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Chair: Ms. Yasmin Ratansi



Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development

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• (1105)
[English]

The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Alexandre Roger): I must inform members that the clerk of the committee can receive motions only for the election of the chair. The clerk cannot receive other types of motions and cannot entertain points of order or participate in debate.

We can now proceed to the election of the chair. Pursuant to Standing Order 106(2), the chair must be a member of the government party.

I am now ready to receive motions for the chair.

Mr. Albas.

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Clerk.

I move that we make Madame Ratansi chair of the committee.

The Clerk: Thank you, Mr. Albas.

It has been moved by Mr. Dan Albas that Yasmin Ratansi be elected chair of the committee.

Are there any further motions?

(Motion agreed to)

The Clerk: Seeing no other motions, I declare the motion carried and Yasmin Ratansi duly elected chair of the committee.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

The Clerk: I invite Yasmin Ratansi to take the virtual chair.

The Chair (Ms. Yasmin Ratansi (Don Valley East, Lib.)): Thank you very much, Mr. Clerk.

Thank you, Mr. Albas, for nominating me.

Thank you, committee. I hope that in this session—we have lost a lot of time—we can work together and build the future, a greener future, with the co-operation of everyone. I am looking for a very collaborative approach. Our congeniality at the beginning of this session was very good, so I hope we continue with that.

I'd like to ask the clerk, with the permission of the committee, to do the elections of the vice-chairs.

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Chair: Mr. Roger.

The Clerk: Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

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

Mr. Baker.

Mr. Yvan Baker (Etobicoke Centre, Lib.): Thank you very much, Mr. Clerk.

Chair, congratulations.

I'd like to nominate Mr. Albas as a vice-chair.

The Clerk: It has been moved by Mr. Yvan Baker that Mr. Dan Albas be elected as first vice-chair of the committee.

Are there any further motions?

(Motion agreed to)

The Clerk: Seeing no other motions, I declare the motion carried and Mr. Dan Albas duly elected first vice-chair of the committee.

Mr. Dan Albas: Thank you.

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

[Translation]

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

Mr. Peter Schiefke (Vaudreuil—Soulanges, Lib.): I nominate Ms. Monique Pauzé as vice-chair of the committee.

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

Are there any further motions?

(Motion agreed to)

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

[English]

Madam Chair, the floor is yours.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

I see Mr. Longfield's hand raised.

Mr. Longfield, you have the floor.

Mr. Lloyd Longfield (Guelph, Lib.): Thanks, Madam Chair.

I'd like to move that we adopt the routine motions as agreed upon in our last session.

The Chair: Ms. Collins.

Ms. Laurel Collins (Victoria, NDP): I have a point of order, so that I know the process. If I have an amendment to the routine motions that were adopted last session, at what time would I either move that amendment or move a motion to replace a section?

The Chair: Mr. Roger.

The Clerk: If Ms. Collins has amendments, then I would suggest that we go through the routine motions one by one, and Ms. Collins can move her amendments at the appropriate time.

The Chair: Okay.

Mr. Albas, you have your hand up.

Mr. Dan Albas: Yes, Madam Chair, I was going to say that perhaps we could go through them. Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Longfield.

Mr. Lloyd Longfield: We've received the motions via email from the clerk's office, so I've just pulled them up on my screen and I'm ready to start reading through them if people want to follow along.

The Chair: Sure. Everybody has received the routine motions, I presume, and has them on their screen or electronically.

[*Translation*]

Is there a problem, Ms. Pauzé?

Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ): I just want to be sure that I understand. We will examine and adopt the motions one by one, is that right?

The Chair: Yes.

Ms. Monique Pauzé: All right, thank you.

[*English*]

The Chair: Mr. Longfield.

Mr. Lloyd Longfield: Chair, I see that these motions were adopted on February 18, which was about a decade ago—but no, it was in 2020, before we were hit by the virus.

First of all, on the analyst services, it states:

That the committee retain, as needed and at the discretion of the chair, the services of one or more analysts from the Library of Parliament to assist it in its work.

The Chair: Is everybody in agreement?

(Motion agreed to)

Okay. Please continue, Mr. Longfield.

Mr. Lloyd Longfield: On the Subcommittee on Agenda and Procedure, it states:

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

Mr. Dan Albas: I'm raising my hand, Madam Chair.

The Chair: Go ahead, Mr. Albas.

Mr. Dan Albas: Thank you.

I would actually like to move a motion that we delete this. I'd be happy to make that motion and then make my case to members after, if you deem that appropriate.

● (1110)

The Chair: Why don't you make your case now, before I take a vote? You're asking for the elimination of the steering committee.

Mr. Dan Albas: Yes, I move a motion to eliminate the steering committee.

The Chair: Give us your reasons.

Mr. Dan Albas: Okay. Is it on the floor to debate?

The Chair: Yes, go ahead.

Mr. Dan Albas: Thank you, Madam Chair.

First of all, congratulations to you for being nominated. I look forward to working with you and other members. In the spirit of that, I'd like to raise that oftentimes these extra subcommittees or steering committees do take away time from the work of the committee. I find that if we have the right people working around a table, especially with everyone present, we can actually come up with agreements and then everyone else can also have their say.

It is my understanding that in the previous iteration of this committee, the steering committee was not always seen as being the most effective means. Since 2011, I have oftentimes found that as a parliamentary practice if we try to work with people at the same table, everyone feels respected and we get a lot more done. So I would just move that motion. We as a committee could always add it in. We are masters of our destiny, but I just think that if we want to do a study, or study the estimates, we shouldn't schedule another meeting in our busy lives when we can take care of that business here.

The Chair: Mr. Longfield, you had your hand up.

Mr. Lloyd Longfield: Yes. Just to clarify, I put my hand up in the participant screen, as well as the visual screen. Which one would you prefer?

The Chair: Sorry?

Mr. Lloyd Longfield: When we want to speak, should we use the participant screen?

The Chair: You can put your hand up, because I can see you. If there are too many people, I would say use the chat function.

Mr. Lloyd Longfield: That's great. Thank you.

There is a long-standing process of having a subcommittee that we can refer to. Also, when we have many, many motions to deal with, having a separate discussion outside of committee time to try to establish some preliminary priorities that we as a committee could then approve is useful. Some of those discussions can take a while, so I think having a vehicle there that we can refer to is important.

We may or may not choose to use it all the time, but to have it there, I think, is important for the committee structure.

The Chair: Who is next? I saw Yvan Baker first, then Madame Pauzé and then Mr. Schiefke.

Mr. Yvan Baker: Thank you, Chair.

I suggest that we keep the subcommittee.

My experience is that the more people are involved in trying to come to an agreement on anything, the harder it is to come to an agreement. I think having a smaller group of people who are tasked with finding consensus on some of these issues, particularly the procedural ones, would actually be more productive and more efficient. We would come to decisions faster, and fewer people would have to be involved in those discussions.

Second, it would allow the full committee's time to be preserved for the substance of what we're here to do, which, I think, is also very important, rather than taking up time in committee to discuss more procedural matters and planning matters.

Last, as Mr. Longfield just indicated, having it there gives us the option of using it. It doesn't mean we have to use it in every case, but if we eliminate that option, we eliminate the potential benefits of having a subcommittee, which are some of the things I described.

The Chair: Madame Pauzé.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Monique Pauzé: Thank you, and congratulations on your election, Madam Chair.

I am proposing a compromise. Let us limit the use of the subcommittee. As I recall, before the pandemic the subcommittee would organize the work. With 12 members, that could take a while. The subcommittee could set the agenda and do the groundwork, and the committee would hold all the other meetings.

I propose that we use the subcommittee the first time to do that work and then that it hold meetings as required. The idea is that we limit the use of the subcommittee.

[*English*]

The Chair: Yes, Madame Collins.

Ms. Laurel Collins: On a point of order, my audio cut out while Madame Pauzé was speaking. Would she mind repeating what she said?

• (1115)

The Chair: Madame Pauzé, could you repeat what you said, please?

[*Translation*]

Ms. Monique Pauzé: Yes, of course.

I am proposing a compromise. Before the pandemic, when I sat on the subcommittee, we established the schedule. Having 12 people participate in this exercise can be inefficient. The subcommittee could hold a first meeting to set the agenda and do the groundwork. Then everything would be done at committee and we could convene the subcommittee as required.

If we were to adopt a motion to eliminate the subcommittee, we would not be able to re-establish it if necessary. I am proposing a more prudent approach, which would allow us to convene the subcommittee as required.

Setting the agenda would be fairly simple and probably done more efficiently by a subcommittee than by 12 people.

[*English*]

The Chair: Mr. Schiefke, you are next, followed by Mr. Jeneroux and Mr. Albas.

Mr. Peter Schiefke: Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

I want to echo the thoughts of Mr. Baker and Mr. Longfield and some of the thoughts just shared by Madame Pauzé. Given the amount of time we've already lost, and the limited time we have left to accomplish the work we need to get done, I feel that the steering committee is a valuable tool for us to be able to free up some time that we can then use more effectively as members of this committee. Setting the agendas, prioritizing the motions—these are all things that, if we tried to do them as a committee, all of us together, would take a significant amount of time.

