



CANADA

Standing Joint Committee on the Library of Parliament

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EVIDENCE

Thursday, April 22, 2010

Co-Chairs

**Rob Anders
Percy Downe**

Standing Joint Committee on the Library of Parliament

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•(1205)

[English]

The Joint Clerk of the Committee (Ms. Keli Hogan): Honourable senators, members of Parliament, as joint clerk of your committee, it is my duty to preside over the election of the joint chair from the Senate.

I'm ready to receive a motion for the election of the joint chair for the Senate.

Mr. Rob Anders (Calgary West, CPC): May I nominate Percy Downe?

The Joint Clerk (Ms. Keli Hogan): It was moved by Mr. Anders that the honourable Senator Downe be elected joint chair of the committee.

Is it your pleasure to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[Translation]

The Joint Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Marc-Olivier Girard): We can now proceed with the election of the joint chair for the House of Commons.

[English]

Pursuant to the Standing Orders of the House of Commons, the candidate must belong to the government party.

Are there any nominations?

Mr. Greene.

Senator Stephen Greene: I'd like to nominate Rob Anders.

The Joint Clerk (Mr. Marc-Olivier Girard): Mr. Greene has nominated Mr. Anders. Are there any other nominations?

[Translation]

No?

[English]

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

[Translation]

Does everyone agree?

[English]

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Joint Clerk (Mr. Marc-Olivier Girard): Mr. Anders is officially elected co-chair of the Standing Joint Committee on the Library of Parliament.

With the committee's consent, I will now proceed with the election of two vice-chairs for this committee.

The candidate for the first vice-chair must belong to the official opposition.

[Translation]

Are there any nominations?

Yes, Mr. Anders.

[English]

The Joint Chair (Mr. Rob Anders): I'm going to query the other side. Mr. Bélanger, I believe you had....

I understand that he was in that position before. Is he interested in taking it again?

Hon. Carolyn Bennett (St. Paul's, Lib.): I would nominate Mauril Bélanger. I think it's very important to have the continuity, now that we have two new chairs; to have somebody who has been at the steering committee before and knows the history of this committee.

[Translation]

The Joint Clerk (Mr. Marc-Olivier Girard): Does the nominee accept the nomination?

Hon. Mauril Bélanger (Ottawa—Vanier, Lib.): Yes.

The Joint Clerk (Mr. Marc-Olivier Girard): Very well.

Are there any other nominations?

[English]

No?

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Joint Clerk (Mr. Marc-Olivier Girard): I duly declare Mr. Bélanger elected first vice-chair of the Standing Joint Committee on the Library of Parliament.

Congratulations.

[Translation]

We will now proceed with the election of the second vice-chair. This time, the candidate shall be a member of an opposition party other than the official opposition.

[English]

Are there any nominations?

Mr. Anders.

The Joint Chair (Mr. Rob Anders): I understand that formerly Mrs. Carol Hughes of the NDP was in that position. I believe Mr. Rafferty is standing in for her today. Does he know whether she'd be interested in the position?

Mr. John Rafferty (Thunder Bay—Rainy River, NDP): She didn't indicate to me that she was interested in the position, but if she is nominated we could find out very quickly whether she's interested.

An hon. member: Are you?

Mr. John Rafferty: Are you asking whether I'm interested?

No, I'm not. Thank you.

The Joint Clerk (Mr. Marc-Olivier Girard): Do you want us to postpone the election of the second vice-chair until we find out? She can be elected in absentia.

The Joint Chair (Mr. Rob Anders): I look to Mr. Plamondon to see whether he has had any thoughts on this position.

[Translation]

The Joint Clerk (Mr. Marc-Olivier Girard): Is Senator Lapointe nominating Mr. Louis Plamondon?

Senator Jean Lapointe: Yes.

The Joint Clerk (Mr. Marc-Olivier Girard): Are there any other nominations?

Is it the pleasure of this committee to adopt the motion that Mr. Louis Plamondon be elected second vice-chair of this committee?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Joint Clerk (Mr. Marc-Olivier Girard): Agreed, Mr. Louis Plamondon is elected second vice-chair of this committee.

