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Tuesday, June 21, 2011

—
Chair

Mr. Rodney Weston

Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans

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•(1105)

[English]

The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Georges Etoka): 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, 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'm ready to receive motions for the chair.

Mr. MacAulay.

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Cardigan, Lib.): I move that it be Rodney Weston.

The Clerk: It has been moved by Mr. MacAulay that Mr. Weston be elected chair of the committee.

Are there any further motions?

Mr. Weston.

Mr. John Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country, CPC): I'd just like to say I think it's a great name.

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. Rodney Weston elected chair of the committee.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

The Clerk: Before inviting Mr. Weston to take the chair, if the committee wishes we will now proceed to the election of vice-chairs.

Pursuant to Standing Order 106(2), the first vice-chair must be a member of the official opposition.

I'm now prepared to receive motions for the first vice-chair.

Mr. MacAulay.

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay: I'd like to nominate Mr. Fin Donnelly.

Mr. John Weston: That's also a good name, Mr. Clerk.

The Clerk: It has been moved by Mr. MacAulay that Mr. Donnelly be elected first vice-chair of the committee.

Are there any other motions?

Is it the pleasure of the committee to adopt the motion?

(Motion agreed to)

The Clerk: I declare the motion carried and Mr. Donnelly duly elected first vice-chair of the committee.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

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

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

Mr. Donnelly.

Mr. Fin Donnelly (New Westminster—Coquitlam, NDP): I'd like to nominate Mr. Lawrence MacAulay.

The Clerk: It has been moved by Mr. Donnelly that Mr. MacAulay be elected second vice-chair of the committee. Is it the pleasure of the committee to adopt the motion?

(Motion agreed to)

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

I now invite Mr. Weston to take the chair.

•(1110)

The Chair (Mr. Rodney Weston (Saint John, CPC)): The first thing I'd like to say is thank you very much for electing me once again as chair. I want to say congratulations to our two vice-chairs. It's great to come back to this committee. It's a terrific committee, and I very much enjoyed working on this committee in the last Parliament and look forward to the work that we'll be doing in this Parliament.

For the new members, I want to say welcome to this committee. I hope you'll find the work here as satisfying as I did in the last Parliament. This is not a warning of any sort, but this committee tends to be very collegial. One of the things I really enjoy about this committee is that we do tend to work very closely and have a very collegial working relationship with all members of the committee. I certainly want to welcome all the new members to the committee and welcome back the members who were on the committee in the previous Parliament.

We have a few items of business, but one of the things I was surprised to hear during the election of the chair was that Mr. Weston was so fond of the name Rodney, as he pointed out.

Thank you very much, Mr. Weston. That's a little "inside baseball" there.

Before we begin, we have a few things we need to clear up today. We need to go through our routine motions. We need to set our routine motions on how we conduct our business. I think the clerk has circulated them to you. This is the process. These are the motions that were followed in the previous Parliament. You might want to take a look at the motions. I'm assuming that you might have given some thought to them beforehand.

I'm not sure how you want to deal with the motions we have in place. There are the motions we have from the previous Parliament. Do you want to deal with this as a whole? The only one I have to say would probably change is the allocation of time for questioning, because we no longer have a Bloc Québécois party here, and this lays out a standard for that as well.

Are there any questions? How do you want to deal with this? Do you want to deal with this on a one-off basis? Would you like to deal with this as a whole? I'm open for discussion at this point.

Mr. Kamp.

Mr. Randy Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission, CPC): I would recommend, Mr. Chair, that we proceed through them one at a time. I think there are some minor changes in more than just the speaking order. I think we can move through them pretty quickly.

The Chair: If it's all right with everyone we'll go through them one at a time.

The first motion we have is on the services of analysts from the Library of Parliament: that the committee retain, as needed and at the discretion of the chair, the services of analysts from the Library of Parliament to assist it in its work.

Mr. Vellacott.

Mr. Maurice Vellacott (Saskatoon—Wanuskewin, CPC): I so move.

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: I'll invite the analysts to take their seats at the table.

Kirsten, welcome back.

The next motion we have is on the subcommittee on agenda and procedure. The motion reads that the subcommittee on agenda and procedure be established and be composed of the chair, the two vice-chairs, a member of the other opposition party, and a member of the government party.

On that motion, Mr. Kamp.

• (1115)

Mr. Randy Kamp: That's the previous motion, so I assume it's not being moved; it's not on the floor at this point. I would like to move that the subcommittee on agenda and procedure be composed

of five members, including the chair, the two vice-chairs, the parliamentary secretary, and a member of the Conservative Party.

The Chair: Can you please read that again, Mr. Kamp?

Mr. Randy Kamp: I move that the subcommittee on agenda and procedure be composed of five members, including the chair, the two vice-chairs, the parliamentary secretary, and a member of the Conservative Party.

The Chair: You heard the motion as proposed by Mr. Kamp. Is there any discussion on the motion?

Those in favour?

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: On a reduced quorum, the motion from the previous Parliament is 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 three members are present, including one government member and one opposition member.

Is there any discussion on that motion?

Mr. Vellacott.

Mr. Maurice Vellacott: Mr. Chair, does the three include the chair? Is the chair part of that number?

The Chair: Yes.

It's been moved by Mr. Vellacott that the motion stand from the previous Parliament as read.

Those in favour?

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: The next motion is on the distribution of documents.