In the limited amount of time the steering committee was able to do their work, they were quite effective. They were able to work together to prioritize motions and to free us up to be able to focus on other work. For me, I think the limited time—and the time that we've lost, actually—only reinforces the need for the steering committee. On the role it could play moving forward, maybe we could have a chat about that, but I think we definitely need the steering committee, moving forward.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

The Chair: Mr. Jeneroux.

Mr. Matt Jeneroux (Edmonton Riverbend, CPC): Thanks, Madam Chair.

I had actually lowered my hand, because I thought a lot had been said, but I think there are two important points to raise in support of my colleague Mr. Albas.

One, we're in a minority Parliament. As somebody who would not necessarily be on a subcommittee, I do think that having a say in what sets the agenda is important for all of us. That's incumbent upon Mr. Baker and Mr. Longfield as well.

The second point is that these subcommittees were put in place back when we were all meeting every day in Parliament, in the precinct. Now that we're all virtual, the ability to have that discussion is a lot easier than it would have been in the midst of going to question period and then going back to committee, and trying to fit it in within a day. It's a lot easier to fit in these meetings virtually, or at least that's what I find.

I'll just throw those comments on the table, Madam Chair, in support of my colleague Mr. Albas.

The Chair: Mr. Albas.

Mr. Dan Albas: Thank you, Madam Chair.

I'll just give some further context for the committee. Look, I understand that there are always concerns when you take something that is regularly done by a committee, but I would say the following things.

First of all, anything that is forwarded to the steering committee involves the clerk, the analysts, the chair and the vice-chairs, who all find another time. The work is given to them and then they go through multiple discussions, which may not always be reflective of all members. Sometimes an individual member will see an issue, and if they were to have a timely intervention, it would save the whole committee a lot of process. Then this gets forwarded to a future meeting, where we as a committee go through a full argument again over a particular issue before we agree to it. In terms of saving time, I don't think that's there.

The only time I have seen a subcommittee or steering committee really do good work was on the Standing Joint Committee for the Scrutiny of Regulations. The reason for this was that the committee wanted to update its approach in how staff make reports to members, both for the Senate and for our own House. Quite honestly, there was a lot of technical information as we went through it. Do we want to have briefing notes three pages long? What's the standard template? Those are things that I totally agree should be studied by the committee.

I would simply say that if we can get support today to just eliminate this, and if it looks like we're hitting impasses, if it looks like collaboration would be done better by four individual MPs rather than all of us.... I've already heard from my Conservative members that we will get our own house in order when we come to committee so that we can make decisions. I'm not sure if other parties feel that they are in the same situation. If they are, I would say that we wouldn't need to have the steering committee.

Lastly, I would say again, Madam Chair, that each one of us has been sent by our constituents, and sometimes we'll see something from an angle that others don't. I have to say that my committee members are fantastic. They bring up points to me that I never would have considered. I plan on utilizing that. Quite honestly, I think we can simply eliminate it, and if in a month we want to change that, we can.

• (1120)

The Chair: Are there any more arguments?

Mr. Redekopp, go ahead.

Mr. Brad Redekopp (Saskatoon West, CPC): Thank you, Madam Chair.

What my colleague just mentioned were points I was going to make, but I want to reiterate a couple of things.

In the last iteration of this committee I think we worked well together, so I don't anticipate that there are going to be a lot of issues with setting the agenda where we get bogged down in some of the technicalities that were mentioned. I strongly agree that we can deal with this as a group, together. I think it's better for all of us to be able to have a say if we need to, similar to the points that were just mentioned. I would very much like to see this committee not be a standard routine.

As my colleague was just saying, if we do get into a situation of being bogged down for whatever reason, where it does make sense that it should be taken essentially off-line to a smaller group, that's definitely something we can do at the time, as needed. As a general routine, though, I don't think it's necessary. I think we can do all these things quite efficiently at the committee level.

The Chair: Madame Collins, you had your hand up. I must have missed it. I'm sorry about that.

Ms. Laurel Collins: That's fine. Congratulations on your appointment as chair of this committee.

In terms of this conversation, I'm not completely clear on what the impacts would be. In our last session, we had a subcommittee. It met at an alternate time. Would getting rid of the subcommittee free up some extra committee time? Is that correct? Or are we losing additional time to have the discussion?

In my opinion, I'm open to having all the committee members being part of the discussions around what's on the agenda and how we debate things. Either way is fine for me, but ultimately I want to move forward as quickly as possible.

Can I get some clarity around what this would actually mean?

The Chair: Ms. Collins, I have been in Parliament for quite a long time now and have sat on different subcommittees. I find subcommittees are more efficient because you represent your constituents and your party, etc., and you bring that thinking to the subcommittee. The steering committee just creates an agenda, because all the motions come in as to what to study and when to study it. We can limit the steering committee's job to creating a timetable and saying what days are available and what slots they have filled up, and then asking what you and your whole committee think.

It doesn't take away the committee time. It just asks the three or four members to give some time to discussing the schedule for the year. That's it. We do not want to make it into a.... It is never a decision-making body; it is just there to ensure people's input.

Mr. Baker, I'll get to you immediately.

For example, the Conservative caucus, the Liberal caucus, the NDP caucus or the Bloc caucus says, "Here is my representation; here is what I need to put before you and here are my motions." The whole committee decides on the motion and says, "Okay, we will study it." Then the subcommittee says, "Here is our timetable." They will work with the clerk and the analysts to see how many meetings to have, what the decision is, etc.

Whether I was the chair of some of those committees during a minority Parliament or I was the vice-chair, I've always found these very important because they cut down the committee's time. I hope that answers your question. If it doesn't, let me know.

Mr. Baker.

• (1125)

Mr. Yvan Baker: Thank you, Chair.

If I may, I just want to respond to Ms. Collins's question. I think, Chair, that you did that effectively, but if I could, I'll just add, for clarification, that my understanding and my experience so far have been that the steering committee meets separately from the broader committee, at a separate time, which allows the full committee to spend more dedicated time to the substance of the matters that we're here to discuss. The subcommittee is like a delegated group of people who are meant to come to an agreement on some things, like the agenda, the process and everything else.

From my point of view, it would be better to have the steering committee in place. Then we can use it as we as a committee see fit when we move forward and delegate these sorts of procedural items to that subcommittee so we can focus our time on the substance. That would be my suggestion: that we keep it, but that we use it as Madame Pauzé alluded to earlier, appropriately and selectively.

The Chair: Mr. Longfield, you had your hand up.

Mr. Lloyd Longfield: Yes. I think Dan makes a good point. We are in a minority government. If we move to send something to the subcommittee and if it isn't the will of the committee, it's not going to happen. It's not like we can force things either way. I think that by having the vehicle there, if there are multiple motions—we have some from last time and there are probably more coming forward that we're going to need to discuss—we get the priorities in that subcommittee and go back to our colleagues to say, "We have consensus around this." Hopefully, things coming back from the subcommittee have some consensus around them so that we can explain how the discussion went.

When it comes to committee, then, we save ourselves some time by having had the more substantive discussion outside of the main committee work. I think having the vehicle there is good. I think we have some checks and balances in terms of the numbers of votes on the committee, so keeping it in place is something that Dan can live with, hopefully, as long as we're not going to try to overuse it. If we try to overuse it, it can get shut down by the votes we have in the committee.

The Chair: Do I have any more interventions?

Seeing none, can we take a vote on it? Those in favour of Mr. Albas's motion to eliminate the steering committee, please put your hands up.

The Clerk: Ms. Ratansi, if I may, as per the order adopted in the House earlier this session, all the votes in committee have to be done by recorded division, so therefore I need to—

The Chair: I'm sorry, Mr. Clerk. This is getting to be a virtual thing.

Go ahead, Mr. Roger.

Mr. Yvan Baker: Chair, just for clarification, we're voting on Mr. Albas's motion that we remove the subcommittee, is that correct?

The Chair: Yes.

(Amendment negatived: nays 7; yeas 4 [*See Minutes of Proceedings*])

The Chair: The motion is defeated, so the steering committee stays.

Mr. Longfield, continue with the motion.

• (1130)

Mr. Lloyd Longfield: That was an amendment. We now need to pass the main motion, which is:

That the Subcommittee on Agenda and Procedure be established and be composed of five (5) members; the chair, one member from each party; and that the subcommittee work in the spirit of collaboration.

The Chair: I guess nobody is going to challenge that now.

(Motion agreed to)

Mr. Lloyd Longfield: Okay. I'm just trying to be thorough.

On a meeting without a quorum, it states:

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

The Chair: Ms. Collins, did you have your hand up?

Ms. Laurel Collins: Yes. I want to make an amendment to the section that begins "that at least four members are present" and change it to "two members of the opposition and two members of the government".

The Chair: Are there any questions or concerns?

Mr. Clerk, how should we proceed with that?

The Clerk: If there is unanimous consent, we can adopt it. If not, we do a recorded vote.

