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Chair: The Honourable John McKay



Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security

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• (1535)

[English]

The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Jean-Marie David): Honourable members of the committee, I see a quorum. I must inform members that the clerk of the committee can only receive motions for the election of the chair. The clerk cannot receive other types of motions, cannot entertain points of order nor participate in debate.

[Translation]

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.

[English]

I am ready to receive motions for the chair.

Ms. Pam Damoff (Oakville North—Burlington, Lib.): I would like to nominate John McKay.

The Clerk: Are there any further motions?

(Motion agreed to)

The Clerk: I declare Mr. John McKay duly elected as chair of the committee.

The Chair (Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.)): Thank you, everyone. I appreciate it. It was the robocalls that probably put me over the top, as it was a hotly contested election.

Mr. Jack Harris (St. John's East, NDP): There were no mail-in ballots.

The Chair: I would have declared it a fraudulent election if I'd lost.

As people can tell, especially the new members being welcomed here, led by Shannon, I guess we must have really discouraged the entire Conservative Party last time. You did a clean sweep.

Tako, Damien and of course, the returning Glen, you're more than welcome. As Glen and others will know, we've had a pretty collegial committee, and we've done some pretty important work. I'm hoping that a lot of that work will carry over the course of whatever is left in this mandate.

With that, I'm going to move to the election of the vice-chairs. I would ask for a nomination for the first vice-chair.

Mr. Tako Van Popta (Langley—Aldergrove, CPC): I nominate Shannon Stubbs.

The Clerk: Are there any further motions?

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: Congratulations, Shannon.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC): Thank you.

The Chair: We can do the usual stuff in saying that I'm really looking forward to working with you, but I'm not sure that's true.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: It goes without saying.

The Chair: That's right.

Let's move on to the second vice-chair.

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.

[Translation]

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

Mr. Lightbound, please go ahead.

• (1540)

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Louis-Hébert, Lib.): Mr. Clerk, I nominate Kristina Michaud as second vice-chair of the committee.

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

Are there any further motions?

(Motion agreed to)

The Clerk: I declare the motion carried and Ms. Michaud duly elected second vice-chair of the committee.

[English]

Mr. Chair, the floor is now yours.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. It is indeed a pleasure to see the clerk back before us today. He's had some health challenges, and we are hoping the committee won't overwhelm him in his health challenges. It's really good to see you, Jean-Marie, and you've really been very helpful to us all.

I'd like to turn to routine motions.

Ms. Damoff.

Ms. Pam Damoff: Thank you, Chair. I'll put on the record your comments about the clerk. They are shared by everyone who's been on this committee.

I would move that we adopt the routine motions from the last session of Parliament.

Mr. Jack Harris: Chair, I guess I'll second it, but I would like to make some amendments to what is on the floor from the last Parliament. There are a couple of items that I believe need to be changed. I don't know how you want to do that.

How do you want to proceed?

The Chair: First of all, we should get the original motion on the floor.

Pam has moved it. Are you going to second it?

Mr. Jack Harris: I can second it as long as it's with amendments.

The Chair: Then you'd have to move an amendment to the main motion. The main motion is properly on the floor, so with that, I'm assuming you have an amendment to the main motion.

The Clerk: I'm sorry, Mr. Chair. It's just that we require unanimous consent if we're going to move all the motions in the same motion at the same time. I just want to make sure that the committee is in agreement.

Mr. Jack Harris: Do we have to do it that way procedurally, Mr. Clerk?

The Clerk: If we're doing all the motions at once, yes.

Mr. Jack Harris: Why don't we take them...? There are changes, from my point of view, to the motions on the subcommittee on agenda and procedure and the time for opening remarks and questions of witnesses that I would like to move as amendments. I would invite Pam to have the motion that would adopt all of the previous routine motions adopted February 20, with the exception of item two and item four. I think we can have agreement on those.

I would move my amendments then for the other two, if that's procedurally okay with Pam and the chair.

The Chair: I'm agreeable to that. Is there anything that's procedurally incorrect about that, Mr. Clerk? Okay.

In effect, we're modifying Pam's motion to say we're moving for unanimous consent on everything except the time for opening remarks and questioning witnesses, and what was the other one?

Mr. Jack Harris: It's the subcommittee on agenda and procedure. It's just the insertion of one word.

Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): I have a point of order. It's just a question on the procedure. It's my understanding that, without unanimous consent, we adopt each individually through the routine motions. Is that correct?

The Chair: Generally speaking, that's quite correct, but what we're trying to do is deal with everything else but the ones that are contentious. We're dealing with it that way, unless there's some real major objection to it.

Mr. Damien Kurek: I will note that I will be suggesting a number of amendments that would apply to the meeting without a quorum, the time for opening statements, opening remarks and questioning of witnesses, and then working meals as well.

• (1545)

The Chair: That's pretty much everything. With that, and seeing no unanimous consent to proceed in the other fashion, we'll have to go through it paragraph by paragraph.

I will ask the committee to speak to the motion on analyst services:

That the committee retain, as needed and at the discretion of the Chair, the services of one or more analysts...

Does someone want to move that?

Mr. Jack Harris: I'll move that.

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

The Chair: The motion on the subcommittee on agenda and procedure states:

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

Does someone want to move that?

Ms. Pam Damoff: No.

Mr. Jack Harris: No.

The Chair: Okay, is it “no collaboration” or “no spirit”? Which one?

Mr. Jack Harris: I have an amendment, sir.

The Chair: Do you want to move the amendment, Jack?

Mr. Jack Harris: Yes. I just wanted to introduce the word “recognized” before “party”. Where it says, “one member from each party”, I would ask that the word “recognized” be inserted. That word is used in the PROC routine motions, but it's not in the original motion we have here.

The only reason for this is that, lest there be any confusion, I notice that in the chamber, even when voting now, the chair calls upon the members of the Green Party to have their votes counted. They're not a recognized party. I don't want there to be any reason for confusion in the subcommittee. They're not a member of the committee, or they don't have appointed members of the committee, but if we're going to do it in accordance with the normal procedure, then “recognized” ought to be inserted after the word “each”.

I would move that the routine motion be amended to read as follows:

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

I am in favour of that part.

The Chair: You're in favour of collaboration. Good.

Does everyone understand the amendment to the motion?

Is there any debate on the amendment?

(Amendment agreed to)

(Motion as amended agreed to)

The Chair: Moving on, the third motion is with respect to meeting without a quorum:

That the Chair be authorized to hold meetings to receive evidence and to have that evidence printed when a quorum is not present, provided that at least four members are present, including two members of the opposition and two members of the government, but when travelling outside the parliamentary precinct, that the meeting begin after 15 minutes, regardless of members present.

Damien, I believe you had an amendment to that.

Mr. Damien Kurek: I did, Mr. Chair, but it appears that the routine motions I have differ from the ones you just read.

I will not be needing to move a motion in this regard. It has clearly outlined what I was going to amend.

The Chair: Well, there we are.

Is there any other commentary or amendment on that motion?

(Motion agreed to)

Mr. Jack Harris: As a point of information, does that mean the chair could hold a meeting by himself or herself, with no members present? Is that the idea?

• (1550)

The Chair: I think we'd accomplish a lot, if that were true.

Voices: Oh, oh!

Mr. Jack Harris: All the more reason for members to make every effort to attend.

The Chair: Yes.

I like the idea that when we get outside the parliamentary precinct, which is just basically down the street, I can start a meeting. That sounds good.

Ms. Pam Damoff: Just for clarification on that, though—

Mr. Jack Harris: We're probably all out of it now.

The Chair: Yes.

Ms. Pam Damoff: In terms of travelling outside the parliamentary precinct, what we're doing right now is actually considered within the parliamentary precinct. Is that not correct? It's because it's a virtual Parliament.

The Chair: I would think that's true, but I can't make a ruling with regard to what constitutes parliamentary precinct and what doesn't.

Mr. Jack Harris: Privilege no doubt applies, though.

The Chair: The next motion deals with the time for opening remarks and questioning of witnesses:

That at the discretion of the chair, 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.

Is that motion understood by everyone?

I see Kristina's hand up first.

