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# Standing Committee on Natural Resources

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Wednesday, February 19, 2020

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Chair: Mr. James Maloney





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• (1535)

[*English*]

**The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Leif-Erik Aune):** Members of the committee, it's past 3:30 and I do see a quorum, but a PROC report changing the membership of committees was adopted just moments ago, so I just need to consult that document and compare it with our membership list. I beg your indulgence for five more minutes.

Thank you.

• (1535)

(Pause)

• (1540)

It is past 3:30 and I see a quorum. I'll speak slowly, perhaps so slowly, in fact, that we'll just give Mr. Cannings one moment to return.

**Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC):** Thank you, colleagues. I think that would be reasonable.

[*Translation*]

**The Clerk:** Pursuant to Standing Order 106(1), this meeting has been called in order to elect a chair.

[*English*]

I can only receive motions for the election of the chair. I cannot receive other types of motions, entertain points of order, or participate in debate.

[*Translation*]

Standing Order 106(2) stipulates that at the commencement of every session, each standing committee shall elect a chair and two vice-chairs, of whom the chair shall be a member of the government party, the first vice-chair shall be a member of the official opposition, and the second vice-chair shall be a member of an opposition party other than the official opposition party.

[*English*]

I'm ready to receive motions.

Mr. May.

**Mr. Bryan May (Cambridge, Lib.):** Thank you.

It's my honour and privilege to nominate James Maloney.

**The Clerk:** Mr. May moves that James Maloney be elected as chair of the committee.

Are there further motions?

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

(Motion agreed to)

**The Clerk:** I declare the motion carried. Mr. Maloney is duly elected as chair of the committee.

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

**The Chair (Mr. James Maloney (Etobicoke—Lakeshore, Lib.)):** First of all, let me say thank you. All kidding aside, it is a great honour to chair this committee. I can say that based on my own experience, having done it in our last session of Parliament.

It's a pleasure for a number of reasons, not the least of which is the continuity factor. Mr. Cannings, Ms. Stubbs and I have been on this committee since day one. I think everybody who ever attended this committee walked away pleased in recognizing that we worked with a great spirit of co-operation. We agreed far more than we disagreed. I'm not optimistic, I'm confident—in fact, I'm sure—that we can continue that. I look forward to working with all of you.

Let's get started on the next item on the agenda, that being the nominations for first vice-chair.

Mrs. McLeod.

• (1545)

**Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC):** I nominate Shannon Stubbs.

**The Clerk:** Thank you, Mrs. McLeod.

Mrs. McLeod nominates Shannon Stubbs as first vice-chair. Pursuant to Standing Order 106(2), the first vice-chair must be a member of the official opposition.

Are there further motions?

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

(Motion agreed to)

**The Clerk:** Mrs. Stubbs is duly elected first vice-chair of the committee.

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

**Mrs. Shannon Stubbs:** Thank you.

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

I'm prepared to receive motions for the position of second vice-chair.

Mr. Lefebvre.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Paul Lefebvre (Sudbury, Lib.):** I nominate Mario Simard.

[*English*]

**The Clerk:** It's been moved by Paul Lefebvre that Mario Simard be elected as second vice-chair of the committee.

Are there further motions?

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

(Motion agreed to)

**The Clerk:** I declare the motion carried. Mario Simard is duly elected second vice-chair of the committee.

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

**The Chair:** Mr. Cannings.

**Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP):** Maybe I missed something when I was in the washroom, but was there something from PROC about a third vice-chair, or is that something they're still discussing? If so, is that something that this committee can...? It's my understanding that a committee can elect a third vice-chair, if they so wish.

**The Chair:** The issue that PROC just dealt with was only with respect to the current membership of the committee. Mr. Saini was replaced by Mr. Sidhu.

**Mr. Richard Cannings:** Yes.

**The Chair:** The Standing Orders provide for there to be only two vice-chairs, and the committee, I understand, does not have the authority to change that. However, I don't think that precludes PROC from continuing their discussions on the issue, which I believe they are doing.

**Mr. Richard Cannings:** I think the Canada-China committee, which might not be a normal committee, has three vice-chairs.

**The Chair:** The third vice-chair was by a special order of the House because that committee was newly constituted.

Mr. Lefebvre, do you have something to add?

**Mr. Paul Lefebvre:** What I'm hearing is that they are having those discussions at PROC, and I think we should take the lead from PROC once they've made a decision on the third vice-chair. When that comes up and there's a decision made, then we'll re-entertain that here. That's my proposal.

**The Chair:** Are there any other comments? Okay.

Congratulations, everybody. We're off.

We have some routine motions to deal with first.

Ms. McLeod, is this something other than routine motions?

**Mrs. Cathy McLeod:** Yes, Chair.

**The Chair:** Okay, because I think we're required to deal with those first.

**Mrs. Cathy McLeod:** As I understand it, any motion can be put forward, but if you would like me to defer until after the routine motions, I'm happy to do so.

**The Chair:** Doing that would probably make more sense, if you don't mind.

**Mrs. Cathy McLeod:** If I could have standing later, that would be....

**The Chair:** Okay.

Thank you.

