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•(1100)

[Translation]

The Clerk of the Committee (Mrs. Marie-France Renaud): Honourable members of the committee, I see a quorum.

I must inform the members of the committee that the clerk of the committee can only receive motions for the election of the chair.

[English]

The clerk cannot receive other types of motions, cannot entertain points of order, nor participate in debate.

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.

[Translation]

I am ready to receive motions.

Mr. Reid, you have the floor.

[English]

Mr. Scott Reid (Lanark—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington, CPC): Although I'm tempted to nominate my friend Tom Lukiwski, I'm going to resist that temptation and nominate Joe Preston instead.

An hon. member: Oh, sure.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

An hon. member: Tom, it could be at least one or two.

The Clerk: It has been moved by Mr. Reid that Mr. Preston be elected chair of the committee.

Are there any further motions?

[Translation]

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[English]

(Motion agreed to)

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

Before inviting Mr. Preston to take the chair, if the committee agrees, we will now proceed to the election of 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.

Ms. Turmel, go ahead.

Ms. Nycole Turmel (Hull—Aylmer, NDP): I nominate Alexandrine Latendresse.

The Clerk: It has been moved by Ms. Turmel that Ms. Latendresse be elected first vice-chair of the committee.

Are there any further motions?

[English]

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

[Translation]

The Clerk: I declare the motion carried and Alexandrine Latendresse duly elected, in absentia, first vice-chair of the committee.

[English]

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. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Are you looking for a nice Saskatchewan Roughrider fan or—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Clerk: Mr. Scott.

Mr. Craig Scott (Toronto—Danforth, NDP): I'd be very happy to nominate Mr. Lamoureux.

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

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

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

The Chair (Mr. Joe Preston (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC)): Mr. Christopherson.

Mr. David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Chair, may I be the first to congratulate you on your ascension to power again?

The Chair: Yes.

Mr. David Christopherson: I wanted to suggest that we could do some productive work right now. I think that Mr. Bezan's outstanding issue should be our priority, even above my own colleague's motion. I don't think we can leave that cloud hanging over the member any longer than necessary.

I won't make a motion, I'll just throw it out for discussion, Chair, but would it not be possible for us to schedule that hearing today so that we can land running and invite the parliamentary law clerk and get on with it?

The Chair: Sure. I'll go to Mr. Lukiwski on that issue, and we'll have a casual conversation, I guess.

Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Regina—Lumsden—Lake Centre, CPC): Yes, sure. I agree with David's assessment. We have to deal with this.

My understanding is I believe it's resolved. We haven't seen any official notification on that yet, but my understanding is, after speaking with Mr. Bezan, it is resolved. However, I do believe that there are issues germane to that case that would be very important for us to at least have one study on, perhaps two.

I know that we're going to have to schedule a steering committee meeting, and as a member of the steering committee on future business I will certainly be recommending the first order of business to be that case, the privilege case on Mr. Bezan.

I don't know if it's appropriate to try and schedule it now before the steering committee meets.

I can't remember, David, who's your representative on the steering committee?

• (1105)

Mr. David Christopherson: I was trying to think the same thing. We'll get back to you on that.

Mr. Tom Lukiwski: Okay. When we have that meeting, which I assume will probably be on Tuesday—

The Chair: It will be on Tuesday. The location is a little up in the air. Is it here?

A voice: Yes.

The Chair: Wow, on budget day?

Voices: No.

The Chair: Oh, I'm a week early.

Okay, so it will be here on Tuesday at 11 o'clock for the steering committee.

Mr. Tom Lukiwski: Yes, I'll be bringing it forward, whether it's a motion or just a.... I don't think we have to deal with it like that, formally in the steering committee, but I think that should be our first order of business. I agree with you on that.

Mr. David Christopherson: Okay. Agreeing on it is not the whole point. The second piece of it was—

Mr. Tom Lukiwski: Scheduling.

Mr. David Christopherson: Yes. My point really was, rather than wait until Tuesday to do what we already agreed today we're going to do, why don't we schedule that meeting?

The Chair: You may find that we've already started down that road.

Mr. David Christopherson: Okay.

The Chair: Certainly we had a conversation with the law clerk, knowing that he would be one of the witnesses coming. We know that when we had the Chief Electoral Officer here, we suggested we would have him back.

There's been some thought process on the planning, and invitations at least tentatively given, so that we can start right in.

Mr. Tom Lukiwski: I think what we don't know, David, and one of the reasons I'm suggesting it, is that let's assume for a moment that next Thursday would be the first meeting. I don't know whether it would take one meeting or two, quite frankly, because I'm not sure how many witnesses you or anyone else may suggest that we need to bring in.

Mr. David Christopherson: I think there's just one on the list, isn't there, or am I incorrect?

The Chair: I have six on the list that has been submitted. The steering committee will try to look at scheduling those, but...

The other thing is that a name not on the list is Monsieur Bezan's. We don't know whether he wants to come or not, but normally on a motion of privilege in a person's name they are the first witness. We've already had a first witness.

I thought the steering committee might be able to clear some of that up.

Mr. David Christopherson: Yes, fair enough.

Listen, our job is to try, and try I did. But I see the wisdom of the steering committee, and am persuaded.

Thank you.

The Chair: Excellent.

Am I right that the potential witness list, the unfinished witness list, the thoughts on witnesses, have gone out to you now, and you've seen them?

David, as you said, whoever your member on the steering committee is, they'll have some thoughts on this.

If we can accomplish any other committee business today then, we have the nuts and bolts of the cost of the question of privilege related to this motion of privilege.

