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# Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics

EVIDENCE

**NUMBER 001**

Wednesday, February 19, 2020

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Chair: Ms. Rachael Harder





## Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics

Wednesday, February 19, 2020

• (1540)

[*English*]

**The Clerk of the Committee (Ms. Miriam Burke):** 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 and cannot entertain points of order or participate in debate.

[*Translation*]

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

[*English*]

I'm ready to receive motions for the chair.

**Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC):** I'd like to nominate Rachael Harder for chair.

**The Clerk:** Are there further motions?

(Motion agreed to)

I declare the motion carried and Ms. Harder duly elected chair of the committee.

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear!

**The Clerk:** I invite you to take the chair.

**The Chair (Ms. Rachael Harder (Lethbridge, CPC)):** Hello, honourable colleagues. Welcome. Thank you for your vote of confidence and for giving me the opportunity to serve in this capacity. It's something I very much look forward to doing.

I've given some thought to this role and what I would envision this looking like going forward. I recognize, of course, that we represent different parties, different viewpoints. Of course, there will be times when we disagree, but my hope is that there will be many times when we are able to work collaboratively on projects that will advance our parliamentary system and uphold democracy.

There are a few values that I would invite you to help me, as chair, uphold. I would love for this to be a place of openness, a place where there is diversity of thought and belief, and where that is mutually respected. I would love for this to be a place where we are able to communicate with one another in a courteous manner. Around this table that means going through the chair, I would ask respectfully. Outside of this table, I encourage you to engage in rich

dialogue with one another and to do so in a capacity that would help protect democracy.

As you're aware, at this table, it is our responsibility to bring about a measure of accountability to all those in public office. Within that, there is a fair bit of non-partisanship. There are four commissioners we will hopefully have the opportunity to hear from at different points in time, or perhaps all at once, depending on the will of this committee. There will be numerous other studies brought forward, including things having to do with lobbying, ethics, privacy or what have you. We get to decide. Again, it would be my hope that in many of these directions we are able to come together collaboratively. Where that is not possible, it would be my hope that we are at least respectful toward one another.

It is with anticipation that I take on this role. I am looking forward to doing my best to facilitate a culture of deep honour and respect around this table. Thank you for giving me that opportunity.

With that, I will move to more of the routine things we need to get done today. The first is that, if the committee is in agreement, I would invite the clerk to proceed with the election of the vice-chairs.

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Clerk:** Pursuant to Standing Order 106(2), the first vice-chair must be a member of the government party.

[*Translation*]

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

**Mrs. Élisabeth Brière (Sherbrooke, Lib.):** Madam Chair, I nominate Brenda Shanahan.

• (1545)

**The Clerk:** It has been moved that Brenda Shanahan be elected as first vice-chair.

Are there any further motions?

**Mrs. Brenda Shanahan (Châteauguay—Lacolle, Lib.):** This isn't for this position; it's for the position of second vice-chair, right?

**The Clerk:** No. We are dealing with this position.

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

I declare the motion carried and Mrs. Shanahan duly elected as first vice-chair of the committee.

(Motion agreed to)

[English]

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

**Mr. Michael Levitt (York Centre, Lib.):** I have a point of order. I'm aware that currently before PROC, the possibility of having an additional vice-chair is being examined. I understand also that it's going to the Board of Internal Economy, I think, tomorrow.

Would it be possible, if there's no opposition, to just postpone the election the of the second vice-chair until the next meeting so that PROC and the Board of Internal Economy can at least hear this? It shouldn't create any conflict in what the final result might be, but it might allow us to add an additional member as well, if that's okay, if it's not seen as being offside with anyone.

**The Chair:** I would ask for a show of hands at this point in time, unless there is further discussion from any sides.

[Translation]

**Ms. Marie-Hélène Gaudreau (Laurentides—Labelle, BQ):** I have a question, Madam Chair.

What are the issues if we do not make a decision today and we defer it to the next meeting?

[English]

**The Chair:** It's my understanding that there is no problem. It just means that at a future meeting—if time permits, the next meeting, as long as there's a decision that has been made—we can discuss our second vice-chair and take a vote at that point in time.

**Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP):** Thank you, Madam Chair.

In response to my colleague and to my other colleagues. I'm very interested in having the vote, but I think I'll accept the motion and my request will be to have the vote at the next meeting. Once this has been dealt with, then we can deal with this because we do need to deal with the issue of the vice-chairs. If we can have the assurance from our colleagues that this will be put on the agenda.... I don't think it should take very long, but we need to make sure that once we hear back from PROC and internal economy, we're structured.

**The Chair:** Excellent. Thank you, Mr. Angus.

Mr. Levitt.

**Mr. Michael Levitt:** It's in no way my intention to onward postpone this. I just know that those issues are literally on the table now. I believe we are supporting the addition of an additional vice-chair. Let's at least hear.... Again, it's not meant to delay or cause any issue beyond. If it's going to get dealt with tomorrow and we can deal with this on Monday, that would be great.

**The Chair:** Ms. Shanahan.

[Translation]

**Mrs. Brenda Shanahan:** I would still like to have an assurance from the clerk that having only one vice-chair is not detrimental in any way and that no situation will arise that leaves us without a second vice-chair.

[English]

**The Chair:** According to procedure, we have to have a second vice-chair, so that's certainly not brought under question. That will be put into place. The question is whether or not we will have two second vice-chairs. That is a decision that is before PROC at the moment and a decision that should be reached, I believe, tomorrow. Once that decision is finalized, then we can move forward with either putting one second vice-chair in place or putting two second vice-chairs in place.

I would just ask again for the support of the committee to go ahead and put the routine motions in place.

• (1550)

**Mrs. Élisabeth Brière:** Madam Chair, thank you.

I'd like to move the following routine motions.

**The Chair:** Perhaps, if I may, just give me one moment to confer with the clerk. I will suspend for two seconds.

• (1550)

(Pause)

• (1550)

**The Chair:** I will bring us back to order at this time.

What I will do is this. I have a copy of the motions in front of me and I'd like to go through them one by one and the committee will either say yea or nay to each one. Then if there are additions to be made at the end, we will have an opportunity to discuss them. Of course, throughout, as I go through each motion, you will have the opportunity to present changes should you wish to do so, and then the committee will vote on that.

Ms. Shanahan.

[Translation]

**Mrs. Brenda Shanahan:** My question is for you, Madam Clerk.

Is it usual for the person making the motions to read them? Does the chair have to read them or can either one of them do it?

[English]

**The Chair:** We can do it either way. If it is the wish of Ms. Brière, then she is welcome to read each motion.

I give you the floor.

[Translation]

**Mrs. Élisabeth Brière:** So the motion 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.

[English]

**The Chair:** I will call the question for the committee to vote.

(Motion agreed to)

Then I'll invite the analysts to come to the table.

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Charlie Angus:** Can I interrupt on a point of personal privilege?

This is the best team in Parliament. This team is extraordinary. I am very honoured that they chose to come back to our little abode. You will be very impressed with their work.

**The Chair:** That's excellent. Thank you, Mr. Angus.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Greg Fergus (Hull—Aylmer, Lib.):** A point of order, Madam Clerk.

I would like to get to know this dynamite team better. Can you introduce them to us?

[*English*]

**Ms. Alexandra Savoie (Committee Researcher):** Hi everyone. My name is Alexandra Savoie. I've been an analyst at the Library of Parliament since January 2018 and with this committee since January 2018.

• (1555)

[*Translation*]

I am a lawyer by training. In a previous life, I worked in the private sector. I also articulated at the Supreme Court and I have worked in not-for-profit organizations.

It will be a pleasure for me to help you during this session.

**Mr. Greg Fergus:** Thank you.

**Mr. Maxime-Olivier Thibodeau (Committee Researcher):** Thank you, Madam Chair.

Thank you for your kind words, Mr. Angus; they are much appreciated.

My name is Maxime-Olivier Thibodeau. I have been an analyst at the Library of Parliament for almost 10 years. For almost all that time, I have worked with this committee. Generally, I should be able to grasp and understand the issues being dealt with, at least I hope so. I am here of my own free will. I assure you that it is not a punishment. These are subjects that get me excited.

