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—
Chair

Mr. Leon Benoit

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• (1540)

[English]

The Chair (Mr. Leon Benoit (Vegreville—Wainwright, CPC)): Members, we are now in public. We are in an open meeting.

Madame DeBellefeuille, you'll have to move the motion before we can proceed.

[Translation]

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille (Beauharnois—Salaberry, BQ): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I move that the following motion be reported to the House at the first opportunity:

That in the light of the importance of the data compiled by the RADARSAT-2 satellite, including hydrological, cartographical and geological data, the Standing Committee on Natural Resources recommend to the Minister of Industry that he maintain his decision, made under the Investment Canada Act, not to allow the sale of the aerospace assets of the Canadian company MacDonald, Dettwiler and Associates Ltd. (MDA) to the American company Alliant Techsystems Inc. (ATK)

[English]

The Chair: You have heard the motion.

We have on the list, first, Mr. St. Amand.

Mr. Lloyd St. Amand (Brant, Lib.): Mr. Chair, I have no difficulty with the motion—

The Chair: Just a moment, Mr. St. Amand.

Mr. Harris.

Mr. Richard Harris (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): On a point of order, Mr. Chair, the time limit that has been suggested to discuss this is not part of the motion; therefore, I'm under the assumption now that this is open for discussion until we're finished discussing it. Is that correct?

The Chair: Absolutely, Mr. Harris. There is no time limit. You can't impose a time limit.

Mr. St. Amand, continue, please.

Mr. Lloyd St. Amand: I was about to say that although it could be said that the motion is somewhat superfluous if it's the case that another committee has already passed it, I see no harm or difficulty whatsoever in this committee adopting the motion.

The Chair: Okay.

Mr. Harris is next on the list.

Mr. Trost, had you asked for the floor too?

Mr. Bradley Trost (Saskatoon—Humboldt, CPC): Yes.

The Chair: Is there anybody else who wants to get on the list?

Okay, Mr. Harris, go ahead.

Mr. Richard Harris: Mr. Chair, I just question why we would be dealing at the natural resource committee with the sale of a company that is the purview of the industry committee, perhaps the international trade committee, or perhaps the foreign affairs committee. Primarily it's the Minister of Industry who deals with things like this. That committee is the most appropriate one in which to discuss it.

Notwithstanding what the satellite does, among other things, among a whole bunch of other things, it does some things to deal with our natural resources. But we're not talking about how it deals with our natural resources, we're talking about the sale of this thing. For that reason, I fail to see the purpose of bringing this motion forward at this committee when it rightly belongs in the industry committee, if any, of all the committees. The sale is particular to the Investment Canada Act.

So I think this motion is actually not appropriate to bring forward to this committee.

• (1545)

The Chair: Okay.

Mr. Trost.

Mr. Bradley Trost: I just want to make a general remark. One of the things I really dislike about this place—this place being Parliament Hill—is the number of times we have to vote on things where we really have no idea what we're voting on. It's just the sheer volume of it. I don't know a single member of Parliament who reads every piece of legislation they've ever voted on. Considering that another committee has dealt with this, I don't see the difference between one committee, two committees, three committees, or four committees voting on it.

I'm assuming that the minister made the proper decision. It's a good Conservative government. I'm assuming that whoever votes for this is endorsing Conservative government decisions—good and excellent. But I really don't know one way or the other. To actually vote on this with any ability or sense, I'd need to actually have witnesses and so forth. I was talking to a member of the industry committee to get some background on this the other day.

So I think voting on motions on which we really don't have a background is sort of useless, particularly if they've been done at other committees.

There doesn't seem to be anything too bad with the motion. It congratulates and supports the minister. I can't argue with that. But other than that, this doesn't make sense to me.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Trost.

Go ahead, Madame DeBellefeuille.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille: As I said earlier when we were in camera, even if Mr. Harris is right, it would not be in our interests for him to take time preventing the committee from debating the study. The goal of my motion is to encourage the minister to stand by his correct decision. As you say, I do not see why we would have a debate on inviting witnesses.

Mr. Trost, in other committees, the Conservatives have abstained from voting. You are in favour, you are against, or you abstain. If you want to be a team player, do not drag out the debate on this motion in order to delay our study on forestry. I am asking you this very politely and with all respect.

[*English*]

The Chair: Would you like to comment, Mr. Boshcoff?

Mr. Ken Boshcoff (Thunder Bay—Rainy River, Lib.): Thank you.

Is there any time left of the 10-minute debate before...?

The Chair: There is no limit to the time of the debate. You can take as long as you like, Mr. Boshcoff. However, I would hope you would be in a hurry to get back to the forestry report.

Mr. Ken Boshcoff: Truly, it looked like a fairly benign motion. I don't think I can recall, in elected office, asking someone to maintain a decision that they just made. If indeed there was a reneging or something in a few weeks, then I could see us all getting quite hostile, but in all fairness I don't understand....

You can send a personal letter congratulating, as a caucus or as an individual. I think that would be wonderful. But I don't know about our role here.

Just from a democratic standpoint, I don't know what these types of resolutions do, Madame DeBellefeuille.

The Chair: I will make a short comment on that. Normally I wouldn't, but any motion passed by this committee of course reflects on the committee. I think Mr. Boshcoff makes a good point on that.

We'll go now to Mr. Tonks.

• (1550)

Mr. Alan Tonks (York South—Weston, Lib.): Mr. Chairman, to answer Mr. Harris's question and Mr. Trost, the issue to me is linkage. What is the linkage of the committee—what the committee is charged with and accountable for—to the decision that is to be made or that has been made?

My only point would be that we probably should have had a little input before the decision was made, on the basis of what the

substantive linkage is. I had the mining association come to see me, as I'm sure many of us did. They talked about the absence of a geophysical survey, an up-to-date and modern technology, to map the natural mining landscape of Canada. They pointed to the geophysical and the geological survey that they felt was extremely absent and elementary. And just by association, they did talk about the technology offered through RADARSAT-2.

To me the only question is that if we had wanted to have a motion with a preamble showing the linkage on the substantive side, we probably should have done that before the decision was made. But the decision was made. So in retrospect, I think it's consistent with the role to say that for these reasons—the updating and the very important geophysical and hydrological issues we're dealing with—this is something we should have, and the minister was right.

I would hope that we would just pass the motion, and that you, Mr. Chairman, would carry that message to stay with it, because for what this committee is substantively charged with, he did the right thing.

It's as simple as that, to my mind.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.

Go ahead, Mr. Harris.

Mr. Richard Harris: I understand what Mr. Tonks is saying. I think I agree more with Mr. Boshcoff. Quite frankly, this motion is... I'm not prepared to just arbitrarily vote on this motion because it sounds like a good motion, not without understanding the issue more.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Harris.

We will go to the question.

Please raise your hands: those in favour, those opposed....

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: The motion carries.

Mr. Omar Alghabra (Mississauga—Erindale, Lib.): Mr. Chair, can we have an individually named vote?

An hon. member: It's done; the vote's done.

The Chair: We've finished the vote, Mr. Alghabra. You have to be little quicker. Not that I'm making any commentary....

Mr. Omar Alghabra: I just wanted it to show on record that the Conservatives abstained. They didn't vote for it, so.... It's really important—

The Chair: No, Mr. Alghabra, that's out of order.

We will now suspend the meeting and move back in camera to continue to deal with the forestry study.

[*Proceedings continue in camera*]

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