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—
Chair

Mr. Bernard Patry

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•(1610)

[Translation]

The Chair (Mr. Bernard Patry (Pierrefonds—Dollard, Lib.):
Good afternoon, everyone.

[English]

I am very sorry to be late. I am not usually late, but there can be a problem when you have another committee, such as the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs.

Pursuant to Standing Order 113(3), this meeting is for the organization of Bill C-27. You have the orders of the day and the appointment letter of the chair by the Speaker of the House. The letter reads:

Pursuant to Standing Order 113, I'm pleased to confirm your appointment as Chair of the Legislative Committee on Bill C-27, an Act to amend the Criminal Code (dangerous offenders and recognizance to keep the peace).

It's signed by Mr. Milliken.

You've all received the routine motions. They are the same routine motions that we passed for Bill C-25. Do you want me to read all the motions?

Some hon. members: Dispense.

The Chair: Is everyone agreed on these routine motions?

Madame Jennings.

Hon. Marlene Jennings (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine, Lib.): We're in agreement.

The only thing that we would like to add is what we had added at the legislative committee for Bill C-35, which is:

[Translation]

“Staff at in camera meetings.” It simply states:

That, unless otherwise ordered, each Committee member be allowed to be accompanied by one staff person at an in camera meeting.

We would like to add: “and that each party be allowed to be accompanied by one staff person from its Whip's office at an in camera meeting.”

[English]

The Chair: Are there any comments concerning the addition from Mrs. Jennings?

[Translation]

Do you have any comments?

(Motion agreed to.)

Mr. Bélanger.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger (Ottawa—Vanier, Lib.): Point 6 refers to the availability of documents in both official languages. Is it necessary to add this, or do we agree to say that documents must be available at the time of distribution? Too often we're told that the trial is coming and that—

Some hon. members: No, no.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: So that's understood. If a document is not available in both languages, it won't be distributed.

An hon. member: That's it.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Thank you.

The Chair: If a witness submits a presentation drafted in only one of the official languages, it will not be distributed to committee members. Instead it will be distributed by the clerk, once the document has been translated into the other official language.

Mr. Moore.

[English]

Mr. Rob Moore (Fundy Royal, CPC): Under speaking times, one of the things we do at the justice committee, which I think works well, is that no member speaks twice before another member has spoken once. I think we've added it to our other committee on Bill C-35. I would make the suggestion that we follow this format that no member speaks twice before another member speaks once.

•(1615)

[Translation]

The Chair: Ms. Jennings.

Hon. Marlene Jennings: However, if a committee member hasn't yet spoken and his or her turn has come up, that member may decide to give his time to a member of his party or any other member. I think that's also acceptable.

The Chair: Mr. Ménard.

Mr. Réal Ménard (Hochelaga, BQ): We have to see how many speaking rounds are allotted to us. Then we'll have to see how the political parties manage their time, and that's up to them. If we're entitled to two rounds, normally each of the committee members will speak. I understand the fairness rule. If we want members to take part in the committee and to have the feeling of being useful, they have to be able to ask questions. But if, for a strategic reason that is up to a party, for example, opposition colleagues want to have their critic speak twice, it seems to me that doesn't concern us. However, the Chair must enforce the fairness rule. The other parties must not interfere in a party's internal affairs. So there's a balance between the two.

The Chair: I entirely agree with what Ms. Jennings, Mr. Ménard and Mr. Moore said. The NDP has only one member, and, if there is a second round, he will speak twice, whereas the other committee members will only have spoken once. There has to be a fairness rule, so that all members who want to ask questions can do so.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: From what Mr. Moore said, Mr. Comartin won't be able to ask a second question or speak before all committee members have spoken.

The Chair: That's what I just said. Mr. Comartin would speak twice because we're proceeding by political party, not by persons.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Mr. Chairman, that goes against what Mr. Moore said.

The Chair: It worked very well during the study of Bill C-35. As Mr. Ménard mentioned, the member may be alone, or say that his or her colleague does not wish to speak. It's the political party that chooses its critic. We usually try to give all members the opportunity to ask questions. That's what I've always said.

Mr. Réal Ménard: That's why you have our respect and friendship.

The Chair: Thank you.

[*English*]

We will vote on all these routine motions, including item 10 as amended by Madame Jennings.

(Motions 1 to 9 inclusive agreed to)

(Motion 10 as amended agreed to)

(Motion 11 agreed to)

The Chair: We will continue.

[*Translation*]

You've all received the documents sent by the clerk?

At the first meeting, we'll hear the first witness on Bill C-27, the Minister of Justice.

[*English*]

Mr. Moore, does anyone have comments? Will the first witness be the Minister of Justice?

Mr. Rob Moore: That sounds good. Of course, there would be some departmental staff there.

The Chair: There would be departmental staff there, yes.

