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Chair

Mr. Garry Breitkreuz

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• (1535)

[English]

The Chair (Mr. Garry Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville, CPC)): I'd like to bring this meeting to order. This is the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security, meeting number 13.

We had a motion to meet today, a special meeting for the selection of witnesses for the study of Bill C-391, an act to amend the Criminal Code and the Firearms Act, which is the repeal of the long-gun registry.

Just a little bit of history here in regard to this.... Mr. Holland had moved a motion outlining all the witnesses who should be called on May 4, May 6, May 12, and May 13. I will also remind you that the last time we were considering this, Mr. MacKenzie had the floor, so procedurally we could continue that way, but I would ask if there are any considerations in regard to this that may be new. Does anybody have anything new? I believe there might be some other information.

Mr. Mark Holland (Ajax—Pickering, Lib.): Point of order, on two points.

The Chair: Yes, Ms. Mourani has the floor, but....

Mr. Mark Holland: It's a point of order. The first is a question on the speakers list. Are you proposing to start a new speakers list? Is that correct?

The Chair: I haven't proposed that. I'm putting forth a question here, whether there are any new considerations in regard to this. I think there may have been some discussions among the parties in regard to that. Do you want to bring those discussions forward? If not, procedurally, I would recognize Mr. MacKenzie.

You also have a point of order, Ms. Mourani?

Mr. Mark Holland: Sorry, I had a second point of order, and that was to clarify that we're not in camera. Is that correct? If we are in camera—

The Chair: We are not in camera.

Mr. Mark Holland: Okay. I was going to make a motion that we not be, but if we're not, that's fine.

The Chair: No, we're not in camera.

Ms. Mourani.

[Translation]

Mrs. Maria Mourani (Ahuntsic, BQ): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Chair, in light of the meeting in question, that is, the second-last meeting, we tried to find some common ground. You put it very

well when you said we talked to one another. I would like to move a friendly amendment regarding Mr. Holland's motion. I think this amendment could solve the problem and be acceptable to everyone. On one hand, a motion that would....

[English]

The Chair: Let me interrupt. I could also suggest that he rescind his motion, if he agrees, and then you could put forward a motion. We could handle it that way as well. I don't know if you've discussed this. His motion is on the table right now, and we'd have to decide that or have him rescind his motion, and you could make a completely new motion. It's up to you.

[Translation]

Mrs. Maria Mourani: We are trying to find some sort of solution to the problem, because we do not want to end in another stalemate.

Personally, I would be prepared to move an amendment to Mr. Holland's motion. The amendment would call for three additional hearing days and allow the government to add six or seven new witnesses. The government could select its witnesses, which is normal. According to Mr. Holland's motion, right now, six witnesses are already from the government's list, and it could also select its witnesses, which would mean about 12 witnesses for the government. On our end, we will keep the same number of witnesses.

Of course, it would be necessary to establish the new schedule. For example, you will notice that the third day is so busy that there is no time allotted for questions. Perhaps we could try, still keeping it friendly, to add an hour to allow more time for questions.

If everyone agrees on adding 3 days and allowing the government to have 12 witnesses—in the motion already moved by Mr. Holland—we could come to a decision on the order of witnesses in a friendly manner.

• (1540)

[English]

The Chair: Okay.

I will try to rephrase your amendment. Please, listen carefully so that I get it correct.

Mr. Mark Holland: Point of order, Mr. Chair. Where are we procedurally? I thought there was a point of clarification at the beginning, and now we're hearing a motion being moved. A motion can only be moved once somebody has the floor. I thought there was a question of clarifying procedure.

I have a number of points I want to make with regard to what is now an amendment on the floor. I'm not really sure how it got on the floor. My point is that I would certainly like to speak to this, and I'm trying to understand where we are in the process, and what happened to the speakers list, and what happened to the motion and the process we normally follow.

The Chair: I had asked the question, and I think Ms. Mourani made an amendment on a point of order, which is really not something I can accept.

I had put forward the question of whether there were any new considerations in regard to this, or whether you wanted to continue with what we had previously.

Procedurally, that would be the correct thing to do—to give Mr. MacKenzie the floor, and to continue, as we had at our previous meeting. However, if there had been some discussion or if there were any new considerations in regard to this, I would have been willing to hear those. There aren't any, so I will turn the floor over to Mr. MacKenzie.

Mr. Dave MacKenzie (Oxford, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We added this day.

There have been some discussions among members of the committee. I want to give Ms. Mourani credit, because I think she came up with something a day or two ago that certainly some members of the parties have talked with each other about, and the proposer of the bill has been consulted. With that, I do believe she had what should have been considered a workable solution for the committee. Failing that, Mr. Holland's attempt to decide which witnesses and what days we'd sit certainly isn't workable for us.

I think the discussions that Ms. Mourani and I had were certainly adult in nature, and I appreciate that. She had indicated that each member of the committee could have three witnesses allocated to them. We were prepared to accept that on this side, excluding the chair, so that the other side would have had 18 witnesses that they could name. This side would have had 15 witnesses.

If my Liberal friends had accepted what she suggested, I think that's very democratic and it's parliamentary. It is part of the agreement that the whips from all parties had agreed to, that witnesses would be fairly balanced with respect to the numbers in the House, and so on. That would have reflected that the Liberals, the Bloc, and the NDP, as a group, would have had three more witnesses than this side had.

I fail to understand why Mr. Holland's approach is that he would name the witnesses; he would decide who should be called. I think it has become more evident that as time goes on we're certainly hearing from people across the country who feel that their voices should be heard. I'm not suggesting these people are all supporters of Bill C-391, but they're certainly people who believe in the democratic process. I know we had a list of people from the province of Quebec, as a matter of fact, who very recently came forward feeling that they should be heard. We understand that it's not possible that everyone who wishes to speak would get that opportunity, but certainly there should have been representation.

Going back to the original motion that's on the floor, it's purely unworkable. It's not something we would accept. If Mr. Holland wished to have his motion rescinded and we dealt with what Ms. Mourani had, I don't think there is any doubt that we could have moved along on this. But certainly to have taken over the meeting a couple of days ago and have listed the witnesses that purely Mr. Holland thought should be called....

We're hearing from police officers and individuals across the country. As you know, the chief in Calgary has come out very strongly in support of Bill C-391. The president of the Saskatchewan police association has come out in support of the bill as well.

It is a bill that's important. We've said from the very beginning that we understand there are people who are opposed to it. We recognize that. But if we don't hear both sides of it, I don't know how anybody could make up their mind.

As a matter of fact, I have a copy of a message that was an e-mail that I believe was sent to the leader of the Liberal Party. That individual indicated that he was very upset that his views were not going to be taken into account. I can read you what he says. This was to the leader of the Liberal Party.