The Chair: Do we have unanimous consent to adopt Ms. Collins's motion?

Madame Pauzé.

[*Translation*]

The Clerk: You do not consent, Ms. Pauzé?

Ms. Monique Pauzé: I would ask my colleague to please repeat her proposal and also to present her arguments as I do not understand the reason for the amendment.

[*English*]

The Chair: We can't hear you.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Pauzé, could you please speak into the mike? Thank you.

Ms. Monique Pauzé: Is that better now?

The Chair: Yes.

Ms. Monique Pauzé: All right.

I would like Ms. Collins to repeat her proposal and also to explain the reasons for this change.

[*English*]

Ms. Laurel Collins: Thank you.

The proposal is to amend the section that starts with “that at least four (4) members are present”. The section will change to “including two members of the opposition and two members of the government”.

In explanation, this is something that many committees have already done. There are a few committees that have “one member of the opposition and one member of the government”, but we need members from the opposition in order to have a meeting.

The Chair: Madame Pauzé, do you have any further questions?

[*Translation*]

Are you in favour of the proposal? I see that you are.

[*English*]

Do we have unanimous consent on changing it from what it is now to “two members of the opposition and two members of the government”? I need unanimous consent.

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

(Motion as amended agreed to)

The Chair: Go ahead, Mr. Longfield.

Mr. Lloyd Longfield: Thank you.

This is with regard to the time for opening remarks and questioning of witnesses:

That witnesses be given ten minutes for their opening statement; that, at the discretion of the Chair, during the questioning of witnesses, there be allocated six minutes for the first questioner of each party as follows: Round 1: Conservative Party, Liberal Party, Bloc Québécois, New Democratic Party; For the second and subsequent rounds, the order and time for questioning be as follows: Conservative Party, five minutes; Liberal Party, five minutes; Conservative Party, five minutes; Liberal Party, five minutes; Bloc Québécois, two and a half minutes; New Democratic Party, two and a half minutes.

The Chair: Ms. Collins.

[*Translation*]

Then, it will be Ms. Pauzé's turn.

[*English*]

Ms. Laurel Collins: I wanted to move an amendment—

[*Translation*]

Ms. Monique Pauzé: There were—

[*English*]

The Chair: You are speaking, Ms. Collins.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Monique Pauzé: Oh, I'm sorry.

[*English*]

Ms. Laurel Collins: I move that for the second and subsequent rounds, the order and time for questioning be as follows: one, Conservative Party for five minutes; two, Liberal Party for five minutes; three, Bloc Québécois for two and a half minutes; four, New Democratic Party for two and a half minutes; five, Conservative Party for five minutes; and six, Liberal Party for five minutes.

• (1135)

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Ms. Pauzé, you have the floor.

Ms. Monique Pauzé: I agree with Ms. Collins. However, I would like to move an amendment to the beginning of the motion. I propose that the witnesses have five minutes for their opening statement. This would always let us successfully complete the two rounds of questions.

[*English*]

The Chair: Mr. Longfield, did you read “10 minutes” for the witnesses?

Mr. Lloyd Longfield: Yes. It says, “That witnesses be given ten (10) minutes for their opening statement; that, at the discretion of the chair, during the questioning of witnesses, there be allocated six (6) minutes for the first questioner”.

The Chair: Okay.

Madame Pauzé, what are you proposing? Sorry, I didn't get clarity on this.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Monique Pauzé: I propose that witnesses have five minutes and not 10 minutes for their opening statement.

[*English*]

The Chair: That's for their presentation. Okay.

We have two suggestions. One is that the witnesses be given five minutes, depending on the number of witnesses or whatever.

Madame Pauzé, was it to a maximum of 10 minutes? Is that what you said?

[*Translation*]

Ms. Monique Pauzé: No. I propose that the opening statement be limited to five minutes.

The Chair: Okay.

Ms. Monique Pauzé: The rest of the paragraph stays the same. That would let everyone participate in the second round. It's about the equal opportunity to speak.

[English]

The Chair: Okay.

Mr. Longfield.

Mr. Lloyd Longfield: Chair, seeing as how technology sometimes does not go in our favour, I think it's a good idea to get the Bloc Québécois and the New Democratic Party moved up in the schedule. Given the work that we are trying to accomplish, I think giving witnesses 10 minutes but still moving the Bloc Québécois and the NDP up in the schedule will not only give the witnesses time to present to us for up to 10 minutes—they don't need to use it, of course—but also make sure that in the second round the NDP and the Bloc Québécois get a chance.

I would say that holding to the 10 minutes but moving them up might accomplish what Madame Pauzé was looking for.

The Chair: Madame Pauzé is looking for five minutes per witness.

Mr. Lloyd Longfield: Yes, but if we moved the NDP...

Sorry.

The Chair: I am just trying to clear up the confusion.

If witnesses were to be given five minutes instead of 10 minutes, would everyone be in agreement with that? It would give the committee more time to ask questions. If you are not in agreement, then we'll have to go to a recorded vote.

Mr. Dan Albas: Five minutes is adequate.

The Chair: Is everybody in agreement with Madame Pauzé's suggestion of five minutes for the witnesses?

(Amendment agreed to [See Minutes of Proceedings])

The Chair: Okay.

Next, Madame Collins was suggesting a change to the speaking order in the second round.

Madame Collins, would you repeat what you said, please? What was your speaking order?

Ms. Laurel Collins: It was that, for the second and subsequent rounds, the order and time for questioning be as follows: Conservative Party, five minutes; Liberal Party, five minutes; Bloc Québécois, two and a half minutes; New Democratic Party, two and a half minutes; Conservative Party, five minutes; Liberal Party, five minutes.

[Translation]

The Chair: Do you agree?

[English]

Mr. Dan Albas: Madam Chair, I have a quick question for committee members. If this is the wrong stage, perhaps the clerk could clarify.

I think it's great that we're going to a five-minute structure where people can get their points out, but I also believe in doing my homework. Is there anything in this motion or a subsequent motion for routine procedures that would have someone, if they are going to come to the committee, submit early enough, such as three days

prior, so that we can have their opening statement translated? I'm a big believer.... In some cases we are funding people to attend in person. I would just like that ability so that we can have the benefit of their opening statement when they come.

● (1140)

The Chair: Mr. Roger can correct me on this, but I think in this virtual Parliament we will only have witnesses virtually. Normally, witnesses do submit their material in advance and we do get it in advance.

Mr. Roger, the floor is yours.

The Clerk: Thank you, Madam Chair.

We don't have a routine motion in committee, and we did not have a routine motion in committee to that effect, to submit the documents three days in advance. The committee can adopt such a motion if it wishes. I would just caution the committee that witnesses don't always want to give their documents three days in advance. Sometimes they want to give the documents the day of their presentation. Sometimes meetings are cancelled, and they don't want their documents presented if they're not appearing before the committee.

I can certainly ask. If the committee passes a motion, I'll do whatever is in my power to get the documents three days in advance. It's just that it might not always be possible to do so.

The Chair: Mr. Longfield, go for it.

Mr. Lloyd Longfield: Now that we have five-minute witness presentations, I'm confident that you can manage our committee time in keeping the routine motions the way they are for the other committees as well—that is, the speaking order in the second round being Conservative, Liberal, Conservative, Liberal, Bloc and NDP, the way we have it in front of us.

So I would be against the motion of changing that. I'd like to stay with what we have.

[Translation]

The Chair: Mr. Godin.

Mr. Joël Godin (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, CPC): Good morning, Madam Chair. First of all, congratulations on your election as Chair.

With respect to the Clerk's comments, I understand very well that, in certain situations, the witnesses might be reluctant to provide their statement in advance. It is up to the committee to make decisions about procedure. If witnesses are not inclined to respect the procedural rules, they will deprive themselves of an opportunity to present their views on a given subject.

In exceptional circumstances, it is acceptable that we are not provided the statements in advance. However, the procedure should be that we ask for them to help us do our job. Decreasing the time allotted for presentations by five minutes will also help us in our work as parliamentarians.

Those are my comments, Madam Chair.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you.

I think we all agreed to five minutes for the opening statements. As for what Mr. Albas proposed, the clerk indicated that there's no motion, but the committee is the master of its own destiny. When we call witnesses, we will ask them. When the steering committee, for example, does a study or a timetable, it will say what the study is and also the witnesses who were presented by each party. When the witnesses come, we'll ask them three days in advance. It's our job to ask. Nobody can override us.

I have another thing that Mr. Longfield put on the table, that the speaking order for the second round be the same as has been suggested in the motion.

Is that correct, Mr. Longfield?

Mr. Lloyd Longfield: I was just saying that as background to why I wouldn't be supporting the change. There is an amendment on the floor to change this, and I said I wouldn't be supporting it. I'd rather go back to where we were. Now that we have five minutes of speaking time, I think that gives you lots of time to manage the committee.

The Chair: Okay.

Ms. Collins, you had your hand up.

