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Wednesday 28 May 2008

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Mercredi 28 mai 2008

**Standing Committee on
the Legislative Assembly**

Annual review,
television broadcast
system and guidelines

**Comité permanent de
l'Assemblée législative**

Rapport annuel ,
système de télédiffusion
et directives

Chair: Bas Balkissoon
Clerk: Tonia Grannum

Président : Bas Balkissoon
Greffière : Tonia Grannum

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ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON
THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

**COMITÉ PERMANENT DE
L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

Wednesday 28 May 2008

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The committee met at 1304 in room 228.

**ANNUAL REVIEW,
TELEVISION BROADCAST
SYSTEM AND GUIDELINES**

The Chair (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Since we have a quorum, we'll call the meeting of the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly to order. On the agenda we have today, as we requested, the annual review of the television broadcast system and guidelines.

I want to welcome the Honourable Steve Peters, the Speaker; Deborah Deller, the Clerk; and Mr. Arleigh Holder, the director of broadcast and recording. I don't know who's going to go first.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I'll start, Mr. Chair, just to say thank you very much for the opportunity to address the committee. We'll be looking to Arleigh Holder, our director of broadcast and recording services, to deal with the technical questions that arise.

I just wanted to update the members on one issue that I know has been discussed around the building, and that's the issue of video streaming, of having the legislative broadcast on the Internet. The cost for that was approved at the last meeting of the Board of Internal Economy. As of Monday of this week, the site is up and running. So if you were to go to the homepage of the government of Ontario, you would see an icon for video streaming. There will be no repeat, but it is live and it is up and running.

With that, I'm going to turn it over to the Clerk for any comments that she may have, then Arleigh will deal with the bulk of the presentation.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): Thanks, Speaker. We thought maybe what we would do this afternoon is, given that there are some new members of the committee, we have a short video of the history of the broadcasting and recording service, so with your indulgence we're going to show you that video just to give you an overview of what it is the service does. Arleigh can follow that up with a little bit more of an introduction and orientation. We'll talk about some of the initiatives that we have undertaken in broadcast and recording. To end, there is just one issue that I need to make you aware of. So, Arleigh.

Mr. Arleigh Holder: Thank you very much. I will start off, first, with this six-minute video—it's not very

long—just showing the history of broadcast recording, some of the things that we're doing and some of the equipment that we use. After that, I would get into what we'll be doing in the future.

Video presentation.

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Mr. Arleigh Holder: Most of what I'm about to say was covered in the video, but I would just like to go over a few things. I'd like to also invite all members to drop by broadcast and recording to get a personal tour of our facilities. We are currently involved in some reorganization which Deborah will talk about.

Right now, we are available on some 200 cable systems throughout the province, as well as Star Choice. Question period is also seen on TVO as a repeat broadcast very early in the morning. We have, of course, the media studio, which is operated by broadcast and recording. It's a very busy room. Most conferences are carried live on CP24 or Newsworld, and that room can be booked by any member.

We have a full-time staff of 22 bodies, divided into audio and video maintenance. We travel with committees whenever there's a committee travelling around the province. Our department goes ahead to the hotel, or wherever you're setting up, and we set up all the microphones and do all the recording, which is then given to Hansard. We provide set-ups and cues for the Lieutenant Governor and special groups that attend the assembly.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): I'm just going to fill you in on a couple of initiatives that we've undertaken recently. One is, if you are in a committee that's meeting in 151, lately you will notice that we have installed three new television monitors on three of the walls in the committee room. This will enable greater ease of videoconferencing if a committee chooses to explore that method of interviewing witnesses. It will also allow witnesses, when they are bringing presentations that are PowerPoint or slides in nature, to be able to show those on the monitors in room 151. We have that advantage in that room because it is televised and the booth is right next door. It's not something, at least right now, that we can necessarily offer in the other committee rooms, although we'll explore that as well.