Mr. Craig Scott: Mr. Chair, I don't know whether or not this is privileged information, but with regard to Professor Dawood, did she get wind of the committee and apply, or did somebody know about her expertise in this, or...?

The Chair: I do not know. Which party submitted her name?

A voice: Liberal.

The Chair: The Liberal Party submitted her name. They obviously know of certain expertise that she has.

Mr. Craig Scott: Okay. It's just that you had asked, and I didn't know that this was an area.

The Chair: Yes. As we said, and we were pretty clear before we left, this list could be added to if we felt we needed to.

I think the steering committee really needs to look at how long we need this thing to go on. The Speaker has handed this to us as a "How do I fix this when it happens again?" motion of privilege. It does include a couple of members, but it looks like those have been solved. This motion of privilege has now become as much administrative as it was a motion of privilege: what does the Speaker do when the Chief Electoral Officer does this?

We're back to the budget for the study on this motion of privilege. The clerk has put together potential costs for us to do this study, as we do for each of our studies.

Do I need someone to move that?

Mr. David Christopherson: So moved.

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

The Chair: That's unanimous. Thank you.

That being done, I see nothing else that we can accomplish today until the steering committee meets.

Mr. Lukiwski.

Mr. Tom Lukiwski: I have a question on the membership lists for other committees.

The Chair: Oh, yes. They're all prepared and capable of being presented today.

I will ask for unanimous consent after question period to accept the committee lists.

Mr. David Christopherson: You don't even run it by us here, just cursorily? No?

Okay. Fair enough.

The Chair: It's one of those things that happen in a cloud somewhere out there.

Madame Turmel.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Nycole Turmel: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We have to send our priority issues to the Subcommittee on Agenda and Procedure through the members representing us on it, correct?

• (1110)

[*English*]

The Chair: I'm sorry, I missed that.

Ms. Nycole Turmel: I'm saying that for any items that we want prioritized, we have to go through our representative on the smaller committee to—

The Chair: Well, on the steering committee, yes.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Nycole Turmel: Great.

[*English*]

The Chair: And please, that's the right way to do it, to have them show up Tuesday ready to discuss any item they want for this committee.

Mr. Lukiwski.

Mr. Tom Lukiwski: Mr. Chair, there's one other item we should schedule. Since the latest replenishment is on a private member's bill—it's happening today—we'd have to schedule a private members' subcommittee on votability. That would be held probably the week of the 10th, either the 11th or the 13th.

We know who is on the current list of replenishment, but those members have until this Friday, I believe...and to determine those who have more than one motion or bill on their list, have until this Friday to make the determination of which one they want.

After we have the final list, we'll then need to have a subcommittee to determine whether they're votable or not.

The Chair: Absolutely.

Is there any chance we could do that in the second half of the meeting on Tuesday? We have two hours, and I don't think the steering committee will take longer than the first hour.

Mr. David Christopherson: Do we have to strike the members?

The Chair: Yes.

I recognize that we need to know who the member is from each party who is now sitting on that subcommittee for private members' business.

Mr. Tom Lukiwski: Yes.

The Chair: Mr. MacKenzie from—

Mr. Tom Lukiwski: So next Tuesday is going to be the steering committee, right?

The Chair: Right.

If we went from 11 o'clock to 12 o'clock on the steering committee and then let private members' business meet—

Mr. Tom Lukiwski: If I may, I've never sat—

The Chair: You think it's the week after they have to meet?

Mr. Tom Lukiwski: I think so.

The Chair: All right.

We'll just have to schedule them to meet and report back to us in that following week.

One glitch in that following week is the budget on Tuesday the 11th. Oftentimes committee rooms are very tough to use on budget day. This room is often used to store a whole pile of copies of the budget, and lock-ups are held in other committee rooms, so you'll give your chair your best effort to find a committee room close to home for us to meet on that day.

Is there anything else?

Mr. Reid.

Mr. Scott Reid: Apropos of the Bezan hearings, when the Chief Electoral Officer was here, I made an inquiry as to whether he had sent any similar letters to other members who may have had similar problems in the past, or whether this was a unique phenomenon in his experience. He said he'd go back, investigate, and provide any further information. I think I actually requested that specific letters, if he had them, be sent to this committee. They would have come to the clerk. We've had a month and a half. I'm wondering whether or not that has actually happened.

The Chair: I can say I have received a letter from him containing that information. It needs to be finished being translated. It's all in English at the moment. It will be coming to each member of the committee at the earliest opportunity.

Mr. Scott Reid: You have no idea when that will be, do you?

The Chair: It will be early next week.

Mr. Scott.

Mr. Craig Scott: Can I make a special request of Mr. Reid? When the replenishing decisions come, can you choose the simplest of your bills, please?

Mr. Scott Reid: I did not expect to hear a comment like that coming from Professor Scott, I have to say.

Mr. Craig Scott: My head has—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Chair: I was thinking it. I just didn't say it.

Mr. Craig Scott: My head has been exploding reading them.

Ms. Nycole Turmel: So you don't get all the details on top of this analysis.

The Chair: Thank you for the recommendation. I agree.

Is there anything else for the good of our committee today?

I thank all of you for coming today. It's great to be back. It's nice to see fewer people, but people with more enthusiasm. The smaller group will get more work done, I think.

We'll see the steering committee on Tuesday. The regular committee will meet starting next Thursday.

Ms. Nycole Turmel: So, who is on now? All of you.... Okay.

The Chair: These are the new members.

Mr. Tom Lukiwski: Mr. MacKenzie is the one who is no longer with us.

Ms. Nycole Turmel: Okay. I will try to find....

The Chair: Okay.

The meeting is adjourned.

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