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Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage

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Wednesday, October 14, 2020

Chair: Mr. Scott Simms



Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage

Wednesday, October 14, 2020

• (1600)

[*Translation*]

The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Thomas Bigelow): Welcome.

[*English*]

I see that we have a quorum, so I will commence.

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.

Do I have any motions for the position of chair?

Ms. Julie Dabrusin (Toronto—Danforth, Lib.): I nominate Scott Simms.

The Clerk: Thank you very much.

Are there any further motions?

Seeing none, it has been moved by Ms. Dabrusin that Scott Simms be elected chair of the committee.

Pursuant to the House order of Wednesday, September 23, 2020, I must now proceed to record a division unless there is unanimous consent. Is there unanimous consent to elect Scott Simms as chair of the committee?

(Motion agreed to)

The Clerk: I declare the motion carried and Mr. Simms duly elected chair of the committee.

I invite Mr. Simms to take the virtual chair.

The Chair (Mr. Scott Simms (Coast of Bays—Central—Notre Dame, Lib.): I've never been asked to virtually chair before. Thank you so much.

Ms. Dabrusin.

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: Apparently the phone line isn't live yet. I just wanted to flag that.

The Clerk: Thank you very much, Ms. Dabrusin. If you'll allow me to ask Mr. Simms, I will make sure we try to send out all the information to the staff and members, so that they have the correct phone line. I will flag it to our technical team.

Thank you very much for that.

In the meantime, perhaps Mr. Simms, I can give the chair back to you for just one moment.

The Chair: Sure.

At this stage, we are proceeding with the election of the vice-chairs.

Are there any technical glitches you'd like to fix before we proceed to that, Tom?

The Clerk: I'm just going to send a quick note, Chair, to our technical staff regarding the phone lines.

The Chair: While you're doing that, I'll thank everyone for electing me as chair and providing me with, quite frankly, over 16 years, the easiest election I've ever faced in my life. That's very kind of you all.

[*Translation*]

Thank you. You're too kind.

[*English*]

Okay, Tom, do you have an update?

The Clerk: Yes, sir, I've flagged it, so hopefully we can get this resolved momentarily.

If the committee wishes, we can proceed with the election at least of the vice-chair and second vice-chair for the time being. Hopefully by the time we complete that process, the phone lines will be working again.

I have signalled the issue to the technical team. Hopefully they can resolve the matter. It may have been caused by the delayed start or the restarting of the meeting, so I will enquire with them to see if there could be a resolution sought in that.

The Chair: Okay.

The Clerk: Yes, I'm being told that phone lines should be back up soon and that ParlVu is indeed running. Hopefully those phone lines will be working again soon. Apologies again for the technical issues so far today.

The Chair: If I'm not mistaken, Tom, the difference there is that ParlVu is a substantial amount of time after—

The Clerk: Yes, there's a delay on ParlVu. The phone line is certainly the preferred method so that it is in real time. I'm being told by my IT counterparts that it should be up and running very soon.

If I have another update, I will let you know as soon as possible.

The Chair: You know, Tom, if this doesn't work out, you could always anchor CNN. You're very good at giving us quick updates in real time.

How about we proceed to the election of the vice-chair?

The Clerk: Thank you very much, Chair. I will do so.

Pursuant to Standing Order 106(2), the first vice-chair must be a member of the official opposition. I'm now prepared to receive motions for the first vice-chair. Do I have any motions for the first vice-chair?

• (1605)

Mr. Martin Shields (Bow River, CPC): I would move the nomination of MP Rayes as the first vice-chair.

[*Translation*]

The Clerk: It has been moved by Mr. Shields that Alain Rayes be elected as first vice-chair of the committee.

Are there any further motions?

Pursuant to the House Order of Wednesday, September 23, 2020, I will now proceed to a recorded division unless there is unanimous consent.

Is there unanimous consent?

I declare the motion carried and Mr. Rayes duly elected first vice-chair of the committee.

(Motion agreed to)

[*English*]

Congratulations.

Mr. Chair, if you'll allow me, I will 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'm now prepared to receive motions for the second vice-chair.

I see a few hands. Mr. Shields, were you done with your intervention? You can put your hand down.

I have Mr. Louis.

Mr. Tim Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga, Lib.): Actually, Ms. Bessette was before me.

The Clerk: Thank you for the clarification.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Bessette, you may go ahead.

