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Thursday 17 February 2005

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Jeudi 17 février 2005

**Standing committee on
finance and economic affairs**

Pre-budget consultations

**Comité permanent des finances
et des affaires économiques**

Consultations prébudgétaires

Chair: Pat Hoy
Clerk: Trevor Day

Président : Pat Hoy
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ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON
FINANCE AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS**

**COMITÉ PERMANENT DES FINANCES
ET DES AFFAIRES ÉCONOMIQUES**

Thursday 17 February 2005

Jeudi 17 février 2005

The committee met at 1005 in room 228.

PRE-BUDGET CONSULTATIONS

The Chair (Mr. Pat Hoy): The standing committee on finance and economic affairs will please come to order. This morning's order of business, as the committee would know, is report writing. What we would do is first of all go through the draft report to see if members feel that it is accurate or if there are proposed changes, followed then by any motions that have been put forward.

We'll look at the draft report first. I suppose the easiest way is to call it out by page, unless there is another suggestion.

Mr. Mike Colle (Eglinton-Lawrence): Mr. Chairman, we've read it. To me it's a very accurate summary. I think researchers did a great job of condensing all the material. I suggest that just if we have comments or changes—I have a couple of minor changes—it might be more expeditious, rather than going through it page by page.

The Chair: Are we agreed? Agreed.

Mr. Colle: I just have two minor changes. Based on the minister's presentation, I just wanted to clarify some points. It's on page 2, paragraph 5. One of the references—I checked with Hansard, and this reflects basically what Hansard said. I just want to change page 2, paragraph 5, and add to the end of the paragraph:

"The Ministry of Finance has identified \$350 million in savings as part of a line-by-line program review. This is nearly half the target of \$750 million in savings set by the government to be realized by 2007-08."

That's the change on page 2, paragraph 5. They were in the minister's comments that weren't included in the report.

The Chair: Agreed? I remember him saying it.

Mr. Colle: Yes. I have another one on page 3—

The Chair: And provide that in writing.

Mr. Colle: I have both of them. I'll give it to you in writing.

The Chair: Very well.

Mr. Colle: Second, again the same thing, the minister's comments, amend page 3 and add a paragraph after the first paragraph:

"According to the Ministry of Finance, in fiscal 2004-05, Ontario is making a net contribution to Confed-

eration of \$23 billion. This means that Ontarians pay \$23 billion more in revenues to Ottawa per year than they receive in program spending, transfer payments, and in paying our share of federal debt interest. The ministry is concerned that this large net outflow is seriously harming Ontario's fiscal capacity to invest in core government services such as health, education, and infrastructure. Ontario is Canada's economic engine—the scope of this outflow threatens not only Ontario's ability to generate new wealth but Canada's as well."

It's a reflection of what the minister and staff presented in their preliminary comments to the committee.

Mr. Michael Prue (Beaches-East York): I don't deny that it was said, but I don't know whether it was in quite the context as if it was being said today. I mean, there might have been a great many more comments to it, given that it is now a political issue. I'm not sure that it should be given that kind of priority in this report. I don't think it was intended to be that kind of priority, but at the same time, I do not deny that it was said; it was.

Mr. Colle: Yes, and that's all I'm doing. I just want to include those remarks. I'm not saying it should be given any more priority or highlighted; it's just to include those comments.

The Chair: Agreed?

Mr. Larry Johnston: Just one explanation, and that is that normally in the draft final report we don't usually include comments from the minister, because it's a report to the minister rather than the minister reporting to himself. That may reflect why some of the things that were said by the minister to the committee are not highlighted in the initial section to the degree that Mr. Colle is looking for, but at the end of the day, whatever the members wish—

Mr. Colle: What I'm trying to do basically is to say this was put before us, and I think the minister was making a presentation, as was ministry staff. I think it reflects what ministry staff was trying to put on the record too. It was before us, and that's what I'm basically saying, although it's not a huge part of the report.

Mr. Prue: As long as it's clear it's what the minister is saying.

Mr. Colle: Yes, exactly. That could be indicated.

Mr. Prue: So if the minister wants to read and think that he did a good job, I guess he can.

The Chair: I guess the committee understands what research is putting forward to you, and it would appear that there is agreement to put this into the report. Any

other suggestions, concerns or discussion about the draft report?

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Mr. Colle: If I could just comment too: What I found very helpful—and hopefully members in the House will find it helpful—is that the research request made by various members has been included. I know the work entailed by staff to put this together, and I just hope it doesn't get lost on members of the committee and on members of the Legislature that this is valuable information that has been requested and put forward by staff. I just want to make note of that.

The Chair: Any further comment or discussion on the draft report? Hearing none, the draft report will stand as amended.

Now we will move to motions. For the committee's information, these motions are deemed to have been moved. They are numbered in your package 1 through—

Interjection.

The Chair: I'm advised that the ones with dates appearing were moved. Those without a date have come in since the committee last met, which is as per the agreement. So the ones with dates are deemed to have been moved; the ones without dates have not been moved.

Mr. Colle: I'm just thinking, out of fairness, whether we should hold down the ones put forward by the official opposition and give them a further chance.

Mr. Prue: To speak to it; I think that is totally fair until someone arrives.

Mr. Colle: So what we'll do is start with the other motions, if possible, by the government or the NDP. I think that would be fair.

The Chair: Agreed? We are agreed. Then we'll move to page 2.

Mr. Prue: On a point of privilege, Mr. Chair: I have the motions, but I don't think I have them in the same way you do. I have the ones that were moved before and the ones that the New Democratic Party has put forward, but is there anything other than that? When you say page 2, I don't know—

Clerk Pro Tem (Ms. Tonia Grannum): If you use the package that was handed out, what we did was, we took your previous motions and the new ones and put them in a package in the order that they would probably appear in the report.

Mr. Prue: I don't have that package.

Clerk Pro Tem: OK, sorry.

Mr. Prue: So I don't know the order. I just want to make sure that I'm doing it all correctly here. I have all the motions but not the package.

Page 2, if I could, then?

The Chair: My understanding is that this one will have to be moved because it's not dated.

Mr. Prue: Yes, of course. I would move this motion: "Fair share" revenue package

Be it resolved that the standing committee on finance and economic affairs strongly recommends to the Minister of Finance that the government introduce, in its

2005-06 budget, a \$3.5 billion "fair share" revenue package consisting of the following measures:

At least \$1.5 billion in taxes from imposing higher tax rates on individual income over \$100,000;

At least \$1 billion from returning corporate tax rates (excluding small business) to the 2000 rate;

At least \$750 million from closing loopholes in the employer health tax benefiting large corporations.

