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## **Standing Committee on the Status of Women**

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**Monday, November 19, 2007**

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**Chair**

**Ms. Yasmin Ratansi**

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## Standing Committee on the Status of Women

Monday, November 19, 2007

• (1535)

[English]

**The Chair (Ms. Yasmin Ratansi (Don Valley East, Lib.)):** There's enough for quorum, isn't there? I counted seven, but there's an eighth one there.

I would like to make a suggestion to the committee. We have the routine motions as presented by the clerk, and then there were proposals that we all took away and had an opportunity to read and digest. We can just go through it quickly, because we have a lot of other business to attend to. I'm going to seek yes or no, agreed or disagreed. And I think we have already said we do not need the subcommittee on agenda and Procedure, so we can remove that.

We're going now to the proposal by Madam Boucher.

I'm sure there is not anyone who does not understand what the intent is, so could we move forward and have a suggestion to proceed one by one?

Ms. Minna.

**Hon. Maria Minna (Beaches—East York, Lib.):** I'm sorry....

**The Chair:** Ms. Minna, what we are doing is taking the proposal that was presented by Madam Boucher. We've all had a chance to review it, understand it, and now we're going to vote on all of them one at a time.

On reduced quorum, all in favour of changing from the current motion to this one, please raise your hands.

**Mr. Bruce Stanton (Simcoe North, CPC):** Is there no discussion on this?

**The Chair:** Mr. Stanton, I think that's why we took it with us, so that everybody could—

**Hon. Maria Minna:** If they wish to give a reason to accept it, Madam Chair, if you don't mind my suggestion....

**The Chair:** That's why I asked. I want consensus that if we proceed with this, everybody has had an opportunity to read it. So unless they have real, specific questions...and if they have specific questions, they can ask. Is that fair enough? Say, if they wanted to know, "Why did you want to reduce quorum?", because it has been presented by the government side.

Is that fair enough? Can we proceed that way so that if they have a question, they can ask a question? If they have read it and do not have a question, then we can perhaps vote on it.

**Mr. Bruce Stanton:** What you're suggesting is that we just vote on each one—

**The Chair:** Yes, one at a time.

**Mr. Bruce Stanton:** —and if opposition members don't favour what's been proposed, then they have an opportunity to either say yea or nay with no discussion.

**The Chair:** Or they can ask for discussion, if they want. The floor is open to them, because I think the government side understands where they're coming from. It's the opposition that may not understand where you're coming from. Everyone has had, I think, four or five days to review it, and that's why I'm trying to seek consensus. If everybody's in agreement, and we can proceed that way, we can make the business go faster.

**Mr. Bruce Stanton:** If the committee so chooses. I would just think in the course of making decisions about items where we have proposed some changes that we would have the opportunity to speak to it, even briefly. But to not have the opportunity to at least provide some background or rationale seems to me—

**The Chair:** Can I seek the committee's indulgence? The only people who wouldn't understand are on that side of the House.

**Hon. Maria Minna:** Madam Chair, if I may, we're having a debate about—

**The Chair:** Just one second. I think Ms. Mathysen was before you.

Ms. Mathysen.

**Mrs. Irene Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP):** While I understand the issue around having a discussion, we have indeed read this. There are very pressing concerns about the work of this committee, so I really don't want to devote an inordinate amount of time to this.

**The Chair:** Okay. I appreciate where you're coming from.

Mr. Stanton, perhaps we could keep 45 minutes for the whole of this. We could go through each one—reduced quorum, distribution of documents—and you could say for one minute why you did what you did.

**Mr. Bruce Stanton:** I don't think we should set a timeframe. Let's proceed and do the best we can on this.

**The Chair:** Ms. Minna.

**Hon. Maria Minna:** Thank you.

I'm sorry, Madam Chair. Since Mr. Stanton has suggested he would like to introduce it, maybe it wouldn't hurt us to understand immediately from him or any of the members exactly what they're thinking. Some of us could choose to rebut and then move on as quickly as we can. I think that would be fair.

• (1540)

**The Chair:** That's why I was seeking approval to allocate a specific time limit of 30 or 45 minutes. But we shouldn't go into an inordinate amount of debate over something we've already read.

Ms. Demers wants to say something, and then you can give us your *raison d'être*, Mr. Stanton.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Nicole Demers (Laval, BQ):** Thank you Madam Chair.

Just before Mr. Stanton objects to your suggested manner of proceeding, I would like to remind the committee that we have already voted on how we are going to proceed. Why is there now an attempt to change that?

Madam Chair, I really want this committee to be effective, and I really think it would be a good idea to have a specific amount time allocated to these routine motions. These are simply routine motions, there's nothing out of the ordinary about them. If we deal with them, we can move on to planning our future business. It is important that we get that done. Let us set aside a specific amount of time for these motions. We have all read the resolutions as well as the motions. We know why they have been tabled.

If Mr. Stanton wishes, he can take a couple of minutes to explain them, but we are ready to vote on these motions.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** I'm sure Mr. Stanton is well aware that everybody is very keen to see this agenda of the standing committee move forward.

Mr. Stanton, I will give you a minute or so to explain and perhaps do two together—reduced quorum and distribution of documents.

**Mr. Bruce Stanton:** The proposals for these changes to the routine motions were not in any way intended to curtail, block, or become an obstacle to the proceedings of the committee. These suggestions would serve the purposes of all party members who participate in the committee. There's nothing aggressive or overt in this.

We'd be happy to withhold some of the additions. They are proposals. If they're not acceptable to committee members, let's move on quickly.

On reduced quorum, look at the first paragraph that has been proposed by the government members. Exclude the second paragraph for the moment. If you were to take the first paragraph with the addition of one member of the government, that would be quite acceptable.

The first wording stated there be two vice-chairs and a member of the opposition party. We're making that a little more flexible by saying there should be three members present, including one opposition member, in case the vice-chairs are not able to make it. Then other members of the committee can attend. As long as there are three members of the committee, including one opposition member and one government member, this provides some flexibility. That's my suggestion on reduced quorum.

**The Chair:** Next is the distribution of documents.

**Mr. Bruce Stanton:** On the distribution of documents, the one thing I did find out, Madam Chair, in the course of this discussion was that the motions that were circulated by the clerk's office were in fact different from the motions we used in the last session. There were differences. I don't know whether that comes as a surprise or not, but in fact, on the distribution of documents, the one the clerk's office circulated to us finishes with "such documents exist in both official languages".

I note that in the motion we had last session, some language I thought to be helpful was included. It indicated "and no document provided by a witness distributed without the authorization of the clerk of the committee". There was some clarification.

To be honest, some of the routine motions we had in the last session are better than what the clerk distributed here at the start. I presumed from the outset that they were the same, but they're not. Without the benefit of some background as to why they're different, we had to proceed that way.

I would simply suggest that what we have proposed here on the distribution of documents assures that the language will be both official languages and that the witnesses be compelled to know that in advance. I think that's a help to the committee.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Ms. Mathysen.

• (1545)

**Mrs. Irene Mathysen:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

Might I suggest, since the routine motions we used for proceedings in the last session were so effective and we did so well with them, why don't we simply adopt those?

**The Chair:** Okay....

Yes, Mr. Stanton. I'm just going to take the committee's view on this, because they are motions that have been adopted. We've been working with those motions. If you have some real desire to say "No, we absolutely cannot agree with these, but we can accommodate one, two, three, four, five, six", we can move that way effectively.

Yes?

**Mr. Bruce Stanton:** That sounds good. I'll offer two considerations.

The first is on the question of staff at meetings. I wonder whether the committee members might agree to allow for in camera meetings in which, in addition to the one staff person per committee member, there also be consideration to have one from the party; this is typically a person from the whip's office, by chance. That has been proposed in our suggestions here: that in addition to one per person, you could have an additional person. And if you wish, you could even make it specific: from the whip's office.

There are occasions when you may have an additional person; that's the suggestion, and I think it will help. I think it helps serve all parties' interests to have one additional whip's office staff—not per member, but per party—here at the table.

The only other one I would consider to be important of the proposals we put forward is that in regard to the 48-hour notice for motions, time should be measured against when the notice was sent. You'll see in our proposal under motions that the 48 hours of notice shall be required—that's clear, and it's the same as in our previous routine motions—"and that the period of notice be calculated from the time the motion has been distributed to the members of the committee by the clerk".

**The Chair:** So you're adding additionally when was this received by the clerk. And for 48 hours, the clock ticks—

**Mr. Bruce Stanton:** When it's been sent.

**The Chair:** —by the committee members.

**Mr. Bruce Stanton:** That's it.

**The Chair:** Are these the two that you—

**Mr. Bruce Stanton:** If we could put those two changes into the routine motions that we have—the document I'm holding from session one—I think this would be acceptable.

**The Chair:** Okay. Mr. Stanton, I will ask the committee whether they have questions.

If I understand you correctly, the routine motions of the previous Parliament dealing with the services of the analysts, reduced quorum, distribution of documents, and working meals are so far so good, except that when you come to staff at in camera meetings and the notice of motions, those are two for which you're very keen to ensure there is clarity.

**Mr. Bruce Stanton:** That's correct.

**The Chair:** Okay. Committee members, I'd like to have....

Yes, Ms. Minna.

**Hon. Maria Minna:** I just want a clarification from Mr. Stanton for the purpose of proceeding. Of the motions that you presented, are you saying now that rather than our voting on all of them, you wish us to vote only on the two? Or am I misunderstanding? I'm sorry.

