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—
Chair

Mr. Rick Casson

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•(1805)

[*English*]

The Co-Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Paul Cardegnà): Order, please.

Honourable members of the committee, I see a quorum.

[*Translation*]

I am ready to receive motions for the position of chair.

[*English*]

Mr. Laurie Hawn (Edmonton Centre, CPC): I would move that Rick Casson be elected chairman.

The Co-Clerk (Mr. Paul Cardegnà): It has been moved by Laurie Hawn that Rick Casson be elected as chair of the committee. Are there any further motions?

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Co-Clerk (Mr. Paul Cardegnà): I declare the motion carried.

I would now ask my colleague to take over for the election of the vice-chair.

The Co-Clerk of the Committee (Ms. Angela Crandall): We'll proceed to the election of the vice-chair pursuant to the motion, adopted in the House on February 10, that there be one vice-chair of the special committee.

Are there motions for—

The Chair (Mr. Rick Casson (Lethbridge, CPC)): I'd like to nominate Mr. Wilfert.

The Co-Clerk (Ms. Angela Crandall): Are there any other motions for nomination as vice-chair?

The committee has heard the question. All in favour please signify.

Some hon. members: Aye.

The Co-Clerk (Ms. Angela Crandall): The motion is carried.

The Chair: I'd like to start by thanking you all very much for what I consider to be a vote of confidence. Hopefully, we can make some things happen at this committee. We all know that it was struck for a very special reason and since last June hasn't been functioning. We'll be very interested in getting it going and getting an information flow back to Canadians, as this committee was intended to do.

I recognize some faces around the table from my many years on the defence committee: Mr. Bachand, for one; Mr. Wilfert; and others of you who have filled in; and Laurie Hawn, of course, at defence. We're excited about this.

Now, if it's the wish of the committee, we can deal with the routine motions. Is it all right that we proceed this way?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Chair: Very good.

What's been distributed is the set of motions adopted in the last Parliament for this committee. Do we need to do just one motion, or do we need to do them one at a time?

Some hon. members: One at a time.

The Chair: Okay.

The first one is that the committee will meet on Wednesdays from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. and, regardless of when the meeting starts, will sit for two full hours.

Mr. Wilfert.

Hon. Bryon Wilfert (Richmond Hill, Lib.): Mr. Chairman, I believe that if you seek it you'll find a consensus, that there is agreement to move it to Thursday from 3:30 to 5:30. I have been in consultation with our whip, and I believe others have with theirs, to change the time. I had looked at Tuesday, but apparently there was a conflict on Tuesday mornings. Otherwise, I think that would have been also amenable to many of the members.

I would make an amendment to this to move it to Thursdays from 3:30 to 5:30.

•(1810)

The Chair: I need somebody to move that motion first.

Mr. Laurie Hawn: He just did.

The Chair: Okay, it's Mr. Wilfert. And then Mr. Wilfert has proposed an amendment.

Mr. Laurie Hawn: Oh no, I'm sorry. I'll move the motion, and then Bryon can amend it.

The Chair: Mr. Hawn moved the original motion, Mr. Wilfert moved an amendment, and Mr. Crête wants to speak to it.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Paul Crête (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, BQ): I'm not at all pleased with the change.

Many members plan their schedules from Monday to Thursday. On Thursday afternoon, they leave Ottawa to return to their respective ridings. I would have preferred to see you opt for Tuesday or some other morning, rather than for Thursday afternoon. In a pinch, I would even prefer Wednesday evening. If we meet on Thursday afternoon, our riding schedules that have been set for the entire session will be disrupted. It's always possible to make some adjustments while we are here. Members are present from Monday to Thursday, or from Tuesday to Friday. To hold a meeting on Thursday afternoon would disrupt our planned schedule for the session.

[English]

The Chair: Mr. Hawn.

Mr. Laurie Hawn: We did look at alternative times, and Thursday from 3:30 to 5:30 was the only time that didn't cause conflicts with other committees.

The Chair: We have a speaking list.

Mr. Obhrai.

Mr. Deepak Obhrai (Calgary East, CPC): To my friend Paul, I say that most of the time we have votes on Thursdays at 5:30. This is before 5:30. I agree with you that if we were to sit on Thursday evening, it would conflict with what you're talking about. But this is only Thursday afternoon, and since most of us have to be here until 5:30 and beyond for the votes, I think it would be more appropriate to leave at that time.

The Chair: Mr. Bachand.

