



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES  
CANADA

## **Standing Committee on Finance**

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**EVIDENCE**

**Thursday, October 24, 2013**

**Chair**

**Mr. James Rajotte**



## Standing Committee on Finance

Thursday, October 24, 2013

•(1145)

[English]

**The Clerk of the Committee (Ms. Christine Lafrance):** Honourable members of the committee,

[Translation]

I see a quorum.

[English]

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

[Translation]

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

[English]

I am ready to receive motions for the chair.

[Translation]

Ms. Nash, the floor is yours.

[English]

**Ms. Peggy Nash (Parkdale—High Park, NDP):** I'd like to put forward a motion that our colleague, James Rajotte, long-time chair of this committee and other committees, who has performed those duties so ably over so many years, have his name put forward as the new chair of our finance committee.

[Translation]

**The Clerk:** Thank you, Ms. Nash.

[English]

Are there any other motions?

**Hon. Scott Brison (Kings—Hants, Lib.):** I'll vote to second.

**The Clerk:** No.

**Hon. Scott Brison:** Oh, you don't require a seconder? Okay.

I'm wanting to express my support effusively.

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**Hon. Scott Brison:** That's all right.

**The Clerk:** Are there any other motions?

[Translation]

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

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

**The Clerk:** I declare Mr. Rajotte duly elected chair of the committee.

[English]

Before inviting Mr. Rajotte to take the chair, if the committee wishes we will now proceed to the election of the vice-chairs.

[Translation]

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

[English]

I am now prepared to receive motions for the first vice-chair.

Mr. Saxton.

**Mr. Andrew Saxton (North Vancouver, CPC):** Madam Clerk, I'd like to nominate as vice-chair Ms. Peggy Nash, my colleague from the other side, who has very ably filled that position in the past, as I'm sure she will in the future.

[Translation]

**The Clerk:** Are there any further motions?

[English]

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

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

[Translation]

(Motion agreed to)

**The Clerk:** I declare Peggy Nash duly elected first vice-chair of the committee.

[English]

**Ms. Peggy Nash:** Thank you for nominating me.

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

[Translation]

I am now prepared to receive a motion for the election of the second vice-chair.

Mr. Keddy, go ahead.

[*English*]

**Mr. Gerald Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's, CPC):** I would nominate Scott Brison for second vice-chair, and I can go on and brag him up if you wish.

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

[*Translation*]

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

Are there any further motions?

[*English*]

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

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

[*Translation*]

**The Clerk:** I now invite Mr. Rajotte to take the chair.

[*English*]

**The Chair (Mr. James Rajotte (Edmonton—Leduc, CPC)):** First of all, I want to thank Ms. Nash for nominating me, and for her kind words. I want to thank all of you for electing me again as chair of this committee, a role and responsibility I treasure. I enjoyed it very much in the last session and look forward to it in this session as well.

[*Translation*]

I want to congratulate the vice-chairs, Ms. Nash and Mr. Brison.

[*English*]

They worked very well in the last committee as the two vice-chairs. I look forward to that again.

We should also extend a welcome back to those members who were on the committee last session and who are here again. I know some of them are in the House or have other duties.

We have a couple of substitutes here today. Welcome to our committee.

We have two permanent members who are new, Mr. Saxton and Mr. Keddy. Welcome to you.

We've had a very productive working relationship on this committee. I look forward to that again.

Welcome. I'm sure you all had a good summer and enjoyed the prorogation equally on all sides, and—

**Mr. Scott Brison:** It gave us more time to campaign in Nova Scotia.

**The Chair:** Okay. We won't get into that and the party scene.

I do want to first invite the analysts to take their seats. We will welcome the analysts to the table.

Perhaps, especially for the new members, we could have the analysts introduce themselves to the committee. I know the returning members know them very well, but perhaps we could ask them to introduce themselves to the committee.