From the previous Parliament, the motion is that the clerk of the committee be authorized to distribute to the members of the committee only documents that are available in both official languages.

Mr. Hayes so moves.

Those in favour?

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: Sorry, I forgot to ask for a discussion. Everybody was in favour, so I take it back.

Working meals. A motion from the previous Parliament reads that the clerk of the committee be authorized to make the necessary arrangements to provide working meals for the committee and its subcommittees.

Do I have a mover?

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay: We're not opposed to that.

The Chair: Mr. Weston.

Mr. John Weston: I know we've already gone past it, but...

[*Translation*]

We could perhaps add a few words on official languages. If the committee agrees, we could circulate a document that has not been translated yet in the second official language. That would give the committee a bit more flexibility.

[*English*]

The Chair: As we say many times, the committee is the master of its own destiny; the committee can determine that at a specific point in time if there is a need to do that. You would need unanimous consent for the committee to distribute documents of that nature.

[*Translation*]

Mr. John Weston: Okay, thank you.

[*English*]

The Chair: All right. Back to working meals.

Mr. MacAulay, I believe you moved that.

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay: Yes, I did.

The Chair: Is there any discussion on the motion on working meals?

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay: What about the menu?

The Chair: We'll get to that later.

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: The motion on witnesses' expenses from the previous Parliament reads 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.

It is moved by Pat Davidson.

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: With regard to staff at in camera meetings, the motion from the previous Parliament reads that unless otherwise ordered, each committee member be allowed to be accompanied by one staff person at an in camera meeting, and in addition each party shall be permitted to have one party staff member attend in camera meetings.

Can I have a mover for that motion? Mr. MacAulay.

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: Mr. Vellacott.

• (1120)

Mr. Maurice Vellacott: Just on that matter, I assume the staff are bound by the same rules of confidentiality at in camera meetings as the members are.

The Chair: That's correct, yes.

The next motion from the previous Parliament is on in camera meetings transcripts. The motion reads 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.

Do I have a mover for that motion? Mr. Donnelly.

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: With regard to notice of motions, the motion this committee had from the previous Parliament was that 48 hours' notice be required for any substantive motion to be considered by the committee, unless the substantive motion relates directly to business then under consideration; and that the notice of motion be filed with the clerk of the committee and distributed to members in both official languages.

Do we have a mover on that motion, or a suggestion? It is moved by Mr. Donnelly.

Mr. Kamp, do you have a comment?

Mr. Randy Kamp: I guess what the motion doesn't say is when the clerk will distribute the.... It says "be filed with the clerk and distributed to members in both official languages".

Are we making the assumption that the clerk will not hang onto the motion and not give us the 48 hours' notice? That has happened in committees in the past; I don't think it was this one, as I recall.

If it's filed properly on a given business day, then we will see it that same business day.

The Chair: I guess what you're asking, Mr. Kamp, is when the 48 hours begins. Does it begin when it's distributed or when it's filed?

Mr. Randy Kamp: Well, we would like to see it for 48 hours.

The Chair: We can add a timeframe to this motion as well, if you wish, Mr. Kamp.

Mr. Randy Kamp: Yes. Perhaps we could amend the motion with another sentence that states, "Completed motions that are received by close of business shall be distributed to members on the same day."

The Chair: Rather than just say "close of business", do you want to put a time on it, Mr. Kamp?

Mr. Randy Kamp: Do you have a suggestion?

The Chair: The clerk is suggesting "by 5 p.m.".

Mr. Randy Kamp: Okay.

The Chair: Because "close of business" could be open to discretion at that point, is what he's suggesting.

In other committees they have put a time on it.

Mr. Randy Kamp: Okay. I'm good with that.

Thank you.

• (1125)

The Chair: All right.

All those in favour of the amendment to the motion that was discussed, adding the timeframe that the motions would be distributed "no later than 5 p.m."? This is the amendment, and we're defining the time as 5 p.m.

(Amendment agreed to)

The Chair: We're now on the amended motion.

(Motion as amended agreed to)

The Chair: On the allocation of time for questioning, in the previous Parliament the wording of this motion was that witnesses from an organization be given ten minutes to make their opening statement; and that, at the discretion of the chair, during the questioning of witnesses, there be allocated ten minutes for the first questioner of the Liberal Party, seven minutes for the first questioner of the Bloc Québécois, five minutes to the questioner of the New Democratic Party, and ten minutes for the first questioner of the Conservative Party; and that if there is a subsequent round, the rotation be the same except all questioning be for five minutes.

Mr. Allen.

Mr. Mike Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac, CPC): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

A warm welcome to all our new committee members as well as our previous committee members. I'm not going to say "old".

I have a couple of points, Mr. Chair.

I think we should have some discussion on this. Going back historically and seeing how the committee has worked, what I've often found is that sometimes we have two-hour meetings and sometimes we have hour meetings, and even though, in some cases, you do your best to split your time, I don't often find that all members get a chance to pose questions to witnesses.

I'd like to see a couple of principles. The first is that we set up the round of questioning such that all members have a chance to have a time slot. The second is how much time we have.

One of the things I'd like us to consider as part of the discussion on this is possibly splitting this into two components, the first one being the time, the time for the presenters to come and then the allocated time for the rounds, and then the second component of this is actual speaking order.

