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Monday, May 8, 2006

—
Chair

Mr. Norman Doyle

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• (1535)

[English]

The Chair (Mr. Norman Doyle (St. John's East, CPC)): Order, please.

I want to welcome Blair Wilson, in particular, to our meeting. You weren't here for our last meeting, Blair, so it's nice to have you aboard.

I think everyone has a copy of the motions that we passed out last week. If you don't, let us know, and I'm sure we can get you one. I believe the first order of business would be to go through these motions and get them passed.

The first one is on services of analysts from the Library of Parliament: that the committee retain, as needed and at the discretion of the chair, the services of one or more analysts from the Library of Parliament to assist it in its work.

At this point I call for somebody to make a motion on that one.

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

The Chair: Next is the subcommittee on agenda and procedure: that the subcommittee on agenda and procedure be composed of the chair, the two vice-chairs, and a member of the other opposition party. That would be Mr. Siksay, I would imagine, because the vice-chairs have already been elected.

We need a motion on that, please. Mr. Siksay. Thank you.

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: Witnesses' expenses: that, if requested, reasonable travel, accommodation, and living expenses be reimbursed to witnesses, not exceeding two representatives per organization; and that, in exceptional circumstances, payment for more representatives be made at the discretion of the chair.

Do we have a mover on that? Thank you.

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

The Chair: Now that we have the first motion taken care of, we'll invite the researchers and analysts to the table as well, if they so desire. We will order you up here.

Reduced quorum: that the chair be authorized to hold meetings to receive evidence and to have that evidence printed when a quorum is not present, provided that at least three members are present, including one member of the opposition.

It is moved by Mr. Siksay.

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: Distribution of documents: that only the clerk of the committee be authorized to distribute documents to the members of the committee and only when they exist in both official languages, and that witnesses be advised accordingly.

Can we have a mover on that? Okay.

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

The Chair: Working meals: that the clerk of the committee be authorized to make the necessary arrangements to provide working meals for the committee and its subcommittees.

We need a mover on that one, if it's okay.

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

The Chair: 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.

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

The Chair: In camera meeting transcripts: that one copy of the transcript of each in camera meeting be kept in the committee clerk's office for consultation by members of the committee.

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

The Chair: Notice of motion: 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 clerk of the committee and distributed to members in both official languages.

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

The Chair: Designate a chair: that when the chair and vice-chairs are unable to act in that capacity at or during a meeting of the committee, the chair shall designate a member of the committee to act as chair at or during the said meeting, and such an acting chair shall be vested with all the powers of the chair at or during the said meeting.

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

The Chair: Order in council appointment: that whenever an order in council appointment is referred to the committee, the clerk obtain and circulate to each member of the committee a copy of the said appointment with the appointee's curriculum vitae.

Mr. Bill Siksay (Burnaby—Douglas, NDP): Mr. Chair, can I ask a question about that?

Last session the committee asked not only for a curriculum vitae but also for specific criteria for the job, such as the job posting or the outline of the job. I forget the exact wording, but I wonder if that can be part of this motion as well.

The Chair: Do you want to bring it to the next meeting? We could rewrite it and have a motion passed. We'll stand on this one until then.

Thank you, Bill.

Allocation of time: that witnesses from an organization be given ten minutes to make their opening statement; and that, at the discretion of the chair, during the questioning of witnesses, there be allocated seven minutes for the first questioner of each party and that thereafter five minutes be allocated to each subsequent questioner—alternating between government and opposition parties—until all members have had a chance to participate, after which, if time permits, a new round will commence.

How do you feel about that?

An hon. member: So moved.

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

The Chair: Main and supplementary estimates: that whenever the main estimates or the supplementary estimates are tabled in the House, the committee invite the minister and appropriate senior officials to appear at a televised meeting of the committee, if possible.

An hon. member: So moved.

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

The Chair: Chapter of a report of the Auditor General: that whenever a chapter of a report of the Auditor General refers to a subject under the mandate of the committee, the committee invite the Office of the Auditor General of Canada and any appropriate senior officials to appear at a televised meeting of the committee, if possible.

An hon. member: So moved.

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

The Chair: Thank you. All carried—without debate, you could say.

Next we will look at future business of the committee.

For the information of the committee, the minister is prepared to meet the committee to give us an overview. Is there any discussion on that? Would it be okay if we had the minister come on Wednesday, May 10, to meet our committee and give an overview of activities of the department? I'm told by our clerk that we could have a departmental overview on May 17 as well.