Mrs. Lyne Bessette (Brome—Missisquoi, Lib.): I nominate Martin Champoux for the position of second vice-chair.

The Clerk: Thank you.

It has been moved by Mrs. Bessette that Martin Champoux be elected as second vice-chair of the committee.

Are there any further motions?

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

[*English*]

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Can I bring a point of order, please?

The Clerk: Yes, of course. Unfortunately, I cannot entertain it, but the chair can.

The Chair: Go ahead, yes.

Ms. Heather McPherson: I just would like to flag that, once again, it would be important to have a member from each recognized party be part of the subcommittee. I did want to put on the record that this would be my preference.

The Chair: For all parties to be represented on the subcommittee...?

Ms. Heather McPherson: For all recognized parties to have a member in one of the vice-chair positions.

The Chair: If I'm not mistaken, that usually has been the composition or at least it has been for the past little while.

Tom, I believe that is the case. Is it?

The Clerk: Thank you, sir.

The point of clarification here is that, indeed, all recognized parties, depending on the routine motions that are adopted, could very well be represented on the subcommittee. This is more a question of the vice-chair titles—

Ms. Heather McPherson: Yes, I should clarify that.

The Clerk:—so they're two different topics. Ms. McPherson is noting that there is a suggestion or a desire to have a third vice-chair position for the committee, and we can certainly make note of that.

The Chair: Ms. McPherson, on a personal level, I'm glad you brought that up. I think all parties should be represented on the subcommittee despite shared titles and so on and so forth. Thank you for doing that.

Okay, everyone, I have just a few things—

The Clerk: Sorry to interrupt, sir. I don't believe I was complete in the election of the second vice-chair, so if you'll allow me, sir, I'll complete that process.

The Chair: Again, I would never want to usurp democracy by any stretch of the imagination, Tom. Please go ahead.

The Clerk: Thank you very much, sir.

I believe we were at the point where I was acknowledging that based on the House order of September 23, the committee must in this current context proceed to a recorded division unless there's unanimous consent to elect Mr. Champoux as second vice-chair. Do I have unanimous consent?

(Motion agreed to)

[*Translation*]

The Clerk: I declare Mr. Champoux duly elected second vice-chair of the committee.

[English]

With that, I will gratefully hand the microphone back to the chair.

The Chair: Nice job, Tom. That was excellent.

Folks, before I get into the routine motions, please indulge me for just a moment. I think this is something that has been mentioned at other committees. It certainly needs to be mentioned at ours.

This is our new virtual reality, and I just want to make a few notes here, if I may, about the nature of what we're doing here.

If you have a motion to move, please unmute yourself and state that you would like to move a motion. You may also raise a point of order at any time during the meeting by unmuting yourself and stating that you have a point of order. Once a motion is moved or a point of order is raised, please use the “raise hand” function to indicate that you wish to be included on the speakers list. You may do so by clicking on “participants” at the bottom of your screen. This will provide you with a list of all participants in the meeting at the right-hand side of the screen. At the bottom of that list, you will see the option “raise hand”.

Finally, the motion adopted by the House on September 23 provides that “except for those decided unanimously or 'on division', all questions shall be decided by a recorded vote”. Therefore, once a motion or an amendment is moved and there is no more debate, I will ask if there are any objections. If you object, please unmute and say so. I will then ask the clerk to proceed with a recorded vote. For unanimous consent, I'll be looking for those who want to dissent, more than for those who consent, as that will give me a clear indication in our virtual reality.

That being said, let's go through our routine motions.

I recognize Mr. Louis.

• (1610)

Mr. Tim Louis: My hand was excitedly up. I would like to adopt the routine motions that were passed in the last session, but before I do that I want to congratulate you and the vice-chairs and everybody for being on this important committee. It's an honour to serve, so thank you.

I would like to read them and then we can take it from there.

On analyst services, I move:

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.

On the subcommittee on agenda and procedure, I move:

That the Subcommittee on Agenda and Procedure be composed of five members—

Mr. Anthony Housefather (Mount Royal, Lib.): On a point of order, Mr. Chair, I would recommend that we do the motions one at a time, so that if anybody has amendments, we stop after the first one, do the amendments, pass it and go to the second one.

The Chair: Mr. Louis, if I may, can we start from the top again? When you've finished one section, such as analyst services, we'll go to possible debate and a vote.

Mr. Tim Louis: That's understood. Thanks for the clarity.

On analyst services, I move:

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.

