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Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities

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Friday, October 9, 2020

Chair: Mr. Sean Casey



Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities

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• (1305)

[*English*]

The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Andrew Wilson): Honourable members of the committee, good morning or good afternoon, depending on where you're joining us from.

I see a quorum. I must inform members that the clerk of the committee can receive motions only for the election of the chair. The clerk cannot receive other types of motions and cannot entertain points of order or participate in debate.

We can now proceed to the election of the chair.

Pursuant to Standing Order 106(2), the chair must be a member of the government party. I am ready to receive motions for the chair.

Mr. Ryan Turnbull (Whitby, Lib.): I'd like to nominate Sean Casey as our chair. He's done a wonderful job in the past, and I think he continues to be a fair and very competent chair.

The Clerk: It has been moved by Mr. Turnbull that Mr. Casey be elected as chair of the committee.

Are there any further motions?

Mr. Vaughan.

Mr. Adam Vaughan (Spadina—Fort York, Lib.): I would nominate MP Chabot for one of the positions of vice-chair.

The Clerk: We'll get to the election of the vice-chair after we've elected the chair, but thank you for that.

Are there any other motions for the chair of the committee?

Pursuant to the House order of Wednesday, September 23, I will now proceed to a recorded division, unless there is unanimous consent for the motion.

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Clerk: Seeing consent for that, I declare the motion carried, and Mr. Casey duly elected chair of the committee. I'd invite you to take the chair.

The Chair (Mr. Sean Casey (Charlottetown, Lib.)): Thank you, colleagues.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Louise Chabot (Thérèse-De Blainville, BQ): Thank you, Mr. Casey.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you very much, Andrew.

I presume that our next order of business is the election of the vice-chairs. The Standing Orders require that one vice-chair be from the official opposition and the other from the third party. Am I correct in that, Andrew?

The Clerk: You are correct.

With the acceptance of the committee, I could take us through the election of the vice-chair and the second vice-chair.

The Chair: You certainly have the acceptance of the chair.

The Clerk: That's wonderful. Thank you.

Pursuant to Standing Order 106(2), the first vice-chair must be a member of the official opposition. I am now prepared to receive motions for the first vice-chair.

Mrs. Falk.

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster, CPC): Just before I give a motion for vice-chair, are we using the "raise hand" function on the participant list? I did have my hand raised there. I just don't know if I need to visually show that I'm raising my hand, or if that will be used.

The Clerk: Yes, I apologize for that. I do see your hand raised, yes.

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk: Wonderful. Thanks.

For the vice-chair, as a member of the official opposition, I would like to nominate the Honourable Peter Kent for this position.

The Clerk: It has been moved by Mrs. Falk that the Honourable Peter Kent be elected as first vice-chair of the committee. Are there any further motions?

Seeing none, I would ask whether the committee would like to proceed to a recorded division or we have consent.

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Clerk: I declare the motion carried, and the Honourable Peter Kent duly elected first vice-chair of the committee.

We move now to the election of the second vice-chair.

Pursuant to Standing Order 106(2), the second vice-chair must be a member of an official opposition party other than the official opposition. I am now prepared to receive motions for the second vice-chair.

I see that Mr. Vaughan has his hand up.

Mr. Adam Vaughan: I nominate MP Chabot for the position of vice-chair from the third party.

The Clerk: It has been moved by Mr. Vaughan that Madame Chabot be elected as second vice-chair of the committee.

Are there any further motions?

Seeing none, I would ask whether the committee would like to proceed to a recorded division or we have consent.

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Clerk: I declare the motion carried, and Madame Chabot duly elected second vice-chair of the committee.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Louise Chabot: I am delighted.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Clerk.

Thank you, colleagues.

I presume now we'll proceed with routine motions. I recognize Ms. Young.

Oh, folks, as Mrs. Falk indicated, I would urge you, if you have motions to present after routine motions, to please use the “raise hand” function. I have it on my screen and will pay attention to it.

Go ahead, Mr. Long.

Mr. Wayne Long (Saint John—Rothsay, Lib.): Thank you, Chair.

Good afternoon to my colleagues and friends across Canada.

I have some routine motions to start with, with your agreement, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Go ahead.

Mr. Wayne Long: The first is for 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.

The Chair: Colleagues, you've heard the motion. It appears to be in order.

Is there any debate?

• (1310)

I'm hearing no debate. Are we ready for the question?

Let me ask first if we have consensus or if we wish to proceed to a recorded vote. Can members give some sort of a visual indication if we have consensus? Okay, thanks everyone.

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: Go ahead, Mr. Long.

Mr. Wayne Long: The second motion is for the subcommittee on agenda and procedure:

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

The Chair: The motion appears to be in order.

Is there any debate?

Go ahead, Ms. Gazan.

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): I wish to propose an amendment to this specific motion so that it reads, “That the Subcommittee on Agenda and Procedure be established and be composed of five (5) members; the Chair, one member from each recognized party; and that the subcommittee work in the spirit of collaboration.”

The Chair: The amendment appears to be in order.

Is there any debate on the amendment to add the word “recognized”?

I'm seeing none, so do we have consensus that the motion be amended as suggested?

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

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

The Chair: Go ahead, Mr. Long.

Mr. Wayne Long: The third motion is for 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 from the opposition and two (2) members from the government; and that in the case of previously scheduled meetings taking place outside of the Parliamentary precinct, the committee members in attendance be required to wait for 15 minutes following their designated start of the meeting before they may proceed to hear witnesses and receive evidence, regardless of whether opposition or government members are present.

The Chair: The motion appears to be in order.

Is there any debate?

I'm seeing none, so do we have consensus or do we require a recorded division?

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: Go ahead, Mr. Long.

Mr. Wayne Long: Motion number four, “Time for Opening Remarks and Questioning of Witnesses”, reads:

That witnesses be given ten (10) minutes for their opening statement; that, at the discretion of the Chair, during the questioning of witnesses there be allocated six (6) minutes for the first questioner of each party as follows: For the first round: 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: Thank you. The motion appears to be in order.

Is there any debate?

[*Translation*]

I see that your hand is up, Ms. Chabot. You have the floor.

• (1315)

Ms. Louise Chabot: Good afternoon. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We understand that the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs has proposed something different in terms of the time for opening remarks and questioning witnesses. We recently received a routine motion, on January 30, 2020, to be exact. It basically provides for five minutes for witnesses and sets out a different order for the second round of questions.

I would like to know if someone is proposing that format rather than what has been presented to us.

The Chair: Thank you.

[English]

Ms. Gazan, please.