[Translation]

Mr. Claude Bachand (Saint-Jean, BQ): I'm not pleased with this arrangement either. To my knowledge, votes have rarely been held on Thursday evening. Most Members want to leave after Question Period on Thursday. Does anyone here have a committee meeting scheduled on Monday or Tuesday morning? No. So then, 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. would also be an excellent time slot. I get into town the night before. The following morning, we could have breakfast together, from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. That would free up our Wednesday evenings or our Thursday afternoons.

I have no choice but to reject the two motions on the table. I would urge my colleagues to do likewise, so that we can find a more appropriate time slot that takes into account the work we do in our ridings. Members leave town on Thursday afternoon. I often have meetings Thursday evening in my riding. I would have to leave later and miss my Thursday appointments.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Wilfert.

Hon. Bryon Wilfert: Mr. Chairman, looking at the rotation of committee schedules, following on Mr. Crête's comments, there is 11 to 1 o'clock on Monday, if members are agreeable. All the others are definitely.... I won't even begin to know who's on which committees, but I think foreign affairs and defence are both Monday and Wednesday afternoons at 3:30. But there is a slot, and it's actually entitled "special committees", from 11 to 1 o'clock on Monday, if that works. That's a suggestion.

The Chair: Okay, we have another suggestion, but it doesn't seem to be flying.

What about 11 to 1 o'clock on Tuesday? Who's busy then?

Mr. Laurie Hawn: Mr. Chair, that creates a significant problem for western MPs, those who get here on Monday. We're not here until just before question period on Monday.

The Chair: But what about Tuesday, 11 to 1 o'clock?

Mr. Wilfert, go ahead.

● (1815)

Hon. Bryon Wilfert: Mr. Chair, I have no problem with that. My two colleagues who would normally be here, Mr. Rae and Mr. Coderre, are not here, so I can't speak for them, but for me the Tuesday from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. is fine. I know that both of them sit, one on foreign affairs and one on defence, so it wouldn't conflict with those committees. I can't speak for them, but I'm free.

The Chair: Is there any other comment?

We have a motion to go at 6:30 on Wednesday and we have an amendment to go at 3:30 on Thursday.

Mr. Wilfert.

Hon. Bryon Wilfert: Being amenable to this, if everyone is agreeable to Tuesday from 11 to 1 o'clock, I would move it to Tuesday. That's not a problem.

The Chair: The 3:30 to 5:30 has been withdrawn.

Hon. Bryon Wilfert: I'm withdrawing it and suggesting 11 to 1 o'clock on Tuesdays.

The Chair: We have speakers. We have Mr. MacKenzie and Mr. Hawn.

Mr. Dave MacKenzie (Oxford, CPC): Mr. Chair, From our side it would be more convenient for us, for a variety of reasons, if it were to move to Thursday rather than Tuesday. It's the same time, but move it to Thursday rather than Tuesday.

The Chair: I'm looking at the schedule, and the two time spots are 11 to 1 on Tuesday or 11 to 1 on Thursday.

Mr. Dave MacKenzie: There's no difference in the committees, so if Tuesday works, then Thursday should work.

The Chair: Do we have concurrence?

Mr. Dave MacKenzie: We agree.

An hon. member: *D'accord.*

The Chair: That's the most amended I have ever seen a motion without ever getting it amended.

I am going to propose that we vote on the amendment to the motion, that we meet at 11 until 1 on Thursday.

(Amendment agreed to)

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

The Chair: The second motion is that the committee retain as needed, at the discretion of the chair, the services of one or more analysts from the Library of Parliament. Could we have a mover?

It is moved by Mr. Kerr.

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: The next is that the subcommittee on agenda and procedure be composed of the chair and the three vice-.... That's not right.

This is the motion that was adopted last time, but we are not going to deal with that one. We are going to deal with the motion that is being handed out at the moment. We will wait until we get it.

The motion now says that the subcommittee on agenda and procedure be composed of the chair and one representative of each opposition party.

In the past we had three vice-chairs, and that's not the way it is anymore. We only have one vice-chair. so that previous motion is null.

Do I have a mover? It is moved by Mr. Crête.

Mr. Hawn.

Mr. Laurie Hawn: I have an amendment, Mr. Chair, for the sake of fairness. Since the chair is the chair and obviously unbiased, I would propose that the subcommittee on agenda and procedure be composed of the chair and one representative of each party.

The Chair: Is there any problem with that?

