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Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration

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Wednesday, October 14, 2020

Chair: Mrs. Salma Zahid



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• (1105)

[English]

The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Leif-Erik Aune): Honourable members, I see a quorum. We will now commence the meeting.

The clerk of the committee can only receive motions for the election of the chair, and—

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal (Surrey—Newton, Lib.): I propose Salma Zahid to be the chair.

The Clerk: Okay, sir. That is duly noted. I'll come to your motion in just a moment.

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal: Thank you, sir.

The Clerk: I may not receive any other type of motion and I cannot entertain points of order nor participate in debate.

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

Was it Mr. Dhaliwal who moved the motion or Mr. Saroya? I did not see on Zoom who moved the motion. Could you please move your motion again? I'm ready to receive a motion for the nomination of chair.

Mr. Bob Saroya (Markham—Unionville, CPC): It was Sukh Dhaliwal.

The Clerk: Mr. Dhaliwal, please turn your camera on. We're ready to receive your motion if you have one.

Hon. Geoff Regan (Halifax West, Lib.): As Mr. Dhaliwal appears to be having technical problems, why don't I...?

There he is.

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal: The IT people are working on the camera right now.

The Clerk: Are there any other motions for the nomination of chair?

Hon. Geoff Regan: Do we have a nomination now before us? I didn't hear it. If we don't have one, I nominate Salma Zahid for chair.

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

Are there any other nominations?

Seeing none, is it the pleasure of the committee to adopt the motion?

I see unanimity.

(Motion agreed to)

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

The Chair (Mrs. Salma Zahid (Scarborough Centre, Lib.)): Thank you to all of the members.

When anyone is speaking, there's a lot of sound coming in. It's difficult to understand. There's a lot of vibration within the sound.

Mr. Marc Serré (Nickel Belt, Lib.): Madam Chair, some of the MPs are not on mute.

The Clerk: It seems we're having some technical difficulties. I also hear feedback on my end. I'm going to check with the technical team and follow up with committee in just 10 seconds. Please bear with me for just a moment.

• (1110)

The Chair: Yes.

The Clerk: Thank you so much. We've made a technical intervention. Hopefully that will improve the audio quality.

Ms. Zahid, since you have been elected chair of the committee, I've sent a couple of notes to your P9 account on the next steps. The chair is yours.

The Chair: Thank you, and thanks to all my colleagues for the confidence in electing me the chair again. I really look forward to doing important work on this committee.

If the committee would like to move to the election of the vice-chairs, I would invite the clerk to preside over the election of the vice-chairs.

The Clerk: Thank you so much.

The committee will proceed to the election of vice-chairs. 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.

Madame Martinez Ferrada.

[Translation]

Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada (Hochelaga, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Clerk.

I would like to nominate Christine Normandin for vice-chair of the committee.

[*English*]

The Clerk: It has been moved by Ms. Martinez Ferrada that Ms. Normandin be elected as the first vice-chair.

Are there any other nominations?

Mr. Bob Saroya: Hello. Can you hear me?

The Clerk: I hear an intervention. Is that Mr. Saroya?

Could I ask you to repeat yourself, please?

Okay, then, are there any other nominations for the position of vice-chair?

Hearing none, is it the pleasure of the committee to adopt the motion?

[*Translation*]

Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada: Mr. Chair, my understanding is that....

[*English*]

Ms. Raquel Dancho (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC): Mr. Clerk, I believe MP Saroya is trying to speak but is obviously not coming through.

Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada: Point of order, Mr. Clerk.

The Clerk: Thank you, Ms. Dancho.

Madame Martinez Ferrada, I'm not able to hear points of order, but you have the floor.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada: Thank you.

As I understand, the first vice-chair of the committee must be a member of the official opposition. So I will withdraw my nomination and save it for the election of second vice-chair.

The Clerk: We are currently discussing the motion to elect the first vice-chair, who must indeed be a member of the official opposition. We have a motion. I think that Mr. Soraya also had something to say.

Mr. Soraya, go ahead.

[*English*]

Mr. Bob Saroya: Good morning. I propose that Raquel Dancho be the first vice-chair of the committee, please.

The Clerk: It has been moved by Mr. Saroya that Raquel Dancho be elected the first vice-chair.

Are there any other nominations?

Hearing none, as more than one candidate has been nominated, pursuant to the order adopted by the House on Wednesday, September 23, any motion received after the initial—

Hon. Geoff Regan: I'm sorry, but only one candidate was validly nominated, because it has to be someone from the Conservative Party. Only one Conservative was nominated and that is Ms. Dancho.

The Clerk: Of course, I beg your pardon.

Members of the committee, I must apologize. I've never before received a nomination for someone who was not a member of the required party and I took it for granted.... I apologize to all members.

For the first motion, Madame Normandin regrettably is not eligible to be nominated as the first vice-chair.

Thank you all for your patience.

Mr. Regan, I owe you a nice bottle of wine.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

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

Thank you for your patience. That was very kind of all of you.

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

I see unanimity.

(Motion agreed to)

The Clerk: I declare Ms. Dancho the duly elected vice-chair.

I guess that was my one mistake for the session.

We'll now proceed to the election of second vice-chair. The second vice-chair must be a member of an opposition party other than that of the official opposition.

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

Madame Martinez Ferrada.

• (1115)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada: Thank you, Mr. Clerk.

I made a mistake earlier. So I am happy to correct myself and move a motion to nominate Ms. Normandin for second vice-chair of the committee.

The Clerk: Okay, noted. Ms. Martinez Ferrada is nominating Christine Normandin for second vice-chair.

Is it the pleasure of the committee to adopt the motion? We have unanimous consent.

(Motion agreed to)

[*English*]

I declare Madame Normandin the duly elected second vice-chair.

(Motion agreed to)

The Clerk: The vice-chairs have been elected.

Madam Zahid, you have the floor.

The Chair: Thank you, clerk, and congratulations to both the vice-chairs. I look forward to working with you all in our committee. We have some important work to do.

Now I would like to ask the committee members if we are okay to now adopt the routine motions?

Yes, Mr. Dhaliwal.

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal: Madam Chair, I would like to bring in the routine motions. The motions are basically the same ones as were adopted on February 18.

First, would you like me to read them one by one?

The Chair: Yes, you can read them one by one, and then we will vote on them.

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal: Sure. The first is on analyst services:

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

(Motion agreed to)

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal: The next is on the Subcommittee on Agenda and Procedure:

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

The Chair: Is everyone in favour of this motion?

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Madam Chair, I'm just wondering. With this motion, I think committee members would have also received from their own party whip the latest round of motions from PROC that have been proposed for all committees. I just wonder if I can get a comment from the clerk or from Mr. Dhaliwal regarding all of the motions that we are proceeding with, and whether they are aligned with what was proposed by PROC in the latest round.

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal: Yes, they are.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Kwan.

Mr. Dhaliwal will read them one by one, and if anything comes up, then we can debate it. So I think he can continue.

● (1120)

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal: Okay, I'll continue with the next one, on meeting without a quorum:

That the Chair be authorized to hold meetings to receive and publish evidence when a quorum is not present, provided that at least four (4) members are present, including two (2) members of the opposition and two (2) members 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)

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal: The next is on time for opening remarks and questioning of witnesses:

That witnesses be given ten (10) minutes for their opening statements; 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.

The Chair: Ms. Normandin.

[Translation]

Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Thank you very much.

Unless I am mistaken, I have before me routine motions from the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs. The first difference I see is that opening remarks last five minutes and, in the second round of questions, the Conservative Party has five minutes, the Liberal Party has five minutes, and the Bloc Québécois is given two and a half minutes, as is the New Democratic Party. Then, the Conservative Party again has five minutes and the Liberal Party has five minutes. My understanding is that this is what the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs has discussed.

