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Chair: The Honourable Marc Garneau



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• (1640)

[*English*]

The Clerk of the Committee (Ms. Vanessa Davies): Honourable members of the committee, I see a quorum.

[*Translation*]

I must inform members that the clerk of the committee can only receive motions for the election of the chair. The clerk cannot receive other types of motions, cannot entertain points of order nor participate in debate.

[*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 for the chair.

Yes, Mr. Battiste.

Mr. Jaime Battiste (Sydney—Victoria, Lib.): Thank you, Madam Clerk.

I would like to nominate Marc Garneau as our chair.

The Clerk: It has been moved by Mr. Battiste that Mr. Garneau be elected chair of the committee.

Are there any further motions? I am not seeing any.

(Motion agreed to)

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

I invite Mr. Garneau to take the chair.

The Chair (Hon. Marc Garneau (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Westmount, Lib.)): Thank you very much, Madam Clerk.

[*Translation*]

Thank you, everyone. I will do my best to fulfill my role as chair of this important committee.

[*English*]

If the committee is in agreement, I invite the clerk to proceed with the election of the vice-chairs.

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

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

Yes, Mr. Battiste.

Mr. Jaime Battiste: I would like to nominate Jamie Schmale for vice-chair.

The Clerk: Thank you.

It has been moved by Mr. Battiste that Mr. Schmale be elected as first vice-chair of the committee.

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

(Motion agreed to)

The Clerk: Mr. Schmale is duly elected as 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 motions for the second vice-chair.

Go ahead, Mr. Schmale.

Mr. Jamie Schmale (Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock, CPC): I nominate Ms. Gill.

The Clerk: I'm sorry.

Mr. Chair, Ms. Atwin and Mr. Schmale both request the floor.

The Chair: From where I'm sitting virtually, I saw Ms. Atwin's hand go up first, so I suggest that we hear from her.

The Clerk: The chair recognizes Ms. Atwin.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Jenica Atwin (Fredericton, Lib.): Mr. Chair, I nominate Marilène Gill to be second vice-chair of the committee.

[*English*]

The Clerk: It has been moved by Ms. Atwin that Ms. Gill be elected as second vice-chair of the committee.

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

(Motion agreed to)

The Clerk: Ms. Gill is the duly elected second vice-chair of the committee.

The Chair: Thank you, Madam Clerk.

Colleagues, I have a few words before we move to the business of routine motions.

I would like to, first of all, welcome everyone to our first meeting of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs.

Today's meeting is taking place in a hybrid format, pursuant to the House order of November 25, 2021.

Members are attending in person in the room and remotely using the Zoom application.

Regarding the speaking list, the committee clerk and I will do our very best to maintain a consolidated order of speaking for all members, whether participating virtually or in person.

I would like to take this opportunity to remind all participants to this meeting that screenshots or taking photos of your screen is not permitted.

The proceedings will be made available via the House of Commons website.

[*Translation*]

Given the ongoing pandemic and in light of the recommendations from public health authorities, as well as the directive of the Board of Internal Economy on October 19, 2021, to remain healthy and safe, the following is recommended for all those attending the meeting in person.

First, anyone with symptoms should participate by Zoom and not attend the meeting in person.

Everyone must maintain two-metre physical distancing, whether seated or standing.

Everyone must wear a non-medical mask when moving about the room. It is strongly recommended that members wear their masks at all times, including when seated. Non-medical masks that allow for better sound are available in the room.

Everyone present must maintain proper hand hygiene by using the hand sanitizer at the room entrance.

Committee rooms are cleaned before and after each meeting. To maintain this, everyone is encouraged to use the wipes provided to clean surfaces, such as the desk, chair and microphone when vacating or taking a seat.

As the chair, I will be enforcing these measures for the duration of the meeting, and I thank members in advance for their co-operation.

● (1645)

[*English*]

Colleagues, I would suggest that as the next order of business the committee proceed to considering our routine motions. In preparation for this, the committee clerk has circulated a list of routine motions that the committee adopted in the last parliamentary session. The committee clerk is also able to answer any questions about the routine motions that you may have.

Mr. Weiler has his hand raised.

Mr. Patrick Weiler (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I just want to propose a motion to adopt the routine motions that have been circulated through the clerk.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Weiler.

Are there any other comments from members? If you're there virtually, please raise your hand. I cannot see if somebody in the room is raising their hand, so I will depend on the clerk for that.