• (1150)

**Mr. Mark Mahabir (Committee Researcher):** My name is Mark Mahabir. I have been with the committee since 2009. I'm a lawyer and my background is in tax law, intellectual property law, and corporate law.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Michaël Lambert-Racine (Committee Researcher):** Good morning. My name is Michaël Lambert-Racine. I am an economist by training, and I have been working for this committee since last spring.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Merci. Bienvenue.

I would like our clerk who started the meeting to introduce herself. By the way, she did an excellent job of preparing us for this meeting. I want to commend her for that.

**The Clerk:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. It was a pleasure.

My name is Christine Lafrance.

[*Translation*]

I have been working as a clerk at the House of Commons since 2005.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** This is our second clerk today.

**Mr. Rémi Bourgault (Procedural Clerk):** My name is Rémi Bourgault. I am the committee clerk assisting Christine today, as well as for another project that we may be discussing later on today or in the next weeks.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Colleagues, we have a very busy fall agenda, so I am proposing that we get right into the planning and do this as an organization meeting. We have some topics. I'm going to go through the orders that were dealt with in the House. We will deal with routine motions, and then I'm proposing that we discuss future business.

You should all have the documents in front of you, as well as the motions and the proposed calendar.

I will just go right into the orders from the House. Does everyone have these documents?

**An hon. member:** No.

**The Chair:** Let's allow them to be distributed then.

You should have routine motions and you should have a proposed calendar.

With respect to orders from the House, first of all, on October 21, the House adopted a motion requesting that the committee table a report on income inequality no later than December 11, 2013. This is the issue we were dealing with in the last session. This enables the committee to have more time. So we will have to table that report on December 11.

Second, the House has adopted a motion authorizing the committee to table its pre-budget consultation report no later than December 11, 2013, instead of November 29. Again, this will give the committee more time to deal with this issue.

Third, the House has adopted a motion re-establishing all evidence received by the committee in relation to these studies, income inequality and pre-budget consultations, from the 41-1 session in the 41-2 session. This means that we can use the material from that session in preparing our reports in this session.

Fourth, the committee will therefore not have to vote on motions to re-establish documentation received for these studies. That was done in the House, and it's helpful for this committee.

We will now move to routine motions, questioning of witnesses and other motions. Go to the routine motions of the working document for finance committee members. You have in front of you the first ones that were adopted in the last session. We have motions on the service of analysts from the Library of Parliament, the subcommittee on agenda and procedure, reduced quorum, and distribution of documents.

Ms. Nash.

•(1155)

**Ms. Peggy Nash:** Mr. Chair, first of all, congratulations on your re-election.

Can you just tell us overall whether these are the same routine motions in general that we had adopted at the last committee? Maybe you could highlight changes if there are any.

**The Chair:** We can deal with them in groups. We'll deal with it right to the questioning of witnesses. My understanding is those are exactly the same as the last session.

Do we want to adopt all of those until the questioning of witnesses?

Could I have someone move that? Mr. Hoback.

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

**The Chair:** We have other motions.

If you turn to page 3, we have PBO and private members' bills. This is the costing of private members' bills. We have the Parliamentary Budget Office and economic and fiscal outlook. We have the annual update on tax change recommendations by Finance Canada. I think all members wanted that one last time. There's the tabling of motions outside the normal finance committee schedule. This was in the last session as well, to ensure that because we do have extra time, the committee adds that the chair not receive any motions outside of regular finance committee time.

Those were all in the last session as well. Could I get someone to move those motions? Mr. Van Kesteren.

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

**The Chair:** We have a new motion. We put all of our briefs on the finance committee website. I think we were the first parliamentary committee in Canada to do so. We put all briefs on our website, being the open and transparent committee that we are. The motion is that briefs received by the committee and related to its studies be published on the finance committee website.

Could I have a mover?

Do you have a question on that, Mr. Brison?

**Hon. Scott Brison:** Do we know how many people are actually viewing the briefs?

**The Chair:** How many are actually going to the website? I don't know that offhand. I could endeavour to find out. Perhaps we could put that question to IT.

