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Standing Committee on International Trade

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Wednesday, October 14, 2020

Chair: The Honourable Judy A. Sgro



Standing Committee on International Trade

Wednesday, October 14, 2020

• (1530)

[*English*]

The Clerk of the Committee (Ms. Christine Lafrance): 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 and cannot 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 government party.

I am ready to receive motions for the chair.

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal (Surrey—Newton, Lib.): I nominate Judy Sgro as the chair.

The Clerk: It was moved by Mr. Dhaliwal that the Honourable Judy A. Sgro be elected as chair of the committee.

Are there any other motions?

(Motion agreed to)

Seeing none, I declare Ms. Sgro the chair of the Standing Committee on International Trade.

The Chair (Hon. Judy A. Sgro (Humber River—Black Creek, Lib.)): Thank you all very much for the vote of confidence.

I have worked with some of you before in other committees. I think that we worked well in the last committee session. People know me as being pretty patient. I want to make sure everybody gets their fair time and a great opportunity to ask their questions, and so on. Thank you for the vote of confidence.

I have a question for you all. Does the committee wish to proceed at this time with the election of the vice-chairs?

The Clerk: I'm sorry, but I just got a message that the technicians are requesting a pause. I'll just make sure that everything is fine and then I will come back.

[*Technical Difficulty—Editor*]

[*Translation*]

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

I'm now prepared to receive motions for the position of first vice-chair.

Ms. Bendayan, the floor is yours.

Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Outremont, Lib.): I'd like to nominate Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay as vice-chair of the committee.

The Clerk: Mr. Savard-Tremblay may be nominated, but as second vice-chair. The first chair must be a member of the official opposition.

[*English*]

Is there a motion for the first vice-chair, who must be a member of the official opposition?

Mr. Randy Hoback (Prince Albert, CPC): I nominate Tracy Gray.

The Clerk: Thank you, sir.

Mrs. Tracy Gray (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC): I accept the nomination. Thank you.

The Clerk: Are there any further motions?

(Motion agreed to)

Seeing none, I declare Ms. Tracy Gray the first vice-chair of the Standing Committee on International Trade.

[*Translation*]

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

I'm now prepared to receive motions for the position of second vice-chair.

Ms. Bendayan, the floor is yours.

Ms. Rachel Bendayan: Thank you.

I nominate Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay as second vice-chair.

The Clerk: It was moved by Ms. Bendayan that Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay be elected as second vice-chair of the committee.

Are there any further motions?

(Motion agreed to)

• (1535)

I declare the motion carried and Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay duly elected as second vice-chair of the committee.

[*English*]

Madame Sgro, the floor is yours.

The Chair: Madam Clerk, can we now proceed with the rest of the agenda?

The Clerk: If it's the will of the committee, we can proceed with the routine motions.

The Chair: Okay.

As you are all aware, the webcast will always show the person speaking rather than the entirety of the committee. To ensure an orderly meeting, I have to outline a few rules to follow.

Interpretation in this video conference will work very much as in a regular committee meeting. You have the choice at the bottom of your screen of either “floor”, “English” or “French”. As you are speaking, if you plan to alternate from one language to the other, you will need to also switch the interpretation channel so that it aligns with the language you are speaking. You may also want to allow for a short pause when switching languages.

Before speaking, please wait until I recognize you by name. When you are ready to speak, you can click on your microphone icon to activate your mike. I remind you that all comments by members should be addressed through the chair.

Should members need to request the floor, they should activate their mike and state that they have a point of order. If a member wishes to intervene on a point of order that has been raised by another member, they should use the “raise hand” function. This will signal to the chair your interest in speaking.

In order to do so, you should click on “Participants” at the bottom of the screen. When the list pops up, you will see next to your name that you can click on “raise hand”.

When speaking, please speak slowly and clearly. When you are not speaking, your mike should be on mute, and the use of a headset is strongly encouraged.

Should any technical challenges arise—and I'm sure they will, in relation to, for example, interpretation—or if a problem with your audio arises, please advise the chair immediately, and the technical team will work to resolve the issue. Please note that we may need to suspend during these times, as we need to ensure that all members are able to participate fully.

Before we start, can everyone click on their screen in the top right-hand corner and ensure that you are all on gallery view?

Is everyone on gallery view? With this view, we can all see all of the participants in a grid view. It will ensure that all video participants can see each other.

If the committee wishes, we can now proceed to the consideration of routine motions.

Ms. Rachel Bendayan: Madam Chair, may I present routine motions at this time?

The Chair: Please go ahead.

Ms. Rachel Bendayan: I will begin in English, and for the benefit of our translators, I will switch to French about midway through routine motions.

Beginning with “Analyst Services”, the motion reads:

That the committee retain, as needed and at the discretion of the chair, the services of one of more analysts from the Library of Parliament to assist it in its work.

With respect to “Subcommittee on Agenda and Procedure”, we have:

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

With respect to “Meeting Without a Quorum”—

Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): I have a quick question, Madam Chair. Are we going to be dealing with these one at a time or are we going to be dealing with them all together? How is it your intention to proceed?

The Chair: If we have unanimous consent, we can deal with them all on the completion of the presentation of the motions.

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: Well, I do have suggestions for some slight alterations, so I'll ask how you want me to deal with those. Do you want me to raise them as the motion is read, or do you want me to wait until the end and then go back?

The Chair: My suggestion is that we wait until Ms. Bendayan finishes and then we will go to you, Mr. Blaikie, for any suggestions you may have.

Is that acceptable to the committee?

• (1540)

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal: On a point of order, Madam Chair, this morning at the immigration and citizenship committee, we read one motion at a time. I think it was as fast as this, and it's not going to be as confusing as going back and forth. I think we should do one topic at a time.

The Chair: Okay, let's try it, then.

Mr. Blaikie, Ms. Bendayan will start again with the routine motions, and you'll have to indicate where you want to make an amendment or a change.

Will that work for everybody?

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: That works for me.

The Chair: Okay, Ms. Bendayan, we'll go back to you.

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: There is no need to repeat the first motion on my account, but I do have a suggestion for the second motion.

Ms. Rachel Bendayan: Is that on the subcommittee on agenda and procedure?

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: Yes. We would add “recognized” in front of “Party” so that it would read partway through, “the Chair, one member from each recognized Party; and that the subcommittee work in the spirit of collaboration.”