We also have a new sound system that's very recently been installed in room 151. We have had an issue with BlackBerries. You've heard the noise they make if you have them on your desk in the House and they resonate

through the sound system. That's not so much the problem. The problem is this rapid "tat, tat, tat" that a BlackBerry makes, even if it's silent when it goes off. If it's near a microphone, you've probably noticed it if it's near your computer or your car radio. That's an issue for the interpreters, in particular in room 151, because it's a noise that is bothersome to the ears. The new sound system that has recently been installed in 151 mitigates that, so that little rapid-fire sound doesn't occur on the new sound system. Members should be aware that it still does occur in the House to some extent, and so to the extent possible, we'll be asking members to keep their BlackBerries as far away from the microphone as possible.

We have an amount that we have put into the estimates this year for the installation of new, upgraded cameras in the legislative chamber. For the last several years we have undertaken a long-term project to digitize all of our equipment. We still send out the signal in analog format because that's how it most often gets received, but we are very current and very up to date in terms of the technology we use here at the assembly.

The final thing is, as the Speaker mentioned, the webcasting. That is up and running. It's the feed from broadcast and recording. It's administered through the information management office outside of broadcast and recording. You will notice that you can access it in either English or French. The interpretation is broadcast just as it is on your television set.

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One thing I should mention: If you are an internal user, you are in fact bypassing—we have a service provider that is hosting the webcast for us, but if you're using it from your office here at Queen's Park, in order to avoid an impact on the bandwidth that we're paying for, you will be actually accessing it through our internal system. So what you will notice is, if you have your TV on in your office and at the same time you've got the webcast running on your computer, there is a slight delay on the cast in the computer. That is true in-house, not true for the users outside of this place. They're getting live real-time.

The webcast is a live webcast. The ability to archive and provide a search component is much more complex than just providing the live cast. So we aren't doing that at the moment, although it's something that we will probably explore further down the road. Did I miss anything? Yes. Go ahead.

Mr. Arleigh Holder: One of the other services that we provide to members is dub requests. I've included in this document some stats about how many dubs we actually do every year.

First of all, if you go through it, there's an introduction and it just tells you some technical stuff and what we're going to do in the future. But then there's also the CRTC regulations so that if you wanted to really see how we are governed and what we can or cannot do—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I think, Mr. Chair, it may be important to just highlight some of the CRTC regulations, because I know there has been talk in the

past of using the Legislative channel to promote things like Foodland Ontario commercials or "Get your flu shot" commercials. There's a reason we can't do that, and it is this ruling. I'll turn it to Deb, Mr. Chair.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): If you do take a look at those CRTC guidelines, on the second page in particular you'll notice they are very specific in terms of what we are allowed to broadcast. If you take a look at item (g), you'll notice that it says that what we're allowed to broadcast is, "Any programming that is included ... but is in addition to the coverage of the proceedings ... is limited to a description of the processes of Parliament or the Legislature involved or an agenda"—you'll notice that we've put committee agendas up and sometimes the agenda of the proceedings in the House—"... of upcoming activities." No comment, no further analysis, just anything related to the Legislature can go up, but nothing external to that. So we are very strictly governed by these CRTC guidelines in terms of what we can or cannot broadcast. The committee should be aware of that.

Further to that, in the back of your grey standing orders binder under a tab called, oddly enough, "Television Guidelines," you'll notice that in 1986, when Broadcast and Recording was started, the committee and the House adopted specific guidelines around how the House is to be recorded. Those guidelines are still in effect today. I think the last time I was before this committee there was a review of those guidelines and the decision was to maintain the status quo. But, as members of the committee, you should probably make yourselves aware of those guidelines as well. I think Tonia's passing out copies of them now.

Dub requests: When Arleigh talks about dub requests, what he's referring to—some of you are probably aware—is the request that we get sometimes from members saying, "Can you give me a copy of the tape of the member's statement that I made yesterday, or the day before?"

Those are on the increase dramatically from members. We suspect it's because there is an increasing propensity among members to post those dubs on either their own website or, it turns out, YouTube. So those requests are increasing. It does put some stress on the staff in Broadcast and Recording because, obviously, it takes some time to create the dub copies. Currently, we're managing it. We may, though, have to come up with an alternative system somewhere down the road if the increase in demand continues.

