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Standing Committee on National Defence

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EVIDENCE

Tuesday, March 9, 2010

—
Chair

The Honourable Maxime Bernier

Standing Committee on National Defence

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•(1105)

[*English*]

The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Paul Cardegnà): Honourable members of the committee, I see a quorum.

[*Translation*]

I see that we have a quorum.

Therefore, we can proceed to elect a chair.

[*English*]

I am ready to receive motions to that effect.

Mr. Laurie Hawn (Edmonton Centre, CPC): I nominate Maxime Bernier.

The Clerk: There's a motion by Mr. Laurie Hawn to elect Maxime Bernier. Are there any other motions? Is it the pleasure of the committee to adopt the motion?

(Motion agreed to)

[*Translation*]

The Clerk: Before we invite Mr. Bernier to take the chair, we will proceed with the election of the vice-chairs.

[*English*]

For the first vice-chair, who, as you know, under Standing Order 106(2) must be a member of the official opposition, I'm ready to take motions to that effect.

Hon. Ujjal Dosanjh (Vancouver South, Lib.): I nominate Bryon Wilfert.

The Clerk: Mr. Dosanjh nominates Mr. Bryon Wilfert as first vice-chair. Are there any other nominations? Is it the pleasure of the committee to adopt the motion?

(Motion agreed to)

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

[*Translation*]

The Clerk: I am now ready to receive nominations for the positions of second vice-chair.

Mr. Pascal-Pierre Paillé (Louis-Hébert, BQ): I nominate Mr. Claude Bachand.

The Clerk: Mr. Paillé nominates Mr. Claude Bachand as second vice-chair.

Are there any other motions?

(Motion agreed to)

The Clerk: I declare Mr. Bachand elected second-vice-chair. I invite Mr. Bernier to take the chair.

The Chair (Hon. Maxime Bernier (Beauce, CPC)): Thank you, honourable members of the committee.

[*English*]

I'm very pleased to be your chair. I'll do my best to be sure that this committee will be as efficient and as effective as we were last session.

Before starting, I have to read something for you.

[*Translation*]

I would like to read the following statement. On Wednesday, March 3, 2010, the House of Commons adopted the following Order, and I quote:

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, routine motions 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. I believe the Clerk has distributed a copy of these motions to committee members for information purposes.

•(1110)

[*English*]

Mr. Jack Harris (St. John's East, NDP): Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, I haven't had an opportunity to consult with anyone on this, but my experience of being on this committee over the last year, or slightly less than a year, is that it's sometimes difficult, if not impossible, for me to engage in a second period of questioning on our rotation.

I am just wondering if the committee would be prepared to consider moving the third-round slot for the NDP—it's on the back page of what was distributed—to the end of the second-round slot, giving five minutes in the second round after Liberal, Conservative, Bloc, Liberal, Conservative, and Conservative. I don't know if there's a seconder for that, but it's something I would put up for consideration by the committee. Sometimes it's questionable, and we have to figure out if there's going to be a slot and when we're adjourning and all of that.

The Chair: Before that, I just want to ask the committee if they want to have this discussion right now, because it's supposed to be a part of our future work. Today the agenda is the election of the chair and vice-chairs. If the committee agrees to discuss this right now, we can. If not, it would be at our next meeting.

Monsieur Bachand.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Claude Bachand (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Chair, three members are meeting with NATO at this time. Therefore, I'm wondering if we could put off this discussion until the next meeting, since we have to leave shortly. We have other matters to discuss in another forum. The only item on today's agenda was the election of the chair.

Are you also thinking about perhaps calling a meeting of the steering committee this week to consider future and other business?
[*English*]

The Chair: Mr. Hawn, do you want to add something to that?

Mr. Laurie Hawn: Well, we can discuss future business in the steering committee or we can do it in the whole committee. We're easy either way, but I'd personally prefer the whole committee.

Hon. Ujjal Dosanjh: Actually, I would prefer the steering committee.

Mr. Laurie Hawn: Okay. Either way is...

The Chair: My understanding is that we will have this discussion at our next meeting. We will have a meeting this Thursday. Is that a steering one or...?

Mr. Laurie Hawn: It will be a steering committee if you're going to do that.

Hon. Ujjal Dosanjh: It should be a steering committee.

The Chair: It will be a steering committee at 11 o'clock on Thursday. The goal of that meeting will be to discuss the future work of our committee.

Mr. Hawn.

Mr. Laurie Hawn: I'll just bring up one thing, though, because it's a little bit time-sensitive, and that's the minister's appearance on

estimates. He has to appear by March 18 in order to meet his obligation on March 23. March 18 is the date that best fits his schedule. Obviously, we can discuss that on Thursday, but I'm just giving you a bit of forewarning on that.

Hon. Ujjal Dosanjh: We should be able to accommodate that.

You should do that in the steering committee.

Mr. Laurie Hawn: Yes, I was just giving you a bit of forewarning on that one.

Hon. Ujjal Dosanjh: I don't think anybody would want to not have the minister comply with his obligations.

The Chair: Okay. We'll have the conversation about this *attribution de temps* at our next meeting.

Mr. Harris.

Mr. Jack Harris: I don't have a problem with that. The only reason I raise it is that the House motion deems that the current ones are adopted, but also indicates that we can change them. It doesn't matter to me whether we discuss that today or Thursday, as long as we get a chance to discuss it—or at the next regular meeting or whenever.

The Chair: Yes.

Mr. Laurie Hawn: To be clear, that could be discussed at the steering committee, that aspect of it, but it would have to be voted on.

Mr. Jack Harris: Oh, yes.

The Chair: Okay.

Did you want to add something, Mr. Clerk?

[*Translation*]

The Clerk: The committee could meet at 11 a.m. on Thursday.

The Chair: Then it's agreed, Thursday at 11 a.m.

Thank you very much and have a pleasant day.

[*English*]

Thank you very much. Have a nice day.

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