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# Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security

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## Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security

Monday, November 20, 2023

• (1100)

[*Translation*]

**The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Simon Larouche):** Good morning.

Welcome to meeting number 83 of the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security.

Honourable committee members, I see that we have 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, cannot entertain points of order nor participate in debate.

[*English*]

We can now proceed to the election of the chair. Pursuant to Standing Order 106(2), the chair must be a member of the governing party.

[*Translation*]

I am ready to receive motions for the chair.

[*English*]

Go ahead, Mr. Motz.

**Mr. Glen Motz (Medicine Hat—Cardston—Warner, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Clerk.

Given that the chair has to be a member of the government, I would nominate Peter Julian.

**The Clerk:** Mr. Julian—

**Mr. Glen Motz:** That's a joke.

It was just to see if you're awake, Peter.

**Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP):** Mr. Clerk, I have to wonder what my colleague was drinking over the course of the break, because, of course, the NDP is an opposition party. If he wants to change the rules, that's quite another thing.

**The Clerk:** I'm now ready to receive any motions for the nomination of the chair.

Go ahead, Monsieur Fortin.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Rhéal Éloi Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ):** Thank you, Mr. Clerk.

I understand Mr. Julian is declining the nomination.

I, for one, nominate Mr. Heath MacDonald as chair.

**The Clerk:** It has been moved by Mr. Rhéal Fortin that Mr. Heath MacDonald be elected as chair of the committee.

Mr. Schiefke has the floor.

**Mr. Peter Schiefke (Vaudreuil—Soulanges, Lib.):** Thank you very much.

[*English*]

I would just like to know, before I vote for my honourable colleague to take the presidency of this committee, whether or not he would acknowledge the incredible show the Alouettes put on yesterday.

Would you be willing to do that, sir?

**Mr. Heath MacDonald (Malpeque, Lib.):** Yes.

**Mr. Peter Schiefke:** That's wonderful.

He has my vote, sir.

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

**Mr. Peter Julian:** I was tempted to propose my colleague Doug Shipley as part of the corporate coalition, but instead I will second the nomination of Mr. MacDonald, particularly if he is going to speak to the Alouettes' surprise victory yesterday.

[*Translation*]

**The Clerk:** It has been moved by Mr. Rhéal Fortin that Mr. Heath MacDonald be elected as chair of the committee.

• (1105)

Is it the committee's pleasure to adopt the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

[*English*]

**The Clerk:** I declare the motion carried and Mr. MacDonald duly elected.

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

**The Chair:** Thank you so much.

First of all, I would like to thank our former chair for the work he has done and wish him all the best on his knee surgery.

I would also like to congratulate the Montreal Alouettes. I'm true to my word.

I guess we'll get started right away with the order of business. If anybody has anything to say or anything going forward, let's get to work.

Go ahead, Mr. Lloyd.

**Mr. Dane Lloyd (Sturgeon River—Parkland, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and congratulations.

You just joined our committee, I believe, this fall. I'm looking forward to getting to know you better as chair. I'm looking forward to the very important work we're going to have to do over the next few months.

We have an important task ahead of us. It's been nine months since the former minister of public safety was told about the shocking and incomprehensible transfer of notorious killer Paul Bernardo out of a maximum-security prison. It's been nine months, and victims and Canadians have yet to receive an answer for why the minister allowed this disgraceful transfer to take place. It's been nine months and nothing has been done about the fact that Paul Bernardo remains outside of a maximum-security prison to this day. It's been nine months and still no one in this government has taken responsibility for this decision. No one has been held accountable.

Canadians and victims deserve to know what is going to be done about this, and they deserve to know who is going to be held responsible. Our Conservative team will not stop until we get the answers Canadians deserve.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** I have Ms. O'Connell.

**Ms. Jennifer O'Connell (Pickering—Uxbridge, Lib.):** Thanks, Mr. Chair.

Well, we could see the Conservative script being read, and I'm sure the Leader of the Opposition will give bonus points for accurately reading the script. Perhaps my colleague will even get a question or an S.O. 31 for good behaviour. On the topic of the real issues and the real work before this committee, we've already agreed to do a study.

Mr. Chair, I know there's been some disruption—not disruption, but we've been without a chair in place for a few days—so I would encourage you to line up witnesses for Wednesday's meeting on the study of prison transfers and classification, whichever witnesses are available. It should be the priority that we start this work.

We began the work with the good advice from Mr. Julian in terms of trauma-informed training, and I think that we should continue this work. We have a lot of work to do on this committee. We have a lot of things to study, including prison transfers, including Bill C-26, which is crucially important, and including auto theft, which I know is something that was brought forward by our Bloc members and was well supported on this committee.

Any sort of delay only delays serving Canadians. Canned speeches from Conservatives for brownie points are not actually helpful to Canadians and victims, but the work we do is, so I would encourage you to schedule Wednesday's meeting as quickly as possible, with witnesses on the transfer study.

Thank you.

• (1110)

**The Chair:** I have Mr. Julian, please.

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Mr. Chair, I would like to welcome you as chair. You have the confidence of all four parties around this table.

I did want to ask you about the agenda for Wednesday as we start that important study and we do the trauma-informed information session, which I think will help guide members of the public safety committee.

I agree with Ms. O'Connell that we need to set a deadline in terms of additional witnesses so that next week we can have the hearings that we have voted to have.

**The Chair:** Thank you, everyone.

I was having a sidebar here with the clerk discussing the witnesses: whether they were called, when they were called and that type of thing. He informed me that they will be notified ASAP to see if they can come on Wednesday.

Is that correct?

**The Clerk:** I've been informed that the deputy minister and the commissioner of Correctional Service Canada are available next Monday. They are not available this Wednesday.

I could contact the ombudsman for victims of crime, as well as the unions, to see if it's possible for them to meet with us on Wednesday.

**The Chair:** I have Ms. O'Connell.

**Ms. Jennifer O'Connell:** Thank you.

I would suggest contacting any of the witnesses on the list—such as Tim Danson, who represents the victims' families—to see if they are available on Wednesday. I think it's important that we move forward on this. If officials aren't available until the following Monday, that's fine, but we've allocated a certain number of meetings with a defined list of witnesses and they should be contacted as soon as possible.

I recognize the challenges with Ron's surgery and needing this process to happen, but we are fully prepared to have a meeting on Wednesday on this study, and witnesses need to be contacted.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Is everyone okay with that process? Okay.

Ms. O'Connell, go ahead.

**Ms. Jennifer O'Connell:** If that's settled, I'll move a motion to adjourn.

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

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