Mr. Arleigh Holder: If you look at the last page, you can see that so far this year we've done 197 requests for dubs. That's just since January.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): Two other things—oh, sorry.

Mr. Arleigh Holder: I also wanted to include a list of all the cable companies that are carrying us and their potential subscribers and actual subscribers. Obviously, one of these cable companies is probably serving you in your area.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):

Two other things to mention briefly: One, as Arleigh mentioned, is that broadcast and recording is also responsible for the operation of the media studio. What you should know is that we operate the media studio in co-operation with the press gallery. We work very closely with the gallery in developing the guidelines for the media studio and in terms of all of the policies around the use of the media studio. Our philosophy has always been that the studio is really there for the use of the press gallery, so their opinion about how it should be operated is weighted very heavily.

The other issue I wanted to draw to your attention is the news that we've recently been told—as recently as yesterday confirmed—by Star Choice that they are not interested in renewing our contract for the distribution of the OntParl signal. There are probably a lot of reasons for this. One is that as the demand from networks, such as CTV, increases for high definition, which uses up more bandwidth, the satellite companies are looking for clients they can off-load in order to make room for probably higher-paying clients with increased viewership. So we've been given a warning that Star Choice is not interested in renewing the contract, which will mean that Star Choice viewers, once that happens, will no longer have access to the assembly's parliamentary channel.

We are exploring different options to deal with that. One, obviously, is to see if Bell might want to pick up the signal for broadcast on Bell ExpressVu. I have to tell you honestly that I'm not overly optimistic that that's something that will happen. We will explore that option, but Bell is probably under the same kinds of stresses as Star Choice.

The other thing that's possible: We used to provide the satellite signal to cable subscribers via—is it called C-band?

Mr. Arleigh Holder: Ka-band.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):—and we may be able to come to an agreement with Star Choice to go back to that system that we used to have, still with access to the satellite in the provision of OntParl.

I just wanted to make you aware of it. At this point, I think we are still exploring options. It is very early for us to actually do anything in terms of appealing to the CRTC or anything like that, but it is something that we may seek your assistance in doing somewhere down the road.

I think that's all we've got. We're happy to answer questions.

The Chair (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Yes, we have questions. Mr. Flynn?

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: I have a few questions, but before I ask them, let me preface my remarks. I've only been here now for going on five years, I guess, and since I've been here, the one thing I have noticed is the professionalism and the quality and the discreet nature of the recording here. I think you guys do a super job, so I just wanted to pass that on from a new member.

From a business perspective, I suspect the service is on in every office of every party, of every member, and probably in a few of the ministry offices as well. Externally, I'm not so sure what the viewership is. I know there are a number of subscribers or a number of people that we send it out to. My impression is that the longer members have been at Queen's Park, the more convinced they are that hundreds of thousands of people are tuned in to this every day. As a newer member, I suspect that that figure is a little lower. I'm just wondering if we have any idea—I know we can track whom we send it to and who picks it up, like Cogeco and some other places like that. Do we have any way of tracking the numbers on who actually sits down and watches this? I guess the networks have a way of doing that somehow. Everybody knows who's watching American Idol and what the numbers are, or who's watching the hockey game.

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The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):

They're the equivalent of the Neilson ratings, which we don't participate in. We did do it once. It's not very accurate. It was early on, in 1996. I think at that time it showed between 150,000 and 200,000 viewers, but again, it depends on the point in time at which you do the analysis.

The other thing I would say is that I'm not sure in the end that it matters what the viewership is. You started off by saying that every member thinks there are hundreds of thousands of people watching.

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Not every member; the older members.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):

And my response was going to be that hundreds of thousands of people are watching. The point is, what you're providing is a service. You're providing the accessibility of the Legislative Assembly to the population of Ontario. In your mind, the viewership only matters to the extent that you provided that accessibility. If there are 100,000 people or 800,000 people watching, in the end it probably isn't going to make a difference to your desire to provide the service.

