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# Special Committee on the Canadian Mission in Afghanistan

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EVIDENCE

**Thursday, March 11, 2010**

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**Chair**

**Mr. Kevin Sorenson**



## Special Committee on the Canadian Mission in Afghanistan

Thursday, March 11, 2010

• (0900)

[English]

**The Clerk of the Committee (Mrs. Carmen DePape):** Honourable members of the committee, I see a quorum.

We can now proceed with the election of the chair. I'm ready to receive motions to that effect.

Mr. Hawn.

**The Clerk:** It has been moved by Mr. Hawn that Kevin Sorenson be elected chair of the committee.

Are there further motions?

Is it the pleasure of the committee to adopt the motion?

[Translation]

(Motion agreed to)

**The Clerk:** I declare the motion carried and Mr. Kevin Sorenson duly elected chair of the committee.

[English]

If the committee wishes, we'll proceed with the election of a vice-chair before inviting the chair to come forward.

**Mr. Laurie Hawn (Edmonton Centre, CPC):** I would nominate Kevin Sorenson.

**Hon. Ujjal Dosanjh (Vancouver South, Lib.):** Mr. Wilfert.

**The Clerk:** It has been moved by Mr. Dosanjh that Mr. Wilfert be elected vice-chair of the committee.

Are there further motions?

[Translation]

Is it the pleasure of the committee to adopt the motion?

(Motion agreed to)

[English]

**The Clerk:** I declare the motion carried and Mr. Wilfert the duly elected vice-chair of the committee.

I invite Mr. Sorenson to take the chair.

**The Chair (Mr. Kevin Sorenson (Crowfoot, CPC)):** Good morning.

Thank you for your vote of confidence in the chair. We hope that will continue throughout the duration of this committee and this Parliament.

It is a pleasure to be part of the Afghanistan committee. I think we all understand the importance of this committee. Like most committees in the House, we want to make certain that our work is substantive and that we have some good accomplishments here in our committee.

This is the first meeting of the Special Committee on the Canadian Mission in Afghanistan, on Thursday, March 11, 2010.

Our orders of the day were the election of the chair and the vice-chair. My understanding is that this was the reason this meeting was called today, so unless there are any other motions, we will...

Have we had any indication yet for certain as to the day this committee will be meeting?

**The Clerk:** No. It's the committee that decides.

**The Chair:** So I would encourage each one of you to come with a motion. Maybe discuss it among colleagues and try to find a time that is most beneficial. I know you've done this before.

Before we get into anything else, if we're going to move into routine motions, we need a motion to do that. My understanding is that we aren't going to go through with a lot of committee business today, but we have to start deciding on what day, witness lists, and things like that.

Mr. Hawn.

**Mr. Laurie Hawn:** Last time, it seems to me that Wednesdays from 3:30 to 5:30 worked for everybody. I would suggest that we continue with that.

**The Chair:** At that time, then, do you want to adopt the routine motions? Would that be all right?

**An hon. member:** Okay.

**The Chair:** Mr. Hawn.

**Mr. Laurie Hawn:** With respect to routine motions, I would move that we simply adopt the routine motions that we had last time. They seemed to work.

**The Chair:** All right. So we will do that at the next meeting, which will be held...

**An hon. member:** We could adopt the routine motions now.

• (0905)

**The Clerk:** We could adopt the motions and the time of the meeting. That's fine.

**The Chair:** Okay. If we vote... Do we have a motion, then?

**Mr. Laurie Hawn:** I move that we adopt the existing routine motions from the last session.

**The Chair:** You don't need a copy? Everyone has that and you're happy with that? It's all good?

**An hon. member:** Yes.

**The Chair:** Do we need a seconder?

**The Clerk:** No.

**The Chair:** All in favour of adopting the routine motions, as of the last committee, and the time?

(Motion agreed to)

**The Chair:** That's done.

We have a few more hands in the air here.

Mr. Wilfert is first.

