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• (1305)

[*Translation*]

The Clerk of the Committee (Ms. Miriam Burke): Honourable members of the committee, I see a quorum.

[*English*]

I must inform members that the clerk of the committee can receive motions only for the election of the chair. The clerk cannot receive other types of motions, entertain points of order or participate in the 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 official opposition.

[*English*]

I'm ready to receive motions for the chair.

Mr. Barrett.

Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC): I'd like to nominate Chris Warkentin for chair.

The Clerk: It has been moved by Mr. Barrett that Mr. Warkentin be elected as chair of the committee.

[*Translation*]

Are there any further motions?

(Motion agreed to)

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

[*English*]

I invite Mr. Warkentin to take the chair.

The Chair: Thank you, colleagues. It is a privilege to be elected as a chair and I'm hopeful that we can work together to get things done at this committee.

I want to thank David Sweet for his long-suffering efforts to keep us in line. I will attempt to follow in his footsteps to be a fair chair and one who will allow for work to proceed at this committee.

This is the 17th meeting of the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics. I suggest we now move into an in camera portion to allow us to move into committee business and a

discussion about future meetings. If it's the will of the committee, I suggest we do that.

In order for us to move in camera, we will be required to log out of this and into a new meeting. I see that Mr. Angus has his hand raised.

Do you have a suggestion or a thought on that, Charlie?

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Yes. I didn't know it was necessary to go in camera. There are issues before us that should be and deserve to be discussed in public. Particularly, I have sent a letter to my colleagues asking to bring forward some key witnesses so we can move towards a completion of the WE study. They would include Craig and Marc Kielburger, Victor Li, Sofia Marquez and Guy Spencer Elms. I have asked that we be willing to summon them if necessary.

This is partly because of the allegations that were raised in the very disturbing Bloomberg article, but we also need to wrap up this study and I think we can do that fairly quickly. I don't think this needs to be done in camera. I'm ready to have that discussion now, because we need to reassure the Canadian people that we are here to get our job done. We have a report to finish and these are key outstanding witnesses that we need to hear from.

The Chair: Yes, you are correct, Mr. Angus. It is not required that committee business be moved in camera. There is one exception to that. There were documents that were circulated before this meeting that are in camera documents. I would just caution members not to talk about those while we are in public.

Second of all, there is some talk about the Pornhub discussion that I think it would be helpful to have in camera just because of the sensitivity of that topic. Other than that, I think we can proceed in public if that is the will of the committee.

I see that Mr. Erskine-Smith has his hand up.

Mr. Nathaniel Erskine-Smith (Beaches—East York, Lib.): Thanks very much.

I am looking forward to working together again on the ethics committee. While I haven't followed all that came before, I know you have done a lot of work to this end.

To work constructively, I went over Charlie's request and I think it makes good sense to have a set of final meetings to answer any outstanding questions we have. Just so I have it right, Charlie's asking for Craig and Marc Kielburger, Sofia Marquez, Victor Li and Guy Spencer Elms.

I'm just thinking this through and wonder what you think, Charlie, if we have the Kielburger brothers for one meeting and then Sofia Marquez, Victor Li and Guy Spencer Elms for another meeting. Where summonses are required, I would be—and I think we would be—amenable to supporting the request to ensure that witnesses attend.

The Chair: I see Mr. Barrett, and then we'll go back to Mr. Angus.

Mr. Michael Barrett: Thanks, Chair, and congratulations. Thank you for stepping in to fill that role.

With respect to Mr. Angus's request, I appreciate the effort at clarity so that we can close out the study and hear from key witnesses.

As you said, Mr. Angus, this is particularly in light of the revelations and the new information in the Bloomberg article.

I have no argument, per se, with Mr. Erskine-Smith's proposed timetable. I'm not sure if Mr. Angus had suggested that Mr. Bill Morneau be included in that list. I'll leave that to Mr. Angus to answer.

With respect to the MindGeek and Pornhub study, there was a discussion about potential witnesses. At the request of potential witnesses, and a request for privacy and for consideration about the sensitivity to their experience and their trauma, I would like to share with members of the committee some correspondence from representatives of some folks...that we would like to put forward their names as witnesses. It's not something that can be discussed in public.

With respect to the pandemic spending and the WE matter, I think we can dispose of that in public.

• (1310)

The Chair: Very good.

Mr. Angus.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Mr. Chair, I was so keen to get to work that I did not take a moment to congratulate you and say how much respect I have for you. I will also pay respect to David Sweet. I thought he did an extraordinarily professional job in some very trying times. I think he kept that ship afloat when everybody was burning all ends of the boat. We assume that you will do the same.

I think we can move on with this. I certainly understand the necessity to go in camera on issues that are of a sensitive nature. I support Mr. Barrett on that.

I feel it's a fundamental obligation of our committee to be able to get a report to Parliament and the Canadian people on what we heard. We need to move on that. We are now coming into the spring of 2021. It's incumbent to move on with this report.

In terms of Mr. Erskine-Smith's offer on the table, I think a day with the Kielburger brothers would be very useful. I would say it has to be a three-hour meeting. There will be many outstanding questions.

We've asked Mr. Victor Li since last summer to appear and he hasn't appeared. He may be feeling incapacitated, but Mr. Erskine-

Smith will remember that we also had a hostile witness in the Cambridge Analytica study. Zack Massingham had a doctor's note. He did not want to appear. We summoned him and he appeared virtually. We were able to finish the study.

