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CANADA

# **Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development**

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**EVIDENCE**

**Thursday, February 4, 2016**

—  
**Chair**

**Mrs. Deborah Schulte**



## Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development

Thursday, February 4, 2016

•(1105)

[English]

**The Clerk of the Committee (Ms. Cynara Corbin):** Honourable members of the committee, I see a quorum.

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, nor participate in debate.

We can now proceed to the election of the chair.

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

I am ready to receive motions for the chair.

Mr. Gerretsen.

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.):** I'll nominate Deb Schulte.

**The Clerk:** It has been moved by Mr. Gerretsen that Ms. Schulte be elected as chair of the committee.

Are there any further motions?

**Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP):** I'll move, without any consultation, that Mr. Amos be elected as chair, and no offence to Ms. Schulte.

**The Clerk:** It has been moved by Mr. Cullen that Mr. Amos be elected as chair of the committee.

Are there any further motions?

Since more than one candidate has been nominated, pursuant to Standing Order 106(3), I am required to preside over the election of the chair by secret ballot.

It has been moved by Mr. Gerretsen that Ms. Schulte be elected as chair of the committee. It has been moved by Mr. Cullen that Mr. Amos be elected as chair of the committee.

Are there any further motions?

Before proceeding, I will very briefly explain the process. My colleague, who is a procedural clerk at the House of Commons, will distribute a ballot to each member of the—

**Mr. William Amos (Pontiac, Lib.):** Sorry, I didn't realize that I had the option of saying thank you, but no thank you. So I would like, if it's possible, to decline the invitation.

**The Clerk:** Is it my understanding that the committee wishes to withdraw the motion by Mr. Cullen that Mr. Amos be elected as chair of the committee?

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** If Mr. Amos is unwilling, absolutely, I'll withdraw my motion.

(Motion withdrawn)

**The Clerk:** Therefore the motion on the floor is that Mr. Gerretsen moves that Ms. Schulte be elected as chair of the committee.

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

(Motion agreed to)

**The Clerk:** I declare the motion carried and Ms. Schulte duly elected as chair of the committee.

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear!

**The Clerk:** I would invite her to take the chair.

**The Chair (Mrs. Deborah Schulte (King—Vaughan, Lib.)):** I just wanted to thank all of you very much for this privilege and this honour. I'm definitely going to be putting all of my energy into working with you and making this one of the best committees on the Hill. I can't do that without all of you, so thank you very much for this honour.

Are members ready to proceed with the election of the vice-chairs?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Chair:** Okay.

[Translation]

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

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

[English]

**Mr. William Amos:** Could I propose Nathan Cullen?

**A voice:** It has to be someone from the official opposition.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** I used to be. Thanks for reminding me.

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

**The Chair:** Yes, Mr. Shields.

**Mr. Martin Shields (Bow River, CPC):** I would nominate Jim Eglinski.

**The Clerk:** It has been proposed by Mr. Shields that Mr. Eglinski be elected as first vice-chair of the committee. Are there any further motions?

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

(Motion agreed to)

**The Clerk:** I declare the motion carried and Mr. Eglinski duly elected first vice-chair of the committee.

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Jim Eglinski (Yellowhead, CPC):** Thank you.

Again, I will work with our main chair to make this a very worthwhile endeavour for all of us. I think we can have a great term together.

Thank you.

•(1110)

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

Mr. Amos.

**Mr. William Amos:** I propose Mr. Cullen.

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

(Motion agreed to)

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

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear!

**The Chair:** That's fantastic, thank you.

The next business of the committee is the adoption of the routine motions, so if the committee members agree, we can proceed to the adoption of the routine motions. Are there any objections?

While they are being handed out, I'll just let you know that these are the motions that were adopted in the last Parliament. Just to be clear, we'll need a mover for each separate motion.

We can start with the service of the analysts from the Library of Parliament.

Go ahead, Mr. Gerretsen.

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** Madam Chair., I'll move the first routine motion, the service of the analysts from the Library of Parliament, which is:

That the Committee retain the services of one or more analysts from the Library of Parliament, as needed, to assist the Committee in its work and that these services may be requested at the discretion of the Chair.