[Translation]

Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Mr. Chair, I believe the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs agreed to a new method, whereby the two and a half minutes allocated to the Bloc Québécois and the NDP respectively in the second round were moved to immediately after the first five minutes allocated to the Conservatives and Liberals respectively. The Conservatives and Liberals then have another five minutes each to complete the second round.

I'm not sure whether there was agreement among the party whips to do it that way, but it would ensure that the last parties on the list, which have the least amount of speaking time, aren't always cut off at the end. I know the idea was discussed, so I just want to know where things stand.

[English]

The Chair: Are you moving that as an amendment, Ms. Michaud?

[Translation]

Ms. Kristina Michaud: Yes.

[English]

The Chair: The first round would remain the same. In the second round, just so that I understand it, the Conservatives would be five minutes and then the Bloc would be two and a half.

Mr. Jack Harris: It would turn to the Liberals.

The Chair: I'm sorry. It would be the Liberals with five, and then the Bloc with two and a half...?

Ms. Pam Damoff: It would be the Conservatives and Liberals with five, then the Bloc with two and a half, the NDP with two and a half, the Conservatives with five, and the Liberals with five. Isn't that right?

Mr. Jack Harris: That's the PROC recommendation.

Ms. Pam Damoff: If we're going to do that, Chair, it's important that we reduce the amount of witness time, even though you do an outstanding job of trying to keep everybody in line. I would suggest, even though it's at the discretion of the chair, that witnesses be given five to seven minutes. Then we can determine, depending on the panel, whether it will be five or seven. We've actually done that in the past.

The Chair: Do you mean 10 or seven minutes?

Ms. Pam Damoff: No, I mean five to seven. Witnesses would be given five to seven minutes for their opening statements.

The Chair: I see.

Ms. Pam Damoff: The rest is the same, and then there are the changes Kristina put forward.

Mr. Damien Kurek: In the spirit of collaboration—it seems this is a group motion—I would add, after the “five minutes for opening statements”, “whenever possible witnesses provide the committee with their opening statements 72 hours in advance”.

Mr. Chair, is it amenable to you to have this collaborative effort on this amendment?

The Chair: That's a good idea.

Looking to the clerk here, does it need to be part of the routine motions?

That idea of requiring 72 hours, Damien, are you making it a requirement?

Mr. Damien Kurek: I would add the words, "that whenever possible witnesses provide the committee with their opening statements 72 hours in advance".

• (1555)

The Chair: We have three amendments, if you will, running simultaneously here. Kristina's motion is first up. The question I have of Kristina is whether she perceives Pam's amendment as a friendly amendment.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Kristina Michaud: Yes, I consider it a friendly amendment.

[*English*]

The Chair: That takes care of two of the amendments. The third one is what Damien was referencing.

You're saying, wherever possible, the brief be submitted 72 hours in advance. The major problem is translation, but that's another issue.

Mr. Damien Kurek: The 72 hours are for the purpose of translation. That gives a day or two for translation, and then there is still time for committee members to review and have the briefs with them as statements are made. I'm trying to accommodate the good work our translators do.

Ms. Pam Damoff: Could the clerk speak to the translation issue? We all want to see the statements ahead of time, but that doesn't always happen. Sometimes people send them only in English.

I'm just curious. It's "wherever possible", so it doesn't really matter but....

The Clerk: There is no issue with the motion as it is right now. Obviously, sometimes it won't be possible to get briefs translated in time. You also have some witnesses who don't actually prepare notes.

However, I'll give these instructions and clearly communicate them to the witnesses, and it will help them understand the expectations of the members.

Mr. Glen Motz (Medicine Hat—Cardston—Warner, CPC): Chair, I just want clarification on what Pam recommended on the five to seven minutes. On which presentations do we decide to give them five minutes and on which presentations do we decide to give them seven minutes? If you're bored and falling asleep, obviously it's going to be five minutes.

How do we determine that? Will it always be seven minutes then? As a committee, I think we need to say it's either five minutes or seven minutes, because it's going to be tough to determine what you give.

The Chair: You are giving the discretion to the chair here, Glen.

Mr. Glen Motz: That's my concern.

The Chair: Yes, I know.

Ms. Pam Damoff: Could I just clarify that, Chair?

The Chair: Yes.

Ms. Pam Damoff: In the past what we have done is this. If we had three panellists, we went to five minutes, and if we had two, we had seven minutes. That's why I suggested the five and seven. I don't really think that we should be too prescriptive on this, but that's been the precedent before: Three panellists were given five minutes and two panellists were given a longer time.

That's why I suggested five and seven, Glen.

Mr. Glen Motz: Thank you.

The Chair: It is tough trying to keep people within the timelines. One becomes quite unpopular quite quickly, as you know, Glen.

Go ahead, Kamal.

Ms. Kamal Khara (Brampton West, Lib.): I don't have anything to add, Chair.

The Chair: Is there anyone else?

Go ahead, Jack.

Mr. Jack Harris: Thank you, Chair. I was just about to praise you for the excellent discretion you've exercised at this committee in the past, just to put Glen a little bit at ease.

I think the rule of five to seven minutes, normally depending on the number of witnesses, is fair. I am satisfied that the chair has been quite able to exercise discretion in a fair manner. Some people like to go on for more than five minutes, as you may have noticed. Some witnesses, in fact, feel deprived if they can't say more than five minutes' worth of stuff, so that's okay.

On the 72 hours, that may be a bit onerous for some unprofessional witnesses or people who might not normally prepare well in advance. I would be okay with that. The chair has acknowledged that he works with the witnesses, and you can't force people to give things 72 hours in advance or refuse them to be able to testify. I think that would limit the ability of the committee to hear evidence.

As long as it's seen that "wherever possible" is broadly interpreted by the chair and by the clerk in working with witnesses, I'd be happy with that, too. The rest is fine.

• (1600)

The Chair: Go ahead, Glen.

Mr. Glen Motz: I just want to clarify the motion that we're on. I'm somewhat confused about it.

The witnesses are going to be given five to seven minutes for their opening statements, and whenever possible, the witnesses will provide their opening statements to the committee in advance.

The Chair: Yes, 72 hours.

Mr. Glen Motz: Right.

At the discretion of the chair, the questioning of witnesses will be allocated to six minutes for the first questioner of each party—

The Chair: No. There's no discretion of the chair.

Mr. Glen Motz: We'll take that out. They'll be allocated six minutes for the first questioner of each party in round one—Conservative, Liberal, Bloc and NDP. In the second and subsequent rounds, the order and timing is Conservatives and Liberals for five, Bloc and NDP for two and a half each, in that order, and if there's any time left, Conservatives followed by Liberals.

The Chair: I'm sorry, I [*Technical difficulty—Editor*].

Mr. Jack Harris: We lost you, John.

Ms. Pam Damoff: You're on mute again, John.

The Chair: I think there's a “mute somebody or other” out there that's frustrating me.

Glen, I jumped in a little quickly on you. There is discretion for the chair to reduce time for questioning. It says “at the discretion of the chair” twice: first with respect to the witnesses, and second with respect to the members. That has been routine. You just have to have it because you can't control time in this business.

Does everybody have an understanding of this motion? Are we good on it? Does anybody need it read back by the clerk? Do we understand what we're voting on?

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

The Chair: Thank you very much.

The next motion concerns working meals.

Ms. Pam Damoff: No, it's document distribution.

The Chair: Did I miss something?

Oh yes, I did; it's document distribution.

Mr. Damien Kurek: I have a point of order, with an information question.

Is this being broadcast?

The Chair: Yes, we are in public.

Mr. Damien Kurek: Then let me ask through you, Mr. Chair, to the clerk, is it just online that it's being broadcast? How would my staff be able to access it?

The Clerk: Mr. Chair, there are two ways. It's broadcast on ParIVu, but there's also a phone number they can call to access the live feed.

The Chair: Are we good with that?

Okay.

I'm sorry, I skipped document distribution. The motion for it is:

That only the clerk of the committee be authorized to distribute documents to members of the committee and only when such documents exist in both official languages, and that witnesses be advised accordingly.

There's the motion on the floor. Is there any discussion?

Ms. Pam Damoff: I'll move it, Chair.

The Chair: Is there any discussion?

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: I'll keep on working here, but I wonder, out of curiosity, whether there are any further changes to the routine motions that we had before.

On working meals, the motion is:

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

Can someone move that?