Ms. Laurel Collins: Sorry, I was just a little bit lost. Mr. Albas put a motion on the floor to—

The Chair: No, he didn't put a motion on the floor. He was just asking a question, and my response to Mr. Godin was that what Mr. Albas asked, the clerk had clarified.

Mr. Roger, I think we need to take a vote on Ms. Collins's amendment to the speaking order for the second round.

Do you want to repeat what Ms. Collins moved?

• (1145)

The Clerk: Yes, absolutely.

The amendment by Ms. Collins is that we keep the first part of the motion as is, but for the second and subsequent rounds the order and time of questioning is as follows: Conservative Party, five minutes; Liberal Party, five minutes; Bloc Québécois, two and a half minutes; New Democratic Party, two and a half minutes; Conservative Party, five minutes; Liberal Party, five minutes.

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

The Chair: Somebody raised their hand and I didn't see it.

Yes, Mr. Albas.

Mr. Dan Albas: Thank you, Madam Chair.

With your permission and the permission of other committee members, I am not going to be putting a motion forward to effect my concern about not receiving documents in time, but I am going to ask.... I am going to meet with other parties and perhaps bring a motion if there is some agreement or at least some feedback from other parties. I believe I have a member from Quebec, and the majority of stakeholders will inevitably be from other areas that will not submit in both official languages all the time. I want to stand up for our members from Quebec to make sure they have the courtesy of being able to read in advance in their own language.

I hope other members will be amenable to my contacting them so we can get some agreement on the wording.

The Chair: Okay, good. Thank you.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Pauzé, do you have a question?

Ms. Monique Pauzé: I just want to check something.

When reading the motion on the time allocated to witnesses, it sounded like Mr. Roger said that they have 10 minutes. I thought that we unanimously adopted an amendment to give them five minutes. Perhaps I am mistaken.

[*English*]

The Chair: Mr. Roger, can you explain what you said?

[*Translation*]

The Clerk: As you said, Ms. Pauzé, the committee did adopt an amendment to the motion so that witnesses will have five minutes. I said that the first part of the motion would remain the same, but that obviously included the amendment adopted. I then moved directly to the second part of the routine motion, which concerns the second and subsequent rounds of questions, with the Bloc Québécois and the NDP now finding themselves higher on the list.

[*English*]

The Chair: Mr. Longfield, go ahead with the next routine motion, please.

Mr. Lloyd Longfield: Actually, can we just accept that motion now as amended?

The Chair: Ms. Collins, did you have something else to say? We are voting on the amended motion.

Ms. Laurel Collins: I can wait. It's about a previous motion, but we can finish this first.

The Chair: Okay.

Is everybody in favour of the amended motion?

Did you raise your hand to speak, Mr. Albas, or just to approve it?

Mr. Dan Albas: I was just going to say that we should use unanimous consent for these things.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

The Chair: Yes.

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

The Chair: Mr. Longfield, go ahead.

Mr. Lloyd Longfield: On document distribution, it states:

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

The Chair: All in favour?

(Motion agreed to)

• (1150)

The Chair: That's good.

Go ahead with the next motion, please.

Mr. Lloyd Longfield: For working meals, it states:

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

The Chair: All in favour?

(Motion agreed to)

Mr. Lloyd Longfield: The next one is for travel, accommodation and living expenses of witnesses:

That, if requested, reasonable travel, accommodation and living expenses be reimbursed to witnesses not exceeding two representatives per organization; provided that, in exceptional circumstances, payment for more representatives be made at the discretion of the Chair.

The Chair: All in favour?

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: Proceed, Mr. Longfield.

Mr. Lloyd Longfield: Next is access to in camera meetings:

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

The Chair: Is there any opposition?

Mr. Dan Albas: May I ask a question?

The Chair: Sure.

Mr. Dan Albas: Due to the fact that these routine motions seem to have been written in the pre-COVID era, can I ask the clerk what that means for virtual meetings and for hybrid meetings?

The Chair: Mr. Roger.

The Clerk: Thank you, Mr. Albas. I was actually thinking about that when he was reading the motion.

Indeed, during in camera proceedings, we are allowed to have staff from the government House leader or the whips. They show up here in the Zoom meeting. You will see them. Their cameras are off, but they're there. It's one per party, and it's also one staff per party as well, such as administrative staff, with one for the Liberals, one for the Conservatives and so on.

I don't know if that answers your questions, but they're allowed to be in the Zoom meeting as though they were at the table. It's just that their cameras are off and they're not allowed to speak, but they are in the meeting.

Mr. Dan Albas: Thank you.

The Chair: Also, through security, others won't be allowed entrance, because that's what the clerk controls.

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: Go ahead with the next motion, Mr. Longfield.

Mr. Lloyd Longfield: It's a new world.

For transcripts of in camera meetings, it states:

That one copy of the transcript of each in camera meeting be kept in the committee clerk's office for consultation by members of the committee or by their staff.

The Chair: Are there any questions?

Go ahead, Mr. Albas.

Mr. Dan Albas: Again, given that it's a COVID environment, it may not be reasonable for someone to physically present themselves, particularly if there are conditions that deny entry. I'd just like to hear how the clerk will be prepared to address this issue if we pass this.

The Chair: Mr. Roger, please.

The Clerk: In terms of going to the clerk's office.... This is the only virtual meeting that we're going to have. For all the other meetings, MPs can join in person and other MPs can join virtually. The same can be said for the clerk's office. If you want to see the copies for in camera meetings, right now the only way is to come to the clerk's office. We keep at a distance of two metres and then you could consult the documents at my office. My office is available, and we can take precautions. For example, I can tell management that the MP is going to be joining me at my office, but everything should be and is workable in that regard right now.

Unfortunately, for reasons of security, we can't send in camera transcripts by email, but if you are connected through the House you can come to the office and I can show you the paper documents there.

I think Mr. Albas has more questions, Madam Chair.

The Chair: Mr. Albas.

Mr. Dan Albas: Again, Madam Chair, I do appreciate that the clerk can be put in difficult situations to address hypotheticals, but it may not be reasonable to say that a member or their staff shall be able to have physical access, when physical access...may be ordered by a health authority or by the House itself.

Given the fact that we are given the same protections in our speech in this virtual setting, I would hope that the same privileges—I hate using the term, but here I mean the ancient sense of “privilege”, meaning that it's privileged information—and that access can be accommodated if there were a pandemic-related reason.

I don't think we need it now, but in case we are not able to be physically present due to some sort of health order, I would like the clerk and committee members to be alert to the fact that we may need to bring forward an amended version so that we do not deny members their rights.

• (1155)

The Chair: Go ahead, Mr. Roger.

The Clerk: Mr. Albas, your point on privilege is a very good one, as it is indeed privileged information. I can tell you, representing the House administration, that if something were to happen so that it is not possible to see the documents, the House administration would make the documents available for you, the MPs of the committee, to consult. That would certainly happen and we would put these at your disposal. I have no doubt about that.

My management is listening to this meeting right now, so we'll make note of it. If you'd like, I can come back to you at a further date with it.

The Chair: Can we proceed now?

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: Mr. Longfield.

Mr. Lloyd Longfield: The next one is on notice of motion:

That a 48 hours' notice, interpreted as two nights, shall be required for any substantive motion to be considered by the committee, unless the substantive motion relates directly to business then under consideration, provided that (1) the notice be filed with the clerk of the committee no later than 4:00 p.m. from Monday to Friday; that (2) the motion be distributed to members in both official languages by the clerk on the same day the said notice was transmitted if it was received no later than the deadline hour; and that (3) notices received after the deadline hour or on non-business days be deemed to have been received during the next business day and that when the committee is travelling on official business, no substantive motions may be moved.

The Chair: Are there any questions?

Mr. Albas.

Mr. Dan Albas: I want to make it clear—and maybe we would want to put this in the motion itself—that Ottawa time should always be the time. Unfortunately, there's no reference to that, so I would ask the clerk if an amendment could be made to clarify that.

I want to apologize to my fellow member from British Columbia, because being there always puts us three hours behind.

The Chair: Mr. Roger, you had your hand up.

The Clerk: Thank you, Madam Chair, and thank you, Mr. Albas.

The time in this notice for the notices of motion is the time when the clerk's office receives the motion by email. That's always what has been used and what will continue to be used.

If you want to put it in the motion as an amendment, of course the committee can do that, but it's always been understood that 4 p.m. is Ottawa time because it's the time-stamp when I receive the motion in the inbox.

The Chair: Are you satisfied?

Mr. Dan Albas: I think that's fair, as long as everyone knows the rule.

(Motion agreed to)

Mr. Lloyd Longfield: The next is orders of reference from the House respecting bills:

That, in relation to Orders of Reference from the House respecting Bills, (a) the clerk of the committee shall, upon the committee receiving such an Order of Reference, write to each member who is not a member of a caucus represented on the committee to invite those members to file with the clerk of the committee, in both official languages, any amendments to the Bill which is the subject of the said Order which they would suggest that the committee consider; (b) suggested amendments filed, pursuant to paragraph (a), at least 48 hours prior of the start

of clause-by-clause consideration of the Bill to which the amendments relate shall be deemed to be proposed during the said consideration, provided that the committee may, by motion, vary this deadline in respect of a given Bill, and (c) during the clause-by-clause consideration of a Bill, the Chair shall allow a member who filed suggested amendments, pursuant to paragraph (a), an opportunity to make brief representations in support of them.

