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Chair: Mr. Robert Kitchen



Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates

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• (1105)

[English]

The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Paul Cardegna): Good morning, honourable members of the committee. I see a quorum.

[Translation]

I must inform committee members that the clerk can only entertain motions for the election of the chair. He shall not receive any other motions or points of order and shall not participate in debate.

[English]

We can now proceed to the election of the chair. Pursuant to Standing Order 106(2), the chair must be a member of the official opposition. I am now ready to receive motions for the position of chair. If members could indicate their intention by using the "raise hand" function, I would appreciate it.

[Translation]

Mr. Paul-Hus, you have the floor.

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlebourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Good morning, Mr. Clerk.

I nominate Mr. Robert Kitchen for the position of chair of the committee.

The Clerk: Mr. Paul-Hus nominates Mr. Robert Kitchen for the position of chair.

[English]

Mr. McCauley, you have your hand raised. Do you want to nominate somebody?

Mr. Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Mr. Paul-Hus beat me to it. Thank you.

The Clerk: Thank you, Mr. McCauley.

Are there any other nominations for the position of chair?

Pursuant to the order adopted by the House on Wednesday, September 23, if there's only one motion, we'll proceed immediately to the decision-making process.

Does the committee wish to adopt the motion?

(Motion agreed to)

The Clerk: I announce that Mr. Robert Kitchen has been duly elected as chair of the committee.

Congratulations, Mr. Kitchen. I will ask you to take over presiding the meeting at this time.

The Chair (Mr. Robert Kitchen (Souris—Moose Mountain, CPC)): Thank you very much, Paul. Thank you, everybody, for that confidence.

Paul, I didn't get a chance to say whether I actually would accept the nomination. Is that part of procedure?

The Clerk: Curiously enough, Mr. Kitchen, it isn't really a nomination of the House of Commons. It's actually a motion, and there is no such provision. Once the motion is made, it's in the hands of the committee. You would have needed unanimous consent to withdraw. Your only option now, if you don't want to be chair, would be to resign. However, there is unfortunately no provision for us if a candidate accepts a nomination.

• (1110)

The Chair: Thank you for that clarification. I look forward to your wise and astute guidance as we go forward.

I've had the opportunity to talk with the previous chair, Tom Lukiwski, who has told me wonderful things about the committee and the tremendous work it has done, working together in the past. I look forward to doing the same as we look forward and work together on this.

As a heads-up, for those who don't know me or have not met me personally, I am a chiropractor by trade. I have been a member of Parliament for the past five years. Before that I was the registrar for the chiropractic profession in Saskatchewan and the national president of the regulatory board throughout Canada, so I have some experience in dealing with committees.

I also spent many years as a hockey coach and I qualified coaches at many levels. I spent a lot of time watching parents with stopwatches as their children played on the ice and monitored how much ice time they got. I'm very familiar with trying to make certain that timing is appropriate and that we stay on that track. I look forward to making sure that this committee stays on time.

I do ask of everyone to make certain that when you put forward your questions, you recognize that the time allotted is not only for your question but also for the answer. We want to make certain that we try to adhere to that rule as much as possible, recognizing that once in a while we may go a little bit longer, but we will try to make certain that if that does happen, it's evenly dispersed.

With that said, Mr. Clerk, I think the next steps are for routine motions. Is that correct?

The Clerk: If I may, Mr. Chair, there are two points to raise.

The first is that you could ask, when you have an opportunity, one of your staffers to email the OGGO inbox with your cellphone number. In the event I need to communicate with you privately, that would give an opportunity for us to do so.

Committees are not obliged to proceed to the election of vice-chairs after the election of the chair; however, committees often do. It's entirely at the committee's discretion whether it proceeds to the election of vice-chairs now or to routine motions. My recommendation would be that we deal with the vice-chair issue and then the routine motions, but, again, it's in the hands of the committee.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: I would suggest we go ahead and choose our vice-chairs.

The Clerk: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Under the Standing Orders, the clerk does preside over the election of the vice-chairs, so if you will allow me, I will proceed to that right now.

The Chair: Please do so.

[*Translation*]

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

I'm now ready to entertain motions for the position of first vice-chair.

Mr. Steven MacKinnon (Gatineau, Lib.): Mr. Clerk, I nominate Mr. Drouin for the position of first vice-chair.

The Clerk: The nomination of Mr. Drouin is hereby proposed.

Are there any other motions?

[*English*]

(Motion agreed to)

The Clerk: Seeing no dissension, I declare the motion carried and Mr. Drouin duly elected first vice-chair.

I will now proceed to the election of the second vice-chair.

I'm sorry, Mr. Gerretsen, I see your hand raised. Do you wish to intervene?

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): No, sorry. That was when Mr. Kitchen was suggesting that we go to routine motions. My hand was raised for that section of it, and I apologize.

The Clerk: Thank you, Mr. Gerretsen.

[*Translation*]

Pursuant to Standing Order 106(2), the second vice-chair must be a member of an opposition party other than the official opposition. I'm now ready to entertain motions for the position of second vice-chair.

Mrs. Vignola, you have the floor.

• (1115)

Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoulu, BQ): From what I understood, someone was supposed to nominate me.

Mr. Steven MacKinnon: I'm sorry, I got confused between the positions of second vice-chair and third vice-chair.

I nominate Mrs. Vignola for the position of second vice-chair of the committee.

The Clerk: Mr. MacKinnon nominates Mrs. Vignola for the position of second vice-chair of the committee.

Are there any other motions?

[*English*]

(Motion agreed to)

The Clerk: Seeing no dissension, I declare the motion carried and Madam Vignola duly elected second vice-chair of the committee.

I will now hand the meeting back to the chair, Mr. Kitchen, with thanks.

The Chair: Thank you very much for that, Paul.

Now I gather we would step into the issue of routine motions. Is that correct?

The Clerk: We can, Mr. Chair.

Copies of the routine motions were sent to all members yesterday. I see that Mr. Gerretsen would like to intervene and Mr. McCauley would like to intervene as well.

It may be worthwhile for members to continue using the raised hand function so that we can track who wishes to intervene next.

Mr. Chair, I have a list of the routine motions here. My recommendation would be that the committee proceed one at a time through them to ensure that there is clarity as to what's being adopted, but you may want to take that issue up with the committee itself.

As I said, Mr. Gerretsen and Mr. McCauley both have their hand raised.

The Chair: Thank you.

I think we will go one by one, but before that, I will listen....

Mr. Gerretsen, I think your hand was up first.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: I was just going to move those, if that's okay, Mr. Chair. I will go one by one if that's your preference.

The Chair: I would prefer we go one by one.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: That was going to be my suggestion.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. McCauley.

Is the committee comfortable with going one by one and going through the list as they were presented to us by the clerk?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Chair: We'll go with the first motion, which is on analyst services, as follows:

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

Do we have concurrence on that?

Just so people know, if you go back historically, the thumbs up is the negative and the thumbs down is the positive, but we'll pick the thumbs up as positive in this matter.

(Motion agreed to)

The Clerk: Mr. Chair, just as a point of clarification for the benefit of the members, traditionally the analysts are visible to the committee with their cameras on during a regular committee meeting. In light of the fact that they're only attached to the committees now, their cameras have been off. However, I have asked them to turn their cameras on now, and, if you permit, Mr. Chair, the analysts can introduce themselves now.

The Chair: Certainly, I would be very happy to say hello and meet them so that everyone knows them.

Ms. Raphaëlle Deraspe (Committee Researcher): Good morning. Thank you, Mr. Chair. I've been with the committee for the last five years and am happy to be back. I'm pleased to meet you.

The Chair: We're pleased to meet you, and thank you for coming back.

Ms. Lindsay McGlashan (Committee Researcher): Good morning. Thank you, Mr. Chair and members of the committee. It's a pleasure to be here. I look forward to supporting the work of the committee. Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much. I appreciate it, and it was nice to meet you both. We look forward to working long hours and getting things done right.

We'll go to the second motion, which is on the subcommittee on agenda and procedure:

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

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: The next is on meeting without a quorum:

That the Chair be authorized to hold meetings to receive evidence and to have that evidence printed when a quorum is not present, provided that at least four members are present, including two members of the opposition and two members of the government, but when travelling outside the Parliamentary Precinct, that the meeting begin after 15 minutes, regardless of members present.

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: The next is on the time for opening remarks and questioning of witnesses:

That witnesses be given ten minutes to make their opening statement; 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: Conservative Party, Liberal Party, Bloc Québécois, New Democratic Party; that for the second and subsequent rounds, the order and time for questioning be as follows: Conservative Party, five minutes, Liberal Party, five minutes, Conservative Party, five minutes, Liberal Party, five minutes, Bloc Québécois, two and a half minutes and New Democratic Party, two and a half minutes.

Are there any questions?

I see hands up. We'll start with Mr. Gerretsen.

You had your hand up first.

• (1120)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: That was from before. I will take it down. Sorry about that.

The Chair: Madame Vignola.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Julie Vignola: I have a suggestion to make—

Mr. Green, did you want to make a suggestion?

[*English*]

Mr. Matthew Green (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Do I have the floor, Mr. Chair?

The Chair: I saw Ms. Vignola first, but she is right in the middle of...

It's whatever you would prefer.

Mr. Matthew Green: No, my apologies. I should note that there has been some back and forth with the translation, so I'll just make sure I switch back. Thank you.

The Chair: Okay. We'll go to Ms. Vignola first.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Julie Vignola: I have a suggestion to make. I will read the motion that the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs has adopted. I liked the idea, so I'm suggesting it to you:

That witnesses be given five (5) minutes [instead of 10 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 [...]