[English]

The Chair: Ms. Normandin, would you like to propose an amendment to the motion that Mr. Dhaliwal has read?

[Translation]

Ms. Christine Normandin: With pleasure.

[English]

The Chair: Can you please read the amendment?

[Translation]

Ms. Christine Normandin: I could read you the new motion as amended. Is that okay with you?

[English]

The Chair: Yes. Please, go ahead.

[Translation]

Ms. Christine Normandin: It reads as follows:

That witnesses be given five (5) minutes for their opening statements; that whenever possible, witnesses provide the committee with their opening statements 72 hours in advance; 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,

Bloc Québécois, two and a half (2.5) minutes,

New Democratic Party, two and a half (2.5) minutes,

Conservative Party, five (5) minutes,

Liberal Party, five (5) minutes.

[English]

The Chair: Mr. Serré.

Mr. Marc Serré: Madame Chair, I just want to make sure the translation says that the witnesses have five minutes to present. That was the motion that Ms. Normandin presented. I just want to make sure it's five minutes.

The Chair: Ms. Normandin, are you proposing five minutes for each of the witnesses for the opening remarks?

[*Translation*]

Ms. Christine Normandin: The Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs did propose five minutes to ensure the ability to stay within the allocated time and get through all the rounds.

[*English*]

The Chair: Okay.

Just to make sure, I feel there may have been an issue with the translation, so I just want to repeat it. Ms. Normandin, please let me know if that is okay.

You are proposing five minutes for the opening remarks for each of the witnesses. The first speaking round will be six minutes starting with Conservatives, six minutes to the Liberals, and then coming to the Bloc for six minutes and then the NDP for six minutes. Going into the second round, it will be five minutes for the Conservatives, five minutes for the Liberals, and five minutes for the Conservatives.

Ms. Normandin.

• (1125)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Christine Normandin: For the second round, here is what was suggested in the Standing Committee of Procedure and House Affairs:

- 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
- Liberal Party, five (5) minutes

The Bloc Québécois and the NDP are in the middle of that round, and not at the end.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Normandin, for clarifying. Is everyone okay with the amendment proposed by Ms. Normandin?

Mr. Allison.

Mr. Dean Allison (Niagara West, CPC): I apologize profusely for not having a headset, but is there any reason why all the members wouldn't get a chance to talk one time before opposition parties got the chance to talk twice? Every member should have the right.... I would go to Mr. Regan to ask his thoughts on that.

The Chair: Mr. Regan.

Hon. Geoff Regan: Madam Chair, it's a bit unorthodox to call on one particular member. I don't know why my old friend Dean's picking on me.

I recognize there's always the argument that we're all members of Parliament and that we all ought to have our turn. I don't have a problem with the proposal by Ms. Normandin, but I do respect what Mr. Allison is saying. I recall someone saying, in a dispute, "Well, some of my friends say this, and some of my friends say this, and I agree with my friends."

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Allison.

Thank you, Mr. Regan.

All those in favour of the amendment proposed by Ms. Normandin?

(Amendment agreed to)

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

The Chair: We are back to Mr. Dhaliwal.

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal: The next one is on 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.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Dhaliwal.

(Motion agreed to)

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal: The next one is with regard to 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.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Dhaliwal.

All those in favour of this motion? Is there anyone against?

Ms. Normandin.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Christine Normandin: If I may, Madam Chair, I would like to point out that the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs added something to that motion, whereby members must now confirm their physical presence at the meeting, to avoid extra meals being ordered.

I also propose that addition.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Normandin. You are proposing an amendment to the motion proposed by Mr. Dhaliwal.

All those in favour of the amendment proposed by Ms. Normandin?

(Amendment agreed to)

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

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal: The next one is on travel, accommodation and living expenses of witnesses:

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

The Chair: All those in favour of the motion proposed by Mr. Dhaliwal? All those against the motion?

Ms. Jenny Kwan: [*Technical difficulty—Editor*]

The Chair: The motion is adopted.

(Motion agreed to)

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal: On to the next one—

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Sorry.

Madam Chair?

• (1130)

The Chair: Ms. Kwan, please.

Ms. Jenny Kwan: I don't actually know how to get onto the rotation. It seems that my "raise hand" feature is not working. Every time I press it, nothing happens.

Before this vote gets passed, I just want to ask a question.

For witnesses who are appearing virtually, there would be no impact. If one organization, let's say, wanted to have three individuals represent it, is that going to be an issue with respect to this motion? I just want to get clarity on that.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Kwan.

Can I ask the clerk to please clarify this situation?

The Clerk: Yes. Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

Traditionally, the limit of the expenses is due to travel. It does not cost us more to have additional witness participating by Zoom. Were we, however, to use a video conferencing studio, for example, if Internet connections were poor in a remote area, then there would be costs incurred. Sometimes those costs can be in the neighbourhood of, say, \$500 to \$1,000 per session.

Members, as your administrative officer, I should remind you of those costs so that you can be aware when considering the limit to the maximum number of organizational representatives to reimburse for costs incurred.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you for clarifying that.

Ms. Kwan, I hope the clarification given by the clerk is okay.

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Am I understanding correctly, then, that the limitation on the number of representatives from an organization is strictly tied to the cost? For example, in an instance where witnesses appear virtually or via video conferencing, if there's no additional cost and they want to have three members in one room, then we would be able to allow them to do that.

It doesn't happen all that often, but it does happen from time to time. I just want to make sure that this does not restrict those organizations' wishes in that regard. As long as there are no additional cost implications, then they would be able to have potentially, let's say, three witnesses instead of two. Am I understanding correctly?

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Kwan.

I think the clerk would like to clarify it.

The Clerk: To your clarification, Ms. Kwan, it is our established practice that the chair has the right, on a case-by-case basis, to expand the number of witnesses for extenuating reasons. Even if the committee decides to set a limit, be it two, three, four or whatever it is, if there is some reason why an organization would like to have more representatives and it is a compelling reason to the committee or the chair, then the committee reserves the right to allow for more representatives, despite the cost.

The Chair: Thank you for your clarification.

Mr. Dhaliwal, can we please move forward?

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal: Thank you, Madam Chair.

The next motion is on access to in camera meetings:

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

The Chair: All those in favour of this motion?

Yes, Ms. Normandin.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Christine Normandin: I would like us to add that those employees would be authorized to participate using Zoom.

I will quickly explain what I mean. Otherwise, those employees can only participate by telephone, so they cannot see people, or they can follow us on ParLVU, which has a 40-second lag. That complicates the exercise a bit. The Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs did some testing, and it was working well with employees using Zoom.

[*English*]

The Chair: Mr. Regan, were you saying something?

Hon. Geoff Regan: Madam Chair, I thought I was voting in favour, but let me say something in French.

[*Translation*]

Should we specify that the assistants using Zoom must not use their camera? That is what I wanted to mention. I am of the impression that Ms. Normandin agrees with this amendment.

[*English*]

The Chair: Ms. Normandin, can you please read your amendment so that all the members can vote on it?

• (1135)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Christine Normandin: I propose:

That those employees be authorized to participate through Zoom.

[*English*]

The Chair: Mr. Regan was also proposing something.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Geoff Regan: I propose a subamendment that would be added at the end of the motion. I would be fine with changes being made to terminology or wording in general. I propose:

that those assistants must not use their camera.

[*English*]

The Chair: Mr. Serré, did you want to say something?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Marc Serré: Thank you, Madam Chair.

If I understand correctly, and I would like the clerk to confirm, employees participate in our meeting by telephone. Members are the only ones to participate by video, while employees will participate by telephone, all through Zoom.

I would like the clerk to confirm that this is indeed the procedure in the House of Commons.

[English]

The Chair: Just to clarify before we move forward, Ms. Normandin and Mr. Regan, are you proposing this amendment and sub-amendment to the motion on in camera meetings?

