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# **Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security**

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**EVIDENCE**

**Thursday, September 21, 2017**

—  
**Chair**

**The Honourable John McKay**



## Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security

Thursday, September 21, 2017

• (0845)

[*Translation*]

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

[*English*]

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 to that effect.

Mr. Spengemann.

**Mr. Sven Spengemann (Mississauga—Lakeshore, Lib.):** Mr. Clerk, I would like to move the nomination of Mr. John McKay as chair for this committee.

**The Clerk:** It has been moved by Mr. Spengemann that Mr. John McKay be elected as chair of the committee.

Are there any further motions?

(Motion agreed to)

**The Clerk:** I declare Mr. McKay duly elected and invite him to take the chair.

**The Chair (Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.)):** Thank you for that nomination, Sven, and for the confidence the committee has put in me. I have heard great reports about this committee and the work it's done in the last two years. I'm hoping that we can keep that going.

I hear great reports about the clerk and the analysts. I want to just mention that Rob Oliphant did a terrific job in the last couple of years. You as a committee did great work, and very influential work from what I can determine. I hope that I can continue that tradition or at least stay out of the way so you do the good work.

I think we still have some committee business to do here, Mr. Clerk.

**The Clerk:** We will proceed to the election of the first vice-chair. Pursuant to Standing Order 106(2), the first vice-chair must be a member of the official opposition.

[*Translation*]

Are there any nominations?

[*English*]

Mr. MacKenzie.

**Mr. Dave MacKenzie (Oxford, CPC):** I nominate Pierre Paul-Hus.

**The Clerk:** It's been moved by Mr. MacKenzie that Mr. Paul-Hus be elected as first vice-chair.

Are there any further motions?

(Motion agreed to)

[*Translation*]

**The Clerk:** I declare Mr. Paul-Hus duly elected as first vice-chair of the committee.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Congratulations.

I'm hoping to accomplish some business here today and to look at the fall agenda. Essentially, the next two days are Tuesday and Thursday of next week, and then we're anticipating receiving Bill C-21. Bill C-21 will occupy the committee time and take precedence over other committee work.

My thought had been that we would have a discussion on a larger basis as to where you want to see the committee go and what it wants to do for the fall session, and then after that we would adjourn and the steering subcommittee would meet. We would create a schedule, and then at the first available opportunity come back to the main committee and present that schedule to the main committee. I hope that suits members.

The first item of business is to resolve what we're going to do next Tuesday and next Thursday. One suggestion has been that we get a briefing on the migrant issue. A sub-suggestion of that is that we do it jointly with the immigration committee. That's an option, shall we say. It is a meeting that we can pull together. The clerks have assured me that they can pull it together, and quickly, because it mostly would be officials.

Monsieur Paul-Hus.

• (0850)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC):** Mr. Chair, I would like to make two motions.

The first is about marijuana. I would like us to check whether it is possible to conduct a study on the effects of marijuana on public safety.

I would also like to make a motion about the problems related to migrants. The objective is to conduct a study on the management problems at the border faced by the RCMP and the Canada Border Services Agency.

We can discuss them later.

[English]

**The Chair:** Madam Damoff.

**Ms. Pam Damoff (Oakville North—Burlington, Lib.):** I would like to make a suggestion for next week. Is there a motion on the floor, though?

**The Chair:** It's in order, but he hasn't.... I believe your notice period is 48 hours.

[Translation]

**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus:** They are just notices of motion.

[English]

**The Chair:** The clerk has raised the issue of whether we want to do this in camera or in public. I'm agnostic.

[Translation]

**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus:** Is the issue whether the meeting must remain public when we are discussing these motions?

My goal today is actually just to introduce two motions. One deals with migrants and the other deals with marijuana. I don't necessarily want to discuss them today. I just want to introduce them.

[English]

**The Chair:** These are just tabled, then.

**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus:** Yes.

**The Chair:** Okay.

**Ms. Pam Damoff:** Will we have the steering committee look at what we're going to do in terms of studies and that type of thing?

**The Chair:** Yes.

**Ms. Pam Damoff:** Okay.

In terms of next week, we have a lot of new members on the committee, so for those who weren't here, our first study was on the mental health of our first responders and public safety officers. We looked at a number of different tools that could be used for those individuals. One of them was the road to mental readiness program, which has been adapted for public safety officers and first responders.

The Canadian Mental Health Association has approached us to see if the committee would be interested in getting a condensed version of what that training is. Normally it's four hours, but it would be two hours to fit within our committee time. We would also have the opportunity to ask them some questions about it. While it's an excellent tool for public safety officers, within the public safety community there are questions as to.... It's been adapted from the military to be used for the RCMP and then rolled out. We know that we're getting legislation and that we're not going to have a lot of time to do a study next week. However, they're available, so I wondered if the committee would be agreeable to having them come in for one of

our meetings next week to do the shortened version of the training and also to give us some information on it.

Those who were here will recall that we had a unanimous report on the issue. I think it was the first unanimous report we had in 10 years from this committee, so I know it's an issue that all parties are concerned about and very passionate about. Certainly on the Conservative side you have a member who has introduced a private member's bill on this. Matthew has been incredibly supportive of our first responders and public safety officers.

