



CANADA

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—
Co-Chair

The Honourable Marilyn Trenholme Counsell

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● (0935)

[Translation]

The Joint Chair (Hon. Marilyn Trenholme Counsell (Senate)): Good day and welcome everyone to our first fall meeting.

[English]

Welcome, everybody, and thank you for being here.

[Translation]

I want to thank Members and Senators for being here.

[English]

We have one important function this morning, but equally important is that I know there is at least one person—and probably others—who would like to offer some comments that we would then proceed to consider and act upon.

[Translation]

Our first item of business is the election of the Joint Chair of the Standing Joint Committee on the Library of Parliament.

Could you kindly take over for me, Mr. Hall?

[English]

Mr. Hall will continue with this process.

[Translation]

The Joint Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Thomas Hall): Ladies and gentlemen,

[English]

honourable senators, I'm ready to receive motions for the co-chair of this committee.

Mr. Maurice Vellacott (Saskatoon—Wanuskewin, CPC): I propose Lui Temelkovski, from the Liberal Party, to be the co-chair for the committee.

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Joint Clerk (Mr. Thomas Hall): Mr. Temelkovski, you are elected co-chair.

Are there motions for a vice-chair?

Mrs. Susan Kadis (Thornhill, Lib.): I propose Mr. Vellacott as vice-chair.

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Joint Clerk (Mr. Thomas Hall): Mr. Vellacott is elected vice-chair.

Ms. Trenholme.

[Translation]

The Joint Chair (Hon. Marilyn Trenholme Counsell): First of all, I'd like to thank Ms. Kadis for the leadership, cooperation and interest shown last year.

[English]

Thank you, on behalf of all of us. Will you continue to be a member?

Mrs. Susan Kadis: Yes, I will, with pleasure.

[Translation]

The Joint Chair (Hon. Marilyn Trenholme Counsell): Welcome, Mr. Temelkovski. You may proceed.

[English]

The Joint Chair (Mr. Lui Temelkovski (Oak Ridges—Markham, Lib.)): Thank you very much.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

I would like to thank Susan for her work in the past year or so, as well as the rest of the committee.

I look forward to chairing this committee. I know there's a lot of work being done on the library, so we want to monitor that and see which way we can help the library in its progress toward the opening.

I don't have anything else to add today, unless someone else does, except that we will meet next week. A subcommittee has already been set up, and we will look at an agenda for the future.

Mr. Maurice Vellacott: I have one discussion item, maybe in the form of a motion, and I would appreciate the input of other committee members.

Going back some months, we have had the matter of the hiring of a new librarian. Our former librarian stepped away in the spring after giving notice in December. Susan had stressed and tried to emphasize, by way of letters and so on, that we would be able to follow the process, encourage it along, and have a little involvement in that.

At this point, it leaves the library in a bit of a limbo land position, as they don't have anybody in that position. Notices have gone out through the *Gazette*, yet there has been no progress on it. I know there have been various rumours as to why not—there has not been a clerk in place—and things like that.

I would move—and I guess we could discuss this and decide from there—that we have Tony Valeri, from the Privy Council, explain the process to us and give us an update in respect to where we are in regard to hiring, at a subsequent meeting. We're not talking about the intimate details of who is being considered or that type of thing, but simply the process, so that we can understand and get a sense of where we are and what is slowing or stalling it a bit now, too. That would be my hope, to expedite the work of the library.

• (0940)

The Joint Chair (Mr. Lui Temelkovski): So it's a motion to invite Mr. Valeri—

Mr. Maurice Vellacott: On behalf of the Privy Council, to come in to give us a little update in terms of the process. It has slowed a little bit, so maybe he could give us some insight into that too.

The Joint Chair (Mr. Lui Temelkovski): Karen.

Hon. Karen Redman (Kitchener Centre, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I certainly hear Mr. Vellacott's concern, but I sense things will be resolved in the near future. Rather than asking Mr. Valeri, I'm wondering if the committee would be amenable to an inquiry on the status of the whole issue, given that we didn't have a clerk and given that there are some other issues.

Maybe one of the two of you, as chairs, could write and ask about the status of putting the chief parliamentary librarian in place. I would think you would get a letter back explaining things to your satisfaction.

Mr. Maurice Vellacott: In response, I would say very quickly—and others may want to talk—that I know Susan was diligent in terms of going the letter route and attempting that, but that's not quite the same as having him here and giving an explanation to all of us, because we don't all get the insights. I'm not sure that was effective, although I think we made a diligent effort.

Maybe Susan has a response to that.

Mrs. Susan Kadis: Yes, if I may, Mr. Chair.

I did speak with him very recently. He said that as soon as the head clerk issue was resolved—and I believe it has been resolved—that would be the next order of business, in terms of ensuring that person is put in place. It would be expedited at that point.

So I think there were other issues they were dealing with, and this was the next one, definitely, based on the conversation last week.

Mr. Maurice Vellacott: Did he give you a sense that we might have some opportunity, if we are a committee that means anything here, to be involved in the process at all? Or is the intent to just carry on with appointments without regard for this committee in that? Will we get a look at them? Will we be able to advise them? Will we be able to have any input in respect of that hiring?