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Well, that leads me to—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Mr. Chair, it was interesting that yesterday, as an example, one of the local cable companies had mixed their broadcast up and distributed the French broadcast in the Welland area. The member from Welland came to the Clerks' table to inform them of the problem, because his constituency office was receiving phone calls that the broadcast was in French and not in English, and those individuals weren't bilingual. I believe, Arleigh, you received a call as well.

Mr. Arleigh Holder: I received some calls from a member who then turned on his closed captioning so he could read it until it was fixed.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): I guess one thing to note is that when something goes wrong, if something happens—sometimes Rogers has dropped the signal. Rogers used to be famous—and I don't know if they do this anymore—for pre-empting us

right at 8 o'clock at night, regardless of what was happening in the House, and then the phones would light up like Christmas trees. So there are obviously people out there watching. My mother is one.

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: That's what I was going to say. I think each of the members probably knows people who watch this on a regular basis by their first names. I think we know the people who are very interested in these issues in each of our ridings.

From a business perspective, I'm looking at what the cost is of providing this service as well. If we're servicing a good number of Ontarian citizens, that's a great thing, and we're doing it at a reasonable cost and we're accountable in those costs. If we're spending an awful lot of money servicing 200 people, then I have some concerns, and I'd like to know a little bit more about it. I don't have any agenda here. I'm not trying to get rid of the TV service, but it is some information I would like to have. I think from a business perspective you need to have those costs. I think you need something more than just an anecdotal idea as to how many people are watching you. Even if the Neilson ratings are suspected to be inaccurate, it still is better than nothing. Right now I'm not sure if we have anything.

Mr. Arleigh Holder: The problem with ratings—most TV stations have ratings at a certain time when they're showing their big shows. That's when they get their big numbers. We don't really know when—if we knew when question period was going to be a volatile situation, we would say, “Okay, now do a rating.” That would be different. But how can we tell when will be a good day? If you did ratings of a regular TV station at 2 o'clock in the morning, I bet the ratings would be terrible.

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: When people can't sleep. Do we know what the budget is? Do you have that figure with you today?

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): In total, the broadcast and recording budget is a little over \$2 million; roughly \$2.5 million. About \$1.5 million or a little less than that is salaries and then it's about \$850,000 for the actual operating of the service itself.

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: That's interesting information, because you could probably break that down. I don't think that's an unreasonable amount, but I really feel that we need to know just how much penetration we're getting, if we're providing a service that people are actually using. If it's a handful of people, then I'm concerned. If it's a lot of people, then I have no concerns at all.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): If that's something the committee wants to direct us to do—I've got to tell you, I'd be waiting for direction from the committee to do that. I'm not sure that's a decision I'm prepared to make on my own because, once again, I think you need to think carefully about what you're going to do with the information once you get it.

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: It's a standard business practice, though. We shouldn't be afraid of receiving

information. Really, what we do with it then is up to us. But I don't think we should be hiding from the information.

Mr. Bob Delaney: I'd like to pick up for a moment where Mr. Flynn left off. Perhaps some of the years I spent in public relations may come to benefit us.

The equivalent in Canada to the Nielsen ratings in the States is a service called the Bureau of Broadcast Measurement, or BBM. One subscribes to any one of a number of packages by the Bureau of Broadcast Measurement. It hasn't been since the 1980s that I did any work with them, so I'm not going to pretend to be up to date on their most recent policies and procedures, let alone their rates—but it would be worth inquiring. BBM will profile a broadcast outlet—be it cable TV, broadcast TV or radio—in 15-minute increments. So the information that Mr. Flynn suggested is, in fact, available and we could find out what the cost of doing that would be from BBM, and we would be able to know with some exquisite precision what our viewership rates are in 15-minute increments pretty much through the day. I think we probably would be surprised to find that, in addition to our staff and other government people and all of our families, there are people who really do watch this.

I would add, as a sidelight, one anecdote of my own. Soon after having been elected, I called home and I said to my significant other, Andrea, “I'm going to be on for about five minutes. If you're having dinner in the house, you may want to watch.” This was when we had night sittings. So she turned it on and turned it up. When I came home, she said, “You should have seen this. I turned it on, there was your voice in the living room, and the first thing that happened was the cat ran right upstairs because he thought you were there.” So I can at least claim viewership of one cat.