We have the amendment. Now we are open for debate.

Mr. Crête.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Paul Crête: We're opposed to the amendment because it would alter the representation of opposition parties. It refers to two members of the Conservative Party, which alters the balance. In our view, the original motion is much better.

[*English*]

The Chair: Mr. Dewar.

Mr. Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre, NDP): I don't want to make a big thing about this, but I have a question to the clerk about what happened last time. What was the composition? How many people were on it? What was the configuration?

The Chair: I will ask the clerks for....

• (1820)

The Co-Clerk (Ms. Angela Crandall): Mr. Hawn was a member of the committee. It was the chair and the three vice-chairs, and I recall that Mr. Hawn was a member of the subcommittee as well. It was five in total.

Mr. Paul Dewar: Five in total?

The Chair: We have Mr. Hawn and then Mr. Obhrai.

Mr. Laurie Hawn: I'll defer to Deepak.

Mr. Deepak Obhrai: Mr. Chair, this is the composition of the steering committee of the foreign affairs committee, of which you are a member, and it works very well, as you know, despite the fact... because we are all congenial. I do not see why, on the one hand, when we are in the foreign affairs committee we are working within that steering committee structure, which is the chair and a member from each party.... I think it would be more appropriate to leave it

like that. You know from your experience working on that steering committee that it works very well.

The Chair: Mr. Crête.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Paul Crête: This is a special committee, not a regular committee. If we follow your logic, there would be two parliamentary secretaries. I think the original setup. . .

We are not on the same page, Ms. Crandall. In the past, the Subcommittee on Agenda and Procedure was composed of the committee chair and three vice-chairs, for a total of four persons, not five.

The Co-Clerk (Ms. Angela Crandall): I distinctly remember that Mr. Hawn was a member of the subcommittee.

Mr. Paul Crête: Wasn't he mentioned in the routine motions that we adopted?

The Co-Clerk (Ms. Angela Crandall): I don't know if the motion was amended.

Mr. Paul Crête: According to the motion on the table, the subcommittee shall be composed of the Chair and the three Vice-Chairs. That's the customary makeup.

[*English*]

The Chair: We are dealing with the new motion and the amendment. As I understand what the amendment is, there would still be three opposition members and two government members, one of whom would be the chair.

Is that what you're proposing?

Mr. Laurie Hawn: And the reason I'm proposing an amendment is to make it the same as it was last time, which was the chair, who is obviously Conservative, and in effect one member from each party—the way it was last time.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Paul Crête: I'm simply trying to wrap my head around this. This was not the motion adopted by the committee. So then, this is the customary way of doing things?

[*English*]

Mr. Laurie Hawn: No.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Paul Crête: If we look at the routine motions adopted by the committee last time around, we note the following:

That the Subcommittee on Agenda and Procedure be composed of the Chair and three Vice-Chairs of the Committee.

[*English*]

The Chair: We're just asking the clerk to.... This might be the wrong wording, if indeed the motion was amended subsequently. We're going to check to make sure that's not the case.

However, was it an official motion, or were you just appointed? How did it happen?

Mr. Laurie Hawn: I can't recall specifically, Mr. Chair, but whether it was amended or whether it was subsequently moved to change it, the fact is that it was changed, and there were five members of the subcommittee: the chair and one member from each party. That's why I'm moving that this new motion reflect the same practice we've had since this committee started and as is followed in other committees.

The Chair: Mr. Dewar.

Mr. Paul Dewar: If we're going to take that route—and I don't want to make a big thing about this—there would also be three vice-chairs. So if you're going to model or mirror what you had last time, you would have a different configuration in terms of vice-chairs.

I actually don't know: what was the rationale for having one vice-chair and one chair? Last time there were three vice-chairs. I ask without prejudice; I don't know.

The Chair: Can the clerk tell us? Was it a motion in the House or...?

This is from the House, from Tuesday, February 10: "that in addition to the chair, there shall be one vice-chair"—and that's it. So this was just trying to follow the motion that was in the House.

I guess last time it was wrong. This time, we're trying to make it right, to follow the motion.

Mr. Laurie Hawn: Is there an error in this motion? Is that what you're saying?

The Chair: Yes. The motion that was handed out shouldn't have been handed out; that's what it looks like to me.

Go ahead.

