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CANADA

# **Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development**

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**EVIDENCE**

**Tuesday, October 29, 2013**

—  
**Chair**

**Mr. Chris Warkentin**



## Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development

Tuesday, October 29, 2013

•(1100)

[Translation]

**The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Jean-Marie David):** Honourable members of the committee,

[English]

I see a quorum.

[Translation]

We can now proceed to the election of the chair.

[English]

Pursuant to Standing Order 106(2), the chair must be a member of the government party. I am ready to receive motions to that effect.

Ms. Crowder.

**Ms. Jean Crowder (Nanaimo—Cowichan, NDP):** I move that Chris Warkentin be chair.

**The Clerk:** It's been moved by Ms. Crowder that Mr. Warkentin be elected as chair of the committee.

Are there any further motions?

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

(Motion agreed to)

**The Clerk:** I declare the motion carried and Mr. Warkentin duly elected the chair of the committee.

Before inviting Mr. Warkentin to take the chair, if the committee wishes, we will now proceed to the election of the vice-chairs.

Pursuant to Standing Order 106(2),

[Translation]

The first vice-chair must be a member of the official opposition.

[English]

I am now prepared to receive motions for the first vice-chair.

Mr. Warkentin.

**Mr. Chris Warkentin (Peace River, CPC):** I'd like to move that Jean Crowder be the vice-chair.

**The Clerk:** It has been moved by Mr. Warkentin that Ms. Crowder be elected as first vice-chair of the committee.

Are there any further motions?

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

(Motion agreed to)

**The Clerk:** I declare the motion carried and Ms. Crowder duly elected first vice-chair of the committee.

Pursuant to Standing Order 106(2), the second vice-chair must be a member of an opposition party other than the official opposition. I am now prepared to receive a motion for the second vice-chair.

**Mr. Mark Strahl (Chilliwack—Fraser Canyon, CPC):** I propose Elizabeth May.

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

**Ms. Jean Crowder:** She's actually not a party....

**The Clerk:** Mr. Boughen.

**Mr. Ray Boughen (Palliser, CPC):** I propose Carolyn Bennett.

**The Clerk:** It has been moved by Mr. Boughen that Ms. Bennett be elected second vice-chair.

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

(Motion agreed to)

**The Clerk:** I declare the motion carried and Ms. Bennett duly elected second vice-chair of the committee.

I now invite Mr. Warkentin to take the chair.

**The Chair (Mr. Chris Warkentin (Peace River, CPC)):** Thank you so much for allowing me to continue to serve in this capacity. It's been a good committee and something that I've been looking forward to getting back to.

It's great to see each one of you, and we look forward to having a good and productive committee for the next number of months.

It's good to have a new member of our committee; Mark Strahl, thanks for joining us. We look forward to working with you.

I thought it would be helpful if we could get through the routine motions of the committee. You will have had circulated the motions as they stood prior to when we left. I'm not sure if anybody wants to move the entirety of the existing motions as they were.

Ms. Crowder.

**Ms. Jean Crowder:** We don't have the whole list. For example, we don't have the rotation of the speakers on these routine motions.

**The Chair:** I don't have that either.

Give me a second. We don't want to revisit if we don't have to. It would be helpful.

•(1105)

**Ms. Jean Crowder:** We would be taking it on faith that it was exactly the same as the other, but we don't actually have it in front of us.

**The Chair:** Well, here's a question. Could we have a motion moved that we adopt every motion from the last Parliament?

**Ms. Jean Crowder:** Every routine motion?

**The Chair:** Every routine motion.

**Ms. Jean Crowder:** So as presented....

**The Chair:** As we had in the last Parliament, prior to....

**Mr. Mark Strahl:** Do you have an addition coming up?

**The Chair:** I know there are a couple of different routine motions that have been proposed in addition to what was there previously, but I was thinking if we could just simply adopt all of the routine motions as they were to begin with.... We won't reference any particular document; we'll simply accept what was, to continue.

**Ms. Jean Crowder:** The routine motions that we passed at the start-up of the last committee.

**The Chair:** Right.

**Ms. Jean Crowder:** Okay. I'm fine with that.

**The Chair:** So it's moved by Ms. Crowder. Any debate?

(Motion agreed to)

**The Chair:** I do note that there's been some talk of some additional routine motions. We'll hear from Mr. Strahl first.

**Mr. Mark Strahl:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We've circulated our proposed addition to the routine motions, which essentially has happened at other committees as well. Basically it allows members who are not members of this committee, including independent members, to file amendments at the appropriate time. We have an important job to look at legislation, and that's not limited just to those of us who are in recognized parties. This allows that to occur, and to occur at the committee stage where amendments are intended to be delivered.