The minister will be prepared to talk about any upcoming legislation that he has on the books. We could get into that as well. I think he's prepared to do his estimates after the break. We'll have enough to occupy the committee on Wednesday, May 10, and May 17, and I think it's safe to say that the estimates could probably be

done after the break week. We're waiting for a date that the minister would be available to come in for the estimates.

Also, maybe on Monday, May 15, we could look at the committee's priorities and develop our calendar to accommodate them.

I'm told by the clerk as well that we should try to have a briefing from the IRB. The UN High Commission for Refugees has submitted a report to the department about their monitoring of the safe third country agreement.

Are there any problems with any of these suggestions that committee members would like to bring to our attention? If not, we could proceed to set some of these meetings.

As I said, on Monday, May 15, we could have a look at your priorities as a committee.

Andrew.

• (1540)

Hon. Andrew Telegdi (Kitchener—Waterloo, Lib.): On that, I think it would be useful if we gave all members of the committee a prioritized work plan from the previous Parliament. Maybe Ben can do a bit of a report about what was accomplished and what legislation was in the works, because there were a number of pieces of legislation introduced in the House. We're waiting for the Citizenship Act to be introduced in the House. That would give a good overview, and it would allow members to think about it before we come to the committee.

The Chair: Did everyone get a copy of this briefing book? The briefing book pretty well outlines what the committee's activities were last time around. It might be helpful for members of the committee to go through that briefing book. Has it been distributed to all members? Okay.

So can we proceed, first of all, on the understanding that on Wednesday the minister will come to meet the committee, give an overview at that time, and possibly talk about legislation that he might have upcoming and what his vision is for his department and what have you? That would take care of Wednesday. And then Monday, on future business, we could have a look at what the committee's priorities are and develop our calendar to accommodate these priorities. Fair enough?

Are there any concerns, questions, comments from anyone?

Mr. Devolin.

Mr. Barry Devolin (Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock, CPC): There is one question or issue I'd like to put on the table that possibly the minister or his staff could address when they're here.

I'm the furthest thing from an expert on this department or on the processes that this department administers, but what I do know anecdotally is that there's a sense that this department, from an administrative efficiency point of view, doesn't do a great job. In my riding office, you know, my staff will say some departments we deal with seem to do a good job and turn things around quickly, and other departments seem to be very slow, and people wait for long periods of time, never knowing why.

So I don't expect an answer today, but I would appreciate it if the minister or his officials would talk to us a little bit about whether they've done benchmarking in their department, if they have some standards they try to meet in terms of how long it ought to take to process a particular type of application.

Secondly, maybe they could explain to us why it may be difficult for them sometimes to deal with things in an expeditious way. I do understand that there probably are some good reasons, but I'd just like to know the answer to that question. People ask me why it takes three years sometimes to get an answer to something that it would seem should only take a matter of hours of actual consideration.

•(1545)

The Chair: Well, first of all, I did neglect to mention that the departmental overview will be on the 17th. I think we have people here from the department who are taking notes, and I would imagine that will be conveyed to departmental officials, who will take appropriate action, I'm sure.

Hon. Andrew Telegdi: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

In light of all the papers and the text going around in terms of deportation, I think it would be appropriate for this committee to hear from the Canada Border Services Agency on the removal of people and the processes that are used, because I believe they are not within the mandate of the committee or the Minister of Immigration.

The Chair: Hopefully we can deal with that on Monday when we put together our priorities. You should bring it up to us at that point, and we can have it placed on the list of things to do. The CBSA could come in on the 17th on as well.

Hon. Andrew Telegdi: Just on that problem, it's a two-part problem, because the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration is the

one who can do legislation that impacts removals. So it's a two-part process, but we'll have to hear from both of them.

The Chair: Is there any further business, Mr. Farrell, that we have to deal with?

So will we meet here again on Wednesday, or in....? Okay, we'll be informed, and on Wednesday the minister will be meeting the committee at 3:30 in the afternoon.

Are there any other questions or comments?

Mr. Barry Devolin: Is this our regular committee room? I understand we're somewhere temporarily. Is this the temporary room?

The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. William Farrell): No, what happens is we try to get any committee room. But something is going on over at West Block today, so most of the committee rooms are taken by some reception. It was the only one we could get.

Mr. Barry Devolin: So typically we would be back where we were last week.

The Chair: A few people mentioned to me about possibly changing the committee time to Tuesday instead of Monday. I'm informed that we will be changing to Tuesday in September. It would be a bit of a problem right now to change it to Tuesday, given the fact that the committee rooms have been assigned. But we will be going to Tuesday in September—Tuesday and Thursday.

Are there any further comments? If not, I move to adjourn.

Thank you.

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