**The Chair:** Is there any discussion?

(Motion agreed to)

**The Chair:** I'd like at this time to invite Penny Becklumb and Tim Williams, the committee analysts, to take their places at the table, please. Welcome, and thank you.

The next item to be addressed is the subcommittee on agenda and procedure.

Mr. Aldag.

**Mr. John Aldag (Cloverdale—Langley City, Lib.):** I move:

That the Subcommittee on Agenda and Procedure be composed of five (5) members, including the Chair, the two (2) Vice-Chairs, the two (2) members of government;

That quorum of the Subcommittee shall consist of at least three (3) members, including one (1) member of the opposition;

That each member of the Subcommittee shall be permitted to have one (1) assistant attend any meetings of the Subcommittee on Agenda and Procedure; and

That, in addition, each party shall be permitted to have one (1) staff member from a House Officer attend any meetings.

**The Chair:** Is there any discussion?

Mr. Fast.

**Hon. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC):** Madam Chair, I understand that this is a reflection of the process that we had in the last Parliament, with a few minor changes. I'd be interested to see if the committee members are willing to simply have the subcommittee comprise all the members of this committee, simply because the number of members has now been reduced from 12 to 10. It's not as unwieldy as it used to be.

One of the things that I found, Madam Chair, when I was chairing justice between 2008 and 2011, is that we'd have these discussions as a subcommittee and we'd realize there was probably helpful information we could get from the remaining committee members, and we'd have to refer back or try to anticipate what that input might be. Certainly we're not stuck on that, but it's something that I believe is available for us to do, to consider matters of agenda and procedure as a full committee.

•(1115)

**The Chair:** Mr. Cullen.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** Thank you, Madam Chair, and thanks to my friend down the way.

I chaired a committee as well. I'm one who is inclined in the other direction. I find that the subcommittees, particularly in cases where they achieve a consensus, are able to work quickly. It's a much more informal conversation because there are fewer people. I totally respect Ed's view that there have been some committees, particularly the more contentious they are, where consensus is rarely achieved, so the subcommittee does work, and then you have to bring it back to the full committee for the passing of an agenda anyway.

I would propose that at least we start off on the subcommittee path, because many committees worked that way in the past, and see if that consensus model works okay and that we aren't referring back and repeating the conversation. I think maybe that's the thing Ed is worried about, that you end up repeating conversations if there isn't a lot of collegiality. It always comes back to the larger committee anyway; it's not as if the subcommittee can entirely be its own power.

At least give it a few months to see how it works and then return back to this, which we can always do as a committee, and change the way we do business.

**The Chair:** Okay. Just for clarity, we don't have to actually put it to the subcommittee, right? We don't have to use this provision. It's there if we need it, but we don't have to use it. That's up to our discretion.

Mr. Gerretsen.

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** I was going to ask a question that I think Mr. Cullen answered, which was about whether we can revisit it later on if necessary. The truth of the matter is that I have a very heavy workload and I wouldn't personally want to commit myself to being part of the subcommittee as well.

My question was going to be about if we can return to it later and amend these procedures if we choose to do so. I know that you've only been the chair for five minutes, but I expect an answer to my question.

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

**The Chair:** I have an expert tweeting in my ear here telling me all the important things.

My understanding is that because these motions require the full committee to decide on them, we could make recommendations from the subcommittee but they would have to come back to this committee anyway if we were going to make changes. So the answer is yes, we can, but it would be done by the full committee if there's a recommendation that we want to make later.

We do have a motion on the floor, and we do need to address it. Is there any further discussion?

Based on what was discussed, are all in favour?

(Motion agreed to)

**The Chair:** Thank you.

The next one is on reduced quorum.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. William Amos:** As far as reduced quorum is concerned, I would like to move the following:

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 (4) members are present, including one member from the opposition and one member from the governing party.

