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**Official Report
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Tuesday 15 June 2004

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Mardi 15 juin 2004

**Standing committee on
estimates**

Organization

**Comité permanent des
budgets des dépenses**

Organisation

Chair: Cameron Jackson
Clerk: Trevor Day

Président : Cameron Jackson
Greffier : Trevor Day

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

STANDING COMMITTEE ON
ESTIMATESCOMITÉ PERMANENT DES
BUDGETS DES DÉPENSES

Tuesday 15 June 2004

Mardi 15 juin 2004

The committee met at 1545 in room 228.

The Chair (Mr Cameron Jackson): I'd like to call the standing committee on estimates to order; I note that routine proceedings have been completed. I'd like to welcome all members.

I'd like to do a couple of introductions at the outset. To my right is our committee clerk, Trevor Day. To his right is Cory Pagett, who is the Hansard reporter. To my left is Anne Marzalik, who is our dedicated legislative researcher who is available to this committee.

ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR

The Chair: You have a copy of today's agenda. Our first order of business is that we would like to resolve the issue of an election of a Vice-Chair. We are open to nominations.

Mr Jim Wilson (Simcoe-Grey): I would like to place a nomination in the name of John O'Toole, the member from Durham, as Vice-Chair of this committee.

The Chair: Do I see a seconder for that nomination? Mr Bisson.

Last call: Are there any other nominations? Seeing none, I declare Mr O'Toole the Vice-Chair of the committee.

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): Do I get to make a speech?

The Chair: No, you don't. These days, saying nothing will get you really far.

SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

The Chair: I would like to resolve the issue of the subcommittee membership so that we have that on our record. Could I be informed of who will represent each caucus? I'd like to recognize Ms Horwath.

Ms Andrea Horwath (Hamilton East): I will be representing the NDP caucus.

The Chair: We are going to need you to become, through the House leaders—today we have you subbed in, you're not a permanent member of the committee, so I can't allow that at the moment. But if it is your intention, then we'll need your House leader to speak to the government House leader, and I'm sure they will facilitate your transfer to this committee.

Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay): You would know that there is actually a motion that is supposed to

be coming to the House—it was supposed to be here today but it won't be in until tomorrow—naming all the members on the committee, including Ms Horwath as our nominee. So it's all taken care of. It's just a formality at this point.

The Chair: All right. Then I will still recognize the other members of the committee for purposes of Hansard. I know it will be directed, but we may wish to have a subcommittee meeting and something may happen in the House. I'll make sure that all parties are represented, but I would like to have your nominees for the record.

Ms Caroline Di Cocco (Sarnia-Lambton): I believe I'm the representative for the government.

The Chair: Thank you. The official opposition?

Mr Wilson: Mr Chairman, I don't know if you need a motion. The clerk has provided me with a motion.

I move that the membership of the subcommittee on committee business be revised as follows: that Mr O'Toole be appointed in place of Mrs Witmer.

1550

The Chair: OK. Since it's a motion, we'd better have a vote. All those in favour? Opposed, if any? Carried.

I think our working knowledge is that Ms Martel is the subcommittee rep and that you're subbing in for her today. We'll leave it at that until the House leader can adjust that accordingly, and the minutes will reflect that you're representing the subcommittee today. I can't ensconce you as the permanent member.

COMMITTEE BUSINESS

The Chair: Are we prepared to proceed with the next order of business? Are the caucuses ready to order up their business in accordance with the standing orders? Have all three caucuses come prepared to do that?

M. Bisson: Oui, oui.

The Chair: Fine. Then you will be familiar with standing order 59, which indicates that there are two rounds, leading off with the official opposition, who can choose up to two ministries for up to a total of 15 hours. The selection will then move to the NDP for similar parameters of up to two ministries, up to 15 hours in total. Then we will move to the government for their selection.

Mr O'Toole: Chair, has there been any discussion? As you are the Chair, I know you are the pinnacle here. We sort of have in our mind that the three main

ministries, of course, would be finance, health and education. That's where most of the money is spent. I imagine other caucuses will have a similar—but we're submitting those as our three top priorities at this time. I don't know how we allocate the time. Do we just choose?

The Chair: I'd like to get the first round developed today so we can give ministries sufficient notice.

Mr O'Toole: We'll submit Health. It's the largest. It's 50% of the budget.

The Chair: My understanding is that you would like to submit Finance at 7.5 hours and then Health at 7.5 hours, in that order.

Mr Wilson: I'm thinking more Health and Education, then Finance. The NDP are planning on doing Finance. We were planning on doing Health and Education. That's as far as I've got in any discussions with any members.

The Chair: I think the Chair sort of indicated—

Interjection: OK, we'll go with the Chair.

The Chair: Well, it's not the Chair's selection. I was advised by the House leader for our party that the choices would be Finance, 7.5 hours; and Health, 7.5 hours. If you wish to change those suggestions by your House leader, you have the right to do it. But I was given notice of that.

Mr O'Toole: Very appropriate.

Mr Wilson: You're more up-to-date than I am.

The Chair: Is that your final answer? Good. Finance is first at 7.5 hours; Health is second at 7.5 hours.

Now I will move to the NDP to hear up to two ministries, and if possible, please give us the allocation of time you wish to devote to each.

Ms Horwath: We would like Energy, 7.5 hours; and Municipal Affairs and Housing, 7.5 hours.

The Chair: That's your final answer?

Ms Horwath: Yes, Mr Chairman.

Mr Phil McNeely (Ottawa-Orléans): What was the last one?

The Chair: Energy, 7.5 hours; and Municipal Affairs and Housing, or whatever it's called these days, 7.5 hours.