Nothing changes for the first round. I will continue:

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

So, instead of scheduling five-minute segments for the Conservative Party and the Liberal Party one after the other, we would let the Bloc Québécois and the New Democratic Party get their turn between two five-minute segments. Would that suit you?

[*English*]

The Chair: Do we have anything further?

Mr. Green, do you want to speak?

Mr. Matthew Green: Yes. I think now is the appropriate time just to acknowledge the fantastic work of our previous chair, Tom Lukiwski, who is now on PROC, and reference the fact that our committee, working in a collaborative spirit, actually made this a practice throughout COVID. I just want to take this moment and acknowledge his past chairpersonship and obviously support this to ensure that we have equitable interventions.

Thank you to the honourable member, Ms. Vignola, for bringing it up.

The Chair: Mr. McCauley, I saw your hand go up.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Thanks, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Clerk, could you run through what we did most recently in the last group of meetings? I think that worked very well. I would think that maybe we could just stick with what worked before.

• (1125)

The Clerk: Thank you, Mr. McCauley.

The motion that existed originally is the one that the chair read. However, that did give discretion to the chair. The motion that Mr. Kitchen read, which was the original one in effect, gave discretion to the chair, who at the time was Mr. Lukiwski, to make modifications as he saw fit, which he did quite regularly. He did it based on the amount of time left, and he was able to manage that situation.

I've never heard any complaints from members about how he did that, but the original motion that existed at that time was the one that Mr. Kitchen read. The one that Madam Vignola read was actually adopted by PROC during their first meeting last week, I believe.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: I don't know, Mr. MacKinnon—you've been here from the beginning as well—but I think how we had it recently worked very well and seemed fair, and it also allowed a bit of discretion when we needed to perhaps limit witness time. I think that worked well. I'd prefer to stick with the original.

Mr. Steven MacKinnon: I would concur.

The Chair: Mr. Paul-Hus.

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: Thank you. During Zoom meetings, we don't have the opportunity of talking to our colleagues, but I want to say that I agree with what Mrs. Vignola suggested. The Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs adopted that suggestion, which all committees are discussing. I think it's a fairer way of allocating speaking time.

[English]

The Chair: Mr. Green, I saw your hand first, and then we have Mr. Gerretsen.

Mr. Matthew Green: I just want to note that although our previous chair was good in his discretion, there were times when we were pushed out for various reasons—technical reasons—from our last round. I think that PROC, very rightly in their wisdom, with Mr. Lukiwski, have identified this as being a standard, being the pre-eminent committee on committees.

In that collaborative spirit, I would strongly suggest that we carve this out in the way that it's been presented by Ms. Vignola so that we take the burden off Mr. Kitchen as the chair to have to make decisions on the fly that may or may not impact the way we're able to collaboratively work together.

The Chair: Is there any more discussion?

Mr. Gerretsen.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Thank you very much, Robert.

By the way, I serve on the PROC committee with Tom, and he's very knowledgeable. You have big shoes to fill, but congratulations on your new position.

I just want to say that at the PROC committee we had a lot of debate and discussion on this. We ended up coming down on it the way that has been proposed by Madame Vignola. The way we left it was that if there is any time after the expiration of the way it was laid out, then the chair could use that additional time to share, at their discretion, amongst the various different committee members.

That's just a thought for our deliberations on this.

The Chair: Do I see any other hands?

Mr. McCauley.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Thanks very much for everyone's input.

I'm fine with what Mr. Paul-Hus was saying. I'm sorry that I'm flip-flopping a bit, but it's not a hill to die on. I'm fine with following up on Mr. Paul-Hus's comments.

The Chair: Okay.

I appreciate the kind words. It's correct that I do have some huge shoes to fill in this role. I look forward to that opportunity.

I do want to make certain that all members of the committee get an opportunity to ask their questions. In that aspect, from my years on the veterans affairs committee as well as HESA, I have noticed that as the time get tight, sometimes the Bloc [*Technical difficulty—Editor*]. I want to make certain that this is recognized throughout and that they do get those opportunities and are not being short-changed when we get into those situations.

At this point in time, we basically have two proposals in front of us. One is what we have gone with in the past. The other is to reward it so that during the second round we go with the Conservatives for five minutes, the Liberals for two and a half minutes, the Bloc for two and a half minutes, the NDP for five minutes, the Conservatives for five minutes, and then the Liberals.

I guess I will ask for a vote on that. If we accept that, we will go that route. If not, we will stay with what is there.

Go ahead, Ms. Vignola.

• (1130)

[Translation]

Mrs. Julie Vignola: My motion also suggested that the time for witnesses to make their opening statements be reduced from 10 minutes to 5 minutes, so that we would have more time for questions.

[English]

The Chair: Correct. I apologize. I missed that.

Yes, we are voting on that part as well, to go from 10 minutes to five minutes per witness, along with the change in times.

The Clerk: Mr. Chair, I have found a copy of the motion that was adopted by PROC. I believe it is the same as the one Madame Vignola read out. If you wish, I can read it back to the committee to ensure that they know what they are voting on.

The Chair: I would appreciate that. Thank you very much.

The Clerk: The motion that was adopted by PROC is 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

The Chair: Mr. Gerretsen, do you have a point on the motion?

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: I'm sorry, are we reading it out to vote on it, or is it still debatable?

The Chair: I was under the impression that we had finished the debate on it and were going to the vote on it.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Okay. I was going to explain why we chose to reduce it to six minutes at PROC, but I'm happy to just proceed with the vote.

The Chair: I am calling for the vote.

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: It's pretty well unanimous, so we will make that change.

Thank you very much, everybody. Well done.

That's the first vote we've run, and I'm so happy I chaired a vote.

Mr. Steven MacKinnon: I tried to help you out there.

The Chair: Okay, we'll move on to the motion on document distribution:

That the clerk of the committee be authorized to distribute documents to members of the committee only when such documents exist in both official languages, and that witnesses be advised accordingly.

Is there any discussion on this?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: Mr. Chair, I would like to say something.

[*English*]

The Chair: Mr. Paul-Hus.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: Thank you. In other committees, documents often happened to be in English only. It was always claimed

that there was a lack of time for translation. It is necessary to keep an eye on this, because it is very important for Francophones.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you for that.

I believe this basically requires that to happen, and I think it's correct that unless we seek permission from the whole committee to have it put out in one language that we require everything to be in both languages.

Is there any other discussion on this?

Seeing none, raise a hand if you are in favour.

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: The next one is on 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.

Is there any discussion?

Mr. Gerretsen.

• (1135)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

One of the other changes we made in PROC, which I think would be appropriate for your committee as well, would be that at the end of this, it would read, "provided that members have confirmed their physical presence for the meeting". This would put the onus on the members to tell the clerk that they will be there so that the clerk can then provide meals. Otherwise, you end up with a lot of meals when a number of people are virtually attending and it would be a waste.

The Chair: Certainly.

Is there any further discussion?

Ms. Vignola, you had your hand up, or was that along the same lines?

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Julie Vignola: Thank you.

Yes, it's a good idea to confirm our presence with the clerk, but I think we are able to buy a muffin before a meeting. Can we just do without a working lunch? With the salary we earn, we are able to afford it. I'm just asking the question. I'm willing to discuss it, but I don't think we can't buy a muffin before a meeting.

[*English*]

The Chair: We have two points.

Is there any further discussion?

Mr. Gerretsen.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: I guess I have the benefit of having been through this debate already in PROC.

We had a lengthy discussion on this, and there were multiple different reasons for why members were advancing different ideas. That is how we came to this particular wording. We had the exact same discussion. Given the fact we are in a pandemic, we asked why it was necessary to have meals delivered to us.

At PROC at least, we determined that there was no reason why we couldn't get our own food—and here I agree totally with what Ms. Vignola is saying—even if it were just from upstairs in the West Block and we brought it with us. Members decided that if they were going to attend in person, they would inform the clerk they were going to be there but would not require a meal.

At the end of the day, this gives the clerk the ability to do it if he or she has to. That's why we caved in on that wording.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: If this committee chooses to strike that and just take the whole part out, I'd definitely be supportive.

The Chair: We're going to go with Mr. MacKinnon, then Mr. McCauley and then Mr. Paul-Hus.

Mr. Steven MacKinnon: I'm sorry, Mr. Chair. I didn't have my hand up.

The Chair: Okay. I'm sorry. I thought it was.

Mr. McCauley.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Thanks.

I was just going to agree with Ms. Vignola. Obviously, it's just virtual right now, and I see no point in using up taxpayers' money. That's just to back up Ms. Vignola's comments.

The Chair: Mr. Paul-Hus.

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Meals are for people attending a meeting in Ottawa. If the meeting is held in the West Block, we can make arrangements since the cafeteria is open there. However, there is nothing in the Wellington Building. If a meeting is held there and it's at lunchtime—I don't know what our hours will be yet—it might be more complicated to get a meal. If not, indeed, it's not necessary.

[English]

The Chair: Mr. Green.

Mr. Matthew Green: Yes, I totally understand the rationale. I think that people who may be serving on only one committee would have the time allocation to do that, but before I vote in support of striking the ability to provide food, has it been in the past a custom, or is there an availability, for staff to also access the snacks? While we're meeting virtually and while our meetings tend to be short, I just imagine times where we might be hours in a committee meeting on a particular topic without the ability to retreat. There's also a cost allocation to us for sending our staff off-site to go out and pick up food somewhere. I come from a city council, where we had these conversations numerous times as well, and at the end of the day, it always occurred to us that a \$5 sandwich was

a time/cost savings in terms of the allocation of the work we did to be able to take time to go off to get food or to bring in food.

