



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES  
CANADA

## **Standing Committee on Official Languages**

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**EVIDENCE**

**Thursday, June 16, 2011**

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## Standing Committee on Official Languages

Thursday, June 16, 2011

•(0850)

[English]

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

[Translation]

I must inform members that the clerk of the committee can only receive motions for the election of the chair. The clerk cannot receive other types of motions, cannot entertain points of order nor participate in debate.

[English]

We can now proceed with the election of the chair. Pursuant to Standing Order 106(2), the chair must be a member of the government party.

[Translation]

I am ready to receive motions for the chair.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger (Ottawa—Vanier, Lib.):** Mr. Chair, I would like to nominate Mr. Michael Chong.

**The Clerk:** It has been moved by the Hon. Mauril Bélanger that Mr. Michael Chong be elected as chair of the committee.

Are there any further motions?

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

(Motion agreed to)

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

Before inviting Mr. Chong to take the chair, if the committee wishes, we will now proceed to the election of the vice-chairs.

Pursuant to Standing Order 106(2), the first vice-chair must be a member of the official opposition.

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

**Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP):** I nominate Mr. Godin.

**The Clerk:** It has been moved by Mr. Aubin that Mr. Yvon Godin be elected first vice-chair of the committee.

Are there any further motions?

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

(Motion agreed to)

**The Clerk:** I declare the motion carried and Mr. Yvon Godin duly elected first vice-chair of the committee.

Pursuant to Standing Order 106(2), the second vice-chair must be a member of an opposition party other than the official opposition.

I am now prepared to receive motions.

**Mr. Royal Galipeau (Ottawa—Orléans, CPC):** Mr. Clerk, after lengthy consideration, I would like to nominate the Hon. Mauril Bélanger.

**The Clerk:** It has been moved by Mr. Royal Galipeau that Mr. Mauril Bélanger be elected second vice-chair of the committee.

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

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** I have not said I am accepting.

I have a question. If I do not accept, what happens? Does the position stay vacant?

**The Clerk:** Unfortunately, I can only receive motions for the position of second vice-chair.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** Then I accept.

**Mr. John Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country, CPC):** If Mr. Bélanger is our vice-chair, I have to ask him this question. Why is he sitting so far away from the other members? Don't you like us?

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** It is just that I am closer to the door.

**The Clerk:** Is it the pleasure of the committee to adopt the motion?

(Motion agreed to)

**The Clerk:** I declare the motion carried and Mr. Mauril Bélanger duly elected second vice-chair.

I now invite the chair, Mr. Michael Chong to take the chair.

**The Chair (Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC):** First, I would like to thank you all for your confidence and for electing me chair of the committee.

Second, we have to pass the routine motions. So the clerk will circulate the motions that the committee passed last session. He will also circulate the routine motions that other committees used.

•(0855)

[English]

We're going to distribute two sets of routine motions. One set is the routine motions that were adopted by this committee in the last Parliament, and the other is a generic set of routine motions.

I suggest that we work from one particular copy so that we're all on the same page. I also suggest that we start with the first routine motion and have somebody suggest changes or suggest keeping it the same. It's up to the committee to decide what it would like to do.

Would the committee prefer to start with the routine motions that were adopted in the last Parliament as a working sheet for everyone? Yes, okay. We will do that.

We are working from the set of routine motions that were adopted in the last Parliament. We'll start sequentially so that we're all on the same page. There are 12 routine motions, and we'll begin with the first one.

Mr. Lauzon, you have the floor.

[Translation]

**Mr. Guy Lauzon (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry, CPC):** Mr. Chair, if I may make a suggestion, I feel that these motions are more or less the same as in the previous Parliament. Are we going to change them? If not, perhaps we could pass them all together.

[English]

**The Chair:** We can adopt more than one routine motion at once, but I would point out that at least one routine motion needs to change. It's up to the committee—it doesn't have to change—but there is one routine motion that the committee may want to change, and that's the order of members in questioning of witnesses. It's the third-last routine motion.

We could adopt, if it's the wish of the committee, the first few motions.

**Mr. Guy Lauzon:** Many of them are just housekeeping.

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

We could adopt the first nine routine motions in a single motion on the floor, then go to the discussion on the questioning of witnesses, and then discuss the last two motions together, as a third motion on the floor.

Monsieur Godin.

[Translation]

**Mr. Yvon Godin (Acadie—Bathurst, NDP):** Mr. Chair, I would like us to take the time to read the motions. I do not like to rush through things because once motions are passed, we can't go back. We have new people on the committee. We have only just been provided with the document. We know the motions, of course, but I would like us to take a moment to read them. I would like to find out which motions you want to deal with first.

**The Chair:** The one dealing with the services of analysts from the Library of Parliament.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** That is the first motion, but where are we going up to?

**The Chair:** Up to the questioning of witnesses.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** Does that include the notice of motions? I would like us to take a few minutes to read them.

[English]

**The Chair:** So we have a motion on the floor right now to adopt the first nine routine motions that this committee had in the last Parliament. We'll have discussion now as to whether the committee wants to accept them as they were in the last Parliament or whether the committee wants to make amendments to these first nine routine motions. We'll have a discussion about that.

Members, I'm going to suggest that somebody move an amendment to this motion on the floor. As the clerk has pointed out to me, if you look at the second routine motion, that has to change. Currently it requires that the subcommittee be comprised of the chair, two vice-chairs, and a member of the "other" opposition party. But there is no other opposition party, so that has to change. We used to have three opposition parties on this committee, so you could have two vice-chairs and then a member of the third opposition party.

So we need to change that routine motion.

● (0900)

**Mr. Guy Lauzon:** Could we amend it to just say the chair and two vice-chairs?

[Translation]

**Mr. Royal Galipeau:** No, that doesn't work.

**Mr. Guy Lauzon:** Why not?

**Mr. Royal Galipeau:** Because, in a way, it hands control over to the opposition. We have a majority government in the House, on the committee and on the executive committee.

[English]

**The Chair:** I will make the suggestion that the subcommittee be comprised of five members: the chair, the two vice-chairs, the parliamentary secretary, and a member of the government. What that means in the subcommittee is that the chair would.... There would be two vice-chairs, the parliamentary secretary, and a member of the Conservative Party. So then you'd have three government members and two opposition members.

**Mr. Royal Galipeau:** Yes. That is my amendment.

**The Chair:** Okay.

That's the amendment, so now we're discussing the amendment to the main motion.

Mr. Julian.

[Translation]

**Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP):** Mr. Chair, we could just go over the motions one after another. I think that would be easier. We have nine at the moment, actually. I think that, if we look over the motions again, the first one will pass very easily and then we could come back to the question of procedure in the second.

[English]

**The Chair:** We have a motion and an amendment to the motion on the floor. The proper procedure would be to dispose of them before we go to your suggestion.

**Mr. Guy Lauzon:** I could withdraw the original motion, because it's getting too complicated. Maybe we should go—

**The Chair:** Okay.

**Mr. Guy Lauzon:** If that's doable.

Sorry about that.

**The Chair:** Technically, you can't withdraw motions from the floor.

Do I have unanimous consent to defeat both the subamendment and the main motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Chair:** They're off the floor.

We're now going to do this differently. We'll start with the first routine motion. Do I have a mover of the routine motion?

It's moved by Mr. Bélanger. Is there any discussion on the routine motion as it's presented on this sheet of paper?

[*Translation*]

Here's what it says: "That the committee retain, as needed and at the discretion of the chair, the services of one or more analysts from the Library of Parliament to assist it in its work."

[*English*]

Is there any further discussion? Seeing none, I'll call the vote.

All those in favour?

(Motion agreed to)

**The Chair:** We'll now go to consideration of the adoption of the second routine motion. It's the routine motion concerning the subcommittee on agenda and procedure. Is there a mover for this particular motion?

**Mr. Royal Galipeau:** It's not what is written here.

**The Chair:** I'd like you to move what you would like to move. Would you please read it into the record?

**Mr. Royal Galipeau:** I move that the subcommittee on agenda and procedure be composed of five members, including the chair, the two vice-chairs, the parliamentary secretary, and a member of the government party.