At least \$250 million from increasing tobacco taxes by \$5/carton.

I think it's self-explanatory. We believe that there is an opportunity for the government, although it may be unpalatable, to do much of the work that you are saying needs to be done, but you're going to have to find the revenue for it. Notwithstanding that monies may one day flow from the federal government, we are certainly not holding our breath and are suggesting there is a way out of the tax mess, and that is to find the revenue.

The Chair: Further discussion?

Mr. Colle: I don't think we can support this. As much as we would appreciate the revenue—and as the member said, it would really help us to deliver on a lot of the needs Ontario has. The real problem is that it is a significant increase in taxes that would potentially do a great deal of harm to the Ontario economy, in the short term, anyway, especially the employer health tax.

As you know, we've just won a court case, where the Superior Court supported the government's notion that professional sports teams have to pay that. I think this, for example, would hurt a lot of medium and small businesses and individuals self-employed in business.

We are progressing on a plan to increase tobacco taxes to the national average. We've done the second instalment of that. We're going to proceed on that. So we cannot, I don't think, support this.

The Chair: Further comment? Hearing none, all in favour? Opposed? The motion is lost.

For the committee, page 3. This one is dated. So it has been moved. Further discussion?

Mr. Colle: Just briefly, I hope you have the inclusion of the word "film" in there, the "enhanced film tax credits." In the original motion, it just had "enhanced tax credits." I remember the reference in my discussion of it was about encouraging the minister, in essence, to follow through with that announcement made earlier this year to help the film industry in Ontario. Hopefully, this will be included in the upcoming budget. That's, in essence, the purpose of the motion.

The Chair: Technically, Mr. Colle has made an amendment to the motion. All in favour? Carried.

Now, then, to the motion; any further discussion?

Mr. Prue: I support it.

The Chair: All in favour? Opposed, if any? Carried.

I show an NDP motion on page 6.

Mr. Prue: The motion reads as follows:

Be it resolved that the standing committee on finance and economic affairs strongly recommends to the Minister of Finance that the government, in its FY 2005-06 budget, bring back the government PST rebate for the

purchase of Energy Star appliances. This program used to encourage the purchase of energy-efficient fridges, freezers, washers and dryers but expired July 31, 2004. Bringing back the rebate would constitute a meaningful step in promoting energy conservation and energy efficiency.

I think it's self-explanatory. The Minister of Energy stood up yesterday and talked about air conditioners and changing that so that we have more energy-efficient air conditioners. The only way you're going to get people to give up their clunkers—well, not the only way, but a very significant way of giving up the clunkers—that are no longer energy-efficient is to make it economically feasible to do so. It's a small price to pay in order that we will be able to close down, hopefully one day, the coal-fired generating plants.

The Chair: Thank you. Further discussion?

Mr. Colle: I think this is supportable, given the Minister of Energy's direction. It will hopefully dovetail with some of those initiatives. So this is something that's supportable.

The Chair: All in favour? Carried.

Page 8. There is an NDP motion.

Mr. Prue: It reads as follows:

Be it resolved that the standing committee on finance and economic affairs strongly recommends to the Minister of Finance that the government not privatize important public assets such as the LCBO, OPG or TVO, to deal with a short-term deficit.

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I know the minister has said in the past, by way of explanation, that it's not his intention to privatize, but there is a lot of information floating around about income trusts and other things that may find its way into the budget. We believe the minister should be advised that privatization of these public assets is not in the long-term public interest.

The Chair: Further comment?

Mr. Colle: Yes, this is supportable. It certainly fits in with the minister's statements and the objectives. In essence, we are hopefully not going to move in any way toward privatization of assets to fix our short-term deficit problem. So this is very supportable.

The Chair: Further discussion? Hearing none, all in favour? Carried.

Page 13, NDP motion.

Mr. Prue: The motion reads as follows:

Be it resolved that the standing committee on finance and economic affairs strongly recommends to the Minister of Finance that the government allocate at least \$100 million of new provincial money to expand Ontario's regulated, non-profit child care system in its FY 2005-06 budget. This would be over and above monies transferred from the federal government for child care purposes. This would constitute a meaningful step in implementing promises made in the Liberal 2003 election platform to invest \$300 million in child care and to extend child care assistance to 330,000 children.

This is a motion by way of some of what we heard and the necessity of a child care program. Although it appears to be stalled slightly in the federal House, there is a move afoot there to greatly expand the child care program. This, we believe, would dovetail quite nicely with federal initiatives.

The Chair: Further discussion?

Mr. Colle: We can't support this at this time due to the fact that there are these discussions going on. They're discussions that we hope will lead to a meaningful and comprehensive national child care program that will take Ontario's needs into account. So we'll await the outcome of those discussions, which Minister Bountrogianni is involved in at the present time.

The Chair: Further discussion? Hearing none, all in favour? Opposed? The motion is lost.

NDP motion, page 15.

Mr. Prue: The motion reads as follows:

Be it resolved that the standing committee on finance and economic affairs strongly recommends to the Minister of Finance that, in its 2005-06 budget, the government eliminate the national child benefit clawback and ensure, at a minimum, a 3% increase for those receiving Ontario Works and ODSP assistance. This would constitute a meaningful first step in implementing promises made in the Liberal 2003 election platform and in opposition to end the national child benefit clawback and to increase both the basic Ontario Works allowance and ODSP. This would cost approximately \$300 million.

By way of explanation, we believe the greatest single action that can be taken to eliminate child poverty, and in fact poverty in Ontario, is to end the clawback. About 40% of those on social assistance in Ontario are children, and those are the poorest of the poor. To take away those monies institutes and solidifies poverty—grinding, never-ending poverty. We had Deb Peliti who came here and got a standing ovation in the House. That poor woman who found the money and was allowed to keep it, thankfully—at least the reward portion—has her monies clawed back \$232 a month, each and every month that her kids don't get clothes and have to go to the food bank to eat. She is but one example, and we think it's something the government should make a priority.

The Chair: Further comment?

Mr. Colle: I think the motion is certainly well-intentioned, that in essence there has to be aggressive improvement in the state of our citizens who are living in abject poverty. Removing that clawback would go a long way toward doing that.

My problem with the motion is that it's extremely specific and it ties the ministry down to a \$300-million expenditure which I think is just too specific. I know that the minister is actively working with the Ministry of Community and Social Services to try to deal with this issue in a multiplicity of strategies, so I can't support this.

The Chair: Further discussion? Hearing none, all in favour? Opposed? The motion is lost.

Page 16, an NDP motion.

