



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES  
CANADA

# **Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates**

---

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

---

**EVIDENCE**

**Tuesday, February 16, 2016**

—  
**Chair**

**Mr. Tom Lukiwski**



## Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates

Tuesday, February 16, 2016

•(1535)

[English]

**The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Leif-Erik Aune):** Honourable members, I see a quorum. My name is Leif-Erik Aune. I'm the clerk of your committee.

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 with the election of the chair. Pursuant to Standing Order 106(2), the chair must be a member of the official opposition. I am ready to receive motions for the chair.

[Translation]

**Hon. Steven Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC):** I nominate Tom Lukiwski.

**The Clerk:** Mr. Blaney has nominated Mr. Lukiwski.

Are there any further motions?

[English]

No. Is it the pleasure of the committee to adopt the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

**The Clerk:** The motion is carried and Mr. Lukiwski is duly elected chair of the committee.

Sir, would you like to take the chair?

**The Chair (Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Moose Jaw—Lake Centre—Lanigan, CPC):** Thank you very much and good afternoon, everyone.

I noticed when I was speaking with Frank a few moments ago that this is a unique committee. Even though we have over 200 new members in Parliament this year, this committee only has three returning members: myself, Madam Ratansi, and Monsieur Blaney.

I welcome all of you new to Parliament. Erin and I know each other, both being from Saskatchewan. I am pleased to say I'm looking forward to chairing this committee. I think it's going to be a good committee.

Traditionally this has been fairly non-partisan, although over time there has been the odd controversial issue that has appeared before the committee, as Madam Ratansi would know, having been a chair

of this committee. The studies and the work that we do affects all parliamentarians and all levels of government within all ministries.

I think we should be able to get along well. I certainly pledge to you I'll be doing my utmost to make sure I'm as fair as possible in all rulings. That's the way I like to operate. We're not looking to try to gain any political strokes here, at least not from the chair. I am looking forward to working with all of you over the course of the next months and hopefully years to come.

With that, I would like to recommend that the clerk of this committee now move on to the appointment of the vice-chairs.

**The Clerk:** Pursuant to Standing Order 106(2), the first vice-chair must be a member of the government party. I'm now prepared to receive motions for the first vice-chair.

**Mr. Francis Drouin (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, Lib.):** I'd like to nominate Ms. Yasmin Ratansi as vice-chair.

**The Clerk:** Monsieur Drouin has moved that Yasmin Ratansi be elected as first vice-chair of the committee.

Are there further motions? Seeing none, is it the pleasure of the committee to adopt the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

**The Clerk:** Yasmin Ratansi has been duly elected first vice-chair of the committee.

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

**Mr. David Graham (Laurentides—Labelle, Lib.):** I nominate Mr. Erin Weir as the second vice-chair.

**The Clerk:** David Graham has nominated Erin Weir. Are there other motions?

Seeing none, is it the pleasure of the committee to adopt the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed,

(Motion agreed to)

**The Clerk:** Mr. Weir, you are the second vice-chair, sir.

**The Chair:** I'll ask for the will of the committee. We have a number of routine motions and all of you probably have copies of them in front of you. Most of them are fairly pro forma, but there's two that I think will have the interest of this committee and I would suggest that we perhaps deal with those now.

The first is the length of time and the rotation for questioning witnesses. I know there has been a suggestion brought forward by the government as to the rotation length of time for questioning for a traditional meeting of approximately 50 minutes. For new members I would point out that these committees meet for a two-hour period. Many times witnesses are brought in for one-hour blocks. If that is the case, normally the committees allow up to ten minutes for opening comments, and then the remaining 50 minutes would be for questioning from the committee. The government has proposed a rotation list and a timeframe, but the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs has also adopted a separate rotation and timeframe. I would ask that if there are any comments we can deal with them now, but I would think it would be in the best interest of this committee if we could determine, before we leave this afternoon's meeting, which one of those two rotations and time allocations we would take. I would invite anyone who has a question or a comment to identify yourself.

