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• (0855)

[English]

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

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.

We can now proceed to the election of the chair. Pursuant to Standing Order 106(2), the chair must be a member of the governing party. I am ready to receive motions for the chair.

Mr. Scarpaleggia.

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Thank you.

I would like to nominate Yasmin Ratansi.

The Clerk: It has been moved by Mr. Scarpaleggia that Ms. Ratansi be elected chair of the committee.

(Motion agreed to)

The Clerk: I declare the motion carried and Yasmin Ratansi duly elected chair of the committee. I invite Ms. Ratansi to take the chair.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

The Chair (Ms. Yasmin Ratansi (Don Valley East, Lib.)): Thank you very much.

If the committee is in agreement, I would invite the clerk to proceed with the election of the vice-chairs. Is the committee in agreement?

Proceed.

The Clerk: 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. Aitchison.

Mr. Scott Aitchison (Parry Sound—Muskoka, CPC): I nominate Kerry-Lynne Findlay.

The Clerk: It has been moved by Mr. Aitchison that Ms. Findlay be elected first vice-chair of the committee.

(Motion agreed to)

The Clerk: I declare the motion carried and Ms. Findlay the duly elected first vice-chair of the committee.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

The Clerk: 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 for the second vice-chair.

Ms. Collins.

Ms. Laurel Collins (Victoria, NDP): I'd like to move that we postpone the election of the second vice-chair until after PROC has made its decision, in much the same way the finance committee has done.

The Chair: I would like to ask committee members for their concurrence. If they are in agreement, we can proceed that way. The others have done the second vice-chair, but the third vice-chair will come after PROC has made its decision. If it's the committee's will, I am willing to accept it.

Is it the committee's will to postpone it?

An hon. member: Yes.

The Chair: Fair enough. We will postpone it.

Welcome, everyone. I think we have some routine motions that need to be done.

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: Yes, Madam Chair. I'd like to propose some routine motions.

[Translation]

Has everyone received a copy of the routine motions? I see that you have.

Madam Chair, I will read the first motion, and then we will vote on each motion individually.

The first motion concerns the analysts, and it reads as follows:

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.

(Motion agreed to)

[English]

The Chair: I invite the analysts to now come forward, please. Thank you.

You may continue with the next motion.

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: Thank you. I move:

That the Subcommittee on Agenda and Procedure be established and be composed of five (5) members, namely the chair and one member from each recognized party; and that the subcommittee work in the spirit of collaboration.

(Motion agreed to)

[Translation]

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: Here is the motion on a reduced quorum:

That the Chair be authorized to hold meetings to receive evidence and to have that evidence printed when a quorum is not present, provided that at least four (4) members are present, including one member of the opposition and one member of the government, but when travelling outside the parliamentary precinct, that the meeting begin after fifteen (15) minutes, regardless of members present.

(Motion agreed to)

[English]

The Chair: Please, proceed.

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: This motion deals with the protocol for questioning witnesses. I move:

That the witnesses be given ten (10) minutes to make their opening statement; that, at the discretion of the chair, during the questioning of witnesses, there be allocated six (6) minutes for the first questioner of each party as follows: for the first round: Conservative Party, Liberal Party, Bloc Québécois and New Democratic Party. For the second and subsequent rounds, the order and time for questioning be as follows: Conservative Party, five (5) minutes, Liberal Party, five (5) minutes, Conservative Party, five (5) minutes, Liberal Party, five (5) minutes, Bloc Québécois, two and a half (2.5) minutes, New Democratic Party, two and a half (2.5) minutes.

(Motion agreed to)

● (0900)

[Translation]

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: Now we have the motion on documents distribution:

That the Clerk of the Committee be authorized to distribute documents to members of the Committee only when the documents are available in both official languages and that witnesses be advised accordingly.

(Motion agreed to)

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: The motion on working meals reads as follows:

That the Clerk of the Committee be authorized to make the necessary arrangements to provide working meals for the Committee and its Subcommittees.

[English]

The Chair: This is very important. Does everybody agree?