I just put that out there to see if the committee would be agreeable for them to come in—probably on Tuesday, but we would leave that for the clerk to arrange—and give us some information on that.

• (0855)

**Mr. Glen Motz (Medicine Hat—Cardston—Warner, CPC):** Just as a point of clarity, this is an information session for us?

**Ms. Pam Damoff:** Yes.

**Mr. Glen Motz:** I left policing in 2015, and as I understand it, we already rolled out the mental readiness program for our people back in 2014 or 2015.

**Ms. Pam Damoff:** Some did and some didn't. In fact a lot didn't.

I'm sorry, Mr. Chair, I wasn't recognized. My apologies.

**Mr. Glen Motz:** Would it just be an information session for us, to see whether it fits what we think should be available to the law enforcement and public officers in our country?

**Ms. Pam Damoff:** We did hear testimony on it when we did our study. Some are using it; some are not. To be frank, certainly there are mixed feelings on it within the public safety community. As a tool for public safety officers, we determined in the report that it was a valuable tool. It wasn't a solution. I know that I continue to be approached by the public safety community on various issues to do with this. It's something that certainly the minister is very committed to and that we as a committee have been quite committed to.

I think it would be useful for us, when we are approached by public safety officers talking about this, to have some knowledge of what it's all about. Quite frankly, I've read about it, and I have a general sense of what it is, but.... It's not just policing. Fire, corrections officers, and RCMP are using it, but not all services are using it. Not all individuals get trained in it.

[Translation]

**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus:** Mr. Chair, having a briefing about it next Tuesday is no problem for me, because it will let the members of the committee re-immers themselves in the issue. However, I feel that it is important to establish our priorities for the coming weeks. Moreover, I believe that Bill C-21 will be studied soon. In terms of the way things roll out, we will see, depending on the motions I have introduced. Mr. Chair, you have talked about migrants as well. In my opinion these are hot, important topics that we have to deal with.

As for Tuesday's meeting, we can start with that; I see no problem.

[English]

**The Chair:** Michel.

[Translation]

**Mr. Michel Picard (Montarville, Lib.):** For your information, in case you were not aware, there is a list of hot, important topics that we have to deal with. Let's make sure we are talking about the same thing here.

There is an unofficial calendar that contains a number of topics that have been established for the fall. That could even keep us occupied until winter. As you said, there's Bill C-21, for one thing.

**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus:** That is why I want to know.

**Mr. Michel Picard:** The committee has had this shopping list for two years, and it has become longer. Now you are making some proposals that are also in the calendar.

The steering committee can put it all in order, of course.

[English]

**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus:** Okay.

**Ms. Pam Damoff:** I'm wondering if the clerk could refresh my memory, or the committee's memory, on what we passed at the end of June for our next study. I thought we had passed a motion to study the issue of indigenous people in corrections. Is that correct?

**The Clerk:** The motion was adopted on March 6, and then we got a lot of legislation that prevented us from starting the study. I can read the motion if you'd like.

That, notwithstanding the motion adopted by the Committee on February 25, 2016, and pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), the Committee undertake a study involving no fewer than four (4) and no more than six (6) meetings on the situation of Indigenous inmates and issues with the Release and Re-integration program; that correction officers, Correctional Services of Canada, the Corrections Investigator of Canada, former inmates, members and elders from First Nations, parole officers, academics and content experts be invited as witnesses; that the Committee prepare a report with particular consideration to Indigenous offenders continuing to be released more frequently at statutory release than non-Indigenous offenders and to the reasons most Indigenous offenders did not complete correctional programs before becoming eligible for parole, to resource issues, to access to mental health services; that the Committee make recommendations; that the evidence received by the Committee as part of the briefing on the Annual Report 2014-2015 and 2015-2016 of the Office of the Correctional Investigator be deemed adduced to the Committee's study and; that the Committee report its findings to the House.

• (0900)

**The Chair:** Matthew.

**Mr. Matthew Dubé (Beloeil—Chambly, NDP):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Welcome to the committee, I suppose. We'll see how that plays out, but as you said, we will try to stay collegial.

With regard to the suggestion for this briefing, I'm certainly not opposed to it in principle and I'm always wary of starting a hierarchy of issues in these types of discussions, but as Monsieur Picard alluded to, a number of things have already been on a docket: motions from me, including one on the asylum seekers' situation, and motions from the Conservatives. Given the change in the

composition of the membership, perhaps their objectives have changed.

Nonetheless, the study that was just read out by the clerk, and among a whole slew of other things, given that Mr. Doherty's bill, I believe has passed third reading now and does put into place a round table with appropriate ministers discussing this kind of issue, and given that we have done the report before and we could probably talk about this particular topic forever—with no disrespect to the men and women who serve and who are attempting to help with this kind of study—at some point, if we keep coming back to the same topic and given the large number of things we want to deal with, I just feel that already losing a meeting to go back to something when there's so much ahead of us is not necessarily something I would be entirely open to doing, despite not being opposed to the idea in principle.

