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—
Chair

The Honourable Shawn Murphy

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• (1055)

[English]

The Chair (Hon. Shawn Murphy (Charlottetown, Lib.)): This is the meeting of the public accounts committee.

There's only one item on the agenda, and that's to deal with a motion from Mr. Wrzesnewskyj.

I'll read the motion:

I move that Superintendent Denis Constant, the former executive officer in former Commissioner Zaccardelli's office, and also retired Chief Superintendent Wayne Watson, appear as witnesses before the Committee.

Do you want to speak to your motion, Mr. Wrzesnewskyj?

I should add that we have about seven minutes to get this done. I will allow Mr. Wrzesnewskyj and up to five other intervenors no more than one minute.

Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj (Etobicoke Centre, Lib.): Thank you, Chair.

This motion passed back in September, but because of prorogation requires being reintroduced. It deals with the whole issue of Mr. Zaccardelli shutting down a criminal investigation two days into it when he found out that it was taking place.

Mr. Zaccardelli's testimony before us was problematic on several occasions, but we could never nail things down. One of those, for instance, was Fraser Macaulay saying that he was seconded because he didn't provide information that he knew a year and a half before. Well, we were able to establish timelines that it was impossible for Mr. Fraser Macaulay to have known in that sort of timeframe. Mr. Zaccardelli never provided any evidence or basis for why he would say that, yet someone's reputation was severely smeared and tarnished by that statement by Mr. Zaccardelli.

This is another one of those situations; Ron Lewis said he was instructed by Mr. Zaccardelli to do this. Mr. Zaccardelli said no. It's referenced in three paragraphs in our report.

Paragraph 28, paragraph 136, paragraph 236—all three of those deal with this particular issue. We heard testimony from former Assistant Commissioner Spice that would allow us to perhaps nail this thing down, that Mr. Denis Constant was aware that Mr. Zaccardelli had given those instructions...Mr. Denis Constant and Mr. Wayne Watson, who worked in headquarters in the former commissioner's office.

Thank you.

The Chair: I'm going to allow an additional four interventions, up to one minute each. I'm going to cut you off at a minute.

Mr. Christopherson.

Mr. David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Thank you, Chair.

I hear your points, Borys, and they're all valid. My difficulty is that there are lots of other valid issues we could go into, and keep on going. At some point, we've got to be prepared, those of us who think this thing is over, to defend against someone who might...and I'm not saying you will, Borys, but anyone who wants to suggest that we don't care, or for some reason we're failing the public in not pursuing this any further.

In my opinion, Chair, we've gone way beyond what the mandate of this committee is. In an attempt to get to the end, we've called on a public inquiry to pick up on any unresolved issues, and we're calling for that because we believe there are unresolved issues.

I really believe it is time for us to close this off. I'm comfortable defending to the public and my constituents why I voted that way; I hope everyone else does too.

Thank you.

The Chair: Mr. Poilievre, you have up to one minute.

Mr. Pierre Poilievre (Nepean—Carleton, CPC): I don't think there's any problem in pursuing answers to this. I would suggest—and I'm going to be proposing an amendment—that the committee write to the witnesses with a series of questions and invite them to respond in writing. That would be a way of not leaving anything out. Our letter and their response would be on the public record, but it won't impede us from moving forward with our report as of now.

I'm moving that amendment.

The Chair: Here's what I'm interpreting the amendment to read: that the committee would invite Mr. Constant and Mr. Watson to write a letter. I don't think we have to ask questions. I think they know what—

Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj: Mr. Chair, I'd actually prefer Mr. Poilievre's amendment, and consider it a friendly. We would need to list several questions for them to respond to.

Mr. David Christopherson: That can't be an amendment to your motion, it's completely different. Yours is call them in; his is let them write in instead. So how can it be an amendment to the main?

Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj: We could argue whether or not it's substantive enough that it's a second motion, but I'm treating it, as the initial mover, as a friendly amendment.

Mr. David Christopherson: I'm saying that if you want to make it a friendly motion, what you could do is just adopt it, reword your motion, and then we could be unanimous.

The two can't stand together, Chair, they go in two different directions.

Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj: We'll reword it. I think there's consensus.

For the sake of expediency and so that we can get out of here—because there are people out in the corridor—I think we can rework the wording to something that would accommodate that.

Perhaps as a final comment, this particular item might not be a bad idea to mention at some point, because this different version of events is referenced three times. So within one of those contexts it should be referenced.

The Chair: Perhaps I can bring this to a head.

I talked to the clerk when the conversation was going on. The clerk has instructed me that it's really not a proper amendment because it totally changes the gist of the motion.

Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj: I will in that case withdraw my motion—

The Chair: Excuse me, Mr. Wrzesnewskyj; if I might add, the clerk has indicated that the motion actually belongs to the committee.

Am I correct here—and that it can't be withdrawn?

The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Justin Vaive): With unanimous consent it can be.

The Chair: It can be withdrawn with unanimous consent.

(Motion withdrawn)

The Chair: So that motion is done.

Now, we have before us a proposal, which I hope will be a motion. I'll go over it, and please correct me if I'm wrong. It reads to the effect that the committee develop a few questions—hopefully not too many—to present to Mr. Constant and Mr. Watson. Those questions will be answered, and the replies will be tabled with the committee.

Mr. David Christopherson: Is that before completion of our report?

The Chair: I can't put a time limit on it, because I don't know. It will be as soon as possible...within one week, we'll say.

Is everyone agreed with that unanimously?

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

The Chair: We do have a brief steering committee meeting on Monday morning, but I think what we will be...the sense of the steering committee before we would continue with the RCMP report on Tuesday, and probably Thursday too.

● (1100)

Mr. David Sweet (Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Westdale, CPC): Mr. Chairman, would it be too difficult to go in camera for 30 seconds?

The Chair: No. There's another meeting coming in here, but we can go in camera for 30 seconds.

[*Proceedings continue in camera*]

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