(Motion agreed to)

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: Related to witnesses' expenses, I move:

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

(Motion agreed to)

[Translation]

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: Now here is the motion on staff at in camera meetings:

That, unless otherwise ordered, each Committee member be allowed to have one staff member at an *in camera* meeting and that one additional person from each House officer's office be allowed to be present.

(Motion agreed to)

[English]

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: Related to in camera meeting transcripts, I move:

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 or by their staff.

(Motion agreed to)

[Translation]

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: Here is the motion on notices of motions:

That a forty-eight (48) hours notice, interpreted as two (2) nights, shall be required for any substantive motion to be considered by the Committee, unless the substantive motion relates directly to business then under consideration, provided that (1) the notice be filed with the Clerk of the Committee no later than 4:00 p.m. from Monday to Friday; that (2) the motion be distributed to Members in both official languages by the Clerk on the same day the said notice was transmitted if it was received no later than the deadline hour; and that (3) notices received after the deadline hour or on non-business days be deemed to have been received during the next business day and that when the committee is travelling on official business, no substantive motions may be moved.

(Motion agreed to)

[English]

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: The last motion relates to independent members. I move:

That, in relation to Orders of Reference from the House respecting Bills, (a) the clerk of the committee shall, upon the committee receiving such an Order of Reference, write to each Member who is not a member of a caucus represented on the committee to invite those Members to file with the clerk of the committee, in both official languages, any amendments to the Bill which is the subject of the said Order which they would suggest that the committee consider; (b) suggested amendments filed, pursuant to paragraph (a), at least 48 hours prior to the start of clause-by-clause consideration of the Bill to which the amendments relate shall be deemed to be proposed during the said consideration, provided that the committee may, by motion, vary this deadline in respect of a given Bill; and (c) during the clause-by-clause consideration of a Bill, the chair shall allow a Member who filed suggested amendments, pursuant to paragraph (a), an opportunity to make brief representations in support of them.

(Motion agreed to)

● (0905)

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: That's all I have, Madam Chair.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Schiefke.

Mr. Peter Schiefke (Vaudreuil—Soulanges, Lib.): Madam Chair, I'd like to propose a motion. I move:

For the second meeting of the committee, that the committee invite senior officials from Environment and Climate Change Canada to provide a briefing on the responsibilities and activities of the Department and answer questions for the duration of the meeting. Environment and Climate Change officials be given up to thirty (30) minutes for the briefing and that the clerk ask the witnesses to provide written material in both official languages in advance of the meeting if possible. For the third meeting of the committee, that the committee invite senior officials from Parks Canada to provide a briefing on the responsibilities and activities of the agency and answer questions for one hour. Parks Canada officials be given up to fifteen (15) minutes for opening remarks and that the clerk ask the witnesses to provide written material in both official languages in advance of the meeting if possible. And that the committee invite senior officials from the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada to provide a briefing on the responsibilities and activities of the Agency and answer questions for one hour. Impact Assessment Agency of Canada officials be given up to fifteen (15) minutes for opening remarks and that the clerk ask the witnesses to provide written material in both official languages in advance of the meeting if possible.

The Chair: I've checked with the clerk. The motion is in order. Are there any questions?

As committee members know, we need to move on, so we need the bureaucrats to come here and give us an update. If they give us an update, at least we will know what our starting point is. Then the subcommittee can be formed and discuss further business for the whole term as such.

Are there any questions for Mr. Schiefke?

Mr. Mazier.

Mr. Dan Mazier: On the one hour for Parks Canada, is there any way we can switch that around and reduce it, and for Environment and Climate Change Canada can we increase it, so we can ask more questions? Could we make them all the same so that we have an equal amount of time to ask each department questions at separate times?

Mr. Peter Schiefke: Yes, I think that will be fine. This was based on conversations we had where we asked them what time they felt they needed to properly convey the information. However, if you'd like to make a change, I would definitely be amenable to that. I think the idea remains the same, which is that we all want to be on the same page with regard to the information they have to provide.

