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CANADA

# **Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs**

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**EVIDENCE**

**Tuesday, June 9, 2015**

—  
**Chair**

**Mr. Joe Preston**



## Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs

Tuesday, June 9, 2015

• (1150)

[English]

**The Chair (Mr. Joe Preston):** We're back in public now.

Mr. Christopherson, please, on your motion.

**Mr. David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre, NDP):** Thank you. I appreciate the opportunity just to make the case, and I'll make it very brief because I think I do have a sense of where you're going to go on this.

The best argument against my motion would be, it seems to me, that the two chambers are two separate entities. They are meant to be completely separate and the two shouldn't overlap. My submission is that all orders in council are available to us.

The fact remains that the Prime Minister still appoints the Speaker of the Senate, and no matter how hard the Prime Minister tries to backpedal away from the Senate, he still has major ownership of that business. My purpose is to underscore that aspect and find out what kinds of things prime ministers consider when they're looking at the Speaker of the Senate.

Given some of the current controversy, I certainly think it's fair to ask some questions about what was known about the current Speaker's difficulties with the Auditor General, and whether or not that was considered when the Prime Minister made his decision.

At its core, Chair, my argument is that given it is part of the Prime Minister's exercise of prime ministerial responsibility, it is legitimate

business of this House. Notwithstanding that they are two separate chambers, there is an organic link and there is some ownership of the Senate in terms of the Prime Minister by virtue of the fact that the Prime Minister is the one who personally appoints the Speaker of the Senate. I would underscore that he does that at a time when in the modern era of House of Commons and provincial legislatures, those houses elect their own speakers. We elect our own Speaker.

There's also the whole idea of the relevancy in this day and age of a Prime Minister still having that kind of royal authority to just appoint the leader of the Senate—the upper house, no less—when he doesn't have that power in the House that he serves in.

Those are my arguments, Chair. Thank you.

**The Chair:** Seeing no other comments—

**An hon. member:** Can we have a recorded vote?

**The Chair:** Yes.

(Motion negated: nays 5; yeas 3)

**The Chair:** Since we're going to go to bells in about a minute and a half, is there anything else for this committee today?

**Mr. Craig Scott (Toronto—Danforth, NDP):** That was very efficient, Chair.

**The Chair:** We are adjourned.





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