**Hon. Bryon Wilfert (Richmond Hill, Lib.):** Mr. Chairman, I would respectfully suggest that we should strike a steering committee and that the steering committee meet prior to our next meeting on Wednesday. If Monday would be available, I think it would be helpful for the steering committee. I've had discussions with Mr. Hawn with regard to looking at an agenda for the future.

**The Chair:** The steering committee has already been struck because it's part of the routine motions.

**Hon. Bryon Wilfert:** Next Monday?

**The Chair:** You're looking for a time on Monday? How about if we look for available times? We'll talk. By the end of today, or the end of tomorrow for certain, we will get back to each one on the steering committee.

**Hon. Bryon Wilfert:** I'd appreciate that.

**The Chair:** I guess you guys know who is your representative on the steering committee, and your steering committee will meet Monday.

**Hon. Bryon Wilfert:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** All right.

Mr. Harris.

**Mr. Jack Harris (St. John's East, NDP):** Yes, Mr. Chairman.

The motion I would propose today is that the committee undertake a study on the transfer of Afghan detainees from Canadian authorities to the Afghan authorities and report its findings and recommendations to the House of Commons; and that pursuant to the order of reference of Wednesday, March 3, 2010, the evidence and documentation received by the committee during the second session of the 40th Parliament be taken into consideration by the committee in this session.

This is available in both official languages.

I know the steering committee is going to meet to discuss witnesses, etc., on Monday, but given the importance of this and the desire not to lose any time in pursuing this, I would propose that this motion be passed today. If someone needs copies of it, I have others available.

**The Chair:** Mr. Hawn.

**Mr. Laurie Hawn:** We'll point out that we already transferred, in a motion on March 3, all the information from previous Parliaments to the current session.

**Mr. Jack Harris:** The important part is that the committee undertake a continuation of its study.

**The Chair:** We do have a speakers list here.

Madame Lalonde?

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Francine Lalonde (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ):** No.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Okay, so Mr. Abbott.

**Hon. Jim Abbott (Kootenay—Columbia, CPC):** I would respectfully suggest to Mr. Harris that this motion is probably best discussed at the steering committee. I don't think we're losing any time at all. This motion, along with the other future business that may be discussed at the steering committee, will be coming back to us next Wednesday. So I don't see any reason for haste to pass something that effectively says to the steering committee that it's a done deal. I think we need to leave the steering committee with latitude.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Abbott.

On a different subject now, I apologize, Mr. Cox and Ms. Kostiuik, for not inviting you sooner.

We are being joined by Mr. James Cox and Christine Kostiuik. They are the analysts for this committee. I think they're the same as last year, so I don't think we need to have a bio read or anything like that. You know these folks.

Welcome to the table, and thank you.

So Mr. Abbott's suggestion is that we move this motion through and just have them take a look at it at the steering committee, but it is very similar to what we've discussed. I don't know if it's going to present any problem.

Mr. Harris.

**Mr. Jack Harris:** I don't know why we need to go to the steering committee with this. I think this is something the general body is probably going to have to deal with anyway, and it's a top-of-the-mind issue. As you suggest, or I guess implied, this is something that we need to undertake, and I don't want to wait until next Wednesday to pass a motion like this.

**The Chair:** Mr. Hawn.

**Mr. Laurie Hawn:** No, go ahead, Jim.

**Hon. Jim Abbott:** At the risk of being repetitive, I think that when we're taking a look at this committee and taking a look at the future business of this committee, clearly this is an issue that is of very high interest to all of us on this committee, and to many Canadians. That isn't the question. The question is would passing this motion end up effectively, if not tying the hands of the steering committee, throwing a weight to this that may or may not be proper in light of the other things the steering committee may be wanting to take a look at.

I remind the committee that the original purpose of this Afghan special committee was to be able to have information come out and be distributed, disseminated to the people of Canada. I don't think that when the committee was originally struck there was ever any idea that it was going to be an inquisition committee. That can be part of it; I'm not suggesting that it can't be part of it. But I think there is more to this committee than this aspect, as important as it may be. Rather than putting all of the weight of this on the steering committee before they even meet, I fail to see what the haste of passing this motion is.

As a consequence, I would move to table this motion.

