



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
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CANADA

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

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**EVIDENCE**

**Tuesday, December 8, 2015**

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**Chair**

**The Honourable Larry Bagnell**



## Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs

Tuesday, December 8, 2015

•(1105)

[English]

**The Clerk of the Committee (Ms. Joann Garbig):** 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 and cannot entertain points of order or 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. I'm ready to receive motions for the chair.

**Mr. David de Burgh Graham (Laurentides—Labelle, Lib.):** I nominate Mr. Chan to be the chair.

**The Clerk:** Mr. Graham nominates Mr. Chan.

Are there other motions to nominate?

**Ms. Anita Vandenberg (Ottawa West—Nepean, Lib.):** I nominate Mr. Larry Bagnell.

**The Clerk:** Ms. Vandenberg nominates Larry Bagnell as chair.

Are there further motions? None.

Since more than one candidate has been nominated, pursuant to Standing Order 106(3) I am required to preside over the election of the chair by secret ballot.

It has been moved by Mr. Graham that Mr. Chan be elected chair, and it has been moved by Ms. Vandenberg that Mr. Bagnell be elected chair.

Before proceeding, I'll briefly explain the process. My colleague, also a procedural clerk at the House of Commons, will distribute a ballot to each member of the committee. You have to clearly indicate your choice by printing in block letters the name of your chosen candidate. You then deposit your ballot in the box when it circulates around the table. We will then count the votes and announce the name of the successful candidate. If no candidate receives a majority of the votes cast, another ballot will have to be conducted in the same manner.

Allow me to repeat the names of the nominated candidates: Arnold Chan and Larry Bagnell.

Go ahead, Mr. Reid.

**Mr. Scott Reid (Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston, CPC):** Are we able to hear the two candidates indicate why they would like the chairmanship?

**The Clerk:** The Standing Orders have no provision for this.

**Mr. Scott Reid:** In that case, would it be permissible for us to have enough time to actually chat with them?

•(1110)

**The Clerk:** Go ahead, Mr. Lamoureux.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Maybe just to assist in facilitating, I've just canvassed both candidates. They're quite comfortable with proceeding as you've said, so we can just go right to the vote.

**Mr. Scott Reid:** Madam Clerk, I appreciate that, but I'm not comfortable proceeding in that way. I have no idea what makes Mr. Chan better than Mr. Bagnell or Mr. Bagnell better than Mr. Chan. I can't vote in an informed manner if I have no idea how each intends to act.

It would be odd indeed if we'd had a process of not allowing the candidates for Speaker to indicate that, either formally or informally, and we gave time—30 minutes—for us to talk among ourselves and get further information.

Voting in an uninformed manner would be most inappropriate.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Madam Clerk, if I may, you indicated that you're not allowed to take points of order. You're just there to facilitate the election and you're following the rules.

I think it would be more appropriate, Scott, that we have this discussion and maybe look at changing the rule. There might be a better way so that we can improve it in the future, but when all is said and done, as of right now the rules say to just go ahead and have the vote. If one or both of the candidates had expressed an interest in addressing us, maybe we could consider it, but if they're both content, then why?

**Mr. Scott Reid:** The rules are actually silent on how much time is taken for the voting. It would not be a breach of the rules for us to take half an hour and have an opportunity to chat with the two candidates so as to make an informed decision.

I quite literally cannot make an informed decision about two candidates, neither of whom, to my knowledge, was a candidate before the moment they were nominated, and neither of whose qualifications, one over the other, are known to me. It would make a sham of any voting procedure if we were simply to be told we have to tick off a name on a ballot without knowing why we're doing it.

**The Clerk:** As I indicated at the outset, I can only receive motions for the election of the chair. I cannot receive other motions of any kind, entertain points of order, or take part in debate.

As a point of information, the Standing Orders of the House do provide for interventions by the candidates for Speaker of the House, but the rules have no provision for an equivalent proceeding in committee.

**Mr. Scott Reid:** Let me ask this question: would I be correct in assuming that I will not be breaking the rules if I take the time, prior to casting my own ballot, to go over and chat with the two candidates who have been nominated by the government party and ask each of them why they think I would be best advised to vote for them as opposed to the other—that is to say, if I take my time in casting a ballot until such time as I can make an informed decision, as opposed to an uninformed decision? Conservative members and perhaps Mr. Christopherson might want to do so as well.

**The Clerk:** Does Mr. Christopherson wish to intervene?

**Mr. David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre, NDP):** Thanks. I don't need any time. I know the members. I'm ready to vote.