Mr. Sidhu.

**Mr. Maninder Sidhu (Brampton East, Lib.):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I have some routine motions to present.

The first is with regard to the analysts:

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.

I have one on the subcommittee on agenda and procedure.

• (1550)

**The Chair:** Sorry. We'll do one at a time.

(Motion agreed to)

**The Chair:** Sorry, Mr. Sidhu. What is the next one?

**Mr. Maninder Sidhu:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

On a subcommittee on agenda and procedure:

That the Subcommittee on Agenda and Procedure be established and be composed of five (5) members; the Chair, one Member from each Party; and that the subcommittee work in the spirit of collaboration.

**Mrs. Cathy McLeod:** Thank you.

I've been on committees for which there was a subcommittee or there were just discussions with the committee as a whole. I'm not sure what the typical practice of this committee has been but certainly I've always appreciated having the fuller input as we move forward. Again, I'm not familiar with this committee.

**The Chair:** It's a fair point.

I can tell you that in the four years last time, the subcommittee didn't meet once. We did everything.

**Mrs. Cathy McLeod:** You had the authorization.

**The Chair:** We were required to have a subcommittee in the event that it would be needed.

Are there any other comments before we vote on it? No.

(Motion agreed to)

**The Chair:** Mr. Weiler.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Patrick Weiler (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country, Lib.):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

With regard to reduced quorum, I move:

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 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 15 minutes, regardless of members present.

[English]

**The Chair:** Are there any comments?

(Motion agreed to)

**The Chair:** I neglected to say I'd like to welcome the analysts. As everybody who has been here before knows, without our analysts and our clerk, we can't do anything at these committees. Some would argue that they play a more important role than we do. I've worked with one of our analysts before, and I'm looking forward to working with both of you, so thank you for joining us.

Thank you, Clerk, for being part of it as well. Maybe after we finish the routine motions, you would take a moment to explain the role of an analyst, because we have at least three new members on the committee. It will be a refresher course for the rest of us.

Thank you.

Mr. Weiler, we go back to you.

[Translation]

**Mr. Patrick Weiler:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

[English]

**Mr. Richard Cannings:** Excuse me. Did we deal with the reduced quorum motion?

**The Chair:** We did, yes.

**Mr. Richard Cannings:** We did? I didn't hear the question. I heard the motion, but I...

**The Chair:** I asked if anybody had any questions or comments....

**Mr. Richard Cannings:** I was going to suggest an amendment, that's all, but am I too late?

**The Chair:** I'd love to accommodate you, but we've already voted on it.

**Mr. Richard Cannings:** It was done very quietly, without my looking.

[Translation]

**Mr. Patrick Weiler:** I'll continue. As for the questioning of witnesses, I move:

That witnesses be given 10 minutes for their opening statement; that, at the discretion of the Chair, during the questioning of witnesses, there be allocated six 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, five minutes; Liberal Party, five minutes; Conservative Party, five minutes; Liberal Party, five minutes; Bloc Québécois, two-and-a-half minutes; New Democratic Party, two-and-a-half minutes.

• (1555)

[English]

**The Chair:** Are there any questions or comments before we vote? No? Okay.

(Motion agreed to)

**The Chair:** Next we have Ms. Jones.

**Ms. Yvonne Jones (Labrador, Lib.):** Mr. Chair, it's on documents distribution:

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:** All in favour?

Mr. Cannings.

**Mr. Richard Cannings:** Good.

**The Chair:** Okay. Thank you.

(Motion agreed to)

**Ms. Yvonne Jones:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I also move:

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:** Think about this one. It's the most important motion we're going to pass in the next term. It's actually the most controversial one. Ted's not here, so that's fine

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

**Mrs. Shannon Stubbs:** No, it was.

**The Chair:** I'm not kidding. Last time, this was a subject of great debate.

**Mrs. Shannon Stubbs:** That was good in the silly season, the fighting days.

**The Chair:** I'm assuming that everybody's in favour of this. Okay?

(Motion agreed to)

**The Chair:** Thank you.

**Ms. Yvonne Jones:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I also move:

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

**The Chair:** Ms. McLeod.

**Mrs. Cathy McLeod:** Certainly I will support this. I do appreciate that when you have a Monday and a Wednesday from 3:30 to 5:30, the optimal use of video is always I think in the taxpayers' best interest. It's different for those early morning meetings when you're from B.C. when it doesn't work, but I think to the degree possible, if the clerk can encourage video conferencing when it's feasible, that would be great.

**The Chair:** That's a fair comment. That's always a factor in the decision. You're not moving an amendment, are you?

**Mrs. Cathy McLeod:** No.

**The Chair:** All in favour?

(Motion agreed to)

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Mr. May.

**Mr. Bryan May:** Are we on in camera meetings?

**The Chair:** Yes.

**Mr. Bryan May:** I move:

That, unless otherwise ordered, each Committee member be allowed to have one staff member at an in camera meeting, and that one additional person from each House officer's office be allowed to be present.

