



House of Commons
CANADA

Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans

FOPO • NUMBER 001 • 3rd SESSION • 40th PARLIAMENT

EVIDENCE

Monday, March 8, 2010

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Chair

Mr. Rodney Weston

Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans

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• (1535)

[*English*]

The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Travis Ladouceur): Good afternoon, honourable members.

I'm Travis Ladouceur, the new clerk assigned to the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans. I look forward to working with all of you during my mandate.

I see a quorum.

We can now proceed to the election of the chair.

I am ready to receive motions to that effect.

Pursuant to Standing Order 106(2), the chair must be a member of the government party.

Are there any motions with regard to the election of the chair?

Monsieur Blais.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Raynald Blais (Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine, BQ): I would like to nominate Rodney Weston.

The Clerk: It has been proposed by Mr. Blais that Mr. Weston be elected chair.

Are there any other motions in this regard?

[*English*]

(Motion agreed to)

The Clerk: I declare the motion carried and Mr. Rodney Weston officially elected chair of the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans.

[*Translation*]

Before asking Mr. Weston to take the chair, we could move immediately to the election of the vice-chair.

[*English*]

I am now ready to receive motions to that effect.

Monsieur Lévesque.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yvon Lévesque (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, BQ): I nominate Lawrence MacAuley.

[*English*]

The Clerk: It has been moved by Mr. Lévesque that Mr. MacAuley be elected first vice-chair of the committee. Are there any other motions?

(Motion agreed to)

The Clerk: I declare the motion carried and Mr. Lawrence MacAuley the duly elected first vice-chair of the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans.

We can now proceed to the election of the second vice-chair of the committee. Are there any motions for the election of the second vice-chair?

Mr. Calkins.

Mr. Blaine Calkins (Wetaskiwin, CPC): Yes. I would like to nominate Monsieur Blais.

[*Translation*]

The Clerk: It has been moved by Mr. Calkins that Mr. Blais be elected second vice-chair of the committee.

Are there any other motions in this regard?

[*English*]

(Motion agreed to)

The Clerk: Therefore, I declare the motion carried and Mr. Raynald Blais the officially elected second vice-chair of the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans.

I now invite Mr. Weston to take the chair.

• (1540)

The Chair (Mr. Rodney Weston (Saint John, CPC)): Before we begin, I have a statement that I'd like to read to the committee.

On Wednesday, March 3, 2010, the House of Commons adopted the following order:

That, for all standing committees, routine motions in effect at the time of prorogation of the previous session be deemed to have been adopted in the current session, provided that committees be empowered to alter or rescind such motions as they deem appropriate.

Accordingly, the routine motions that were in effect at the time of prorogation are reinstated. The clerk will reflect the House order in the minutes of this meeting, and the committee can, if it chooses, amend any of these motions. Finally, for information purposes, the clerk has distributed a copy of the motions to all committee members.

Are there any questions around that opening statement? Basically, our previous motions all stand, and we would proceed in the same manner in which we had been proceeding.

All right. So I have the official business done for the clerk.

I am so relieved to see that Mr. Byrne is not here today, because he told me on Friday that he was going to run against me for the chair, and when I came in today and saw that he was not here—

An hon. member: Oh, that's why they're—

The Chair: Yes, that's why they're all excited.

An hon. member: [*Inaudible—Editor*]

The Chair: No, no.

I was counting on your vote, Scott.

An hon. member: You had it.

• (1545)

Mr. Mike Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac, CPC): It's the first time he's been early.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Chair: We don't have a lot of business to discuss here today, so what I'd like to do is propose this. If you recall, at our last meeting in December, we had asked our analyst, François, to come back with a couple of work plans on a couple of topics. François has completed the study on the eco-certification for the fishery sector and the impacts of climate change on the fishery sector.

Rather than keep you here to discuss a report or a work plan that you haven't had the benefit of going over at first hand, what I'd like to do today is ask François if we could distribute copies of those work plans to members of the committee. We'd distribute these copies to all members now, and then I would propose that the steering committee gather on Wednesday to look at the work plans and have discussions around the work plans and on how we want to proceed.

Monsieur Blais.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Raynald Blais: I would also like to take this opportunity to point out that, after prorogation, we learned in the Speech from the Throne that a new Fisheries Act will be introduced. We know very well what introducing such a bill means for committee members. It will, at the very least, upset our schedule and agenda. Could the government party provide us with additional information on the timeline or possible agenda for the fisheries bill? My understanding is that this could take place very soon. I would like to have some information about that.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you, Monsieur Blais.

Certainly, if there is information available, I'm sure that the parliamentary secretary, who is a member of the steering committee, could bring that information forward at that time. I'm sure he'd be very happy to do that.

Mr. MacAulay.

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Cardigan, Lib.): First of all, we want to know if there is any difference in what's going to be brought forward. Would there be consultation and this type of thing with the fishermen? That's what I would want to know.

The Chair: That makes sense. As I said, if Mr. Kamp has information at that time that he can bring forward, I'm sure all members have the same questions and would certainly like to proceed.