The Chair: Is there any discussion on that matter?

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: I would like to ask Gabrielle and Marion to please join us.

Mr. Louis.

Mr. Tim Louis: On the subcommittee on agenda and procedure, I move:

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

The Chair: Is there any discussion, even though we already had one?

Ms. McPherson.

Ms. Heather McPherson: I bet you can guess what my discussion is about, so forgive me. I'm new to this, as you all know, and this is only the very beginning of this. I would just like to change the “one member from each party” to “one member from each recognized party”, please.

The Chair: Okay, so you want to amend it by adding the word “each” in front of “party”.

Ms. Heather McPherson: No, I want to amend it from “one member from each party” to “one member from each recognized party”.

• (1615)

The Chair: Sorry, that's what I meant. We all make mistakes.

It's “recognized party”. Is there any discussion?

(Amendment agreed to)

(Motion as amended agreed to)

The Chair: Mr. Louis.

Mr. Tim Louis: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

On meeting without a 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 two members of the opposition and two members of the government; and that when travelling outside the Parliamentary Precinct, the meeting begin after 15 minutes, regardless of members present.”

The Chair: Is there any discussion?

Ms. Heather McPherson: I'd like to suggest an amendment.

I would like to include two members of the opposition and two members of the government.

The Chair: Is there any discussion on the proposed amendment by Ms. McPherson?

(Amendment agreed to)

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

The Chair: Go ahead, Mr. Louis.

Mr. Tim Louis: Thank you, sir.

Regarding the time for opening remarks and questioning of witnesses, I move “That witnesses be given five minutes for their opening statement; that, at the discretion of the chair, during the questioning of witnesses, in the first round, there be allocated six minutes for the first questioner of each party as follows: Conservative Party, Liberal Party, Bloc Québécois, New Democratic Party. For the second and subsequent rounds, the order and time for questioning would 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; and New Democratic Party, two and a half minutes.”

The Chair: Go ahead, Ms. McPherson.

Ms. Heather McPherson: I promise this is my last one.

I would like to propose the following amendment: “That witnesses be given five minutes for their opening statements, and that, whenever possible, witnesses provide the committee with their opening statements 72 hours in advance; that, at the discretion of the Chair, during the questioning of witnesses, in the first round, there be allocated six minutes for the first questioner of each party as follows: Conservative Party, Liberal Party, Bloc Québécois, New Democratic Party. For the second and subsequent rounds, the order and time for questioning would be as follows: Conservative Party, five minutes; Liberal Party, five minutes; Bloc Québécois, two and a half minutes; New Democratic, two and a half minutes; Conservative Party, five minutes; and Liberal Party, five minutes.”

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. McPherson.

Is there any discussion on the amendment?

(Amendment agreed to)

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

The Chair: Mr. Louis.

Mr. Tim Louis: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

On document distribution, I move “That only the clerk of the committee be authorized to distribute documents to members of the committee and only when the documents are available in both official languages and that witnesses be advised accordingly.”

The Chair: Is there any discussion?

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: Mr. Louis.

Mr. Tim Louis: The next one, Mr. Chair, is on working meals. I move “That the clerk of the committee be authorized to make the

necessary arrangements to provide working meals for the committee and its subcommittees.”

• (1620)

The Chair: Is there any discussion?

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: Mr. Louis.

Mr. Tim Louis: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

On the travel, accommodation and living expenses of witnesses, I move “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: Is there any discussion?

Mr. Kevin Waugh (Saskatoon—Grasswood, CPC): I have brought this up at every committee I've been on. Finally, because of COVID, we're doing more and more video conferencing, which, let's face it, we should have been using for years. Because of COVID and the restrictions on people coming to committee until COVID is lifted, I'm fine with video conferencing.

Sometimes I question. I've been in other committees, Mr. Chair, where we have two or three people. Two is fine. Sometimes we'd have as many as four from one organization flying into Ottawa to do a presentation, which was simply ridiculous.

COVID has answered a lot of my questions about cutting expenses in Ottawa. I'm sure we all agree that the day of meeting face to face, with people coming to Ottawa to give a presentation has long gone. We should use more Zoom, which we will certainly, it looks like, for the coming months.

That's all I have to say on that.

The Chair: Okay. I assume you're not proposing an amendment.

Mr. Kevin Waugh: No, I wouldn't, but I may in the future.

The Chair: That's duly noted. We've been warned.

