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Mr. Bob Mills

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• (1125)

[English]

The Acting Chair (Mr. Blaine Calkins (Wetaskiwin, CPC)): I would like to call the meeting to order.

Mr. Warawa, you have the floor.

Mr. Mark Warawa (Langley, CPC): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I have three motions that I want to introduce, and I'll do this as quickly as I can.

Unfortunately, at the previous meeting there were some issues. The meeting started quite late. I keep time, and unfortunately we were shut out on opportunities for our round, so we have to try to move these motions. It was quite disappointing. It seemed as though there was a strategy to start the meeting late and end it quickly and early in order to eliminate us from having the opportunity to question the witnesses.

So here we are on the motions, and I thank you for this opportunity. I have three motions.

I'd like to start off with the first motion inviting the Honourable Stéphane Dion to appear before the committee by Wednesday, November 29, of this year as a witness for the discussion on Bill C-288. The reason is—and I'd like to deal with these motions separately—that Stéphane Dion was the last environment minister, and I believe he has a responsibility to address why virtually nothing was done to combat growing greenhouse gas emissions. Bill C-288 states that we now need to meet those Kyoto targets. Well, that former minister needs to answer to Canadians why he didn't do anything.

The next motion I'll be making will be to invite David Anderson. Again, we need to find out why these former environment ministers really did not protect Canadians and did not meet the obligations of Kyoto. We've heard from other witnesses that if Bill C-288 had been introduced in 1998, it would have been relevant, but at this point it's not relevant anymore. It appears to be more mischief and obstruction tactics by the opposition.

We need to hear from these former environment ministers on why they didn't do what they were supposed to. Why did they permit greenhouse gas emissions to go far beyond the Kyoto target? Why did they sign up for Kyoto and then not do anything? I think it would be really helpful as we consider Bill C-288. That's why I moved that first motion to invite Stéphane Dion.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Blaine Calkins): All right. We have a motion on the floor. Is there any discussion?

Mr. Cullen.

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): I've seen Mr. Dion testify before, and I'd be interested in some of the things he might have to say about this.

The timing is problematic. The Liberals have raised the position—and I think it can be verified—that this Wednesday, November 29, is actually when the convention begins for them in Montreal. I'm wondering if there's any flexibility within Mr. Warawa's position, in order to not have it on that particular day.

Mr. Mark Warawa: Yes, I'd be open to a friendly amendment.

Mr. Nathan Cullen: The other concern I have with these motions is that they don't delay or interfere with the committee's commitment on delivery of Bill C-288 back to the House. I suppose, in a sense, we need to rely on the clerk to be able to establish a calendar that achieves both any inclusion of extra witnesses and arriving back at the commitment that this committee has already committed to.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Blaine Calkins): Mr. Cullen, my discussions with the clerk have led me to believe that Mr. Dion has been invited, and we do have a set number of days. Now, because of the Liberal convention, we talked about this at the last committee meeting, whereby everything was basically going to be moved back by one day—and I hope I have that right, Mr. Clerk. My understanding of the motion, from what I've heard, is that we're simply trying to specifically schedule a specific individual who has been invited to this committee to appear on a specific date, and I don't think it's going to have any effect on the timelines whatsoever.

Would anybody else like to speak to that, or would you like to proceed to the vote?

Mr. Maurice Vellacott (Saskatoon—Wanuskewin, CPC): Are we just speaking on the first motion? I'd like to speak later.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Blaine Calkins): Okay. Are you ready for the question?

Mr. Nathan Cullen: Just to clarify, we talked about a friendly amendment to change the date.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Blaine Calkins): Are you moving an amendment, Mr. Cullen?

Mr. Nathan Cullen: Yes, I am, to some day prior to the 29th, like the 28th. I rely on the clerk's capacity to find a date.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Blaine Calkins): We have an amendment. I believe you're trying to move it up. I don't know if that's a realistic thing to do. Would somebody like an explanation from the clerk on the scheduling right now, so that we can bring some clarification to this?

Mr. Justin Vaive (Procedural Clerk): Next week, on November 27, we have a scheduled meeting on CEPA. On November 28, we have a full list of witnesses for further consideration on Bill C-288. Mr. Warawa's amendment is to ask Mr. Dion to appear before Wednesday, November 29. We would have to juggle one of the other meetings in order to accommodate Mr. Dion or to add Mr. Dion to one of our current meetings.