Mr. Schmale, I yield the floor to you.

Mr. Jamie Schmale: Thank you, Chair.

My question is in regard to the subcommittee. When we come back, probably in February, I was wondering if it's possible to arrange for a subcommittee meeting as soon as possible, so that when we come back, the agenda—or at least our future studies—is already somewhat planned out, subject to approval of the committee. That way the clerks have ample time to arrange witnesses and we're able to have a direction taking us potentially right through spring and into June.

The Chair: Mr. Battiste.

Mr. Jaime Battiste: I do agree that we should get a subcommittee, but I believe that we have to go through the routine motions first before we get into the discussion around the subcommittee. While I am in agreement with our learned vice-chair, it's my understanding that we have to go through the routine motions first.

I would ask the clerk to give me a sense of whether that is correct or not.

The Chair: I can confirm that for you, Mr. Battiste. Yes, we first have to adopt the routine motions, one of which includes the subcommittee on agenda and procedure.

Are there any comments concerning Mr. Weiler's proposed motion that we adopt the routine motions that were provided by the clerk?

The Clerk: Mr. Chair, if I may, are you seeking unanimous consent for the adoption of the routine motions?

The Chair: I wanted to see if anybody wanted to say anything. Otherwise, I will be looking for unanimous consent, yes.

I see no hands raised. Therefore, I would ask the committee for unanimous consent to adopt the routine motions that were presented by the clerk to each member before the meeting.

(Motions agreed to)

● (1650)

The Chair: Thank you. That covers the business. Are there other items?

I see that Mr. Battiste has his hand up.

Mr. Jaime Battiste: Yes. I wish to continue the discussion that Mr. Schmale raised on establishing a subcommittee.

I had spoken to some of the parties and I think we have support to move forward with this. One of the first things about being on the Indigenous and northern affairs committee is understanding the terminology, the correct and most respectful processes whereby we can move forward as a committee.

I have floated as an idea to the other parties that we start off with a historic first as our first meeting in January and have a training session. One of the greatest examples that I have seen used is the Kairos blanket exercise. That is an interactive tool whereby we can learn about and go through cultural sensitivity, as well as training and education on indigenous history and indigenous terminology. I think it has been well received across Canada. I look to the parties to see if we can start off our meeting in January with that kind of training session.

We look to the establishment of a subcommittee to iron out the details of how we move forward on that. Based on what we've heard lately, with some of the things that are around, I think it's good to have a subcommittee that can meet and discuss this, but also, I understand, there is the option of virtual training sessions.

I think both of those things would be very beneficial for this committee. I look to the other parties for their support in moving forward in this historic first to open our minds and our hearts before we start into motions on areas of studies—first to learn and to hear.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Battiste.

Does any other member wish to comment on what Mr. Battiste has said?

[*Translation*]

The Clerk: Mrs. Gill would like to speak.

Mrs. Marilène Gill (Manicouagan, BQ): Thank you, Madam Clerk.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I would like to ask several questions about what Mr. Battiste said. I will tell you what I understand, but please let me know if I am mistaken. First of all, I don't know what Mr. Battiste means by the word training. I understand the whole question of awareness and knowledge of history, which, in my opinion, is primarily the responsibility of each elected representative.

I'm just wondering if this is happening outside the committee. As Mr. Schmale said, the committee should be starting work soon. Would these hours be in addition to the committee meetings? Although I've been an MP for six years, I've only been on committees for three, and the election happened very quickly. So I'm wondering if this is common practice, and I feel like a precedent is being set.

I'm not saying that setting a precedent is a bad thing. In fact, I want to see Quebec become independent. However, I have some questions. I would like to hear my colleagues from each of the parties on this subject, and I would like to know if we could make a more substantial proposal. I'm willing to support this proposal, but I feel responsible, and I would like to know more about what I'm agreeing to.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you, Madame Gill.

Mr. Battiste, would it be possible to elaborate a little more on the proposed first meeting and the opportunity to sensitize and educate

so that Madame Gill will have a better sense of what we're talking about?

As I understand it, this is something you are proposing that would be a starting at the first meeting so that it will help to guide us in subsequent meetings. Perhaps you could elaborate a bit more for Madame Gill.

Mr. Jaime Battiste: Yes. To be clear, this is something that we discussed in the previous INAN committee—in the 43rd—at the start and that didn't end up happening, but I thought we had a good discussion around it. This would be at the first meeting we have when we are back in January. It will be during the two-hour normal business meeting, but instead of looking at motions and studies, we would start off by having an education session.