The Chair: Do you want to propose the wording to the amendment?

Mr. Dan Mazier: Let Kerry-Lynne say her piece.

The Chair: Okay. That's fine.

Madam Findlay.

Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay: Thank you, Madam Chair.

I'm just trying to understand this. We just passed a motion that we'd be given 48 hours' notice of all motions, and I'm trying to understand why we're dealing with this right now. I believe that others among us also have motions that we'd like to put forward, in proper order, as to what we'll be looking at in this committee.

The Chair: Yes. This is our first meeting, where I first got elected as the chair. The governing party decided that, at least, we should have something to study, something that would give us a base for a study. I checked with the clerk and the clerk told me that this motion was in order, so I didn't make the decision on my own.

This is committee business and this is relevant to what the committee normally studies or will study. That's why the motion was in order.

Do you have another motion that is on committee business?

Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay: We do.

The Chair: Can we deal with this motion first? Thank you.

Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay: I would like to propose an amendment to the motion that we set the department up for the second meeting of the committee and that we table a decision on the Parks Canada officials.

● (0910)

The Chair: You want the third meeting to wait. You don't want Parks Canada to come.

Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay: Yes. We want to table our motion. There may also be another motion coming forward from another member of the committee as to what we'll be looking at for the third meeting and going forward.

The Chair: We'll go to Mr. Longfield first and then Mr. Saini.

Mr. Lloyd Longfield (Guelph, Lib.): I appreciate where Ms. Findlay's coming from. We also have some motions to be put forward. However, once we have the subcommittee in place, it can deal with the raft of motions that is going to come in to get us started.

In order to get some firm footing on where we ended last time—and where we're heading this time—it would be important to get the government officials to brief us. That'll give us context for any other studies that we might want to do.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Saini.

Mr. Raj Saini (Kitchener Centre, Lib.): I was just going to reiterate the same point as Lloyd. I don't think we're trying to put any motions forward or anything like that. Another motion can be subsequently debated.

We just want to get a start and get some briefing from the government officials. From that briefing, we can decide which direction we want to go. It will give us some context and information as to where we are at and what we think about where we need to go. I think the motions can come after. I think initially it would be good to get a quick briefing right away to get some information because we've started a bit late.

The Chair: Mr. Schiefke.

Mr. Peter Schiefke: Thank you, Madam Chair.

I just wanted to add that I've had briefings as parliamentary secretary with these officials. I found them to be incredibly helpful in terms of better understanding where we are as a starting point and in formulating my thoughts. The reason for putting this motion forward is just to ensure that every member of this committee is starting at the same place and has access to that very valuable information.

I agree that we should move on to other motions following that. This was really just to make sure we're all at the same starting point and following the same process that the previous committee used in 2016, when they started their meetings off with briefings from the officials. I've spoken to many of them and they said it was incredibly helpful.

The Chair: Yes, Mr. Redekopp.

Mr. Brad Redekopp (Saskatoon West, CPC): Can you provide some clarity on which officials? Are we talking about deputy ministers or assistant deputy ministers? Who is going to be briefing us?

Mr. Peter Schiefke: It would be at the assistant deputy minister and vice-president level.

The Chair: Does that clarify that for you, Ms. Findlay? Would you proceed with it? Most of us are new to this committee and we need at least a base understanding of what has transpired previously and what the officials know. Then we can move forward.

Of course, I was going to suggest that the subcommittee meet as well so that... I know the elections of the second and the third vice-chairs are not done, but we can invite the members of the different parties to at least be part of the steering committee and then, as motions come in, we can do further study. We can follow it step by step.

Ms. Findlay, do you have any objections to this motion?

Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay: I'll withdraw my amendment. Thank you for clarifying who would be coming. I appreciate that.

(Amendment withdrawn)

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: Ms. Collins.

Ms. Laurel Collins: I just had two other routine motions that I was hoping to put forward. I wasn't sure if this was the time.

The Chair: Yes, you can.

Ms. Laurel Collins: Thank you.