The Chair: Mr. Longfield.

The Chair: Are there any questions? Hearing none, I think that is agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: Mr. Longfield.

Mr. Lloyd Longfield: I have run out of routine motions, unless there are any others.

The Chair: Now I guess you need to ask for approval of the total amended...with whatever amendments there are.

Mr. Lloyd Longfield: I would ask for the total package with amendments to be approved by the committee.

The Chair: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Chair: Raj, you have your hand up.

Mr. Raj Saini (Kitchener Centre, Lib.): I want to make a motion.

• (1200)

The Chair: Okay.

Mr. Raj Saini: Is this the proper time?

The Chair: Yes, any time is a proper time for motions.

Mr. Raj Saini: That pursuant to Standing Order 81(4) and the Order of Reference of Wednesday, September 30, 2020, the committee consider the Main Estimates and invite the Minister of Environment and Climate Change for one hour and senior officials for two hours to appear in view of this study.

The Chair: Do you want to explain why?

Mr. Raj Saini: It is important that we have the minister here to give us the estimates, to give us the financial review of where the department is at and where it is going. It is always good to start any session with a meeting with the minister so we understand where the department's thinking is.

The Chair: Are there any questions?

Yes, Mr. Longfield, go ahead.

Mr. Lloyd Longfield: We've missed a period, so to get this going forward, I agree that this is something we should get on top of right away, to catch us up.

The Chair: Are there any questions?

Mr. Albas.

Mr. Dan Albas: Is the member talking about the main estimates, or previous to that?

Mr. Raj Saini: It is the main estimates.

Mr. Dan Albas: It is the current main estimates, okay.

In that case, Madam Chair, having confirmed that, I would like to put a deadline or a timeline on that. I would make a motion that it be before November 6 of this year.

The Chair: Is this a friendly amendment, “before November 6 of this year”? Is that what I hear from you, Mr. Albas?

Mr. Dan Albas: I'm not asking for a friendly amendment. I put forward a motion. Then I'll make my points from there.

The Chair: Procedure-wise, first I need to take a vote on Mr. Saini's motion. If it is a friendly amendment, then I'll have to do a friendly amendment.

Mr. Dan Albas: On a point of order, Madam Chair, if you deemed the motion in order, then I can put up an amendment to the said motion.

The Chair: So you are making an amendment to this motion.

Mr. Dan Albas: Yes. If I didn't make that clear, that's on me.

The Chair: Okay, sorry. You didn't—I thought you wanted another motion to be first, then this to be read.

Now that you have presented an amendment, do you want to explain yourself?

Mr. Dan Albas: I believe that members have said multiple times that we are behind. I believe the member who made the motion said that this has some urgency. I believe that the main estimates are part of our primordial duty to this place, so putting November 6 basically gives the minister a working frame, and I look forward to seeing him.

I also have a question, but putting a timeline on the main motion would be important, and I hope that all members support it.

The Chair: Are there any questions for Mr. Albas?

All those in favour of the motion as amended....

Mr. Roger, am I doing the right thing here? We are not here in consultation, so just let me know.

The Clerk: You are doing fine, Madam Chair. As usual, if there is a unanimous consent, there is no need for a recorded division. If there isn't, then I proceed to a recorded division.

The Chair: Before I ask for unanimous consent, Madame Pauzé, was your hand raised for the same motion or for something else?

[*Translation*]

Ms. Monique Pauzé: It was for something else, Madam Chair.

[*English*]

The Chair: Okay, fine.

Are all in favour of the amended motion?

Mr. Dan Albas: Are you asking for unanimous consent?

The Chair: Yes, it is for unanimous consent.

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

The Chair: Good, that is carried.

I have Madame Pauzé first, and then Mr. Albas.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Monique Pauzé: I am pleased to see that we are continuing our work. I would simply like to speak about the motions I will be moving a little later. For example, at some point I would like us to discuss a decarbonization plan—

[*English*]

The Chair: Mr. Longfield.

Mr. Lloyd Longfield: On a point of order, I'd love to hear the motion, but could we first dispose of the motion that's on the table, before we enter into another motion?

The Chair: I thought we had unanimous consent, so—

Mr. Lloyd Longfield: No, that was just on Dan Albas's amendment. Now we have to accept the motion as amended.

The Chair: Thank you very much. I thought I said that, but if I didn't, that was my fault.

• (1205)

Mr. Lloyd Longfield: I'm sorry, Madame Pauzé.

The Chair: That's not a problem.

All those in favour of the motion—

Mr. Dan Albas: Madam Chair.

The Chair: Yes, Mr. Albas.

Mr. Dan Albas: I did have a further question. Unfortunately, I only heard....

I was looking for a timetable. Maybe you could read the motion as amended and I'll see whether I'm satisfied. I do think it might be missing another piece.

The Chair: Okay.

Mr. Saini, would you like to read your motion and incorporate Mr. Albas's amendment?

Mr. Raj Saini: Sure.

The motion is as follows: That, pursuant to Standing Order 81(4) and the order of reference of September 30, 2020, the committee consider the main estimates and invite the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change and senior officials to appear in view of the study.

The Chair: I think it was “no later than November 6”. That was the amended motion.

Mr. Raj Saini: And “no later than November 6”.

The Chair: Mr. Albas.

Mr. Dan Albas: I do beg the indulgence of the committee, because I'm an imperfect human being, but I do believe it's always helpful to indicate that the expectation would be for one hour with the minister and for the second hour with officials so that we can ask technical questions as follow-ups.

If that's a friendly amendment, and that can be incorporated into that, I would just look to the member. If not, I can make the relevant motion to amend.

Mr. Raj Saini: No, that's fine.

The Chair: Mr. Clerk, have you taken in the friendly amendment?

The additional amendment Mr. Albas has given is that the first hour be the minister and the second hour be the departmental officials.

Mr. Dan Albas: If the minister wants to stay because we're such a great group, I'm okay with that.

The Chair: Okay. Now that we have the amendments, I will ask for a vote on the motion itself.

Are all in favour of the motion as amended? Do I need to have it reread? No? Okay.

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

The Chair: Good. Now that we're done with that, I will go to Madame Pauzé first....

Mr. Albas, did you have your hand up for something else?

Mr. Dan Albas: Yes. It was for a different motion. I'll wait my turn.

The Chair: Okay.

Madame Pauzé.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Monique Pauzé: I would first like to try to understand. Motions must still be tabled 48 hours in advance. I want to move some motions now, but can I do so, just as Mr. Albas did? I have to say that the organization of the committee's work is a bit of a problem for me. Can I move my motions right away so that, as we said at the beginning, the subcommittee can discuss the dates on which they will be studied? Must I only address a more general subject and see where the committee is going?

It is more a point of order to try to understand what is happening.

[*English*]

The Chair: Madame Pauzé, as we are in committee business, you are allowed to present your motion.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Pauzé, what is your motion?

Ms. Monique Pauzé: In that case, I will present two motions right now.

The first concerns a decarbonization plan:

That, pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development undertake a study and make recommendations on the development of a decarbonization plan with a view to ensuring the energy transition toward implementing renewable energies; that, to do so, the Committee invite key stakeholders from various innovative renewable energy sectors, such as solar energy, geothermal energy, and wind energy; that a report be presented to the House of Commons; and that six (6) meetings be allocated for this study.

I know that Mr. Roger already has the motion and can give it to you.

My second motion is the following:

That, pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development undertake a study in connection with the de-

sire, expressed in the Speech from the Throne, to put in place a plan that will make it possible to surpass Canada's climate objectives and that to do so, the Committee examine the feasibility of zero-emission federal legislation, that a report be presented to the House of Commons and that four meetings be devoted to it.

● (1210)

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Albas, do you have a question on that motion, or do you have a new motion to present?

Mr. Dan Albas: I have my own motion to present, so I will wait until the correct time. I am a little confused, though, because there are two separate motions and I wonder if the member is giving notice of motion. I look to you, Madam Chair, to explain which motion is on the table for discussion.

The Chair: That is something I will have to ask Madame Pauzé to clarify.

Mr. Longfield, are you asking a question on this motion?

Mr. Lloyd Longfield: I think we're just giving notices of motion, but I will let Madame Pauzé speak to that.

The Chair: Madame Pauzé, would you like to explain which one you want the committee to consider?

[*Translation*]

Ms. Monique Pauzé: I have already given notice of these motions and I believe that Mr. Roger has them. Furthermore, I believe that the two motions have been translated. Therefore, I am presenting these two motions.

[*English*]

The Chair: Mr. Roger.

[*Translation*]

The Clerk: Good afternoon, Ms. Pauzé. We do have both motions.

[*English*]

We will be circulating them. They are in both official languages right now, I think.