**The Chair:** So we have a routine motion on the floor to adopt, concerning the subcommittee on agenda and procedure.

Mr. Galipeau has proposed that the subcommittee be composed of the chair, two vice-chairs, the parliamentary secretary, and a member of the government. So there would be three government members and two opposition members on this committee. One of the three government members would be the chair.

Is there any discussion?

Monsieur Bélanger.

• (0905)

[*Translation*]

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** Mr. Chair, I feel that Mr. Galipeau's exact words are important. He said: "un membre du parti gouvernemental".

**Mr. Royal Galipeau:** I said "du parti ministériel".

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** Right, but that does not mean a member of the government. I think that is quite an important distinction that should be reflected in the motion. If it is a member of the government, it would have to be another parliamentary secretary.

**Mr. Royal Galipeau:** No, no, no, I said "un membre du parti ministériel", a member of the government party.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** Yes, but when the chair read the motion, he said "government member". That would have to be another parliamentary secretary, Mr. Chair. Members of the governing party are not necessarily members of the government.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Mr. Galipeau.

**Mr. Royal Galipeau:** I'm not changing what I said.

**The Chair:** What did you say again? Did you say "government party" or did you say "Conservative Party"?

**Mr. Royal Galipeau:** I said "a member of the government party", because I will have another motion later on.

**The Chair:** We have a motion on the floor.

Thank you, Mr. Bélanger, for clarifying the wording.

Thank you, Mr. Galipeau, for clarifying the wording.

Monsieur Godin.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** I think we should add "and another member of the official opposition", because the majority of opposition members are from the official opposition; it's not equal.

**Mr. Royal Galipeau:** So do you want to add another government member too? That would end up being the entire committee.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Mr. Julian.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I support Mr. Godin's subamendment, because it makes sense. First, Mr. Galipeau's proposal under-represents the official opposition. It makes up a third of Parliament and should make up a third of the executive committee. Then, the tradition at that committee has always been to operate by consensus. It is not a partisan committee and we know that all its members work together. An expanded subcommittee on agenda and procedure would allow questions about the agenda and about the witnesses to be resolved at the subcommittee. It makes a lot of sense to have appropriate representation so that committee work will be more efficient when the agenda is presented here. I think that the subamendment is wise and good.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Monsieur Bélanger.

[*Translation*]

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** Mr. Chair, I want to make sure I understand. Mr. Godin is proposing to add a member of the official opposition to the subcommittee. So there would be two members of the official opposition and myself. That would be equal, wouldn't it?

[English]

**The Chair:** No, it won't be equal, in the sense that the opposition will control the subcommittee because the chair, being myself, in the subcommittee normally doesn't vote. I would only vote in the event of a tie.

As a result, during the normal course of business, you'd have three opposition members, two of whom are official opposition and one is a member of the Liberal Party, along with two members of the government, one of whom is the parliamentary secretary and the other is one of the other five Conservative members here. So the opposition would control the subcommittee.

[Translation]

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** I understand what Mr. Godin is trying to achieve, but I don't think that this is the right way to go about it. So I will not be supporting Mr. Godin's motion. The government has a majority, both in the House and on the committee. We may not like it, but it is the reality we have to live with. I do not think that the motion should be accepted.

**The Chair:** I would also like to say that Mr. Galipeau's motion is fair. If things are tied, I get to break it.

•(0910)

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** If there is consensus, I will withdraw the motion.

**The Chair:** Okay.

Mr. Galipeau, you have the floor. Then it will be Mr. Godin's turn.

**Mr. Royal Galipeau:** Mr. Chair, I have a lot of respect for Mr. Godin and I have to say that this makes me respect him even more. I was going to ask if we had unanimous consent so that he could withdraw his motion, but he did it himself. There is nothing more for me to say.

**The Chair:** Mr. Godin, do you have anything to add?

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** That's fine.

[English]

**The Chair:** Okay, so we're back to the—

[Translation]

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** We must have unanimous consent now.

[English]

**The Chair:** Do we have unanimous consent to withdraw the amendment to the main motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Chair:** Seeing unanimous consent, we'll now go back to the main motion on the floor, which is the motion as originally moved by Monsieur Galipeau.

Is there any further debate on the main motion as originally presented?

[Translation]

**Mr. Royal Galipeau:** Let me clarify one thing. We mentioned a parliamentary secretary, but I would like us to specify that we mean the parliamentary secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages

[English]

**The Chair:** We'll ensure that the clerk has noted that it will be more specific in the routine motion.

Is there any further debate on this motion?

Monsieur Godin.

[Translation]

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** I would like Mr. Galipeau to reconsider his motion. The reason is simple. We will have work to do and we will have to meet. My question is, if the parliamentary secretary is away somewhere for a couple of weeks, will we be able to meet?

[English]

**The Chair:** If that's the case, then you have the extra vote on the subcommittee.

[Translation]

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** Does that mean that the meeting will be called anyway, Mr. Chair?

[English]

**The Chair:** Well, if we book a meeting, everybody agrees to it, and the parliamentary secretary agrees to it but doesn't show up, then you have the extra vote on the committee.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** Let's put that on the record.

**The Chair:** Okay.

Is there any further debate on this motion moved by Monsieur Galipeau?

Seeing none, I'll call the question. All those in favour?

(Motion agreed to)

**The Chair:** We'll now proceed to the consideration of the third routine motion.

Could I have a mover for the third routine motion, reduced quorum?

It's moved by Monsieur Godin.

[Translation]

It reads as follows: "That the chair be authorized to hold meetings to receive and publish evidence when a quorum is not present, provided that at least four (4) members are present, including two (2) members of the opposition."

[English]

Is there any debate on this motion as moved by Monsieur Godin?

Monsieur Galipeau.

[Translation]

**Mr. Royal Galipeau:** I would like the number to be five.

[English]

**The Chair:** We have an amendment.

[Translation]

**Mr. Royal Galipeau:** That would be three members of the government party and two members of the opposition.

[English]

**The Chair:** We have an amendment to the main motion on the floor.

Monsieur Galipeau has moved that the main motion be amended so that five members be present instead of four, three of whom are from the government party, two of whom are from the opposition parties.

Monsieur Godin.

[Translation]

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** I don't know why Mr. Galipeau keeps talking about the government and such. The mere fact that it mentions five members, including two from the opposition makes things perfectly clear. I have been here for 14 years and these motions have always been drafted in this way. It says that five members will be present and that two of them will be from the opposition. The other party is not going to come here from England or France, after all. I say we should keep the motion the way it is.

• (0915)

**The Chair:** Mr. Galipeau.

**Mr. Royal Galipeau:** If we say that there must be a minimum of four and we specify that two members must be from the opposition, it follows that two must be from the government party. I wanted three, but I can live with two. But it cannot be four opposition members.

[English]

**The Chair:** Monsieur Bélanger—

[Translation]

**Mr. Royal Galipeau:** I want to make it clear that, at the meeting, there must be at least two members from the government party and two members from the opposition.

**The Chair:** Okay.

Mr. Bélanger.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** Mr. Chair, I think I understand what my colleague Mr. Galipeau is trying to say. There must be at least one member from the government party and one from the opposition. The idea here is to make committee work easier, to hear from witnesses and to publish what we have heard. This is not about making decisions or passing motions. This is strictly about making the work easier. The intent is for us not to look stupid if people come to testify from Yukon, for example, and we do not have a quorum because something else is going on. We have to avoid situations like that and make sure that we can hear the witnesses.

If we are starting to say that there has to be a government majority on the committee, what is going to happen when four opposition members show up but only three government party members do? They would not have a majority then. Does that mean that we could not have the meeting? That gets a little awkward. I agree that there must be at least one person from the government side—and I would add it here—and at least one member from the opposition side. But going any further would start to get complicated and could tie our hands. I think we need to stay away from that, given that we are not talking about meetings where decisions are made. We have to keep the quorum the same as it is at present for all committees.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Bélanger.

[English]

Mr. Julian.

[Translation]

**Mr. Peter Julian:** I agree with that. We are talking about a reduced quorum, and the committee cannot make any decisions under those circumstances. All it can do is hear witnesses. If we make things too complicated, so that the committee cannot meet or hear witnesses when we don't have a quorum, it would be a real pity.