As a Canadian, you have the right to your own personal opinion. However, as the leader of a national political party, you should be bound to uphold the basic tenets of democracy, which include permitting all other Canadians the same right of personal belief and the democratic ideal of majority rule. You should defend, rather than deny, the right of your members as representatives of their constituents to vote for the opinion of the majority in their respective constituencies. Forcing your members to vote for the party line is something we, as Canadians, would expect from countries like North Korea or China, but which does not belong in our "democracy" and which should not be condoned by us.

● (1545)

Considering that a vast majority of the Canadian populace does not support the gun registry and believe it to be wasteful, ineffective, and prejudicial, you would be far more wisely served to stand for the majority and not the elitist misinformed minority, or at least permit your caucus members to do so. Be a Canadian first and a Liberal after that and stand for the right. I will sign myself as a very disenchanting former lifelong Liberal.

These are the kinds of things we're getting. I would expect that the other side are getting something similar: they may be getting letters from Conservative supporters who are suggesting that we have the wrong side. That's fair. But to do what Mr. Holland's motion would have us do is certainly not in the best interests of Canadians or part of a fair and impartial hearing.

This whole idea of having this extra meeting today has been somewhat hijacked again. The understanding we thought we had when we left the meeting yesterday was that we could sit down as adults and parliamentarians and come to an agreement, which I believe existed among all three opposition parties and certainly on our side, that we would each have three members, or each member of opposite sides here, so that this side would get that 15 and their side would get 18.

Then we have these shenanigans coming up again today. As I said, I'd really like to give credit to Ms. Mourani. I think she had the right approach. But to continue on with the original motion that was on the floor by Mr. Holland is certainly not in the best interests of Canadians. I would hope that the other side would see that and vote against that motion when the opportunity comes to them.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Rathgeber, go ahead, please.

Mr. Brent Rathgeber (Edmonton—St. Albert, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I concur with all of what Parliamentary Secretary MacKenzie had to say. I too commend Ms. Mourani for her attempts to bring some reason and logic to these proceedings. Unfortunately, though I think she is making valid and legitimate attempts to bring fairness and some sort of procedural equity to this debate, of course as part of a two-member caucus in this six-member coalition, she cannot stand up to the member who is clearly the leader of the pack. Once again, we're dealing with Mr. Holland's omnibus motion to dictate the list, with some minor crumbs being thrown to the government.

Folks, this is a committee of Parliament. We are all duly elected by our constituents in our respective electoral districts to participate in the democratic process. There are 12 members of this committee, 11 of whom vote. Five of them vote on this side of the table, and six of them vote on the other.

There is only one fair and equitable way to come up with a witness list. Just as an aside, I have to tell you that the other committee I sit on—and I think my friend Mr. Comartin will concur with this and certainly Mr. Norlock will concur—typically does not work in this sort of dictatorial fashion, where one member comes with a list of proposed witnesses, moves an omnibus motion with the support of the six voting members from the opposition and forces his will upon the committee.

Mr. Wrzesnewskij commented on my speech on Thursday. What I meant when I referred to a tyranny of the minority was somewhat unclear to him. By way of clarification, there is a tyranny of the minority when an individual who does not represent the majority of interests of Canadians—and we just heard from a letter written by a former lifelong Liberal supporter who is now a disenchanted—

● (1550)

Mr. Mark Holland: On a point of order, I appreciate the speeches, Mr. Chair, but instead of conferring upon me my opinion or what I am and am not willing to do, perhaps the government should give me the opportunity to speak rather than filibustering its own motion.

Mr. Brent Rathgeber: That's not a point of order.

The Chair: Anyway, it's your motion.

Go ahead, Mr. Rathgeber.

Mr. Brent Rathgeber: Thank you.

I would dispute any poll or any survey that says a majority of Canadians favour this long-gun registry. But I think that really misses the point. We heard a whole pile of surveys last week. One of the members says that long guns are the most frequently used weapon when police officers are murdered, and Mr. MacKenzie disputes that. Another member from that side says that long guns are the most frequently used weapon of choice in domestic violence, and Mrs. Glover disputes that. Mr. Comartin says that 66% or 65% or 63%—I can't remember, it was in the sixties—of Canadians favour the long-gun registry, and the chair says 75% of Canadians don't.

I must say, the only person who really made sense last week on the other side of the table was Mr. Kania, who wants to come to this

issue with an open mind. But an open mind is premised on listening to the debate. We obviously have different data. We have all these surveys. They all have different results. Nobody knows the methodology, how many people were asked.

As a result, we need to get to the bottom of this issue. We need to have a full, fair, and balanced debate. And a full, fair, and balanced debate, ladies and gentlemen, means two things: number one, there's equity in the witness list, but more importantly, one side doesn't get to dictate who the other side's witnesses are.

Mr. Comartin and I know each other reasonably well; we work together on another committee. And I was absolutely shocked and chagrined by one of his comments last Thursday. He said that because almost two-thirds of the people of Canada support the long-gun registry, two-thirds of the witnesses ought to come from that side of the table. Keeping the veracity of his survey aside, because I don't know where he was quoting from, or if he was making it up, but that aside—

Mr. Joe Comartin (Windsor—Tecumseh, NDP): Point of order. That's a personal slight. I don't make things up, so I'd ask him to retract that last comment.

Mr. Brent Rathgeber: I retract my inference that he made it up and I look forward to his referencing the survey that showed that somewhere between 62% and 65% of Canadians support the long-gun registry.

Using his logic that this would justify having 62% or 65% of the witnesses who favour the long-gun registry, if we were to apply that to any other criminal or civil procedure that would mean that in a capital murder trial—I'm pretty confident, although I am making this up, that 100% of Canadians are against capital murder—that 100% of the witnesses would be called by the crown and the defence would not be able to call any. If that is Mr. Comartin's idea of a fair hearing and a fair trial, I'd be happy to hear that when he has the floor.

With that, Mr. Chair, while reserving my right to speak later, I would like to hear from Ms. Mourani, whom I do credit for trying to bring some semblance of reason and logic to this otherwise grotesque spectacle of democracy.

● (1555)

The Chair: Okay. The next person on my speaking list is Mr. Holland, but his chair is empty.

The next person on the list is Ms. Mourani. Ms. Mourani, go ahead.

Mr. Mark Holland: Mr. Chair, I was right there. Can I have a moment?

If there's a genuine interest in having a discussion here, it might behoove the chair and others to give me the opportunity to speak.

The Chair: You were on, sir. I didn't see you. I don't know where you were.

Mr. Mark Holland: I will ask the permission of the committee to allow me to speak. We can continue to filibuster, or we can...