Mr. Deepak Obhrai: Mr. Chair, I say to my colleagues on the other side, you would want a chair who is neutral, not a Conservative sitting there looking out for Conservatives, although the Conservatives have the chairmanship. It would be far more advisable to do as is done with every other committee: that we have the chair remain neutral to make his rulings, and then we have one member from every party. That works very well with everything else. I don't see any problem.

If you are going to use the chair as a Conservative member, then you are actually compromising the position of the chair by forcing him to be a Conservative member and not a neutral member. It is important to recognize that the chair should be neutral. And then you have members from all parties, who will now be hoping the chair will act that way.

That's critically important, I must say, for the functioning of a committee. Let's be very careful here and not make the chair a member putting forward a Conservative point of view.

•(1825)

The Chair: Mr. Bachand.

[Translation]

Mr. Claude Bachand: Mr. Chair, I'm wondering if this is really the issue here. Does Mr. Hawn want the parliamentary secretary to the minister to sit on the committee? If that's the case, then I'm against the idea, just as I opposed it on the Defence Committee.

If we agree to have a member of the Conservative Party in addition to our chair, then we run the risk of having the parliamentary secretary seated at the table, and I was against that idea on the Defence Committee. I would also remind Mr. Hawn and the Conservative party that when they were in opposition, they systematically objected to the presence of parliamentary secretaries. I simply want the Conservatives to be consistent in their thinking and actions. Would Mr. Hawn be the person selected?

Colleagues also need to understand that this is a steering committee. Ordinarily, members of this committee try to get along. Rest assured that as a group, you will have to adopt the report from the steering committee. However, it can be amended after the fact. I don't have a problem with the current makeup of the subcommittee, namely one representative per party, plus Mr. Casson, who represents the Conservative Party.

I'd like Mr. Hawn to answer my question.

[English]

The Chair: Mr. Hawn.

Mr. Laurie Hawn: Mr. Chair, Mr. Bachand is quite incorrect. I have never advocated against parliamentary secretaries being on steering committees, so he's quite wrong. That is absolutely a false statement. The simple fact is that this is the way it worked last time. The simple fact is that we're all parliamentary secretaries on this side of the room anyway, so it really doesn't matter, if you're saying a parliamentary secretary can't be on it, because we're all parliamentary secretaries.

My simple point is that the way it worked last time worked well. That was the chair and a member of each party.

The Chair: Mr. Wilfert.

Hon. Bryon Wilfert: Mr. Chairman, I don't know whether this is a solution, but I remember Mr. Hawn being on the steering committee. If we accept the motion the way it is, which is the chair and three members of the opposition.... I would just ask the clerk that we get the original motion for the next meeting—in other words, strike the steering committee as is, so that we can go ahead with business. But if in fact the motion said....

Mr. Hawn was on it. I'm not sure how he got on it, but he was on it. If the motion does say that he was on it, I would be amenable to having him on, if that is what we had originally. It worked fine; I certainly had no problem. But in fairness, we need to see the original motion.

In order to do this, I would simply move it as it is, if it hasn't been moved, which is you and one of us from each opposition. In the meantime, the clerk can undertake to get the original motion, and if Mr. Hawn is on it, then we can—

The Chair: I have a problem with this motion—the one that was presented, not the second one here—that the subcommittee on agenda and procedure be composed of the chair and one representative of each opposition party.

The motion says that I am the chair, and then there is each opposition party. I somewhat agree with Deepak. I think those of you who have been around know that I try to be very fair on these issues, and I'd just as soon be the chair and not be the one representing the government, even at the steering committee. You can take that for what it's worth, but that's how I feel about it.

I'm not sure what I need to do. Mr. Wilfert suggested that we pass a motion and then revisit it later, and I'm not sure that would be wise, Mr. Wilfert. I would like somehow to...*[Technical difficulty—Editor]*...right now.

What if we don't deal with this at this meeting? What if we deal with all the other routine motions? We can get the clerk to do the research that has been asked for by Mr. Wilfert. I prefer that way.

• (1830)

Mr. Laurie Hawn: Do you mean before the end of this week?

The Chair: No, I don't think we could do it by then. We can pass all the routine motions except the steering committee motion.

So how do we meet again? We couldn't.

The Co-Clerk (Ms. Angela Crandall): You could meet at the call of the chair.

The Chair: We could meet at the call of the chair of this committee. So we would have to bring the whole committee back together to strike the steering committee.

[Translation]

Mr. Paul Crête: Mr. Chair, we should go ahead and vote on the other routine motions. If we find last year's motion before the end of the meeting, then we can discuss it. Otherwise, we'll discuss it at the next meeting.