Mrs. Susan Kadis: My sense was that they took seriously the content of the letter we'd sent. How large a role, I can't really define. Maybe Mr. Hall can elucidate on that in terms of the actual input we've been requesting from the committee, and where you believe they're at, again without getting into details.

The Joint Clerk (Mr. Thomas Hall): Ms. Kadis and the senator had sent a joint letter to the government House leaders in both

Houses last fall, asking for this committee to be recognized as the committee responsible for the appointment, and telling both House leaders that we wanted to be involved in the process.

There was a reply from Mr. Valeri.

I think the researcher might want to add something.

Mr. James Robertson (Committee Researcher): Under the Standing Orders of the House of Commons, once the name of a parliamentary librarian has been tabled in the House, as it must be in advance of the appointment being made, this committee has thirty days to call that nominee before it in order to interview that person. The government cannot make the appointment official until this committee has either reported or until, after thirty days, the House of Commons has voted on a motion, non-debatable, to ratify the nomination.

At this point in time, given that the committee could not be that involved up to now for whatever reason, the next step in the process is for the government to propose a nomination. This committee will have a period of time to interview that person and report to the House and Senate, and at that point there must be a motion of the House before the appointment can actually be made by the government.

The Joint Chair (Mr. Lui Temelkovski): Given that information, Mr. Vellacott, maybe we could leave this for the subcommittee to—

Mr. Maurice Vellacott: That would be good.

Maybe I should leave the motion on the table, unless there were other comments to be made.

Maybe the better approach would be.... If we let it simply float, if you will, and don't have that person in to have a nice friendly chat and get some sense of their background, etc., then if I understand it correctly, by default it just carries on from there. So that it doesn't, I would want to have something on the record, as a minimum, so that we do make a point of having that person in and at least exercise that particular part of our mandate, so that there isn't just that lapse of the thirty days and an automatic appointment. That would be my preference.

• (0945)

Mr. James Robertson: In connection with Ms. Redman's suggestion, I think we will also do up a letter for the co-chairs to send to the government, asking for an update on the status of the nomination. You will presumably get a response to that either by letter or by the tabling of a nomination. We will, as staff, ensure that the committee is aware of its timeframes for dealing with the nomination.

Mr. Maurice Vellacott: I'll just reframe my motion and maybe make a friendly amendment to it, to say that we put in writing a request asking for an update, if that would be acceptable to members.

From what Susan reports here, we think we already have inklings of that, but maybe that would be the form of my motion, I guess, with a friendly amendment to my own motion.

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

The Joint Chair (Mr. Lui Temelkovski): So what we will do is send a letter, and within those thirty days or prior to them, we will meet with the candidate whose name is given.

Mr. Maurice Vellacott: I guess so. That's a separate issue from this issue of putting forward the letter of query. If you're accepting that, Chair, is that another thing on the record that we will do? Is that what you're proposing?

The Joint Chair (Mr. Lui Temelkovski): Yes, that's right.

Mr. Maurice Vellacott: So it's that we will exercise the option that we have, rather than letting it pass just by default.

I'm okay with that if the other members are, and I guess that's on the record as a motion.

The Joint Chair (Hon. Marilyn Trenholme Counsell): If I may, there are two other things. I would like for us to also have an update on the status of the Library of Parliament. This morning, someone from CNIB asked me something. Apparently, there is a national conference of libraries here next June, and they're wondering if it's going to be ready. If we could be briefed—I have a clipping here about the overrun costs—I think we, as members of this committee, should know the status of the restoration, the timetable, and perhaps something about the costs, the budget.

Mr. James Robertson: If I may, I would suggest that perhaps we could do another letter for you as co-chairs, to send to the acting parliamentary librarian on behalf of the committee, seeking a report in writing on that information. Would that be appropriate?

The Joint Clerk (Mr. Thomas Hall): Or you could invite them to come to our next meeting. Which would you prefer?

The Joint Chair (Mr. Lui Temelkovski): I would prefer to see someone, as opposed to a letter in this case.

The Joint Chair (Hon. Marilyn Trenholme Counsell): I think so. Then we could ask questions. I would agree.

The Joint Chair (Mr. Lui Temelkovski): Yes, a little interaction.

Mr. Maurice Vellacott: No doubt they will bring a written submission, or we would assume that anyhow. But that's right, because then you get the face-to-face.

Mr. James Robertson: The other point on the advantage of that would be that we could ensure that the necessary people from the Department of Public Works and Government Operations are in attendance, as they are actually in charge of the renovations until those are handed over to the library sometime in January.

The Joint Chair (Mr. Lui Temelkovski): That's right.

Is everyone in agreement with that? Yes? Good.

Anything else?

The Joint Chair (Hon. Marilyn Trenholme Counsell): Yes, if I may.

[*Translation*]

I discussed a matter with Senator Lapointe and I believe he has a few words to say to the committee. Correct?

