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

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**EVIDENCE**

**Tuesday, May 10, 2016**

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**Chair**

**Mrs. Deborah Schulte**



# Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development

Tuesday, May 10, 2016

•(1145)

[English]

**The Chair (Mrs. Deborah Schulte (King—Vaughan, Lib.)):** We're going to start the meeting.

I apologize to all of our witnesses. We have a couple of things. I sent out an email last night asking if people would be willing to entertain meeting on the 17th, rather than dealing with drafting instructions, to give us a chance to hear from some more witnesses.

We have polled the witnesses who are here today to see if any of them would be able to come back on the 17th, so that we would have a more fulsome discussion rather than a very pinched discussion that might happen today with all six on the agenda.

If it happens that we're going to try to fit them all in, we'll have very short questioning. I didn't think that was the right way to go, given the knowledge that needs to come out of the question period.

I proposed, through the email, to move the 17th as an additional witness day. We would move our drafting instructions to after the summer. I don't know if you have all considered that, but we do have three witnesses, almost four, who would be prepared to come back on the 17th if we do that. That might help us today.

We have the Canadian Wildlife Federation and the Mining Association of Canada, both are prepared to come back on the 17th. We have the Canadian Boreal Forest Agreement, one on video conference and one that's prepared to come back here. The Forest Products Association of Canada is prepared to come back and they're by video conference. We have two on video conference.

Welcome to all of you and thank you for being very accommodating, giving us that option. I need the committee to put their thoughts quickly on the table about that.

Mr. Eglinski.

**Mr. Jim Eglinski (Yellowhead, CPC):** Madam Chair, our side would be willing to stay over and continue, and get rid of the special committee thing, so that we can get most of the witness presentations. One of our members has to leave, but the rest of us are willing to stay because it's a very important topic. We would be willing to stay after one o'clock if it's agreed by the committee.

**The Chair:** Does anybody have any comments on that?

**Mr. Darren Fisher (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, Lib.):** I can't stay.

**The Chair:** You can't stay either. Is there anyone else who can't stay?

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.):** I can stay up until about 1:40.

**Mr. Mike Bossio (Hastings—Lennox and Addington, Lib.):** No, I can't stay. I have a meeting at one o'clock and then at 1:30.

**The Chair:** It's a good idea, but the other issue is that we can't do the work that we need to do in the subcommittee. We do need to do that as well because we have some additional witnesses that I needed to review with the subcommittee to see how we would move forward on that. If we are going to put a budget for travel, we need to do that very soon.

If there's a chance at all to travel in the summer, that has to be worked out and then discussed. The longer we put that off, the less chance we are going to be able to make that happen. I will leave it up to the committee.

Mr. Fast.

**Hon. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC):** There's also the other issue of debating the two motions that have been deferred on a number of occasions. Given the fact that we do have a full slate of witnesses here, in the interest of ensuring they get the time to present and we get a chance to ask some questions, I would be prepared to defer consideration of my motion if Mr. Gerretsen was prepared to defer consideration of his motion.

**The Chair:** Mr. Gerretsen.

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** Madam Chair, unfortunately, I'm not prepared to do that. I need to put forward my motion today. I would like to table it and I would rather not do that during the questioning of witnesses. I would like to know if there's going to be some time toward the end to do that.

**The Chair:** My intention was to try to get agreement to move some people to the 17th, so we could have a fulsome discussion with the ones that need to stay here today and with the ones that are prepared to come back, and to get any motions that need to be tabled, so we can get that work out of the way because we've been delaying that now for over a week and we need to have it heard.

I appreciate your comments, but I'm hearing that you're not willing to entertain that. I was thinking we would do your motion at the end.

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** As long as you're allotting time.

**The Chair:** I am allotting time at 12:45 to do that.

**Hon. Ed Fast:** Madam Chair, that gives our witnesses about 45 minutes to present.

**The Chair:** If four of them are prepared to come back, then we can do that on the 17th.

**Hon. Ed Fast:** It's still going to be very tight for questions. We're cheating a number of very important organizations out of a full opportunity to be heard. That's my concern about packing in motions at the end. I understand Mr. Gerretsen wants to go ahead and he's entitled to do that. I believe we've now discarded the idea of cutting into the subcommittee time as well. I think this is a problem.

**The Chair:** If we get started very soon, we can have two witnesses do 20 minutes of statements with 40 minutes of questioning, which is robust for two people. We should be fine if we work quickly and get this resolved, so that the two witnesses that are willing to stay get their full time and get good time for questioning. The 40 minutes is only 10 minutes shorter than normal, but we need to get started.

Mr. Gerretsen.

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** I would put forward a motion that we invite the four guests back to our next meeting. Is that how you want to handle this?

**The Chair:** We first need to agree as a committee that we are prepared to have the 17th. We had made a work plan that we would have the 17th for drafting instructions. We need to open the 17th up for witnesses. Maybe that could be brought forward if we're prepared to do that.

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** Unless you have consensus from the committee, I'm happy to put forward that motion.

**The Chair:** I know I'm rushing and people aren't feeling comfortable, but I'll call a vote on that one. I did put it out to try to ensure everybody was aware of what we were thinking of doing. It isn't just for the chaos today that we're doing that. There are other people who also want to come and talk to us as well, and we wanted to try to get one or two of them in as well.

**Hon. Ed Fast:** Madam Chair, this is an example of what happens when you invoke closure so suddenly on bills. Can you clarify again which organizations will not be heard today? I want to ensure that those who are being asked to come back on the 17th would not be unnecessarily inconvenienced.

• (1150)

**The Chair:** Could the Canadian Wildlife Federation let us know if they're prepared to come back and if there are any issues with coming back on the 17th?

**Mr. Rick Bates (Acting Chief Executive Officer and Executive Vice-President, Canadian Wildlife Federation):** We're prepared to come back. It would be fine.

**The Chair:** What about the Mining Association of Canada?

**Mr. Ben Chalmers (Vice-President, Sustainable Development, Mining Association of Canada):** I'd be happy to come back on the 17th.

**The Chair:** What about the Canadian Boreal Forest Agreement? We have Mr. O'Carroll, and we have Ms. Lisgo on the video conference. What about the two of you?

**Mr. Aran O'Carroll (Executive Director, Secretariat, Canadian Boreal Forest Agreement):** Madam Chair, we'd be happy to come back.

**The Chair:** On the video conference, that's a confirmation?

**Ms. Kimberly Lisgo (Conservation Planning Team Lead, Canadian Boreal Forest Agreement):** Yes, that's fine.

**The Chair:** The Forest Products Association of Canada, Ms. Lindsay, you're on the video conference, too.

**Ms. Kate Lindsay (Director, Conservation Biology, Forest Products Association of Canada):** Yes, I'm prepared to come back on the 17th.

**The Chair:** Awesome.

Mr. Fast, are you comfortable with that?

**Hon. Ed Fast:** It's not ideal, but—

**The Chair:** It's definitely not ideal. It's the best we could do after we found out the situation this morning, to try to poll people to see if they could work with us on it.

How about we call the vote for the motion?

