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## Standing Committee on Natural Resources

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EVIDENCE

**Thursday, March 11, 2010**

—  
**Chair**

**Mr. Leon Benoit**



## Standing Committee on Natural Resources

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• (0905)

[English]

**The Clerk of the Committee (Mrs. Carol Chafe):** Honourable members, I see a quorum.

We can now proceed to the election of the chair.

Mr. Regan.

**Hon. Geoff Regan (Halifax West, Lib.):** I nominate Mr. Harris.

**The Clerk:** Are there any further nominations?

Mr. Tonks.

**Mr. Alan Tonks (York South—Weston, Lib.):** I nominate Mr. Benoit.

**The Clerk:** Are there any further nominations?

**Mr. David Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC):** I can second Mr. Benoit's nomination, I guess.

**The Clerk:** Mr. Anderson has seconded the nomination.

Mr. Harris.

**Mr. Richard Harris (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC):** Although I know I have many friends in this Parliament—and some among them, obviously—I just want to say that I appreciate the nomination and I'm honoured by it, but I don't think I'm going to be able to do it.

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

**Mr. Richard Harris:** I'll have to decline the nomination. I'm sorry.

**The Clerk:** As Mr. Harris's nomination is actually in the form of a motion, I require unanimous consent of the committee in order to withdraw. Is there unanimous consent that Mr. Harris can withdraw?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Hon. Geoff Regan:** It was his idea, I want you to know.

**The Clerk:** By unanimous consent, Mr. Harris is permitted to withdraw his name and the motion is withdrawn.

**Mr. Richard Harris:** On a point of order, Madam Clerk—

**Mr. David Anderson:** He wants to reinstate himself.

**Mr. Richard Harris:** —I was just wondering for my memoirs: does this become part of the official record?

**The Clerk:** Yes.

**Mr. Richard Harris:** That's wonderful.

**The Clerk:** There being no further nominations, I declare Mr. Benoit duly elected as chair of the committee.

We now move along to the second item of business on the agenda, which is the election of the vice-chairs. I am now prepared to accept nominations or motions for the position of vice-chair.

Mr. Bains.

**Hon. Navdeep Bains (Mississauga—Brampton South, Lib.):** I nominate Alan Tonks for vice-chair.

**The Clerk:** Is there a seconder?

**Mr. Devinder Shory (Calgary Northeast, CPC):** I'll second that.

**The Clerk:** Are there any further nominations?

Seeing no further nominations, I declare Mr. Tonks duly elected vice-chair, from the official opposition.

Our next item of business is the election of another opposition vice-chair, the second vice-chair.

Mr. Tonks.

**Mr. Alan Tonks:** I nominate Mr. Nathan Cullen.

**The Clerk:** Mr. Tonks has nominated Mr. Cullen. Are there any further nominations?

Seeing no further nominations, I declare Mr. Cullen duly elected second vice-chair.

Congratulations.

I now invite your chair, Mr. Benoit, to take his place as chair of the committee.

• (0910)

**Mr. Richard Harris:** It was a tough campaign.

**The Chair (Mr. Leon Benoit (Vegreville—Wainwright, CPC)):** The other thing on our agenda is the routine motions. I think you all know that in the House on March 3 there was a motion passed that related to routine motions of committees. It said:

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.

That is the direction that was agreed to, I believe, by the various parties. I would suggest that we deal with routine motions in that way by approving the routine motions that were in place last time, but it is of course up to this committee.

Mr. Anderson.

**Mr. David Anderson:** Do you want a motion to do that? How do you want to handle it?

**The Chair:** Yes. That's the way anything would have to be done.

**Mr. David Anderson:** Yes, just to be sure. This needs to be appropriately worded, but I have a motion that we accept the motion of the House of Commons to adopt the routine motions in place at the time of prorogation.

**The Chair:** It's actually an order of the House, I believe. That's what it is.

Do you all understand the motion?

Mr. Cullen, and then Mr. Tonks.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP):** I don't know, Chair, if it's appropriate now to bring it up as we're doing routine motions, but last time as the committee commenced we discussed the notion of having a subcommittee in order to set the agenda and then bring that proposed agenda back to the committee as a whole for approval.