Having said that, I'm also proud to say, Mr. Clerk, that I'm down by 20 pounds. I'm on a very restricted diet. I won't be able to have those tasty little doughnuts that you purchase anyway, so I'm out. I wouldn't even be eating the food. I'm just saying that if there were apples available for staff and other people from time to time, I don't see that as being an atrocious use of taxpayers' time and money.

• (1140)

Mr. Kelly McCauley: I think the doughnuts are a personal attack on me, Mr. Green.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Green. I appreciate your comments. As you've said, the bottom line is that staff are at those meetings and, ultimately, if it's in the Wellington Building, they can't access the cafeteria as well. That's a good point.

At this point, I think maybe we should move forward with the recorded division on this, Mr. Clerk.

The Clerk: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The recorded division will be on the amendment by Mr. Gerretsen to add to the motion, at the end, "provided that members have confirmed their physical presence for the meeting". I will proceed with the roll call on this.

[Translation]

Mrs. Julie Vignola: If my question from earlier has become a motion, you can cancel it altogether.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you. We will make those amendments.

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

The Chair: The next point 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.

Is there any discussion?

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: The next 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.

Is there any discussion? Mr. Paul-Hus.

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Normally, both government and opposition parties have people from the whip's office on committees who are often present at these meetings. Are they included? There is a person on the MP's immediate staff, but if we need someone from the whip's office, are they included?

• (1145)

[English]

The Chair: The motion calls for one additional person from each House officer's office to be allowed to be present.

The Clerk: If I may, Mr. Chair, in the past, I believe the definition of "House officer's office" has been sufficiently fluid to be considered to include the whip's office. That is to say that in addition to each member having a staff member at an in camera meeting, it would also include somebody from the whip's office.

Where this may be problematic now in hybrid meetings in the context of COVID is that there may not be enough seats in the room for everybody. However, this is a routine motion that was adopted back in the time when we were meeting entirely in person and there were sufficient seats. I might suggest that the committee may want to adopt this to allow for the possibility of it while keeping in mind that the Board of Internal Economy has adopted provisions to reduce the presence of staff at committee meetings simply due to the ongoing pandemic.

Again, the pandemic won't be here forever and it is possible that in the future these provisions won't be in place, but I do want to raise the issue with the committee that there are fewer opportunities for staff to appear at hybrid meetings. At least that's my understanding based on what I've received.

Thank you.

The Chair: Mr. Paul-Hus.

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Clerk, we have to understand that we operate in hybrid mode. The important thing, in my opinion, is to be clear. Since in camera meetings are few and far between, we want to make sure that no one will object to having a member of the whips' offices participate in the meetings. We are in hybrid mode. It still needs to be clarified, because questions have been raised about this in other committees.

The Clerk: Mr. Chair, I've always heard that this means that House officers include whips and that they have access to the meeting. You're right that in hybrid format, they may only have access to the meeting in virtual mode. As for their presence in person in the room, it could be problematic if there are changes due to the pandemic.

[English]

The Chair: Is there any further discussion?

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: On 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.

Is there any discussion?

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: On 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. from Monday to Friday, that (2) the motion be distributed to Members in both official languages by the clerk on the same day the said notice was transmitted if it was received no later than the deadline hour, and that (3) notices received after the deadline hour or on non-business days be deemed to have been received during the next business day; and that when the committee is travelling outside the Parliamentary Precinct, no substantive motions may be moved.

Is there any discussion?

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: 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 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.

Is there any discussion?

Mr. Weiler, do you want to discuss it?

• (1150)

Mr. Patrick Weiler (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I meant to raise my hand to get on the speaking list after we're done with routine motions.

The Chair: Okay, sorry, I apologize.

Mr. Patrick Weiler: That's okay.

The Chair: Seeing no further discussion, the motion is carried.

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: Those were the routine motion I have.

Yes, Mr. Green.

Mr. Matthew Green: If I could go after Mr. Weiler, I do want to test the will of the committee on getting rolling and right back to business here.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Include me as well after Mr. Green.

The Chair: We will go with Mr. Weiler, then Mr. Green and then Mr. McCauley, at this point.

Go ahead, Mr. Weiler.

Mr. Patrick Weiler: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

What I'd like to propose is that pursuant to Standing Order 108(2) the committee conduct a 16-meeting study on; a) federal shipbuilding; b) ship procurement; c) the polar icebreaker; and d) the effects of COVID-19 on shipyard construction and delivery, and that the committee report its findings to the House by November 26, 2020.

The Chair: Mr. Clerk, I'm going to defer to you. Is it best for us to hear all of the motions or to debate one at a time?

The Clerk: My recommendation is that you deal, Mr. Chair, with one motion at a time. It would create too much confusion otherwise. Procedurally, we can't entertain another motion until the previous motion is disposed of.

• (1155)

The Chair: Thank you.

Is there any discussion on the motion?

Mr. Matthew Green: Absolutely.

The Chair: Mr. Green, I'm sorry, just a second.

I have Mr. Green, Ms. Vignola and then Mr. McCauley.

Mr. Matthew Green: While I can appreciate that the government side would want to turn the page to a new agenda for this committee, notwithstanding all of the critical studies that we had undertaken prior to its rather abrupt prorogation, I would suggest that we continue the course that we had set prior to the abrupt prorogation of this committee, the dissolution of this committee.

I will not be supporting this, nor their "turn the page" agenda. At the appropriate time, I will be requesting that we commence the bulk of the work that we had prior to the very abrupt dissolution of this committee at prorogation.

The Chair: Ms. Vignola.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Julie Vignola: Mr. Weiler's suggestion is interesting. It echoes one of my concerns. If one could add knowledge of the criteria for prioritizing shipyards when awarding contracts under the National Shipbuilding Strategy, that would be interesting as well.

[*English*]

The Chair: Mr. McCauley.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Thanks, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Weiler, thanks for putting that forward.

I think we're down to me, Mr. MacKinnon and Mr. Drouin from the 2015 class on OGGO. Those two will know that I've been for a shipbuilding study for a long time. In general, I do support it.

There are a couple of issues with it, though. Of course, the main estimates dropped very recently, so we have to get to those. I think they're deemed reported at the end of November, so we have to get our estimate studies done. My understanding is also that the supplementary (B)s will possibly be dropped in October as well, which have to be studied as well, so the timing issue doesn't work out well.

I can't support the motion at this time, although I do think we should continue as we had agreed in the last Parliament to the study. Perhaps we could break it up and study the polar icebreaker first because of the rumours of the government going offshore for one, rather than getting moving on the *Diefenbaker*, which should have been in the water years ago, as many of you know.

At this time, I can't support the motion for the study as written, but certainly I think we can talk among ourselves to get working very soon.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. McCauley.

Ms. Vignola, could you repeat your amendment, please?

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Julie Vignola: The amendment proposed to include in the study the criteria for prioritizing shipyards when awarding contracts under the National Shipbuilding Strategy.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Julie Vignola: In terms of the date, I agree with Mr. McCauley because we have to deal with the budget. So we can do this study, but we should perhaps prioritize the budget since we haven't voted a budget in about a year and a half. It's time for us to study that as well.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you.

I apologize. I'm trying to look at the participant list and the hands that are up and to listen.

Mr. Paul-Hus, you have the floor.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Perhaps this should be clarified. How do you want us to raise our hand? Do you want us to use the computer system or to do it on-screen?

I understand Mr. Weiler's motion, because, yes, there are many questions about shipbuilding. However, two motions have already been tabled, one by my colleague Mr. McCauley, on June 9th, and the other by Mrs. Vignola, also in June. These motions concerned requests to the Office of the Parliamentary Budget Officer for the study on Joint Support Ships and the *Asterix*, on the one hand, and the three possible warship options, on the other.

We will have to decide what we want. First, we have to wait for the report from the Office of the Parliamentary Budget Officer before we go any further. Second, we will have to inform the Standing Committee on National Defence, of which my friend Mr. Gerretsen was a member. At that time, in 2018, we did a study on Canadian naval capabilities. It might be a good idea to review that first.

As for the rest, I for one will be tabling motions when it is my turn to do so, but I will give priority to the supply problems created by COVID-19. There is also the budget, yes. We will have to go through all the votes in the Main Estimates before we go any further.

• (1200)

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Paul-Hus.

We need to recognize that we're discussing the amendment by Ms. Vignola at this point in time as she has made the amendment to the original motion, just for clarification. Is there any further discussion on Ms. Vignola's amendment?

Ms. Vignola, do you have anything more to add?

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Julie Vignola: I assume that the report of the Parliamentary Budget Officer is ready, as Mr. Paul-Hus said, but that given the prorogation of Parliament, if I'm not mistaken, we have to move a motion to formally reintroduce that report.

Am I wrong, or is my assertion correct?

The Clerk: I will answer Mrs. Vignola.

I put this question to the members of the Office of the Parliamentary Budget Officer at the beginning of prorogation. They were in the process of reviewing the laws that govern them. There is nothing to prevent the committee from making the same request of them. I have yet to receive a response from the Parliamentary Budget Officer. I don't know how the bill is drafted or how the Parliamentary Budget Officer interprets it. We have to wait and see. I don't know if the people in the office continued their work during prorogation.

On another subject, Mr. Chair, I would like to clarify something for those who have problems with interpretation. I forgot to mention at the beginning of the meeting that if you want to speak in French, you have to be on the French channel. If you want to speak in English, you have to be on the English channel. When you switch from one channel to the other, it takes a few seconds for the change to take place. This can create problems and cause you to hear the interpretation while you are trying to speak. I hope that this clarification can solve some of the problems.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. I appreciate that.

There's just a point that I think we need reminding of. In the committees that I've been involved with in the past, the reality is that the motions that are presented at the beginning will be taken to each committee's subcommittee, at which point that subcommittee will determine which ones to proceed with, based on that process, and then be brought back to the committee.