**Mr. Bruce Stanton:** I think what was proposed by I think it was Madame Demers—

**Hon. Maria Minna:** Oh, that we vote as a group.

**Mr. Bruce Stanton:** I'm sorry. Ms. Mathyssen. Pardon me, *désolé*.

Since we worked well with the routine motions in the last session, the two proposals we would make for change on those two documents are simply to add the staff person under staff—

**Hon. Maria Minna:** So we're making only two changes now, as opposed to the whole of them.

**Mr. Bruce Stanton:** Correct.

**Hon. Maria Minna:** Okay, got you. *Merci*.

**The Chair:** The clarification is the staff will be specified. It will be one per party and it should be from the whip's office or....

**Mr. Bruce Stanton:** The wording we used here was, "In addition, each party shall be permitted to have one party staff member attend in camera meetings". If the committee so chooses, that could read, "to have one whip's office staff member attend in camera meetings".

**The Chair:** I think there was confusion. They wanted clarification. So can we specify that it should be...?

Oui, Madame Demers.

• (1550)

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Nicole Demers:** Excuse me, Madam Chair.

Mr. Stanton, are you talking about allowing each member of the committee to have one whip's office staff member attend?

**Mr. Bruce Stanton:** No, one whip's office staff member per party.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Could you explain why you want that?

**Mr. Bruce Stanton:** Again, Madam Chair, it provides a little flexibility for the parties. If an in camera meeting is under way and you already have your staff in attendance and the whip's office needs to send somebody in to the committee to relay a message or something of that nature, it affords that possibility. For example, if you have your full complement, it wouldn't raise an objection if a member of the whip's office came to bring information or whatever the case may be.

**The Chair:** Yes, Ms. Minna.

**Hon. Maria Minna:** Just for clarification, Madam Chair, are the whip's staff of the respective parties not allowed in the in camera discussions now? I thought they were.

**The Chair:** No, they're not.

**Hon. Maria Minna:** We've seen them, that's why.... This is an in camera meeting, isn't it? Aren't they in the room right now?

**The Chair:** We're not in camera. It's a public meeting.

**Hon. Maria Minna:** Oh, it's a public meeting, sorry.

**Mr. Bruce Stanton:** They would only be there if they were there as a substitute. If a member didn't have a staff person in, then another member from the Prime Minister's Office or another ministerial department could be there as that staff—

**Hon. Maria Minna:** If I may finish, since I just wanted clarification, I'll just give you my final....

I don't have a problem with having either a staff person from any of the members' offices, obviously, or a researcher from one of our research offices. I don't see the need to have a party person. What is the point?

**The Chair:** If I may be so bold as to speak on behalf of Mr. Stanton, you have a specified person and the whip is the most specified person. If we leave it dangling and the whips are always there.... Am I right in that this is why you chose the whip?

**Mr. Bruce Stanton:** It's the whip's office because they're the staff members who are providing the administrative type of support. It's not departmental staff per se. It's administrative in nature.

**The Chair:** Is there any more confusion?

Madam Davidson, did you want to clarify?

**Mrs. Patricia Davidson (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC):** No, I want to speak on something else in general, not on that specific point.

**The Chair:** Okay, could I just get people to agree to this?

[*Translation*]

Do you need to consult your colleagues, Ms. Demers?

**Ms. Nicole Demers:** I would like to consult with Ms. Minna, Madam Chair. I do apologize, but as you know, I have a great deal of respect for your colleague.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** So the proposal is, and Mr. Stanton, if I'm putting words in your mouth, you may tell me,

In addition, each party shall be permitted to have one party staff member attend in camera meetings (from the whip's office).

**The Clerk of the Committee (Ms. Danielle Bélisle):** It's a tie vote.

**The Chair:** Very rarely does that happen, although with the government, it passes.

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

**The Chair:** I am sorry, Madam Davidson.

**Mrs. Patricia Davidson:** That's okay, Madam Chair.

I wonder if I may make my remarks now. I want to make sure that I'm clear on what we're doing. We're not working actually from either of these documents now; we're working on last year's document and amending it. Is that correct? And we don't have it in front of us.

**The Clerk:** Yes, you do have it. It's the minutes.

**The Chair:** You do have that.

What we are doing, Ms. Davidson, for clarification purposes, is taking from the proposal that has been presented by Madam Boucher and taking ones that are sort of do or die, and asking if we can agree to have them replace the current staff at in camera meetings.

**Mrs. Patricia Davidson:** I didn't realize that the minutes were what we had decided last year as we laid them out.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** The next one is the 48-hour motion.

Now that Mr. Stanton has provided clarification, I have to give some time for the opposition to consult.

On notice of motions, the only change that Mr. Stanton is proposing is that the timing be from the time the notice is given to the members.

Mr. Stanton, if I understand you, if somebody gave a motion today at the end of the meeting, the 48 hours would be up on Wednesday at say 4 p.m.

•(1555)

**The Clerk:** No, from the time the motion has been distributed to the members.

**The Chair:** Distributed to the members in both official languages.

**Mr. Bruce Stanton:** Madam Chair, it really again simply speaks to getting some continuity and consistency with the way in which the time clock is established for motions. Reading from the way the motion on last session's routine motions reads, I would put a semicolon at the end of what would otherwise be the end of the first sentence and add the first point in the government proposed motion. That would read: "and that the period of notice be calculated from the time the motion has been distributed to the members of the committee by the clerk of the committee."

**The Chair:** I ask the clerk if that would create any confusion. Would it be objective, or would it be subjective in terms of when this got distributed? I don't want to create confusion. I simply want to understand.

**The Clerk:** When we talk of distributing it to members normally, it's the time when we distribute it electronically. Some of your members might not be here, you might have substitutes or whatever. So if somebody would give notice in the meeting right here and now, I would not say it has been distributed to members. It would be considered to have been distributed to members once I'd been able to have it in both official languages, laid out and sent electronically. From that time on, that is when you would have the 48 hours running.

**Mr. Bruce Stanton:** That's the way I would—

**The Chair:** Is that the current practice?

**The Clerk:** Yes, because some members might not be present, and today things are pretty much done electronically.

**The Chair:** Yes, Ms. Minna.

**Hon. Maria Minna:** I'm trying to understand. I have some problem with the wording. I'll tell you why.

First, I don't have a problem with the 48 hours being deemed to start when the clerk's office receives it, because that's what it's been traditionally. They receive it and then they send it out. In any other business that's normally how it works when something is received and there is a time.

The other thing is that the wording is a bit generic, in that I don't know whether this necessarily means when the clerk, as she said, distributes it electronically or distributes it to the committee here. It just says when it has been "distributed to the members of the committee", but in what form? I don't know if we want to be clear on that. I have some problems.

The other thing, Madam Chair, is that I don't want to delay things. My concern is that we tend to find ways to make life hard for ourselves and delay processes. If a motion has been received by the clerk at 3:20 on a Monday afternoon, and it's noted, that to me is deemed to have been received, and the 48 hours will start at 3:20 on a Monday afternoon. Presumably the clerk, as soon as she can—within the next few hours or so—will send it out to everybody, but the timing starts. I don't understand the need for it to be distributed—and then, of course, the wording of distribution to me isn't clear, so I have some serious problems with it.

I don't understand why we need to delay things and make work harder for ourselves.

**The Chair:** Go ahead, Danielle.

**The Clerk:** I just want to add something. I did receive motions last week, and not one of them was translated. We cannot distribute things that are in one language only—so, sure, if somebody comes here and has the motions in both official languages and would like to distribute them to members, there's no problem.

• (1600)

**Hon. Maria Minna:** What I might suggest as the wording is that the 48 hours are deemed to start when received, as long as it's received in both official languages, so that the clerk doesn't have to be doing the translation. Then they can immediately turn them around and send them out.

**The Chair:** Go ahead, Madame Boucher.

[Translation]

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher (Beauport—Limoilou, CPC):** I would like to point out that when we sent the motions, we sent them in both official languages.

**The Clerk:** The proposals were in both official languages, yes.

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher:** Exactly, the proposals and all the rest of it.

I think it is very important that the 48-hour notice be deemed to start when the motions are sent to members. I have sat on other committees where monumental mistakes have been made, both by government and opposition members. In some cases, there was no 48-hour notice and the voting was done instead by a show of hands. We have to work as a team in the committees, yet under this other system, some members were sometimes unfairly disadvantaged. To my mind, the 48-hour notice allowed us to ensure that the same rule is applied to everybody.

[English]

**The Chair:** According to the clerk, the understanding....This is really confusing. I'll tell you why it's confusing.

From my perspective, I sit there and ask what 48 hours is and when it is calculated and if it is calculated when the clerk receives it, even if it's received in one language and is unilingual. It really muddies the water rather than clarifies, and as Ms. Mathysen pointed out, the routine proceedings have been working fine.

The floor is yours, Mr. Stanton, but the clerk says there are times when the motions you will be sending if we adopt this thing won't come till the next meeting or the meeting after, depending on what was deemed to have been received, so it can create a confusion rather than a clarification.

Mr. Stanton is next. Then we have Ms. Davidson and then Ms. Minna. Did I see any other hands up? Yes, there is Madame Demers.

Go ahead, Mr. Stanton.

