



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES  
CANADA

# **Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates**

---

OGGO • NUMBER 010 • 2nd SESSION • 41st PARLIAMENT

---

**EVIDENCE**

**Thursday, February 6, 2014**

---



## Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates

Thursday, February 6, 2014

• (0845)

[*Translation*]

**The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Marc-Olivier Girard):** Good morning everyone. As you know, there are now 10 members in a standing committee rather than 12. That is why you will have to re-elect your chair and your two vice-chairs this morning.

I see that we have quorum. We may now proceed to the election of the chair.

Pursuant to the standing order, the chair must be a member of the official opposition.

I am ready to receive nominations for the chair.

**Mr. Bernard Trottier (Etobicoke—Lakeshore, CPC):** I nominate Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault.

**The Clerk:** Moved by Mr. Trottier that Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault be elected chair of the committee.

Are there other motions?

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

**Some Hon. members:** Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

**The Clerk:** I declare the motion carried and Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault duly elected chair of the committee.

Before inviting Mr. Dusseault to take the chair, if it is the wish of the committee, we shall now elect the two vice-chairs of the committee.

[*English*]

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

Mr. Martin.

**Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP):** I'd like to take this opportunity to nominate the honourable Gordon O'Connor as vice-chair.

**The Clerk:** It has been moved by Mr. Pat Martin that Mr. O'Connor be elected as first vice-chair of the committee.

Are there any further motions? Is it the pleasure of the committee to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. members:** Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

**The Clerk:** Mr. O'Connor has been duly elected first vice-chair of the committee. Congratulations.

We move now to elect the second vice-chair. Just a reminder that it must be a member of the opposition party other than the official opposition, that being the Liberals.

I'm now prepared to receive a motion for the second vice-chair.

**Mr. Bryan Hayes (Sault Ste. Marie, CPC):** I move to elect the honourable Gerry Byrne as second vice-chair.

**The Clerk:** It has been moved by Mr. Hayes that Mr. Byrne be elected as second vice-chair of the committee.

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

**Some Hon. members:** Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

**The Clerk:** Mr. Byrne has been duly elected as second vice-chair of the committee.

[*Translation*]

Congratulations everyone.

I now invite Mr. Dusseault to take the chair.

**Chair (Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP)):** Thank you, Mr. Clerk.

Thank you very much for your renewed confidence in me this morning. I am pleased to be at the service of the committee once again.

As you can see, there is nothing on our agenda. However, as you know there will be 16 meetings from now until June 19. Consequently I suggest that the subcommittee that has already been struck meet, so that we plan our next meetings. That way we will have a clear idea of our agenda for the weeks to come.

Are the members of the committee in agreement?

Mr. Martin, you have the floor.

[*English*]

**Mr. Pat Martin:** Mr. Chair, on that subject, given that we've had a reduction in the size of the committee, there has been some conversation between government members and ourselves, and we don't really feel there's a need to have a planning committee for this committee any longer.

We feel that given the truncated size, we could probably operate simply as a committee as a whole. You could still set meetings for planning, but it would be all of the members wishing to come that would be in attendance, and it would save us duplicating and debating the same issues.

● (0850)

[Translation]

**The Chair:** So as early as next Tuesday, we can examine our future business, as a whole committee.

[English]

**Mr. Bernard Trottier:** Yes. I discussed it with Mr. Martin and we think it makes some sense, given that we're now a 10-person committee. The subcommittee consisted of five people, but there was some duplication because the discussions and the decisions that we would have in the subcommittee then had to be carried over to some extent to be explained to the larger committee. In some ways, it's more efficient to have the plenary of the committee have that discussion.

If we could have that meeting on Tuesday, that would be fine. I don't know if that requires a change to our routine motions where we identify a planning subcommittee right now.

Our experience, Mr. Chair, was that at the last meeting it was very efficient. It wasn't a long meeting anyway. We'd be very amenable to meeting as a whole committee.

[Translation]

**The Chair:** I don't think we will have to change the routine motions.

[English]

**Mr. Bernard Trottier:** I'm sorry, I think I misspoke. I said Tuesday, but I think there may be some sense that we can have our first meeting for planning on Thursday, given that Tuesday is budget day and that some activities have to take place that morning.

[Translation]

**The Chair:** Fine.

As I was saying, I do not think that we will have to change the routine motion.

[English]

**Hon. Gordon O'Connor (Carleton—Mississippi Mills, CPC):** I think Mr. Byrne had a comment.

[Translation]

**The Chair:** We can meet as we wish in order to plan our next meetings.

Mr. Byrne, go ahead.

[English]

**Hon. Gerry Byrne (Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte, Lib.):** I want to raise with my colleagues my past experience sitting on the public accounts committee, which decided to dispense with the subcommittee on planning. It didn't work out well, because there was no mechanism to vet or to try to convene with compromise on key issues. It ended up that we spent a lot of time in regular committee talking about procedural matters and other things.

I understand the sense of collegiality, about seeing whether we can make this happen within the limited timeframe that is normally reserved for hearing witnesses and conducting studies, but I would like to say that I think it's a mistake to do away with the subcommittee, which we're obviously not doing, because it's already confirmed in our routine orders for this committee. I really like the idea of a subcommittee and having it meet on a somewhat regular basis to vet procedural matters and not have the time consumed within the committee.

My experience with public accounts is that we did very little business during our allotted committee time because we just wrangled about procedure. That's it.