That in the case of previously scheduled meetings taking place outside the Parliamentary precinct, the Committee members in attendance shall only be required to wait 15 minutes following the designated start of the meeting before they may proceed to hear witnesses and receive evidence, regardless of whether opposition or government members are present.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Is there any discussion? All in favour?

(Motion agreed to)

**The Chair:** Great. Thank you.

The next one is about the distribution of documents.

Mr. Bossio.

**Mr. Mike Bossio (Hastings—Lennox and Addington, Lib.):** I would like to move this motion on the distribution of documents, which states:

That only the Clerk of the Committee be authorized to distribute to the members of the Committee any documents, including motions, and that all documents which are to be distributed amongst the Committee members must be in both official languages; and

That the Clerk shall advise all witnesses appearing before the Committee of this requirement.

• (1120)

**The Chair:** Is there any discussion? All in favour?

Mr. Amos.

**Mr. William Amos:** It's just a point of information. I've been around enough committee proceedings to know that in reality, witnesses oftentimes come in semi-prepared, having sometimes submitted their documents in advance. It becomes a networking session, and they start passing around documents.

Practically speaking, what is the control mechanism? How does it work? Do we just make an announcement and say they are not allowed to pass around any materials?

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** This has often come up in the past, and while it may seem a bit onerous, the staff will instruct all witnesses many times to make sure they bring documents in advance so that we can have them translated. Some witnesses just simply don't.

It makes things very uncomfortable, because often at committee someone will pass a motion to say, "Let's just please accept this". In 90% to 95% of the cases it's in English, and it puts some of our francophone members at a great disadvantage if they say "yes" to make everything move along and to get along, and then they just don't have the information in front of them.

For our unilingual anglophone friends, I'd say, imagine the reverse, that someone comes in to testify, speaks entirely in French, presents a complicated document in French, and you feel under pressure to just simply accept it.

The NDP's tradition has been very strict on this, that we don't allow it. That's within the rules of the House, and it's just a fairness thing.

There may be the occasional one-off where there is something small or it's a graph or a picture with a description. For those kinds of things we'll try to make concessions. However, my general instruction is a pretty hard line, which is unusual for us, but on this one it's pretty clear. Someone is put at a huge disadvantage if they don't have it and if, when it comes up, they feel pressured to vote for it to be allowed. It's not great for unilingual francophone members in particular. That seems to be the overwhelming number of cases. I'm sure it happens in reverse, but it's usually that way.

**The Chair:** Mr. Fast.

**Hon. Ed Fast:** I concur with Mr. Cullen as to why we set up this kind of procedure, but we, as a committee, are masters of our own procedure and we can certainly dispense with that requirement by unanimous consent.

I think you will acknowledge that there will be times when there are emergent circumstances in which we would want to allow the distribution of documents without formally going through the clerk, and that would be available to us.

**The Chair:** That's great. The clerk was just telling me that it would be a really good process to do it this way; however, there may be times it could be done by unanimous consent at the meeting.

Are we all in favour of the motion as presented? I think we already did vote but it got sidetracked.

(Motion agreed to)

**The Chair:** The next one is on staff at in camera meetings.

**Mr. Darren Fisher (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, Lib.):** I would be pleased to move that, Madam Chair, and I apologize in advance to the francophones in the room:

[*Translation*]

That each Committee member in attendance shall be permitted to have one (1) staff member attend any in camera meetings; and

That, in addition, each party shall be permitted to have one (1) staff member from a House Officer attend in camera meetings.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Is there any discussion on this one?

(Motion agreed to)

**The Chair:** The next one is on in camera meeting transcripts.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. William Amos:** I move—

That in camera meetings be transcribed and that the transcription be kept with the Clerk of the Committee for later consultation by members of the Committee.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Is there any discussion?

(Motion agreed to)

**The Chair:** The next one is on working meals.

Mr. Gerretsen.

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** It's my pleasure to move what's arguably the most important procedural matter here:

That the Committee authorize the Clerk of the Committee, in consultation with the Chair, to make the necessary arrangements to provide for working meals, as may be required, and that the cost of these meals be charged to the Committee budget.

