. Hinton and then Mr. Shipley.

**Mrs. Betty Hinton:** I'm also very sympathetic toward your needs. I don't think that's a request. It has to happen; you have to eat. David has the same kind of issue. Unlike some reasons for having meals brought in, I think these are very legitimate reasons, and I think it would probably serve all of us on this committee well to make certain that we do eat. As was mentioned, I also go to another meeting at one o'clock, so I would be going from 9 a.m. until 3 p.m. with no meal break. That is kind of ridiculous. So I don't have a problem with that at all.

One thing I do have a problem with, and I'm sure that one of my other colleagues will have an equally serious problem with it, is that I'm really disappointed to hear we can't meet in the veterans room after going through the paces of having it named the veterans room. I'm not certain what can be done about that, but I would certainly like to look into the possibility of changing it.

It's booked every Tuesday and Thursday from 9 to 11, is that the problem?

**A voice:** No, from 11 to 1.

**The Chair:** I have some understanding of this, but I think the clerk probably has it clear. I believe it involves us going to all of our whips and coordinating all the whips to get a change.

**Mrs. Betty Hinton:** That's a challenge in itself, but maybe we could do it.

**The Clerk:** What happens is that procedure and House affairs sits at the same time as us. They always sit from 11 to 1. They don't change like we do. The reason for that is that the procedure and House affairs committee requires the presence of the whips of every party and they have to be in close proximity to the House. That's why they sit in room 112 north.

There are only three committee rooms in the Centre Block, those upstairs on the second floor, which are televised rooms. They're always used for committees that bring in a minister and things like that. Therefore, when we came into this block, we came into confrontation with that arrangement and they have precedence over us. It's something that was already established before we named it the veterans room. It's not up to me to decide. It is really up to the whips to decide what to do with this. I would suggest to all the members to talk to their whips about it and hopefully work something out. They will advise me after that.

**Mrs. Betty Hinton:** So that I'm clear on this, what's the option? Do we go back to meeting at 9 a.m., or would we be interfering then with the procedure and House affairs committee?

**The Clerk:** No. The Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs only sits from 11 to 1, which is our block. There are other blocks, and I have the committee block schedule. If you would like, I can hand those out to all the members so they can see what the different options are.

**Mrs. Betty Hinton:** If we went back to the original schedule that started at 9, we would eliminate the need to bring in meals, we would accommodate all of our members who have health issues who require a meal, and we would be back down in the veterans room, and all that would be necessary would be to move to 9. If I'm hearing you correctly, that room is not booked at 9 a.m. That's the easy solution.

**The Clerk:** That's right.

There is a problem with that. Some other members sit from 9 to 11 on other committees, and that is the case for Mr. Sweet and Mr. Shipley.

**The Chair:** Mr. Shipley, and then Mr. Perron.

**Mr. Bev Shipley:** The unfortunate part is not being in the room, but I have another standing committee at nine in the morning, as perhaps a number of us do, and I don't know how we work around that. If we do stay with it, and I don't have an issue staying with it, other than if we aren't in that room at this time, maybe another time it will change.... If we're going to have a lunch, just a sandwich or something to get us through is all that would really be necessary to bring in. It is a little intimidating when we have witnesses and we're munching away and they aren't. I was on another committee where they have it, but I guess that's just standard process to go through.

• (1130)

**The Chair:** Mr. Perron, and then Mr. Valley.

[Translation]

**Mr. Gilles-A. Perron:** As for the Veterans Room, I think the solution is easy. We ask our whips to have their meetings in room 356-S on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor of the Centre Block. It is quite close, and all of their offices are on the 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> floors. The room is quite big too: the Bloc Québécois uses it every day around 1:00 p.m. for question period.

Why not lean on our whips to move to room 356-S? The room is free, and it is used starting at 1:00 p.m. by Bloc Québécois members who meet there before question period. So we could ask them to move there and we could go back to room 112-N. I can say to Mr. Guimond that we are sorry, but he has to move.

[English]

**The Chair:** I'm not opposed to that. It's a question of getting the whips in line. We'll see where that goes.

Mr. Valley.

**Mr. Roger Valley (Kenora, Lib.):** In January we're going to be going to a new time slot anyway, so let's just live with this for now.

**An hon. member:** Yes, it's four weeks, that's all.

**Mr. Roger Valley:** It's four weeks. We'll struggle through this room, and let's go.

**The Chair:** Okay.

I sense that unless we get some major breakthrough on behalf of the whips wanting to accommodate, I think we're where we are in terms of time slot and room-wise.

Given the parameters we have, should we be meeting in this location at this time, etc., then we'll arrange for meals. Is that fair?

High protein, low fat, low sugar.

