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•(0850)

[English]

The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Jean-Marie David): Honourable members of the committee, I see a quorum. We can now proceed to the election of the chair.

Pursuant to Standing Order 106(2) the chair must be a member of the government party.

I am ready to receive motions for the chair.

Ms. Ashton.

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill, NDP): I would like to nominate Blake Richards.

The Clerk: It has been moved by Ms. Ashton that Blake Richards be elected as chair of the committee.

Are there any further motions?

(Motion agreed to)

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

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

The Chair (Mr. Blake Richards (Wild Rose, CPC)): I thank everyone for your vote of confidence. If all the votes and decisions go that smoothly for the committee, I'll be thrilled.

It's a pleasure to be on the committee with all of you. I'm looking forward to getting down to work.

I know that you had initially planned to get into your new study, the access to capital study, this past Tuesday. We'll certainly have a chat with the clerks, but I think we can get down to work on that study next Tuesday. That would certainly be my goal.

Ms. Niki Ashton: I did want to make a comment. We're keen to get started as soon as possible. I know this has been in the wings for a while. We can leave this to a subcommittee meeting, Chair, if you see fit to have that kind of discussion.

I did want to suggest adding a few more witnesses, having seen the complete list last time. Particularly when it comes to first nations,

I see a bit of repetition in terms of whom we've already heard from. I think it would be important to supplement that list with a few other first nations as well, and perhaps also have some more regional balance in terms of whom we're going to hear from.

I'd love to have that discussion as a whole, but also in subcommittee, sooner than later.

The Chair: Why don't we have an offline discussion about that. I think the intent would be to bring the officials in, which was my understanding, probably on the first day. We could certainly undertake that and then we can have an offline discussion about how we might proceed from there.

Is that reasonable?

Ms. Niki Ashton: Yes.

The Chair: Ms. Bennett.

Hon. Carolyn Bennett (St. Paul's, Lib.): I had sent a letter last week to Chris. In looking at the work plan, we didn't seem to have microfinancing, which is an area where we do a great job internationally, but we've not done it domestically to any extent. There are some people doing some interesting things. That's in a letter, just for us to do a panel or two on microfinancing. I think it would really complement our work. Frankly, I think it could be a very interesting part of the recommendations.

The Chair: Mr. Strahl.

Mr. Mark Strahl (Chilliwack—Fraser Canyon, CPC): I might suggest, based on the conversation we've had here, that Tuesday we meet with officials, and then Thursday we have a subcommittee meeting and just kick around the witness list and any additions, substitutions, or adjustments we want to make.

The Chair: That certainly sounds like a reasonable plan to me. I see some nodding of heads on both sides of the table, so I think that's probably how we'll proceed. We'll have some conversations and try to make that happen.

At this point we'll adjourn until next week.

The meeting is adjourned.

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