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—
Chair

Mr. Kevin Sorenson

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• (1530)

[English]

The Clerk of the Committee (Mrs. Angela Crandall): Honourable members of the committee, I see we have a quorum.

We can now proceed to the election of the chair.

[Translation]

Mr. Bernard Patry (Pierrefonds—Dollard, Lib.): I move that Mr. Kevin Sorenson be elected Chair.

[English]

The Clerk: Are there any other nominations for the position of chair?

It is moved by Mr. Patry that Mr. Kevin Sorenson be elected chair of the committee. Is it the pleasure of the committee to adopt the motion?

(Motion agreed to)

Mr. Bernard Patry: A good way to start—unanimously.

The Clerk: We can now move on to the election of the first vice-chair.

[Translation]

Ms. Johanne Deschamps (Laurentides—Labelle, BQ): I move that Mr. Bernard Patry be elected first vice-chair.

[English]

The Clerk: Are there any nominations for the vice-chair?

The motion is that Mr. Patry be nominated from the opposition as the first vice-chair.

(Motion agreed to)

[Translation]

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

Ms. Johanne Deschamps: I nominate Ms. Lalonde.

The Clerk: Are there any other nominations?

[English]

The motion is that Madame Lalonde be the second vice-chair.

(Motion agreed to)

The Clerk: I invite Mr. Sorenson to take the chair.

The Chair (Mr. Kevin Sorenson (Crowfoot, CPC)): First of all, thank you. I want to thank each one of you for the confidence shown

in me to be the chair. It was a pleasure for me to serve as the vice-chair in the last Parliament.

I want to say that I have appreciated Mr. Patry in this position in years gone by. I think he has always tried to work with as much consensus as possible, and we have always had a great working relationship.

Not every committee in a minority government works that way. Certainly it takes a great deal of patience sometimes, and each member must decide that they're going to make this thing work. We look forward to it.

We have a choice. My suggestion is that we proceed with the routine motions. I think each member has a copy of the motions. No, not yet?

[Translation]

Ms. Francine Lalonde (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ): We don't have a copy. Furthermore, we were not called to this meeting to adopt routine motions.

[English]

The Chair All right then, we can wait until next week.

As you know, the routine motions basically put the research officers in place, as well as a steering committee, so that it can begin fairly quickly to put witnesses in place. My reason for wanting to do that as soon as possible is that there are a number of witnesses who have already said they would like to come soon. If we were able to get the steering committee in place, we could start having meetings next week. It's still the committee's choice. We are here today to elect the chair and the vice-chairs.

Does anyone else have any comment? Do you want to wait for the routine motions until next week, or would you like to proceed?

Madame Lalonde.

[Translation]

Ms. Francine Lalonde: I'd just like to say that because we're not adopting routine motions until next Tuesday, that's no reason not to discuss the agenda. That's the important question, particularly as the clerk is present. In any case, we're not planning to discuss the agenda this evening, or the subject that will lead off our work.

As far as I'm concerned, Mr. Chairman, this doesn't change anything. To be honest, Thursday afternoon is a bad time for me. If we could wrap up early this week, I can be here every other time, as required.

Thank you.

[English]

The Chair: The very first motion, though, Madame Lalonde, is the motion to put in place the steering committee. And I think the way we have proceeded in the past is that this steering committee would put in place a lot of what would be before the committee. We cannot strike a steering committee until we have this routine motion passed.

Monsieur Patry.

[Translation]

Mr. Bernard Patry: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[English]

It doesn't matter to me if we pass it today, but I would prefer that it be passed in the next week. But you could start 30 minutes earlier next week for your meetings, just to be sure that we could add something else after that in our slot.

There are two things I'd like you to do, if possible. The first one has to do with the fact that you mentioned that many of the witnesses who wanted to appear in front of the committee were not aware of this. The members would like to get a list of the people who want to appear in front of the committee, so that when we meet with the steering committee we can judge this and what we can do in the first few days.

The second thing is that for a lot of my colleagues, Thursday afternoon is a really bad day. Regarding Tuesdays and Thursday afternoons, if it's possible, I would like you to look at the possibility of our working on Wednesday afternoons in any other room—even the room on Wellington Street. Any other room would be much more suitable to members, including those from the west who want to catch flights on the Thursday evening, or something like that. For us it would be much more suitable to work on Tuesdays and on Wednesday afternoons.

