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Wednesday, November 30, 2011

Chair

Mr. David Christopherson

Standing Committee on Public Accounts

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• (1530)

[English]

The Chair (Mr. David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre, NDP)): We'll now bring this 18th meeting of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts to order.

I'll go to the government benches first. You won the race.

Let me just outline exactly what we're here to do and why we're not doing what we thought we were going to do. We attempted to follow the direction of the committee, which was to conduct a hearing today, but because of the short notice, we were not able to line up the deputy minister. My judgment was, in fairness, that with only 24 hours' notice, it's not unreasonable that someone like a deputy would say they couldn't make that. They offered up other dates that were close. I certainly didn't personally get any sense that someone was trying to dodge us. It was just a matter of scheduling. However, we hadn't agreed to the 7th, which was the date that he or she could have made it. Had we done that, I would have taken it upon myself to make a switch. But we hadn't, and I didn't think it was appropriate that I would go filling spaces in the schedule. That's way beyond my purview.

I decided that we would still have a meeting—as much as I was tempted to avoid one—so we could deal with committee business. We have to come to grips, one way or another, either by agreement or by some other method.... We need to determine what we're going to do between now and the end of the year so that we don't run into this again. This was our first worst-case scenario: not enough time, people couldn't make it, we lost the meeting. We want to try to avoid

that. To be fair, Mr. Kramp has been doing what he can from his position to try to make that happen.

I called us together here so that we could deal with the business at hand. There are also a couple of matters that I don't think we've had a chance to touch on. I wouldn't mind getting a little feedback about those meetings. That's why we're here. Instead of holding a hearing, we are going to do committee business.

I suspect there is a motion waiting for me from the government benches to move in camera. As you know, I play that straight up. I did see hands from the government bench first, so I will give the floor first to the leader of the government delegation.

Mr. Saxton.

Mr. Andrew Saxton (North Vancouver, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

As per normal procedure, I move that we go in camera when discussing committee business.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

As everyone knows, that is in order and non-debatable. Therefore, we'll move directly to a vote.

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: We will now go in camera.

[*Proceedings continue in camera*]

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