Hon. Jean Lapointe (Senator, Senate): I don't believe this matter is on the agenda, Madam Joint Chair. I plan to table a motion in the Senate in the very near future calling for major changes to be made to this committee.

The Joint Chair (Hon. Marilyn Trenholme Counsell): You do not wish to address the committee at this time?

Hon. Jean Lapointe: No.

[*English*]

The Joint Chair (Mr. Lui Temelkovski): We will leave it for the first meeting after we've been briefed and the subcommittee meets and sets out the agenda.

● (0950)

Mr. Maurice Vellacott: Are we anticipating that the subcommittee will meet next week sometime?

Hon. Jean Lapointe: Do we have a date for next week yet?

The Joint Chair (Mr. Lui Temelkovski): We don't have a date yet. Are there any suggestions?

The Joint Chair (Hon. Marilyn Trenholme Counsell): I think it would have to be Tuesday.

The Joint Chair (Mr. Lui Temelkovski): For sure, somebody will not be able to make it at any given time, so throwing a dart at the wall may be the best way.

Mr. Maurice Vellacott: If you said eleven o'clock on Tuesday, would that...? Committees meet at nine.

The Joint Chair (Mr. Lui Temelkovski): This would be a subcommittee.

The Joint Chair (Hon. Marilyn Trenholme Counsell): Yes, eleven o'clock is fine.

Mr. Maurice Vellacott: It's the co-chairs plus a member from each party.

Mr. James Robertson: So eleven o'clock Tuesday is okay.

The Joint Chair (Mr. Lui Temelkovski): The subcommittee only, yes.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Guy André (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Mr. Joint Chair, next Tuesday at 11 a.m. is not a convenient time for us. Is there another possible date that could be considered?

[*English*]

The Joint Chair (Hon. Marilyn Trenholme Counsell): I think there might be unexpected meetings. I won't be here.

The Joint Chair (Mr. Lui Temelkovski): I believe Tuesday is November 1, and we're all going to be busy that day. But if we wait another week, it looks like it will be two weeks later, because we're off the week after that. So is there agreement on that?

That would be on November 15, right, Susan?

Mrs. Susan Kadis: What time?

[Translation]

Mr. Guy André: Could we meet on a day other than Tuesday? Ms. Rivard is never around on Tuesdays. What about Wednesday?

Ms. Denise Poirier-Rivard (Châteauguay—Saint-Constant, BQ): I don't have a problem with either Wednesday or Thursday.

[English]

The Joint Chair (Mr. Lui Temelkovski): Maybe if we find out who's on the committee, we can peg the date.

Susan.

Mrs. Susan Kadis: I'm not on the committee right now. I'm on as a former chair, I guess. Now you need a Liberal.

Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP): I'm not the NDP member of the committee. I'm just sitting in, so I don't know what to say on this issue. I would just say to go ahead and book the day, and hopefully we can be there.

[Translation]

Mr. Guy André: I have another question, Mr. Joint Chair. You mentioned a subcommittee meeting in two weeks. Is that correct? That doesn't pose a problem. I'm sorry, but I'm not a member of the subcommittee. I was getting the two committees confused. We thought it was the committee that was supposed to meet on Tuesday.

Hon. Jean Lapointe: That's why I asked the question.

Mr. Guy André: Thank you, Senator Lapointe. It makes no difference then if you meet on Tuesday in two week's time, or next Tuesday.

[English]

The Joint Chair (Hon. Marilyn Trenholme Counsell) : *Quelle date?* Wednesday? Thursday? Thursday at nine o'clock would be great for me, but on Wednesday we have Senate caucus.

● (0955)

The Joint Chair (Mr. Lui Temelkovski): This would be after the caucuses, at one o'clock.

The Joint Chair (Hon. Marilyn Trenholme Counsell) : That's fine. That's perfect. The 16th, at one o'clock.

The Joint Chair (Mr. Lui Temelkovski): Wednesday is caucus day, right? So one hour after lunch is enough.

Mrs. Susan Kadis: Can I just clarify, Mr. Chair—

The Joint Chair (Mr. Lui Temelkovski): I'm sorry, but we will further coordinate the date with our two offices.

Mrs. Susan Kadis: What I'm saying is that I'm not on it right now. I was on it as the co-chair. Whether or not Gurbax or anyone else wants to be on it, I'm happy to serve on the subcommittee, because you now need a Liberal person. Right now, there isn't one.

If Gurbax is interested.... No? Okay, I will do that then. You can put me down. Thank you.

The Joint Chair (Mr. Lui Temelkovski): Senator Lapointe.

[Translation]

Hon. Jean Lapointe: Mr. Clerk, could you send a list of the subcommittee members to my office? Thank you.

[English]

The Joint Chair (Mr. Lui Temelkovski): Of course.

Mr. Maurice Vellacott: Will you confirm in writing...?

The Joint Chair (Mr. Lui Temelkovski): We will confirm in writing the time and the date of the subcommittee meeting. The subcommittee will then set some structure for the future meetings.

Thank you very much.

The meeting is adjourned.

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