There it is. I'm happy to chat about it. I hope you all have your copy. That is what that motion serves to do: to allow members who are not on this committee to file amendments with our committee.

**The Chair:** Ms. Crowder.

**Ms. Jean Crowder:** I'm very disappointed to see this motion before committee. I have a number of concerns with the motion. One of the concerns I have, of course, is that this is a blatant attempt to circumvent the rights of members to move motions in the House. It would be independent members, of course—independent members who are not members of standing committees—and it seems pretty clear that this is an effort to prevent independent members from moving amendments in the House at report stage, which would then have us voting all night. I would argue that this is contrary to a democratic process. I also think that it will seriously impact on the ability of the committee to do its work. We're going to end up having people coming into our committee who have not heard witness testimony, who have not been part of the discussions. They could be

moving amendments contrary to what the will of the committee is. I'm very surprised to see this come forward.

The other issue is that given the fact that, sadly, we have seen efforts to put time allocation at committee, how is that going to impact on our ability as members of the standing committee to engage in discussion? At another committee I was on, a motion came forward and the government said the bill must be reported back by such-and-such a date. Then they limited the amount of time for amendments. We were allowed to speak to each amendment for only five minutes. Are we then going to allocate time to independent members who come forward? It raises questions about whether the committee then becomes master of its own fate when we can have people from outside coming into the committee and utilizing committee time. Clearly, we won't be supporting this motion.

•(1110)

**The Chair:** Thank you.

I do want to note to our analysts that they're welcome to join me. Thank you for being here.

Mr. Bevington.

**Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP):** I think the points that Ms. Crowder has raised are very good points. Some of them I hadn't considered. I can't believe the government is trying to do this.

There's another point that I think is very important, which is that somehow we're creating two classes of members of Parliament. We're going to have members of Parliament who can go in front of every single committee and present amendments. Well, perhaps you should open it up to every single member to do that. That's really an inappropriate inequity in the system. How can this government promote inequity among MPs through this process? Is this simply to enable rules? If the government is serious about the problems it has with order in the House, deal with it in the House. Don't turn it onto the committees. I think what this motion is proposing is almost ridiculous.

**The Chair:** Ms. Hughes.

**Mrs. Carol Hughes (Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusksing, NDP):** To add to this, I would tell you that if they feel they should have a say, then bring them in as witnesses instead. At the same time, it's not going to circumvent the democratic process that's actually been put in place. If they feel they need to have a say on the issues and it's not enough to do it in the House of Commons, then you can very well consider them as witnesses instead.

I'm wondering whether or not the analysts have actually looked at this and seen what the impact could be on the committee. It would be good to have that point of view, given that there are a lot of regulations. It would be good to have their point of view on the impact this could have on the committee, whether positive or negative. That would be interesting.

It's unfortunate to see a government willing to go down this road. The committee has been functioning very well, and this is just going to take away our ability to do the work that is required of us.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

We won't ask the analysts to engage in procedure in committee, obviously; we will leave it to committee members to determine.

If there aren't any further questions or comments, we'll move to a vote.

(Motion agreed to)

**The Chair:** Ms. Crowder, did you have a motion you wanted to bring? No. Very good.

Colleagues, that concludes what we had set out to do today. I'm hopeful that we can meet as a subcommittee. I think we'll move to meet the subcommittee and discuss....

Ms. Bennett.

**Hon. Carolyn Bennett (St. Paul's, Lib.):** We had a motion we wanted to put forward around the TRC and being able to bring them in. I don't know if people have seen the motion. It is:

That the Committee undertake a study of the possible extension of the mandate of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), which currently expires on July 1, 2014, to fulfill its mandate as set out in Schedule N of the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement; and that it report its findings to the House of Commons no later than Monday, December 2, 2013.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

We are having that circulated now so that every committee member will have it. The subcommittee will look at that in addition to the other things.

Is there something more, Mr. Strahl?

**Mr. Mark Strahl:** Do we need to determine at this committee who the members of the subcommittee are, or do we simply—

**The Chair:** It is adopted through routine proceedings. The only person who needs to be designated is the additional Conservative member.

● (1115)

**Mr. Mark Strahl:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** It is presumed that the subcommittee is the chairs and vice-chairs and one other member of the Conservatives.

Colleagues, if there's nothing more, we will adjourn this meeting. We will reconvene as the subcommittee determines.

Thank you so much. The meeting is adjourned.

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