Okay. We'll move back to the motion.

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: Mr. Louis.

Mr. Tim Louis: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

On access to in camera meetings, 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: Is there any discussion?

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: Mr. Louis.

Mr. Tim Louis: Thank you, Chair.

On 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.”

The Chair: Is there any discussion?

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: Continue, Mr. Louis.

Mr. Tim Louis: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

On notices of motions, I move “That forty-eight (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 4:00 p.m. be distributed to members the same day” and “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 4:00 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 outside the Parliamentary Precinct, no substantive motions may be moved.”

The Chair: Is there any discussion?

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: That brings to an end our routine motions.

• (1625)

[Translation]

Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Chair, I have motions to put forward, if I may.

[English]

The Chair: Okay.

[Translation]

Mr. Champoux, thank you.

[English]

I just noticed here, and this is one of the things I will have to get used to. I am reticent to jump right away to recognize people because we do have the “raise hand” function that I spoke of earlier.

According to the list, I have Mr. Housefather.

[Translation]

Then, it will be Mr. Champoux's turn.

[English]

Before I get into the motions, can I as chair just suggest one thing? I tend to be somewhat strict, as I was last time, about recognizing folks who wish to be recognized. I understand that you can unmute and you say your point of order, or any objection you may have or anything of that nature, to get my attention. I appreciate that, but can we just stop right there? I'd like to recognize people as they have asked to be given the floor.

Not only is this essential for the organization of this, but it is also essential for the people who are recording this. These are the people who do the blues, the Hansard people. It works so much better for them. It is so much easier for them if I am able to recognize who was about to speak.

I don't like the idea of free-flowing conversation because sometimes it gets very confusing. I suspect with this virtual reality in which we now exist that it might be just a little bit more confusing.

Thank you for your indulgence as I deal with that issue.

Go ahead, Mr. Housefather.

Mr. Anthony Housefather: Before I begin, may I just ask a question? For the interpretation, do I have to switch between English and French, or can I just use “floor” now? Has that been fixed, or do I have to keep going back and forth between English and French?

The Chair: That, sir, I do not know, so I am going to turn to Tom to address it.

The Clerk: There has been an update to Zoom, I believe, which should have rectified the issue Mr. Housefather is speaking about. However, my understanding is that the update wasn't necessarily automatic. If your own Zoom application was not updated, you may experience it. I had this experience in another committee I was sitting in on yesterday, where some individuals who had still not updated their Zoom still had the previous issue when they were trying to switch from English to French, and unfortunately they were stuck on the wrong toggle, so to speak.

Without any word yet from the interpreters, I would suggest, Mr. Housefather, that you can certainly give that a try. If we do have any issues, I'm sure they will flag them to me, and I'm sure the members, unfortunately, will hear about them as well.

Again, my understanding is that with the new version of Zoom, that should have been resolved.

Mr. Anthony Housefather: Perfect. That was my understanding too. Thank you.

Colleagues, I have a very simple motion, which I hope will not be that difficult. As you will all remember, we spent a couple of meetings in the last session before prorogation adopting various motions for studies. These motions came from all of the different parties.

As opposed to redebating and fighting over whether or not we agree with wording, or what wording, since we already amended those motions, I'd like to just readopt the motions that we adopted in the last Parliament as they were. That doesn't mean we have to prioritize those or even do those studies, but in case the subcommittee does want to prioritize those studies, it would give them the latitude to do so.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Chair, I move:

That the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage agree that all substantive motions adopted by the Committee to undertake studies or hear from witnesses in the 1st session of the 43rd legislature are hereby adopted again by the Committee without modification or amendment.

Basically, that should save us from having to spend a meeting or two debating motions that had already been adopted. However, as I said, it doesn't necessarily mean that the subcommittee would prioritize those studies or that we would even do them. They would just be added to our list, and we could examine them if we like.

[*English*]

Mr. Chair, hopefully that would have acceptance from my colleagues.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Housefather.

Is there any discussion? I know the hands are up here on the side.

This is where it gets a little complicated. If you want to address the issue that Mr. Housefather brought up, show me your hand.

I'm trying to come up with a system. I know we have Monsieur Champoux on something different and we also have Madame Besette. I'm looking to Tom for clarification on that one.

Would anyone like to discuss the matter brought up by Mr. Housefather?

(Motion agreed to)

• (1630)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Champoux, please go ahead.