Again with regard to the comment made by the Clerk regarding requests for dubbing, at the moment, the procedure is a little time-consuming. You, as a member, have to go down and hand them a DVD or a CD on which they're going to dub the particular clip that you've requested. Presuming that we have the storage capacity to do this on the assembly's Intranet, I'd like to propose to you that when a request for dubbing is made, it be uploaded for a set period of time onto the Intranet and a user ID and a password be provided to the member, who can then download it, which would allow, for example, an out-of-town member to have his or her constituency office download it and then walk it over to the local TV station—essentially, off-load the burning of the CD or DVD onto either the member or the const office, in which case they can make as many as they want, and streamline the process to enable the broadcast services people to deal with the request, upload it and essentially be done with it, with a minimum of need for interaction with the member or his staff.

Mr. Arleigh Holder: I would think that would depend on, first of all, what the member is going to use the clip for—if they wanted broadcast quality or if they just wanted a copy for a website. Everything we do is strictly

broadcast quality. Even the DVDs that we give you are right from the original masters. So uploading some of those clips will take quite a bit of time.

Mr. Bob Delaney: I accept the comment. It would be fair, when the request is made to do the dub, to say, "Is this webcast quality or broadcast quality?" If it's broadcast quality, it's your choice, you can either say, "Well, we're going to upload a file of however much in the way of megabytes," or in a long one, a gig or two. Or if it's in webcast quality, you can say, "We can easily upload that for your download."

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The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): Yes, and actually when I mentioned the increase in demand for dubs, what I did say was that we'll be exploring ways of trying to deal with that. Certainly, one of the ways that we would explore is being able to make it available electronically to members.

Mr. Bob Delaney: Okay.

Mr. Arleigh Holder: In this package, I mentioned, in the future plans, that we are looking at implementing an online archiving system so that members can actually have access to clips themselves.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): On the Intranet.

Mr. Bob Delaney: On the Intranet. Okay. Thank you.

Mr. Norm Miller: Thank you for your presentation today. I guess the thing I'm concerned about is that we seem to be losing networks or means of distributing our coverage of Queen's Park. I believe we lost one of the cable networks last year, did we not?

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): What happened was that Rogers moved it above their basic package. You had the basic package, and they moved it into one of their specialty packages.

Mr. Norm Miller: And now it looks like we're losing Star Choice, which certainly for an area like Parry Sound–Muskoka and most of rural Ontario is not a good thing, because probably most people use satellite dishes for coverage. So hopefully you'll have some luck with Bell ExpressVu.

I'm just wondering if there's anything that needs to be done to make the coverage more interesting to the general public, which I would assume would then make cable companies and satellite companies more interested in looking for the service. I would expect that—not so much when the Legislature is in session, but there's more than half the year when it's not in session—there's not much too interesting on the broadcast service when the Legislature is not in session. So I guess my question is, are there other things that we could put on, and would we have to change the CRTC rules to be able to do that, to maybe enhance the service for the six and a half months when the Leg. isn't in session?

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): First of all, we are restricted by the CRTC rules, and I don't honestly see that changing. But within the rules, I think there are some things we can do. The Speaker brought forward to this committee one initiative, which is

to put members' bios up. That's consistent with the parliamentary nature of the broadcast channel.

There are other things we can do. We can do educational videos, for example. We have one that needs to be updated right now, but the origin of petitions and that kind of thing. Those are the kinds of things that we could put up that are related to the parliamentary process and that are educational in nature.

Mr. Norm Miller: Could we also do something like coverage of other Legislatures, like Westminster, for example?

Mr. Arleigh Holder: No, we wouldn't. That would be something with permission rights. We can probably do it internally, but I don't think we can broadcast it. Again, that would be against the CRTC regulations.

Mr. Norm Miller: I'm just concerned with the trend of us losing coverage, especially losing Star Choice, which really affects rural Ontario terrifically.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): As I say, we'll be pursuing that and we'll be reporting back to you to keep you updated and let you know what, if anything, we can do. It strikes me that one of the things we may want to consider is approaching the CRTC to make coverage of legislative proceedings a mandatory thing. This is not something that we in Ontario are concerned with alone. Other jurisdictions have been talking about that as well, and we may want to join with them in approaching the CRTC to do something like that.