Ms. Leah Gazan: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I wish to propose a few amendments to the motion, to read as follows, "That witnesses be given five minutes for their opening statement; 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 minutes for the first questioner of each party as follows: For the first round: 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 minutes; Liberal Party, five minutes; Bloc Québécois, two and a half minutes; New Democratic Party, two and a half minutes; Conservative Party, five minutes; Liberal Party, five minutes."

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Gazan.

Before we proceed, you've proposed, as I understand it, three amendments to the motion: the first, to reduce the amount of time for witnesses from 10 minutes to five for their remarks; the second, to afford them the opportunity to provide their opening statements 72 hours in advance; and the third, to change the speaking order in the second and subsequent rounds to move the Bloc Québécois and New Democratic Party from fifth and sixth to third and fourth.

Ms. Leah Gazan: Yes.

The Chair: I understand you want to amend the motion as such. Do you want to proceed with the amendments as one motion, or do you want them dealt with individually?

Ms. Leah Gazan: Maybe we should deal with them individually, just as a precaution.

The Chair: Okay.

Amendment number one is that the time for witnesses' opening statements be five minutes instead of 10 minutes. That's the first amendment, and then we'll deal with the next two.

I recognize Mrs. Falk.

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk: Are we first going to be dealing with the motions that I've laid out before us?

The Chair: Right now, Mrs. Falk, we are specifically dealing with the motion put forward by Mr. Long with respect to witness statements and speaking order, and more particularly the amendment to that motion proposed by Ms. Gazan to change the length of time for opening addresses by witnesses, from 10 minutes to five minutes. That's what we're dealing with now.

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk: I would like to speak to that.

I know many of us were on this committee before Parliament was prorogued and our study was thrown out the window. Each one of us experienced the technical difficulties that come with a hybrid-fashion committee. We each gave some grace for that. I definitely add my voice to asking witnesses to provide their testimony to each of us in advance so we could each come well prepared to the meeting. Also, I would ask that we reduce the witness testimony to five minutes. We never know what can happen, whether it's with connectivity or, as we're going into winter, with winter storms or power outages. I would appreciate it if this committee could take into account only having five minutes for witness testimony.

Thank you.

• (1320)

The Chair: Thank you, Mrs. Falk.

Is there any further discussion on the motion to amend the length of witnesses' opening statements?

Seeing none, is there consensus to amend the motion to shorten witnesses' opening statements or do we require a standing vote? Could we have some indication, please?

I see a consensus.

(Amendment agreed to)

The Chair: Now we will move to Ms. Gazan's second motion, which is to afford witnesses the opportunity to provide a written version of their opening statements 72 hours ahead of their appearance at committee.

Is there any discussion?

Mr. Housefather, please.

Mr. Anthony Housefather (Mount Royal, Lib.): I entirely support the idea of witnesses providing their opening statements to the committee as soon as possible before they appear. I only question, Mr. Clerk, that 72 hours often doesn't give time for translation. The committee can't receive documents until they're translated. Leah might agree that we ask witnesses to provide their opening statements to the committee as soon as possible, as early as convenient for them, so that ideally we get them translated and we actually receive the statements before the meeting. I don't mind how she worded it, but I think 72 hours doesn't actually create the time often needed for translation.

The Clerk: This is similar to an amendment to this routine motion that was accepted by PROC. To my mind, the “whenever possible” covers us in the case of last-minute witnesses being brought to the committee, or any kind of witness who is not able to provide an opening statement. I think the language of “whenever possible” covers us on that. I will do my best to have it translated and get it to the committee, but do know that it won't be possible in every instance because, as I say, sometimes we have a last-minute cancellation and need to fill a witness spot. Sometimes we don't get confirmation for a witness coming until right at the end, but we will do everything in our power to get those opening statements to you when they're provided.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Clerk.

The question is on the amendment with respect to the provision of written opening statements from witnesses.

Do we have consensus or do we require a standing vote or recorded division?

I see several thumbs in the air. I'll take that as consensus. Thank you.

(Amendment agreed to)

The Chair: The third amendment was with respect to the speaking order in second and subsequent rounds: to move the Bloc and the NDP from fifth and sixth in the speaking order up to third and fourth.

Is there debate on the amendment?

Mr. Kent, please go ahead.

Hon. Peter Kent (Thornhill, CPC): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

We'd like a recorded vote on this. We prefer Mr. Long's original speaking rotation.

(Amendment agreed to: yeas 7; nays 4)

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

• (1325)

Mr. Wayne Long: Motion number five 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.

(Motion agreed to)

Mr. Wayne Long: Mr. Chair, I have just one comment on motion number five. Certainly I've seen in my vast experience up in Ottawa that there are times when I'm still surprised that witnesses show up with just English copy. We see it again and again.

This is just a comment: hopefully it won't happen often this time.

Motion number six is on working meals. It is:

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: The motion is in order.

Mr. Long, I know you want to offer a further commentary on this. You have the floor.

Mr. Wayne Long: No, I was just going to say that I know it will be a challenge, with me sitting here at times in Saint John, New Brunswick, to get me a meal, but I'll take what I can get, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Well, it's your motion.

Is there any debate?

[*Translation*]

You have the floor, Ms. Chabot.

Ms. Louise Chabot: I understand the problem our colleague is talking about.

In its motion on working meals, the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs added “provided that members have confirmed their physical presence at the meeting”.

I propose that amendment. It will guarantee that we do not needlessly have turkey delivered to us.

The Chair: Ms. Chabot proposes an amendment that requires notice from those who will be attending in person in Ottawa. We may now debate the amendment.

[*English*]

Mr. Wayne Long: That's a good amendment, Chair.

[*Translation*]

The Chair: As there is no debate, we will now go ahead and vote on the amendment. If we have unanimous consent, it will not be necessary to have a formal vote.

We seem to have a consensus.

(Amendment agreed to)

The Chair: Thank you.

• (1330)

[*English*]

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

Mr. Wayne Long: The next motion is number seven, “Travel, Accommodation and Living Expenses of Witnesses”:

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

(Motion agreed to)

Mr. Wayne Long: The next motion is number eight, “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.

(Motion agreed to)

Mr. Wayne Long: The next motion is number nine, “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.

(Motion agreed to)

Mr. Wayne Long: The next motion is number 10, "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. Eastern Time from Monday to Friday; that (2) the motion be distributed to members in both official languages by the clerk on the same day the said notice was transmitted if it was received no later than the deadline hour; and that (3) notices received after the deadline hour or on non-business days be deemed to have been received on the next business day; and that, when the committee is travelling on official business, no substantive motions may be moved.

