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**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

Wednesday 19 March 2014

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Mercredi 19 mars 2014

**Standing Committee on
the Legislative Assembly**

School Boards Collective
Bargaining Act, 2014

**Comité permanent de
l'Assemblée législative**

Loi de 2014 sur la négociation
collective dans les conseils
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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**

Wednesday 19 March 2014

Mercredi 19 mars 2014

The committee met at 1204 in committee room 1.

**SCHOOL BOARDS COLLECTIVE
BARGAINING ACT, 2014
LOI DE 2014 SUR LA NÉGOCIATION
COLLECTIVE DANS LES CONSEILS
SCOLAIRES**

Consideration of the following bill:

Bill 122, An Act respecting collective bargaining in Ontario's school system / Projet de loi 122, Loi concernant la négociation collective dans le système scolaire de l'Ontario.

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): We'll call the meeting to order, everybody. Welcome to the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly, on Bill 122, An Act respecting collective bargaining in Ontario's school system.

At the last meeting we spent a good three hours debating a motion and an amendment to a motion. I think we've had adequate debate on that and I'd like to go directly to clause-by-clause and section 1—

Interjection.

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): I'm sorry, the motion and the amendment that were presented the last time are both out of order today. It's time to go straight to clause-by-clause. We'll start with section 122.

Mr. Rob Leone: Mr. Chair?

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Yes?

Mr. Rob Leone: Can I move that each caucus be given 20 minutes for an opening statement?

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): My understanding is that's my decision. You have every right to have that opening statement under the first section we'll start with.

Mr. Rob Leone: So are we able to move the motion?

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): I would say no.

Bill 122, An Act respecting collective bargaining in Ontario's school system: section 1. Is there any debate on section 1? Mr. Leone?

Mr. Rob Leone: Well, thank you, Mr. Chair. I was looking forward to the opportunity to have an opening statement today, but obviously we're stuck with clause-by-clause on this particular piece of legislation. I just want to reiterate for members of the committee what we have been requesting, and that is for some acknow-

ledgement of one request that we've made, which is to include co-instructional activities—that an amendment be made possible by this committee. On seeing that consent by members of this committee, we would then be able to move smoothly through clause-by-clause.

I've once again asked a question in question period with regard to co-instructional activities, and I have to say that I was not satisfied with the answer that was provided to me. I will suggest that this process would move a whole lot smoother had we had the opportunity to discuss and engage in a dialogue with how we can best achieve the goals that we have put forth.

We have made available in our package—in the package of amendments that we've seen—the frame in which we can pursue that, through the advice of the Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association. In their presentation to this committee, they had made it clear that it was possible to include co-instructional activities with an appropriate definition of those said activities in the legislation, in a proposed amendment.

We have taken a look at that amendment. We have largely respected the wishes of the Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association in trying to find a way to incorporate that into this piece of legislation. To date, I have not heard whether the government in particular has any interest in pursuing that.

I would suggest once again that there are more than 70 amendments. We actually were delivered another package of amendments today, which contains probably some 30 other amendments, which is an incredible amount of amendments that have been sought given the context of this particular piece of legislation, legislation that we are to understand has been in the works for more than a year.

I want to stress this point, Chair: In the process of going through and crafting a bill, and all the negotiations that certainly had, as the minister has suggested, taken place, why are there so many amendments to this particular bill? What was missing in the negotiation phase in the lead-up to the presentation of that bill? I have serious concerns about the direction of that.

Then the bill was tabled in November, and then we hear that the government was going forward—

Interjection.

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): A point of order.

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: Chair, a point of order: Chair, you already ruled that we're going to clause-by-clause. I would ask that you—

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): He actually has the opportunity to do up to 20 minutes on any one of the sections.

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: But if he's going to make comments, it has to be restricted to section 1. The member is speaking in generalities all over the place.

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): I understand what you're saying, Mr. Balkissoon. The reality is that I didn't allow an opening statement for any of you, so you can all comment for up to 20 minutes on this first section, okay?

Continue, Mr. Leone.

Mr. Rob Leone: I appreciate that. I don't appreciate the interruption, but we are talking about the interpretation and application of a particular piece of legislation, which is obviously relevant to the discussions that we're having here—the fact that we've received more and more requests for amendments that have likely been delivered to the various caucuses through stakeholders, an opportunity to discuss these things.

1210

This is a pretty dense bill. There are 55 sections of the bill. There are a couple of schedules involved. It's a comprehensive piece of legislation. We have long sought to have open public hearings on these things. The point I'm trying to make here is that in the process of tabling this bill and the likely negotiations that ensued thereafter while this bill was sitting in the Legislature and prior to entering this committee, there were lots of debates and negotiations.

Limited public hearings were sought because the government now claims that those public hearings weren't necessary because they had done all the consultations and negotiations before. In the process of doing that, even with doing that, we have seen that 70, 80, 90, 100 amendments have been proposed with this particular piece of legislation. Those are amendments that we've seen prior to going through the clause-by-clause process. We are now on section 1 of this bill to try to potentially amend section 1 of this bill, which effectively talks about the interpretation and application of that, and section 1 is obviously going through what this bill is supposed to be.

I want to suggest that, had the government done its due diligence, there wouldn't be upwards of 100 amendments on this piece of legislation. There wouldn't be any sense of disagreement among the "partners of education." I say that with a quote, unquote because I've long maintained that students and parents are not considered partners when it comes to the legislation being brought forth with this government. That has been a long-standing concern of mine and one that I think the committee has not heeded in any particular way.

We have to roll our way through all of these amendments, the ones that have been proposed and the ones to be proposed, and that is of particular interest to this committee. This process could take a very, very long time. I don't need to remind committee members that we are able to speak to any section of this legislation. We can propose amendments to any word in this legislation and, in the process of doing that, we're able to speak for 20

minutes, we're able to provide recess for 20 minutes. This has the potential, depending on the amount of agreement on this committee, to drag out for weeks and weeks and weeks.

We have suggested that one way we can move this bill forward is to heed our concerns, our one request, which is to protect co-instructional activities from future job action. For the life of me, I don't understand why we have not received any response to that particular request.

So here we are. We're here commencing clause-by-clause today without any guarantee that extracurricular activities will be protected for students, particularly for parents who consider them as part of the educational experience. In fact, this is something that the Minister of Education herself has suggested as being very important. That's prior to even being the Minister of Education, when she was president of the Ontario Public School Boards' Association, which is an item I brought up during question period today.

