

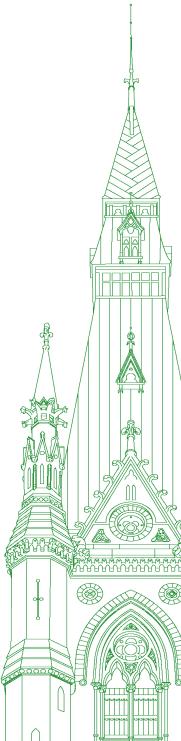
43rd PARLIAMENT, 2nd SESSION

Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Technology

EVIDENCE

NUMBER 001

Thursday, October 15, 2020



Chair: Mrs. Sherry Romanado

Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Technology

Thursday, October 15, 2020

• (1110)

[English]

The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Michael MacPherson): Honourable members of the committee, I see a quorum.

I must inform members that the clerk of the committee can only receive motions for the election of the chair. The clerk cannot receive other types of motions, cannot entertain points of order nor participate in debate.

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

I am ready to receive motions for the chair.

Ms. Helena Jaczek (Markham—Stouffville, Lib.): I nominate Sherry Romanado as chair.

The Clerk: It has been moved by Ms. Jaczek that Sherry Romanado be elected as chair of the committee.

Are there any further motions? No.

Pursuant to the House order of Wednesday, September 23, 2020, I will now proceed to a recorded division.

(Motion agreed to: yeas 12; nays 0)

The Clerk: I declare the motion carried and Ms. Sherry Romanado duly elected chair of the committee.

I invite Mrs. Romanado to take the virtual chair.

The Chair (Mrs. Sherry Romanado (Longueuil—Charles-LeMoyne, Lib.)): Thank you very much.

Thank you, members. I'm looking forward to working with you again this session.

[Translation]

Thank you for your trust.

[English]

With that, I will turn the chair back over to the clerk so that we can take the nominations for the vice-chairs.

The Clerk: This is for the election of the first vice-chair.

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

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

Mr. Derek Sloan (Hastings—Lennox and Addington, CPC): I move to nominate Mr. Cumming.

The Clerk: It has been moved by Mr. Derek Sloan that Mr. James Cumming be elected as first vice-chair of the committee.

Are there any further motions? No.

Pursuant to the House order of Wednesday, September 23, 2020, I will now proceed to a recorded division.

(Motion agreed to: yeas 11; nays 0 [See Minutes of Proceedings])

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

We can now proceed to the election of the second vice-chair.

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

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

[Translation]

Ms. Emmanuella Lambropoulos: I nominate Mr. Lemire.

The Clerk: It has been moved by Ms. Lambropoulos that Mr. Lemire be elected second vice-chair of the committee.

Are there any further motions?

[English]

Seeing none, pursuant to the House order of Wednesday, September 23, 2020, I will now proceed to a recorded division.

(Motion agreed to: yeas 11; nays 0 [See Minutes of Proceedings])

• (1115)

[Translation]

I declare the motion carried and Mr. Lemire duly elected second vice-chair of the committee.

[English]

I hand it back over to the chair.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

I would like to ask if there are any other motions for the position of vice-chair.

Seeing none, we will now proceed with the routine motions.

Ms. Emmanuella Lambropoulos: Madam Chair, I remember that, in the last session, Mr. Masse was also a vice-chair. Is it something we would be willing to accept, to have a third vice-chair once again, considering the fact that this is how it has worked in the past?

The Chair: I understand that the decision is still before the Board of Internal Economy on whether or not there's a possibility of having a further vice-chair. I'm checking with the clerk. I understand that, at the moment, we cannot pursue that, but I would like to confer further with the clerk and get back to the committee.

I agree that it worked very well in the last session, and if we are able to do so, we would like to proceed that way. Let me get back to the committee with respect to the ability of the committee to accept another vice-chair.

If it is the will of the committee, I will now move to go through the routine motions. We will go over them one by one so they can be debated and voted on as such.