[English]

Now I will invite the duly elected co-chairs to take their seats and proceed with the business of the committee.

The Joint Chair (Mr. Rob Anders): Thank you very much for the honour.

In other committees, I've generally not been a fan of steering committees, because I find that they just take extra time relative to the main committee. I have found that committee business was often best discussed in a larger committee anyway, but *c'est la vie*.

Previously there was a steering committee for this committee, and we can set it up. Whether or not we exercise its use, though, is up to our discretion. I just raise that question. I know that previously Carol Hughes for the NDP was a member of that subcommittee, Senator Strachan was a member of it, Monsieur Plamondon for the Bloc

Québécois was a member of it, and now he's a vice-chair, and Mr. Blake Richards was for the Conservative Party of Canada.

Do people wish to have a steering committee for the committee?

All right. Let's proceed with it, then.

Since we have Monsieur Plamondon now serving as a vice-chair of this committee, it would probably be fitting that we have somebody nominated from the New Democratic Party to serve on the steering committee.

Mr. Rafferty, I think you're the only representative. Am I correct, sir?

• (1210)

Mr. John Rafferty: Yes, you are correct.

The Joint Chair (Mr. Rob Anders): In that case...and I take it you're a substitute for Mrs. Hughes?

Mr. John Rafferty: I'm a substitute for Mrs. Hughes and I'm sure that she'd be fine with whatever is decided.

The Joint Chair (Mr. Rob Anders): Okay, then. I hope that's the case.

All right. Now, I look to our officials with respect to how we proceed, to make sure that Mrs. Hughes makes it on. Do we have a nomination for her, or is it just an assumed thing?

The Joint Clerk (Mr. Marc-Olivier Girard): Do you mean, to be a member of the subcommittee on agenda and procedure, the steering committee? It will be provided for in the routine motions that all members.... When we get to this specific motion, we just need to make sure that there will be a seat for the NDP.

Actually, that's the third motion on the list.

The Joint Chair (Mr. Rob Anders): Okay, so we want to go through routine motions, do we? All right. Here we go.

Now, should I be moving these? Is this how you wish to proceed?

The Joint Clerk (Mr. Marc-Olivier Girard): Actually, co-chairs usually do not move motions.

The Joint Chair (Mr. Rob Anders): That's what I thought.

The Joint Clerk (Mr. Marc-Olivier Girard): We just need a mover from the floor for each motion.

Mr. Scott Armstrong (Cumberland—Colchester—Musquodoboit Valley, CPC): I'll move the first one.

The Joint Chair (Mr. Rob Anders): All right.

I am going to read this so that everybody is up to speed. For the services of analysts from the Library of Parliament, the motion is that the committee retain as needed and at the discretion of the joint chairs the services of one or more analysts from the Library of Parliament to assist in its work.

(Motion agreed to)

The Joint Chair (Mr. Rob Anders): Now we go to routine motion number two. I'll read it, and then somebody can go ahead and move it. For witnesses' statements and questioning, the motion is that witnesses appearing before the committee be given ten minutes to make their opening statements and that during the questioning of the witnesses the time allocated to each questioner be five minutes.

Mr. Trost moves it.

(Motion agreed to)

The Joint Chair (Mr. Rob Anders): Motion three is on the subcommittee on agenda and procedure. Once again I'll read it:

That the subcommittee on agenda and procedure be composed of the joint chairs, the vice-chairs, and four other members of the committee representing: from the Senate the Conservative Party; from the House of Commons, the Conservative Party, the Bloc Québécois, and the New Democratic Party, to be designated after the usual consultation; and that the subcommittee be empowered to make decisions on behalf of the committee with respect to its agenda, to invite witnesses, and to schedule hearings.

I'm just going to ask our officials here. I'm assuming that first we move it, but then do we deal automatically with the election of the people to it, or do we move to motion four?

The Joint Clerk (Mr. Marc-Olivier Girard): I'm sorry...?

The Joint Chair (Mr. Rob Anders): Okay, I'm going to do what I want to do.