Just to make it clear, Mr. Gerretsen, I understand your motion is to make the 17th a witness day, and then we'll have drafting instructions in the fall.

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** That's correct, Madam Chair.

(Motion agreed to)

**The Chair:** Those who are going to come back, thank you so much for your patience and we look forward to seeing you on the 17th.

We have two witnesses who are with us today from Nature Canada. They are Alex MacDonald, senior conservation manager, and Eleanor Fast, executive director.

We also have, from Ducks Unlimited, James Brennan, director of government affairs, and Mark Gloutney, director of regional operations. We'll open the floor to you.

Just to let everybody know, at a quarter to one I'm going to stop the meeting because it has been made clear there is some committee business that's going to come forward today. Thank you.

Who would like to go first?

Go ahead, Mr. Brennan.

[Translation]

**Mr. James Brennan (Director, Government Affairs, Ducks Unlimited Canada):** Thank you, Madam Chair and members of the committee, for inviting Ducks Unlimited Canada to contribute to the committee's study on federal protected areas and conservation objectives.

Ducks Unlimited Canada is very happy to be here today in its role as the leader in wetland conservation in Canada, as well as in its role as a key partner in the management of several federal protected areas that rely on healthy wetlands.

[English]

My name is Jim Brennan. I am director of government affairs for Ducks Unlimited Canada. I'm also the co-chair of the Green Budget Coalition. Joining me today is Dr. Mark Gloutney, director of regional operations for the eastern region of Canada.

We're pleased to provide you with a brief leave-behind PowerPoint presentation that provides you with a greater level of detail. I invite you to review this document at your convenience, and send us any comments or questions, should they arise.

Our mission at Ducks Unlimited Canada is to conserve, restore, and manage wetlands and associated habitats for North America's waterfowl. By focusing on habitat conservation, we're also able to preserve and restore wetlands for their life-sustaining functions for Canadian society.

Some of you may already know that Canada is home to almost one-quarter of the world's wetlands. These wetlands provide Canadians with critical ecosystem services, including carbon capture and storage, water filtration services, flood attenuation, and green jobs, to name a few. Despite the clear economic and ecological values provided by wetlands, 70% have already been lost or degraded within settled areas of this country.

Surprisingly the loss continues as we are losing more than 29,000 acres of wetlands each and every year. Despite the work of organizations like Ducks Unlimited Canada, who have conserved and restored millions of acres of habitat, governments and conservation organizations cannot keep pace with this rate of habitat destruction.

Today we wish to raise three priorities with you. First is investing in the management of existing national wildlife areas and migratory bird sanctuaries. Second is finalizing the accounting guidelines for the conservation activities across Canada, so they may fully contribute to our national inventory of conserved lands, and third is supporting land-use planning initiatives, in which many indigenous peoples and environmental groups are actively engaged to advance the protection of large areas of ecological and social significance.

I will now hand the mic over to my colleague, Dr. Mark Gloutney, who will outline his experience with NWAs.

•(1155)

**Mr. Mark Gloutney (Director, Regional Operations, Eastern Region, Ducks Unlimited Canada):** Madam Chair and members of the committee, Ducks Unlimited Canada has been working to restore wetlands on 19 of the 54 national wildlife areas in Canada.

This partnership extends back to the beginning of the national wildlife area program where the federal government secured lands, and Ducks Unlimited invested in the restoration of the wetlands on the properties.

Since Ducks Unlimited started working on national wildlife areas in the 1970s, we have restored 20,000 acres and have invested \$15 million on those properties. The results have been healthy, functional wetlands, where people can enjoy these critical habitats and where a multitude of waterfowl, amphibians, birds, and fish make their homes.

We also note that these wetlands are important components of successful species at risk recovery strategies. Restoration often involves built infrastructure, like dikes and water control structures. These all have finite lives. This infrastructure is in serious need of new investments.

Ducks Unlimited has been doing its part with investments of over \$1 million last year alone in Ontario's national wildlife areas, but more is needed. Where the maintenance of wetland functions are core to the value of a national wildlife area, a failure to invest in the infrastructure will mean a failure of the protected area to meet its conservation objectives, and would also raise liability issues for the federal government and for Ducks Unlimited.

Ducks Unlimited supports the active management of national wildlife areas in those areas that are of highest priority for waterfowl populations and under the highest threats.

The Green Budget Coalition, a group of 20 non-government organizations who yearly compile recommendations for the federal budget, had submitted two recommendations in 2016 for federal efforts related to protected areas.

Ducks Unlimited Canada contributed significantly to these recommendations, and recommended \$30 million be dedicated annually to better manage national wildlife areas and migratory bird sanctuaries.

As the committee studies what is needed to expand protection of Canadian lands and waters, we urge you to consider the allocation of adequate funding for the management of the whole network, especially national wildlife areas and migratory bird sanctuaries.

**Mr. James Brennan:** Thank you, Mark.

The second recommendation we would like to make is related to the way in which certain areas are accounted for in the current protected area inventory.

We have secured long-term protection on over 500,000 acres via fee-simple purchase or permanent conservation easements. However, based on the current guidelines, most of the lands we secure do not satisfy the criteria for permanent protection and inclusion in Canada's protected areas inventory.

The federal government has already recognized the value of private lands conservation measures by funding programs such as the natural areas conservation program and the national wetlands conservation funds, which are due to sunset in 2019. It has also allocated modest amounts of funding to start the process to fully capture and track all of Canada's natural heritage assets on private land.

As guidelines for protected areas accounting are being updated at the international and national levels, we recommend that the government continue to advance its national inventory of conservation measures. This complete baseline of national conservation measures will be essential to inform how the federal government develops a strategic road map to meet and exceed protection targets, in collaboration with provinces, territories, indigenous peoples, and other conservation partners.

The third and final point we would like to raise with the committee is the need to act now where opportunities present themselves.

In the Northwest Territories protected areas strategy, for example, protection is proposed for wetlands that are key breeding habitats for waterfowl populations that migrate across the continent. We strongly encourage the federal government to play a leadership role where such strategic land-use planning initiatives exist. Increased support to indigenous people and their partners would enable the more efficient identification of areas to be protected, the facilitation of fair negotiation processes, and the designation of these areas by federal or local tools.

As part of conservation planning efforts, we will need support to complete the Canadian wetland inventory, as there is no complete mapping of wetlands on the Canadian landscape to consistently inform land-use decisions. Wetlands should also be added to Natural Resources Canada's national terrestrial monitoring framework, so that we can better understand and monitor landscape change as it pertains to wetlands.

Another way to easily expand the protected areas network is to enable the Canadian Wildlife Service to secure lands adjacent to existing NWAs and MBSs as they become available. Currently, funds have been set aside under the national areas conservation plan, but the CWS does not have a mechanism to swiftly deploy these funds to hold biodiversity hot spots for migratory birds and species at risk near existing NWAs and MBSs.

We propose that the committee and government should examine how lands can be acquired under permanent protection through streamlined processes.

We thank you for the opportunity to speak today and highlight these issues of importance to Ducks Unlimited. We hope to have the opportunity to meet again to discuss strategies for the expansion of the protected areas network in Canada, as well as the role of wetland ecological services for Canadians.