Do you want to allow me to speak, or do you not want to let me speak?

The Chair: You can speak. You were on the list.

Mr. Mark Holland: Mr. Chair, thank you.

First of all, I have an observation. Nobody has moved an amendment. Nobody has put any other suggestions on the table by way of amendment. The only thing we've seen is a very protracted filibuster, one that I wasn't going to participate in yesterday, to be frank.

There seems to be a misunderstanding about the meaning of the word "democracy". You talk about conferring upon the august authorities that somehow I have the opportunity to move this committee on my own. All they have to have the ability to do is to move a motion. As with any other democratic process, there is a majority vote, and that vote then decides what will happen. Now, that may not be your definition of majority, but it's the definition that most people use of democracy, that a majority vote is what ends up carrying the day.

I moved a motion. I said then that if given the opportunity—and I certainly say it now—I am open to discussing that. But don't expect my ideas to be the same as yours. And I do have certain concerns. One of the concerns I have is the notion that we bring one-off individuals. There is a chief of police from a major city who disagrees with every other chief of police from every other major city. The chiefs of police as an association and more than 90% of their membership have one position. Every single police association in the country, with the exception of Saskatchewan as the sole exception, is in favour of the registry. The one association that disagrees has an undecided opinion. It has not taken a position. One of its members has said one thing, others are saying another, and they haven't taken a formal position. So you have virtually every single police association in the country, if not every one; you have virtually every chief of police....

The point that I would make, simply put, is that if you're going to have police appear before the committee, it would make sense to have those who are representing an association or those who are representing a provincial or territorial association come and speak.

Now, there are 32 million individuals in Canada, all of whom I'm sure would like to be able to speak. But with all due respect, if I want to know the opinion of people in the parliamentary secretary's riding, we don't invite 100,000 people to the House of Commons to hear the opinion of people in his riding. We happen to ask the parliamentary secretary. We have a system of representative democracy, and in this system of representative democracy, groups represent other groups, and those are the ones we listen to.

So I have a fundamental problem with the notion of cherry-picking the person who has one particular point of view, and then holding it out somehow that there's some great dissent among the broader community. I think that's disingenuous in the extreme. It's a little like us having a debate on whether or not the Earth is flat and saying that we should have an equal number of people who believe that the Earth is round and an equal number of people who believe the Earth is flat.

Committee members are entitled to other opinions. I don't deny them that opportunity. But I would suggest that a great way of resolving this, if committee members have some great objection to the motion I presented, is that they have in their democratic

capacities the ability to do something that none of them so far has done, and that is, move a motion to amend it.

There are two ways to deal with this, and it can be done expeditiously. We can have a vote on the motion, and it can be defeated and a new motion can be introduced. We can have amendments made to this motion until it's satisfactory to proceed with the vote. Alternative to all of those, we could have a filibuster with great throes of rhetoric and all kinds of ridiculous over-the-top, syrupy wording, which, by the way, isn't being reported or talked about anywhere except when Conservative members of Parliament rise in the House of Commons.

So I would suggest that rather than continuing this charade, we simply move whatever amendments committee members would like to see. That's the way this committee has always worked. That's the way, frankly, it should always work. I invite members, please, if they have ideas, if they have things they want to change, move them. If they don't like the motion, defeat it and present a new one. I'm willing to work with the committee, but instead of giving long rhetorical speeches, let's actually present some credible ideas.

• (1600)

The Chair: Ms. Mourani.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Maria Mourani: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I will be as clear and as explicit as possible. Mr. Holland's motion is no good, and I will tell you why. I met with representatives of the Fédération des femmes du Québec. They cannot come on May 6. I met and spoke to Mr. Dupuis, and he cannot be here on May 12. So, right off the bat, some witnesses are unable to appear. I could go on and keep giving examples of people who will not be here, because this motion is too restrictive. It says that the representatives from the Fédération des femmes du Québec will appear on May 6, for example. But they will not be here. The motion also says that Jacques Dupuis will be here on May 12, but that does not work for him; he is available on May 13.

I am sorry, but this motion is too restrictive. I cannot support it, and we will not support it. I want to make that very clear.

However, I am proposing a solution that would give everyone a chance to speak and give their opinion. I think it is a fair motion that could solve this problem. My fear is that there will be no witnesses. The Liberal Party will hold things up because there was much talk about the Conservative government doing it, but anyone can. The solution—

[*English*]

The Chair: Order.

Please, Mr. Holland. Everything comes through the chair. Don't harass Ms. Mourani.

Continue, Ms. Mourani.

[Translation]

Mrs. Maria Mourani: We are not afraid of the debate. The government wants to bring us witnesses who represent its vision. We want to invite witnesses who represent our vision, as well. We are not afraid of the debate. You can bring me your witnesses any time, and I will be ready to talk to them and debate the issue.

I think this is a fundamental bill for Canada and for Quebec. I think the filibustering needs to stop. It makes no darn sense. We need to find a solution that works. I have a solution to propose to all my colleagues at the table. Every member who has the right to vote, excluding Mr. Chair, could select 3 witnesses, which would be a fair representation of the minority government, 15 witnesses for the Conservative government and 18 witnesses for the opposition. That would solve the problem, and we could finally start to hear what people think. Enough filibustering, let's move on!

[English]

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Mourani. Such common sense here.

Was there a motion there? Sorry, Ms. Mourani, was that an amendment?

[Translation]

Mrs. Maria Mourani: My motion is here, and I will hand it out. Mr. Holland has to withdraw his first, before I can move my motion.

[English]

The Chair: Okay.

Mr. Brent Rathgeber: Call the question. Was this an amendment?

The Chair: No, she has a motion, but the motion cannot be placed on the table at the same time as we have another motion.

[Translation]

Mrs. Maria Mourani: Mr. Chair, I cannot propose an amendment because the parameters of the current motion are too restrictive.

I know that Mr. Holland is very conscientious, and I am sure that he would agree to withdraw his motion so we can move forward and deal with this issue. I am certain that he is acting in good faith. I take for granted that Mr. Holland, Mr. MacKenzie and Mr. Comartin are acting in good faith. So I move that Mr. Holland withdraw his motion because unfortunately I cannot amend it. I will then put forward my motion, which is in both languages.

•(1605)

[English]

The Chair: Thank you. A suggestion has been made that Mr. Holland withdraw his motion. If he doesn't withdraw his motion, we can take a vote on it.

Do you want to withdraw your motion, Mr. Holland?

Mr. Mark Holland: We can either vote on it or amend it. I'm not withdrawing it.

The Chair: You're not withdrawing it.

Is there any more discussion on this before we vote?