The Chair: Does anyone have any objection to that?

No. Everyone is in favour of adding that one word.

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

Do you want to continue, Ms. Bendayan?

Ms. Rachel Bendayan: Yes, thank you.

With respect to “Meeting Without a Quorum”, we have:

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.

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: On that, Madam Chair, if I may, I understand that a number of committees in this session have specified that of the four members present, there should be two from government and two from opposition. I would propose that change.

The Chair: Is there any discussion on that?

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal: That's exactly what we did at the immigration committee this morning.

The Chair: Everyone is in favour of the proposed amendment by Mr. Blaikie, then. It will be two members from the government and two from opposition to make up the quorum.

(Amendment agreed to [See Minutes of Proceedings])

Ms. Bendayan, please continue.

Ms. Rachel Bendayan: With respect to “Time for Opening Remarks and Questioning of Witnesses”, we have:

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: 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.

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: Again, Madam Chair, I have a change to suggest for that motion.

I understand that the procedure and house affairs committee, and 14 committees in total so far this session, have adopted a second rotation that states, “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, Conservative Party, five (5) minutes, and Liberal Party, five (5) minutes.”

I propose that we change the second rotation to reflect the changes that other committees have made.

The Chair: Is there any discussion on the proposed amendment by Mr. Blaikie? Everyone's good?

(Amendment agreed to [See Minutes of Proceedings])

Thank you, Mr. Blaikie.

We go back to Ms. Bendayan, then.

[Translation]

Ms. Rachel Bendayan: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Here's the routine motion regarding document 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.

[English]

The Chair: Is there any discussion or comment? No.

Please continue, Madam Bendayan.

[Translation]

Ms. Rachel Bendayan: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Here's the motion regarding working meals:

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: Go ahead, Mr. Dhaliwal.

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal: Madam Chair, because we are changing somewhat here and some members will be joining virtually, the working meeting lunches should only be for the members who will be present in person.

• (1545)

The Chair: Okay.

Go ahead, Ms. Gray.

Mrs. Tracy Gray: Madam Chair, we might want to have wording to have people confirm their physical presence for the meeting, just as a way of clarification. Then we know how many lunches to order.

The Chair: Excellent. Absolutely.

Is that okay? All right.

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: Do we need a certain period of time before the meeting by which members would give notice? Is it 24 hours or 48 hours or...?

The Clerk: The caterers need 48 hours' notice to cater individual lunches in the meeting room.

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: Would you like 72 hours' notice, then, just to make your life a little less complicated?

The Clerk: I'm not sure it needs to be in the motion, but there could be an understanding that I would send an email around asking who would be present in Ottawa. I would provide the deadline in the email.

The Chair: Are we good with that? We are.

Ms. Bendayan, you may continue.

[Translation]

Ms. Rachel Bendayan: Here's the motion regarding the travel, accommodation and living expenses of witnesses:

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.

[English]

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: I have a question about this one. I really don't know the answer. The clerk may have some idea.

I'm wondering whether some people in these times might need a bit of support to get to where they can participate electronically, and whether in cases when we might otherwise have spent money to bring people to Ottawa, we may be able to assist in giving them the technical capacity, if they lack it, to participate in meetings. I mean something within reason; I'm not talking about buying them a computer or something like that.

I'm wondering what the understanding around this subject is. The trade committee has less experience with it than some other committees. I'm wondering whether some flexibility in the budget so as to provide a bit of technical assistance would be appropriate, or whether it's not needed because the House is able to support witnesses from its own budget anyway.

I'm just looking for a little information on this question.

The Chair: Let me ask the clerk to comment.

I agree with Mr. Blaikie that we're in unusual times. If a small number of dollars have to be spent to ensure that we can get to hear a witness, I think that's important as well.

Madam Clerk, have you any comment?

The Clerk: These days, by the motion that was adopted on September 23, all witnesses have to appear by video conference. They will all be on Zoom. They're not coming to Ottawa; there are no witnesses in the room.

That said, if a witness needs to travel to get a good connection, this motion would apply.

Mr. Randy Hoback: That makes sense.

The Clerk: We are also providing a headset to witnesses who don't have a headset to make sure the sound is good. However, with regard to buying computers, I'm not sure that would be in the... Maybe they could rent one. I don't know how this could work. It would have to be on a case-by-case basis.

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: This would allow them to travel somewhere where they can get a good connection. The House provides a headset in any event. They have the technical support of House staff if they need to download Zoom, or whatever it is they need to do.

The Clerk: Yes. There are some tests done with the witnesses ahead of time by the House of Commons technicians.

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: That sounds good.

The Chair: We can deal with that on a case-by-case basis.

Ms. Bendayan, please continue.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Rachel Bendayan: The motion concerning access to in camera meetings reads as follows:

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.

[*English*]

The Chair: Are there any comments?

Go ahead, Ms. Gray.

Mrs. Tracy Gray: I wanted some clarification regarding in camera meetings, because sometimes there are some differences there.

Looking at what other committees have done that sat over the summer, I'm wondering if we can ensure, for clarification, that for in camera meetings we do have it documented that members of Parliament can also have one staff member for each MP and from each House officer. The whip's office would also be allowed to attend. Those would, of course, be over Zoom.

• (1550)

The Chair: Is everyone okay with that? Good. Thank you, Mrs. Gray.

Ms. Bendayan, please continue.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Rachel Bendayan: The motion concerning transcripts of in camera meetings reads as follows:

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.

[*English*]

The Chair: Is everyone all right with that?

Ms. Bendayan, please continue.

Ms. Rachel Bendayan: With respect to notice of motion:

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.

The Chair: Is everyone all right with that? Yes.

Ms. Bendayan, please continue.

Ms. Rachel Bendayan: With respect to orders of reference from the House respecting bills:

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.

The Chair: Is everyone all right with that? We are.

Ms. Bendayan, please continue.

Ms. Rachel Bendayan: Finally, with respect to ministers' appearance:

That whenever a minister appears before the committee, every effort should be made in order for the meeting to be televised.

The Chair: Is everyone all right with that? Yes.

Ms. Bendayan, please continue.