Mr. Prue: The motion reads as follows:

Be it resolved that the standing committee on finance and economic affairs strongly recommends to the Minister of Finance that the government allocate \$1 billion in new K-12 educational funding in its FY 2005-06 budget. This would constitute a meaningful step in implementing the Liberal 2003 election education promise of implementing the Rozanski report recommendations.

I think it's self-evident what it says. That is the minimum that's going to be required to get Ontario education back to where it was before the disastrous previous decade.

The Chair: Further comment?

Mr. Colle: Again, I think the motion is well-intentioned. The government has already committed \$1.1 billion more for education for 2004-05. In the last budget, there was a commitment of \$2.1 billion more for education over the next four years. I think it's a matter of timing and it's a matter of various challenges that the Ministry of Education has, but we're certainly moving toward full implementation of Rozanski.

Again, it's a matter of different priorities. We can't meet all the needs at once, but the Ministry of Education is aggressively moving toward healing the wounds in public education as fast as they can. We can't support this specific motion.

The Chair: Further comment? Seeing none, all in favour? Opposed? The motion is lost.

Page 17 is a motion previously moved: Any comment?

Mr. Colle: I know Mr. Wilkinson couldn't be here. He moved this. Its objective was basically to try to encourage that people with low-emission vehicles and also the new non-toxic-burning motors, the hybrids etc., and alternate fuels like ethanol be exempt from the Drive Clean program. I think it's something worth considering and see if it's plausible. I would hope that we would support this.

The Chair: Further comment? Hearing none, all in favour? Carried.

Page 19, an NDP motion.

Mr. Prue: The motion reads as follows:

Be it resolved that the standing committee on finance and economic affairs strongly recommends to the Minister of Finance that the government allocate sufficient funds to hire a minimum of 3,000 new nurses in its FY 2005-06 budget. This would cost approximately \$150 million and would constitute a meaningful step in implementing the Liberal 2003 election promise to hire 8,000 new nurses.

By way of explanation, we're closing in on the second year of the mandate. We're halfway through the mandate and we're nowhere near the number of nurses that need to be hired. We would need another 3,000 new nurses, at least, in order to keep up with that promise. We don't believe that waiting until the last year of the mandate and then suddenly trying to find 8,000 is realistic, and we're asking that the government show its commitment in this budget by hiring 3,000 at this time.

The Chair: Further comment?

Mr. Colle: Again, it is our intention to move toward hiring the 8,000. We've already put money forward to hire 3,600 additional new places. This is being done on a schedule in conjunction with the Ministry of Health. So this specific direction in this motion would not be acceptable at this time.

1030

The Chair: Further comments? Hearing none, all in favour? Opposed? The motion is lost.

Page 29, an NDP motion.

Mr. Prue: The motion reads as follows:

Be it resolved that the standing committee on finance and economic affairs strongly recommends to the Minister of Finance that the government, in its FY 2005-06 budget, reverse the Conservative's 15% increase in long-term-care rates and continue to phase in operating increases to bring Ontario's per capita funding for long-term care up to the national average. A meaningful step in this direction would be an operating increase of \$200 million.

Again, for those who live in long-term-care facilities, the 15% increase constitutes a real hardship. Most of the people who live in those facilities, or almost all of them, are infirm. Many of them have cognitive disabilities. Most of them have very meagre pensions. Some of them rely wholly on government programs and old age pensions. The 15% increase literally robs them of any spending money or opportunity that they might have for what one should not consider luxuries but life's necessities, such things as getting your hair cut and other things for which they must pay in those facilities. We believe that the government has an obligation to our senior citizens and to those in those facilities to ensure that they at least have some modicum of comfort and opportunity to make personal choice, such as getting a haircut. We ask that this motion be approved.

The Chair: Further comment?

Mr. Colle: Again, the sentiment is something we can support. We have increased the commitment in real dollars to long-term-care facilities. I think it's over \$300 million, and front-line nurses etc., and the ministry is aggressively looking to implement a lot of the recommendations of the report by MPP Monique Smith from Nipissing. It's just that that \$200 million is something that is too specific to tie the minister down with at this time. So we don't support it.

The Chair: Further comment? Hearing none, all in favour? Opposed? The motion is lost.

Page 30, an NDP motion.

Mr. Prue: The motion reads as follows:

Be it resolved that the standing committee on finance and economic affairs strongly recommends to the Minister of Finance that the government allocate sufficient funds in its FY 2005-06 budget to put in place:

—12,000 new rent supplements at \$4,450 per unit.

This would cost \$53.4 million

—7,000 units of affordable housing at \$50,000 per unit for a cost of \$350 million.

The rationale behind this motion is that the rent supplements—only 400 have been instituted, at least that I am aware of, and I'm also the housing critic. I went to the announcement. Minister Gerretsen was there, Anne Swarbrick was there from the Toronto agency that is going to do this, and 400 rent supplements are in the works.

What was promised was, I think, 35,000 rent supplements. What we're saying is that into the second year of the mandate, if this is to be a realistic promise, then we have to start acting on this. It is an expense which we acknowledge at \$53.4 million, but there are 170,000 people, and that constitutes 70,000 families, on the waiting list for public housing in Toronto alone. There's double that number if you take the whole province. Much of the anxiety that these people are facing can be resolved with rent supplements. We know that it will take a long time to build the actual units, and we are suggesting that this should be done immediately.

The second part is 7,000 units of affordable housing. The promise that was made during the last election by the now Liberal government was that they would build 20,000 units of affordable housing. We're into the second full year of the mandate and nowhere near one third or one quarter—hardly any affordable housing units at all have been built. We believe that although the cost is high, the need is absolutely great and that it is a commitment that must be met. We're asking that this motion be carried and forwarded to the minister for his consideration.

Mr. Colle: As some members of the committee may know, Minister Caplan is actively working on this file. He's in discussions with the federal government, trying to come up with a financing capital approach that will allow the government to get back into building affordable housing. There is the full intention to do that. It's just that this motion is, again, much too specific in nature. We have to allow the Minister of Finance to work together with the ministry, as they are right now, and hopefully there will be some serious progress made very quickly on this front. We can't support this as worded at this time.

The Chair: Further comment? Hearing none, all in favour? Opposed? The motion is lost.

NDP motion, page 32:

Mr. Prue: The motion reads as follows:

Be it resolved that the standing committee on finance and economic affairs strongly recommends to the Minister of Finance that the government, in its FY 2005-06 budget, continue to freeze all regulated and deregulated college and university programs as well as ensure that funding is sufficient to compensate for the tuition freeze and to implement the Rae recommendations for 2005-06. These commitments would cost approximately \$900 million in operating funding (including base and student aid), \$550 million in capital funding and \$60 million to compensate for the tuition freeze. This would total \$1.51 billion and would constitute a meaningful first step in implementing the Rae report recommendations as well as to support the tuition freeze on all college and universities programs.

