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# Standing Committee on National Defence

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Wednesday, December 15, 2021

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Chair: The Honourable John McKay





## Standing Committee on National Defence

Wednesday, December 15, 2021

• (1545)

[English]

**The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Andrew Wilson):** Honourable members of the committee, I see a quorum.

I must inform members that the clerk of the committee can receive motions only for the election of the chair. The clerk cannot receive other types of motions and cannot entertain points of order or 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.

Mr. Fisher.

**Mr. Darren Fisher (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, Lib.):** Welcome, everybody. It's great—on the last possible day, I guess—to be in front of all of you, face to face.

I would be honoured to nominate John McKay for the position of chair of the national defence committee.

**The Clerk:** It has been moved by Mr. Fisher that Mr. McKay be elected as chair of the committee.

Are there any further motions?

**An hon. member:** Debate.

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

**The Clerk:** Is it the pleasure of the committee to adopt the motion?

(Motion agreed to)

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

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

**The Chair (Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.)):** We have routine proceedings, but I see that the vote has been called already.

Am I in a position, if I have unanimous consent, to proceed until we're...? Do I have unanimous consent to at least accomplish something?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Chair:** Now that we have established all of that, do I see nominations for the first vice-chair?

Mr. Motz.

**Mr. Glen Motz (Medicine Hat—Cardston—Warner, CPC):** Thank you, Chair, and congratulations on this very auspicious position that you now hold.

I would like to nominate the Honourable Kerry-Lynne Findlay as the first vice-chair, please.

**The Chair:** Are there any other nominations?

Seeing none, I will assume that is the will of the committee.

(Motion agreed to)

**The Chair:** Wherever Kerry-Lynne is, congratulations.

For the second vice-chair...

Yes, Mr. Motz.

**Mr. Glen Motz:** I'd like to nominate Ms. Normandin from the Bloc.

**The Chair:** That's very friendly of you.

Since I doubt Ms. Normandin will have a competition with herself, she is the second vice-chair.

(Motion agreed to)

**The Chair:** Do we have a third vice-chair? No? We have just two.

We are now on routine motions. I'm assuming that all of you have the routine motions in front of you.

The first motion has to do with analyst services.

Are we in favour of analysts?

(Motion agreed to [See Minutes of Proceedings])

**The Chair:** Welcome. I don't know your name.

**Mr. Martin Auger (Analyst):** It's Martin Auger.

**The Chair:** Oh, it's you, Martin. My goodness, you look different behind that mask.

**An hon. member:** Only the best.

**An hon. member:** The best is right.

**The Chair:** Excellent. My goodness, yes, this is a blast from the past.

The second motion is as follows:

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

I don't know how you go about that, but we'll go with that.

**Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC):** It is five members, then. It's just that in the proposed routine motion, it just says “number”. It doesn't have the actual number.

**The Chair:** It's one member of each recognized party.

**Mrs. Cheryl Gallant:** Does that include the Liberals, or is it one Liberal?

**The Chair:** No, it's the chair and one member of each recognized party.

As far as I know, the Liberal party is a recognized party, for some.

**An hon member:** Well, it depends where you live.

**The Chair:** Is that agreeable?

(Motion agreed to)

**Mr. Darren Fisher:** Mr. Chair, I have a quick question.

Can these be read into the record by the chair?

**The Clerk:** It would be preferable if someone other than the chair moved them, because the chair technically can't move motions.

**The Chair:** I'm just learning the ropes. I went to the James Bezan class of parliamentary procedure and flunked.

Mr. Fisher, since you're such an enthusiast—

**Mrs. Cheryl Gallant:** On a point of order, let's read each motion and then vote on each motion separately, instead of reading all of them at once into the record.

**The Chair:** We're doing just one at a time. We've done the first one. Presumably the second one is satisfactory.

I need a mover for the third one.

**Mr. Darren Fisher:** I'll move it, Mr. Chair.

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

**The Chair:** Is there any discussion?

(Motion agreed to)

**The Chair:** Four. Who wants to read that?

Madame Normandin.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ):** We'll have a bit of French, then. With respect to the time for opening remarks and questioning of witnesses, I move the following:

That witnesses be given five minutes for their opening statement; that whenever possible, witnesses provide the committee with their opening statement 72 hours in advance; that at the discretion of the Chair, during the questioning of witness-

es, there be allocated six minutes for the first questioner of each party as follows for the first round:

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

Bloc Québécois, two and a half minutes

New Democratic Party, two and a half minutes

Conservative Party, five minutes

Liberal Party, five minutes.