**Mr. Bruce Stanton:** I would just point out, Madam Chair, that in the existing motions it simply says 48 hours' notice, so my question, through you to the clerk, would be how one determines that time clock now.

**The Clerk:** In the past, the 48-hour notice has been done by counting like the little children, by counting how many sleeps, so if you sent it to us and we were able to send it out at 5 o'clock on Monday, even though the meeting would be at 3:30 and it's not a frank 48 hours, it would be fine.

**The Chair:** There's flexibility.

**The Clerk:** At the moment, I don't know. If it says that the period of notice be calculated from the time the notice has been distributed, it seems to want to restrict it a little more. It's up to the committee to decide if that's the way they want it to make sure that everybody has enough time or whatever.

**Mr. Bruce Stanton:** I would only say again, this is not an attempt to in any way delay anything. It's just trying to be consistent, and being more concise as to how one measures that 48 hours so that there isn't discretion given in terms of what meets the rule. It either does or it doesn't. And if it doesn't meet that next meeting, then it goes to the meeting following.

I agree with Madam Minna with regard to how it's distributed. I think we'd all agree that we could put, "when it's electronically distributed", because again, we know—as the example was given here—if it's submitted to the clerk in both official languages and can be sent out right away, the clock starts running then. But if it needs to be translated and you have some work to do before it can get running....

And remember, this is just a notice of motion. Once these are submitted, they will appear on the agenda. Those are the standing orders. That's the normal course. But this makes it fair for all parties. Everyone lives by the same rules, and we know what the rules are.

Again, that's why I support the proposal.

• (1605)

**The Chair:** Ms. Davidson.

**Mrs. Patricia Davidson:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

I was going to say much the same thing that Mr. Stanton just said in his last remarks. I think it should be calculated from the time the motion has been electronically distributed.

I know the motions I sent forth to the clerk were in both official languages. They were translated, so they were able to be sent on as soon as they were received.

I don't think we need this last part, because I think the official languages part is covered in one of the other clauses in that original, if I'm reading the minutes correctly. So I think we can probably forget that last part after "clerk of the committee". That perhaps might—

**The Chair:** Make it easier?

**Mrs. Patricia Davidson:** —make it easier to understand.

It just makes it fairer for everybody. We're all dealing with the same timeframe. It means that I can't bring something in that's translated and ready to go, then give it to the clerk and expect to deal with it right off the bat when the rest of the people haven't had a chance to look at it.

It's fair for everyone.

**The Chair:** Ms. Minna.

**Hon. Maria Minna:** I was just going to refer to what I said earlier, which is that I think the current one is fine. We all have translation capabilities or access to it as part of our offices. So when we send in motions, out of courtesy, because we're parliamentarians, for starters we should send them in two official languages anyway.

So Instead of playing with the words "48 hours", we could say that all motions that are sent in to the clerk ought to be sent in two official languages so the clerk doesn't have to take the time to translate motions and can send them out immediately. If you want to put in, "at the time they were electronically distributed", I'm not going to die over it or worry about it. My main concern was that if we were going to wait for them to come to this committee, wait for distribution by hand, then it would just take forever.

But I would say that maybe you add in there the fact that it should be in both official languages so that the clerk, once receiving it, can also notify when they electronically send it. Because if they're receiving them in both official languages, presumably they can turn around and send them out rather quickly, I would think.

**The Chair:** Okay.

Madam Demers.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Nicole Demers:** Madam Chair, we are wasting a lot of time here. Our committee worked well last year. Mr. Stanton, you were not unhappy with the way in which procedural motions were addressed, and to my knowledge, nobody was prejudiced by them. In fact, with the exception of one occasion, I have never heard anybody on this committee object to the way in which motions are tabled. Everything ran very smoothly. I cannot fathom why we are wasting so much time discussing these motions when everything worked very well. It's beyond belief, Madam Chair.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Demers.

Ms. Boucher.

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher:** I would like to comment on what Ms. Demers said. Perhaps you did not experience any difficulties, but I myself have sat on two other committees where there were problems.

I therefore want to ensure, first and foremost, that I will have the opportunity to review the motions before they are tabled. In some committees, motions have been tabled without anybody even having received them by the day the committee was sitting. Two or three people may have seen the motions, but the others have not even had time to look at them.

I therefore, want to make sure that members will be able to review the motions 48 hours before they are tabled. Furthermore, my colleagues assure me that this is an excellent way of organizing our business. It would allow all members of the committee to be up to speed and have a grasp of the issue at hand. To my mind, it is important to work as a team, and I want to be guaranteed that we will receive motions ahead of time.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Okay, committee members, we've heard the debate on this, and if I have heard you correctly, 48 hours.... We're going to the proposal; we're not reading from the minutes. It reads:

That 48 hours' notice will be required for any substantive motions to be considered by the committee and that the period of notice be calculated from the time that the motion has been electronically distributed to members of the committee by the clerk of the committee.

Ms. Davidson, then you suggested the rest of it is not worth it, but we could put down that it's distributed to the clerk of the committee in both official languages?

**Mrs. Patricia Davidson:** Yes.

• (1610)

**The Clerk:** And that motions be sent in both official languages.

**The Chair:** Can I repeat—

**The Clerk:** So is that your proposal, Mr. Stanton?

**Mr. Bruce Stanton:** So all we're going to do is to drop the last sentence out of the government's proposed motion where it reads "and that all motions received by the clerk shall be placed upon the agenda"—although you might still want that.

**The Chair:** Can I read that again, before you—

**Hon. Maria Minna:** So "distributed" means when it's received by my office, not when it's sent?

**The Chair:** No, no, no.

[*Translation*]

It has a different meaning.

[*English*]

**Hon. Maria Minna:** It's important to clarify it.

[*Translation*]

**The Chair:** Ms. Demers, could you explain to us what is understood by "distribution" in French?

**Ms. Nicole Demers:** It means that the documents will be sent to our offices, to committee members' offices. I am with you.

**The Clerk:** We are talking about distributing motions electronically—I do not see the difference.

**Ms. Nicole Demers:** It is because previously the clock started when the motion was received at the clerk's office.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Can I repeat this?

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Nicole Demers:** Previously, the clock started from the time that the clerk's office received the motion.

**The Chair:** No.

**The Clerk:** But according to the wording of this motion, that is no longer the case.

**Ms. Nicole Demers:** Exactly, but previously, the clock started from the time that you received the notice of motion in your office. Now, however, the clock will start running from when we receive them in our offices.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** No, it's when it is sent.

Can I read it again slowly, so that it sinks in and then we can vote on it?



[Translation]

**Ms. Nicole Demers:** Excuse me, Madam Chair.

[English]

**The Chair:** It reads:

That 48 hours' notice shall be required for any substantive motion to be considered by the committee and that the period of notice be calculated from the time the motion has been electronically distributed to the members of the committee by the clerk of the committee and that the motion be in both official languages.

[Translation]

Is that okay?

[English]

**Hon. Maria Minna:** If I could, just to help with the problem that Madame Demers is having, instead of saying “distributed”—because it seems to suggest that it also means when received—can we say “electronically sent”?

**Mr. Bruce Stanton:** It's been sent electronically.

**Hon. Maria Minna:** It's the moment it's sent, not that it's received.

But mind you, it's received pretty quickly. So I don't know....

**The Chair:** So the confusion, Madame Demers, is about when this thing went out. We're just trying to flow information. So if it goes out from Mr. Stanton to the clerk on Monday at 5 p.m. in both official languages, and then the clerk sends it—

**The Clerk:** The clerk is sitting here, so she won't receive it, and she won't go back to her office after that. You have a meeting at 3:30. That's another problem you're looking at.

**The Chair:** We're just throwing out some problems so you can solve them in your head and then tell us how it goes, just in case.

I'm just giving you a scenario. Your office sends a motion. Say your office sends a motion at 5 p.m. We sit from 3:30 to 5:30 p.m. It is in both official languages, but the clerk has received it in her office, electronically, and the clerk is not going back to the office until Tuesday morning at eight o'clock. So she's deemed to have received it at 8 a.m. Or are you going to deem that she received it at 5 p.m.?

**Mr. Bruce Stanton:** This has nothing to do with when it's received.

**The Chair:** So then whenever she receives it and she sends it out....

**Mr. Bruce Stanton:** That's correct.

**The Chair:** Okay. Whatever confusion there was, it's more confusing.

I'll give you one last thing, and then let's vote on it, unless you want to change some wording.

**Mr. Bruce Stanton:** We're relying on the clerk's office to expedite this as best they can, as I'm sure they will.

The point is that when it is sent out electronically, whatever has to be done to it to prepare it and send it to the committee, that is when the 48 hours starts. If it doesn't make it for the next meeting in two

days, then it will be for the meeting after that. It's very straightforward.

• (1615)

**The Chair:** Yes, Ms. Minna.

**Hon. Maria Minna:** Madam Chair, I have to admit that I'm finding this particular discussion rather....

**The Chair:** Bizarre?

**Hon. Maria Minna:** Yes, it is. I don't see what's wrong with what we had before.

In every other process in my life.... I'm starting to remember that when I sent papers for my election, Elections Canada deemed them to have been received when they received them, not when they sent them back to whomever. In every other system it is when you receive it.

You know what? I'm sticking with what we have. When the clerk receives it, it's deemed to have been received, fine. Let's move on. This is getting too complicated.

**The Chair:** Let's vote on what has been proposed and on the changes that have been made. I've read it two times already, so I'm not going to read it again.