The clerk has informed me that the routine commissions are the routine motions that were adopted by the last Parliament's committee. Does everyone have a copy of the government's submission as to rotation and length of time?

**The Clerk:** It hasn't been distributed yet, sir.

**The Chair:** It has not been distributed?

Erin, can I just ask you straight out, have you seen the proposed rotation list for questioning and the length of time allocated?

• (1540)

**Mr. Erin Weir (Regina—Lewvan, NDP):** I haven't seen it in writing. We have heard some things about it, but no I haven't seen it.

**Ms. Yasmin Ratansi (Don Valley East, Lib.):** The clerk has extra copies.

**The Chair:** Has the government all seen your own submission? I think we're all fine except for Mr. Weir.

**Ms. Yasmin Ratansi:** Only Mr. Weir needs one.

**The Chair:** The opposition has copies and Erin has one now. Erin, do you have both the government's suggested rotation and the rotation agreed upon by PROC?

**Mr. Erin Weir:** Yes.

**The Chair:** Does anyone want to either open up discussion or perhaps make a motion? As I told Madam Ratansi, I'm speaking a little bit out of turn here as the chair, but I can say that the opposition has met. We've taken a look at both these submissions, both the government's proposal and the one adopted by PROC. The opposition has no issue with either one. I'm just looking for someone to make a recommendation and a motion.

**Ms. Yasmin Ratansi:** I move that we adopt the time for opening remarks and questioning as presented by the government.

**The Chair:** Monsieur Blaney.

[*Translation*]

**Hon. Steven Blaney:** Mr. Chair, I would like to offer a quick reminder while our colleague is looking over the proposal. As a member of the committee, I always expect to receive documents in both official languages when they are formally distributed to the committee.

Thank you.

[*English*]

**Ms. Yasmin Ratansi:** Mr. Chair, it is in both languages.

**The Chair:** Erin, any questions or comments?

**Mr. Erin Weir:** I think we're good with the PROC recommendation.

**The Chair:** All right.

We have a motion on the floor to adopt the government submission. I would ask for any further comments.

**Ms. Yasmin Ratansi:** If Mr. Weir wants the PROC recommendation, which is seven-seven-seven-seven, that gives you one extra minute. We have—

**Mr. David Graham:** PROC lets the Liberals go first.

**Ms. Yasmin Ratansi:** No, we're fine.

**Mr. David Graham:** No, but that PROC is different.

**Ms. Yasmin Ratansi:** Okay. So the PROC submission is Liberal, Conservative, NDP, and Liberal; then Conservative, Liberal, Conservative, Liberal, and NDP. If you're fine with that, we have no problem.

Mr. Chair, we are flexible.

**The Chair:** Mr. Weir, the NDP would like the Procedure and House Affairs committee submission.

**Mr. Erin Weir:** Yes, we would go with the PROC submission.

**The Chair:** We do have a motion upon the floor. We need to vote, unless the government wants to withdraw its motion.

**Ms. Yasmin Ratansi:** I will withdraw that motion.

**The Chair:** All right.

The clerk, quite correctly, has suggested that it would be helpful if we could have the entire motion read into the record.

If we're going to go with PROC, Erin, could I have you please make a motion to adopt the Procedure and House Affairs rotation and time?

**Mr. Erin Weir:** Sure, I'm happy to make a motion that we adopt the Procedure and House Affairs recommendation on the time allocation for this committee.

• (1545)

**Ms. Yasmin Ratansi:** And speaking rotation.

**The Chair:** And speaking rotation.

**Mr. Erin Weir:** That's correct.

**The Chair:** Seconded by Mr. Whalen? Okay.

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

**The Chair:** The second point that I think would be helpful to the committee is if we could determine whether or not we need a subcommittee on agenda and procedure.