**The Chair:** Mr. Godin.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** I remember that motion very well. The objective is to have a reduced quorum. I don't really have a problem with the five members, including the two from the opposition. But I don't agree with mentioning the government, and I will tell you why. We are talking about five members, two of which must be from the opposition. The government members could easily not show up at the committee if they didn't like some of the witnesses. The meeting would then automatically be cancelled. If five members are supposed to be present, it is the government's responsibility to ensure that its members are there. The meeting is public and it is called by the chair, who is a member of the government. With a reduced quorum, no votes can be held. You only hear from witnesses and gather information.

Nothing has ever stopped the government from sending its members to committee. However, it could choose not to do so, which would automatically lead to the meeting being cancelled. That's why we are not talking about the government. The idea behind having two members of the opposition is to prevent the government from calling a meeting with witnesses when the opposition cannot be there. This ensures that the opposition is present. And it is up to the government to just send its members to committee. That's its guarantee. The quorum is five members and at least two must be from the opposition. At no point in time does this prevent the government from sending its members to committee.

In terms of the quorum, the required presence of government members has never been discussed in the past. The issue has always been the two members of the opposition in order to make sure the opposition was present at committee. It is up to the government to send its own members to committee. Otherwise, it would be too easy. We have already seen meetings being cancelled that way. I don't mean to be casting stones, but the members were not the absent ones in those cases, it was the chair who didn't show up. And we had invited people from Manitoba. Their flights had already been paid. The witnesses were all here for the meeting. As you well know, a war broke out because of that. I am saying that the motion is fine the way it is. I have no objection to talking about five members, including two members of the opposition. But I definitely do not agree with what is being proposed. That goes against what we want to do and what we need. So I would ask that my dear friend Mr. Lauzon withdraw it.

• (0920)

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Godin.

Mr. Galipeau.

**Mr. Royal Galipeau:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

We have already settled the question of five members and have gone back to four members, but I am not withdrawing the motion that two members be from the opposition and the other two from the government.

[English]

**The Chair:** Your amendment is still on the floor. We're going to continue debate unless it collapses, at which point I'll call the vote on the amendment.

Go ahead, Mr. Julian.

[Translation]

**Mr. Peter Julian:** I don't understand, Mr. Chair. I wanted to ask Mr. Galipeau a question through you.

I think Mr. Galipeau understands that we are talking about a meeting without a quorum. Witnesses appear, but the committee cannot make decisions. I don't understand why this motion is becoming so complicated that witnesses cannot give their testimony. I have trouble understanding that. The formula is really complicated when it's all about a meeting where no decision can be made because there is no quorum.

[English]

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Julian.

Mr. Weston.

[Translation]

**Mr. John Weston:** If I understood correctly, there are two issues. The first is the quorum so that members can hear the testimony. The second is figuring out who is supposed to make up the quorum.

Whether we like it or not, the fact of the matter is that, under the rules of Parliament as a whole, the majority of members will be members of the government party. I think that's a fact. I don't understand how we are not able to reach this conclusion. In a normal process, I don't feel there is going to be a problem if two members are supposed to be from the government party.

**The Chair:** Mr. Godin can now have the floor. And Mr. Galipeau will be next.

Mr. Godin, go ahead.

[English]

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** I'll try it again.

This has to do with a reduced quorum to listen to the witnesses. The chair is from the government. He is the one who calls the meeting. He is the one who is in control of calling the meeting.

We see two from the opposition. That is to make sure it doesn't happen that the meeting is called and we don't show up or that he could do it without the opposition, because he is from the government.

In this, when we say that the quorum will be five people with two from the opposition, that's the minimum. It doesn't stop you from sending all your members. What it will stop you from doing is not showing up and requiring the meeting to be cancelled. That's the problem. It's only that. You just have to show up. This motion doesn't say that the government will not show up. That's not what the motion says. It just says that you cannot cancel the meeting because

the government did not show up, because it's your responsibility to show up.

If you put in there that two have to show up and you don't show up, that means the meeting is cancelled.

• (0925)

**Mr. John Weston:** It's the same from the opposition side.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** I'm sorry, there is no time limit on my—

[Translation]

**The Chair:** Mr. Godin has the floor.

[English]

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** Okay. But we don't have control over calling the meeting. It's the chair who calls the meeting. The chair calls the meeting, and when witnesses come here we want to be here, because he has called a meeting and we don't want a meeting to be called without the opposition.

But on the other hand, nothing is stopping you from being here. And nothing is stopping the chair from cancelling the meeting anyway. We saw that before.

This is not a motion that came in during a minority government. It was here 14 years ago. It was here in 1998, and I'm sure Mauril Bélanger remembers that. That was always the motion.

I have no problem with the five members. That's not where I have the problem, not at all. But I have a problem when you say and you put in a motion that the government has to be present, because automatically you just have to be present. It's just that we don't want a meeting to be cancelled when witnesses are coming in.

[Translation]

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Godin.

Mr. Galipeau, it is your turn.

[English]

**Mr. Royal Galipeau:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

First, I'd like to underline that the chair is not from the government. I remember when he was in the government and he pulled himself out of the government. So he's not in the government, but he is in the government party.

I've listened to this discussion from all angles, and as a result I am willing to compromise even further, but not all the way.

This is what I propose: that the chair be authorized to hold meetings to receive evidence and to have that evidence printed when a quorum is not present, provided that at least four members are present, including one member from the opposition and one member from the government party.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** Including at least....

**Mr. Royal Galipeau:** Well, if there are four, then of course "at least" is redundant.



**The Chair:** I want to make sure everybody is on the same page here. Is there unanimous consent to withdraw the amendment Monsieur Galipeau originally moved? It was to have five members present, two from the opposition and three from the government. Is there unanimous consent to withdraw that amendment from the floor?

**Mr. Royal Galipeau:** I thought I did that a long time ago.

**The Chair:** No. Is there unanimous consent?

(Amendment withdrawn)

**The Chair:** Monsieur Galipeau has moved a new amendment to the main motion moved by Monsieur Godin. The new amendment is that there be four members present, and that one of those be an opposition member and one of those be a government party member.

**Mr. Royal Galipeau:** They have to be. There could be more.

**The Chair:** Perhaps you would like to read your amendment again so that everybody is on the same page, and then we'll have a discussion.

**Mr. Royal Galipeau:** I move that the chair be authorized to hold meetings to receive evidence and to have that evidence printed when a quorum is not present, provided that at least four members are present, including one member of the opposition and one member of the government party.

•(0930)

**The Chair:** We have an amendment on the floor. We'll now proceed to a debate on the amendment. We'll begin with Mr. Weston, and then Monsieur Godin.

Mr. Weston.

[Translation]

**Mr. John Weston:** I really like that amendment. I think it also satisfies my friends opposite. Well done.

[English]

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Weston.

Monsieur Godin.

[Translation]

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** I am not in favour of the amendment because it is the same principle. Whether we reduce the number to one or leave it at two does not make a difference. It is the same principle as the one I am talking about. Reducing it to one person from the opposition...

Two members of the opposition are present.

**Mr. Royal Galipeau:** Nothing stops them from coming. That was the principle.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** If that's the principle, are you ready to have zero members from the government? The purpose of having a member from the government was to prevent the meeting from being cancelled. It has always been like that, not just in a minority government. It has been like that for years. You can ask the researchers to check.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Godin.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** I would just like to finish what I was saying. When we say "member of the government", does that mean "member of the government party" and does it include "the chair"?

**The Chair:** Yes, it includes the chair.

Do you agree with...

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** We are in favour of it.

**The Chair:** Great.

Mr. Lauzon, it is your turn.

**Mr. Guy Lauzon:** I would like to discuss the point raised by Mr. Godin. He does not want to give us the power to cancel the meeting, but he wants to have that power himself. If you don't appear, it will be the same thing for you. You can cancel the meeting.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Lauzon.

Mr. Godin, go ahead.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** Mr. Lauzon, in case you are not aware, I would like to tell you that the chair is on your side and he can cancel the meeting. You know how it works, you have already done that.

**Mr. Guy Lauzon:** If we decide to hold a meeting or if the chair calls us to a meeting and your members don't show up, the meeting will be cancelled.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** That's exactly why. The idea is that the government cannot call a meeting without the opposition. We cannot have a meeting if the members of the opposition are not present.

