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Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans

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Thursday, February 20, 2020

Chair: Mr. Ken McDonald



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• (0855)

[English]

The Clerk: Honourable members of the committee, I see a quorum.

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.

[Translation]

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.

[English]

Mr. Ken Hardie (Fleetwood—Port Kells, Lib.): I would like to nominate Ken McDonald as chair of the committee.

The Clerk: It has been moved by Mr. Hardie that Ken McDonald be elected chair of the committee.

(Motion agreed to)

The Clerk: I declare the motion carried and Ken McDonald duly elected chair of the committee.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

The Clerk: I invite Mr. McDonald to take the chair.

The Chair (Mr. Ken McDonald (Avalon, Lib.)): Thank you everyone. It's good to be back in the chair.

I look forward to another great session with FOPO. I think in the past we managed to do some exciting and valuable work. Some of it we didn't finish and maybe we'll get a chance to do that in this session.

I think everyone will find I'm more than fair, and a bit firm when the time limit is up, but I'll try my best to make sure everybody gets to say exactly what they want to say.

I thank you all for your support.

If the committee's in agreement, I invite the clerk to proceed with the election of the vice-chairs.

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

[Translation]

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

[English]

The Chair: Mr. Fast, go ahead.

Hon. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC): Mr. Chair, I nominate Mr. Mel Arnold from the great province of British Columbia.

• (0900)

The Clerk: Are there any further motions?

It has been moved by Mr. Fast that Mr. Arnold be elected first vice-chair of the committee.

(Motion agreed to)

I declare the motion carried and Mr. Arnold duly elected first vice-chair of the committee.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Mel Arnold (North Okanagan—Shuswap, CPC): Thank you.

[Translation]

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 ready to receive motions for the second vice-chair.

Mr. Bernard Généreux (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, CPC): May I nominate someone even though I am not an official member of the committee?

The Clerk: Yes, since you are an official alternate member.

Mr. Bernard Généreux: I nominate Mrs. Gill.

The Clerk: It has been moved by Mr. Généreux, that Mrs. Gill be elected second vice-chair.

Are there any further motions?

(Motion agreed to)

I declare the motion carried and Mrs. Gill duly elected second vice-chair of the committee.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

Mrs. Marilène Gill (Manicouagan, BQ): Thank you.

Mr. Bernard Généreux: I will send you my bill later.

[English]

The Chair: Mr. Morrissey, go ahead.

Mr. Robert Morrissey (Egmont, Lib.): Mr. Chair, I would propose the following routine motions be reviewed.

I propose:

That the committee retain, as needed and at the discretion of the Chair, the services of one or more analysts from the Library of Parliament to assist in its work.

(Motion agreed to)

Mr. Chair, I propose:

That the Chair be authorized to hold meetings to receive evidence and to have that evidence printed when a quorum is not present, provided that at least four (4) members are present, including one member of the opposition and one member of the government, but when travelling outside the parliamentary precinct, that the meeting begin after fifteen (15) minutes, regardless of members present.

The Chair: Mr. Johns.

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Chair, in terms of the four members, can we amend it to include two members from the opposition and two members from the government?

(Amendment agreed to)

(Motion as amended agreed to [See Minutes of Proceedings])

Mr. Robert Morrissey: Mr. Chair, I propose:

That witnesses be given ten (10) minutes for their opening statement; that, at the discretion of the Chair, during the questioning of witnesses, there be allocated six (6) minutes for the first questioner of each party as follows: Round 1:

Conservative Party

Liberal Party

Bloc Québécois

New Democratic Party

For the second and subsequent rounds, the order and time for questioning be as follows:

Conservative Party, five (5) minutes

Liberal Party, five (5) minutes

Conservative Party, five (5) minutes

Liberal Party, five (5) minutes

Bloc Québécois, two and a half (2.5) minutes

New Democratic Party, two and a half (2.5) minutes

(Motion agreed to)

● (0905)

Mr. Robert Morrissey: Mr. Chair, I propose:

That the Clerk of the Committee be authorized to distribute documents to members of the Committee only when the documents are available in both official languages and that witnesses be advised accordingly.

(Motion agreed to)

Mr. Chair, I propose:

That the Clerk of the Committee be authorized to make the necessary arrangements to provide working meals for the Committee and its Subcommittees.