**Hon. Scott Brison:** It would be interesting to know.

**The Chair:** Does someone want to move that motion? Mr. Aspin will.

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

**The Chair:** The next one deals with pre-budget consultations hearings. This is a new draft motion. It's shorter than the last one. As you will recall, the last one asked that briefs be prepared a certain number of days before witnesses had to appear.

My recommendation is that we adopt the shorter one. Because of a shortened time period, I don't know if it's fair to ask witnesses who are going to present to the committee to do so. Many of them obviously have submitted briefs online. My understanding is those briefs will be online today. The briefs we received in the summer will be on the finance committee website today. I wanted to shorten this because of the timelines. If someone did not do a brief and members of the committee wanted to invite someone who did not do one, it would be too tight of a timeline.

It's the exact same subject areas in this motion as in last session's motion. Are there any questions? It is moved by Ms. Nash.

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

**The Chair:** Thank you.

I've dealt with routine motions, questioning of witnesses, and other motions.

Are there any other motions I need to deal with?

Mr. Saxton.

**Mr. Andrew Saxton:** Chair, I have a new motion that I'd like to present to the committee. It's new, but it's also similar, if not identical, to what's been proposed in the past around this time. I'd like to read my proposed new motion to the committee, Chair.

I move that

(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, in a letter to the Chair 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;

(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.

I'm sure everybody's familiar with the rationale behind this, but I'll share it with you. It makes bill consideration in the committee fairer. It allows everyone to have their say without holding up the clause-by-clause consideration of this committee, and it still allows parliamentarians not represented on our committee to participate in the legislative process. It allows us to really streamline the process when our committee reaches clause-by-clause stage.

I have a written copy in both official languages that I would like to give to the clerk now, please.

• (1200)

**The Chair:** We can distribute those.

**Mr. Andrew Saxton:** I don't have enough copies. I have four copies. Maybe we can make more.

I should just note that it's my understanding that the committee has adopted motions similar to this in the past.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

The motion is in order. We'll have discussion on the motion.

Ms. Nash.

**Ms. Peggy Nash:** Is this a motion that's being presented to other committees? Are you aware of whether that is happening?

**Mr. Andrew Saxton:** I'm not aware if it's being presented to other committees.

**The Chair:** I think this motion was presented to the procedure and House affairs committee, was it not?

Does anyone else have anything to add on that? No?

**Mr. Andrew Saxton:** I just heard that it is being presented at all other committees.

**The Chair:** It is being presented?

**Mr. Andrew Saxton:** That's my understanding.

**The Chair:** It's the same motion.

**Mr. Andrew Saxton:** It's the same motion.

**The Chair:** Okay. So it's similar to what we did with respect to clause-by-clause consideration of the last budget bill.

**Mr. Andrew Saxton:** That's my understanding.

**The Chair:** Okay.

Is there further discussion?

Ms. Nash?

**Ms. Peggy Nash:** Perhaps I could ask Mr. Saxton just to outline what impact this motion would have on our committee deliberations.

**Mr. Andrew Saxton:** What it does is allow members of Parliament who are not represented here in committee by other caucus members to have an opportunity to propose amendments.

**Ms. Peggy Nash:** Would this mean that they would not be able to move amendments in the House at a later date because they've moved the amendments here at the committee?

**Mr. Andrew Saxton:** That's my understanding.

**The Chair:** Well, just to be clear on that, they could move certain amendments, like the deleting of a clause, but because they would be allowed to move amendments here, they would not be allowed to move those same types of amendments in the House—

**An hon. member:** Substantive.

**The Chair:** Substantive.

**Mr. Andrew Saxton:** Right.

**The Chair:** Okay.

I have Monsieur Côté and then Mr. Brison.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Côté, go ahead.

**Mr. Raymond Côté (Beauport—Limoulu, NDP):** I want to express my concern. Our floor time is limited, and the government has repeatedly introduced omnibus bills. I would like Mr. Saxton to assure us that we will have more time to comment than before. I am not really convinced that this will be the case, since we have only five minutes each during a two-hour meeting. Even though additional committee meetings were added, we have less than two months left to do our work before the holidays. I am fairly concerned about this proposed motion regarding the time that will be allotted to the rest of the standing committee's members.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Merci.