Mr. Damien Kurek: I'd be happy to move it, Mr. Chair, and then I would make an amendment to the motion as well.

The Chair: Okay, the motion is on the floor, and you want to make an amendment. Go for it.

Mr. Damien Kurek: In acknowledgement of the different times we're in, I move that “provided that members have confirmed their physical presence for the meeting” be added to the end of the working meals routine motion.

Thank you.

• (1605)

The Chair: I don't quite understand. Could you give me some explanation of what that means?

Mr. Damien Kurek: Sure. Because we will have hybrid meetings, members should confirm physical attendance at the meeting, out of respect for those who are preparing the bagged lunches and whatnot for our meetings. For staff to prepare 12 meals when only four members will be present.... It's a very different set of circumstances to prepare for 12 than to prepare for four.

Mr. Jack Harris: Does that mean, Chair, that if you're sitting in your office on Parliament Hill someone will bring you a bagged lunch, but no one will bring me one here in St. John's?

The Chair: We'll fly one out for you directly, Jack.

Mr. Jack Harris: Purolator's still working.

Ms. Pam Damoff: I have a question. While we're in virtual Parliament, is the House even providing meals if people are physically in Ottawa?

Mr. Damien Kurek: Mr. Chair, I can speak for that, having been on the ethics committee this summer.

They do provide bagged lunches. The staff at the House of Commons have done a great job, but this would give them an idea so that they know how much to prepare, especially in the hybrid setting in which you could have three members or you could have eight or 12 members.

It just ensures that we're respecting those who are doing the background work so that we can do our work.

To address Mr. Harris's point, those in their offices wouldn't get the lunches but will enjoy them in the committee room.

The Chair: The way it would read, then, is “committee meals for the committee members present”. Is that right?

Mr. Damien Kurek: I can read it again. The motion as written is this:

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

I suggest replacing the period with a comma and adding “provided that members have confirmed their physical presence for the meeting”. That is the addition.

The Chair: It seems awfully awkward. Why not simply say, “for committee members present”?

Mr. Damien Kurek: It's in order to give time for the staff to prepare accordingly, if it's a meeting that will be taking place over lunch.

The Chair: Okay.

Is there any other discussion?

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: I agree with the change that Damien's trying to make because of our virtual scenario. We could all conceivably be present, but if we're not physically there, we don't want House administration to be running around, spending money or taking up their time to make meals people aren't going to eat.

Mr. Jack Harris: This is not for this meeting we're having now, for example. It's only for a meeting that has a boardroom where there are actually people physically present in Ottawa. It doesn't quite say that, but okay.

The Chair: Is there any other discussion?

(Amendment agreed to)

(Motion as amended agreed to)

The Chair: We're on travel, accommodation and living expenses of witnesses. The motion would read:

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 per organization; and that in exceptional circumstances, payment for more representatives be made at the discretion of the Chair.

Ms. Pam Damoff: John, if the committee agrees, I will give you a motion to adopt the remaining routine motions in one vote. I think all the ones that needed changes have been dealt with now.

The Chair: I'm looking for support to that effect. You're moving that as a motion, right?

Ms. Pam Damoff: Yes, I am.

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

The Chair: Excellent. Thank you.

I was rather hoping to go to subcommittee work. Let me take some guidance here from the clerk.

You had sent me a motion that says that the subcommittee on general procedure be established, and be composed of five members, the chair, etc. In light of the motions we passed, do we need to deal with that motion?

• (1610)

The Clerk: Mr. Chair, the only problem is that as the motion is worded right now, I need to confirm with the whip of each party who will be a member of the subcommittee. That may delay us.

If the committee wants to adopt a different motion and rescind the one that was adopted earlier, that's another option. Perhaps we could specify the actual people, and then in the future we could move again to the regular motion.

The Chair: Okay.

Ms. Pam Damoff: Chair, I'm going to suggest moving a motion here and then that we move to subcommittee to develop a work plan and pick a date that people can put forward additional studies.

The motion I want to bring is:

That, pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), the committee undertake a study of systemic racism in policing services in Canada, in particular the RCMP, and that the evidence and documentation received by the committee during the First Session of the 43rd Parliament on the subject be taken into consideration by the committee in the current session. That the Committee report its findings to the House and that pursuant to Standing Order 109, the government table a comprehensive response to the report.

My wording would have been that we continue a study except we really can't. This was Jack's initiative in the summer, so basically we would be finishing the good work we started in the summer.

I'm getting ahead a bit, but perhaps that gives us the ability to get the clerk working on this. We can move to the subcommittee whenever he has the names to develop a work plan. Then perhaps we could pick a date as a group for all parties to submit additional ideas for studies, and then we can hash that out in the steering committee.

The Chair: That's a motion properly before the committee.

Is there any discussion?

Mr. Jack Harris: I don't think it needs a seconder, but I will second it in any event.

Yes, I am in complete agreement with that approach, Pam, and thank you for preparing that motion because, of course, the study is no more until we revive it. I think that effectively revives the study and allows us to consider all the evidence, and to hear more. That would be totally appropriate. I don't know how long it's going to take to know who is going to be on the subcommittee. I don't think there's much doubt about that.

Perhaps there are a number of other studies I have given consideration to, but I didn't think today was the day we were going to talk about them. If we could proceed with whatever we have to do to continue the study we're adopting and, at the same time, set a date for a steering or subcommittee meeting, I think by then we would have things in place from the whips to allow the subcommittee to meet.

The Chair: Is there any further discussion?

Ms. Michaud.

[Translation]

Ms. Kristina Michaud: I was going to move more or less the same motion as Ms. Damoff, so I'm obviously in favour of it. However, could we get it in writing so it's all spelled out?

Next, I'd like to know whether we're adopting motions, as I have others to put forward. Is now the time for that?

[English]

The Chair: Pam's initial motion is to get the work of the committee started, specifically on the racism study. Meanwhile, the subcommittee would be properly constituted, and we would then, as a subcommittee, pick a date to get together to deal with other issues to be pursued, other studies to be undertaken, and set out a work plan for the committee.

Is it the will of the committee to, first of all, deal with Pam's motion?

Mr. Damien Kurek: To clarify, are there two motions on the floor, one to deal with the systemic racism study, and then another to assign the subcommittee the ability to determine—

• (1615)

The Chair: No, at this point there is only one motion properly on the floor.

Mr. Glen Motz: I don't have an issue with the first part of Pam's motion on studying racism. My concern is that any other motions that Kristina, Jack or any of my colleagues on the Conservative side want to bring forward on a study are effectively going to be relegated to the subcommittee to decide. Those are conversations the entire committee should be having on what studies we're going to be moving forward with.

I'm prepared to suggest to Pam that we amend the motion to say that if you want to study systemic racism, let's deal with that in a motion. If we're going to deal with anything else besides that, whether it be subcommittees or other motions, then we deal with those separately. That would be my recommendation.

Mr. Damien Kurek: I would agree with my colleague Glen. It seems to me that one of the most valuable aspects of the committee format is to ensure that the subjects of studies and whatnot can be debated in a format where we can give appropriate scrutiny.

The subcommittee is very valuable, and in terms of work plans for any particular motion, I 100% agree. However, in terms of the work of the committee, I'm not comfortable with that being part of a motion that would effectively reduce any of our members' ability, who are not on the subcommittee, to move forward with really anything that's of merit that this committee may or may not study.

The Chair: For procedural cleanliness, can we deal with the motion? Then, if either Glen or Damien wish to discuss further issues at the committee rather than at the subcommittee, a motion can be moved to that effect.

Mr. Jack Harris: Can I jump in? I appreciate what both Glen and Damien were saying. My understanding is that the subcommittee doesn't make decisions as to which studies will be pursued. The committee may discuss various subjects and recommend certain subjects, but nothing can be decided by the subcommittee other than to send a report to the committee.

If there needs to be preliminary discussion by the full committee, then that's a different matter. I don't particularly see anything wrong with that, but normally, we have proceeded the other way. However, that's a matter for the committee to decide, I guess.

The Chair: To go back, can we deal with Pam's motion? Then we'll move to the concerns raised by Damien and Glen, and Jack can make his point.

Mr. Tako Van Popta: Just for clarification on Pam's motion about systemic racism, was there included in her motion some language about how many hours or days or meetings we're going to dedicate to that study?