**The Chair:** Are there any questions or comments? No? All in favour?

(Motion agreed to)

**The Chair:** Mr. May.

**Mr. Bryan May:** Also, Mr. Chair:

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.

**The Chair:** Are there questions or comments? None? All in favour?

(Motion agreed to)

**The Chair:** Mr. Weiler, you had your hand up.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Patrick Weiler:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

With regard to notices of motion, I move:

That a 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 4:00 p.m. from Monday to Friday; that (2) the motion be distributed to Members in both official languages by the Clerk on the same day the said notice was transmitted if it was received no later than the deadline hour; and that (3) notices received after the deadline hour or on non-business days be deemed to have been received during the next business day and that when the committee is travelling on official business, no substantive motions may be moved.

• (1600)

[*English*]

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

Are there any questions or comments?

(Motion agreed to)

**The Chair:** We have one more.

Mr. May.

**Mr. Bryan May:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I move the following:

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:** Thank you, Mr. May.

Comments or questions?

(Motion agreed to)

**The Chair:** That's all of the routine motions.

Mrs. McLeod, if you'll indulge.... I meant to do this at the beginning.

Maybe our analysts could just take a moment here.

**Ms. Sophie Leduc (Committee Researcher):** Thank you, Chair, for giving us the opportunity to introduce the work of the analysts to committee members.

Good afternoon to all committee members.

[*Translation*]

My name is Sophie Leduc, and I am accompanied by my colleague Xavier Deschênes-Phillion. We are analysts at the Library of Parliament, and natural resources and energy issues are our domain. We will be assigned to the Standing Committee on Natural Resources.

[*English*]

First, I'd like to point out that you should have in front of you a package of information that you might find useful. It describes a little bit more our role in different contexts, whether during study of a subject matter, a study of proposed or existing legislation, or estimates. Also included in this package is a research document that you might find useful in your work.

There are key aspects that I would like to highlight. Analysts are the contacts for content issues that members might have in relation to the committee's work. As well, all our services are non-partisan in nature. I'll give you an example of one of the products we provide for the committee. In the context of a study, for each meeting we will prepare a briefing note. It will include information on topics that are under consideration, short biographies of witnesses who are invited to appear in front of the committee, and suggested questions that you may wish to ask witnesses. The briefing note is provided no later than 24 hours before each meeting.

[*Translation*]

At the end of a study, analysts also prepare draft reports, including recommendations for consideration by committee members. This draft is, of course, prepared in accordance with the committee instructions.

We would also like to remind you that not only do you have access to the work of analysts in the context of committees, but parliamentarians can also benefit from the expertise of Library of Parliament staff, be it for your requests for information or analysis. Of course, Xavier and I invite you to come and ask questions about our work before or after meetings. We very much appreciate feedback on our work, as it allows us to better identify your needs and improve our products.

[English]

Thank you for your time. We look forward to working with all members of the committee.

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

Ms. McLeod, I hate to keep deferring your turn, but I understand that Mr. Cannings has another routine motion he'd like to move before I get to you, if that's okay.

**Mr. Richard Cannings:** This is a fairly short and, I hope, painless motion.

It's about in camera proceedings and it is as follows:

That any motion to go in camera should be debatable and amendable, and that the committee may only meet in camera for the following purposes:

to discuss administrative matters of the committee

a draft report

briefings concerning national security

And furthermore, minutes of in camera meetings should reflect...the results of all votes taken by the committee while in camera, including how each member voted when a recorded vote is requested.

• (1605)

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

Before anybody speaks to this, in my own experience from another committee where this motion was moved, the clerk on that committee advised us that the standing orders are very clear on in camera proceedings. The circumstances surrounding this motion needed to be reviewed further before that committee dealt with it, so we deferred it to the next meeting to consider once we had heard back from the clerk.

Having said that, I open the table for discussion.

**Mr. Richard Cannings:** It would be fine if that's the way it went, but if we can deal with it now, all the better.

**The Chair:** Mr. May.

**Mr. Bryan May:** I was going to speak to that. The motion that was brought back in June 2016 was more specific than this motion and also took into account that privacy or protection of personal information might also be considerations. I would agree with the chair that we should probably take a look at that and if some of these are in addition to that, maybe we can talk about that.

**The Chair:** Does anybody have an objection to putting this over to...?

Thank you.

Finally, Ms. McLeod, we go over to you.

**Mrs. Cathy McLeod:** Thank you. Here is my motion:

That, pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), given that 26 mills have closed and over 10,000 workers impacted in British Columbia alone, and that Quebec forest products are still affected by 20% taxes and tariffs from the United States, the Committee undertake a study of the forest industry and what action the Government of Canada can take; that the witness list include representatives of provincial and indigenous governments; representatives of impacted communities; representatives of labour organizations; industry experts; Canada's Minister of Natural Resources; Canada's Minister of International Trade; officials from the Department of Natural Resources Canada, Global Affairs Canada, Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions, the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, and Western Economic Diversification; that the study contain no less

than 10 meetings and commence on February the 27th and that these hearings be televised when possible; and that the Committee report its findings to the House.