Ms. Rachel Bendayan: There is one more. It is with respect to participation of independent members:

That a member of Parliament who is not a member of a caucus represented on the committee and who seeks the right to speak during the questioning of witnesses ask a committee member beforehand to share that member's speaking time, and that the committee member inform the Chair before witnesses are questioned that they intend to share their time with the member who is not a member of a caucus represented on the committee; and that the Chair write to the members of Parliament who are not members of a caucus represented on the committee to inform them of this process.

The Chair: Are there any further comments on those routine motions?

Not seeing any—

Mrs. Tracy Gray: Madam Chair, I'm wondering if you can provide some clarification on the subcommittee. For this particular committee, historically it's something that hasn't really been utilized. Perhaps you could provide some clarification on the terms of reference for that subcommittee.

Since we're in this unique stage and committees can be mobilized very quickly, and we don't all have to physically get together, and a committee of the whole can occur very efficiently and very quickly, I'm wondering what the purpose of the subcommittee would be. What would they be doing differently? How often would they meet, and for what purpose?

This committee has only sat once since March. I think we should be meeting together as frequently as we can. I was wondering if you can provide some clarification as to what that subcommittee would look like.

• (1555)

The Chair: Mr. Dhaliwal, did I see your hand up? Did you want to comment?

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal: Yes, Madam Chair.

This is what we did this morning on the meeting of the subcommittee on agenda and procedure. We adopted a motion "That the Subcommittee on Agenda and Procedure be established and be composed of five members; the Chair, one member from each party, and that the subcommittee work in a spirit of collaboration."

The Chair: Can I throw something out in an answer to Ms. Gray?

In our last session, we did not use the subcommittee part. We would have a discussion among all of us as committee members and decide the priorities of the different items that each party cared about and wanted to see some work done on, and we did it all as a group, rather than having a separate subcommittee. We never utilized it.

Mr. Hoback, I'd appreciate your comments too, because you've been on the committee quite a while.

Mr. Randy Hoback: Yes, Chair. We've got along so well as a committee. When we sat together, we tended to either basically negotiate it beforehand or have it all figured out in the committee among ourselves.

At the time, we thought a subcommittee was a waste of time, because decisions had to come back to the committee to be authorized anyway. The subcommittee could go out and do all this work and come back to the main committee, and all of a sudden they'd all get voted down. You might as well just do it all in the main committee and be done with it. Then we all know where we're going, and it gives everybody a chance to have their input into the direction the committee should travel—"travel" may not be the right word, but which way it should go.

The Chair: Yes.

Are there any further comments on that idea that we won't utilize the subcommittee, that we will just utilize the whole committee to establish our priorities?

Is everybody okay with that?

Go ahead, Mr. Blaikie.

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: I think Mr. Sheehan had his hand raised.

The Chair: You have to wave it up to make sure I see it.

Mr. Terry Sheehan (Sault Ste. Marie, Lib.): Sorry about that.

I'm just agreeing with everyone, including the new vice-chair, and congratulations.

To Randy's point, we had that in our pocket but we never used it. I think that we can form it through resolution today, but I think agreement among ourselves.... I can't remember ever using it as well. If we ever needed to, I suppose it would be in our pocket, but we could all agree as a committee that we would direct the subcommittee to do something. However, we've never used it. It's just a good tool to have in the tool box, because you never know when you will need that tool.

The Chair: Okay. Are there any further comments on that? Is everyone okay with that?

(Motion agreed to)

All right. We will continue to function as we did prior.

Thank you for raising that point, Ms. Gray.

We need to take a vote now.

All those in favour of the routine motions as amended?

Mr. Randeep Sarai (Surrey Centre, Lib.): Madam Chair, I have a quick question. It went pretty fast. As for the in camera meetings, do we really want all staff to be there? I think traditionally we only had a member from every whip's office in the in camera meetings.

I know it went fast, and I wasn't able to interject then, but my suggestion would be members and only one member from the whip's staff for an in camera meeting.

The Chair: Mr. Dhaliwal, are you speaking on the same issue? Then I have Mr. Savard-Tremblay.

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal: Regarding in camera meetings, I would like to bring in a routine motion. It is “That the committee may meet in camera only for the following purposes: (a) to consider a draft report, (b) to attend briefings concerning national security, (c) to consider lists of witnesses, or (d) any other reason that needs unanimous consent of the committee; that all votes taken in camera with the exception of votes regarding the consideration of draft reports be recorded in the minutes of proceedings, including how each member voted when recorded votes are requested; that any motion to sit in camera is debatable and amendable.”

The Chair: Go ahead, Mr. Savard-Tremblay.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Before the discussion on the motions ends, I want to address one topic and ask a question, because this process was fairly quick.

The new vice-chair, whom I want to congratulate and also welcome, spoke earlier about parliamentary assistants attending this meeting. I want to know whether this involves giving them Zoom codes so that they can access our meeting.

• (1600)

[*English*]

The Chair: I'm not sure.

Madam Clerk, would you comment?

The Clerk: As of now, the motion reads that every MP has the right to have one staff member attending the in camera meeting, plus a member from the leader's office and a member from the whip's office.

I tried to find out how this would be done before the meeting, and to be frank, I received contradictory information. I will get back to you on that.

To my knowledge, during the summer every MP could have one member of his staff and one member from the leader's office and one member from the whip's office by Zoom. They received the link and they received the password, but the cameras were not open. Only the members had the camera open, but the staff could listen to the meeting.

Please take that carefully, because I need to double-check that.

Ms. Sgro, if you can take a minute, please, I would like to speak to you about the motion tabled by Mr. Dhaliwal.

The Chair: Mr. Dhaliwal, before we suspend for a few minutes, do you want to say something about the motion that you moved regarding in camera meetings?

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal: Madam Chair, that one is fine. However, on the other one, the one where the witnesses come and speak, instead of allotting them 10 minutes, I think we should have only five minutes, because if there are two from—

Mr. Randy Hoback: No. You're changing things.

Chair, why don't we just deal with one motion at a time?

The Chair: Yes.

I don't know how we do all this, but I'm going to suspend the meeting for two minutes while I have a discussion with the clerk.

• (1600)

(Pause)

• (1605)

The Chair: All of this is an experience for all of us.

Mr. Dhaliwal, you had moved a motion regarding in camera. So that everybody clearly hears it, would you like to read out again the motion you're suggesting? I certainly didn't hear it clearly enough and understand fully what the implications are.