**A voice:** Is that in the motion?

**The Chair:** Yes, it's very important.

We'll just leave the motion as the motion, but I think we've had a clear understanding and a talk about it, so the clerk, as authorized, understands.

That's the motion, it was moved by Mr. Stoffer, and he said he was okay with it and everything else before he had to...whatever. Is there any other discussion on it?

All those in favour of "Working Meals" as it's worded?

(Motion agreed to)

**The Chair:** Now we're onto the back page, "Witnesses' Expenses". The motion reads:

That, if requested, reasonable travel, accommodation and living expenses be reimbursed to witnesses, not exceeding two (2) representatives per organization; and that, in exceptional circumstances, payment for more representatives be made at the discretion of the Chair.

Is there any discussion on that?

(Motion agreed to)

**The Chair:** Next is "Staff at *in camera* meetings". It reads:

That, unless otherwise ordered, each Committee member be allowed to be accompanied by one staff person at an *in camera* meeting.

Is there any discussion on that matter?

(Motion agreed to)

**The Chair:** Now we have "*In camera* meetings transcripts". It reads:

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.

Is there any discussion on that?

(Motion agreed to)

**The Chair:** Now we have "Notice of Motions". It reads:

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.

Is there any discussion on that motion?

**Mr. Roger Valley:** We assume that once we file it with the clerk, that's the 48 hours, right?

**The Chair:** I'll let the clerk specifically answer that.

**The Clerk:** That's something we—all the clerks of the committees directorate—discussed.

The question is—It's up to the committee to decide. Do the 48 hours start when I receive the motion or do the 48 hours start when I send out the motion for your notice? It's up to you to decide.

● (1135)

**Mr. Roger Valley:** I put it as 48 hours from the time we give it to you.

**Mrs. Betty Hinton:** If he receives it two days before our meeting, that would be 48 hours.

**The Chair:** That puts some interesting pressure on our clerk, because if he receives it and then it's delayed by a matter of hours or a day—

I think, to cover him, it's probably better if we—sorry, we're taking the speaking order; go ahead, Mr. Sweet.

**Mr. David Sweet:** Because translation's a concern and we've just voted that all documentation be in both official languages, I just think we need to stipulate that it needs to be upon distribution.

**The Chair:** To be honest, I think that logically makes sense.

Is there any more discussion on it?

Go ahead, Mr. St. Denis.

**Mr. Brent St. Denis:** I thought the 48 hours was generally to provide a period of time for the clerk to do the administrative work around it, so that's why we have the 48 hours, which has usually been enough time. If there were an emergency, well, he would discuss it with the chair, and it would be resolved.

I don't know. Has the practice been, Alexandre, that it's been 48 hours from the time...? For example, let's say Roger here had a motion at this meeting, Tuesday, for Thursday. Would the 48 hours be deemed to be from the moment he presents it to you? That gives you a Tuesday to Thursday scenario.

Anyway, if there's a consensus.... Otherwise, I think it would be 48 hours from the time the member in question delivers it to the clerk, either at a meeting or to his or her office.

It hasn't been a problem. That's generally been the practice.

**The Chair:** This committee, to be fair, really hasn't had an issue with this. I don't know if there are other circumstances with the clerks who are with other committees that are of a different nature.

**The Clerk:** It depends on whom you ask. Some committees do things one way; some do things differently.

The other question with this motion is that the 48-hour period is interpreted as two sleeps and not exactly 48 hours. If I receive a notice of motion between five o'clock and six o'clock, I'm not in the office; I will have received it, but I can only send it out the next day. That's one thing. The other thing is it all depends on whom you ask.

It's really up to you to decide as a committee how you want to interpret it and how you want me to deal with these motions.

**An hon. member:** *Quelle est ta préférence?*

**The Clerk:** Well, the way I see it personally is that the notice is for members to take notice and study a motion before they discuss it in committee.

This motion stems from the House; there, if a member files a motion at six o'clock, the member will have until seven o'clock—till the House adjourns—and the motion will come out the same day, so it really doesn't matter. That's not the situation in committee; here, if you send it to me between five and six o'clock, it will only come back the next day, so it doesn't apply. It really depends whom you ask.

I will conform to whatever the committee decides.

**The Chair:** I have a suggestion, but I'll recognize Mrs. Hinton.

**Mrs. Betty Hinton:** I think all of us recognize how hard the clerk works, and I don't think anybody here wants to make it harder for him. I don't see what the big issue is. I'll let it go so that if he receives one late, it's 48 hours from when he sends out the notice. I mean, it's not a big deal one way or the other. If there were some kind of emergency, we could probably bend the rule. Let's give the clerk the benefit of the doubt and make it 48 hours after you issue.