By way of explanation, yesterday or the day before in the House, the member from Trinity-Spadina stood up and asked the question about freezing and was assured by the minister that in fact tuition fees would be frozen. The rest falls into place here with the Rae recommendation of ensuring that adequate operational funding and capital funding would fall into place. We think it's a no-brainer; we ask for your support.

Mr. Colle: This is one of the minister's priorities. He's stated that emphatically. The Rae report is widely accepted as an important critical milestone for Ontario to achieve. In that light, I think this is supportable as a motion, because it certainly, as I said, is one of the two main priorities in our discussions with the federal government on the upcoming budget. This is supportable.

The Chair: Further comment? Hearing none, all in favour? Opposed? The motion is lost.

Mr. Prue: Lost? No. They all voted for it.

Mr. Colle: I think it was unanimous.

The Chair: I'll call it again. All in favour? Carried. I apologize.

NDP motion, page 34.

Mr. Prue: I think this is the final motion, at least that I have. It reads as follows:

Be it resolved that the standing committee on finance and economic affairs strongly recommends to the Minister of Finance that the government allocate the full two cents of the gas tax to municipalities for public transit in its FY 2005-06 budget. This would cost approximately \$160 million and would honour the Liberal 2003 election promise to allocate two cents of the gas tax to Ontario's municipalities for badly needed public transit.

By way of explanation, we understand that the government is committed to the two cents, and no one is denying that. The question here is the timetable. The timetable that was set out in the past was that it was one cent in October, going to a cent and a half this coming October, and finally to two cents before the end of the mandate.

We believe that the needs of the transit authorities across the province are great. We have heard the transit authorities in places like London, Hamilton, Toronto and Ottawa say that there is not sufficient money and we are simply suggesting that it be speeded up. This is a request to the minister to speed up that funding so that we get to the two cents earlier, rather than later.

Mr. Colle: I think the problem with this is, again, that there is a schedule of implementation. At this present time we're trying to follow that flow of money. Hopefully we can get help from our distant federal cousins so that this could be expedited. We can't support this at this time.

The Chair: Further comment? Hearing none, all in favour? Opposed? The motion is lost.

That completes the motions put forward by persons—however, we do have motions that have been put before the committee by the official opposition, the ones that are dated, that we have not discussed. It is our understanding that a member might be here at 10:55, so I ask the committee members for some guidance here. Citing the

fact that you skipped these to do the ones previously done, now how shall we proceed?

Mr. Colle: Let's just recess until 11.

Mr. Prue: Recess to 11 o'clock. If they are not here, we have two alternatives: We can either proceed with them, because they have been duly made, and we can vote on them, or we can adjourn until this afternoon, because we have set that aside. I don't want to prejudge. Let's see what happens at 11 o'clock.

Mrs. Carol Mitchell (Huron-Bruce): I just wanted to get my viewpoint across. The meeting was scheduled at 10. They knew that this was coming forward. I'm more than prepared to recess and come back for 11 o'clock, and I realize that there has been time set aside, but I do think that we need to deal with it this morning.

The Chair: Very good.

Mr. Colle: Let's just move to recess until 11 o'clock.

The Chair: The committee is recessed until 11 o'clock this morning.

The committee recessed from 1043 to 1100.

The Chair: The standing committee on finance and economic affairs will come to order once again.

We will now go through motions previously put by the official opposition. We'll begin on page 1. Is there any comment?

Mr. Jim Flaherty (Whitby-Ajax): This is item 1; this is a tax reduction. Yes, I move that.

The Chair: Any further comment, in support?

Mr. Colle: It's above and beyond any kind of reasonable approach to fiscal management, if you look at the specifics asked for in this motion. I can't support it.

The Chair: Further comment?

Mr. Prue: I could support some of it, but certainly I'm not going to support it as a whole package. I do have some real difficulties with number 5, on the public service. We're in the middle of negotiations. I do not believe that public servants are overpaid. Quite frankly, I don't know what "rebalance the roles of the public and private sector" means, but that smells to me of privatization and I cannot be looking at that. So, notwithstanding that I do support some of it, I will be voting no.

The Chair: Further comment? Hearing none, all in favour? Opposed? The motion is lost.

Page 4: This motion has been previously put. Further comment? Hearing none, all in favour? Mr. Colle, do you have a comment?

Mr. Colle: There's no problem with this motion just asking for an update, and we're more than happy that we have an update for the member, if he wants. So I can support this.

The Chair: Further comment? Hearing none, all in favour? Carried.

Page 5: This motion has been previously put. Further comment? Any comment?

Mr. Colle: We can support this, given the implication of removing the cap.

Mr. Prue: I'm not sure, and maybe I'm not reading it right, but this is upholding the hard cap, not removing the cap. Your government has allowed the city of Toronto to remove the cap and substitute a 1.5% increase. This is a

change in government direction. Is that what you're indicating?

Mr. Colle: No. If I could just explain it, it's basically that our intention is to keep the cap on increases on the commercial assessment—increases by municipalities. We've said to a number of cities that have asked for exemptions, like Ottawa, Toronto and Sarnia, that we would consider those applications, but it is our intention to try to keep that cap because we do believe that there is a serious challenge in the taxes paid by business and property taxes.

Mr. Prue: OK. So you're supporting this motion, which would not allow for an exemption.

Mr. Colle: Not necessarily. We're saying that we're still committed to try to hold the cap, but we made that change in last year's budget, which said we would consider applications, that when a community like Ottawa or Toronto is faced with massive increases on the residential, they would be allowed—up to 50% of the increase to be passed on to commercial. That's why we said we would consider that. That application being made still holds.

Mr. Flaherty: I obviously support the motion. Those of you who actually care about the future of the city of Toronto, I would urge you to support the motion, and I would urge the government not to provide exceptions to the hard cap, because the commercial-industrial tax ratio for the city of Toronto is way out of line. The result of that is that there are no new buildings of a commercial nature of any size being built in the city of Toronto. They're being built in Vaughan, Mississauga and Durham region. That is going to continue so long as there is this ratio of 7 to 1 or 8 to 1 in the city of Toronto, and it's 4 to 1 or so in the city of Mississauga. Those people who actually talk a lot about helping the city of Toronto can help a great deal by maintaining the hard cap and getting those taxes back in line, because it's quite obvious that the city of Toronto's government does not have the will to do that.