The Chair: Pam.

Ms. Pam Damoff: No, there was not, and deliberately, because even though this is a brand new Parliament, I don't want to be that prescriptive. We had picked witnesses from before. That's why I suggested the subcommittee could do a work plan. I think we had two meetings left, but there were three witnesses per meeting. Jack mentioned that there are some people he'd like to hear from. I think cramming the three witnesses into one meeting is a challenge. We did it because it was the summer and we were trying to get in as much as we could.

Even if we only went with the same witnesses we had last time, I would strongly urge that we have only two witnesses per meeting to allow for proper questioning of the witnesses. For anyone who was on the committee when we had three, and for some of them I think we had four witnesses, it really did a disservice to the testimony we were given.

So I did not put a number of meetings on it. Having said that, we've already held quite a few meetings on it, so there's not an awful lot left for us to do.

I'll just leave it there.

• (1620)

The Chair: Shannon.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: Thank you, Chair.

To that point, Pam, I think it would be beneficial to add in a time frame and some specificity around the remaining meetings. I would suggest two. The reason I suggest two for the remaining meetings is that there have already been six meetings, and 26 witnesses participated in this important study previously. Although it is a new Parliament, we certainly, I would think, face no barriers in terms of calling on their testimony and their good work and sharing their experiences here.

I also note that in 2019 at this committee there was a study on crime in rural areas—thank you for taking that on—and a study on indigenous people in the federal corrections system. Both were eight meetings in total, so it seems to me that it's reasonable for us to say that we can wrap up this important work with two remaining meetings.

The other reason I would say this is that I think we all want to get to better outcomes. The longer we have meetings, the longer we're held up from moving forward with substantive recommendations and a report to achieve both a highlight of the concerns on this issue and also a move to substantive recommendations to stamp out instances of racism, to which we are all unanimously opposed, and actually get to making things better on this issue in Canada.

That's why I would propose, if members would support it, adding in a timeline for a completion of this study and then to dictate our work from there.

The Chair: Glen, before I turn to Kristina, Jack and then Joël, I just got a note from the clerk saying that without your headset on, you get no interpretation. Maybe you're one of those guys who don't need any interpretation.

Mr. Glen Motz: I borrowed this headset. I was told by the person I borrowed it from in the office next door that it keeps cutting out. I will try it. Hopefully, it doesn't cut out anymore.

The Chair: Thanks.

We have Kristina, Jack and then Joël.

[Translation]

Ms. Kristina Michaud: I'd like Ms. Damoff to read out the motion. I'd also like to know whether we can move amendments to the motion before it is put to a vote.

[English]

The Chair: Yes, we can do that.

Pam, do you want to read out the motion again so that we all know what we're talking about here?

Your mike is on mute.

Ms. Pam Damoff: Oh. I'm pulling a John McKay here.

The Chair: That's right.

Ms. Pam Damoff: Kristina, I was unable to share this motion ahead of time because the committee wasn't constituted. I do have it translated, but I'll read it again:

That, pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), the committee undertake a study into systemic racism in policing in Canada and in particular the RCMP, and that the evidence and documentation received by the committee during the First Session of the 43rd Parliament on the subject be taken into consideration by the committee in the current session; that the committee report its findings to the House; and that, pursuant to Standing Order 109, the committee request that the Government table a comprehensive response to the report.

I believe it's the motion I have on the table, is it not, Chair?

The Chair: Yes.

Ms. Pam Damoff: It's exactly the same motion that we passed in the last session of Parliament, just with the addition that we bring the evidence from the previous session into this session. That's the only change that's been made to the motion we adopted.

The Chair: Kristina.

[Translation]

Ms. Kristina Michaud: Thank you, Mr. Chair and Ms. Damoff.

That's great. I wanted to add that the work done previously be given serious consideration, even though this is a new session of Parliament.

I would even say that we should specify a date for the tabling of the report. There is consensus on this issue: everyone wants things to progress quickly so our findings can be reported to the House in short order. With your agreement, I would suggest including a specific date, before January 2021. I'm not sure how long it normally takes to write a report. The clerk could enlighten me on that. I think we need to deal with this issue expeditiously so the committee can move on to its next study. I know a number of topics are on the list.

• (1625)

[English]

The Chair: We're getting a fair number of proposed amendments. Why don't I do it this way? Why don't we go through the discussion first, exhaust the discussion, and then we'll go back to the amendments as to the number of meetings and an end date?

Jack.

Mr. Jack Harris: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'm going to suggest that Pam's motion is probably sufficient for this meeting. The decisions about whether we should have one meeting, or two or three or four, are premature at this point, unless someone has a desire to compress the study.

We have a number of new members on the committee. We're bringing new evidence back in as a result of the motion that was passed. People should have a chance to review it and see if it's complete.

There are a number of topics that we did discuss, and as Pam pointed out, some of our witnesses, even though valuable.... If you had three witnesses appearing and making presentations in one hour, quite often you didn't have a lot of time to ask questions. You couldn't ask three people questions. If you were lucky, you had a thorough opportunity with one. I think we do need time to consider that.

The steering committee may make recommendations to the group. People will have their opinions and make a decision. A full committee would still make the decision. I think there needs to be an opportunity for people to say what they would do with those meetings, what aspects were not covered or ought to be covered.

I'm not going to get into some suggestions that I had, but there are one or two very important issues—contract policing, for example—that we didn't really get into very much. I don't know if we had it as part of our original work plan.

I'm not interested in having a full fall being spent on this committee, by no means. I have four or five ideas of my own, and I'm sure committee members will have others that we need to put into the mix to see what we do next. I would certainly think that either the....

On the timing of the report, we could decide that today, although, again, I think that if we leave it to the subcommittee to at least discuss these things and come up with a collective recommendation, as opposed to something in the spur of the.... It's nothing to negate the thought that went into your motion, Kristina, but to at least think about it and have an opportunity to talk to the clerk about what's realistic in terms of the committee, the analysts' work and all that. I think we might get a better idea of how quickly we can do this. That just seems to me to make sense.

The Chair: Before I call on Joël, I'll just mention that you've all been mailed the motion. It should be in your box.

Joël.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Joël Lightbound: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I agree with Mr. Harris that we shouldn't decide on a set number of meetings and we should let the Subcommittee on Agenda and Procedure figure it out. If it's the committee's will, perhaps we could establish a maximum number of meetings—say, six—and let the subcommittee figure out exactly how many we need. Realistically, I think we need more than two meetings to dive back into the study we started in the summer and to instruct the analysts.

[*English*]

The Chair: Does anyone else want to speak to the main motion? If there is no one to speak to the main motion, then I want to go to Shannon.

You're going to move, as an amendment, your limitation to two meetings.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: I think I pick up from Jack's comments, and the comments around the table, that there doesn't seem to be an appetite for setting limits on the number of meetings.

I would still encourage that to happen, for the reasons that have been discussed. I will suggest, and seek to discuss right after this, that if we do vote in favour of continuing the systemic racism study, in particular with no concrete timeline for us to put forward recommendations to take action, we also seek to move to bring back the Parole Board study into the Levesque murder, because there were only two meetings done with five witnesses heard on that study. In the exact same thought process and arguments that have been made by our members about this study, I'll seek to have that continued by our committee.

That is an additional reason why we should be mindful of timelines on these studies, because we'll need to continue with that important work and have time for both of those things to be accomplished.

• (1630)

The Chair: I interpret that as withdrawing your limitation.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: Yes.

The Chair: Next was Kristina.

You wanted to set an outside date. Do you want to move that as a motion?

[*Translation*]

Ms. Kristina Michaud: Mr. Lightbound made a good point. Before I move an amendment, I'd like the clerk to clarify a few things for me. Is the time frame I suggested realistic? Does it give us enough time to get everything ready, write the report and so forth?

I'd like to hear what the clerk thinks.

[*English*]

The Chair: We have a very learned clerk, and he has many opinions. I'm sure he can express himself.

[*Translation*]

The Clerk: Thank you for the question, Ms. Michaud.

It's a bit hard right now to give you an answer, since the parties are in the midst of hashing out which committees are going to meet when and how often. That means we still don't know whether the committee is going to have the same meeting frequency as before, in other words, every week, twice a week. Until I have a specific timetable for the committee, it will be hard to help you figure out dates.

