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—
Chair

Mr. Gary Schellenberger

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•(1540)

[English]

The Chair (Mr. Gary Schellenberger (Perth—Wellington, CPC)): I'm sorry for the delay, everyone.

Welcome to meeting number three of the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage.

Our first order of business is selection of witnesses for the motion that passed in the previous meeting.

Ms. Glover.

Mrs. Shelly Glover (Saint Boniface, CPC): I just wanted to make a motion that we have an in-camera meeting. I see that there are some media cameras here, and we weren't anticipating that. I'm just going to make a motion that it be an in-camera meeting.

The Chair: Okay.

Madame Lavallée.

[Translation]

Mrs. Carole Lavallée (Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert, BQ): I understand Mrs. Glover's idea of having an in camera session to discuss witnesses. That would certainly be easier. But we know that our friends from the media have really come here to hear us debate the Plains of Abraham motion. So my suggestion is to discuss that motion first and then, afterwards, we can move in camera or not, as you wish, to deal with the list of witnesses.

[English]

The Chair: Mr. Rodriguez.

[Translation]

Mr. Pablo Rodriguez (Honoré-Mercier, Lib.): I have not had the honour and privilege to sit on this committee previously. But, for all the other committees I have sat on, whenever we dealt with housekeeping, internal business, that is, the meetings were held in camera.

So I support Mrs. Glover's suggestion and I too suggest that all discussions on the committee's work be conducted in camera.

[English]

The Chair: Would anyone else like to speak to the motion?

Mr. Angus.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): I think that today would be an excellent time for us to have all the issues that we're going to discuss in camera. It would be easier, and it does not put us in a frame where we're set up to be some kind of farcical show

in terms of debate. I would like to have our committee develop a relationship with each other so that we can talk about things. Having cameras here for this motion at this point certainly is not helpful.

•(1545)

The Chair: Mr. Pomerleau.

[Translation]

Mr. Roger Pomerleau (Drummond, BQ): I completely share my colleague's view. This is why the media have come here today. Our main item is the whole matter of the re-enactment of the Battle of the Plains of Abraham. This is going to be in the headlines for weeks and will get a lot of people up in arms. I think it deserves to be heard in public.

What we choose to do after that can be up to the committee.

[English]

The Chair: Mr. Bruinooge.

Mr. Rod Bruinooge (Winnipeg South, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Just in relation perhaps to the topic of witnesses, having spent a number of years on previous committees—and I imagine this is likely the same practice for this committee—when we are deliberating in terms of the numbers of groups and the types of witnesses that we will bring before the committee we tend to do this in camera. There are a number of good reasons. For instance, when I was doing this in the past I was dealing with a number of first nations groups, and we tried to have some regional balance and we tried to accommodate needs based on economics, etc. It is important to have a cohesive message in terms of the actual final list versus perhaps the debate that might occur in preparing that list.

It's been a good practice in the past to do it in camera, as we wouldn't want to necessarily indicate preference per se. Perhaps there are groups that might feel they should be included versus others that are selected for reasons that might have to do with regional balance or other matters such as that. It is a good practice that has worked well for other committees, and for this committee probably as well.

In terms of this motion by Madame Lavallée, there has been some opinion on both sides of this matter in terms of whether it should be in camera or not. The in-camera practice typically has been extended to witness selection. I'm not sure that is a practice in relation to motions, debates on items such as this. Maybe I'm just extending an opinion on that, though. I don't necessarily disagree with what Mr. Angus said. I just think perhaps the in-camera idea is more relative to witnesses.

So perhaps I'll leave my comments there.

The Chair: It's been moved by Ms. Glover that we move in camera for this meeting.

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: We'll move in camera for the rest of the meeting.

We will take a five-minute recess to let those people who have to vacate the room do so.

[Proceedings continue in camera]

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