Mr. Chair, I've certainly been anxiously waiting for this committee to get up and going because of the significant crisis. If you will note, the date I've suggested that we commence does allow us the opportunity to deal with what I understand is a very short timeline in terms of the letter that we received, which the clerk distributed earlier, on what next Tuesday is. I thought it was imperative to get this motion on the table quickly because, of course, next Thursday will be rolling around and I know that it's a challenge for the clerk to get things going. I thought it was a good thing to have a conversation about and to discuss in this meeting today.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Mr. Lefebvre.

**Mr. Paul Lefebvre:** Listen, I was going to propose something similar as well, but it was with respect to forestry. I think we're on the same path or the same page on that, so I think we can work it out. I find 10 meetings a lot, given the studies we've done in the past. We'll have to determine a list of witnesses together. Each party would bring a list of witnesses and see where that brings us, but certainly that's something we're in favour of looking at.

On that note, I know we have a motion before us, but we also have to deal with the trade committee request to us. I think that's probably why you have the 27th. That leaves us the Monday. We'll have to talk about that as well. I just want to make sure we're all on the same page. We really need to deal with that.

The only thing, obviously, with respect to the Minister of Natural Resources, is the availability, but he's willing to—

• (1610)

**Mr. Bryan May:** And Global Affairs.

**Mr. Paul Lefebvre:** Yes, and the Minister of Global Affairs.

It's certainly something that we're open to entertaining.

**The Chair:** Mr. Cannings.

**Mr. Richard Cannings:** We meet Mondays and Wednesdays, right? So this would be the 26th, not the 27th.

**Mrs. Cathy McLeod:** Thank you for that friendly amendment.

**The Chair:** I take it that it's accepted? Okay.

Mr. Lefebvre, you have something to say.

**Mr. Paul Lefebvre:** I'd just go back to the language. It says, "no less than 10 meetings". If we're satisfied that we're done after six or seven meetings, I don't think we should be forcing ourselves to go to 10 meetings. I think it's when the committee is satisfied that it has heard what it needs and the analysts are saying that we have the information we require. I'm not saying that because I want to reduce it. Obviously, this is extremely important, but I'm sure there are other studies we all want to do as well. Actually, our plan was to work in concert with the other parties as to how we could come up with the topics and then take the angles that everybody wants on those. I just find that 10 could be...

Did you want to jump in on that, Bryan?

**Mr. Bryan May:** No, I have nothing else.

**Mr. Paul Lefebvre:** My only thing would be to leave it more open.

**The Chair:** Can I make a suggestion, then?

Given what we're about to talk about, which is what we have to do on Monday, I was going to suggest that next Wednesday be used for committee business anyway. It will be our first opportunity, and in the spirit of what you raised earlier, we'd do it with the group as a whole.

It sounds like you have a consensus developing here on your suggestion. I was going to invite others to submit any proposals they might have.

So let's do that. If they could get them to me no later than Monday, I could immediately circulate them. They will have to be translated, of course. Then on Wednesday we can come here as a group, prepared to discuss perhaps one or two or three motions, including a list of witnesses. The following week is a non-sitting week. That would give the clerk an opportunity to line up witnesses so that we could be ready to start the first meeting we come back.

Ms. McLeod.

**Mrs. Cathy McLeod:** I will amend it so that it's starting the first week after the break week, if you want a day for committee business.

To be frank, though, when you have thousands of people out of work and a crisis, I think it's critical that we deal with it initially. Certainly, I would be prepared to say that we can talk about other motions, but if this passes now, and the clerks, once they hear the witnesses...if we want to adjust the meetings either up or down, maybe we can change the motion at that time. I would really like to pass this motion today and just adjust the date to the Monday following the break week.

**The Chair:** Mr. May.

**Mr. Bryan May:** I think we're onside with the motion, and I just want to follow up with what MP Lefebvre was referring to with regard to the 10 weeks.

Doing a quick perusal of what that means for us, I agree with you that this is a crisis that need to deal with quickly. This wouldn't be done until probably May. We wouldn't be getting a report back until June, based on 10 weeks. We almost need to cut that in half to be able to get to this much more quickly. That's assuming we don't take on anything else. That's assuming there's no legislation or motions that come to us. You wouldn't have a report to even table until we're almost ready to break for the summer.

I'm wondering if, maybe not now but at the committee business meeting, we could get a breakdown of what those 10 meetings look like. Obviously we're going to have a meeting with the ministers, a meeting with the officials. An hour and an hour is usually what I've been used to. Maybe we could get an idea of what those other nine meetings look like. Is it possible to do this in a more condensed form? That's my thought on it. Ten meetings seem like a bit long.

• (1615)

**The Chair:** Go ahead.

**Mrs. Cathy McLeod:** As I indicated, I think we could look at and vote on this motion as it stands. When we have our committee meeting of the whole, if we want to readjust the number of meetings, we can move an amendment at that time.

