



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs

PROC • NUMBER 021 • 1st SESSION • 41st PARLIAMENT

EVIDENCE

Tuesday, February 14, 2012

—
Chair

Mr. Joe Preston

Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs

Tuesday, February 14, 2012

• (1130)

[English]

The Chair (Mr. Joe Preston (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC)): We will go ahead and get started.

Happy Valentine's Day to all of our committee members. You know I love you all.

We are on meeting number 21, and under Standing Order 108(2) today we're studying broadcasting in the House of Commons.

We have two great guests with us today.

Madam O'Brien, it's always great to have you at committee, and Valentine's Day is a special day to have you at committee.

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

The Chair: Okay, Preston is sucking up. It works.

And Monsieur Bard, it's always good to see you too.

Do you have an opening statement or anything you'd like to share with us today? We'll go right to questions, if you—

Ms. Audrey O'Brien (Clerk of the House of Commons): Mr. Chairman, there's nothing very much in the way of an opening statement, except perhaps to say we're delighted to be here to have a chance to talk to the committee about broadcasting.

[Translation]

As you know, since 1997, the House of Commons administration has been broadcasting, in a non-partisan way, all House of Commons deliberations. There are guidelines to be followed by the production crew which set out the principles behind the taping of debates. These guidelines ensure that the camera only covers the member the Speaker recognizes. To this end, the House of Commons broadcasting production crew carefully selects specific angles for the nine cameras placed throughout the chamber.

[English]

The proceedings have been televised since 1977. In 1992 the practice changed somewhat in order to include information related to the agenda for the day, such as oral questions.

Of course when new Parliaments are formed the shooting pattern may be adapted to allow a wider camera angle during transitions. This is particularly true during question period.

In 1992 the Standing Committee on House Management recommended that

Camera angles used during Question Period should be wider so that viewers can appreciate the context and flavour of House; when the Speaker rises, the whole House should be shown and when individual Members rise to ask or answer a question, wider shots should be employed.

We've nonetheless been very careful about this use of wide shots. It's been a long-standing practice that we don't have reaction shots and so forth, though we do use over-the-shoulder shots on occasion to establish context for the viewer.

Since 1992 the House of Commons and CPAC have worked in partnership to ensure proceedings are broadcast across Canada via both cable and satellite providers.

In 2009 the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs updated the Speaker's permission governing the use of audio, video, and text to the proceedings to enable greater access and reuse. The video content of the House is now widely available from a variety of social media and websites, and because of the high quality of the video that's produced you will see it being viewed, monitored, and used in a variety of new ways. It really is pretty well ubiquitous.

• (1135)

[Translation]

I have nothing further to add. We would now be pleased to respond to your questions.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Ms. Audrey O'Brien: And Happy Valentine's Day to you, Mr. Chairman. Forgive me, lest I seem ungrateful for your affection.

The Chair: Well, thank you. I'm speechless, and that seldom happens with your chair.

Ms. Chris Charlton (Hamilton Mountain, NDP): And blushing.

Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC): Now that we have that on the permanent record....

The Chair: Mr. Albrecht, you're the first of the day.

Mr. Harold Albrecht: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

And thank you to our guests for being with us today.

I've read through the guidelines, and certainly I don't have any major issues with the guidelines themselves. I think today we'd like to explore a couple of changes that we perceive may have happened, and possibly suggest some that may or may not be helpful. This is a good time to have a discussion.

One thing that occasionally occurs is that when you're up in the House and making a speech, it's not always evident which camera is actually filming the speaker. I wonder if you've ever given any thought to having a red light on the camera that's filming. It would do two things. It would give the person who is speaking the ability to know where he or she should be focusing, and there are also those few occasions when at the end or perhaps in the middle of a speech you want to make a particular point and you want to make sure you're looking into the eyes of the person who is viewing.

I wonder if that has ever been considered, or would it be a huge obstacle to consider that?

Ms. Audrey O'Brien: Well, I'll defer to my colleague Monsieur Bard, who can better answer that. When I was talking to him in preparation for this meeting today, he was explaining the familiarization period that goes on with a new Parliament. People have different ways they turn and different angles; they face different ways. It's quite a process to get used to the particular players.