Mr. Joe Comartin: Mr. Chair, I'm going to say something.

The Chair: Okay. I'm making up a new list here.

Mr. Comartin, please.

Mr. Joe Comartin: I'm going to continue to support Mr. Holland's motion for the same reasons I gave last week. I just want to add that the real problem we've got here is we simply do not have enough time to deal with an issue that has been a serious policy issue in this country going on better than twenty years. To handle a change in that policy by a private member's bill is about as undemocratic as any process I could think of that would be instituted.

We get two hours of debate at the start of the private member's bill at second reading. We get two hours at the end. What is obvious to anybody sitting at this table is that we've got this inability to adequately respond to those people in the country who have a valid right to come here and testify. We've got probably close to 200 names of individuals and groups who want to testify. They've told both sides of the table that, all parties.

I'm not suggesting we call all of them. But to reduce that, as Ms. Mourani is suggesting at this point, to—where are we at?—30 or 32 witnesses is not democratic. It's a bad process. It's an unfair process to the witnesses, and quite frankly, it's an unfair process to the country as a whole because of the significance of this issue. No matter which side of the coin you're on, it is a major policy issue. It should not be dealt with in this way. It is just grossly undemocratic.

That's all I have to say.

The Chair: Thank you.

Before I call a vote, are there any other comments?

Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskij (Etobicoke Centre, Lib.): Wasn't there a list?

The Chair: No. The suggestion was made that I call the vote.

Do you want to speak?

Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskij: Yes, briefly. And I was on the list prior to all the various interjections.

The Chair: Right.

Mr. Wrzesnewskij, go ahead.

Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskij: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I believe that all of us have gathered in this particular special session to find a reasonable resolution of this particular issue, notwithstanding the difficulty of the issue itself. It's a little discouraging when our meeting begins with, as Mr. Comartin has stated, what could have been constructive commentary.... When things begin with personal slights, whether toward Mr. Holland or toward Mr. Comartin, or even in a fascinating way by stating that only one person on this side seems to make any sense.... So you're collectively saying that all but one makes any sense.

There's no room for this. In fact, I think we can rise above this. I certainly hope that within the next couple of hours, as difficult as this subject is, and as difficult as the particular knot we've put ourselves into.... And we're all collectively to blame for that. I don't think we should point fingers. But I believe reason will prevail by the end. It doesn't help our democratic process to use statements that seem to twist the reality of our system, by calling things a tyranny of the minority.

We'll have a vote. We'll have a vote on Mr. Holland's motion. It may pass or it may not pass, but it will pass by a majority of votes. And the majority vote will then decide. If it doesn't, we'll move on to the next motion.

And if there are, in fact, abuses that have been taken.... And they do take place in committees or in Parliament. Perhaps we can point to the example of the Prime Minister's misuse of prorogation this past winter. The government certainly is a minority.

• (1610)

Mr. Dave MacKenzie: Point of order. This is ridiculous. This is exactly.... If he wants to talk about prorogation, there have been 104 in this country. Why would the member bring that issue in here?

Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj: I don't believe that's a point of order.

I was just providing clarification for the terminology that's been used a number of times by Mr. Rathgeber in providing examples.

I believe that in this committee we can actually rise to the occasion, if we show the goodwill, if we do not engage in personal slights, and if we try to proceed expeditiously on this. It's fascinating how, collectively, if we were to just tone it all down, we might actually serve the public in a positive way.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. MacKenzie, did you indicate that you wanted to...?

Mr. Dave MacKenzie: No, I'm fine, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: No more speakers?

I'll call for the vote. You wanted a recorded vote.

(Motion negated: nays 7; yeas 4)

The Chair: The motion is defeated.

I'm not sure who was first here, Mr. MacKenzie or Ms. Mourani.

Mr. MacKenzie, go ahead, and then Ms. Mourani.

Mr. Dave MacKenzie: I'd like to suggest that maybe we take a ten-minute break to sit with representatives of each of the parties and come up with something in ten minutes to bring a motion.

The Chair: I'll suspend, then, for approximately ten minutes.

Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj: For the record, one person can't make that sort of decision for the whole committee, so I suggest you would probably find consensus around the table.

The Chair: Oh, I see. Nobody seemed to be objecting.

Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj: You're reading our minds.

The Chair: I'm reading your minds. I am trying to do my best for us.

• (1610)

_____ (Pause) _____

• (1615)

The Chair: I'd like to reconvene this meeting.

I will recognize Ms. Mourani, please.

[Translation]

Mrs. Maria Mourani: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I want to thank all my colleagues for their cooperation, and now I will hand out my motion. I will read it, if I may.

[English]

The Chair: We'll just take a moment while it is being distributed.

Okay, go ahead Ms. Mourani.

[Translation]

Mrs. Maria Mourani: The motion is as follows:

That, as part of the examination of Bill C-391, each party submit to the clerk a list of witnesses not exceeding a ratio of three witnesses for each of its members, excluding the Chair, by 12:00 noon, Thursday, April 29, and that the Committee devote six meetings to hearing those witnesses and that the various points of view be presented in a balanced manner at each meeting.

Mr. Chair, if everyone agrees with the principle of three witnesses per member, I could remove the deadline of Thursday, April 29 at noon, and we could discuss it in a friendly manner today and decide on our list, if possible. That is a suggestion. I can leave it or I can take it out, depending on what my colleagues think.

• (1620)

[English]

The Chair: Okay, thank you.

I have a speaking list started here.

Mr. Rathgeber, please.

Mr. Brent Rathgeber: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I would also like to thank Ms. Mourani for a great motion, which I am going to support.

I just have a question. Has she contemplated how the sponsor of the bill, Ms. Hoepfner, will be accommodated by her proposal?

[Translation]

Mrs. Maria Mourani: I move that it be 30 minutes. Ms. Hoepfner could come, she would be on your list of witnesses. She could appear for 30 minutes. That would be much less time than other witnesses, but it is up to you to decide. Ms. Hoepfner is your witness.

[English]

The Chair: Can I interrupt?

I would just remind the committee that the usual practice is to have the mover of a private member's bill speak to it first, not as one of the witnesses, but to speak to it first. We can allot an hour or whatever you want for that. And then, often, we ask for the officials —

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Maria Mourani: I think it should really be 30 minutes for Ms. Hoepfner.

[*English*]

The Chair: Okay, 30 minutes, or whatever. You can decide that, and then we would have the officials from the department—it can be the minister or any other officials—for however long the committee wants, maybe another half an hour. That's usual practice.

I don't know, do we as a committee want to depart from that usual practice?

Mr. Holland.