Hon. Geoff Regan: I suppose that's right. I guess I'm a little confused about this question of the phones. The question Mr. Serré was asking of the clerk is whether there is a technical problem with what Ms. Normandin is proposing or if it works fine. In fact, I suppose if we're not in camera, perhaps it's not necessary. Is that the case?

The Chair: Ms. Normandin, can you please clarify that?

[Translation]

Ms. Christine Normandin: I probably would have actually added something at the end so that, during regular meetings, officials and employees can participate in the meeting through Zoom.

[English]

The Chair: I just want to clarify to all committee members that if you want to speak, please either raise your hand on Zoom on the right-hand side of the screen or wave so I can recognize you.

Ms. Martinez Ferrada.

[Translation]

Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada: I want to begin by saying that I am new to this committee.

If I have understood correctly, according to the usual procedure, a staff member from the whip's office is allowed in the room, but we want to extent that rule to the entire staff.

As far as I understand, there are no staff members in the room, only one member from each whip's office. Is that right?

[English]

The Chair: I'll ask the clerk to clarify this.

The Clerk: Thank you so much, Madam Chair.

Over the summer, the practice of committees was to follow two different procedures: one during public meetings and one in camera meetings.

During public meetings, all staff could use the phone lines to listen to proceedings live. That way they wouldn't face the 45- to 90-second delay from ParlVu. During in camera meetings, only those who were present in the Zoom meeting had access to the video and audio. There was no ParlVu and no phone line. In the case of in camera meetings, I provided password access to the offices of the House leaders, the offices of the whips and to one designated representative from each of your offices. We permitted one party officer from each party to attend, as well as one of your members' assistants.

That's the practice we established over the summer, and if members wish to cement that in a routine motion or to deviate from that for any reason, it would take a motion of the committee to do that. Otherwise, if the members adopt the routine motion as it was drafted in the last session, we would continue the practice of letting certain assistants attend the Zoom meetings during in camera meetings only. Otherwise they would need to call in to the phone line.

• (1140)

The Chair: Is everyone okay with the clarification provided by the clerk?

[Translation]

Ms. Christine Normandin: That seems clear. However, if we are ready have an amendment proposal on the table consolidating what has been done this summer we should adopt it right away.

[English]

The Chair: Ms. Martinez Ferrada would like to speak to the motion being proposed by Ms. Normandin.

[Translation]

Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada: Madam Chair, my understanding is that no change of that kind has been made in another committee.

Ms. Normandin, I am wondering whether you could withdraw your motion and talk about it with your party's whip. We can come back to this issue at a later date if we have to make that change.

Ms. Christine Normandin: I don't see any inconvenience to that. We talked about potentially adding it, since the whips have discussed the possibility of agents and employees being able to participate through Zoom.

If this is in line with what was done this summer and all parties agree on it informally, I don't see an issue with withdrawing it. I would still like to make sure that we have that continuity and that employees can participate using Zoom.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Normandin.

Ms. Normandin is withdrawing her amendment.

All those in favour of Ms. Normandin's withdrawing her amendment?

(Amendment withdrawn)

The Chair: Mr. Dhaliwal.

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal: Did you take a vote on the original motion?

The Chair: Can you please repeat it, so that we can vote on it?

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal: The motion reads:

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.

The Chair: All those in favour of the motion?

Ms. Kwan.

Ms. Jenny Kwan: I'm not sure the "raise hand" feature is working, because I never get recognized.

On this issue, and it's related to what Ms. Normandin was raising previously, it is my understanding that the whip's office is working with the House of Commons to accommodate the Zoom feature for staff, both in the whip's office as well as our own staff. While this is not an official component of PROC, I believe that work is underway.

I wonder, as we proceed with or work at this committee, if we can come back to revisit this issue at the appropriate time. I do agree with Ms. Normandin. When staff is on the phone, there is a delay lag. It's different than what we normally have in a committee. Because of the COVID situation, we're having to do some of this work virtually, and therefore, allowing our staff to be able to connect in the same way as we do would be important.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Kwan.

The phone line is live, and there are no delays on the phone line. I understand there is a delay of a minute on ParLVu, but there are no delays on the phone line. We will leave it up to PROC and the whips to decide on that.

Right now we are on the motion proposed by Mr. Dhaliwal. If that matter is raised at PROC and by the whips, then we can look into it afterwards.

All those in favour of the motion proposed by Mr. Dhaliwal?

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: Mr. Dhaliwal

• (1145)

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal: The next motion deals with transcripts of in camera meetings:

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.

The Chair: All those in favour of the motion?

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: Mr. Dhaliwal.

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal: The next motion deals with notice of motion:

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 4:00 p.m. (EST) from Monday to Friday; 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 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: All those in favour of the motion?

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: Mr. Dhaliwal.

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal: The next motion deals with 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 of 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: Just a reminder to all members that when you are voting, please raise your hand, so I can see whether you are in favour or against.

All those in favour of the motion proposed by Mr. Dhaliwal?

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

The Chair: Mr. Dhaliwal.

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal: The next motion deals with other in camera meetings:

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

• (1150)

The Chair: All those in favour of the motion?

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

The Chair: We have adopted the routine motions.

I will keep a speaking list. We'll begin with Ms. Ferrada, followed by Mr. Serré and Ms. Dancho.

Ms. Raquel Dancho: Madam Chair, I think it's important that the official opposition be recognized first to speak. I would appreciate your consideration of that, at least before the second Liberal member speaks.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Dancho. I will keep a speaking list as the hands are raised. The first one was Ms. Ferrada.

I'm keeping a complete list, so if you want to speak, raise your hand.

Go ahead, Ms. Ferrada.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada: Thank you, Madam Chair.

I'm happy to see that we can finally resume the committee meeting. We are all very enthusiastic and happy to be able to begin studies that, I think, will be important for immigration issues.

I would like to begin by moving a motion. I hope we can vote on the motion today, as the committee must quickly begin the work if it wants to do as much of it as possible. I hope that the committee members will agree with the motion.

I will summarize the motion, and I could send it by email to the clerk, who could then send it to all the committee members.

I propose:

That pursuant to standing order 108(2), the committee conduct a study on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on immigration in Canada, that the study take into account the effects of the pandemic on international students, that the committee considers actions taken to address public health measures and exemptions affecting family reunification, including identifying best practices in the development of further assistance to international students, families, and foreign workers, that the committee hold at least 6 meetings to hear from witnesses; that the committee report its findings to the House; and that pursuant to Standing Order 109, the government table a comprehensive response thereto.

This motion's objective now gives us the time to look at the impact of COVID-19 on the immigration system and all immigration programs.

If you like, Madam Chair, I can send an email to the clerk with the motion, as it is written. I can send the English and the French versions to all committee members.

[English]

The Chair: Mr. Clerk, could I get clarification on this? Could you distribute this motion to all members?

The Clerk: Yes. Our office will contact the office of Ms. Martinez Ferrada and request the text of the motion. However, when the committee is considering committee business, members may move motions to propose studies without notice.

The Chair: Do we email the motion to all members?

The Clerk: As soon as I have it, we'll distribute it to all members directly, without delay.

The Chair: Would anyone like to speak to the motion proposed by Ms. Martinez Ferrada?

[Translation]

Ms. Christine Normandin: If I may, Madam Chair...

[English]

The Chair: Go ahead, Ms. Normandin.

[Translation]

Ms. Christine Normandin: I have a question about stewardship. There are some raised hands in the participant list. I understand that we are talking about speaking turns. How would it work if someone wanted to take the floor on the motion? I would like to know how we will operate in terms of speaking turns.

[English]

The Chair: Between me and the clerk, we will keep a list. Now we have a motion proposed by Ms. Martinez Ferrada, and as per the clerk, we will keep a list of speakers, for anyone who would like to speak to this motion.