The question for committee members then becomes, who's going to stand up for parents and students? Who among us is going to stand up for the people who are contacting us, particularly during the previous job action that commenced about a year ago—pretty much ended about a year ago—where extracurricular activities, sports teams, debate clubs, choir practice, extra help after school and parent-teacher interviews weren't taking place? Who's going to stand up for students and who's going to stand up for parents at the end of the day? I think we have a responsibility on this committee to do that because it's our job.

We hear from these constituents on a day-in, day-out basis. We may not have heard from some of them for a while, because the job action did run full circle at the end of the last school year, but the potential exists for it to come back to do this again. We're in a new collective bargaining season; collective bargaining is about to begin for the next contract. That's what the fall is going to bring.

I've heard from a lot of parents, particularly ones who have kids in sports who are relying upon their last year of extracurricular activities to potentially get scholarships to American universities on the basis of their excellence in sports. I'm prepared to stand up and speak on behalf of them to ensure that we don't get to a place where their season is cancelled, scouts don't come around, and they don't get the scholarships that allow them to pursue post-secondary education in the United States or in another province, or even within our own universities and colleges here in Ontario. Who among us is going to stand up for those parents and those students who are very concerned that come September, in a new collective bargaining season, we have the potential to lose our extracurricular activities?

I would suggest that it's our responsibility as committee members to do what we can to ensure that we have a process in place that everyone agrees to, which is what this bill does. It sets out the parameters, the partners, the role of the government, the role of the school board and

the role of teacher federations at the central table—and the role of the school boards and the role of teaching federation locals at the local level.

Certainly, there are some amendments to flesh out, and I respect some of the points that are going to be made on this. But at the end of the day, what parents seek is some assurance that we're going to be able to provide a framework that works for them. I think it's about time that we stand up as legislators to do essentially what parents are asking us to do, which is to protect extra-curricular activities.

I want every committee member to understand where we're coming from. If it hasn't been clear to this point, it should be clear now. We have a process, an established bill, a piece of legislation the government has put forward, a piece of legislation that has a few problems—as many of the amendments are pointing out—one that I know all members of this committee want to work through, and we could do that in a very expeditious manner if we attempted to work together on sharing our ideas. But at this point, without having acknowledgement that you're about to share your ideas, we have some difficulty accepting that as part of this process.

I want to note, too—I had gone back to previous educational legislation. I remember that in 2000, we had a committee set up to look at public hearings on a bill that was designed to deal with extracurricular activities, Bill 74. I remember that Liberal members of that committee who were going through that public hearing process called the process a sham due to the time allocated to committee members to listen to presentations from those delegations and to ask questions of those who were presenting. I will note that many presentations were brought forward. The time allocated for those public hearings was 30 minutes for both presentation and questions. Liberal members of that committee at that time called that unacceptable and a sham.

Well, do you know what we had here in public hearings on this bill? We had five-minute presentations and three minutes per party to actually ask questions—a total of 14 minutes per presentation. I think, Chair, that we are doing a disservice to families in this province by not heeding their concerns.

Notwithstanding the possibility of not hearing from them, members of this committee have an opportunity to stand up and show up for parents and students in their own ridings and right across the province of Ontario. That's all we're asking. It's a request. It requires a figment of acknowledgement that you're willing to accept that point.

1220

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): You have about another three minutes left in this round.

Mr. Rob Leone: Unfortunately, I have another three minutes, but I have about another 25 minutes of things I could say.

The reality of it is that my great concern is that we are in a position where we're going to go through clause-by-clause without the full benefit of public hearings, but in

the absence of that, we have an opportunity as committee members to do something positive for parents and families and for the partners in education who want a process set up.

This can be a win-win for everybody. This can be a win-win for families; it can be a win-win for the teacher federations; it can be a win-win for the government; it can be a win-win for the school boards, if we work together. For the life of me, I don't understand why we aren't doing that today.

I want to assure parents in my community, and I want to assure parents right across the province of Ontario, that we will do our due diligence in reviewing this piece of legislation. We will examine it thoroughly. We will seek improvements where it falters. We will examine this clause by clause. We will do that with their interests in mind, because at this point it's only the Ontario PC caucus that seems prepared and willing to do that.

I remain disappointed in this process. I remain disappointed in the fact that we weren't able to hear from more delegations. I remain disappointed in the fact that the concerns of parents and students have not been heard. I remain disappointed that members of this committee are willing to sidestep all of their concerns just to get a bill through that may potentially have a severe effect on the provision of co-instructional activities in our schools.

Just to remind committee members, we're talking about sports teams. We're talking about arts committees and councils. We're talking about debate clubs. We're talking about choir practice and music instruction that happens after school. We're talking about helping students who need help after school hours. We're talking about, potentially, instructional tutoring classes that go on after school. We're talking about communication with parents. These are items that I know families are concerned about. These are items that have been challenged by the seeming unwillingness of particularly the government in not trying to move forward with this process.

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): You've just got about 30 seconds left.

Mr. Rob Leone: I will end with that, Chair. I think that the point has been made. I encourage all committee members to consider what we're asking for and to ensure that this is a smooth process for everybody involved.

Thank you very much, Chair.

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Thank you very much.

Mr. Todd Smith: Do I have the opportunity, Chair, to—

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): I wanted to give each of the other caucuses an opportunity first. Any opening statements or anything like that?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: No comment.

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: No comment.

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): I've given the flexibility to talk about anything on your first comments on section 1. From this point on, if you would like to make a comment on section 1, you'll have to stick to section 1. Okay?

Mr. Todd Smith: Do I have that opportunity as well?

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): You have the opportunity, but stick right to section 1.

Mr. Todd Smith: Thank you very much. With section 1, this would be a motion that has come from the New Democratic Party—

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Section 1.

Mr. Todd Smith: Section 1. Where are we here, sir?

Mr. Rob Leone: No amendments. Just the section.

Mr. Todd Smith: Oh, right here. Okay, I apologize.

This is the “Interpretation and Application” section that we’re talking about:

“Interpretation

“1(1) Expressions used in this act relating to collective bargaining have the same meaning as in the Labour Relations Act, 1995, unless a contrary intention appears.