• (1200)

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Ms. Fast.

**Ms. Eleanor Fast (Executive Director, Nature Canada):** Thank you, Madam Chair, committee members.

Thank you for inviting Nature Canada to speak to the committee. It's an honour to be here. My name is Eleanor Fast, and I am executive director of Nature Canada. I'm joined here today by my colleague Alex MacDonald, senior conservation manager.

Nature Canada is the oldest national conservation charity in Canada. Since our founding in 1939, we've been working to protect habitats and the species that depend on them, as well as connecting Canadians to nature. Nature Canada is the national voice for nature, representing 45,000 members and supporters and a network of provincial and local nature organizations across Canada.

We are thrilled that the committee is undertaking this study on protected areas. Canada has a rich natural resource of forests, freshwater and marine habitats, and grasslands that make a significant contribution to the world's ecosystem services. Many of Canada's wild spaces remain intact and to some degree connected at the landscape level, but action must be swift in order to conserve this biodiversity for generations to come.

One component of this protection must be the designation of areas protected for biodiversity, for wildlife conservation, given the threatened status of many species and the still poorly understood impacts of climate change on wildlife populations.

Canada urgently needs a comprehensive implementation strategy for protected areas in order to achieve the Aichi targets and to arrive at a long-term vision. To reach our Aichi target goals of protecting 17% of Canada's land and 10% of our oceans by 2020, the federal government, provincial and territorial governments, indigenous governments, industry, and civil society must work hand in hand. The federal government has an important leadership and coordination role to play.

In the written brief that Nature Canada submitted, we have outlined five specific recommendations for the committee to consider. In the interests of time, I'm going to focus my remarks on the first two recommendations, but Alex and I are happy to take questions on any of them.

Nature Canada's first recommendation is to ramp up efforts to establish new, and expand existing, national wildlife areas and migratory bird sanctuaries.

Environment and Climate Change Canada's Canadian Wildlife Service manages a network of over 12 million hectares of federally protected areas for wildlife conservation—the national wildlife areas and migratory bird sanctuaries. These areas are there to protect wildlife populations, particularly migratory birds and species at risk. They are often overlooked as protected areas, but they are important and currently comprise about 11% of terrestrial and marine protected areas, second only to Parks Canada, and they encompass more marine areas than the Department of Fisheries and Oceans' marine protected areas.

The network of national wildlife areas and migratory bird sanctuaries suffers from a low profile and significant threats to ecological integrity. The network is underfunded. Currently it receives about a dollar per hectare for the entire program and just 25¢ per hectare for site maintenance.

In the Green Budget Coalition's recommendations for the 2016 budget, \$3 million was recommended to create three new national wildlife areas, and \$10 million for management of existing sites, ramping up to \$30 million annually by 2019. However, funding for new national wildlife areas was absent from the federal budget, even though relatively modest sums could make a huge impact.

As well as being relatively inexpensive, national wildlife areas and migratory bird sanctuaries are easier to create than national parks and offer more management flexibility, making them appealing in meeting the 2020 timeline of the Aichi targets.

Nature Canada and our partners have done significant work in identifying sites most in need of protection as national wildlife areas and migratory bird sanctuaries. With partners, we have recognized 600 important bird and biodiversity areas, IBAs, across Canada's diverse landscapes. We've built a comprehensive database, developed many site conservation plans, and developed a network of hundreds of volunteer stewards who conserve IBAs.

• (1205)

These sites provide a template for the expansion of national wildlife areas and migratory bird sanctuaries, and Nature Canada and our partners are ready to work with the federal government to help reach the Aichi targets and the long-term vision that is needed beyond that.

The second recommendation that we would like to make is simply to stop losing protected areas. Given Canada's commitment to the Aichi targets, transferring ecologically sensitive habitat that currently enjoys some protection into private hands without binding rules to protect ecological integrity simply does not make sense, yet the Government of Canada is currently in the process of transferring 700,000 hectares of native grasslands in 62 community pastures formerly managed by the prairie farm rehabilitation administration, or PFRA. The government is transferring them to the Government of Saskatchewan, which has stated that it intends to sell these lands once transferred.

Temperate grasslands are among the most endangered ecosystems in Canada and globally, and the federal community pasture program invested hundreds of millions of dollars over 80 years to restore and manage more than a million hectares of native grasslands. These community pastures are home to some of the highest concentrations of species at risk on the continent and 31 federally listed species at risk. This is an urgent issue, as many of these community pastures are scheduled to be transferred in 2017. Nature Canada recommends a pause while a strategy to protect these habitats and species at risk is developed.

That outlines the first two recommendations that we made in the brief. The other recommendations are these.

Recommendation three is to ensure that the Parks Canada Agency and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans have sufficient resources to meet their objectives for establishing new and expanded national parks, national marine conservation areas, and marine protected areas.

Recommendation four is to negotiate the establishment of new protected areas with indigenous governments as part of the nation-to-nation process that the federal government is committed to.

Recommendation five is to demonstrate federal leadership on the use of Aichi target 11, "other effective area-based conservation measures", to protect important terrestrial and marine ecosystems in concert with the indigenous and local governments, private landowners, and non-governmental organizations responsible for their stewardship and management.

More details on these recommendations can be found in the written brief that Nature Canada submitted.

Thank you, again, for giving Nature Canada the opportunity to speak to the committee. Alex and I look forward to your questions.

**The Chair:** Thank you so much. We will move right to questions.

Mr. Shields, you are up first.

**Mr. Martin Shields (Bow River, CPC):** Thank you, Madam Chair.

Mr. Brennan, you mentioned \$30 million and active management. What would that look like?

**Mr. James Brennan:** Active management, for us, is generally focused on building a strong plan for a protected area. Perhaps Mark could speak to some of the work that we have done.

**Mr. Martin Shields:** "Active management" sounds like more than a plan to me. Something on paper is not active. When you say "active", I am looking for where the action is.

**Mr. Mark Gloutney:** The action is really about maintaining the ecological integrity that exists within the national wildlife area. Are there pieces of infrastructure, like dikes and water-control structures, that need to be rebuilt? Are there grasslands that need to be managed to enhance and maintain their biodiversity? It is really about supporting the active work that happens within the boundaries of the national wildlife area.

• (1210)

**Mr. Martin Shields:** Are you talking about an extension of what you already do, nothing different?

**Mr. Mark Gloutney:** It is extending what we are doing and then adding in some of the other activities that we could do to help with recovery strategies for species at risk, for example. Many of those strategies are pretty new. It's adding value within the national wildlife area system.

**Mr. Martin Shields:** I am getting to those strategies. You still haven't gotten to the actions. I got the dikes and the rest, but then you are talking about developing strategies. You want \$30 million, but you haven't quite gotten to how you would use it.

**Mr. James Brennan:** In the case of wetlands, for example, we are often installing plate-steel fabricated water-control structures, so we have to buy those on the commercial market. We have to install them, and we have to hire people to install them. Ducks Unlimited generally works in a supervisory, planning type of role.

