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## Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage

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**Chair**

**Mr. Gary Schellenberger**

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• (1550)

[English]

**The Chair (Mr. Gary Schellenberger (Perth—Wellington, CPC)):** I call this meeting to order.

I see we have quorum. I thank everyone for coming to make this quorum.

This meeting is going to last no more than 15 or 20 minutes. There are two priorities for me right now that we have to get to before we leave.

First, it's been brought to my attention that our first vice-chair from the Liberals is no more a part of this committee; Ms. Dhalla is not part of this committee. As my first point of order for today, I'd like to replace Ms. Dhalla.

Mr. Simms.

**Mr. Scott Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor, Lib.):** Are you taking nominations at this point, Mr. Chairman?

**The Chair:** I am taking nominations.

**Mr. Scott Simms:** It would be my honour to nominate Mr. Mauril Bélanger for the position of vice-chair.

**The Chair:** Are there any other nominations?

Are we agreed around the table?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Chair:** Would you stand, sir?

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

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Vice-Chair.

Second, it's very important for our analysts to have some work to do this summer while we're all out sunbathing and doing nothing; I'm quite sure we're going to be very busy. They have asked if they could have a little bit of direction for the fall and if we might be able to enlighten them.

There have been a couple of things. Mr. Angus sent something in and Mr. Simms sent something in, and lo and behold they are very close. From Charlie we got the Canada Council of the Arts, Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, Telefilm Canada, and Canadian Museum of Civilization. From Mr. Simms we have the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, Telefilm Canada, Canada Council of the Arts, and National Arts Centre. Three things there are relatively the same. I know that one of our reports was on the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation.

Did you have something, Mr. Bélanger?

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** I'd like to add, Mr. Chairman, if I may, that on the matter of copyright, the minister confirmed when she appeared that the government would be presenting legislation in the fall. I don't know when in the fall that would be, but from my experience on this committee, dealing with Bill C-32 in the 35th Parliament, it was difficult, complex, and controversial, and I suspect you had a foretaste of that in terms of Bill C-60 in the last Parliament. Any time spent by the members or by staff preparing for that would be time well spent.

I don't know the extent to which the government will go into this legislation, whether there's a number of controversial items or not, but I would certainly put that near the top in terms of research work.

**The Chair:** Mr. Abbott.

**Mr. Jim Abbott (Kootenay—Columbia, CPC):** I might be able to shed a little light on this; I think it would be good for all committee members to be fully apprised.

I agree completely with Mr. Bélanger—yet another frosty Friday we have here—but I'd just like to put it into proper context. I'm not sure—and I'm not predicting, I'm just simply saying—that a decision has been made regarding which committee it will be coming before. It might be presumptuous of us to assume that it will be coming before the heritage committee. It could be going before the industry committee or before a joint committee.

I agree that it would be a good idea for us to inform ourselves as much as we can, but not with an absolute deadline in mind that we are going to be tasked with this. Although we will be very interested and will want to be participants, we might not be the key players. And I'm not predicting anything; I'm simply saying that we don't know.

**The Chair:** I'd like to add something here. I was around for the last deal on copyright, regarding the digital form. Then Bill C-60 came back to us for a wee bit last time. It is very complicated, and if we had even a couple of sessions just to go over what's been before us—and I'm quite sure that even in the last two years things have changed again—I would find that very informative. Sometimes it's not the most exciting thing, but it's very complicated, and it's very important to so many people.

Yes, Mr. Fast.

**Mr. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC):** Mr. Chair, I'm just wondering, could members of the committee be provided with copies of Bill C-60 and also any reports that have been prepared in the past? I understand that there are at least two reports outstanding. It would be very helpful for us to go through those before we brought any delegations in.

• (1555)

**The Chair:** Again, I may be talking through my hat here, but I think it might be a good idea even to go through those reports and relate them to what Bill C-60 said. Bill C-60 didn't look too much like some of the reports did; that's because we had both Industry and Heritage involved.

My suggestion, then, is that it would be great if we could start off with some of that, and....

Yes, Mr. Kotto.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Maka Kotto (Saint-Lambert, BQ):** Mr. Chairman, as I remember, we debated this subject in the last parliament. We talked about striking a joint heritage-industry committee to examine this bill, but that committee remained to be established. As an election was called sooner than expected, the plan was not carried out. I think we should perhaps reconsider establishing a joint committee. I don't see how the members of this committee could be excluded from it.