With that, I will open the floor to the routine motions.

Madam Jaczek.

Ms. Helena Jaczek: Thank you very much, Chair.

Starting with analysts' services:

That the committee retain, as needed and at the discretion of the chair, the services of one or more analysts from the Library of Parliament to assist it in its work.

Would you like me to go through them one by one?

The Chair: We're going to do them one by one. Are there any questions or comments on this motion?

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: Madam Jaczek.

Ms. Helena Jaczek: The next motion is on the subcommittee on agenda and procedure:

That the Subcommittee on Agenda and Procedure be composed of five (5) members; the chair, one member from each party; and that the subcommittee work in the spirit of collaboration.

The Chair: Members, are there any questions or comments on

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): You will notice that other committees had to work in the word "collaboration".

The Chair: On that note, because it's already in the motion, I think, in the spirit of this committee, we didn't have a problem.

Are there any other comments or questions regarding this?

(Motion agreed to)

Ms. Helena Jaczek: The next is on meeting without a quorum:

That the chair be authorized to hold meetings to receive evidence and to have that evidence printed when a quorum is not present, provided that at least four (4) members are present, including one member of the opposition and one member of the government, but when travelling outside the Parliamentary precinct, that the meeting begin after fifteen (15) minutes, regardless of members present;

The Chair: Members, are there any questions or comments on this motion?

(Motion agreed to)

Ms. Helena Jaczek: The next is on the time for opening remarks and questioning of witnesses:

That the witnesses be given ten (10) minutes for their opening statement; That, at the discretion of the chair, during the questioning of witnesses, there be allocated six (6) minutes for the first questioner of each party as follows: Round 1: Conservative Party, Liberal Party, Bloc Québécois, New Democratic Party. For the second and subsequent rounds, the order and time for questioning be as follows: Conservative Party: 5 minutes, Liberal Party: 5 minutes, Conservative Party: 5 minutes, Bloc Québécois: 2.5 minutes, New Democratic Party: 2.5 minutes;

Mr. Brian Masse: I have a quick question on that, Madam Chair.

Is that different from ours? I think it might be. This is coming from the overall process. Is it the same or is it a little different?

The Chair: This one is the same as the one we had in the last session.

Are there any questions or comments on the motion?

Go ahead, Madam Lambropoulos.

Ms. Emmanuella Lambropoulos: Currently it says that witnesses have 10 minutes to give their testimony. We saw in the summer, when we were meeting almost the entire summer, that many times we had tech glitches and difficulties that did not allow us to complete all of our rounds.

Are we willing to shorten the amount of time that witnesses have to speak at the very beginning to make sure that all members have time to ask their questions and that all rounds will be completed?

• (1120)

The Chair: Thank you very much, Madam Lambropoulos.

Is this a friendly amendment that you would like to make, and if so, how much time would you like allocated?

Ms. Emmanuella Lambropoulos: I believe that something around seven minutes might give us more time to allow all of us to ask our questions. That's why the witnesses are here in the first place: to answer our questions.

Seven minutes at the beginning may be apropos, if that's okay with everyone else.

The Chair: Members, we have an amendment on the floor. Is there any debate, or are there any questions on the amendment?

Mr. Brian Masse: No, I think it's reasonable, Madam Chair. Sometimes we've gone in this direction before, so I support formalizing it to ease the transition.

The Chair: Perfect.

Are there any other comments or questions regarding the amendment?

Mr. Lemire?

[Translation]

Mr. Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Do we need to establish a time limit of seven minutes? It can be a goal. However, I know that meetings were held where there were several witnesses and where the time was decreased to five minutes. All the rounds must be completed, but we can also give the clerk and the chair some flexibility in terms of the time. In any event, I agree that we should ensure that each speaking time is adhered to.

I want to know one thing.