If you could just look at this possibility now, it doesn't mean we're going to do it, but if you could just look at the possibility of doing this....

• (1535)

The Chair: Sure.

Mr. Casey.

Mr. Bill Casey (Cumberland—Colchester—Musquodoboit Valley, CPC): I agree with Mr. Patry about Wednesdays, instead of Thursdays.

The Chair: I think the first order of business is to get through the routine motions; it's not to start deciding on what days we meet. Yes, I agree, Thursdays are very difficult, but they are also the days that are allocated to us.

I think the way we want to proceed, first of all.... We have no research officers until we pass the routine motions. We have a couple of folks here who are maybe in the room somewhere and are willing to serve, and we think we'll have them, and we hope we do, but until we pass the routine motions, we don't have routine. We cannot start explaining who the witnesses are who have requested coming here until we have our research officers at the table.

Madam McDonough.

Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP): It seems to me there's nothing to impede our dealing today with just those routine matters. I mean, there's nothing that's going to be different or that's going to change between now and the next meeting; it's just the straightforward, routine matters.

The second thing is that I'd like very much to support both Bernard and Francine, and Mr. Casey, on the question of exploring Wednesday as a possible meeting date. I know it's the ultimate nightmare to try to do that in the whole group, but if we could all agree that people are willing to consider it, I wonder if we could feed in—which is why we're going to do the routine business, right, because then we have the capacity to deal with these decisions—to people what would work, if people are open to Wednesday instead, and ask for the exploration of a possible venue to be carried out. Finding a meeting venue may prove to be the even bigger challenge.

I'd just like to suggest that we proceed in that way.

The Chair: All right. Thank you, Madam McDonough.

Mr. Patry.

Mr. Bernard Patry: Yes, about these routine motions, if you just read the titles—number one, number two, like that—I think you could get an agreement and finish them in three minutes. You don't need to read all of these motions. If you just go like this, these are routine motions and....

The Chair: In fact other committees have said.... We would ask the clerk to explain any differences that may be in these routine motions from what the committee actually put in place last time. Some committees have had one member say, "I move that we pass motions one to thirteen", if they're the same—and it takes 30 seconds.

An hon. member: Are they the same?

The Chair: I'm going to refer to the clerk and she can explain the routine motions. I know there's a difference, because in one of the routine motions that's always been handed out, witnesses are allowed to appear at 48 hours.... This committee in the last Parliament changed that to 24 hours. So that is one of the changes, but I'll refer to the clerk.

The Clerk: I prepared two lists of motions. One is on the standardized motions, and one is on the motions the committee had in the last Parliament, entitled section 9.

[Translation]

The routine motions printed here are identical to the ones adopted by the committee during the last Parliament. No changes have been made.

• (1540)

[English]

The committee doesn't need to create a subcommittee on international trade because there is a standing committee on international trade. It may want to decide about the subcommittee on human rights.

The Chair: Mr. Tonks.

Mr. Alan Tonks (York South—Weston, Lib.): If they're the same to that extent and there's consensus of the committee, I'd move the routine motions, one to ten inclusive, with the amendments.

The Chair: Mr. Obhrai.

Mr. Deepak Obhrai (Calgary East, CPC): Thank you.

The Chair: It's going to take a chiropractor to get my head back on that side, but I'm very pleased to look at this side and see you folks.

Mr. Deepak Obhrai: Thank you.

There are some motions in here that are very easy to do, like the subcommittee on agenda. I think those are the ones we should do right now. The other ones, like questioning of witnesses, order of motions, and changing the time to Wednesday, will require a little more thinking right now. So we can put those ones for Tuesday. Ones like the subcommittee on agenda and procedure, and research officers, we can do right now. They're not very difficult.

The Chair: There is no motion to change to Wednesday. The motions here are standardized motions that come before these committees. The only thing that could possibly take some discussion would be the time given to witnesses, which we have allocated as ten minutes, and the time given to members, which is five minutes in the round. That's the same as in other years. I know other committees have got worked up about those kinds of regulations or times, but I think we could pass all these motions, if it's the will of the committee.

