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The Honourable Andrew Telegdi

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• (1530)

[English]

The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. William Farrell): I see a quorum present.

I would like to refer everybody to section two of your agenda. I'll read it into the record.

Standing Order 106(2) states that:

...each standing or special committee shall elect a Chair and two Vice-Chairs, of whom the Chair shall be a Member of the government party, the first Vice-Chair shall be a Member of the Official Opposition, and the second Vice-Chair shall be a Member of an opposition party other than the Official Opposition party.

The first item of business is the election of the chair. I open the nominations.

Mr. Temelkovski.

Mr. Lui Temelkovski (Oak Ridges—Markham, Lib.): Mr. Chair, it's my pleasure to nominate a colleague, Mr. Andrew Telegdi. He did a remarkable job in the first session.

I see eyebrows being lifted. I think that's in concurrence, but it could be the other way.

It's my great pleasure to nominate Andrew.

The Clerk: Are there any further nominations for chair?

I close the nominations.

(Motion agreed to)

The Clerk: It is adopted. Mr. Telegdi is the chair of the committee.

We now have the election of the vice-chair for the official opposition. I open the nominations.

Mrs. Diane Ablonczy (Calgary—Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Chair, sadly, I don't have a flowery speech, but I would like to nominate Mr. Art Hanger for first vice-chair.

The Clerk: Are there any further nominations?

I close the nominations.

(Motion agreed to)

The Clerk: It's carried. Mr. Hanger is the vice-chair for the official opposition.

We now have the election of the second vice-chair. I open the nominations.

Mr. Telegdi.

The Chair (Hon. Andrew Telegdi (Kitchener—Waterloo, Lib.)): I concede the floor to Mr. Siksay.

Mr. Bill Siksay (Burnaby—Douglas, NDP): I'll nominate Ms. Faille as second vice-chair.

The Clerk: Are there further nominations?

I close the nominations.

(Motion agreed to)

The Clerk: I declare Madam Faille duly elected as second vice-chair of the committee.

I'll now invite Mr. Telegdi to take the chair.

The Chair: I thank my nominator and members of the committee.

I actually want to say that when I became chair, I kind of issued a challenge to the committee to work in as much of a non-partisan fashion as possible, because there are many issues we agree on. I'm really glad and grateful to the members of the committee for allowing that to happen.

We produced lots of reports, and I know we're all getting a little antsy to get going on legislation. Let me say this. We're soon going to be getting some legislation pertaining to the Citizenship Act. Given the fact that we have done so much work, that's really great.

I was remiss in one area, and I'll be asking the committee for concurrence.

In the last year, we did a lot of work. Nina attended many of the committee meetings. She was on tour with us, and she visited the great city of Waterloo. I might say that maybe next year we'll hopefully find an occasion to be there right around Oktoberfest time, because you can certainly get a feel for the culture.

Welcome, Nina.

The thing I was going to ask is that we put her name on the cross-country tour report, the electronic version of the report. I think that would be proper.

I remember when I was not a member of this committee, but I attended with the committee on their travels. The chair put my name on one of the reports that I spent a particularly long time working on.

Mr. Hanger, welcome. I remember that we crossed on the citizenship issue back in 2000.

• (1535)

Mr. Art Hanger (Calgary Northeast, CPC): Yes, we did.

The Chair: I think you gave a great speech on the charter and what it meant, so I appreciate you being here on the committee.

Mr. Clerk, you have a proposed newly revised meeting schedule.

If I could have somebody move the newly revised schedule, we could adopt it. It's pretty well the same as we had before.

Mr. Temelkovski.

Mr. Lui Temelkovski: I move that we adopt the schedule for the following meetings, as presented to us.

The Chair: Okay, thank you.

Second?

Mrs. Diane Ablonczy: No, I just want to speak to it.

The Chair: All right, Diane.

Mrs. Diane Ablonczy: Mr. Chairman, we are now considering our priorities. I have read Ben Dolin's draft on family reunification. It is a very important issue, of course, but I just wonder whether that's the best use of our time right now, to be honest with you.

Basically, well into November we have family reunification. But as I recall, our next priority, as set about a year ago, was credentials, yet we have maybe one day on that late in November.

The minister has been talking about the need to re-examine our point system to get more skilled trades in. That has become, I think, a very pressing issue, so I really would like to hear from my colleagues on whether, as I propose, we shouldn't move credentials up and leave these other issues for a little bit later, just because it really is becoming a huge issue, particularly here in Ontario.

• (1540)

The Chair: What I was going to suggest—because I think things will become clearer soon in terms of the amount of work we're going to get—is that we leave it for the steering committee, because we have the minister coming in, too. And then we have to report on Bill C-283 by November 25. We're having a steering committee meeting on Thursday, from noon until 1:30, and maybe we can work through some of that at that point in time.

Mrs. Diane Ablonczy: That's fine.

The Chair: I appreciate what you're saying now. We're going to get something on the numbers as well. The minister talked about increasing the numbers, and it could very well tie right in. So we'll leave it until Thursday for the steering committee, and then we'll come back to it as a committee.

Mrs. Diane Ablonczy: The committee will still have to approve it, but I'm happy to follow the chair's lead on that.

The Chair: The reason we have a short meeting today is that we have the memorial service and wish to allow members a chance to attend. But we'll deal with it on Thursday at the steering committee, and then we'll come back to the full committee and hopefully have a little more idea about the pieces of legislation coming down and their timeframe.

Mr. Anderson.

Hon. David Anderson (Victoria, Lib.): Just to guide the steering committee, of which I'm not a member, I would agree with my colleague Diane that this is going to take a lot more than one meeting. The issue of credentials is largely provincial in terms of the professional associations and trades associations, and I feel it would take quite some time, or a number of meetings at least, to deal with it effectively. This is very much an important issue, given current concerns.

The Chair: I agree wholeheartedly, and I just want to point out that the operative word is that on November 22 the committee will commence. So it certainly won't be one meeting, but a fair number of meetings, which I think ties in very much with the numbers the minister is going to be presenting. So that is well advised.

So we will put off the motion by Mr. Temelkovski and we'll deal with it on Thursday—if that's satisfactory, Mr. Temelkovski?

Mr. Lui Temelkovski: Yes.

The Chair: Thank you.

The meeting is adjourned.

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