I think if we break this up into two components it might make the discussion a little bit easier, as opposed to muddying it all into one. In the first one we can talk about the rounds of questioning, if we want to have an opening round of ten minutes for the presenters to make their presentation, and then, after that, our questioning round. In the past we went ten minutes for the Liberal Party, seven minutes for the Bloc, five for the NDP, and ten for the Conservatives, I think it was. We might want to make that a little more uniform this time. Perhaps all parties could have seven minutes in that first round and then five-minute rounds after that. Or we could have the same kind of thing as before, where we'd have ten minutes for the official opposition, ten minutes for the government, and maybe seven minutes for the Liberals, starting out.

I think we should try to break this up into two components first. I would propose that we actually do that. And in the interest of perhaps keeping that easy, I guess I'll throw it open by proposing that we should break this up into two components before we start.

The Chair: I think it would make sense, Mr. Allen, if we broke it into two components, because there are two actual questions here that we need to answer.

On the first component, that being the time for the presenters, if we just stick to that, I think we can all agree on it to begin with. The

time for presentations has generally been ten minutes. We ask presenters to keep it to that.

So we'll craft this motion piecemeal. I'll ask for discussion on the presentations at ten minutes. Is there any discussion on that?

Do you want to do it as a separate motion? Is that what you're suggesting here?

Mr. Allen.

• (1130)

Mr. Mike Allen: If we are in agreement to break it up, then I'll propose a motion.

The Chair: All right.

Mr. Mike Allen: Then we'll have something to discuss. In the rounds of questioning, the witnesses from one organization shall be allowed ten minutes to make an opening statement. During the questioning of the witnesses, there shall be allocated seven minutes for the first round of questioning and thereafter five minutes shall be allocated to each questioner in the second and subsequent rounds of questioning.

We always get into the question of what constitutes one round, with at least each party having one.... So if we went with the NDP, the Conservatives, the Liberals, and the Conservatives, that would constitute the first round of four, and everybody would have seven minutes. We would start with the official opposition, then go to the Conservatives, then to the Liberal Party, and then back to the Conservatives. That would constitute the first seven-minute round. That is kind of what I was thinking. Then everything else after that would be five minutes.

We can talk about the speaking order as a separate motion, but this is the spirit of what I'm recommending.

The Chair: What you're proposing, then, Mr. Allen, is that we have a seven-minute round. There would be ten minutes for the presentations and then the first round would be for seven minutes. Then the order you propose—

Mr. Mike Allen: We can talk about the order.

The Chair: All right.

Mr. Mike Allen: The first round will be for seven minutes.

The Chair: You're talking about seven minutes for the first round—

Mr. Mike Allen: And five minutes after that.

The Chair: —and five minutes for the second round.

An hon. member: And subsequent rounds.

The Chair: For second and subsequent rounds. Okay.

Mr. Mike Allen: I'll read that again.

The Chair: Sure, if you don't mind.

Mr. Mike Allen: It says that the witnesses from any one organization shall be allowed ten minutes to make their opening statement. During the questioning of witnesses there shall be allocated seven minutes for the first round of questioning and thereafter five minutes shall be allocated to each questioner in the second and subsequent rounds of questioning.

The Chair: All right. You've heard the motion by Mr. Allen.

On the motion, Mr. Donnelly.

Mr. Fin Donnelly: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I have two questions. One, do we have a limit in terms of the number of presentations that could be made in a committee?

The Chair: We haven't had one. The presenters are usually invited by the committee, so I guess at that point in time.... We have had occasions where we've had one presenter and we've had occasions where we've had several presenters. There has never been a limit on it, but that is certainly something we could talk about if you want to propose something.

Mr. Fin Donnelly: It was more that I'm curious to find out. At some point, there are only so many we can fit in at one committee meeting. It would have to spill over to another committee meeting.

The Chair: It generally depends upon the topic and I guess the level of detail we are looking for from the presenters.

It has been my experience that just about every presenter who comes before the committee will use up the ten minutes—and then some. So it might not be a bad idea to limit the number of presenters per meeting. That's not a bad idea at all, because we could take up a large part of the meeting just for presentations, and a lot of members would have questions that they wouldn't get to ask if we run out of rounds.

Mr. Fin Donnelly: I don't have a specific proposal in mind in terms of limiting that, but having three or four is probably adequate.

Before moving on, the second question I had is on the time allocation that Mike was suggesting.

You initially suggested two possibilities. One was an even allocation and the other was for ten, ten, and seven.

Mr. Mike Allen: Yes, ten, ten, seven—something like that.

Mr. Fin Donnelly: I think that would be my preference, to look at that.

The Chair: Mr. Weston.

[*Translation*]

Mr. John Weston: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I have two questions.

My first question is about the representatives. If I understand Mr. Allen's suggestion correctly, regardless of how many representatives there are, the company would get 10 minutes. Once again, I think we would like to have some flexibility to make changes.

Second, let us think of the three parties that are represented here and the fact that there are 11 people. I feel there would be a problem if not everyone was able to ask a question. That could be a problem for those who sit for two hours without having a chance to participate.

Could Mr. Allen tell us if he thought about the number of people?

•(1135)

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Weston.

Mr. MacAulay.

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay: I think we have to be careful. When presenters come, many times they've come here with the thought that two or three people were going to give a presentation. You've seen it, Rodney. The problem you have is when you have somebody coming from British Columbia to give a presentation and we tell them they cannot do it. I think we have to be very sure this is well explained if they're going to give ten minutes. I've seen it here where we have professional people sitting at the back. They've travelled thousands of miles, and to tell them they can't talk.... They have to be fully aware they've got ten minutes and have to divide it up, if we're going to cast this in stone.