● (1550)

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Okay. Is there any discussion?

(Motion agreed to)

**The Chair:** Mr. Bezan, do you want to do the next one?

**Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC):** I move:

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

**The Chair:** Is there any discussion?

(Motion agreed to)

**The Chair:** Oh, Mr. Motz wants to do the next motion.

I don't want this motion to be enhanced.

**Mr. Glen Motz:** It might be. I move:

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

After “the Chair”, I would add “and committee members”.

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

**Mr. Glen Motz:** No. I'm just joking.

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

**The Chair:** On travel and accommodation, Ms. Gallant, do you want to move that?

**Mrs. Cheryl Gallant:** 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.

(Motion agreed to)

**The Chair:** We're now on access to in camera meetings.

Mr. Fisher, it's back to you.

**Mr. Darren Fisher:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I guess our virtual folks aren't carrying any of the weight here, so I'll move this one. I move:

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

**Mrs. Cheryl Gallant:** There has been a concern in the past with respect to that. Sometimes a member will have an intern be that staff member. We have witnessed security-wise that the person should not be an intern, because they've been from foreign countries in the past. It's just better to say that interns are not allowed to be present during in camera meetings.

I also believe that somebody from the whip's office is allowed to be in there in lieu of one of the staff members. There can be a member of the whip's office come in, but it would mean one less staff member. Somebody would have to forfeit a staff member.

I just want to make sure that's clear.

**The Chair:** Are you proposing an amendment to this motion?

**Mrs. Cheryl Gallant:** Well, yes, I want to make sure there is an amendment that none of the staff be interns going through internships.

**The Chair:** Jennifer.

**Ms. Jennifer O'Connell (Pickering—Uxbridge, Lib.):** Mr. Chair, I think that's ridiculous. If a member or a staff person has a House of Commons badge and if they've been approved to be on the precinct, then they should be allowed. It is up to the discretion of each member who staffs them as to who is there. The suggestion that somebody from another country can't be trusted on this committee I find deeply offensive.

I think we can govern ourselves to determine who is the best staff person to staff us. In an in camera setting, we limit those numbers for that reason, but it's the determination of each member to determine who that staffer is. Whether they're an intern or a full-time or part-time employee makes no difference, as long as they're approved on the Hill.

**The Chair:** I see Mr. May.

I can't see Mr. Spengemann. Where is he? Can we change the screen so that I at least can see him?

I'll go to Madame Normandin, then Mr. May and then Mr. Spengemann.

• (1555)

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Christine Normandin:** I wanted to say the same thing as Ms. O'Connell.

The only thing I would add is that, as far as I know, the whips haven't discussed this. We are talking about a member of a whip's office coming in to help us.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** I have Mr. May and then Mr. Spengemann.

**Mr. Bryan May (Cambridge, Lib.):** I would echo Ms. O'Connell's comments. In addition, it gets a little complex in offices like mine—and I'm sure in many others—where interns are not there just for experiential learning and are actually fully paid staff. The term “intern” can mean a lot of different things on the Hill. The concept that we would exclude somebody because they're not a full-time, long-term staff member is problematic.

**The Chair:** I'm going to go to Mr. Spengemann, but I see two Yves Robillards here: one apparently in person and one on the screen.

**Voices:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Sven Spengemann (Mississauga—Lakeshore, Lib.):** Chair, congratulations on your election. I look forward to working with you and colleagues.

Just for the record, Mr. Chair, I strongly support the comments of my colleague, Ms. O'Connell. I've served on this committee since 2015, and it has certainly not been my experience that anybody was excluded for security reasons and related to having the status of an intern.

This committee does not have any security screens, unlike NSI-COP, where people actually receive an elevated security clearance. It's my strong view, first of all, that there are no systematic security considerations attached to interns who come from—and I'm using Ms. Gallant's words—“foreign countries”, and, secondly, that any MP who is engaging a staff member, including interns, does so at her or his full discretion, with the appropriate House of Commons clearances and security screens, and those folks should be given the opportunity to enter these processes, as would other regular paid staff members.