(Motion agreed to)

Mr. Wayne Long: On other in camera meetings, I move:

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

(Motion agreed to)

● (1335)

Mr. Wayne Long: Routine motion number 12 is on "Orders of Reference from the House Respecting Bills":

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

(Motion agreed to)

Mr. Wayne Long: That is all that I have, Chair, for routine motions. Thank you very much for your time and consideration.

The Chair: That was excellent work, Mr. Long. Thank you.

Ms. Young, you have your hand up. Do you have something you want to raise now?

Ms. Kate Young (London West, Lib.): Yes, thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I have two motions. I'm going to read them separately, and I imagine that the committee would probably want to vote on them separately.

The first motion is, "That the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities Committee agree that all substantive motions adopted by the committee to undertake studies or hear from witnesses in the first session of the 43rd legislature are hereby readopted by the committee without modification or amendment."

The second motion would prioritize a study, so I wonder, Chair, if you'd like to call a vote on that first motion.

The Chair: We'll have debate first, but the motion is in order.

Go ahead, Mr. Kent.

Hon. Peter Kent: Thank you, Chair.

I'd like to ask Ms. Young whether she wants to maintain the priority of the motions and the orders passed in the last Parliament, given that, now we that have the main estimates and time is short before the end of November for us to call the three ministers within the purview of the committee, I wonder whether she would accept support on the basis that more urgent business supplant or take priority over those original motions.

● (1340)

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk: I'm just wondering about the relevance. I know the Prime Minister and the government had decided to pro-rogue Parliament to reset the focus. I'm assuming just from calls that I've experienced from my constituents and the study we were doing prior to this, before it got thrown out the window, that priorities have kind of changed. Canadians have been affected by COVID, whether seniors or children or workers and so on. I'm just not too sure how relevant and timely doing that at this moment would be.

Mr. Anthony Housefather: I support Ms. Young's motion.

To answer Mr. Kent, if it does not set any prioritization for the study, you will have to then determine that, since there are a number of studies that were adopted by the committee including one from Mrs. Falk on grandparents and supportive grandparents, one on the Canada summer jobs program and a COVID-related study that the committee was in the process of undertaking.

In my view, there's no reason why we would not readopt the studies and continue to have them on the table, as well as any other studies that may be brought forward by members of the committee, and then the committee will have to prioritize what studies we actually do in this Parliament. That will at least leave all the studies that were already adopted, having been put forward by all the different parties, on the books so that the committee may indeed proceed with them, should the committee want to do so.

[Translation]

I will add a comment in French.

I feel it is very important to mention that studies have already been proposed by members of different parties. This does not mean that the committee will give them priority, and we may also give priority to other studies that we decide to undertake. Those studies may already have been debated, because some members felt it was important to undertake them. I have no problem with that, especially if the committee wishes to move forward. Any decision will be made by the committee.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Housefather.

Mr. Vis, go ahead, please.

Mr. Brad Vis: It's nice to see some of my colleagues back at the committee table again. I'm very pleased to be recommencing.

For the sake of our new members, at the finalization of my current comments, I would kindly ask that the clerk tell the HUMA members which studies were actually on the table.

I would also add to the comments of my colleague MP Falk that the world and the priorities of this committee need to change with what's been happening in our country. When we had those original debates, COVID wasn't really an issue. I think we need to re-examine what we're doing. We need to look very closely at the new benefits that were just announced by the Government of Canada and at some of the new housing initiatives that were just announced by the new government, and really strategically think about how our work on this committee is going to serve the well-being of Canadians, hold the government to account and ensure that we're doing the most for the people who brought us here.

I disagree with adopting all of the same studies that we had to achieve that end.

Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I hope that the clerk can provide us that quick update for the new members right now.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. Vis. I think that's a reasonable request.

I don't know whether you have that at your fingertips, Mr. Clerk, or whether anyone else might have that list of adopted substantive motions at their fingertips, but I certainly agree with Mr. Vis that it would be helpful for everyone to have it. Do you have it, Mr. Clerk?

The Clerk: I do in fact have it. It's up to the members what they would prefer. I can read out the motions that were adopted by the committee or I can send it as an email to everyone. I have it as a PDF document.

[Translation]

Mr. Brad Vis: Can you give us the motions in English and French?

Ms. Louise Chabot: We would like to get them, please.

[English]

The Clerk: It sounds as though everyone would prefer to receive them as an email, and then we'll have them in both English and French.

Mr. Brad Vis: If you can send them right away, then yes, absolutely.

• (1345)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Vis and Mr. Clerk.

[Translation]

Ms. Chabot, you have the floor.

Ms. Louise Chabot: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I would also like to thank the members.

I am also pleased to sit on the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities.

I say that I live in the most beautiful constituency, and I now add that we sit on the best committee.

I would like to speak about two things, starting with the motion before us.

Then, Mr. Chair, I also have some notices of motion to present to you. Please let me know when would be the best time for me to do it. It is important to me that I present them to you.

I understand the objective behind reintroducing all motions previously passed here in committee, so that we can consider them. However, our committee has a number of motions on the table. Then we became a COVID-19 committee, and we considered only issues related to that.

Now, I stand with the others. When the House was prorogued on August 20, that meant our committee no longer existed, that all motions were dropped and that the main ministers' mandate letters no longer applied either. I also thought that the committee struck today would pick up its business on a new basis. That does not mean that certain motions could not be moved again. It is a question of passing them all together. However, it seems to me that, strategically, we should assess each motion on its merits and consider new motions that will be proposed.

Mr. Chair, can you confirm that, if we debate this motion, we will be able to present our motions afterwards?

The Chair: Exactly. Ms. Young has indicated that she has a second motion. Then we will be ready to receive others.

Thank you.

Mrs. Falk, you have the floor.

[English]

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk: Thank you, Chair.

I am wondering if MP Young could repeat the words of the motion.

Ms. Kate Young: Yes, of course. I move, "That the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities Committee agrees that all substantive motions adopted by the committee to undertake studies or hear from witnesses in the first session of the 43rd legislature are hereby readopted by the committee without modification or amendment."

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk: I would be more inclined to support this if there were something in there confirming that that isn't the prioritized list. If the point of the government of proroguing Parliament was to reset, I think the committee should follow suit as well.

Mr. Wayne Long: To MP Kent's point, there was already a motion last session to invite ministers to appear before the committee—I think before November 30—so MP Young's motion should reinstate that I believe.

Is that correct? I think that might allay MP Kent's concerns.

The Chair: That would be my understanding as well.

Mr. Anthony Housefather: I want to again speak to the point that Ms. Falk and others have raised, that there is no prioritization set out in this motion. This motion simply sets out that all the studies and witnesses called by the committee would be reinstated without amendment.