We'll go to Mr. Brison.

**Hon. Scott Brison:** Thank you.

In the past, the Bloc members and the Green Party both have been opposed to this because they view this as being very limiting in terms of their participation in the House. I think that's important to recognize as well in terms of the consideration, because this will affect other honourable members, and those honourable members are opposed to this motion.

• (1205)

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Brison.

Mr. Hoback, please.

**Mr. Randy Hoback (Prince Albert, CPC):** I appreciate what you say, Mr. Brison, but the reality is that by their not being able to present at committee they actually present at report stage, so they actually get a benefit that none of these committee members here have. That benefit—

**An hon. member:** Exactly.

**Hon. Scott Brison:** But they don't view it that way.

**Mr. Randy Hoback:** This is a fair way to deal with the issues that the independents or members without parties want to bring forward in a piece of legislation. They can do it here in committee. They have the chance to vet it here in committee and then we can vote on it as committee members. It doesn't change the voting. It doesn't change the process as far as how committee meetings are running; it just gives them an opportunity to present here instead of doing it in the House.

As I actually look at it, with their presenting in the House, it gives them a benefit that we don't have.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Hoback.

Mr. Jean, please.

**Mr. Brian Jean (Fort McMurray—Athabasca, CPC):** Just very quickly, I was going to agree with Mr. Hoback. I think it's fair to say that we were all elected by particular regions of the country and we should all be treated the same. I don't think any one particular member should get any more rights than any other just because they're associated with a political party.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Jean.

I would like to clarify, and the clerk can comment if she wants, but in response to Mr. Côté's concern, and I don't know if it addresses his concern, as I understand the motion, it would not limit the members of this committee with respect to any intervention on a bill, a report, or any hearings.

Ms. Nash.

**Ms. Peggy Nash:** We didn't expect this motion to come up at this time. We didn't have any background on it.

My concern is that we don't have it in writing. Personally, I'm not really clear what all the implications are from it. If it's being presented at other committees, I don't know what the other committees are deciding. I'm reluctant to vote on this without having the text of it and without having some time to consider it, because it's not something we've had a notice of motion on, which I understand is still in order, but I'd like some time to consider it, if that's possible.

**The Chair:** Okay, I'll look to the mover.

**Mr. Andrew Saxton:** We do have it in writing.

**The Chair:** In terms of time, are you talking days, minutes, or hours?

We have a text that I can give you.

**Ms. Peggy Nash:** Somebody has just put it in front of me.

**The Chair:** We can suspend for five minutes, if that would address it. If you're looking for days, then obviously I'll—

**Ms. Peggy Nash:** We would just like time to consider this, because it wasn't something that we anticipated. We'd like to understand the implications and think it through before we make that decision, because it does impact the rights of some members in the House. Whether you think they may be getting an advantage or not, it does have an impact on some who are not here to express their opinion. I understand it's within the power of the committee to make that decision, but I would like to fully consider what the implications are.

**The Chair:** I'm just looking for your guidance.

I could suspend for five minutes and we could have some discussion, but if you would prefer a longer time—

**Ms. Peggy Nash:** Are you saying that we could not deal with this at our next meeting, that it would have to be dealt with today?

**The Chair:** It's up to the mover.

**Mr. Andrew Saxton:** I appreciate that Peggy doesn't have a copy in front of her.

• (1210)

**Ms. Peggy Nash:** I do. Someone has just given it to me.

**Mr. Andrew Saxton:** Good, because we went to the trouble of getting a copy and translating it to have it in both official languages ahead of time.

As I mentioned before, it's not really a new motion. It's something that the committee is familiar with because it has passed a similar motion, if not an identical motion, in the past.

I'd certainly be amenable to taking a five-minute break if you'd like to have a chance to read it and discuss it with your colleagues, but I would really like to have this brought before the committee and voted on today if we could. I'm certainly happy if you want to take some time to read it and discuss it with your colleagues. That's not a problem.