The Chair: Good point, Mr. MacAulay. Thank you.

Mr. Vellacott.

Mr. Maurice Vellacott: I think rather than actually set that into our routine motions here in terms of how many witnesses you have, as I think you wisely suggested, Mr. Chair, depending on the nature of the material and the extent of detail, I think it would be better to get to that consensus or agreement as the topics come up. So for this one, really, having two is adequate, or for this one maybe we move on it quickly and we can do three or four.

I don't think you'd want to set that into your routine motions, in my humble opinion, but rather decide that case by case as you proceed.

The Chair: Thank you.

Anything further?

Mr. Allen.

Mr. Mike Allen: Thank you. This is just a point of clarification. Lawrence is right. It's really bad if someone misunderstands what they're going to be doing. I think certainly the intent is if we invite an organization here, they would have ten minutes to present, each one of them. If they have two to three people in each organization here, each one won't get ten minutes, obviously, but the organization would get ten minutes. If they want to split that between them, that's fine. Maybe it should say "from any one organization" or "the witnesses from each organization", or something like that.

I hear what you're saying. Each organization that's invited should get ten minutes.

The Chair: All right. I think we're all in agreement on the ten minutes per organization. That makes sense. It has to be clearly defined to them before they come that they have ten minutes. If they have several presenters, they would have to divide that ten minutes up if they're from the same organization.

But if we invite two or maybe three organizations, there would be ten minutes per organization. I just want to make sure I understand clearly what the proposal is before us. So a ten-minute opening statement is what we're looking for.

Mr. Allen, you did make a formal motion. I'll ask you to read it again.

Mr. Mike Allen: Sure: prove that I can read.

The Chair: It's just so I'm clear on it here.

Mr. Mike Allen: He's putting the test that I can actually read.

Okay. So it would read as follows: that the witnesses from any one organization shall be allowed ten minutes to make their opening statement. During the questioning of witnesses, there shall be allocated seven minutes for the first round of questioning, and thereafter, five minutes shall be allocated to each questioner in the second and subsequent rounds of questioning.

• (1140)

The Chair: Mr. Donnelly, you propose an amendment to that motion?

Mr. Fin Donnelly: That's right.

The Chair: Could I ask you to state the amendment?

Mr. Fin Donnelly: The amendment is that it be ten for the Conservatives, ten for the New Democrats, and seven for the Liberals.

The Chair: For the first round.

Mr. Fin Donnelly: For the first round, yes.

The Chair: What about the second and subsequent rounds in Mr. Allen's motion? Are you suggesting an amendment to just the first part?

Mr. Fin Donnelly: So the subsequent would be five....

Well, I think in keeping, then, I would suggest six, six, and four.

The Chair: Okay.

Is there discussion on the amendment?

Mr. Allen.

Mr. Mike Allen: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I know I wanted these broken up, but I think in the spirit of what we're trying to do here.... One of the other principles I'm hoping to achieve here is to give everybody a crack at stuff before we keep going around. And I'm going to propose a change in the speaking order as well.

At the end of the day, I think if we keep it at seven minutes, there would be.... As I would see it, there would be four questioners in the first round, keeping it clean at seven minutes. But if we also keep to the principle that everybody is going to get on, and there will be a five-minute slot for all 11 members, or at least there will be a slot for all members, then I don't think we have to have that big first round like we used to have before.

As I think we probably all know, splitting our time doesn't work out very well. When you have a five-minute round and you say you're going to split your time, typically that second person gets only

the last 30 seconds for a question. Things go pretty quickly in a five-minute round.

So I would suggest that we try to keep it consistent so that everybody gets seven in the first round, and then we can get agreement on what that first round is.

The Chair: Mr. MacAulay.

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay: I would agree with the seven minutes as long as all parties have the five on the second round. I think it's only fair. That's the way we've worked here over the years, so hopefully that can happen—in the spirit of cooperation.

The Chair: Mr. Donnelly, do you have a comment?

Mr. Fin Donnelly: Yes, Mr. Chair.

Maybe Mike could explain a little bit about how it would work. I know it's getting off the motion and into the next proposal, but that might shed some light on how this would be an even distribution of the time allocation.

Mr. Mike Allen: Mr. Chair, if you would like, I could go into that.

The Chair: Yes, please.

Mr. Mike Allen: What I would see happening...and this is before we come to the speaking order.

I know Mr. MacAulay is going to get wound up when I say this, but that's okay.

At the end of the day, this is how I would see this playing out. The first round would start with the official opposition, the NDP, for seven minutes. It would come back to the Conservatives for a seven-minute round. It would go to Mr. MacAulay and the Liberals for a seven-minute round. Then it would come back to the Conservatives for a seven-minute round. That would be round one.

Round two would start with the NDP again, as the official opposition—these would all be five-minute rounds—and it would go NDP, Conservative, NDP, Conservative, NDP, Conservative until we got to the last two slots; we could go Conservative, Liberal, if we get to then, but I could put in a Liberal slot before the last Conservative slot as well.

So I would see it going back and forth between the opposition and the government until all members have been exhausted. And hopefully that would happen.

Well, “exhausted” might not be a good word: “expired”.