Mr. Galipeau's motion protects both sides. If there is a meeting, there must be a member of the opposition and a member of the government party. Also, the chair must be there. Both sides are covered.

**Mr. Royal Galipeau:** Are you in favour of that, Mr. Godin?

[English]

Let's run with it, guys.

**The Chair:** Monsieur Bélanger.

[Translation]

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** Mr. Chair, I congratulate my colleague for agreeing with my suggestion.

[English]

**The Chair:** Seeing no further debate, I will put the question on the amendment moved by Monsieur Galipeau.

(Amendment agreed to)

**The Chair:** We're now back to the main motion, as amended, concerning this routine motion. Is there any debate on the main motion as amended? Seeing none, we'll go to the vote.

(Motion as amended agreed to)

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

[Translation]

We are now going to the distribution of documents.

[English]

Mr. Bélanger, go ahead.

[*Translation*]

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** I so move.

**The Chair:** Okay.

[*English*]

The motion has been moved by Monsieur Bélanger. I'll read it:

[*Translation*]

That the Clerk of the Committee be authorized to distribute documents to members of the Committee only when they exist in both official languages, and that no document provided by a witness be distributed without the Clerk's authorization and, since the documents must be in both official languages in order to be distributed, that the Clerk advise the witnesses of the availability of a translation service.

[*English*]

Is there debate on this motion?

Mr. Weston.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. John Weston:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I would like to move a few amendments.

First, I feel it is obvious that the clerk can distribute the documents. But I think it should be the clerk and only the clerk.

Second, I think that it is very important to let the witnesses know, before they come here, that they have to distribute the documents in both official languages.

Third, regarding the documents that can be distributed, I think that we have to emphasize that the documents include the motions.

So I am going to suggest the following new wording:

● (0935)

[*English*]

that only the clerk of the committee be authorized to distribute to the members of the committee any documents, including motions, and that all documents that are to be distributed among the committee members must be in both official languages. The clerk shall advise all witnesses appearing before committee of this requirement.

[*Translation*]

During the last session, I was on the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans. Some witnesses had great texts, but they were written in only one official language. It was a shame not to be able to hear them.

[*English*]

Do you want me to read it again?

**The Chair:** Yes, for clarification, and then we're going to go to Monsieur Galipeau.

**Mr. John Weston:** It states that only the clerk of the committee be authorized to distribute to the members of the committee any documents, including motions, and that all documents that are to be distributed among the committee members must be in both official languages. The clerk shall advise all witnesses appearing before committee of this requirement.

It should say “shall advise all witnesses in advance” of this requirement.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Weston.

We have on the floor an amendment to the motion moved by Monsieur Bélanger.

I'll go to Monsieur Galipeau.

**Mr. Royal Galipeau:** I'd like to square this with the Official Languages Act. The act imposes obligations on the government and on Parliament to serve Canadians in both languages, so that Canadians can be served in either of the two official languages as they prefer. The onus is on the government—not on Canadians—in the two-way communications.

The government has an obligation to communicate with Canadians in the language of choice of Canadians. But witnesses appearing here are the Canadians; they are the Canadians and they are the ones coming here to communicate with us. They should be able to do that in either of the two languages, as they choose. I don't see where we are in a position to impose on them the same obligation that the law imposes on us. Some of them may not have the resources to communicate with us in both official languages. Provided they communicate with us in the language of their choice...

I understand the spirit, and it's certainly more convenient for us that they communicate in both languages, but we're now imposing on Canadians the obligation that we should assume.

● (0940)

**The Chair:** Just to clarify what Mr. Weston has proposed here, he is not proposing that witnesses translate the documents or come to the committee with the documents in both official languages. He is saying that any documents to be distributed to this committee need to be in both official languages.

Now, if the organization appearing has the resources to translate those documents on their own, those documents will then be distributed by the clerk. If the organization does not have those resources, they have two options. They can come here with a unilingual copy of those documents, at which point, if this amendment is adopted, I will not allow the documents to be distributed until the clerk has had a chance to take them to translation services and have them translated, after which they will be distributed, probably a week after the meeting has occurred.

The other option is that they send them to the clerk a week in advance and have translation services translate them for them so that when they arrive here we can distribute them in both official languages. Nobody suggests—

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Royal Galipeau:** I am all in favour of that.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Okay.

That's what we are talking about here.

We are going to Monsieur Bélanger, then Mr. Harris.

[*Translation*]

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** I would like to point out two things. The Canadians who come here can express themselves in the language of their choice. The act requires it. We, as parliamentarians, also have rights. One of those rights is to be able to listen to what is being said in the language of our choice. That's why there are people in the booth. Another right is to be able to read in the language of our choice, which explains this motion, Mr. Chair.

[*English*]

I will deem Mr. Weston's motion a friendly amendment, because it is essentially a slight clarification of the intent of this anyway, that the clerk be...and the last time we added that the clerk also advise witnesses of the availability. It is a friendly amendment. I've incorporated it into the main motion.

Thank you very much.

**Mr. John Weston:** That's a good idea.

**The Chair:** Mr. Harris.

**Mr. Dan Harris (Scarborough Southwest, NDP):** I had my hand up when we were talking about something a little different, but certainly I agree fully. Advising witnesses in advance is an improvement to what was already there.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Monsieur Menegakis.

**Mr. Costas Menegakis (Richmond Hill, CPC):** I am trying to get my head around the word “only”. It says that “only” the clerk be authorized, in the amendment that John is moving.

**The Chair:** Just to clarify why the word “only” is in there, in previous committees I chaired it sometimes happened that—which members generally don't like—some witnesses would distribute documents without authorization, not realizing that they needed to be in both official languages and thereby bypassing the intent of this routine motion. Alternatively, you might get third parties, members of the public, coming into the room who have not been called as witnesses but who are distributing documents to committee members without the committee's authorization. That is why the word “only” is in there.

**Mr. Costas Menegakis:** I accept the clarification, but I assume the clerk is authorized to distribute documents.

**The Chair:** It is only the clerk.

**Mr. Costas Menegakis:** The word “only” makes this motion make sense. Otherwise I can't imagine that in the past the clerk was not authorized to distribute documents.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Royal Galipeau:** We are all on the same wavelength.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** We are all on the same page.

Is there any further debate on this amendment moved by Mr. Lauzon?

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Guy Lauzon:** I have a suggestion. When witnesses take the floor, it really helps me to have a copy of their speech. Could we ask

them if it is possible to have a copy so that we can follow along when they are speaking? Is it possible to suggest that?

[*English*]

**The Chair:** I will instruct the clerk right now to make those efforts with the witnesses when they are invited.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Guy Lauzon:** That works for me.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** We will do that. He has noted it, and we will ensure that is done whenever we have witnesses appear.

Mr. Weston.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. John Weston:** I agree with the suggestion. I think it is important to include the following words at the end: “that the Clerk advise the witnesses of the availability of a translation service”.

• (0945)

[*English*]

**The Chair:** We will consider that part of the original amendment that you moved.

Is there any further debate?

Mr. Galipeau.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Royal Galipeau:** Mr. Lauzon's suggestion is very practical, especially when the witnesses are reading their submissions. But some witnesses occasionally give presentations that are not written. Under those circumstances, it becomes quite difficult. And witnesses should not be restricted to reading submissions only.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** I understand. It's just guidance to the clerk that if documents are available, and if they're available ahead of time, they be distributed to members of the committee so they can look at them before the committee meets.

Is there any further debate on the amendment moved by Mr. Weston?

Seeing none, I'll call for the vote on the amendment.

(Amendment agreed to)

**The Chair:** We're back to the main motion as amended.

Seeing no further debate, I'll call for the vote on the main motion as amended.

(Motion as amended agreed to)

**The Chair:** We'll now go to consideration of the next routine motion. Do I have a mover of this routine motion?

It is moved by Mr. Harris. Thank you very much. I'll read it.

[*Translation*]

The motion on working meals says the following: “That the Clerk of the Committee be authorized to make the necessary arrangements to provide working meals for the committee and its subcommittees.”