**Mr. Martin Shields:** You're talking extension. It's not new. It's continuing to develop the processes you have now and extending them.

**Mr. Mark Gloutney:** Right, and doing them differently so we can accommodate some of these other benefits that we're trying to accrue on the lands.

**Mr. Martin Shields:** When you mention inventory, I think that's what we've heard from a number of different witnesses already is the sense that we don't know the inventory here or there, and everybody has a piece.

How could you contribute to that inventory process? Do you have the ability to do that?

**Mr. James Brennan:** Definitely. We have an in-house geographic information systems group that does wetland mapping right across the country. We have generated polygon-based maps of where wetlands are in Canada. We have a pretty good idea in certain regions of the country where those habitats lie.

Certainly, we work in partnership with Environment and Climate Change Canada primarily with the Canadian Wildlife Service to build that inventory, to build the products and the tools that inform effective decision-making.

**Mr. Martin Shields:** One of the things we first hear when one organization has it in their IT is that there's no transferability. That's a huge issue if you're talking multiple organizations. You have yours. Do you believe it's transferable?

**Mr. James Brennan:** Generally speaking it is. Through the North American waterfowl management plan, we have agreements with landowners and with the crown to protect and restore our wetlands across the continent, and we share data and information.

**Mr. Martin Shields:** I'm talking the IT inventory. Can you transfer the database in your IT program to another one? Do you believe...?

**Mr. James Brennan:** Yes. We can do that.

**Mr. Martin Shields:** Okay. Great.

Eleanor, you said you were looking for federal coordination. Is that the role you're looking for from the federal government?

**Ms. Eleanor Fast:** My colleague will answer.

**Mr. Alex MacDonald (Senior Conservation Manager, Species at Risk, Urban Nature and Protected Areas, Nature Canada):** Thank you very much, Mr. Shields.

The coordination we're looking for there is an opportunity for the federal government to provide leadership on identifying a strategy for a national framework for terrestrial protected areas. We have a national marine protected areas framework established.

There are organizations that could feed into such a process. For instance, one of our national reporting systems, the conservation areas reporting and tracking system, is managed by the Canadian Council on Ecological Areas. There's an opportunity for the federal government to use some of these existing tools and provide that leadership and oversight.

**Mr. Martin Shields:** I would suggest you talk to Ducks about visibility. I seem to donate a lot of money to Ducks. They are very visible. We all know them. If you have a problem, they know how to market.

That's good enough.

**The Chair:** Are you sure? Okay.

Mr. Amos.

**Mr. William Amos (Pontiac, Lib.):** Thank you to our witnesses. We appreciate the flexibility today. I know it has not been that simple.

I want to go right back to Nature Canada on that issue of coordination, but I would invite comments also from DU on this.

We've had discussions around coordination of protected areas in all of their different guises across the country: federal, provincial, indigenous. I think there's an emerging recognition that we don't have a handle on all of it and we need a better way, not just for the purposes of percentage bean-counting, but with a view to ensuring we have the highest possible quality conservation as per the Aichi targets.

What comments would you have at this institutional level that would help guide us as we recommend where the federal government should help lead the country?

• (1215)

**Ms. Eleanor Fast:** I think the Aichi targets give urgency to the issue, but I would urge a longer-term, more substantial vision for what Canada could be in terms of protected areas.

I think the role of the federal government is one of developing a vision for Canada within international frameworks and on the national stage, but I would urge you to work with the provincial governments and nation-to-nation with indigenous governments. I think that provides the real opportunity here.

**Mr. Mark Gloutney:** I think there are also opportunities to be creative and to think about what we are actually trying to accomplish as an end game. Are there many different tools that we can bring to bear that'll provide some level of protection, recognizing that the longevity of some of those protections might not be as long as we'd like but they provide steps along the road to ultimately attaining conservation on the landscape? For example, we often sign 25-year agreements with private landowners to do conservation work on their lands. It provides a short-term protection, but it's part of the change in the conservation of a landscape. It doesn't help us with our overarching targets, but there are many tools like this that get us down the road towards conservation.

**Mr. William Amos:** I have a quick point of clarification on the last aspect.

When Ducks Unlimited uses money accorded to it through the NACP, does it actually use it, in some cases, for 25-year protection plans, which then subsequently have to be renewed, that aren't permanent, if you will? It's a simple yes or no on that one.

**Mr. James Brennan:** Yes.



**Mr. William Amos:** Okay. Would it be possible to let our committee know what percentage of those protections of the monies you invest through the NACP are permanent, versus those that are impermanent in some way, shape, or form?

**Mr. James Brennan:** We could get you a number. Typically, a private landowner is a little more reticent to go into permanent long-term protection.

**Mr. William Amos:** Yes, that makes sense.

This one goes to Ducks Unlimited.

Mr. Brennan, we've had discussions about this previously. As you know, I agree wholeheartedly that the entire initiative around conservation has to be conceived as an infrastructure issue. You stated earlier that we can't keep pace with the level of habitat destruction that is ongoing. I think that's a statement worth noting. As we look forward to achieving greater protection, could you speak a little more to how you would like the federal government and other governments to use infrastructure funding to achieve conservation benefit?

**Mr. James Brennan:** I think the most obvious way to do that would be to look at the way in which wetlands retain water on the Canadian landscape. There's been an awful lot of wetland loss in areas that are certainly susceptible and prone to flooding. We have a recommendation in the current year's Green Budget Coalition recommendations that suggest that a portion of the green infrastructure money should be allocated towards natural or green solutions.

The scientific evidence demonstrates fairly clearly that there are opportunities to use wetlands to hold water back on the landscape, and therefore reduce the incidence of flooding. The most noteworthy study of late was what we refer to as the Smith Creek study. It was undertaken, using our GIS data, by scientists at the University of Saskatchewan. Professor John Pomeroy, who's the Canada research chair in water, undertook a study to look at what the impacts of wetland loss on the working landscape are. What he discovered was that the removal of wetlands on the Smith Creek watershed landscape increased water flows into creeks and feeder streams by over 30%—it's about 32%.

Certainly, by taking a look at the infrastructure tools at the government's disposal, we think you could certainly get a great bang for your buck, in that we have an opportunity to not only reduce the incidence of flooding, but to gain the biodiversity gains that you get from putting natural habitat back on the landscape as well.

• (1220)

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

Mr. Stetski.

**Mr. Wayne Stetski (Kootenay—Columbia, NDP):** Yes, thank you.

To Ducks Unlimited, in my riding of Kootenay—Columbia, I've worked with Ducks Unlimited on several projects, and absolutely, it takes active management to keep a healthy wetland. Thank you for that.

My question will be for Nature Canada, and then perhaps I'll go back to both of you if there's time available.

In the brief that you submitted to the committee, you noted that Canada is about to lose a significant amount of federally protected land in the transfer of community pastures and grasslands to the Government of Saskatchewan. How important are these areas for conservation? What does the government need to do to ensure that a plan is in place to protect the ecological integrity of the grasslands before the transfer happens? Should these lands actually be transferred? Is government doing enough to make sure that if they do leave, they protect ecological integrity?