“Same

“(2) Expressions used in this act relating to education and the school system have the same meaning as in the Education Act, unless a contrary intention appears.”

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Have you got comments on this section?

Mr. Todd Smith: Do you have any comments?

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): No, he has had his 20 minutes. It has to be you.

Mr. Todd Smith: Oh, sorry. I’m going to have to take a look at that. I was expecting to make some opening comments as well, Chair, on where we’re at today and the fact that we haven’t had the public consultations either. I would also like to speak about some of the comments that were made in regard to the co-instructional activities and the extracurricular activities, the reason why we’re here and why we intend to continue to try and push for that and, obviously, have parents involved in the process. Do I have the ability to speak to that?

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Well, you have the ability to speak to any one of these sections and you have up to 20 minutes, as long as you stay to the section and talk on the section itself.

Mr. Todd Smith: Okay. “Expressions used in this act relating to collective bargaining have the same meaning as in the Labour Relations Act, 1995, unless a contrary intention appears.”

I’m obviously concerned that what could happen in this section is that we don’t have the ability to include extracurricular activities when we’re talking about the collective bargaining process. As we do know, the collective bargaining process is expected to begin in the not-too-distant future, so I’m concerned that co-instructional activities may not be included in this section when it deals with interpretation. It is a huge concern. It has been outlined by my colleague, our critic for education, Rob Leone, and it continues to be a concern today. I believe it’s something that the minister, this morning in question period, even indicated is a concern, and it’s something that hasn’t been part of our discussions to this point. It’s disappointing to me that this is such an important part of the school day and the school activities and the school career of young people and that this section hasn’t been

discussed properly. I’m worried that under the “Interpretation and Application” portion of this, we don’t have the ability to discuss things that my colleague has pointed out.

There are so many children in school right now who are looking forward to their graduation. I can tell you that my young daughter is in grade 8 and she just had her graduation pictures taken the other day. They were texted to me, and they look fabulous, by the way, Mr. Chair. She’s a very good-looking girl; she takes after her mother. This is something that we’ve been looking forward to in our family for a long time, and these types of activities weren’t able to continue as a result of what we’ve seen in the past, where extracurricular activities have been held hostage as part of the job action that we’ve seen in the province. These are the types of things that we’re concerned about and that should be included in the language when it comes to the various sections that we’re dealing with.

Unfortunately, what we’ve seen is that, while the Premier continues to talk all the time about the fact that we should be talking with our partners, whether it’s in the education sector or any sector that we’re looking after in the province, that actually isn’t happening. We’ve seen processes like this railroad at times and we haven’t had the input that we’ve needed so that we can make well-educated, common-sense decisions where we have been presented with all of the facts from all of the partners in education. I worry that by rushing through this process the way we have—again, the public consultation process is what I’m talking about, where we didn’t get to hear from major, important stakeholders in the education sector—things will be held hostage when it comes to future job action related to the collective bargaining process.

“Interpretation and Application”: “Interpretation” leaves a lot to be interpreted. Right? It certainly does. I mentioned the fact that my daughter is in grade 8 and she’s looking forward to her graduation. There are so many other young people out there who are looking forward to their track and field season that is just about to begin as well, and eventually, the weather is going to warm up. Eventually, we are going to get outside and the snow and the ice will melt away from our track and field facilities. Soccer seasons are going to start up. These are the types of things that people are looking forward to and the reason why they enjoy the school experience and the education experience so much. I can tell you that this is a concern, not just for parents out there and students; it’s also a concern for our educators who are out there. Many of them want to ensure that these extracurricular activities, these co-instructional activities, are included in the job description of our educators as well, because they don’t want to be put in a position where they feel that they have to choose between their students and their job, or their association or federation or whatever it might be. It’s a very difficult situation for a lot of our educators to be put in, so I believe that if we made it very clear when we’re crafting legislation going forward that we include

co-instructional activities in the daily activities of our educators in our schools, that way we can have a fulsome, wholesome experience that our students, our parents, our teachers, our principals and all those who work in our school system can count on and rely on, on a daily basis.

1230

I would just like to say, as well, that in the crafting of this bill, and I believe while it occurred over the period of almost a year, it does beg the question—there are a number of pages included in this bill, and we have two stacks of amendments here that we're dealing with: Who was consulted on this bill?

As I say, the Premier talks all the time about consultations and working with our partners, and when you have this many amendments—and we haven't consulted with many of the stakeholders in our education system—what is wrong with this bill? We see this often in the Legislature: where a bill will come before the Legislature and it's a lot thinner than this. This is probably one of the more comprehensive bills that we've actually seen.

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Just keep on topic with your questions.

Mr. Todd Smith: Yes—sorry—absolutely.

We were talking about the interpretation and application process. I'm just wondering: If we're talking about interpretation, what are we actually interpreting here? We have stacks and stacks of amendments, so obviously it has been a bit difficult for those who have made these amendments to interpret what's actually in this. It's many, many pages—28 pages, as a matter of fact, 55 sections in here—and it begs the question: Was everyone who should have been consulted on this actually consulted, and why do we have so much concern? There are so many pieces of legislation that come before the House that are rather flimsy pieces of legislation, and they may be one or two pages. This is obviously 28 pages—it's fairly significant—but there are a lot of issues that folks are taking with this document.

Our intention as members of the PC caucus is to make sure that we get everything right in these various sections that we're talking about, ensuring that this bill is the best that it possibly can be when it eventually leaves this room. By not including our many stakeholders in this section and in this process, perhaps we are going to fall short.

This section related to interpretation: We should keep in mind that the Labour Relations Act is a very, very big act, and it's something that needs to have careful consideration as well when we're applying aspects of the Labour Relations Act to what we're discussing here today. It involves job action. It involves the various types of job actions that can take place: It involves strikes; it involves, obviously, work-to-rule; and the various options that are out there when the collective bargaining process is under way.

When we're talking about the School Boards Collective Bargaining Act, we have to make sure that we're getting all of these sections right; that we're getting each and every piece of this properly examined.

There are obviously many concerns when dealing with this piece of legislation. We've talked about work-to-rule at great length, and how we don't believe that extra-curricular activities should be held hostage—that our students shouldn't have to pay a price. Ultimately, that's what we've seen in the past: that the biggest losers in these types of situations aren't the employees or the school boards; they are, in fact, the students who are hurt by this. That's why we have to make sure that we get it right, and why we are working with all of our partners and stakeholders in getting the collective bargaining process correct: so that we don't have these types of events occur in the future.