The Chair: Further comment? Hearing none, all in favour? Carried.

The motion on page 7 has been previously moved. Any comment?

Mr. John O'Toole (Durham): Do we have to enter these or read them or anything?

Mr. Colle: No, they're already moved.

Mr. O'Toole: This is a really important initiative. I think with your strategy on energy and energy efficiency, this is really trying to encourage efficiency. In fact, it was mentioned yesterday in response to the Minister of Energy and his idea of bringing in regulations dealing with air conditioning and making them 30% more efficient. There are a lot of other ways—NRCAN and others have suggested ways to be building-efficient, or in fact heating and cooling of the building itself, the building at R2000 and those types of instruments. This is just to include a building materials exemption. I think it would be good advice to the minister. Whether or not they follow through is certainly—I would ask for your support in that light.

The Chair: Further comment?

Mr. Colle: I think it's a motion of support.

The Chair: Any other comment?

All in favour? Carried.

Page 9: This motion has been previously moved. Any comment?

Hearing none, all in favour? Carried.

Page 10: This motion has been moved. Any comment?

Mr. O'Toole: Again, it's not a popular topic, but there is a bill before the House today; I think it's Bill 159—is it? The tobacco bill. Or is it 156? I think 156 is the bill banning tobacco. It is probably the right public health and public policy thing. How you do it and how you implement it is where the debate should be; not if we should ban, but how.

This is a way of giving transitional funds that were promised during the election by your government in the amount of \$50 million to transition the current tobacco industry out of that product. Otherwise, you're basically putting them in a box and throwing them off a bridge. I don't think this is a surprise to you. It's just a repeat of your election promise to develop a transition strategy for agriculture in the tobacco area. I would ask for your support to encourage—and to support Minister Peters. He needs support. I think there are other members sitting—Mrs. Mitchell might be interested in that ministry, because somebody is going to have to move Steve Peters; there's no question. He's running into very difficult receptivity in the community—certainly in mine, and Mr. Hoy's as well.

The Chair: I remind the member that we're speaking to the motion on page 10, which might be on a similar subject.

Mr. O'Toole: How come we skipped 9?

The Chair: Number 9 carried.

Mr. O'Toole: Oh, good. I apologize. How did I miss that?

Mr. Colle: Because they're very similar.

The Chair: You were overcome with joy, I suspect.

Mr. O'Toole: It's the same thing, in the same vein. It's on tobacco. That's why I got misled there—at least, that's a nice faking out of it. On the same basis, it's supporting transition in tobacco farming. There you go. I'd ask for your support.

The Chair: Further comment?

Mr. Colle: Just that this is redundant. The committee has already endorsed the first one. This is just rhetoric and a repeat. There's no need to support this one. We've already supported the previous one.

1110

The Chair: Further comment?

Mr. Prue: I can't vote for number 10 because of "take action to sustain the industry." I don't believe that something that has been determined to be injurious to health should be sustained. I realize that it's going to take some time. I am not against smokers themselves, but I hardly want to sustain an industry. To what purpose? I don't understand. I think we have to ease them out. I

voted for the last one but I don't want to sustain the industry.

The Chair: Further comment? Hearing none, all in favour? Opposed? The motion is lost.

I would just remind the committee that we have completed some of these, so we will be skipping pages to do the official opposition motions. That's what we're working on now. It's just the official opposition motions.

Interjection.

The Chair: I'm advised that number 11 is out of order.

Mr. O'Toole: Why's that?

Clerk Pro Tem: You have to word it differently, that "the committee suggests" or—you're directing the Legislative Assembly to do something. We don't have the authority to do that.

Mr. O'Toole: I move that the committee recommend to the government that they strike an all-party task force on the viability and future viability of agriculture.

The Chair: Do we have agreement on the amendment? All in favour of the amendment?

Mr. O'Toole: Could I have a recorded vote, please.

Ayes

Colle, Jeffrey, McNeely, O'Toole, Prue, Zimmer.

The Chair: All opposed? The amendment is carried. Further comment? Hearing none, all in favour?

Mr. O'Toole: Recorded vote.

Ayes

O'Toole, Prue.

Nays

Colle, Jeffrey, McNeely, Mitchell, Zimmer.

The Chair: The motion is lost.

We move to page 12, a previous motion. This motion has been put. Further discussion?

Mr. O'Toole: We've heard quite broadly that the plight and challenges in agriculture are not limited to BSE but include things such as the CAIS program not being adequately responsive to other commodity groups. If you're paying attention to that issue, it is needing some very serious fine-tuning. I know the Chair knows this all too well. It does not suit all commodity groups very well.

On behalf of the corn producers who made the presentation, we are going to ask that the minister meet with them—this is just this committee—before this year's planting and commit to reviewing the market revenue program.

Again, this is the wish of this committee and that's why I ask for your support.

The Chair: Further comment?

Mr. Colle: I think there's a lot of rhetoric and presumption here. The motion says the Nutrient Manage-

ment Act and source water protection act are destroying rural Ontario communities. I can't agree with that and I think that's very, very rhetorical and vexatious and not worth supporting.

The Chair: Further comment?

Mr. O'Toole: Just quickly on that, I think if you read the full sentence, it says those particular programs, "along with other pressures"; commodity prices are at an all-time 20-year low. They're providing a difficult environment for rural Ontario communities, not destroying. It is a bit strong and I agree with you there. I apologize if I upset anyone with that harsh language. Given that acquiescence there, would you then support this? You won't support it even if I do remove the word "destroying."

The Chair: Further comment?

Mr. Prue: I would like to move an amendment. I would like to strike the first paragraph in its entirety, because it is vexatious and it is wrong-headed, but I think the recommendations should stand and can stand without a preamble.

It's simply asking that the minister respond in a budget increase for agriculture—and we know that the farmers are hurting—and, secondly, that the minister meet with the OCPA, the Ontario Corn Producers' Association, before this year's planting, which I would think is sometime this spring, and that commits to review the market revenue program to ensure that the farmers have adequate revenues and can continue to farm the land.

I think what is being proposed is not bad. The way we got to the proposal, of course, was perhaps not the most politically astute move. So I would just move that we strike the entire first paragraph. If we do, I will support the motion.

The Chair: We have a motion to omit the first paragraph. Any discussion?

Mr. Colle: I'm worried about the last paragraph. Is it asking the Minister of Agriculture or the Minister of Finance to meet with the corn producers' association? I would support just the middle paragraph, which is, I think, the overall objective and pertains to the Minister of Finance. I would be supportive of just leaving the middle paragraph and extracting the other two, which could be problematic in terms of the first one especially, and the second one, whether it's the Minister of Agriculture or the Minister of Finance.