[English]

The Chair: I think we need to deal with it somehow today, because if we don't deal with establishing the subcommittee on agenda, then the committee is still stalled. We really need to get this thing going, to my mind.

We're going to stand this for a moment and we'll come back to it at the end. Hopefully we'll have more information by then.

The fourth routine motion is that the clerks of the committee be authorized to distribute to the members of the committee only documents that are available in both official languages; and that the practice of the committee will be that unless there are exceptional circumstances, all written material will be distributed to committee members 24 hours in advance.

It is moved by Mr. MacKenzie.

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: Motion five is that the clerks of the committee be authorized to make the necessary arrangements to provide working meals for the committee and its subcommittees.

It is moved by Mr. MacKenzie.

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: Motion six is that, if requested, reasonable travel, accommodation, and living expenses be reimbursed to witnesses, not exceeding two representatives per organization; and that in exceptional circumstances, payment for more representatives be made at the discretion of the chair.

It is moved by Mr. Dewar.

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: The next is that, unless otherwise ordered, each committee member be allowed to be accompanied by one staff person at in camera meetings, and that a representative of the whip's office of each party be allowed to attend in camera meetings.

It is moved by Mr. Wilfert.

(Motion agreed to)

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

It is moved by Mr. Crête.

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: The next motion is that 48 hours' notice be required for any substantive motion to be considered by the committee, unless the substantive motion relates directly to business then under consideration; and that the notice of motion be filed with the clerks of the committee and be distributed to members in both official languages.

It is moved by Mr. MacKenzie.

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: Next is the motion for the good old rotation: that at the discretion of the chair, witnesses be given ten minutes to make their opening statement; and that at the discretion of the chair, during the questioning of witnesses the time allocated to each party be as follows: first round, seven minutes, Liberal, Bloc Québécois, NDP, Conservative; second round, five minutes, Liberal, Conservative, Bloc Québécois, Conservative, Liberal, NDP; and that if there is a third round of questioning, the committee will revert to the same order as in the second round; and that when a minister is in attendance, the order and time allocation for questioning witnesses be the same as above, with the exception that in the first round of questioning, ten minutes be allocated to each party.

Does somebody want to move that?

Mr. Crête moved it.

Mr. Deepak Obhrai: I have an amendment.

I want to run this idea by my colleagues opposite. It is what is done in the foreign affairs committee: you have the Liberals, the Bloc, and then it's the Conservatives, then the NDP. It means you don't have all the opposition on one side; it breaks and allows the government one, and then it goes back to the NDP, as it is done in the foreign affairs committee. It then goes back to the Liberals and back to us. It works very well in the foreign affairs committee.

Would you not agree, Paul, that we do that?

•(1835)

Mr. Paul Dewar: As the man said, what's in it for me?

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Paul Dewar: I actually don't have a problem with it.

Mr. Deepak Obhrai: If we can do that, it's fine and in the spirit of cooperation.

The Chair: The only amendment you're suggesting is that in the first round it go Liberal, Bloc, Conservative, NDP. The rest of it is the same.

Mr. Deepak Obhrai: Yes.

The Chair: Go ahead.

Mr. Dave MacKenzie: I just have one question. It goes through the first round and then it says "Conservative second round". What does that mean?

The Chair: I think that should be a spot, shouldn't it?

Committee, I just want to make a point here. If we adopt what has been proposed, in the first two rounds not every member at the table will get a chance to speak, because there are only four Conservative spots in the first two rounds. We structured it at the other committee so that in the first two rounds everybody would get a pop at it. So it should be Conservative, Liberal, Conservative, Bloc, Conservative, Liberal, NDP.

Do you get my point?

Mr. Laurie Hawn: That's on the second round.

The Chair: Yes. In order for all the members at the table to have a chance to speak or ask a question in the first two rounds, you have to have five spots for the Conservatives. If you don't start the second round with a Conservative, or have one in there somewhere, then one of the people at the table won't get a chance to ask a question.

Mr. Crête.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Paul Crête: The overall spirit of the motion is not to grant speaking time to members, but rather to the parties. That was the purpose of the motion adopted by the committee in the past. The party can choose to split its time if it so wishes. Like the other parties, the Bloc can decide to split its time into two three-minute or three-and-a-half-minute chunks.

If we amend the question to allow all committee members to speak, then we will be altering the dynamics completely.