There are so many aspects that are so important, and obviously we have many, many sections here that we'll be looking at as part of the "Interpretation and Application" portion of this. I know we'll have some comments from the other parties, as well, when we hear from them about why this is so important.

Again, this relates to the Labour Relations Act from 1995. It's a very big act, and it involves so many important issues when it comes to our work environments and our school systems.

I think the one thing that we should keep in mind when we're looking at this is that the school system is a unique type of situation. It's very different from industry or other types of sectors that we deal with when we're talking about the Labour Relations Act. The province has a duty to provide a public education system that our students can rely on to receive an education that's going to allow them to be successful, not just here in Ontario but on the world stage. So it is a very unique type of situation that we're talking about within the Labour Relations Act—the fact that our schools need to be treated a little bit differently. We have to make sure we're getting that right, so that we don't impact learning activities and the ability for our students to ensure that they're getting the best education possible each and every day.

I think what we have seen in the past is, when we don't get things right in the collective bargaining process, our students are the ones who suffer. They suffer not just in the classroom, but on the playing fields as well. That's why we've continued to try to have public consultations focus on extracurricular and co-instructional activities that aren't just focused on playing fields, but also graduations, school trips, debate clubs, school choirs and bands—they're all affected when we don't get things right. We just want to ensure that when we do get around to debating the various portions of this act, we're doing everything that we can to make sure that we get things right.

Obviously, we believe that we have to work with all of our partners. I believe that the last time we were speaking about this, we didn't have proper input from the principals' councils; we didn't have proper input, obviously, from parents and students who could potentially be involved in this process. When you are crafting a bill, it's our belief that we should be including all of these very important partners in this discussion.

Having said all that, I would like to pass it on to whoever might like to bring comments.

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Further comments on the bill before we vote?

Mr. Rob Leone: I'm wondering if the legislative lawyer could answer this question. This bill, in terms of this section, talks about the relationship between the Labour Relations Act and Bill 122 and the processes being set up. My question is, to what extent do Ontario Labour Relations Board decisions affect the legislative process in any particular way?

Ms. Laura Hopkins: This is a matter of substantive law that is the law of collective bargaining. I think that perhaps ministry staff may be in a better position to describe for you the impact on the functions of the Labour Relations Board that this act may have.

Mr. Rob Leone: Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Is anyone here from the ministry?

Mr. Tim Hadwen: Where would you like me to be?

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Just sit there. Can we get your name, please?

Mr. Tim Hadwen: Tim Hadwen with the Ministry of Education.

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Please proceed.

Mr. Tim Hadwen: Under the legislation, where there are decisions that need to be made for the purposes of moving the collective bargaining forward or resolving other issues, the Labour Relations Act commonly uses the Labour Relations Board to make those decisions. This act, where there are decisions of that kind to be made, does the same thing: The Labour Relations Board is also used when there are issues that arise under the act that need resolution by a third party.

Mr. Rob Leone: May I ask—

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Yes.

Mr. Rob Leone: If there were prior decisions that involved labour relations with respect to what we're talking about, strike action or job action, are those decisions that have been rendered in the past with the Ontario Labour Relations Board considered when crafting this particular piece of legislation?

Mr. Tim Hadwen: Yes. When it makes decisions, the Labour Relations Board considers its previous decisions, and the act has been put together by folk having regard to the entire legal context, other statutory provisions and decisions by the Labour Relations Board and the general law of the land.

Mr. Rob Leone: Does this bill in any way contradict prior decisions that might have been rendered?

Mr. Tim Hadwen: I don't think so.

Mr. Rob Leone: Okay. I was just curious about that. Those are the questions I had, Chair.

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Okay. Is everyone ready to vote on the bill?

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: On section 1.

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Sorry—on the section. It's going to be a while before we get to the bill.

Mr. Rob Leone: I'd like a 20-minute recess.

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): No more debate? Okay. A 20-minute recess, and we'll vote on section 1 when we get back.

The committee recessed from 1243 to 1303.

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Okay. We're now going to vote on section 1. All those in favour of section 1? All those opposed? Section 1 carries.

We'll now go to section 2 and amendment number 1, an NDP amendment.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Withdrawn, Chair.

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Amendment 1 is withdrawn?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Withdrawn.

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Any further questions or any debate on section 2?

Mr. Rob Leone: Excuse me. I'm sorry. What just happened there?

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): The NDP withdrew their motion on section 2, and I'm asking if there's any further debate on section 2.

Mr. Rob Leone: Sure. I'd like to debate.

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Mr. Leone.

Mr. Rob Leone: I'm just trying to read very quickly that NDP motion that they tried to move but not move anymore, to see if—

Mr. Peter Tabuns: It's withdrawn.

Mr. Rob Leone: Sorry?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: It's no longer on the table.

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Mr. Leone, you have to speak to the actual section at this point.

Mr. Rob Leone: I can speak to the section?

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Yes.

Mr. Rob Leone: Okay. I'm also able to amend the section as I wish. Correct?

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Yes.

Mr. Rob Leone: Thank you.

Chair, this is the definitions section of the act. I find the definitions section of any legislation to be very, very interesting, in particular because there are so many words that are listed in the act itself, that a few of them are selected as requiring further definition.

I'm very amused that the first one on this list is "central table," which is a term that is used in section 23. I'm not quite sure why, in subsection 2.(1), "In this act, 'central table' means a central table established under section 23," when section 23 of this act goes on at great length to explain exactly what the central table actually is.

There's an interesting part of this particular piece of legislation that seeks to establish the central tables. As I understand it in section 23, those central tables are—there are four of them that have been proposed by this government bill, this piece of legislation.

I want to state that one of the interesting elements through this process of clause-by-clause is that we're going to understand some of the problems with the legislation that has been written herein. I was just at the Association des enseignantes et des enseignants franco-ontariens conference in Ottawa last week, where they had

explained and expressed their desire to me not to have four tables, but to have three and to amalgamate those tables into one.

It just goes to show the point that myself and my colleague from Prince Edward–Hastings, Mr. Smith, were stating in the discussion surrounding the previous section of this piece of legislation: that thorough consultations would have made a very simple change, which is to essentially amalgamate, or make one, the two distinct French school system tables, the public and the Catholic.