**The Chair:** I'm not seeing anyone else.

Ms. Gallant, you proposed this. Are you satisfied with the comments of colleagues?

**Mrs. Cheryl Gallant:** Well, it would appear that the amendment would not pass.

(Amendment withdrawn)

**The Chair:** The amendment would not pass, so it's the motion as it is before you.

(Motion agreed to)

**The Chair:** On transcripts of in camera meetings, I know that Mr. May is keen to read that into the record.

**Mr. Bryan May:** 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; and that the analysts assigned to the committee also have access to the in camera transcripts.

(Motion agreed to)

**The Chair:** The next is on notices of motion, Ms. O'Connell.

**Mrs. Cheryl Gallant:** First, on a point of order, Chair, I'd like to go in camera, please.

**The Chair:** It's a non-debatable motion.

(Motion negatived)

**The Chair:** We have 15 minutes left on bells. Let's use that time.

On notice of motion, I have Ms. O'Connell.

**Ms. Jennifer O'Connell:** I move:

That a 48-hour notice, interpreted as two nights, be required for any substantive motion to be moved in committee, unless the substantive motion relates directly to business then under consideration, provided that: (a) the notice be filed with the clerk of the committee no later than 4:00 p.m. from Monday to Friday; (b) the motion be distributed to Members and the offices of the whips of each recognized party 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; (c) 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 holding meetings outside the Parliamentary Precinct, no substantive motion may be moved.

• (1600)

**The Chair:** Is there discussion?

Go ahead.

**Mr. Glen Motz:** I'm curious. Should things get out of hand again with the pandemic, what does that do to hybrid sittings of the committee? We're not on precinct. What does that do to our ability to move substantive motions? Is the committee in a hybrid sitting still considered to be on precinct?

**A voice:** Mr. Motz, we're fine.

**Mr. Glen Motz:** Fair enough. Thank you.

**The Chair:** Is there any other discussion?

Cheryl.

**Mrs. Cheryl Gallant:** I'm questioning why "4:00 p.m." and "and the offices of the whips of each recognized party" are highlighted in yellow. Is that something different from the usual?

**The Chair:** It's a bit of a change. It's related to the whips' access to the motions. Instead of having to run around, they can go directly to the clerk and get them.

**Mrs. Cheryl Gallant:** Very good. Thank you.

(Motion agreed to)

**The Chair:** On orders of reference from the House respecting bills, this is a long one, so we'll give it to the one who is the most educated.

Sven.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Sven Spengemann:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'm going to read the next motion in French. It pertains to the orders of reference from the House respecting bills.

That in relation to orders of reference from the House respecting Bills,

(a) The clerk of the committee shall, upon the committee receiving such an order of reference, write to each member who is not a member of a caucus represented on the committee to invite those members to file with the clerk of the committee, in both official languages, any amendments to the bill, which is the subject of the said Order, which they would suggest that the committee consider;

(b) Suggested amendments filed, pursuant to paragraph (a), at least 48 hours prior to the start of clause-by-clause consideration of the bill to which the amendments relate shall be deemed to be proposed during the said consideration, provided that the committee may, by motion, vary this deadline in respect of a given bill; and

(c) During the clause-by-clause consideration of a bill, the Chair shall allow a member who filed suggested amendments, pursuant to paragraph (a), an opportunity to make brief representations in support of them.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Is there discussion?

(Motion agreed to)

**The Chair:** On technical tests for witnesses, James or John. That sounds like a biblical theme here.

**Mr. James Bezan:** I move:

That the clerk inform each witness who is to appear before the committee that the House administration support team must conduct technical tests to check the connectivity and the equipment used to ensure the best possible sound quality; and that the Chair advise the committee, at the start of each meeting, of any witness who did not perform the required technical tests.

(Motion agreed to)

**Mr. James Bezan:** So be it and so ordered.

**The Chair:** On linguistic review,

[*Translation*]

Ms. Normandin, could you please read the motion in French.