Can I ask the clerk to clarify that?

• (1155)

The Clerk: As I see hands rise using the “raise hand” icon in Zoom, I'll take note of the name and message it directly to the chair. I'll attempt to keep track in that way.

I see Mr. Regan's hand is physically up, so I'll take note of that.

The Chair: Yes, Mr. Regan.

Hon. Geoff Regan: I have a point of order that I think might be helpful.

I'm the chair of the Canada-China committee, and I find that when I'm chairing it via Zoom, I don't see the “raise hand” function unless the technicians make me a co-host. I don't know, Ms. Zahid, but I presume you're not seeing that “raise hand” function either, and that might help you to see it. Yes, it works for the clerk to advise you, but you might find it simpler if you saw the hands yourself and kept a list. I leave that to you and the clerk.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Regan. I think I will work with the clerk on that for the next meeting. I think it's a good idea to have a co-host so that I can see this directly.

We have Ms. Dancho on the list to speak to the motion.

Ms. Dancho.

Ms. Raquel Dancho: Thank you, Madam Chair.

I appreciate the motion very much. In fact, I have a more comprehensive motion that encompasses the entirety of the Liberal motion. It does include a number of additions that have been discussed with other opposition parties that I think are extremely important to the benefit of all Canadians in terms of our immigration policy moving forward.

I would like to adjourn debate on this motion and put forward my motion for discussion. Again, it overlaps so we might as well discuss the more fulsome one. I move to adjourn debate on this motion.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Dancho.

We will pause for a second.

[Translation]

Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada: I have a point of order, Madam Chair.

[English]

The Chair: Yes, Ms. Martinez Ferrada.

[Translation]

Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada: Madam Chair, I have moved a motion and I'm asking that a vote be held. If the committee members want to make amendments to the motion, I am open to discussing it, and I think that all the committee members are, as well.

I think that we all agree on the study of the impact on immigration. In my view, members of the committee can discuss the details of this motion. My goal is for us to have a unanimous motion on an issue that affects us all. Regarding immigration, I think that we will find a consensus to pass a motion that brings together the concerns of committee members.

I have moved a motion, and I am asking that it be put to a vote. If my colleagues would like to discuss it, I invite them to do so.

[English]

Ms. Raquel Dancho: Madam Chair, I put a motion on the floor to adjourn debate. Again, my motion encompasses what the Liberal motion includes, as well as some areas the Liberal motion has left out that are of key importance to opposition parties.

Rather than amending a motion that is lacking about half of what it needs, I move to adjourn this debate on that motion so I can put forward my motion that is more encompassing.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Dancho.

I want to clarify this with the clerk. Give us a second, please.

Thank you, and sorry for the delay. I wanted to clarify this technical issue with the clerk.

The clerk will do a recorded vote on the motion proposed by Ms. Dancho to adjourn the debate.

• (1200)

The Clerk: I will call a recorded vote.

(Motion agreed to: yeas 6; nays 5 [See Minutes of Proceedings])

The Chair: The motion is adopted.

Go ahead, Ms Dancho.

Ms. Raquel Dancho: Thank you, Madam Chair.

I wish to move a motion. This motion is in consideration of the overturn of the entire immigration system in the world and how many human lives are impacted by that both at home and abroad.

In that context, I move:

That, pursuant to standing order 108(2), the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration commence a study on examining the impact of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic on Canada's immigration system, and that this study evaluate, review and examine all issues relevant to this situation, including the following:

1. application backlogs and processing times for the different streams of family reunification and the barriers preventing the timely reunification of loved ones, such as denials of temporary resident visas because of section 179(b) of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulations and the ongoing closures of Visa Application Centers;
2. examine the government's decision to reintroduce a lottery system for the reunification of parents and grandparents; to compare it to previous iterations of application processes for this stream of family reunification, including a look at processing times and the criteria required for successful sponsorship;
3. temporary resident visa processing, authorization to travel to Canada by individuals with an expired Confirmation of Permanent Residency; use of expired security and background checks for permanent immigration;

Hon. Geoff Regan: I have a point of order.

The Chair: One second, Ms. Dancho. We have a point of order.

Go ahead, Mr. Regan, please.

Hon. Geoff Regan: I understand this is challenging for the interpreters, so I simply ask that Ms. Dancho slow down.

Ms. Raquel Dancho: I'll slow down, thank you—

Hon. Geoff Regan: It becomes a real problem for our interpreters.

Ms. Raquel Dancho: —and I will try again. I appreciate that.

The Chair: Ms. Dancho, speak a bit more slowly so that it's easier for the interpreters.

Ms. Raquel Dancho: Okay. The clerk does have a copy of this, so he can distribute it immediately.

I will go more slowly, thank you.

It continues:

—use of expired security and background checks for permanent immigration;

4. to expedite and facilitate the issuing of visas and study permits for international students and that this study pay particular attention to the difficulties encountered by certain groups of international students (such as students from francophone Africa) and to the usual administrative delays and additional delays caused by the COVID 19 pandemic;

5. refugee resettlement program, meeting the Government of Canada's international commitments to settle convention refugees in Canada, work of Canadian civil society groups to bring privately sponsored refugees to Canada and to extend a life boat to the people of Hong Kong facing persecution under the new National Security Law;

6. severe and long-term economic impact of reduced immigration to Canada in 2020-2023;

7. administrative costs and delays related to Labour Market Impact Assessment (LMIA) applications under the Temporary Foreign Worker Program (TFWP) and consideration of possible solutions, including granting open work permits on a sector-by-sector basis to facilitate labour mobility; that LMIA's be biennial; that the duration of work permits be extended; that three-year work permits be extended annually;

8. technological capability of the Department of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada and Passport Canada to work remotely or virtually, meet service standards and enforce applicable laws.

• (1205)

The Chair: I'm sorry for interrupting, Ms. Dancho. Can you go a bit more slowly so that it's easier for the interpreters?

Ms. Raquel Dancho: Slower? Okay. My apologies.

It continues:

—and Refugee Board of Canada and Passport Canada to work remotely or virtually, meet service standards and enforce applicable laws.

9. that all testimonies received during a study pursuant to this motion be deemed included in further studies;

10. the two pilot projects for Caregivers introduced as of June 18, 2019: (1) Home Child Care Provider Pilot; and (2) Home Support Worker Pilot; that the study examines the criteria and its effect on the caregivers who are trying to qualify under these programs toward the path for permanent status; that the Committee report its findings to the House; and that, pursuant to Standing Order 109, the government table a comprehensive response thereto.

11. that this study begin no later than October 27, 2020, that the Committee table its findings in the House upon completion and that, pursuant to Standing Order 109, the government table a comprehensive response thereto.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Dancho.

I have a speaking list. Next is Mr. Serré.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Marc Serré: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Thank you for the motion, Ms. Dancho. There is a lot of information there, and I missed a large portion of what was said.

Would it be possible, with the clerk's assistance, to submit our motions to the subcommittee for consideration?

I want to make sure to have a French version of this motion, as well.

[*English*]

Ms. Raquel Dancho: Madam Chair, I'd like to respond.

The Chair: We have a speaking list, so....

Ms. Raquel Dancho: I just want to reiterate that the clerk did have the motion as of early this morning. He can email it.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Dancho.

We have a speaking list, so we will go by that.

However, I think the members have not been provided with a copy of the motion.

Next on the list we have Ms. Normandin, and then we have Ms. Kwan.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Christine Normandin: I had raised my hand to talk about another motion. I just wanted to move my own motions without putting them to the vote. I will still use this opportunity to speak to this motion.

[*English*]

The Chair: [*Technical difficulty—Editor*]

[*Translation*]

Ms. Christine Normandin: May I continue?