Mr. Norm Miller: One other question, just from my perspective of the riding Parry Sound–Muskoka: Does Cogeco distribute the—

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): Yes.

Mr. Arleigh Holder: Just to let you know, we're not the only channel that Star Choice has dropped. It actually dropped four others, including the CBC channel.

Mr. Norm Miller: Okay, thank you very much.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: When is your CRTC licence up for renewal?

Mr. Arleigh Holder: Currently, Parliaments are exempt from the licence.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: Because you're exempt from the renewal process, could you initiate a change to your licence? Could you initiate that because you don't have to go through the formal renewal process?

Mr. Arleigh Holder: No. If you read this, it exempts us and other Parliaments, all Parliaments. Then it gives strict guidelines to what we can do.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): It's likely that in order for these guidelines to be changed, Canadian Parliaments as a collective would have to go to the CRTC. These apply to all Legislatures in the Parliament of Canada.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: Okay. So when they were updated in 2002, was that when the exemption for further renewals happened?

Mr. Arleigh Holder: That was when we were exempted from having to own our own licence. Before that, TVO used to appear before us.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: I'm assuming that when you talk about the one time that you did have some kind of idea of how many viewers there were, you were involved with the BBM? You subscribed to BBM at that point to get those numbers?

Mr. Arleigh Holder: It was Neilsen.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: It was Neilsen; okay. Because the challenge you have with the Bureau of Broadcast Measurement is that they have, I think, six weeks in the spring and in the fall, and of course if the House isn't in session, it may not be quite as high as you would like it.

My second question is: Have you had any staffing or budgetary impacts as a result of the standing order changes in the timing?

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): We are still assessing the impact. We had a meeting with all of the directors of the assembly at the outset of the standing order schedule changes. We will be having another meeting next week. What we have determined is to take this period of time through to the end of June to get a full idea of what the impact is and assess it and determine how we can sustain it long term.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Can I jump in? The intent is that not only the broadcast services—I've spoken with Deb and asked that for everything that takes place within the legislative precinct, the reports be sent to Deb. The plan is that when the standing committee meets to review the changes, we will be able to bring a complete picture of that impact on the whole of the precinct.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: One final question: When you reference your dub requests, are those all internal, or is there an opportunity for outside stakeholders to request them?

Mr. Arleigh Holder: Anyone can request a dub.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: Are they charged for that service?

Mr. Arleigh Holder: There's no charge.

The Chair (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Mr. Brown.

Mr. Michael A. Brown: I share Mr. Miller's concern. I obviously have a riding that relies greatly on Star Choice as a provider of service to most of my communities, actually, and losing that, we would need an alternative. But it occurs to me that as we are now going to streaming Internet service and there is a convergence, I'm told, of technologies, maybe the answer will be sometime down the road to be using the Internet to actually supply the service to households. Am I just totally off base thinking that they may occur within a relatively tight time frame of four or five years?

Mr. Arleigh Holder: I think it depends on the bandwidth. Right now, the bandwidth is not there to support broadcasts, but perhaps in the future.

Mr. Michael A. Brown: I am attracted to the notion that we ask the Parliament of Canada to work with the CRTC to mandate the broadcast of legislative proceedings.

The Chair (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Mr. Miller.

Mr. Norm Miller: I would agree with Mr. Brown. I would support asking the Parliament of Canada to mandate coverage of the provincial Legislatures.

I just want to make one comment about the dubbing discussion that was going on. There are other ways for members, anyway, to get the signal digitalized on your own that are relatively simple, without needing to use broadcast services at all, at least for iTube-quality videos.

The Chair (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Anybody else? Thank you all very much. I really appreciate your taking the time to be here. With that, we're adjourned.