**Ms. Peggy Nash:** In that case, then, could I suggest we recess for a few minutes?

**The Chair:** Okay.

I will suspend the committee for five minutes or so.

• (1210)

\_\_\_\_\_ (Pause) \_\_\_\_\_

• (1225)

**The Chair:** I call meeting number one back to order.

Colleagues, we will return to the proposed motion by Mr. Saxton.

Is there any further discussion on this motion?

I had Mr. Atamanenko and I had Mr. Keddy.

Mr. Atamanenko, go ahead, and then we'll go to Ms. Nash.

**Mr. Alex Atamanenko (British Columbia Southern Interior, NDP):** Thanks very much, Chair, and congratulations, by the way, on your unanimous re-election. It was a tough race, but you made it.

I'm not on this committee, but it obviously affects other committees. I don't understand. This is obviously a fairly fundamental change to the way things are done.

I understand the rationale, but I'm just wondering, Andrew, why it would not be possible, in the spirit of cooperation, to leave this until next meeting so that the folks in my party could have a chance to coordinate a discussion on this approach, because it affects not only this committee but other committees. In the relative scheme of things, we're here for a long time. One more day probably wouldn't make much difference.

My question is whether it would be possible just to say that we can consider this. We were kind of caught off guard here. I didn't know of this, and I'm sure nobody here knew of this motion before. Would it not be possible to say that we'll just defer it, give it some thought, and bring it back at the next sitting of this committee? To me, that would demonstrate that at least there is this idea that we can cooperate in the name of getting some good business done, and not start off with the approach that this is thrown at us and now we have to make this quick decision. It just doesn't make that much sense to me.

As a substitute here on this committee, I want to make that comment on the record.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

We'll go to Mr. Keddy, please.

**Mr. Gerald Keddy:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

As a newcomer to this committee I'm trying to be fair in my assessment of all the motions, but I think the motion addresses a long-standing inequality, quite frankly, that has been in existence.

All of us who belong to bona fide political parties with 20 members in the House are able to have a chair on a committee, to have our voices heard on a committee, and to be involved in debate on all subjects. Since I've been here, which is now for 16 years—Scott and I were elected at the same time—there has never been an ability for an independent or someone who represents a small party of three, four, five, or even ten members, to bring an amendment to committee. Therefore, the only choice they have is to bring those amendments to the report stage of the bill. We end up in long voting sessions, taking a lot of time from all parties, when I think, quite frankly, a lot of that could be handled at the committee level.

It is, quite frankly, a question of fairness and a question of equality. The point being made is to recognize that independents and other members still have rights as members of Parliament. We may not agree with the amendments they propose, but at least they have an opportunity to present them and have reasonable debate over them.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Ms. Nash, go ahead, please.

**Ms. Peggy Nash:** It's my recollection that this issue came to light when we were dealing with Bill C-60. As members of this committee who were members of the last committee will recall, Bill C-60 was one of these large omnibus budget implementation acts that included not only finance measures but a whole range of other measures that were all bound up in one bill. As with the latest BIA, it was a catch-all of many different changes and concerns, all bound up in one very large bill. As with the current BIA, it was pushed through. We had time allocations; we had severe time restrictions on our ability to study that bill. It makes it extremely difficult for members of the committee and other members in the House to be able to study and have input into changes that quite frankly should not just be the purview of the finance committee. We see changes to the navigable waters act, changes to the Indian Act, changes that will affect the RCMP, national security, and a whole range of issues in this latest

bill. We even have some Supreme Court appointments thrown into the latest BIA.

This makes it extremely difficult for members to grapple with these bills. I think that is the fundamental problem we're facing. This method of throwing all of the government's agenda into one bill and then restricting the amount of debate and the amount of time members have to learn what's in the bill, to be able to discuss and debate it, is at the root of this issue.