Having consulted my Bloc colleague who sits on the Standing Committee on Industry, I can say that he welcomes the idea of there being, on one side, representatives of this committee from each of the parties and, on the other side, representatives of their committee. However, it would be absurd to exclude the members here present from the future committee.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Yes, Mr. Martin.

**Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP):** If I could, Mr. Chair, I'm substituting for Charlie Angus, and at the outset of the meeting you listed some of the things that Charlie had left with you as things that he deemed to be important. To be fair, that was only in answer to the question you put to him about which crown corporations he might like to see studied. In actual fact, he did leave a brief note with me about some of things that he thought would be coming up in the fall and therefore would benefit from some work over the summer. Could I table those for you?

**The Chair:** Sure.

**Mr. Pat Martin:** Mr. Angus assessed that a number of things would probably be coming up early in the fall, including a meeting with the minister. I don't need to go through that. He also mentioned GATS at Doha; the CBC mandate review, etc.; the copyright review, which you've obviously touched on. With regard to the CBC terms of reference for the mandate review of CBC, which I believe your committee talked about, you voted at committee that you wanted consultation into the development of the terms of reference for the mandate review. I think he's identified that this needs more work. As well, Mr. Angus is serving notice that he will be bringing forward media concentration, the idea of concentration of ownership in the media, and the francophone secretariat as it applies to people in

northern Ontario, in terms of service in the French language being properly maintained outside of Quebec.

So he's listed those five things in addition to—

**The Chair:** He has the CBC in there again. As I say, that's something we have a report on and that I think will come up. Again, I would suggest that CBC might be on the docket, so we should get information on, for instance, what the mandate is now. I know the Senate has been looking into some of the stuff on CBC. So that would be something also.

Yes.

**Mr. Pat Martin:** Just to finish up, one thing that's given special emphasis on Mr. Angus' list is the francophone secretariat as it applies to francophone northern Ontarians. He'd like to develop information throughout the summer for a meeting on issues around this secretariat. The specific question he mentions is with regard to how the regional francophone programs are being supported and managed by the government for those francophone populations outside of Quebec.

He has given special urgency to that. If you could add that to the list of research items throughout the summer, he would appreciate it.

**The Chair:** Do we have anything to go by yet, guys?

**Voices:** Yes.

**The Chair:** Okay.

When we come back in the fall, I would suggest that if you have various...or whatever research is closest to us, we can have a meeting and decide what our agenda will be. Does that suit everyone around the table?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Chair:** And you have some ammunition to work with.

**Voices:** Yes.

**The Chair:** I must say, again, thank you so much to everyone for coming out to this short meeting today. Have a great summer....

Yes, Mr. Scarpaleggia.

• (1600)

**Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.):** Mr. Abbott mentioned, when the Museums Association was here, that they had a very tight organization, that they had the capacity to contact their members with lightning speed. That indeed is the case. In fact, as a result of their communication to their members, I have received two e-mails—both, incidentally, from railway museums.

I'm not quite sure what's at the root of this, but they feel that the museums policy somehow overlooks their specific needs. I don't know if it's because railway museums are cultural but also tied in with the transportation industry that they are somehow on the margins of museums funding programs.

So I don't know what the issue is, but I would like to suggest that at our first meeting in the fall we invite two railway museums—in particular, one from the east and one from the west, from Delson, Quebec, and from Revelstoke, which I believe is in Mr. Abbott's riding—even just for an hour and a half. There's something there, under the surface, that I don't know enough about, and I'd like to hear from them.

**The Chair:** Mr. Abbott.

**Mr. Jim Abbott:** I might be able to add a very small amount of enlightenment there.

The interesting thing with most museums—there are always exceptions to collections—is that there is a degree of portability for an awful lot of artifacts. Obviously the amount of portability for an 1897 locomotive is rather limited. There is also a culture, as you've referred to it, of people who really enjoy taking a look. I have the Canadian Museum of Rail Travel in my constituency, and I indicated that we have about a mile and a half of passenger cars, some of which have been restored. There is a strong desire, as I understand it, on the part of the rail museums to create not necessarily a virtual museum but a stronger public awareness and an alliance so that people would be more aware of... It would just be easier to access the information, and a stronger pooling of information would add a certain synergy. Rather than one plus one equals two, it would be one plus one equals three, just because of the synergy between the museums.