[*English*]

The Chair: Yes, Ms. Normandin.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Christine Normandin: Thank you.

You will notice that the motion as such takes up a number of study topics we ourselves proposed as motions, and that's good. It

also states that testimonies can be reused in other studies. That's also very good.

I have one or two questions, as I have a few concerns. First, how will we establish the priority of various topics to be studied? After all, there are several of them. So, if the motion is passed, what will we start with and how will we decide? Will we start with family reunification or with foreign workers? There are a number of issues to discuss.

Second, how much time do we want this study to take up? I think it's worthwhile to have a general study that will help us prioritize what we want to study in more depth afterwards, but the general study should not take so much time as to leave us none for that in-depth study.

So that is something I would like to raise.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Normandin.

Ms. Kwan, please.

● (1210)

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Madam Chair, I wonder if Ms. Dancho could respond to Ms. Normandin's questions, and then I will speak after that.

The Chair: We have a speaking list, so if you want to speak to it.... Because I have Mr. Dhaliwal after you, we will go by the speaking list.

Ms. Jenny Kwan: All right, thank you.

Then I guess my question also is with regard to the different components in the large motion. How would we prioritize those different components? Are they prioritized in the order in which they were read? Therefore, as the committee proceeds with its work, if this motion is passed, the committee could almost do the work in little chunks, if you will, according to the list that was read out.

The other question I have is this: If this motion were to pass, what will the full duration of this study be? If we begin on October 27, how many meetings will be allocated to the full committee component?

Once we have a response on that, at the appropriate time I would like to move an amendment to the motion, if I may, in reference to item number 5, which speaks about the “refugee resettlement program, meeting the Government of Canada’s international commitments to settle convention refugees in Canada, work of Canadian civil society groups to bring privately sponsored [groups of] refugees to Canada”. I’d like to add another component to it, and that is to extend a lifeboat to the people of Hong Kong who are facing persecution under the new national security law. I’d like to move this amendment to the large motion because I think this is an important piece that we should study under the refugee aspect. I’m aware that the—

[Translation]

Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada: Madam Chair, I have a point of order.

[English]

The Chair: Yes, Ms. Martinez Ferrada.

[Translation]

Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada: Madam Chair, I am a bit uncomfortable with the fact that some committee members received a copy of the motion this morning and can propose amendments based on wording we cannot comment on—

[English]

Ms. Raquel Dancho: I have a point of order, Madam Chair.

[Translation]

Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada: Madam Chair, I made a—

[English]

Ms. Raquel Dancho: We did not have the Liberal motion that was tabled this morning, which they tried to bring forward. They are asking for something they did not do in the first place. That’s not acceptable—

[Translation]

Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada: Madam Chair, no one—

[English]

Hon. Geoff Regan: Order, order, Madam Chair. We already have a point of order on the floor. It’s one at a time.

The Chair: One person speaks at a time. Please raise your hand and I will recognize you one at a time. Please try not to speak over the other members.

Ms. Raquel Dancho: Understood.

Madam Chair, the Liberals are bringing forward some criticism that doesn’t apply to their own motion this morning. They’ve not provided a copy to all members. At least the Conservatives provided this motion this morning to the clerk. It was provided to the other opposition parties as well. We actually did more than the Liberals are criticizing us for right now. It’s a moot point.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Dancho.

The clerk got the motion—

[Translation]

Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada: Madam Chair, I would like to finish my point of order—

[English]

The Chair: Ms. Martinez Ferrada, just let me speak for a second to clarify this.

I have checked with the clerk. The motion was received and is being translated. Until it is translated, the text of the motion proposed by Ms. Dancho cannot be circulated without unanimous consent.

The motion is in the process of being translated. I just want to clarify that.

Yes, Ms. Martinez Ferrada, you were speaking.

[Translation]

Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada: Madam Chair, the point of order concerns the fact that, when I moved my motion, I specified that I would have the motion sent by email to all the members, through the clerk, to ensure that everyone has had an opportunity to read it.

If I have understood correctly, some members of the committee have already received the motion, probably sent by the Conservative Party members. I propose that, to ensure that our work is effective, we need to wait to receive the motion in writing before making the necessary amendments to it—

[English]

Ms. Raquel Dancho: On a point of order, Madam Chair, I would like to address the speculation of the Liberal member.

The Chair: Ms. Dancho, just one second. She is already speaking on a point of order, so let her finish. Then we can go—

Ms. Raquel Dancho: I would like to address the speculation—

The Chair: —to the other one. Let her speak.

If one member is speaking on a point of order, another member cannot intervene on that meanwhile. We have to wait for Ms. Martinez Ferrada to finish.

Ms. Martinez Ferrada, please proceed.

• (1215)

[Translation]

Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada: As I was saying, I think that my privilege as a member of the committee is not being respected if I cannot have access to a motion to which I can propose amendments.

Ms. Dancho read the entire text. Unfortunately, I cannot remember all of it. So I want us to collaboratively ask the person who moves the motion to have it sent to us in French and in English, so that committee members who want to propose necessary amendments can do so.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Martinez Ferrada.

Ms. Dancho, you have a point of order.

Ms. Raquel Dancho: Madam Chair, I do appreciate the member's comments. The clerk is able to send the English version. We do have a French, translated version as well. It's just not quite complete.

Can the clerk chime in on how long that remaining translation of about two lines is going to take?

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Dancho.

I just want to clarify one technical thing. Notices cannot technically be given before the committee has elected a chair.

Right now we have an amendment proposed by Ms. Kwan on the floor.

Would anyone like to speak to that amendment by Ms. Kwan?

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Sorry, Madam Chair, I was cut off by a point of order before I finished all of my comments. May I finish?

The Chair: Yes, please.

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Thank you very much.

Speaking again on my amendment, I'm aware that the Canada-China committee has also resumed its work. However, with respect to this amendment that I'm proposing, I only want to focus on the immigration aspects related to the people of Hong Kong. As we know, there is an urgent situation happening in Hong Kong. I think it would be appropriate for our committee to study this aspect within the larger context of the refugee resettlement programming so that we can put a clear immigration focus to—

[*Translation*]

Ms. Christine Normandin: Madam Chair, I have a point of order.

[*English*]

The Chair: Yes, Ms. Normandin.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Christine Normandin: I just wanted to know where we are at in terms of the receivability of both the Liberals' motion and the Conservatives' motion, which have not been distributed in both official languages. That has not been clarified. I only want to make sure that we are debating correctly, as, to my knowledge, only my motions have been distributed officially in both languages. I would not want something to be applied to one party, but not to the others.

In short, two motions are not being distributed in both official languages. Either they should both be accepted, or neither one of them should be accepted. I just want to know where we are at right now.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Normandin.

I want to clarify what I said before. The clerk has clarified that notices are permitted before the election of the chair. However, there is no notice period and motions may not be moved until after the election of the chair. The two motions that have been moved by the Liberals and the Conservatives are thus okay.

I will ask the clerk to comment on this.

It's over to the clerk. Please clarify this.

The Clerk: I hope to.

Members may place motions on notice. Until the election of the chair there is no notice period, because requiring a notice period is a routine motion that the committee adopts for itself.

However, it is also the practice—and the committee has adopted a routine motion—that provided that it relates to the ongoing debate, members may move motions without notice. Presently, the committee is considering committee business, and so motions to propose studies for future business are in order even if they are moved without notice.

It is understandable that members would want to have text of the motions. Our practice is also to distribute them only when they're available in both official languages.

I recall Ms. Dancho's question inquiring how long it would take for the translation. I don't know precisely, but we've made the request. Our intention, our plan and our instruction is to distribute them to all members as soon as they're available in both official languages.

I don't encourage it, but if the committee agreed by unanimous consent to distribute a document in one official language, then I would be compelled to do so. It would, though, take the unanimous consent of the entire committee to do something like that.