**The Chair:** Go ahead, Mr. Sweet.

**Mr. David Sweet:** I think there are two things here: fairness to the clerk in terms of undue pressure and also fairness to those who would like to prepare to deal with the motion as well. I mean, we have lots on our plate. Some of us have multiple committees and multiple friendship groups, so it just gives someone the opportunity to prepare appropriately for the kind of debate that's going to be around a motion.

**The Chair:** I'm going to boil it down to what I think is the crux of the issue. If the motion is received before the end of the clerk's business day and he's able to send it out before the close of business on Tuesday—because this really only applies to Tuesdays—then I think that serves effectively as 48 hours' notice for Thursday. If he receives it after close of business on Tuesday and can't send it out Tuesday evening, then I think it has to be passed over for Thursday.

In other words, if it goes out Wednesday morning, that's not 48 hours' notice for Thursday. I think that's just a fair understanding of it.

Go ahead, Mr. Valley.

• (1140)

**Mr. Roger Valley:** As long as we retain the right to put a motion in on Tuesday and deal with it on Thursday—that's what we need to do.

**The Chair:** I think as long as members understand that they have to do it so that it's not at the very cusp of the end of business and you can't get it out.

**Mr. Gilles-A. Perron:** You might be going toward a tougher time for Alexandre. For example, if I'm sending it two minutes before five o'clock, I'll have my e-mail proving that I sent it. He'll have two minutes or he'll have to do overtime, something like that.

I think we should be a bit more elastic and say at least at three or four o'clock in the afternoon. Give him at least an hour or two to get around and see what's going on. If he receives it two minutes or five

minutes before five o'clock, he's going to be in trouble. I don't want to put Alexandre in trouble.

**The Chair:** If you receive a motion on a Tuesday afternoon, what's reasonable in terms of getting something out?

**The Clerk:** Whatever happens, if I'm at the office.... Technically you have until six o'clock to send a motion. If I receive a motion at 5:59 p.m. on my blackberry, I will come back to the office and that motion will be sent out at eight or nine that evening, or however long it takes. I will do that job, and I will send it out. That's my job and I'm here to serve you. So you will have that motion that evening, if I get it. If I don't, then it will be the next morning.

I don't want to give a time. I don't want to pronounce myself on that. Whatever you decide is adequate, I will do.

**The Chair:** Okay. I think members just have to be understanding. If they want to deal with a motion on a Thursday, they really should present it during committee on Tuesday. That's just reasonable. If it's somewhat later.... I think we have a general understanding on that; we've discussed the issue.

Is there any other discussion on the issue of 48 hours?

(Motion agreed to)

**The Chair:** All right. This is the last one, on questioning of witnesses, it states:

That during the questioning of witnesses the time allocated to each questioner be as follows: On the first round of questioning in the following order: Liberal, seven minutes, Bloc Québécois, seven minutes, NDP, five minutes, and Conservative, seven minutes, on the second round of questioning, five minutes per party in the following order: Liberal, Bloc Québécois, Conservative, Liberal, Conservative, NDP, Conservative, Bloc Québécois, Liberal, Conservative, Liberal, Conservative, Liberal and Conservative.

Let's do this one quickly, because this is where it always gets dicey.

Is there any discussion on this?

**Mr. David Sweet:** It's just whether we go with your spoken words or whether we go with the written words here, because—

**The Chair:** I thought I tried to be as careful with that as I possibly could be.

**Mr. David Sweet:** Hang on. I'm actually so confused I want to read this again.

On the first round of questioning, in the following order: Liberal, seven minutes, Bloc Québécois, seven minutes, NDP.... Okay, I'm sorry, it was my mistake. That's why I wanted to read it again. No problem.

**The Chair:** Okay. I tried to read that verbatim. When in doubt, it is what is written on the page, not what I said—as you see it written.

I see no discussion. It's exactly what we agreed upon. I think we're all happy.

(Motion agreed to)

**The Chair:** Good. Thank you. That made that so much easier.

Now, I know Mr. Perron wanted to address something, and it may have been....

Okay, I understand. So we've dealt with the issue of meals.



I want to talk about some business issues, but....

Mr. Shipley, yes.

**Mr. Bev Shipley:** I'm just wondering, on the questioning rounds, can you put out a sheet? We had a sheet I think last time that gave us what was coming up.

**The Chair:** Yes, I'd like to have one of those to make sense of it, absolutely.

I'd just like to apprise people that since we now have an ombudsman in position, I think it would probably be a good idea for us to have that individual here for questioning as soon as possible. I know there's been some discussion as well with regard to some

people's interest in having the minister. We can certainly see if the minister is interested.

We were in the process of doing a health care review, and there have been some questions raised recently on the issue of the veterans independence program—its extension, widows, etc. I think we'd like maybe to have some departmental officials in and have the committee talk to them about that.

Those are some ideas. We'll see what we can do to set up for the next meeting with some of those.

I think that's it.

The meeting is adjourned.

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