**The Chair:** Is there any other commentary?

I think that does give some guidance to the subcommittee. Unless there is a contrary suggestion, I'm open to an adjournment, and then we can proceed.

Do we have any other business that we should have covered?

**The Clerk:** If we want to do a joint sitting....

**The Chair:** The clerk has pointed out that if we want to do a joint sitting with the immigration committee, we have to have a motion to that effect. That doesn't bind us, I'm assuming, but that does give us the option.

Can I have someone...?

**Mr. Matthew Dubé:** I move the motion.

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

**Ms. Pam Damoff:** Can I ask a question?

Would this briefing be for one meeting?

**The Chair:** That's where I'm starting. I don't know where the briefing would lead.

**Ms. Pam Damoff:** Because our point of view—and Mr. Picard pointed this out to me—is that from the Public Safety perspective, we're more operational and immigration is....

We're certainly a very important cog in the wheel of what's going on at the borders, but I think if we were to dedicate one meeting to it, quite frankly we'd start having legislation that would be difficult to do a lot on in the short term. I don't know how quickly that could be arranged and whether that could fill our week next week until we get legislation, if we were to do it for one meeting.

**The Chair:** We could do it for one meeting and, according to the will of the committee, decide whether we wanted to go beyond one meeting. If we have this option on the table, we could at least do a joint meeting, or not, as the case may be.

Mr. Picard's points are well taken, that it is an operational issue. On the other hand, it's probably two-thirds public safety and one-third immigration in terms of weighting. It does seem to be an appropriate topic for which this committee should at least have a briefing.

Monsieur Picard.

[Translation]

**Mr. Michel Picard:** I simply want to explain my point more clearly.

With immigration cases or refugee claims, there are people on the ground handling the situation. There is an impression that Public Safety Canada is beset with the problem and that it is the most important player. But, actually, it just enforces the law, specifically the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act.

There is an impression that the RCMP, customs and other agencies are in charge of managing these cases, but they just enforce legislation from Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada. Those organizations have a much more visible presence on the ground, but the cases are the responsibility of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, not Public Safety Canada.

• (0905)

[English]

**The Chair:** Ultimately, that's true.

Before I ask for adjournment, could those parties who want to put witnesses forward on Bill C-21 start getting their witness lists ready so that the clerks can start to merge them? I don't see Mr. Holland here, but I expect that the government might have a witness or two on Bill C-21.

Pierre.

[Translation]

**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus:** I would like to go back to what Mr. Picard has just mentioned.

Personally, I feel that it is very important to understand the border control situation. RCMP and CBSA members have had to deal with a major problem this summer, particularly in Quebec.

Of course, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada manages the cases afterwards, but the peace officers actually had to deal with a real problem. Whatever the situation, border control is the responsibility of Public Safety Canada.

You mentioned the possibility of holding a joint meeting about that topic. That sort of goes back to the objective of the motion I introduced and that we have not yet discussed. I think we need to move forward.

[English]

**The Chair:** I think Matthew is up next.

**Mr. Matthew Dubé:** Was the motion moved? I thought I moved the motion, so do we just call the question or...?

**The Chair:** Refresh my memory on the motion. I apologize.

**Mr. Matthew Dubé:** You asked us if someone was ready to table the motion for the joint meeting, which I agreed to do. I don't know....

**The Chair:** Yes, you did, and I forgot all about it.

(Motion agreed to)

**The Chair:** Another victory for democracy.

I'm sorry that I wandered away from the conversation. I apologize for that.

**Ms. Pam Damoff:** I have a question. Do you need a motion for the clerk to investigate having the Canadian Mental Health Association come next to look at the road to mental readiness?

I'll move that, if it can be done next week. I don't want it to interfere with legislation or our study, but if we could have them come in next week for one meeting, I'll move that motion.

**The Chair:** Is there any discussion?

(Motion agreed to)

**The Chair:** Okay. That's guidance to the subcommittee.

Is there anything else?

Sven.

**Mr. Sven Spengemann:** Briefly for the benefit of the subcommittee, the study on indigenous corrections was a point of some importance to the committee as a whole and its formation at the time, and it remains a high priority for the Liberal side of this committee. If we can make sure that we fairly expediently find those four, five, or six sessions within the relatively intense legislative agenda that we have this fall and make sure that we can execute and deliver on this study, I would be grateful. I think it has slid backwards a couple of times in the agenda-setting process in the past term, but I think we should keep our eyes on that and give it the due priority it deserves.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

**Ms. Pam Damoff:** Mr. Chair, would the clerk be able to distribute the motion for that study to the committee members? We do have a number of new ones, and what you read was fairly lengthy.

**The Chair:** Yes.

[Translation]

**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus:** Mr. Chair, I recommend that the subcommittee should focus on the proposed program, select topics for discussion, and then submit its proposals to the committee.

[English]

**The Chair:** That is the idea of having the subcommittee afterwards.

Okay? That's good. Thank you. The meeting is adjourned.









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