Mr. Martin Champoux: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I have two motions to put before the committee today. The first reads as follows:

That, pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), the Committee undertake a study on the difficulties and challenges facing regional media, issues that have been aggravated by the COVID-19 pandemic, with a view to proposing protections that could be introduced by the federal government, and that, for this purpose, the Committee evaluate the possibility of establishing a Canadian Print Media Fund with money generated by taxing the profits of web giants and collecting GST on online advertising; that the Committee devote a minimum of three (3) meetings to this study; and that the Committee report its findings and recommendations to the House.

Now I will read the second motion, Mr. Chair.

That, pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), the Committee undertake a study on the challenges and issues facing the cultural and tourism sectors in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, with a view to proposing a survival and recovery plan for these sectors; that the Committee devote a minimum of three (3) meetings to this study; and that the Committee report its findings and recommendations to the House.

[*English*]

The Chair: Mr. Champoux, we have two motions that you've brought forward.

With the indulgence of the committee, I propose that we deal with motion number one to begin with.

You've read it into the record. We will now open it up for conversation.

I see Mr. Rayes.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Sorry, I have a motion to put forward.

[*English*]

The Chair: Okay.

Mr. Shields.

Mr. Martin Shields: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

As you have asked for these two motions to be separated and read, my question previously—and I agree with Mr. Housefather in his intention—was whether they have to be read separately and approved as we have done with the other pieces before.

I just caught that, in a sense, when you reminded me that you wanted to read these motions. Can we do whole motions for a group that were in the past? Can you do that?

The Chair: As masters of our own destiny, what Mr. Housefather brought forth....

You're talking about the motions in the last session. Is that correct?

Mr. Martin Shields: Yes.

The Chair: What Mr. Housefather proposed is that we accept those. We voted on those and now they are a part of....

I'd like to ask Tom the clerk to distribute the motions that Mr. Housefather referred to as being brought forward to this session.

Mr. Martin Shields: Okay, so they can be done in a group and not have to be voted on.... Because we voted on everything else individually and you're asking for these two motions to be voted on individually. Can they...?

I'm guess I'm asking whether it's proper procedure to separate them or to have them done as one.

The Chair: To do both motions proposed by Monsieur Champoux as one, I suppose—

Mr. Martin Shields: No, I mean Mr. Housefather's.

The Chair: You're talking about Mr. Housefather's motion. We already voted on that, sir.

Mr. Martin Shields: Okay, all right.

The Chair: That's the only problem with that. You can divide these and discuss them if you so wish. However, we've already dispensed with those.

Mr. Martin Shields: Yes.

The Chair: In the meantime, I'm making the call right now on motion number one to have a discussion and then a vote.

Ms. Dabrusin.

• (1635)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: I was wondering whether you had it in writing, Mr. Chair. It would be a bit easier if we could read it. This is fairly important, after all. Can you email it to everyone?

Mr. Martin Champoux: I did actually send them to the clerk of the committee a bit earlier, and they have been translated. He has them in hand and they are ready to be distributed. However, I think I'll ask the clerk how to proceed at this point. Can the motions be emailed out right away or is it better to wait until the next meeting?

[*English*]

The Chair: We certainly could save that discussion for another time if you so wish.

Ms. Dabrusin, I'll come back to you, if you would like to address what Mr. Champoux just discussed.

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: It's more a procedural question, I guess, for us to think about for all substantive motions going forward. I don't know if there's even a "pin screen" function that we can start developing on Zoom, where we can have the wording up and look at it, like a "share screen" kind of function.

In theory, I don't necessarily have a problem with the motion that's been proposed. Having just heard it, I'm not sure I have focused on all the words that were said. It's just that this is a substantive motion. I'm not protesting anything about the motion; I'm just wondering if there is a way for us to be able to actually read it.

I suspect there would be some crossover if I had conversations with other members of the committee. There might be crossover in interests on some of these motions. Other people might have other words they would want to toss in or amend.

Ms. Heather McPherson: I just want to echo a little bit of what Ms. Dabrusin was saying. I would like to have it in a written format so that I could actually examine it and look at it a little more carefully.

I also just want to clarify, because of course—as I mentioned earlier—I am new. This doesn't indicate that this would be the order of any studies we would do. This wouldn't preclude any further studies we would want to do.

The Chair: No.

Ms. Heather McPherson: Okay. I just wanted to clarify that. Thank you.