(Amendment negated)

**The Chair:** Now, since we said that those were the only two things, can we therefore say that we are now moving on to the business of the committee? Yes?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Chair:** Okay. So, we've done the routine motions.

Committee members, you have in front of you motions from Madame Demers, Ms. Mathysen, and Ms. Davidson.

**The Clerk:** The motion by Madame Demers for the BlackBerry's could almost be a routine motion.

**The Chair:** Okay. Madame Demers, your....

Yes.

**Hon. Maria Minna:** On a point of order, Madam Chair, at the last meeting we had, we were going to be discussing the committee's business. It seems that we now have a whole pile of motions from various sources. We're discussing future business through motions rather than by discussing items. I find this rather unfortunate. Are we not going back—

**The Chair:** Ms. Minna, if you'd give me some opportunity, I'd like to finish Ms. Demers' motion only, and then I'll go through the business and show the committee. So you've jumped the gun on it.

**Hon. Maria Minna:** I'm sorry.

**The Chair:** I wanted to go through the business that has been given out to every committee member to just see how we match. We'll have to now choose what it is that we would like to proceed with.

So can we take Ms. Demers' motion, which is really quite simple? It says, "That the Standing Committee on the Status of Women request all members of the committee not to use their BlackBerry while witnesses are being introduced, out of respect for the witnesses."

Yes, Mr. Stanton.

**Mr. Bruce Stanton:** I just have a question, through you, Madam Chair, to Madame Demers.

Is it only when they're being introduced? I thought, perhaps, that you had meant when they're giving testimony, during their presentations.

[Translation]

**Ms. Nicole Demers:** That is correct, Mr. Stanton. That is actually what the French version states, there must be a mistake in the translation. I was referring to when our witnesses are giving their testimony. I would prefer us not to use our BlackBerry during that time. It is up to each individual member to decide whether he wants to have his BlackBerry on or off before the witnesses arrive or after they have gone.

[English]

**Mr. Bruce Stanton:** So, in the English text, then, Madame, it should read, "while witnesses are giving testimony or making presentations"?

[Translation]

**Ms. Nicole Demers:** Not only during their presentation, but while we are questioning them as well. If it were only during their presentation—

**Mr. Bruce Stanton:** Yes, it is the same.

**Ms. Nicole Demers:** When we are asking questions and people around us are—

[English]

**The Chair:** Actually the French one does say during the presentation of their testimony.

[Translation]

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher:** During their presentation.

[English]

**Mr. Bruce Stanton:** We haven't changed much—the testimony—because the presentation could be meant as just the first ten minutes, but actually it should be—

**The Chair:** While witnesses are testifying. Okay?

**Mr. Bruce Stanton:** Sure.

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

[Translation]

**Ms. Nicole Demers:** Thank you, colleagues.

[English]

**The Chair:** Now, the research analyst had sent out the suggestion for future business, which was what we had discussed in June 2007. Then we received a lot of motions. What I'd like to do is, if we look at the logic of the committee, there are supplementary estimates and departmental performance reports, and we also presented reports in terms of trafficking, economic security, and the funding changes to

the status of women program. The government has responded to it. So if we look at the moneys and their responses, that would be a natural fit for what we could do if we so wished.

The proposals that we have received from Ms. Davidson, Ms. Demers, and Ms. Mathysen are basically taking it from here and giving their priority...the proposed studies. This is really in alphabetical order.

Can we at least agree that the first things we can look at, because the supplementary estimates were tabled on October 30, 2007, is to see where Status of Women Canada is going and bring in the new executive director? I think the new executive director is not available until December.

• (1620)

**The Clerk:** She is touring the country at the moment.

**The Chair:** The coordinator.

**The Clerk:** I've asked for the coordinator or some of her staff to come, but she seems to want to come with the staff.

**The Chair:** Ms. Davidson, I will give you the floor in one second.

I think every one of you has received this blue report, and everybody has had a chance to look at it and see where we're going. I think we could have a performance report and an update on where the status of women program is from the horse's mouth.

Yes, Ms. Davidson.

**Mrs. Patricia Davidson:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

I just wanted to ask a question; I didn't want to speak to the motion that I had put forward at this point. Apparently there were some calls made by the clerk to the department, the Status of Women department, and to different ministries, different minister's offices, to see if they would appear. Was that on your behalf that these calls were made? When I was questioned about it, it was stated that it was on behalf of the committee, but we definitely, as a committee, had not discussed anything about this yet. Would that have been on your behalf, Madam Chair?

**The Chair:** Let me explain. After last week's meeting we were discussing what business we could get into. Since the trafficking report and the economic security report, there have been responses by the government, and it was HRDSC and the Department of Justice, etc. The clerk asked if, in preparation, we could at least find out if anybody would be available Wednesday or next Monday, etc., and would I be willing to put my name to it, and I said yes, I would.

I think that as a committee we're here to do work. We were just in preparation for whatever could happen; otherwise we would have no witnesses and no business for the next two weeks.

**Mrs. Patricia Davidson:** I understand that, Madam Chair, and I think as chair you do have the right to move the business along and to see where we're going. It was just that it was stated on behalf of the committee—

**The Chair:** No, the clerk asked me—

**Mrs. Patricia Davidson:** —and I found that rather strange when we hadn't discussed it.

**The Chair:** No, we hadn't discussed it, but we wanted to in preparation, just in case—

**Mrs. Patricia Davidson:** On behalf of the chair, yes.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** Members of the committee, if we were to do the supplementary estimates and departmental performance reports, we would need the coordinator to come—she wants to come—but we could have officials come, because otherwise on Wednesday we will have no witnesses. What is the will of the committee? What would you like to do? The next one, the government response, is we still need ministers. We will need the ministers, because remember we are going into....The trafficking issue is not only trafficking; it's an immigration issue as well. And those are issues we need to be mindful of, considering we're going into the Vancouver Olympics, and we're mindful of it because the world is in such a turmoil. I was just listening to Minister Finley talking about how important it is that we try to protect people who may be illegally trafficked under the guise of refugees. So there are a whole lot of things that are going on.

Ms. Minna, you had some suggestions.

• (1625)

**Hon. Maria Minna:** Madam Chair, the estimates are here and we do have an obligation to study them and work on them. We tend sometimes to put them off because there's a lot of other work and we're finishing other stuff and then we do them at the very end and we spend very little time on them, which is really unfortunate, because we're not doing our job properly as parliamentarians. We should indeed pay more attention to them and work with them.

At this particular time we have the luxury, in a way, of starting out a new session without having an ongoing piece of work or legislation that we're working on, as we were in other times. I would suggest we work with the supplementary estimates and start dealing with them immediately and get them done with, so that then we can actually move on to some other studies. In the meantime at least we've done the base work on that. As we know, they are always deemed to be passed if they're not done by a certain date. Rather than allowing them to drag on and then fitting them in somewhere once in a while, because they are important to the work that we do and they do have a great deal of impact on everything else, I think we should just get them done.

**The Chair:** Ms. Mathysen and Ms. Davidson.

**Mrs. Irene Mathysen:** And would the minister be present during that meeting? I just want to be sure that we have the minister here to discuss the estimates.

**The Chair:** We can send the invitation to the minister and it will depend on the minister's schedule.

If I heard Ms. Minna correctly, the estimates are out. We need to review them and we could probably get departmental heads to come. We would start with the departmental heads, and if the minister is available, then we can get the minister.

The last time we waited a long time and the minister wasn't available and then we went to the committee of the whole.

**The Clerk:** When you're saying "department", you're talking of the status of women agency. You're not talking of the department under Madam Verner. Okay, I just want to clarify that. So it's the

status of women program, the arm's-length agency, whose staff would be coming.

**The Chair:** That would be the starting point.

Ms. Davidson.

**Mrs. Patricia Davidson:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

I think Madam Bélisle has clarified part of my question. I had the same question on whether we were inviting the minister, because definitely that is how we normally do the supplementaries. We have the minister here and that's our opportunity to discuss things with the minister. I think by all means we need to extend that invitation.

Then the other question I had concerns the coordinator who was referred to, I think, and then other officials. Maybe you could elaborate a little bit more on who the coordinator is. I don't mean the name. Is that the head department person or...?

**The Chair:** Clare Beckton is the new coordinator for Status of Women Canada, and she is not available because she's been travelling. But we can get the staff from the agency to come and speak to us on what is going on and give us a status update and departmental performance, etc.

**Mrs. Patricia Davidson:** Will they be able to answer questions?

Didn't we run into this problem before, either at this committee or the other one I sit on, where officials came from the department but they weren't top officials and they really couldn't answer? Was that the health department?

**Ms. Nicole Demers:** It was health.

**Mrs. Patricia Davidson:** Yes, health. They couldn't answer any questions, so we wasted....

Remember that, Nicole?

**The Chair:** What they have said, Ms. Davidson, is that they were looking to see....

I guess when the question came on whether it was the committee that was asking for them to come, at that time you probably said, no, it was not the committee. Probably the chair made that request to check around. We can now say, if the committee wants, that it is the committee that would like them to come.

There are always times when.... For instance, we had Finance Canada come, and the deputy minister was not there. The financial officers did not know; we needed the deputy minister.

So it is quite possible that they do not have the holistic picture, but if we want to start the ball rolling, we can have the people from the agency and make a request—from the committee—that the agency staff come and give us a status update. It has been a long time now.