● (1220)

The Chair: I hope that clarifies the situation.

We have Mr. Dhaliwal on the list, and then Ms. Normandin.

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal: Thank you, Madam Chair.

I agree more with MP Normandin than with Madam Kwan when the latter is talking about the Hong Kong part of the topic.

However, when it comes to MP Dancho's motion, it's wide open to studying almost everything that this department has ever done and will probably ever do. There's no focus—

Ms. Raquel Dancho: On a point of order, Madam Chair, the member is making generalizations about my statement.

I just want to be clear that the 10 clauses in here are the ones that are supremely affected by the pandemic. It is the duty of the committee and the department of immigration to cooperate and study these matters that affect human lives.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Dhaliwal.

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal: Madam Chair, I fully support saving lives so that Canadians can be healthy. There is never an issue with that. However, her motion is so wide open that we would study, as I said, almost everything this department, the IRCC, has ever done and will ever do.

I think we should have motions that are focused and time-sensitive, saying in this motion, as number one, that “this is the time we are going to spend on this study”.

That's the way I would like to see it.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Dhaliwal.

I want to let all the members know that right now we have an amendment proposed by Ms. Kwan. We can only speak to that amendment.

We have Ms. Normandin on the list.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Christine Normandin: Thank you.

As a member of the Bloc, I'm troubled by something. In fact, it makes me a bit uneasy. It's not the substance of the motions; it's the fact that the French versions aren't available in either case. If I weren't bilingual, I might have trouble following the discussion right now. I understand the motions, and I'm able to comment on the basis of what I've received and what's been said in English, with the help of the interpreters, but that isn't an official translation. If I spoke only French, I'd feel as though my ability to do my job as a parliamentarian had been thwarted.

This is my question: if we don't receive the translated versions of the motions very soon, wouldn't it be appropriate to postpone this debate? I won't make it a motion, but I am asking the question. I feel I must address the issue of bilingualism. Both official languages have to be on equal footing.

I'd have no problem carrying on with the debate if we had a better sense of how long it's going to take before we get the translated versions. If it's in the next few minutes, I'm fine with extending the meeting.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Normandin.

We have a speaking order, so please, Ms. Dancho, we will come to you.

Ms. Raquel Dancho: We have a translated version that's available and will be sending that around shortly.

The Chair: We have a speaking order, so please raise your hand and I will recognize you.

We have Mr. Serré on the list.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Marc Serré: Thank you, Madam Chair.

I just wanted to comment on what Ms. Normandin said. I appreciate how important Ms. Dancho's motion is, as is the need to prior-

itize. It's difficult to do that, however, when it comes to Ms. Dancho's motion and Ms. Kwan's amendment, since we don't have the French versions of what was distributed in English. I, myself, understand English and French, but I tend to read the French for content.

Could we not put the debate on hold today, as Ms. Normandin suggested, to make sure we get the translated motions and have the opportunity to really digest the content at another meeting? There's no rush, and we need to be sure we have all the information in hand. I don't want members to start submitting unilingual motions on the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration. This isn't a precedent we should be setting. Having the French versions of both motions is important so we can look at them in detail and make sure they're consistent.

I therefore move that we suspend debate, as Ms. Normandin suggested, to give the committee a chance to digest the content in English and in French.

• (1225)

[*English*]

The Chair: Yes, Mr. Serré.

There is a motion by Mr. Serré.

Are you moving this motion, Mr. Serré, to suspend the debate?

Ms. Raquel Dancho: Madam Chair, we still have to vote on MP Kwan's amendment. I move to vote on her amendment.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Dancho.

We have an amendment by Ms. Kwan on the floor. Would anyone like to speak to the amendment?

Ms. Raquel Dancho: Madam Chair, can we vote?

The Chair: We can vote on the amendment proposed by Ms. Kwan.

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

The Chair: We have Ms. Dancho on the list.

Ms. Raquel Dancho: Madam Chair, further to the study, I would point out that it has more specifics than the Liberal motion had when it was proposed. Moreover, no member had a copy of the Liberal motion, aside from the Liberal members. At the very least, we have distributed our motion in English to the opposition party members, as well as a French translation that we have just finished. It's not the official translation, but hopefully my Bloc colleague will appreciate our efforts in this regard.

I would also like to point out that we are operating in this Zoom virtual committee setting per the direction of the Liberal government, and should we have been in the same room as in normal circumstances, it would have been easier to distribute paper copies to everyone in advance and currently, as we're getting the translation.

I'd appreciate it if we could move forward. I move to vote on my motion.

The Chair: Ms. Martinez Ferrada.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada: Madam Chair, as I mentioned earlier, the members of the committee can't do their jobs properly if they don't have the motions in both official languages. If we can't read the motions and put forward amendments in an informed way, in order to do our jobs as parliamentarians, I move that debate be suspended.

[*English*]

Ms. Raquel Dancho: Madam Chair, I have moved a motion to vote on my motion.

Hon. Geoff Regan: On a point of order, there is no such—

The Chair: Ms. Dancho, Ms. Normandin has proposed a motion to adjourn the debate.

All those in favour of the motion to adjourn the debate—

Ms. Raquel Dancho: No, Madam Chair, that is incorrect. MP Normandin did not move to adjourn debate.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Christine Normandin: That's right. I didn't move anything formally.

Mr. Marc Serré: I did.

Ms. Christine Normandin: Thank you.

[*English*]

The Chair: Just one second....

Ms. Raquel Dancho: Mr. Serré did not put forward a motion to adjourn.

The Chair: Just one second.

Ms. Martinez Ferrada, did you move the motion to adjourn the debate?

Ms. Raquel Dancho: Madam Chair, I have a point of order. I put forward my motion to vote on my motion prior to Madame Martinez Ferrada's motion.

Hon. Geoff Regan: I have a point of order. There is no such motion; there's no such thing as moving to vote now.

• (1230)

The Chair: Let me clarify this with the clerk.

Ms. Dancho, we cannot move the motion to vote because there are members on the speaking list.

Yes, Mr. Dhaliwal.

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal: Madam Chair, we have the motion on the floor to adjourn the debate, and it is not debatable, so let us vote on this immediately.

The Chair: You are proposing a motion to adjourn the debate, Mr. Dhaliwal?

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal: Yes, please.

The Chair: We have a motion on the floor to adjourn the debate.

Can we have a recorded vote on that please, Clerk?

The Clerk: The question is on the motion by Mr. Dhaliwal to adjourn the debate.

(Motion negatived: nays 6; yeas 5)

The Chair: Ms. Normandin.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Christine Normandin: I believe a French version is being distributed. I think the clerks are about to send it out formally. Can someone confirm that?

[*English*]

The Chair: Clerk, can I check with you on whether or not you received a copy of the motion in English and French?

The Clerk: I'm just checking now. One moment, please.

In the last minutes, we have not received an email from Ms. Dancho's office.

Ms. Raquel Dancho: I apologize, Mr. Clerk, but I'm looking right now at the email we sent you. It was a number of minutes ago. Would you mind checking again?

The Clerk: Yes, of course.

Ms. Raquel Dancho: Thank you. It was at 11:23. That was 10 minutes ago. There are English and French versions there. My staff are doing their best to use their French skills.

The Clerk: I'll ask the committee assistant to take a look at all of our correspondence and confirm with me. I'll advise the chair directly. When we find it, we'll distribute it without delay to the committee. We already have instructions to do that. We'll make sure it goes out the door immediately. We're actively looking for it right now.

The Chair: Ms. Normandin.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Christine Normandin: I voted against the motion because I didn't want the meeting to end abruptly if we were about to receive the translated version. I would, however, move that the sitting be suspended momentarily, just long enough to receive the motion.