It will be a pleasure for me to continue working with this committee. I see it as a privilege. If you wish, we could—later, or now, if you prefer—explain more about our role in supporting your work.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Would you be able to provide us with a brief overview of the work you will do for this committee?

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Maxime-Olivier Thibodeau:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I will continue in French.

For the benefit of new members and those who have not sat on this committee for many years, like Mr. Gourde and Mr. Angus, here is what we do.

We provide you with parliamentary information and research services so that you have all the information you need to do your work. For this committee in particular, we prepare briefing notes that explain for you the issues discussed at each meeting, we intro-

duce the witnesses you invite, and we suggest questions you may wish to ask them.

If appropriate, we provide background documents to give you more detailed and in-depth information on a particular subject, depending on the study on your agenda. If you wish, we can also help you prepare your work by suggesting topics for study, by giving you all the information you need and by doing all the research you require to plan your work. We can plan as you wish, days, months, or even years in advance. You lead, we follow.

Feel free to call on us, either for committee work or individually and in confidence. We are at your service.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Thank you.

I'll let you continue, Madame Brière.

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Élisabeth Brière:** I move:

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

(Motion agreed to)

Under the heading “Reduced Quorum”, 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 (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)

Under the heading “Questioning of Witnesses”, I move:

That witnesses be given ten (10) minutes for 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: Round 1:

Conservative Party,

Liberal Party,

Bloc Québécois,

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)

• (1600)

**Mrs. Élisabeth Brière:** Under the heading “Documents Distribution”, I move:

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 the witnesses be advised accordingly.

(Motion agreed to)

Under the heading “Working Meals”, I move:

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

(Motion agreed to)

Under the heading “Witnesses' Expenses”, I move:

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

(Motion agreed to)

Under the heading “Staff at in camera Meetings”, I move:

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)

Under the heading “In camera Meetings 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)

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Mr. Angus.

**Mr. Charlie Angus:** I'm sorry to interrupt such a smooth-moving machine. I have a motion that I wanted to bring in terms of in camera meetings. We could do it now because we're discussing in camera meetings, or we could do it at the end. How would you like to proceed, Madam Chair?

**The Chair:** I would allow your comments to be made at this point in time.

**Mr. Charlie Angus:** I bring this forward while we're on in camera proceedings. I know we're going to get along very well in this committee and we're going to respect each other, but I have seen in the past abuses of in camera, where, as you've said, the importance of democracy is sometimes put under a cone of silence. I just thought we should have some clear rules about how we go in camera and what is admissible.

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, with the exception of votes regarding the consideration of draft reports—

because that would not be acceptable

—including how each member voted when a recorded vote is requested.

**The Chair:** Do you have copies of it, Mr. Angus?

**Mr. Charlie Angus:** There are copies of the one amendment, which I think the clerk clarified has all but the exception of votes on a draft report.

**Mr. Han Dong (Don Valley North, Lib.):** Can we get a quick five-minute recess so that we can take a look at it and then talk to colleagues about it?

**The Chair:** I'm happy to suspend for five minutes. Then I'll call us back to the table.

**Mr. Han Dong:** Thank you, Chair.

• (1600) \_\_\_\_\_ (Pause) \_\_\_\_\_

• (1605)

**The Chair:** Order, please. A motion is on the floor.

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Brenda Shanahan:** Madam Chair, we asked for the complete new version of the translation, which includes the new sentence. Do we have it?

• (1610)

[*English*]

**The Chair:** I believe you do. It should look like this.

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Brenda Shanahan:** No. Something was added and we do not have the new version. It seems that it is being distributed now.

**A voice:** I have it.

**Mrs. Brenda Shanahan:** Okay, excellent. It has red on both sides.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** I will also need that, please.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Charlie Angus:** Excuse me, madam, I realize that we made a mistake about a change needed on that line. Has the translation been done correctly?

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Ms. Shanahan, are you folks ready to go on your side, or do you need another minute?