[*English*]

The Chair: In response to that before I open it up, I believe the numbers at the table reflect the situation as it exists overall in Parliament, so that's why it's structured with this many members on each side.

I understand what you're saying, but....

Mr. Hawn.

Mr. Laurie Hawn: If somebody wants to share their time, they can share their time. But the simple fact is that the Conservatives get seven minutes—one round in the first one—and they need to get four five-minute rounds in the second one because there are five

members. We get 27 minutes. That's the way it works. That's the distribution in the House. That's the distribution on the committee. That's why those slots are the way they are.

The Chair: Mr. Dewar.

Mr. Paul Dewar: I want to be clear here. We have a motion in front of us. We agreed to change the order of the first round. We were then clarifying the significance of this second title. We established that it is a typo, I guess. Is that clear?

Mr. Laurie Hawn: No.

Mr. Paul Dewar: Well, there's something wrong then, because people are misinterpreting this. I want some clarification before we carry on the debate.

The Chair: Okay, if you want to put a Conservative in at the bottom, wherever, I think it's still fair that everybody at the table gets a chance to ask a question in the first two rounds. I don't know if the Conservative has to be first or where it needs to be, but that's my argument.

Mr. MacKenzie.

Mr. Dave MacKenzie: Mr. Chair, I'm sure the Bloc doesn't really mind that it gets the same number of rounds as the NDP, when you go two rounds. I think there's something wrong with the sheet, if you look at it.

I'm not trying to limit your time, Paul, but if you look at it, I think there's something wrong with the second round.

The Chair: Okay, we have Mr. Obhrai and then Mr. Crête.

•(1840)

Mr. Deepak Obhrai: As it stands right now, if you count, there are only four Conservatives anyway, according to this. Right?

Mr. Laurie Hawn: It needs to be five.

Mr. Deepak Obhrai: Yes, but we haven't done anything yet. Are you suggesting we change the second round too?

The Chair: I think I opened a can of worms here.

Monsieur Crête.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Paul Crête: I'd just like all committee members to know that the motion is exactly the same as the one adopted last time around. We're simply asking for the status quo.

What Mr. Obhrai's is proposing today with his amendment corresponds to the motion that was adopted by the committee during the last Parliament. At least that is the motion that was printed in the minutes of proceedings of the meeting.

Mr. Hawn, you can check for yourself in the minutes of the last meeting that were provided by the House.

[*English*]

The Chair: Mr. Crête, are you suggesting it was adopted as it appears here?

[Translation]

Mr. Paul Crête: The last time the committee met, the speaking order during the first round of questioning was as follows: the Liberal Party, the Bloc Québécois, the NDP, the Conservative Party. During the second round, the speaking order was: the Liberal Party, the Conservative Party, the Bloc Québécois, the Conservative Party, the Liberal Party, the NDP. That is exactly the same order as we have here.

[English]

The Chair: Mr. Hawn.

Mr. Laurie Hawn: Mr. Chair, Mr. Crête has forgotten about the election in November. That changed the composition of the committee.

[Translation]

Mr. Paul Crête: Yes, but what I'm saying is that this motion is exactly the same as the one adopted last time around.

[English]

Mr. Laurie Hawn: There's one more member on this side of the committee than there was when that was passed. The makeup of the committee has changed.

Last time every member of the committee got a round of questioning. All we're saying is that this time every member of the committee needs to get a round of questioning. The number of members from each party has changed on the committee; therefore, it is going to change.

[Translation]

Mr. Paul Crête: But we still have a minority government.

[English]

Mr. Laurie Hawn: Well, we're still in a minority. It doesn't matter; it's the same principle as last time. This reflects the makeup of the House, which is different from the makeup of the House last time.

The Chair: The numbers have changed in the House. That's a factor.

So somebody help me bell the cat here.

Mr. Deepak Obhrai: Mr. Chair, let me say, based on that argument and based on the excellent argument made by Mr. MacKenzie, which says that the Bloc will get two questions and the NDP will get two questions, it does not reflect the thing. I think the last NDP on the second round should be a Conservative, not a NDP. Then it fits very perfectly.

Mr. Paul Dewar: I'll be reasonable here. Put a Conservative and an NDP. Is that okay?

Mr. Deepak Obhrai: Yes.

Mr. Paul Dewar: Done. Is that okay?

Mr. Deepak Obhrai: Five Conservatives and one NDP.