[English]

Is there any debate on this motion moved by Mr. Harris?

**An hon. member:** It's not emphatic enough.

[Translation]

**Mr. Guy Lauzon:** I so move.

[English]

**The Chair:** Seeing none, I'll put the question.

(Motion agreed to)

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr. Harris.

Mr. Bélanger.

[Translation]

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** Mr. Chair, I have a question. I know it's not on the agenda, but can we also make sure that we get good coffee?

[English]

**The Chair:** I will give verbal direction to the clerk to investigate this matter.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** Certainly not what we're given here.

**The Chair:** We're going to the consideration of the next routine motion, which is witnesses' expenses.

Do I have a mover of this motion?

It is moved by Mr. Trottier. I'll read the motion.

[Translation]

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

[English]

Is there any debate on this motion?

Seeing none, I'll put the question on this motion moved by Mr. Trottier.

(Motion agreed to)

• (0950)

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr. Trottier.

We'll now go to the consideration of the next motion. Do I have a mover?

It is moved by Monsieur Galipeau. Thank you very much.

I'll read the motion moved by Monsieur Galipeau.

[Translation]

The motion on staff at in camera meetings states the following: "That, unless otherwise ordered, each Committee member be allowed to be accompanied by one of his or her staff person, in addition to one staff person from the office of the Whip of each party, at in camera meetings."

[English]

Is there any debate on this motion?

Seeing none, I'll put the question.

(Motion agreed to)

**The Chair:** We'll go to consideration of the next motion. Do we have a mover?

It is moved by Mr. Trottier. I'll read the motion.

[Translation]

The motion on in camera meetings transcripts says the following: "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."

[English]

Is there any debate on this motion?

Mr. Julian.

[Translation]

**Mr. Peter Julian:** This is more of a question, Mr. Chair, and I am asking it on behalf of my Liberal colleague, because it has already been asked in other committees. This same situation has come up in the last few Parliaments. On occasion, when only one member from a party is on a committee, the member might have to be replaced. In some committees, it could mean that other Liberals might replace an official member. I just want to clarify that, when we say members of the committee, we also mean acting members, people who might have come to replace Mr. Bélanger, for example.

[English]

**The Chair:** I'm a little confused. We're talking about the routine motion on in camera meeting transcripts.

[Translation]

**Mr. Peter Julian:** I'm sorry, I was talking about the next item.

[English]

**The Chair:** Is there any further debate on the motion concerning in camera meeting transcripts?

Seeing none, I'll call the question. All those in favour?

(Motion agreed to)

**The Chair:** Do I have a mover for the next motion?

It's moved by Monsieur Bélanger.

[Translation]

I will read the notice of motion. Then, Mr. Julian will have the floor.

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

[English]

Is there any debate on this motion?

Mr. Julian, would you like to comment on the motion by Monsieur Bélanger?

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Peter Julian:** No thank you, Mr. Chair.

I had a point to raise about the motion that we just adopted. Mr. Bélanger does not have a problem with the motion as presented.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Is there any further debate on this motion moved by Mr. Bélanger?

Seeing none, I'll call the question. All those in favour?

(Motion agreed to)

**The Chair:** I suggest that we go to the last two routine motions and then go back to the questioning of witnesses so that we can get the last two, which I don't think will have a lot of debate.

Do I have a mover of the motion concerning televising specific meetings?

It is moved by Monsieur Galipeau.

It reads:

[*Translation*]

Televising Specific Meetings.

That the meetings with the Commissioner of Official Languages and any Minister be televised if possible.

[*English*]

Is there debate on the motion moved by Monsieur Galipeau?

Go ahead, Monsieur Bélanger.

[*Translation*]

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** Mr. Chair, I would like to make sure that we are not interpreting the resolution too narrowly. I wouldn't want us to be in a situation where someone says that only the meetings where testimony is given by the Commissioner of Official Languages or by ministers can be televised. I would like this to be clear.

In the last session, we had a series of meetings with deputy ministers after volume II of the report of the Commissioner of Official Languages was issued. A number of those meetings were televised, and it was very important that they be. I want to make sure that we are all on the same wavelength.

Mr. Chair, I would like to hear you say that this isn't restrictive; in other words, that it can go beyond the commissioner or ministers.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Previously, when I have been chair and on other committees, if a member or members have asked through the clerk that the meeting be televised, we have made our best efforts to get a room that has television.

[*Translation*]

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** Are we going to continue to meet here?

**The Chair:** I think so, but I'm not sure.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** This room is equipped to broadcast meetings, right?

**The Chair:** Yes.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** Is this our "normal" room?

[*English*]

These rooms are broadcast-ready. But if you request another room, we'll make our best efforts to go there as well if it's in Centre Block, but obviously there are scheduling issues.

• (0955)

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** I'd like the meeting to be in Ottawa Vanier, Mr. Chairman.

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**The Chair:** Okay. Is there any other debate on this motion?

Seeing none, I'll call the question. All those in favour?

(Motion agreed to)

**The Chair:** We'll now go to the motion concerning dissenting and supplementary opinions to committee reports. Is there a mover of this motion?

It's moved by Monsieur Bélanger.

I'll read it:

[*Translation*]

Appending Dissenting/Supplementary Opinions to Committee Reports

That any member of the committee be entitled to submit a dissenting or supplementary opinion to any committee report in accordance to the Standing Orders of the House, provided that it is no more than five (5) pages in length and submitted electronically, in both official languages, to the clerk in the 48 hours following the adoption of a report.

[*English*]

Is there any debate on this motion?

Mr. Julian.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Mr. Chair, I would like to ask a question.

In other committees, the 48-hour time frame is interpreted as follows. For example, if a report is adopted on Thursday morning, this time frame brings us to the following Monday. It's 48 working hours. Is that how you interpret it as well?

[*English*]

**The Chair:** I'll consider that an amendment to the main motion, Mr. Julian.

Mr. Julian is suggesting that we put "two business days" instead of "48 hours".

Mr. Harris.

**Mr. Dan Harris:** The other document says that 48 hours' notice be calculated in the same manner as for the House. That probably would be the appropriate language.

**The Chair:** Okay, that's appropriate wording.

Is there any debate on the amendment?

(Amendment agreed to)

**The Chair:** We're now back to the main motion as amended.

Is there any debate on the main motion as amended?

(Motion as amended agreed to)

**The Chair:** We're back to the last routine motion, which is the one that I think will take a bit of debate, as it normally does. It concerns the interrogation of witnesses.

Do I have a mover of a motion, either the one in front of us on paper or a different motion?

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** We do it paragraph by paragraph.

**The Chair:** I'm trying to get direction from the committee. Do you want to use the motion on the paper in front of us as the motion to be moved, or do you want to suggest a new one?

Monsieur Galipeau.

**Mr. Royal Galipeau:** I have something else to suggest.

[*Translation*]

Instead of six paragraphs, there will be two.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** I'm going to ask you to read it and re-read it so we're all on the same page, and then we'll have a debate.

**Mr. Royal Galipeau:** I propose that we break this down into two items: one, rounds of questioning; and two, speaking order.

On rounds of questioning, the motion is that the witnesses from any one organization shall be allowed 10 minutes to make their opening statement. During the questioning of witnesses there shall be allocated seven minutes for the first round of questioning, and thereafter five minutes shall be allocated to each questioner in the second and subsequent rounds of questioning.

[*Translation*]

I think that if we can use this for the moment, it would be fairly easy to get a consensus on the matter.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** We have a motion on the floor that witnesses be given 10 minutes for their opening statements and then go to a first round of seven minutes for members, and then for rounds two and beyond, to go to five minutes per member.

As chair, it would be helpful if there could be a minor change to what you've just suggested, which would be to grant witnesses up to 10 minutes for an opening statement. As chair, I've had the problem where we might have two panels of one hour each, and each panel has three members on it. If we give them 10 minutes each, as I would be bound to do by the routine motion, the first 30 minutes of the meeting would be taken up with opening statements from the witnesses. Saying "up to 10 minutes" gives the chair flexibility that if we have a very tight agenda, a lot of members on the panel and not a lot of time, we could shorten it to five minutes each, giving members more time.