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Brenda Shanahan:** It's all fine, we do not need more time.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** This motion has been put forward by Mr. Angus with regard to in camera proceedings. At this point in time, I would ask if there are any comments from the floor with regard to this motion.

Mr. Fergus.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Greg Fergus:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

I had a discussion with Mr. Angus, and I feel that he would be in favour of adding a fourth paragraph, paragraph (d), which would deal with protecting the personal information of those testifying before the committee.

There are occasions where we have to mention personal information of individuals in our discussions, and we do not want that to end up in the committee minutes. It is something that we must protect, and I feel that Mr. Angus would agree.

[English]

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Ms. Shanahan.

[Translation]

**Mrs. Brenda Shanahan:** I agree with the addition.

I have just one question. When we are talking about individuals, does it mean the witnesses appearing before the committee, or can it be any individual present at the meeting?

The educator in me wants to stress the point that, in French, we have to correct (a), (b), (c) and (d).

I see that it is actually a list of conditions. I am just afraid that there could be another condition. I would like to see a fifth point. Certainly, the committee is free to decide to hold a meeting in camera should that fifth situation arise. It is at the committee's discretion, of course. It can be anyone or any combination of members present.

I dread lists that are too defined, because one can never think of everything that might come up.

[English]

**The Chair:** I'll just offer a comment on that before moving to Mr. Angus. Anytime the committee puts a motion in place—any motion—the committee does have the ability to overrule that motion with unanimous consent. This would be the standing motion for most cases, but should there be a case where we feel that there's an exception or the committee feels that there's an exception then, through unanimous consent, that could be overruled.

Mr. Angus.

**Mr. Charlie Angus:** I'm very supportive of my colleague. However, I think we need to be specific. I'm trying to think of the language, because anything that happens in this committee could embarrass someone because we deal with ethics and breaches, etc. If we have to have discussions that affect the private information of individuals in extraordinary circumstances or that are not germane to our study.... Sometimes we will get information on a person and will want to talk about whether or not a witness is appropriate, and we have to talk about that amongst ourselves. However, we can't use in camera to avoid discussing certain people who may have to come. I just want to get clearer language on how that would be used so that we're very clear on it.

• (1615)

**The Chair:** We'll hear Ms. Shanahan and then Mr. Fergus.

**Mrs. Brenda Shanahan:** I'd like some clarification. Is my colleague asking or requesting that we discuss potential witnesses in public? I would have a big problem with that. There is a difference between embarrassing somebody and protecting their confidentiality and privacy. There's an extreme difference, and I know this committee has studied that. Discussing people in public is not on for me.

**Mr. Charlie Angus:** Certainly when we discuss witnesses, we do that in camera because we have to set priorities and we don't want that information to be misused or misinterpreted, but we do discuss people here. That's part of what we do with ethics. Issues are brought forward. We name people we think should be brought. That's sometimes done in public. I think the issue is being able to say, "I think we should go in camera" if we're going to discuss something of a personal nature that should not be germane to the committee. How can we just define that a little more clearly so that we're not abusing that, but we're saying that if we're going to go in camera on something it's because there is specific personal information that should be brought to committee but should not be in the realm of the public?

Can Mr. Fergus give us some clearer language?

[Translation]

**Mr. Greg Fergus:** I would like to do that, Mr. Angus, but you have caught me off guard, because you are much more experienced than I am at this committee and with the matters we are discussing.

I will make one suggestion. I feel that everyone is in favour of the amendment you are proposing. Would it be possible to set it aside for the moment and work on it—it could be done by the chair, yourself and the analysts—in order to find the right way to express everything? We could discuss it at our next meeting.

It is simply that Mrs. Shanahan has just raised an important point.

But I am in favour of what you have just proposed, Mr. Angus. We don't want to shy away from discussing appropriate committee matters in public, but I do want to avoid situations where things are not appropriate. It would be better to have a little more time to work on those amendments some more.

[English]

**The Chair:** We'll hear Ms. Shanahan, and then Mr. Angus.

**Mrs. Brenda Shanahan:** I'm open to my colleague's suggestion, but perhaps it will be helpful for Mr. Angus to just add three words—it certainly will be helpful for me—to part (a): to discuss administrative matters of the committee "and witness selection".