• (0910)

**The Chair:** We have a motion to table.

Just before we go there, we know we're going to continue the study that began here last fall. That's obvious; we're going to continue it. This motion doesn't mean there will not be another study. Sooner or later, there is going to be the withdrawal of our troops, and there are going to be many other issues that may come along. It does not suggest that we could not look at that one as well. But this one basically, as the motion in routine motions suggests, is that we just continue and we pass the information along. So I don't see anything that should be too much of a problem.

But I understand your hesitation in saying that we have a steering committee and let's do all of these motions through the steering committee; let's go through the proper process. I understand what you're saying.

Mr. Hawn.

**Hon. Jim Abbott:** A point of order, Mr. Chair. I think I am correct that when there is a motion to table it's non-debatable.

**The Chair:** I'm being told that there is no such thing as tabling a motion. We're still in a debatable motion here.

**Hon. Jim Abbott:** Okay. Thank you.

**The Chair:** Mr. Hawn.

**Mr. Laurie Hawn:** Further to that, I think it is appropriate that this be relayed to the steering committee, because there are other issues of business that this committee should have been doing, should be doing now, and should be doing in the future, and that does centre around 2011. The committee was struck to look at the mission, to look at all aspects of the mission, and this is one. But frankly, what's far more important to Canadians, and what's far more important to the mission and certainly to the CF, is what's happening between now and 2011, what happens in 2011, and what the mission looks like after 2011. That's going to be of far more use, frankly, to the future of the mission and the future of Afghanistan than this is—as important as this is to many people; I acknowledge that. But to pass this motion here without having it go to the steering committee, where all the other aspects of important business of this committee would be raised, would be premature.

**The Chair:** All right. We have a speakers list.

Mr. Dosanjh.

**Hon. Ujjal Dosanjh:** Let's be candid with each other. I think this is the issue the committee will focus on to begin with. We left off with that before Christmas. This doesn't preclude any other business

being discussed in the committee, either in the middle of it or after it or even before it.

And insofar as the steering committee is concerned, this is the committee, and this committee can, in its discretion, give direction to the steering committee or pre-empt the steering committee in these kinds of decisions.

So let's move on this. There are other recommendations that might come from the steering committee. We can consider those.

This debate is kind of useless.

**The Chair:** Well, debate is never useless, Mr. Dosanjh. One of the things you'll find is that debate is never useless.

**Hon. Ujjal Dosanjh:** But ultimately this is the issue we're going to focus on first. I think you'll find that the majority of the committee wants to do that.

**The Chair:** I agree, and I think you're probably right.

The other point to remember, though, is that this meeting was initially called to elect the chair and to deal with our routine motions. I don't think it's out of order to say that we have a steering committee Monday and let's look at those motions then. If there are other motions that come in... Your motion is in order; it can be debated here today. But debate is never meaningless.

Madam Lalonde.

• (0915)

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Francine Lalonde:** Mr. Chair, as you yourself said a little earlier, we are going to debate this issue anyway, for all kinds of reasons, especially since it is a debate that had started and was rudely interrupted for too long. If we had been able to continue this debate, we would have already finished and we could have used the conclusions for our future work.

I am sure that there are other issues to be tackled. That is crystal clear, but we cannot abandon this issue without resolving it. The steering committee will study how the debates are going to take place. This committee must agree to continue the work that we have begun. I think that is perfectly normal and it will prevent us from continuing to waste time.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Thank you, Madam Lalonde.

Mr. Wilfert.

**Hon. Bryon Wilfert:** Mr. Chairman, I agree with Mr. Hawn that obviously there will be other issues that we'll probably be dealing with at some point, but the fact is that the committee was undertaking a study. Maybe if the wording had been "continue with" the study...

We all know that we're going to deal with the detainee issue, so it seems to be a bit of a moot point. We're simply confirming what we've already been engaged in for the last number of months.

I agree with you, Mr. Chairman, that in fact this is really stating the obvious. This motion is not exclusive. It doesn't in any way suggest that we're not going to deal with any other issues. I've spoken before about what happens post-2011.