Perhaps Monsieur Bard could answer that.

Mr. Louis Bard (Chief Information Officer, House of Commons): Especially at question period, we have the list of members asking the questions, but then you have to prepare yourself for who may respond to that particular question; therefore, you may have two or three cameras at different angles to make sure we are getting ready, because we have only a few seconds of reaction time to make adjustments.

In terms of adding lights or having those kinds of things put in place, I'm sure we can look into that. If it's something you would like us to look into, I will.

Mr. Harold Albrecht: I think it would be worth looking at. It's not urgent by any means.

Another perceived change we've noticed over the last number of months is that there appears to be a larger section of the screen that has the words, the text, so there are occasions when it appears that a little more than a third of the screen is actually blocked out by the script below. Did that change, or are we imagining that it's gotten larger?

Mr. Louis Bard: Since 1992 we've been trying to provide some context of what happens in terms of the agenda of the day and to try to describe to the viewers what is happening in the House at that time. It used to be static data that we had, and we went from French to English. In consultation with CPAC and the broadcasting industry, we've been looking at better ways to use the screen space, allowing members' names and titles to stay longer, and we were using the scroll bar to provide the English and French content of what was happening.

This has been a change over the last years. We've been adjusting to the industry standards and making a better image and representation of the screen.

Ms. Audrey O'Brien: If I may just add, Mr. Chairman, one of the things that is a bit of a challenge as well is that you have the name of the member, the riding—and the riding names seem to get longer, or maybe I'm just getting older—and the names of ministries, particularly as you get responsible for this, that, and the other thing.

That also is causing this. But we're trying to clean up the screen so that the shot has less text and more of the photo.

Mr. Harold Albrecht: If I could just respond to that, I have to take at face value what you're saying, but it appears to me that we actually have more text. Recently we've had the entire summary of some of the bills that we're debating scroll across throughout the time that the bill is being debated. That seems to be a change. I'm not sure that it's helpful; it may be.

My bigger question is who provides the summary, what is being scrolled across the screen? Does it come from the Library of Parliament? Does it come from the bill? I'm just concerned that we're being accurate in what is there if in fact we need to have it there.

• (1140)

Mr. Louis Bard: The text comes from the order paper. That's where we get all the information from. We don't write or develop anything; everything comes from the agenda of the day and the order paper. We just take what is there and portray that.

Mr. Harold Albrecht: Do we have feedback as to the degree of helpfulness of having that amount of wording scrolling across the screen? To me it's a distraction, but to others it may be helpful.

Mr. Louis Bard: The feedback comes from the broadcasting industry. They love what we produce. They like the quality of what we produce. They find it very informative. They like the fact that it's French and English, one right after the other; it scrolls rapidly. The feedback is very good from that perspective. It's so good that most broadcasters record our content live; that's what they use for the six o'clock news. They've invested to record all that content.

The broadcasters love it, there is no doubt. There is a lot of good information and they find our quality of production just unbelievable, how we've maintained that very high-quality product.

Mr. Harold Albrecht: I don't want to get into another critique of the broadcast industry, but I think it would be helpful in the future if there are what I consider to be moderate to major changes along those lines to have some input from committee members as you are considering it. To me that would have been helpful.

Thank you.

If I have any time left I'll concede to one of my colleagues.

The Chair: Thank you.

You have about 30 seconds, if you'd like to use 30 seconds of Mr. Albrecht's time.

Ms. Charlton.

Ms. Chris Charlton: Thank you very much.

I don't have very much to add to some of the comments that have already been made. I just wonder if you could perhaps tell the committee whether you've received any suggestions or criticisms from our members that we may not be aware of that we perhaps ought to be taking into account.

Ms. Audrey O'Brien: One of the things that Mr. Bard was explaining to me is that there is broadcasting at the request of the different parties. Mr. Bard would be happy to meet with the whips and representatives of the parties who may want better explanations as to how the camera shots are picked, and what have you.