In the past, the order that Ms. Jaczek just gave was in effect. However, I gather from the procedure committee's routine motion, in the second and third rounds, the order was changed to give each political party the opportunity to speak. The motion proposed that the Conservative Party have five minutes; that the Liberal Party also have five minutes; that the Bloc Québécois have two and a half minutes; that the New Democratic Party also have two and a half minutes; that the Conservative Party have five minutes; and that the Liberal Party also have five minutes. The third round is next.

Is the committee aware of this? I think that this was proposed. I want to move an amendment to include this round.

The Chair: Mr. Lemire, we must address the first amendment before you can move a second one.

We'll discuss Ms. Lambropoulos' amendment to decrease the time for witnesses' presentations from ten minutes to seven minutes. I'll then accept other amendments to the motion.

Ms. Emmanuella Lambropoulos: Now that the other committee members have shared their views, I move that we give the witnesses a maximum of seven minutes for their presentations. This time could be decreased to five minutes, if the committee so desires. Perhaps a maximum of seven minutes would give us more flexibility.

[English]

The Chair: Are there any more questions or comments regarding the first amendment, to change the motion to include a maximum of seven minutes for the opening statements by witnesses?

(Amendment agreed to [See Minutes of Proceedings])

The Chair: We'll now move back to the original motion, as amended.

[Translation]

Mr. Lemire, you wanted to move an amendment. Is that right?

Mr. Sébastien Lemire: Yes. I'll read it.

That, taking into account the routine motion adopted by the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, for the second and subsequent rounds, the order be as follows:

Conservative Party, five minutes

Liberal Party, five minutes

Bloc Québécois, two and a half minutes

New Democratic Party, two and a half minutes

Conservative Party, five minutes

Liberal Party, five minutes.

I move that the order be changed so that, if the meeting is coming to an end, the party isn't—

[English]

Mr. Brian Masse: Chair, I can't hear the translation,

I'm sorry to interrupt, Sébastien.

I'm having a hard time. I don't know whether it's just me, but I cannot hear the translation. It's very difficult.

The Chair: One moment; we'll double-check with the clerk whether it's working.

Is anyone else having difficulty with translation?

Mr. Ehsassi, is it okay?

[Translation]

Mr. Lemire, are you on the French channel? Can everyone hear the interpretation right now?

Mr. Lemire, can you please start again?

(1125)

[English]

Mr. Nathaniel Erskine-Smith (Beaches—East York, Lib.): It's still working, but the challenge is that we still hear your voice significantly too. That's the challenge with Sébastien as well, that we're hearing both at the same time. It's not much, but it's enough that it's rather annoying and distracting, to be honest.

The Chair: Okay, one moment.

[Translation]

Mr. Sébastien Lemire: Yes, I was on the French channel. Can you hear me better now? Obviously, you can't.

The Chair: Yes.

Mr. Sébastien Lemire: Okay. Here's my amendment:

That, taking into account the routine motion adopted by the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, for the second and subsequent rounds, the order be as follows:

Conservative Party, five minutes

Liberal Party, five minutes

Bloc Québécois, two and a half minutes

New Democratic Party, two and a half minutes

Conservative Party, five minutes

Liberal Party, five minutes.

No time was added to any of the parties. The time is the same, but the order is different. That way, no party is penalized as a result of not being able to take the floor at the end of the meeting, as we've unfortunately seen all too often.

I'm making this proposal in the spirit of the motion adopted by the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs.

The Chair: Thank you.

[English]

We have an amendment on the floor to change the second and subsequent rounds, moving up the two slots for the NDP and the Bloc so that they are sandwiched in-between to make sure there's a chance for all parties to participate in all of the rounds. I know that in the last session we worked really hard to make sure that everyone got their rounds in.

Is there any other debate on that amendment?

(Amendment agreed to)

The Chair: Is there any debate on the motion as amended?

(Motion as amended agreed to [See Minutes of Proceedings])

The Chair: Madam Jaczek.