**The Chair:** Is there any discussion on this one?

(Motion agreed to)

**The Chair:** The next one is on witnesses' expenses.

**Mr. Darren Fisher:** Madam Chair, I will move this in English.

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.

• (1125)

**The Chair:** Is there any discussion?

(Motion agreed to)

**The Chair:** We now move on to notice of motions.

Mr. Aldag.

**Mr. John Aldag:** I will move:

That a forty-eight (48) hours notice, interpreted as two (2) 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 be deemed to have been received during the next business day.

**The Chair:** Is there discussion?

(Motion agreed to)

**The Chair:** We're onto rounds of questioning, allotment of time.

Mr. Bossio.

**Mr. Mike Bossio:** I move, regarding rounds of questioning and the allocation of time:

That witnesses from any one organization shall be allowed ten (10) minutes to make their opening statement; and

That during the questioning of witnesses, there shall be allocated six (6) minutes for the first round of questioning;

That the order of questions for the first round of questioning shall be as follows: Conservative Party, Liberal Party, New Democratic Party, Liberal Party.

That the order of questions for the second round of questioning shall be as follows: Liberal Party: six (6) minutes, Conservative Party: six (6) minutes, Liberal Party: six (6) minutes, Conservative Party: five (5) minutes, New Democratic Party: three (3) minutes.

**The Chair:** Okay, that's open to discussion.

**Mr. Mike Bossio:** —for a total of 50 minutes.

**The Chair:** Sorry, my apologies.

**Mr. Mike Bossio:** I would like to add one further thing. I would like to thank the members opposite for sharing their experience with us in going through some of these motions. It's very much appreciated.

**The Chair:** Absolutely.

Mr. Cullen.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** I was just going to ask Mr. Bossio to run those numbers again because I just don't have them in front of me.

Do you mind? Sorry about that.

**Mr. Mike Bossio:** I'd be happy to.

So in round one, the first party to question would be a Conservative for six minutes, the second questioner would be a Liberal for six minutes, the third questioner would be an NDP for six minutes, the fourth questioner would be a Liberal for six minutes. In round two, the first questioner would be a Liberal for six minutes, the second would be a Conservative for six minutes, the third would be a Liberal for six minutes, the fourth would be a Conservative for five minutes, and the fifth would be an NDP for three minutes.

**The Chair:** Okay, go ahead, Mr. Cullen.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** I appreciate the offer. In years past, we've been on the seven-minute clock. I don't know if it was everybody's preference, Madam Chair. I don't know what the other members of the committee felt. Even that gets quite rushed sometimes. You get a witness that's a little long-winded and you get two questions in and you're out, even under seven minutes. I appreciate the committee moving perhaps more quickly.

This goes further, Madam Chair, as to how we book meetings. The number of witnesses often becomes problematic. If we stack up six, seven, eight witnesses, all of this becomes very problematic because if you have four questions for four witnesses, seven minutes isn't enough. It will be even harder with six minutes, because you'll only be able to address two witnesses. You'll see that some panels cover three different topics and you have to leave a topic entirely behind.

I would argue for the seven minutes, unless there's something prohibitive about that. Your total was 60, I believe you said, or 50 in the end, so tacking on seven onto the first round. I can remember Mr. Brison sitting I think in this chair at finance committee and asking for his second round to also be a full complement. I'll make the same argument because in finance we were very gracious to Mr. Brison and allowed him a full last round. That feels a bit self-serving, I guess, but remembering history is important sometimes.

**The Chair:** Could you clarify that amendment so we understand completely what you're bringing forward on the table?

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** I'm just changing it up to seven minutes for that first round rather than six. The second round I would go five across the board or six across the board. I think for time allocation, it only adds four minutes to the top and it would add a further six or seven minutes. We'd be right around the hour mark. Ed will correct me if I'm wrong on this, but traditionally we try to keep the panels to about 50 minutes of presentations and then about an hour and change, given interruptions, for the question time. That's a typical committee day, I think. Mr. Fast will be able tell you if that's true or not.

• (1130)

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Mr. Fast.