So I'm saying have a second study, a second set of meetings, probably three hours, with Mr. Guy Spencer Elms, who's the key financial driver of the Kielburger operation in Kenya. Mr. Victor Li, of course, is the architect of all the very convoluted finances, which I think will be helpful for us, because I don't think any of us actually have a real understanding of how their operation works, despite all the testimony we've gone through. We've asked for Ms. Sofia Marquez before, because of the issue of lobbying. I would say that would be another meeting. Then we need to set aside time to get this report done so we can present it to the Canadian people.

That's my offer. Then, if we have agreement on that, I would be more than willing to go in camera for the sensitive issues that we have to talk about in terms of documents and certainly the issue of Pornhub. We want to make sure we do this right.

If we can get agreement on the first part, I would say, Mr. Warkentin, excellent chair that you're going to be, I'd be more than willing to go in camera.

The Chair: Okay. You made an offer. You didn't make it a motion, but I suspect that if you needed to, you'd make that a motion.

I guess what I'd like to do is get an indication from committee members. Is anybody opposed to the offer?

We may be forced to make that a motion, Mr. Angus. Then we can have a discussion and either vote for it or vote against it. We'll only proceed that way if there isn't consent to move forward, because there seems to be consensus.

Mr. Barrett.

Mr. Michael Barrett: Chair, all of those things as outlined by Mr. Angus I would like included in the meeting. As I said previously, I would like an invitation and to hear a response from former finance minister Bill Morneau and, depending on the outcome of that outreach, for the committee to then make a decision on if a summons needs to be extended or if he is available and attends of his own volition.

The Chair: Okay. What I'm going to do is go back to Mr. Angus to get clarity in terms of how he would like to proceed. Then we're going to go through the speaking list. I have Ms. Shanahan, Ms. Gaudreau and Mr. Erskine-Smith.

Let's go back to you, Mr. Angus.

Mr. Charlie Angus: I think we have agreement on the first part of this. My understanding is that it seems we have consensus.

I'm sorry. I forgot to respond to Mr. Barrett on Mr. Morneau. I think Mr. Morneau is very important here. I'm of the feeling that maybe we should wait on the Ethics Commissioner's report, which I believe should be coming soon. We might be in a better position to have him come then. I leave that to my colleagues, but I certainly think that if there's a finding we would be better equipped to have Mr. Morneau then.

I'm open, but I think that if we have agreement on the first part, I'm ready to accept. I would put that on the table. I think with Mr. Morneau that I'd like to see what the Ethics Commissioner has to say, and I'm hoping that report will be coming soon.

● (1315)

The Chair: Mr. Angus, these witnesses have all been invited. Are you suggesting that if they do not come that...? I think Mr. Erskine-Smith had suggested a summons. Is it the committee's will that it's how we would proceed? We would provide another invitation, and if they don't, then it's a summons? Very good. Okay.

We're going to go through the speaking list now. I guess we will proceed on the basis that this is a motion if in fact we don't get consensus here.

Mr. Nathaniel Erskine-Smith: Why don't I just move this? If anyone has an amendment, let me know.

I move that, in order to complete the study into issues of conflict of interest and lobbying—I don't know how you phrased it originally, with respect to the pandemic—and report its findings to the House, the committee hold two final meetings to hear from the following witnesses: Marc and Craig Kielburger for a three-hour meeting, and then Sofia Marquez, Victor Li and Spencer Elms in another three-hour meeting; and that the committee will summon these witnesses should they not respond and grant our request.

The Chair: Very good. I appreciate that.

Ms. Shanahan.

Mrs. Brenda Shanahan (Châteauguay—Lacolle, Lib.): Thank you, Chair, for recognizing me. I too would like to offer my congratulations on your election. I think we are off to an auspicious start with the work we have before us.

I had my hand up originally to speak to the public and in camera part, and I think you have found a consensus on that.

For the other topics we want to discuss, about the motion on Pornhub and other matters, we want to keep that in camera.

As for the matter that is before us, just as Mr. Angus and Mr. Erskine-Smith have outlined and the motion that Nathaniel has outlined, I'm agreeable to us proceeding on that basis.

The Chair: Thank you.

Ms. Gaudreau.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Marie-Hélène Gaudreau (Laurentides—Labelle, BQ): Good afternoon, Mr. Chair. Congratulations. You have a great challenge ahead of you. The beauty of it is that we've been together for several meetings, except for the newcomers. Bravo! I'm sure it's going to go well.

Hello to Mr. Sweet as well. I hope he's doing well.

Obviously, I was agreeing on the matter of being very careful with personal information, which must remain confidential. I agree.

I'm also pleased to know that after all the time we spent on getting to the bottom of this, as has been mentioned several times, we're going to continue along this path and finalize things. I am in favour of this, and always within the deadlines. At report time, we will need to have a list of the witnesses we met with, so that we aren't missing information and have to call them back another time.

This is the point I ask us to be vigilant about. I wanted to make this slight clarification.

I wish you a happy 2021, dear colleagues.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you.

I think there's a consensus here in terms of how to proceed, and I think we do have a good witness list and instructions for the clerk, first of all, to invite and then, if those invitations aren't received well, to summon. We will proceed on that basis. I will now suspend the public portion, because I believe the outstanding subjects should be discussed in camera. I think there is consensus to do that.

Mrs. Shanahan.

● (1320)

Mrs. Brenda Shanahan: I would just like to confirm that indeed the motion has passed as put forward.

The Chair: The motion has passed as put forward.

We'll proceed to the in camera portion now, colleagues.

[*Proceedings continue in camera*]

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