The Chair: Further discussion?

Mr. O'Toole: If you want to call the question on just that middle paragraph, I think it's very succinct.

The Chair: The motion before us is to remove the first paragraph. All in favour? Opposed? So it's carried, that the first paragraph is removed. Further discussion?

Mr. O'Toole: I would move that the last paragraph be removed.

The Chair: Discussion? All in favour of removing the last paragraph, the third one? Carried.

Mr. O'Toole: I would move that we call the vote on the middle paragraph.

Mr. Colle: On a point of order, Mr. Chair: It should be just a small change there, that "The committee respectfully requests," rather than "I."

The Chair: All in favour of that? Agreed. It will read, "The committee respectfully requests" etc. Further discussion? All in favour?

Mr. O'Toole: Recorded vote.

Mr. Colle: Unanimous.

The Chair: Unanimous. The motion is carried.

Now we move to page 14. The motion has been put. Further discussion?

Mr. Colle: We're in support of this. I think it's a good intention here.

The Chair: Further discussion? Hearing none, all in favour? Carried.

Page 18: This motion has been put. Further discussion?

Mr. O'Toole: Just to comment on this, in the media, as we speak, is the issue of both collapsing the CCACs, the community care access centres, in the study under Elinor Caplan, as well as the district health councils that were being disbanded under the LHIN system. There are issues with respect to severance and transition. I think what we're really trying to do here is to make sure that health care dollars are spent for front-line services and patient services. So, you know, I think it's important that we send a signal here, however the wording might work, that you'll find support. I think you'll find support in the House for measures of addressing adequacy in health care.

The Chair: Thank you. Further discussion?

Mr. Colle: I can't support this motion. It's vexatious, rhetoric and, essentially, very provocative. It doesn't help in any way, shape or form to deal with the challenges we face in health care.

The Chair: Further discussion?

Mr. Prue: I'm not going to vote for this unless the mover separates the second paragraph. That's the only one that I can agree with. I don't think that it's wise or justified to spend a portion of the \$2.5 billion from this regressive tax in simply cutting workers and paying out severance. If it's going to be used for actual health improvements, so be it; that I can live with. But to simply lay off nurses, as has been done this past month in Ontario in places like Sault Ste. Marie, the Chair's riding and wherever else, to my mind, is not a good application of those dollars. I don't support the other three paragraphs.

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The Chair: Further comment? Hearing none, all in favour?

Mr. O'Toole: Recorded vote, please.

Ayes

O'Toole.

Nays

Colle, Jeffrey, McNeely, Mitchell, Prue, Zimmer.

The Chair: The motion is lost.

Page 20: This motion has been previously put. Further discussion?

Mr. O'Toole: Well, I guess I'll speak to this. Mr. Colle has recognized, as I do, as the federal government and Romanow and everyone else has recognized, health care and the current dilemma of hospitals. What we're saying here is that the government set up an all-party committee to review hospital operating and capital budgets. The problem is, you're going to bring in audit teams. I guess you might say, if I want to be critical of our own actions, we did it with a couple of hospitals. You've done it with Bill 8, which is the mandatory balanced budget for hospitals, which is creating, according to Hilary Short, great stress and dilemma in the system. We heard it in Ottawa. It means they're going to cut people, which cuts services, which affects patients. So when we put these outside people in there—and no disrespect to some of the people who are appointed, but we were roundly criticized, everybody from the health services restructuring commissioner, who was the associate dean of medicine at Queen's when we appointed him. He wasn't some political fly-by-night, but he was widely criticized.

What I'm suggesting here is an all-party committee. It's such an important component of our budget in this province that it would be unwise—I sit on the estimates committee and lots of those types of committees. The public accounts committee spends all its time with the auditor. I think it would be wise for you and your democratic renewal to say, "Spend your money where the money is," and it is in health care. There should be a specific committee. If they review best operating principles, achieving your targets on accountability, best measurements in terms of shorter waiting times, all these are laudable goals. Where's the action plan?

If you want to modify this, what I'm trying to get at is making sure that the elected people who are accountable for the hospitals in Northumberland—or whether it's in Toronto or in Mr. McNeely's riding of Ottawa—are there at the table bringing forward the issues, whether it's the Kingston hospital issue, the Peterborough hospital issue or Lakeridge Health. We should be doing it. Don't appoint this to some ne'er-do-well. I think sometimes the appointees are political puppets as well. Roy Romanow wanted to be in the Senate. Kirby wrote the best report, and he's already in the Senate.

Mr. Colle: Kirby did write a good report.

Mr. O'Toole: Yes, Kirby's report's extremely good, Mr. Colle; I agree with you. Anyway, I would ask that we encourage the minister, in their review, to—OK? Thank you very much. I ask for your support.

The Chair: Further comment?

Mr. Colle: I can't support this, especially the first part. It's making a lot of assumptions, and there's a lot of rhetoric there too. I just mention that we did pass a bill that expanded the powers of the Provincial Auditor, now called the Auditor General, in the province of Ontario who now, for the first time, can go into hospitals. I don't

know whether I as a member would want to go to micromanaging hospital budgets or long-term-care budgets. I think it's a transition that's in capable hands. It's going to take a lot of work. As the member said, it's not easy. A lot of people have tried, but I think there is a process in place and I have full faith in the Auditor General to play a watchdog role and ensure that the money is well spent in our quite sizable health care and hospital budget, which is over \$11.1 billion, I think, as we're speaking.

The Chair: Comment?

Mr. O'Toole: Recorded vote.

Ayes

O'Toole, Prue.

Nays

Colle, Jeffrey, McNeely, Mitchell, Zimmer.

The Chair: The motion is lost.

Page 21: This motion has been previously put. Further comment?

Mr. O'Toole: We got a very passionate and informed presentation from Anne Wright and Mayor Marilyn Pearce from Scugog at the Whitby site of these hearings. They addressed the issue of multi-site hospitals, such as Lakeridge. There are several of these hospital governance models throughout the province. They have an alliance with the University of Toronto. I would ask that the Minister of Finance address the issue of multi-site hospitals, as well as teaching programs within these settings, in a separate funding envelope.

There is a process, called the JPPC process, in the hospitals. That joint planning and priorities committee for the hospital sector is pretty much run by the teaching hospitals in Toronto. I'd be quite honest to say that. They have set up what they call a global budget for the hospitals. That global budget is sort of like the base operating budget. It does a count of such things as the number of procedures, whether it's eyes or hips and knees or MRIs. If the base is incorrect and not adjusted for population growth or decline or additional functions, the global base is wrong.