Mr. Mark Holland: Mr. Chair, I am extremely disappointed with the position of the Bloc. That said, for the purposes of moving this forward—albeit in a way that I don't think is very balanced—I am going to be supporting the motion, simply because we have to hear from witnesses. Given that the Bloc has decided to support the Conservatives on that, I will have to proceed on that basis.

My suggestion and my caveat in supporting the motion is that we should identify the witnesses that we have and come to a concurrence on when those witnesses will be speaking. My reason for that, Mr. Chair, with all due respect to your suggestion, is that in the much heralded spirit of balancing out interests that was described earlier, I think each day needs to be balanced. Typically the clerk, for purposes of simplicity, puts government witnesses on one day and opposition witnesses on another day. I don't agree with that. In this instance, it is inappropriate. So my suggestion, and I will do this prescriptively by way of amendment, is that each day the committee has a balance of opposition and government witnesses.

The Chair: It's already in the motion.

Read the motion, Mr. Holland, please.

Mr. Mark Holland: Well, presenting the witnesses in a balanced manner is not the same as having an equal number of witnesses.

So I would move an amendment that it be an equal number of witnesses, or as close to equal as possible, because—

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Maria Mourani: Mr. Chair, point of order.

[*English*]

Mr. Mark Holland: —there are slightly more opposition than government witnesses, but there should be, at minimum, a balance of opposition and government witnesses at each meeting.

The Chair: Ms. Mourani had the floor next.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Maria Mourani: Mr. Chair, it says here—I am not sure whether it is clear in English: "...that the various points of view be presented in a balanced manner at each meeting." I totally agree with Mr. Holland, but it is already in the motion.

[*English*]

Mr. Mark Holland: If we can get that as a direction of the clerk, I'll withdraw the amendments, as long as we're clear that there would be a minimum of a balancing of government and opposition witnesses on each day.

My second point, Mr. Chair, is that you said we are going to have department officials. Again, if we're all presenting witnesses, then they have to come from our witnesses. I would suggest that whether or not that witness is the mover of the bill, or whether or not that witness is a department official you want to call or whoever, there's only one pool of witnesses. I want to make sure we're very clear on that point, too.

There are no special bonus witnesses for anybody. There are no bonus witnesses that are outside these rules. Everybody gets an opportunity to put forward, by this motion, a certain number of witnesses. If you want those witnesses, whoever they may be, make sure you include them in your list. I want to make sure that that's expressly understood.

Is there a need for an amendment, or is that an expressed understanding in the motion that could be a direction of the clerk?

• (1625)

The Chair: Ms. Mourani suggested that the mover of the private member's bill would be given a half hour right at the beginning—a special provision, as is normal in private members' business. Do you still agree to that?

Mr. Mark Holland: It was my understanding that that was to be taken from the Conservative witnesses.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Maria Mourani: Mr. Chair, I consider the sponsor to be a witness as well. You say there is a practice. I would like to check that with Mr. Préfontaine.

What is the practice, Mr. Préfontaine? Is the person who sponsors a bill a witness or do they have special status?

The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Roger Préfontaine): Without ruling on the issue of whether the person is considered a witness or not, I can confirm that it is customary for the sponsor of the bill to be invited to introduce their bill to the committee studying it when the hearings begin.

Mrs. Maria Mourani: So the sponsor is not considered a witness? Is that what you mean?

[*English*]

The Chair: Just wait. Let Ms. Mourani finish.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Mark Holland: It is due to the point of order, is it not? I kept speaking. I stopped because I wanted to move an amendment, but I want to check whether it is necessary to move a motion. So it is a point of order. I already have the floor, I imagine—

Mrs. Maria Mourani: May I respond, Mr. Chair?

[English]

The Chair: Ms. Mourani.

[Translation]

Mrs. Maria Mourani: If I understand correctly, Mr. Holland is talking about selecting witnesses, agreeing on when they will appear and having their points of view presented in a balanced manner. The idea of balance is provided for with the following wording: "...that the various points of view be presented in a balanced manner at each meeting."

Now as for the rest, we can deal with it in a friendly manner. I think that Mr. MacKenzie would agree. If not, Mr. Holland should move his motion for the amendment.

Mr. Mark Holland: Yes, but I think that—

[English]

The Chair: Mr. Holland, you have to get the attention of the chair. You can't just have a conversation with Ms. Mourani. You have to go through the chair.

Mr. Mark Holland: If I could, I still have the floor. I only stopped moving an amendment so that I could get clarity. I still have the floor. I didn't move the motion because I wanted to know whether it was necessary or was implicit in the motion.

The Chair: You're playing by some loose rules.

Go ahead.

Mr. Mark Holland: Hearing that there isn't a consensus on this matter, I'll put it to a motion. I don't intend to debate it, but I would just move that we vote on it and move on. My motion would be that there would be no additional witnesses, and that should a member of the committee want a witness to appear they should ensure that their witness is on the submitted list.

We can vote on that, if there's agreement or disagreement. My point is that there's—

The Chair: To clarify that, you're asking that the mover of the private member's bill not have any special consideration.

Mr. Mark Holland: No, of course there is special consideration. I agree that she'll be given 30 minutes at the front end of the meeting to start the meeting. That's a very special consideration. I'm simply saying that we just agreed to having 15 witnesses. I'm just saying that I'm not agreeing to 16.

I'm saying that she is given special consideration. She'll be at the front of the meeting. She'll be given the first opportunity to speak, as is the normal course. But I'm saying that what we just agreed to, in my view, when we presented this motion was 15 witnesses. Now I'm being told that there are bonus witnesses. I want to eliminate that confusion with the motion that I've just presented. If it carries, great. If it doesn't carry, then we can continue on.

The Chair: Any other discussion?

Sir, did you want to comment?

Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskij: I'd like some clarification and guidance. Normally, from what I've experienced on committees, when a private member's bill does come forward, as was mentioned,

the mover has the opportunity to present it to committee and to speak to the committee. Is the presenter of the bill considered a witness? If the presenter is considered a witness, I've also seen in committees where the presenter of a bill does his or her presentation, but is not questioned by committee members. So if they're just presenting and making a statement in presenting their bill, are they considered a witness? This would then mean engaging in questions and answers. Or are they outside of that understanding of being a witness, and they just present, and then there are no questions and answers?

I'd like some clarification, because I'm not quite sure what we're deciding right now.

• (1630)

The Chair: I've been on the Hill quite a number of years, and every private member's bill that I've ever participated in did not regard the person who was moving the motion as a witness to the bill. The committee then would hear from them, often for two hours, including officials from the department. Each committee may do it a little differently. Then, after that, they would begin to hear the witnesses. But the committee is master of itself. That's just the usual practice that I have observed here on the Hill, and I know of no exception to that.