**Hon. Ed Fast:** Thank you for the opportunity to address that.

For the most part I concur with Mr. Cullen. In fact, if you go back beyond 10 years, I believe committees have typically had seven minutes in the first round. One of the things that surprised me when I was first elected back in 2006 was how quickly the time goes when you're examining witnesses at the table and you're embarking upon a line of questioning. The time goes so quickly. I think those of you who are new here will find that six minutes cuts even more into the key questioning that all parties here would want to engage in.

The other thing is I've been advised by my staff that quite a number of the committees have adopted seven minutes for the first round. They've changed up the order slightly and I have a proposal on that as well, again for your consideration. I believe this has been supported at many of the committees, which are, of course, all led by Liberals. That was in fact seven minutes in the first round, but it would start off with the Liberals, then a Conservative, then an NDP, and then a Liberal. In the second round you would go down to five minutes: Conservative five minutes, Liberal five minutes, Conservative five minutes, Liberal five minutes, and then three minutes for the NDP.

I understand that quite a number of committees have agreed to that. It would provide us with the additional time to have sustained questioning of witnesses in the first round, and then supplementaries in the second round.

**The Chair:** We do have an amendment to the motion on the floor. We can't have more than one on the floor at any one time. You're making a recommendation. We're just having a discussion right now about what was proposed, right?

**Hon. Ed Fast:** I didn't understand that Mr. Cullen had made a formal amendment. I understood that he was....

Was that a formal amendment?

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** Yes, it was in a sense a proposal. I may not have used the word—

**Hon. Ed Fast:** You didn't use the word, which is why I jumped—

**The Chair:** Okay, we're just having discussion right now. That sounds fine. We're debating.

Go ahead, Mr. Aldag.

**Mr. John Aldag:** The question for either scenario is are we staying with one hour?

I wasn't sure if, Mr. Fast, that gives us one hour. I think we have two hours blocked for our hearings for our committee at work, but Mr. Cullen's, was it over one hour? I wasn't sure how that would work. It would take us into two hours and some minutes, unless I miscalculated.

**The Chair:** Could I just clarify? If I got it right, we have four in the first round at seven minutes, rather than six minutes, which just adds four additional minutes. In the second round, we're dropping from six minutes to five.

**Mr. John Aldag:** I think that was Mr. Cullen's proposal. We have two different scenarios, and one would equal an hour and one would equal more than an hour.

**The Chair:** Fair enough. When I asked for clarification, he said seven minutes for the first round all across, and then five minutes for the second round. Maybe I got it wrong. That's what I heard.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** I had actually said six across, five across on the second round. But even under the six minutes across, that still brings us under an hour, I believe, unless I'm doing really bad in my math.

**The Chair:** No, it does bring you under an hour.

**Mr. John Aldag:** The other comment I was going to throw out to the committee is I don't have the experience that my colleagues across the table do, but I'm on a committee that's been going for two weeks now, and in that we're using five minutes consistently. Five minutes goes really quickly. It does really help you tighten your questions, though, so there's a certain value to that in helping move things along and really get to the point. When I saw six minutes, I thought, that's being really generous, and hadn't considered a seven-minute option.

**The Chair:** Mr. Bossio.

● (1135)

**Mr. Mike Bossio:** This structure was brought about in the spirit of being fair. If you look at the three parties with official status, of the 327 MPs, the Liberals at 184 have 56.3% of the seats, the Conservatives 30.3%, and the NDP 13.5%. In the allocation of minutes in rotation for a 60-minute panel with a 10-minute presentation, the Liberals are actually going from 56% representation to 48% representation in the speaking order and the time allotted. The Conservatives would be going from 30.3% to 34% in the time allotted, and the NDP would be going from 13% to 17% time allotted. We were just trying to bring about some fairness to the structure.

I think, once again, these can be amended. Why don't we move along this path as we've agreed in the past in the subcommittee. If we find the six minutes is really cramping into everybody's ability to fully engage with the witnesses, then at that point we could revisit changing the time allotments.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Mr. Amos.