I question whether this particular issue of independent members has been a concern in the House going back a number of years. It first came to this committee—again, if my recollection is correct—with the omnibus BIA, Bill C-60. To me, the fundamental problem is not the role of independent members; it is the nature of these omnibus budget bills. I think that's what we should be taking a look at.

With our past experience, it's been extremely difficult for members of this committee, let alone other members in the House, to even know the contents of these bills and be able to give adequate input and suggestions and to have discussion on this kind of bill. We've said this many times: it's not a good way of developing legislation.

What we do notice is that mistakes get made, and the government has to go back and correct those mistakes in subsequent BIAs, which they are doing in this one—correcting some past mistakes. One of the mistakes affected my community directly. It pertained to credit unions. We have a number of credit unions in the riding of Parkdale—High Park. I know some of you from out west have many, many credit unions in your communities. They were beside themselves that their taxes would be double what the banks were paying because of a mistake that was made in the last BIA. Now that it's been discovered and highlighted, the government is trying to correct that in this BIA.

• (1230)

The haste with which laws are being passed and the number of laws that are being thrown into one overarching bill are, in essence, what is causing the problem. I can say very concretely that for credit unions, for example, that had year-end reporting in the period between the adoption of Bill C-60 and the correction of this measure, there has been considerable stress and anxiety, because they have to budget and plan for that doubling of their tax. Even if the government intended to increase their taxes to match those of the banks, which we disagreed with, inadvertently, in its haste, it doubled the amount of tax they would pay to even more than what the banks are paying.

We think if there is a problem and we want to correct that problem, we should be looking at the very nature of these omnibus budget bills. There are a great many changes that have nothing to do with budgets or finance that are thrown into these bills.

I can tell you that when the finance committee ends up dealing with massive changes to the navigable waters act, which has nothing to do with finance, there's a serious problem with the way we are crafting legislation in this country. It doesn't make for good legislation. It doesn't make for good democratic process.



I believe at heart that what my colleague opposite, Mr. Saxton, wants to do with his motion is to improve the democratic process. I think he's addressing the wrong problem in order to do that. The fundamental problem is these omnibus budget bills.

Canadians as a whole are very uncomfortable with how legislation is being made. The measures that are being adopted lead to mistakes and do not lead to the best outcome.

I've said this before, but I will take the opportunity to say it again. If the government wants to make changes, say, to the navigable waters act or to the Indian Act or to the National Research Council, or on other environmental measures, it has a majority. The normal practice would be to introduce bills that pertain to each subject; they would go to the appropriate parliamentary committee, the members of which would have the expertise and the experience and would have worked in those specific fields, and they would have the opportunity to examine, discuss, debate, amend, and adopt bills in those areas.

Frankly, the practice of bringing omnibus bills to this committee and then parcelling some parts out to other committees for them to review with very little time—sometimes they get one meeting—and then bringing those sections of the bill back to finance, where ultimately we vote on them, has not been a great practice. What happens is that those who know about the subject—whether it be the environment or the National Research Council or labour legislation—the MPs who actually know about those areas and who may have questions and who hear witnesses and debate those issues, are not ultimately the ones who get to vote at committee on those bills. I think that's a real problem.

Fundamentally, it's the issue of omnibus budget bills that has created this problem.

● (1235)

Now, in our experience here at the finance committee, the Conservatives proposed something very similar to this motion to deal with Bill C-60, and we did oppose it at the time. We didn't think it was the right way to go because it would deny a long-standing practice for independent members who don't sit on the committee to take their amendments to the House.

Perhaps the intention of the government was to try to reach out and offer them the opportunity to participate in committees that they don't sit on. I'll assume that it was a positive intent the government had, but what we found at the last budget implementation act we dealt with was that when these independent members tried to bring amendments to the committee, they had extremely little time to be able to present their amendments. It was—

● (1240)

**The Chair:** I'm sorry, Ms. Nash.

Do you have a point of order, Mr. Hoback?