[Translation]

Mrs. Maria Mourani: Move your amendment.

[English]

The Chair: Are you finished, Mr. Wrzesnewskij? Okay.

Mr. MacKenzie.

Mr. Dave MacKenzie: It seems to me we're getting down here to splitting hairs. If the presenter of the bill gets 30 minutes to present the bill, we don't ask questions. Hopefully, then, we could all agree that she's not a witness, that she will not be part of the witness list. She just simply presents her bill. I don't know why we want to beat this thing to death. I thought Ms. Mourani's motion was pretty clear. Surely the committee would expect the presenter of the bill to make a presentation. If we don't want to ask questions, then I think my colleague from the Liberal Party has come up with what should be deemed a fairly reasonable thing. We give her half an hour. We don't ask questions; she's not a witness on our witness list.

The Chair: Okay.

Mr. Holland.

Mr. Mark Holland: As I said, Mr. Chair, I'll hold that out as the amendment. But I'll add as an additional thing, just so it's clear that she's getting special consideration, that the mover of the bill, Mrs. Hoepfner, be granted 30 minutes at the beginning to present her private member's bill, and that she be included in the list of 15 witnesses afforded to the Conservative Party.

The Chair: You've heard the amendment. Any discussion?

Mr. Mark Holland: A recorded vote, please.

The Chair: All right. Call the roll.

(Amendment agreed to: yeas 6; nays 5)

The Chair: Okay, that carries.

We'll now go back to the main motion, which you have before you. It's been amended.

Mr. Rathgeber, please.

Mr. Brent Rathgeber: Thank you.

Again, I have a question of clarification. I think this is an important one.

I need to know, before we vote on the motion, what is considered a witness. I anticipate a number of groups will be on the list of the respective parties. I can think of the hunters and anglers, and the Canadian Taxpayers Federation. I'm assuming, and I hope my assumption is correct, that a witness may include a group of two or more persons, but they will only be allotted one ten-minute speaking time and one round of questioning. If they bring support people to answer questions, especially of a technical nature, I'm assuming those are not considered multiple witnesses, that a witness includes a group of individuals. Is my assumption correct? It's not correct?

•(1635)

The Chair: Mr. Holland.

Mr. Mark Holland: Thank you, and I appreciate the suggestion, but we're going to run into huge problems on both sides. We have victims groups coming to our committee. We have associations representing national police organizations. We already have 33 witnesses. So I think we could be ratcheting this up to 40, 50, 60, 70, or 80 people speaking. I think we have to ask organizations to condense their comments to a person representing an organization, and that constitutes a witness.

For example, if the *Association des étudiants de Polytechnique* want to have a representative, that's one person who speaks on behalf of all the very many people who are part of that organization. I think if we get into a situation where ten people want to make one-minute statements, it's just too much. I think we have to say one organization, one witness, and decide among yourselves who is going to represent.

The Chair: Mr. Wrzesnewskyj, and then Mr. Rathgeber.

Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj: In response to that question, I have not been on the Hill as long as our chair, but the practice is that witnesses are individuals. You just have to take a look at your agendas for each committee: those individuals represent organizations. If the RCMP makes a representation, it's individuals. So we list the names of the individuals who are the witnesses. There are times when you allow three witnesses from one organization. That will be an opportunity for you when you make your selections of the individuals who are coming forward as witnesses.

The Chair: If you have a witness before the committee, and three of them show up, they would still get ten minutes as an opening presentation. Is that clear?

Is that what your question was?

Mr. Brent Rathgeber: Well, yes, part of it.

Mr. Holland would answer that only one of them would be allowed at the table.

An hon. member: No, not at the table, but to speak.

Mr. Brent Rathgeber: And I agree with him that we shouldn't have ten one-minute dissertations. What we have frequently found in this committee is that a group, such as the RCMP, will bring a small

entourage. The individuals won't speak during the first ten-minute round, but they may answer a question if the question....

Okay, I guess we could have support people in the back. I'm just having a conversation with Mr. Wrzesnewskyj, whose mike isn't on.

As long as we're clear. We have had situations, I'm sure you'll agree with me, whereby the RCMP, for example, will bring the deputy commissioner and two or three support people. They'll all sit at the table, and some of them may take questions.

Mr. Wrzesnewskyj says only if they're listed, and I think he's probably right.

So I don't have particularly strong feelings about this. I just want to make sure we're clear and that the rules are known. I'd like to hear Mr. Comartin, if he's prepared to enter into this, because I think he has years and wisdom, notwithstanding what I said earlier.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Chair: Order.

Mr. Brent Rathgeber: And I apologize to anyone who was in my sights—just so we are clear.

The Chair: We'll get the committee's permission for Mr. Comartin to answer his question before we go to Mr. Kania.

Mr. Joe Comartin: I think it was quite common before the justice committee and the public safety committee when I was on it to have the ten minutes split. I don't think I ever saw it more than in half.

On the point Madame Mourani made about the victims groups, I think we will hear from them that they would like more than one person to speak. So we should simply say that's fine, but have no more than two. It's hard to say much in less than five minutes.

•(1640)

The Chair: The clerk is taking notes, so he can direct them, unless there are strong objections here.

Mr. Joe Comartin: I think that has been fairly common practice before the justice and public safety committees over the years.

The Chair: I wonder about the logistics of this. I put this to the committee. I don't think we have room for more than two, and if everybody brings two there is no way we can physically accommodate them at this committee, because you would have 10 to 12 people sitting there at every meeting.

Mr. Joe Comartin: We have room for them to sit in the back. If they say they want to have a support group with them, that's fine, but they can only have a maximum of two at the table.

The Chair: Even if we get two at the table, that's still 10 to 12 sitting there at every meeting.

Mr. Kania.

Mr. Joe Comartin: I rest my case. We don't have enough time.

Mr. Andrew Kania (Brampton West, Lib.): I was going to speak about practical arrangements, because we can't have ten people coming from one group. Since I put my name on the list I heard about the two persons per group. I think that's a reasonable accommodation. Let's work with something like that.

The Chair: Ms. Mourani.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Maria Mourani: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Listen, Mr. Kania took the words right out of my mouth. I think one or two witnesses are fine, especially since Mr. Comartin is right about the victims groups. We may be interested in hearing from two witnesses. What matters is that each group will have 10 minutes. If one group has two representatives, the 10-minute speaking time will be split in two. Otherwise, we will not have time to ask questions.

However, if we take the RCMP, for example, if the senior deputy commissioner came with his chief superintendent, perhaps the senior deputy commissioner would speak for 10 minutes, but perhaps Mr. Cheliak would be able to provide more specific answers to our questions. So when it comes time for questions, it would be preferable if the person best suited to respond do so. Therefore, I agree with the two-person maximum.