So your perception I think is very accurate. However, if I go to the Revelstoke museum and say that we'd like to invite them to Ottawa to tell us all about it, and my friend in Cranbrook catches wind of this, I'll have one heck of a time, because both museums are.... I think it's a great idea, but it's....

There's a rail travel museum and then there are locomotive museums and so on and so forth. If the researchers could give us some background on this, it would be really helpful in terms of moving that particular item forward. So I'm very excited about that suggestion.

**Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia:** Do I understand, Mr. Abbott, that you would not want to have a meeting on this?

**Mr. Jim Abbott:** Oh, no, I think we should; I just think we have to make sure that we do it well, particularly with some more research.

**An hon. member:** So decide in the fall.

**Mr. Jim Abbott:** Yes.

**The Chair:** Mr. Martin.

**Mr. Pat Martin:** The only comment I would make is that Mr. Angus probably wouldn't recommend that it be the first meeting of the new session. He did send direction to me that if this got to be a planning meeting for meetings in the fall, when it comes to museums specifically he would rather deal with some of the other pressing issues facing—

**Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia:** And I agree; I'm suggesting just one meeting, not a full-length study of museums. It would be one meeting at some point, not necessarily the first meeting.

**Mr. Pat Martin:** I see.

**The Chair:** This meeting is getting a little longer here, and we are getting....

Yes, Mr. Kotto.

• (1605)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Maka Kotto:** Mr. Chairman, I was somewhat surprised that we were so confused as to adjourn the meeting when we hadn't debated the motion we were to discuss today, a motion I introduced at the end of the last meeting we held here.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Okay.

We have two motions here, including one from Mr. Warkentin. This is going to take us into a full meeting if we work on these two motions. As I had suggested, the biggest thing to do today was to get a new vice-chair. The second thing was to give some direction to our men here.

Yes.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Maka Kotto:** With all due respect, Mr. Chairman, I agreed to come to this meeting today because we had agreed, as stated in the blues, to debate this motion today, a motion on the museums policy. That's what was agreed.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** This is the motion:

That, in the Committee's opinion, the government implement as soon as possible the new museum policy discussed in 2005 and respect the work and consultations undertaken by the Department; that this new policy, once developed, be studied by the present Committee before its introduction in the House; and that the Chair report to the House.

To the best of my knowledge, there was no policy. No policy was presented. There was work done on the policy, but there was no policy.

Am I correct?

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Maka Kotto:** Mr. Chairman, there are figures. Wouldn't it be appropriate to review all those figures, since you are part of the continuity of a government history? The previous government was about to establish a museums policy, with the consent of the Canadian Museums Association. Instead of wasting our time playing at being tourists in all the museums of Canada and Quebec, we could refer to those documents, develop a draft policy that would be submitted to our committee and move forward, in order simply to save time.

My NDP colleague, Mr. Angus, pointed out that there were urgent issues that had to be dealt with because they absolutely have not been addressed. I'm referring to the subjects he put forward. Furthermore, as regards the museums, the essential work has been done. Witnesses have appeared before the committee and one official came to testify. I don't see why that poses a problem.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** Mr. Chairman, I'm going to make a suggestion which I hope we may be able to agree to. It won't have escaped our notice, on both sides of the table, that there appears to be an infatuation with, an enthusiasm for, a museums policy and a desire to do better for our museums, large and small.

I ask Mr. Kotto whether it would be acceptable for one or two or three priorities for this summer to be that our researchers do an in-depth job that would lead us to adopt a report on a museums policy very early in the fall. It would be a document that could thus become a substantive report that would state everything that has been done, what has been agreed upon and what has been concluded.

I'm speaking to you as a member of the former government at a time when there appeared to be a consensus between the Canadian Museums Association, the Department of Canadian Heritage and the various political parties.

If they could put that all together for us early in the fall, would that be enough? Then we could review everything and turn it into a report, which would encourage the government to move forward more quickly.

That's a suggestion, Mr. Chairman.

•(1610)

**Mr. Maka Kotto:** Mr. Chairman, there is a report on the discussions on the museum policy, and I believe it is available. It isn't a secret document.

I think it's imperative that the government do its homework. The figures are there. The museum community agrees on that report and on the recommendations it contains. It isn't up to us to redo the work from scratch.

I thought that there was a consensus the last time and that debate on the motion was postponed for lack of time. So, to save time, I would move that we put the motion. In that way, everyone will shoulder their own responsibilities.

