



House of Commons
CANADA

Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development

AANO • NUMBER 001 • 1st SESSION • 39th PARLIAMENT

EVIDENCE

Monday, May 1, 2006

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Chair

Mr. Maurice Vellacott

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Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development

Monday, May 1, 2006

• (1535)

[English]

The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Roger Préfontaine): Honourable members of the committee, I see a quorum.

We can now proceed to the election of the chair.

[Translation]

I'm ready to receive nomination motions for the position of chair.

[English]

Mr. Colin Mayes (Okanagan—Shuswap, CPC): I would like to nominate Maurice Vellacott for the chair.

The Clerk: It has been moved by Mr. Mayes that Maurice Vellacott be elected chair of the committee.

Are there any further motions?

Hon. Anita Neville (Winnipeg South Centre, Lib.): I'd like to nominate Mr. Mayes as chair.

The Clerk: It has been moved by the honourable Anita Neville that Mr. Mayes be elected as chair of the committee.

Mr. Colin Mayes: I would like to decline that nomination.

The Clerk: Am I to conclude that the motion is withdrawn?

Hon. Anita Neville: If he's not willing to run, I will, but I'll make another motion, Mr. Clerk.

I'd like to put forward Mr. Mark's name.

The Clerk: It has been moved by Madame Neville that Inky Mark be elected as chair of the committee.

Mr. Inky Mark (Dauphin—Swan River—Marquette, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Clerk.

I want to thank the honourable member for the honour of nominating me for that position, but at this time I have to decline the offer.

Thank you.

Hon. Anita Neville: I will not move any further motions, Mr. Clerk. Thank you.

The Clerk: Am I to conclude that the motion has been withdrawn?

Hon. Anita Neville: Fine.

The Clerk: Are there any further motions?

There being no further motions, is it the pleasure of the committee to adopt the motion?

Hon. Anita Neville: To withdraw the names?

The Clerk: To adopt the motion that Mr. Vellacott be elected as chair of the committee.

Hon. Anita Neville: Mr. Clerk, I'd like to request a recorded vote, please.

The Clerk: My colleague Jim Latimer, who is the procedural clerk, will proceed to a recorded division.

Mr. James Latimer (Procedural Clerk): It is moved by Mr. Mayes that Mr. Vellacott be elected chair of the committee.

(Motion agreed to: yeas 7; nays 5)

The Clerk: Now to the election of the vice-chairs. I am now ready to receive motions for the first vice-chair.

Mr. James Latimer: The first vice-chair is from the official opposition.

[Translation]

The Clerk: I'm ready to receive nominations for the position of first vice-chair, which according to the Standing Orders must be a member from the official opposition.

Ms. Neville.

[English]

Hon. Anita Neville: Mr. Clerk, I'd like to nominate my colleague Ms. Karetak-Lindell.

The Clerk: It has been moved by Mrs. Neville that Madame Karetak-Lindell be elected as first vice-chair of the committee.

Are there any further motions?

Mr. Vellacott.

Mr. Maurice Vellacott (Saskatoon—Wanuskewin, CPC): I think Ms. Karetak-Lindell would make an excellent choice—I served with her on the committee in the past—but I would also think there would be other members from the Liberals who could capably do the job, so I'd like to propose Mr. Gary Merasty, who I know has a lot of experience and involvement and has served well in our province. I would nominate him as the vice-chair for the committee.

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

Are there further motions?

Mr. Merasty.

Mr. Gary Merasty (Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River, Lib.): I thank Mr. Vellacott for the nomination, but I have to decline at this point in time.

Thank you.

Mr. Maurice Vellacott: I'll try again. I've enjoyed serving with some of these others before and they have been excellent colleagues in other spheres. I have enjoyed working with Anita, so I would like to propose her as the vice-chair for this committee. I believe she'd serve very capably.

• (1540)

The Clerk: It has been moved by Mr. Vellacott that Mrs. Neville be elected as first vice-chair of the committee.

Madame Neville.

Hon. Anita Neville: Mr. Chairman, I decline. Thank you very much.

Mr. Maurice Vellacott: Well, I've made my honest efforts there, so I think we'll leave it at that.

The Clerk: It has been moved by Madame Neville that Nancy Karetak-Lindell be elected as first vice-chair of the committee. Is it the pleasure of the committee to adopt the motion?

(Motion agreed to)

The Clerk: I declare Madame Karetak-Lindell first vice-chair of the committee.

Now the election of the second vice-chair of the committee.

Monsieur Lemay.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Marc Lemay (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): I nominate Ms. Jean Crowder.