[*Translation*]

I think that at this time the committee would like to know which motion you wish to present first. It can then make a decision and vote. At that point you can move your second motion, which will then be voted on. We want to know which motion you wish to present first.

Ms. Monique Pauzé: I'm sorry, but I did not hear what Mr. Roger said. Perhaps he was not speaking loud enough. I don't know why, but I did not hear any of his clarifications.

The Clerk: That's all right, I can repeat what I said.

At this point, the committee would like to know which motion you would like to debate first. After the debate, there will be a decision. The committee will then be able to deal with your second motion, which will also be voted on. We can only deal with one motion at a time. We must vote on a given motion before moving on to the next one.

[English]

Mr. Lloyd Longfield: On a point of order, I also want to give notice of a motion that I have. I'm thinking that we have gone from getting our structure put into place and maybe we could get these motions over to a subcommittee. We could have a whole list of motions for the subcommittee to consider so that we're not picking and choosing before we have all of our motions on the floor.

The Chair: I agree with you, Mr. Longfield. It's confusing everybody. We have not all received everybody's motions. We'd like to at least have a look at the motion in order to ask intelligent questions.

Mr. Albas.

Mr. Dan Albas: Thank you, Madam Chair.

I have a point of order. We're clearly in committee business. The member has a right to have the motion tabled. I believe you've said that it's in order. For the purposes of today, I would like to know if the motion on coal is what we will be discussing first. Then we can separate out the second motion by the member.

I recognize that some members may find this process confusing, but committee business is exactly that. She does have a right, I believe, to table her motions and have them debated.

• (1215)

The Chair: I don't think Mr. Longfield was denying her right to present the motions. We are in committee business, but we still haven't gotten clarity on what motion Madame Pauzé wants us to discuss.

Mr. Dan Albas: Madam Chair, quite honestly, as the chair, you should just say that you're ruling the second one out of order because we can only do one thing at a time. That would be reasonable, in my opinion. But then, again, I'm not the chair.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Albas. Thank you for telling me what my job should be.

Madame Pauzé has the right to present two motions, but she also has the right to say which motion she would like us to reflect on. You might want to present three motions; I won't rule you out of order. I think Madame Pauzé should be given the opportunity to tell us clearly whether she wants the first motion or the second motion.

[Translation]

Ms. Pauzé, please choose which motion you would like to present first.

Ms. Monique Pauzé: I would like to first present the motion on zero-emission legislation. It is the second one I read, the one that ends "and that to do so, the Committee examine the feasibility of zero-emission federal legislation, that a report be presented to the House of Commons and that four meetings be devoted to it."

[English]

The Chair: On her first motion on zero emissions, are there any questions for Madame Pauzé?

Mr. Albas.

Mr. Dan Albas: I am sorry, Madame Pauzé, to ask the question again. Could you read the motion out so that I know clearly which

issue we're debating? Both of them did relate to emissions, and I don't want to be debating the wrong motion.

The Chair: Madame Pauzé, you're on mute.

[Translation]

Could you please reread your motion?

Ms. Monique Pauzé: Okay.

I will read it slowly.

That, pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development undertake a study in connection with the desire, expressed in the Speech from the Throne, to put in place a plan that will make it possible to surpass Canada's climate objectives and that to do so, the Committee examine the feasibility of zero-emission federal legislation—

[English]

The Chair: Madame Pauzé, bring your mike closer to your mouth. The interpreter cannot hear you and therefore cannot translate.

[Translation]

Thank you.

Ms. Monique Pauzé: All right.

Should I start over?

The Chair: Yes, please.

Ms. Monique Pauzé: Can the interpreters hear me clearly?

[English]

The Chair: Can interpretation hear her?

We have lost interpretation too.

Mr. Roger.

The Clerk: I have the motions in English—

[Translation]

Ms. Monique Pauzé: Okay.

I believe the Clerk has sent the motions, is that right?

The Clerk: Yes, I sent the motions in French and in English.

[English]

All the members should have both motions in their P9 accounts, but whatever the case may be, I have the motions in French and in English.

I can read both versions, if you'd like. I'm just offering my help.

The Chair: Madame Pauzé, would you mind if the clerk read out your motion, because you are having some technical difficulties?

She is in agreement, Mr. Roger, so can you read it, please?

Now you are on mute, Mr. Roger.

The Clerk: I'm sorry. Would you like me to read it in French or in English?

The Chair: Most are anglophones.

[*Translation*]

You can therefore read it in English.

• (1220)

[*English*]

The Clerk: Okay.

The Chair: You have already sent it to everyone on their P9 account.

The Clerk: Yes, I did. I'm just looking at it right now. It's actually my staff who sent it. I'm just going to open it and read it in English.

The Chair: If you guys can open up your P9 account, you will see the motion there as well.

The Clerk: Okay, so here I go—

Mr. Joël Godin: I have a point of order.

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Yes, Mr. Godin?

Mr. Joël Godin: Madam Chair, the interpreter has told me that, unfortunately, she does not have a copy of the motion, that she will not be able to interpret it precisely, but that she will do her best. I think that is a problem. A motion should be very precise, in both English and French. We cannot rely on the interpretation alone. That goes for any motion or legislative text.

The Chair: Mr. Godin, if you check your P9 account, you will see the exact motion in English and in French.

Mr. Joël Godin: Okay, thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.

[*English*]

Now that everybody has the motion in front of them, do you really want the clerk to read it out?

Okay, go ahead, Mr. Roger.

The Clerk: In English, it is: That, pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development undertake a study in connection with the desire expressed in the Speech from the Throne to put in place a plan that will make it possible to surpass Canada's climate objectives; and that to do so the committee examine the feasibility of zero-emission federal legislation; that a report be presented to the House of Commons; and that four meetings be devoted to it.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Longfield, I saw your hand up. If you didn't have your hand up and I saw something in error, then I apologize.

Mr. Lloyd Longfield: After we have finished with these motions, I am going to introduce one, so I'll just lower my hand.

The Chair: Okay.

Are there any questions for Madame Paupé?

Mr. Dan Albas: Is this debate, Madam Chair?

The Chair: Yes, you can debate it.

Mr. Dan Albas: Okay. I would simply say that the Conservatives will be voting in opposition to this. It's not because we disagree that there is some usefulness in the committee looking into what the climate plan of the government is. I will say that what they are undertaking in this country is not working at this time. We're seeing rising emissions, and we're seeing too many people without work. Conservatives want to see people working, and we want to see emissions on a proper track. The plan the government has put forward has not been working, and I think the PBO had a lot to say about the carbon tax today.

That being said, the government has said that it will be putting forward legislation in regard to the net-zero targets that are mentioned in this motion. This would mean both that there would be debate in the House and that anything would then be referred to us for further study. Without having meaningful legislation that guides exactly what the government intends to do and the approach, I think that doing four meetings on this and then having to look at that legislation a second time is duplicative and would not be a good use of our time. What I would suggest to members is to simply vote no on this. We will probably be seeing that.

I also want to illustrate that there is a piece of private members' business that in my understanding will be before the House. It also addresses this. I believe it's actually a member of the Bloc Québécois who is proposing the legislation in terms of climate targets and net-zero. There are multiple opportunities that the House of Commons will have and that the environment committee must respond to if that legislation is passed through second reading. We will then have all the stakeholders whom members want to hear from talk to us about the legislation.

Rather than talking about desires in the throne speech... I certainly appreciate Madame Paupé's urgency that she would like to study this. However, I think we would be duplicating work that doesn't need to happen at this time. I would like us to look at other elements of the government's plan that are not working. As I said, too many people are not working and, as well, emissions are going up and critical habitat is being lost.

I think we should vote no now and defer this until the legislation comes forward.

• (1225)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Albas.

Next I have Mr. Longfield, Mr. Baker, Mr. Schiefke and then Madame Paupé.

Mr. Longfield, go ahead.

Mr. Lloyd Longfield: Thank you.

Congratulations, Madame Paupé. I think this is a great motion.

Both motions are excellent. I would love to take both of those motions forward, but we're talking about the first one, which does align very well with the work of our committee. There will be disagreements on what we study and how we study it, and that's part of the work of the committee as well. I think getting this forward and having it discussed would be a very important thing for us to go forward with. I'll be supporting the motion.

The Chair: Mr. Baker.

Mr. Yvan Baker: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I want to make a couple of points.

First of all, in response to Mr. Albas's comments, when I read the motion I thought that what makes this incrementally helpful is that Madame Pauzé has said we should study the feasibility of zero-emission federal legislation. She is not saying that we should study the legislation itself. She's saying that we should study the feasibility of it, which is a useful study for us. It's useful information for us to have as an insight so that as members of the environment committee we are prepared to better understand it in the context of any legislation that comes forward. I just wanted to make the point that it is a useful thing for us to do. It's not duplicative.

I had two clarifying questions for Madame Pauzé.

First, when we say "zero-emission federal legislation", do we mean net-zero or just zero? That's a clarifying question that I want to ask. Second, could Madame Pauzé elaborate on what she is trying to achieve with this motion? In my response to Mr. Albas, I've communicated what I think the intention is, but I don't want to put words in Madame Pauzé's mouth. I would love to hear from her what her rationale is.