**Mr. Randy Hoback:** I appreciate the history lesson that Ms. Nash is giving us here today. I guess I'd just request that she go back to the motion that's in front of us and how it relates to omnibus bills or anything else. Whether it's a one-page piece of legislation or a 100-page piece of legislation, the rules would be the same. I'm getting confused about why she feels this is just for omnibus bills or stuff

that's been done in the past and does not talk about what's actually right in front of us.

**The Chair:** Okay.

Ms. Nash, do you want to respond to the point of order?

**Ms. Peggy Nash:** Sure.

Thank you for that question. I think it's an important one. My point on this is that what sparked this reaction were the deliberations under Bill C-60, Bill C-45, and...what was the first one? Bill C-30, was it?

**The Chair:** It was Bill C-38.

**Ms. Peggy Nash:** Bill C-38, our first.... Who could forget Bill C-38? I have fond memories of Bill C-38.

It was our experiences with these bills that led to your party proposing in our committee that we offer independent members the opportunity to come to the—

**The Chair:** On the point of order, as Mr. Hoback knows, relevance is interpreted very broadly by the Speaker, but Ms. Nash is arguing that the reason this motion is necessary is because of the budget implementation bills being the way they are. One can agree or disagree with that, but to me, as the chair, it is within the bounds of relevance.

Mr. Jean, do you want to make a further point of order?

**Mr. Brian Jean:** My point of order is not in relation to the topic. It's just simply that I never expected to start sneezing so early in the process at committee, and I have a little issue. I don't want to miss the vote, so if she's winding down, I'll stay. But otherwise I need to go to the washroom or have somebody bring me some Kleenex, because I'm getting an allergic reaction and I'm not sure from what.

**The Chair:** Okay. As your chair, I was hoping to get the calendar dealt with today. We have about 18 minutes left and I have three more speakers on the list. If this debate continues, I won't get to that, and then the whole calendar kind of gets pushed back.

If I could get an indication from the floor, from Ms. Nash and the other three speakers, am I going to be allowed, as the chair, to go to the calendar today, or are we continuing with this debate for some time?

Ms. Nash.

**Ms. Peggy Nash:** Well, Mr. Chair, this is a pretty significant change that we had no advance notice of.

**The Chair:** Yes, I'm not debating that.

**Ms. Peggy Nash:** As I understand it—

**The Chair:** I'm not debating that. I'm just—

**Ms. Peggy Nash:**—and it was confirmed here in the committee, this is a motion that's being presented in other committees. It is really a pretty fundamental change to the rules of this place. I think it's fair that we have a thorough debate and that we not be rushed on it.

**The Chair:** I'm not disputing that. I'm just asking. I'm just asking as the chair for my own guidance.

**Ms. Peggy Nash:** How long will the discussion continue...?

**The Chair:** It's just that we have about 17 minutes and I would like to get to the calendar. If I can't get to the calendar, that's the decision of the committee, but...

**Ms. Peggy Nash:** My suggestion was that we have more time. I know you gave us a few minutes during a recess of the committee. My suggestion was that we think this through a little more thoroughly.

**The Chair:** The request from the opposition is to have more time.

I look to the mover.

**Mr. Andrew Saxton:** Chair, I don't think more time is going to change the outcome of this, so I think it's not in anybody's best interest to give more time.

**The Chair:** Okay, thank you.

I go back to you, Ms. Nash, for your...

Mr. Caron, on a point of order.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP):** I would like to know who is currently on the list.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Ms. Nash has the floor, and then I have Monsieur Côté, Mr. Hoback, and Mr. Jean.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Guy Caron:** I would also like to speak at the end. Thank you.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Okay. Ms. Nash, please.

**Ms. Peggy Nash:** I was talking about our experience under Bill C-60, and our experience with this kind of motion.

If the members who were on the committee at that time remember, it was a process where parts of the bill were sent out to other committees. Some other members examined the bill in those committees. Then it came back to this committee. We dealt with any amendments, and this is where all the votes took place.