● (1000)

**Mr. Royal Galipeau:** Mr. Chairman, if you read the blues of what I said, that's exactly what I said.

**The Chair:** That's not what I wrote down, so my apologies. I understand.

**Mr. Royal Galipeau:** They would be allowed up to 10 minutes.

**The Chair:** What we have in front of us is a motion to do the following. Witnesses would be given up to 10 minutes to make their opening statements; then we would go to the first round of seven minutes for members; and then we would go to the second and subsequent rounds, which would be five minutes, ad infinitum, until the committee meeting ended.

We haven't decided how many members per round are going to be included or what the order will be. Monsieur Galipeau is suggesting we tackle that as a second item.

Monsieur Bélanger.

[*Translation*]

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** There are two things.

First, I would like to know the rest of the resolution before we adopt it.

Second, I think that the chair should have a little more discretion in the last round. In the last round, the chair should be able to decide whether it will be two or three minutes each, depending on the time left in the meeting. I don't know whether Mr. Galipeau would agree to add this idea of flexibility for the chair in the last round. As I said, I would like to hear the rest of the resolution before making a decision.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** It's up to Monsieur Galipeau if he wants to tell us what his proposal is for the actual members in each round. He doesn't have to. It's up to him.

The second thing I'd point out is that Monsieur Bélanger is asking that the chair be given some discretion and that this motion, or some motion, include giving the chair discretion regarding time.

It's interesting. On this committee in the last Parliament the chair was bound by the order in the routine motion. On other committees, I know that the chair has some discretion, because it's written into the routine motion. It's up to the committee how it wants to proceed.

Monsieur Galipeau.

**Mr. Royal Galipeau:** The intent of this proposal is obviously fairness. I think the spirit of what Mr. Bélanger is proposing is in line with fairness. We always have to be mindful of the clock. It's pretty simple on the first round and second round, but there may not be time for a third round of five minutes. There could be time for a third round of three minutes.

I don't mind giving the chair discretion, especially this chair, who we just unanimously elected.

**The Chair:** How about we add the phrase at the beginning of your motion, moved by an amendment of Monsieur Galipeau, which would read, “That at the discretion of the chair”....

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Royal Galipeau:** Is that acceptable?

[*English*]

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** That's a lot of trust in the chair. I was referring to the last round.

**The Chair:** It's hard for me to figure out. He's proposing only two rounds.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** I understand. I can live with that.

**The Chair:** Mr. Julian.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We need to know the second part of the proposal because we don't know exactly what Mr. Galipeau is suggesting. We're talking about seven minutes, that's true, but are we still talking about the Conservatives? This would, of course, be less acceptable. We need to have everything on the table, Mr. Chair.

As for the chair, of course you would have to have more flexibility in the last round. That's common practice in almost all the other committees.

• (1005)

**Mr. Royal Galipeau:** Mr. Chair, I have no objection to sharing the content of my next suggestion, which is motivated by the same desire for fairness. Still, I would like both sections to be voted on separately. If you wish, I can present it to you as part of this discussion, but it's not what we're voting on.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** I understand.

We're going to follow this according to procedure.

On the floor we have a motion that's been amended: that at the discretion of the chair witnesses be given up to 10 minutes for their opening statements, that the first round be seven minutes, and that the second round be five minutes.

That is what's currently on the floor.

**Mr. Peter Julian:** And subsequent....

**The Chair:** Would you like to tell us what your next motion will be?

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Royal Galipeau:** Naturally, it's about the order of the participants.

[*English*]

The order of questions for the first round of questioning shall be as follows: the government party, the official opposition, the government party, and the third party. Questioning for the second round shall alternate between the government party members and the opposition members in the following fashion: the government party, the official opposition, the government party, the official opposition, the government party, the official opposition, the government party, the official opposition, the government

party—based on the principle that each committee member should have a full opportunity to question the witnesses. If time permits, further rounds shall repeat the pattern of the first two at the discretion of the chair.

I repeat, the order of questions for the first round of questioning shall be as follows: the government party; second, the official opposition; third, the government party; fourth, the third party.

Should I continue?

**The Chair:** Go ahead.

**Mr. Royal Galipeau:** Questioning for the second round shall alternate between the government party and the opposition members in the following fashion: the government party, the official opposition, the government party, the official opposition, the government party—based on the principle that each committee member should have a full opportunity to question the witnesses. If time permits, further rounds shall repeat the pattern of the first two at the discretion of the chair.

**The Chair:** We're not going to vote on this yet because it's not a motion on the floor, but just to clarify, the first round is seven minutes and the second round is five minutes. The first round is Conservative, New Democrat, Conservative, Liberal, for a total of 28 minutes. The second round is Conservative, New Democrat, Conservative, New Democrat, Conservative, New Democrat, Conservative, for a total of 35 minutes. This means that in just over an hour we would go through each member of the committee once. And then after that we would start at the top again of round one and work our way down through round one and subsequently through round two.

**Mr. Royal Galipeau:** If we were to have a third round, then the third party would have a chance to get back in.

**The Chair:** Okay.

Is there any debate?

Mr. Julian.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I would like to present an amendment to Mr. Galipeau's proposal.

**Mr. Royal Galipeau:** I didn't propose anything. I simply gave information. I didn't propose anything. You asked me for that information.

• (1010)

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Understood.

The other possibility is that I propose an amendment that combines your amendment and our subamendment. That's another possibility, but we will need to vote on the entire thing. It's a package deal.

What we are suggesting goes along with this committee's direction and traditions. We start with the official opposition, followed by the government, then the third party, then the government. This would preserve the principle that each member of the committee gets a chance to speak.

However, by tradition, opposition members start the first round of questions. It's an important role, especially since we are talking about official languages. It's our duty to keep an eye on the government's actions. And that's why the Standing Committee on Official Languages exists. Reversing the order means that each member of the committee can speak. We are also maintaining the tradition of the opposition's ongoing monitoring of official languages.

**Mr. Royal Galipeau:** Mr. Chair, as usual, I bow to the wisdom of my friend, Peter Julian.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** We'll have that discussion after we conclude the discussion on the motion in front of us, which concerns the rounds of questioning.

Mr. Julian.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Thank you to Mr. Galipeau, my new neighbour in the Confederation Building. In this case, I'll present the amendment to the proposal that is currently on the table. The first round of seven minutes would go like this: the NDP, the Conservative Party, the Liberal Party and the Conservative Party.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** We're not on that right now.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Peter Julian:** No, no. I'm adding an amendment. I'm changing his original suggestion that set out the time and order we just discussed. As I said, it's a package deal and, yes, it's in order.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Okay, that's fine.

Just so everybody is on the same page, Mr. Julian is moving an amendment to the motion on the floor. The motion on the floor concerns the witnesses and the rounds of questioning and the amount of time allocated for each. Mr. Julian is about to move an amendment to include in that motion the order of questioning.

Go ahead, Mr. Julian.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Peter Julian:** So that it's clear when we go to make a decision about Mr. Galipeau's proposal, here is the order we are suggesting. In the first round, the speakers will go in this order: the official opposition, the government, the third party and the government.

In the second round, the order would be: the official opposition, the government, the official opposition, the government, the official opposition, the government and the government.

The third round would be the same as the first round, but each person would have five minutes.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** We have an amendment on the floor. I'm going to read it out by party names so that we're all clear.

The first round would be New Democrat, Conservative, Liberal, Conservative. The second round would be New Democrat,

Conservative, New Democrat, Conservative, New Democrat, Conservative, Conservative.

Is there any debate on the amendment?

Mr. Bélanger.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** I'm taking note here, Mr. Chair, of how quickly one loses friends. I remember the days when we were in the official opposition and we protected the third and the fourth parties. I'm saddened by the fact that I seem to be the only one around the table who has these memories. I'm taking note of that. I would remind folks that neither victories nor defeats are permanent in this business.

**The Chair:** For clarification, as chair, I'm curious, having never sat on a committee in a majority Parliament before, prior to 2004, what was the common practice in most committees in terms of the first member to speak? Was it the opposition? Okay.

• (1015)

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** And then it was the other opposition parties, and finally, the government. The second round was similar.