The committee is free to set out its priorities by separate resolution, which then the committee will do. However, this motion itself doesn't do that in setting priorities; it simply reinstates what the committee has already adopted.

I'm sure that the clerk can confirm that, based on the wording of the motion, or the chair. However, as a former chair, that is certainly my understanding of how the motion reads.

• (1350)

The Chair: My understanding is that her next motion will deal with priorities, but not this one.

Mr. Turnbull, please.

Mr. Ryan Turnbull: Much to the same point as my colleague Mr. Housefather, I was just going to point out that this motion does not prioritize or limit us from prioritizing the different motions but really kind of re-enacts or reboots and retables the motions that were there before. From my recollection, many of the studies are still, and maybe even more, relevant given the COVID-19 pandemic, so we could revisit those.

Certainly the subcommittee functions to prioritize work to some degree as well. There are multiple opportunities, and I understand that the main estimates are already included in that list, so I think that deals with Mr. Kent's concern. It seems maybe we could deal with these in two separate issues, as two separate votes.

Hon. Peter Kent: To that point, the amendment to Ms. Kusie's original motion did provide for the main estimates. Again, I was making that point on the basis of post-prorogation and the expectation that all those original amendments would have died with the previous government.

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Ms. Chabot, you have the floor.

Ms. Louise Chabot: Mr. Chair, I completely understand that proposing all of our motions, studies and witness lists all over again does not necessarily mean that we are giving them priority. However, when we do so, it will all end up somewhere in our calendar, whether we prioritize it or not.

If that means that we may decide not to go ahead with one of the motions to accommodate new motions because we are a new committee, I can live with that. However, given our work resumption strategy, if we do not prioritize beforehand those motions we have already passed, we will have to do so later, and that concerns me. If reintroducing them does not necessarily mean we are going to con-

sider them because there will be other more important ones, I can live with that.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Chabot.

[*English*]

Ms. Young, do you have a further intervention?

Ms. Kate Young: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I just want to reiterate that my next motion will deal with prioritization. At first, when I was considering these motions, I was thinking of doing it all in one, and then I thought it was best to keep them separate for the reasons we're hearing right now.

Mr. Brad Vis: Thank you, Clerk, for sending that document.

I'll just reiterate my point that I believe, given the new suite of benefits from Employment and Social Development Canada and given the new announcements on housing, this committee should take the refresh that the Liberals wanted to give it and start afresh. There is much to be done, from a labour and economic standpoint, that requires us to re-examine our priorities. We should not be hindered by the previous work of the committee, whether we are in agreement with or in opposition to it.

• (1355)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Vis.

Mr. Housefather.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Anthony Housefather: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I would like to finish my contribution to this debate by emphasizing that I strongly agree with Ms. Chabot: if we have already adopted a study, we can adopt it again, but that does not mean the committee should prioritize it or even undertake it. Usually, parliamentary committees have a long list of study proposals, and some of them never get done.

That does not mean we cannot adopt and do other studies before those on the list, or even without having done them. Mind you, certain studies are important. For example, I found the Canada Summer Jobs study quite important. If we take up those studies again, we will avoid another debate on motions that have been carried and on which the committee was generally unanimous.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you.

Ms. Gazan has the floor.

Ms. Leah Gazan: While I appreciate the concerns that are being raised about bringing forward the same motions, I just want to remind the committee of some earlier comments made about time wasted proroguing Parliament. Canadians are expecting us to get back to work. I certainly have heard many people in other parties talking about getting back to work. I think we need to get back to work. I don't think that limits the kinds of questions within the studies we've agreed upon. They can adjust and shift as our circumstances have adjusted and shifted. For example, we talked about the impacts on student jobs. I'm sure the questions that will be asked in committee will reflect the changing circumstances and the programs that have been put forth. We can certainly offer that up when we're requesting specific witnesses.

I do think it's time for us to get back to work. I think Canadians are tired of all the games. People are rolling on the streets, and I think they want to see us finding tangible research solutions to some of the very complex issues we're facing.

Thanks very much.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Gazan.

Is there any further debate?

Seeing none, we are ready for the question.

I think it's clear that a recorded division is required on this, based on the debate we just had.

(Motion agreed to: yeas 7; nays 4)

The Chair: Ms. Young.

• (1400)

Ms. Kate Young: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

The second motion, as we have talked about, would prioritize the studies. I think you will hear that this would be even more relevant today, since COVID:

That, in recognition of the fact that nearly 80% of the indigenous peoples in Canada live in urban, rural and northern communities, be it resolved that pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), the committee undertake a study to investigate and make recommendations on the challenges and systemic barriers facing indigenous people and indigenous housing providers in northern, urban and rural communities across Canada; that this study focus on urban, northern and rural providers and identify the gaps in the federal government's current policies in addressing homelessness and the precarious housing crisis facing indigenous people in urban, rural and northern communities across Canada; and that, pursuant to Standing Order 109, the committee request that the government table a comprehensive response to the report.

The Chair: All right. I had understood that that was to be.... I'm not sure that I heard priority in there, and my only question would be whether this is identical to a motion that has already been adopted, in which case I'm not sure whether it's in order.

I seek your guidance on that, Mr. Clerk.

Ms. Young, I didn't hear anything different from the motion that was just adopted by virtue of the continuation motion. Am I mistaken?

Ms. Kate Young: I certainly was meaning to have this as a priority for the committee moving forward. This is an area that I think is no doubt even more of a concern across Canada since COVID started. It was a priority for our committee prior to this meeting, and I

think it still remains a priority for Canadians and for indigenous people. I think it's probably one of the most important studies that we could take on at this time. It's certainly specific to an area of great concern for many Canadians, if not all Canadians. I think that we need to make sure that we look at this very important issue right off the top of this committee. I think anything less than that would be harmful.

Thank you.

The Chair: I don't debate any of that. My query is strictly on a procedural basis. If you've introduced a motion that has already been adopted by the committee, I'm not sure that the motion is in order. If you were to indicate that as a first order of business that the committee should undertake, then that's a different motion, but that isn't what I heard. If you want to reframe it or to include those words, we can go ahead with this, but otherwise, I don't think we can.

Ms. Kate Young: Okay. Yes, I understand, Mr. Chair.

What I would like to say is that, as a first order of business, I recommend that this committee undertake the following motion, and then it would read as I have read before. Would that be substantial?

The Chair: I think that does it.

Mr. Clerk, are we off base here?

The Clerk: Ms. Young isn't able to amend her own motion, unfortunately. Someone else could move the amendment, but we would need to have language in there about prioritization of that because, having adopted the previous motion, this study is now back on the books.