The Joint Clerk (Mr. Marc-Olivier Girard): I'm sorry; it's just that I missed the last part of your question.

One member can move this motion, and then the committee can reach a consensus about what they want exactly and do it as a friendly amendment.

The Joint Chair (Mr. Rob Anders): Okay. Maybe what we'll do is we'll just boogie through routine motions and then get to the subcommittee stuff. Fair enough.

An hon. member: I'll move the motion.

The Joint Chair (Mr. Rob Anders): I think we already did. Did we not already have somebody do that? Mr. Trost, I thought you had moved it.

Let's stick to procedure. Mr. Trost moved the motion. Is there any debate on it or anything else?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Honourable chairs and joint chairs, I would first like to point out that I count myself with those who believe that this subcommittee is very useful. That is why I am happy we are proceeding to constitute it and I would like us to spend a little more time on that.

There are two joint chairs, two vice-chairs and four other members. Perhaps it is time to do something different.

It will be the Conservative Party on the Senate side, since the Liberal Party is represented by the joint chair. I have no objection.

Then, it will be the Conservative Party for the House of Commons because I am representing the Liberal Party. There is also the Bloc Québécois. The Bloc Québécois is already represented. I am not sure we need two representatives. I would remove one. But we must

certainly have someone from the New Democratic Party because it is not represented right now. So I would remove one of the representatives from the Bloc Québécois.

I would also like us to focus on the positions and not the people. So, if Mr. Plamondon cannot come to a meeting, he can send someone in his place. If the regular NDP representative cannot be there, she will send a representative. If I cannot be there, I will send one of my colleagues and so on.

It is a question of positions and not of people, even if it means sending a substitute when we cannot be there.

• (1215)

[*English*]

The Joint Chair (Mr. Rob Anders): So our Bloc colleagues agree with ruling representation for them in the province of Quebec on the steering committee. Is that right?

The Joint Chair (Senator Percy Downe): No. I think what Mauril was saying is that all parties be represented. We don't need the same numbers.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: That's exactly what I was saying.

The Joint Chair (Mr. Rob Anders): I'm shocked. The Bloc's good with this? Going once, going twice....

[*Translation*]

The Joint Clerk (Mr. Marc-Olivier Girard): I would first like to comment on Mr. Bélanger's point. Other than the joint chairs and the vice-chairs, the other representatives who will be sitting on the small steering committee will be designated by the whips of each of the recognized parties.

In that case, if someone is not available, they could be duly replaced in conformity with the mechanisms that are usually used in the other standing committees. This is also in the Standing Orders of the House of Commons. It will not be a problem.

[*English*]

The Joint Chair (Mr. Rob Anders): If the Liberals and the Bloc like it, I'm okay with it.

The Joint Clerk (Mr. Marc-Olivier Girard): Just to clarify, there's a request to remove, among the general representatives of parties, the one additional representative from the Bloc Québécois. Does everybody agree?

The Joint Chair (Mr. Rob Anders): If the Bloc is happy, the Bloc is happy. Okay.

Is there any other debate on that particular motion on the structure of the subcommittee? No?

I'm going to take that as an amendment, so first we're going to vote on the amendment.

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

The Joint Chair (Mr. Rob Anders): Now we're going to vote on the motion as amended.

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

The Joint Chair (Mr. Rob Anders): Now on to motion four:

Quorum / meetings without quorum

(a) That its quorum be fixed at six members, provided that each House is represented, and a member from the opposition and a member from the government are present, whenever a vote, resolution or other decision is taken; and

(b) That the joint chairs be authorized to hold meetings to receive evidence and to have that evidence published when a quorum is not present, provided that at least three members are present, including a member from the opposition and a member from the government, and provided that each House is represented.

Senator MacDonald's hand was up first. Bless your heart, Mr. Plamondon. It's moved by Senator MacDonald.

(Motion agreed to)

The Joint Chair (Mr. Rob Anders): On to number five, on distribution of documents:

That the joint clerks of the committee be authorized to distribute to the members of the committee only documents that are available in both official languages.