Let's deal with the issue at hand. We were dealing with the detainee issue. Let's finish the detainee issue. The steering committee would only recommend, presumably, the same thing, that this is what we're going to be dealing with.

Mr. Chairman, we have the motion. It's in order. I suggest we vote on the motion that's before the committee. The steering committee will probably come back as well with other issues that we can deal with in the future. I say we get on with it.

**The Chair:** Thank you for that suggestion, Mr. Wilfert.

Mr. Harris.

**Mr. Jack Harris:** I'm not going to belabour the point, but if there's going to be an attempt by some Conservative members to derail the Afghan detainee study through a debate or otherwise, we might as well have that debate here and get it over with. Certainly I am determined, on this side, as I believe my colleagues here are, that we should continue this Afghan detainee study. It is the Afghanistan committee. There are many other issues that we need to deal with. This is obviously still of pressing concern to members. I think we should indicate that today. The steering committee can add other things to it.

My understanding of the steering committee role was also so that we might not lose time. People can submit witness lists to the steering committee. Perhaps arrangements to have someone testify next week can be in order. Rather than waste another week, have the steering committee report and have a debate next week about whether we'll continue the Afghan detainee study. I think that's not what this committee should be doing.

I recognize, of course, that procedurally you might do it that way, but we're already on this road. Let's stay there unless the majority of this committee decides otherwise.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Harris.

Mr. Bachand.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Claude Bachand (Saint-Jean, BQ):** I do not want to repeat everything that has been said, Mr. Chair. The fact is that this committee is sovereign. If a majority decides to continue the Afghan detainee study, then we will do so. If we decide that we have done enough, we will stop. If we decide to move to a different topic, we will do so. It is the committee that makes the decision.

If we had not been delayed first by a boycott and then by prorogation, our work would have been well underway. We might have finished dealing with the file. In short, we are just going to continue.

I sense the committee's willingness to continue the Afghan detainee study. As long as the committee does not decide otherwise, we will go with the majority.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr. Bachand, for that observation.

Mr. Hawn.

**Mr. Laurie Hawn:** Well, we can do the math, Mr. Chair. That's fine. Let's deal with this one.

I have another motion, and then I have a comment relative to Monsieur Bachand's last comment as well.

**The Chair:** Mr. Obhrai.

**Mr. Deepak Obhrai (Calgary East, CPC):** Just for your information, this thing is not working. I cannot understand what the interpreter said.

**Mr. Laurie Hawn:** It's okay, you didn't miss much.

**Mr. Deepak Obhrai:** I didn't miss much?

• (0920)

**The Chair:** Mr. Obhrai, I would encourage you to turn it to the right station.

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**The Chair:** It's working on this one. Either do that or get a new earpiece.

**Mr. Deepak Obhrai:** Someone's cellphone is going off now.

**The Chair:** I hate it when cellphones are left on in committee meetings. From here on in, all members please respect the committee and shut your phones off.

Now, to my understanding, Mr. Harris did move his motion.

Mr. Hawn, you basically summarized it as "do the math".

**Mr. Laurie Hawn:** Yes, go to the vote. We can do the math.

**The Chair:** All right.

If there's no more debate on this motion, then we will vote on the motion by Mr. Harris.

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

**The Chair:** Mr. Hawn, you mentioned that you had a motion.

**Mr. Laurie Hawn:** I have another motion, Mr. Chair, and that relates to documentation. I have it in French and English. My motion reads as follows:

That this committee request that Justice Iacobucci review the release of documents and information from the Privy Council Office, the Departments of Foreign Affairs and National Defence, and other relevant documents from 2001-2005, regarding Taliban detainee policy, and especially documents prepared by Ms. Eileen Olexiuk while she was employed for the Department of Foreign Affairs in Afghanistan.

**The Chair:** All right. So this is just making a recommendation. This is basically to make a recommendation that Judge Iacobucci has the... The committee's recommendation would be that they continue viewing all relevant documents from the Privy Council, the Departments of Foreign Affairs and National Defence and other relevant documents from 2001 to 2005 regarding Taliban detainee policy, and especially documents prepared by Ms. Eileen Olexiuk while she was employed for the Department of Foreign Affairs in Afghanistan.

