



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics

ETHI • NUMBER 014 • 2nd SESSION • 41st PARLIAMENT

EVIDENCE

Tuesday, March 4, 2014

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Chair

Mr. Pat Martin

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•(1140)

[English]

The Chair (Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP)): Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. We'll convene our meeting. It's a planning meeting of the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics.

We're in public, so it's up to members whether or not they choose to discuss future witnesses.

Mr. Ravnat.

Mr. Mathieu Ravnat (Pontiac, NDP): I think we're at the point where we want to talk about witnesses on Bill C-520. If I'm correct, Mr. Chair, that's a piece of business.

The Chair: I don't see any particular order on which study we want to discuss. I think we want to discuss witnesses generally and future business generally. We have two items on the go.

Mr. Mathieu Ravnat: Well, if I could address the witnesses for Bill C-520, the official opposition would like to move that we see the following witnesses: Peter Penashue, Dean Del Mastro, Irving Gerstein, Mike Duffy, Shelly Glover, and James Bezan.

I respectfully submit that.

The Chair: The clerk has asked if you would repeat the proposed list.

Mr. Mathieu Ravnat: Sorry about that, Mr. Clerk.

The names are Peter Penashue, Dean Del Mastro, Irving Gerstein, Mike Duffy, Shelly Glover, and James Bezan.

If that motion is in good order, I'd like to speak to it.

The Chair: I'm not sure we need motions as such at this stage of discussing witnesses, but if you choose to make it a formal motion, it's certainly in order.

Mr. Mathieu Ravnat: I do indeed, yes.

The Chair: You're welcome to speak to the motion.

Mr. Mathieu Ravnat: It's clear that Bill C-520 does a number of things. One of the things it certainly does is it unfortunately limits the power of independent officers and agents of government to do their work. As you could see at our last meeting, commissioners are particularly concerned about how it may very well limit their independence and limit their ability to do their work.

In light of that, I think it is important to understand the shortcomings of various regulations and acts that are under their purview. The individuals who the official opposition have named

would be very well placed to tell us about the shortcomings in their particular situations. They could enlighten us on any future changes to the roles of the various commissioners and changes to the various acts and regulations that are in place ultimately to protect Canadians and ultimately to make our elections fair and free.

In this spirit, the official opposition thinks that each of these individuals could have something important to contribute to the debate on Bill C-520.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Ravnat.

Is there any further discussion on Mr. Ravnat's motion?

Mr. Calandra.

Mr. Paul Calandra (Oak Ridges—Markham, CPC): Mr. Chair, we had notice of this, and we'll obviously be voting against bringing forward these witnesses, for they have nothing to do with Bill C-520. This of course is just a continuation of the angry NDP and their attempts, their own real attempts, at witch-hunting. It's actually quite shameful, Mr. Chair.

Having said that, we of course will be voting against bringing these witnesses forward. At the same time, we have a number of issues that we wanted to address. As you probably know, we wanted to address this at the last meeting, but we were not afforded a chance to do that.

In order for us to do that, I'd like to entertain a motion to move in camera. I'm not sure if I can do that now, but if I can, I'd like to do that.

•(1145)

The Chair: We haven't voted on the motion on the floor. I guess you're speaking to Mr. Ravnat's motion. We would have to finish with Mr. Ravnat's motion before another motion would be in order. That's my understanding.

Is that correct?

A motion to move in camera supersedes everything else, and it's non-debatable.

Mr. Andrews, did you have a comment?

Mr. Scott Andrews (Avalon, Lib.): Yes. I'd like a recorded vote.

The Chair: We'll have a recorded vote on the motion to go in camera, which is non-debatable.

(Motion agreed to: yeas, 6; nays, 3)

[Proceedings continue in camera]

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