• (1405)

The Chair: My only comment on that is that I'm not sure the motion could be moved until it was ruled in order. Am I wrong there?

The Clerk: You're correct.

The Chair: Okay. I can rule the motion in order now that she's rephrased it, and we can proceed.

Mr. Brad Vis: For clarification, can Ms. Young please reread the new motion to the committee?

The Chair: I think that's fair.

Ms. Young, after that discussion, the motion that you want to present is different from the one that has already been presented. Please go ahead.

Ms. Kate Young: This is the second part of the motion that we would prioritize a study that all parties agreed to before. The motion is:

That, in recognition of the fact that nearly 80% of the Indigenous People's in Canada live in Urban, rural and northern communities; be it resolved that pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), the committee undertake a study to investigate and make recommendations on the challenges and systemic barriers facing Indigenous People and indigenous housing providers in northern, urban and rural communities across Canada; that this study focus on urban, northern and rural providers and identify the gaps in the federal governments current policies in addressing homelessness and the precarious housing crisis facing Indigenous People in urban, rural and northern communities across Canada and that pursuant to Standing Order 109, the Committee request that the government table a comprehensive response to the report.

The Chair: Okay, colleagues, you've heard the motion. The motion is now in order.

I recognize Ms. Gazan.

Ms. Leah Gazan: This is just to say that I think this is a critical study. I think, if anything, we've seen during COVID certainly with cases now emerging in indigenous communities, certainly in my riding.... I have over a hundred cases with a very high indigenous population and a housing crisis. I think this is very pertinent, not only to COVID, but also to an issue that has been present prior to COVID. I fully support this motion.

Mr. Brad Vis: While I believe I supported this motion last time—I am not at all opposed to the motion—at this moment I have reservations about the need for us, during this reset, to have the ministers come before our committee at the earliest possible time. We have a short window to examine our estimates, and I believe we have a fiduciary responsibility to Canadians to show how we're spending taxpayer dollars at this critical time. I'm not in opposition to this motion, but I think we need to be flexible with some immediate issues that need to come before this committee in a timely way. My support about whether to move forward on this motion will likely be contingent on some flexibility from the other side to ensure we account for estimates and the appearance of ministers at this critical juncture.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Vis.

Madame Chabot, please go ahead.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Louise Chabot: Mr. Chair, with all due respect, I would like to point out that earlier we discussed the motion to reintroduce all of the proposed studies that had already been adopted. We debated it and I was quite clear. We were reassured that reintroducing all the motions did not mean they would be prioritized. The motion is in order, but I want to say, respectfully, that I will be opposing it. Indeed, I have the impression that we are trying to do indirectly what we did not want to do directly earlier. Earlier, we passed a motion to give ourselves some leeway for prioritization.

I am not in any way denying the vote I cast at the time. I am talking here about the importance of indigenous issues, including social housing. I also recall how important it was to our work when we agreed on that priority. So today I am going to oppose voting now to make one of these motions the priority. I feel we need to be flexible and look at the other proposed studies, taking into account the Speech from the Throne, the various proposals and the new mandate letters. We can determine our study schedule later on.

So I am going to oppose this, Mr. Chair.

• (1410)

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Chabot.

[*English*]

Mrs. Falk, please.

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk: I'm a little disappointed that this is what we're having. I brought this up when we debated about prioritization.

Right off the top, we should just be having the ministers here. We're in the middle of a pandemic. The ministers have not reported anything to this committee. Tons of programs and benefits have been rolled out the door. I think we should have each of the ministers who are responsible to this committee here at this committee right off the top.

We all know how important and difficult it is to get schedules to mesh. We need to do that before we discuss the priority of studies that we're going to do, especially with main estimates coming up. We need to have the ministers at this committee sooner than later. That will also contribute to the studies we are going to do, let alone the government legislation that's going to come.

We heard about seniors in long-term care facilities. That is apparently important to this government, so we can expect something to this committee. Child care is another thing.

Before we jump in so deep with both feet, swimming in a whole bunch of the priorities that we just discussed—or I was just told previously in the last motion that we're not necessarily going to do that—we need to get the ministers here.

Hon. Peter Kent: I agree, and I believe that this motion is redundant and actually acts against the spirit of what was accepted in the previous motions. I think the priority, our responsibility, is to call the minister with regard to the main estimates that have just recently been tabled.

To Rosemarie's point, time is short and, given availabilities, we do not have that many opportunities to ensure that all the ministers can appear with their officials.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Kent.

Mr. Housefather, please go ahead.

Mr. Anthony Housefather: I understand what Mr. Kent and Mrs. Falk are saying. I don't think these things negate one another. The first thing is that what was originally [*Technical difficulty—Editor*] was simply to bring back all the studies and all the calls for ministers that had already been passed. The first motion was not to prioritize anything. The second one by Ms. Young, as I understand, seeks to prioritize the indigenous housing strategy, which is one motion of many that were previously adopted by the committee. I think what my Conservative colleagues are asking for is also to prioritize the calling of ministers for the estimates.

Mr. Chairman—again if Ms. Young or you will allow me—perhaps we can amend Ms. Young's motion to say that the committee's two immediate priorities are to deal with the indigenous housing strategy motion that was just reaffirmed by the committee and to call ministers for the estimates as soon as they are available. Make those the first two things the committee does. I think that's a reasonable compromise based on the indigenous housing strategy being so important—of course we're going to have to line up witnesses for that study as well—and hearing from the ministers on the estimates.

I think perhaps that would bring a consensus from the committee if we agree those two things are the priorities of the committee.

• (1415)

The Chair: Are you moving that as an amendment?

Mr. Anthony Housefather: Mr. Chairman, I want to hear from Ms. Young— it's her motion—whether she would be prepared to do that. I'm certainly prepared to move an amendment. I don't want to negate her motion, though, if she doesn't agree with that.

The Chair: Ms. Young, do you consider that to be friendly?

Ms. Kate Young: I do have a question. I thought the ministers were in order to appear for the estimates at a given time after the estimates, and that that would happen in due course, and that wouldn't negate this motion.

I would think the motion would stand, but I could be talked into making a friendly amendment if that's what we think is necessary. I still think it's redundant.

The Chair: Mr. Turnbull, please.

Mr. Ryan Turnbull: My understanding is we already have the ministers appearing and I think we have a deadline for that, which, if I remember correctly, is somewhere around the end of November.

I think we should let Ms. Young's motion stand, which is to undertake this study. I believe strongly that this should be the first study that we undertake, given the fact that we often iterated our deep commitment to first nations and working with them through reconciliation. We know that if communities were vulnerable, with housing insecure going into this pandemic, they are much more so during this pandemic. I think there is a strong case to be made and a strong commitment for the study to move forward as our first priority.