Those are my two questions: Is it zero or net-zero, and can Madame Pauzé elaborate a bit on her rationale for this motion?

The Chair: I'll let Mr. Schiefke speak, and then Madame Pauzé will respond to any of your questions.

Madame Pauzé, would you mind if everybody asks you questions, so that we could consolidate their questions, because I've seen a few hands rise up?

Mr. Schiefke.

Mr. Peter Schiefke: Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

I also want to add my thanks to Monique Pauzé for her motion. I wholeheartedly agree. I think this is something that we should be using the resources and the time of the committee to study.

Since 2015, we've done a great deal. We've worked very hard to reach a point where projections show that we'll have reached about 200 megatonnes of our approximately 280-megatonne goal of reaching the Paris targets. We did that through a price on pollution. We did that through putting in place subsidies for electric vehicles and investing record amounts in green infrastructure, including public transportation, and we have new initiatives on the way looking into clean fuel standards and planting two billion trees. We're doing a lot of work to study exactly how we can plant those trees in a way that will allow us to protect as many species as possible while reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

We've done a lot, but we're the first to say there's always more we can do, and I think that's the spirit of Madame Pauzé's motion. It's to say, what else can we do to help Canada achieve this necessary and urgent objective of not only meeting but also surpassing our Paris targets?

Therefore, I think we should be using the resources and the time of the committee to provide additional ideas that the government can adopt and invest in to help us meet that goal. It's imperative that we do so.

● (1230)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Pauzé, thank you for tabling this motion, which I will be supporting. It is a good idea to use our committee's resources to help us not only reach but also surpass the Paris Agreement targets.

[*English*]

The Chair: Mr. Saini, do you have a question?

Mr. Raj Saini: I have a couple of questions for Madame Pauzé. I would suggest some points of clarity for her motion. She referred to "zero emissions", which I would maybe change to "net-zero emissions".

The other thing is that you have "six" written in English but you have "4" in brackets. I would just like some clarity on whether you could agree to make it "net-zero" and whether it is six or four meetings that you want.

The Chair: Was anybody else's hand up before that I have not noticed?

Ms. Collins has a question for Madame Pauzé.

Ms. Laurel Collins: First of all, I want to thank Madame Pauzé for bringing this forward. Yes, I always want to be talking about putting our climate targets into law. In the framing of it, I really want us to start from a place of honesty about where we're at, which is that we have missed every single climate target this government has set and are not currently on track to meet our 2030 targets. My concern about net-zero federal legislation for 2050 is that this is two decades too late. We really need to be clear that we have less than a decade to meet our 2030 targets, which we currently are on track to miss.

I just want to get some points of clarification about where Madame Pauzé was starting from and if there is some way we can ensure that we're clear about where we're at and how far we have to go.

The Chair: Ms. Collins, are you proposing an amendment to her motion?

Ms. Laurel Collins: I think—

The Chair: Are you just asking for clarification?

Ms. Laurel Collins: Yes.

The Chair: Okay.

Mr. Albas, did you have a question for Madame Pauzé?

Mr. Dan Albas: Yes, I did.

Quite honestly, I will be voting against the motion overall, but I do have an interest in the work of the committee and just want to ask the member whether or not she has contemplated having other stakeholders here. I think that including the minister in the motion would be an effective use of time, because right now we've heard the throne speech but we don't have a lot of details. Having, as part of the motion, the minister coming in to start off the study would probably be welcomed by opposition members. I believe that accountability is always good, so hopefully our Liberal colleagues would agree with that.

I'll just ask the member if she thinks that should be included. If not, I just want to hear what she has to say first before I make any motion to amend it.

The Chair: Okay.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Pauzé.

Ms. Monique Pauzé: Thank you very much for the exchange.

We need to clarify what constitutes a zero-emission law. I am proposing that we determine whether such legislation would be feasible at the federal level. It would be modelled after California's zero-emission law, for example, which requires companies to produce electric vehicles. Quebec, with a population of eight million, has a zero-emission law, and California's population is at least that of Canada. If Canada were also to adopt such legislation, it would provide companies with an even greater incentive to produce electric vehicles.

The Bloc Québécois was critical of the Speech from the Throne, but agrees that the electrification of transportation is one means of decreasing greenhouse gases. These models already exist. In Norway, for example, there are many electric vehicles and this has made it possible for that country to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions.

The zero-emission law that I am proposing has a very commercial component that would promote research, innovation, job creation and the production of electric vehicles to meet demand. People and groups across the country, from coast to coast to coast, could testify before the committee on this subject.

I think I have presented my arguments.

Given all the work already done by all these groups across Canada, I propose that we have just four meetings, which would not monopolize all of the committee's time.

As Mr. Schiefke or Mr. Baker mentioned, the issue is the feasibility of coming up with such legislation. After four meetings, we will have the answer to that question. If feasible, a bill will then be introduced in the House.

I took some notes, but I am not sure that I answered all the questions. If you have other questions, don't hesitate to ask them.

● (1235)

[*English*]

The Chair: Mr. Baker, you have your hand up.

Mr. Yvan Baker: Thanks, Chair.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Pauzé, I would like to check something. When you say “zéro émission” in French, is that the equivalent of “net zero” in English? That is my first question.

Second, I would like to tell you that I support the motion because it is an excellent idea. That said, there was a discussion about whether the committee should meet four or six times. Having four meetings is good, but, given that this motion proposes a study of a very important and fairly complex subject, I propose that we have six meetings to properly study the matter.

Ms. Monique Pauzé: May I answer?

The Chair: Yes.

Ms. Monique Pauzé: In English, we do not refer to net emissions, but to a zero-emission law. It is not the same thing as net zero emission. It is truly a zero-emission law. That is what it is called in California and Quebec, where such legislation exists.

I proposed that there be four meetings on this subject, but, I would not complain if there were six. It is a very broad and important subject.

[*English*]

The Chair: I think, Madame Pauzé, the confusion is that in English it's written “six”, and in brackets it's written “4”. If you've made a mistake that way and you want to change it to “four”, perhaps that's what....

[*Translation*]

It should be six or four.

[*English*]

Okay? Thank you.

Next is Mr. Albas, and after that Mr. Longfield and Ms. Collins.

Mr. Dan Albas: Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

I want to thank the member for clarifying net-zero versus zero emission. That does bring into question the feasibility.

I'm going to make a motion to amend the member's motion. Maybe I'll just bring it up for the clerk so he doesn't have to pull all of his hair out. Perhaps right after we say, “The committee examine the feasibility of zero-emission federal legislation,” I would add “and have witnesses, starting with the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, as well as other pertinent witnesses”.

That's my motion. I'd be happy to give the rationale if you find it in order, Madam Chair.

● (1240)

The Chair: You have the right to move an amendment to the motion. If you explain yourself, then I can ask the committee members for their questions or their vote.

Mr. Dan Albas: Yes, okay.

So far in this discussion, there have been a few different questions asked of the member, but quite honestly, anything that.... The government holds all the cards when it comes to its throne speech and implementing its agenda in terms of a first mover, so the clarification by Madame Pauzé was very important in specifically saying she was targeting zero emissions, not net-zero, as was raised by MP Baker.

I do want to include that any discussion should start with the minister. I believe in ministerial accountability, and hearing from the minister will allow us to shape our study in a way that helps us better understand the issue. I hope that all members will agree with having the minister, who will have research from Environment Canada and has principal responsibility for any potential legislation. I hope that all members would believe that starting with the minister is top of the agenda for us, so I'm looking for all-party support for this, despite....

On one last note, six meetings seems to me a bit excessive, particularly since we may have legislation at some point, but I'm just going to leave the point there. My motion to amend says we should have the minister come in and tell us about the feasibility.

The Chair: Mr. Albas, now that you have proposed an amendment, I will have to take questions from people who want to speak to the amendment.

Mr. Longfield, do you want to speak to Mr. Albas's amendment or not?

He's not here.

Ms. Collins, you were next in line.

Ms. Laurel Collins: I have a question of clarification for Madame Pauzé, as I won't be able to vote on Mr. Albas's motion without really understanding the main motion itself.

Madame Pauzé, you were talking about zero-emission legislation and you referred to California legislation, which is actually zero-emission vehicle legislation, if I recall correctly. This is different from climate accountability legislation, which is legislating laws in five- or 10-year increments around ensuring that we get to net-zero by 2050 and are meeting our climate target.

I was curious whether this motion, when we're talking about zero-emission legislation, is just in reference to zero-emission vehicles, or are we also talking about all the other elements of getting to zero emissions, which would include things like retrofitting buildings, transforming our other transportation, active transportation, all of the pieces around fossil fuel development and that kind of thing?

The Chair: Ms. Collins, you are addressing Madame Pauzé's original motion. I'll let her answer, but I want questions for Mr. Albas as well, because we don't want to confuse the issue. There is an amendment on the floor. I have to take the amendment first.

