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—
Chair

Ms. Raymonde Folco

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• (1535)

[Translation]

The Clerk of the Committee (Ms. Danielle Bélisle): Ladies and gentlemen, we have a quorum. We will now proceed with the election.

[English]

Pursuant to Standing Order 106(1), your first order of business is to elect a chair. I'm ready to receive motions to that effect.

Mr. D'Amours.

[Translation]

Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours (Madawaska—Restigouche, Lib.): I nominate Ms. Raymonde Folco for the position of Chair of the committee.

[English]

The Clerk: Perfect.

No other nominations? I declare Madam Folco the chair of the committee and I invite her to take the chair.

An hon. member: I want to hear her platform.

The Chair (Ms. Raymonde Folco (Laval—Les Îles, Lib.)): You will have croissants and *éclair*s au chocolat every noon hour with black coffee, espresso, double strength.

The Clerk: Now we have to elect our vice-chairs. I'm supposed to do that again, so you can rest for two minutes.

The Chair: Order.

[Translation]

The Clerk: Standing Order 106(2) stipulates that each committee shall have a Chair and two Vice-Chairs.

The Chair shall be a member of the government party, while the first Vice-Chair shall be an member of the Opposition.

[English]

Do I have a proposer?

Mr. Barry Devolin (Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock, CPC): I would like to nominate Mr. Paul Forseth.

The Clerk: Are there any other nominations for vice-chair?

The Chair: I move that the nominations be closed.

Can I move that as chair?

A voice: No, not as chair.

The Clerk: Mr. Forseth is acclaimed.

Now for the election of the vice-chair from another opposition party. Could I have a nomination? Mr. Lessard.

[Translation]

Mr. Yves Lessard (Chambly—Borduas, BQ): I nominate Ms. Gagnon.

The Clerk: Agreed.

[English]

Are there any other nominations? Madam Gagnon is duly elected as vice-chair for other opposition parties.

The Chair: Mr. Adams, on a point of order.

Hon. Peter Adams (Peterborough, Lib.): I don't know if Peter Julian is a full-time member or not, but I would like to welcome Todd Russell as a new member of our committee.

The Chair: Thank you very much. You will find, Mr. Russell, that this is one of the most interesting committees there is. Not only are we discussing really fundamental questions, and we are not joking, but also there's quite a lot of diversity of opinion around this table. Welcome to the committee, by all means.

I'd like to thank all my colleagues of all parties for my nomination and your support. I really appreciate it. I know it hasn't always been easy in the last year. I try my best, I think you know. Sometimes we all get caught up in a lot of things, but we'll just keep going.

[Translation]

Today's meeting will be very brief. Before we wrap things up, I would just like to remind you that our meetings will be held in this room on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Mr. Adams, I requested a change in the schedule, but that proved to be impossible.

I would simply like to reread the motion agreed to at our meeting of September 29 last. The motion reads as follows:

[English]

The motion is:

That the Committee invite the Minister of Social Development and the Minister of Service Canada to appear in relation to the government responses to the following reports: "An Examination of New Directives Governing Contribution Agreements for Selected Programs Delivered on Behalf of Human Resources and Skills Development Canada"....

On that, Minister Stronach has answered, and we're working out the dates with her, from what I understand. October 25 has been confirmed, next Tuesday.

Hon. Peter Adams: A point of order, Madam Chair.

This is the calls for proposals report and the tabling of the government response. I thought when we discussed it, because there is in fact a panel, which involves the private sector, the volunteer sector, from Ontario, from Quebec, and from British Columbia, and because the work of this public panel overlaps with this matter, we would postpone the minister's hearings. By the way, the minister, as you said, doesn't object to coming, but I thought we would postpone the matter in respect for the volunteer sector until that panel had reported. The last meeting of the panel is November 5.

● (1540)

The Chair: Right. I thought the minister's acceptance meant that your panel had finished its work.

But this is certainly something that we had discussed together. First of all, it would show some respect for a task force that the minister herself has put together, and it would be logical to wait until the panel has made its report known and then invite the minister to speak on both.

We will come back to that.

The Clerk: I had presented that to the department and asked them about it. They told me the minister was going to speak on that. I thought she was going to reveal to us what it was all about.

Maybe I'll go back.

Hon. Peter Adams: I apologize. As I said, I have no objection to it, but the committee is master of its own fate.

As you said, Madam Chair, it seems to me that it is illogical and kind of counterproductive. I think we have between 20 and 30 representatives of the volunteer sector who have met four or five times in different locations and who will meet again in Gatineau on November 5. I suspect the department doesn't know that's going on.

The Chair: I think there may be a mix-up. I would strongly recommend this to committee, and, as Mr. Adams has said, of course, the committee is master of its own agenda.