[*English*]

The Chair: Mr. Holland, please.

Mr. Mark Holland: To focus the debate and hopefully end it, I propose an amendment that there be a maximum of two witnesses per organization witness within that ten-minute timeframe.

The Chair: Okay. You heard the amendment.

We need a new list now because we are now on an amendment. I had Mr. Wrzesnewskij next, but we are now dealing with an amendment.

Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskij: I was on the previous list because I was hoping to move an amendment. I think everyone would concur with it. It helps with the wording of the motion to embrace this concept.

In the second line we would eliminate the word “witnesses”, so it would say “submit to the clerk a list of organizations, not exceeding a ratio of three organizations per committee member, with two witnesses from each organization”.

Mr. Mark Holland: On a point of order, the only challenge is that right now we have the amendment I moved on the floor. Frankly, I think it's clearer to keep it as it is.

The Chair: Yes. With all due respect, I don't think we'd get a consensus on that.

Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskij: That's exactly what you said—

Mr. Mark Holland: I'm not changing the definition. I want to be careful. I don't want to see us changing the definition of “witness” to “organization”, because I think that could prove problematic for both sides.

The Chair: Yes. I don't see support for the redefinition.

Okay. Mr. McColeman.

Mr. Phil McColeman (Brant, CPC): I just want to be completely clear, and I think this last intervention did that. But I just want to be sure.... Speaking to this amendment, then, I believe what you said—and I just want you to clarify—is that one witness can have two representatives. Correct?

• (1645)

Mr. Mark Holland: Inside ten minutes.

Mr. Phil McColeman: Inside ten minutes. But it counts as one witness and they can have two representatives here?

Mr. Mark Holland: Yes. But to be clear, they'd be from the same organization. So you couldn't use it as a gateway to bring in another organization as an extra witness to split it five and five.

Mr. Phil McColeman: Fine. I just want to be very clear that this is what your amendment entails.

The Chair: Good. I think I'm getting the drift here as well—slowly.

Does anybody else have a comment? Then I'm going to reflect what I think you hear after we pass this motion. Pardon me, the amendment.

An hon. member: What's the amendment?

Mr. Mark Holland: There would be a maximum of two people inside a maximum of ten minutes, or one witness could be divided into two maximum.

The Chair: Yes. It would be an opening statement of ten minutes. That should be in the amendment.

No further discussion?

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

The Chair: Now we go to the main motion.

Mr. Holland.

Mr. Mark Holland: Yes, if I still have the floor, Mr. Chair, there are two other points of clarity. The first one is the date. I know all committee members are aware that we have to report back by June 11. Therefore, because there's no prescribed date—

The Chair: You're not speaking to your motion. Can we deal with the motion?

Mr. Mark Holland: This is to the main motion, Mr. Chair, about when we're going to be hearing witnesses.

The Chair: So you're amending it now?

Mr. Mark Holland: Well, no—potentially, if there's a consensus.

What I'm saying is that we haven't established when we would hear these witnesses. Right now, we are scheduled to deal with clause-by-clause on this bill. We have the first Tuesday and the first Thursday in June scheduled to deal with clause-by-clause.

So to ensure that we are going to meet that timetable, and maybe it's necessary—because we have more meetings now—to have a couple of special meetings, I would give you an amendment that we would hear all witnesses no later than the dates already established for clause-by-clause consideration of the private member's bill.

The Chair: Let me inform the committee that there are only six meetings left, according to the calendar. There are only six meetings. So we'd have to do away with the rest of the agenda that you set previously.

Mr. Mark Holland: We would have to push those meetings down to the other side of this. There are meetings that are in June, so that would push these meetings into June.

I would add, by the way, that there are six meetings. I think we have agreed today to five, if I'm not mistaken?

The Chair: Six. We have agreed to six.

Mr. Mark Holland: We've agreed to six?

The Chair: No, we haven't. The motion is not passed yet.

Mr. Mark Holland: But should the motion pass, Chair, we've agreed to six? And we have six free days?

The Chair: No, we have six days until we have agreed to clause-by-clause on June 1.

Mr. Mark Holland: Okay. The reason I make that point is that if we wait longer than that, we will then be in a situation where we endanger not reporting back to the House by the date prescribed for this committee to report back to the House.

So I'll leave that as an amendment. If somebody wants to make a subamendment that they're willing to have special meetings, as opposed to pushing those meetings that we already have scheduled into later June, then I could support that. But I think it's imperative that the committee has this out by the time we had previously scheduled.

The Chair: Mr. MacKenzie, please.

Mr. Dave MacKenzie: The whole thing has gotten a little convoluted. I hope the clerk has lots of notes, because I'm not sure exactly where we are.

I think we haven't passed Ms. Mourani's original motion. Is that right? So now the amendment is how do we fit it all in if we pass the motion? I think that's what you're trying to say. We've got to get it fit in, and how do we do that?

Mr. Mark Holland: Just to answer the question, I'm being prescriptive because I can agree to this as long as we're ensuring that we're dealing with it in time to deal with clause-by-clause. That's why it's an important part of my support of the overall motion, because if we're hearing witnesses on June 11 and we leave no time for clause-by-clause, then we won't report back to the House in the prescribed time.

• (1650)

Mr. Dave MacKenzie: I can't add an amendment, but I would have suggested that you maybe wanted to make your motion to move May 11, May 25, and May 27 into June and deal with this.

Mr. Mark Holland: That's my point.

Mr. Dave MacKenzie: Why didn't you make that as a motion?

Mr. Mark Holland: That is effectively the motion. I was suggesting that the things we currently have scheduled that are not related to Bill C-391 be pushed to the first available opportunities after we're finished consideration of Bill C-391 and that we dedicate

the remaining six meetings to Bill C-391. That ensures that we hit the clause-by-clause dates that we had previously established.

The Chair: Let's just hang on a minute here.

Let me make a suggestion, and I presume it's going to be an amendment to the motion that we have before us. We've had a lot of difficulty scheduling the CSIS people in for May 11. We can hear witnesses on Bill C-391 on May 4, May 6, May 13, May 25, May 27, and June 1 if the committee wishes. Then we can go to clause-by-clause on June 3.

Would the committee agree to that timetable? It means we would still hear the people we've had a very difficult time getting hold of on May 11.

Go ahead, Mr. Holland.

Mr. Mark Holland: I have no problem accepting that, Mr. Chair. I think it's good that we're doing this by amendment so we can keep clear of what we've been doing, and if you're amending the amendment, I would simply suggest that the day for clause-by-clause have an unlimited timeframe; in other words, we would continue sitting until such time as we're finished clause-by-clause consideration.