I don't know if this is the moment to bring up that topic again, but I would like to. I'm under your direction in terms of whether the motion you just proposed would preclude that later on, or if this is the appropriate time to do it. I'm in your hands. But I'd like the conversation to be held so that we can decide whether we want to have a subcommittee of this committee.

**The Chair:** This is something the committee can talk about again. We did that before.

This is an order of the House saying that we would adopt the same procedures as last time, the same rules as last time. It would be the time to talk about it. We have a motion on the floor saying that we adopt the rules we had in place before prorogation. That's what we're discussing before we vote on this.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** Just for the sake of procedure, then, do I need to move...? I mean, I'm obviously fine with adopting the previous rules. The reason I bring up the subcommittee is that there was some to-and-fro during the course of the last session around the agenda. I'm trying to offer up a suggestion that will alleviate those tensions.

I think a subcommittee might do that, so do I have to move an amendment to the motion? I'm not sure of the procedure available to me, but whatever it is, I'd like to have the discussion within the committee to test the will of the government in particular. I'm not sure what the will is of my colleagues in opposition, but I sincerely feel that it's a procedure that would allow us a little bit more expediency in setting out the agenda and a little bit better communication among all the parties.

**The Chair:** We certainly can discuss this when we have our meeting on future business of the committee. There's nothing that precludes that. It can happen at any time. It's up to the committee.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** Can I simply test the will of my colleagues, then, Chair, to know if the discussion is there?

**The Chair:** We've had several discussions on that, as you know.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** I know, but I guess what I'm questioning is whether things have changed. That was a number of months ago. If people have changed their opinions, I'd like to know. I haven't had

any conversations with David and only very cursory ones with my colleagues from the Liberals and the Bloc.

**The Chair:** Mr. Cullen, for that reason, could I suggest that you talk to some others on the committee about it and bring it back when we discuss future business at the committee? Would you like to do that?

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** Sure. I'll work on it between now and then.  
● (0915)

**The Chair:** Is there further discussion on this motion?

Mr. Tonks.

**Mr. Alan Tonks:** In the routine motions that are part of the excellent document that was sent out, there was one with perhaps a contradiction in terms, on "working meals". I'm not interested in the working meals part, but the motion that deals with travel.

From the last meeting, I think we had a discussion in linking whatever our agenda would be to travel for the committee, to try to get a handle on that in advance, whether we went up to Chalk River or over to Fort McMurray or wherever. Pursuant to what has been raised on the steering committee, when we are going to be discussing our agenda I wonder if we could just make sure that we look at our travel schedule, along with that agenda development. We left that out last term.

**The Chair:** It logically fits in, Mr. Tonks. I agree. When we're talking about future business of the committee, I think that fits in. That's part of what we discuss.

**Mr. Alan Tonks:** Okay.

**The Chair:** I understand what you're saying. It's perfect sense.

**Mr. Alan Tonks:** I'm sorry to be dwelling just on meals and travel, but....

**Hon. Geoff Regan:** At morning meetings, there probably won't be too many meals.

**Mr. Alan Tonks:** So all of the routine motions are from what's here?

**The Chair:** Yes.

**Mr. Alan Tonks:** Okay.

**The Chair:** Any further discussion on Mr. Anderson's motion?

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

**The Chair:** I think it was unanimous.

That's great. That's the business for the meeting today.

If we come back next Tuesday to discuss future business of the committee, would that make sense?

**An hon. member:** Yes.

**The Chair:** We'll leave it at that, then.

Thank you all very much.

Oh, Mr. Harris has a point of order.

**Mr. Richard Harris:** Mr. Chair, I just wanted to point out that when I was on the committee before, we did quite a study on the forest industry. In the meantime, some time ago, knowing that we have a huge presence in China in construction, I received a number of very nice photos. I have them electronically, if anybody wants them. The photos are of house and apartment construction in China primarily using wood from West Fraser, Canfor, and Tolko out in B. C. If anybody wants these, let me know and I can supply them.

It's a great thing. As you know, we're even going to double our shipments to China this year.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Harris. It sounds like it should have been a paid ad, not a point of order. But that's just fine.

**Mr. Richard Harris:** Wood is good.

**The Chair:** It's good for you, Richard.

Thank you, everyone. Have a great weekend. We'll see you Tuesday.

The meeting is adjourned.

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