Just in the way of background for new members, committees themselves determine how they wish to set their own agenda. It can be done one of two ways. We could adopt a subcommittee, which many committees do, composed of the chair of the committee, the two vice-chairs, and a further member from the official opposition. The subcommittee would meet on an ad hoc basis to discuss future business for the committee. They would normally agree by consensus on what studies or business this committee should be engaged in and bring that back to the full committee for ratification.

The second method would be to have the full committee discuss what business we want to deal with.

It's a matter of whether or not we take a subcommittee approach to it, which is obviously a smaller committee, and some would suggest more efficient, or do it as a full committee.

Are there any comments? I look to the government to open that.

**Ms. Yasmin Ratansi:** In the past, when we were in opposition, we adopted the Subcommittee on Agenda and Procedure because it keeps the focus, and you can bring back all the information that you want to the committee at large. This does not disallow the committee to vote on it, as they have the right to.

I think a small committee determining the agenda would be a better fit. We have a long list of agencies, boards, and everything under our belt. It would help if we kept that process.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Any other comments?

Would you care to put that in the form of a motion?

**Ms. Yasmin Ratansi:** Yes.

That the Subcommittee on Agenda and Procedure be established and be composed of the Chair, the two Vice-Chairs, and one government member.

**Hon. Steven Blaney:** I support that.

**The Chair:** Monsieur Blaney seconds that.

(Motion agreed to)

The whip of the party will determine which one of you gentlemen....

**Mr. Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC):** Sorry, did I hear wrong that the motion said it would be a government member?

**Ms. Yasmin Ratansi:** Yes.

**The Chair:** No, an opposition member.

**Ms. Yasmin Ratansi:** No, I said "government member". That's what is written on my agenda and procedure, maybe.

**The Chair:** I'm going from last year, Madame Ratansi, and that was the government.

**Ms. Yasmin Ratansi:** Yes, it was the government, and I'm looking at the previous session.

**The Chair:** This just says "Conservative", but it was previously.

**Ms. Yasmin Ratansi:** Yes, so it is government.

**The Chair:** Once you have determined who that additional member is, you can let the clerk know.

**Ms. Yasmin Ratansi:** Sure.

**The Chair:** The only other question I would have for the clerk right now is whether there are any outstanding issues from the previous Parliament that are left unresolved or studies that the previous committee recommended be passed along to this committee.

**The Clerk:** From the perspective of procedure and administration, there are several remaining routine motions that committees ordinarily consider and adopt, regarding the services of the Library of Parliament, meeting without a quorum, the distribution of documents, working meals, and others. A complete list of those routine motions adopted by this standing committee in the last session has been distributed to each member. It's in a bilingual column format.

If members wish to either propose or discuss those routine motions, that then would be the normal practice of the committee. Regarding any substantive work, I would propose waiting until after the committee has made up its mind on whether to retain the services of the Library of Parliament before considering the substantive work of the committee.

**The Chair:** I should also point out that the routine motions you've seen that were adopted by this committee in the previous Parliament are pretty pro forma. They are usually the same routine motions that are adopted by the vast majority of committees. For example, on "Analysts services", it's as follows:

That the Committee retain the services of one or more analysts from the Library of Parliament to assist it in its work.

This is very necessary, obviously.

There are things we've already dealt with, such as the time and opening remarks of witnesses, working meals, meeting without a quorum, etc. I don't have to go through the entire list, because you have them in front of you.

• (1550)

**Ms. Yasmin Ratansi:** Just go one by one and table it. That way, it is on the record, so there's no confusion.

**The Chair:** If you wish to deal with it in that manner, we can. We can do it as a package. Why don't we start at the beginning, then, with "Analysts services"?

**Ms. Yasmin Ratansi:** So moved.

**The Chair:** All in favour?

(Motion agreed to)

**The Chair:** We do have analysts in the room with us. I invite them now to come and sit with us at the head of the table.