Certainly, if we look at the economic development agencies, the industry stakeholders, there are a lot of trade agreements. I think there are a lot of things that are very important within this, so I certainly think we can look at voting on the motion as it stands with the adjustment of the date for the start. Certainly, I know the analysts do a fine job in laying out what they think would be a valuable study. We can have that conversation and can move an amendment at that time.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Mr. May.

**Mr. Bryan May:** In the spirit of moving to try to vote on it today, I'm wondering if you would be willing to remove the number of weeks altogether, and we can determine that when we have a better sense of what this would look like. We could move to vote on it today, with an amendment taking out the number of meetings in the last half of the last sentence.

**The Chair:** We take out the words "that the study contain no less than 10 meetings".

**Mr. Bryan May:** Yes. We don't know who the witnesses are going to be, we don't know how... I think it would be much easier to have that conversation than it would be to amend it after the fact.

**The Chair:** Let's put this to the piecemeal here.

First of all, Ms. McLeod, what you read is different from what is on this paper, so we'll have to deal with that. That just deals with the date and not anything to be concerned about.

Are you agreeable to what Mr. May is suggesting?

**Mrs. Cathy McLeod:** Yes I am, provided the analysts know and we agree to a robust study that does the work that we need to do to look at this serious issue.

**The Chair:** I don't think anybody's going to suggest we end it after two meetings.

**An hon. member:** No.

**The Chair:** Okay, were there any other comments, then?

The motion will read as has been presented to us on this piece of paper with the exception that the word "immediately" is removed, the words "that the study contain no less than 10 meetings" are removed, and somewhere in there it should say "commence on Monday, March 9".

All right?

**Mr. Bryan May:** That's the first day we're back.

**The Chair:** Right.

**Mr. Bryan May:** Is it the ninth or the eighth? My mistake.

**The Chair:** It's Monday, March 9.

**Mr. Bryan May:** You're correct.

**The Chair:** Does everybody understand what we're now about to vote on? There are no more comments? Okay. All in favour of Ms. McLeod's motion as amended?

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

**The Chair:** See? Remember what I said about the spirit of co-operation at the beginning? Thank you.

On the next piece of business, I assume that everybody has seen the letter we received from the chair of the Standing Committee on International Trade. Is that a yes? Okay.

They have requested that we review certain provisions of Bill C-4. The gist of the request and of the motion that was passed at their committee is that we have the option to agree to do it, in which case we would have to provide a response to that committee no later than 5 p.m. next Tuesday.

That would require us to deal with this sometime between now and next Monday, presumably have some witnesses come and speak to us and then turn to our analysts, who have just explained to us what they do and ask them to become superheroes right out of the gate and turn something around in less than 24 hours. Then we would have to review it ourselves.

Option number two is that we decline to accept this invitation, in which case we can notify the trade committee by Friday.

I'll throw it out there for discussion.

Mr. Lefebvre.

• (1620)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Paul Lefebvre:** The Standing Committee on International Trade has asked us to review certain provisions of the Canada–U.S.–Mexico agreement. We are ready to hear from witnesses on Monday. Perhaps the clerk and the analysts could explain to us the procedures to be followed. We need to determine immediately or shortly who the witnesses will be. Some of them could appear on Monday.

Our analysts will then draft a report, which must be submitted in both official languages to the Standing Committee on International Trade by 4:00 p.m. on Tuesday. For our part, we must be able to review and approve the document.

Therefore, I am asking the analysts and the clerk to give us suggestions as to how we can meet those deadlines.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** The short answer from our analysts is that they could conceivably do this, assuming there aren't too many witnesses and not too much information to distill in such a short turnaround period. Then we'd have to find time on Tuesday to deal with it ourselves.

**Mr. Paul Lefebvre:** There are two things on that, then, if that's the case.

[*Translation*]

This question is more for the clerk.

Will the chair have the authority to approve the report that will be produced by the analysts? Also, are we prepared to give him that authority?

**The Clerk:** Normally, reports are adopted by the committee and tabled in the House by the chair.

**Mr. Paul Lefebvre:** Okay.

**The Clerk:** It isn't consistent with our practice to give the chair the authority to approve a report himself. It must be approved by the committee members.

**Mr. Paul Lefebvre:** What do we have to submit, a report or a letter? I want to make sure. I think it's a letter.

**The Clerk:** You're right. It's a communication between the two committees. The committee can adopt a motion or ensure that the chair has the authority to communicate recommendations directly to the other chair.

**Mr. Paul Lefebvre:** All right. The difficulty we're going to have is that on Monday, after hearing from the witnesses, we will have to make recommendations immediately, and then we're going to have to make sure that the... I just want to make sure that we will be able to follow all the steps together properly for this request. That's why I'm asking the analysts and the clerk to guide us.

**The Clerk:** There is also the issue of the invitation.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Mr. May.

**Mr. Bryan May:** It's obviously outside convention, but is it possible to approve via email? If we see the letter, can you send it to each of the offices and get consent that way to move forward, or can we move a motion now to give the chair the opportunity to approve it?

• (1625)

**The Chair:** Before we start debating how long it's going to take and when we're going to do it, have we established that we're going to go ahead with this?