Mr. Dave MacKenzie: We might have votes.

Mr. Mark Holland: Then we would come back after the votes.

We've got to report it out. You guys want to report it back as much as we do.

The Chair: I would have a hard time with that, but we could have June 3 and June 8 for clause-by-clause. That would be two days at two hours each day.

Mr. Mark Holland: We have to report it back by June 11, Chair. There could be considerable debate in clause-by-clause consideration. There's one clause on which there could be a lot of debate, folks, and we just spent three and a half hours on the setting of the witnesses. I don't doubt our ability to protract the process.

As an amendment to the amendment, I'm moving that the meeting of June 3 be for unlimited duration.

The Chair: Ms. Mourani, you have the floor next.

[Translation]

Mrs. Maria Mourani: I wish to move an amendment. It could read as follows: "That the committee devote six meetings to hearing the ten witnesses, on May 4, 6, 13, 25, 26 and 27."

So we would be done in May. We could do the clause-by-clause study on the 1st and the 3rd, as agreed. It would not change anything. We would have just one special meeting, Wednesday, for two hours.

Is that good?

[English]

Mr. Phil McColeman: That would be to a maximum of two meetings. It should be the same.

The Chair: Mr. Norlock's next on my list.

Mr. Rick Norlock (Northumberland—Quinte West, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Would Madame Mourani please repeat her suggestion? I think it's going down the right path.

•(1655)

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Maria Mourani: It could say: "That the committee devote six meetings to hearing the ten witnesses, on May 4, 6, 13, 25, 26 and 27." That way, the only special meeting not included in our regular schedule would be Wednesday, May 26. So we would simply be done at the end of May. Our work on the correctional services report would be postponed until June, which would give the analysts even more time. We could have the hearing, the clause by clause on the 1st and the 3rd, as agreed. It would be done.

[*English*]

The Chair: Mr. Norlock, are you done?

Mr. Rick Norlock: Merci.

The Chair: Okay.

Mr. Holland.

Mr. Mark Holland: I think Mr. McColeman had a good suggestion, that on the two meetings in June we extend the sitting by two hours on each. If we do that, then—

An hon. member: Only one meeting.

Mr. Mark Holland: Well, we said we have two meetings at the beginning of June to go clause by clause. If we were efficient, we'd get out of there, maybe in two hours, and we'd only need one meeting. But if there isn't consensus, we can come back to this point.

The Chair: Can I suggest that we really don't have to deal with this at this point?

Mr. Mark Holland: I can live with the motion, that's fine. I thought Mr. McColeman was making a suggestion. He's apparently not making that suggestion, so let's continue. Let's deal with this—

The Chair: I think we can deal with this motion. This is getting so convoluted, we don't even know what we're doing any more.

An hon. member: We have an amendment on the floor.

The Chair: Yes, but we keep adding to it all the time.

Mr. Mark Holland: It's much easier to have a motion than—

The Chair: Which one are we on here? We are on the amendment for the dates.

Do you all have the dates straight? Are you all clear? Mr. Norlock asked for a clarification.

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

The Chair: Okay, that's carried.

Now let's go to the main amendment, which is a limit of two witnesses per whatever time slot there, with a total of ten-minute presentations from them.

An hon. member: We did that one.

Mrs. Maria Mourani: It's already done. We did it.

The Chair: Oh, the main motion. Sorry. Okay, that one was passed. Yes, we even voted on that. I told you it's confusing.

Mr. Mark Holland: Mr. Chair, it is confusing. I apologize. Sometimes it's easier to have a motion on the floor and to work with a motion.

Anyway, the last amendment I'll make, and I promise this is my last one, but I think it's extremely important, because they're the people more responsible and charged with this issue—

Mrs. Shelly Glover (Saint Boniface, CPC): On a point of order, Chair, I think I was on the list.

Mr. Mark Holland: No, no. After you move an amendment, once the amendment is carried or fails, then you move back to the person who had the floor.

This is my last amendment.

I'm going to make a motion that on the opening day we hear from Madam Hoepfner, that we hear on that opening day from the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police, the Canadian Police Association, the RCMP, William Sweeney, and from the Canadian firearms program, Chief Superintendent Marty Cheliak.

The Chair: This really goes against what your previous motion was.

Mr. Mark Holland: Well, it's an amendment I'm putting on the floor.

The Chair: This is ridiculous.

Mr. Mark Holland: It's my last one.

The Chair: Okay.

Ms. Glover, you were next on my list.

Mrs. Shelly Glover: Thank you. I hope we get an award for patience.

The Chair: Thank you. Yes, I'm sorry.

Mrs. Shelly Glover: Has Mr. Holland finished?

Mr. Mark Holland: Sorry, on a point of order, this is on the amendment. Is that correct?

The Chair: Ms. Glover.

Mrs. Shelly Glover: I was going to ask that we call for the question earlier. We continue to go over and over and over these new amendments and these new pushes by Mr. Holland, which, frankly, is why this is becoming more convoluted than it need be.

I understand he has the right to put forward amendment after amendment after amendment, but frankly, if his amendments go completely contrary to what the premise of the motion is, which is what his new amendment does, it's not valid, in my opinion. I would ask you to take that into consideration.

The Chair: I'm trying to be fair. I'm trying to be, but that amendment really is out of order, so I'm not going to allow that amendment. It is out of order.

Mr. Mark Holland: Mr. Chair, I'll challenge the chair on that.

The Chair: All those supporting the challenge, please raise your hand.

•(1700)

The Clerk: He wants the vote recorded.

The Chair: You can't have a point of order, I'm sorry, Mr. Comartin.

Pardon?

Mr. Joe Comartin: The motion is to uphold the chair. If you're going to support the chair, it has to be a yea. I think you're doing it backwards.

The Clerk: That's what I was about to say. Supporting the chair is a yea and overturning his ruling is a nay.

(Ruling of the chair sustained: yeas 7; nays 4)

The Chair: Ms. Glover, are you done?

Mrs. Shelly Glover: I want to call the question and vote on Ms. Mourani's well-thought-out motion.

The Chair: All right.

All those in favour of the motion as amended.

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

The Chair: I guess that brings this meeting to an end.

I will work as well as I can with the information that we have been given here. We have decided on 33 witnesses, which means five or six per meeting. So the first 50 to 60 minutes of every meeting we'll be hearing from our witnesses, and then we'll go to questions and comments. Some meetings may have two on one side and four on the other, some may have three, some may have two on one side. I will try to make it as fair as possible.

The Clerk: The parties should submit their witnesses by tomorrow.

The Chair: Yes, the parties have to submit their witnesses by tomorrow.

This meeting stands adjourned.

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