**Mr. Laurie Hawn:** I have a clarification. It's not that the committee do that, but that this be added to Judge Iacobucci's mandate, to cover 2001 to 2005, as Mr. Dosanjh recommended yesterday on CBC.

**Hon. Ujjal Dosanjh:** Absolutely.

**The Chair:** We have Mr. Harris, Mr. Bachand, and then Mr. Dosanjh.

**Mr. Jack Harris:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

It's an interesting motion. Certainly the proposal that whatever study is being undertaken go back to 2001 is something that's consistent with even the Liberal motion calling for a public inquiry.

I'm curious, though, if the suggestion is that Mr. Iacobucci be somehow or other an agent of this committee and that he would do something on behalf of this committee and report back to us. We don't seem to have any control over Mr. Iacobucci.

In principle, I have no problem. Perhaps we should get Mr. Iacobucci here next week and see exactly what he's doing.

**The Chair:** All right. As I understand it, this motion is simply a recommendation to him. It's a request—

**Mr. Laurie Hawn:** Making sure that he covers everything from the beginning of the mission to today.

**The Chair:** Mr. Bachand.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Claude Bachand:** I think that is a very nice try on Mr. Hawn's part. In my opinion, the committee should continue to have the freedom to look at all the documents it wants. We have already talked about this. I consider Parliament to be sovereign. In my opinion, there is no way a judge should start investigating and reviewing documents to decide which ones will be sent to the Special Committee on the Canadian Mission in Afghanistan. That is not the point. The Bloc Québécois' position is that we must see all the documents.

I will not give any legitimacy to the government's position that we have to listen to a judge or that we leave it up to a judge. I feel the committee is sovereign and sufficiently capable of deciding which documents it wants to see. We want all the documents that have already been provided, but uncensored. Anything that would make us transfer our power to review all documents to a judge is against the Bloc Québécois' philosophy and mine. In addition, I do not think we even have the actual mandate of the judge.

So I am against this motion for the reasons I have just presented.

● (0925)

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Bachand. This is not dealing with... As you've suggested, it's not dealing with information from our committee, but this is a recommendation that the judges, you know, take a look at it.

Mr. Dosanjh.

**Hon. Ujjal Dosanjh:** Well, this is a recommendation that actually defies all parliamentary conventions. It is asking this committee to in fact go against its own understanding of parliamentary privilege. Parliament in fact has the right to see all documents. I agree with my colleague, Mr. Bachand.

The government is obviously sovereign in making whatever recommendations they are going to make. I would recommend to the government that they call a full public inquiry rather than playing these silly games, bringing this to the committee so that we make a

recommendation to a judge who hasn't even been appointed yet, who doesn't have terms of reference yet, such that we actually send a recommendation that diminishes Parliament's own power in the traditional sense of the term. It makes absolutely no sense to me.

I would suggest that if you really want to send a recommendation to the government, we should pass a motion in the committee, again reiterating Parliament's position, that in fact they should provide us with uncensored documents. That's the correct motion to present.

I will not be a party to a motion that actually diminishes parliamentary power and in fact hands that power to the Prime Minister—

**The Chair:** So Mr. Dosanjh, you would oppose this motion—

**Hon. Ujjal Dosanjh:** On that basis.

**The Chair:** —to expand the ability of Mr. Iacobucci to carry out the responsibility that he has already been given?

**Hon. Ujjal Dosanjh:** I would absolutely.

Look, I would be happy to vote on whether or not we should get full disclosure. I have already said publicly, on behalf of the Liberal Party of Canada, that the government can send all of the documents starting in 2001 to Iacobucci, if they so wish.

**The Chair:** Well, that's all this is saying.

**Hon. Ujjal Dosanjh:** No.

**The Chair:** The committee—

**Hon. Ujjal Dosanjh:** Look, we don't even know what his powers are. Has he been appointed? Where is the appointment order? Is this committee now wanting to make Iacobucci its own instrument? Then bring him here. Let's ask him questions first...whether he's been appointed.