• (1130)

Mr. Nathan Cullen: Just to clarify, are those witnesses on November 28 the environmental groups that are scheduled to come?

Mr. Justin Vaive: Many of them are the environmental groups that were in Nairobi. They would be coming, along with some of the industry groups.

The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Eugene Morawski): We could always ask Mr. Dion to come with them.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Blaine Calkins): Would that be acceptable?

Mr. Scarpaleggia.

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): I'm a supporter of Mr. Dion in the leadership campaign, which includes many other fine candidates, of course. First of all, the convention begins on Tuesday at 2 p.m. Mr. Dion will be working hard to woo delegates in order to win.

I'm just wondering if Mr. Warawa is afraid Mr. Dion will win and become the next Prime Minister. Is that why he's trying to embarrass him and diminish his chances of winning?

The Acting Chair (Mr. Blaine Calkins): Mr. Warawa.

Mr. Mark Warawa: If I could answer that, no. I believe Canadians want an accountable government. We do have an accountable government now, but Mr. Dion needs to be accountable for not meeting the objectives of the Kyoto. Now the Liberal members are trying to pass the lack of accountability by the previous government on to this government. This government is taking its obligations very seriously. We're committed to Kyoto, but we have a problem in that it appears Mr. Dion, as environment minister, did not do what he needed to. He has to be accountable. He has to appear before this committee and answer why he didn't meet those obligations that he signed Canada up for.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Blaine Calkins): I think this is a matter of debate, so we should move on this.

We have an amendment to the motion that was presented by Mr. Cullen. Is there anybody else who would like to speak to that amendment?

Yes.

Mr. Mark Warawa: What was the friendly amendment?

Mr. Nathan Cullen: The friendly amendment was to move it to November 28 and adjust the witnesses on November 28 accordingly.

From my understanding in talking to some of the environment groups, there were only two or three presenting on November 28, which is less than our usual complement.

Am I incorrect? Are there more than that now?

The Clerk: We have more people than that.

Mr. Nathan Cullen: Okay, then I have wrong information.

The Clerk: We have witnesses from both sides.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Blaine Calkins): Do you want to proceed with your amendment, Mr. Cullen, at this time? Or would you like to withdraw it?

Mr. Nathan Cullen: Let's withdraw it. It's getting too complicated.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Blaine Calkins): So we're back to the original motion from Mr. Warawa.

Is everybody ready for the question?

Mr. Maurice Vellacott: And this is the one saying that the Minister of the Environment will appear before us.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Blaine Calkins): I believe it's Mr. Dion.

Mr. Maurice Vellacott: I will simply comment as well before we go to the vote.

I believe the actions of our vice-chair just moments ago, in terms of not even being willing to take his responsibility to sit in the chair at the start of the meeting.... I don't know where this leaves us in terms of precedent for the future. And then in dishing all of our stuff...we cannot even get to our duly filed amendments. That is the whole point of having notice requirements. We filed, and then the chair walked away. I think that is something that deserves a chiding from the House, because he was clearly out of order—I will just finish, I am speaking on the motion—at the time in respect to walking away. The clerk confirms that he was out of order.

The unfortunate thing is that we didn't get all of these motions under way. In particular, on this one, there might have been more extensive discussions.

As was already pointed out by my colleague, Mr. Dion is a past environment minister who proposes to be the leader of the Liberal Party. More importantly, he was the minister over a period of time when there was nothing in terms of proper analysis for the minus-6% Kyoto target. It was under Mr. Dion's watch where we dug the hole, if you will, and there was no concrete action taken during that period of time.

The Canadian public wants to hold governments to account. They did that at the last election. I think they want to hold ministers to account. Mr. Dion is a fine man, but he does need to be brought to this committee to answer and respond for the lack of action that we had over that period of time under his watch.

Again, I can't understand why there would not be an agreement by Liberal members. They tout all that they're doing in Bill C-288 and so on. Mr. Dion may have something very revealing to divulge to us in respect to reasons why he could not...excuses if you will, or maybe some very exceptional kind of rationale that would be helpful to us to understand the current dilemma and mess that we're in, as foisted on us by the Liberal Party, which is now not in office.