[*English*]

The Chair: We have Ms. Normandin's motion to suspend the meeting for a few minutes. All in—

• (1235)

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Madam Chair, can I interject for a minute?

The Chair: We have a motion by Ms. Normandin to suspend the meeting for a few minutes.

All those in favour?

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: The meeting is suspended for five minutes.

• (1235) _____ (Pause) _____

• (1245)

The Chair: I would like to restart the meeting.

Ms. Dancho.

Ms. Raquel Dancho: Thank you, Madam Chair, I appreciate that.

The Chair: We have a point of order.

Mr. Serré.

Mr. Marc Serré: Yes, thank you, Madam Chair.

I wanted to give an opportunity for the honourable member Dancho to correct the record. Earlier her comment was a bit insulting of Parliament, in her saying that the reason we are meeting via Zoom is the Liberal government and COVID. It was the will of Parliament to meet by Zoom and to have a hybrid Parliament.

Also, I would like her to clarify for the record that she is stating that we should have all 338 MPs physically present in Parliament.

There is a reason we have Zoom.

I want a clarification because for the member to put all on this on the Liberal government is misleading and false.

Ms. Raquel Dancho: Madam Chair, I'm happy to respond.

Mr. Marc Serré: We could debate this all day, but it's insulting to an MP. The alternative is for us all to be present in Parliament.

We chose this as Parliament and as the government. Yes, we would all like to be present in the House of Commons, but because of the pandemic and the risks of travelling from coast to coast to coast, it would not be safe to do so.

Ms. Raquel Dancho: Madam Chair, this is moving into debate. I wish to address the concerns.

Mr. Marc Serré: Thank you for the time, Madam Chair.

The Chair: Ms. Dancho.

Ms. Raquel Dancho: Thank you, Madam Chair. I appreciate the member's comments.

I don't wish to insult Parliament. I completely understand the pandemic and I wish to withdraw that comment.

The second thing I'd like to talk about is the prioritization suggested by Madame Normandin. It is a good point. I believe the standard procedure for a committee is that the clerk works with the chair and vice-chairs. I would also suggest that our NDP colleague should develop a work plan that works well to allow for robust discussion on each of the 10 items in my motion. Each item is equally important.

With that I move to vote on this motion.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Dancho.

I have a list of people who would like to speak, so you cannot move on—

Ms. Raquel Dancho: Madam Chair, if that is the case, I move to extend the time. We are running out of time. We have lost 10 minutes to technicalities and 13 minutes to a suspension.

The Chair: We have a speaking list, so we will go with it. Meanwhile, I will clarify with the clerk the time that we have.

We have Mr. Dhaliwal next and then Ms. Kwan.

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal: Madam Chair, MP Dancho was saying that we should extend the meeting, but we are all busy with other things. I have another committee meeting to go to and other meetings set up, so I would not be able to support going beyond 10 o'clock.

The Chair: We have Ms. Kwan on the list. Ms Kwan, please.

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Thank you very much. I will be very brief: I will support the motion.

The length of the motion, how many meetings to hold and the order of the subcomponents of the motion should be determined at subcommittee.

The Chair: We have Ms. Martinez Ferrada next on the list.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada: Thank you, Madam Chair.

I need some clarification, please.

First, I'm new to Parliament and to the committee, so there's something I don't understand. I sent my motion to the committee's general mailbox well before my fellow member asked for a vote. I feel that my privilege as a member has been violated because members voted on a motion they weren't even able to receive. I sent the email at least 45 minutes before Ms. Dancho sent hers.

Second, if we are discussing Ms. Dancho's motion, I'd like to address each of the points and propose amendments so it takes into account changes we think are necessary. I'm not sure how you'd like to proceed, but I'd like to discuss amendments to each of the points in the motion.

Third, I have a question for the other members, especially those from the Bloc Québécois and the NDP. It's about all of these motions. I'd like to hear their thoughts on how much time should be allocated to a study like this and which issues should be prioritized. It's pretty clear to me that there's enough content to take us into next year.

I gather that Ms. Dancho bundled all of the motions that the previous committee had voted on into a single package. That was very generous of her, but I don't think we'll be able to make progress on immigration issues if we can't take a deeper dive into those we feel are more important. We agree on many of them. I just think we need to talk it over and fine-tune a few things, such as figuring out a list of priorities and a time frame.

Last, I'd like some clarification from the clerk on procedure. Can a motion be voted on before it has even been received and read by members? They voted solely on the basis of a discussion, without having the actual document, which had already been sent out quite a few minutes before.

• (1250)

[English]

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Martinez Ferrada.

I have Ms. Dhillon next on the list, followed by Mr. Regan and Ms. Dancho.

Ms. Anju Dhillon (Dorval—Lachine—LaSalle, Lib.): I agree with my colleague, Soraya, that we should meet some time to study this motion. We only got the French version a few minutes ago. There are very detailed things in it. Some clarification is necessary. As Mr. Dhaliwal said, we have other obligations as well. I can't stay past one o'clock, so I don't know what I'm going to do. We should postpone this to another meeting.

Furthermore, I see several points here that make no sense. Should I get into that or not?

Point 7 doesn't fall under CIMM at all.

Point 9 is so broad and open. It says "that all testimonies received during a study pursuant to this motion be deemed included and further studies." What does that mean? Does that mean you pick and choose, and select what parts of the present study are going to go into future studies? Which future, which studies? Can things be picked and chosen, if this is passed without any clarification?

There are a number of points here that require a lot of clarification. I don't think we can do that today, and I don't think it's fair to ask people to stay beyond one o'clock when we have other obligations. I really hope we can put this aside for another time.

The Chair: Mr. Regan, you are next.

Hon. Geoff Regan: Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

While I agree with the comments of Madam Martinez Ferrada and Ms. Dhillon on the motion, I would like to move to amend point four in the motion, deleting the words "to expedite and facilitate the", and replacing them with "the facilitation and". I also move to delete the words "the difficulties encountered by certain groups of", and to replace them "with special attention to the experience of groups of".

In this way I think that we would not be prejudging the answers we're going to get. We want to have an open examination to hear the experiences of people, and the experience with international students is an important issue and matter of concern. I come from a city—Halifax—where we have a large number of universities, in a province where international students play a very important role economically as well as academically, so I think that broadening the wording of this would be valuable.

• (1255)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Regan.

We have an amendment on the floor.

Ms. Dancho, then Mr. Dhaliwal.

Ms. Raquel Dancho: I move to vote on Mr. Regan's amendment.

Hon. Geoff Regan: Madam Chair, on a point of order, I think what Madam Dancho has essentially tried to do a few times now is to move the previous question when she uses the phrase "move to vote". I think the clerk will confirm that you can't do that in a committee in this situation. I don't think you can in any situation.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Regan for clarifying that.

I will repeat that when we have either an amendment or a motion on the floor and we have a speaking list, we cannot move to vote on that amendment or motion until the debate collapses.

We have Mr. Dhaliwal on the list.

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal: Thank you, Madam Chair.

I would like to amend paragraph one of the motion, when it comes to family reunification—

The Chair: Mr. Dhaliwal, I'm sorry for interrupting. We have an amendment on the floor proposed by Mr. Regan, so we are dealing with that amendment now.

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal: Madam Chair, I would also like to propose an amendment.

The Chair: Are you proposing a subamendment to Mr. Regan's amendment?

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal: No, it will be to—

The Chair: Right now, we have an amendment proposed by Mr. Regan on the floor, so we are dealing with that amendment.

Seeing that there is no one to speak on that, can we—

Ms. Raquel Dancho: Madam Chair, I just want to mention that I did not give consent to end the meeting, and that we should have a vote on whether we should extend it or not.

The Chair: Once again, we are now dealing with the amendment proposed by Mr. Regan.