I want to show support for that. I will be voting in favour of it. I think the motion should stand as is.

Ms. Leah Gazan: I wanted to echo, Mr. Chair, the comments of my colleague on the committee. I think if there are some feelings of mistrust around the ministers attending that we could put forward a separate.... I think the motion needs to stand as is. Certainly data has indicated that this is a critical issue that is beginning to exacerbate as the pandemic proceeds. Perhaps knowing that the ministers will be appearing to provide estimates, we can get some assurances on a date by next meeting about when that will occur.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Gazan.

Mrs. Falk, please.

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk: Thank you, Chair. I hope this will be my last intervention on this.

We just adopted all of our previous motions without modification. Have any of the timelines and deadlines for the previous motions we just adopted been taken into account? For our Canada summer jobs program, in the motion that Dan Albas, our colleague, tabled, the deadline is Tuesday, December 15. By the time we come back, it's going to be mid-October. Is this being taken into consideration, as well as all the deadlines that were in the motions that were previously tabled? It's just a question for clarification.

The Chair: Mr. Kent, please.

Hon. Peter Kent: There's no question that the motion, although it is redundant and I think acts against the previous motions we accepted, is an important one. It's an important study. But I think with regard to the process we're going through here today, I will have to oppose this motion on the record, and I hope that fellow committee members will too. I appreciate Mr. Housefather's attempt to find a friendly compromise, but I think we need to make it very clear that it is our duty to call the ministers and make them the ultimate priority of the tabling of the main estimates and the deadline between now and then.

I think we can discuss, as Mrs. Falk has just raised, the Canada summer jobs motion. We need a business meeting to discuss all of the standing motions and new motions that folks will want to put before the committee, given the changes even in the last month, since prorogation.

• (1420)

The Chair: Madame Chabot, please go ahead.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Louise Chabot: Mr. Chair, in a previous life, we had procedures for dealing with a motion. We either postponed it to a fixed date, or brought it forward. In our rules of procedure, they are not the same thing.

I object to the possibility of debating and deciding the list of priorities today, whether it be one motion, two priorities or three priorities. I object, in keeping with what I said during the first debate.

I submit to you that we could possibly introduce all the motions and set priorities in subcommittee.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Chabot.

[*English*]

Mr. Vis.

Is there any other debate on the motion? I'm seeing none, so we're ready for the question on the motion to identify the urban, rural and northern study as a priority.

(Motion agreed to: yeas 6; nays 5)

The Chair: Is there any further business to bring before the meeting?

Mr. Brad Vis: I would like to propose an additional motion, Chair, if that's all right.

I would ask, in the spirit of collaboration and given the adoption of the motion that we just had, that the Liberal members especially consider some flexibility in what I'm about to read.

Just as a preamble, recently in the House of Commons I had a debate with the parliamentary secretary Mr. Vaughan, previously a member of this committee. Mr. Vaughan clearly stated that the rapid housing initiative was one of the most important things that the federal government was undertaking.

It's unprecedented for a government to outline that it is going to purchase 3,000 units of new housing within a six-month period. I think this motion I'm about to read actually goes well with the motion to focus on indigenous housing just passed by the committee.

I'll just go ahead and read the motion, and then we can have a debate about it.

That the committee conduct an ongoing study of the Rapid Housing Initiative as the program is rolled-out over the next six months to March 31, 2021; that all aspects of the proposed program be examined, with specific focus paid to the number and location of units acquired; that any other housing-related initiatives, either of the [Canada] Mortgage and Housing Corporation or Employment and Social Development Canada or other government department...the committee deems necessary to be studied; that witnesses include officials of Employment and Social Development Canada, staff of the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, and other witnesses the committee deems necessary; that this study be conducted over the course of six...one-hour meetings with officials providing monthly progress updates; that the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development and the CEO of the [Canada] Mortgage and Housing Corporation appear for two hours at a seventh meeting to testify; that the initial meeting be held no later than October 31, 2020 and the final meeting be held by April 30, 2021; and, that the committee present its findings to the House.

• (1425)

The Chair: You've heard the motion, colleagues. It appears to be in order.

The debate is on the motion.

I recognize Ms. Chabot.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Louise Chabot: Mr. Chair, I would like to present five notices of motion to committee members.

Is this the right time to do it?

The Chair: No, Ms. Chabot, it is not the right time yet, but I will give you the floor again immediately following debate on the current motion.

Ms. Louise Chabot: Mr. Chair, could you clarify something for me?

Is this a motion we are going to debate and also vote on today, or is my colleague presenting it as a notice of motion that we will debate at the next committee meeting?

The Chair: You can do either, Ms. Chabot.

Right now, we are dealing with committee business and we are allowed to present motions without notice. However, if you prefer to proceed with notice, that is also acceptable.

Ms. Louise Chabot: So I have a question for the member who presented it.

Is the motion a notice of motion or is it a debatable motion that will lead to a decision?

Mr. Brad Vis: Actually, it is both. I have noted the dates in the motion, but I want to be flexible for my colleagues. If you want to consider the motion at our next meeting and just receive it and add it to the list of motions received today, that is fine with me too.

Ms. Louise Chabot: I will suggest that.

[*English*]

The Chair: Mr. Turnbull.

Mr. Ryan Turnbull: I have two questions.

Can we get a copy of the motion from Mr. Vis, maybe emailed if that's possible? I would like to read it. He read it quickly, and I'm not sure if I got it.

On a point of clarification, Mr. Vis, are you suggesting the rapid housing initiative should be studied while it's being implemented, simultaneously? It seems to me that might be quite challenging to do. The usual practice is to have something implemented, and then study it, or study it before it's implemented, but maybe not during the same exact period.

Mr. Brad Vis: I would add, in the spirit of co-operation, that there are serious housing needs, especially in your neck of the woods, Mr. Turnbull, and my own, in the Greater Vancouver and Fraser Valley regions.

The purpose and spirit of this motion is to ensure that the government actually meets its stated goal of purchasing or acquiring 3,000 additional units of supporting housing within a six-month period. This committee could provide a great function to hold our public servants to account to ensure that those purchases are being made, especially in the Toronto and Vancouver regions, and provide updates to this committee in a timely manner to ensure that, in fact, the government meets that objective.

That's the spirit of this motion.

• (1430)

The Chair: We'll go to Mr. Vaughan.

Mr. Adam Vaughan: I have no problem with the spirit of this motion in terms of making sure that the good work we do through the national housing strategy, and in particular the rapid housing initiative, is publicized and promoted and shared publicly with this committee, with Canadians, with Parliament, with whoever needs to know the work we're doing.