**Mr. Alex MacDonald:** Thank you, Mr. Stetski.

These are very important lands. We know that grasslands globally and nationally are one of the most endangered biomes. The PFRA community pasture lands, or the former PFRA lands, are home to some 31 federally listed species at risk, as well as their habitat. We know habitat loss is one of the main stressors facing our species at risk nationally. This example of losing these effectively managed and effectively protected spaces is an example of habitat loss again.

There's no simple yes or no answer in terms of what's happening, or what could be done and what is being done, in terms of halting the transfer or putting a pause on the transfer of these lands. We understand the environment minister's office is aware of the issue and discussions with Minister MacAulay's office are under way, but of course it is an urgent matter that we hope is addressed soon.

The transfers are taking place in three phases, with two additional sets of transfers remaining. One set of the former pastures has already been transferred. The end date is March 2018, and up to 57 of the former PFRA sites have already been transferred, 34 in Saskatchewan alone. The next set of transfers will take place in March 2017, with the final set in March 2018.

The final transfer, and this is the point we'd like to underscore, will include the most intact and ecologically valuable of all the lands. That leaves relatively little time to prevent the loss of some of Canada's best remaining grassland landscapes, so this is certainly concerning to us.

**Mr. Wayne Stetski:** There is still time, then. I understand both the agricultural industry and conservationists are interested in keeping these lands.

**Ms. Eleanor Fast:** Yes. Nature Canada is part of a coalition of people who are concerned about this transfer, which includes not just Nature Canada, Nature Saskatchewan, and the nature groups, but also ranchers and the Canadian Roundtable for Sustainable Beef, which is part of the Canadian Cattlemen's Association. It's not an issue that is only of concern to environmental groups. It's of great concern to ranchers and other people who use the land as well.

• (1225)

**Mr. Wayne Stetski:** I have a question for both of you, and I'll start with Nature Canada.

We've heard from a number of stakeholders that federal government leadership is needed if we're going to reach these conservation targets. Especially under such tight timelines, what kind of consultation is needed to meet Canada's conservation targets? What measurements can government put in place to ensure that stakeholders—and there are many of you that we're having the pleasure of meeting with—are working together to meet these goals?

Nature Canada first, and then Ducks Unlimited, please.

**Mr. Alex MacDonald:** Just very quickly, one of the opportunities for federal leadership on that particular matter, on target 11 and ensuring that we reach the target in time, would be leading on other effective area-based conservation measures. We have made in Canada a study, which is valuable to the world protected-areas community, from the Canadian Council on Ecological Areas. It would provide a decision-screening tool that would allow multiple jurisdictions to walk through the process of identifying whether lands that were not formerly protected could count toward our Aichi targets. That's certainly an opportunity for federal leadership to push the needle, so to speak.

I'll pass it over now.

**Mr. James Brennan:** Thank you.

As I said in our remarks, we believe the opportunity is to capture the privately conserved lands and include them in the national tracking, or in the national database. If all the privately conserved lands were included, it would add at least another 1% to the grand scheme of things, so it would move the ball down the proverbial field fairly quickly.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Mr. Aldag.

**Mr. John Aldag (Cloverdale—Langley City, Lib.):** Thank you.

Ms. Fast, you made a comment, if I heard you correctly, about liking to see a more substantial vision for what Canada could be, or something to that effect. What I'm wondering—and I'll get Ducks Unlimited's comments, but I'll start with Nature Canada first—is that in your strategy you talked about finishing off systems areas that we have as we work toward the 17% target. Once we achieve that, and finish the systems plans if we aren't at the 17%, what would you see that could help us implement a more substantial vision for what Canada could be?

I don't want to put words in your mouth, but we have heard from other groups—and I've done some reading—that targets are one thing, but it's the question of the integrity of the biodiversity. What is it that you at Nature Canada would be looking for in that next phase of protection of areas?

**Ms. Eleanor Fast:** We don't have an exact figure to give you in terms of the percentage of Canada that we think should be protected. What is crucial is ecosystem integrity, landscape-level protection, along with the network and the integration of various types of protected areas. National parks are the jewel in the crown of Canada's protected areas. That type of protection, however, isn't necessarily right for everything. That's why both Nature Canada and Ducks Unlimited today highlighted the importance of national wildlife areas and migratory bird sanctuaries as an essential part of

ecological protection, as well as indigenous protected lands and so on.

I don't have a number for you, but what's needed is that landscape-level protection of the ecosystem.

**Mr. John Aldag:** What I'm hearing is a shift from a hard percentage target to a commitment to increase the system, looking at the richness and interconnectedness of what's being protected.

**Mr. Alex MacDonald:** Within the protected areas community we are often reminded that the 17% and 10% targets, although laudable, were determined as part of an international negotiation and aren't necessarily science-based targets for Canada. We've heard of initiatives like “Nature Needs Half” and that much higher levels of protection would be needed to conserve biodiversity effectively.

Percentages are an important goalpost, or milestone, but we can certainly surpass those standards. There are studies at the global level showing that even reaching 17% and 10% will not effectively conserve all the global biodiversity at risk.

• (1230)

**Ms. Eleanor Fast:** The IUCN and BirdLife International, as well as other partners, have been working together to develop something called “key biodiversity areas”, or KBAs, which already exist in some ways in terms of the IBAs, or “important biodiversity areas”. This new KBA standard, though, will encompass all biodiversity, and that will be a great starting point towards ensuring that Canada's precious biodiversity will be covered by a protected areas network.

**Mr. John Aldag:** I think everybody sees some opportunities for the expansion of migratory bird sanctuaries and the wildlife conservation areas. It didn't appear that there was a plan in place, but it seems that both your organizations have done work. Have you shared this with the Canadian Wildlife Service, Environment Canada, and other organizations? How can you help guide the federal government in determining priority areas through the work you have done?

**Mr. Mark Gloutney:** We at Ducks Unlimited have talked to them about the national wildlife areas that exist where those critical pieces you could pick up are complementary. We've been working closely with their staff on some key properties that are coming onto the market, have come off the market, or are coming back on. We've been talking to them about some of the key places where we can expand that network.

**Ms. Eleanor Fast:** To be frank, it's an issue of money, in many ways, as both Nature Canada and my colleagues at Ducks Unlimited noted in our remarks. The Green Budget Coalition recommended \$10 million in this budget and \$30 million in subsequent years for national wildlife areas, yet there was no money in the budget. It's difficult for the Canadian Wildlife Service to implement a plan if they're not receiving any money. Part of the investment in protected areas should be for this network.

**Mr. John Aldag:** Given where we're at in meeting the targets, frank conversation is welcome. I appreciate your sharing those facts and figures with us.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

We're going into our second round. It's obviously not going to be a full round, so if you could share your questions with each other, that would be great.

Next is Mr. Gerretsen.

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

My first question would be to Nature Canada. If I understood correctly, the national wildlife areas are easier to facilitate and to acquire than the national parks. Could you expand a little bit more on what you see as the pros and cons of that approach?