(Motion agreed to)

Mr. Chair, I propose:

That, if requested, reasonable travel, accommodation and living expenses be reimbursed to witnesses not exceeding two (2) representatives per organization;

provided that, in exceptional circumstances, payment for more representatives be made at the discretion of the Chair.

(Motion agreed to)

Mr. Chair, I propose:

That, unless otherwise ordered, each Committee member be allowed to have one staff member at an in camera meeting and that one additional person from each House officer's office be allowed to be present.

(Motion agreed to)

Mr. Chair, I propose:

That one copy of the transcript of each *in camera* meeting be kept in the Committee Clerk's office for consultation by members of the Committee or by their staff.

(Motion agreed to)

Mr. Chair, I propose:

That a forty-eight (48) hours notice, interpreted as two (2) nights, shall be required for any substantive motion to be considered by the Committee, unless the substantive motion relates directly to business then under consideration, provided that (1) the notice be filed with the Clerk of the Committee no later than 4:00 p.m. from Monday to Friday; that (2) the motion be distributed to Members in both official languages by the Clerk on the same day the said notice was transmitted if it was received no later than the deadline hour; and that (3) notices received after the deadline hour or on non-business days be deemed to have been received during the next business day and that when the committee is travelling on official business, no substantive motions maybe moved.

(Motion agreed to)

Mr. Chair, I propose:

That, in relation to Orders of Reference from the House respecting Bills,

(a) the Clerk of the Committee shall, upon the Committee receiving such an Order of Reference, write to each Member who is not a member of a caucus represented on the Committee to invite those Members to file with the Clerk of the Committee, in both official languages, any amendments to the Bill, which is the subject of the said Order, which they would suggest that the Committee consider;

(b) suggested amendments filed, pursuant to paragraph (a), at least 48 hours prior to the start of clause-by-clause consideration of the Bill to which the amendments relate shall be deemed to be proposed during the said consideration, provided that the Committee may, by motion, vary this deadline in respect of a given Bill; and

(c) during the clause-by-clause consideration of a Bill, the Chair shall allow a Member who filed suggested amendments, pursuant to paragraph (a), an opportunity to make brief representations in support of them.

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: Mr. Hardie.

Mr. Ken Hardie: Mr. Chair, when the time is appropriate, I would like to file a notice of motion on the following:

That given the decline in Pacific salmon stocks and the ongoing situation with Big Bar Landslide, the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans undertake a study on the state of Pacific Salmon and make recommendations on next steps to ensure for the long-term health of these stocks, as well as the commercial, indigenous and recreational fisheries that depend on them, and call witness including senior departmental officials, First Nations, and relevant stakeholder groups to testify before committee.

I move that we adopt that motion.

● (0910)

The Chair: Are you moving it now, or just giving notice that that motion will come forward?

Mr. Ken Hardie: I'll look to the clerk, but I believe we have to give notice of motion because we haven't had the 48 hours.

The Chair: We can deal with it now, because we're in committee business. You can move it now, and you don't have to give notice first.

Mr. Ken Hardie: Then so moved.

The Chair: Is there any debate?

Mr. Mel Arnold: Can we suspend for a couple of minutes?

The Chair: The meeting is suspended.

● (0910) _____ (Pause) _____

● (0915)

Mr. Ken Hardie: Mr. Chair, we came into this meeting on the understanding that we would be giving notice of motion. I appreciate the clerk's advice that the motion could be dealt with right now, but it's not our intention to spring anything on anybody. If time is needed to consider the motion and prepare any comments or amendments that people might want to put forward, we'd be more than happy to present it as a notice of motion at this point and then deal with it at next Tuesday's meeting.

The Chair: Is everybody okay with that?

Mr. Mel Arnold: Yes.

The Chair: Mr. Morrissey.