I think I'm going to look over to the Bloc to see if somebody from there wants to move that motion.

The Joint Chair (Senator Percy Downe): On that, I don't know why we need the motion. Is it not against the rules of Parliament to distribute documents in one language? This seems like something left over from 1970.

What's the reason, Mauril?

[Translation]

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: The reason is simple: this rule does not apply to all committees. Each committee has to pass it so that it becomes a rule, at least in the House. That may be the case in the Senate, but it is not automatically so in the House. That is why it has to be adopted by each committee, and it is my pleasure to so move.

Our joint chairs must recognize that francophones are not only in Quebec.

•(1220)

[English]

The Joint Chair (Senator Percy Downe): We're much more civilized in the Senate.

[Translation]

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: I agree with that.

[English]

The Joint Chair (Mr. Rob Anders): I'm going to just say, for whatever the record is worth here, that I noticed Mr. Plamondon's hand first but that Mr. Bélanger was speaking. Therefore, I have to accept Mr. Bélanger's moving of the motion while he was speaking to it.

They beat you to it.

Is there any more discussion on the motion?

Yes, Ms. Bennett.

Hon. Carolyn Bennett: Just for clarification, this is if a witness arrives and doesn't—

An hon. member: Appreciate that.

Hon. Carolyn Bennett: Yes, okay.

An hon. member: We obviously have different rules in the Senate.

The Joint Chair (Mr. Rob Anders): Is there any more discussion on the motion?

(Motion agreed to)

The Joint Chair (Mr. Rob Anders): Next is a motion to publish the committee's proceedings:

That the committee publish its proceedings; and that the joint chairs be authorized to set the number of printed copies to meet demand.

Does anybody wish to move that motion?

I saw Mr. Armstrong's hand first, maybe because he's closest.

(Motion agreed to)

The Joint Chair (Mr. Rob Anders): Next is a motion on the authority to commit funds and certify accounts:

That either joint chair or, in accordance with the direction of the joint chairs, either joint clerk be authorized to approve payment of expenditures of the committee.

That's moved by Mrs. Cadman.

(Motion agreed to)

The Joint Chair (Mr. Rob Anders): Next is a motion on travelling and living expenses of witnesses:

That at the discretion of the joint chairs, the committee may reimburse reasonable travelling and living expenses for one witness from any one organization, and payment will take place upon application, but that the joint chairs be authorized to approve expenses for a second witness should there be exceptional circumstances.

That's moved by Mr. Shory.

Do we have any debate on the motion? We do.

[Translation]

Senator Jean Lapointe: I second the motion.

[English]

The Joint Chair (Mr. Rob Anders): We already recognized it, so I'm going to go back on precedent here. We already recognized Mr. Shory.

Monsieur Lapointe, you can second it if you like. Okay, you're going to second it then.

(Motion agreed to)

The Joint Chair (Mr. Rob Anders): Next is a motion on working meals:

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

I am particularly in favour of this motion.

Moved by Monsieur Gaudet and seconded by Mrs. Cadman.

Any debate?

You want to get in your dibs on what you want, Mrs. Cadman?

Ms. Dona Cadman (Surrey North, CPC): Yes, I was going to ask if we could get some sparkling water, please.

The Joint Chair (Mr. Rob Anders): Sparkling water? How do the committee members feel? I don't think anyone is opposed to sparkling water. Okay, good, I have some direction for the clerks.

Yes, Monsieur Lapointe.

[*Translation*]

Senator Jean Lapointe: Honourable chairs, I suggest we at least have sandwiches when we come here at lunchtime. I have not eaten since this morning. We should at least have sandwiches, vegetables, fruits, something to munch on. If the meeting goes to 1:30 p.m. or 2:00 p.m., we do not have the time to eat before going back to Senate. So, I move that we approve a small budget to accommodate everyone who participates in the committee.

[*English*]

The Joint Chair (Mr. Rob Anders): Monsieur Lapointe, I want to let you know that I wholeheartedly agree with you and grumbled mightily about the situation when I entered the room.