So what I'm trying to say here is that there needs to be a complete review of hospital-based funding. Maybe this is where they're directing it when you build in these accountability mechanisms in hospitals. I ask for your support that the minister address specific funding needs within the hospital sector.

The Chair: Further discussion?

Mr. Colle: I think the members opposite must agree, that's one of the values of going to sites like Whitby; this committee has gone to Pickle Lake. I think it's valuable for us to meet face to face with advocates and representatives of the hospitals and ordinary people in Ontario. This was a very strong presentation, and I think this motion is worth supporting.

The Chair: Further comment? Hearing none, all in favour? Carried.

Page 22: Further comment?

Mr. O'Toole: That's why on this committee level I feel quite comfortable being completely transparent in terms of what we responded to. The audiologist issue is not new. In fact, all of what I'd call some of the tiers in health care providers—in that, I would include audiologists. They're highly trained professionals who always operate under the practice of a GP or somebody. But also, if you want to look at it, one of the real opportunities in health care is the role of the optometrists. TPAs, they call them: therapeutic prescription—they can actually write prescriptions, where the family practitioner may not know as much about the eye.

This is recognizing that there is a saving that was brought to our attention, where audiologists would be able to provide, under regulation, certain tests, procedures, whatever, especially in the infant literacy area. Hearing and having their ears tested is one of the contributing factors to literacy and speech and language; it is. It's a primary part of the speech and language program. But they would have to go through a doctor to prescribe this test, which is a waste of money. They've said they could save \$73 million. I'd ask for your support for the minister to review it, period. Save \$73 million.

The Chair: Further comment?

1130

Mr. Prue: Yes. I'd like to echo those concerns. The presentation was really quite good. Governments, no matter what party, always have to look at ways of saving money. This seems to me to be a very easy one. I have no doubt that many people will continue to go to their doctor and be referred, because people are sort of into this practice, but it makes very little sense to me that the doctor be the precursor, that it be mandatory when you know all you need is your ears tested. There are hearing clinics all over this province that can do the job very easily without the need to involve the doctors. It would free them up more time, and it would allow the limited number of doctors we have in the province to look at those things for which they are qualified.

Mr. Colle: I thought that was a good presentation, and it perked my interest, talking about \$73 million in savings, but it's never that easy, it seems. I've already asked ministry staff to begin looking at that; I was interested myself to get an answer. I think it's a supportable motion.

Mr. O'Toole: In the interest of co-operation here, which I respect, the audiologist was the same thing each of you have had from optometry as well. They're called TPAs. You were there; I brought it to both Elizabeth Witmer and Tony Clement. It made very good sense for an optometrist—

The Chair: We're on another subject.

Mr. O'Toole: I know, but I'm trying to maybe move an amendment here. I'll move the amendment that we include optometrists and TPAs to be investigated for future savings.

Mrs. Mitchell: It's on page 27.

Mr. O'Toole: Is it? Thank you, Mrs. Mitchell. I forgot.

Mrs. Mitchell: In the spirit of co-operation.

The Chair: You'll withdraw that, then?

Mr. O'Toole: I withdraw that comment.

Mr. Colle: You're behind yourself.

Mr. O'Toole: I'm not even here, partially.

The Chair: All in favour? Carried.

Page 23: Further comment?

Mr. O'Toole: At the risk of being self-critical, I met with Pran Manga, who's a health economist. He's a Ph.D. at the University of Ottawa who analyzed, objectively and professionally, the implications of chiropractic services. It's an alternative form; it's a patient-choice form of medicine. This is a worthwhile report. All I'm asking here is to review the Manga report, because there's money there. Recorded vote.

The Chair: Further comment? Hearing none, all in favour? Opposed? Lost.

Page 24: Comment?

Mr. O'Toole: Again, I'm asking for your support and, in the interest of patients, that you review your ill-conceived and ill-advised plan of eliminating chiropractic service.

The Chair: Further comment?

Mr. O'Toole: Recorded vote.

Ayes

O'Toole, Prue.

Nays

Colle, Jeffrey, McNeely, Mitchell, Zimmer.

The Chair: The motion is lost.

Page 25: Comment?

Mr. O'Toole: This one is not quite as vehement or wordy. What it said was—there's another duplication here—that chiropractors, to access radiological services, had to go through doctors. It's the same old duplication issue. I'd ask for your support.

The Chair: Further comment?

Mrs. Mitchell: I'm pleased to speak to this. It is my understanding that the process has not changed; it was always through doctors' orders and it was only site-specific. Certain spots had changed within their own communities. We have done the research and found that nothing has changed in the process, so it would be our position that we maintain the process.

The Chair: Further comment? Hearing none, all in favour? Opposed? The motion is lost.

Page 26.

Mr. O'Toole: A lot of what I'm saying is, here's your chance to do the right thing. There is a duplication inherent in the system today, that Canadian food and health—I forget their acronym—are the ones that approve all of the new foods, drugs and all the rest of the

stuff that comes into Canada, and then there's an Ontario drug formulary committee as well.

I'm a layperson. I'm not a professional, obviously, but my impression was that all governments use that as a delay to prevent the drug from getting on the formulary, which has to be funded. In Ontario, we have a very ambitious and generous drug program for seniors and low-income persons called the Trillium plan.

We all know that drugs are an important part of rehabilitation and all that stuff today, but those duplications cost millions of dollars. They go through tests but they've already been approved federally, otherwise they can't be sold here.

So I ask that you support this. Mr. Smitherman is doing the best he can, let's put it that way, but the civil service is entrenched—

Interjection.

Mr. O'Toole: As good as he can do, and he can't do very well.

Mrs. Mitchell: I appreciate the support.

Mr. O'Toole: It's not support; it's a masked comment.

But in the civil service, there are people who are entrenched. I worked for General Motors for some 30 years, in a lot of different positions. This is worse than General Motors. It's so entrenched. I don't blame individuals, but they're so territorial about the drug section, the long-term-care section, the hospital section, and any relationship stuff doesn't get moved very quickly. This committee—and there's an independent panel of experts. They're pharmacologists and all these kinds of people. It's not that they aren't qualified, but they think they should go through this rigorous review of drugs that have already been rigorously reviewed.

I'd ask for your support. It's duplication and waste.

The Chair: Further comment?

Mr. Colle: We can support this.

The Chair: Mr. Prue, did you have a comment?

Mr. Prue: No, I was just going to vote yes.

The Chair: I saw your light come on there.

All in favour? It's carried.