I'm assuming that is the same process this committee has already followed. Correct me if I'm wrong, but I do believe that's the process that we set out, and although we will move forward on this motion, there will be others that will be presented and then discussed.

Do we need a vote on the amendment, Mr. Clerk?

• (1205)

The Clerk: Mr. Chair, if I may intervene on that, the subcommittee makes recommendations to the main committee. A motion adopted by the main committee doesn't have to be referred to the subcommittee, though the subcommittee may want to make recommendations as to, for example, how to run the studies. Once adopted in the main committee, the motion doesn't actually have to be referred back to the subcommittee for consideration. The subcommittee, however, can make recommendations, which have to be approved by the main committee.

I would suggest that we proceed to a recorded division on the amendment and the motion, as there has been considerable debate. I don't know if Mr. McCauley wanted to intervene again or not.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: No. I'll leave it. I was just going to suggest that we refer it to the subcommittee to hash out a general order of stuff once we know about the estimates and everything else.

The Clerk: The chair can always convene a meeting of the subcommittee at a later date to discuss future business and then make recommendations to the main committee, or the main committee can adopt motions right now.

As there is a motion on the floor, I would suggest that we should dispose of it, and I would suggest, Mr. Chair, that we proceed to a recorded division on Madame Vignola's amendment, if you agree.

The Chair: I think we should as well.

(Amendment agreed to: yeas 6; nays 4)

The Chair: Is there any further discussion on the motion as amended?

Mr. MacKinnon followed by Mr. Paul-Hus.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Steven MacKinnon: Mr. McCauley said that we've been wanting to do a review of the National Shipbuilding Strategy for a very long time. It is still the largest procurement in the history of the country and it is having an impact in every region of Canada. So it is entirely appropriate for this committee to look at it.

Unlike Mr. Green, I don't think it's about turning the page, as he said. On the contrary, we've been trying to do this in-depth review for several years now. We should support the motion as amended by Mrs. Vignola.

Mr. Paul-Hus, Mrs. Vignola and Mr. Weiler represent important shipbuilding regions.

I will be supporting the motion, Mr. Chair.

[*English*]

The Chair: Mr. McCauley.

• (1210)

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Thank you.

I appreciate what Mr. MacKinnon says. It's quite funny when we say we've been trying; I've been trying for five years. The Liberals have been blocking the study for most of those years.

Maybe it's just semantics, but it's not the NSS that we owe it to taxpayers and Canadians to review; it's the actual procurement process, the cost overruns, the delays and everything else. I think all parties agree on the idea of the NSS. I think we want to look not at that but rather at the actual procurement process.

I appreciate Ms. Vignola's amendment, but again, with all the other items that we have as well as our previous discussions from before prorogation, this is going to go well into the new year. We could spend 16 meetings, I'm sure, just on the JSS or what's going on in Irving right now.

I don't support the motion period, because I think it's too restrictive with regard to what we actually need to do and also does not address this looming chance that the polar icebreaker or new icebreakers for the Great Lakes, etc., could get offshored any moment now, as we've seen. I think we're doing a disservice to taxpayers but to the shipbuilding regions as well if we don't get it right. I don't think this motion does that.

The Chair: Thank you.

We are going to go to Ms. Vignola, followed by Mr. Paul-Hus, Mr. Kusmierczyk and Mr. Green.

I'm going to ask people to hit the little raised blue hand. That way I can catch things fast enough and then follow in order.

Ms. Vignola.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Julie Vignola: Thank you.

I will respond quickly to what Mr. McCauley just said.

Mr. Weiler, if memory serves me correctly, your motion mentions icebreakers. Are you talking only about polar icebreakers, or do you include light and medium icebreakers?

[*English*]

The Chair: Mr. Weiler, I'll let you answer that, if you would.

Mr. Patrick Weiler: We're specifically talking about the polar icebreakers.

The Chair: Ms. Vignola, do you have anything further to add?

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Julie Vignola: No.

[*English*]

The Chair: Mr. Paul-Hus.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mysteriously, I can no longer click on the little raised blue hand. It has disappeared from my screen.

I recognize that there are a lot of questions that need to be asked about the National Shipbuilding Strategy. We know that some contracts are not being executed effectively, but this is not a good time to look at that because of the situation we are facing.

In any event, we cannot support the date that is mentioned in the motion. We can defeat the motion and present it later in a different way or we can amend it to change the date. The November date does not hold, given the Main Estimates that we will be required to review in the coming weeks.

[*English*]

The Chair: Mr. Kusmierczyk.

Mr. Irek Kusmierczyk (Windsor—Tecumseh, Lib.): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I really appreciate it.

This is an important study and an important motion being brought forward. It is a matter of urgency, I feel.

In our constituency of Windsor—Tecumseh, we don't have a shipbuilding footprint, although being in the Great Lakes, we depend significantly on the Coast Guard and the ships there to patrol our waters in the area.

Fundamentally, I do appreciate the incredible significance of the shipbuilding industry, not just to the security and the safety of our country from coast to coast to coast, but also to the jobs that I see from shipbuilding. In this climate and situation with COVID, that is absolutely paramount.

When I think of shipbuilding, I think not just about the direct shipbuilding jobs, but also about the skilled trades and how important the health of our shipbuilding industry is to the development and cultivation of skilled trades in this country. When I think about shipbuilding, I also think about communities that have a large steel sector and steel industry, and how important that is to those communities as well, and to all the workers who are tied to that.

To me, this is a priority. This is about making sure that, yes, while we're focused on COVID and the health and safety of Canadians as a top priority, at the same time, it is important that we focus on advancing, protecting, and growing jobs. Shipbuilding, obviously, is a large accelerator and catalyst for that. Again, whether it's skilled trades, good union jobs, or good steel jobs, it's absolutely critical.

There is, to me, quite an urgency to see this study brought forward in a timely fashion. I will be supporting this motion.

• (1215)

The Chair: Mr. Green.

Mr. Matthew Green: I don't think anybody is disputing how important jobs are to the shipbuilding industry, just as we're not disputing how important jobs are to veterans, or looking at the green economy, or any of the other priorities that we had prior to this. The kicker is how overly prescriptive this is, which is why I referenced how it turns the page on other discussions that we had prior to the unfortunate and untimely dissolution of Parliament.

Even in my remarks after this is dealt with, I would still point out that defence procurement, with a focus on shipbuilding, has always been a priority of this committee in my short time here. I don't think that will change. What will change, though, is how we order the studies of this committee.

My preference is to resume, notwithstanding...To be on the record, for those who might be tuning in for the first time, we worked through COVID. It's not as if we hit pause at this committee and didn't do any work during COVID. We worked through COVID and had collaboratively identified and prioritized the good work of this committee to come up with what should have been, at least in my opinion, a full resumption of the work we had done.

I'm not going to be supporting this. I understand that defence procurement and the focus on shipbuilding is critically important. At the appropriate time, we can work together to draft a motion that would be beneficial to the entire committee, and not just switch our attention to something that is very prescriptive in a 16-week, November or December, drop-dead period.

The Chair: Ms. Vignola, I see that your hand is up.

[Translation]

Mrs. Julie Vignola: You know how important the national shipbuilding strategy is to me and to jobs. That there are guaranteed jobs in Halifax and Vancouver is good, but that there are as many here at Davie shipyard, which represents half of the construction force, is equally important. I am sure you have heard enough from me on this so far.

The proposal would force us to look at all of this very quickly, so we would be looking at budgets very quickly. It does not make sense. We have to take the time to get it right.

So in order to serve our community well and to take into account the jobs that this strategy will create in a direct, indirect and induced way, I cannot agree with the original format of the motion.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Weiler.

Mr. Patrick Weiler: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I've heard a few concerns about the motion, and I'd like to bring forward a few potential workarounds to address the concerns that were raised. Mr. McCauley raised a concern about the estimates and how this might impact them, and Ms. Vignola raised the issue of the scope of the ships that are going to be covered by this.

I would suggest two things. One would be to move the date from November to having this presented to the House by December 17. That would allow more time to do other studies, such as on the esti-

mates, and likewise for Ms. Vignola to study the light icebreakers as well.

• (1220)

The Chair: Okay, we've basically heard an amendment being suggested there.

Is that correct, Mr. Clerk?

The Clerk: I did hear Mr. Weiler putting forward some suggestions. However, Mr. Weiler, being the one who proposed the motion, cannot amend his own motion. Another member could move the same amendment, but procedurally, usually the mover of the motion cannot amend their own motion without the unanimous consent of the committee.

The Chair: Thank you. That's a good point.

Mr. McCauley, I saw your hand up.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: I appreciate your attempt, Mr. Weiler, to try to accommodate our concerns, but even December 17 is not going to be realistic.

I've been working on this for five years. We could probably spend six months just looking at Irving, the shipyard, much less all of it. The Coast Guard stuff, the *Atlantic Eagle* issue with CITT, would take months on its own.

While I appreciate your attempt, it would be wasting our time and doing a disservice to everyone involved if we rushed it through in two months. We could easily do this for a full year. I think that was our discussion before prorogation. We were going to leave it until the end because it would take such a long, long time.

If you want to split it up to just to study the icebreaker—because there is the concern about the government outsourcing this from the country—perhaps something broken down like that.... However, to do the whole package by December is not possible. It's just not realistic.

Again, I appreciate your attempt to try accommodate our concerns, but we won't support this because the issue needs a full and proper review and, I think, agreement among all four parties on how we're going to do that.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Kusmierczyk.

Mr. Irek Kusmierczyk: That's perfect. Thank you so much, Mr. Kitchen. I appreciate that.