We don't usually respond, which is to say that we don't take action to change anything without consultation with the whips. He could answer whether or not there have been specific cases.

Mr. Louis Bard: Absolutely. We have feedback from time to time on certain shots or certain parts of the day. We meet with whips very often who want to review the content to see if they liked, based on their choice of seating arrangements, what they saw in the shot and the angle, and whether it was straight or not—I mean, we have these kinds of discussions.

Those things happen a lot more at the beginning of a session than during a session. It seems that your communications experts are looking at this and making all kinds of recommendations, but we are very open at any time to concerns, to sitting with the whips, to looking at some of the content, to watching some videos to try to understand their concern. I mean, we're trying to adapt and adjust, but we need to stay within the guidelines all the time.

Also, we had feedback from a member once that said “Mr. Bard, I look too good on camera, and because of that I have to shave twice a day and I need to change suits.”

Voices: Oh, oh!

Mr. Louis Bard: And people have asked that we change all the screens in the lobby. I mean, there are a lot of these kinds of reactions.

Normally, what I see as a serious kind of comment comes through the whip's office. They're the ones who really raise the issue and call us. They meet with the broadcasting crew, and we remain available at all times. If there are any concerns, or you don't like something, or something is bothering you as a member or as a party, we remain available.

Our job is to make good productions and to respect the ethics of that production, and we realize that Canadians are watching those programs.

• (1145)

Ms. Chris Charlton: Thank you very much. I think that's all for me.

The Chair: Great.

Mr. Lamoureux, you're next.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Do you take any sort of log in terms of individuals who are calling in to provide comments on what it is they're seeing or general observations, either through CPAC or...?

Mr. Louis Bard: No, we never really acknowledge or file formal requests.

A lot of this is sometimes informal discussion around the House to our broadcasting crew. Sometimes they go to visit the control room and bring comments. It's been at the request of the whip, but we never maintain a log of all the requests or all of the discussions. We look at this as private with each of the parties, and we respect this kind of dialogue with the parties. Sometimes it is a communication strategy, sometimes it's specific questions to the parties, and we don't log anything.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: What I am referring to more is the viewing audience. Do you get feedback at all from members of the public who are watching?

Mr. Louis Bard: No. There is no formal mechanism. The feedback we're getting is more through CPAC and the association of broadcasters. It's more on the quality of productions. We don't really get feedback directly from the viewers.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: You made a comment in terms of the quality, and I agree: it's phenomenal quality. The quality in Ottawa is amazing, compared to a provincial legislature.

Are you taking any other action to further enhance the quality, or are you at where you want to be? Is there anything on the horizon you're looking at, everything from changing cameras...? Is there anything of that nature?

Mr. Louis Bard: It's a very good question. There is no doubt, we have been very fortunate. Since its inception 35 years ago, the board has always been very receptive to supporting the enhancements of television.

From 2000 to 2004, if you recall, there was a major revamp of the complete broadcast environment in terms of a refit of the House. We changed the audio systems and all the cameras. There was a lot of investment to sustain a very good technological environment.

The next big wave for us will be a completely digital environment. The industry is bringing this to us, and we are close to it. It is a major change for Canada to align to that, and we want to be ready for that. We have been working very closely with CPAC to be a pioneer, and to work with them and align ourselves to that.

So far, we have been able to sustain a good environment, to make investments, and we have a very state-of-the-art and up-to-date environment.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: What about in terms of just overall? Over the years do you find there's been an increase in viewers, generally speaking? Are there some jurisdictions where it's not watched? Do you take any ratings in some provinces where maybe there's very little promotion?

Mr. Louis Bard: Yes. We receive ratings from CPAC. They maintain excellent ratings in terms of who accesses what and when, and this and that. We have this kind of information. There is no doubt that the decision here many years ago to also stream on the Internet all the committees, whether it's audio or video, and the House, means that as a country we have a penetration in Canada at over 99%. Canadians who have a satellite connection, a radio connection, television or cable, or the Internet have access to our debates. We are the first country in the world that has this level of penetration. Above that, we are also accessible to the entire world, for universities, libraries, other governments. We are prime broadcasters for most departments. We have now officials who use all our services with video on demand, all of those services. I think in Canada we are enviable in what we can offer Canadians today.