[*English*]

The Chair: Kristina, do you still want to pursue your proposal in the form of a motion?

[*Translation*]

Ms. Kristina Michaud: In this case, I think it's reasonable not to pursue the amendment, so I'll withdraw it.

[*English*]

The Chair: Pam.

Ms. Pam Damoff: If we're not going ahead, I was thinking that when we table the report in the House, perhaps we can include something in the report itself about having the government report back by a date.

There's so much uncertainty right now, and if Kristina is not going forward, then I can just let that go.

The Chair: At this point, unless there is other discussion, Pam's motion, as read into the record, is the only thing to be voted on. We would then move to Damien and Glen's concern about the discussion of what the other priorities of the committee are.

Is there any other discussion on Pam's motion?

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: Before I ask Damien and Glen to speak on other things that they feel concerned about, the clerk has sent me a note about the state of the ability to hold meetings virtually and otherwise, making it difficult for him to talk about timelines and the frequency of our meetings.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Clerk, I'll let you explain.

[*English*]

The Clerk: It's pretty much what I said in French the first time around. The parties are currently negotiating which committees are going to sit and at what frequency they will sit. This means that, at the moment, it's impossible for me to know how many meetings we have in the next few weeks or the next months. It makes it very difficult for me to assist members in planning their work. That's why I'm not giving you much information in terms of deadlines at this point.

• (1635)

The Chair: Thank you.

Damien or Glen, do you want to speak?

Damien.

Mr. Damien Kurek: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I appreciate that.

I think the confusion was in Ms. Damoff's introduction. It made it sound as though the motion was limiting the ability of the committee to discuss other items. I'm comfortable with moving forward on the committee business as scheduled, although I would make one note. Certainly I appreciate seeing all of you virtually and the circumstances that prohibit many of our regular activities as members of Parliament, but I would note the significant value of being able to have meetings in person and certainly would encourage, for sure, the hybrid setting.

As I mentioned before, I did have the opportunity to do a number of in-person committee meetings this summer that were very good. We talked a lot about the co-operation between members, and certainly I think a physical presence is a significant part of ensuring that can be the case going forward. I would make that note, but I appreciate Ms. Damoff's entire motion and the clarifications that it brought to the future work of the committee.

The Chair: Thank you.

Glen, did you want to add anything?

Ms. Pam Damoff: I can't hear him.

The Chair: We still can't hear you, Glen.

Ms. Pam Damoff: Chair, on a point of order, if the interpreters can't hear him, I don't think he can participate.

Mr. Glen Motz: I can't help it. There's a headset, but it doesn't work. I'm sorry.

Ms. Pam Damoff: No, we need it to be bilingual.

Glen, I'm not trying to be difficult, but it's not fair to our francophone members if they're not getting translation.

Mr. Damien Kurek: Can I make a suggestion? Glen, you can call in with a telephone and use the telephone as a microphone that has the same quality as a telephone conversation. That might be an intermediate....

Mr. Glen Motz: Yes.

Chair, I have a motion or two to present. I will do that shortly.

The Chair: Yes.

While Glen is dialing up, we'll go to Gagan.

Mr. Gagan Sikand (Mississauga—Streetsville, Lib.): I just want to flag that I also want to reintroduce my motion that I brought to the committee last time, on gang violence.

The Chair: Okay.

I need some guidance from the committee as to whether you wish to use the balance of the time, which would be until 5:30, to receive motions. I'm going to work on the assumption that once the motions are received, accepted and passed, they will then be referred to the subcommittee for work.

Pam.

Ms. Pam Damoff: Chair, in previous committees in the last Parliament, it was always helpful if we set a date. All of the motions could be sent in, and then all of us get an opportunity to read them and to think about amendments.

We weren't able to give 48 hours' notice to do that, because we didn't have a committee, but I think we could just set a date and do it in quite short timing, have the opportunity to look at the studies and have an educated discussion on what we want to do as a committee moving forward. Once we decide on the studies, we can send it to the subcommittee.

It's difficult. Kristina had asked me to read the motion twice. We haven't seen any of the motions, and Glen is having difficulty with his audio. It has worked well on public safety in the last Parliament, and status of women, which I was on, so I would propose a date. Most people seem to have them already. Maybe we'd just go until Wednesday next week, and when all the studies are submitted to the clerk and distributed, then we can have a committee meeting, if that's the will of the committee, to go over them.

The Chair: Unfortunately, it would seem that Glen is still struggling. He would have precedence in terms of presenting, and then I think Gagan is up.

I think the way Pam is suggesting is perfectly reasonable, but—

Mr. Gagan Sikand: Sorry, Chair, I was just going to speak to that and say that I agree with her. I think that's a better way of going about it.

• (1640)

The Chair: Okay. That would effectively mean you would have to withdraw your intention to file a motion, if that's all right.

Mr. Gagan Sikand: Provided that hers passes, yes.

The Chair: Well, that's at your risk.

Jack.

Mr. Jack Harris: If we're talking about the work for the balance of today's meeting, if the intention is that people want to move motions for studies, then Pam's was a particular motion that revived a study, which I think is in a different category. If people have new studies to do, and perhaps the one that Shannon had with respect to the study that was under way, they are in a different category. If there are new studies going on, I would propose....

I mean, I have five suggested studies. I didn't come with motions today and I don't intend to present them today. They are things we could discuss at a meeting of the steering committee. One or two of them will maybe survive, or maybe none of them will. At least we could come back with the recommendations to the committee, and then the whole of the committee could deliberate on the value of each individual study.

However, to try to deal with them today, without everybody participating, I think would be defeating the collegiality that we talked about, the collaborative nature of the work we do. I know that everybody has pet ideas. I know I certainly have lots of them. I don't think that today is the right time to do it.

If we had an opportunity for everybody to present their motions so we could have them together all at once when we're deliberating the priority that the committee as a whole wants to give them, I think that would be a more appropriate way to go. That's my view. It may not meet with the approval of the committee, but I think that's a better way to proceed.

The Chair: I might well agree with you, but Glen has his motion up.

I think I'm hearing something.

Mr. Glen Motz: Can you hear me now?

The Chair: I can hear you. The question is, does translation get you?

A voice: This is interpretation. The sound is coming through loud and clear, Mr. Motz.

The Chair: They can hear you.

Okay. Proceed, Glen.

Mr. Glen Motz: Thank you, Chair.

I apologize to the committee. I should have known.... In any event, a new headset works wonders.

Chair, if I may, I would like to propose the following motion: That, pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security request that the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness appear for a full two-hour meeting, at his earliest possible convenience, to answer questions about the Prime Minister's mandate letter to him; that the minister appear at the meeting exclusively for the purpose of the mandate letter and no other matters; and that this meeting be televised.

That's my motion.

The Chair: The motion is proper and in order, and this is what the committee is discussing.

Everyone has heard the motion. Is there any discussion?

Pam.

Ms. Pam Damoff: I have a question.

I know that when the minister appears before committee on other issues, like estimates, questions veer into whatever is in the headlines that week. I don't know how you say he can only talk about the mandate letter.

I think the minister would be happy to come. Normally he only comes for an hour, so I would propose an amendment to make it one hour.

I would remind our colleagues that if we're going to talk about his mandate letter, which I'm sure he would love to talk about, we stick to the mandate letter and don't use it as an opportunity to question what's in the headlines that week.

The Chair: First of all, Pam, are you moving that as an amendment to Glen's motion?

Ms. Pam Damoff: Normally, the ministers would come for an hour and officials would come for an hour, so two hours seems a bit excessive for the minister. They don't normally come for the full two hours.

The Chair: Glen, do you see that as friendly or unfriendly?

Mr. Glen Motz: Well, Pam is friendly. The suggestion might be unfriendly. I think the fact that he hasn't been at this committee... COVID has prevented that since he got his mandate letter.

• (1645)

Ms. Pam Damoff: He actually has been to the committee, with all due respect.

The Chair: He has.

Mr. Glen Motz: Is this since he got his mandate letter?

The Chair: Yes.