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For the life of me, it just seemed like a very simple request for central table, that they be tied together; and yet in the legislation, we see outlined in section 23, which elaborates on the definition that we're talking about here, that there are four central tables, in essence, that are going to be established. Did they not talk to the AEFO? Did they not understand the concerns about having different tables and what they would mean? It speaks again to the desire for us to have—we're questioning, certainly, the crafting of this legislation, with particular reference to the terms that are being established here.

I know we're going to section 23 a little later, so I'm not going to talk too much about what's in it, but the very fact that we are seeing this definition in subsection 2(1) of this act, even though section 23 elaborates in further detail—I have some questions about that. There is certainly some degree of asking why, in effect. I'm hoping that when we have commentary, particularly from the parliamentary assistant, on this legislation, he perhaps might want to answer why the central table portion is elaborated in section 23, and now we're seeking to define it in subsection 2(1). That is the first definition, and there are certainly questions that can be asked with respect to that.

The funny thing about the second term that they're trying to define here is this concept of “central terms.” I think a lot is going to be said over the course of clause-by-clause hearings on what these “central terms” will actually entail. “Central terms’ means”—as it suggests here—“in relation to a collective agreement, the terms and conditions of the collective agreement that are determined through, or in connection with, central bargaining, if any,” which is interesting, because the possibility, I think, written in this definition is that there may not be any particular central terms that are part of the bargaining process.

We are going through this process of analyzing Bill 122 with the explicit purpose of having central tables. That's what the process is trying to define, because prior to the negotiations that happened decades ago, it was always a local school board with a local teaching federation that were in negotiation with each other. Now we're setting up this apparatus of a central table. We have to discover what these central terms may be, if any. It's central to what we're discussing in this particular piece of legislation. So what might these central terms

look like? What might be the negotiating aspects that these central terms might look at?

I would suggest that one of those central terms might be the length of the contract that's being negotiated. Of course, this legislation spells out who exactly—the minister, in terms of her discretion on whether this is going to be a two-, three- or four-year agreement, will certainly be challenged in the course of clause-by-clause, as we've heard several presentations during public hearings allude to the fact that the discretion of the minister in this negotiation is key. Obviously, what I assume is the request of certain partners of education is to limit those powers and those concerns. I'll let those who are going to move those motions make their arguments, if they're going to make any. I feel like I'm the only one—myself and my colleague from Prince Edward–Hastings are the only ones who are going to speak to any part of this piece of legislation, even though it's not our own. I find that interesting.

But what are, in fact, the essential terms and what are they supposed to do? I know that, in the course of a negotiation, what this bill seeks to do is to spell out what those terms are, if in fact there are any. I'd be very interested to know what is going to be more specifically contained therein. I am hoping that, again, if the parliamentary assistant seeks to provide some clarity on those items, he will do so when his time comes to speak on this particular section.

We have this apparatus that's being created in this particular piece of legislation: the central table. There's going to be some, I guess, discussion on what those central terms are going to be, subject to the limitations of this legislation. I think what might also be important to discuss at this very same time are what the “local terms” are going to be, which is five definitions below the top: “local terms,” which “means, in relation to a collective agreement, the terms and conditions of the collective agreement that are not central terms.” The assumption that these “local terms” are going to be subject to local negotiation between school boards and the teaching federation locals is, I think, an understanding that might be presented in this particular piece of this section. But are they in fact so? How is that all determined, the clarity of which is not particularly evident at this point in time?

I think there has to be some understanding that these definitions require perhaps a little bit of beefing up. I will let others on this committee perhaps suggest—I realize that no motion was moved with particular reference to the next item, which is the minister. I will get to that in a moment, because there are two items that I've just bypassed to get to “local terms” on this, the first one of which is the “employee bargaining agency.” The “employee bargaining agency” is “an entity designated under sections 19 or 20 as an employee bargaining agency.” That's what the legislation states, so we have to actually go back to section 19 and section 20 to understand what those employee bargaining agencies mean. Again, this piece of legislation hinges on the process by which collective bargaining is going to take place in the future,

so understanding what these terms mean is essential. Looking at the various amendments that have been tabled—and, as my colleague suggested, more than one package; likely two or three; maybe more, where we have potentially 100 amendments to this piece of legislation—understanding what these agencies are is important.

We have a bargaining agency for the employees. We have a bargaining agency for the employer, which is the next item that requires a specific definition. As the bill states, it is “an entity designated under section 21 as an employer bargaining agency.” I know that part of the process of doing all this debate revolves around the changes and who actually is the employer and what role the government plays therein. I know that school boards are struggling with this idea, because at least some trustees are raising the point that these bargaining agencies are their trustee associations. I remember hearing, from at least a couple of delegations, or at least presentations through correspondence to me, about the challenges with respect to those employer bargaining agencies. What if school boards are not paid-up members of their trustee associations? What if school boards have priorities that don’t align with what their trustee associations are saying? Because there is that potential differentiation between outlooks and priorities and goals, there is a need, obviously, to understand what these employer bargaining agencies are to do in the event that there is no consensus about joining those associations or allowing those associations to speak for the employer, which is the school boards, what the relationship has to be and how collective bargaining changes or is altered going forward on that basis.

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Chair, many of the terms that are outlined in this section of the bill are pivotal to the future success of this legislation. If we get these definitions wrong—and there is some indication, as I mentioned, that there are some challenges with respect to it—we are perhaps heading into a collision course with the various “partners” that don’t include parents or students with respect to this piece of legislation.

There are, of course, other definitions that are required here, but I do want to stop at this point to suggest that there could have been a lot more discussion about what should be contained herein. There should be a lot more understanding about the different roles and responsibilities. In the absence of having those discussions about those roles and responsibilities, we get into a situation where 100 amendments are proposed to deal with particular issues.

For example, I know there was a proposed amendment that likely came from one of the presentations, if not more, regarding whether the definition of the “minister” contained in this is one that should be amended. I’m to understand that we no longer want to have a potential debate on amending that particular definition.