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal: Madam Chair, it's not a necessity that we get this motion passed. It was my suggestion. The clerk may feel that it is not a necessity for this committee. This might be applicable to one committee but not the others.

I have no problem, one way or the other, whether this motion goes through, but I can read it for you and the members again.

It is “That the committee may meet in camera only for the following purposes: (a) to consider a draft report; (b) to attend briefings concerning national security; (c) to consider lists of witnesses; (d) for any other reason with the unanimous consent of the committee; that all votes taken in camera, with the exception of votes regarding the consideration of draft reports, be recorded in the minutes of proceedings, including how each member voted when recorded votes are requested; that any motion to sit in camera is debatable and amendable.”

I would like to withdraw my motion because I don't think it's a necessity here.

Mr. Randy Hoback: I think we should do it. I agree with that. I think it's a good motion.

The Chair: Madam Clerk has indicated that she needs some time to look at what the implications are from her perspective on this motion.

Can I suggest that we hold down Mr. Dhaliwal's motion for our next meeting? We'll make sure that we all fully understand the implications, because there certainly seem some positives there. We'll hold it down until our next meeting and go ahead and deal with all of the other routine motions as amended.

Mr. Randy Hoback: Chair, I understand that other committees have passed this motion. Mr. Dhaliwal has already said that himself. I don't see why we need to wait if other committees have already taken this motion and put it in as part of the routine motions. We should do the same.

The Chair: Go ahead, Mr. Blaikie.

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: I was just going to echo Randy's comment. I've also heard that other committees have adopted this. I know that in the last session, committees adopted this, including the procedure and House affairs committee, I believe.

It's not a motion that's come from nowhere. It's something that other committees have been doing. I think it would make sense to adopt the motion in order to align with the practice of other committees in that regard.

The Chair: The information I'm receiving from our clerk is that it's inadmissible. That's the reason for us to hold it down to our next meeting and deal with it at that time. If it's inadmissible, we won't be dealing with it, but if it's admissible and the committee wants to deal with it, we could deal with it at that particular time.

Would that be acceptable to everyone?

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: Yes.

My understanding is that it will come back and be deemed moved then, as long as it's admissible at the next meeting.

The Chair: Yes.

Mr. Randy Hoback: That's the way I understand it too. It is moved unless it's inadmissible. I agree.

The Chair: Is everybody is okay with that?

Madam Clerk—

Mrs. Tracy Gray: Madam Chair, we could say that we agree to it, without having to—

The Chair: I think the question is whether everybody fully understand the implications of it. That's what we'll have some time for, from our perspective.

If we hold it over until the next meeting, the clerk will do her proper due diligence on it, and then we can have a fuller discussion and vote on it accordingly.

• (1610)

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal: I agree.

Mr. Randy Hoback: Wait a second.

Chair, that's not what I understand Mr. Blaikie to be saying. I interpret it as if she comes back and says it's inadmissible, then we'll deal with it, but if it is deemed admissible, then it's already been dealt with.

Am I hearing that right?

The Chair: Just to be clear, I think at the time that it's an admissible motion, we'll have a chance to discuss the implications of it and vote on it at that point. That would be my thought process. It's subject to what the committee is thinking.

I see the clerk attempting to get in here.

The Clerk: The chair is responsible for deciding if a motion is admissible or not. If we could have a little bit of time, I could explain to her why my advice to her is that the motion is inadmissible, and maybe we can manage it in a way that it will be admissible.

The Chair: Okay.

Randy, go ahead.

Mr. Randy Hoback: The problem with that is you're deciding behind closed doors whether it's admissible or not when other committees have already said that it is admissible. Precedence has already been set in the other committees on whether it's admissible or not, the way I understand it. There should not be any question here.

The Chair: We happen to have a very senior clerk, and very often—as you know, because you've worked with her for some time—often things can get past.

We could do it that way, but we would still have to have a discussion as to what the implications are, because I think the committee would want to comment on whether this is an appropriate motion or not.

Mr. Dhaliwal, were you trying to raise your hand?

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal: Yes, Madam Chair.

This is my motion, and I would like to withdraw it. I have the right to withdraw it at any time. Let's deal with the routine motions. I will withdraw my motion.

The Chair: Madam Clerk, does Mr. Dhaliwal need the permission of the committee to withdraw his motion?

The Clerk: Yes, you need unanimous consent to withdraw a motion.

Mr. Randy Hoback: No.

The Chair: We don't have unanimous consent. Can we go back and try to find ways of dealing with this?

If we hold it to our next meeting—go ahead, Mr. Blaikie.

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: It is acceptable to me that we wait until the next meeting. At that point, it seems to me that one of two things would happen in a scenario that I find acceptable. The first thing is you would come back and say it's out of order, in which case we could then discuss the chair's ruling and perhaps decide to overturn that ruling, if need be, and if it's the will of the committee. Second, all I'm concerned to know is that if it is admissible, then it will come back as a moved motion, and we will have the discussion and then make the decision as a committee.

The Chair: Yes.

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: I would hate to see it go away and not be brought back or see the person who moved it withdraw it. I think it's a discussion worth having and a question worth deciding.

As long as we're going to decide the question with a vote at the next meeting, I'm satisfied that we can move on with the meeting today. I just want reassurance that we'll have a discussion and a vote at the next meeting.

The Chair: Absolutely, we will, and a discussion. I think that's important to make sure we all fully understand everything here.

Is everybody okay with that?

Mr. Dhaliwal, we're going to receive that motion and hold it—

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal: Thank you.

The Chair: —and then we'll come back for a full discussion and a vote at the next meeting, if it's admissible.

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: I think you have Ms. Gray trying to—

The Chair: Yes, I know. I'm just trying to finish the thought before I lose one of these screens.

We will have that discussion then, if that's okay.

Go ahead, Ms. Gray.

Mrs. Tracy Gray: Thank you, Madam Chair.

I'm just curious why this motion would have been approved and is being acted on in other committees. The concern is that if other committees have already gone through this process, we're not setting a new precedent here, so what is the issue?

One option is to agree to this, and then if there is an issue down the road and we find something that isn't admissible or that needs to be amended, we can make an amendment at that time, rather than having to go through all this again. It sounds like we have a lot of consensus here with our group.