**Mr. Alex MacDonald:** Thank you, Mr. Gerretsen. That's an excellent question and one—

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** Thank you. I only ask excellent questions.

**Voices:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Alex MacDonald:** With respect to the steps through which these national wildlife areas and migratory bird sanctuaries are designated, or proposed and designated, versus national parks, one of the important yet significant hurdles with respect to national parks, of course, is mineral and energy resource assessments, which are very key.

With national wildlife areas, it's a much less arduous process to determine stakeholder conflicts, but most importantly, the management regime that's permitted for national wildlife areas under the Canada Wildlife Act and the wildlife area regulations is more flexible than that of national parks. We've made reference, and I'm sure other witnesses have made reference, to the idea of national parks and national marine conservation areas as the crown jewels in our protected areas.

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** What's the disadvantage?

**Mr. Alex MacDonald:** The disadvantage of national wildlife areas is that there can be less strict protections in some cases. One disadvantage I alluded to earlier was the mineral and energy resource assessment. There's no automatic subsurface protection.

•(1235)

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** To build on that, what's the proper balance, in your opinion, of national parks versus the national wildlife areas?

**Mr. Alex MacDonald:** It's difficult in a country as large as Canada to give a simple answer to that. It's very case by case, I think, and certainly with the Northwest Territories protected areas strategy, we've seen a really great balance, I think, in terms of national parks,

national wildlife areas, and territorially protected areas. Coming to the table is what works best for the communities involved and the communities who have the authority to make that decision.

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** I have a quick question for Mr. Gloutney.

You mentioned, if I understand correctly, that Ducks Unlimited owns some land but also leases some land. You were talking about 25-year leases that you do, or something that you could do. What percentage do you own versus lease? Would you answer that first?

**Mr. Mark Gloutney:** We don't really lease the land. We sign an agreement.

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** You monitor it.

**Mr. Mark Gloutney:** We sign an agreement. There's no fiscal exchange. We have about half a million acres that we own, and 5.5 million acres that we have under agreement.

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** So you have a much larger percentage under agreement.

Do you do any collaboration—and I guess this would go to either witness—with the provincial and/or municipal levels of government as well?

**Mr. Mark Gloutney:** Certainly. They are some of our core partners. We work with both those levels of government on a multitude of things.

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** I'll share the rest of my time with Mr. Bossio.

**The Chair:** Mr. Bossio, be quick.

**Mr. Mike Bossio:** Thank you.

I applaud you on the Green Budget Coalition. I think it's a fantastic idea and a plan that combines resources. Have you thought of doing a protected lands coalition?

Once again, you could transfer those databases, which would assist in doing an inventory by combining the different organizations that are involved in protected lands, wildlife areas, or species at risk, and add more funding alternatives.

If you had to guesstimate, what would be the percentage of lands today that are protected under those different associations?

**Mr. James Brennan:** We do collaborate extensively on conservation issues. Certainly, we have a long-standing partnership with groups like Nature Canada and the Nature Conservancy. I'm not sure I fully understood the second part of your question in terms of the percentages.

**Mr. Mike Bossio:** Right now we say we have 10% protected lands and we're trying to get to 17%. I wonder in that 10%... From what I understand, those lands are not in that 10% today. Is there a guesstimate as to type of percentage you would be looking at if you took into account the Nature Conservancy, Ducks Unlimited, and Nature Canada, etc.?

**Mr. James Brennan:** As I said before, if you were to take all of the privately conserved lands that are not currently accounted for or included in the national tracking, I think we're at about 10% or 11% towards the 17% goal and it would add another 1% to the sum total of lands conserved in Canada.

**Mr. Mike Bossio:** Is that just Ducks Unlimited, or is that Nature Conservancy—

**Mr. James Brennan:** That's all privately conserved lands.

**Mr. Mike Bossio:** It is 1%. Okay. Thank you.

**The Chair:** Mr. Eglinski.

**Mr. Jim Eglinski:** Thank you to our groups of witnesses.

There's been a lot of discussion about the lack of co-operation between the different agencies in dealing with our different lands. I want to fall back on the Aichi standards. I'll go to Nature Canada first. You've been around here for 75 years.

Do you understand the rules and guidelines of the Aichi agreement? Are you fairly familiar with them?

Can you tell me, travelling around Canada, taking into consideration Ducks Unlimited, taking in the private lands, taking in municipal infrastructure where they have large park areas, if we had a working agreement among the federal government, provincial governments, municipal governments, private individuals, private landholders, organizations such as yours, and organizations such as Ducks Unlimited to pull our resources together and come up with a standard by which people could maintain their parks, whether they're municipal, private, or federal, do you believe that we would be able to add a lot more land?

A lot of this land that's out there today that is parks or conservation areas are not being recognized. Do you think they would fit that category or could fit that category?

• (1240)

**Mr. Alex MacDonald:** If I can use an idiom, that's the \$64,000 question.

Currently, in the guidance that's provided for the Aichi targets, and target 11 in particular, there is guidance for formal protected areas that are backed by legislation, and of course we've spoken about the other area-based conservation measures.

The guidance on the latter is still developing over time. Here in Canada, I think we've made significant progress towards determining what other types of areas can count. Certainly, as our colleagues at Ducks Unlimited have mentioned, in some cases private conservation lands held by NGOs could qualify.

In the case of other sites, like municipal parks and green spaces, things like that, the key question becomes whether or not conservation is the primary objective in their management, and if issues arise in land use or land management policies, whether or not conservation of nature takes precedence in those disputes.

These considerations are captured in the great decision screening tool that has been developed, and that we would encourage the federal government to look at and provide leadership on at a federal level. As well, indigenous conserved lands and a number of

protected areas being established by aboriginal governments under land-use planning processes could be incorporated.

Right here in the national capital region, Gatineau Park is a great example. It's 360 square kilometres that could also count toward Aichi, again, if the conservation of nature were made paramount in its management and its management was backed by effective legislation to do so.

To answer your question, there is an opportunity to grow or to expand our protected areas estate in Canada using some of these other sites, but we need that federal leadership.

**Mr. Jim Eglinski:** Federal legislation to pull the people together and come up with a standard.

**Mr. Alex MacDonald:** Exactly, and of course everyone agreeing to play. It would mean multiple jurisdictions, given the way that land is divided in Canada, of course.

**Mr. Jim Eglinski:** My riding is Yellowhead, and I have all of Jasper National Park and half of Banff National Park, and Willmore Wilderness Park. I know the sites, and the land on each side of the parks. I've often thought that if we need to increase our parks we could expand the boundaries and just make them fatter. Am I out to lunch in thinking that? A lot of land on both sides of our national parks is basically uninhabited.

We have aboriginal communities. We have aboriginal communities that we want to work with to help the program. Knowing Canada as well as you do, as I hope you know it, do you think we could expand the boundaries? At some time we have to look at it, and maybe today is the time we look at expanding those boundaries before industry gets in there and starts to get a foothold.

**Mr. Alex MacDonald:** It's a very difficult question to answer. It varies case by case and there's no one answer that could be given.