• (1630)

**Mrs. Patricia Davidson:** And the minister would come as well?

**The Chair:** We can make a request to the minister.

**The Clerk:** For Wednesday?

**Mrs. Patricia Davidson:** Well, whenever we're doing it, I think the minister needs to be invited.

**The Chair:** We're not saying that we will not invite the minister, but we have to be mindful that the minister might not come.

**Mrs. Patricia Davidson:** I understand that, but we need to extend that invitation.

**The Chair:** Yes. We will invite the minister.

Madame Boucher.

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher:** I am going to ask you to clarify a few things for me, as I want to make sure that I am understanding you properly. It is the Minister who has final responsibility for the Status of Women, and it should, therefore, be the Minister whom we question. I am struggling to understand why we would invite officials here to question them on matters that are the responsibility of the Minister. I appreciate that they have a certain expertise, but it is the Minister who is responsible for the Status of Women. If we are going to meet with somebody to discuss these issues, then it ought to be the Minister. I do not think that it is appropriate to ask officials to answer such specific questions.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Ms. Boucher, you have brought in a good point. We have had not the Minister of Finance but the Deputy Minister of Finance coming in to give us supplementary estimates updates and to tell us how they do budgeting—for instance, gender-based budgeting. The minister does not come down to the nitty-gritty operational level. That is why we need, from an operational perspective, the person. Civil servants have come before the committee. We have Statistics Canada coming. We have civil servants from HRSDC. We have civil servants coming because they are accountable to this committee.

On public accounts, we wanted the deputy minister to account for what they were doing. The ministers are accountable. They are always accountable in the House. But we need to see here, from the deputy minister, what they have been doing, or hear from their staff on what they have been doing.

Ms. Minna.

**Hon. Maria Minna:** Madam Chair, I have sat on committees before where we have had HRDC...or I guess it's not called that now. It's HRSDC. I'm getting all the various acronyms mixed up from all the different changes.

We have had, as you say, representatives from various departments. Certainly while the coordinator is out, or may not be available immediately, there is a deputy or assistant deputy in the department responsible for Status of Women Canada. I'm sure this coordinator reports to somebody. She doesn't report directly only to the minister. I think the assistant deputy minister or deputy minister should be invited, and of course the minister as well. If the minister is not available immediately, it could be in a week's time or two, but certainly we could try to make sure that she comes as well.

What's our timeline for these estimates to be reported back, first of all?

**The Clerk:** Maybe Clara could explain a little more in terms of the difference between a department here and an agency.

In this case, my understanding is that the minister is, politically, the one who would answer why there have been cuts and so on and so forth, but it is administered by this Status of Women agency. So when you're going to your deputy minister, you're talking of a deputy minister of another department. What you want are people from the agency plus the minister, Madam Verner.

Am I right, Clara? Here I'm getting into places—

**Hon. Maria Minna:** I'm sorry, it's rude to interject, but I was involved in the department for quite some time. Yes, Status of Women Canada is an agency, but it reports, through its coordinator, to another bureaucrat. She does not report directly to the minister. I know that much. There is, obviously, an assistant deputy minister or a deputy minister to whom that coordinator reports, and that's who makes.... They have much more power than the coordinator does.

**The Chair:** We'll go to Madame Demers.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Nicole Demers:** I agree with Ms. Boucher, Madam Chair; it is important that the Minister appears before the committee. However, I have experience of other committees where even the Minister could not answer all of the questions because he had so many different files to juggle. Remember that last year the Minister of Health delegated the responsibility of answering our questions to his deputy ministers. The current minister is the Minister of Canadian Heritage, Status of Women and Official Languages. She obviously would not be able to answer all of our questions off the top of her head.

Status of Women Canada, the agency responsible for managing the program, already has a good grasp of the issues. With the help of departmental officials, we too can get a handle on the issues. If the Minister has time to come to see us later, then so much the better. We can use the opportunity to ask her more specific questions as to where Status of Women Canada is heading, after having come to grips with the basics.

• (1635)

[*English*]

**The Chair:** I'm hearing consensus, then, that we send an invitation to the minister and to whichever department head the coordinator reports to. So we'll have to find out the reporting relationship. We can extend the invitation to the administrators, if they can come, without the coordinator. If the minister comes, I think she will need some backup, as well.

Are we in agreement?

**The Clerk:** Can we have something clear so I could let them know?

**Hon. Maria Minna:** I'm sorry. I apologize, Madam Chair. I missed part of what you were saying.

What I was trying to say was that we invite whoever is available below the coordinator from Status of Women Canada and also the deputy minister or assistant deputy minister, who is accountable.

I apologize. I just missed—

**The Chair:** That is no problem.

**Hon. Maria Minna:** My mind wandered for a minute.

**The Chair:** Go ahead, Madame Boucher.

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher:** We have touched on so many issues that I need to clarify something. If we do invite them, would it be for next week?

[*English*]

**The Chair:** If we do not have any witnesses, and if we have no business to discuss, then there'll be no meeting Wednesday. But we will have business to discuss as future agenda.

So we'll try to invite her for the week after, which is the Monday or the Wednesday. We have to give that option to the minister. We can't demand that she come.

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher:** Okay.

**The Chair:** Is that okay with everybody? No? Yes? What is the problem?

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher:** There is no problem, I just wanted to know whether it was Wednesday for certain. You are saying that she will come on either Monday or Wednesday, depending on her availability and that of the deputy minister. Is that correct? If they are not available this coming Wednesday, we can meet with them the week after or in two weeks' time, depending on their availability. Is that correct? I just want to make sure that we are clear on what is happening.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Are there any other questions on this?

**The Clerk:** So can I know clearly...? Can I put down that it was agreed that the minister, the deputy or assistant deputy minister, and the status of women program coordinator or her administrators be invited to appear before the committee regarding the estimates?

**The Chair:** Yes.

It's the supplementary estimates and the full month's report.

**The Clerk:** Should it say either the minister, the deputy minister, or the assistant deputy minister?

**Hon. Maria Minna:** I think the deputy has to come.

**The Chair:** Is there a deputy?

**Hon. Maria Minna:** If there is no coordinator... There is a deputy responsible for Status of Women Canada.

**The Chair:** I understand that under the coordinator, there is a deputy coordinator. We can ask her—it has to be a her, I'm sure—to attend, because the coordinator is out.

So the invitation goes to the minister, the deputy minister or ADM—it depends on who is there—and the deputy coordinator.

**Hon. Maria Minna:** I'm saying they should all come.

**The Chair:** Even if the four witnesses came we would be fine.

**The Clerk:** And whoever could come will come—or do we wait for the time when the minister can come?

**The Chair:** We can start off with three people, or two people, whoever can come.

The ministers are generally busy and we cannot keep on postponing it. When she is available we'll be able to. Is it Immigration or Human Resources? Immigration. I'm getting those two ministries mixed up.

Madame Findley, and Mr. Nicholson.

Yes, Mr. Stanton.

•(1640)

**Mr. Bruce Stanton:** Perhaps you've answered the question already.

You're thinking how many ministers for each report. Because we cover such a wide berth on this, I'd be inclined to think it's a good idea. I just don't know how long it might take; as you mentioned, there are layers here. There's Citizenship, there's Justice, there's HRSDC. It might be considered to think of the minister who has the most significant role perhaps in some of those recommendations. That's the difficulty, I would say, here. We could take a lot of time on this.

Alternatively, you could take one meeting per report and try to do two at the same meeting. I don't know how improbable that might be.

**The Chair:** When we did the report, and if we look at the responses, remember that trafficking under the justice bill has become a Criminal Code.... We could have the justice department, but we also stated, and I think we were very clear, the last time that it is the immigration law that has to be amended or issues have to be addressed in terms of how do you sensitize the immigration officer's training to understand that this person is being trafficked, because the other front-line workers understand.

When I was in Australia and I spoke with the Australians on their trafficking issues, they said that because they're an island they fly in, so they're not trafficked. So they determine trafficking in a very different way. Canada is far and people fly in, so we have to find out from our ministers what their thought process is immigration-wise. Justice and immigration will be the two areas that will be very useful.

Madame Demers.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Nicole Demers:** Madam Chair, I would also like to hear from officials from the Department of Public Safety, given that the Olympics and Paralympics will be held in 2010 in Vancouver. Everyone knows that human trafficking increases during these events. The traffic in young people has increased, and I fear that if we are not adequately prepared, the number of young children and young women who are victimized will increase.

What measures do we intend to take? What measures have we already put into place? What measures will be put in place, not only in terms of immigration and justice, but also in terms of public safety, to prevent these persons from being victimized? What measures will we take?

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Ms. Neville, then Ms. Davidson, Ms. Mathysen, and Ms. Minna.

**Hon. Anita Neville (Winnipeg South Centre, Lib.):** I have a brief comment, Madame Chair.

I recall that this committee passed a motion that I introduced at the last session on asking the government for a response on what they are planning to do to deal with the issue of trafficking around the Olympics. I'm prepared to reintroduce the motion if necessary to facilitate a response, and I'll do so.

**The Chair:** Thank you. The chair suggests you should do so.

Ms. Davidson.

**Mrs. Patricia Davidson:** Thank you, Madame Chair.

I just want to support what Madame Demers was saying. I think public safety is very important.

One of the biggest things we identified was the lack of awareness in the community and the lack of awareness in the police forces in general. I think that we do need to speak with the public safety department. I think that's very important.