But you'll remember that we did discuss this. It was a day when Mr. Adams was away on this business, as a matter of fact. We said we would wait for him to do his report and then go on further.

I'll stop there.

Madam Gagnon.

[Translation]

Ms. Christiane Gagnon (Québec, BQ): This is a reference to the future business of the committee. I don't quite understand...

The Chair: Excuse me?

Ms. Christiane Gagnon: What I understand from all this is that a committee will be examining something. I have no idea what we're talking about.

The Chair: We're talking about a working group. Perhaps you were absent the day we discussed this matter. Minister Stronach set up a working group and asked Mr. Adams, as parliamentary

secretary, to set up a series of meetings with various group to get some feedback on this issue.

Our committee had discussed this matter and I had suggested that we wait until Mr. Adams had finished his work and briefed us. We could then decide if there is anything that needs to be done, or said. However, I proposed that we wait first for Mr. Adams' report. He is scheduled to report to the minister, but he will also be reporting back to us, either alone or with others. That's about it.

[English]

Hon. Peter Adams: Madam Chair, if I could, I'd like to add that I appreciate you're ascribing all this fine work to me, but I'm in fact a co-chair with the president of the YWCA of Toronto. She and her colleagues, following some extensive meetings, established this panel. I sit on it with her, and we chair the meetings.

The panel consists of representatives of volunteer groups. I could give you the names of the representatives from Quebec, if you wish.

As I mentioned, we've had one meeting in Ottawa-Gatineau, and we have another one in Gatineau fairly soon. We've had other meetings around the province of Ontario, rurally and at the community level.

A lot of them are umbrella groups, and these 20 or 30 volunteers represent maybe 200 or 300 community groups among them. That's what it is.

[Translation]

Ms. Christiane Gagnon: Can you be more specific about this group's mandate?

[English]

Hon. Peter Adams: Okay. Yes.

Madam Chair, if I might, through you, it is a follow-up to our committee's report on calls for proposals. As you know, when we had our hearings on calls for proposals, and this was particularly true of the Quebec witnesses, it went beyond calls for proposals. It didn't just ask for calls for proposals on projects over \$500,000.

Even I would have to say that we had a variety of complaints, and it's a follow-up to that. It adds to and overlaps with this committee's report and the government's response to this committee's report on calls for proposals. I would like to think that it leads to improvements in the system that go beyond simply the calls for proposals.

When the minister appears, my thought is that our reports, the government's response, and the volunteer panel's report all overlap.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

● (1545)

[Translation]

The Chair: We've discussed these matters. I simply wanted to reread the motion to refresh your memory. It seems like ages since all of this happened.

On another note, you may remember that the Subcommittee on the Status of Persons with Disabilities submitted a report to us which we then tabled to the minister. The minister has now responded to this report. I believe you've all received a copy of this response. If everyone agrees, I propose that we send the follow up to the report to the subcommittee, because it contains a reference to a number of political and non-political stakeholders, including the Minister of Social Development. A number of recommendations affect the Minister of Public Works and Government Services. Other parties affected include the House of Commons, through its Speaker and the Senate, also through the Speaker. Therefore, many stakeholders are affected by the Subcommittee's recommendations.

I propose that we ask the Subcommittee to continue its work, to meet with the ministers and the Speakers of the Senate and House of Commons and to report back to us on its planned course of action.

Is there anything you wish to add, Ms. Bakopanos?

Hon. Eleni Bakopanos (Ahuntsic, Lib.): I just want to mention that a briefing took place today at 1 p.m., with several officials from different departments in attendance, to examine the recommendations and respond to the committee's report. Members should know that if others wish to attend a briefing, it gets more complicated because representatives from seven different departments must be brought together. We were fortunate to have five seated at the same table. We had officials responsible for each of these recommendations, because some involve different stakeholders.

In attendance were some Conservative colleagues, a Bloc Québécois assistant and someone from the NDP. Obviously, my colleague, the subcommittee chair, and I were also there. If someone wants to pursue the matter, that's always a possibility.

On the other hand, as a rule we're notified when the subcommittee is scheduled to meet and we can attend as observers.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Bakopanos.

The parliamentary secretary has made two suggestions. First, she's wondering whether members might like to meet with officials to discuss this question. Or, members could attend meetings of the Subcommittee on the Status of Persons with Disabilities. I've spoken to Mr. Boshcoff and he'll do the follow up. You're free to attend, as Ms. Bakopanos was saying. Let us know if you want to meet with officials and we'll make arrangements.

I've read through the document once, fairly quickly. Apart from one answer, all of the comments seem very positive. There does not appear to be any controversy, aside from the role of doctors, at least in so far as the Minister of Social Development is concerned. I can't speak for the others, because they couldn't comment on the work. Let me know if you're interested in meeting with some of them, as Ms. Bakopanos suggested.

