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Chair

Mr. David Christopherson

Standing Committee on Public Accounts

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• (1530)

[English]

The Chair (Mr. David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre, NDP)): I call the meeting to order. This is the 13th meeting of the public accounts committee of Canada.

Obviously we are going to be interrupted; the bells are already going.

Mr. Kramp has a motion/suggestion/recommendation to make. He's getting copies made, so we can hold on that until.... Hopefully those will be available by the time we come back from voting.

We have to address a couple of little things, and then we'll head off to vote. The first is to recognize Mr. Allen, who is not here yet, but Mr. Allen will be replacing Monsieur Caron. Some of you remember Malcolm from the last Parliament. When they started to load me up with other files, he often filled in for me.

Here he is now.

One of the things we need to do is to amend.... I'm hoping we can do this really quickly. To the vice-chairs and the steering committee, I'm sorry that I didn't speak to you ahead of time, but it's a matter of moving a motion that allows Mr. Allen to become a part of the steering committee. Could I just get a motion that the committee agrees that Mr. Allen will be the replacement for Monsieur Guy Caron on the steering committee?

An hon. member: I so move.

The Chair: So moved. Is there any discussion? Hearing none, all in favour? Please indicate any opposed.

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: It is so ordered; we've cleaned that up.

Welcome, Malcolm. This is a return visit for you—in a different chair, but the same gig.

Maybe we could give some thought to the following. I say to Mr. Allen, Mr. Kramp, and Mr. Byrne that we need to have a steering committee for this week, and we still have to force ourselves to sit down and find a regular time that works. I'm left scrambling every Monday playing catch-up with the agenda, with the steering committee. Maybe we can all touch base during the interim.

Also, Mr. Jeff Graham is joining us to work along with Alex. He's been seconded from the Auditor General's Office, and of course I know the committee will welcome Mr. Graham and wish him all the best on our committee. Welcome aboard.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

The Chair: That's as good as it gets, so soak it up.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Chair: All right, I think that will hold us. Unless anybody has anything urgent, I am going to suggest that you grant me permission to suspend until we've concluded our voting, and then we will return. Is everybody okay with that?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Chair: Therefore I declare this meeting suspended until called back to order by the chair.

• (1530)

_____ (Pause) _____

• (1700)

The Chair: I now call this meeting back to order.

Mr. Kramp has a motion. Just before I go to Mr. Kramp, though, I want to bring colleagues up to speed if I can.

During the interim, when we were voting, etc., the current Auditor General, Mr. Wiersema, asked to speak with me, so I had a quick chat with him. I need to advise the committee that November 27 will be his last day. I can't think of the title of the bill, but because of one of the staff bills or rules, it's necessary for there to be a week between any active service and any continuing service. The good news is that Mr. Wiersema has agreed to continue in an advisory capacity to the new Auditor General, which is very good. Normally we try to plan for an overlap where there's a six-month hand-off, but that won't happen. Instead, Mr. Wiersema has agreed to come back as an adviser.

However, the point is, first of all, to tell you that, and secondly, to tell you that it means that for the week of November 28 he cannot appear before committee because he's a private citizen again and has no status at the committee. I'm mentioning this for Mr. Kramp in particular, because I won't be here next week. I'm doing another election monitoring mission in Morocco.

Mr. Kramp will be acting chair for next week, but I need you to know that Mr. Wiersema is not available for any planning you do at that time, and also, all members should be aware of that as we consider what Mr. Kramp is about to put in front of us. If I can, by way of a tee-up on what Mr. Kramp is going to suggest, I'll say that he has a number of recommendations about meetings going forward.

The first one deals with what we will do on Wednesday. Right now we don't have any plans for Wednesday. If we don't approve something, I don't have a reason to call the meeting. As you know, technically our meetings happen because the chair calls them, so we really need that piece of work.

As for the rest of it, Mr. Kramp is going to place it before us. If it's smooth sailing and everybody's okay, then we'll do it quickly here. If not, the recommendation from me is that we take a motion prior to adjourning at 5:30 that refers all unconcluded matters to the steering committee. Then they would bring things forward.

So that's where we are. If there are no points of order or anything else, I will move to Mr. Kramp, who now has the floor.

Mr. Daryl Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings, CPC): Thank you, Chair.

I would propose two motions. For the first motion that I will present...and I would hope that we wouldn't be in camera on this. This should be straightforward. There should not be a problem with this. We're just looking at Wednesday's schedule. We would be looking at a continuation from witnesses who were here previously.