The Clerk: Mr. Lemay nominates Ms. Jean Crowder as second vice-chair of the committee. Are there any other motions?

[*English*]

There being no further motions, is it the pleasure of the committee to adopt the motion?

(Motion agreed to)

The Clerk: I declare Madame Crowder second vice-chair of the committee.

[*Translation*]

I now invite Mr. Vellacott to take the chair.

[*English*]

The Chair (Mr. Maurice Vellacott (Saskatoon—Wanuskewin, CPC)): We'll carry on from here.

We have some orders of business that we could take care of if it is your pleasure today, and they would be some of the routine motions that normally come up in the course of the start of our committee. There are those who would maybe want to actually meet with their colleagues to decide in advance and prior to a Wednesday meeting how to proceed with respect to some of these. Some of these are fairly straightforward and to the point. There are others that may involve a little more discussion, a little more vigour, or difference of opinion on some of that. We are at your pleasure as a committee to do what you want at this point.

I would suggest that we maybe proceed or have a Wednesday meeting in which we deal with that: it could take a meeting of itself and then have any other motions forward at that point in terms of committee business, other things that we'd want to address in the course of the weeks ahead. But let's hear from you as members as to what you want to proceed to do. Do you want to go with routine motions?

I think everybody has before them some of the routine motions we've gone over in the past. Some of them are pretty to the point. As I suggested, you may want to have some discussion as a particular party with respect to how you come down and how you want to have those go forward.

Before we go on to those, you need to let me know or indicate what your wishes are.

Monsieur Lemay.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Marc Lemay: I would like to draw the attention of the members of the committee to what is said here concerning the presence of staff at in-camera meetings: that, unless otherwise ordered, each committee member be allowed to be accompanied by one staff person at an in-camera meeting. I would like us to replace the words "by one staff person" with the words "by one staff person from his or her party".

We feel that, clearly, this is a very restrictive provision. Within the Bloc Québécois, one person — as it happens, my assistant — who works for the party research service, is responsible solely for Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development. It does seem to me to be very important that she be present even for in-camera meetings. I think this situation is the same for the other members of the committee. It isn't sufficient that only the presence of committee staff members be accepted. In fact, for my part, my office staff stays at the office.

• (1545)

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Lemay.

We can come back to that. Maybe I'll just quickly explain, as I understand it, the difference in the French-English translation there. We need to get back to the question. I assume you want us to proceed to deal with these motions.

Mr. Lemay, apparently the difference between the French and the English...your French version does seem to imply it has to be from your particular office, whereas the English version does not so indicate. I don't know if that satisfies you, but the understanding is that you can bring one staff person, whether they be from your office as MP or otherwise.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Marc Lemay: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We simply need to ensure that the French version and the English version say the same thing. You are quite right; the English version is perfect, but the French translation is not.

We simply need to have the French corrected, Mr. Clerk. Thank you.

[English]

The Chair: My straight question is, do we want to proceed with these routine motions at this point or would we be pleased to do that at the Wednesday meeting at the call of the chair at 3:30?

We can also deal with other items of future business that you would want to suggest at that point. We can have some discussion of that. If we propose a 48-hour advance notice, then we would actually have to have that at a further meeting.

Mr. Albrecht.

Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC): Mr. Chairman, as a matter of principle, I think it would be wise for us to be apprised of the issues that are coming before us in advance so that we're not acting on material we might not be fully apprised of. I would prefer to wait for another meeting to deal with these.

The Chair: Okay.

You have this stuff in hand. What are the wishes of other members? Ms. Crowder, Mr. Russell, Gary, Anita, do you want to go to the next meeting or do you want to proceed right away? Do you want to wait? Do you have internal discussions that you might want to have in advance and wait until the next meeting?

Ms. Crowder.

Ms. Jean Crowder (Nanaimo—Cowichan, NDP): I would support waiting until the next meeting, and I would also ask if there could be a subcommittee on agenda and procedure scheduled at some point fairly quickly as well.

The Chair: That would be one of the first things we would strike in terms of the composition of that committee. As you can see, Jean, it is one of the first routine motions there.

What I'm saying is you may want to have a discussion in terms of the composition of that committee. You have an example before you, and it might suggest a different configuration than what you would desire as a member.

Is there any other comment? I am sensing from the committee that the will would be to actually just proceed with this on Wednesday, to think it through, look over these samples here, talk with your party colleagues, and get a sense from them how you want to proceed. We will all come back probably better informed as to how we want to go with these routine motions.

Does anybody have any more comments or thoughts?

With that, we will dispense for now. The notices will be out. It's routine, meetings on Mondays and Wednesdays at 3:30 p.m.

We're adjourned.

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

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

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