I suggest we vote on this and say this is the direction we want to go. If we find some issue with it, we can always make an amendment of some kind.

• (1615)

The Chair: I certainly would prefer to hold it and fully understand it. We still have some additional work to continue today. Sometimes at committee we don't always do things correctly, and we want to make sure we are doing them correctly.

You have Mr. Dhaliwal, who wants now to withdraw it and he doesn't have unanimous consent, so I think it all deserves a separate hour in discussion and debate. If I were to say to you that it was inadmissible, I would have to feel strongly that it would be inadmissible. I would not come back and say it was inadmissible if I did not have a full background to say why. Then the other committees would have to look into what they've done and maybe correct themselves; I don't know.

If we could move on and adopt the routine motions as amended today, we could move on to the next part of our agenda for today's meeting.

Mr. Randy Hoback: I have a point of order, Chair.

There was another motion by Mr. Dhaliwal, and then there was a concern raised by Mr. Arya. We haven't dealt with those yet. Are they just going away? What's going on with them?

The Chair: Madam Clerk, we're all trying new things here today.

The Clerk: I think Mr. Hoback wanted to point out that some members have expressed some reservations about the routine motions and they had something they wanted corrected or amended. Since all the motions have not been adopted yet, they are open for debate; they are open to be amended.

The Chair: Mr. Dhaliwal, as Mr. Hoback said, you had moved two different things. Would you please repeat them?

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal: Yes, Madam Chair.

On the time for the opening remarks, I would suggest that the witnesses be given five minutes for their opening statements, and that at the discretion of the chair during the questioning of witnesses....

The Chair: Okay.

Go ahead, Mrs. Gray.

Mrs. Tracy Gray: Thank you, Madam Chair.

I wouldn't be supportive of that. I think there is good value in hearing from our witnesses; that's the whole purpose of their com-

ing to testify. Lots of time they give technical information and statistics. They're giving a lot of information, and sometimes five minutes is just not enough time to fulfill that.

We could, depending on the number of witnesses, potentially look at taking a couple of minutes off their time if there is a huge number, but having the normal amount of time I think would be the normal and preferable protocol, especially since this committee has only sat once since March. Surely there are a lot of witnesses who have a lot of new information to give us after that amount of time.

The Chair: Thank you, Mrs. Gray.

Is there any further discussion?

Mr. Randy Hoback: Chair, what we've done in the past, I think fairly well, is that whenever a minister came, it was always 20 minutes, and 10 minutes was always the norm. If there was a vote or something that shrank the committee, then the vice-chairs got together with the chair and decided what the appropriate time was to get those witnesses on the record.

It's very important, though, that they have their 10 minutes to get their exact points across to us in an efficient manner, because that's why they're there and that's why they're putting all sorts of resources into creating their presentation for us.

I can't support this motion. I agree with Ms. Gray, but I also trust the vice-chairs and the chair if they need to adjust something once in a while. They should have the freedom to do that.

The Chair: Thank you.

Go ahead, Ms. Bendayan.

Ms. Rachel Bendayan: Picking up on what Mr. Hoback was saying, provided that the committee give the chair discretion, I think I would be comfortable with that. Perhaps instead of setting a specific amount of time, we could leave it to the discretion of the chair.

I would also note, in connection with our previous discussion on a previous topic, that other committees have also shortened the amount of time for witnesses. I believe PROC did this recently, so it would be consistent with what other committees are doing, but in light of the valid points the members of the Conservative Party raised in their conversation, perhaps we can simply make it at the discretion of the chair.

• (1620)

The Chair: Mr. Hoback is next.

Mr. Randy Hoback: I'm sorry, I can't go with that.

Again, you're asking someone to present in front of the committee. They need to know how much time they're going to have, and 10 minutes is a consistent time frame. If you say that it's at the call of the chair, then it puts the chair in a really bad position in trying to balance the needs of her party—and she is not really neutral—and what is right, and she will always be under the accusation that she's stacking the committee or that she is doing things to benefit the Liberal Party instead of being the chair. I think that's why it's important that you have it nailed down at 10 minutes.

As I said, if there is a unique scenario, then the chair and the vice-chairs should talk about it and proceed as they see best, but you have to have the vice-chairs involved in that conversation.

Mr. Ben Lobb (Huron—Bruce, CPC): Madam Chair, I have a couple of points here.

One, I would ask if that is a formal motion that Mr. Dhaliwal is presenting and whether it is in order.

I'd be interested to hear from Mr. Dhaliwal, because he's been around as long as I have and as long as Mr. Hoback and certainly you. I'd be interested to hear why, all of a sudden, after 12 years in Parliament, he thinks witnesses should present for five minutes.

I know that if I have recommended somebody as a witness for a committee, and they're talking about something technical as a producer or a processor in regard to trade, to me it's only respectful—especially if they've come from far away to Ottawa—to give them more than five minutes.

That's my point. I think the unwritten rule is that you as chair have discretion when you're trying to fit in a committee report or a study. When we get down to crunch time, you can tighten things up, but I think the point here is that I'd like to understand from Mr. Dhaliwal why, all of a sudden, he feels that it needs to go to five minutes.

The Chair: Mr. Dhaliwal, would you like to respond?

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal: Yes, please, Madam Chair.

The way I see it is that this will give all the members more time to ask particular questions that witnesses will be able to address instead of them giving just their opinion. In practice it's also very important that the committee members from all parties have the ability as the time comes to make sure they're able to utilize their time to ask their questions and hit the particular points they want to address. That's the way I was thinking.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Mr. Dhaliwal has moved a motion that the time be reduced from 10 minutes to five minutes. We need a vote on that.

The Clerk: Ms. Sgro, if I may, pursuant to the motion of September 23, the votes need to be—

[*Translation*]

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay: Sorry, there's a delay as a result of the interpretation. Could we please have more time to vote yea or nay?

[*English*]

The Clerk: When the committee votes, there are three ways to express its decision: unanimous consent, on division or with a recorded vote. I think in this case we need to go with a recorded—

Mr. Ziad Aboultaif (Edmonton Manning, CPC): We cannot hear you, Clerk.

The Chair: Yes, we cannot hear you, Madam Clerk. Would you please repeat that?