The second motion on the sheet that you're about to get is an amendment to the previous routine motion.

I'll proceed with the first one, regarding in camera proceedings. I move:

That any motion to go in camera should be debatable and amendable, and that the committee may only meet in camera for the following purposes: (a) to discuss administrative matters of the committee, (b) a draft report, (c) briefings concerning national security;

And furthermore, minutes of in camera meetings should reflect on the results of all votes taken by the committee while in camera, including how each member voted when a recorded vote is requested.

The Chair: Turning to discussion, could you explain why you're saying that?

● (0915)

Ms. Laurel Collins: Yes. Fundamentally, this is to make sure that we have the greatest amount of transparency when we're holding these meetings, that we're only going in camera when it is absolutely necessary, and that the public is invited into this space and is able to follow along in our discussions around the environment and climate change.

The Chair: You are aware that an in camera meeting is there because it's sensitive business. The public does not get invited. In camera meeting transcripts remain private.

To the people who need to ask questions, ask the questions and then I'll ask for a vote.

Yes, Mr. Longfield.

Mr. Lloyd Longfield: To my understanding, in camera procedures and motions are covered in the 1,400-page manual we have on proceedings. We should stay with the proceedings as they're outlined to us as members.

The Chair: Are there any other questions or comments?

Mr. Schiefke.

Mr. Peter Schiefke: Madam Chair, I'd like to add an amendment to that, if possible. I would add "to consider matters where privacy or the protection of personal information is required", if that's amenable to my honourable colleague.

Ms. Laurel Collins: That is amenable.

The Chair: I am taking advice from a clerk that this is not a very... He calls it a dangerous motion. It's not... How can we put it gently? It's not something that has been done, and shouldn't be done. There's a reason. As Mr. Longfield pointed out, there are 1,400 pages of procedures. There is a reason why in camera should stay in camera and private.

I'll go first to Mr. Aitchison.

Mr. Scott Aitchison: I would tend to agree with you, Madam Chair. The rules and procedures for going into camera are all very well laid out. This would strike me as not a routine procedure. You're fundamentally changing the way business is done.

At the very least, we certainly shouldn't consider this today but take it under advisement. I wouldn't want to be making changes to the standard procedures just on a whim.

The Chair: Ms. Collins.

Ms. Laurel Collins: My understanding is that this has passed at a number of other committees, including PROC.

The Chair: I have to go with Mr. Aitchison, on taking it under advisement. We need to figure out the pros and cons of it. Every committee is the master of its own destiny. What PROC decided may be...but I will ask for a vote if there are no other discussions.

Yes, Ms. Collins.

Ms. Laurel Collins: If the committee is wanting to think through this motion and look at the precedent set by a number of other committees, we could table it until our next meeting.

The Chair: Is that agreeable?

Yes, Madam.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ): I just wanted to add that, for me, what is written here is limiting. We may potentially need to meet in camera, but be unable to do so because what is written here is too restrictive. That is sort of how I feel right now. So I am perfectly fine with taking some time to think about this.

[*English*]

The Chair: Is everybody agreed?

(Motion allowed to stand)

The Chair: It will be tabled while we reflect on it.

The next item I'd like to....

I'm sorry. Have I jumped the gun on you?

Ms. Laurel Collins: It's about the timing to submit other motions.

The Chair: That's why I'd like to get the subcommittee established, so that the subcommittee can then receive motions and discuss the process and what we're going to study.

The normal practice has been that the vice-chairs from the different parties have been part of the subcommittee, but since there is no vice-chair from the Bloc and the NDP, representatives are acceptable. We could establish a subcommittee with Madam Findlay and Madam Pauzé. Also, we have Madam Collins and, from the Liberals, Mr. Scarpaleggia has been nominated.

The clerk will send out a notice. Every motion that needs to be sent can be sent to the clerk. The subcommittee will receive it, discuss it and present its plan to the committee for its approval. Is that agreed?

Okay. Is there any other business?

Seeing none, the meeting is adjourned.

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