• (1150)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Do you actually have a sense of the numbers of viewers who are really watching CPAC, like for our question period or just regular debates?

Mr. Louis Bard: No, I didn't prepare for that today, but I can gather information and get back to you on that if you wish.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Or just provide it to the chair; that would be good.

Mr. Louis Bard: Yes, I will do that.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Thank you very much. I appreciate that.

The Chair: Mr. Lukiwski.

Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Regina—Lumsden—Lake Centre, CPC): Thanks, Chair.

I don't have a whole bunch. I think most of the questions I wanted to ask have already been asked. I appreciate the fact that if we do have some concerns or suggestions we can use our whips to channel that information to you.

I'm curious about one thing, and it's a very minor point. I notice when members are up to speak and when the graphics explaining the bill and all that go by, when they identify the member and the member's riding, underneath that there's a little coloured bar, which I guess indicates the colour of the party. When Conservative members stand up there's a blue bar, I think it's more gold than orange for NDP, and when a Liberal stands up it's red. With independents, how does that work? I say that because Mr. Goldring used to be in our caucus and now has stepped down because of some legal challenges he's facing. I don't think he's even spoken yet, but how are you going to identify him by colour? Is there a standard? I think in years past all independents used to have grey or something signifying independents.

Mr. Louis Bard: It's white today.

Mr. Tom Lukiwski: It's white. And all the independents have that?

Mr. Louis Bard: Yes.

Mr. Tom Lukiwski: So members formerly known as the Bloc, and Ms. May, are they all white?

An hon. member: The artists formerly known as the Bloc.

The Chair: Yes. It's just a symbol now.

Mr. Tom Lukiwski: I just want to go back to one other thing.

Madam O'Brien, you were talking about the wide-angle shots. I know that it's supposed to be just for question period and you're not supposed to have reaction shots and the like. Is that being religiously adhered to? Maybe I'm getting comments from some of our members that are incorrect, but it seemed that the wide-angle shots were being employed a little bit more frequently than just in question period and votes, where if a single member is standing up to debate and there are a bunch of empty chairs around him there's a wide-angle shot that illustrates this. I think it concerns a lot of members that if this is what's happening it doesn't look good, frankly, for Parliament.

Can you confirm that during debates, during government orders, when individuals are standing up it's still single torso and up shots, or are they using wide-angle shots for that as well?

Ms. Audrey O'Brien: I can confirm that's what they should be doing. I think from time to time, if there's been a switch in who's speaking at the last minute, there may be a certain time when the camera is trying to find whoever is getting up. That might happen,

and there might be errors that slip in from time to time. But we have to say sometimes to the frustration of our broadcasting team—which is an excellent team—we discourage any artistic impulses that would have them deviate from the torso close-up shot that's the usual.

Mr. Tom Lukiwski: Does the broadcaster get a list in advance, showing who is going to be speaking on a particular bill or SO-31, that type of thing, so they can prepare?

Ms. Audrey O'Brien: We try to share the information we have. For example, in question period, we know who is going to question, but we don't know who is going to answer. That's always a bit of a challenge. Then, depending on the body language of the person answering, they face the Speaker, or they face the questioner.

Mr. Tom Lukiwski: I think it would be a good idea if you could put a red light on the camera. I'll give you an example.

As you know, we have a number of members on the opposition side of the House in the far corner. During SO-31s, a member came to me yesterday. I always advise them to face one direction when they get up to speak, so that the camera will find them and then they can just keep looking in that direction. Unfortunately, this member is right in the corner and he faces the Speaker when he delivers his SO-31s. I guess his wife, or whoever might be watching these things, mentioned that all she could see was his profile. Nobody could see his face full on. I said it was probably because the camera doesn't swing around far enough to get into that far corner.

But if there had been a red light on a camera, the member would have known which direction to face so his wife could see him better. I think it's probably a good suggestion. If you could let us know if that's possible, I think it would be helpful for all members.