**Ms. Yasmin Ratansi:** Mr. Chair, taking up on your suggestion, would you like a block motion to go through?

**The Chair:** That's what I was referring to earlier.

The only point I would make to all members—and the clerk pointed this out again—is on point three, "Witnesses belonging to the same organization". Apparently, only that routine motion was adopted only by this committee.

The chair has the power to determine some of the things contained in that one motion, so what I would like to do, perhaps, since this was a routine motion of the previous Parliament, is to go down to point five, “Meeting without a quorum”, continue on until we finish on “Notice of motion”, and then go back to “Witnesses belonging to the same organization”, since it was so unique. Does that meet with the agreement of the committee?

**Ms. Yasmin Ratansi:** Yes.

**The Chair:** We're at “Meeting without a quorum”.

**Ms. Yasmin Ratansi:** So moved.

**The Chair:** All in favour?

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

**The Chair:** Next is “Documents distribution”.

**Ms. Yasmin Ratansi:** So moved.

**The Chair:** All in favour?

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

**The Chair:** Number seven is “Working meals”.

**Ms. Yasmin Ratansi:** So moved.

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

**Ms. Yasmin Ratansi:** They're not waking up, so I have to say “so moved”.

**The Chair:** All in favour?

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

**The Chair:** Next is “Travel accommodation and living expenses of witnesses”.

**Ms. Yasmin Ratansi:** So moved.

**The Chair:** All in favour?

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

**The Chair:** Next is “Access to in camera meetings”.

**Ms. Yasmin Ratansi:** So moved.

**The Chair:** All in favour?

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

**The Chair:** Next is “Transcripts of in camera meetings”.

**Ms. Yasmin Ratansi:** So moved.

**The Chair:** All in favour?

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

**The Chair:** Finally, we have “Notice of motion”.

**Ms. Yasmin Ratansi:** So moved.

**The Chair:** All in favour?

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

**The Chair:** Now we can go back just quickly to “Witnesses belonging to the same organization”.

Madam Ratansi, perhaps I could ask you to make comments, since this apparently was the only committee that adopted this particular

routine motion. Can you give us some background as to why the committee felt that it would be in its best interest to adopt this, if you can recall?

**Ms. Yasmin Ratansi:** Mr. Chair, I wasn't here from 2011 to 2014, so I'm not sure which committee adopted it. Was it the committee during 2011?

**The Chair:** It was in the last session.

**Ms. Yasmin Ratansi:** That means I wasn't here.

**The Chair:** We can take a quick look at it.

**Ms. Yasmin Ratansi:** Yes, if the analysts or somebody can shed light on it, because I don't remember seeing this. We used to group everybody together, so I have no idea.

**The Chair:** Yes, I'm not sure. Frankly, I can't understand the relevance of this and why the committee adopted it in the last session. I don't think we have any corporate knowledge of this, frankly.

**Ms. Yasmin Ratansi:** If we don't, is it possible to delete it?

**The Chair:** I believe we probably could.

If we do not adopt it now, it will not be part of the package of routine motions. However, in the future, the committee can always revisit routine motions any time it wishes. If you wish to just ignore that and go on as every other standing committee does, and if we see a need to adopt this sometime in the future, the committee can certainly recommend it. We can discuss it and vote upon it then.

• (1555)

**Ms. Yasmin Ratansi:** I concur with you, because I see no reason for such a motion to be there.

**The Chair:** Yes. Frankly, I can't understand it, unless there's somebody who sees a reason.

**Mr. Ramez Ayoub (Thérèse-De Blainville, Lib.):** Is there no history for that?

**Ms. Yasmin Ratansi:** No.

**Mr. Ramez Ayoub:** Nothing? Nobody knows why it's there?

**The Chair:** Not here.

**Mr. Ramez Ayoub:** Are you serious?

**The Chair:** Seriously—

**An hon. member:** Then we won't miss it.

**Ms. Yasmin Ratansi:** Mr. Chair, I've reread it. It will confuse the living daylights out of the committee itself, so we might as well remove it.