Mr. Paul Dewar: We'll never get to it, by the way.

Mr. Laurie Hawn: I love what we argue about here.

The Chair: We have to focus here. One at a time, please.

Mr. Wilfert.

Hon. Bryon Wilfert: At the defence committee, the first round is exactly as it said here. As Mr. Hawn knows and certainly you do, Mr. Chairman, at the end we have Liberal, Conservative, Bloc, Conservative, Liberal, Conservative, Conservative. There's an extra Conservative. The NDP don't get an extra....

The fact is that at the defence committee we have gone Liberal, Conservative—add the extra Conservative at the end.

Mr. Laurie Hawn: It's a different makeup.

Hon. Bryon Wilfert: That's what we do at the defence committee. Then in the third round, if there's a third round, it's Liberal, Bloc, NDP, Conservative.

The Chair: What you're suggesting, Mr. Dewar, still only has four. Somebody is still going to miss the boat here.

Mr. Deepak Obhrai: We should add a Conservative. Have an NDP, then a Conservative.

Mr. Paul Dewar: Do cleanup.

The Chair: You put that in there, then you count the number of Conservatives who speak. Go ahead, do that. There are only four.

Mr. Deepak Obhrai: One, two, three...there are still four. That's the way it goes, timing.

Mr. Paul Dewar: It's not the defence committee.

Mr. Laurie Hawn: It doesn't matter. It's one per.

Mr. Paul Dewar: I know, but you guys are saying this is like the defence committee. It's not the defence committee.

The Chair: We just want to make it fair for everybody. We're kind of stuck here. We have to make a suggestion. I think the only way to make it work is that we start the second round with a Conservative, Liberal, Conservative, Bloc, Conservative, Liberal, Conservative, NDP. There's only one NDP member at the table.

Go ahead, Mr. Hawn.

●(1845)

Mr. Laurie Hawn: As we have done previously, we've given the NDP an extra slot if there's extra time. I would suggest we would still do that, even though officially the NDP is only entitled to one slot because of the makeup of the table.

An hon. member: [*Inaudible—Editor*]...this motion.

Mr. Laurie Hawn: I understand that. This motion is not written correctly.

Mr. Paul Dewar: Says you.

Mr. Laurie Hawn: According to the procedures established by the House of Commons, this is not written correctly.

Mr. Paul Dewar: Who wrote this up?

Mr. Laurie Hawn: Not us.

Mr. Paul Dewar: It's a standard motion.

Mr. Laurie Hawn: No, it's not.

The Chair: We dropped it last time, and it really isn't fair because it doesn't reflect the new reality of the composition of Parliament.

So I think we've agreed to let the NDP stay on the second round. I think we've had consensus on that. But we have to add two Conservative spots in the second round.

If I could make a suggestion to make it fair for everybody, we would go Liberal, Bloc, Conservative, NDP in the first round, and I do believe that if we checked we'd find that this is the case on some other committees. Then in the second round we go Conservative, Liberal, Conservative, Bloc, Conservative, Liberal, Conservative, NDP. That gives everybody at the table a chance. It gives the NDP an extra slot if we get the time. That's the thing.

Mr. D'Amours.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours (Madawaska—Restigouche, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I have a quick question. We could spend all night debating the number of times government members should be allowed to speak, but let me refresh your memory a little. Your party raised the same arguments during a meeting of the Standing Committee on Official Languages. When it came time to ask questions, some government members delighted in asking questions on two occasions, and consequently some of their colleagues were unable to put questions of their own. You can argue what you like, but judging from what happened in other committees, clearly this isn't necessarily the case. Perhaps you are not motivated by the desire to give everyone an opportunity to speak, but rather by the desire to get another chance to speak, regardless of who is talking.

[*English*]

The Chair: That's taken.

Mr. Hawn.

Mr. Laurie Hawn: That's essentially what goes on. There are times when only two of the three Liberals speak, but they get three slots, and that's fine. That's up to the party. If the Bloc wants to have the same member take both periods, that's fine. That's up to that party. But the fact is that the slots are based on the number of members at the table, which is representative of the House, which is representative of the committee, and that's the only commonsense way to do it.

The Chair: Mr. D'Amours.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours: Mr. Chair, I understand what Mr. Hawn is trying to say, but this is not what the government side has been saying from the outset. At some point, maybe we should wrap up this discussion. Clearly, we are at an impasse. You were not arguing in favour of giving members another chance to speak, but rather arguing that each member should be entitled to speak. I don't think we're going to change anyone's mind.

