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Tuesday, October 29, 2013

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Chair

Mr. David Tilson

Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration

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• (1105)

[English]

The Clerk of the Committee (Ms. Julie Lalonde Prud'homme): Honourable members of the committee, I see a quorum.

[Translation]

I must inform members that the clerk of the committee can only receive motions for the election of the chair. The clerk cannot receive other types of motions, cannot entertain points of order nor participate in debate.

[English]

We can now proceed to the election of the chair. Pursuant to Standing Order 106(2), the chair must be a member of the government party. I am ready to receive motions for the chair.

Mr. Menegakis.

Mr. Costas Menegakis (Richmond Hill, CPC): I'd like to move that David Tilson be chair of the committee, please.

The Clerk: It has been moved by Mr. Menegakis that Mr. Tilson be elected as chair of the committee.

Are there any further motions?

Is it the pleasure of the committee to adopt the motion?

(Motion agreed to)

The Clerk: I declare the motion carried and Mr. Tilson duly elected chair of the committee.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

The Clerk: Before inviting Mr. Tilson to take the chair, if the committee wishes, we will now proceed to the election of the vice-chairs.

[Translation]

Pursuant to Standing Order 106(2), the first vice-chair must be a member of the official opposition.

I am now prepared to receive motions for the first vice-chair.

Mr. Cash, you have the floor.

[English]

Mr. Andrew Cash (Davenport, NDP): I'd like to nominate Lysane Blanchette-Lamothe.

[Translation]

The Clerk: It has been moved by Mr. Cash that Ms. Blanchette-Lamothe be elected as first vice-chair of the committee.

Are there any further motions?

Is it the pleasure of the committee to adopt the motion?

(Motion agreed to)

The Clerk: I declare the motion carried and Ms. Blanchette-Lamothe duly elected first vice-chair of the committee.

[English]

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

The Clerk: Pursuant to Standing Order 106(2), the second vice-chair must be a member of an opposition party other than the official opposition. I am now prepared to receive a motion for the second vice-chair.

Mr. Menegakis.

Mr. Costas Menegakis: I'd like to move that the Honourable John McCallum be elected.

The Clerk: It has been moved by Mr. Menegakis that Mr. McCallum be elected as second vice-chair of the committee.

Is it the pleasure of the committee to adopt the motion?

(Motion agreed to)

The Clerk: I declare the motion carried and Mr. McCallum duly elected second vice-chair of the committee.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

The Clerk: I now invite Mr. Tilson to take the chair.

The Chair (Mr. David Tilson (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC)): Ladies and gentlemen, I notice there are some people who wish to speak, but I'd like to say a few things.

Thank you very much for having me sit in this chair.

We have a relatively new committee with Ms. Sitsabaiesan, Mr. Weston, Mr. Menegakis, and myself are the survivors of the last—and Mr. Leung. I'm sorry. I apologize. We are the survivors of the former committee, so we are a relatively new committee. We had a good relationship even though we had a nice, cozy filibuster toward the end of the session, but that's the way life goes.

We have an expert clerk, Ms. Lalande Prud'homme, who is sitting next to me. Julie Béchard and Mr. James Gauthier are the two analysts. I don't know why they're sitting over there, as opposed to at the table.

A voice: It's routine procedure.

The Chair: It's for routine motions.

I'm going to suggest the procedure that we follow in the next little while. I suggest this morning we deal with the routine motions. The list keeps getting bigger and bigger. Next Thursday, question period is at the same time as we are scheduled to meet, so we will not meet. Assuming that the routine motions carry today, I suggest that next Tuesday there be no meeting, but that a subcommittee meeting next Tuesday be made up of the two parliamentary secretaries, the two vice-chairs and myself to settle the future agenda of the committee.

Because we're a new committee, I suggest that for the following Thursday we invite the officials to attend the meeting to present the mandate of the committee and provide an update of the committee. Depending on what the subcommittee agrees at that time, if witnesses were to be called for future meetings, that would give the clerk an opportunity to call witnesses for the following Tuesday.

That's my suggestion. I'll see if there's a consensus.

I have a list. Mr. Weston and Ms. Blanchette-Lamothe, welcome to the committee.

Ms. Lysane Blanchette-Lamothe (Pierrefonds—Dollard, NDP): Thank you, Chair.

I want to take this opportunity to congratulate you on being elected the chair of the committee. It is my pleasure to work with you and with all the members of this committee on citizenship and immigration.

Regarding what you presented to us, I would like to present a motion, because I don't see it in the routine motions and I want to make sure we talk about it in our routine motions. I think you've received that motion. I will read it in French.

• (1110)

The Chair: I don't have it.

Ms. Lysane Blanchette-Lamothe: Then I will read it so that you do have it. I will read it slowly, for sure, because I will read it in French. I have it here in French:

[*Translation*]

That the chair of the Committee on Citizenship and Immigration may accept a motion to meet...

