



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES  
CANADA

# **Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri- Food**

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AGRI • NUMBER 001 • 1st SESSION • 42nd PARLIAMENT

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**EVIDENCE**

**Wednesday, February 3, 2016**

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## Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food

Wednesday, February 3, 2016

• (1550)

[Translation]

**The Clerk of the Committee (David Chandonnet):** Honourable members of the committee, I see a quorum.

[English]

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

I am now ready to receive motions for the chair.

**Mr. Francis Drouin (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, Lib.):** I would like to nominate the member for Miramichi—Grand Lake, Pat Finnigan.

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

I declare the motion carried and Pat Finnigan duly elected chair of the committee.

(Motion agreed to)

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

**The Chair (Mr. Pat Finnigan (Miramichi—Grand Lake, Lib.)):** Thank you.

If it is the pleasure of the committee, I invite the clerk to proceed to the election of the first vice-chair.

[English]

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

[Translation]

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

[English]

**Mr. Francis Drouin:** I would like to propose Mr. Bev Shipley.

[Translation]

**The Clerk:** Any further motions?

I declare the motion carried.

(Motion agreed to)

[English]

Bev Shipley is duly elected first vice-chair of the committee.

[Translation]

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

[English]

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

**Mr. Bev Shipley (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, CPC):** I propose Ruth Ellen Brosseau.

**The Clerk:** It has been moved by Bev Shipley that Ruth Ellen Brosseau be elected second vice-chair of the committee.

[Translation]

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

[English]

I declare the motion carried and Ruth Ellen Brosseau duly elected second vice-chair of the committee.

(Motion agreed to)

[Translation]

**The Chair:** I'd like to thank the committee members for the confidence they've placed in me by electing me chair.

I humbly accept the position you have offered me. As someone with great admiration for all the agricultural trades, I will certainly endeavour to perform my duties with passion.

I'm quite honoured and pleased. I hope to contribute to the growth of agriculture across the country and to help the field develop through the new agreements that have been implemented with our partners around the world.

[English]

I really want to thank each and every one of you. I want to congratulate my vice-chairs, Mr. Bev Shipley and Ms. Ruth Ellen Brosseau, for their acceptance of these positions. I want to again thank all my other colleagues for taking their seat on this committee also.

Are there any other points of order today that we need to conclude?

Then if it's the pleasure of the committee, we will adopt the routine motions by the committee in the previous sessions. Do we have consensus on that? Good.

[Translation]

Mr. Shipley, you may go ahead.

• (1555)

[English]

**Mr. Bev Shipley:** Mr. Chair, I'm wondering if there's an opportunity for us to have those routine proceedings. Some of us are new and may not have them. I'm wondering if they are available for review.

**The Chair:** I will read every one of them, but I don't believe we have that. I guess this is the only copy. We can do this the next time if you wish.

**Mr. Bev Shipley:** That's up to you, but I'm not necessarily asking that. I'm just saying I think it would be appropriate for the committee. Most will not know what the last routine proceedings were and what they involved. They speak to a number of issues we need to talk about.

**The Chair:** Would the committee like to wait? We could have copies made. Are you okay with that?

**Mr. Bev Shipley:** I think that would be good.

**The Chair:** We'll try to get copies made.

We will suspend the meeting until we get the copies.

• (1555)

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

• (1600)

**The Chair:** Okay, we'll get the meeting in order again.

I think everybody received the routine motions that were adopted by the committee in the previous session.

[Translation]

I assume you have all received your copy.

[English]

The following is a list of the routine motions adopted by the committee during the second session of the 41st Parliament.

The first one is "Services of Analyst from the Library of Parliament": 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.

Go ahead, Mr. Longfield.

**Mr. Lloyd Longfield (Guelph, Lib.):** I move that we adopt the first motion.

**The Chair:** Does everybody agree to adopt the first motion?

(Motion agreed to)

[Translation]

[English]

**Mr. Francis Drouin:** Mr. Chair, do we want to continue approving some of the routine motions, or can the analysts present themselves quickly so we know who they are?

• (1605)

[Translation]

**The Chair:** I would now like to ask the analysts to introduce themselves.

**Mr. Frédéric Forge (Committee Researcher):** Good afternoon. My name is Frédéric Forge and I am an analyst at the Library of Parliament. I have been covering agricultural issues for the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food for nearly 18 years now.

**Ms. Khamla Heminthavong (Committee Researcher):** Good afternoon. My name is Khamla Heminthavong. I have been handling agricultural issues for this committee and the Senate for five years.