I'm going to interrupt for a moment. This being Thursday morning, there are private members' bills in the House. Should there be a bell, we would recess to go and vote, for those committee members who would want to do so. I can't anticipate whether there would or would not be a bell—

Mr. O'Toole: There should be, I'm told.

The Chair: I can't anticipate that. I'd just remind you of the current time. We can come back this afternoon. I think there are three motions yet to go and I have a number of procedural things for the committee to consider in terms of presenting their report etc. So I just remind you that if we got to a bell situation, I would adjourn until—

Mr. Colle: Let's move quickly.

Mr. O'Toole: OK, I'll move very quickly. I'll cut back the comments.

The Chair: We are now at page 27 and the motion has been put.

Mr. O'Toole: This one just encourages you to allow optometrists to prescribe—

Mr. Colle: Yes, we're—

Mr. O'Toole: In support of that?

Mr. Prue: I vote for that, yes.

Mr. O'Toole: Great.

The Chair: Further comment? Hearing none, all in favour? Carried.

Page 28.

Mr. O'Toole: I'd ask for your support in considering a ventilation—

Mr. Prue: Not a chance.

Mr. O'Toole: There should be an amendment to Bill 156, is it? Is 156 the smoking bill?

Mr. Colle: Whatever. OK, let's vote.

The Chair: Further comment?

Mr. O'Toole: Call the vote.

The Chair: Hearing none, all in favour? Opposed? The motion is lost.

Page 31. The motion has been put. Any comment? Hearing none, all in favour? Opposed? The motion is lost.

Page 33. The motion has been put.

1140

Mr. O'Toole: I'll be very brief. There was a presentation made in Whitby asking for a contribution to the infrastructure of Ontario's or indeed Canada's newest university. I know that Bob Rae, in his report, would like to see these innovative new forms of universities and post-secondary. It encourages and improves access for students from Northumberland and from Peterborough. Just put this to the minister's attention and support Minister Chambers, who is trying to do a good job.

The Chair: Further comment? Hearing none, all in favour? Carried.

I'm advised that there is another motion—I believe members have a copy—put forward in the name of Mr. McNeely. Mr. McNeely, you would need to read this into the record.

Mr. Phil McNeely (Ottawa–Orléans): I move that the standing committee on finance and economic affairs recommends that the Minister of Finance include in the budget funds for a province-wide Better Buildings Partnership program, based on the world-renowned Better Buildings Partnership program that has been in place in the city of Toronto for the past eight years.

Could I expand on that?

The Chair: Further comment?

Mr. McNeely: This came out of the meeting in Ottawa and my experience on city council in the city of Ottawa. I'd asked the question of Mr. Koch, who presented to us there. His comments were, "That program is being accepted by a lot of municipalities in Ontario, but it only represents currently, to my knowledge, about seven to 10 right now." That's in Hansard.

I feel this is an excellent program. It should be in place and it's not going to be in place if we don't have prov-

incial direction for it. The city of Toronto got \$8 million from the Canada-Ontario infrastructure program eight years ago. That money has now grown to \$9 million. In addition to that, they're generating \$20 million a year in energy savings. It retrofits buildings. It gives low-interest or no-interest loans to retrofitting buildings.

Some of the benefits that come from it: This investment stays there—in Toronto's case, it has grown from \$8 million to \$9 million; it pays for itself; a lot of jobs come out it—they feel over \$100 million worth of construction; it reduces energy use by \$20 million a year; and the last thing is, it reduces emissions. This is a good program and I'd like it supported here.

The Chair: Further comment?

Mr. O'Toole: As the opposition energy critic, I would support that. In fact, it's kind of implied in one of our amendments that was brought forward. Mr. McNeely, in the spirit of co-operation, I'll be supportive of that program. It's an excellent program. In fact, it's better than the one Dwight introduced yesterday.

The Chair: All in favour? Carried.

That completes motions, I do believe. I see no further motions coming.

The Chair would like to know how we will be responsible for signing off on the final draft. This could be done by the Chair or the subcommittee or the full committee. The draft has had two changes. Who would sign off on the final draft?

Mr. Prue: I trust you to do it.

Mr. Colle: I have no problem with the Chair doing it. We have full confidence in the Chair.

The Chair: Very good. We're agreed that the Chair—agreed.

Mr. O'Toole: Chair, if I may ask a question, and I do apologize. It's my private member's bill today—

Mr. Colle: That's why we want to wrap it up and get out of here.

Mr. O'Toole: Number 4 was the one on the recreational vehicles tax. Did that pass?

Mr. Colle: Yes.

Mr. O'Toole: Very good. Thank you.

The Chair: Does the committee adopt the report, as amended, and all the recommendations that were carried? Agreed.

Mr. O'Toole: A question, Chair.

The Chair: Quickly.

Mr. O'Toole: How are the recommendations going to be handled, by section or as a summary?

The Chair: I have a list of items here. What's your question again?

Mr. O'Toole: How would the recommendations be handled? As an appendix?

Interjection.

Mr. O'Toole: OK, right at the end as an attachment, and indexed as such.

The Chair: We require a deadline for the possibility of dissenting opinions to the report. Would February 21 at 5 o'clock be advisable for any dissenting report to be put forth?

Mr. Colle: Sure.

Mr. O'Toole: That's next Monday. Dissenting report? I'll have to ask; I'm not the critic. How about February 22?

The Chair: OK, February 22, 5 p.m.

Mr. O'Toole: Yes.

The Chair: How shall I present this report: with a motion that the recommendations contained in the report be adopted? This went to the Legislature last year. Is that the wish of the committee again?

Mr. Prue: Same way.

Mr. Colle: Yes, the same.

The Chair: Does the committee request that the government table a comprehensive report to the committee report within 120 calendar days? We did not request this last year. It was deemed by the committee that the budget would reflect the—

Mr. Colle: Yes, dispense.

The Chair: Agreed? OK, so we will not do that.

Shall a copy of the final report, along with the dissenting opinions, be forwarded to the Minister of Finance prior to being tabled in the House? We have done that in the past, it's my understanding, because we were in intersession, but we are not now. It would be tabled in the House, and I believe the minister would see it immediately following.

Mr. Colle: That's fine.

The Chair: So we will not give a copy prior to putting it to the House. Agreed? Agreed.

Does the clerk of the committee have the authority to have the report and dissenting opinions translated and printed?

Mr. Colle: Yes.

The Chair: Agreed? Agreed.

We are adjourned.

The committee adjourned at 1147.

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Mrs. Carol Mitchell (Huron–Bruce L)

Mr. John O’Toole (Durham PC)

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