An hon. member: That's worse.

An hon. member: How about “tired”?

Mr. Mike Allen: Just tired, yes.

• (1145)

The Chair: Mr. MacAulay.

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay: First, I would like Mike to repeat it. But if I understand it correctly, basically after the first round it's the elimination of the third party.

Mr. Mike Allen: Yes.

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay: That normally never happened around here, but—

Mr. Mike Allen: No. We've talked about it in every session of Parliament. What I've seen in a lot of the other committees is that it's a question of whether all members who are duly elected get an opportunity to question the witnesses. I know we can do some things on splitting time, but as I said, with five-minute rounds you don't get much of an opportunity to do that. You might get a little bit of an opportunity to do it in the first seven-minute round.

But for Lawrence I will repeat it. The first round would be NDP, Conservative, Liberal, Conservative. And then it would go NDP, Conservative, NDP, Conservative, NDP, Conservative, which would exhaust the NDP members. And then it would be Liberal, Conservative.

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay: Yes, but it would have to be into the next day for a Liberal to get up, and that's just not fair.

The Chair: Mr. Vellacott.

Mr. Maurice Vellacott: In the proposal, for example, it goes back to the NDP. That's assuming that if Fin asked the question on the first round, then it's Ryan or Rosane or Jonathan, and likewise then it comes back to us. So if you decline, you'd have to decline all along the line, I guess. So if no other Conservatives have questions, then it jumps back to the NDP. We're talking about a different member each time. It's not like another Conservative, in the second round, grabbing the spot, or an NDP member. It's a different person from that party speaking each time. Is that correct?

The Chair: I believe what Mr. Allen is proposing is parties, not individuals.

Mr. Mike Allen: Just for clarification, though, to Lawrence's point, by making the first round a little bit shorter at seven minutes, that also means that in a two-hour meeting where you have maybe two or three witnesses at the most, there would be approximately 68 minutes of questioning to get through everybody, which means the Liberals would get two cracks in that hour and 10 minutes or hour and 15 minutes.

The Chair: Mr. MacAulay.

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay: But where is the Liberal going to get the second crack?

Mr. Mike Allen: It would be second to last on round two.

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay: So you have the NDP, Conservative, Liberal, and then it's back to the Conservatives on the first round.

Mr. Mike Allen: Yes, that's on the first round.

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay: And then you have the NDP, Conservative, NDP, Conservative, NDP, Conservative, and then—

Mr. Mike Allen: Yes, and then it's Liberal and Conservative.

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay: But it'll never get there, Mike.

Mr. Mike Allen: Well, it will if we get 68 minutes. There are 68 minutes of questioning, so say 75 minutes—

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay: Why could you not just put the Liberal in one round before, and at least we'd have a chance for the second round, in the line of fairness? If the committee opposes that, I'm overruled, but just to be fair, even if I were second last before

you repeated it three or four times—so if you put the NDP, Liberal, Conservative and then put the NDP in last, or the Conservative—I would at least get two kicks. It's eliminating the Liberal Party.

The Chair: To your point, Mr. MacAulay, Georges was doing some quick math here. You have 120 minutes in a two-hour meeting. If you take out 10 minutes for the presenters, if there is one presenter, then the first round should take 28 minutes and the second round to complete all members should take 40 minutes total. And you would get two questions. From the proposals on the floor, the Liberal Party would get 12 minutes of questions.

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay: Well, of course you know everything goes on beyond the time. And also, you have meetings that are one hour, and of course you'd go with the first round then and then the Liberal would be eliminated.

• (1150)

The Chair: Actually, when we had meetings that were one-hour meetings we generally only got one round if we had several presenters. So you would have one seven-minute question under this proposal; the NDP would have a seven-minute question, and the Conservatives would have 14 minutes in one round for a one-hour meeting.

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay: All I would ask is that you consider putting a Liberal in just in the line of fairness before you go five or six rounds. It's just too long. It eliminates the Liberal Party. Could you put it in just one slot before that, in the line of fairness?

And Mike, you can suggest it. Put it in somewhere before.

Mr. Mike Allen: I'll make my motion and you can go from there.

The Chair: We have a motion on the floor that Mr. Allen presented that would provide for seven minutes in the first round and five minutes in the second and subsequent rounds.

Mr. Donnelly has amended that motion to call for ten minutes for the Conservative Party, ten minutes for the New Democratic Party, and seven minutes for the Liberal Party in the first round. The discussion was on the second and subsequent rounds, if I recall, taking us back to where we were.

Mr. Donnelly.

Mr. Fin Donnelly: What we're looking at with time, if there is one presentation, is 10 minutes and then 28 minutes of questions in the first round and theoretically 40 minutes in the second round. That is 78 minutes. That is with one presenter.

I am curious. If we looked at last year and at how many committee meetings we had presentations, I don't recall there being many where we had only one presentation. Most had at least two, and sometimes there were up to six. So we would never get through this round if we had three presentations in 30 minutes. We would be lucky to get through the first half of the second round.

The Chair: That's correct. When you take the example of the last Parliament and what we did with multiple presentations, you're right when you say that. But if you break it up into one-hour meetings and have one or two presenters for the first hour and one or two presenters for the second hour, and you only get one round in each hour, then under Mr. Allen's proposal, or the amendment you are suggesting, Mr. Donnelly, the second and subsequent rounds would not come into play. Do you see what I'm saying?