Mr. Glen Motz: Fair enough, but I still propose that, because his portfolio is so broad and there are so many things going on, not only with respect to this issue we talked about with systemic racism and the parole, but also with respect to emergency preparedness and matters of public safety all across the spectrum, it would be great to have as much time as possible with the minister. Since we have only a two-hour window, having him here the entire time to answer questions, as opposed to his officials, would be of benefit to the committee members.

The Chair: I'm working on the presumption that Pam is friendly and the amendment is not, so after the discussion we'll have to vote on the amendment to the motion first.

Is there any further discussion?

Pam.

Ms. Pam Damoff: I have a question again. I'm assuming the opposition is going to want the minister to appear on estimates. Is it the will of the member that the minister come for two hours on his mandate letter and then come back to talk about estimates? I'm sure there's a timeline on those. That's another reason. He did appear in the summer before the committee for one hour with his officials.

That's just a question. Does he want the minister to come for the main estimates as well as for his mandate letter, or would they be combined as one?

The Chair: Glen, do you want to respond to that before I go to Shannon?

Mr. Glen Motz: I'll let Shannon go ahead.

The Chair: Shannon.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Indeed, the minister did come to the committee in the summer, but of course that was for the study on systemic racism.

I think the importance of the position of the public safety minister right now and the variety of initiatives that have happened under his portfolio, including his crucial position with what Canada is facing right now and the fact that he hasn't, in fact, appeared on his mandate letter, more than merits a two-hour appearance. We as committee members can then do our due diligence and our jobs, on behalf of the people we represent, to hold him to account on the status and the work he is doing based on his mandate.

As well, in this crucial time that we're apparently all in together, it is the perfect time—and urgent, in fact—for him to spend two hours with this committee.

Then he should join us again, as is his duty, in supplementary estimates separately.

The Chair: Is there any other discussion?

The procedure would mean that the first vote—and this will have to be a recorded vote—will be on Pam's motion that the timeline of the original motion be reduced from two hours to one.

(Amendment negatived: nays 6; yeas 5 [*See Minutes of Proceedings*])

The Chair: The amendment fails.

We now go to the main motion. Does everybody understand it or do you need any clarification?

Jack.

• (1650)

Mr. Jack Harris: This is just a clarification. Is this intended, Glen, to supersede the other motion in terms of time, or is the time to be determined by the availability, whatever the recommendation of the subcommittee might be and the decision afterwards?

What's your understanding?

Mr. Glen Motz: Jack, I would suggest that's one of the logistical issues for the subcommittee to determine, based on the minister's schedule and the other studies that are under way.

The Chair: Okay, we are ready to vote.

(Motion agreed to: yeas 11; nays 0)

The Chair: Are there any other items for discussion?

Go ahead, Shannon.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: Thank you, Chair.

I do want to move a motion now, and it is relevant to Jack's comments about the differentiations between the motions on studies for future work and the one I am about to move.

I want to move that our committee reconvene the study on the Parole Board and the circumstances that led to a young woman's death, which you were working on previously. Pam, you've said that the work is not done and that we must do more to prevent gender-based violence; and Joël, you have spoken very passionately about the importance of this work in the committee.

In exactly the same framework and mindset in which we are continuing the previous study on systemic racism, I would make an argument that we have a duty to determine if there are systemic issues within the parole system that may put vulnerable women at risk and in danger. Certainly, because of the incident that occurred, I think it behooves us to continue with that work. That is in a separate category than other studies and other work that we might do in the future.

Should I just move my motion on recommencing this study?

The Chair: Yes, you could. Let's hear your motion first.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: I move that, pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security continue the study on the Parole Board and the circumstances that led to a young woman's death, as originally instructed by unanimous vote in the House of Commons on February 5, 2020, and that the committee report its findings to the House with recommendations.

The Chair: The motion is properly in front of the committee.

Before we commence discussion, I want to point out to the committee that the particular study in that particular motion was as a reference from the House, and all matters that are referred to committees die with prorogation.

I don't want to pre-empt any conversation, and I don't know whether the clerk has any matter to add to it, but I think it is unique and distinct from the racism study that was initiated by the committee itself.

Could I hear from the clerk as to whether what would otherwise be a motion that's properly before the committee would be in order?

• (1655)

The Clerk: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

There's actually no objection, procedurally. If the committee wants to resume a previous study, it can do so. I might suggest a different wording, but other than that, there is no issue.

The Chair: What would the wording be if it was going to be different?

The Clerk: If you wish, I can send a copy to all members, but in English it would be this: That, pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), the committee undertake a study of the Parole Board and the circumstances that led to a young woman's death, and that the evidence and the documentation received by the committee during the First Session of the 43rd Parliament on the subject be taken into consideration by the committee in the current session.

The Chair: So in effect, it's an end run on the reference from the House. Is that correct?

The Clerk: I'm not sure what you mean by an "end run".

The Chair: Well, you're not referring back to the unanimous motion that sent it to this committee.

The Clerk: Yes, that's correct. Basically, the motion relies on the committee's power to create its own studies.

The Chair: Okay.

Shannon, I'm assuming that is acceptable to you.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: Yes.

The Chair: Okay.

Is there any discussion?

Go ahead, Pam.

Ms. Pam Damoff: I think Joël had his hand up first, Chair.

The Chair: Sorry, Joël.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Joël Lightbound: I'd just like to thank Mrs. Stubbs.

This is indeed an important motion. It deals with an issue that merits the same level of study as systemic racism. The subcommittee is probably in the best position to determine how many meetings we need for the study. I have confidence in the subcommittee to sort all those things out.

[*English*]

The Chair: Okay.

Is there any other discussion?

Go ahead, Kristina.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Kristina Michaud: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I have an amendment to the motion in light of recent cases, especially the Cox case. I'd like to add the following:

...that the Committee also study a more recent case of a repeat offender who had committed violent sexual offences against young women and then committed another offence while on parole; and that the study be renamed the study on the Parole Board of Canada and the circumstances surrounding repeat sexual crimes against women by certain sex offenders.

[*English*]

The Chair: Kristina, could you go over that motion again, more slowly, so that interpretation can pick it up, please?

The Clerk: Mr. Chair, perhaps I can send it by email.

The Chair: Oh, okay.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Kristina Michaud: I can read it out as well.

[*English*]

The Chair: In the meantime, read it again. It's a short motion.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Kristina Michaud: All right.

...that the Committee also study a more recent case of a repeat offender who had committed violent sexual offences against young women and then committed another offence while on parole; and that the study be renamed the study on the Parole Board of Canada and the circumstances surrounding repeat sexual crimes against women by certain sex offenders.

[*English*]

The Chair: Okay. I still don't have it on my...motion, but the first question would be whether Shannon sees that as a friendly amendment.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: Yes, it's a sure thing. I see it as friendly and totally acceptable like that.

The Chair: Okay.

Go ahead, Pam.

Ms. Pam Damoff: Thanks, Chair.

The case was certainly horrible, except that he wasn't granted parole, so it would be impossible to do the two. We're looking at one case where we're continuing a study on someone who was granted parole, and it involves the Parole Board, whereas, in fact, this person was denied parole twice, and he was out on statutory release. They're two completely different cases.

I'm very supportive of continuing the work we were doing in the last session on the study we had started, but if we start expanding it.... It's very, very different. Statutory release is something that's prescribed in the law, so we can't study that.

I think we should move forward with the study Shannon has put forward, but I wouldn't be supportive of expanding it, for a number of reasons: not because what happened isn't concerning, but because they're very different cases.

• (1700)

The Chair: Kristina.

[Translation]

Ms. Kristina Michaud: I completely understand what Ms. Damoff is saying.

My only concern is that witnesses we heard from couldn't reveal certain details because Marylène Levesque's case was still under investigation. It does no harm to broaden the study. Even if the two cases are different, we could seek out other information in an effort to understand things.

That's why I proposed we broaden the study to include other cases, even if they aren't all the same. This kind of thing happens all the time. There will never be two cases that are exactly alike. I think broadening the study would be well received.

[English]

The Chair: Is there any other conversation?

Glen.

Mr. Glen Motz: I would agree with [Technical difficulty—Editor].

Ms. Pam Damoff: We can't hear you, Glen.

Mr. Glen Motz: Sorry. Hold on. I'll try this....

Can you hear me now?

The Chair: Yes. That's much better.