Go ahead, Mr. Comartin.

Mr. Joe Comartin (Windsor—Tecumseh, NDP): I'm concerned about scheduling. Before we get into this—

The Chair: That's the next one, item 6. We're on item 4 now.

Mr. Joe Comartin: It's just that we're talking about witnesses, so I assumed we're going to talk about—

The Chair: We talked about item 4, the appearance of the Minister of Justice, and we can go right now to the schedule of meetings. That's no problem.

Mr. Joe Comartin: Thank you.

The Chair: The meetings are scheduled right now. Next week they will be Tuesday, May 15, and Wednesday, May 16. We're finishing Bill C-35, and on Tuesday, May 29, we'll be doing clause-by-clause consideration of Bill C-35. If everything is fine, on Wednesday, May 30, we could have the Minister of Justice for Bill C-27, if we want to keep the same schedule—

The clerk tells me that on May 30, the Minister of Justice is in front of the justice committee.

Go ahead, Monsieur Ménard.

• (1620)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Réal Ménard: I'm pleased you said that because it seems to me we should try as far as possible to start our proceedings on this bill once we've completed the study of Bill C-35. We were a bit scared. On the opposition side, they're the same people, with a few exceptions. As for the rest, we have three committees that are sitting twice a week. That's starting to be a lot.

Do we agree on how things will operate? We can keep the same slot, Tuesday and Wednesday afternoons, following question period. We would start consideration of Bill C-27 once Bill C-35 is complete. Are you telling us we're going to the end of May?

The Chair: On May 29, consideration of Bill C-35 should be completed.

Mr. Réal Ménard: I imagine the government didn't think we'd finish with Bill C-27 before the summer recess. I officially move that we meet in the same time slot once the study of Bill C-35 is completed.

[*English*]

The Chair: Okay. The clerk asked me if the standing committee could meet for half an hour to discuss all the witnesses, but I'm not sure it's necessary. You could all send the lists of witnesses all parties want to appear in front of us for Bill C-27. I'll have no problem with this; everyone is here today. It's up to every party to send a list, and we're going to choose from the lists at that time. Sometimes the same witness could appear. You'll remember that this is what happened on Bill C-35.

Go ahead, Madame Jennings.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Marlene Jennings: If I understand correctly, Mr. Ménard is moving that our committee not start its meetings on Bill C-27 until the legislative committee on Bill C-35 has completed its proceedings. As we have decided to meet normally on Tuesdays and Wednesday afternoons, theoretically, the first committee meeting would be held on June 5, at 3:30 p.m. There would also be another meeting on Wednesday, June 6, at 3:30 p.m.

The Chair: Yes.

Hon. Marlene Jennings: If everyone agrees on that, the steering committee won't need to meet. We can simply set the deadline for each person to send his or her witness list. That would give our clerk the time to collect them.

[*English*]

The Chair: Does everyone agree with the comments from Ms. Jennings that we are going to start Bill C-27 after we finish Bill C-35, and that we feel we're going to finish by Tuesday, May 29, and on May 30 there will be no committee because justice has a meeting on Wednesday afternoon on May 30?

Yes, Mr. Moore.

Mr. Rob Moore: I have one comment on that. That would be subject to Bill C-35 running that course, and also subject to that justice—If that justice committee meeting, for whatever reason by the time May 30 rolls around, is not on May 30, I would think where justice normally meets 9 to 11 Tuesdays and Thursdays, that we might be able to start. Barring something unforeseen happening, I'm in agreement with that.

Are we deciding right now on the time being...? The suggestion is there for Wednesday—is that the suggestion, at 3:30?

The Chair: Tuesday and Wednesday usually, 3:30 to 5:30.

A voice: Starting what day?

The Chair: It's going to be on June 5, and Wednesday, June 6. But as Mr. Moore pointed out, if there is no meeting of the justice committee on Wednesday afternoon, May 30, we'll start on May 30 on Wednesday afternoon.

Madame Davidson.

Mrs. Patricia Davidson (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Chairman, are Tuesdays and Wednesdays cast in stone then? I have committee meetings Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday afternoon.

The Chair: If you have meetings on the four days, even if we switch days, you're going to have some meetings. I have meetings also on Tuesday and Wednesday and Thursday.

Mrs. Patricia Davidson: They can't be in the mornings?

The Chair: That's the only time, because on Wednesday all the caucuses meet. It's impossible for Wednesday morning. And on Tuesday we have the justice committee, and I am on the foreign affairs committee also. It's very difficult. That's why the members have chosen Tuesday and Wednesday afternoon.

So that's fine with this? Okay, the schedule of meeting.

Budget—Do you have enough money?

• (1625)

The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Richard Dupuis): At this time.

The Chair: Okay, that's it.

The meeting is adjourned. Merci.

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