Mr. Martin Shields: I totally agree. We need a visual, and that's very important as we look at this. Wording is key and wording does make a difference. Having them orally is one thing, but we need to see a visual.

The Chair: Mr. Housefather.

Mr. Anthony Housefather: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I appreciate it.

[*Translation*]

Overall, I agree with Mr. Champoux's motion. I think it deals with a very important issue. His second motion is also important, but I just hope that it will include sport, which isn't in there now.

The motions we adopted were already familiar to us; we knew what they said. Today, perhaps we can agree to wait until we receive the other motions in writing. That way, we could deal with them at the next meeting, once we've had a chance to discuss them with our fellow members, since we may have amendments to put forward. That would be better for me, because I can't recall the exact wording of the motion without having it in front of me.

The Chair: Mr. Champoux, please go ahead.

Mr. Martin Champoux: Mr. Chair, as I said earlier, I'm somewhat of a neophyte when it comes to procedure, like Ms. McPherson. I sent the motions in writing and the clerk has them in hand.

Could the committee ask the clerk to send them out to everyone, so that notice is deemed to have been given?

• (1640)

[*English*]

The Clerk: Absolutely, we can distribute those documents. I simply await the direction to do so, and we can certainly send those off by email. I can't guarantee.... Hopefully, they'll arrive as quickly as possible, but there may be a bit of a delay in sending those by email.

The Chair: Thank you, Tom.

I have Mr. Housefather and Mr. Champoux with raised hands.

It appears that we're going to have to have.... We'll distribute both motions, Mr. Champoux, and then we discuss this at the next meeting.

[*Translation*]

Thank you, Mr. Champoux.

[*English*]

Now we go to Madame Bessette.

Mrs. Lyne Bessette: Yes.

[*Translation*]

I, too, have a motion to propose. It reads as follows:

That the committee undertake a comprehensive study to review the government's support to the Arts, Culture, Heritage and Sport sectors during the COVID-19 pandemic; that it consider new measures that would better support these sectors which are disproportionately affected by the pandemic and facilitate getting artists, athletes and the cultural sector workers back to work and competitions; that it also consider measures to best assure and protect business continuity for event, festival, races and tournament organizers in these specific sectors; that the committee hold no less than four meetings on this subject; and that the committee report its findings to the House.

[*English*]

The Chair: Is there any discussion on this motion?

Mr. Anthony Housefather: I believe that this motion is, in a way, much more comprehensive than, but similar to, Mr. Champoux's second motion. If this is again one that we're putting on notice to be debated at the next meeting, perhaps prior to the next meeting, Madame Bessette, Mr. Champoux and whoever else can sit down and agree on how to draft the motion to everyone's satisfaction so that the issue is covered.

I think it shows the same general desire as Mr. Champoux's second motion. It's just done in more detail. Perhaps before the next meeting they can agree on what exactly should be in the motion, and then we can vote on that.

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Mr. Rayes, you may go ahead.

Mr. Alain Rayes: I agree. I think we should do the same thing we're doing for the other motions, meaning, wait until we have a hard copy so we can read them and see whether there's any overlap, and perhaps even consolidate certain motions to produce a final version. That way, we could also propose amendments.

I have two motions, as well. I'd like to read them and make sure the clerk can send them out afterwards.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Rayes.

Mr. Champoux, you may go ahead.

Mr. Martin Champoux: I just wanted to chime in on the discussion. I totally agree with combining motions that are very similar, so we don't waste time talking endlessly about issues that could be grouped together.

That said, I do think we need to be careful when we do that. The cultural sector is facing a unique set of circumstances, and if we don't examine them separately, we at least have to address them in conjunction with similar situations. What I'm trying to say is we mustn't water down our study of the challenges facing the cultural sector by introducing a host of other sectors because we've grouped them together in an effort to find a universal solution.

I think we really need to focus on finding a solution for the cultural community in response to the huge crisis it is facing. Of course, that in no way diminishes what other sectors are struggling with. I just want us to be mindful of that when we combine motions.

[*English*]

The Chair: That's food for thought. Thank you very much.

Perhaps, as originally suggested by Mr. Housefather, Madame Bessette and Monsieur Champoux can have a discussion as to where they can find common ground on these motions, and then we can discuss them. You have given notice on them now, and we can discuss them at the next meeting.

Does anybody else have anything to say about that?

I think that we're now drawing to a close.

• (1645)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Anthony Housefather: Mr. Rayes had two motions to put forward.