Mr. Fin Donnelly: Yes.

The Chair: I guess there would be more responsibility on the committee to determine how many presenters they want to bring forward and whether they want to bring forward one presenter or two presenters and how you want to structure the meetings. If you want to structure the meeting as a two-hour meeting, then you're going to get into the second and subsequent rounds. If you structure the meetings as one-hour meetings with one presenter—I'm assuming—then you would have the one round.

You get where I'm going on this.

It's up to the committee to determine how the meetings are going to be structured. It's going to determine how we get into this.

You used the example, Mr. Donnelly, of the previous Parliament. If you go back to it, there were probably very few when we got into second and subsequent rounds. You were the NDP member that had the benefit several times in the previous Parliament of what Mr. MacAulay was talking about. But it probably didn't happen that often that you got that benefit. You were in the first round, and you had your five minutes in that first round. It's all in how the committee structures the meetings.

Mr. Fin Donnelly: Just to finish off the proposed amendment I put forward, instead of 28 in the first round it would be 17. So it would be a much shorter first round. I haven't done the math on the second round, but it would be 12....

• (1155)

The Chair: That's where the order comes into play to determine how we go. Your suggestion in the amendment is a 10-minute first round for the Conservatives, 10 minutes for the NDP, and seven minutes for the Liberal Party. So it would be 27 minutes in the first round.

Mr. Allen's proposal is 28 minutes in the first round.

Go ahead, Mr. Allen.

Mr. Mike Allen: I appreciate what Fin is saying. As part of how we manage this, all of us as members need to respect the fact and support you in the management of the time. We see some questions go on for four and a half minutes of a five-minute slot. It's five minutes for the question and the answer. In order for this to work and be fair to all members, we need to support you in your enforcement of that as well.

The Chair: I will admit guilt when it comes to enforcement of the times. That has been difficult. You make a good point that we had members who would ask their questions until the alarm went off to suggest the end of the time and then wait for the response. Then the response would sometimes take several minutes. I don't like to cut off our guests when they come in. As committee members, you know the time constraints we're under when we come here.

Anyway, you're right that when we set times in routine motions, they're the times allotted for questions and responses.

Mr. Maurice Vellacott: Are you calling the question on the amendment?

The Chair: Sorry, I still have another speaker here, Mr. Vellacott.

Mr. MacAulay.

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay: This is a question for the chair.

Do you honestly believe that if you have professionals at the end and it goes to the beeper and the time limit, we're not going to allow them to answer? It has never happened.

That's where the time is eaten up. The committee is going to say—it's the master of its own destiny—we want to hear the response. A lot of times we want to hear the response because it will hopefully be a valuable response.

Mr. Maurice Vellacott: The questioner should get to the point and ask the question.

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay: My only concern is that a lot of things should be, but often they're not. That's my problem with the lineup.

I think there's a willingness here to try to accommodate me. If we could be put in a couple of slots earlier, it could be accommodated. It will be interesting to watch our chair monitor the time. He's a wonderful chairman, but I'll be surprised if he can keep it right on the time. It just does not happen.

The Chair: To your point, Mr. MacAulay, that's exactly why we tend to get in only one round in an hour meeting if we have a 10-minute presentation.

In the previous Parliament, with the order the way it was and the time allotments, there were only 32 minutes for our questions, as opposed to the proposal today for 28 and 27. Thirty-two minutes isn't a lot of difference, but in a 60-minute time slot we can only get the 10-minute presentation and one round of questions. We do tend to go over.

In this committee we're not as focused on the time as we are on trying to achieve something and garner some information from our witnesses. We ask them here to provide us with some knowledge and perspective.

Cutting them off is not something I really look forward to, as you said, when there are professionals here. We want to get the information we've asked them to come here to provide.

Mr. MacAulay.

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay: I need some guidance from you. Are we going through with the amendment and voting on the amendment to Mike's motion?

The Chair: We would have to vote on the amendment first.

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay: I would like to propose an amendment to the amendment.

The Chair: So it would be a subamendment.

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay: I guess you would call it a subamendment.

•(1200)

The Chair: Okay.

Do you want to propose your subamendment, Mr. MacAulay?

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay: I agree with the first round being seven, seven, seven and seven, and then NDP, Conservative, NDP, Conservative, Liberal, NDP, and Conservative.

The Chair: That's for the next round.

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay: Yes.

The Chair: Okay. You're suggesting that the first round be seven, seven, seven—four sevens.

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay: And then it would be NDP, Conservative, NDP, Conservative, and then the Liberals.

The Chair: Okay. Your only change is to the order; it's not to the time limit.

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay: No, it's not to the time.

The Chair: So it would be a seven-minute round for the first, and the order would be NDP, Conservative, Liberal, Conservative.

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay: Yes, because if we lengthen the time for anything else, we'll be cutting others off. I want to be fair.

The Chair: Mr. MacAulay, the subamendment is not in order, because you're trying to change the order of the amendment. Is that what you're proposing? It's not the amendment. The amendment is to have the times at ten, ten, and seven. Is that correct?

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay: That's right.

The Chair: So your subamendment should be after the amendment is dealt with.

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay: It should be after the amendment is dealt with.

The Chair: It's after the amendment is dealt with. Is that correct? It's after the main motion.

Mr. Allen.