Mr. Robert Morrissey: Mr. Chair, I move notice of the following motion:

The notice of motion states:

That given the potential consequences of seal predation on fish stocks along the East coast and following the government's creation of an Atlantic Seal Science Task Team; that the Standing Committee of Fisheries and Oceans undertake a study on seal predation and their effects on Atlantic fish stocks, primarily off the coast of Newfoundland and Labrador and explore the potential for other viable domestic markets for seal products; that the committee strongly consider travel to countries such as Scotland, Norway and Iceland which acted to conserve fish stocks as a result of seal populations; that the chair be empowered to coordinate the necessary witnesses, travel, resources and scheduling to complete this task; that the Committee call witnesses including senior departmental officials from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, and interested stakeholder groups to testify before the Committee; and that the Committee report its conclusions and recommendations to the House of Commons.

The Chair: Is there any discussion?

Hon. Ed Fast: That's a notice of motion.

The Chair: Thanks, Ed.

That will come back on Tuesday as well.

Mr. Robert Morrissey: Mr. Chair, I have a second notice of motion as well.

The notice of motion reads:

I move that the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans undertake a study to examine the issue of seafood mislabeling and the potential economic, conservation and food safety risks that it poses to Canadian consumers as well as fishers and producers and; that the chair be empowered to coordinate the necessary witnesses, travel, resources and scheduling to complete this task; and that the committee report its conclusions and recommendations to the House of Commons.

● (0920)

The Chair: That one will come back on Tuesday as well.

Mr. Fast.

Hon. Ed Fast: Mr. Chair, could I ask members of all parties here at this table to consider the prioritization of these three motions? If they all pass, we have some that have imminency to them, such as the Big Bar slide, and we may be proposing an interim report relating just to the Big Bar slide, because the spring freshet on the Fraser is happening over the next four or five weeks. That is imminent, so we might as well get that part of the study done with an interim report.

The Chair: Yes. We'll have to wait until Tuesday to see if they pass.

Mr. Johns.

Mr. Gord Johns: Mr. Chair, I move:

That any motion to go in camera should be debatable and amendable, and that the committee may only meet in camera for the following purposes:

(a) to discuss administrative matters of the committee

(b) a draft report

(c) briefings concerning national security

Et que le procès-verbal devrait refléter les résultats de tous les votes pris à huis clos, y compris la manière dont chaque membre a voté lorsqu'un vote par appel nominal est demandé.

The Chair: Mr. Cormier.

● (0925)

Mr. Serge Cormier (Acadie—Bathurst, Lib.): I'd like to propose an amendment to point (a), to read "to discuss administrative matters of the committee, including selection and consideration of witnesses".

The Chair: Mr. Johns.

Mr. Gord Johns: We support the amendment to the motion.

The Chair: All those in favour of the amendment?

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Marilène Gill: Mr. Chair, I'd like to ask a question.

Perhaps it is because of the French version, but I am wondering about the first paragraph, where two elements seem contradictory to me. We are asking for a debate on in camera proceedings, but then we list conditions for it to be behind closed doors. It is one or the other. I do not know if I am the only one who understands it that way.

It says: "visant à siéger à huis clos puisse faire l'objet d'un débat", but there are also very specific conditions to be respected for the committee to meet in camera, which are listed in paragraphs (d), (e), and (f). That should in fact be corrected in the French version so that it says (a), (b) and (c).

Does this mean that we may also debate points contained in (a), (b), and (c)? It's as though we were saying that we can debate them, but at the same time, that we cannot.

[*English*]

The Chair: Yes, it should be (a), (b), (c).

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Marilène Gill: That is not my main topic.

Mr. Chair, may I repeat my question?

[*English*]

Mr. Serge Cormier: Madam Gill, could you clarify?

[*Translation*]

I am simply trying to understand your point of view.

Mrs. Marilène Gill: The text on in camera proceedings begins with:

That any motion to go in camera should be debatable [...]

Oh, it's the motion. I had misread the French. I thought it was the in camera proceedings as such that could be debated.

[*English*]

Mr. Serge Cormier: Okay.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Marilène Gill: It's all right, I withdraw my objection...

[*English*]

The Chair: All those in favour of the amendment?

(Amendment agreed to)

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

The Chair: I would appreciate it if members could make every attempt to be here on time in the future. The odd time I may get here right on the button, but that doesn't happen very often. We only have a certain amount of time, especially when we have witnesses, and you want to ask questions. I would like to get started on time every day. I don't like starting when members are missing, but if they are missing, we will start without those members present if we have a quorum.

The meeting is adjourned.

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