[*English*]

**Mr. Ed Fast:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I tend to concur with you. I think the issue here is the way the motion has been worded. There are two parts to it. The first part alludes to the implementation of a policy, and the second part alludes to the fact that this policy has not yet been developed. We may have a working paper or a discussion paper, but you can't implement something that hasn't been completed.

I'm prepared to accept Mr. Bélanger's suggestion, but if in fact that doesn't fly, if Mr. Kotto is prepared to delete the first part of the motion, and simply say that "a new policy, once developed, be studied by the present committee before its introduction in the House; and that the Chair report to the House", I believe that would be acceptable.

**Mr. Jim Abbott:** I would be hard-pressed to see a minister—whether it's my minister, my government, or whatever government—being prepared to comply with bringing his or her legislation before a standing committee for that committee to approve it before the person takes it to the cabinet for approval. And that's really what the second part of this is asking for.

That is not going to happen. We can ask for it until we're blue in the face, but it is not going to happen.

**The Chair:** Mr. Kotto, go ahead, please.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Maka Kotto:** Mr. Chairman, I move that we put the motion to a recorded vote.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Okay, we'll take a recorded vote then.

**Mr. Jim Abbott:** Mauril, could you explain to us again exactly what your proposal is?

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** You want me to explain it in English? I thought I had, but it's not accepted. It's a suggestion I made...I sense some tension, some hesitation. Mr. Kotto's intentions are legitimate. I was coming with a suggestion that might bridge that, but it doesn't seem to be working. That's fine.

**Mr. Jim Abbott:** Can you explain it again?

**Mr. Ed Fast:** What you suggested is fine. You're talking about the work plan or information that we could elicit during the summer.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** I'll explain again. Was it a bad translation? Do you want me to try to, by repetition, convince people? Does that work with you guys, or are you trying to get me to convince Mr. Kotto by repetition? No, I won't do that. He's a very intelligent man, and he understood what I wanted to say, and it's fine.

**Mr. Ed Fast:** The motion as it's presently worded is ambiguous and contradictory, and it doesn't work. Now if Mr. Kotto can rephrase it to something that does make a little more—

**The Chair:** I won't be able to report it to the House.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** That means we have lots of time. We're going to be adopting it and reporting. Let's vote on it and go for supper.

**The Chair:** Yes, Mr. Kotto?

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Maka Kotto:** Mr. Chairman, I requested a vote on the motion, and I would like it to be recorded.

•(1615)

[*English*]

**Mr. Jim Abbott:** Mr. Chair, if we're going to be going to vote, and the vote is going to be recorded, I am going to be voting against it. I think it's important, if it's going to be recorded, and I want it to be understood why. I have the highest respect for Mr. Kotto, and I know he has the best of intentions, but I agree with Mr. Fast that unfortunately the wording of the motion is really contradictory and ambiguous. I think this committee—and I know the government—wants to move forward with a museums policy. That's a given. That has been an unqualified statement by the minister. However, as I say, because the motion is ambiguous and contradictory within itself, I will unfortunately be obliged to vote against it.

**The Chair:** Just as a point of clarification, a report back to the minister from this committee does not necessarily tie the hands of the minister.

**Mr. Maka Kotto:** *Exactement.*

**The Chair:** In my estimation, we've sent reports. I look at the report that went from this committee on copyright, and then Bill C-60 came back and didn't even resemble it. So I will take the motion. I don't see how we will tie the minister's hands if we get into this discussion. We can work with the working paper. We can deal with whatever. We can make some suggestions. Our suggestions will either be accepted or they will not.

**Mr. Jim Abbott:** Mr. Chairman, we are getting into debate, and I'm sorry about that, but "the new museum policy discussed in 2005" is totally ambiguous. I don't have a clue what that refers to. Secondly, "the new policy, once developed, be studied by the present Committee before its introduction in the House", is meant to tie the

minister. That's why I say it's ambiguous, and it's contradictory, and quite frankly, I can't imagine any minister of any Crown of any government in any legislature or parliament being prepared to take that kind of direction from a committee.

**The Chair:** Okay. We've debated the situation. Mr. Kotto has asked for a vote. I will ask for a vote to be recorded.

(Motion agreed to: yeas 6; nays 4)

**The Chair:** We'll talk about it in the fall.

With that said, have a good summer. The meeting is adjourned.

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