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**Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills
and Social Development and the Status of
Persons with Disabilities**

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EVIDENCE

Monday, March 8, 2010

—
Chair

Ms. Candice Hoepfner

Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities

Monday, March 8, 2010

• (1530)

[English]

The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Georges Etoka): Order. Good afternoon, members of the committee.

I see a quorum. We can now proceed to the election of the chair. I am ready to receive a motion to that effect.

Mr. Maurice Vellacott (Saskatoon—Wanuskewin, CPC): I move that Candice Hoepfner be chosen as the chair of our committee.

The Clerk: It has been moved by Mr. Vellacott that Ms. Hoepfner be elected chair of the committee.

Are there any other motions?

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

(Motion agreed to)

The Clerk: I declare Ms. Hoepfner duly elected as chair of the committee.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

The Clerk: If the committee wishes, we will now proceed with the election of the vice-chairs.

I am now prepared to receive motions to that effect, beginning with the first vice-chair.

Ms. Minna.

Hon. Maria Minna (Beaches—East York, Lib.): I would like to propose Raymonde Folco for vice-chair.

The Clerk: It has been proposed by Ms. Minna that Madam Folco be elected first vice-chair of the committee.

Are there any other motions?

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

(Motion agreed to)

The Clerk: I declare Madam Folco duly elected as first vice-chair of the committee.

[Translation]

Ms. Raymonde Folco (Laval—Les Îles, Lib.): Mr. Clerk, there are two vice-chairs.

The Clerk: Yes, I am going to proceed to the other election.

I will now move to the election of the second vice-chair of the committee.

Mrs. Beaudin.

Mrs. Josée Beaudin (Saint-Lambert, BQ): I would like to propose Yves Lessard.

The Clerk: It has been proposed by Mrs. Beaudin that Mr. Lessard be elected vice-chair of the committee.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

The Clerk: I declare Yves Lessard elected second vice-chair of the committee.

[English]

I now invite Ms. Hoepfner to take the chair.

The Chair (Ms. Candice Hoepfner (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Thank you very much for putting your confidence in me. I look forward to chairing this committee. I've heard some very good things about the committee, the atmosphere and the work that you accomplish. I want to thank you for your confidence in me, and I look forward to working with each one of you.

We will proceed with some routine business. 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. The committee can, if it so chooses, amend any of these motions.

Finally, for information purposes, the clerk has distributed a copy of the motions to all committee members. You should have all of those motions.

I would like your feedback on how you would like to proceed, but at this time it might be beneficial for the steering committee to meet. The members could adjourn and the steering committee could meet and talk about future business.

Any comments, or any objection to that?

•(1535)

Mr. Michael Savage (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, Lib.): Could you explain what you mean?

The Chair: The first routine motion says that the subcommittee on agenda and procedure would be composed of the chair, the two vice-chairs, and one member of the New Democratic Party. I guess we probably have a partial steering committee....

I want the steering committee to meet. That's what I'm asking.

Ms. Raymonde Folco: Well, you'll have to finish this meeting—

The Chair: Yes, that is the end of the meeting. Well, I wanted to see...in case there was any discussion from members.

Monsieur Lessard.

Ms. Raymonde Folco: Can you give us a date then, Madam Chair?

The Chair: Yes.

Monsieur Lessard.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yves Lessard (Chambly—Borduas, BQ): Madam Chair, would it not be appropriate for someone to move all the routine motions for us? We agree with keeping exactly the same motion. My understanding is that we need a proposer to be able to do so. Am I right, Mr. Etoka?

[*English*]

The Chair: My understanding is that we've already moved all of these in the House. These routine procedures were adopted already, but what you can do pursuant to this order is make amendments if you choose. You're free to look at those orders and make amendments if you so choose.

Mr. Savage.

Mr. Michael Savage: Thank you, Chair.

I'm fine with the motions. Certainly, I know that there is going to be a subcommittee meeting after this meeting, but since this is the first time we've met this year, I will offer a few thoughts, if I may, about where the committee was and where I would see it going, which might inform the subcommittee, if that's okay.

The Chair: Yes, absolutely.

Mr. Michael Savage: Thank you.

As you will know from discussion with your colleagues, we were well on our way to concluding a report on developing an anti-poverty strategy for Canada, which I think is a very important report. We need to prioritize that and get that done.

I also think that with the budget it would be very important to express our hope to the minister that she would appear before us on estimates as soon as possible and, as well, to have a separate meeting with officials. I would see the meeting with the minister at the earliest opportunity, and with the officials, and then the resuming of the poverty report.

Then, of course, we have Bill C-304, which I think was unfortunately the only bill that had gone through committee but

wasn't reported to the House, and which we need to bring back at the earliest opportunity as well.

Those are just a few thoughts. I'm sure they're nothing radical, but that's how I see where we are.

The Chair: I appreciate that, Mr. Savage.

I thought that's what the steering committee probably would look at in deciding what the priority was for all of us. I appreciate those comments.

Mr. Michael Savage: And welcome to the committee.

The Chair: Thank you.

Monsieur Lessard.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yves Lessard: Still in the order of priorities, Madam Chair, there are two bills that are very important for the members of the committee and for people who are losing their jobs. These are Bill C-308, which reforms employment insurance, and Bill C-241, which addresses the waiting period. We must keep in mind from the outset that these are on the list of priorities. In any event, we are certainly going to rearrange the list of priorities through the work we do as a committee.

•(1540)

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you very much, Monsieur Lessard.

Are there any other comments?

Mr. Komarnicki.

Mr. Ed Komarnicki (Souris—Moose Mountain, CPC): Yes. There is no question that the estimates are something of a priority, and the minister will certainly appear at the earliest, I would think, that can be arranged through her office.

I do know that of course there are private members' bills, but the one private member's bill that we dealt with was Bill C-304, I think, which is the housing bill proposed by the NDP, by Libby Davies. There were a number of amendments to that bill. My understanding is that those amendments may have to be either reintroduced or agreed to unanimously, so the subcommittee might discuss that. It would be good for us to know if there is agreement to bring the bill forward with the amendments, notwithstanding the prorogation. That's something the subcommittee may want to look at.

The Chair: Yes, certainly. My understanding is that there would actually have to be a motion brought forward in the committee so that we could reinstate that bill as it was prior to prorogation. I imagine that would be some of the discussion the steering committee would also have.

Are we okay? Good. Then the meeting is adjourned....

Mr. Cannan.

Mr. Ron Cannan (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC): I was just going to say that we have a great improvement in our new chair. This was an efficient meeting.

The Chair: Oh, I think you're speaking a little early.

The meeting is adjourned.

Thank you, everyone.

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