We will go to a vote on the amendment proposed by Mr. Regan.

(Amendment agreed to)

The Chair: Mr. Dhaliwal.

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Can I propose an amendment as well to paragraph one when it comes to family reunification? It's a very important point in the area I come from. I want to give a bit of background information as well before I move the amendment about what we have done when it comes to family reunification.

We all know the government moved quickly to introduce a process to reunite many families last June, but many families are still navigating the immigration system. It will be—

Ms. Raquel Dancho: Madam Chair, I have a point of order. The Liberals are trying to run down the clock, and we have not given consent to adjourn the meeting at one o'clock, so I suggest that we extend the meeting. I believe it is a majority vote for that.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Dancho, but we have Mr. Dhaliwal speaking.

Ms. Raquel Dancho: Madam Chair, I move that we vote to extend the meeting.

The Chair: Just one second.

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal: Madam Chair, I have the floor.

• (1300)

The Chair: Mr. Dhaliwal, just one second.

Mr. Marc Serré: Madam Chair, I have a point of order. Can we—

The Chair: Just one second.

Can we please ask the clerk to clarify whether we have to extend the time or—

The Clerk: Thank you, Madam Chair.

As members will probably know, the meeting schedule is agreed to by the whips. I give that to you just as a point of information. However, strictly speaking, the rule is that the committee meeting continues until a motion to adjourn is adopted.

The Chair: Thank you for the clarification.

Please go ahead, Mr. Dhaliwal.

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal: Thank you, Madam Chair.

It is very useful to examine family reunification and spousal sponsorships. However, the study should not include the exploration of [*Inaudible—Editor*], but rather the family reunification scheme as a whole.

With regard to family reunification and COVID-19, the government has made progress with respect to amending visa [*Inaudible—Editor*] and seeks to keep families together. Recently, we introduced a process for extended family, committed couples and compassionate cases to reunite.

We have also sped up our process for spousal applications, and we will make almost 49,000 decisions by the end of the year.

The parents and grandparents program that was announced will accept 40,000 applications this year and the next.

Therefore, I propose an amendment to paragraph one of the motion: That, pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), the committee undertake a study on family reunification and that during the study the committee pay attention to the grand operational landscape, including sponsorship application process times; that the committee examines ways in which to improve the application process and explore options to increase efficiency and accessibility for families; and that the committee report its findings and recommendations to the House.

The Chair: Mr. Dhaliwal, are you proposing this as an amendment?

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal: Yes, please.

The Chair: We have an amendment by Mr. Dhaliwal on the floor.

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal: I propose that we strike paragraph one and replace it with my amendment.

The Chair: Can I please ask the analyst to read the amendment so that it is clear to all members?

Ms. Raquel Dancho: Madam Chair, may I make a comment on the amendment?

The Chair: The analysts don't have the amendment right now.

As we have the amendment on the floor, we will go to it.

We have a speaking list, so we will go by the speaking list, Ms. Dancho.

Ms. Kwan is next on the list.

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

I do not support this amendment. The original motion is very specific about what work needs to be done, particularly the impact on family reunification, spousal sponsorship and the impact of section 179(b). I think we need to have a very focused component to this motion. I do not support the amendment as proposed.

• (1305)

The Chair: Mr. Serré is next on the list.

Mr. Marc Serré: Thank you, Madam Chair.

I'd like to propose an amendment or ask for clarification from the clerk on point number seven in the motion dealing with the temporary foreign worker recruitment program and the LMIA, which is out of scope for this committee.

The Chair: Mr. Serré, we have an amendment on the floor right now.

Mr. Marc Serré: Okay.

The Chair: We can debate that amendment, which has been proposed by Mr. Dhaliwal.

We have Ms. Martinez Ferrada on the list.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada: Thank you, Madam Chair.

I, too, have some questions, especially in terms of what's valid and what isn't.

A moment ago, Ms. Dhillon made a comment about point 7 of the motion. Did we get any clarity as to whether it falls under the responsibility of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration? It deals with labour market impact assessments, which fall under employment, not immigration.

I'm wondering whether point 7 shouldn't be corrected or amended so it lines up with the committee's role.

[*English*]

The Chair: Ms. Martinez Ferrada, I'm sorry for interrupting.

We have an amendment on the floor, which as been proposed by Mr. Dhaliwal, so we cannot deal with anything else right now. Until or unless you are speaking to that amendment....

Ms. Dancho.

Ms. Raquel Dancho: Thank you, Madam Chair.

I think the member's amendment, although it has validity, is actually encompassed in the motion already.

I agree completely with MP Jenny Kwan's comments. We have to focus on family reunification.

The initial Liberal criticism of this was that it was too broad. Now we're wanting to add further layers to it. The motion includes what the Liberals wanted to study, and it includes the priorities of opposition parties. Liberal members are repeating their points over and over and speaking multiple times.

In the interests of time, I think we need to vote on this amendment and continue forward. This study is incredibly important. The sooner we pass it, the sooner we can do the good work on behalf of Canadians and their families who are separated abroad.

The Chair: Mr. Dhaliwal, did you raise your hand to speak?

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal: No, I'm sorry. I already spoke. Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Dhaliwal.

Ms. Martinez Ferrada.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada: Madam Chair, as I mentioned earlier to the member, we have amendments to propose for each point. She has to respect the fact that committee members want to contribute to the discussion on each of the points in the motion.

That said, I'd like the clerk to clarify whether I can move a motion to adjourn.

The Clerk: May I have the floor, Madam Chair?

[*English*]

The Chair: Yes, please.

[*Translation*]

The Clerk: Is the motion to adjourn debate or the meeting?

[*English*]

The Chair: Ms. Martinez Ferrada.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada: It's a motion to adjourn the meeting.

The Clerk: A motion to adjourn either debate or the meeting is in order, but cannot be debated or amended.

Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada: Can you repeat what you just said?

[*English*]

Can you say it again in English? I can't get the translation. I just want to understand what you just said.

The Clerk: Motions to adjourn the debate, as well as motions to adjourn the meeting, are in order if a member has the floor. Members may not move such motions on a point of order, but if they

have the floor for debate, then a motion to adjourn the meeting or a motion to adjourn the debate is in order and must be moved without debate or amendment.

• (1310)

The Chair: Thank you, Clerk, for the clarification. We have the motion to adjourn the meeting.

All those in favour—

[*Translation*]

Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada: Madam Chair, may I speak?

[*English*]

The Chair: Ms. Martinez Ferrada.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada: I move that the meeting be adjourned to continue the debate at the next meeting.

[*English*]

Ms. Raquel Dancho: On a point of order, Madam Chair, the Liberals are looking to adjourn debate on their own amendment to this motion. I just want to reiterate that if we don't pass this motion today, we will be further delayed in our ability to study the important issues in immigration that include all of the topics the Liberals as well as opposition parties put forward.

Hon. Geoff Regan: On a point of order, this is debate.

Ms. Raquel Dancho: If we can just move on this amendment, vote on it and then move to vote on the motion, we can actually get to work. This committee has not met since the summertime—

Hon. Geoff Regan: On a point of order, Madam Chair, this is debate; it's not a point of order.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Regan.

We have a motion on the floor by Ms. Martinez Ferrada to adjourn the meeting. Can we please move to a vote?

All those in favour of the motion proposed by Ms. Martinez Ferrada to adjourn the meeting?

We need to move to the recorded vote.

Clerk, can you please do the recorded vote?

The Clerk: Yes, Madam Chair.

The question is on the motion by Ms. Martinez Ferrada that the meeting be adjourned.

The Chair: Can I vote...?

The Clerk: Yes, yours is the tie-breaking vote, Madam Chair.

The Chair: I vote yea.

(Motion agreed to: yeas 6; nays 5)

The Chair: The meeting is adjourned.

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