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# Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs

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Chair: Mr. John Aldag





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• (1000)  
[English]

**The Chair (Mr. John Aldag (Cloverdale—Langley City, Lib.)):** Good morning, colleagues. I call this meeting to order.

Welcome to meeting number 90 of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs. We recognize that we are meeting on the unceded territory of the Algonquin Anishinabe people.

Colleagues, today I was able to get some extra resources. I thank everyone for making it here on short notice. Good morning.

We're meeting to continue our clause-by-clause review of Bill C-53. We left off yesterday on the general discussion of clause 8. That's where we're at. I don't have a speaking list for clause 8.

I had Arnold first and then Gary.

**Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I have a motion on notice from last week. I was just wondering if I could move that motion right now.

**The Chair:** Because I already called clause 8, procedurally you'll have to wait until we're between clauses. That would be in order for this morning, but because we're resuming the debate on clause 8, we'll have to dispose of it.

**Mr. Arnold Viersen:** Between clauses I would like the floor.

**The Chair:** That's noted. I will give it to you.

Gary, did you want to speak to clause 8?

**Mr. Jamie Schmale (Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock, CPC):** I will, if you don't mind.

**Mr. Gary Vidal (Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River, CPC):** I'll let him go and then I'll follow.

**Mr. Jamie Schmale:** I haven't been a chair before, just a vice-chair. I was a little disappointed to get this meeting notice first thing in the morning. Many of us were in the House until midnight last night debating a very important issue. I noticed you weren't there for whatever reason. I understand you're travelling. That's fine, but to wake up first thing in the morning to find out there is a 10 a.m. meeting, with no communication with the vice-chairs at all, was extremely disappointing.

I understand that the government side wants to get this bill through. I understand that completely, but at the same time, had there been some consultation or even a conversation, I think a lot of issues could have been avoided.

I'm a little frustrated. I think the other parties are too. I'll let them speak for themselves.

I had no problem with continuing at the normal meeting at 3:30. Gary, Lori and others are working on language on clause 8 and we think we're very close. We're also engaging with the partners of this legislation. Based on the tight time schedule, we're still in that process. We're still working on that.

Had we had the proper time, I think we could have gotten there and moved on with this, but at the same time, being told...when we were debating indigenous services up until midnight, that wasn't there.

Chair—

**The Chair:** If I could just pause for a second, I have a point of order from Mr. Carr.

I'll come back to you, Mr. Schmale.

**Mr. Ben Carr (Winnipeg South Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Chair, I appreciate the frustrations of my colleagues, but it feels as though perhaps we're wading into debate. I think we have to move on to the clause.

Am I correct on that?

**An hon. member:** Aren't we in debate?

• (1005)

**The Chair:** Well, we're on clause 8. That's what I have—

**Mr. Ben Carr:** It's just that we should switch, for relevance, to clause 8.

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

Mr. Schmale, we'll go back to you. We are on clause 8.

**Mr. Jamie Schmale:** All right. I'll wrap up quickly, Chair.

I'd like to move a motion to adjourn this meeting and reconvene at the normal time of 3:30 this afternoon. I don't know what room it is—415, Wellington Building.

**The Chair:** Because you put a condition on that, it becomes a debatable motion. I'll take a speaking list for that motion.

We'll go to Mr. Vidal, Ms. Idlout and then Mrs. Atwin.

**Mr. Gary Vidal:** Thank you, Chair.

I think what my colleague Mr. Schmale is suggesting is that we.... That's what I was working toward with the business of yesterday and the take-note debate last night. My team was working with some of the partners. Frankly, it would have been nice if the government had done that ahead of time to get clarity on this definition around "indigenous governing body" and "collectivity".

I've been working with some of the partners and we are now working with the Library of Parliament and the law clerk to try to draft something that will work for clause 8. I think that would alleviate the concerns of some of the people who have expressed concerns about being caught up in something they don't want to be caught up in, while still respecting the rights of the three Métis governments to represent the people they choose to represent.

Having a bit of time today was the plan to get this nailed down so that by 3:30 today, we could have a solution to clause 8, which would allow us to move on with our consideration of the rest of the legislation.

I think it's a very appropriate request based on what we were expecting and the work we are doing to get an answer, aiming for the 3:30 timeline today, so we can appropriately deal with clause 8.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Next on my list I have Ms. Idlout.

Lori, before I go to you, I just want to say this. Yesterday, as we adjourned, I said that I had requests for resources for the rest of this week. When I went to bed last night, we had not heard anything. I was notified at about 8:30 this morning that the request had come through and the resources we received for today were starting at 9:00 a.m. We therefore could have started at 9:00 a.m. I've been clear that, as chair, my job is to secure resources to enable the discussion to happen on Bill C-53. It's up to members to do with that as they see fit and to have debate.

We talked yesterday, and one of the solutions put out there was for clause 8 to be stood in order to allow members to come up with wording. This would allow us to move on to clause 9. Clause 8 could be held before clause 2 in our proceedings.

It was short notice, but that's what we got. That's what we're working with. I have a request in for tomorrow, just to give you notice. Right now, it's from noon until 6:00 p.m., but I'm happy to extend that until midnight if we want to. We have a request for resources on Thursday and Friday. If we need to keep going into Christmas, I can explore what that looks like as well. As chair, I need to be in town, and I'm willing to do that in order to continue to facilitate the discussion.

That's why we have the resources today, with short notice. I appreciate everyone making it here on short notice. That's where we're at. We're back on the discussion of clause 8.

Next on my list, related to the motion to adjourn with conditions, I'll go to Ms. Idlout.

**Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP):** *Qujannamiik, Iksivautaq.* Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I support the motion to adjourn, because I need time to consult with our partners about the proposals submitted by the Conservatives. I share the concern that we were given basically very little notice, other than what you shared during committee—that you were looking for additional resources. When you mentioned that, there was no mention of the timing.

I know this piece of legislation is very important for the Liberals because of the mistakes they've made. We need to make sure we're doing this right. The best way to make sure we're doing it right is to be given the time to consult with our partners about what clause 8 will mean for them. Clause 8 is particularly important because it talks about recognition. Because of this recognition of indigenous governing bodies, we need to be careful that we are not recommending something that infringes on first nations like those in Ontario or other Métis in Alberta.

I've said this all along: It is important that we recognize Métis' right to self-government, but we need to do it right so that we are part of the Parliament that is helping to create solidarity, as opposed to dividing first nations, Métis and Inuit. If we continue today, I'm quite concerned that we're going to get backlash from our partners. We need to make sure we show our respect for them and their concerns. That's why I support adjournment at 3:30 p.m. It's so we get that bit of extra time to hear from our partners.

• (1010)

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Idlout.

Next I have Mrs. Atwin.

**Mrs. Jenica Atwin (Fredericton, Lib.):** I'll cede my time, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

I have Mr. Viersen.

**Mr. Arnold Viersen:** I support my colleague's motion to adjourn. I hope we can go to the vote forthwith.

**The Chair:** I have no further people on my speaking list, so we can call the question.

The motion is to adjourn until our regular meeting time at 3:30 today. All in favour?

(Motion agreed to)

**The Chair:** We're adjourned. We'll be back at 3:30.







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