[*English*]

The Chair: I'm sorry, could you start again, please.

Ms. Lysane Blanchette-Lamothe: Sure, I'm sorry about that.

The motion reads as follows:

[*Translation*]

That the committee may meet in camera only for the purpose of discussing:

- (a) wages, salaries and other employee benefits;
- (b) contracts and contract negotiations;
- (c) labour relations and personnel matters;

(d) draft reports;

(e) briefings concerning national security; and

that all votes taken in camera be recorded in the minutes of proceedings, including how each member voted when recorded votes are requested.

[*English*]

As we are starting with quite a new team, we want to make sure that we will have transparency in this committee and that the public will know what we're discussing, as it is an important committee that deals with very important issues.

This motion is to make sure that this committee will work in good faith and will go in camera when it's needed, but not on occasions when it is not needed. That is why I present this motion, to make sure that we can deal with it in our routine motions.

The Chair: The motion is in order, although I think it would be more appropriate when we discuss routine motions.

Ms. Lysane Blanchette-Lamothe: So we can include this—

The Chair: It would be part of the routine motions, but the motion is in order, whether we do it now or whether we do it when we get into routine motions. I'd like to go through the list, but your motion is in order. I think I'd like to have it debated, or discussed, or voted on when we get into routine motions.

Mr. Cash.

Mr. Andrew Cash: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

It's an honour for me to be on this committee. I wish to congratulate you and the vice-chairs on your elections.

In the spirit of working together with accountability and transparency, we place this motion before this committee. We've seen time and time again over the last couple of years, in fact ever since many of us arrived here in 2011, the use of in camera to in a sense hide—

The Chair: Mr. Cash, unless the committee wants otherwise, I think that is a routine motion and I'd like to deal with it when we get into routine motions. This list that is before us, I thought it would be commenting on my suggestions for the procedure. I do believe we could get into routine motions this morning, but we're not there yet. I think that's a routine motion.

Are you going on to other matters?

Mr. Andrew Cash: No, I'm sticking with the motion.

The Chair: Perhaps we could deal with that when we get to routine motions. We're not there yet, Mr. Cash.

Mr. Andrew Cash: Allow me to wrap up by saying that this is vital for accountability. It's vital for Canadians to understand the process, which is why we feel it's extremely important, as do Canadians. This is something we should be discussing. I'd like to be put at the top of the list for when we discuss the motion.

•(1115)

The Chair: Do you want to deal with this motion now, or do you want to wait until we get into it? If there is a feeling that you want to talk about the motion now, I have no problem with it.

Mr. Costas Menegakis: I'm in agreement with you, Mr. Chair. Let's go through the process. We'll start dealing with the routine motions, and when we get to that particular motion, every member will have an opportunity to speak to it, including Mr. Cash.

The Chair: Ms. Sitsabaiesan, are you on a new matter or are you on this issue?

Ms. Lysane Blanchette-Lamothe: Mr. Chair, I'm sorry, I don't want to cause disorder in our meeting, but as it is my motion, maybe I could say that I agree that we discuss it with the other motions, if we go one by one. As long as we discuss that motion, I would agree to—

The Chair: I wouldn't dare forget it. We'll speak about it.

Ms. Lysane Blanchette-Lamothe: You will put it inside—

The Chair: It will be dealt with. I'll make this promise: as soon as we get to routine motions, it will be number one. How about that?

Ms. Lysane Blanchette-Lamothe: I like it.

The Chair: Maybe it will be number two.

Ms. Sitsabaiesan, did you have something to say?

Ms. Rathika Sitsabaiesan (Scarborough—Rouge River, NDP): I was going to suggest that once we start routine motions, and maybe once we have our analysts, we could deal with this motion as item number two in routine motions.

The Chair: All right.

Mr. Menegakis.

Mr. Costas Menegakis: Mr. Chair, I would first of all like to congratulate you for once again taking the helm of this committee. You've certainly proven to be very fair, and we are fortunate to have you sitting in that chair again.

I also want to congratulate all of the new members, in particular the new vice-chairs. Lysane and John, welcome to the team.

We have a very important task here in the citizenship and immigration committee, and I believe that we can all work together towards our common goal: to strengthen Canada's immigration system. Having said that, and knowing that we're going to be moving to discuss routine motions, I would now like to move that we go in camera so that we can discuss those motions.

I move that we go in camera, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Well, I have another speaker who wants to say a few words. Mr. Weston.

Mr. Costas Menegakis: I don't think it's debatable.

The Chair: That is not debatable.

All those in favour of this motion?

Ms. Rathika Sitsabaiesan: I'd like a recorded vote, please.

(Motion agreed to: yeas 6; nays 5)

[Proceedings continue in camera]

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