This notion that everybody is entitled to speak at committee certainly doesn't flow from the House. We've tried to give that to everyone, but it is not the operating principle, which we're now trying to make it. That's fine. I understand where the majority lies here, but I'm saddened by the treatment that my friends from the NDP are reserving for the Liberals here. We did not do that to them.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Monsieur Bélanger.

Mr. Galipeau, and then Mr. Julian.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Royal Galipeau:** I have a question that I don't expect to get an answer to right away. A point was raised that I think is important. It's about the order of questions when there's a majority government. The last time there was a majority government was in the 37<sup>th</sup> Parliament.

Could the clerk or the analysts answer this question or find the answer? What was the order of questions during meetings of the Standing Committee on Official Languages when there was a majority government?

We've had the 38<sup>th</sup>, 39<sup>th</sup> and 40<sup>th</sup> Parliaments. Few of us were here for the 37<sup>th</sup> Parliament.

**The Chair:** The clerk doesn't know the answer right now, but he will find the information for the committee.

Mr. Weston.

**Mr. John Weston:** About what Mr. Bélanger said, I think there's a balance to maintain between the two issues. There is the representation of all the parties within our committee's procedures, but there is also the problem of the members' morale. If they don't have enough of an opportunity to speak, they'll be less and less interested in participating on the committee. I don't have the answer, but like many other colleagues, I see clearly that participation is what is going to motivate me to continue.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Weston.



Mr. Julian, *et puis, Monsieur Gourde.*

[Translation]

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Bélanger's reaction makes me a little sad. What we just proposed would allow him to speak a second time in the third round, which was not the case before. It also means that he would be in the third position on the list. Actually, it's an improvement over what Mr. Galipeau proposed initially.

I think that Mr. Bélanger is well aware of the fact that we are in the process of improving his situation. If he is proposing that time be taken from the NDP and given to the Liberal Party, clearly the answer will be no. We are not going to tell our members to hush up to give more time to the third party, that's for sure.

A proposal was made that gives the Liberal Party more representation than before, but there has to be a consensus within the committee. I think Mr. Bélanger is aware of that. I didn't understand his intervention. What the NDP just proposed is clearly better than what was proposed by the government party.

**The Chair:** Mr. Gourde.

**Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lotbinière—Chutes-de-la-Chaudière, CPC):** Mr. Chair, we have on the table a proposal from Mr. Galipeau and an amendment from Mr. Julian. I think that Mr. Bélanger needs to tell us which of these two options seems the most interesting to him. I think that Mr. Galipeau's proposal would let him have seven minutes to speak following the first round, which may be very favourable. In fact, very often we don't get to the end of the second round when there are two witnesses. When we are hearing new witnesses, we start the first round again. Under the circumstances, I find that Mr. Galipeau's proposal favours Mr. Bélanger. We are in favour of it. I am going to vote in favour of Mr. Galipeau's proposal, without amendment.

• (1020)

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Gourde.

Mr. Bélanger.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** I'll respond to Mr. Weston's comment.

Mr. Weston and Mr. Gourde might be right. But sometimes all the rounds are monopolized by the parliamentary secretary. Our motion doesn't guarantee that every member is going to be able to speak. As I said, Mr. Gourde seems to want to share the speaking time, but sometimes another parliamentary secretary basically uses all the time and doesn't let the other members speak. I want you to know that it doesn't depend on how it's done; it depends on the parliamentary secretary.

[English]

**The Chair:** Is there any further debate on this amendment by Mr. Julian?

Seeing none, I'll call the question on the amendment by Mr. Julian on the order of questioning, which, just to reiterate, is New Democrat, Conservative, Liberal, Conservative for round one; for round two it's New Democrat, Conservative, New Democrat, Conservative, New Democrat, Conservative, Conservative. So we're voting on that amendment to the main motion.

[Translation]

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Mr. Chair, in the third round, five-minute interventions are going to be allocated in the same order as in the first round: NDP, Conservative Party, Liberal Party, Conservative Party.

[English]

**The Chair:** That's right. So the third round would be New Democrat, Conservative, Liberal, Conservative, which would be five minutes rather than seven minutes.

(Amendment negated)

**The Chair:** Mr. Julian, just to clarify, we're back to the motion as moved by Monsieur Galipeau, which did not include the list of parties. It just concerned up to 10 minutes for the witnesses, seven minutes for round one, and five minutes for round two.

Mr. Julian, you have the floor.

[Translation]

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Mr. Chair, I would like to suggest that we adjourn for a minute. I think that we are on the same wavelength. We might just need a little bit of discussion. It would be better than continuing to talk about it at this table because it would take more time.

[English]

**The Chair:** I'm not going to adjourn; I'm going to suspend if I'm going to do anything. Is it the will of the committee to suspend for five minutes?

[Translation]

**Mr. Jacques Gourde:** There's another meeting and we need to leave. There's no time.

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Still, we're going to have to take a few minutes.

[English]

**The Chair:** Mr. Julian, I don't have a consensus to suspend. We can continue this discussion. It's your right to have the floor.

Mr. Bélanger.

[Translation]

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** Mr. Chair, for form's sake, I am going to propose an amendment. I suggest that we do what we did in the past and, in the first seven-minute round, the order should be: New Democrats, Liberals, Conservatives.

In the second five-minute round, the order should be: New Democrats, Conservatives, Liberals.

In the third five-minute round, the order should be: New Democrats, Conservatives, Liberals.

In the fourth five-minute round, the order should be: Conservatives, New Democrats, Liberals.

This is how it was in the past. I am going to propose it for form's sake, Mr. Chair. A proposal doesn't need to be supported to be considered. We'll make everyone vote on it.

•(1025)

[English]

**The Chair:** We have an amendment to the main motion on the floor. Is there any debate?

Mr. Julian.

[Translation]

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We are going to have to take the same amount time that suspending for a few minutes would have taken. Actually, it's clear that we'll continue to find configurations that work.

I am a little disappointed that the government did not vote earlier as it had indicated, while it had accepted the process. Now, we are presenting an option that, as Mr. Bélanger rightly said, is closer to what it was when there was a minority government. Actually, it gives the Liberal Party's only member four turns. The four NDP members will be able to speak if we have four rounds. The Conservatives will be entitled to four rounds for their six members.

It's favourable for the Liberal Party. I don't think that we can accept this amendment because the Conservative members won't have the opportunity to ask questions. One principle is important: there needs to be a balance. It's difficult in this case, but we are still looking for a format. That's why I suggested that we suspend a few minutes ago. I think we're going to spend some time discussing this second format, which has advantages and disadvantages. It will be easier to resolve these issues the way we usually do, with a brief discussion around the table. Mr. Bélanger's proposal contains some major aspects, but it contains some gaps as well. We are still looking for something fair and that requires the committee to be involved.

**The Chair:** I have an answer for the committee. Prior to 2004, when there was a majority government, this committee was a joint committee of the Senate and the House of Commons.

We are talking about the rules of another committee in a majority government, prior to 2004.

The chair allocated seven minutes to the first questioner of each party and thereafter three minutes to each subsequent questioner, alternating between the government and opposition parties.

[English]

That's your answer.

[Translation]

**Mr. Royal Galipeau:** Would opposition parties ask questions in succession or in alternating order?

**The Chair:** They alternated with the government party.

[English]

I'll read it in English: at the discretion of the chair, seven minutes for the first questioner of each party and thereafter three minutes to each subsequent questioner, alternating between the government and opposition parties.

That's your answer.

[Translation]

**Mr. Royal Galipeau:** That's what I suggested.

[English]

**The Chair:** We're now going to go to Monsieur Bélanger.

[Translation]

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** Mr. Chair, I had two thoughts while listening to Mr. Julian.

When we are debating a motion in the House, there are rounds, but all the recognized parties in the House take turns in asking questions and commenting. Naturally, the members of a majority party don't all get to speak. The same goes for all the parties because there aren't enough rounds, or the debates are not long enough for everyone to speak. Regardless, the principle is that all the parties should have the floor in each round.