The Joint Chair (Senator Percy Downe): My colleague is absolutely right. The problem, of course, is that no budget has been authorized for the committee, so I assume they can't buy it.

The Joint Chair (Mr. Rob Anders): Yes, Mr. Malhi.

Hon. Gurbax Malhi (Bramalea—Gore—Malton, Lib.): Sometimes people are vegetarian and need some vegetarian sandwiches.

The Joint Chair (Mr. Rob Anders): Hopefully vegetarian with protein in there somehow, some sort of bean-based thing, maybe. Okay.

All right, just for direction, I hear sparkling water, I hear sandwiches, and I hear veggies, and hopefully with some sort of bean-based thing so it has protein content.

I think we all have a good sense where this is moving. I think we all want munchies. It's good.

(Motion agreed to)

The Joint Chair (Mr. Rob Anders): We'll work on the meals.

Next is in camera meetings:

That each member of the committee be allowed to have staff present at in camera meetings, unless there is a decision for a particular meeting to exclude all staff.

Does anybody want to move that one? All right, Mrs. Cadman.

•(1225)

[*Translation*]

Senator Jean Lapointe: I second Ms. Cadman's motion.

[*English*]

The Joint Chair (Mr. Rob Anders): All right, we have a seconder. Great.

(Motion agreed to)

The Joint Chair (Mr. Rob Anders): Now notice of motions:

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 joint clerks of the committee and distributed to members in both official languages.

Who would like to move that? Okay, Mr. Malhi.

Is that a seconding, Mr. Plamondon? Okay, it's a seconding.

Monsieur Lapointe.

[*Translation*]

Senator Jean Lapointe: Have you asked whether someone wanted to second it?

[*English*]

The Joint Chair (Mr. Rob Anders): Monsieur Plamondon was the seconder. So the motion is moved by Mr. Malhi, seconded by Monsieur Plamondon.

(Motion agreed to)

The Joint Chair (Mr. Rob Anders): Thank you very much, colleagues. So that deals with the routine motions.

Now for the structure of the subcommittee. Do the clerks wish to...?

The Joint Clerk (Mr. Marc-Olivier Girard): We need to deal with the first report of the committee. It is very usual for this committee, the standing joint committee, to present its first report basically to both houses. It sets the quorum of the committee, its mandate, and it seeks special authorization on the Senate side.

The Joint Clerk (Ms. Keli Hogan): Actually, in the Senate we have to report how much we spent the last session, so this is just based on our rule 104 in the Senate, and it's how much this committee has spent. So it's basic from previous years.

The Joint Clerk (Mr. Marc-Olivier Girard): So basically we need a motion to concur in this report and also a motion to authorize the co-chairs to present it to both houses of Parliament.

The Joint Chair (Mr. Rob Anders): Mr. Bélanger, you'd like to move the first, would you? All right, then. As read by the clerk, the motion as it stands, moved by Monsieur Bélanger.

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

The Joint Chair (Mr. Rob Anders): Now for the second issue for the joint chairs to present.

Monsieur Plamondon, you are moving the motion as read by the clerk.

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

The Joint Chair (Mr. Rob Anders): That's pretty much routine business out of the way.

Now I think we should move to the subcommittee issue, because we didn't actually determine who the subcommittee members were.

The Joint Clerk (Mr. Marc-Olivier Girard): So it's going to be the joint chairs plus the vice-chairs, and also one member to be determined by the relevant whips from—

The Joint Chair (Mr. Rob Anders): Oh, to the whips. Okay, fine. I'm fine with that. We'll leave it to the whips' discretion.

Now we're done all the basics, folks.

[Translation]

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Mr. Chair, could the clerks tell us what room the meeting will be in? We used to meet in the East Block. I think it was Room 362. It was a good way of doing things. I am not sure what the other hon. members think, but it is a better meeting room than this one. It was also easier for the members of the Senate. I am not sure if we can get back into that habit. I am just bringing that to your attention.

Thank you.

The Joint Clerk (Mr. Marc-Olivier Girard): I can answer you, Mr. Bélanger.