Ms. Helena Jaczek: The next motion is on document distribu-

That the clerk of the committee be authorized to distribute documents to members of the committee only when the documents are available in both official languages, and that witnesses be advised accordingly:

The Chair: Do members have any questions or comments?

(Motion agreed to)

Ms. Helena Jaczek: The next is on working meals:

That the clerk of the committee be authorized to make the necessary arrangements to provide working meals for the committee and its subcommittees;

The Chair: Are there any comments or questions on the motion?

(Motion agreed to)

Ms. Helena Jaczek: The next is on travel, accommodation and the living expenses of witnesses

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

The Chair: Do members have any questions or comments?

(Motion agreed to)

Ms. Helena Jaczek: In the spirit of collaboration, I'm going to switch to French.

[Translation]

Here's the motion concerning access to in camera meetings:

That, unless otherwise ordered, each committee member be allowed to have one staff member at in camera meetings and that one additional person from each House Officer's office be allowed to be present.

The Chair: Are there any questions or comments?

(Motion agreed to)

• (1130)

Ms. Helena Jaczek: Now, regarding the transcripts of in camera meetings, I move:

That one copy of the transcript of each in camera meeting be kept in the committee clerk's office for consultation by members of the committee or by their staff.

[English]

The Chair: Members, are there any questions or comments?

(Motion agreed to)

Ms. Helena Jaczek: The next routine motion is on notices of motion:

That 48 hours' notice be required for any substantive motion to be considered by the committee unless the substantive motion relates directly to business then under consideration; that the notice of motion be filed and distributed to members by the clerk in both official languages and that completed motions that are received by 4 p.m. be distributed to members the same day; that 48 hours' notice, interpreted as two nights, shall be required for any substantive motion to be considered by the committee unless the substantive motion relates directly to business then under consideration, provided that (1), the notice be filed with the clerk of the committee no later than 4 p.m. from Monday to Friday, (2) the motion be distributed to members in both official languages by the clerk on the same day the said notice was transmitted if it was received no later than the deadline hour; and (3), notices received after the deadline hour or on non-business days be deemed to have been received during the next business day, and that when the committee is traveling outside the parliamentary precinct, no substantive motions may be moved.

The Chair: Is there any debate on that motion?

(Motion agreed to)

Ms. Helena Jaczek: The next motion is on orders of reference from the House respecting bills:

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.

The Chair: Are there any questions or comments?

(Motion agreed to)

Ms. Helena Jaczek: Madam Chair, another routine motion adopted previously by this committee reads:

That all meetings of the committee, other than those deemed to be in camera, be televised or, if that is not possible, be webcast.

The Chair: Are there any questions or comments?

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: Thank you very much, Ms. Jaczek.

Seeing that it is 11:33, we do have some time still for this meeting. I'd like to open the floor for any questions, concerns or anything that anyone would like to bring forward.

Mr. Brian Masse: Madam Chair, I have a couple things to inquire about concerning timelines, our meetings and availability in the House.

We have estimates in front of us as well. We've received some appointments and also a report from the parliamentary budget officer that might require some scheduling. Then we have our previous business to discuss.

I don't know if you have a plan for that. I would move a motion that all previous work of the committee be adopted and returned.

This way we could, number one, table our fraud report, and number two, bring back any of the evidence and testimony we had with the previous studies under COVID-19 that might be relevant for any subsequent work.

If that's in order, I would move that to start with, because I'm concerned with some timelines of reporting back to the House and availability of meeting space.

• (1135)

The Chair: Thank you so much.

I'll just clarify, with respect to the orders in council, the report and the main estimates, that we do have the dates that those are required to be handled by. If it's the will of the committee to do so, we will schedule them accordingly. We will use the subcommittee much more this session than we had a chance to in the past session to make sure that we schedule all of these things.

Now, Mr. Masse, you brought forward a motion to return to the work of the previous session. I think it's important that we clarify which studies you're referring to. You referred to the report on fraudulent calls. I think it's probably the will of the committee to table that one. I would like you to clarify which studies you would like to bring forward, so that we can open it up to debate with the members.

