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—
Chair

The Honourable Denis Paradis

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• (1630)

[*Translation*]

The Chair (Hon. Denis Paradis (Brome—Missisquoi, Lib.)): We are now in public session.

The first item on the agenda is the election of a vice-chair.

Madam Clerk will proceed with the election.

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

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

Mr. René Arseneault (Madawaska—Restigouche, Lib.): I nominate Alupa Clarke, a new member on this committee, for the position of vice-chair of this famous and prestigious committee on official languages.

The Clerk: It is moved by Mr. Arseneault that Mr. Clarke be elected first vice-chair of the committee.

Are there any further motions?

Mr. Bernard Généreux (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, CPC): I move that there be no further nominations.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

(Motion agreed to)

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

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Bernard Généreux: I didn't have the skills for it.

Mr. Alupa Clarke (Beauport—Limoulu, CPC): If only all elections were that easy.

Thank you very much. It's a great honour. I'm the child of a bilingual marriage: my father is from Vancouver and my mother is from Quebec City. I had the opportunity to join the committee on two occasions. I am very happy to be elected vice-chair. Rest assured that you will not be disappointed and that I will take this very seriously. I am very pleased.

Mr. Bernard Généreux: Don't take it too seriously.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Chair: Mr. Samson, the floor is yours.

Mr. Darrell Samson (Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook, Lib.): I did not hear you say it, but if memory serves, you are Acadian. That should also be addressed.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Alupa Clarke: Yes, I grew up in Shippagan, on the Acadian peninsula, where I lived between the ages of 2 and 11. So my best friends are Acadian. I go to Le Goulet and Shippagan every year. The journey you mentioned earlier today will be a wonderful return to my roots.

Ms. Linda Lapointe (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, Lib.): In any case, Mr. Arseneault sees an Acadian in each and every one of us here.

Mr. René Arseneault: I would like to say that Mr. Clarke's father lives in my riding, and he strongly urged me to take a look at his son, which I will do.

Mr. Alupa Clarke: In fact, my father keeps me informed of anything his MP does, including his bike tour this summer across New Brunswick, a very popular event. It was actually featured in *L'Acadie Nouvelle*.

The Chair: Very well.

Congratulations on being elected and welcome, Mr. Vice-Chair.

Mr. Alupa Clarke: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: The next item is a motion by Ms. Lapointe.

Mr. Choquette, your motion is no longer there. I will be reading Ms. Lapointe's motion as follows:

That the Committee invite Statistics Canada to explain the situation and provide solutions in response to the anomalies observed in the 2016 census count for linguistic minorities.

Are there any comments?

Mr. Choquette, the floor is yours.

Mr. François Choquette (Drummond, NDP): I support the motion.

The Chair: Are there any other comments?

Mr. Clarke, go ahead.

Mr. Alupa Clarke: I am new here, and I don't always understand everything that's going on. I would like to clarify something.

I heard that Statistics Canada responded to the government and explained what had happened. Is it a quantitative error in the compilation or a more serious error?

Mr. Bernard Généreux: That's what we want to find out, and that's why we are inviting the officials from the department.

Mr. Alupa Clarke: Okay. You have my support.

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: Mr. Choquette, the floor is yours.

Mr. François Choquette: Mr. Chair, I would like to inform you that I will be moving a motion soon, but not today, on the bilingual bonus to public servants.

We heard about a report that apparently asks that the bilingual bonus to public servants be eliminated, which worries a number of stakeholders. It would be good to hear the views of unions and other experts. I'm not saying that an exhaustive study is needed, but we should address this issue before making a decision, whenever we have more time. If memory serves, the bonus has been around for more than 40 years. Before it is scrapped overnight, we should perhaps think about it to avoid a blunder.

There's one more thing. Perhaps we'll have the opportunity—

The Chair: Mr. Choquette, with respect to the first point, please send your motion to Madam Clerk.

Mr. François Choquette: Of course, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Paul Lefebvre (Sudbury, Lib.): Mr. Chair, can we have the report?

Mr. François Choquette: Yes, the report is available.

Mr. Paul Lefebvre: Who prepared the report?

Mr. François Choquette: We can ask the clerk to check.

An hon. member: It was the Clerk of the Privy Council.

The Chair: The clerk is looking into it.

Mr. Paul Lefebvre: The clerk can then let us know.

Mr. François Choquette: Mr. Chair, let me conclude by saying that, these days, we hear a great deal about how difficult it is for official language community media to survive. We receive letters and requests about this from across Canada. A number of community newspapers, media outlets and radio stations say that their survival is increasingly difficult. I have previously asked the Treasury Board whether it was going to adopt a different policy to support community media in minority settings.

Should we perhaps delve deeper into the issue, because, for one thing, there is a community radio station currently threatened with being shut down if tools are not provided to improve the situation. We can certainly ask questions about this during our next trip, and subsequently study the issue.

That's all I had to say.

● (1635)

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Does anyone else have anything to say?

Since no one else wants to speak and since there are no other items on the agenda, I'm going to end the meeting.

The meeting is adjourned. We will see each other again on Thursday.

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