**The Chair:** All agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Chair:** Since we now have a Subcommittee on Agenda and Procedure, I would suggest that the subcommittee meet at its earliest opportunity and perhaps invite the analysts to see if they have any other information they could bring to us from the previous Parliament as to ongoing studies. If that is the case, the chair then will call the meeting of the Subcommittee on Agenda and Procedure after consultation with all parties, particularly the government and Mr. Weir. We'll have that sometime in the next 24 to 48 hours, hopefully.

We have a meeting established for this coming Thursday. That's our regular sitting time, but until such time as we have an agenda, it will be at the call of the chair. Does that meet with the approval of the committee?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Chair:** Okay. Not seeing any further questions, I call this meeting adjourned.

---







Published under the authority of the Speaker of  
the House of Commons

---

### SPEAKER'S PERMISSION

---

Reproduction of the proceedings of the House of Commons and its Committees, in whole or in part and in any medium, is hereby permitted provided that the reproduction is accurate and is not presented as official. This permission does not extend to reproduction, distribution or use for commercial purpose of financial gain. Reproduction or use outside this permission or without authorization may be treated as copyright infringement in accordance with the *Copyright Act*. Authorization may be obtained on written application to the Office of the Speaker of the House of Commons.

Reproduction in accordance with this permission does not constitute publication under the authority of the House of Commons. The absolute privilege that applies to the proceedings of the House of Commons does not extend to these permitted reproductions. Where a reproduction includes briefs to a Committee of the House of Commons, authorization for reproduction may be required from the authors in accordance with the *Copyright Act*.

Nothing in this permission abrogates or derogates from the privileges, powers, immunities and rights of the House of Commons and its Committees. For greater certainty, this permission does not affect the prohibition against impeaching or questioning the proceedings of the House of Commons in courts or otherwise. The House of Commons retains the right and privilege to find users in contempt of Parliament if a reproduction or use is not in accordance with this permission.

---

Also available on the Parliament of Canada Web Site at the following address: <http://www.parl.gc.ca>

Publié en conformité de l'autorité  
du Président de la Chambre des communes

---

### PERMISSION DU PRÉSIDENT

---

Il est permis de reproduire les délibérations de la Chambre et de ses comités, en tout ou en partie, sur n'importe quel support, pourvu que la reproduction soit exacte et qu'elle ne soit pas présentée comme version officielle. Il n'est toutefois pas permis de reproduire, de distribuer ou d'utiliser les délibérations à des fins commerciales visant la réalisation d'un profit financier. Toute reproduction ou utilisation non permise ou non formellement autorisée peut être considérée comme une violation du droit d'auteur aux termes de la *Loi sur le droit d'auteur*. Une autorisation formelle peut être obtenue sur présentation d'une demande écrite au Bureau du Président de la Chambre.

La reproduction conforme à la présente permission ne constitue pas une publication sous l'autorité de la Chambre. Le privilège absolu qui s'applique aux délibérations de la Chambre ne s'étend pas aux reproductions permises. Lorsqu'une reproduction comprend des mémoires présentés à un comité de la Chambre, il peut être nécessaire d'obtenir de leurs auteurs l'autorisation de les reproduire, conformément à la *Loi sur le droit d'auteur*.

La présente permission ne porte pas atteinte aux privilèges, pouvoirs, immunités et droits de la Chambre et de ses comités. Il est entendu que cette permission ne touche pas l'interdiction de contester ou de mettre en cause les délibérations de la Chambre devant les tribunaux ou autrement. La Chambre conserve le droit et le privilège de déclarer l'utilisateur coupable d'outrage au Parlement lorsque la reproduction ou l'utilisation n'est pas conforme à la présente permission.

---

Aussi disponible sur le site Web du Parlement du Canada à l'adresse suivante : <http://www.parl.gc.ca>