The Clerk: On September 23, the House adopted a motion stating how the committee should vote. It is either by unanimous consent, on division or with a recorded vote. I think in this case it is

probably a recorded vote. I'm not sure. It's up to the committee to decide.

The Chair: How would the committee like to have this vote? Is it on division or with a recorded vote?

Mr. Randy Hoback: I guess it's a recorded vote, because we are going to vote against it.

The Chair: Okay.

The Clerk: This is a recorded vote on the amendment of Mr. Dhaliwal to reduce the time given to the witnesses for their opening remarks to five minutes.

(Amendment negatived: nays 6; yeas 5 [*See Minutes of Proceedings*])

• (1625)

The Chair: Thank you very much. The amendment is not carried.

Mr. Dhaliwal, you mentioned another motion. Do you have anything else?

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal: No, everything else is okay.

The Chair: All right.

Are there any other comments before we deal with the routine motions as amended, subject to our clarifying the admissibility or inadmissibility of the suggestions by Mr. Dhaliwal that we will discuss at the next meeting?

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

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal: I'd say it's unanimous. I think everybody had their hand up.

The Chair: Madam Clerk, can we proceed?

The Clerk: Would you invite the analysts to open their cameras?

The Chair: Yes. Would Bashar Abu Taleb, Offah Obale and Anne-Marie Therrien-Tremblay, the committee's analysts, activate their cameras in order to be part of this meeting?

There we go. Welcome. Thank you. It's good to see you all.

Go ahead, Mr. Savard-Tremblay.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay: Before we continue, I want to say something.

Many of the routine motions have been inherent to how we operate. Is this a good time to submit proposals regarding specific or priority studies for the coming weeks? I've submitted some proposals to the clerk, which have been translated and adapted for compliance and admissibility purposes.

Is this a good time to introduce them, or would it be better to do so a little later, by the end of the meeting?

[*English*]

The Chair: There will be time. I'm just moving into the area now of other business.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay: Thank you.

[English]

The Chair: Does the committee wish to discuss any other business at this time?

Mr. Savard-Tremblay, you indicated that you wanted to introduce something.

[Translation]

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay: Can I do so now?

[English]

The Chair: Yes.

[Translation]

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay: Madam Clerk, I don't know whether you have my motions on hand. The motions are translated and adapted proposals regarding studies and priorities for the coming weeks.

How do you want us to proceed? I'm having a bit of trouble, given that everyone is on Zoom. I don't know whether you're sending all this by email. What's the procedure for this?

The Clerk: I'm ready to send the motions that were received in your P9 email account. The motions are in both official languages. Do you want me to send all the motions, Mr. Savard-Tremblay, or just one or two of them?

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay: I don't know the order in which the motions were sent to you. Since we don't have much time, I would suggest the first two, meaning the first motion and the second motion.

The Clerk: Could you tell me what these motions are about?

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay: One is about transparency, and the other is about the investor-state dispute settlement mechanism.

[English]

Mr. Randy Hoback: I have a point of order, Madam Chair.

The Chair: Go ahead, Mr. Hoback.

Mr. Randy Hoback: How are we going to handle this? If we haven't seen them, it's kind of hard for us to decide how to proceed.

• (1630)

The Chair: That's what I was about to say.

Mr. Randy Hoback: Is there any advice from the clerk on how this was done in other committees?

The Clerk: As committees are different, there have been different ways committees have worked. Some have taken motions; others do not. Maybe we could send all the notices of motions to the members, and those can be discussed at the next meeting, or I could send right away the two motions that Mr. Savard-Tremblay would like to present to the committee. They can be discussed today or later, as the committee wishes.

The Chair: I would suggest that if anyone wanted to discuss further business, they could suggest it today, or send it to the committee. I don't think it's practical for us to receive an email off-screen, try to read it and understand the implications and agree to it today. We need the time to make sure that everybody has an opportunity

to send different points of thought on different projects or studies they may want to do.

Not having received that information prior to today's meeting, it's very difficult for the chair to make any kind of decision on anything without having had sufficient time to look at it.

Go ahead, Mrs. Gray.

Mrs. Tracy Gray: We have submitted three motions as well. They're topics that I believe will receive a lot of consensus, as there have been some significant conversations. I have two motions, and we have another member on our side who has also submitted a motion.

My motion relates to the main estimates, which is a normal practice, because we do have a timeline for that. Many committees have been voting on that at their first meeting, as we are today. I have a motion to invite the Minister of Small Business, Export Promotion and International Trade to the committee. That's a very brief and simple motion that we could potentially address today, because it's very simple, and other committees are doing that as well.

The second motion has to do with hearing from stakeholders with regard to the Canada-U.K. transitional agreement. As we know from, the U.K. agreement will not be applicable to CETA at the end of the year. This motion is extremely timely.

Those are the two motions I have submitted. Perhaps there might be a desire to discuss those today, in particular the one about having the minister appear, because other committees have been addressing that as well.

The Chair: Thank you.

Can I go back to Mr. Savard-Tremblay for a minute? We were trying to clarify what we were going to do, so I need to go back to him to give him an opportunity to reference the motions he submitted to the clerk.

[Translation]

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay: First, we did submit them. I understand the situation, given that the committee wasn't re-struck and that we just did this. Of course, we couldn't send the motions earlier to submit them in advance.

Madam Chair, you're recommending that we table them. I'll ask the clerk to send everyone all the motions by the next meeting so that we can really talk about them.

That said, I still want to ask for a level playing field. In other words, if we can't discuss my motions today, I want this to also apply to everyone else. It's a matter of fairness.

• (1635)

[English]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Savard-Tremblay.

Rest assured, Mr. Tremblay, issues of fairness are really important to me. I will always go out of my way to make sure I am fair to every member of the committee.

Ms. Bendayan is next.

Ms. Rachel Bendayan: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Given the discussion around the table, I think it would make sense for all members to have the opportunity to read the motions that will be sent by email and be able to digest and assess those motions and their ideas for future studies.

However, as Ms. Gray indicated, I would like to propose that we could discuss the study on main estimates and the invitation to the minister during the time we have today. I would welcome that discussion and I certainly think we could deal with the proposal on the main estimates today.

The Chair: Thanks.

Mr. Sheehan is next.