**The Chair:** Ms. Mathysen.

• (1645)

**Mrs. Irene Mathysen:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

Most certainly I would concur that we do need to hear from these ministers. My concern is that, like with all ministers, there may be some problems in getting them here in a timely fashion. I wanted to make sure that we didn't lose precious time in regard to this committee. So I would suggest that given the fact that last June, as those of us who went to the meeting of Commonwealth ministers in Uganda know, gender budgeting was a very key issue and it is going to come up again at the CHOGM this fall, I would like that item to be moved up in terms of your deliberations. I think that it's important, in terms of our response to the Commonwealth. I would like to know more about it, and we're going to move into a budgeting process very quickly. In fact it's already begun.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Ms. Minna.

**Hon. Maria Minna:** I was going to say that with respect to studying the responses to the reports with respect to the trafficking, that's two departments, Justice and Immigration. The economic, that's HRSDC. It tends to be the department that deals with most of it, in terms of training, in terms of pensions, in terms of employment insurance. It's got tons of stuff there. You could mine that forever, in terms of the impacts it has, apart from health and all that. That's the major one, and child care. It's all in there. So there are three departments.

And the impacts of funding from the changes of Status of Women Canada, again, that we could deal with when we have the officials from Status of Women Canada and the deputies in front of us. That topic can be dealt with at the same time. Those don't need to be separate.

So I would suggest that we do the Status of Women Canada one at the same time that we do the estimates, or at least when we have the officials in, or when the minister comes, as well. For the other two, we would look to getting the ministers and deputies of those three departments: Justice, Immigration, and HRSD. Those are the three,

basically, that impact on those issues the most. I think if we manage those three, we've done reasonably well.

Then, for the moment, with respect to the last comment Ms. Mathysen made, I'm going to make a comment here that may be out, but I have to make it just because of what I'm facing. This document we're just going through is a document that we were told at the last meeting we were going to be given and that we would be discussing and seeing what issues we had already approved. One of them was in fact gender-based analysis. Now I see there's a motion.

I have to say that I find it difficult dealing with this committee, where instead of going by consensus, as we had done before, and looking at the list that we had put forward previously and then suggesting other items, we've got members coming across with motions on stuff that was already on that list. People are trying to say here is my motion, so it's the NDP or it's the Conservatives or it's whoever who really cares about this issue, they're putting forward motions. I'm sorry, but I had to comment, because these motions are not really....

We've got a list here, and I don't have a problem dealing with gender budgeting because of course it is important, and I support going to that immediately after the estimates and these others, because I think it's critical; I just don't think we need to have all these motions, that's all, with the exception of—

[*Translation*]

**The Chair:** Ms. Demers, Ms. Mathysen has the floor.

[*English*]

**Hon. Maria Minna:** Just to finish, Madame Demers' motion, though, is not the same thing. She's not duplicating stuff that's there, although Ms. Davidson's got some new ones. But there's a lot of duplication, and that's all I was saying.

**The Chair:** Okay.

Mr. Mathysen, you wanted to respond?

**Mrs. Irene Mathysen:** Yes, thank you, Madam Chair.

While I am very appreciative of the list that came from our June meeting, when I received the motions from Madam Davidson, it seemed to me prudent to make it clear that these are important matters that I wish to bring before the committee. So it's in response to motions that were made and it's to make clear that I regard the suggestions on this list as very significant and the ones we should indeed focus on, because the ones from Madam Davidson did deviate from this list.

• (1650)

**The Chair:** Okay. And that is why, committee members, what I suggested was I saw these motions and said we have submitted a proposed study list, and we can always vote on what is our priority and move forward with it.

So I guess at the moment, if I understand what we have discussed so far, we are talking about the supplementary estimates and the performance reports.

We would like to see the minister being invited, the ADM or the deputy being invited, and the deputy coordinator being invited to come before us. We can at that time address some of the issues, as Ms. Minna pointed out, on the funding to Status of Women Canada. Those responses are important and they are timely.

The trafficking one, not only does it have immigration and justice, but it might have the Minister of Public Safety, and that is important.

What I'd like to get from you is, if we can't get the ministers, can we have parliamentary secretaries or deputy heads to come and talk to us? Would it be worth our discussion, or is there...?

Yes, Mr. Stanton.

**Mr. Bruce Stanton:** I think the parliamentary secretaries would be okay, but I would sense that if we're looking for a government response here and we're dealing with that, it's really more in the political vein. The kinds of questions I think one would expect the committee to be putting to officials on those reports really has more of a political dimension, so I would say it's not at the administrative level.

Perhaps I'm speaking out of turn, but I think the parliamentary secretaries should be able to speak on those so we can get on with other business, as well. Obviously, we'd prefer the ministers, though.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Ms. Minna.

**Hon. Maria Minna:** On the government responses, I agree with Mr. Stanton. Also, Madame Demers in her lists is quite right.

These are government positions, political positions. I've seen these things before. It seems to me that the ministers, who have to sign off on those responses because they are political responses, should be the ones coming. Even the parliamentary secretaries are limited in what they will be allowed to say or not say. The minister has much more latitude. At the end of the day, he or she is the one who signs off on the response and gives direction to the system as to how to respond and how to word it.

I would think that on this government response one, we need to have the ministers come. I would hope that we'd agree to that.

I hope the ministers make themselves available as soon as they can, because I think this is very important work. We certainly should send the letters out immediately to them and get on with it.

**The Chair:** Yes, Mr. Stanton.

**Mr. Bruce Stanton:** I was going to add one other thing. I get the sense from this that it's not as though we have to have one of these after each other. This is work that we can put in front of us between now... I mean, yes, we need to get to it, but it's not as though we have to do this before we can get on with something else.

We can get underway with a study or some other work. Then, when that minister's available, we'll pick a time slot to do that work and then move on with our study. It's not as though we need to hear them in front of any other business of the committee.

**The Chair:** Madame Boucher.

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher:** I would like to address the matter of parliamentary secretaries. I myself am a parliamentary secretary, and I believe my role is basically to help and support the Minister, and not to make decisions. I am there to listen.

In our discussions, I believe the Minister should come and explain things. Despite their good faith, parliamentary secretaries do not necessarily have the necessary authority. It is really the Minister who makes all final decisions.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Madame Demers.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Nicole Demers:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

I would like to begin by apologizing to Ms. Mathysen. The fact remains that three people were allowed to speak before you recognized me again. But I won't hold that against you.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Was I not paying attention, or what?

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Nicole Demers:** You were too busy.

Madam Chair, I simply wanted to talk about the motions we tabled concerning our various choices. I believe there was a misunderstanding and people were a bit panicked last week when they saw the pile of motions that had been presented. We had agreed to present motions for everything, which goes against our usual way of making decisions. I think that is why we all presented motions to prioritize the issues we would like to study this year. I must admit that I have never made a motion to that effect. We have never operated that way.

That being said, I agree: clearly I want to hear from people in a position of responsibility. Since deputy ministers are accountable to their ministers, they may be in a better position to answer our questions than the parliamentary secretaries. As Ms. Boucher said, despite their good faith, parliamentary secretaries are not necessarily the ones who make decisions.

● (1655)

[*English*]

**The Chair:** I have been reading those motions again, and I think we are all focused on the...

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher:** As far as the motions which have been presented are concerned, let's not forget that there are new members on this committee, people who were not here last year. We wanted to study issues we felt were important. I am new on the committee. Occasionally I replaced someone, but there are subjects which are dear to my heart and which I would like us to study. I would not want us to forget about them. As a new member, I just want to make sure that the issues set out in our motions were important to everyone. After all, we are all working with the same objective in mind, namely the welfare of women.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** If we look at the proposed studies by members in the previous session in alphabetical order...

**The Clerk:** I just want to make sure. You're all talking and I never have a real motion or anything to go by.

**The Chair:** I think the consensus, as I heard it, was that we invite the various ministers, but it should not detract us from moving forward. Whenever they are available we would like to have ministers. Parliamentary secretaries do not speak for the government. It is a political response we want. Because it's a political response, we want ministers responsible for the different areas. That's why we would like to have the ministers.

Parliamentary secretaries will do for the time being, Madam Boucher, no insult to you.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Nicole Demers:** I so move.

**An honourable member:** What do you move?

**Ms. Nicole Demers:** What you said. There is no motion to that effect. We need concrete proposals.

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher:** Then let us all move our motions, since they are all good ones.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Danielle would like to read what she thinks is a motion. That way we know what we are—

**The Clerk:** So that's your consensus?

**The Chair:** Yes.

**The Clerk:** That the committee invite the minister responsible for the government responses to the 12th, 18th, and 21st reports of the committee.

It's the minister responsible. In one case it's the Minister of Justice. In another case it's the Minister of Immigration. In the other case it's Madame Verner.

**The Chair:** The response on turning outwards is both the Minister of Justice, immigration, and safety.... On improving the economic security—

**The Clerk:** It's been signed only by the Minister of Justice.

• (1700)

**The Chair:** That's true, but I heard Minister Finley today, when there was a refugee case, talk about trafficking and how important it is for security purposes to ensure that we get the minister's take on what it is and what will happen.

Yes, Ms. Davidson.

**Mrs. Patricia Davidson:** Madam Chair, I just think it's vitally important that we get all of the ministers who are involved, because I think we saw when we did this study that it's not a silo. There is just so much overlapping and....