Mr. Brian Masse: Thank you, Madam Chair.

The simple one is the fraud one that we had, which was basically ready to go out the gate, so to speak. I'll leave that aside and thank members for that.

The other one would be with regard to COVID-19. I think we were in discussions on that and in getting something more concrete, so I would entertain that as the next priority.

I'm open to the other work we've done. We can have further discussions on it, but with respect, it would be the COVID-19 work that we were almost getting completed on.

The Chair: Do we have any debate on the motion?

I see Mr. Erskine-Smith.

Mr. Nathaniel Erskine-Smith: For the sake of our time and being efficient and more focused, it would be useful if we adopted Brian's motion very restricted to say, let's move forward with the one on fraudulent calls and get it out of the way, and then to punt the rest of the work for scheduling purposes and getting things done this fall to the subcommittee. We can then map out a proper agenda of what we're going to tackle, when we're going to tackle it, and seeing what time we can actually allocate to the different issues.

The Chair: Mr. Erskine-Smith, are you suggesting an amendment to Mr. Masse's motion?

Mr. Nathaniel Erskine-Smith: Yes, if Brian is open to that.

It would be useful to hammer out the fraud report, which is done, and away we go. I think that should be returned. However, for the remainder of the work, because with COVID it was not entirely clear what we were thinking of ultimately landing on in terms of recommendations, more time will be required there. I've just received a lot of notices of motion. That, in conjunction with the new

notices received, could be a focus of discussion at the subcommittee on agenda and procedure.

Mr. Brian Masse: I consider that a friendly amendment. The only thing on which I might give clarification is that I was just worried that none of that could be discussed in the subcommittee if it wasn't actually formally adopted in this group.

I agree with what you're suggesting and how to get there. The only thing I was concerned about is whether we had to formally somehow adopt that work for it to be relevant in the subcommittee.

I don't know. I don't think I've ever been down that road before.

The Chair: The purpose of the subcommittee is, in fact, to discuss agenda and procedure. What would happen is that the motion would be sent to the subcommittee, the subcommittee being the five members, who would discuss, debate, and then bring it back to the full committee for fulsome debate and ultimately a vote. That's the purpose of the subcommittee.

The motion does not have to pass here to be sent to subcommittee. It gets dealt with at subcommittee and then comes back to us to debate and to vote on.

Mr. Masse, you didn't have a perfectly worded motion on the floor, but the clerk can work with us to have that worded out.

Right now, we have an amendment on the floor that the committee reintroduce the fraudulent calls study that was pretty much finalized in the last session, reintroduce it to be able to table it in the House in the second session of the 43rd Parliament.

Is there any other debate on that? Mr. Dreeshen, I know you had your hand up, but is it on the amendment or the original motion?

Mr. Dreeshen, on the amendment.

Mr. Earl Dreeshen (Red Deer—Mountain View, CPC): Thank you.

I suppose it's on the amendment, because the amendment has taken off some of the other potential studies we have. My concern is that if we don't put the rural broadband onto it and it simply becomes an add-on where the discussion would take place in subcommittee, and it might then be thrown into the mix of all the other motions we've seen. I believe it is a critical one for us to put in.

From that position, I'm more inclined to consider Brian's more all-encompassing type of motion. Therefore, I believe this is simply restrictive.

Taking that into account, I also recognize what you've just mentioned as far as the subcommittee work is concerned. I just don't want to see some of the studies we've done get mixed in with new things that we're going to be discussing.

• (1140)

The Chair: Okay. Is there any further debate on the amendment to the motion?

Mr. Brian Masse: Sorry, Madam Chair, but as just a point of clarification so we might avoid a vote, it is a friendly amendment. That's why I appreciate what Earl said, but it is friendly. The main motion is just, let's deal with fraud, and that's it. Then I think it's just one vote.

Earl's sentiment has been expressed. That was really what I was trying to get to. I think we all agree that this work and the way he expressed it is where we want to get to.