**Mr. Bryan May:** If it can be done.

**The Chair:** Go ahead, Mrs. Stubbs.

**Mrs. Shannon Stubbs:** I think we have to, if it can be done, because of how important this is and the relevance to our committee. Also, as a last resort, in the last term there were occasions where we did email okays in the final stages of some things.

My colleague has suggested this. After the Monday afternoon meeting, could we have a special meeting on Tuesday morning to complete it?

**The Chair:** I doubt anybody would object, but I know I have another committee meeting, and I suspect other people are going to be in the same boat.

**Mr. Bryan May:** I would be unavailable.

**Mr. Paul Lefebvre:** Maybe at 1:15 on Tuesday. That would give time to the analyst and it would be after the committee. All committees would end at 1 o'clock, so 1:15. We should not be getting a 20-page letter. We'll see what the witnesses say.

That's my first point, but to go back to your point, Mr. Chair—

**The Chair:** Working backward then, if we're going to meet at 1:15 Tuesday to review the report, they're going to have to receive some sort of drafting instructions from this committee after we hear the witnesses on Monday. That means we're going to have to hear from witnesses, and whatever time that concludes, we're going to have to do it almost on the spot, or sometime between then and Monday night to give them some time to draft this thing.

**Mrs. Shannon Stubbs:** This is a bit incredible. I appreciate the constraints and commitments of the other members. I feel the Tuesday morning meeting proposal is a good faith attempt to try to allow everybody to participate in our roles. We all have to recognize that the committee is in this position because of a vote taken by Liberal and NDP members at a different committee. Our initial motion provided a way longer timeline where committees could effectively do this work and not be constrained.

I suggest that it ought to be the responsibility of the members, maybe not the individuals here, but whose colleagues have put them in this position, to move toward us and accommodate the aim of the official opposition wanting to give the opportunity to every member to participate in a meaningful and comprehensive way. I want to state for the record that the Conservatives are the members here who had an initial motion that would not have put in place these extreme time constraints that we're all facing, which I fear might diminish our ability to do our jobs with the rigour they deserve.

**The Chair:** Mr. Lefebvre.

**Mr. Paul Lefebvre:** I have two points, and I thank you for that intervention. Certainly, in the motion, if a standing committee listed does not consider the subject matter of the provisions.... I think you raised that and we're in agreement.

Number one, I would like to hear from the Bloc and NDP what their positions are on this motion.

Number two, once we have that response we go back to suggesting timelines and how we can achieve this, if that's where we're going to go.

**The Chair:** Thank you. Yes, we have some parameters on what this will take to get it done. I guess the first question we have to answer is whether we're willing to undertake this at all.

Mr. Cannings, do you have any thoughts on that?

**Mr. Richard Cannings:** I think the suggestion of a 1:15 meeting on Tuesday is fine with me. I can't be there for the morning, or at least, I was on House duty, and now I have another thing, so I've already found a replacement for House duty to do this other thing. You know, I'm wearing out my welcome asking for replacements, so I'd rather.... I would agree that I can't see this as taking up much time—you know, more than 15 minutes—on Tuesday at 1:15, so I would be in favour of that.

I can't comment further on whether we should do this. I don't know what these clause-by-clause.... I don't know what the clauses say, so I would rather go through with this, say that we will do it. I want to respect our Conservative members in trying to do the work that everyone expects us to do. I think that having a short meeting at 1:15 on Tuesday would accomplish that.

• (1630)

**The Chair:** Mr. May wants to say something.

Mr. Simard, do you want to...?

Mr. May, go ahead.

**Mr. Bryan May:** I have two quick questions, I guess.

First of all, when we talk about doing this on Tuesday morning, will that actually be enough time for the analysts?

We're having the meeting Monday. Do you need Tuesday morning to complete this work?

**Ms. Sophie Leduc:** Yes.

**Mr. Paul Lefebvre:** There's translation.

**Mr. Bryan May:** I think it's number one for all that. So that's number one: will we even have this in time for that short time frame?

Number two is this. I don't know that I got an answer to my question of whether we can do this via email, and that would solve a lot of this problem. Can we simply receive this via email, as early as possible on Tuesday? Let's say by noon. I know that's pushing it. Then we have a window from then until—the deadline's 4:00, so let's say 2:30 or 3:00. Then everybody has an opportunity to respond to that email with their thumbs up or not. Is that even possible?

I'm just thinking of logistics here. I chair another committee, so I won't be available at 8:45. I hate to suggest this, because I'm not a morning person, but the other alternative is eight o'clock in the morning.

**The Chair:** [Inaudible—Editor]

**Mr. Bryan May:** Yes, right. I'm just saying that, if it's going to—but I think it's moot if the letter's not going to be ready at 8:45 in the morning.

**The Chair:** Mrs. McLeod.

**Mrs. Cathy McLeod:** I think the suggestion of 1:15...because I think this is an important document and there might be some conversation that we need to have as a committee so that we actually can agree on the letter that goes forward. I think this is too important an issue to not be brought back together to discuss the final product that goes. I would be happy with the 1:15 conversation that we have. That should give us time to make any adjustments.