**Hon. Maria Minna:** It's all HRSD's—whatever it is.

**The Chair:** You have the right ministers and that's fine. We're in agreement that those are the ministers we want, whenever they are available.

In the meantime, let us look at the list that has been given to us by the analyst. I also looked at all the motions that were given in, and I think we tend to have a very strong commitment to the economic

security of women. With all your motions, if I read through the wording, and although we have done a study on the economic security of women, there is this issue around gender budgeting, the integration of migrant workers, the decision making, the small and medium-sized enterprises, and how we can look at the policies of other countries that have made progress on gender and equality issues. The real concern of our committee seems to be around economic security via gender-based budgeting. Am I misreading the committee? No?

Yes, Ms. Minna.

**Hon. Maria Minna:** Madam Chair, I think that from both the list you are reading from and some of the motions that were presented by Ms. Mathysen and also by Madame Demers, there are some similarities.

Madame Demers has “That the Standing Committee on the Status of Women examine the policies of other countries that have made progress on gender and equality issues”. So gender-based analysis is part of that.

And then we also had, in our list, gender budgeting, which has also come up as a motion from Madam Mathysen.

We've already done a study on women's economic security. Now, the gender analysis and budgeting are really the core of how government then prepares all that. So it would seem to me that we take the gender budgeting from our list, and take number two from Madame Demers—Madam Mathysen's motion is pretty much the same, so make that a priority area of first study. And let's word it in—

**The Chair:** But Ms. Minna, if you go to D and E, it would be gender-based analysis in government departments and—

**Hon. Maria Minna:** I'm taking D and E and saying let's do it, and that would include both motions automatically—number two from Madam Mathysen and number two, actually, from Madame Demers. It pretty much encompasses both those two.

**The Chair:** Is the committee in agreement with taking gender-based analysis and gender-based budgeting...?

[*Translation*]

Ms. Boucher, would you like to speak?

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher:** Point C, titled “Gender and Trade” seems important to me. That might be a good subject. Budgeting is mentioned, along with several other issues, including promoting gender trade.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Madame Boucher, if we want to do gender-based analysis and gender-based budgeting and look at Canada, if you do gender and international trade, gender and trade could also overlap onto human trafficking, so you could open up too many issues.

If we start with at least gender-based analysis in government departments, we could call every department that is involved in gender-based analysis and it could be international trade or industry. It could be anything. So let's see what we want to do and do a detailed discussion.



Ms. Minna, Mr. Stanton, Ms. Davidson, and Ms. Mathysen.

**Hon. Maria Minna:** I was just going to say, Madam Chair, that C, the trade part, while I understand it's certainly an area to look at, I think it's very broad and very vague because it would have to be looking at trade negotiations, agreements, the WTO, and all kinds of other stuff that impact women and trade and entrepreneurs. It's not just encouraging women in Canada to be entrepreneurs. It's a much broader look at how trade negotiations and trade deals and trade agreements have an impact on women in the country. So that's a study unto itself, I would suggest.

I agree that we would take D, just a gender-based analysis of government departments and gender budgeting, and number two from Madame Demers, which is pretty much the same thing—she's talking about gender analysis—and make that the first study we deal with. Take those three and put them together.

Given the time that we have, given that Christmas is practically here, it's going to be a big enough chunk to bite off, to get it done.

• (1705)

**The Chair:** Mr. Stanton.

**Mr. Bruce Stanton:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

I don't really have too much concern in terms of the gender budgeting issue, because as Ms. Mathysen has informed us in the past.... I forget where the conference was, but she brought us some interesting information from it.

**Mrs. Irene Mathysen:** Uganda.

**Mr. Bruce Stanton:** Uganda, right.

I have only one question with regard to item D, the gender-based analysis. We did a couple of meetings on that in the last session, and I know that in the 38th Parliament this committee studied the issue at some length. I'm not saying it's not important, but I just wonder whether, in the overall scheme of things, it has the ability to really bring any immediacy or urgency to some of the issues in front of us. In other words, to go back again and hear how the departments are dealing with....

I have to tell you that as a somewhat informed observer, I got the impression, the very distinct impression, from the departments that the notions around accommodating gender considerations in decision-making were very much becoming part of the culture in terms of how programs roll out. That doesn't mean there still isn't some room for improvement, but how are we to weigh the time that we take at committee against how we can actually get specific results?

I know that this is a topic that can consume an awful lot of our time. Would it behoove us maybe to set that aside momentarily? Are there some other topics that we might want to look at pushing more to the front burner? There are some fine topics, and I think time is a consideration. We have Christmas coming up, and then we're into the new year. We likely only have the ability to get a comprehensive report on any one topic between now and, say, the end of March, given that we have other supplementaries and ministers reports.

So if we have one topic and can make one good impact here in terms of what we can do between now and March, let's pick a topic that can actually make a difference for women.

**The Chair:** Ms. Davidson.

**Mrs. Patricia Davidson:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

I have just a couple of questions.

First, do we envision in the timeframe hopefully getting one study done between now and Christmas? Was that your intent, Madam Chair? Because it's not very much time.

**The Chair:** We don't really have the time. We have things to do. But if, for example, supplementary estimates demands that we have ministers, the response from the government demands ministers, while we are working...because the clerk will be working crazily. If we have three weeks left, we probably will be in the middle of a study when the House breaks. Then we'll come back and continue.

**Mrs. Patricia Davidson:** So you envision us finishing it when we come back, after the break.

**The Chair:** By March, yes.

**Mrs. Patricia Davidson:** Okay. That was the first part of my question. I have just a couple of other things.

It was good to get this document. It refreshed my memory on what we had talked about. I know that migrant workers were at the top of the list when we talked last time. They were very front and foremost in the area that we talked about that we should be studying in trying to do something. It was an area that would or could make a difference in women's lives.

The area of gender and trade is an interesting one, but I agree with Ms. Minna that definitely it is a big area. I don't think you really want to combine it too much with something else. I think it would deserve a tremendous amount of research on its own.

Gender-based analysis in government departments is extremely important, but I think we have done some of it. I don't know that we've done all of it, but we certainly have talked with some. I'm wondering how much more we're going to hear that is new.

It seems to me that when we talked about it in the last session, every department we talked to was already incorporating that. They were not, I would say, at the level that they were going to be finished at, but they were incorporating and continuing on. But I'm not sure; maybe it's the expectation of the committee to see how far they have gone and what their top level would be. I can't remember when we put this down.

Gender budgeting, same thing.

I thought the Sisters in Spirit program was another interesting one. I know that we spent a fair amount of time talking about that.

There are a lot of things in here, including a Status of Women Canada review and those types of things. I think those are very interesting ones as well.

I just can't see us spending too lengthy a time on the gender-based analysis or gender budgeting, because I think we do have a lot of that information already there. I think we'd be hearing the same people over and over again. We'd be hearing the same testimony, the same presentation. If we were going to look at it from the point of trying to focus on what the end result should be and could be, then that might be a little bit different take on what we've done with it before.

So I'd need some clarification, I think, before I could support that as the main thrust of where we're going for this session.

• (1710)

**The Chair:** Ms. Mathyssen, did you have your hand up?

**Mrs. Irene Mathyssen:** Yes, I did. Thank you, Madam Chair.

I would like to say that I think that gender budgeting is key in terms of making substantive gains for women. We've heard bits of this, around the periphery, but I don't have a clear sense of what it entails, how it works, and I know that that was a key discussion among Commonwealth countries. I also know that the Government of Manitoba has begun that process.

I want to know more about how it works and its impact, because I think that it's long overdue. It would also provide us with an opportunity to bring in groups that could give us a sense from their external point of view, an assessment of not just gender budgeting but also an assessment of how GBA is working. I think there is a great deal of information out there that would shed light that we need to have.

**The Chair:** Ms. Minna, then Ms. Neville.

**Hon. Maria Minna:** I was just going to say that I understand that we did have some discussions with some of the ministers or some of the representatives here on gender-based analysis, but gender budgeting is much more profound than that. I think it's critical that we not only understand better how it's being done but also try to look to see what kind of outcomes we want. For instance, we did an income security for women report, which showed all kinds of gaps.

If you look at that whole report, really a lot of it is impacted by how government spends its money, how it decides to spend money, how it allocates the money. For instance, I'll give you the example of tax credits versus refundable tax credits or versus direct investments in programs. The impact each has on women and on programs is huge. I want to have some sort of in-depth discussion. Affordable housing—what does that mean? What about the whole area of housing, the whole area of, even to some degree, divorce laws and how they impact children?

What I'm saying is that gender budgeting is very complex and very big. We could maybe take two or three or four areas that we want to study in depth to see just how, when it is applied properly—and if we understand it and study it and from other countries and others—it impacts decisions or outcomes, so that we can make some real specific recommendations to governments on how these things need to be done.

Let me tell you, tax expenditures, which are usually the tax credit part, are worth in this country today.... Actually the last time I looked at them and was in 1994-1995, and they were about \$25 billion. We've since added a lot of other tax credits, which are called tax expenditures, and they are rarely ever analyzed in this country.

They're never evaluated to see whether in fact we get the bang for the buck that we intended, the value, the delivery, the impact, the social impact that were intended, and yet we're spending well over \$25 billion on tax expenditures without having....

I'll wager that if you were to study just that alone, we'd find that women are disadvantaged in that system in which the government is spending huge money, thinking it's providing social services while it's really not impacting the way it thinks it is.