Mr. Mike Allen: Just for clarification, when Fin asked the question, he was asking how this would play out just for clarity in terms of the times. That was not put on the table on the order. We agreed to split these two. The order is going to be the next motion, and then we can discuss that piece. It's just a matter of us talking about times. The first round is sevens, with subsequent fives. Fin's motion is for two tens, a seven, and subsequent fives.

The Chair: You're correct, Mr. Allen. Thank you.

Mr. Kamp.

Mr. Randy Kamp: The motion before us addresses just two questions: how many minutes should each organization have—and I think we have consensus on that at approximately 10 minutes per organization—and then how long should the first round of

questioning be? We're proposing seven minutes. Fin has another suggestion.

I think we should dispose of this, and then we can get into the more interesting question of the speaking order.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Kamp.

So the amendment we have before us today is from Mr. Donnelly, who is proposing ten, ten, and seven on the first round, and on the second and subsequent rounds he's proposing six, six, and four. That's for each respective party—the NDP, Conservative, Liberal. Is that correct? That's correct.

Is there any further discussion on the amendment?

Mr. Weston.

Mr. John Weston: I'm sorry, but can I get you to repeat the original proposal so I know what it is we would be changing from?

The Chair: The original proposal by Mr. Allen was that the first round would be seven minutes per questioner and the second and subsequent rounds would be five minutes per questioner.

Mr. John Weston: Thank you.

The Chair: Mr. Donnelly.

Mr. Fin Donnelly: I know we haven't discussed the order, but if we were to go with an order that Mike provided for clarification, the timing of the two, theoretically again, sort of cumulatively would be, under Mike's proposal, in the first round 14 minutes for Conservative, seven for NDP, and seven for Liberal.

In the second round it would be 20 minutes Conservative, 15 minutes NDP, and five minutes Liberal.

Under this amendment, so under my proposal, in the first round Conservatives would get 20 minutes, the NDP would get 10 minutes, and the Liberals would get seven minutes.

Then in the second round, Conservatives would get 24 minutes, the NDP would get 18 minutes, and Liberals would get four minutes.

•(1205)

The Chair: Okay.

Mr. Fin Donnelly: That's my math, which may or may not be correct.

The Chair: So you're proposing for the first round that there be two Conservative questions. So we weren't talking about the number, but we were talking about ten, ten, and seven, right?

Mr. Fin Donnelly: Yes. That was essentially just going off Mike's.... He provided some clarity, which I know is a separate motion and another discussion.

The Chair: Are we clear on what we're discussing here? According to the amendment Mr. Donnelly is proposing, the first round would be ten minutes per Conservative Party questioner, ten minutes per NDP questioner, and seven minutes per Liberal Party questioner. In the second and subsequent rounds it would be six minutes per Conservative Party questioner, six minutes per NDP questioner, and four minutes per Liberal Party questioner.

Correct, Mr. Donnelly?

Mr. Fin Donnelly: Correct.

The Chair: On the amendment, those in favour?

(Amendment negated)

The Chair: Now we come back to the original motion by Mr. Allen that proposes seven minutes per NDP—

Mr. Mike Allen: Seven minutes in the first round.

The Chair: Sorry. Seven minutes per party in the first round. We'll decide what a round is next. I'll get it straight sooner or later. So it's seven minutes per party in the first round and five minutes per party in the second and subsequent rounds.

Mr. Randy Kamp: That's not quite right, Mr. Chair. It says "per questioner", because we may have a round having more than one questioner in a party. So if you're saying "per party" that wouldn't be accurate. We're saying "seven minutes per questioner in the first round, five minutes per questioner in the second and subsequent rounds", which is how the motion reads. It doesn't refer to parties at that point. We still haven't defined when the parties get to speak, so there's a difference.

The Chair: So you're talking per individual.

Mr. Randy Kamp: We're saying "questioner", which is how the motion reads.

The Chair: Okay, I'll get it straight.

Mr. Randy Kamp: It'll become clearer as we get to the—

The Chair: When we get to the motion. All right.

So seven minutes per questioner for the first round, five minutes per questioner on the second and subsequent rounds.

Mr. MacAulay, on the motion.

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay: I have just a question. You say "seven minutes per questioner". Does that mean you cannot divide or split your time?

Mr. Mike Allen: You can.

The Chair: Feedback seems to be coming from your mike, Mr. MacAulay. Is that where we're getting it from? Are you wired?

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay: It never did it before.

The Chair: On the motion as proposed by Mr. Allen....

Mr. Allen, do you want to read it one more time just to be clear?

Mr. Mike Allen: I move that the witnesses from any one organization shall be allowed 10 minutes to make their opening statement. During the questioning of witnesses there shall be allocated seven minutes for the first round of questioning, and thereafter five minutes shall be allocated to each questioner in the second and subsequent rounds of questioning.

We'll define what a round is and the order in the next motion.

The Chair: You have heard the motion as proposed by Mr. Allen.

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: That establishes the times per questioner and the time for opening statements from our presenters.

Now we need to talk about the order. Do we have a proposal for the order?

Mr. Allen.

• (1210)

Mr. Mike Allen: Thank you, Chair.

Now we'll go back to what I hypothetically was saying the order would be and make it a motion for the order. Then we can discuss whatever amendments Mr. MacAulay would like to make at that time.