This is absolutely baseless. It has no basis in reality right now. This is fiction.

**The Chair:** Mr. Hawn.

**Mr. Laurie Hawn:** Mr. Chair, I'm a bit perplexed at this. Mr. Dosanjh and I were on CBC last night, live, and he was quite happy with having all these brought forward.

The government is proceeding down the road here with Justice Iacobucci. This is merely to clarify what we think should be included in Justice Iacobucci's mandate when it is published. It's being worked on now. I can't tell you when that's coming. That's not part of what I personally am involved in.

The government is proceeding down that road. We can play games here all day long, but the government is proceeding down that road. That is not what this is; that is merely clarifying what Justice Iacobucci should be looking at. He's not an agent of this committee. He's being appointed by the government to look at which documents are releasable, at what information is releasable in the interests of national security and international relations.

I might point out that Derek Lee's own private member's bill, as published, has provisions for the withholding of information by the applicable minister, by the Prime Minister, in the interests of national security and international relations. That's in his own private member's bill.

So let's not talk about playing games here, Mr. Chair. There are games being played very strongly on the other side. We should just get on with our business.

**Hon. Ujjal Dosanjh:** Let's go to a vote.

**The Chair:** All right.

The motion is here. Anyone else on this motion?

Madam Lalonde.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Francine Lalonde:** Mr. Hawn, I do not think anyone here wants to play games. The situation we are studying is too important. The lives of the people and the soldiers in Afghanistan along with everything to do with the involvement of Quebeckers and Canadians are not part of a game.

Mr. Hawn, I understood what you meant, but there is another way to protect national security. It is the constitutional right of the committee to receive all the documents. It can undertake not to disclose the contents of a number of these documents, as the Americans do. It is safe to say that the United States is a country where the members of the House of Representatives and the senators have responsibilities that are at least as important as ours. And they agree to conditions in order to have all the information. They are the ones who have all the information.

• (0930)

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Thank you, Madam Lalonde.

Mr. Wilfert, then Mr. Harris.

**Hon. Bryon Wilfert:** Mr. Chairman, in December Parliament spoke very clearly that it wanted the unredacted documents. We now have the Prime Minister indicating that Mr. Iacobucci, to my understanding, will review what has already been done by officials to see whether or not there are any further documents that may be released.

Mr. Chairman, that is my understanding. Without the terms of reference, without the mandate—again, only going by what I have heard—this motion seems premature to me. Maybe Mr. Iacobucci is doing this. I don't know. It's not this committee that has instructed Mr. Iacobucci, it's the Prime Minister who said he would want him to review the documentation to see whether or not any additional information may be released.

From my perspective, I don't see why we would be dealing with this motion at this time. What we really need, and hopefully we'll receive it very quickly, is the mandate he's been given, and the terms of reference, and the timeframe that has been established in terms of reporting back, hopefully directly, to Parliament and obviously to this committee.

Until we have that, I don't really see why we would pass a motion. Maybe he's already looking at it. Who knows?

**The Chair:** Mr. Harris.

**Mr. Jack Harris:** The motion as read says that this committee requests that Justice Iacobucci review the release of documents and information, etc., etc. As a member of this committee, I'm not prepared to recommend that Justice Iacobucci review anything, and

particularly documents that this committee has asked to see and hasn't seen, and that Parliament has demanded be presented and have not been presented, in a fundamental challenge to the privileges of Parliament.

For this committee to support this is to go totally contrary to the privileges of Parliament and what we decided to do. We do not agree that Justice Iacobucci has a role to play from the government's point of view. If this committee had decided they wanted to do that, that would be a different matter, but we haven't decided that. We decided that the documents should be released.

Also, if we want to sit as a committee, by the way, and talk about in what manner we would receive these documents, whether it be a subcommittee, in camera, or in certain procedures, well, we're certainly capable of doing that. This is not what this is about.

This is an add-on to a government plan that has yet to be detailed and that we at this point oppose and will continue to oppose as long as it fails to respect the privileges of Parliament. So I certainly can't support this motion, although the notion that whatever inquiry that needs to take place includes going back to 2001 I think is already a given.

