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Chair

Mr. James Bezan

Standing Committee on National Defence

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● (1100)

[English]

The Chair (Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake, CPC)): Good morning, everyone. We'll start our meeting.

I see that Mr. Strahl has his hand up.

Before we go to you, Mr. Strahl, I will just say that we have orders of the day. We're going to deal with committee business.

Mr. Strahl, and then Mr. Harris.

Mr. Strahl.

Mr. Mark Strahl (Chilliwack—Fraser Canyon, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

As we will be discussing future committee business, and as is the practice of this committee, I move that we go in camera.

The Chair: That is a dilatory motion. It's non-debatable, so we go straight to the vote.

A voice: It's not debatable?

The Chair: It's non-debatable. I checked with the clerk. It's a dilatory motion. It's a procedure issue, so we're going directly to the vote that we go in camera.

Mr. Jack Harris (St. John's East, NDP): I have an objection to that. I have a point of order.

The Chair: You can speak on a point of order, but not to debate the motion. The motion is a dilatory motion, which means it is non-debatable.

Mr. Jack Harris: We're dealing with a very extraordinary circumstance, with the House of Commons putting a bill before the House, under the guise of a particular budget motion, that changes substantial legislation. We should be dealing with this. This has to be something that our committee can study.

We're trying to let this committee do its work. The idea is to do its work in public so that people will know what's going on. Talking

about separating a piece of legislation so that it can actually be debated by Canadians—that's something that should be debated, and debated openly.

It's one thing to say it's a procedural motion and therefore you can't do it. But there's a substantive notion as to whether we actually have Parliament working. That's what we're dealing with here. It can't be that just because someone moves a motion to go in camera, all of a sudden this committee is shut down by the government members. Because that's what is going to happen here. When this goes to a vote, these people over here are going to say yes, we're going to go in camera. Then the motions they don't like will disappear. That's what is going to happen here. We all know that.

We're just exercising a charade. I am shocked, Mr. Chairman, that the rules of this committee and this House are being abused in this manner again and again by the government, under instructions, obviously, from on high. It's outrageous, and we're objecting to it.

The Chair: I'm not going to allow any more debate on this. That's a debatable issue.

I've checked with the clerk. It's right in chapter 20 that dilatory motions are anything that are to limit debate, to adjourn, or to change process. It's not substantive. It's not about changing a motion itself. This is about procedure in terms of the way the committee functions.

I'm going to go straight to the vote. All those in favour of the motion?

● (1105)

Mr. Jack Harris: Could we have a recorded vote?

The Chair: We'll have a recorded vote.

(Motion agreed to: yeas 6; nays 5)

The Chair: We'll switch to in camera. We'll suspend until we're in camera.

[*Proceedings continue in camera*]

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