**The Chair:** Ms. Shanahan, with regard to the amendment you've made to (a), we would have to put that on hold for a moment, because we can only discuss one at a time at the table. I have to take a vote for (d) before being able to move on to that.

Before I call the vote, Mr. Angus had his hand up to comment on (d).

**Mr. Charlie Angus:** I think we should vote on this. I don't think this is all that difficult. I will just offer this. It's always important to remember that a camel was a racehorse that was designed by a committee. The more we talk sometimes, the further away we get.

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

**Mr. Charlie Angus:** I think the intention of my colleague is fair. I think we have to trust each other that we're not going to abuse that. I'm fair with the language; I think there's an understanding here. We do not want to damage someone who has not done anything wrong but there may be information, so I think it's just fair. I'm willing to accept it. I don't think we can anticipate all the ways in which it will be used, and the language may get harder and harder, so I would agree with that.

Also, I certainly think the amendment on (a) is excellent, because that's how all committees should do witness selection. It should be in camera.

• (1620)

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Again, we're just dealing with (d) at this point in time. Seeing no other speakers, I would ask, do we have final language with regard to (d)?

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Greg Fergus:** Madam Chair, in English, I just said:

[*English*]

“and protect the privacy of any individual”.

**The Chair:** It's “to protect the privacy of an individual”.

Mr. Fergus, is that correct?

**Mr. Greg Fergus:** What I wrote was “and protect the privacy of any individual”, but if I don't have the right wording, please, I'm open to suggestions. Do you want to maybe say “and protect...”?

**The Chair:** At another committee, one of the suggestions that was put forward, which I would present to this committee, is “to discuss matters involving an individual's private information”.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Greg Fergus:** That works for me.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Excellent. I will call the question, then.

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

At this point in time, then, I would move to (a). On the table, we have “to discuss administrative matters of the committee and witness selection”. Is there any discussion with regard to that amendment?

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Brenda Shanahan:** Did we have an amendment for paragraph (a)?

**Mr. Greg Fergus:** That is what we are discussing.

**Mrs. Brenda Shanahan:** Right, I am sorry. Thank you.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Would you like me to read it one more time?

**An hon. member:** Yes.

Sure. It's “to discuss administrative matters of the committee and witness selection”. Are there any comments?

I will call the question.

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

At this point in time, I will ask for any further discussion with regard to the motion as a whole with regard to in camera proceedings.

I will call the question. At this point in time, then, we are voting on the entire motion as a whole—the motion as amended. Just to be clear, we're talking about this entire section. We voted on (d). We voted on (a). Now I'm calling the vote with regard to the entire paragraph.

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

Thank you. We will move forward.

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Élisabeth Brière:** Under the heading “Notice of Motions”, I move:

That a 48 hours notice, interpreted as two 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 pm 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*]

**The Chair:** That's excellent. Thank you.

That brings us to completion then with—

**Mrs. Élisabeth Brière:** Excuse me, I have a last one.

**The Chair:** Okay, my apologies.

• (1625)

**Mrs. Élisabeth Brière:** This is the last page.

[*Translation*]

Under the heading “Independent Members—Clause by Clause”, 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-cause 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;

(c) during the clause-by-cause consideration of the 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)

[*English*]

**The Chair:** I believe that now....



Mr. Kurek.

**Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC):** Madam Chair, thank you very much.

I would move one further motion, if that would be all right, in line with the discussion surrounding accountability. The motion is that all meetings other than those deemed in camera will be televised or, if that is not possible, then webcast.

**Mr. Charlie Angus:** I love television.

**Mr. Damien Kurek:** I'm assured there will be great viewership too.

**The Chair:** Based on what the clerk tells me, I would bring forward a consideration for the committee.

The way the motion reads right now is that if we do not have access to a room where we would be televised, or able to use webcast, then we cannot meet. That's just so we understand the limitations that are on this committee with that motion. One alternative to the motion, or one addition, could be that we could say "if possible". If it's the will of the committee to keep the motion the way it is, by all means that's allowable. It's simply a point for consideration.