• (1155)

Ms. Audrey O'Brien: I'll certainly do that, because it's a concern, and I can see where it would be practical to know about the cameras.

Mr. Tom Lukiwski: Thank you.

That's all I have.

The Chair: Thank you.

Madame Latendresse.

[Translation]

Ms. Alexandrine Latendresse (Louis-Saint-Laurent, NDP): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I have a question regarding one of the guidelines that apply to deliberations. It says that "if an exchange between members occurs too quickly and does not permit normal camera switching, a wider shot may be permitted which incorporates those involved in the exchange, including the chair." I would like further explanations on this guideline. In fact, I wonder under what circumstances there may be quick exchanges between two members. Perhaps you could explain the use of wider shots.

Ms. Audrey O'Brien: This can occur, for instance, during the 30-minute period following a time allocation motion. A very quick question may be asked, followed by a brief answer, and then back. So, there is no time, really, to simply cover the member who is speaking. That is where you would use a wider shot.

The same applies in evening debates, for instance when the leader of the opposition asks for a special debate to be held in the evening on budgetary matters. There can, from time to time, be rapid exchanges between members.

That is done to ensure that, at the very least, the member speaking is seen on camera. We would not want to miss that opportunity.

Ms. Alexandrine Latendresse: So, there would be a wider angle used to cover several members.

Ms. Audrey O'Brien: That is correct, precisely. We try to avoid that, as much as possible, outside of question period. However sometimes it may be more important for the person to be in the frame, at the very least.

Ms. Alexandrine Latendresse: Very well. That is what I wanted to know.

Thank you.

[English]

The Chair: If no one else has any more, I have some through my mother, but I'll wait till after.

Mr. Bob Zimmer (Prince George—Peace River, CPC): Laurie and I are going to share.

The Chair: Excellent.

Mr. Bob Zimmer: This is a dialogue. Do you have any recommendations on how the sessions could be done better? As the expert, what do you have to say?

Mr. Louis Bard: Things are going very well. In general, the overall feedback is very good. We understand the element. It's always a challenge to have members understand the rules of broadcasting, to understand that they are on camera. At the debriefing of new members of Parliament, we say this a lot: you are on camera, and you need to be.... If I have to focus on the chair and the member behind is sleeping, there's not much I can do, unless we put an electric shock on the chair. Members are very visible.

We've tried to bring in a few flexibilities. We have to adjust the quality based on industry standards. I think we've maintained the standards. All of that is going very well. The public is looking for more information. But it's something that can evolve very slowly. As to making a better program, I think you people are good customers and you do quite a good job to give us a prime show.

Ms. Audrey O'Brien: If I might just add, one of the things as well that would make for much better television, if I may say from my aged perspective, is if members—and I know how hard-pressed you are for time.... In interventions where members don't read a text, I think it's much livelier. People who are watching feel much more engaged. That, automatically, is something that I think makes for way better television. It's certainly a difficult thing to ask of members who are supposed to be covering so many different things, but I'll just slide that in.

Mr. Bob Zimmer: I have a question on budget and compensation. You talked about the broadcasters liking your coverage and footage. I would like to know what the budget was for the broadcast department and whether that was in any way compensated by the networks. Is it a cost recovery type of thing, or how does that work?

● (1200)

Mr. Louis Bard: No, my first comment is that we have to realize that the CPAC agreement is the best one in the world. It costs Parliament zero dollars. It's a consortium of cable companies that pays for that. If tomorrow CPAC were to shut down its services and I had to put something else in place, we're talking about \$10 million per year to offer the same service.

In terms of the broadcasters that have access to Parliament Hill, we have agreements because we provide all the connectivity to make sure we provide quality content. For that they've paid for the investment. But there's no cost recovery for Parliament. In terms of what we do here, it's salary for our team, maintenance of the equipment, and all of that stuff. It's a very basic budget.

Ms. Audrey O'Brien: Arguably we're kind of in the best of both worlds, because we basically control the members—that is to say, the House controls the guidelines under which the broadcasting is actually done. Then CPAC and the consortium look after the distribution, which is the really big and tricky thing.