I want to ask my colleague Mr. McCauley whether he can maybe suggest a timeline that he believes would be suitable here. It seems there is recognition of the urgency of discussing this issue, but we want to make sure that the discussion is fulsome, that it receives the fulsome attention it requires.

I want to ask Mr. McCauley whether he can maybe comment on timelines that he feels would be appropriate.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Well, I would suggest maybe sending it to our planning committee, because we're spinning our wheels here. I know that I have other business I want to attend to, as do Mr. Green and Ms. Vignola. Maybe let's send it to our planning committee of five so that they can work out some suggestions.

I mean, if it were up to me, I'd have a certain plan, but that may not work for Mr. Green or Ms. Vignola or for your side. Rather than continue with this back-and-forth, I suggest we sent it off to our planning group so that they can hash it out.

The Chair: Mr. Clerk, are we able to do that? Does it need to be voted on in order for us to do that?

The Clerk: Normally, once a motion or an amendment is before a committee, the committee can dispose of it only by taking a decision, but there are other things. A committee can agree, if there's consent, to either withdraw the motion or adjourn the debate. Once it's no longer debating that motion, it can move on to other business. Then the business could be taken up by the subcommittee.

It's entirely up to the committee's discretion. The committee could decide to adjourn the debate on this motion and proceed to consider other issues, or the committee could, with unanimous consent, withdraw this motion from it entirely and deal with it in subcommittee. Also, if it adjourns the debate here, it could deal with it in subcommittee as well.

There are some options for the committee if it doesn't want to take a decision on this motion right now.

• (1225)

The Chair: Thank you for that.

Mr. Green.

Mr. Matthew Green: I don't know if Bourinot includes referral motions, but would there not be a referral motion that could be in order to have this motion referred to, just directly?

The Chair: Mr. Clerk.

The Clerk: I have seen that happen in the past. If it is the will of the committee to refer it to the subcommittee, then I would say, yes, that would be admissible if somebody wants to propose that. Then the question can be put to the committee members as to how they wish to proceed.

The Chair: Mr. Gerretsen.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: On a point of order, isn't it the intent of the subcommittee to set the agenda, and even if the subcommittee passes something, it still has to come back to the main committee to adopt it? I don't think you want to send the idea of a study to subcommittee to debate. You want to determine at committee level if you want to do the study, and then let the subcommittee determine the agenda as it relates to it. I don't think it's in order to send the discussion over to the subcommittee, which would only have to report back.

The Chair: Mr. McCauley, I see your hand is up.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: I appreciate what Mr. Green is doing. I'm going to suggest that we vote to adjourn this. I think we all have agreed that we're going to do the shipbuilding study. I suggest we vote to adjourn this and then allow our subcommittee to develop a plan going forward without any restrictions or without any param-

eters set up right now, or else I'd ask Mr. Weiler if he'd agree to withdraw this motion.

The Clerk: If I may, Mr. Chair, what Mr. McCauley is proposing is what's called a "dilatatory" motion. They are non-debatable. Procedurally, the chair has to put the question before the committee. The committee will vote on whether or not to adjourn debate on the motion.

My advice to you would be to put the question now. That should be done by recorded division, pursuant to the order adopted by the House on September 23.

The Chair: Thank you. I appreciate that. It's actually something that I was recognizing.

It's non-debatable. Mr. McCauley's motion is the one we're voting on. I'll call for—

Mr. Steven MacKinnon: On a point of order, Mr. Chair, just to be clear, it's non-debatable?

The Chair: Correct.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Not on a motion to adjourn....

Can we have a recorded vote, Mr. Chair?

The Clerk: Yes.

The question is on Mr. McCauley's motion that the debate be now adjourned. I will put the question by recorded division.

The Clerk: Mr. Chair, there are five in favour and five against.

You have a tie and it's incumbent upon you to issue the tie-breaking vote, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: I vote for the motion to adjourn the debate.

(Motion agreed to: yeas 6; nays 5)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: Mr. Chair, I would like to put forward a motion to the committee. May I begin?

[*English*]

Mr. Matthew Green: I'm already on the list.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Steven MacKinnon: A point of order, Mr. Chair.

[*English*]

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Green was next.

• (1230)

The Chair: Yes, Mr. Green was next. Yes, that's correct.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Steven MacKinnon: I have a point of order.

[English]

The Chair: The order was Mr. Green and then Mr. McCauley.

Mr. Steven MacKinnon: I have a point of order, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Go ahead, Mr. MacKinnon.

[Translation]

Mr. Steven MacKinnon: I think it would be helpful for the committee members to know where we stand. We just finished debate on Mr. Weiler's motion. Where are we in the process? What speakers are on your list? How are we going to proceed? Can anyone move one motion, two motions? How do we proceed now?

[English]

The Chair: The procedure was that the adjourning of the debate was on that first motion. I would ask that all members get together, at some point in time, to discuss that motion privately such that it can be put back on the floor.

Now we will proceed to the next issue. Mr. Green, I assume, will be presenting a motion, and that would be followed by Mr. McCauley as the next person after that.

That's the order I have at this point, and then Ms Vignola, I believe, is after that as well.

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: I also have a point of order, Mr. Chair.

[English]

Mr. Kelly McCauley: I think Mr. Paul-Hus is before me.

The Chair: I'm sorry. I apologize. It's Mr. Paul-Hus.

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I would just like to remind you that I'm unable to request the floor electronically. It's important to know that I can only raise my hand manually.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you.

Just for clarification, Mr. McCauley, you indicated that Mr. Paul-Hus was ahead of you?

Mr. Kelly McCauley: As much as I'd love to speak, I saw Mr. Paul-Hus signal before me.

The Chair: Thank you.

Ms. Vignola, I see your hand is up.

[Translation]

Mrs. Julie Vignola: I'd like to propose a motion before the committee. I will follow the order of authorization.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you, and you will be following Mr. Paul-Hus.

Mr. Kusmierczyk, go ahead.

Mr. Irek Kusmierczyk: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I just raised my hand to be on the speaking list as well, if possible.

The Chair: Okay.

We will go to Mr. Green.

Mr. Matthew Green: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I believe I've captured the spirit of the work that we had undertaken prior to the very unfortunate dissolution of this committee.

I move:

That, pursuant to Standing Orders 108(2) and 108(3)(c), the committee resume the following studies and activities undertaken during the 1st Session of the 43rd Parliament; and that the evidence heard and documentation received by the Committee in relation to these studies be taken into consideration by the Committee in this session:

1. Defence procurement with a focus on shipbuilding;
2. Government's Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic;
3. Greening Government Strategy;
4. Hiring Process in the Public Service;
5. Hiring of veterans for public service positions;
6. Review of the Red Tape Reduction Act;
7. Departmental Results Reports 2018-19;
8. Subject Matter of Supplementary Estimates (A), 2020-21: Vote 1a under Department of Public Works and Government Services, Votes 1a and 5a under National Capital Commission, Vote 1a under Privy Council Office, Votes 1a and 5a under Shared Services Canada and Votes 1a, 20a and 30a under Treasury Board Secretariat;
9. Subject Matter of Supplementary Estimates (B), 2019-20: Vote 1b under Department of Public Works and Government Services, Votes 1b and 5b under Shared Services Canada and Vote 1b under Treasury Board Secretariat;
10. Briefing on the Nuctech security equipment contract;
11. Briefing by the Minister of Public Services and Procurement on Phoenix;
12. Briefing by the Minister of Public Services and Procurement on Canada Post; and
13. Awarding by the federal government of a \$900 million sole-sourced contract to WE Charity, as well as prior contracts to this organization.

And that, regarding motions sending for documents as adopted by the committee—

Mr. Clerk, I do apologize in advance because these are lengthy, but I want to make sure these resume as they were critically important.

—as per May 29, 2020, meeting 15:

That, in the context of its study of the government's response to the COVID-19 Pandemic and pursuant to Standing Order 108(1)(a), the committee send for all briefing notes, memos and emails from senior officials, prepared for the Minister of Health, the President of the Public Health Agency of Canada, the Chief Medical Health Officer of Canada, and the Minister of Public Service and Procurement between 2010 and the present day, regarding the stockpiling, management, disposal and replenishment of medical equipment and supplies in the National Emergency Strategic Stockpile; that the committee receive the information no later than October 31, 2020; that matters of Cabinet confidence and national security be excluded from the request; that any redactions to protect the privacy of Canadian citizens and permanent residents whose names and personal information may be included in the documents, as well as public servants who have been providing assistance on this matter, be made by the Office of the Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel of the House of Commons; and that these documents be posted on the committee's web page.

• (1235)

And as per June 19, 2020, meeting 21:

That, in the context of its study of the government's response to the COVID-19 Pandemic and pursuant to Standing Order 108(1)(a), the committee send for documents from Public Service and Procurement Canada (PSPC) containing the following disaggregated data related to businesses owned by under-represented groups (black, indigenous, women, and persons with disabilities) who have engaged with PSPC with regard to the federal government's response to COVID-19: (a)(i) how many companies from under-represented groups have secured contracts with PSPC, (ii) the value of these contracts, (iii) the number of businesses from under-represented groups screened and approved as credited vendors, (iv) number and value of set-aside contracts for these businesses, (v) the number of subcontracts entered into; (b), that the committee send for all papers and records, in unredacted form, from Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) relating to the Federal Contractors Program, and in particular: (i) all current, signed Agreements to Implement Employment Equity ("Agreements"); (ii) the most current list of contractors covered by said Agreements; (iii) the most current compliance documentation furnished by each contractor covered by an Agreement, including the goal-setting report, achievement table, workforce analysis, revised goals for remaining gaps in representation, and any explanatory material; (iv) the most current documentation of ESDC's compliance assessment for each contractor covered by an Agreement; (v) the most recent Limited Eligibility to Bid List; (vi) all documentation filed in an appeal of a finding of non-compliance by a contractor to the Minister; (vii) all documentation connected to an independent review of an appeal; (viii) any documentation internal to ESDC assessing or evaluating the Federal Contractors Program; that the committee receive these documents, papers and records no later than October 31—

[Translation]

Mr. Steven MacKinnon: A point of order, Mr. Chair.