Mr. Glen Motz: Ms. Michaud, I would tend to agree that the issue around the tragic death of Ms. Levesque does speak to a larger Parole Board issue and parole violations. While we want to focus on that one, it might help us frame a larger issue if we can find some other aspects of the whole Parole Board and how they do their work to improve public safety.

The Chair: Joël.

[Translation]

Mr. Joël Lightbound: Mr. Chair, I think Mr. Harris raised his hand before me. If not, I can go ahead.

[English]

The Chair: Oh, sorry.

Go ahead, Joël. You're on.

[Translation]

Mr. Joël Lightbound: Very well.

I agree with Ms. Damoff. While the case Ms. Michaud flagged is troubling, the two cases are completely different. One involves the Parole Board of Canada, and the other involves statutory release, as prescribed by law. We would be undertaking a study of a radically different case. I don't think that was the purpose of the original study the House referred to the committee, which had to do with the Parole Board of Canada and Marylène Levesque's murder.

To my mind, they are two completely distinct cases. That doesn't mean one is any more important than the other; they're both equally important. However, we would be taking the study in a whole other direction, at the risk of watering it down. In this case, we are talking about the actions of the Parole Board of Canada and the judgment of the board members and officers.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you.

Jack.

Mr. Jack Harris: I thank you, Kristina, for bringing that forward. I believe it is a very important and disturbing case. It speaks to something that is also a live issue in the other case, but I think the role of the Parole Board was the concern in the Marylène Levesque case. In the case of someone who is released on statutory release, the Parole Board does not have any role in determining that at all. That's something that is a function of their time, their sentence; if you reach a certain date, then you're a statutory release. The Parole Board can't keep you in.

I think the aspect that's common to both...because what was disturbing to me about the Marylène Levesque case was the fact that there was no rehabilitation actually carried out of the individual who was involved, etc. The real question is what happens inside Correctional Service Canada, particularly for sex offenders who may or may not co-operate in any kind of activity of rehabilitation or programs. That's something that I believe is an important study but a separate study that we should undertake. I would recommend that this study be considered as a separate study. However long the Levesque study is going to go, that's something we'll have to determine ourselves, but I don't think it's even the same....

It's not about the Parole Board, so I'm not sure whether it's in order, Chair. I'm not going to ask for a ruling, but perhaps you want to give us some advice on that. It seems to me the subject of a separate study, and a very important one, probably equally important to the Parole Board role and the Parole Board study. In fact, it's something that we really ought to get our hands on, because one of the failures of our corrections system is how it handles the rehabilitative mandate it has.

● (1705)

The Chair: The chair is in a bit of a dilemma here, because the mover of the original motion saw the amendment to the motion as a friendly amendment, and therefore incorporated it into the original motion. The arguments have gone now along the line that these are actually separate considerations, possibly related at one level, but mostly separate considerations.

At this point, it's one motion. Unless the movers say otherwise, that's what's on the floor.

We have Pam, and then Kristina.

You're on mute. You are having a John McKay moment.

Ms. Pam Damoff: I am. I'm having that kind of day.

Could we get clarification from the clerk on whether...? Basically, what you're saying is that Shannon is actually moving her own motion and incorporating Kristina's into her motion, so it's only Shannon moving a motion? Is that right?

The Chair: There's only one motion on the floor. The mover of the original motion saw Kristina's motion as a friendly amendment and incorporated it, so there is really only one motion on the floor.

Ms. Pam Damoff: I can't support it the way it's worded now, whereas I would have supported the previous motion the way it was.

The Parole Board of Canada, in the case of Cox, denied him parole every time he came until he had to be released. It's a very different case.

I tend to agree with Jack. If there was a study put forward for us to consider on how we rehabilitate people in prison, what kind of programming is done and what kind of enhancements might be made to programming to ensure that when someone does get out of prison, like this individual, they don't reoffend.... Rehabilitation and then being released from prison.... Almost everyone gets out of prison at some point, which is what happened with this individual, whereas Shannon's original motion was about a case where the Parole Board had let him out.

They're very different, so I can't support a motion that has incorporated the two of them, whereas I would have supported the motion if it was just on its own.

[Translation]

Ms. Kristina Michaud: In light of the discussion, I'm wondering whether we can back up a little. Mrs. Stubbs can say that my amendment isn't all that friendly in the end and we can get back to the original motion.

As Mr. Harris suggested, I'll propose a separate motion to have the committee undertake a study of this case specifically. That's a good compromise.

[English]

The Chair: We have Kristina first, and Shannon second.

The Chair: Common sense and procedure don't always go together, but we'll see whether Shannon is prepared to say that this motion is unfriendly and therefore needs to be voted on separately. That's what she's saying, right?

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: Yes, I can just imagine how this would have gone over in 4-H, where we all had to adhere to *Robert's Rules of Order*, if we all went off the rails.

Given the discussion that's unfolded here.... I did perceive it as friendly, because I was thinking of it as a way of getting at the core issues of potential systemic issues across the board, and also recidivism, in the context of public safety.

However, I am more than happy, if it's amenable to our colleague, to go forward with the original motion that I had made, and then deal with this one separately, according to our discussion. I think they are all important issues.

• (1710)

The Chair: I think we understand. What was friendly has now become unfriendly, so what is unfriendly is off the table temporarily while we vote on the original motion.

Am I on solid procedural ground here, Mr. Clerk, or am I leading us into some constitutional crisis?

The Clerk: I believe we're okay. It sounds to me like you have unanimous consent to just revert back to the original motion, and that's fine.

The Chair: Let me put the question, unless there's any other discussion.

Those in favour of the original motion—

Ms. Pam Damoff: Sorry, Chair, could you read it, so we all make sure we know what we're voting on?

The Chair: I don't have it.

Ms. Pam Damoff: Does Shannon have it?

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: I have it. I think the clerk made, in the course of that discussion, an adjustment that I agreed with.

The Chair: Yes, he did, actually.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: He might have it.

Ms. Pam Damoff: Maybe the clerk could read it for us before we vote.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: Yes.

The Clerk: That's not a problem. It was sent to you at 4:57, but I will read it as well.

It says:

That, pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), the committee undertake a study of the Parole Board and the circumstances that led to a young woman's death, and that the evidence and documentation received by the committee during the First Session of the 43rd Parliament on the subject be taken into consideration by the committee in the current session.

The Chair: Okay.

Mr. Jack Harris: I have a point of order, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: I just want to make sure everybody got it, both verbally and in writing, before I call the question.

I see a point of order.

Go ahead, Mr. Harris.

Mr. Jack Harris: I wonder if there's a problem. I'm just pointing out that on the written version, the heading is "Resume a study and take into consideration evidence", but the wording of the motion is actually the same as the one that Ms. Damoff had, which was that we "undertake a study". I wonder whether that makes any difference.

This is a question for the clerk. The words "resume a study" and "undertake a study" have two different meanings, obviously, and we're basically starting from scratch if the other study was on a matter that was referred by the House.

The Clerk: To resume a study is essentially the effect of the motion. The motion speaks of undertaking the study and then adopting all the evidence presented in a previous session, so it has the same effect as if you were resuming a study.

Mr. Jack Harris: Perfect. I'm happy. I just wanted to know that it wasn't an error.

The Chair: Our clerk never makes errors.

I'm not sure he's right on that one, though. I would have phrased it as "undertake a study", because we are not actually resuming the original study, but let's just keep it moving here.

Do we need a recorded vote?

The Clerk: Yes, sir.

The Chair: Okay.

(Motion agreed to: yeas 11; nays 0)

The Chair: Pam.

• (1715)

Ms. Pam Damoff: Chair, I'd like to move a motion that any additional ideas for studies be submitted to the clerk in the form of a motion by Friday, October 16, for distribution to the committee. I'm amenable to changing the date on that, but it gives the committee a week to put them together, including, perhaps, Kristina's idea about ways to promote rehabilitation and reduce recidivism in correctional...and I know other people have spoken about having ideas.

I'd like to move that any motions for additional studies be submitted to the clerk by Friday, October 16.

The Chair: Is there any discussion?

Damien.

Mr. Damien Kurek: I'm curious as to the reason why something like that would be necessary. Certainly as guidance, as soon as we have an understanding of when this committee can meet.... I know the clerk mentioned that there are challenges in the scheduling aspect and whatnot.