**The Chair:** It's great to have such experience at the table. Welcome and thank you.

The second motion deals with the composition of the subcommittee on agenda and procedure, and reads as follows:

That the Subcommittee on Agenda and Procedure be established and composed of the chair, one (1) member of the New Democratic Party, one (1) member of the Liberal Party and two (2) members of the Conservative Party.

My apologies. I read you the version from last session.

[English]

That was last year's motion. I tried to get the francophone one and the English one. I will follow the script from the English.

Yes, Mr. Warkentin

**Mr. Chris Warkentin (Grande Prairie—Mackenzie, CPC):** Can I make a proposal?

The rationale originally was to allow for the parliamentary secretary to attend the meeting. That's why two Conservatives were allowed. My understanding is that parliamentary secretaries will not be official members of the committee now.

I would make a recommendation that we have one member of each party and then we allow for the parliamentary secretary to attend those meetings in addition to that. We would very specifically allocate a space for the parliamentary secretary to allow for him to attend.

It's helpful because often there is information that only the parliamentary secretary can provide in terms of scheduling.

**The Chair:** I think the parliamentary secretary can attend a *réunion*, as we have him here today.

**Mr. Chris Warkentin:** They don't attend the agenda and procedures—

**The Chair:** Oh, you mean the agenda meeting.

**Mr. Chris Warkentin:** Members who are not members of the committee cannot attend that meeting unless we make a special provision that they can.

**Mr. Francis Drouin:** I understand what you're saying, but the idea for having two members of the government was actually to have the parliamentary secretary convey information to one of the members if there's information that the subcommittee should be informed about. That was the idea behind having two members of the government.

As you know, in the past the parliamentary secretary sat on the subcommittee, but he no longer does. However, I think the parliamentary secretary was to convey that information to one of the members, and that was the idea for having two members of the government.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Are there any other comments? No.

I will read the motion again. It is “That the Subcommittee on Agenda and Procedure”—

**Mr. Chris Warkentin:** Sorry. I do apologize. I think we understand. The proposal, then, disallows the parliamentary secretary from attending those meetings. Is that the proposal the Liberals are submitting?

Okay. Very good.

**The Chair:** Okay, we'll continue with the motion. It reads:

That the Subcommittee on Agenda and Procedure be established and composed of the Chair, two Vice-Chairs and 2 members of the government

**Mr. Chris Warkentin:** I think we'd prefer it to say “one member of the New Democratic Party, one member of the Conservative Party, and two members of the Liberal Party”.

**The Chair:** That was the last version that we had. This is the new

**Mr. Chris Warkentin:** We should not speak to the vice-chairs or who those members would be. The allocation should be in terms of those specific parties. We don't want to speak to which members of

**The Chair:** So you want them named in here?

**Mr. Chris Warkentin:** No, we want them not named. We want them simply as members of the respective parties.

**The Chair:** Do we need to change the motion?

**Mr. Francis Drouin:** No, I think the motion is fine. It's the chair, two vice-chairs, and two members of the government.

**Mr. Chris Warkentin:** No.

**Mr. Bev Shipley:** That's not the one I have.

**Mr. Chris Warkentin:** The one I have says, “That the Subcommittee on Agenda and Procedure be established and composed of the Chair, one member of the New Democratic Party, two members of the Liberal Party, and two members of the Conservative Party”.

Sorry, it's one member of the Conservative Party, so one—

•(1610)

**Mr. Lloyd Longfield:** I think we've got two different versions of a document, because ours has “That the Subcommittee on Agenda and Procedure be established and composed of the Chair, two Vice-Chairs and 2 members of the government”.

**Mr. Chris Warkentin:** We don't want that. We just want it to be members generally.

**Mr. Bev Shipley:** The last one that was just given out was the one that Mr. Warkentin just read. Just for clarification, we've got to be talking on the same page.

**Mr. Lloyd Longfield:** Should we bring in an amendment?

**The Chair:** I guess the motion that we will go with is the one that I've just read:

That the Subcommittee on Agenda and Procedure be established and composed of the Chair, two Vice-Chairs and 2 members of the government

Is there any—

**Mr. Chris Warkentin:** We would prefer that it simply be “one member of the New Democratic Party, one member of the Conservative Party, and two members of the Liberal Party”. We'll leave it to the parties to determine who among their members shows up at that meeting.

**The Chair:** Are there any other comments on the motion?

Yes, Mr. Shipley.

**Mr. Bev Shipley:** I'm a vice-chair. We have three chairs altogether. Ruth Ellen is the only one from the NDP. If for some reason something comes up so we can't be there, then the meeting doesn't go forward to set the agenda and to have that discussion. It's just about building some flexibility to make sure that we can move ahead, that's all.