The definition states here, “‘Minister’ means the Minister of Education or such other minister to whom the

administration of this act is assigned under the Executive Council Act.” I’m personally trying to understand why we would have a designation of an alternate and why a Minister of Education would not be the person who speaks for the Ministry of Education as a very simple process of responsible government. We would understand that the political heads of our ministries are the minister responsible for that ministry. The responsibility for the Ministry of Education is with the Minister of Education. It has been a long-standing practice in the province of Ontario. Actually one of our oldest ministries in the province of Ontario is the Ministry of Education. So I don’t really understand why we would have a definition that says, “‘Minister’ means the Minister of Education or such other minister to whom the administration of this act is assigned under the Executive Council Act.”

I’m not sure why Bill 122 might be hived off to another ministry. Is the intent of the government to perhaps not deal with these matters in education? Is the intent of the government to perhaps deal with this from the Ministry of Labour as an alternate, the administration of this act under the Ministry of Labour? I’m really confused as to why we would have this clause in here in the definition of “minister” that perhaps might hive off Bill 122, the School Boards Collective Bargaining Act, to potentially go to another ministry.

Maybe the ministry they’re going to assign it to is the Attorney General. Maybe the minister they’re going to assign it to is the Ministry of Finance. Maybe there are some—we’re not allowed use the word “austerity” anymore, but we’re going to use it today—where those items are going to be at play. Maybe the administration of this act could go on to another ministry. Are members of this committee prepared for that eventuality to happen?

That’s exactly what it says here. “‘Minister’ means the Minister of Education or such other minister to whom the administration of this act is assigned under the Executive Council Act.” This whole piece of legislation could be assigned to a completely different ministry.

I’m curious to know whether the partners in education are okay with that. Are they okay with this particular piece of legislation going somewhere else?

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): You have three minutes left of your 20 minutes.

Mr. Rob Leone: That’s unfortunate. I still have more definitions to go through. I’ll go on to the next one, given the fact that I have limited time here, Chair.

The next one is the Provincial Schools Authority, which means the Provincial Schools Authority continued by section 2 of the Provincial Schools Authority Act. I hope that the committee members, in deliberating about whether this section is a good section and a well-written section, would have reviewed the Provincial Schools Authority Act and made sure that whatever we’re doing within this act is consistent with what is being said in that act. It isn’t entirely clear because we haven’t really had any discussion other than from the Ontario PC caucus

members on this committee about what this bill is about and what this bill should say. I'm very interested to see if we're going to have a member of the government explain to us how the Provincial Schools Authority Act applies to this particular piece of legislation.

In particular, if you don't want to go through the whole act, perhaps you can review and read into the record exactly what section 2 of the Provincial Schools Authority Act actually says. I think that's an important thing that we might want to discuss and that's perhaps very pertinent to us in the deliberation of this particular definition.

I will also suggest that there a couple more definitions that we should talk about. The one point is the school board. Obviously, school boards are integral to the functioning of a well-balanced education system in the province of Ontario. They are the employer of our teachers, our great teachers who are in our schools each and every day, helping students achieve success and achieve more and learn more and to help quench the thirst of learning that I know most students in this province have.

School boards are obviously an integral part of this piece of legislation. What's happening here, though, is that the trustee associations that these school boards may or may not be involved with are going to be the bargaining agents at the central level. That creates an interesting dynamic. I don't think that the trustee associations have previously had the opportunity to go through that kind of process, but it would be interesting to see how that all plays out, going forward. There are, I think, important aspects of what a school board means that have implications on this particular piece of legislation. We will, obviously, listen to potential further elaboration on what these items mean, particularly by members of the government, and I look forward to listening to those items.

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Further debate on section 2? Mr. Balkissoon?

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: No, no; I'm ready to vote.

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Are you ready to vote?

Mr. Todd Smith: No, I'd like to debate further.

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Okay. Mr. Smith.

Mr. Todd Smith: Thank you, Chair.

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Stay with section 2.

Mr. Todd Smith: Yes. My colleague actually raised a very important point when he was going through the definitions. At this time I won't go through all of the points he made and reinforce them, but I would like some clarification on the Provincial Schools Authority Act and how it applies to this piece of legislation. Would that be an appropriate question to ask the legislative counsel?

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): I think you're free to ask that question to the legislative counsel.

Mr. Todd Smith: Would you have the answer to that, Ms. Hopkins?

Ms. Laura Hopkins: That's a statute that establishes the Provincial Schools Authority, and I understand that the Provincial Schools Authority employs teachers in the province. There are some teachers who aren't employed by school boards. Ministry staff will correct me about that if I'm wrong.

Mr. Todd Smith: Where would those teachers be who aren't employed through the Provincial Schools Authority Act?

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Please feel free to come forward.

Ms. Laura Hopkins: I'll invite Mr. Hadwen to help with that.

Mr. Tim Hadwen: Thank you. Tim Hadwen. They are employed at the provincial schools. The Provincial Schools Authority Act continues because the Provincial Schools Authority would continue. For those teachers who are employed at the Provincial Schools Authority, their labour relations would now be governed by the School Boards Collective Bargaining Act. The labour relations portions of the Provincial Schools Authority legislation are now moving, under the proposed provisions here, into the School Boards Collective Bargaining Act, while the portions of the Provincial Schools Authority legislation that continue the Provincial Schools Authority remain.

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Mr. Todd Smith: We didn't hear from any of those people during our public consultations, did we? That would fall within the Provincial Schools Authority act. They weren't given an opportunity or were never represented before the committee to provide any kind of input in the bill that we're talking about today.

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): I can't recall, but I don't think—

Mr. Todd Smith: I don't believe they were. They were one of the groups that didn't have the opportunity because of the limited scope of the public hearings that we've been talking about. It's important to note that they are going to be impacted, potentially, by this bill. There's another group that should have been consulted and actually had a role to play in Bill 122.

Again, it's most disappointing to be a member of the PC caucus, which keeps continuing to push for all of the stakeholders to have an opportunity to comment on a bill that's ultimately going to affect them. Here we have another example that has shown up during the definitions portion of the debate.

I'm worried that we're going to come across groups that haven't been consulted. Obviously, if they're outlined in the definitions in this act, in Bill 122, then they have an important stake in all of this, yet they weren't heard from at this committee. It just drives home the point that my colleague Mr. Leone and I have been making: that there are many, many stakeholders who haven't had the opportunity to appear before this committee and speak to the impacts that Bill 122, the School Boards Collective Bargaining Act, is going to have on their lives and potentially on their livelihoods. I think it's

a very important omission that has occurred in the public hearing phase of these hearings, and I would just like to point that out. When they appear in a section entitled “definitions,” and we get these kinds of questions, I think it’s important that we hear from these types of individuals and organizations. So I just wanted to make it abundantly clear that, again, there’s another group that should have been consulted in this process, and because of the limited scope of the public hearings, we never did hear from those individuals.