Here is how things are going to be until June. From January to June 2010, the Standing House Committee on National Defence meets every Thursday from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. in the room you are talking about, Room 362 in the East Block. Since the meetings of the Standing Joint Committee on the Library of Parliament are less frequent than those of the Standing Committee on National Defence, I suggest that, perhaps till June at least, we meet in the West Block. It is possible that, by next fall, we can be back in Room 362 in the East Block. As I was saying, every Thursday, the Standing Committee on National Defence is in that room.

• (1230)

[English]

Hon. Carolyn Bennett: I would just say, seeing that we have so many new members, that before we decide on the work of this committee, at the next meeting we should ask the parliamentary librarian to come with whatever people he would bring with him to do an orientation or an update of his challenges and the work to date.

The Joint Chair (Mr. Rob Anders): Mr. Rafferty, and then I have something to add to what Ms. Bennett said.

Mr. Rafferty.

Mr. John Rafferty: I'd just like to suggest that this is a good place for this committee to meet. You look at the surroundings. Clearly, this room will be inspirational to the work that this committee does. I would suggest that until June, when everybody moves out of West Block, this would be a good place to meet.

The Joint Chair (Mr. Rob Anders): There you go—tradition.

Before I recognize Mr. Malhi, I want to get something on the record. It's in response to Ms. Bennett. I think everybody here has been to the Library of Parliament and seen what is the very obvious representation of the library at the back of Centre Block, but they do have other facilities where they house the majority of their books, which I've never seen, and I've been here 13 years. I don't know if anybody here has. Has anybody? I think that might be very interesting to peruse.

Hon. Carolyn Bennett: No, I was just saying I've been in them. I've been on this committee so long, they've taken us around.... Even when the library itself was in renovation we actually had a hard-hat tour of what they were doing underneath, and when they lost that forklift down into the river. It's important work.

The Joint Chair (Mr. Rob Anders): I think so. The question is, would you humour the rest of us to see those?

Hon. Carolyn Bennett: Yes. What I'm saying is if you call the parliamentary librarian he'll lay out what there is, and then the committee could decide what they'd like to know more about.

The Joint Chair (Mr. Rob Anders): Okay, that's a perfectly fine suggestion.

Mr. Malhi.

Hon. Gurbax Malhi: I just want to talk about the location. I think most of the members' offices are in either the Confederation Building or the West Block. This is very close to all the members. This is a better place than the East Block. Sometimes I know I have to go within five minutes or seven minutes to the bus service, then I arrive late, five or ten minutes, all the time. This is a very easy and very convenient location to reach in time.

The Joint Chair (Mr. Rob Anders): All right.

Like Mr. Bélanger, I think the East Block office—

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: It's not available.

The Joint Chair (Mr. Rob Anders): I know. It's an absolutely beautiful spot, but it's not available, so *c'est la vie*.

That being said, Mr. Rafferty loves the spirit of the room. It's available. It's close for Mr. Malhi. Unless anybody else has any wonderful suggestions we might look into, I think this is probably going to suit us till June just fine. I think the idea of having the librarian in and then maybe doing a tour afterwards is not a bad way to begin.

The Joint Chair (Senator Percy Downe): Carolyn mentioned new members. In addition to me, how many are new? Could I see a show of hands?

It might be advisable, Rob, if we had the officials from the library, not only the librarian but the senior officials of the management team in, particularly for the new members. For other members, it would be optional, if they would agree. The steering committee could consider that at our first meeting if that's agreed.

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Devinder Shory (Calgary Northeast, CPC): Maybe we should organize a tour as well, a tour of the facilities.

The Joint Chair (Mr. Rob Anders): I love the tour idea. I'm all about the tour, but we will get to that.

I think you folks have directions. You feel as if you have some ideas to run with there.

The Joint Clerk (Mr. Marc-Olivier Girard): The suggestion will be referred to the subcommittee on agenda and procedure.

The Joint Chair (Senator Percy Downe): Yes, for our next meeting.

The Joint Chair (Mr. Rob Anders): You know what? I am just going to go ahead and say the meeting is adjourned.

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