**The Chair:** In that case, this is what we're looking at. We're going to have a meeting at 3:30 on Monday with the witness or witnesses. At the conclusion of that meeting, this group is collectively going to provide them with drafting instructions. They're going to turn that around sometime Tuesday, and we will meet at 1:15 to review it. Is that right?

Mr. Simard.

[Translation]

**Mr. Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ):** Since we don't know what provisions of the bill the committee will study, I have difficulty seeing how you will produce a document and who will be invited.

[English]

**The Chair:** That's a discussion we have yet to have; you're right. There are five clauses, I believe. If we're agreeable to doing this, we've established the time frame in which to do it. We then need to figure out who the witnesses are going to be. That's the next point.

If you want to chime in on that.... Are you agreeable to the process so far?

[Translation]

**Mr. Mario Simard:** For the sake of consistency, before I give my opinion on the work we need to do, I would like to know what that work is. Is it possible to do this work in the time we have, which seems very short?

In my opinion, you've got it backwards. Perhaps it would have been better to know which five clauses we'll need to vote on, and then see if we can do it. I put that forward for your consideration.

• (1635)

[English]

**The Chair:** We can distribute the clauses right now. There are five clauses that we have to look at.

**Mr. Richard Cannings:** There are six.

**The Chair:** Right, there are six.

Do we have copies for distribution?

**Mr. Paul Lefebvre:** Mr. Chair, if the analysts don't have a copy, I have a copy.

**Ms. Yvonne Jones:** We just gave it to him.

**Mr. Paul Lefebvre:** Yes. Can we get copies made?

**The Chair:** Do you want to suspend for two minutes to get copies made?

**Some hon. members:** Yes.

**The Chair:** All right.

• (1635)

(Pause)

• (1635)

**The Chair:** Everybody now has a copy of the sections we've been asked to review. My interpretation of what's happened so far is that we've agreed to proceed with this, and we have the time frame established, so the question becomes who the witnesses are.

Mr. Lefebvre, you have some views on that.

• (1640)

**Mr. Paul Lefebvre:** I certainly think we need departmental officials who have dealt with this to come forward to explain the importance of these provisions and what they mean.

[Translation]

First, we should have officials from the Department of Natural Resources and Global Affairs Canada. Between now and tomorrow, we could also suggest that other witnesses be invited.

[English]

Then from there, Mr. Chair, I think it's up to you to decide the time frames. We have two hours to look at this.

**The Chair:** I was going to address it.

We've established the parameters for how long everybody gets to ask questions. If we have two witnesses and we do one round, we're into 34 minutes, assuming everybody sticks to their allotted time. We have a two-hour meeting. We are going to need time at the end to have some drafting instructions. Are we going to have a two-hour meeting and then do drafting instructions? Keep this in mind with the number of witnesses. We could do three witnesses, I suppose. That's half an hour of evidence, and then we could have one round of questions. It's up to the committee here to decide.

Mr. Lefebvre has suggested some witnesses. Does anybody else have any?

**Mrs. Shannon Stubbs:** I think we could if we can have until the end of the day.

**The Chair:** I'll give you to five o'clock. How's that?

**Mrs. Shannon Stubbs:** Yes.

**The Chair:** Ms. McLeod.

**Mrs. Cathy McLeod:** We just received this letter recently and we've just had the paragraphs identified. Have the analysts identified within the agreement any other sections that relate to the natural resource committee, or have you not had the opportunity to intensely review? I'm just surprised at the....

**Mr. Bryan May:** Mr. Chair—

**Mrs. Cathy McLeod:** I know it's a very technical question.

**The Chair:** Are you asking about other sections of the bill? The bill itself was referred to the trade committee and then they referred these particular sections to us.

**Mrs. Cathy McLeod:** My question is whether this is inclusive of all clauses that relate to natural resources. If it's not possible to answer that today, this minute, it would be very worthwhile for us to understand if there are some that were not referred to us for consideration.

**The Chair:** Mr. May, it's you, and then Mr. Simard.

**Mr. Bryan May:** As I understand it, we're not being asked to delve that deeply into this. They've hived off these clauses to four different committees. Our role is to look at these very specific clauses. If we get into expanding this, it is outside the scope of what we're being asked to do.

**The Chair:** Mr. Simard.

[Translation]

**Mr. Mario Simard:** I may have missed part of the discussion, but have you already suggested some witnesses?

**Mr. Paul Lefebvre:** It would probably be department officials who took part in the process and other experts who would come and explain the basis for these provisions.

[English]

**The Chair:** Ms. McLeod.

**Mrs. Cathy McLeod:** The letter requested a specific action by this committee. I recognize the time frames, but as the natural resource committee, the simple request to identify other sections that might relate to our committee work is not inappropriate. I think it is probably an imperative.

I mean, we are the masters of our destiny. Yes, we should do the task that's been asked of us, but I think it would be of value for our committee to understand if there are any other impacts in the areas we're responsible for.