I obviously am supportive of this, and I think the Canadian public would want to hold Mr. Dion to account for being the Minister of the Environment at the time when there was no concrete action to meet Kyoto targets.

● (1135)

The Acting Chair (Mr. Blaine Calkins): Thank you, Mr. Vellacott.

Is there anybody else who would like to speak to this motion? No. Then I'll call the question. I have a request for a recorded vote.

(Motion negatived: nays 7; yeas 4 [See *Minutes of Proceedings*])

The Acting Chair (Mr. Blaine Calkins): The motion is defeated.

Is there any other business? Mr. Warawa.

Mr. Mark Warawa: Yes, I have a second motion. Rather than take a lot of time, the points have already been made on the importance of accountability.

The motion is to invite the Honourable David Anderson to appear as a witness before the committee by November 28 for the discussion of Bill C-288.

The rationale is that Mr. Anderson was the Minister of the Environment under Prime Minister Jean Chrétien when we signed on to Kyoto, and I believe he has a responsibility to come before this committee. That is why I propose the motion. I think it is very fair and, again, in the spirit of accountability.

Unfortunately the previous motion was not supported. It provides grave concern for me, Mr. Chair, that the members of the committee do not appear to want accountability for poor decisions of the past. Hopefully they will change regarding Mr. Anderson.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Blaine Calkins): Speaking to the motion, we have Mr. Vellacott.

Mr. Maurice Vellacott: Again, that was well put by my honourable colleague. As a past Minister of the Environment at the time when the Kyoto Protocol was signed, it makes every bit of sense to have Mr. Anderson come forward. I think he might well divulge some very interesting things as to why we're in this morass or dilemma of falling so far short of meeting the Kyoto Protocol and the targets. My understanding is that there was not the support for Mr. Anderson within the caucus. As a result, to his disappointment and great dismay, there weren't those action steps taken to meet the Kyoto Protocol target. So I think it would be very interesting for us to have it on the public record from him, now that he's not in cabinet and did not run, of course, in the last election.

He could give us some insights in terms of the inertia and the lack of concrete support from cabinet colleagues at the table at that time. It would be very helpful for us to be made aware of that. Maybe it was more of a vanity exercise by the Prime Minister of the day to say we would meet this, when in fact there was not the tangible support at the cabinet table in terms of taking any actions to get those goals accomplished.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Blaine Calkins): Thank you, Mr. Vellacott.

Would anybody else like to speak to the motion? Mr. Watson.

Mr. Jeff Watson (Essex, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Just to add a point to this, we heard today, of course, that inaction has caused some problems with respect to what options are left to us with respect to compliance with the Kyoto target and timeline. Particularly while knowing that, at the time, the Liberals had a very solid majority government, it's well worth asking the former minister, if he were to appear before us, why there was inaction for four years. Clearly they could have pushed anything through the House had they wanted to. That's the kind of information Canadians need to hear, so it's important that Mr. Anderson be called as a witness and appear before us to answer a question like that.

● (1140)

The Acting Chair (Mr. Blaine Calkins): Thank you, Mr. Watson.

Is there anybody else who would like to speak to the motion? No? I'll call the question and we'll have a recorded vote.

(Motion negatived: nays 6; yeas 5 [See *Minutes of Proceedings*])

The Acting Chair (Mr. Blaine Calkins): Is there any other business?

Mr. Warawa.

Mr. Mark Warawa: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

There's no surprise with the results of the previous two motions and the lack of accountability from the former government. It actually, Mr. Chair, discredits Bill C-288 big time.

On the next motion that's on the schedule, Mr. Chair, the one the chair unfortunately vacated over, in the spirit of cooperation, I'm not going to present that motion. We've heard from the clerk that the 28th, which was what we were proposing in that motion, is filled up with a number of witnesses. Rather than try to reschedule them on the 7th, which probably would not be fair to them, we will try to arrange another day when we can have the minister come to speak to the committee.

Thank you. I will not be presenting that motion.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Blaine Calkins): I believe that completes our agenda.

With that in mind, I adjourn the meeting.

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