Mr. Terry Sheehan: Thank you very much.

Again, it's a pleasure to be here today. It would appear, just on our first meeting, that we are continuing these very collegial efforts on moving forward on what's important to Canadians and our constituents.

I was entertaining putting forward a motion as it relates to alternative energy. However, I know how important this meeting is with respect to creating the ground rules, if you will, on how that discussion would happen going forward. I determined I would not put forward that motion now, in order to deal with very important issues regarding our comfort levels, how we will deal with each other and with witnesses and other very important matters.

As Mr. Savard has already said, he is willing to go forward. We have heard the parliamentary secretary and the new vice-chair talk about one particular matter that would be almost automatic unto itself, which I think we could discuss now. I myself will not put forward my motions until the next meeting.

Why I brought that up, Chair, is that I would like you to inform the committee and the people watching when we will meet in the future. When will these meetings be? I know there have been great discussions among various people. David Akin was talking about how our committees are now meeting on non-Ottawa days and meeting during constituent days.

Chair, perhaps you could clarify when we will be meeting and entertaining these various motions going forward.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Sheehan.

I will just comment quickly that the House leaders are still dealing with what the schedule is going to be for the committee. As of today, we still don't know. They have not resolved those issues as of now.

Mr. Blaikie, I believe you had your hand up.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: Thank you.

I'll address Mr. Savard-Tremblay's point.

It would still be good to decide what the committee could do today, since we don't know when we'll have another meeting. Even if

we just work on the main estimates and send an invitation to the minister so that she can start arranging a date together with the clerk, it would be good to at least get this done today.

That way, I could wait for another meeting to introduce all our ideas for various studies.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Go ahead, Mr. Hoback.

Mr. Randy Hoback: I too have a motion, but it sounds like we're just going to table the motions as we normally do, so there is no reason for me to read it into the record at this point if that's the course of action we're going to take.

Mr. Blaikie, I think you have some interesting ideas there. The main estimates have to happen anyway, and we have to have the minister in front of us for the main estimates, so that's a no-brainer. That's an easy one to get off our checklist and get done.

Why don't we work around that right now? It gives us time to have everybody else's motions put in place so that we can all read them. Then maybe at our next meeting we can have some time set aside to look at them and prioritize them accordingly.

• (1640)

The Chair: That's a terrific idea.

Go ahead, Ms. Bendayan.

Mr. Chandra Arya (Nepean, Lib.): Madam Chair, I have had my hand raised for quite some time. I have hit on the button.

The Chair: I'm sorry, Mr. Arya. This is an all-new system here, so I am having to look to see where there is a hand out or if somebody is shaking their head. Mr. Blaikie is on a rocking chair, it seems, and that's what caught my attention. We'll figure this out as we go through the process.

Mr. Chandra Arya: What I have done is click on the "raise hand" button. You will note that it is a raised hand. I don't know whether it's visible to you.

The Chair: It doesn't show me a raised hand anywhere at all. I know where to get a raised hand from, but when you say that you've put it up there, I don't know where it is.

Mr. Chandra Arya: You will know that it is up there.

The Clerk: If I may, Madam Chair... Click on "Participants", and it will show you all the participants. If anyone raises his or her hand, it will give you a lineup. If you click on "Participants", you will see everyone, and you will see that Mr. Arya has his hand up.

Mr. Randy Hoback: Mr. Arya's hand is a nice Conservative blue. I don't know if we're supposed to take anything away from that.

The Chair: All right. We can do it that way, or you can just wave or whatever to get my attention.

I was at Ms. Bendayan, and then I promise I'll go right to you, Mr. Arya.

Ms. Bendayan, were you finished? I'm sorry.

Ms. Rachel Bendayan: No, I hadn't started, but thank you, Madam Chair.

Now that my colleagues have indicated their intentions, I want to also indicate an intention on my side to propose the continuation of the WTO study, which this committee had, I believe, progressed on for about an hour or an hour and a half before we adjourned and rose for the pandemic.

I will be submitting that, as well as one other motion, for the consideration of my colleagues. I also will allow time for everybody to reflect on those and I will not read them into the record.

I would simply point out that if we are moving on to a discussion on the proposal to study the main estimates, the minister is very much looking forward to coming to committee, and I believe we could find time, based on her schedule, for that to happen at the committee's desire.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Mr. Arya, the floor is yours now.

Mr. Chandra Arya: Thank you, Madam Chair.

First, I would like to propose that the colour of the hand symbol be red when it's a Liberal member.

Then, Madam Chair, I fully agree that the motions be submitted in advance, preferably at least 24 hours in advance. If that can be accomplished, it would be great.

I agree with Mr. Savard-Tremblay that no other motions need to be discussed today. If what I heard Mrs. Gray and Ms. Bendayan talking about—the main estimates and inviting the minister—is a formal motion, obviously we should not discuss it today, but if it is not a formal motion, then can we take it further.

The Chair: Are there any further comments?

Part of our regular practice is that—

Sorry, Mr. Savard-Tremblay. Go ahead.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay: I used the raise hand function for participants. It will be difficult to cope with these new systems, but we'll eventually get used to them.

We actually don't want to get used to them, because we hope to be able to all meet in person as soon as possible. However, for now, we must get used to them.

Nevertheless, I want to make it clear that I would have liked to send my motions. We sent them to the clerk in a timely manner. Of course, since the committee wasn't struck, we couldn't formally submit them, as I would have liked.

That said, even though we agreed to discuss the motions again after they're sent out by email, could we still read them today? Do you consider this appropriate?

[*English*]

The Chair: It's up to the committee, but if everyone chooses to read their motions, by the time we get together again to deal with the motions, we'll probably have forgotten part of what was said and have to start over again. However, it's the committee's decision.

Go ahead, Mr. Hoback.

• (1645)

Mr. Randy Hoback: Chair, I really feel for you in this position, because we're all trying to figure out how to do this.

Historically, what would have happened, when we chaired committees, was that we'd just have a general discussion on where we want to go and not necessarily even have motions in place. Motions may have to be more formalized in light of the fact that we're not all together. We're not in the same room. We're not having those side conversations at the same time. I think, though, when it comes to the main estimates, we don't have a choice. You don't need a motion. It's nice to have one, but we have to do it anyway, which is why I say that one is a no-brainer. That one should be done.