Mr. Bob Zimmer: I think Laurie had a....

Hon. Laurie Hawn (Edmonton Centre, CPC): I have a quick one with respect to archives. How long is this stuff archived? If I wanted to go back and get somebody's speech ten years ago, is that possible?

Ms. Audrey O'Brien: We have an agreement with Library and Archives Canada, but the entire broadcast, gavel to gavel, is not retained automatically. There's selectivity, because you end up with too much. I think digitization is going to help that, but we have to see.

Hon. Laurie Hawn: I'll turn it back to your mother now, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Mr. Lukiwski wants to cut off mom now.

Mr. Tom Lukiwski: I've met your mom; I'd never cut her off.

I want to go back to a scenario that I think I outlined a little earlier. That's the wide-angled shots and the uncomfortable feeling when the camera picks up a lot of empty chairs. Particularly on Fridays, I notice there are behind-the-shoulder shots coming from behind the Speaker. Of course on Fridays, we all know the attendance is down. A lot of members have to get back to their ridings for events and that type of thing. I know all parties try to do their best with the members they have remaining by putting them on the front benches. That's great, but still that one shot from behind the shoulder of the Speaker, wide-angled—I don't care how you try to put members on the front benches and disguise the fact, it's still showing a lot of empty seats, and I don't think that's helpful.

I'm wondering if we could discourage that particular camera angle on Fridays. During the regular question period Monday through Thursday, I think it's fine, but on Fridays, because of the lower attendance figures, if we could get away from that one particular shot I think you'd find that most members would be very much in favour of that. That would be my only suggestion.

Ms. Audrey O'Brien: We'll certainly look at that and see how we can improve things, because obviously everything you say is quite true about Fridays. Many members have left for their ridings.

Mr. Tom Lukiwski: On to mom.

The Chair: I'm making sure no one else has something.

My mother is my biggest critic, of course. Whether it was my former TV show or the radio show I have now, she loves to give her input.

Monsieur Bard, she disagrees with you on that scroll across the bottom. She asks that you find another place to put it. If it's at the top, maybe it's blocking the empty seats. We are creatures of habit and tend to sit near our colleagues when they're speaking, and she says she often believes that's my head....

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Chair: She tells her friends that's my head, but she's not 100% sure because the scroll of whatever it is is now going across the people who are sitting near the people who are speaking.

Certainly that used to be to prove to the people back home we're here doing our job once in a while, sitting near someone who's speaking. I understand it now. I certainly watch enough TV, and it bothers me just as much. I'm sure it doesn't bother moms on the sports channel, but it's always there. There's always activity with the scroll and the size of that bottom banner. It has grown now to be a full one-third. Her suggestion is move it to the top and centre everything below it, then she could see who was sitting near the speakers.

I'll leave it at that. If we are finished with comments, there were things that were mentioned. Is it possible to put a light on the camera? I'm not torn to it being red; it could be any colour.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Chair: We talked a bit about the bottom scroll. We talked about the wide angle, specifically on certain days. And there was a request from Monsieur Lamoureux about how many people are watching. If we can get the GRPs from CPAC as to what that is, that would be a summary of what we discussed here today.

But for the most part, Monsieur Bard and Madam O'Brien, I think Canadians are well served by the broadcasts of this place. The content may not be what they're looking for day-to-day, but the quality of the broadcast certainly is. I commend you both for making sure that happens, and CPAC for what they do too. You're right, around the world what we have is well respected. For those of us who get to watch C-SPAN and the quality of the U.S., the quality of the content's no greater there, but I think the quality of the broadcast is.

So thank you very much for joining us today and covering that with us.

Is there anything else for the committee today?

Mr. Lukiwski.

• (1205)

Mr. Tom Lukiwski: I don't know if this would be considered committee business or not. It's fine with me if we stay in public; I don't really care about that.

I believe in preparation for our study on the Standing Orders, we had talked about getting some of our suggestions to the analysts. We will have some, but I think Joe is probably more advanced than we are.