**The Chair:** Okay.

I will read the motion again:

That the Subcommittee on Agenda and Procedure be established and composed of the Chair, two Vice-Chairs and 2 members of the government

**Mr. Chris Warkentin:** Mr. Chair—

**The Chair:** You want me to read it as amended. Okay. No?

**Mr. Chris Warkentin:** May I propose this text? There is agreement here around the table for it. It is:

That the Subcommittee on Agenda and Procedure be established and composed of the Chair, one (1) member from the Conservative Party, one (1) member from the New Democratic Party and two (2) members of the Liberal Party.

**The Chair:** Are we okay with that? Okay.

I will read it as amended: “That the Subcommittee on Agenda and Procedure be established and composed of the chair, one member of the NDP, and two members of the Conservative Party”—

**Some hon. members:** One.

**The Chair:** Then it's one from the Conservative Party and two Liberals. Do we have that right?

**Mr. Francis Drouin:** I think we do, Mr. Chair, yes.

**The Chair:** Are we all in agreement with that motion? Are there any contrary-minded?

As the first motion read, Mr. Shipley, as vice-chair you were part of that committee and you could have been replaced by another member.

**Mr. Chris Warkentin:** We don't want that. We want this as it now reads. Most committees operate like that.

**The Chair:** Now it will have to be specified members from your party.

**Mr. Chris Warkentin:** That's fine.

**Mr. Bev Shipley:** So if I can't be here, I can designate someone else to be here.

**The Chair:** If you're not here, yes.

Are we all okay with that?

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

• (1615)

**The Chair:** We'll move on to number three.

Yes, Mr. Shipley.

**Mr. Bev Shipley:** This is just a comment that I would leave open to the committee.

I think Ruth Ellen and I are the only ones around the table who've been here before. We've done the agenda subcommittee and so on and we've always had, I think, a good working committee.

One of the things we may think about as we get established is the idea of the committee meeting as a whole to look at the agenda. We found sometimes that after the subcommittee did their discussions for however long and came back to the committee, we went through the same thing again. Now, if it's not a really functional committee, I understand it would be more difficult, but...

At any rate, Mr. Chair, I'll just leave that to the committee members. It might be something to consider as we move forward. I think we will start to throw out ideas amongst ourselves, and at the end of the day there will be a discussion and a decision, and we will move forward on it. I've always found that getting the input of everyone is beneficial to the whole committee.

I suggest that you start this way, Mr. Chair, and maybe we can follow through with that, if folks think that might be an option.

**The Chair:** It's a good idea. We'll at least adopt these, and then we can, if everything—

**Mr. Lloyd Longfield:** I think it's a really good idea to keep the whole committee idea. We have a fallback if it ends up not working out.

**The Chair:** Yes.

**Mr. Lloyd Longfield:** It sounds reasonable.

**Mr. Francis Drouin:** Mr. Shipley, do you mean that previously the subcommittee would meet and set the agenda, and then the agenda still had to be approved by the committee?

**Mr. Bev Shipley:** Yes.

**Mr. Francis Drouin:** So you're just trying to skip that step. You're saying if we can just—

**Mr. Bev Shipley:** If there's agreement. I mean, we passed this, but in the last three or four years we just sort of agreed that we would have that discussion and come to a consensus around the table. Nothing's perfect, but for the most part it actually worked out pretty well.

Mr. Chair, I suggest that you start with this. Then we'll build some confidence around how we move forward and go from there, as long as we understand that we can be flexible.

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

[*Translation*]

[*English*]

**The Chair:** The next motion is on reduced quorum:

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

**An hon. member:** So moved.

(Motion agreed to)

**The Chair:** The next item is on distribution of documents:

That only the Clerk of the Committee be authorized to distribute to the members of the Committee and only when the documents are available in both official languages and that witnesses be advised accordingly.

That is moved by Mr. Warkentin.

(Motion agreed to)

**The Chair:** Next is 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.

That is moved by Mr. Warkentin.

(Motion agreed to)

**The Chair:** Our next motion is on witnesses' expenses:

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

That is moved by Mr. Longfield.

(Motion agreed to)

**The Chair:** The next motion is in regard to staff at in camera meetings:

That, unless otherwise ordered, each Committee member be allowed to be accompanied by one (1) staff person at an in camera meeting. In addition, each party shall be permitted to have one (1) party staff member attend in camera meetings.

That is moved by Mr. Shipley.

(Motion agreed to)

**The Chair:** Our next motion concerns in camera meeting transcripts:

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.