**The Chair:** What about Ducks Unlimited? Do they have a response?

**Mr. James Brennan:** We would agree that it depends on the park that you're talking about. There are certainly opportunities in the north that perhaps would be categorized as low-hanging fruit because they're not in a settled or developed landscape. It really depends on the geography you're talking about.

**Mr. Jim Eglinski:** On your travels across Canada, do you see any areas in our national parks that we possibly need to expand, not counting the ones I just mentioned, because of the demand on them by the public or other demands?

• (1245)

**Ms. Eleanor Fast:** There are particular national parks and national marine conservation areas that we would like to see created. They're in the process, particularly, the creation of the national park reserve in the south Okanagan and the national marine conservation area in the southern Strait of Georgia and Lancaster Sound. Those are particular areas that Nature Canada and many other organizations are very keen to see created.

**Mr. Jim Eglinski:** They're all my old playgrounds. Thank you.

**The Chair:** We are at 12:45. Does anybody want to add to that?

We'll go to questions then.

Mr. Fisher.

**Mr. Darren Fisher:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

Explain to me some of the differences between the wetlands that Ducks Unlimited was to protect and the wetlands that the federal government protects. Is there a significant difference in the use of those lands, the way they're taken care of, the way they're monitored?

**The Chair:** Order, please.

Mr. Gerretsen.

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** I thought we were going to leave some time at 12:45.

**The Chair:** I was leaving that up to you if you wanted to bring something forward.

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** I was waiting for the allotted time that you had set for committee business.

**The Chair:** All right then, have you something to put on the table?

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** Yes, I'd like to table my motion.

**The Chair:** Could you read your motion? Do you have it?

Mr. Cullen

**Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP):** If we are planning to go into committee business for the next 15 minutes, do you want to keep our witnesses here or do you want...?

**The Chair:** If the committee business goes quickly, then we would go back to questioning, because people were concerned about not having enough time for questioning.

**Hon. Ed Fast:** I'm not sure it's going to go fast because we have two motions to deal with.

**The Chair:** If that's the case and you're going to bring yours as well, then we should say thank you very much to our witnesses.

We appreciate all the time you spent. It was a bit of a challenge at the beginning, so thank you for your patience and thank you for sharing all of your knowledge with us.

Mr. Gerretsen, do you have your motion in front of you?

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** The clerk is distributing it and once it's around, I'll be happy to move it. Can we dispense or do you need it read out?

**The Chair:** You'd better read it to get it into the record.

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** Madam Chair, I move:

That, in relation to Orders of Reference from the House respecting Bills,

(a) the Clerk of the Committee shall, upon the Committee receiving such an Order of Reference, write to each Member who is not a member of a caucus represented on the Committee to invite those Members to file with the Clerk of the Committee, in both official languages, any amendments to the Bill, which is the subject of the said Order, which they would suggest that the Committee consider;

(b) suggested amendments filed, pursuant to paragraph (a), at least 48 hours prior to the start of clause-by-clause consideration of the Bill to which the amendments relate shall be deemed to be proposed during the said consideration, provided that the Committee may, by motion, vary this deadline in respect of a given Bill; and

(c) during the clause-by-clause consideration of a Bill, the Chair shall allow a Member who filed suggested amendments, pursuant to paragraph (a), an opportunity to make brief representations in support of them.

Madam Chair, I know that Ms. May is very much interested in speaking to this particular motion, so I would ask, through you, that the committee give consent to Ms. May to do that and if not, I'd be happy to put forward a motion to that affect.

**The Chair:** Do we have a challenge to give Ms. May three minutes to talk to this?

Ms. May.

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Thank you. I appreciate the time to speak to this. Most people around this table—all the people around this table—are friends of mine, and this is both a parliamentary matter of principle and it's also intensely personal. This series of motions that are just being passed, I've been considering whether it will have an immediate effect on my health or merely take years off my life later, and I'm not saying this facetiously. I'm saying in all honesty that this is terrifying for me personally.

What we're facing here is a couple of fictions. The first fiction is that my friend Mark Gerretsen says this is his motion. I know he didn't write it. It was written under the PMO in the previous government. The second fiction is that parliamentary committees are the masters of their own proceedings. It stretches credulity to imagine that parliamentary committees, all of a sudden in the fall of 2013, all automatically adopted the same motion and that it has sprung into the mind of all parliamentary committees simultaneously in the spring of 2016 to do it again.

This is changing the way in which legislation goes through Parliament, changing parliamentary procedures without going through the trouble and the steps it takes to change Standing Orders and change rules. This is the last step required, if every parliamentary committee does this after every election in every session of Parliament. This is essentially taking report stage and making it an anachronistic redundancy, as opposed to being what it was historically, an opportunity for parliamentarians as a whole, not merely members of committees, to suggest amendments.

The brief history of this is that up until the year 2002, members of Parliament of all parties had the right to put forward amendments at report stage. As a result of a 1999 effort by the Alliance party at that time, more than 700 amendments to the Nisga'a treaty were put forward in an attempt to derail it at report stage. The party in power at that time, the former Liberal government of Jean Chrétien—Don Boudria as House leader—retreated to a long process. It took them a couple of years to actually change the parliamentary rules such that a member of Parliament who had an opportunity through their party to put forward amendments to a bill in committee had no such right to put forward further substantive amendments at report stage.

That created the unintended reality that the only members of Parliament with an opportunity to put forward substantive amendments at report stage were those who, again through an irregular process creating two tiers of members of Parliament, were in parties smaller than 12 or sitting as independents. We were the only ones who did have rights to put forward amendments at report stage.

The only remnant of what report stage has been historically, going back through Westminster parliamentary democratic history, was the ironic reality that only members in parties with fewer than 12 had rights to put forward amendments at report stage, because we'd had no opportunity in committee; hence the creation of a fake opportunity of running from committee to committee to put forward amendments, but having no right to move them—as you see in this motion, they're “deemed to have been moved”—having no right to vote on them, and having no right to do anything other than pursue a brief opportunity to make a representation in support of them.

The reality for me personally is that many times committees will be doing clause-by-clause consideration at the same time. I raced to the environment committee in the 41st Parliament with amendments to keep seismic testing out of Sable Island National Park and got there too late. My amendments had all been defeated because I was tied up in a different committee trying to put forward amendments on a different bill.

This creates a virtual impossibility for me personally. Now, I'm very well aware that you've all been told this has to be passed and has to be passed today. Earlier today, the national defence committee was told they had to pass it and had to pass it without giving me an opportunity to speak, because, to make my point, I was tied up with BillC-14, where I'd been summoned to the justice committee to do my amendments there.

• (1250)

**The Chair:** We've given you an opportunity to talk for three minutes. We are now at four. I'm sorry to have to cut you off. My apologies.

**Hon. Ed Fast:** Madam Chair, just for the record, I'd be pleased to let her continue. I think this is an important issue for the committee to discuss.

**The Chair:** What about the rest of the committee?

Are you all right with that?

We need to know how long. How much time do you—?

**Hon. Ed Fast:** Let's make sure we at least have enough time at the end to vote on this.

**The Chair:** That's what I'm worried about, so how about just another minute? Then we'll have to draw it to a close, I think.