[Translation]

**The Chair:** Thank you for your comment.

Mr. Aspin, you have the floor.

[English]

**Mr. Jay Aspin (Nipissing—Timiskaming, CPC):** Chair, I'd like to agree with the notion of not having a subcommittee. Mr. Byrne is right. The public accounts committee didn't have a subcommittee. There were many reasons that committee didn't function properly, and the lack of a subcommittee certainly wasn't among the primary reasons.

We have gone along before on this committee without a subcommittee, and I think it has worked very well. I don't see the need. As Mr. Trottier has pointed out, the numbers simply bear out that the subcommittee is almost the same committee anyway, so it's just redundant.

[Translation]

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Mr. Martin, go ahead.

[English]

**Mr. Pat Martin:** Not to drag out the point, but I'm going to add that the other committee I sit on, the ethics committee, which I chair, doesn't use a subcommittee, and even with the larger numbers we haven't had any difficulty at all. The subcommittee meetings usually have taken 15 or 20 minutes, and we've never had anything proposed by the subcommittee that wasn't ratified by the committee as a whole.

This therefore just skips a step. It doesn't preclude the possibility, if we find that we are ground to a halt by debate at the main committee, of using the subcommittee at a future date.

I like the idea at this time. I don't think we need a motion to that effect. I think there is general agreement, with all due respect to Gerry, that we should meet as a whole.

● (0855)

[Translation]

**The Chair:** Mr. Trottier, you have the floor.

[*English*]

**Mr. Bernard Trottier:** I'll make a comment too. In the government operations committee there has been a fairly collaborative process. There are certain things we have to do involving estimates and oversight of various government departments and agencies, much of it just dealing with calendar dates. There are appointments also within Treasury Board and Privy Council Office often just dealing with specific calendar dates. Experience in the past is that planning was very collaborative and collegial.

If it doesn't work out, I suppose we can always revert to having a planning subcommittee

[*Translation*]

**The Chair:** Thank you for your comments.

From what I understand, we are indeed going to meet next Thursday to plan our future business. This gives everyone a week to suggest topics of study for the winter session. If we see that it is difficult for all of us to agree on that in the full committee, we can revisit the way in which we plan our future business. We can always look at that in the subcommittee.

No one else has asked for the floor and there is nothing left on the agenda.

We will meet next Thursday, at the same time, to plan our future business.

So this concludes our meeting for today. The meeting is adjourned.

---





Published under the authority of the Speaker of  
the House of Commons

---

### SPEAKER'S PERMISSION

---

Reproduction of the proceedings of the House of Commons and its Committees, in whole or in part and in any medium, is hereby permitted provided that the reproduction is accurate and is not presented as official. This permission does not extend to reproduction, distribution or use for commercial purpose of financial gain. Reproduction or use outside this permission or without authorization may be treated as copyright infringement in accordance with the *Copyright Act*. Authorization may be obtained on written application to the Office of the Speaker of the House of Commons.

Reproduction in accordance with this permission does not constitute publication under the authority of the House of Commons. The absolute privilege that applies to the proceedings of the House of Commons does not extend to these permitted reproductions. Where a reproduction includes briefs to a Committee of the House of Commons, authorization for reproduction may be required from the authors in accordance with the *Copyright Act*.

Nothing in this permission abrogates or derogates from the privileges, powers, immunities and rights of the House of Commons and its Committees. For greater certainty, this permission does not affect the prohibition against impeaching or questioning the proceedings of the House of Commons in courts or otherwise. The House of Commons retains the right and privilege to find users in contempt of Parliament if a reproduction or use is not in accordance with this permission.

---

Also available on the Parliament of Canada Web Site at the following address: <http://www.parl.gc.ca>

Publié en conformité de l'autorité  
du Président de la Chambre des communes

---

### PERMISSION DU PRÉSIDENT

---

Il est permis de reproduire les délibérations de la Chambre et de ses comités, en tout ou en partie, sur n'importe quel support, pourvu que la reproduction soit exacte et qu'elle ne soit pas présentée comme version officielle. Il n'est toutefois pas permis de reproduire, de distribuer ou d'utiliser les délibérations à des fins commerciales visant la réalisation d'un profit financier. Toute reproduction ou utilisation non permise ou non formellement autorisée peut être considérée comme une violation du droit d'auteur aux termes de la *Loi sur le droit d'auteur*. Une autorisation formelle peut être obtenue sur présentation d'une demande écrite au Bureau du Président de la Chambre.

La reproduction conforme à la présente permission ne constitue pas une publication sous l'autorité de la Chambre. Le privilège absolu qui s'applique aux délibérations de la Chambre ne s'étend pas aux reproductions permises. Lorsqu'une reproduction comprend des mémoires présentés à un comité de la Chambre, il peut être nécessaire d'obtenir de leurs auteurs l'autorisation de les reproduire, conformément à la *Loi sur le droit d'auteur*.

La présente permission ne porte pas atteinte aux privilèges, pouvoirs, immunités et droits de la Chambre et de ses comités. Il est entendu que cette permission ne touche pas l'interdiction de contester ou de mettre en cause les délibérations de la Chambre devant les tribunaux ou autrement. La Chambre conserve le droit et le privilège de déclarer l'utilisateur coupable d'outrage au Parlement lorsque la reproduction ou l'utilisation n'est pas conforme à la présente permission.

---

Aussi disponible sur le site Web du Parlement du Canada à l'adresse suivante : <http://www.parl.gc.ca>