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Thursday 27 March 2008

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Jeudi 27 mars 2008

**Standing committee on
the Legislative Assembly**

Committee business

**Comité permanent de
l'Assemblée législative**

Travaux de comité

Chair: Bas Balkissoon
Clerk: Tonia Grannum

Président : Bas Balkissoon
Greffière : Tonia Grannum

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON
THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

**COMITÉ PERMANENT DE
L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

Thursday 27 March 2008

Jeudi 27 mars 2008

The committee met at 1533 in room 1.

ASSIGNMENT OF MINISTRIES

The Chair (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I call to order the meeting of the standing committee on the Legislative Assembly. You have a draft committee report pursuant to standing order 109(b). I think the report is pretty simple and self-explanatory. Are there any questions, comments?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Just because I'm not familiar—very simply, then, the standing committee on justice policy would have three departments removed from its jurisdiction. No? Then I don't understand.

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: One would be removed, one would be clarified, and one would be added.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Got it. So democratic renewal is taken out.

The Chair (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Right.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: The name is changed to Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs—Ministry of Government and Consumer Services. That's the full substance and weight of it. Man.

Interjection.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Ferocious. I think there are clear left-right lines on this one.

The Chair (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further questions or comments?

Mr. Norm Miller: Just a question about how the ministry has been assigned. The Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs is assigned to the justice policy committee, but I assume that any issues to do with the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs, not just justice policy issues, could be dealt with at that committee.

The Clerk of the Committee (Ms. Tonia Grannum): I'm sorry, what was the question?

Mr. Norm Miller: Why the justice policy committee? Why not the general government committee? Obviously, with aboriginal affairs, it's not just justice issues that you might be dealing with.

The Clerk of the Committee (Ms. Tonia Grannum): We're just keeping with the assignment of the ministries as they were previously. The office of aboriginal affairs was previously under the justice policy committee, so we're just keeping it there. We don't actually move anybody around. If they were assigned under a certain committee, we keep them there. Any issue

under aboriginal affairs could come under justice, but that's not to preclude the government from sending any issue to any other committee.

Mr. Norm Miller: In terms of balance, I see that the standing committee on general government has a long list of ministries assigned to it. So, if a bill was being put forward by the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs, it could still go to another committee.

The Clerk of the Committee (Ms. Tonia Grannum): That's right. If its agenda was really full, it could be referred to any committee.

The Chair (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Any further questions?

Mr. Bob Delaney: Are we going to vote on this before we adjourn the meeting?

The Chair (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Absolutely.

Mr. Bob Delaney: Let's do the vote and put this issue to rest before I bring up the next point.

The Chair (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I need a mover of the motion to adopt the report.

Mr. Bob Delaney: So moved.

The Chair (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): All in favour? Carried.

Does the committee agree that I present the report to the House? Agreed.

I have a couple of announcements for the committee. The National Conference of State Legislatures' annual summit will take place July 21-26 in New Orleans, Louisiana. It's called The Forum for America's Ideas. As I understand it, this committee will discuss this issue and make recommendations as to members of the committee who will attend this summit. We haven't received the official invite yet; we just know of it, so I'm making you aware of it so that you can give it consideration. We will discuss this at a further meeting.

Mrs. Laura Albanese: Do all the members of the committee usually get to go, or just the Chair? How does it work?

The Chair (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): My understanding is that several different things have happened in the past, so it's really up to the committee to make some suggestions. It would be up to the committee to notify the House leader of the committee's decision, as I understand it.

Mr. Bob Delaney: I had the opportunity to attend one of these—I think it was two years ago—and I found it extremely helpful. One finds that among your colleagues in

the States of all political persuasions—at the state and at the provincial level, we're facing much the same core issues, looking at a somewhat similar range of solutions, and it puts some of the deliberations that we take here in perspective. Many of the other provinces send extensive delegations. There is no equivalent in Canada, nor in my opinion should there be, because we shouldn't replicate this thing. We're in a much larger group of people; the issues touch us all. I found the exercise to be very, very helpful. If the committee members can see fit to go, I would strongly recommend it.

The Chair (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I was just bringing it to your attention. We will have it on a future agenda, if you just want to make note of it.

The suggestion has been put to me that part of our mandate includes the Ombudsman's office. Since we have many new members of the Legislature, would you be interested in having the Ombudsman come to one of our meetings to give us a little bit of a presentation on his work and the role we would play in his work?

Mr. Norm Miller: Yes.

The Chair (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): We'll look at scheduling that.

As a suggestion—Mr. Fenson is the research analyst for our committee—we would spend some time at that particular meeting also getting a little bit of input into the work he can do for us and how it would help this committee, so I will also look after doing that at some future meeting.

Any other business?

Mr. Bob Delaney: I'd like to move that the committee schedule a meeting to reconsider a report on the use of technology in the precinct that it spent a fairly considerable length of time drafting in the 38th Parliament. Perhaps the members should look at the report and revisit the issue and determine whether or not we should adopt the report in whole or in part and recommend its adoption to the House during the 39th Parliament.

The Chair (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I have a motion by Mr. Delaney. Any other comments?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Just out of curiosity: Mr. Chair, you have the authority to bring items to this committee; you set the agenda. Is that correct?

The Clerk of the Committee (Ms. Tonia Grannum): Yes, he can.

The Chair (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): We have a sub-committee to work it out, just like any other committee—as long as it's within the purview, as outlined in the section.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I don't have a problem with having a report come back to see if there's anything useful in it. No offence.

Mr. Norm Miller: This committee did spend a fair amount of time on the use of technology at the Legislature report a year and a half or two years ago. I think it would be worth revisiting that report to see if there are some parts of it that might be suggested for recommendation.

The Chair (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The motion, as put by Mr. Delaney: All in favour? That carries. We'll have that at a future meeting.

That's all the business of the committee.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: Do we set the next meeting date now?

The Clerk of the Committee (Ms. Tonia Grannum): Is that the wish of the committee?

Ms. Sylvia Jones: Scheduling is easier if we have notice.

The Clerk of the Committee (Ms. Tonia Grannum): On what issue?

The Chair (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): It would be this item. The Ombudsman and Mr. Fenson would be separate.

The Clerk of the Committee (Ms. Tonia Grannum): The Chair would have to send a letter to invite the Ombudsman before us, so we'll have to wait to see what his schedule is, as well.

The Chair (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The technology report is the only one we can deal with ASAP. Why don't we leave it up to the Chair to pick a date and then notify everyone, because we'll have to look at every other committee's schedule.

Thank you very much. We're adjourned.

The committee adjourned at 1543.

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