The Clerk: Actually, one to thirteen....

The Chair: If you're unsure what these are, the first one deals with research officers—that brings Gerry and Jim.

Mr. Bernard Patry: Mr. Chair, with your permission, I move that we deal with items one to thirteen—no problems.

The Chair: The seconder is Mr. Van Loan.

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

The Chair: Madam McDonough.

Ms. Alexa McDonough: I'm not sure if there is specific intent to not deal with 14, but it seems to me it's also quite straightforward for us to move it, recognizing that we're deleting 15 because of the new organization. I think it's very important for us to clearly establish that human rights and international development will be a subcommittee of this committee and not of the international trade committee.

The Chair: This motion would say that we have to strike that committee right now or when the need arises.

The Clerk: It's however the committee wants to do it.

The Chair: We've already passed motions one to thirteen. Once the House or the committee decides we need to strike this committee, it will just take a motion at that time.

Mr. Bernard Patry: I agree with Ms. McDonough that we should create a subcommittee on human rights and international development. It has been in existence for thirteen years—since I've been here. I think it's a must and there's no reason not to do it.

The Chair: That is our point. Our point is that this committee is no longer foreign affairs and international trade; this committee is foreign affairs and international development. To say we're going to create a subcommittee on international development and human

rights—it's part and parcel. In fact, it might even diminish the work of this standing committee.

This standing committee's responsibility is international development. Unless there's something very specific to international development that we don't want to study, we would have to strike a committee. My suggestion is if that issue comes up, let's strike that committee then.

Madam Lalonde.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Francine Lalonde: Conversely, Mr. Chairman, often some rather pressing conflicts have arisen in the course of our work where human rights have been called into question. In such instances, it was useful to have subcommittee.

A subcommittee on human rights would be required to report back to the committee. This would allow us to deal with important questions at the same time. That might even be desirable in the case of certain development issues.

In any event, it all comes back to the committee, even though the subcommittee prepares the work. Generally speaking, we assign the work to the subcommittee, although it can take the initiative to do a study.

• (1545)

[*English*]

The Chair: Mr. Patry.

Mr. Bernard Patry: Mr. Chair, I agree with Madame Lalonde. We have always had, as I mentioned, a human rights committee. There may come certain circumstances, and the population will not accept that we don't have a human rights committee. And we cannot wait to have a problem emerging to have a committee, to wait until then to form a committee. Before they do it they need to get a clerk, they need to get prepared. I think we're just passing the motion, and we'll see if we need it after yes or no. But I think we can pass it now, and I move so.

The Chair: So moved.

Mr. Peter Van Loan (York—Simcoe, CPC): I would say, if you look at the wording, the motion is very interesting, because it means that we get all kinds of Conservatives and no Liberals on the committee. So it's not a bad wording right now; I'm not going to object, but I'm not sure you wish to move it.

The Chair: Yes, this is the same motion from the last Parliament, and that's why the motion would have to be changed.

Mr. Peter Van Loan: We will have to wait until the next meeting to get it redrafted into a proper form. And I see the argument for having a human rights committee, but perhaps we're not yet there.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Francine Lalonde: One good reason is that it was drafted when the Liberal Party was in power and the Conservatives were in opposition. We should verify the number of members and see if we should leave the numbers as is.

[*English*]

The Chair: Can we ask them to redraft it and deal with that at the next meeting?

Now, because we have passed one to thirteen, this means that we have now put in place the committee, commonly known as the steering committee, otherwise the agenda and procedure committee. On that committee sits the chair, the two vice-chairs, the parliamentary secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, and a member from the New Democratic Party.

I suggest, because we have no witnesses who are available for Tuesday, that the steering committee take the time allotted to our committee on Tuesday, and they come down, they sit down, and from there we will go on to the other. Is that fair?

Mr. Peter Van Loan: No problem. I agree. So moved.

The Chair: Moved by Mr. Van Loan, seconded by Mr. Patry.

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

The Chair: I would entertain a motion to adjourn.

Mr. Alan Tonks: So moved.

The Chair: Thank you for coming, folks. I look forward to working with all of you.

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