[English]

The Chair: We have a point of order, Mr. Green.

[Translation]

Mr. Steven MacKinnon: I sincerely apologize to Mr. Green. I know he's reading a motion. Listening to the interpreters, I realize that we won't be able to study the content of this motion carefully because Mr. Green is reading it too quickly, and I don't know if we're getting the full meaning of it. I don't know if he has a translated copy of his motion or even if he has the original version so that we can study it.

Mr. Chair, I leave it to you to determine whether the committee is in a position to consider a motion of this magnitude at this time.

• (1240)

[English]

Mr. Matthew Green: It's my understanding, Mr. Chair, that the translated version has been sent. The members, particularly those who have been on this committee, will note that these are motions we've already passed, so they would be familiar with them once they've seen them. For the new members, I can certainly appreciate why this would be an important addition. We do have the translated copies emailed out.

Notwithstanding that, Mr. Chair, I'm also happy to go back and read them very slowly.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: I have a point of order, Mr. Chair.

Did Mr. Green get to the end?

Mr. Matthew Green: No, I was interrupted by the point of order.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: I didn't want to interrupt. I had the impression he was done, but I'll wait until he is done and then I want to ask a point of order.

The Chair: Mr. Green, just for clarification, have you sent the translated documents to everyone in the committee or just to the clerk?

Mr. Matthew Green: We sent them to the clerk as per the usual practice.

The Chair: Thank you.

Carry on, Mr. Green.

Mr. Matthew Green: We can resend them to the entire list, out of courtesy to the members in the group.

The Clerk: If I may, Mr. Chair, we did receive them right before the start of the meeting. No doubt you're aware that, in the absence of a chair, I wasn't able to distribute them at that time.

I could try to distribute them to the committee members now; however, I note that the text I received has some slight changes to what Mr. Green was reading. I believe Mr. Green has made some very minor modifications. When I was following along, there were some sections that had some slight changes to them. Unfortunately, following along, I can't verify that the text I have is completely one hundred per cent.

Mr. Green can maybe speak to that issue, but I did notice some changes in the text that I had that weren't completely the same as what he was saying.

Mr. Matthew Green: Mr. Chair, for those who were on this committee prior, you'll recall that, out of courtesy, many of the motions that we had, conveniently, leading up to the prorogation of Parliament, provided a courtesy to extend the report-back dates on these works that I'm now presenting again to resume as studies. As fate would have it, prorogation dissolved this within days of us receiving these critical demand documents, so I would have it in good faith of the public sector that they would have already been working on these motions well in advance. I added two or three weeks—to the end of this month, October 31—as an adjustment for the dates that these documents would be returned, understanding that they were already within a week and a half of being returned to our next committee date back in August.

That's the change that has been made.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Green, would you finish with your motion, please?

Mr. Matthew Green: Thank you very much.

I will restate:

that the committee receive these documents, papers and records no later than October 31, 2020; that departments tasked with gathering and releasing the following documents do their assessment and vetting as would be done through the access to information process; and that these documents be posted on the committee's web page.

There is also a very apt motion put by my colleague Mr. McCauley on the production of papers. It is within my notes here, but I'll leave that to him to reference at his appropriate time, should he want to have that expedited as well.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Chair, on a point of order, in light of the fact that Mr. Green has not distributed this in advance, and especially in light of the fact that the clerk has said there are inconsistencies in what was provided to him, can you, as the chair, confirm to the committee members that this motion is in order?

• (1245)

Mr. Matthew Green: If I may, it's not really a point of—

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: It absolutely is a point of order. I am asking the chair if he can confirm that this motion is in order.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: I would think the clerk would be able to do that.

Mr. Matthew Green: My understanding is that in the first meeting we can—

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Chair, on a point of order, the clerk does not decide what is in order and what is not in order. That is the chair's job. The chair can go to the clerk for advice, but it is up to the chair to determine if this is in order.

I am asking whether this motion is in order.

The Chair: I am going to ask the clerk for advice. We will suspend for a few minutes so I can discuss with the clerk.

• (1245)

(Pause)

• (1255)

The Chair: I believe everybody is back, so we will resume the committee meeting.

After the discussions we've had, the information is admissible. It is in order, although it is long and extensive. It appears to be in three sections. At this point in time, I think it's best that we debate the issue as a whole as opposed to the three sections. Once that debate is over, we can sit down and either debate, vote on the whole issue or possibly break it into three sections to vote on the three sections.

With that said, Mr. McCauley, you're next to have the floor.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Green, thanks for reintroducing basically all the work the committee has agreed to in the past and is outstanding.

Seeing as we're running short on time, I'm going to propose that we vote on this immediately and get it approved so that the committee can get working on serving Parliament and Canadians again.

Mr. Steven MacKinnon: I have a point of order, Mr. Chair.

My question remains. I don't know how we can properly evaluate a motion of that length and extent without having it in front of us in one way or the other, and preferably, in both official languages.

The Chair: Thank you.

Go ahead, Ms. Vignola.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Julie Vignola: Mr. Chair, I didn't understand everything while the motion was being read. I'm a rather visual person, and if possible, I would like to have the written version of the motion. I need visual support. I have a fairly lengthy motion myself, and each

member will receive visual support. I would very much like to have one in this case as well.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you.

Go ahead, Mr. Kusmierczyk.

Mr. Irek Kusmierczyk: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I appreciate what my colleague MP Green was trying to do with this large motion. I really can't support it. We had a really good start to this committee today. It was very collaborative with a lot of good discussions. As a committee member, as an MP, I really can't vote on something that I simply have not seen and have not been able to study. I think asking for a snap vote on something as large as that is unfair. I think it goes against the spirit that we're establishing here on this committee in terms of working together collaboratively. I just don't think it would be fair to put us in a position to vote on something that we haven't seen.

I'll be honest with you, Mr. Green. You lost me after about the ninth chapter of the motion. I really would like to have an opportunity to look at it, study it and then come back confident that I know exactly what I am voting for. A journalism professor of mine at Carleton once said that if your mom tells you she loves you, go and verify. I think I want to be able to have an opportunity here. I fully appreciate what the member was trying to do in terms of advancing the work of the committee, but I just don't think it would be fair for us to vote on something that we don't have all the details on.

As my colleague Madame Vignola mentioned, I too am very visual. As I said, I lost the thread of the motion about halfway through. I just want to have the opportunity here to read it and study it. Again, I'm sure if everything is in order, we'll be able to move forward on that. I really feel that we need to have this in front of us and to be able to read it. I didn't receive—maybe I was the only one—the actual motion ahead of time from the clerk. I just think that, especially with something as large as this, we all need to be able to look at it.

Again, in the spirit of what we've established in this committee today, I really think that the proper thing to do is simply for us to go back, get that copy—both in English and in French—and be able to look at it in order to make sure everything is in order and to move confidently. With something as important as this, especially if it's going to establish the agenda for the entire committee and establish the tenor and the tone of how we work together, I really do think we need to take a pause here to be able to look at the motion that's being put forward, to consider it and to do the right thing, the responsible thing, and vote for it with full information.

• (1300)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Kusmierczyk.

In fairness to the clerk, while he did receive the information before, he could not dispense it until such time as the chair had been determined. That's the reason that, as you're aware, you did not receive it.

I believe, Mr. Gerretsen, you should be next, assuming your hand is still up.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: It is. Thank you.

I just want to start by saying to my Liberal colleague that I'm willing to bet my political career that his mother loves him.

I agree with what he and Madame Vignola said. I certainly am a visual person. I can honestly say that I wouldn't even know exactly what I was voting on if I didn't have this in front of me. Normally, when motions come forward during committee business—although this might be in order procedurally—there are motions that are a few sentences long and it's very clear what the intent is. There's a lot to this. I think that, in fairness—with all due respect, Mr. Green—if you're going to propose something like this in the future, even though the clerk might not be able to distribute it... You know who's on the committee. You may want to send it to them in advance and just say, "Hey, just to give you a heads-up, I'm going to be bringing this forward." That wasn't the case.

Mr. Chair, I would move, with respect to this motion, that we adjourn the debate on it.

The Chair: That's a non-debatable motion. Therefore, we should call for a vote.

Mr. Clerk, can we call for a recorded vote, please?

The Clerk: Mr. Chair, that is five votes in favour and five votes against. You will need to cast your vote.

• (1305)

The Chair: I will vote for the motion and ask that we have further discussion on this, at the will of the committee, as we move forward.

(Motion agreed to: yeas 6; nays 5)

The Chair: Mr. Paul-Hus, you have the floor for motions.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: Mr. Chair, my understanding is that Mr. Green's motion did not pass. Is that correct, Mr. Clerk?

The Clerk: Yes, debate on the motion was adjourned. That motion did not pass.

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: Okay. Thank you.

Mr. Chair, I have four motions to propose, and they are fairly short so everyone should understand. This is the first motion:

(1) That the committee undertake a study of the Main Estimates, 2020-21 and invite the Minister of Public Services and Procurement and senior officials from Public Services and Procurement Canada to appear.

[*English*]

The Chair: Mr. Paul-Hus, are you going to present all four and debate them separately, or one at a time?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: I have four motions. I can present them one by one so that it will be less difficult to understand, if you give me the opportunity to present them one after the other. Otherwise, I can present all four motions at the same time. I just want to make sure I have the right to speak afterwards.

