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• (1105)

[English]

The Clerk of the Committee: Are the members ready to start? I see a quorum.

There is one item of business on your agenda, and it's to elect a chair.

[Translation]

I am ready to entertain motions for the election of the committee chair.

[English]

Mr. Derek Lee (Scarborough—Rouge River, Lib.): I'd like to nominate David Chatters as chair of the committee.

The Clerk: Are there any other nominations?

Mr. Lee has moved that David Chatters be elected chair of this committee. Is it the pleasure of the committee to adopt the said motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

The Clerk: Unanimous. I declare Mr. Chatters duly elected chair of this committee in absentia. He is not here today.

I have received something from Mr. Chatters that I will be distributing to you.

Now if the committee so wishes, we can proceed to the election of vice-chairs.

Are there any nominations for the first vice-chair of this committee, who has to be a member from the government party? I'm ready to receive motions.

Yes, Madam Jennings.

Hon. Marlene Jennings (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine, Lib.): I propose Derek Lee.

The Clerk: Madam Jennings has moved that Derek Lee be elected first vice-chair of this committee. Is it the pleasure of the committee to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

The Clerk: Unanimous.

For second vice-chair, the Standing Orders provide that the second vice-chair of this committee be a member from a party of the opposition, not the official opposition.

Do I have motions for the election of a second vice-chair of this committee?

[Translation]

Mr. Mario Laframboise (Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, BQ): I nominate Mr. Pat Martin.

[English]

The Clerk: Mr. Martin.

Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Through the clerk, I would speak briefly to the nomination.

I want to thank my colleague for nominating me, and I am willing to stand on the condition that you should be aware that negotiations are under way among the opposition parties, and likely in the next day or two I would step down and a different person will be put in that place. It's yet to be determined who that should be. In the interim, I'm willing and honoured to be nominated and to fill that position.

The Clerk: Mr. Epp.

Mr. Ken Epp (Edmonton—Sherwood Park, CPC): I have a question. Is there anything in our Standing Orders or regulations or rules with respect to how many vice-chair positions one individual can hold? It's a question of curiosity.

The Clerk: The Standing Orders provide for committees to elect a chair and two vice-chairs. Whether a committee could adopt a motion to have more than two, that's a good question.

Mr. Ken Epp: There is no regulation on that.

The Clerk: There is a problem about salaries. There is provision in the House of Commons Act for a special annual amount for a vice-chair, and I would be surprised if it's not limited to—

Mr. Ken Epp: I would be surprised if somebody could have half a dozen of them or something like that.

Hon. Marlene Jennings: In fact, the rules of the House do not preclude an individual from occupying a position, for instance of vice-chair, on more than one committee, but in terms of the allocation the rules do limit the vice-chair allocation to one committee. Therefore, the person cannot receive... If it's a \$5,000 allocation for being vice-chair, and the person is vice-chair of three committees, the individual will only receive one \$5,000 payment, not three.

Mr. Ken Epp: And where is that? Is that a ruling of the Board of Internal Economy?

Hon. Marlene Jennings: I couldn't pull it for you, but it was an issue about two years ago, and it was at that point that the rules were tightened up so that the allocation is only paid once. But there's nothing that precludes an individual from being vice-chair on this committee and vice-chair on another committee. It's the same thing for chair, I believe.

Mr. Ken Epp: Okay. Thank you.

The Clerk: Mr. Lee.

Mr. Derek Lee: We probably don't have to talk about this too much longer, but on the issue of the second vice-chair, electing someone as a vice-chair triggers certain administrative and financial patterns that happen. There are costs attached to those. If we're going to change this a week from now, it might be just as cost-effective to wait for a week and do it then. It may not even be a week. It may just be a couple of meetings.

So I would suggest that we simply defer the election of the second vice-chair for another meeting or two, and when the parties have made up their minds, we'll just do it quickly at that time. That's my suggestion.

Mr. Pat Martin: I understand what Mr. Lee is saying. Perhaps I didn't speak clearly as to what our view is.

I've been asked to maintain the NDP vice-chair position of this committee for the time being. It's possible that negotiations may take place among the opposition parties.

As you know, the vice-chairs are distributed on a pro-rated basis by virtue of the size of their representation in their caucus. The NDP has five opposition vice-chairs. We have five committees where we get to serve as one of the vice-chairs.

There's some horse-trading going on at another level. It may be that this will just be a holding pattern, but I don't see any reason not

to carry on with the status quo for now, until that agreement is mutually reached by all of the whips—not just the opposition whips.

• (1110)

The Clerk: Are members ready for the question?

The motion is from Monsieur Laframboise that Pat Martin be elected second vice-chair of this committee.

(Motion agreed to)

The Clerk: I declare Mr. Pat Martin duly elected second vice-chair of this committee.

I now invite one of the two vice-chairs to take the chair to consider a motion for an acting chair of this committee.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Derek Lee): Seeing no objections, I'll assume the chair.

There's a motion out there somewhere, and I have a motion in writing from Mr. Lukiwski, pertaining to the nomination of Mr. Tilson as acting chair when Mr. Chatters cannot be here. I'm advised that the wording is the same wording this committee has used in previous months except for a change in the dates.

Does anyone wish to have the motion read? May I put the motion, then, without debate?

Okay, I'll put the motion. All those in favour of electing Mr. Tilson as acting chair in the absence of Mr. Chatters, our chair?

(Motion agreed to)

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Derek Lee): The motion is adopted. Thank you.

The Clerk: We will adjourn this meeting, and we will start the next meeting in five minutes.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Derek Lee): Thank you, Mr. Clerk.

Prior to beginning the next meeting with Mr. Tilson in the chair, we will adjourn for five minutes.

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