Mr. Joe Comartin (Windsor—Tecumseh, NDP): In many ways.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Tom Lukiwski: We'll have that debate another day, Joe.

The Chair: Right. Thank you very much.

Yes?

Mr. Tom Lukiwski: We'll have a fair amount. I've identified a lot of this modernization and stuff like that, some minor things, but as we go through the study, I suspect we'll probably end up coming up with more. I just want to say that we'll get what we can to the analysts by Friday, and then I'll continue to examine the Standing Orders as we continue our study. There may be others, just so the analysts aren't blindsided by something that comes up in the middle of a week, if that's okay with the analysts.

Mr. Michel Bédard (Committee Researcher): We'll prepare a chart and have it available on the Tuesday when the committee comes back, and as other issues are identified, we'll add them to the chart with the description and briefing.

Mr. Tom Lukiwski: Okay.

The Chair: Yes. Go ahead, Mr. Lamoureux.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: In terms of the process, because this is exceptionally new for someone like me, do you have a subcommittee that will review some suggestions, or is it the committee—

The Chair: It's going to be the committee as a whole, much as we did with the Elections Act. Even as we found pieces from the Chief Electoral Officer that weren't even in his recommendations, a suggestion from the table would come up and we just deferred it to the bottom and then covered it. We certainly did take new suggestions as the day went on.

We've set aside a number of meetings to be able to look at the Standing Orders, but as the analyst has suggested, he'll put out a chart of what's been suggested, we'll start from the top and go to the bottom, but as we get through that there may be times when we add or agree to take off or....

Madam Charlton.

Ms. Chris Charlton: Just let me understand what this chart is going to look like. I thought there was an agreement at the last meeting to prioritize things that were raised in the debate. I'm assuming the chart is not numerical from one to the end of the Standing Orders, that some priority is given.

Mr. Michel Bédard: It will be for the members to decide which item they want to prioritize. The order in the chart won't be compelling to the members.

The Chair: Mr. Lukiwski.

Mr. Tom Lukiwski: Mr. Chair, to answer what Chris is saying, all kidding aside, I think Joe has been working from the NDP side on some proposed changes to the Standing Orders maybe a little longer than I've been taking a look at it, or our folks.

When we come back, I have no problem whatsoever in terms of determining what Standing Orders are examined first. If you've got a full slate of suggestions, we can start with yours and we'll add ours as we get to them.

The Chair: I do remember, even with the Chief Electoral Officer's recommendations, that we didn't start at the beginning. We tried to pick the low-hanging fruit first and then go to what we thought might be toughest. We can reverse that order. Whatever order you want to go in, we'll certainly—

Ms. Chris Charlton: We don't have 12 years for this.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Chair: I was a young man when we started looking at the Chief Electoral Officer.

Mr. Albrecht.

• (1210)

Mr. Harold Albrecht: Not to get into the administrative detail, and I don't have any problem prioritizing, but I think it would be very difficult not to have them in some order—just for us, for

reference's sake, to have them in some numerical order. I'm happy to pick the low-hanging fruit, that's not a problem, but to actually chart them that way I think might be—

The Chair: The Standing Orders come to us in numerical order. They have numbers, and I think the easiest way for us is to take the ones we're looking at, and look at them from start to finish. But as I said, this group can say they want to skip those five and go to another one because that's what they really want to get to first. I think we can easily do that, and we've shown the ability to work together on those types of things.

We've made a commitment to you, Ms. Charlton, that one of the ones you had suggested would be one of the ones we'd bring up first and we'd go that way. I don't know what number it is, but I don't think it's number one in the Standing Orders.

Ms. Chris Charlton: It's 116.

The Chair: Okay, so we'll get there.

Is everybody prepared?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Chair: All right.

We'll see you on Thursday. We're going to do a bit of a discussion on that on Thursday anyway.

Great. Thank you.

We are adjourned.

