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Thursday, May 11, 2006

—
Chair

Mr. Dean Allison

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• (1310)

[English]

The Clerk of the Committee (Ms. Marie-Andrée Lajoie): Ladies and gentlemen, we will start.

Honourable members of the committee, I see a quorum.

[Translation]

In accordance with Standing Order 107, our first item of business is the election of the chair.

[English]

I am ready to receive motions to this effect.

Mr. Casson.

Mr. Rick Casson (Lethbridge, CPC): I nominate the chair of the HRSD committee, Dean Allison.

The Clerk: Are there other nominations?

Is the committee in agreement with this nomination?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

The Clerk: Before I give the chair to Mr. Allison, we have to elect a vice-chair, and I also have to preside over the election of the vice-chair.

Can I have nominations for the position of vice-chair?

Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South): I nominate Tom Wappel.

The Clerk: Mr. Szabo nominates Mr. Wappel.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

(Motion agreed to)

The Clerk: Thank you very much.

I will now ask Mr. Allison to take his position as the chair of the liaison committee.

The Chair (Mr. Dean Allison (Niagara West—Glanbrook, CPC)): I call this meeting to order.

You all have an agenda in front of you. Let's look at number three. We need seven members for a subcommittee on committee budgets, so we need to pass a motion now to come up with seven individuals who will be looking after and making recommendations back to the main committee on the budgets of the committees that are being brought forward.

Do we have some nominations?

Mr. Wappel.

Mr. Tom Wappel (Scarborough Southwest, Lib.): This is sort of an informal committee, so I don't think we should stand on too much procedure. I think it would be logical that the chair and the vice-chair be on the committee. That would leave a minimum of five. I think the people who are interested should simply put up their hands, if I may make that suggestion, obviously bearing in mind that the Conservatives would want to be in the majority.

Just for those who have not been on the committee before and don't know, all of the budgets of all of the committees come before this committee. The subcommittee on budgets examines those, using a variety of criteria, and makes certain recommendations that then come to the full committee. Then the budgets are discussed again, with the recommendations of the subcommittee.

With those comments, I would certainly think the chairman and the vice-chairman should be on that subcommittee.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Wappel.

I've just been informed here that the chair and the vice-chair are suggested, along with three government and two opposition members.

Mr. Anders.

Mr. Rob Anders (Calgary West, CPC): I nominate Mr. Rajotte.

Mr. Gerry Ritz (Battlefords—Lloydminster, CPC): How much of a time commitment would there be? It's going to vary, but...

Mr. Tom Wappel: Perhaps the clerk would be able to help us out here.

The Clerk: Basically the liaison committee is scheduled, if needed, to meet once a month as a full liaison committee. The subcommittee might be meeting more often to consider some budget, but we're not talking about regular biweekly meetings or anything of that nature.

• (1315)

The Chair: It always starts with just one meeting a month.

All right, so I have Mr. Rajotte as one of the...

Mr. James Rajotte (Edmonton—Leduc, CPC): Mr. Chair, I'll serve if need be, but I think I'd follow Mr. Wappel's suggestion, and if there are members who want to be part of this committee, I would of course defer to them.

The Chair: That's a definite "maybe". Good.

Ms. Sgro has volunteered, and Mr. Lauzon.

We're up to two definites and one maybe, all right?

Now we have Mr. Merrifield and Mr. Hanger.

Mr. Rajotte, you have been bumped out by....

We need one more opposition member. Is there someone from the opposition who would be interested in sitting on that committee?

Do we have another Liberal? Mr. Szabo, thank you very much.

I now move that the chair, the vice-chair, Mr. Hanger, Mr. Lauzon, Mr. Merrifield, Ms. Sgro, and Mr. Szabo comprise the subcommittee on committee budgets.

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: We'll move on to item number 4 in the agenda, "Meetings of the Committee". It reads "that the meetings of the Liaison Committee be held the first Thursday of each month at 1 p. m. and that a working meal be paid out of the Committee's budget at the discretion of the Chair".

Mr. Gerry Ritz: Tim Hortons every week.

The Chair: Tim Hortons or Wendy's.

Mr. Pallister.

Mr. Brian Pallister (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Can we make it clear that we're not meeting the first Thursday of July, August, September, other months?

The Chair: That sounds reasonable—when the House is sitting.

Mr. Wappel.

Mr. Tom Wappel: Mr. Chair, I don't want to be a pain, but the committee traditionally met from one till two—two o'clock, of course, being question period most times. It never started at one, because people kind of wandered in. So there was never an immediate quorum at exactly one o'clock, and there was not the opportunity to consider the later budget requests, because people were leaving or we would lose quorum or something like that.

I'm wondering if we could perhaps try to start at 12:30, if at all possible, and then maybe peter out at about a quarter to two, so those who have SOs and those who have questions and things like that....

Now, of course, the problem is there may be committees that are sitting, and I don't know that, but I can just tell committee members that between one and two is a very short period of time to deal with the requests that have to be dealt with, especially when it doesn't start at one.

The Chair: Mr. Goodyear.

Mr. Gary Goodyear (Cambridge, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I have just a couple of points. That's fine if we start at 12:30; I have a committee meeting from eleven till one, so I will be showing up late.

The second thing is that on May 18, I believe, the Australian Prime Minister is here. That's a Thursday and—

Some hon. members: It's the first Thursday of the month.

Mr. Gary Goodyear: Thank you very much. My apologies.

The Chair: Mr. Murphy, and then back to Mr. Szabo.

Hon. Shawn Murphy (Charlottetown, Lib.): Mr. Chair, I have the very same comment. I think you're going to find at least three or four committees meeting from eleven to one. If you're the chair you can't, obviously, leave before one, and a lot of times you don't get out of there until a quarter after one, so it does make it somewhat difficult.

The Chair: My suggestion is to maybe try to gather here in the room at a quarter to one to be punctual, to get started. Obviously, it's also dependent on the availability of rooms. I'd just urge you to try to be here as close to one as possible, and if we have quorum, then we're off to the races.

Are there any other comments on that?

So it will be one o'clock, then, and we're going to ask people, if they're going to be here at a quarter to one, to grab a quick bite, and then we'll try to get started as close to one as we can.

(Motion agreed to) [See *Minutes of Proceedings*]

● (1320)

The Chair: I'll move on to motion 5, on services of analysts from the Library of Parliament, which is "that the Committee retain the services of one or more analysts from the Library of Parliament, as needed, to assist the Committee in its work, at the discretion of the Chair".

An hon. member: So moved.

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: Now, motion 6, in camera—

An hon. member: Carried.

(Motion agreed to) [See *Minutes of Proceedings*]

The Chair: We'll go to motion 7, on financing of committee activities. We'll go in camera for this.

[*Proceedings continue in camera*]

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