**The Chair:** Ms. Jones and then Mr. Lefebvre.

**Ms. Yvonne Jones:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

It's my understanding that a specific request had been made to our committee. We're dealing with the request in front of us. I think if the committee were to want to entertain looking at any of the clauses within the NAFTA agreement, that would be something we would do separately and outside of the request that is currently on the table.

• (1645)

**The Chair:** Mr. Lefebvre.

**Mr. Paul Lefebvre:** That's fine, Mr. Chair. That's good.

**The Chair:** Okay, there is nobody else.

We've been asked to perform a very specific task, which we've now agreed to undertake. What you're proposing is beyond the scope of that request. The House has referred the legislation to the Standing Committee on International Trade. They have then turned around and given this to us.

That being the case, and because this was thrust upon all of us on short notice—including our analysts and the clerk, and every member of the committee—why don't we give people time to think about witnesses until first thing tomorrow morning? I will then look at the list of witnesses. I will cull it down and determine who's going to be called, subject to your approval.

What direction I do need from you is on the number of witnesses. If I get a list of 15 witnesses tomorrow, that's obviously not feasible.

[Translation]

**Mr. Paul Lefebvre:** Okay.

[English]

**The Chair:** That's a good point.

**Mr. Maninder Sidhu:** Mr. Chair, how many witnesses do you see would be allowed in that time?

**The Chair:** Well, if you do the math, if you do two witnesses, that's 20 minutes of evidence. One round of questions takes us to about 34 minutes. Our meetings are two hours. Assuming you want to stick to two hours and you want to have some time for drafting instructions, we probably don't have any more time than to accommodate three witnesses. That would be my suggestion.

**Mr. Bryan May:** If I can try to simplify this for you, Mr. Chair, and also for the clerk, can we agree that we're looking at speaking with just the officials at this point?

I know, having chaired another committee, how much time and energy goes into trying to bring somebody here, especially from outside of Ottawa. That usually takes two weeks minimum to organize and to plan. Officials are here and they're ready to go. They know this is on the table.

I would like to go so far as to move that we're talking to three department officials and move on.

**The Chair:** Part of the reason I asked for discretion, though, is that we're not the only committee doing this. Everybody is subject to the same time limitations. I wouldn't be surprised if other committees are targeting the same witnesses. It's entirely possible that we could make a request tomorrow to three departmental officials and they say, "Sorry, we're already booked to go to another committee. We're not available for other reasons". For that reason, I need some discretion.

If everybody is okay with that, we will leave it there. Everybody has until 9 o'clock or 10 o'clock tomorrow morning to give me lists of witnesses. Categories of witnesses would be preferable, especially if they are departmental officials, because we can't specify a certain person because he or she may not be available, but somebody else might be.

Does that work for everybody around the table? Is there agreement?

**Mrs. Shannon Stubbs:** Only insofar as we are in this absolutely ridiculous situation, because of the votes cast by Liberal and NDP members at the other committee.

**The Chair:** Thank you for that.

**Mr. Paul Lefebvre:** We could all go down that road, I believe.

**Mr. Bryan May:** Can I suggest we all—

**Mrs. Shannon Stubbs:** The Conservatives initially did, which would have given us a timeline until April 2, so we could all do this and actually do our jobs, right?

**The Chair:** We are where we are.

**Mrs. Shannon Stubbs:** We're all stuck in this ridiculous situation. For the record, I hope this isn't how things are going to go overall or throughout the whole term, however long that lasts.

**The Chair:** Mrs. Stubbs, I can't speak for what happens at other committees, I can only account for what happens here. We've already demonstrated a willingness to co-operate.

**Mrs. Shannon Stubbs:** I totally agree, but you also have caucus meetings, and you can bring things up with your colleagues and all that stuff.

**The Chair:** Thank you. Maybe we'll invite you as a guest speaker.

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

**Mrs. Shannon Stubbs:** That would be fantastic. I tried to get in there on Vegreville and Motion No. 167, remember?

**The Chair:** I do remember.

**Mrs. Shannon Stubbs:** I tried to speak to your caucus. It's a new day.

**The Chair:** Now that we have all of that out of the way, do we have an agreement that by 10 o'clock tomorrow morning I'm going to have a list of witnesses, and then I have the discretion to determine who they will be. There will be a maximum of three witnesses starting at 3:30 p.m. on Monday?

• (1650)

**Mr. Patrick Weiler:** Agreed.

**The Chair:** Agreed?

**The Chair:** Mr. Lefebvre.

**Mr. Paul Lefebvre:** I just wish to confirm that for scheduling next Monday, we have this, and then the following Wednesday, we

have a working committee to determine the next studies after that, right? We can then bring the witnesses for the forestry study, as well as other studies that we want to pursue.

Hopefully, in the meantime, we can talk to most committee members to see how we can work collaboratively on other studies. I'm sure there are a lot of things we will have a lot of collaboration on.

**The Chair:** On that note, thank you everybody. It was a very good first meeting, and I look forward to seeing you on Monday.

The meeting is adjourned.

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