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**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

Tuesday 15 April 2008

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Mardi 15 avril 2008

**Standing committee on
estimates**

Organization

**Comité permanent des
budgets des dépenses**

Organisation

Chair: Tim Hudak
Clerk: Sylwia Przezdziecki

Président : Tim Hudak
Greffière : Sylwia Przezdziecki

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

STANDING COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES

Tuesday 15 April 2008

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

COMITÉ PERMANENT DES BUDGETS DES DÉPENSES

Mardi 15 avril 2008

The committee met at 1546 in room 228.

ORGANIZATION

The Chair (Mr. Tim Hudak): Good afternoon, folks. I'm going to call the standing committee on estimates to order for our consideration of estimates for the 2008 season. I know members are all very anxious to proceed with the drafting of the ministries, but first I'm going to read a statement to make sure that we're all clear on the rules for proceeding.

As you know, the Lieutenant Governor has transmitted the estimates of certain sums required for the services of the province for the year ending March 31, 2009, to the Legislative Assembly. Pursuant to standing order 58, these printed estimates, upon tabling, are deemed to be referred to the standing committee on estimates. All members of the House should have received a copy of the 2008-09 expenditure estimates when they were tabled on April 9.

The objective of today's meeting is for the members to select the estimates of certain ministries or offices for detailed review by the committee, and then to decide when to begin the consideration of the selected estimates. Standing order 59 sets out the process by which the committee makes its selections. Essentially, each of the recognized parties on the committee is entitled to select either one or two ministries or offices in each of two rounds of selection. The official opposition selects first, followed by the third party, then by the government. After two rounds of selection by the recognized parties, the committee will have selected anywhere from a minimum of six to a maximum of 12 ministries or offices for review.

Each party also determines how much time is to be allotted to the consideration of each ministry or office selected. A maximum of 15 hours is permitted per selection. If only one selection is made on the first round, that single selection could be reviewed for a maximum of 15 hours. If two selections are made in a round, both of them are reviewed for a combined maximum of 15 hours. It is up to the party making the selection to determine how the 15 hours are to be divided between the two ministries chosen.

At the conclusion of two rounds, a maximum of 90 hours may be allocated for the review of the selected ministries or offices. The ministries and offices are to be

reviewed in the order in which they were chosen; the order may only be changed by an order of the House.

The estimates of those ministries or offices not selected are deemed to have been adopted by the committee. As Chair, I will report those estimates back to the House, and they will be deemed to be adopted and concurred in by the House.

In accordance with standing order 62(a), the committee must make a report to the House on the estimates it selected and considered by the third Thursday of November this year. If the committee fails to report by the third Thursday in November, the estimates and supplementary estimates will be deemed to be passed by the committee and deemed to be reported to and received by the House.

Any questions on procedure going forward?

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: One question.

The Chair (Mr. Tim Hudak): Of course.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: Chair, in the spring session, or for our first round, when you ask us for our selections, do we tell you our first two choices at that time?

The Chair (Mr. Tim Hudak): Exactly. We'll proceed with the official opposition's first two, followed by the third party's first two, the government's first two, and then back to the official opposition for your second batch of two.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: For the fall session—

The Chair (Mr. Tim Hudak): We'll produce a rough schedule so people can anticipate, but I would anticipate that in all likelihood the second batch will be in the fall.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. Tim Hudak): Any other questions on process or procedure?

I am going to suggest that we begin the first day of hearings on Tuesday, April 29. That will give the first ministry called time to prepare for the committee and get their staff lined up. There are a lot of detailed questions they may be asked to answer, so I'm going to suggest that we give the ministry ample time to review.

Members will know that we meet every Tuesday and Wednesday, from the beginning of standing orders until 6 pm, until we get through the estimates, or the limit placed, as I described under the standing orders. There may be a special order in the House to have us sit outside of the time the House is sitting, but the general procedure is that we only meet when the Legislature is sitting.

There's another thing I wanted to do too. I know there are a number of members who haven't served on estimates before. Members will probably pop in and pop out of committee, as they see fit. The clerk was kind enough to put together some selections of Hansard over the years of estimates in action for various ministries. I appreciate her doing that, and she'll pass them out for your interest and review in your spare time. I think members who have been here before know that the procedure in estimates is unlike that of any other committee.

Lastly, at the beginning of each session, I have a standard message that I relate to the ministers and the ministers' staffs, indicating that if members have questions they can't answer at the time, we do expect the ministers to get back to the committee in a timely manner. It's always my hope and expectation that the standing committee on estimates will receive the full co-operation of all ministries and offices selected for consideration through the course of this new Parliament and that selected ministries will provide timely responses to the committee's requests for information. Some ministries are better than others. What we do is try to serve as a constant reminder to get those responses back to the members as quickly as possible. Any other questions on process before we start?

Okay. As I indicated, we will begin our selection of the ministries or offices for review, beginning with the official opposition.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: We would like to start our session with the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade for seven hours, followed by the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs for eight hours.

The Chair (Mr. Tim Hudak): To the third party for their first two choices.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Ministry of Health for 10 and the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines for five.

The Chair (Mr. Tim Hudak): To the government member.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: The Ministry of Research and Innovation for seven hours and the Ministry of Labour for eight hours in their first round.

The Chair (Mr. Tim Hudak): We'll now repeat the process for the second batch of ministries. Mr. Dunlop for the official opposition.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: For the second session, the Ministry of Energy for seven and a half hours and then the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs for seven and a half hours as well.

The Chair (Mr. Tim Hudak): Mr. Bisson, the third party.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Ministry of Finance for 10 hours and the ministry responsible for apprenticeship training for five.

The Chair (Mr. Tim Hudak): Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Pretty well, I guess.

The Chair (Mr. Tim Hudak): The government member?

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: Ministry of Public Infrastructure Renewal for seven hours and the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing for eight.

The Chair (Mr. Tim Hudak): Terrific. That concludes that process. I remind members that there is no debate or votes on that. The members of the committee make their own selections. The Ministry of Economic Development and Trade will be the first ministry to come before the committee. We're all agreed on that start date of Tuesday, April 29?

Any further questions or comments by members of the committee?

Thank you for your timely responses. I look forward to seeing everybody on Tuesday, April 29. Have a good afternoon. This committee is now adjourned.

The committee adjourned at 1554.

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