**Ms. Christine Normandin:** I'd be happy to. I move the following:

That all documents submitted for committee business that do not come from a federal department, members' offices, or that have not been translated by the Translation Bureau be sent for prior linguistic review by the Translation Bureau before being distributed to members.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Is there discussion?

(Motion agreed to)

I have Mr. Spengemann first and then Ms. Gallant.

**Mr. Sven Spengemann:** Mr. Chair, I have just a brief point of order. In light of the recent motion to go in camera, I'm just wondering.... In the 43rd Parliament, just for the benefit of members of the committee, a move in camera at that time required a logistical switch to a different link and took to the tune of about 10 minutes to achieve.

I'm just wondering if there could be a brief update on the current technological implications of a motion to go in camera and then, conversely, if the committee were to start in camera, for a motion to come out of camera and to resume in a public setting.

• (1605)

**The Clerk:** Thank you, Mr. Spengemann. I can speak to that.

There is a switchover that's required from a technical standpoint. It takes 10 to 15 minutes for the services to switch us over. That said, we have the capabilities to do so should a motion come forward at any point, either if we start in public to go in camera, or if we start in camera to move back to in public. We have the ability to do so, but as you say, there is a delay in doing that.

**Mr. Sven Spengemann:** Just for clarification, Mr. Clerk, it's a delay in either direction. It doesn't matter which way we started; it's still a 10-minute delay.

**The Clerk:** That's my understanding, yes.

**Mrs. Cheryl Gallant:** With that being the case, when we return after the vote, can we move now that we would go in camera upon return?

**The Chair:** Well, first of all we have to establish that there's a will on the part of the committee to return here after the vote. If there is a will to do that and, if you will, scope out a committee agenda for the next few weeks and months, then the question is, do you want to come back in camera? Is that fine?

**Ms. Jennifer O'Connell:** Mr. Chair, could I also recommend that, perhaps, if there are members who want to discuss moving forward the agenda of the committee, they do so in the subcommittee? It is now established, now that we have gone through routine proceedings. That would be instead of trying to rush between votes and that sort of thing.

**The Chair:** Christine.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Christine Normandin:** I wanted to respond to what Ms. O'Connell said. If no motions have been put on notice, I don't see the point of having a subcommittee. However, it might be useful if we could put motions on notice before thinking about the creation of the subcommittee and its meeting.

[*English*]

**Mr. James Bezan:** Chair, we're coming up on the five and a half minute mark for votes. You no longer have consent to keep this meeting going. I think we should go.

**The Chair:** I want to establish a will of the committee to return, so I'll suspend.

Do you want to suspend and come back in—

**A voice:** We should just adjourn.

**The Chair:** You don't want to come back.

**Mr. Glen Motz:** If we decide now that we go, as Ms. O'Connell suggested, and that we don't come back, we have all the motions and everything come forward with the subcommittee. Then the subcommittee can determine a way forward—

**The Chair:** Does the subcommittee want to meet now?

**Mr. Glen Motz:** No, because Kerry-Lynne's not here.

**The Chair:** My concern is that we basically blow six weeks if we don't—

**Mr. James Bezan:** You could still call a meeting during the break if you wanted the subcommittee.... It's at the call of the chair.

**The Chair:** I know, but it would be better....

I'm in the hands of the committee, but it seems to be wasting—

**Mr. Glen Motz:** It would be nice to keep the analysts busy over the next six weeks.

**Mr. James Bezan:** We're at four and a half minutes. I'm out of here.

**The Chair:** Well, I'm happy to do it, but it ends up being not quite optimal.

With that—

Yes, hang on.

**Mrs. Cheryl Gallant:** Chair, one thing we have added on as well in the past is that if we're going to have the minister, we agree to direct the clerk right now, at this point, to ensure the meetings are televised and that we have the minister prior to the estimates, in person and televised.

**Ms. Jennifer O'Connell:** Mr. Chair, this is all for a subcommittee.

**Mr. Bryan May:** On a point of order, Mr. Chair, it looks like we've lost the unanimous consent.

I move that we adjourn today.

**The Chair:** Jennifer O'Connell already moved that.

(Motion agreed to)

**The Chair:** With that, the meeting is adjourned.







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