So then, Mr. Chair, if possible, we should vote on the motion.

[*English*]

The Chair: Ms. Duncan.

Ms. Kirsty Duncan (Etobicoke North, Lib.): I just wanted to say that we had a similar issue in the health committee. I think we came to the conclusion that when it's an issue as fundamental as health, or a committee for this issue, we decided to do the right thing, and that is to have the input from all parties, and we wanted it to be fair.

Mr. Laurie Hawn: Exactly, that's why it's done this way.

Ms. Kirsty Duncan: I think it's interesting to look at the second round. Is that a typo, or was that another way of bringing that into the argument?

The Chair: This is prepared by the clerks. They had no input from anybody, I don't believe.

A voice: It's a typo.

The Chair: We have Mr. Obhrai and Mr. MacKenzie, and then we're going to have to start folding this up here somehow.

Mr. Obhrai.

Mr. Deepak Obhrai: I have my amendment ready for us to start voting on it. So when they are ready to work, we'll put the amendment.

The Chair: I just have to find your amendment. That was on the first one, and then we're going to leave everything the same.

Mr. Deepak Obhrai: The last one is Conservative, then NDP.

• (1850)

The Chair: All right.

I want Mr. MacKenzie to end our speaking on this. Then we're going to present a motion here.

Mr. Dave MacKenzie: I think I've lost track of where we were and was going to ask for clarification.

I understood Mr. Obhrai's motion, but I'm wondering if it shouldn't be one motion that sets the whole speaking order.

The Chair: I agree.

Mr. Dave MacKenzie: I concur with the comments of my colleague across. When you make the change that Deepak has asked for, then it would not be out of sync to have a Conservative, a Liberal, and a Conservative, and so on, through that second round. I would suggest that's what we do.

The Chair: We had a motion tabled and moved, and then we had an amendment.

Mr. Obhrai, it was you who presented the amendment. Do you just want to clarify that for the committee?

Mr. Deepak Obhrai: The amendment states that the first round would be Liberal, Bloc, Conservative, NDP. Round two would be Conservative, Liberal, Conservative, Bloc, Conservative, Liberal, Conservative, NDP. That sets it up.

The Chair: You've heard the motion and you've heard the amendment. I'm going to bring this to a head.

(Amendment agreed to)

(Motion as amended agreed to)

The Chair: We've been able to get the actual wording of the motion. When we go back to the subcommittee on agenda and procedure, it will be composed of the chair and three vice-chairs, as it states there.

I don't know what the date is here.

The Co-Clerk (Ms. Angela Crandall): It's April 15.

The Chair: It states here: "That the Subcommittee on Agenda and Procedure be established and be composed of the Chair, the three Vice-Chairs and a member of the Conservative Party." That's what was passed.

You asked for that, Mr. Crête, and we were able to find it, thank goodness.

Hon. Bryon Wilfert: I asked for it.

The Chair: I'm sorry, Mr. Wilfert asked for it.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Paul Crête: I have a point of order.

I have to say that we weren't being dishonest. Our transcript of the minutes of proceedings did not contain any reference whatsoever to that question.

[*English*]

The Chair: No, nobody said that at all, Mr. Crête. We just wanted to get it clarified. Thank you for doing that.

Mr. Dave MacKenzie: Do you want a motion?

The Chair: Yes, I want a motion. Who wants to move a motion?

Mr. Wilfert.

Hon. Bryon Wilfert: Well, I asked for that information to see if it in fact replicated what happened last time. I'm glad to see I'm not as old as I thought I was; my memory served me well.

So I would move that, with the addition of a member of the Conservative Party.

The Chair: You've heard the suggestion that the motion state that the subcommittee on agenda and procedure be composed of the chair and one representative of each party. That covers it.

It is moved by Mr. Wilfert, then, that the subcommittee on agenda and procedure be composed of the chair and one representative of each party.

Is there any discussion?

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

● (1855)

The Chair: Before we adjourn, and even before we have our subcommittee, I'm just going to ask the committee, just to get things moving down the road here, if they would like the next regularly slotted time to have a briefing on Afghanistan to bring us up to speed.

Is it Mr. David Mulroney, then, who usually comes?

A voice: He's normally the one, yes.

The Chair: So we'll do that, and then at the call of the chair, we'll have a subcommittee meeting as well.

The meeting is adjourned.

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