Independent members had the opportunity to make a very brief comment. I think they had a maximum of maybe two minutes allotted to be able to present any amendments they had, but they didn't even have the right to vote on their own amendments. That, to me, seems fundamentally wrong. Surely one of the fundamental rights of a member of Parliament who is sent to Ottawa is the right to vote, and their vote represents their constituency. This motion would take away the right of independent members to vote, to be able to have an impact on the decision of their own motions. I think that is a problem. I don't think that's satisfactory.

I'm a little concerned that this kind of motion was kind of sprung on us here at the committee. It would be a fundamental change to the rules of the way this House operates.

Here we are debating this. It would impact the rights of those independent members of Parliament. What's their crime? Their only crime is that they don't belong to a political party that has enough seats in the House to have official party status. They are still elected by their constituents. They still represent their communities. Every single member of Parliament, whether they are in an officially

recognized party or not, has exactly the same rights as others when it comes to that vote and representing their communities.

What I see this motion doing is it's taking away their right to vote. I don't think that makes any sense. I'm concerned that this is something the government is proposing, apparently, in all or in most committees. It would fundamentally change the way we work here. It seems to me to miss the nature of the problem. To me, the nature of the problem is that the government—

● (1245)

**Mr. Andrew Saxton:** Chair, may I interject and call it a point of order for lack of any other name?

**The Chair:** I hope it is a point of order.

On a point of order, Mr. Saxton.

**Mr. Andrew Saxton:** You can judge whether it's a point of order.

What I'd like to propose is that we suspend debate until the next meeting, on Tuesday, that we immediately go to finalizing the calendar, and that we dedicate... We have three hours set aside on Tuesday, October 29. I recommend that we do one hour with the Governor of the Bank of Canada, one hour with the PBO, and the first hour we resume debate on this issue.

What I would propose as a new motion is that we go immediately

**The Chair:** You can't propose a motion on a point of order on that subject. I'm being very generous in saying that's even somewhat linked to being a point of order. It's a proposal made in a very generous spirit, so let's hear some reaction to that.

As the chair, I just have to say that prior to becoming chair, I did a lot of work with the clerk and the analysts, and I feel that all that work is going down the drain as this is going on. This is why I encourage political parties to talk to each other, which I will just say is my own independent view.

**Mr. Andrew Saxton:** Do we have unanimous consent, then, Chair?

**The Chair:** We need unanimous consent to adjourn debate on the motion. Do we have that?

Mr. Caron, on the proposal?

● (1250)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Guy Caron:** I just want to clarify something.

Does the motion focus solely on adjourning the debate? Is there nothing else in the motion?

[*English*]

**Mr. Andrew Saxton:** I have no further motions.

**The Chair:** This would deal with motions, and as I understand it, this would allow the chair to go to the calendar. I'm suggesting we do that in camera if we have any discussion there.

Then on the Tuesday—we haven't agreed to anything yet—we would have an hour of debate on this specific motion by Mr. Saxton.

**Mr. Andrew Saxton:** A continuation of where we are right now.

**The Chair:** It would be a continuation of discussion of this motion. That's the proposal.

**Mr. Andrew Saxton:** For the first hour of...

**The Chair:** For the first hour on Tuesday, October 29.

Ms. Nash.

**Ms. Peggy Nash:** Just for clarification, given that my remarks were interrupted, would that mean I would resume my remarks when we resume?

**The Chair:** Yes, my understanding is you would have the floor, and then I'd go to Mr. Côté, Mr. Hoback, Mr. Jean, and Monsieur Caron.

**Mr. Brian Jean:** Please take me off that list.

**The Chair:** Okay.

**Mr. Andrew Saxton:** We'll just carry on where we left off.

**An hon. member:** Let's get the calendar business done.

**Ms. Peggy Nash:** In the interests of recognizing the hard work of our hard-working chair, we'll do that.

**The Chair:** We will then start with this debate on October 29 at 11 a.m.

Thank you. That deals with all the motions.

Colleagues, I am going to suspend and go in camera, and then we will do the calendar.

*[Proceedings continue in camera]*

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