It's big. I would like to take a look at that. I think that if we don't do that, then we're actually missing the boat on the whole economic security side of it. One is a bookend of the other.

• (1715)

**The Chair:** Madam Neville, then Ms. Davidson.

**Hon. Anita Neville:** What I was going to say has been said. Thank you.

**The Chair:** Ms. Davidson.

**Mrs. Patricia Davidson:** Just a very quick question, thank you, Madam Chair, to, if I might, Madam Minna. Would it be your intent, then, that the committee would prioritize the different areas that we'd look at?

**Hon. Maria Minna:** I think what we would do is take an overall look at an issue and what it means, first of all, and get some input. Then we might decide to do an analysis on a few areas and see if gender budgeting were applied, how the area of expenses might actually have come out had it been done properly.

I give the example of housing or the other example of tax expenditures, which are a huge chunk of the government's budget. I suspect that when we look very closely and apply the gender budgeting analysis to tax expenditures, that they're not having the impact that I think government and members of Parliament intended them to have on women and children.

I just think that we should be able to do some of that work. It's not being done anywhere, and it needs to be done, at least so that we can use it and highlight the importance.

**Mrs. Patricia Davidson:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** Madame Demers.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Nicole Demers:** Madam Chair do we have at least three years for this study? I agree that it is very important. In fact, it's essential.

Just this weekend, there was a report indicating that Canadian women were less likely than men to be treated at hospital emergency rooms. That is one more sign of poor budgeting, where funds are invested in men rather than in women.

These are very important issues. But if we do this study, we will have to put a real emphasis on all aspects, including education, health and social housing. We are embarking on a very wide-ranging study, Madam Chair, but I'm happy we are doing it. If we decide to go ahead, we will put everything else aside, tackle this issue and achieve something. But we will need to have the tools and the resources to do the job properly.

[English]

**The Chair:** I agree with you, and I heard Ms. Minna say that we'll have to be specific.

All governments spend money on social programs. We talk about the return on investment. When you put money in, is it having the impact it is supposed to have? If it is not having the impact... In Canada we have poverty, child poverty. We can understand working-income poverty, but there is children poverty, and families are living in poverty. How does that happen in a rich country like ours where we have a surplus of \$13.5 billion?

So I think it is important that we look at gender budgeting—male-female—and specific areas of the social justice agenda, because that's where we have invested our money. We look at social justice and say, “this is what we have invested”. Ms. Minna gave an example of \$25 billion in tax credits. As a government, as responsible MPs, how do we ensure that all the investment we make, either now or in the future, is to the maximum benefit of those we are trying to advance? Other countries have been very good at gender-based budgeting—I think Sweden is one of them—and they have had good success in trying to alleviate poverty.

We all think we need to find an answer to why we are putting money into this black hole and it's not doing anything. We could look at it but restrict the study. We can't be everything to everyone because that will not work. So if you agree, choose three priorities—call it your social justice agenda and gender budgeting—and see where we can go. Then we can ask the analysts to come up with some suggestions.

Are we in agreement with doing gender budgeting in the first round? It does affect the economic security of women and the areas where trafficking can be applied. But we have to be careful. We can say we are trying to alleviate poverty and illiteracy. As a federal government we have invested so much money through our social transfer payments, and it doesn't seem to be having an impact.

I need consensus here.

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

● (1720)

**The Clerk:** So that will be our priority. The researchers are going to draft something. Then we'll discuss it and you'll send me witnesses based on what you decide.

**The Chair:** The analyst says she has a nearly completed study on gender budgeting. We could take a look at it and perhaps choose which specific area we want to study. If the government's budget is \$200 billion, a quarter of that is going toward social transfer programs, and we are not having the impact we want, there is something wrong.

Perhaps we can be the trailblazers for any government that wants to do budgeting and have the right impact.

So what else would you like?

Yes, Mr. Stanton.

**Mr. Bruce Stanton:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

I would add to the point you were going to make. On this gender budgeting issue, I would be interested to have some idea, to Madame Demers's point, as to how big, what the scope of it is going to be. I would have some concerns that we could get it done within a reasonable time limit, considering, as we've said, we're under some time constraints here. We don't know how long this session is going to go, obviously, but it might behoove us to look at areas of study that can be done in smaller sections, perhaps.

I was going to suggest that in looking at some of the other issues that might be able to be done in a smaller timeframe is the work I think Madame Demers put on her list, I don't know that it was specifically on ours, but it certainly did show up in the group of topics we discussed last June, and that was item G, the Sisters in Spirit program. It crossed into two areas of study we had last year, but it mostly flowed out of our discussions around the changes at Status of Women Canada. Sisters in Spirit is part of that women's program, or it's part of that funding envelope the women's program has. We certainly learned in our studies on the economic security of women that certain segments of women in Canadian society were more adversely affected. Certainly, aboriginal women were part of that. So it would be like drilling down a little further to say what the experience is there. Is that program meeting their needs? We're coming up to a budgetary cycle. There's a specific area we can hone down and get a little bit more in-depth discussion around that specific group with the aim, I hope, of making a difference there.

That was a suggestion, in the course of looking at these priorities, I would certainly support.

**The Chair:** Committee members, that would be the second suggestion we would have.

Here is how we can assist the analyst in moving forward. We have said we would choose E, which is very, very specific, and the analyst is going to send us her report so that we can then.... It's a short study, and then we can figure out where we want to focus. We can also simultaneously take a look at the Sisters in Spirit program.

Yes, Ms. Neville.

**Hon. Anita Neville:** Just to comment on the Sisters in Spirit program, it's an important program, but it's not by any means a small study. There are all kinds of ramifications in Sisters in Spirit, whether it's social issues, enforcement issues, protection issues. It's a significant, complex study—I don't want to say huge—and I don't think we should delude ourselves that it's quick and dirty.

• (1725)

**The Chair:** Fair enough. We have taken two mammoth tasks. I would suggest that if we could submit to the clerks a list of witnesses we would like—

**The Clerk:** Even before you've decided on your focus, or the gender—

**The Chair:** No, I'm just talking about the Sisters in Spirit. Then we would be able to figure out.... What I'm trying to suggest is, if we could have a list of witnesses that could potentially be called, for item G, Sisters in Spirit—there is a reason I'm making this suggestion—so we can know how wide the scope is, because if we're looking at gender budgeting we will know the scope once we receive the study from the analyst. We can juggle two balls at the same time and see where we want to go.

No? You're not in agreement? Fair enough. No problem.

Yes, Madame Boucher.

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher:** Everyone seems to agree on gender budgeting. In fact, like Ms. Minna said, we will have to do a lot of research.

However, like Mr. Stanton said, we might be able to do something less intensive in the meantime, so that we have all the tools we need to do the research.

Some committee members have tabled motions. We might look at them to see if there are less comprehensive issues we could work on before the holiday period.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** What's less exhaustive? Has anybody come up with a list that is less exhaustive?

Yes, Ms. Neville.

**Hon. Anita Neville:** I don't understand what you mean by less exhaustive.

**The Chair:** In terms of the time constraints we have.

**Hon. Anita Neville:** Why are we being governed by time constraints? Why don't we choose the topic we want to do and then develop a plan of action for the topic, rather than trying to fit in a little something? Prioritize, develop a plan of action. If it's five weeks, ten weeks, whatever, you know what you're dealing with.

**The Chair:** Fair enough.

Ms. Mathysen, you had your hand up.

**Mrs. Irene Mathysen:** I would concur with my colleague. I think that's wise.

**The Clerk:** Once we get closer to the end, then we choose another one.

**The Chair:** So if I've heard right, consensus was around gender budgeting. Is there a second topic we would like to at least put in our plan?

**Hon. Anita Neville:** Not at this point.

**The Chair:** No? Fair enough.

**Mrs. Patricia Davidson:** So we're not putting this third one in? The last I heard we were going to submit a list of witnesses. We're not doing that now?

**The Chair:** No, there was disagreement. I was just making a suggestion.

Gender budgeting, Madame Boucher, will be in terms of timeframe.

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher:** Okay.

**The Chair:** We will not be able to do too many things. As soon as we get from the analyst the report, an overview, a study—the analysts keep telling me don't give an overview—then we will be able to decide how to proceed. And gender-based budgeting would be our focus because we won't have much time before December.

A suggestion has been given to me that we can hold an information session on gender-based budgeting and have Status of Women Canada come.

**Hon. Anita Neville:** Develop a plan first.

**The Chair:** Yes, develop a plan, and then we can move forward.

Yes, Mr. Stanton.

**Mr. Bruce Stanton:** Madam Chair, since it would appear there's committee consensus that we get into gender budgeting as our first priority and we're looking at a work plan, I think the other topics that had been discussed at least should be put in some priority. Now, maybe we need to resume that discussion at our next meeting, but I don't think we're done with this topic, is what I'd like to say. I just don't want to do a slam dunk.

• (1730)

**The Chair:** That is why I was putting number one and number two. I thought we could continue the discussion, but at the moment we are not. Gender-based budgeting, and at the next meeting we will prioritize the rest of the topics and move forward.

Ms. Mathysen.

**Mrs. Irene Mathysen:** Then I presume once we've got that in place we will suggest witnesses we would like to see come forward.

**The Chair:** Everything is work in progress.

Please be back by 3:30 on Wednesday.

Thank you.

The meeting is adjourned.







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