**The Clerk:** As I outlined earlier, my colleague will distribute the ballots to each member of the committee. Once members have finished filling out the ballots, we will circulate around the table so that members may deposit their ballots. Then we will proceed to the count and be back shortly.

• (1110) \_\_\_\_\_ (Pause) \_\_\_\_\_

• (1120)

**The Clerk:** Honourable members, I declare that Larry Bagnell has received the majority of the votes cast and is duly elected chair of the committee.

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear!

**The Clerk:** I would invite Mr. Bagnell to take the chair.

**The Chair (Hon. Larry Bagnell (Yukon, Lib.)):** First of all, I thank everyone for their confidence.

To Mr. Christopherson, because I think everyone else heard, my philosophy is the same as the Prime Minister's. He said a couple of times that each of you has been elected by your constituents, and those constituents deserve a voice, so I think everyone should be heard fairly on the items we debate.

If the committee is in agreement, I invite the clerk to proceed with the election of the vice-chairs. Agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

• (1125)

**The Chair:** Okay. I hope we do a lot of things by consensus.

Go ahead.

**The Clerk:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

[Translation]

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

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

Mr. Reid, you have the floor.

[English]

**Mr. Scott Reid:** I nominate Blake Richards.

[Translation]

**The Clerk:** It has been moved by Scott Reid that Blake Richards be elected 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 Blake Richards duly elected first vice-chair of the committee.

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear!

[English]

**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.

[Translation]

Ms. Petitpas, go ahead.

[English]

**Ms. Ginette Petitpas Taylor (Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe, Lib.):** I propose the nomination of David Christopherson.

**The Clerk:** It's been moved by Ginette Petitpas Taylor that David Christopherson 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 David Christopherson duly elected second vice-chair of the committee.

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear!

**The Chair:** Our next meeting will be Thursday. We will be discussing the item that Mr. Reid brought up and any other items.

We'll adjourn now—

Go ahead, Mr. Christopherson.

**Mr. David Christopherson:** Thank you, Chair.

I just want to raise the fact that I'm ready to go in terms of dealing with our routine proceedings. If all we're going to do today is elect a chair and vice-chairs and then do the routine proceedings on Thursday, it raises the question of why we are even here today. Why did we go to all this trouble? All of it could have been done on Thursday.

For the life of me, I don't know why there was this big rush, this big announcement that we have to get PROC in place and "Let's go, boys, it's critical". Fair enough, but here we are and we're not doing anything except administrative matters, so I'm a little unclear as to why we aren't proceeding to do some real work right now, since we have lots of it.

While I have the floor—because I don't know when I'm going to get it back—I also want to raise the fact that earlier Mr. Lamoureux went out of his way to be consistent with his government's announcement that they're looking at pulling parliamentary secretaries off committees, because as we all know, it hampers the independence of committees if the parliamentary secretary is sitting there with the control of the majority votes and telling the committee how they're going to vote.

That's a great idea. I applaud that, and Mr. Lamoureux mentioned to me and to others before the meeting started that it was his intention to not be one of the six on the committee but that he'd be coming by.

Then as we sit here now, I see Mr. Lamoureux, the parliamentary secretary, sitting in the key lead position and, in my view, in a position that is completely contrary to what the government said they were going to do with parliamentary secretaries. I thought that when Mr. Lamoureux said he was going to drop by, he'd be over there, which is normally what most people do, because any member can come to any committee. But when I see the parliamentary secretary sitting right where Tom Lukiwski used to sit as the parliamentary secretary to the House leader, I see the same thing that we had last time.

Therefore, through you, Mr. Chair, I'm asking Mr. Lamoureux this: where's the change, given that you are sitting where Mr. Lukiwski did and doing exactly what he did? In fact, no other member of your caucus has spoken yet except you. In fact, I don't know why, but the chair even felt the need to look over and check with you on something.

I'm sure that was just a reflex that will stop now that he's our independent chair, but I'd still like to know through you, Mr. Chair, what the intention of the government is vis-à-vis parliamentary secretaries, because they seem to be saying one thing and doing something else.

● (1130)

**The Chair:** Thank you for that. We will discuss on Thursday both the point that you've made here and Mr. Reid's point that was brought up with us in our little meeting.

Can I have a motion to adjourn? The only item we had on this agenda was the elections.

**Mr. Randy Hoback (Prince Albert, CPC):** I so move.

(Motion agreed to)

**The Chair:** Okay. The meeting is adjourned.

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