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Chair

Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault

Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics

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•(1600)

[Translation]

The Chair (Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP)): Good afternoon, everyone, and welcome to the 61st meeting of the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics.

Today, pursuant to the order of reference of Monday, December 10, 2012, section 67 of the Conflict of Interest Act and the motion adopted by the committee on Tuesday, December 11, 2012, we begin the statutory review of the Conflict of Interest Act.

Before we begin our study, Mr. Angus has a point of order.

[English]

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'd like to welcome Ms. Dawson, and show our great respect for her. Out of our respect for her, I feel very uncomfortable about going forward today if we have a broken meeting where we're not really going to be able to sit down and speak with her. This is the key testimony we need for the entire study we're going to have. If we have a partial start and then we have to stop and then we try and come back, we won't actually get down to the work we have.

I feel very bad about this, but I would prefer that we invite her back at a time when we can do this properly in a full two-hour session. Otherwise, I feel that we're not going to be getting off the ground the way we need to. I'd prefer that we not go ahead at this point.

[Translation]

The Chair: I have checked, and this way to proceed is an option, provided we have unanimous consent.

The clerk is telling me that the committee must first adopt a motion to that effect. I will read it in English:

[English]

That the proposed project budget in the amount of \$23 500, in relation to the statutory review of the Conflict of Interest Act, be adopted.

[Translation]

This is simply a procedural motion that sets out the budget, which is \$23,500.

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: As for the suggestion to adjourn the committee meeting and schedule a full meeting with the commissioner, do we have unanimous consent?

[English]

Mr. Scott Andrews (Avalon, Lib.): Mr. Chair, I sympathize and I concur with Mr. Angus's suggestion. However, looking at the time, Ms. Dawson is here now and we could hear her opening statement and then hold the question session for a full two hours at a later date to maximize the use of the committee's time. That would be okay. She's here now. Why not listen to the opening statement and then proceed with questions at another time?

The Chair: Mr. Warkentin.

Mr. Chris Warkentin (Peace River, CPC): Mr. Chair, I'm not entirely opposed to the idea of having the testimony, but I think it's probably best that we hear the testimony and then we have the opportunity immediately to ask questions. I think that's probably the more appropriate way to proceed. I do apologize to Ms. Dawson. These parliamentary procedures, as you know, are outside of our control, and it has nothing to do with anybody at this table, but we think it would be more appropriate probably to do it that way as well. That's my view at least.

[Translation]

The Chair: I am in the hands of the committee. I don't think we have unanimous consent regarding Mr. Angus's proposal. Therefore, I am asking for unanimous consent with respect to Mr. Angus's earlier suggestion to adjourn the meeting and schedule another one, where the commissioner would appear for two full hours. We could then hear her testimony and ask some questions.

The clerk is telling me that we will be hearing from witnesses next Monday and that the commissioner could probably testify afterwards. She would not necessarily be the first witness in our study. I ask that you keep that in mind before voting.

Do we have unanimous consent regarding the proposal to proceed in this manner?

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: So we will adjourn the meeting, unfortunately. We would have liked to hear from you, but we will set another date that may be more convenient.

The meeting is adjourned.

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