Regarding my suggestion, I find it interesting that my colleague Mr. Julian considers that the Liberals have too many opportunities to speak. However, he was not against that arrangement when the New Democrats often had only one representative, Mr. Godin, on the committee. Mr. Godin had the floor in all but one round. If Mr. Julian were true to himself and his principles, he would agree that the approach that applied to the New Democrats at that time should apply to us now.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

•(1030)

**The Chair:** Mr. Harris.

**Mr. Dan Harris:** Mr. Bélanger said that previously, the New Democrats had three opportunities to speak in four rounds. However, in this case, we are talking about four opportunities in four rounds.

**Mr. Bélanger:** We could take some away.

**Mr. Dan Harris:** In what round?

**Mr. Bélanger:** The third.

**Mr. Dan Harris:** We could change the order for the third round and proceed as follows: the Conservative Party, the NDP, the Conservative Party. That would give the majority party an opportunity to speak again. I would like to move that amendment.

[English]

**The Chair:** We're on the amendment. I'm not going to allow for a subamendment to the amendment. We have to dispose of the amendment in front of us, because if you introduce another amendment, procedurally it's going to become a mess.

[Translation]

Mr. Aubin.

**Mr. Robert Aubin:** I see that we're taking more time than a suspension would have required, had it been granted. I call for a suspension again.

There is probably a detail I failed to understand. Mr. Galipeau acknowledged earlier the soundness of Mr. Julian's suggestion, but the tide has turned. Suddenly, that's no longer possible.

**Mr. Royal Galipeau:** Mr. Chair, I asked a question that was answered. Collective memory about previous procedures contained some holes. Therefore, I asked the library people and the clerk to obtain relevant information, and that information was provided to us. Traditions used in a previous majority parliament are in line with my suggestion.

**Mr. Robert Aubin:** I understood that perfectly.

**Mr. Royal Galipeau:** My suggestion is sound. It is based on what was done in previous majority governments, for instance, the 37th Parliament.

**Mr. Robert Aubin:** If my understanding is correct, tradition takes precedence over the consensus we achieved.

**Mr. Royal Galipeau:** The consensus has not yet been achieved.

**Mr. Robert Aubin:** But it was earlier.

**Mr. Royal Galipeau:** We were lacking information, which has been provided to us since. That information is in keeping with the basis of my original suggestion.

**Mr. Robert Aubin:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** Mr. Bélanger.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** I agree with Mr. Aubin and Mr. Julian. We might have benefited from discussing that issue. Mr. Aubin, I want to point out that consensus wasn't achieved. I didn't agree with any of the suggestions, since I had not been consulted.

Mr. Harris, it should be noted that my suggestion is perfectly in line with tradition. We are not the fourth but rather the third party. The third party was allowed to speak in every round. Earlier, we talked about the New Democrats. They couldn't speak in one round, but they were the fourth party. The Bloc Québécois, which was the third party, could speak in every round.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Bélanger.

Mr. Julian has the floor.

**Mr. Peter Julian:** That's the issue. The Liberal Party has 34 MPs, which is fewer than what the NDP had. The issue is not whether the party is third or fourth, but how many MPs it has. Unless I'm mistaken, the Liberal Party currently has 34 members. The NDP had 36 in the previous Parliament. You are suggesting more floor time for the Liberal Party, which has even fewer members than the NDP had in the previous Parliament. That makes no sense.

That's too bad because, if the government imposes its will, Mr. Bélanger's opposition to our suggestion would make the Liberal Party lose its second round. He'd have to take responsibility for that outcome. His comment was not good for the Liberal Party, as it has clouded the issue, and that's why we're in this situation now.

• (1035)

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** We're not squabbling, but establishing facts.

[English]

**The Chair:** Does anybody else want the floor?

Monsieur Bélanger.

[Translation]

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** Mr. Chair, I want to get back to what Mr. Julian was saying. The difference between 36 and 34 is negligible.

I want to remind him that, at 36 or 34, the New Democrats representative had the right to speak in all but one round. No, that person had the floor in every round, except for one. Those are the facts, Mr. Julian; you may ask Mr. Godin. If I remember correctly, he could not speak in the third round, but he could do so in all the other rounds. Those are the facts, and I was on the committee.

If Mr. Harris wants to move his motion, I would accept a friendly amendment that the Liberals participate in all but the third round.

**Mr. Dan Harris:** I think the chair ruled that out of order.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** I accept the friendly amendment.

[English]

**The Chair:** Before we go to Mr. Harris, I just want to draw to the attention of the members of the committee the fact that the orders of the day for this committee state that the meeting will end at 10:45, which is in some eight short minutes. If we don't come to a resolution on this, I will adjourn at 10:45, because members have other commitments, and that's what the orders of the day state.

I will reconvene this committee early next week for two hours to continue the discussion about this final routine motion. So either we resolve this in the next eight minutes, or we don't, in which case I will call a meeting for next week and we'll continue this discussion.

We have Mr. Harris and then Mr. Julian.

**Mr. Dan Harris:** I wonder, with only eight minutes left... We had proposed doing a short recess, but is eight minutes going to be enough? It might make sense to just adjourn, figure this out amongst ourselves as a committee, and come back next Tuesday morning.

**The Chair:** Are you moving a motion to adjourn?

**Mr. Dan Harris:** Yes, I am.

**The Chair:** That's not debatable. I'll call the vote.

All those in favour of adjournment?

(Motion negated)

**The Chair:** The motion is defeated and we're now back to debate about the amendment moved by Monsieur Bélanger.

Is there debate?

Mr. Julian, go ahead.

[Translation]

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I think it's unfortunate that we couldn't suspend proceedings for a few minutes. I think it would have been wise to take that time. I feel that we could have resolved all these issues and arrived at a consensus. I understand what Mr. Bélanger is trying to do. We accept the principle that every Conservative member has the right and responsibility to ask questions. We also want to have the same right, the same opportunity. We have those principles. There was also a friendly agreement among the great majority of the members here. I don't understand why the Conservative Party, while wanting to achieve that consensus, tried to withdraw it. I find that difficult to understand. That's why we wanted to take a few minutes, to talk things out and arrive at a consensus. I think that what was suggested met all those requirements, including the possibility of a second round for the Liberal Party. Some 30 or 45 minutes ago, we could have arrived at a consensus. Now, an amendment has been moved. The Conservatives have not spoken, but I have the impression that they're against the idea that only four out of six Conservatives would take the floor during the four rounds. Mr. Chair, I assume that's the case. The Conservatives have not stated whether or not they agree with that arrangement. Regardless, there are a number of good things about the suggestion. Mr. Chair, what can I say? That's the current situation.

I want to provide you with the facts because I think that's very important. At the beginning of the preceding Parliament, we had 37 MPs. Following the Winnipeg by-election, we had 36 MPs. We had the floor in the first round and once again later on. As you know, according to this committee's tradition, a fourth round is rarely held. We suggested pretty much the same arrangement the NDP had in the preceding Parliament. At first, we had 37 MPs and then 36 MPs. That's what was suggested to the Liberal Party, which has 34 MPs. I thought that was reasonable.

It is suggested that the Liberal Party have four opportunities to speak and the Conservative Party have only four opportunities. Obviously, that's unacceptable. If we voted on it, I don't think that approach would get the approval of the majority of the members around the table. We still have no consensus. What should we do,

given that the amendment is not acceptable to most of the members around the table? There are two possibilities. We can continue the discussion.

Mr. Chair, I think that you discharge your responsibilities well.

● (1040)

As you rightly indicated, Mr. Chair, we could have talked things out. We could have simply forced the committee to vote. I think you said earlier that you wanted to adjourn the meeting anyway in a minute and a half.

I think that the best thing to do would probably be to focus specifically on resolving this issue while following committee procedure. Therefore, I will take a few minutes to raise some objections to this subamendment.

I realize, Mr. Chair, that in about one minute, you will use the powers vested in you as part of your new position. I want to congratulate you on being elected as chair. I have always admired your work in this committee. I think that you guide the committee very wisely. That being said, I want to continue, Mr. Chair, unless there is a point of order or you want to adjourn the meeting, of course.

So, I will continue speaking to this amendment.

I just wanted to congratulate you because you do a good job. You still have the right to adjourn the meeting, if you wish, because it is 10:45 a.m., unless there is a point of order, of course.

● (1045)

**The Chair:** No.

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Is there a point of order?

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr. Julian, for your intervention.

It being 10:45 a.m., this meeting is adjourned.

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