We'll hear Mr. Kurek, and then Mr. Angus.

**Mr. Damien Kurek:** Chair, I think it would be reasonable to have the language "where possible" but to expand that to "that the effort be made where possible".

**The Chair:** Okay.

Mr. Angus.

**Mr. Charlie Angus:** Thank you. In all my years on committees, I've seen that we sometimes get bumped because something big moves, and we get pushed out and the committee hearings have to go on.

Bob Zimmer did an excellent job of always trying to make sure we got a room with a TV, and I trust that you will do the same. I think it's important. If the meeting has to go on, the meeting has to go on, so if we have language such that we trust that you will do your best to make sure they're televised and recorded, then I think that is sufficient for the New Democrats.

**The Chair:** Excellent.

Mr. Dong.

**Mr. Han Dong:** I just want to ask a question about what the experience has been. What if the committee travels outside of Ottawa? Would this requirement or this motion still stand if the committee were travelling?

• (1630)

**The Chair:** It would be my understanding that this motion would apply only to those official committee meetings that take place here.

I'll just ask the clerk, to verify that that is correct.

At this point in time, the clerk is not 100% sure. I think by adding "if possible" to the motion, we should have our bases covered.

**Mr. Han Dong:** I'm okay with that.

**The Chair:** It should be okay.

Mr. Fergus.

**Mr. Greg Fergus:** My experience at the finance committee—and we try to do everything publicly—has been that when we're travelling, that's not seen as an official committee meeting but as sort of a sub.... I think we even talk about that later on, about not presenting motions when committees travel.

We'll just be adding to our costs if we're making sure that there has to be not only television but translation. I would say let's keep it to regular full committee meetings that are held here in Ottawa as opposed to adding this burden.

Does this committee travel?

**The Chair:** We're going to find out.

**Mr. Charlie Angus:** We get turned down all the time. Get used to it.

**Mr. Greg Fergus:** If we were to, I would say that we wouldn't want to increase the costs, because it's expensive to have video services and conferencing services for meetings on the road.

**The Chair:** Fair enough.

I believe that by saying "if possible", we're giving some room for manoeuvring.

**Mr. Greg Fergus:** Could we say "if practical"?

**The Chair:** It's at the will of the committee.

**Mr. Damien Kurek:** Saying "where possible", I believe, would be general enough language to allow the chair discretion, in terms of location, for meetings here or for committee work outside of the capital.

**Mr. Greg Fergus:** I actually disagree. I'm not trying to be disagreeable, and truly, Mr. Kurek, I hope you understand where I'm coming from. I think "where practical" is better language, because on the Hill it's certainly practical and it's certainly possible, and I think the default value is that we would almost always do it with the very rare exception that we got pushed for some reason. However, on the road, it is possible, but it's just not practical.

I would just stay away from that language, because otherwise we'll never get on the road because our costs will be that much higher and we won't get approval from the committee, the Board of Internal Economy or the group that evaluates which committees can travel and when.

**The Chair:** Both of these words could be included, to say "if practical and possible", and then the differentiation is clearly made.

**Mr. Damien Kurek:** Sure. That's fine.

**Mr. Michael Barrett:** We have collaboration and consensus.

**The Chair:** It seems to be the will of the individual who moved this motion then to accept those two words, that if it's "practical" and "possible", then of course our committee meetings would be televised or webcast.

I will now call the question.

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

Seeing no other desire to speak and having gone through the routine motions, I would now move to adjourn the committee.

With that I would ask all of you to consider possible studies for this committee, and it would be ideal for us to discuss those motions on Monday.

I would ask that you put together your respective motions for study and that you send them to the clerk by tomorrow at four o'clock, given our routine motion that says we need 48 hours or two sleeps. Also according to that motion, you are asked to have them in both official languages, French and English. Then on Monday we will come to the table ready to discuss and make decisions with regard to the studies we will be taking on, going forward.

Mr. Angus.