That is moved by Mr. Warkentin.

(Motion agreed to)

**The Chair:** The next motion is in regard to notice of motions:

That a notice of 48 hours, interpreted as two nights, be required before a member may move a substantive motion, unless it deals directly with a matter before the Committee at this time, provided that: (a) this notice be emailed to the Committee Clerk no later than 4:00 p.m. from Monday to Friday; (b) that the notice be distributed by e-mail 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; (c) that notices received after the deadline hour be deemed to have been received during the next business day; and (d) that this rule does not prevent a member from giving notice of a motion orally during a meeting of the Committee, in which case notice shall be deemed to have been given before the deadline that day.

● (1620)

[Translation]

The motion has been moved by Mr. Breton.

(Motion agreed to)

[English]

**The Chair:** The next motion is in regard to time allocation:

That witnesses shall be allowed up to ten (10) minutes to make their opening statement.

Then there will be a rotation by time. In round one, a Conservative will have six minutes; Liberal, six minutes; NDP, also six minutes; and Liberal, again six minutes. In round two, a Liberal will have six minutes; Conservative, six minutes; Liberal, six minutes; Conservative, five minutes; followed by NDP with three minutes. The allocation of time for questioning will total 50 minutes.

This is moved by Chris Warkentin.

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

**The Chair:** That takes care of the routine motions. I have nothing else on the agenda.

Is there anything else?

Mr. Shipley.

**Mr. Bev Shipley:** I just had a thought. I think most committees agree that there are times when we want witnesses present at the end of the table, but there are other times when we as a committee can take great advantage of the technology that's available to us, particularly when we're asking people to travel from one side of the country to the other. It depends on the study, obviously, but I think we've been able to use that technology with a lot of success. It's just a thought, and certainly as the clerks are reaching out to people, that might be something for them to know.

On the second part, I don't know about you, but I'm a visual person, and one of the challenges when witnesses come in is that we don't always get something to read, particularly in both languages. I know what our procedures say and I think we should always encourage them to have some sort of documentation. It may not be the full text of the speech, but even just the points are sometimes very beneficial to many of us, I would say. When people are talking without them, you can miss something that's key. Anyway, it's just a thought.

Mr. Chair, the procedures are in place, but quite honestly, in agriculture you're going to find that in some of the commodity organizations these guys are actual farmers who are coming out, and they don't have a large administrative operation or much access to

translation. They can get it to us, but sometimes the timing, because of their schedules of work and planting and harvest or whatever, might be.... I don't know if we could allow asking for that even if we could have it.

I know that we need to have consensus, but I just leave that as a thought too, because I think we all want the committee to have as much information as possible. We understand the significance of both official languages, we really do. On the other hand, sometimes these folks just come forward and want to talk about their issues. It's very personal to them in their lives and in their business.

I'll just leave it at that point.

● (1625)

**The Chair:** From the information I've received, it is common practice to ask any witness to send at least their talking notes, and we provide copies for the whole group. I think that's....

**Mr. Bev Shipley:** They do that, but what I find, Mr. Chair, is that sometimes it's a bit intimidating to the local fellow or lady who is coming from somewhere and thinking that they need to have this whole formal presentation. Anyway, I'm just asking. Maybe sometimes we may want to be flexible to accommodate the witnesses who are trying to accommodate the best interests of our study.

**The Chair:** Yes, absolutely.

[Translation]

Would anyone like to comment on what Mr. Shipley just said?

[English]

**Mr. Lloyd Longfield:** I think it is very important, though, for committee members who are more comfortable with the French language to have that information available to them. In the case of points notes, there should be some minimum standards so that the people in the committee can be well informed too.

**The Chair:** Mr. Drouin.

**Mr. Francis Drouin:** Do we translate documents if they send them in on time beforehand? I think we do, right?

**The Chair:** Yes. I'm not sure how much time it takes.

[Translation]

Normally, I think we need two days to have documents translated.

[English]

We ask the witness to submit the documents two to four days ahead of time. I agree that it's not always.... I suppose we have to be flexible if we definitely want to see a person and all he has is himself. We'll be flexible. I guess it is standard practice that we do it, and, Mr. Shipley, you would probably know about that.

[Translation]

When the committee invites people wishing to give a presentation, it's important to do so with enough advance notice for them to contribute to our study and for us to prepare briefing notes and ensure any necessary follow-up.

Any further comments?

[*English*]

I thank you all for the first meeting.

[*Translation*]

I wish you all a good rest of the afternoon.

[*English*]

The meeting is adjourned.

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