MAIL  POSTE

Canada Post Corporation / Société canadienne des postes

Postage paid

Port payé

Lettermail

Poste-lettre

**1782711
Ottawa**

If undelivered, return COVER ONLY to:
Publishing and Depository Services
Public Works and Government Services Canada
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0S5

*En cas de non-livraison,
retourner cette COUVERTURE SEULEMENT à :*
Les Éditions et Services de dépôt
Travaux publics et Services gouvernementaux Canada
Ottawa (Ontario) K1A 0S5

Published under the authority of the Speaker of
the House of Commons

SPEAKER'S PERMISSION

Reproduction of the proceedings of the House of Commons and its Committees, in whole or in part and in any medium, is hereby permitted provided that the reproduction is accurate and is not presented as official. This permission does not extend to reproduction, distribution or use for commercial purpose of financial gain. Reproduction or use outside this permission or without authorization may be treated as copyright infringement in accordance with the *Copyright Act*. Authorization may be obtained on written application to the Office of the Speaker of the House of Commons.

Reproduction in accordance with this permission does not constitute publication under the authority of the House of Commons. The absolute privilege that applies to the proceedings of the House of Commons does not extend to these permitted reproductions. Where a reproduction includes briefs to a Committee of the House of Commons, authorization for reproduction may be required from the authors in accordance with the *Copyright Act*.

Nothing in this permission abrogates or derogates from the privileges, powers, immunities and rights of the House of Commons and its Committees. For greater certainty, this permission does not affect the prohibition against impeaching or questioning the proceedings of the House of Commons in courts or otherwise. The House of Commons retains the right and privilege to find users in contempt of Parliament if a reproduction or use is not in accordance with this permission.

Additional copies may be obtained from: Publishing and
Depository Services
Public Works and Government Services Canada
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0S5
Telephone: 613-941-5995 or 1-800-635-7943
Fax: 613-954-5779 or 1-800-565-7757
publications@tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca
http://publications.gc.ca

Also available on the Parliament of Canada Web Site at the
following address: <http://www.parl.gc.ca>

Publié en conformité de l'autorité
du Président de la Chambre des communes

PERMISSION DU PRÉSIDENT

Il est permis de reproduire les délibérations de la Chambre et de ses comités, en tout ou en partie, sur n'importe quel support, pourvu que la reproduction soit exacte et qu'elle ne soit pas présentée comme version officielle. Il n'est toutefois pas permis de reproduire, de distribuer ou d'utiliser les délibérations à des fins commerciales visant la réalisation d'un profit financier. Toute reproduction ou utilisation non permise ou non formellement autorisée peut être considérée comme une violation du droit d'auteur aux termes de la *Loi sur le droit d'auteur*. Une autorisation formelle peut être obtenue sur présentation d'une demande écrite au Bureau du Président de la Chambre.

La reproduction conforme à la présente permission ne constitue pas une publication sous l'autorité de la Chambre. Le privilège absolu qui s'applique aux délibérations de la Chambre ne s'étend pas aux reproductions permises. Lorsqu'une reproduction comprend des mémoires présentés à un comité de la Chambre, il peut être nécessaire d'obtenir de leurs auteurs l'autorisation de les reproduire, conformément à la *Loi sur le droit d'auteur*.

La présente permission ne porte pas atteinte aux privilèges, pouvoirs, immunités et droits de la Chambre et de ses comités. Il est entendu que cette permission ne touche pas l'interdiction de contester ou de mettre en cause les délibérations de la Chambre devant les tribunaux ou autrement. La Chambre conserve le droit et le privilège de déclarer l'utilisateur coupable d'outrage au Parlement lorsque la reproduction ou l'utilisation n'est pas conforme à la présente permission.

On peut obtenir des copies supplémentaires en écrivant à : Les
Éditions et Services de dépôt
Travaux publics et Services gouvernementaux Canada
Ottawa (Ontario) K1A 0S5
Téléphone : 613-941-5995 ou 1-800-635-7943
Télécopieur : 613-954-5779 ou 1-800-565-7757
publications@tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca
http://publications.gc.ca

Aussi disponible sur le site Web du Parlement du Canada à
l'adresse suivante : <http://www.parl.gc.ca>