You are right, Monsieur Blais, when you say that it could have an impact on our plan.

Mr. Kamp, I don't know if you would want to comment on what Mr. Blais signalled to you as a point at issue.

Mr. Randy Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I do understand the concern of the committee in regard to knowing how that might affect our work plans. All I can say is what everyone knows, which is that the throne speech made a commitment to introducing a new fisheries act. The timeline for that has not been determined at this point, but I think it is very likely that it will take up our time during this session, before June. As for just when we get started and in what form it comes and so on, that hasn't been decided yet.

As I mentioned earlier, possibly by Wednesday I might know a little bit more about what our plans are there, but hopefully by the end of the week we may know a little better what our strategy might be to introduce it.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Kamp.

Mr. Donnelly.

Mr. Fin Donnelly (New Westminster—Coquitlam, NDP): This is another topic that I'm just curious about. Late last year we were talking about the possibility of the west coast salmon being a potential work plan discussion item, but it was decided that we would wait to see the terms of reference for the inquiry. I am wondering when we would hear about that or how soon west coast salmon as a potential discussion or work plan item could be...

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Donnelly. Mr. Kamp might have more information on that as well when our steering committee meets later this week.

Monsieur Blais.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Raynald Blais: Could Randy provide additional information on the agenda as soon as possible, say by next Wednesday? It is simply a matter of being efficient. If we know when the bill will be introduced in the House, we can plan our work better. I would not want to start something that we will have to interrupt. All things considered, I would appreciate it if we could find out what this is about by next Wednesday, at the very least to find out when the bill will be introduced.

I would like to add that, before prorogation, we had talked about the possibility of going to Boston for the International Boston Seafood Show. If I am not mistaken, it is next week. I think it is Sunday, Monday and Tuesday, or something like that.

[English]

Mr. Scott Andrews (Avalon, Lib.): It is this weekend.

• (1550)

[Translation]

Mr. Raynald Blais: Is it not on the 14th?

[English]

Mr. Scott Andrews: It is starting this weekend.

[Translation]

Mr. Raynald Blais: As far as I know, it starts on the 14th. So we have a bit of a tight schedule. I was wondering if it was possible to think of a way that would let us send a delegation to the International Boston Seafood Show, which is taking place in the next few days. That is my suggestion. If there had been no prorogation, this would not have been a problem, but we are stuck with the current agenda.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you, Monsieur Blais.

Actually I remember the discussion around the Boston seafood show, but I don't remember it being an official part of the committee's business that we were looking at that proposal. I thought we were looking at it more from the standpoint that possibly some members of the committee might travel with the minister's delegation that would be going to the Boston seafood show, which happens on an annual basis.

The clerk has informed me that in order for a delegation from the committee to attend the Boston seafood show, the committee would have to go through the process of getting approval from the House and obviously approval for the costs from the House as well.

I guess what I am saying is basically we don't have enough time to follow that process. I'm not sure what the minister's plans are on this. Possibly we could make contact with the minister's office, and if there are members of the committee who are interested in attending with the minister, we could make the minister's office aware of that, and hopefully that would work.

Mr. MacAulay.

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay: I think we'd be quite prepared to attend it with the minister.

The Chair: I can't speak for the minister—

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay: I just want to put that on the record.

The Chair: —but that's the only option available. I guess what I'm saying is that there's not a lot of room here, or time, for this committee to put together a delegation at this point in time.

Are there any other comments?

If the committee is in agreement, at this point in time I will ask François to distribute the work plans he has prepared. We can only deal with what we have in front of us at this time. Possibly Mr. Kamp will have further information as we progress.

Take a look at the work plans that have been developed by François. If you have any questions or concerns, I would encourage you to discuss them as a caucus so that when the steering committee meets, each member of the steering committee is in tune with what all members of the committee would like to see happen in our work plan as we go forward.

Are there any other questions or comments or concerns?

Mr. Kamp.

Mr. Randy Kamp: In the last session we had a routine motion on cookies. I don't know if that is considered a routine motion and carries on to the next session of this Parliament, but I don't see any cookies, so...

An hon. member: There probably should be disciplinary action taken.

• (1555)

The Chair: I'm about to beg forgiveness as chair. As you probably noticed, we do have a new chair. We'll allow him this one omission here. It was a relatively new motion. It wasn't part of our standard practice, but we were endeared to it quite quickly. I guess I would ask the clerk to see that we have some afternoon sustenance provided for the committee.

I trust that everyone is agreeable with the committee meeting time. I know there was some concern last session, but now we'll be meeting on Mondays and Wednesdays. Hopefully that resolves all the issues that others had.

Is there nothing more today?

The cookies are looked after, Randy.

For the most part, this room will be the regular room for our meeting.

Monsieur Lévesque.

[Translation]

Mr. Yvon Lévesque: That does not solve my problem. The Committee on Fisheries and Oceans was moved, but it has been replaced by the Committee on Aboriginal Affairs. So I still have to sit on Thursday evenings.

[English]

The Chair: But we'll get cookies for you.

That being said, as there is no further business, I would ask that the committee be adjourned for the day.

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