There were a number of definitions here. My colleague Mr. Leone has done an excellent job of questioning some of the definitions of these important pieces of this new apparatus, which are being created with Bill 122.

“‘School board’ means a district school board and, unless the context requires otherwise, includes a school authority and the Provincial Schools Authority.” I guess we’ve established who that might encompass as well. Thanks to Mr. Hadwen for clarifying that for us so we can understand that there are people, again, who fall within the parameters of those who will be affected by Bill 122, who haven’t been included in this process.

“‘Teachers’ bargaining unit’ means a bargaining unit described in section 5.” We would, obviously, turn to section 5 of the bill to understand that, and there is the section on teachers’ bargaining units.

As we understand it, “Each district school board and each board established under section 68 of the Education Act has the following teachers’ bargaining units”—and we know who those units are, and we’ve heard from those individuals throughout this process. They were given an opportunity to appear before this committee, and there were a number of those groups who appeared before this committee in the public hearings. They were treated very fairly by this committee and given an opportunity to speak; albeit we never really did have an expanded and in-depth conversation with any of those groups because of the parameters that were set up for speaking with our delegations here at our hearings. We were limited in the amount of time when we could actually question the individuals. It was a very short period of time, and there was hardly an opportunity to understand the impacts that Bill 122 is going to have on these school boards, and on the teachers’ bargaining units as well—also a very important point, as well.

Then, “‘trustees’ association’ means l’Association des conseils scolaires des écoles publiques de l’Ontario, l’Association franco-ontarienne des conseils scolaires catholiques, the Ontario Catholic School Trustees’ Association and the Ontario Public School Boards’ Association.”

Interjection.

Mr. Todd Smith: Thank you very much to my friend Michael Mantha from the NDP. I did grow up in New Brunswick. When I graduated from high school I was actually bilingual, but moved to a very anglophone part of the province.

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Stick to section 2.

Mr. Todd Smith: I haven’t had a chance to practise my French very often, but I appreciate the opportunity to read it every now and then, and I do know what it means. Just don’t try to engage me in a conversation, because you’re going to lose me.

Anyway, there are a number of definitions, obviously. My colleague Mr. Leone has questioned a number of these definitions. I think the one that makes a lot of sense while we’re running on the theme of the French language here, goes back to the very first definition, and that would be the “central table” and the fact that, unfortunately, there was an opportunity before this bill was actually put in print, and there would have been an opportunity for that central table to draw the distinction and actually include the two French tables. There are concerns with that; no question about it.

“Central terms”: Mr. Leone spoke about limiting the powers of the minister. We were expecting that there may have been a debate that was scheduled and withdrawn from the table, but we were expecting to debate the role of the minister. I would just like to reinforce the idea—and the concern, actually—that was raised: that there’s an interesting dilemma that’s pending. I’m not exactly sure where this comes from. Perhaps we will get to it later as we get further into the amendments on the bill, but I believe that there should be some concern about the fact that the Minister of Education potentially will no longer oversee and have the ultimate—the administration of this act will no longer fall under the minister’s mandate. There are some concerns there.

I believe that the Minister of Education—and it would be the Ministry of Education that has been involved in this process in its entirety, for the most part; I believe, as my colleague alluded to, for decades and decades—there’s an opportunity that, at a whim, the collective bargaining process could be moved to fall under another administrator or another ministry. There is some concern about that.

I believe that’s something that we need to discuss further. I don’t know if maybe the legislative counsel can answer this question or not. In what type of situation would it occur where the Minister of Education would no longer have the—what’s the proper word that I’m looking for?—administration of this act assigned under the Executive Council Act? How would that be removed from the Ministry of Education? How would that take place?

Ms. Laura Hopkins: The Executive Council Act makes it possible for the executive council to assign administration of statutes to ministers, no matter what name is used in a statute. That power is typically used when ministers’ titles are changed. For example, at the moment, we have a Minister of Education. In the recent past, we had a Minister of Education and Training. Under the Executive Council Act, the administration of an act like this one would be assigned to the Minister of Education and Training because the job title changed.

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Mr. Todd Smith: Oh, I see. Okay. So it's not as if this would fall under the Minister of Labour.

Ms. Laura Hopkins: That would be a choice that could be made by the government, but typically, this sort of definition—and this is a standardly worded definition—is used in circumstances where ministers' job titles change.

Mr. Todd Smith: Periodically we've seen amalgamations of various ministries, and one minister is in charge of three or four different ministries, perhaps, so this is just basically focusing on the title of that minister and not necessarily moving it to a completely different—okay, I see.

Ms. Laura Hopkins: That's right.

Mr. Todd Smith: Okay. Well, that's clear enough.

I think we've gone through all the definitions and outlined some of our concerns with some of the definitions and the fact that, again, we have been successful, I believe, in driving home our point that we have been making since the outset here, as members of the PC caucus, that there have been some individuals who have a stake in Bill 122 who haven't been consulted properly and that we haven't heard from at the public hearing phase. I think it was important that we actually flesh that out during this exercise. I understand that we're past the point now where—it's unfortunate that we are potentially not going to be able to hear from the individuals that we would like to hear from.

I would encourage that the government take a more proactive approach when we're dealing with these pieces of legislation, to ensure that all of the parties that have a stake in whatever the bill might be that they are bringing forward—consult with all of those individuals who do have an interest in what is happening here, so that we don't make mistakes going forward.

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): You have five minutes left in this 20-minute cycle.

Mr. Todd Smith: Thanks very much. Again, I believe we've gone through the various definitions, and I don't know if we need to belabour these points anymore. I think I'm ready to wrap up my comments at this point, Chair.

My colleague Mr. Leone?

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): I'm going around the table. Any further debate on section 2? Mr. Leone?

Mr. Rob Leone: Well, if no one else would like to talk about this bill, then I think we'll continue going on.