[*English*]

The Chair: Mr. Rayes, you would like to take the floor. My sincere apologies, I completely forgot.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alain Rayes: It's all right.

I have two motions to put forward, but I'd like to say something first.

I want to be sure we discuss the motions before establishing the list of priorities, once we have them all, by the next meeting.

My first motion is similar to Mrs. Bessette's. We all seem to share the same interests, regardless of political stripe. My motion reads as follows:

That the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage conduct a general study of at least 4 meetings on the socio-economic impacts of stakeholders under the Department of Canadian Heritage or benefiting, in one way or another, from the support of the Department of Canadian Heritage and the organizations therein being subject to:

- a) draw up a clear picture of the impacts of the pandemic on their activities;
 - b) better identify their needs during the current crisis; c) identify gaps in federal aid programs; d) identify more effective support measures better suited to their reality.
- This study should be completed before the Christmas Break.

My second motion reads as follows:

That the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage ask the Minister of Canadian Heritage to appear before the committee, along with Department of Canadian Heritage officials, to discuss the department's main estimates and spending priorities, and that this meeting be held before November 24, 2020.

Those are my two motions, which we will send to you, Mr. Chair.

[*English*]

The Chair: Monsieur Rayes, I'm going to break this up once again into your first motion, followed by your second motion regarding the estimates. How about, now that it's been read into the record, we have a discussion on the first motion?

Mr. Shields, your hand is up.

Mr. Martin Shields: No, it was to introduce another motion.

The Chair: Could I ask you for your patience for just one moment?

Does anyone wish to discuss what was put forward by Mr. Rayes?

The Clerk: Mr. Chair, just as a point of clarification, these are notices of motion being put forward, so there's no need for debate right now. My understanding is that these motions are all just being put on notice. Again, I could be corrected on that.

The Chair: No, maybe I got lost in translation there.

Mr. Rayes, you're putting the notice of motion. Is that correct?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alain Rayes: Yes, exactly. I'd like you to have copies in both official languages, as with the other motions.

As is the case for Mr. Champoux's and Mrs. Bessette's motions—and perhaps other motions we'll be receiving this afternoon—I'd like us to have the opportunity to examine and discuss them with our fellow members and to propose amendments or roll certain motions into one so they can be put on notice together.

[*English*]

The Chair: It's the same procedure as last time.

Thank you, Mr. Rayes, for the clarification. Again, you have my apologies.

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: I just want to comment on the main estimates one, because that is more standard. Much as for everything else, we can talk about wording, but assuming that the main estimates one—we can read it again—has standard main estimates wording, we might want to vote on that today just so the clerk can get to actually finding a date. It can sometimes be a bit tricky to organize a date with a minister's office, and it might be nice to have that there given the timeline.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Dabrusin.

My apologies to Mr. Shields, as well. I jumped ahead. I have to get away from this hand-waving thing.

Mr. Shields, go ahead.

Mr. Martin Shields: It's still on a different motion that I want to introduce.

The Chair: All right.

Mr. Waugh.

Mr. Kevin Waugh: Thank you, Chair.

I want to thank MP Rayes, MP McPherson and MP Champoux because, in the last seven or eight months, the Department of Heritage has sent out hundreds of thousands of dollars to special interest groups, as we were discussing. That's good, but I do think that when we bring these motions back—all three of them, from Madame Bessette, Mr. Rayes and Mr. Champoux—that will give us an idea of what the heritage department has done to help us with culture, arts and sports.

We all know that Minister Guilbeault has sent money out to different groups, hundreds of thousands of dollars, and we need to see where the money has gone. That's why I agree with Mr. Rayes that if we could get the minister here to look at the estimates and put two and two together, then we would know who is left out, as Mr. Champoux and Madame Bessette mentioned in their motions.

It's just a thought. We've all been gone from Ottawa for months now. We do see the announcements being made, but at the same time, we need to refresh our minds as to who in fact has gotten money over the last seven or eight months.

• (1650)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Waugh.

Before we move on, Ms. Dabrusin suggested that we initiate a vote in acceptance of the second motion on notice from Mr. Rayes.

Mr. Rayes, if you'd like to address what was proposed by Ms. Dabrusin, because this is committee business you can proceed to a vote if you wish. Perhaps you'd like to discuss that.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alain Rayes: I'm glad Ms. Dabrusin is in favour of doing that. We can at least vote on the motion to get the ball rolling and have the clerk follow up with the minister's office.