[*English*]

I would also like to remind you that on September 29 we agreed—and I will read the paragraph from the minutes:

That, pursuant to the motion adopted by the Committee on June 21st, 2005, the Committee study in the following order: Summer Work Employment Programs, Barriers to Mobility Among Workers and Aboriginal Labour Market Measures delivered by Human Resources and Skills Development Canada.

In terms of what I've just read, I know a number of you have already submitted to the clerk some names of people she could call. We have a meeting tomorrow, so in order to give the clerk some time to call these people and give them a schedule, I would suggest that tomorrow, at our first meeting on the question of summer work employment programs, we call in some officials from the department. That would give the clerk time to call the witnesses you have suggested, and then we could work on this on that basis.

• (1550)

The Clerk: But what I need from the committee is for them to look at this list and tell me who they want. It's not up to me as a clerk to decide—

The Chair: Okay. How many do we have on the list? Oh, we have quite a lot.

The Clerk: The list is not very well balanced in the way that—

The Chair: Oh, it's in English and French.

The Clerk: Yes.

Sometimes there are a few from Saskatchewan, a lot from Quebec, and a few from Ontario. That's why members will have to decide amongst themselves that you should call this one, that one, and so on and so forth.

The Chair: I don't want to go into the details of the list, simply because in the past, you'll remember, there was a great discrepancy in the weight of the different regions of Canada, and we're all very much aware of this.

The other suggestion is that we discuss this list. We could send a copy to all the members. You could come back tomorrow—it's only tomorrow, in any case—and together we could discuss who we should invite.

As I said, there are gaps, and then there is heavy weight for some provinces rather than others. And we all know what that means in terms of discussion.

But we could discuss this list.

This would mean that next Tuesday we would invite the civil servants, and the Thursday after that we would start on that list. There are maybe a dozen names on this list, so it shouldn't take months and months. It should take a relatively short time, which is what we had intended. Remember, these were short subjects.

I have two propositions. One is that we start with the civil servants tomorrow. The other is that we start with the civil servants next Tuesday, and tomorrow we discuss the list together so that we can have some kind of balance, some kind of equilibrium between the regions.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP): Madam Chair, if there's a list of 12 persons or organizations, that doesn't seem very complicated to me.

The Chair: There are 21 in total. It's not the overall number that matters, but rather the weight of the provinces, the Francophone and Anglophone regions, and so forth. I'm speaking from experience, as this matter has already been raised and even been debated by the committee. I'm trying to reach a decision that is fair for everyone. Sometimes there are also political viewpoints. I haven't seen the list, but that happens occasionally.

Mr. Peter Julian: We're not talking about hundreds of people, but about a list of 21 individuals or organizations. In my view, we could have a brief discussion and get down to business tomorrow.

The Chair: I'd like to hear some other views on this subject. We'll go to Ms. Gagnon, followed by Mr. Adams.

Ms. Christiane Gagnon: I'm still trying to understand. I'm sorry, but I'm having some difficulty with this. If I understand correctly, you want to hear from witnesses on three priority issues identified by the committee, namely workers, aboriginals and Service Canada...

The Chair: I'm talking about Summer Career Placements specifically, that is the first topic we selected. Perhaps I didn't make myself clear.

Go ahead, Mr. Adams.

[*English*]

Hon. Peter Adams: Madam Chair, far be it for me to make a suggestion, but I agree in one sense with Peter Julian that it isn't that complicated. I think the way to do it would be to call the officials tomorrow, begin the first of our short studies—so let's have them

here—circulate that letter so that we have time to think about it, and then tomorrow, at the beginning, or, perhaps a little better, at the very end of the meeting we'd go through it and give the clerk some direction as to which of these 21 people we should choose. I think then we would have time to think overnight about the regional and other types of representation, and we would be proceeding with the first of our short studies.

• (1555)

The Chair: I think that's really cutting the apple in two, as we say in English. No? It's not an English saying.

In any case, that seems to be the solution that gives reason to Mr. Julian, and I think it's the best of both worlds.

Does everyone agree then that for the summer career placement program we call the officials for a meeting tomorrow; that we reserve a time after meeting the officials to discuss this list, and this list will be circulated by the clerk so that you can have a good look at it; and that I will take your suggestions and the clerk will then call people, which will mean that by next Tuesday we will be getting our first witnesses for the summer career placement program.

Does everyone agree with this? This is fine. Okay.

I don't think we have anything else on the agenda for today. Unless there are other questions or comments from the floor, the meeting has ended and we will meet tomorrow, same place, another time. Thank you very much, members.

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