If anybody has any questions for—

Ms. Laurel Collins: [*Technical difficulty—Editor*] vote or understand how I would approach the amendment to the motion without actually—

The Chair: Sure. I will let Madame Pauzé answer your question.

Mr. Albas, she needs to understand what Madame Pauzé has actually said before she questions you on your amendment. Fair enough.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Pauzé.

Ms. Monique Pauzé: Thank you.

To answer Ms. Collins' question, I would like to say that this is about vehicles because the transportation sector is the leading emitter of greenhouse gases. We need to tackle the main source of greenhouse gas emissions. This type of legislation encourages people to embrace electric vehicles and increases sales. We are not talking about cars alone, but also about trucks and other vehicles. Directly tackling the key sources of greenhouse gas emissions is the objective of a zero-emission law or what is also called a zero-emission vehicle program or low-emission vehicle regulations. I hope that is clear for Ms. Collins.

Madam Chair, while I have the floor may I speak to Mr. Albas's amendment?

• (1245)

[*English*]

The Chair: Yes. I have people in line, but you may speak to it if nobody yells at me.

Go ahead, Madame Pauzé, since you have the floor.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Monique Pauzé: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Personally, I do not support Mr. Albas's amendment. What he is proposing is too much at this point. That could be done later, after we have determined what is feasible and when we have a bill and clauses to study. Initially, we must hear from people and groups from across the country who, as I was saying, are working on this. We need to hear what they have to say about the feasibility of this law.

We could invite the minister to appear later, but I do not think it is important in the first stage. The committee must first study the feasibility of such legislation.

[*English*]

The Chair: There were a few hands up that I bypassed.

Mr. Longfield, you were on my list if you have any questions for Mr. Albas.

Mr. Baker, did you have a question for Mr. Albas on his amendment?

Mr. Yvan Baker: Yes, in terms of the amendment, we did pass a motion earlier by Mr. Saini that the minister attend the committee. We will have an opportunity to question him then about this topic or other topics. That will allow you to drive the accountability that you are trying to achieve.

I'm with Madame Pauzé on this. Here is a situation where I think Madame Pauzé's intention is to study the feasibility of this legislation she's talking about. It would be best informed by people who are experts in that field advising us and the government, not the other way around.

Those are my thoughts on that.

The Chair: Mr. Saini, you had your hand raised. Was it for a question for Mr. Albas?

Mr. Raj Saini: No, it was for Madame Pauzé, on her original motion.

The Chair: Okay. I'll allow that, and then I'll take a vote on Mr. Albas's amendment.

Mr. Raj Saini: If Madame Pauzé wants to study zero-emission vehicles, it should be put clearly in the motion. When she says "zero-emission federal legislation", that's unclear to me. It can be either net-zero federal legislation or zero-emission vehicles. She can choose.

I think that, because of the importance of the topic, it should be six meetings.

The Chair: Mr. Albas, the floor is yours.

Mr. Dan Albas: Thank you, Madam Chair.

I want to point out a few things. First of all, this isn't about legislation. If we're going to talk about the feasibility of any plan, it's going to come down to the government's ability to legislate. Therefore, to say that the Minister of Environment and Climate Change does not have the expertise or is not germane to the discussion, I think is not feasible. It's strange that we would not be asking the minister to come to talk about something that is his responsibility and that was raised in the throne speech and is referenced in the member's own motion.

I'm a big believer that you go hard on the policy and be good to the people, so I certainly appreciate the member's right to bring this, but I do think the amendment would increase our ability to understand the issue, particularly when we've effectively given this six meetings. Surely we can carve out time for the minister who will be responsible for the inevitable legislation so that we can ask questions pertinent to the feasibility of the proposition the member is espousing.

Remember that California has more people than all of Canada and has a very different temperament. I do think the minister should be involved, and if Liberal members don't want to see ministerial accountability, if they don't feel or have faith that their own minister, who will eventually have to champion whatever bill they come up, can come to this committee prior to that and answer a few basic questions, I think that says more about their approach to ministerial accountability.

That said, I hope no one takes offence. Again, I always try to be hard on the policy and good to the people. We'll see how this amendment turns out.

Thank you.

• (1250)

The Chair: Ms. Collins, do you have a question for Mr. Albas?

Ms. Laurel Collins: It's a question or statement to maybe clarify my previous comments.

I think I would have voted in favour of Mr. Albas's amendment if this were talking about net-zero legislation and climate accountability, but given the clarification that Madame Pauzé gave, which is that it is just narrowly focused on zero-emission vehicle legislation....

I also want to correct the record. Madame Pauzé said that the transportation sector is the leading emitter of greenhouse gases in Canada. The oil and gas industry is Canada's leading GHG emitter. Emissions from the transportation sector are a close second, and buildings are third.

If we're going to invite the minister for something, I would want to be covering all of those things and not just be narrowly focused on zero-emission vehicles. I do agree with Mr. Saini that once we have voted on this amendment, we should amend the motion to make it clear that vehicles are in there.

Because it is narrowly focused on zero-emission vehicles, four meetings would seem enough.

The Chair: Thank you.

Is there any further discussion on the topic?

Mr. Roger, I'm going to call for the vote.

The clerk will take the recorded vote.

The Clerk: The vote is on the amendment by Mr. Albas to add to the motion that we invite the minister and pertinent officials.

(Amendment negatived: nays 7; yeas 4 [*See Minutes of Proceedings*])

The Chair: Now let's vote on the main motion.

Madame Collins.

Ms. Laurel Collins: As a point of clarification about the process, when we're voting for or against this motion, are we in any way deciding the order in which we proceed with studies, or is it just a general vote in favour of or against this motion?

• (1255)

The Chair: No, you are not deciding the priority of our studies. What you are deciding is what we may study, given the time.

That's why steering committees are so important. They give out the timetable so that everybody can plug in what we should study.

Ms. Laurel Collins: I would like to make an amendment to the motion. It is to put "vehicles" after "zero-emission".

The Chair: Okay, what is your amendment?

Ms. Laurel Collins: It is to add the word “vehicles” after the words “zero-emission”. It would be between “zero-emission” and the words “federal legislation”.

The Chair: Are there any questions?

Mr. Raj Saini: My thinking is that this motion that Madame Pauzé has brought forward.... I don't know why we're focusing just on vehicles. That's more of a transport question.

I think the spirit of her motion should be more expansive. Let's look at a net-zero emissions economy and country, rather than focusing very narrowly just on vehicles, because if it's just vehicles, that's a Transport Canada issue or a transport committee issue. Why not be more expansive, take the time to have six meetings and look at the matter in a broader manner?

The Chair: Madame Collins, don't answer until we have Mr. Jeneroux, Mr. Albas and Madame Pauzé.

Mr. Matt Jeneroux: Thanks, Madam Chair.

Mine is more of a clarification question for you. I've been at many meetings where you have been chair, and you've always run a good meeting on time. I've only put this meeting in for two hours in my calendar. I'm curious if we're extending it or not. I have another meeting that I would have to alter, but again, I am just deferring to you.

The Chair: Mr. Jeneroux, no, we go by the clock and we will be ending the meeting on time. My clock says we have three more minutes, so I can allow Mr. Albas a question, and Madame Pauzé as well.

Go ahead, Mr. Albas.

Mr. Dan Albas: Madam Chair, I had my hand up so that I could put forward my own motion afterward, but it does not look like we will have sufficient time to even deal with this one.

The Chair: Madame Pauzé, go ahead.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Monique Pauzé: I am obviously inviting members to vote in favour of my motion. That said, what I want is to get results. I do not want to cast a broad net and study everything. Instead, we should be focusing on getting results by letting Canadians take action that will address greenhouse gas emissions in a sector which, in my opinion, produces the same level of emissions as the fossil fuel sector. I am speaking of the transportation sector. At least, that is the case in Quebec. I believe that this sector's emissions are about the same as those of other sectors.

Therefore, we want to conduct a study that will get results without monopolizing the committee's time because we want there to be time for other motions. That is why I am proposing that we focus on a sector where Canadians can take action.

I will stop there as I know that time is passing and the meeting is coming to an end.

[*English*]

The Chair: I need a minute for myself.

First we will go to Mr. Baker.

Mr. Yvan Baker: Thank you, Chair.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Pauzé, I fully recognize your intention. I agree that emissions from transportation are significant, no matter whether this sector is ranked as the first or second largest emitter.

However, I agree with Mr. Saini. When he began this discussion, I thought that you were proposing a study of the feasibility of a bill that would help us achieve a net zero emission target. That is what I understood. I agree that if we were to do that, we could—

• (1300)

[*English*]

The Chair: Mr. Baker, I'll have to stop you there.

There are good discussions going on. We will have to continue committee business at the next meeting, whenever we are allowed. Hopefully, if the minister is coming, we will have the minister and the departmental officials, but Ms. Collins's amendment to the motion is the point of discussion that we are leaving it at. Once that is over, we will handle Madame Pauzé's motion as agreed upon.

[*Translation*]

Do you agree?

A member: Agreed.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you all for such a wonderful discussion.

The meeting is adjourned.

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