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Before we adjourn, Mr. Chair, at some point, I would like to get a report—not on performing the reviews that we're talking about on viewership, but just on some of the processes that are available and what some of their potential costs would be. We know of at least two now: there's Nielsen and BBM. There may be other ways of doing it as well, for all I know.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): We can commit to getting that information for you.

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Is that good enough?

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: That's fine with me.

Mr. Bob Delaney: Also, just before we adjourn, would it be in order to put a motion on the floor that the committee endorses the Speaker's proposal to carry non-partisan profiles of individual members?

The Chair (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): That's what I was going to raise next. If you want to move it—

Mr. Bob Delaney: All right, I'll move it.

The Chair (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Does everybody understand that motion? Did you get a copy of it? The Speaker, when he was here the last time, suggested that we have these profiles of all members broadcasted on the channel.

Mr. Delaney has moved it. All in favour? Carried?

Mr. Bob Delaney: I believe I actually have to read the motion, though.

The Chair (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Is that right?

Mr. Bob Delaney: It's just a minor point.

I move that the committee endorses the Speaker's proposal to carry non-partisan profiles of individual members on the Ontario legislative television broadcast channel at times when proceedings are not broadcast live.

The Chair (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Mr. Brown.

Mr. Michael A. Brown: Do we want to have a quick discussion of what is non-partisan and how we decide that?

The Chair (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): We had samples from—

Interjection.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): Yes, the committee was shown samples of the profiles that we're talking about. They're very brief. They're really just what the parliamentary roles of members are and what riding they represent.

The Chair (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): And a short bio.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): And a short bio.

Mr. Michael A. Brown: I've seen these things take on lives of their own. They start out with an original intent and five years later, you would barely recognize projects like this. That's all I'm really asking.

The Chair (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I suspect that the committee could always review it with the Speaker.

We have the motion from Mr. Delaney. All in favour? Carried.

One other item for the committee—sorry, Ms. Jones.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: I'd like to follow up on what Mr. Brown talked about with bringing forward a motion to see if we can encourage the modification of the CRTC licence. So whether that's a motion from the committee or we have to update the licence—

Mr. Michael A. Brown: That wasn't what I was suggesting. I was suggesting they mandate it for provincial Legislatures; in other words, require the cable companies and the satellite providers to carry the channel.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: So would that be done in the form of putting it in your CRTC licence?

Mr. Michael A. Brown: I think it would be done in instructing the CRTC to carry any and all parliamentary channels in—

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): It wouldn't affect these guidelines, but it would be an instruction to the CRTC to instruct the satellite and cable companies to carry the—

Mr. Michael A. Brown: What I'm saying is that as a condition of being a satellite or cable company, you would have to do this.

The Chair (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): With regard to your concern: Can we leave it with the Clerk, since she's already exploring what's going to happen to Star Choice, to maybe report back to us, including making it mandatory at that point in time?

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): What I'm doing as a first step is consulting with the other

Clerks across the country, because some of those will be affected too; for example, British Columbia's carried on Star Choice. So I'm going to consult with them first, because it occurs to me that as much of a collective as we can be, the more successful we'll be in terms of trying to push the issue. So that's the first step. Beyond that, either alone or along with the other jurisdictions, my suggestion would be that we send a strongly worded letter, signed by the Speaker and endorsed by this committee, if possible. But I'll keep you updated on that.

The Chair (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): So the committee has your commitment that you will report back to us. Is that good enough? Okay.

On committee business, we agreed that the Ombudsman will report to this committee. You've all received a report called—I hate to call the title out—Don't Let the Sun Go Down On Me. I just wondered if the committee wants to direct that the Ombudsman appear before us to discuss this report, or are you happy with the written form?

Interjection.

The Chair (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): He said he's happy with the written form.

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: I've read it and I thought it was well written.

Mr. Bob Delaney: I wouldn't mind seeing the guy, personally.

The Chair (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I'm in the hands of the majority of committee.

Interjections.

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: If you guys want him, I'm happy to—

Ms. Sylvia Jones: I can live without it.

The Chair (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): You can live without it? I think there's a consensus that we just accept the report as written. Okay?

That's it. Thank you all very much. We're adjourned.

The committee adjourned at 1354.

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