**Mr. William Amos:** My sense is that regardless of whether it's seven minutes, eight minutes, or six minutes, these are tight time frames. I think the onus is on the members to prepare questions, preferably in writing, I would say.

When you have a witness who is being forced to consider things quickly and respond quickly, they should probably get some guidance at the very beginning so they understand this is going to move very quickly and they're going to have to respond very quickly.

I like the discipline of short time frames. I think it forces us to prepare in writing. I don't have a problem with the short time frame.

**Hon. Ed Fast:** I would just note in the interest of collegiality and collaboration, the PROC committee discussed this matter and agreed to the proposal I suggested at the table, which is why many of the committees have adopted it.

I recognize we're masters of our own procedure here, and obviously at the end of the day we accept what's agreed to, but I think there was a general recognition that the process that had been established over many years worked quite well and provided the right balance.

**The Chair:** Normally you get about four witnesses at a committee. That's 40 minutes for them. If we start adding to this, it's going to be a challenge, for sure.

Mr. Fast, could you repeat what you discussed? Obviously, I got a little confused, so I want to make sure I have it clear.

**Hon. Ed Fast:** Yes, coming out of PROC, I understood there was a consensus reached there, what would be the optimal arrangement. The first four questions would be seven minutes. It would start with Liberal, Conservative, NDP, and then Liberal. Then the second round would be five minutes Conservative, five minutes Liberal, five minutes Conservative, five minutes Liberal, and then three for NDP. That's 51 minutes.

**The Chair:** Thank you for that clarification. I appreciate it.

Mr. Gerretsen.

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** I missed that. I was hoping Mr. Fast could repeat that. I realize he was already repeating it for clarification.

**The Chair:** I think it's important. It's changing up the order of questioning and it's changing up the time, not a lot but—

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** Is this an official amendment that Mr. Fast put forward?

**The Chair:** I think we're still in discussions right now.

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** Then I don't need it repeated at this point.

Thanks.

**The Chair:** Mr. Cullen.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** I very much love the enthusiasm and the hopes of being able to stay focused, and I would never suggest that politicians are long-winded.

I will caution that this seven minutes blows by. You are also assuming witnesses are brief and want to be brief. Sometimes you will have what they call a "hostile witness" who is seeking to burn out your time. It sounds as though we're quibbling over a small thing—it's a minute one way or the other, but you'd be amazed.

This will happen within the first few months. One of us will look up as the chair says "Thank you; that's your time" and be completely stunned that whatever it was, the five, six, or seven minutes allocated, is gone. You didn't get to two-thirds of the things you had hoped to explore, and that was your shot. You have to imagine the environment commissioner being here with six chapters, five chapters, and a whole bunch of things your constituents want to know about.

In some concession to Mr. Fast, I think we should take a proposal. He's suggested it. I wonder if he'd considered the benevolence we had when the Liberals were in this place.

To Mr. Bossio's point, even when the Conservatives were in the place, there is always a lessening of the government's allocation in terms of seat proportionality to time proportionality. That's a general given; otherwise...well, there are reasons for it.

I think the proposal was the first round is seven minutes, which gives us four rounds of seven for 28 minutes. The second round was all five. Is that correct, Ed?

● (1140)

**Hon. Ed Fast:** No. It's four, five, and then the last, which is you, is three.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** Then hammer away on the poor New Democrats for two minutes less than everybody else. That's fine. We're okay with that.

Again, you can tell I'm fighting for it, but not entirely, that we take that proposal. If it's amenable to the government members, then we move on.



**The Chair:** Mr. Bossio.

**Mr. Mike Bossio:** Once again I would like to propose that a lot of careful deliberation was given to this schedule, this allotment of time, and the order of it. I would like to try it and see if it works, and then revisit it after a period of time, and if there's been a mistake and six minutes just isn't enough time, we could bump it up to seven. I'd like to see if we can make this work. If we come to the conclusion later on that it doesn't, then let's revisit it at that time.

**The Chair:** I'm trying to take in everything everybody has said and also to start off on a foot of collegiality and consideration for everything that was said.