I don't know if that makes sense, because again, as I just mentioned, the amendment by Mr. Erskine-Smith is friendly.

The Chair: Mr. Erskine-Smith, you wanted to intervene.

Mr. Nathaniel Erskine-Smith: Yes.

I don't think the intention is to drop any of the work we did before, but just to make sure that we deal with it in a focused way. I personally found our COVID study to be very wide-ranging and all over the place and I think it would be very useful to have a subcommittee meeting just to say, how do we focus our efforts and what product are we delivering to the House?

There are lots of new motions and we need to discuss how we are going to usefully spend our time in the months ahead, whereas the fraud report is clearly done and can be tabled and away we go. For the rest of the work, though, we are going to need, as a committee, to have some agenda in front of us for how we knock things off.

The Chair: Is there any debate on the amendment?

Monsieur Lemire.

[Translation]

Mr. Sébastien Lemire: Thank you.

I obviously agree with the spirit of the discussion currently taking place. In this spirit, I prepared a motion, which was sent to you yesterday. We can also adopt Mr. Masse's wording or something that can be comprehensive.

Remember that we added an aside regarding the Investment Canada Act. I'd like this to be included as well. In terms of the Internet and so on, this was part of our Canadian response to COVID-19. I think that we must ensure that this work isn't lost in order to start our proceedings.

The Chair: Mr. Lemire, we're currently discussing the amendment to the fraud report. If you have another amendment, we can consider it afterwards.

In terms of the amendment before us, are there any other areas of discussion or questions?

[English]

With that, then, we will go to a vote.

(Amendment agreed to [See Minutes of Proceedings])

The Chair: Now we'll go back to the motion as amended. We have the motion to reintroduce.... I'll work with the clerk on the language. I'll ask the clerk for some guidance here.

He's giving me the signal to hold up for a moment.

The Clerk: I could provide the language right now, just so it's clear to all the members. The language for the motion would be as follows:

That pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), the committee undertake a study of fraud calls in Canada, and that the evidence and documentation received by the committee during the first session of the 43rd Parliament on the subject be taken into consideration by the committee in the current session.

The Chair: Is there any debate on the motion as amended?

(Motion as amended agreed to)

The Chair: Mr. Masse, we will be in touch to see when we can table this in the House. I'll work with the clerk to figure it out. We have to go through the study, and then we'll be able to do so. I will work with the clerk and with you to get this finalized.

Mr. Brian Masse: Thank you to you, Madam Chair, and to all the members and researchers for all their hard work on this. It's much appreciated.

The Chair: I also want to provide the members with an update. We've received the dates for the next INDU meetings. There will be one on Thursday, October 22, and one on Thursday, October 29, at 11 o'clock both times.

Are there any other questions or comments?

● (1145)

Mr. James Cumming (Edmonton Centre, CPC): Madam Chair, is it the intent that the meeting on October 22 be a subcommittee meeting to deal with all the scheduling issues, the motions we've already received and any other potential motions that come forward?

The Chair: If there is going to be a subcommittee meeting it must be on one of those days. I will be in touch to let you know about the next meeting and if it will be a subcommittee or a full committee meeting.

Any other questions or comments?

Mr. Brian Masse: I have a quick one on scheduling, Madam Chair.

If we are going to have the ministers before the estimates, I believe they'll have to appear before the committee one week before we have to put that to the House of Commons. With those dates, we're already running into the November dates. Maybe the parliamentary secretary could start to broach the subject, because we'll probably only have one or two available time slots for three ministers.

The Chair: Thank you so much, Mr. Masse. We are already preparing the schedule for the fall, so I will make sure that any requests for the main estimates are considered a priority because of the deadline.

Seeing no further debate or questions, I will ask for a motion to adjourn.

Mr. Nathaniel Erskine-Smith: I move to adjourn.

The Chair: Thank you so much.

The meeting is adjourned.

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