[*English*]

The Chair: Certainly. In light of how long we've gone, let's do one at a time, and we'll vote on those as we go.

Let's go ahead with discussion on this first motion.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Can we have that read again, please, Mr. Chair?

The Chair: Certainly.

Mr. Paul-Hus, could you re-read the motion, please?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: Yes, Mr. Chair. Here it is:

(1) That the committee undertake a study of the Main Estimates, 2020-21 and invite the Minister of Public Services and Procurement and senior officials from Public Services and Procurement Canada to appear.

[*English*]

The Chair: Is there any discussion?

I see a number of hands that are up, and I don't know whether those were up in the past. I would ask people to take those down at this point in time if they would. and then we will ask for people.

Can I see hands? Now I have Mr. MacKinnon.

• (1310)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Steven MacKinnon: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I would like something clarified. Earlier this year, we looked at the department's budgetary appropriations. Mr. Paul-Hus would like to meet with the minister and officials to discuss the main estimates. How would that be different from the review of appropriations that we are required to undertake?

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: There's nothing different, dear colleague. I simply want to confirm that in the work of the committee, there is a motion on reviewing the main estimates, as tabled by the House. I just want to make sure that the minister and officials will be appearing before the committee.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you.

Go ahead, Ms. Vignola.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Julie Vignola: I have nothing to add. I raised my hand to discuss my own motions afterwards.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you. I have you next on the list, following Mr. Paul-Hus.

Go ahead, Mr. McCauley.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Thanks, Mr. Chair.

To Mr. MacKinnon's point, I don't believe we did the main estimates. I think we did what was the supplementary estimates, because we have such a very odd estimates process this year. I don't recall the minister showing up for such supplementary estimates, much less for such studies of the main estimates. Obviously we were not, because it wasn't a proper committee. We weren't voting on them either. It may be the appropriate time to do so now.

The Chair: Thank you.

Is there any other debate?

Seeing none, I will call for a vote.

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: Go ahead, Mr. Paul-Hus.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Here's my next motion.

(2) That, pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), the committee undertake a study of the government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic including the procurement of medical equipment and the delays created by the COVID-19 pandemic on procurement activities and that the evidence and documentation received by the committee during the 1st Session of the 43rd Parliament, as part of its study of the government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, be taken into consideration by the committee in the current session.

[*English*]

The Chair: Is there any debate?

I will call for the vote by a show of hands.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Chair, on a point of order, I didn't know which way we were going to vote, if we were doing it in person or...

The Chair: I'm leaving it to the discretion of the committee. If you would prefer a recorded vote, then I would just ask someone to call that.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Okay, thanks.

The Chair: I'll count thumbs now.

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: Go ahead, Mr. Paul-Hus.

• (1315)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Here's the third motion:

(3) That, pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), the committee undertake a study of the Nuctech security equipment contract; ... that the committee send for all documents, memorandums, and briefing materials related to the Nuctech security equipment contract; that the documents be provided to the committee, in both official languages, no later than 5 p.m. (Ottawa time) on [December 10].

[*English*]

The Chair: Did you catch that, Mr. Gerretsen?

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: I did. I have one question.

Is the motion asking for documents that exist, or is it asking to produce documents?

The Chair: Mr. Paul-Hus.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: These are the documents relating to the contract offered by the government to Nuctech.

[*English*]

The Chair: Seeing no further debate, I call the vote.

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: Mr. Paul-Hus.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: Here's the last motion, which is very short:

(4) That the committee undertake a study on the upgrading of Federal IT infrastructures.

I am putting forward this motion because the context of telework poses several problems in terms of information technology.

[*English*]

The Chair: Is there debate?

Ms. Vignola.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Julie Vignola: I would like to put forward a motion along the lines of Mr. Paul-Hus's, but it is perhaps a little more specific. May I introduce it now as an amendment to Mr. Paul-Hus's motion?

[*English*]

The Chair: We would have to get unanimous consent from the floor.

Mr. Lloyd.

Mr. Dane Lloyd (Sturgeon River—Parkland, CPC): I have a point of order, Mr. Chair.

In response to Ms. Vignola's concern, if we allow the subcommittee to possibly look at all the motions that are on the table, and then have the subcommittee decide if there's overlap, it could then determine which motions to move forward with and make a new proposal to the committee at a later meeting. That would be a solution to that issue.

The Chair: Ultimately, in order to change this, Ms. Vignola, my understanding is that Mr. Paul-Hus would have to have unanimous consent to remove his motion, and then to put yours forward.

I'm not certain you want to do that. Mr. Lloyd has made a suggestion that might be acceptable to the committee. If that's the case, I would assume that Ms. Vignola would need to present her motion as well, and then they would be looked at by the subcommittee.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: Yes, I accept. I think the best thing to do is to vote on my motion and then let the subcommittee choose the better of the two motions if Mrs. Vignola's motion passes.

[English]

The Chair: Is there any further debate?

Mr. Gerretsen.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: I have a question, Mr. Chair.

I didn't understand what just happened there. Will Ms. Vignola still be presenting her motion?

The Chair: Correct. She's next up on the floor to present motions. I'm assuming she will present hers when that time comes. Ultimately, though, Mr. Gerretsen, we would have to unanimously get rid of Mr. Paul-Hus's motion if we were going to present hers at this point in time.

We will vote on his motion, and then when Ms. Vignola presents hers, we will let the subcommittee see if there is room to bring these motions together.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: In order for her to present her motion immediately following the vote on this, would we have to unanimously agree to remove his motion? Is that what you're saying?

• (1320)

The Chair: No. His motion would go to the subcommittee, and Ms. Vignola's motion would go to the subcommittee. The assumption would be that they are similar. The subcommittee would then make a determination and come back to the committee with one motion.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Thank you very much.

The Clerk: If I may, Mr. Chair, just to intervene on that point, once the main committee adopts a motion, the subcommittee doesn't usually change it. Usually, it's discussed at the subcommittee and the subcommittee makes a recommendation to the main committee.

If the committee wants to adopt Mr. Paul-Hus's motion, then it will be adopted regardless of what the subcommittee says.

I want to make sure that process is clear before moving forward and that I understand what's going on during the meeting.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you. I appreciate that.

My understanding is that the subcommittee would take a look at the two motions as being similar, and then, as you indicated, come back to the committee with some suggestions. But on the floor and on the record, Mr. Paul-Hus's motion would be passed. This is assuming that the committee would pass Ms. Vignola's as well.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Just as a point of order—this is what I was trying to get at—will hers be ruled out of order because Mr. Paul-Hus's had just passed? If hers is so similar, then the chair might rule hers to be out of order. If that's going to be the case, then I would love to hear, through the debate on this motion, what hers is so that at least people know what their options are before voting on one that might subject the other to being ruled out of order.

The Chair: Yes. Thank you. I now see where you're leading with this.

I will defer to the clerk for a second for any comments he might have.

The Clerk: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

It's entirely at the discretion of the committee how it wishes to proceed. I reiterate that the normal process is for the subcommittee to make a recommendation to the main committee, and then for the main committee to vet it. Once a motion is adopted at the main committee, I'm not sure what the subcommittee would be discussing.

It would make more sense to me—this is merely a suggestion—that the committee not consider Mr. Paul-Hus's motion or Madame Vignola's motion at this level if it wants to discuss them at the subcommittee. To adopt both of them here, and refer them to the subcommittee, to me might seem to be a bit backwards, but then again, maybe I'm not understanding exactly what the committee is planning. My recommendation might be that if the issue is going to be discussed in subcommittee, it would be premature to adopt them in the main committee first before discussing them at subcommittee.

The Chair: Thank you for the clarification. That makes a lot more sense to me as well.

In order to do that, then, I would ask for Mr. Paul-Hus to ask that it be put to the subcommittee versus us voting on the motion.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: The same would go for Ms. Vignola's motion. Then they would both be referred to the subcommittee.

The Chair: Correct. But we would not hear Ms. Vignola's motion on that aspect until she presented here. I assume she has one or two motions, which she could present, and then both of those would go to subcommittee.

Mr. Lloyd.

Mr. Dane Lloyd: On a point of order, I would just propose this: Why can't everyone just table the motions they want to deal with? We don't have to vote on them today. All the tabled motions could be considered by the subcommittee, which could come back to the committee at the next meeting with a proposal for an agenda on an order of motions. Then it could also work on combining any motions that might be duplicative.

That's just a possible suggestion here so that we can consider everyone's motions without having to go through this long, arduous voting process. It's just a thought.

The Clerk: Mr. Chair, I don't want to waste the committee's time, but I just want to clarify what Mr. Lloyd is suggesting.

Mr. Lloyd, you're suggesting that, for example, we take the text of the various motions, distribute them to the subcommittee members and then allow them to meet to discuss. Am I understanding you correctly?

• (1325)

Mr. Dane Lloyd: Yes. It would be to discuss and then propose an agenda or way forward. Then the committee can vote to support that agenda or amend it at a following meeting. I think it would just be very quick. It would give everyone the opportunity to put their motions on the floor today, and things like that. But if there is any disagreement, that's fine.

The Clerk: Thank you for the clarification, Mr. Lloyd.

It rests, Mr. Chair, with how the committee wishes to proceed with Mr. Paul-Hus's motion, which is already on the floor. If the motions are moved here, then we can distribute the text of those various motions to the subcommittee members in anticipation of a subcommittee meeting to be held in the future.

The Chair: Thank you.