• (1635)

**Mr. Charlie Angus:** Thank you, Madam Chair, for allowing me, as the old man of this committee, having served a lifetime sentence of eight years here, to speak.

I would just suggest that, while we're going to have studies, we also have officers of Parliament who report to this committee. For everyone coming up to speed, we should send out invitations to the officers of Parliament—ethics, privacy, lobbying, information—asking them to present to our committee so that we all are brought up to speed. They're not all going to be able to come initially, but if you were tasked to do that over the next few weeks or month, it would give all of us a chance to get a much better sense of the work they do and how it relates to the work we do, because they report to us.

**The Chair:** To be clear, Mr. Angus, do you wish to move a motion?

**Mr. Charlie Angus:** It could be in the form of a motion. It would say that we would invite officers of Parliament who report to this committee, as soon as possible, to present their work to our committee so that we can be apprised of how we work together.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Ms. Shanahan.

**Mrs. Brenda Shanahan:** Just on that, isn't it normal that we have the supplementary estimates or the main estimates? I'd like to get an idea of what the agenda looks like because we will have people possibly coming already in a routine fashion. I'd like to get a sense of what that calendar looks like. This is the first time I am on the ethics committee but I know that on other committees—I was on public accounts—there is a certain rhythm and cycle to the topics that get discussed. I would like to have a more fulsome discussion of that before we get going with seeing people.

**The Chair:** I've been informed by the clerk that there are no supplementary estimates that are brought to this committee.

**Mr. Greg Ferguson:** There are main estimates.

**Mrs. Brenda Shanahan:** What would be the timing on that?

**The Chair:** According to our green book, the main estimates for the fiscal year are required to be tabled in the House of Commons and referred to the standing committees by no later than March 1 of each year. Then if a committee chooses to study and report on the main estimates, it must report them no later than May 31. Should

the committee wish to do so, we would need to look at the main estimates sometime between March 1 and the end of May.

Because it's not March 1 yet, we haven't received them yet, so there is still a bit of time.

Ms. Shanahan.

**Mrs. Brenda Shanahan:** I just want to make the point that I'm not against this, of course not. These are our four commissioners who are very important to this committee and, on an educational basis, I'm all for it, but I'd like to have a more fulsome discussion because there are a number of topics. I'd like for us to be able to think about who we are bringing and how we are bringing them and what that means in terms of having the estimates come forward or not.

I like that you called for an adjournment, quite frankly, Madam Chair, because it's been a full day.

• (1640)

**Mr. Charlie Angus:** It doesn't matter to me one way or the other. The mains, when we deal with the commissioners and we're talking about their budgets, that's one thing. Their overall function and so on.... They report to us, so if the committee doesn't want to bring them, that's okay. We can bring them whenever. I just thought it would be a good way to start, because the fundamental work of this committee is tied to privacy, ethics and information. We tend to invite them, but we can have that discussion whenever. It's no big deal for me.

**The Chair:** Mr. Barrett.

**Mr. Michael Barrett:** Thanks, Chair.

Mr. Angus raises a good point about introducing committee members to each of the portfolios and the work of the commissioners. As far as setting timelines, with respect to Mrs. Shanahan's point and seeing what the calendar looks like, perhaps if Mr. Angus is agreeable, on Monday we could see if there's an opportunity for us to schedule them. When we're looking to populate our calendar with some motions, that would be a good time for that conversation.

I've had the preliminary conversations with some of the commissioners or their staff, and their presentations to us may give rise to work that we may wish to undertake at the committee. Though I have been known to head off in a direction without first reading what's in front of me, I think there is an opportunity here for us to maybe hear from the commissioners about the last Parliament and any of the work they've undertaken since the last Parliament. Some of the commissioners have never been before this committee since they were appointed. There's a good opportunity there.

**Mr. Charlie Angus:** I'm not a hard guy.

**The Chair:** Mr. Angus, because there's a motion on the table, I either have to call the question or you need to withdraw it.

**Mr. Charlie Angus:** I will withdraw it.

**The Chair:** Do I have the agreement of the committee to withdraw the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

(Motion withdrawn)

**The Chair:** I move to adjourn then. Have a great day.

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