I agree with Ms. Gray that we can do that right now. Mr. Blaikie is saying the same thing. I think you're seeing consensus amongst the parties to at least schedule that one first.

The other clarification I would like to have—I just want to make sure I understand it correctly—is that anything we've done before prorogation is gone, and we have to start from scratch. Ms. Bendayan's motion, or what she wants to study, I think is a good study. I think we need to do it. I'm just not sure about the timing on it. It would have to start from scratch again, would it not?

The Chair: The clerk can clarify that. I believe you can reintroduce—

Mr. Randy Hoback: We'd have to bring it back through a motion, probably.

The Chair: You can bring it back and start it; there's a reintroduction process following prorogation.

The Clerk: I will send Ms. Bendayan the wording to write that kind of motion.

Mr. Randy Hoback: The only concern I have with that is that the Conservatives have quite a few new members on the committee. They weren't there. If there's a way to have them brought up to speed so they're on the same level playing field as everybody else, I think that would be important.

The Clerk: There was only one meeting on that.

Mr. Randy Hoback: That's a good point.

The Clerk: We didn't receive any briefs. I can send all the members the link to the transcripts.

The Chair: Okay.

Go ahead, Mr. Blaikie.

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: On the point about the WTO study, frankly, I think it would be better just to start the study again. I would like to hear from Global Affairs again anyway. That was the briefing we got. Given all of what's happened in the last seven months or so since they appeared, I think it would be worthwhile to have them appear anyway. I'm happy to go either way, but in any event, whether we restart the study or carry it over, we would need to hear from Global Affairs again anyway.

For today's purposes, though, what I'm hearing is that we're getting into a conversation about various kinds of studies. I'm fine to just leave that at the door and have people send their motions in and get them distributed by the clerk. If we could get agreement that we at least want to discharge our duty with respect to the main estimates, invite the minister, and have that be what we decide today, and then have the other motions distributed so we have time to read them for our next meeting, I would be very happy to conclude the meeting at that.

If we could get agreement on the main estimates and on inviting the minister, and agreement that we're going to push forward the conversation about other studies, once that's in place I would be happy to move adjournment. Just let me know how quickly you think we can get there and I will do my part, Madam Chair.

The Chair: That sounds wonderful to me.

I have Ms. Bendayan, Mr. Hoback and Ms. Gray on the list.

Ms. Rachel Bendayan: Thank you, Madam Chair.

I fully support what Mr. Blaikie is proposing. I think the members will see from my motion that we would be proposing to have officials come back, because there has been quite a bit of development and movement. There have been ongoing negotiations over the summer on WTO reform, so I think it would be relevant for officials to return in any event.

The Chair: Mr. Hoback is next.

Mr. Randy Hoback: You know, if we're going to deal with this later on, then I'll deal with it later on. I'll turn my time over to Ms. Gray.

Mrs. Tracy Gray: Madam Chair, I was going to say that we are going down the road of starting to debate whether or not we should be discussing some of the motions. I was just going to divert us from that and move forward.

I do have an actual motion, although I don't know if we would call it as structured as that, with respect to getting the minister in. Would it be okay if I read that? Maybe that's what we could bounce this conversation off, just so we have on the record exactly what we're looking for and maybe not think of it as one of these big studies, per se, like a lot of these other ones that we're talking about.

I do have something structured, if you'd like me to read that. Then it's on the record and we can maybe move forward.

• (1650)

The Chair: Just let me clarify that. I think it's pretty natural that at the first meeting, you invite the minister and you do your estimates anyway. As to whether we need a motion or whatever, I have to go back to Madam Clerk.

Can Ms. Gray read that motion into the record to invite the minister, etc., which we talked about? Does she have to give additional time or does she need unanimous consent to do that today?

The Clerk: No, it's up to the committee to decide how it wants to deal with Ms. Gray's motion.

I just want to underline the fact that in studying the main estimates, there's a provision in the Standing Orders, which I don't have off the top of my head, but I think it's Standing Order 81(4) or something. I don't know if she wants to put that in her motion.

Mr. Randy Hoback: You're saying it's subject to the Standing Orders.

The Chair: Yes, exactly. I think we have to have it done by the 25th of November or whatever.

Does the committee wish for Ms. Gray to read out a specific motion inviting the minister to come to committee and to deal with the main estimates, or is there unanimous agreement that we do that?

Ms. Rachel Bendayan: I think all committee members agree on this, so I don't see it as being necessary.

The Chair: Is everyone in favour of inviting the minister and dealing with the main estimates at our next meeting? As Mr. Blaikie so nicely pointed out, everyone can submit their thoughts and ideas on the studies that you think would be good for us to do, and then we will also have time to discuss all of those and prioritize them, as we have done in previous committees. Is everyone in favour of that?

Mrs. Tracy Gray: Madam Chair—

The Chair: Mr. Sarai, you have a hand up. Are you trying to get my attention?

Mr. Randeep Sarai: I was just saying I was in favour.

The Chair: I'm sorry, Ms. Gray; please continue.

Mrs. Tracy Gray: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Just for clarification, I want to know the amount of time for the minister, because I know that sometimes ministers can be very busy. When they have come before committees, they have had very limited time. We just want to make sure that we have a thorough conversation and that all members will have enough time to ask questions. I'd like to ensure that we have a minimum of two hours, which I think is kind of normal, but I just wanted to make sure that it wasn't quick, that we weren't just inviting the minister and would have that amount of time for our normal course of questioning.

The Chair: Usually the minister will come, and if she or he can be here for two hours, great. If not, it's one hour, and then the officials would sometimes remain. We've been quite fortunate to have the ministers come and stay for quite a while, because most of the issues we are dealing with are fairly complex.

Mrs. Tracy Gray: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Let me just add that I do want to be really clear that we will have two hours, because, again, this committee has only sat once since March, so we're not a committee that has had the normal course of ministers coming and presenting. It has been quite a long time, so I

would like clarification that we would have the minister for that whole time, especially for the first meeting, since it's been such a long time.

The Chair: I think it's subject to the availability of the minister, but we will make the request that she be with us for two hours. If her schedule allows for it, I am sure she will be amenable to being here.

Is there any further discussion that we need to have? No?

The meeting is adjourned.

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