I can't speak really, but I'm struggling with this change in order, and I'm not sure I'm really comfortable about the change. We have 51 minutes, and I think the intent was to try to give a focused opportunity for that discussion. The order I'm not sure about; the timing I'm comfortable with.

We have a motion on the table. Is there going to be an amendment to that motion?

Mr. Fast.

**Hon. Ed Fast:** I'll make the amendment as I stated and suggested in our informal discussion.

**The Chair:** You're making an amendment to change the order so that it's Liberals seven minutes, Conservatives seven minutes, NDP seven minutes, Liberals seven minutes. The second round is Conservatives five minutes, Liberals five minutes, Conservatives five minutes, Liberals five minutes, and NDP three minutes.

**Hon. Ed Fast:** That's correct.

**The Chair:** Is there any further discussion or should we bring it to a vote?

Mr. Bossio.

**Mr. Mike Bossio:** I have just one further clarification. I believe at PROC it was agreed that the NDP would end up with two minutes for the very last question to keep it at 50 minutes. That's just a point of clarification, though once again I stand by my original view that we should stick to the original time allotment, and if we need to revisit it, let's revisit it down the road.

**The Chair:** Mr. Fisher.

**Mr. Darren Fisher:** I'm listening to all of the feedback from across the way, but so far the best argument was made by Mr. Bossio when he listed off the percentages.

I'm fine with the way it's written now, and unless someone can convince me otherwise, I won't be supporting the amendment.

**The Chair:** Is there anyone else for discussion?

Mr. Bossio.

• (1145)

**Mr. Mike Bossio:** On a point of clarification, are we voting for or against the amendment, or are we voting for or against the motion?

**The Chair:** We're voting for or against the amendment.

(Amendment negated)

(Motion agreed to)

**The Chair:** That brings us to the end of the routine motions, and I'm just trying to find my script.

The clerk has distributed a calendar.

Do you have it?

**An hon. member:** Yes, we have it.

**The Chair:** Okay. We have a calendar. Next week is a non-sitting week, and then we're back. I just wanted to make sure that we're comfortable with the calendar.

I was thinking that in our first week back, after next week, on the Tuesday, I'd like to have some feedback—and maybe we'll have to do it in camera so that we're very frank—on what each of us wants to achieve by being on this committee and where we'd like to go with the committee. We'd have that discussion, with each of us having five minutes or four minutes, and just go around the table and explore what each would like to achieve from this committee. I thought that might be a good way to kick off the Tuesday so that we can discuss our ambitions.

It's a very broad canvas we have to work on, and I think getting a sense of where everybody would like to go is a great way to start, but it's really up to us, up to you, whether you think that's a good use of Tuesday's meeting.

What do you think? It would be the 16th, from eleven until one. We don't know the room yet, but as soon as we get it we'll let you know.

Mr. Cullen.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** I think that's a great idea, Chair. I think it's a great way to proceed to get a sense of where the committee is.

**The Chair:** That sounds great.

Mr. Fisher.

**Mr. Darren Fisher:** Are you proposing a blue-sky meeting where we sit around and free flow, or is there an official...?

**The Chair:** It would be official. You'd each have a bit of time. I don't really mind what the time is, but we can't go forever. Let's give ourselves five minutes—

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** Six minutes.

**The Chair:** Six, okay.

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

**The Chair:** We'll see how efficient we can be.

We'll give each other six minutes to explore what our passion is, what we don't want to be on the committee for, where we'd like the committee to go, and maybe a little bit about what we're bringing to the committee.

Mr. Fast.

**Hon. Ed Fast:** Madam Chair, that's a great idea, and thank you for suggesting that.

I do have one niggling concern, which is that the proposal is to go in camera. I understand there may be a more free-flowing discussion arising out of that, but I think the general understanding of the Canadian public is that meetings of committees will be open, unless the matters to be considered within committee are clearly ones that need to be in camera.

**The Chair:** I am quite fine with it being open. It was suggested that we might be more comfortable in some of the blue-sky thoughts and the discussion might be more open. We're not necessarily furthering the business of Parliament; we are exploring our committee and just getting some ideas on the table.