**Ms. Elizabeth May:** I was going to say thank you. I think I've made my point that this is a hostile act by a majority party against smaller parties. While it is personal in its impact on me, I want all of you to know as individuals and friends that I do not take it personally.

I think you're about to pass a motion that will hurt the fabric of democracy, and I think you've been told to do it.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Ms. May.

Mr. Cullen.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

Ms. May covered the history well because this is not a move that we haven't seen before. It was just a different party doing it last time

to stop independents and other MPs from moving motions at report stage. You'd wonder why you would even have that stage. I'm curious why the government hasn't gone through the proper procedure, which is to reform the way Parliament works as opposed to this ham-fisted approach and going committee by committee to change this procedure. I'd be curious to hear from the government members the valid reason for doing this, if there is one, because I assume this isn't Mark's authorship. It would be good for this committee to hear about our committee business and not this universal plan that's being promulgated by the Prime Minister's office.

I was looking back, because it's good to look back. There's a 32-point plan issued by Mr. Trudeau called “Real Change” about reforming Parliament and democracy, making committees more independent, and not allowing the Prime Minister's office to dictate what does and doesn't happen. That's a bit rich coming from the House yesterday when we had a motion to end debate not on one but two bills simultaneously. I'm not even sure you guys tried that before. It's an interesting new tactic. The Liberals in the House applauded and laughed at that particular motion, both very important bills, one to the RCMP and one to our budget.

I'm surprised because it doesn't speak to the spirit of what Mr. Trudeau has committed to. On the scale of personal...and I'll end here, Chair, because I assume members of the committee whom I also consider friends didn't put this together themselves but were asked to do it. The language is eerily similar to what's been happening at other committees. A pretty good argument would need to be made that this suddenly spurted from your intelligence and imagination independently and it just happens to have fallen on all 20 committees of Parliament simultaneously. It's a bit much, and it's certainly not in the spirit of what was promised on October 19 last year.

• (1255)

**The Chair:** All right, thank you very much.

Mr. Gerretsen.

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

As a matter of clarification and perhaps privilege, I want to take the opportunity to say that I was in the House yesterday when that occurred. Mr. Cullen was there, and he mentioned at that time and here that a number of Liberals laughed. I didn't hear that. I certainly wasn't one of them, but I can appreciate that our perspectives on it might be a little different.

In terms of this particular motion, this is the arena in which the real work happens. When we get to the House, it's a lot more challenging to put forward a motion. If you're genuinely interested in affecting the outcome of the reports that leave this particular venue and go to the House, this is the place where you have the biggest impact and the biggest opportunity to do it.

I've had the opportunity to get to know the other members of the committee who are not on my side of the House, both on this committee and the other committee I'm in, and I have a much better working relationship with them as a result of the fact that we're able to sit in this type of environment and contribute to the meaningful work that comes out of here.

I respect what Ms. May mentioned about the difficulty of getting from one committee to the other and I appreciate that concern, and hopefully, there is a way in the future that we'll be able to work around that concern.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** We're short on time, so if no one has anything more to say, we'll call the question.

(Motion agreed to)

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

Thank you very much, Ms. May, for taking the time to run over and share with us.

**Ms. Elizabeth May:** Thank you for giving me the time to speak. Obviously, I don't disagree with Mark that committee work is important. Committee work is really important, and I'm not being asked to sit on this committee as a full member.

Thank you very much.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

We have one more motion.

Mr. Fast.

**Hon. Ed Fast:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

I believe we have talked about splitting this into two motions to ensure we have an opportunity to vote on each element of it.

The first was self-explanatory. We had talked about perhaps reviewing the time allocated for the rounds, moving each question from six minutes to seven minutes.

**The Chair:** I think everybody's had a lot of time to have a look at it. I know we're short of time, one of us has to go, and we want to make the vote. The first part is changing the time to be more like PROC. Is there anything anybody wants to say on that before the vote?

Go ahead, Mr. Gerretsen.

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** All I will say is that I'm on another committee, the defence committee, along with Mr. Fisher, where we have seven minutes and then five minutes, and I find during that second round we are so much more limited. Personally, I enjoy the way this committee operates. I'm happy with it the way it is.

**The Chair:** I'm going to call the vote on changing the times, as recognized in the motion.

(Motion negatived [See *Minutes of Proceedings*])

• (1300)

**The Chair:** The second piece of your motion is:

That all committee members or associate members speak and ask questions of witnesses before a non-committee member present may speak and ask questions of witnesses.

That may be something Ms. May.... She's had the chance to come and we've shared time with her, but this motion will impact maybe how we do that.

**Hon. Ed Fast:** It was certainly appropriate for Ms. May to be able to speak to something that so directly impacts her.

The second part of the motion, which is now a separate motion, speaks to the issue of courtesy to each one of our members who come prepared for these meetings. We do a lot of work behind the scenes to make sure that we read the supporting materials, that we work through some good questions to ask. I get the sense this committee has been working better than most of us expected. It hasn't reverted to partisanship yet to any significant degree.

**The Chair:** I hope that continues.

**Hon. Ed Fast:** This would simply ensure that every member of this committee gets a chance to ask a question before a non-member gets to ask a question. I'd hate to see one or more of us cut out of an opportunity to speak. I know it was raised the time Ms. May was here. She was actually ceded her time by one of the Liberal members of the committee, but even that.... Out of courtesy, wouldn't we want to cede our time to another member of this committee rather than to someone who is not a member of this committee?

**The Chair:** I think your point is well taken.

Mr. Cullen.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** Very briefly, I recall ceding some time to Ms. May as well at some point.

**The Chair:** Yes, you did.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** I hear what Ed's saying, totally, just in terms of respecting committee members, but I just don't often see the occasion where my action in doing that was then going to limit somebody else around the table from asking a question. I just simply gave up my time, and if that meant I lost that round and didn't get another round, then I was okay with it.

I couldn't see the imagination of a schedule in which my doing that, or any member doing that, would then bump some other member from asking a question.

**Hon. Ed Fast:** You would if you had two panels.

**The Chair:** It might happen, and we've had a couple of instances this week that have caused that to be a reality.

Mr. Gerretsen.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** It's very unusual.

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** It's a matter of clarification. How would this impact the parliamentary secretary if a member wanted to give their time to that individual? Would it still limit it in the same way?

**An hon. member:** He's not a member of the committee.

**An hon. member:** Well, actually—

**The Chair:** It would be anyone who is not a member of the committee.

I think everybody understands. If there are no more questions—

**Hon. Ed Fast:** If I can just clarify that, there is nothing that would prevent your switching with the parliamentary secretary. There's a form that gets filed, I believe.

**The Chair:** Yes, you can do that officially.

**Hon. Ed Fast:** He would have full authority. He can certainly speak if he wishes to.

**The Chair:** As your representative standing in for you....

Okay. Let's call the vote on the second piece of the motion.

For those of us on the subcommittee, could you stay back?

(Motion negatived)

**The Chair:** All right. Thank you very much. That was quite the meeting, and I appreciate our getting the work of the committee done as well.

The committee is adjourned.

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