Ms Di Cocco: Children and Comsoc.

The Chair: Children and Youth services?

Mr Bisson: Comsoc.

The Chair: No, Comsoc is a separate ministry.

Ms Di Cocco: Yes. Children and Youth Services, and Comsoc.

The Chair: OK. Comsoc will be the next one. And how much time allocation?

Ms Di Cocco: What is the limit that is provided?

The Chair: Fifteen hours. You can do 14 and one; you can do 7.5 and 7.5; you can do 10 and five.

Ms Di Cocco: 7.5 and 7.5 seems to be OK.

The Chair: That completes round one. I'm going to raise the other issue about meeting during the inter-session, but there's no sense in going beyond this list at this point.

Mr Bisson: Why?

The Chair: Because if you add up the total number of days and the time we have to report, we'll be barely lucky to get most of this done.

Mr Bisson: Never presume.

The Chair: If it's the committee's wish—yes?

Ms Di Cocco: If I might ask, who's on the list now, please? I thought Education was on the list. Am I correct?

The Chair: No, it's not. It's Finance, Health, Energy, Municipal Affairs, Children and Youth Services and Comsoc.

Ms Di Cocco: OK. Then I'd like Education on.

The Chair: Instead of what?

Ms Di Cocco: Instead of Comsoc.

Mr Bisson: You can't change it now.

Ms Di Cocco: I apologize.

The Chair: I haven't called the final list. And I hadn't asked her for her final answer, actually. It's now Education. OK.

Ms Di Cocco: Thank you.

The Chair: I'm advised by my learned clerk that we must report the full two rounds, so I'm going to ask you to come up with some additional ministries at this point.

Mr O'Toole: We would move Transportation.

The Chair: Transportation. And your second, or—

Mr Wilson: Do we have to say our points now?

The Chair: Yes, I'm afraid we do. The fact that we're never going to get to them is not the issue.

Mr O'Toole: I would say Agriculture would be next, then. They're cutting money from Agriculture and I'm very concerned about that.

The Chair: We'll save that commentary for the estimates process.

Mr O'Toole: It's recorded, I hope. Isn't it?

The Chair: What time do you wish to put to each of those?

Mr O'Toole: How much time is remaining now?

The Chair: You have a 15-hour window there. Use it as you wish.

Mr O'Toole: I would say 7.5 and 7.5. So we've got Transportation and Agriculture.

The Chair: And that's your final answer?

Mr O'Toole: Final answer.

Mr Bisson: I want to point out that we've made up our minds and we won't change our minds.

Ms Horwath: Our second-round choices would be Environment, and Community and Social Services.

The Chair: Seven and a half each?

Ms Di Cocco: Economic Development and Northern Development.

The Chair: Did you say Northern Development?

Ms Di Cocco: Yes. Economic Development and Northern Development.

The Chair: And the time spread?

Ms Di Cocco: The time spread—

Mr Bisson: Is Northern Development one?

Ms Di Cocco: Yes, Northern Development.

Again, are we keeping to the maximum of 15 hours?

The Chair: Listen, if you want to do 3 and 3, it's up to a maximum of 15. You can choose to do less. I should have made that a little clearer.

Ms Di Cocco: Thank you for doing that. I think three and three on those two.

Interjection.

The Chair: Well, it's their choice, not ours.

I'm going to now read the final list of ministries for those of you who wish to make a notation:

- (1) Finance for 7.5 hours;
- (2) Health and Long-Term Care for 7.5 hours;
- (3) Energy for 7.5 hours;
- (4) Municipal Affairs and Housing for 7.5 hours;
- (5) Children and Youth Services for 7.5 hours;
- (6) Education for 7.5 hours;
- (7) Transportation for 7.5 hours;
- (8) Agriculture and Food for 7.5 hours;
- (9) Environment for 7.5 hours;
- (10) Community and Social Services for 7.5 hours;
- (11) Economic Development and Trade for 3 hours;
- (12) Northern Development and Mines for 3 hours.

That is the order of business for the 2004-05 estimates for the ministries.

Do I have a motion to accept that? Who gave me the motion? Mr Craitor. All those in favour? Opposed, if any? Approved.

Next question—yes?

Mr McNeely: Just a question: This 7.5 hours, is that a day? Are these day sittings?

The Chair: We usually do 2.5 hours a day. If we start at 3:30, we're out of here by 6 o'clock.

Where it gets different is that in the past we've done estimates during the summer or during the intersession.

We can order them up during the course of a day and you can literally do an entire ministry in a day if you go to that system.

If I've answered your question, then that slides us to the next question: if we wish to request of House leaders for us to sit during the intersession to do some of the estimates.

Mr Kim Craitor (Niagara Falls): I'm not available.

The Chair: I can leave this to the subcommittee, if you wish.

Ms Di Cocco: I want to suggest that the subcommittee deal with that.

The Chair: The only reason I raise this is that this is one of the latest estimates any government has had that wasn't precipitated by an election. We've had June elections where you don't get to the estimates until November, but in this instance we've—the standing orders were implicit that there would be sufficient time to do some, if not most, of the estimates. We're just not going to be afforded that time frame. If that is the consensus of the committee, then we will raise the issue at the subcommittee level. We will have a subcommittee meeting tomorrow so we can have this in front of House leaders by the end of the week.

Are there any other matters the committee wishes to raise at this time? No.

Is it agreed that we will serve notice to the ministries immediately and report to the House tomorrow? Our first day for estimates can be Tuesday, June 22. Is there any objection? If not, then we will proceed on that basis.

Motion to adjourn? Moved by Mr Wilson. All in favour? Carried.

The committee adjourned at 1603.

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