**The Chair:** Mr. Hawn.

**Mr. Laurie Hawn:** I have just a final point and then let's call the question. I really hope this is not an attempt by the Liberals—and I will accept Mr. Dosanjh's, because I know the response he's going to make—to duck any responsibility for what actually happened there. We did have difficulty getting former Liberal ministers before the committee prior to Christmas. I assume and I hope that will not be difficult—

**The Chair:** Well, I think certainly—

**Mr. Laurie Hawn:** —the next time we ask, but again, Mr. Chair, we can do the math, so let's call the vote.

**The Chair:** I will go to Mr. Dosanjh and I'll also, because this is your motion, give you the last opportunity to speak to your motion.

Mr. Dosanjh.

**Hon. Ujjal Dosanjh:** I just want to suggest to Mr. Hawn that rather than presenting this motion to this committee, which derogates from Parliament's own privilege of the right to receive documents...

I would suggest, Mr. Hawn, that your members should make a recommendation to the Prime Minister in the same vein: that the Prime Minister should actually do a full public inquiry going back to 2002 and to 2009. I think that's appropriate. The Prime Minister sits with you in the caucus. You make a recommendation to him, find out what the terms of reference are, and broaden them to include this.

I have no difficulty with that. I said publicly and the Liberal Party has said publicly that we have absolutely nothing to hide. We should go back to 2002 and up to 2009 and determine what the governments at various times have or have not done.

• (0935)

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Mr. Hawn.

**Mr. Laurie Hawn:** Yes, and the first part of that has been done. This is merely an attempt to get the committee onside with all of that.



Go ahead and call the vote, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** All those in favour of the motion before you, which was brought forward by Mr. Hawn?

(Motion negatived)

**The Chair:** That is defeated. All right. With that...

Mr. Hawn.

**Mr. Laurie Hawn:** I have one more point, if I may.

**The Chair:** Go ahead.

**Mr. Laurie Hawn:** That stems from some activity before Christmas. It kind of goes to Mr. Bachand's point about a boycott and it's to clarify the record. I don't need a response unless one is forthcoming, but it was suggested—I think it was on December 21 at the ad hoc meeting of that side of the committee—that no offer had been made by this side for an alternative way to proceed over the Christmas break. I was essentially called a liar on national television.

The offer, in fact, was made. It was made to the vice-chair. It was made behind the curtains on their side of the House three or four days prior to that. The offer was for a teleconference whereby we could discuss future business, because we were all going back to the ridings to do things that had been planned for months and months and months. This was not an issue of national urgency or a national emergency.

An offer was made. The point was suggested that the offer had not been made and that somehow I was lying about that. I just want to correct the record. The offer was made and the person to whom the offer was made knows it. I'll just leave it at that.

**The Chair:** All right. Thanks, Mr. Hawn.

You know, we have a new year, 2010, and hopefully we can all take a deep breath. Let's forget the ill feelings of the old year and

welcome in the new and proceed. I don't know if we have to carry this thing out, but I do appreciate that, Mr. Hawn. I think we'll probably just leave it at that.

Mr. Wilfert, did you want to drag this on?

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**Hon. Bryon Wilfert:** Mr. Chairman, since indirectly I was mentioned, I have to indicate first of all that I have not sought nor have I ever thought I would be the clerk of this committee, and therefore any suggestion that teleconferencing, which in my understanding would not be appropriate in any event, given the fact that you have to be physically here at a committee in order to have a committee operate...

If there was any interest in having teleconferencing, or any suggestion of that, it would go to the clerk. It would not go to me. I don't organize any meetings of this committee—never have, never will. Therefore, to suggest that I would agree to or would have supported any suggestion of that nature is false. And I did not have the power, unless somehow there is some rule that allows the vice-chair of a committee to do that.

You as the chair could not do that. You in fact have to talk to the clerk. They organize the place, the time, the meeting, and, obviously, if there's teleconferencing.

So it is not an appropriate comment and I just want to clarify for the record that did not occur.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Thank you all for coming. Enjoy the rest of your day.

We are adjourned.

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