That being said, the member has outlined six one-hour meetings, with a seventh meeting, and wants them all within the first couple of weeks of the program rolling out. While we will be moving as quickly as we can to get this money to the front lines in the fight against homelessness, in particular as it relates to COVID, and in particular in cities with high COVID counts, Winnipeg is also one of them. The focus simply on Toronto and Vancouver is not a national approach that I support. I think we need to take a look at where the science directs us, where the housing point-in-time counts direct us. The cities with programs stepping up with opportunities with large shelter populations also have to be taken into account.

I have no problem referring this to the subcommittee for scheduling. I have no problem having the minister appear to talk about the good work we're doing and the good work we still need to do on top of this to eliminate chronic homelessness. I just think the timetable is heavy at the front end and requires some scheduling.

MP Kent has already said that we have estimates coming, and this would pre-empt those ministers from showing up for those meetings. I think it's a little premature to schedule it in the way you've done it. I totally support the spirit of this and look forward to.... I think the subcommittee should take this motion and work it into a schedule and bring it back, in balance with the other challenging and competing interests we have, which include, of course, the estimates.

On the issue of how this relates to the issue we have prioritized, which is urban, rural and northern housing, we know that the communities with the highest population counts in terms of homeless people count amongst them the highest concentration and the over-representation of indigenous people. We need to get support and programs, and we need to get investments into this particular stream of housing with an urgency that I can't understate. It is long overdue, and if you don't believe me, take a walk through MP Gazan's riding and understand the impact over the last six months of not acting quickly on this file.

I absolutely urge us, in the spirit of Mr. Vis's motion, to take it to the subcommittee, on scheduling; get this committee to focus in on getting accountability and the reporting out on that. We have already missed half a year in terms of advancing the work on the urban, rural and northern housing strategy. We cannot ask this group of Canadians to wait for any longer.

The good news is that the rapid housing initiative will work well to achieve priorities in that segment as we work on fine tuning exactly what the federal approach should be doing for housing individuals in this area. I think that the timetable—and once you see the program as it gets rolled out, I think you'll understand it even more—is a little aggressive on the front end. There will be little to report in the first couple of days. We've already had two one-hour meetings before perhaps even the dollars have started to flow, and that doesn't make any sense.

I would urge my committee members to refer this to the subcommittee. We will report back to Mr. Vis, and work with Mr. Vis as a critic, to make sure he understands how to get the best results from the motion he's moved.

Mr. Brad Vis: Mr. Chair, may I politely respond to those comments?

The Chair: You can do that right after Ms. Young intervenes, because you're next on the speakers list after her. She might have some stuff that you want to respond to as well.

Ms. Young.

Ms. Kate Young: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Thank you to the honourable colleague across the floor for bringing this forward. It speaks to the incredible needs in housing. The rapid housing study and initiative is something that I'm very interested in.

With that said, I spoke to some indigenous community members last night, and they were just starting to hear about this program. I think we need to hear further about what their needs are. The needs of indigenous rural, urban and northern indigenous communities are different depending on where you are. I think it's important for us to hear what they need first.

I would have suggested, as Mr. Vaughan did, to refer it to the subcommittee. If that's in line, I think that's what we should do.

Thank you.

Mr. Brad Vis: Thank you both MP Vaughan and MP Young for your comments.

Mr. Vaughan, first off, regarding Winnipeg, I fully take your point. I believe that this is a national program and our focus should be nationally. That's why when I originally asked you about this in the House of Commons, I asked for a full regional breakdown.

I will note that I'm asking for one-hour meetings: one one-hour meeting a month. However, if the Liberals were to be in favour of supporting this motion and I pushed our first meeting, say to the end of November, I would be very amenable to such an amendment to the motion to make sure this is on the table. I believe with the motion just adopted that this coincides with the other work this committee has prioritized.

Again, extraordinary times call for extraordinary measures. I think this is a very reasonable motion, on a very unique government program, that requires this committee, in the spirit of a minority Parliament, to work on behalf of Canadians to ensure that \$1 billion spent is being used in areas that are most in need of housing right now. That is my main objective.

Thank you.

● (1435)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Vis.

Go ahead, Ms. Gazan.

Ms. Leah Gazan: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I think it would be helpful if we got a copy of the motion. It's really hard to formulate an opinion because there was so much involved with that motion.

I just also want to echo some of the research concerns around pushing forward this study too quickly, because nothing has rolled out, and it is rolling out, so I think narrow the research focus in stages, like what's going on before, as it rolls out and what it looks like after. It's hard to study something that hasn't been rolled out yet.

I think those are reasonable observations, but I'm willing to review your motion. I think we also have to look at how realistic it is in terms of being able to research it, which is why I would like to see the motion before I formulate any opinions on that.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Gazan.

Go ahead, Mr. Housefather.

Mr. Anthony Housefather: Thank you very much.

In substance, I agree with the motion to study the strategy. I have to reiterate, though, what Ms. Gazan just said.

Of the first two things we adopted today, one was to readopt all the things we had already adopted and we'd already looked at, and the second one was to prioritize one study that we'd already adopted.

This is an entirely new study, and I really would like to be able to read all the language of it. I may want to, for example, amend the timing of the meetings, so I'm wondering if, for the new studies—again, it's totally up to you, Brad—we could agree that, if we all get a copy of it, we'd vote on this at the next meeting.

I know Louise has studies, and the same would be true; if she could send us copies of them and we could vote on them all at the next meeting, that would be really helpful so that we understand it, and, if we have amendments, we could talk to you about them before the meeting and try to agree on them.

It's just really hard. With all those paragraphs, I don't really remember in my head exactly where everything was.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Housefather.

Go ahead, Mr. Vaughan.

Mr. Adam Vaughan: I just heard you change the timetables on the fly there, and I'm not quite sure how that impacts this. I think that this is incredibly important—don't get me wrong—and I'm more than happy to talk about this program and, hopefully, how successful it is, because it's critically needed, from what we've heard from the front-line workers right across the country from coast to coast to coast. It's just the timetable you've outlined, and my understanding as parliamentary secretary to the department is that you're not going to get good conversation, just in terms of how front-end loaded the timetable is.

If you remove the exact time and send it to committee, I'm sure we can work out exactly how to achieve what you're trying to achieve, which I think is full public disclosure and real-time assessment of the program. I think these are all great things to talk about. You know me, I love to talk about housing. I'm never going to stop you from doing that.