I would suggest the Kairos witness blanket, but I would also look to the subcommittee, which I assume would have one member from each of the parties on it, so that when we come back as a committee as a whole we would have all of the details ironed out. That's where I believe the subcommittee could be utilized.

To be clear, this would be the first time that the INAN committee is doing this, and I think it's an important first step in moving forward.

• (1655)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Battiste.

The floor is yours, Madam Idlout.

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Qujannamiik, Uqaqtittiji.*

I would like to show my support for having some sort of orientation session. I like the idea of having it during our two-hour normal meeting so that it could be recorded and we could go back to it if we needed to.

I would also like to suggest that in that training or orientation session, we make sure that part of the content differentiates between the realities that were experienced by first nations, Métis and Inuit, because we all have very different experiences, although a lot of the treatment may have been the same. I think we've come to realize that we have important unique differences between our cultures. I think it would be great to make sure that the subcommittee does a few things, including identifying facilitators who are experts in first nations, Métis or Inuit areas as well as making sure that we discuss good questions as Marilène just suggested. We do have really good questions that I think the subcommittee could really help hash out in preparation for our first session in January.

When I want to ask a question later on a different topic, will I just need to raise my hand? As an Inuk, a bilingual Inuk, and an Inuk with constituents who still speak only Inuktitut, I think it would be amazing if I could have interpretation services in Inuktitut, as have been provided in the House of Commons, when I'm able to speak. I would like to ask if this would be a possibility in this committee as well.

Qujannamiik for allowing me to speak.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Madam Idlout.

With respect to translation services, I will have to defer to the clerk on that issue.

Are there other members who wish to speak on Mr. Battiste's proposal?

Go ahead, Mr. Badawey.

Mr. Vance Badawey (Niagara Centre, Lib.): Thank you.

I'd like to put forward a motion that we establish a subcommittee and that each party submit names of who they would like to have on that subcommittee, and that the meeting of this subcommittee be the first meeting and that it would look at the issues we're discussing right now.

I'm sure everyone has an interest in how we will move forward as a committee. That being the case, that discussion can happen at the subcommittee. I would even go as far as having the subcommittee speak about prioritizing what all parties would like to see us move forward on. Obviously Mr. Battiste's intervention would be the first one. As the member mentioned earlier, the blueprint of that process can be discussed at that meeting.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Badawey. There is just one point for clarification.

Is your proposal that, with regard to the formation of the subcommittee, which we definitely have to undertake, it meet prior to our first intended meeting, which would be when we come back at the end of January, so it would already have looked at Mr. Battiste's proposal or any other substantial motions, or that it do this when we return at the end of January?

• (1700)

Mr. Vance Badawey: I mean before the next meeting, yes, since we have only so much meeting time between now and the end of June. We have our allocated times twice a week. I'm sure everyone wants to dive right into the issues, the studies and the hearings, as well as the session that Mr. Battiste talked about. With all that said, I think the subcommittee can meet prior to that. It can somewhat set

the agenda as well as the blueprint for that first meeting, and then we can go from there.

The Chair: Is there agreement amongst the members as to what Mr. Badawey has proposed?

I see an agreement. It's a little bit difficult to see all the unanimity that is oozing through this committee right now, but it sounds like we must choose our subcommittee. There are established procedures for choosing that subcommittee, as you all know. I would encourage us to do this from the different parties, and that we form the subcommittee as quickly as possible.

I will also say that one of the tasks of the subcommittee, as proposed by Mr. Battiste—and I didn't see any objections—would be to elaborate on the details of that first cultural sensitivity session.

I would also say to the different parties that if you have substantial motions that you wish to bring forward for study by this committee, this would also be an opportunity for you to provide those to the clerk, and they may be able to be studied by the subcommittee once it is formed.

Go ahead, Mr. Badawey.

Mr. Vance Badawey: I don't see any other hands up, so I would be prepared to put a motion forward to adjourn.

The Chair: I don't see any other hands up at this point, so I'm going to assume that is unanimous.

Thank you very much, everyone, for this first meeting. I think we accomplished what we needed to accomplish, and I think we've already set the tone for future meetings. Again, I urge you all to work together to get the subcommittee appointed as quickly as possible so that we can begin to flesh out the very important motions and items we will be busy with in the coming months.

Thank you very much. I declare the first meeting adjourned.

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