I would propose that on Wednesday, November 16, we resume the study of chapter 3, "Internal Audit", of the 2011 June status report of the Auditor General of Canada, and that the witnesses who appeared on the 26th be re-invited to appear.

The Chair: Thank you.

You've heard the motion. It's in order. Is there any discussion?

Mr. Kramp, do you want to comment at all or does it stand?

• (1705)

Mr. Daryl Kramp: No. It stands.

The Chair: Very good. The floor is open.

Mr. Byrne.

Hon. Gerry Byrne (Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte, Lib.): Mr. Chair, if we could have an addition, I'd like to make a friendly amendment. At the last meeting on this particular chapter, we only had representatives from the Auditor General's office and Indian and Northern Affairs. There were only senior governmental officials. I was wondering if we could have some aboriginal leaders attending the committee meetings as well.

The Chair: The floor is open for further comment.

Mr. Kramp.

Mr. Daryl Kramp: Mr. Chair, being as how that meeting is on Wednesday, the government is prepared to go with the motion as scheduled. If at some point the committee decides to call additional witnesses later on, then that would be the committee's prerogative, but I certainly would not support Mr. Byrne's friendly amendment at this point.

The Chair: Sorry...? You're not considering it?

Mr. Daryl Kramp: No.

The Chair: Okay.

Is there further discussion? The floor is open.

Hon. Gerry Byrne: I'd like to amend the motion to request the appearance of...

Mr. Chair, you might be able to help me. The.... My mind has gone blank.

The Chair: That's okay.

First nations leaders?

Hon. Gerry Byrne: Yes, leaders of the first nations affected by this chapter.

The Chair: Okay.

We could spend a whole lot of time on names and positions, but let's just try the fundamental idea, because I have a hunch of where this may or may not go.

Are you okay with that?

If it does pass, then we'll move immediately to details of who.

Hon. Gerry Byrne: Sure.

The Chair: Okay.

Therefore, I will accept that as an amendment; it's in order. It is now before us.

You have the floor, if you wish to speak further.

Hon. Gerry Byrne: Sorry.

This is the Wednesday...?

The Chair: Who was here for that one?

Hon. Gerry Byrne: I thought we were talking about the....

You were making a motion to study—

Mr. Daryl Kramp: I was making a motion for the study of chapter 3, "Internal Audit".

Hon. Gerry Byrne: I'm sorry. I thought we were at the—

Mr. Daryl Kramp: No, not at the report stage on that.

The Chair: It's okay. I think we're all right.

So it's not applicable to this file. I probably should have caught that. I apologize.

Therefore, since that matter is technically out of order, we have Mr. Kramp's original motion, which is in order and is still before the committee.

The floor is open.

Hearing no further discussion, all in favour of the motion, please indicate by raising your hand.

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: The motion is carried and so ordered.

Mr. Kramp.

Mr. Daryl Kramp: Mr. Chair, I have another motion that I could present or we could take it to steering committee. If we feel that we have unanimous consent to move forward with a feeling of goodwill as far as the tabling of an agenda, I'd be prepared to present that at this time, with one modification. Obviously, we would have to change a witness schedule due to the Auditor General's lack of availability then. We had him scheduled for November 28 and we could change it to Wednesday, November 23. Interchanging those two dates would be a suggestion.

I could present the proposed amendment at this point, but I do think, if we were to get into a discussion on this issue, one of two things: we should either go into committee and discuss it, unless there's consent on this committee, or we should go into steering committee. I'll let the chair deliberate for a bit, walk through that, and then we'll see where we go.

The Chair: Are you comfortable if we make that change as part of your recommendation because the 28th won't work?

Mr. Daryl Kramp: That's correct.

The Chair: Rather than go through the mechanics of an amendment, as it's your motion, we'll just switch that for purposes of discussion. How's that?

Mr. Daryl Kramp: Sure.

The Chair: It can be amended later, but let's move to that.

Mr. Daryl Kramp: Absolutely.

The Chair: Okay.

So the change becomes your actual recommendation.

Mr. Daryl Kramp: Thank you.

The Chair: Okay.

The clerk has advised me that we weren't able to circulate it because it's not in both languages and that it needs to be read into the record. You're going to take a moment, if you wouldn't mind.

Mr. Daryl Kramp: Then I suggest we go in camera.

The Chair: The motion to go in camera is in order. It's not debatable.

All those in favour of going in camera, please indicate.

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: The motion is carried and so ordered. We are moving in camera.

[Proceedings continue in camera]

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