I'll read it a second time so it's clear for everyone.

That the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage ask the Minister of Canadian Heritage to appear before the committee, along with Department of Canadian Heritage officials, to discuss the department's main estimates and spending priorities, and that this meeting be held before November 24, 2020.

I can read it in English as well, if you like, but I think everyone has access to interpretation.

[*English*]

The Chair: I think that should suffice.

Are there any questions for Mr. Rayes, or any discussion on this point?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Champoux, you may go ahead.

Mr. Martin Champoux: Mr. Chair, I have no objection to the motion, on the contrary. I think it could really help the committee in its work.

Oddly enough, while some may think November 24 is quite soon, I think we should do everything we can to meet with the minister much earlier than that—as soon as possible, in fact—considering that what the committee does next will depend on the information it gets from the minister and his officials.

[*English*]

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: I hear what Monsieur Champoux is proposing, and I think we would all like to hear from the minister. I don't think there's a problem with that, except that it has to work within his schedule. I believe the date proposed by Mr. Rayes is the date by which estimates have to be voted upon.

I just want clarification—perhaps the clerk can help me—on whether the deadline date is the 24th or the 27th for the return of the main estimates. I think the deadline as it works in the motion is fine, because we will endeavour to find the soonest date, but it's going to have to take scheduling. That can get a bit complex at times.

The Chair: Before I go to Mr. Rayes, Mr. Clerk, would you like to weigh in on that?

The Clerk: I'm absolutely happy to do that.

As Ms. Dabrusin pointed out, there is indeed a deadline. The main estimates must be reported back to the House no later than Friday, November 27. However, unlike supplementary or interim estimates, there is no floating deadline, so we can say that the 27th is the latest date to get it back to the House.

If I understand the motion correctly, we are working with a deadline of having the minister before the committee by the 24th at the latest. Again, that is the latest, so we would be working with the parameters of trying to get him in anytime between now and November 24. I think that would build in quite a bit of flexibility.

I will leave it at that, sir.

The Chair: Otherwise, Tom, it would just be reported back unscrutinized. Got it.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Rayes, you may go ahead.

• (1655)

Mr. Alain Rayes: Thank you.

I'm not sure whether Mr. Champoux is still comfortable with the motion, but if not, I would be happy to amend the end as follows:

that this meeting be held as soon as possible and no later than November 24, 2020.

That is usually how it's done. That would show how important it is to the committee to hold the meeting as soon as possible. With your consent, I propose amending my own motion to hold the meeting as soon as possible and no later than November 24, 2020.

I'm not sure whether I can do that, Mr. Chair. I'm trying to find a compromise that works for everyone.

[*English*]

The Chair: You heard the motion as originally read with "November 24". Now we've included the "as soon as possible", with a deadline date as well. Let's make this official. Let's vote on the amendment first, as put forward by Mr. Rayes.

I should have asked if there's any more discussion about that.

(Amendment agreed to)

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

The Chair: Done. We have that motion.

Mr. Shields, you are next, sir.

Mr. Martin Shields: I withdraw at this time. We have enough on the table.

The Chair: That was pretty straightforward now, wasn't it?

Thank you, Mr. Shields. Your directness is always appreciated.

Is there any further business? Does anyone else want to bring something to the floor?

Mr. Waugh, go ahead.

Mr. Kevin Waugh: I've been asked by my staff if you would email documentation to MP staff at the same time as you email members who are on the committee distribution list. I think that's pretty straightforward, Mr. Clerk, but I'm asking if you can email the documentation to staff at the same time as to the MPs.

The Clerk: That is noted.

Thank you very much for that note, Mr. Waugh. Certainly, if any staff members of yours have any issues receiving documents, please let us know. Recently, we have had to make some updates to our distribution lists and we're working within a new context as well, so if there are any issues, please flag them to the committee email and we'll make sure we get documents out to all staff members.

The Chair: Is there any further discussion on that?

It looks as though we've come to the end of this meeting. I want to thank you once again from the bottom of my heart for entrusting to me the position of chair. I have no doubt that we were sporadically riddled with mistakes on occasion, but please be patient with me. I say that to everyone I know, including family. Thank you so much for this first meeting.

To our table officers, thank you so much.

To our clerk, Tom, and to Gabrielle and Marion, thank you so much.

We'll see you at the next meeting. The meeting is adjourned.

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