The spirit of the recommendation here is to ensure that we at least give the opportunity for each of the members of the committee to ask a question. I think that's important. We're all members and we should all have the time. As a result of that we've got minutes now that are allocated, which will allow that to happen. Now the point is how we order it such that we have the best chance to do that.

Mr. Chair, I would move that the order for questioning for the first round shall be as follows: the New Democratic Party, the Conservative Party, the Liberal Party, and the Conservative Party.

That is round one.

Questioning during round two shall alternate between the government and opposition members in the following fashion: NDP, Conservative, NDP, Conservative, NDP, Conservative, Liberal, Conservative.

That would allow every member to ask a question or have the opportunity. They can pass if they want or whatever they want to do, but everybody would have at least one opportunity. That would take a total of 68 minutes. Given some slack time in there, it would give an opportunity for every member to ask. Lawrence, in this case, would be able to get a second round in as well.

Mr. Chair, that is my motion. If time permits, further rounds shall repeat the pattern in the first two at the discretion of the chair.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Allen.

Is there discussion on the motion?

Mr. MacAulay.

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay: What do I move? An amendment?

The Chair: If you wish.

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay: I move an amendment to the motion that it be NDP, Conservative, NDP, Conservative, Liberal, NDP, Conservative. The Liberal would be in on the third round, third or fourth. It's going NDP, Conservative, NDP, Conservative, and then Liberal. It's really the third or fourth round.

The Chair: Your issue is on the second round and subsequent rounds of questions. You're proposing NDP, Conservative, NDP, Conservative, Liberal, NDP, Conservative.

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay: NDP, Conservative.

The Chair: So we get all the questioners in. That's what your proposal is?

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay: Yes.

Mr. Mike Allen: That means that under Lawrence's amendment the two Conservatives would be pushed to the end as the last two questioners? I think it pushed you down one slot and moved us two to the end.

The Chair: That's what I understand Mr. MacAulay is proposing in his amendment here.

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay: There are two Conservative questioners before the Liberal questioner. There are two NDP questioners before—there are two slots—before the Liberal questions, and there are two for the Conservatives and two for the NDP. It's in fact the fourth round before we get in. The first round we're all involved. The second round is NDP and Conservatives and the third round is NDP and Conservatives. The fourth round we'll let the Liberal in and then NDP and Conservative.

The Chair: Okay. Let me get this order straight.

There's no change to the first round. Mr. MacAulay, for the second round and subsequent rounds this is the order you're proposing: NDP, Conservative, NDP, Conservative, Liberal, NDP, Conservative, Conservative.

Is that correct?

•(1215)

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay: Well, if there's a slot there, yes.

The Chair: All right.

Mr. MacAulay has proposed an amendment on the amendment.

Mr. Allen.

Mr. Mike Allen: Just so I understand, the order would be this: the first round would be NDP, Conservative, Liberal, Conservative, a round of all seven minutes. Then the subsequent rounds would be NDP, Conservative, NDP, Conservative, Liberal, NDP, Conservative, Conservative. That would get everybody in.

The Chair: That's my understanding of what Mr. MacAulay is proposing.

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay: I want everybody in. Now I just need some support here.

The Chair: Mr. MacAulay has made an amendment to Mr. Allen's speaking order.

(Amendment agreed to)

The Chair: Mr. Allen, do you want to give me your motion? We've amended it with Mr. MacAulay's speaking order.

Mr. Mike Allen: Do I have to repeat it all again?

The Chair: Please. We don't have the text here.

Mr. Mike Allen: My motion reads that the order of questions for the first round of questioning shall be as follows: NDP, Conservative Party, Liberal Party, Conservative Party. Questioning during the second round shall alternate between the government and opposition members in the following fashion: NDP, Conservative, NDP, Conservative, NDP, Conservative, Liberal, Conservative.

That was my original motion. The amendment passed.

The Chair: The amendment passed, so the order will change. In the second and subsequent rounds it will be NDP, Conservative, NDP, Conservative, Liberal, NDP, Conservative, and Conservative.

Mr. Mike Allen: Yes.

(Amendment agreed to)

The Chair: We have the speaking order and time allotments dealt with—allocation for time and questioning.

The final order of business I want to deal with today is on business for the committee. I propose that we look at calling a subcommittee meeting to discuss the agenda for the committee.

Is that in order for members? When do you propose we have a subcommittee meeting?

Mr. Donnelly.

Mr. Fin Donnelly: Are we having a meeting on Thursday, or will we have only the one meeting this week? If we aren't going to have a second meeting, perhaps the subcommittee can meet on Thursday in the time slot.

The Chair: I'll take that to be a suggestion that the subcommittee meet on Thursday to discuss agenda items for the committee when we return in the fall.

That sounds good. Mr. Donnelly is suggesting that for our regular meeting on Thursday at 11 o'clock, the subcommittee will meet to determine the agenda.

At the subcommittee we can set a different time.

Mr. MacAulay.

•(1220)

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay: I can't be here at 11 o'clock. I have to catch a plane at 12:20. So if it can be an hour earlier...or we can have it right after this meeting.

The Chair: So you're suggesting 10 o'clock, or do you want to suggest following this meeting?

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay: It wouldn't be a long meeting, so why don't we do it right after this one?

The Chair: Are all parties in agreement?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Chair: So the subcommittee will meet following this meeting to discuss the agenda, and there will be no meeting on Thursday.

This meeting is adjourned.

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