Certainly, a committee is in charge of its own destiny, so I'm not sure that a motion like that is necessary, when it's certainly in good conduct and appropriate to distribute motions ahead of time. If I were to move something, I would endeavour to do so, but a motion that limits the ability of the committee to do its work, I don't know that I could support that. I'd be curious to hear from others, but limiting the committee's ability to do its job is something that I find troubling.

The Chair: Gagan.

Mr. Gagan Sikand: I don't think the intention there is to limit the ability of the committee to do its work. It's actually to do it more thoroughly. We're all presenting things off the floor, and to your point, it's not actually getting the attention it deserves. I think it's Pam's intention to have everything presented so that everyone could thoroughly go through it and then we can proceed from there, if I'm not mistaken.

The Chair: Next is Kristina, then Damien, then Jack and Pam.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Kristina Michaud: Thank you.

I'm inclined to support Ms. Damoff's motion. I, myself, have other motions to put forward, one of which I could move today. There's not a whole lot of time left before the meeting ends to de-

bate it properly, however. Perhaps I have time to move my next motion, which we talked about.

I know other members have motions, including Mr. Harris, who didn't expect to do it today either. It may be a good idea to arrange another meeting, quickly if possible, as the clerk mentioned.

[*English*]

The Chair: Jack.

Mr. Jack Harris: I just wanted to say that I didn't see it as restrictive. I saw it as giving an opportunity for all the ideas to be on the table at once. We're only deciding.... We will look at priorities. I may have ideas but, when I hear Kristina's, I may say that I really want to do that one ahead of mine. It gives us an opportunity to see what else is on the table.

The committee is always master of its destiny and can make a decision to prioritize something when something comes up on a given occasion that people think needs to be dealt with quickly. That's always left to the committee. I think it's a good idea to give people a chance to put all the ideas forward, and the rest of the committee can then decide.

The Chair: We have Damien, then Pam.

Mr. Damien Kurek: I certainly don't disagree with the intent. However, I'm always hesitant when we create procedural boundaries to allowing a committee to be able to do its work.

Certainly the spirit of the motion is perfectly in line with what I think is appropriate and perfectly in line with what I would suggest is good conduct. Acknowledging what the clerk mentioned in his statements regarding the organization and the changing dynamics that we all face—whether it be COVID or the hybrid context in which we meet—I would agree with the intent. I'm just not sure that a motion to do that.... Excuse my lack of experience, but it would be my understanding that to make changes, if something did come up, for example, on the 17th, it would require unanimous consent of the committee to be able to move forward.

A voice: No.

Mr. Damien Kurek: No? I would appreciate clarification, then, on what that would look like, because my reading of the Standing Orders would suggest that a motion like that could restrict the committee's ability to do its work.

Again, I agree with the intent. I'm just not sure that a motion is necessarily required, when we're all in agreement with what is good conduct for ensuring that we can do exactly what all of my colleagues have mentioned.

• (1720)

The Chair: Pam is next, and then Shannon.

Ms. Pam Damoff: Thanks, Chair.

I appreciate my colleague's concerns. This is something that has been quite common, certainly in the last five years, on the committees that I have sat on. I can't speak to other ones.

Nothing precludes a member from bringing a motion to committee at any time. That has happened, and then it's up to the committee whether it wants to vote on it or not. There's absolutely nothing that precludes him from bringing a motion at any time.

What this does do, though, is allow.... We have two studies that we've already approved, which are going to take some time. We have a work plan to finish our study on systemic racism and to finish our study on the Parole Board of Canada. Those are two studies we've already approved. This would give us an opportunity to take a look at what other members are interested in doing and develop a bit of a work plan. It is subject to change at any time, but it would give us all an opportunity to review them.

As Jack was saying, it may very well be that you, Damien, put in a motion and then when we look at it we think that's a really good idea and maybe we could add to it and change it a little bit and we move forward. It's not uncommon. It doesn't go against any rules of procedure. It doesn't preclude him from bringing forward a motion at any time with 48 hours of notice, I believe, Chair, for the committee to vote on.

The Chair: We have Shannon, and then Gagan.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: Thanks, Chair.

Pam, I think you're probably getting to the crux of the concern here. Chair, I don't know if you want to weigh in or if the clerk can weigh in so that we can just all be assured of this.

I think what members are looking for is confidence that this motion wouldn't be prohibitive to future motions or requests for work, and wouldn't be used for, say.... I can imagine in a future situation somebody making the argument, "Well, no, we can't go forward on that because we moved this motion at the beginning that says that only these studies were agreed to."

I think we're all on the same page here in terms of the approach and the importance of doing this so that we can actually move swiftly to do our work. There could be a slight language alteration that would clarify that—maybe just the way your motion is already written, but inserting something like "but not limited to October 16".

I think we are just looking to be assured that if there was a reason later on to pursue other areas of study or, in the context of an argument, if an emergency or something were to happen that we thought should supersede.... I think we are all just looking to be assured that this motion isn't restrictive in that way.

The Chair: I would interpret the motion as simply an organizing motion, if you will: "Let's get all the ideas on the table so that when we have a conversation, everyone gets a fair shot at making their argument as to why this should proceed or that should proceed." That's how I interpret it.

Next is Gagan, and then Joël.

● (1725)

Mr. Gagan Sikand: Perhaps Joël should go first, because I was going to say, given the time constraints, Chair, that we should end it.

The Chair: We have five minutes, yes.

Mr. Gagan Sikand: Joël, would you like to go ahead?

Mr. Joël Lightbound: I don't know how Pam feels about it, but given that we have a consensus to send in writing the motions that we'd like to see proceed, do we really need a motion at this point, or do we have consensus among ourselves that by October 16 we want to send all the motions, and then proceed swiftly with the vote?

The Chair: Gagan.

Mr. Gagan Sikand: I don't know if Pam wants to speak to that, but I was going to put a motion forward that we end debate and just vote on the motion that Pam put forward.

The Chair: Damien.

I probably have just overruled you, Gagan, but that's all right. You'll get over it.

Go ahead, Damien.

Mr. Damien Kurek: Since that motion was overruled, I would just ask if I could hear Pam's motion again. I don't have the text of it, because of the short notice of this meeting and whatnot. If committee members could hear the specifics of that, certainly that would help.

The Chair: Pam, do you want to do that again?

Ms. Pam Damoff: Sure. Maybe the clerk could help with wording that's subject to the Standing Orders. I know that at the status of women committee last year, the Conservatives brought forward a motion, even though we had a work plan based on studies, and we voted on it right away.

My suggestion was that perhaps, Chair, we just do it by unanimous consent that all parties submit their ideas for potential studies to the clerk of the committee no later than Friday, October 16, 2020. If the clerk has better wording that would not supersede anything in the Standing Orders, that's fine.

The Chair: Let me just clarify with the clerk before we ask for a vote.

The Clerk: I believe the wording is fine.

The Chair: There's nothing to stop anybody from bringing a 48-hour motion.

The Clerk: Absolutely not, because there's already a routine motion adopted by the committee giving the right to do so.

The Chair: Yes, exactly, including firing the chair, which is probably a good idea....

All right. Is there any other discussion?

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: Okay, thank you, folks. We do have three minutes left.

You're going to feed the clerk what you're interested in discussing. Our next meeting of the full committee would be whenever we can arrange it, which, given the present circumstances, is a bit of a challenge. I would also much prefer—this is a personal prejudice—for the witness lists, the timelines and all the rest of the stuff to be done in the subcommittee, because discussions among 12 people tend to be very time-consuming.

Nevertheless, having said all that, I thank you all.

Mr. Motz, you have one minute left.

Mr. Glen Motz: I just wanted to speak to your point of when the next meeting will be. Someone said earlier in this particular meeting that the date of our meeting specifically will be determined in the coming days, so that might play a role in when our next meetings will be, not inclusive of the subcommittee, which you guys will have on your own.

The Chair: My interpretation would be, a full committee meeting first, and a subcommittee meeting following that, so we can put some flesh on the bones and get down to our studies.

I see that our time has expired. It has been a very useful and helpful discussion. The clerk has a lot of useful information from which we can proceed and hopefully be a little more organized.

With that, I am virtually gaveling this meeting to an end.

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