I just think, in terms of how it works with the rollout of the program, to get you the most effective information so you can have the most effective insight and the best questions possible and also impact the communities that you are speaking to so eloquently, it's a bit front-end loaded, but, as I said, the principles are absolutely fine. If we can get it to the subcommittee and come back to the committee with substantial times, also take a look at the Bloc members' meetings and take into account the estimates meetings, I think we can work this out.

What you're hearing is broad consensus around the principles of your motion. It's just the logistics that we're having trouble with because we don't have the motion in front of us, and it is a bit of a moving target now.

● (1440)

The Chair: We'll go over to you, Mr. Vis.

Mr. Brad Vis: Thank you for those comments, Mr. Vaughan and Mr. Housefather.

I'll just reiterate that I am open to amending and I would seek your amendment to the motion to change the initial date. I believe I've already provided a copy of the motion to the clerk for distribution and would welcome further scrutiny of it.

At previous meetings, we've taken a five- or 10-minute recess to review a motion on the table. Perhaps, Mr. Chair, that's an acceptable option at this time, but as I said, I'm very open to an amendment on the date. My purpose here isn't to study; it is to provide oversight. I want to see public servants coming before Canada right now and saying, they're three months into this program and they've outlined so far that they have purchased 1,000 homes—I'm giving you an example—and next month they will have all these things going on. We're in negotiations with these housing providers and we're going to be at this level next month.

Parliamentary committees don't often take that type of role in the oversight of government programs, but as I mentioned previously, right now extraordinary times call for extraordinary measures. I'm not opposed to what the government is doing on the rapid housing initiative. I want to make sure it's serving the people who need it most in the most effective way. The spirit of my motion is to ensure that those urban indigenous housing providers, be they in Winnipeg or Vancouver or Toronto or Montreal, are getting the services that were promised by the Government of Canada in that six-month period. It is a big goal and we have a responsibility to make sure we're meeting that goal on behalf of Canada, to help those people in need.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Vis.

Madame Chabot.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Louise Chabot: Mr. Chair, my comment is along the same lines.

It would be nice if we could introduce and receive these motions at this meeting, but debate them at the next meeting of the committee.

I would like to suggest we do that, if I may.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Chabot.

That question is more for the clerk, actually. I feel that, rather than a suggestion, it would be a motion to debate these motions at another meeting.

[*English*]

In English we'd call it a motion to table, I suppose. I think that's what I heard, Mr. Clerk, and I seek your advice on whether that's in order and debatable.

The Clerk: We would need to have a motion to adjourn debate on the motion that's currently in front of the committee and then we could take it up at the next meeting.

Mr. Brad Vis: I will move a motion in the spirit of this committee to adjourn debate and table the motion for further study at our subsequent meeting.

The Chair: There's no problem with the mover moving that procedural motion, Mr. Clerk? Is it debatable?

The Clerk: It is.

The Chair: Okay, so the motion before you now that supplants the original motion is that the debate on Mr. Vis's motion be adjourned.

Ms. Gazan, this is on the motion to adjourn debate?

Ms. Leah Gazan: Yes, absolutely, I support that, Mr. Chair.

I had my hand up before. I just wanted to make a friendly recommendation to my colleague MP Vis in terms of the goals he's looking for regarding oversight when he puts the motion forward the next time. It sounds as if the purpose of the study is different from what was initially stated, and I'm just hoping that's clear when he puts the motion forward the next time, when we have a chance to review it.

• (1445)

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Gazan.

Go ahead, Mr. Vis.

Mr. Brad Vis: Indeed the motion is technical but I think it's very clear that I'm asking for a one-hour meeting per month to receive updates from relevant officials at ESDC and CMHC on the progress related to the rapid housing initiative.

My goal in proposing this motion is to ensure effective oversight of the government program aiming to achieve the objective of 3,000 homes within a six-month period. I want to make sure this takes place. In the spirit of this minority Parliament, in co-operation, in being aggressively reasonable, that is what I am intending to do with this, for the well-being of Canadians.

The Chair: I love that—"aggressively reasonable".

I don't see anyone else on the speakers list. Is there any further discussion on whether the debate should now be adjourned?

I see none. Can we proceed by consensus to adjourn the debate, or do we require a recorded division?

I see consensus.

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Chair: The debate on this matter is adjourned.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Chabot, you have the floor to present a notice of motion or a motion.

Ms. Louise Chabot: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

My dear colleagues, I am advising you that I am going to present the motions that I have already given to the clerk. I am going to present them to you today, and you can consider them notices of motions for debate at the next committee meeting. My understanding is that I can present them as notices of motions, so that everyone can become familiar with them.

The first notice of motion concerns employment insurance. I am moving that the committee undertake a study on the reform of the employment insurance program, that it invite the Hon. Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion to speak to us on this issue, and that it hold at least five meetings on the matter.

As you all know, the assistance programs, the emergency programs, and everything else that had to be put into place, including the more flexible EI system, are coming to an end in 12 months. On the issue of EI reform, it would be interesting to know where the minister stands and to hear from witnesses on what the reforms will involve.

The second notice of motion deals with the impoverishment of seniors age 65 and over:

That, the Committee, pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), undertake a study about the impoverishment of the elders...and of the federal help to address the situation...

We are asking that at least two meetings be held to hear witnesses.

The third notice of motion is as follows:

That, the committee, pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), undertake a study addressing the improvements necessary to the seasonal worker's pilot project, ending in May 2021...

This motion is one of the ones we passed. In our original motion, the deadline was May 2020. As the program has been extended for another year, we amended the motion. We are also asking that there be at least two meetings on the matter.

I had introduced the next motion previously, but the committee never dealt with it. The motion proposes that the committee revisit the issue of protecting pension funds in the event of bankruptcy. This has had an impact on the industry and our businesses. As such, we propose that the Hon. Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada be invited to answer questions from committee members for approximately one hour. Perhaps we could take three hours to hear from witnesses.

The final motion concerns Service Canada locations:

That, considering the situation of incomplete reopening of the Service Canada desks, and pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), the committee undertake a study and make recommendations on the causes and impacts of desks closing on citizens of all regions. That the committee invite the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development to address this issue; that the committee held at least two (2) meetings of three (3) hours each to hear witnesses...

There you go. To sum up, we have a notice of motion on employment insurance, a notice of motion related to the impoverishment of seniors and notices of motion on the current pilot project for seasonal workers, the partial reopening of Service Canada locations and the issue of pension funds.

● (1450)

[*English*]

The Chair: Is there any further business to come before the meeting?

Seeing none, I thank you, colleagues, and I welcome you back. It looks as though we have an overflowing plate and some work for the subcommittee to tend to.

I wish you all a great Thanksgiving and look forward to working with you in this session.

We're adjourned.

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