I absolutely don't mind. It's really up to the will of the committee on how you want to handle that.

**Mr. John Aldag:** In the spirit of openness, let's go with an open meeting and talk about our hopes and interests.

**The Chair:** Is that the will of everyone on the committee?

**Mr. Darren Fisher:** I didn't realize that it was to be in camera. I wouldn't support in camera on that. This is something that I think needs to be open.

**The Chair:** That sounds good.

Is there anyone else?

Okay, so on the 18th, it was suggested....

Mr. Gerretsen.

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** It wasn't to that specifically, but just as a matter of procedure, does it have to be us and them? Do we have to sit together? Can I sit next to Nathan next time? That's what I'm asking—

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

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** —as a matter of procedure with the seating.

• (1150)

**The Chair:** I think we can sit wherever we'd like.

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

**The Chair:** I think that's a great idea. Fantastic.

**Mr. Darren Fisher:** [*Inaudible—Editor*]

**The Chair:** I'm sorry, Mr. Fisher. What was that?

**Mr. Darren Fisher:** I've showered.

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

**The Chair:** If on Tuesday we get a sense of ourselves, would we like Thursday to be a briefing from the commissioner to get a sense of what they're thinking?

Mr. Fast.

**Hon. Ed Fast:** Since we're talking about other business—I think that's what's taking place here—I don't know if the commissioner is available. We want to make sure that we have enough time to prepare for that.

Obviously, what we are really looking forward to is having the minister attend for the first time, and we'd love to have her attend

and speak to her mandate. I've had a chance to review her mandate and very much appreciate the Prime Minister making those mandates public. Having already met with her, and also with the parliamentary secretary, who very graciously offered to meet with me, I think we can get off on a really good foot by having her come and talk very generally about the mandate.

I would think we'd want to make sure it fits into her schedule, but over the next three weeks, say, maybe we can find a slot where we could fit her in.

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

I'll give you a chance to respond to what was just asked. Is everyone okay with that?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

Mr. Wilkinson.

**Mr. Jonathan Wilkinson (North Vancouver, Lib.):** I'm still getting used to exactly what I'm allowed to do here or not, so to the extent that you want me to shut up, just tell me to shut up.

I know the minister would be very pleased to come, so it's just a matter of scheduling. I will take that off with me and we'll figure out a time.

**The Chair:** That sounds good. We'll work as well to have her come.

On the 18th, we're all right. We don't know exactly what the time is going to be, but are you interested also in hearing from the commissioner or the department? We could schedule that on the 18th, and if we can get the minister, then we'll get the minister as well.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** Madam Chair, I'm not sure if Mr. Fast was suggesting on the same day.

**The Chair:** I don't think so, but—

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** Okay. I just wanted to check that.

**The Chair:** —if she's available on the 18th, then we'll take her, and we'll move the other one.

But you're interested in—

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** Very keen, absolutely.

**The Chair:** —as soon as possible having the minister come before us and having the commissioner come before us, right?

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** Very much so.

**The Chair:** Mr. Fast.

**Hon. Ed Fast:** I think that usually ministers come for an hour. Given the fact that this is the first opportunity to talk to the minister, I would love to see her make herself available for a little bit longer than that. I think we'll have a lot of questions to ask her.

Likely they're not going to be partisan questions, because this will be the first time we meet her. We'd love to hear her vision for what she sees the government doing going forward, and hopefully we'll be able to share with her a little bit of how we hope to participate in that process.

**The Chair:** I think Mr. Wilkinson is hearing us, and we'll see what we can do about that.

Mr. Bossio.

**Mr. Mike Bossio:** I was going to say that given the minister's tight schedule, maybe we would want to consider it on either the 16th or the 18th.

**The Chair:** Yes, absolutely. I think she's probably pretty booked up right now, but we will make it work. Whatever fits her schedule,

we'll make it work. We have the flexibility, and everyone is okay with that, I think, right?

If there is no other business, then we'll move to adjourn.

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

**The Chair:** Thank you. This meeting is adjourned.

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