I would ask, then, because I would like Ms. Vignola to get a chance to present any motion that she would...but I would ask whether Mr. Paul-Hus might be agreeable to tabling his motion today, and likewise for Ms. Vignola to table her motion on this area when she gets her chance.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: I think we want to do the same thing. It's just a matter of procedure. In order not to get lost in procedure, Mrs. Vignola can propose an amendment to my motion. That way, my motion would be adopted with Mrs. Vignola's amendment. This would be in line with her wishes, and we would have one full motion now, rather than having two motions to deal with later.

Mrs. Julie Vignola: I see no problem in proposing an amendment to the motion.

[*English*]

The Chair: Excuse me for just a second.

Mr. Paul-Hus, you can't make that amendment, but Ms. Vignola could make an amendment if that were how we were to proceed.

Ms. Vignola, go ahead.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Julie Vignola: So I suggest the following amendment:

That, pursuant to Standing Order 108(3)(c), the committee study and issue a report, with recommendations and proposals for improvements, during and after the pandemic, to the various computerized systems and other technological resources used to administer services and assistance programs, especially online assistance programs (such as the CERB and the CEWS), and requests for ongoing online administrative services such as, but not limited to, the processing of immigration files.

[*English*]

The Chair: We are discussing the amendment.

Mr. Paul-Hus.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

As I see them, the motions are totally different. My motion focuses more on the physical IT infrastructure whereas Mrs. Vignola's deals with management programs for the CERB and for immigration. My motion is more about the infrastructure. We could have two separate studies, because I don't know whether we would be able to do it in a single one.

[*English*]

The Chair: Ms. Vignola.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Julie Vignola: The intent of my motion was to study the different IT systems and other technological resources. That is why I was thinking that the IT infrastructure and the IT systems were basically the same subject. I have just made it a little more precise.

[*English*]

The Chair: Is there any further debate on the amendment?

Seeing none on the amendment, I would call the vote.

Those in favour?

The Clerk: Mr. Chair, the order adopted by the House states that if there's unanimity we can proceed without a recorded division. However, in the event that there is any discrepancy or disagreement... I've been noticing that when we've had disagreement during the committee meeting today, there has always been a recorded division and that is following the spirit of the motion adopted by the House.

I might suggest at this point it doesn't appear there is unanimity to adopt this. Should we proceed by recorded division then, as per the order adopted by the House?

The Chair: Yes, we should.

The Clerk: All right.

The motion is on the amendment moved by Madame Vignola. I will call the vote.

(Amendment agreed to: yeas 7; nays 3)

• (1330)

The Chair: Now we will have the vote on the motion as amended.

(Motion agreed to: yeas 10; nays 0)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Clerk.

Mr. Paul-Hus, I believe those were your four motions.

We'll go to Ms. Vignola, recognizing that we've gone a little bit over time. We appreciate the clerks, the analysts and everybody staying on during this time.

I'm not trying to rush you, Ms. Vignola, but please go ahead.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Julie Vignola: I will try to do so quickly.

Basically, I am suggesting the creation of a special committee on the Canada Student Service Grant. So a single committee, rather than four, would focus on that and it would be made up of 11 members.

Do you want me to read the motion in its entirety?

[*English*]

The Clerk: Yes.

• (1335)

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Julie Vignola: I propose:

The Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates report on the following recommendation to the House of Commons:

That the Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates recommend to the House the establishment of a special committee to hold hearings in order to examine all aspects of the design and creation of the Canada Student Service Grant, including those aspects dealing with the measures to prevent conflicts of interest in federal government expenditure policies, with the expenditures committed by the government, with the WE Charity and the Canada Student Service Grant, with the government's decision to choose WE, a unilingual anglophone organization, to implement the Canada Student Service Grant program, and with WE's administration of the Canada Student Service Grant.

(1) That the committee be made up of 11 members of Parliament, five (5) from the government, four (4) from the official opposition, one (1) from the Bloc Québécois, and one (1) from the New Democratic Party.

(2) That changes in the membership of the committee shall be effective immediately after notification by the whip has been filed with the Clerk of the House.

(3) That membership substitutions be permitted, if required, in the manner provided for in Standing Order 114(2).

(4) That members shall be named by their respective whip by depositing with the Clerk of the House the list of their members to serve on the committee no later than three days after this motion is adopted by the House.

(5) That the Clerk of the House shall convene an organization meeting of the committee for no later than five days after this motion is adopted by the House.

(6) That the committee be chaired by a member of the official opposition.

(7) That, notwithstanding Standing Order 106(2), in addition to the Chair, there shall be one vice-chair from the official opposition, one vice-chair from the Bloc Québécois, and one vice-chair from the New Democratic Party.

(8) That the quorum of the committee be as provided for in Standing Order 118 and that the Chair be authorized to hold meetings to receive evidence and to have that evidence printed when a quorum is not present, provided that at least four members are present, including one member of the opposition and one member of the government.

(9) That the committee be granted all the powers of a standing committee, as provided in the Standing Orders, as well as the power to travel, both inside and outside Canada, accompanied by the necessary staff.

(10) That the committee have the power to authorize video and audio broadcasting of any or all of its proceedings.

(11) That the special committee review all the work of the following committee: the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics, the Standing Committee on Finance, the Standing Committee on Official Languages and the Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates, and that the documents and testimony produced by each of those committees be deemed to have been produced as part of the work of this committee.

(12) That the Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister, the Minister of Finance, the Minister of Diversity and Inclusion and Youth, and the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons be among the witnesses called to testify before the committee at the committee's convenience.

● (1340)

[English]

The Chair: Thank you, Madame Vignola.

I see that your hand is up, Mr. Gerretsen.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Right after Ms. Vignola finished telling us that she was a visual person and preferred to have these long motions in front of her, she then subjected us to one herself, which I find slightly ironic.

Again, this is quite a cumbersome motion with a lot of information in it. First, without the benefit of having the opportunity to look at this and review it myself, I'm curious if you can weigh in on whether you, as the chair, believe this motion to be in order, given the fact that it's requesting a whole whack of stuff outside the mandate of this committee.

Can you rule on that? Then if you deem that it is in order, I would like to speak to it.

The Chair: I don't see any reason to rule it out of order.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Thank you for that. I appreciate your taking the time to review it and come to that conclusion. I can only assume that you had the luxury of having it in advance; I really wish I had, too.

There are a few of these motions coming forward and I can respect that. I think there is an opportunity to create the proper form to get this information that the opposition is after, and that's entirely appropriate. I know that the NDP has also brought something very similar forward to PROC, which is a committee that I sit on. I don't know how this would work if it were adopted, but so was the one at PROC. It would appear to me as though we need to get some type of consensus.

Personally, as a member of PROC, I liked the motion that Ms. Blaney brought forward, as it really struck a cord of trying to set the right tone in its objectives and then letting the committee do as it saw fit moving forward. I'm really interested in hearing from the NDP.

Mr. Green, I hate to put you on the spot, but I'm curious where the NDP is on this, given that they have a very similar motion to this, and if I can be completely honest, my preference is that one.

Thank you, Mr. Chair. I've finished.

The Chair: Thank you.

We'll go to Mr. Green, then Mr. Paul-Hus and then Mr. MacKinnon.

Mr. Matthew Green: I would love to be able to compare them side by side. I do know that Ms. Blaney worked with her colleagues across the parties to draft something at that committee. Quite frankly, as you heard in my earlier motion, I don't know if I may be going a bit rogue from the party, but I personally was open even to exploring that at this committee.

I think, at this particular time, if we let that get worked out at PROC, which sort of sets the tone for all the rest of the committees, we won't get caught in a situation where we have these dilatory motions bumping up against each other. I just want to make sure procedurally that I'm not missing anything between the two motions that have been put side by side. At the very least, I would ask that consideration of this also be put out as a notice of motion, as mine will end up being put out, and that we get a chance to look at them and see where we're at to make sure that we're not duplicating work.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Green.

Mr. Paul-Hus.

Mr. Steven MacKinnon: Mr. Chair, on a point of order, was that a motion to adjourn?

Mr. Matthew Green: No. To be clear, I wasn't moving a motion to adjourn.

The Chair: No.

Mr. Paul-Hus.

• (1345)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

It is a very interesting motion, given the WE Charity scandal. Clearly, we want to examine that in some way or another. As my colleagues are saying, we have to read the contents closely in order to be able to propose amendments. So it's too complex. I also propose that we vote to postpone the introduction of this motion to another occasion, and that this meeting do now adjourn.

[*English*]

The Chair: Mr. MacKinnon.

The Clerk: Excuse me, Mr. Chair. Mr. Paul-Hus has moved to adjourn the debate, at least if I understood him correctly. In that case, that question has to be put without debate or amendment.

Do you want me to call the roll for that?

The Chair: For clarification, is that correct, Mr. Paul-Hus?

I interpreted it to be that once the vote was over, we would move to adjourn. I may be wrong on that.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: That's right.

[*English*]

The Chair: Mr. Paul-Hus.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: That's right. My proposal is that we vote to postpone the introduction of the motion until later and that we

take the time to read it. Then, I am also asking for this meeting to be adjourned.

[*English*]

The Clerk: Mr. Paul-Hus is moving to adjourn the debate. The question is on the motion.

(Motion agreed to: yeas 10; nays 0)

The Chair: Thank you.

We are now at 1:47. I did not catch the French interpretation and I'm not certain that we still have our interpreters with us. At this point in time, I will entertain a motion from the floor to end the meeting.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: So moved, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: I want to thank everybody for being here today, including the clerks, the interpreters, and the analysts for their time. It's a tremendous thing to have you here today. It's a great chance to meet you. Hopefully, we'll get to meet in person some time soon.

I really enjoyed hearing the discussion. Hopefully, we will continue to see people working together such that we can continue to have this committee progressing for the betterment of all Canadians.

The meeting is adjourned.

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