I was just listening to the question that my colleague from Prince Edward–Hastings had asked the legislative counsel. I do note that, particularly in the education field, roles and responsibilities—so the member for Prince Edward–Hastings is clear—they do rotate, and I'll give you an example. Child care, and the laws and legislation involving child care provision, used to be under the purview of the Ministry of Children and Youth Services. It's now under the purview of the Ministry of Education. The Day Nurseries Act, for example, was an act that is now added to the scope of the Ministry of Education,

which it previously wasn't before. So it is possible for laws to transfer into different ministries, depending on what they do. Perhaps it's about title changes. Perhaps it's about just the nature of consolidating into a ministry a particular task. Those things are possible.

I think that one of the reasons why—I believe it was the ETFO who made the comments before—is that they were concerned that the transfer of this act could go to a different ministry. They want to make sure it's specifically under the Ministry of Education's provision. They talked at length about wanting that, and that is why there was an amendment proposed that would suggest that subsection 2(1), with respect to the definition of “minister,” only include or specifically state the Minister of Education being the person who wants to go forward with that. Now I understand that no one wants to bring that particular amendment forward. That is certainly the committee's prerogative to move or not to move, and I think that certainly I would like to hear more rationale as to why ETFO's presentation on this particular matter is not going to be moved by other members of this committee.

I'm concerned about a few things. When we talk about definitions to the legislation, as I first stated in my comments before, we're really talking about picking out words in this legislation that we think are important enough to specify in one of the first sections of legislation. We do this in all legislation. There is usually a definitions component in it. Any time we get into a conversation about definitions, there is going to inevitably be a debate about which definitions should be included in the legislation, which definitions should be excluded in the legislation and what was left out of the legislation that perhaps might be of important use to the committee itself. I think that there are certainly concerns with respect to some of the things that might have been left out of this definitions section that we might want to consider.

More specifically, I think we ought to enumerate, in this piece of legislation, the roles and responsibilities that may be assigned to the students. It seems that on an ongoing basis, we fail to understand or hear what role students play. At the end of the day, they are the people responsible for—not responsible for, but they are directly affected by the decisions that are made in the Legislature and at the collective bargaining table. There is no formal role; there is no formal definition of what their role may or may not be. They are simply not involved or not included in the particular piece of legislation that we're dealing with and debating.

I was a student for quite a long time. Obviously, I went through kindergarten to OAC—I was an OAC graduate. Then I was in school for a long time—in university for three degrees. I know what being a student is like and I know the effect that policies have at the ground level on the basis of my experience there. I know that these particular items often ignore the ground-level force or consequence that might be applied. On that basis, I think there is reason to include a definition or at

least outline, enumerate the roles and responsibilities of everybody with respect to students.

Another group of people who are affected by education policy created at the Legislature and/or through the collective bargaining process are parents. They are actually organized in every school that has a parent council, something that I believed we helped usher in. Yet, there has been no movement to incorporate or provide any input from or to list the roles and responsibilities of parents in this process. So here we are talking about a definition component of a piece of legislation, subsection 2(1), that is affecting two key components of our education system with respect to the roles and the responsibilities that may be assigned to them. There's no mention in this piece of legislation in that particular regard. I have some serious issues with that, Chair. I think that we have a responsibility to start listing some of these definitions in this piece of legislation. What are those roles and responsibilities? We've elaborated at length. We've probably spoken on this particular piece of legislation for hours, trying to get an assessment on where students and parents fall on this, and we are still in a position whereby we don't know where they stand or what their standing is with this piece of legislation. Why? Because no one else seems to want to talk about it. We hear some chatter sometimes from people talking about this over there, but they don't have anything on the record that would allow us to engage in a particular debate.

Another aspect, another definition that I think we should be considering is the very definition that is important to what our position is in the PC caucus with respect to co-instructional activities. I believe that there is a necessity to talk about and define what those co-instructional activities are. As we've stated time and again, our number one position has been that we want to see co-instructional activities as part of this bill in a meaningful way that safeguards those co-instructional activities. It's on that basis, Chair, that I wish to move an amendment to subsection (2) of this bill. May I read it in?

I move that subsection 2(1) of the bill be amended by adding the following definition:

“co-instructional activities’ means activities, other than providing instruction, that,

“(a) support the operation of schools,

“(b) enrich pupils’ school-related experience, whether within or beyond the instructional program, or

“(c) advance pupils’ education and education-related goals,

“and includes activities relating to school-related sports, arts and cultural activities, parent-teacher and pupil-teacher interviews, the preparation of letters of support for pupils, participation in staff meetings and school functions.”

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Okay, Mr. Leone. I'd like to have a copy for all the members. If we could, we'll have a five-minute recess on that. We'll get that copied.

The committee recessed from 1353 to 1358.

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Okay, we will reconvene. Mr. Leone, you have the motion. You have read it one time, I believe.

Mr. Rob Leone: Do you want me to read it again?

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Any questions from anyone on this motion?

Mr. Rob Leone: Debate?

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Please speak to it, if you wish.

Mr. Rob Leone: Thank you very much, Chair. Here it is, the moment of truth. I think, Chair, this is our first opportunity to look at whether extracurricular activities are going to have a place in this piece of legislation. I'm very interested to see how that works.

Just to recap: I do believe that we have an obligation to students who are looking to complete their extracurricular activities. This is particularly important because we're about to enter another bargaining season. I've heard concerns from parents—not just from my riding, but many are from my riding—who have expressed their concern and worry that when we go into another bargaining season, there may be some concern around the protection of extracurricular activities.

That's why I think a definition right now is prudent, that we say that this is actually an important part of this legislation, that the legislation contains an aspect—it shows direction that we intend to elaborate upon some of these points, and for future sections. It is a sign that we are going to be able to negotiate and talk about extracurricular activities in this bill.

I think that it is essentially important to, again, students, but it's usually the parents of these students who are talking to us. They're hearing from their coaches already that there might be potential unrest in the new school year. I know this particularly to be the case with folks who are involved in football. Their football season, obviously, runs for just a few short weeks in September to about the middle of November. The concern is, if a football season isn't played, whether the graduating students in that class are going to be in competition for the universities and colleges that they are being recruited to attend on the basis of their football skill.

I'm sure, although I've heard varying degrees of interest in this, that this applies to other sports as well. This applies, certainly, to varsity volleyball and varsity basketball. I'm sure it applies to soccer and to hockey. I think that these are concerns that have been raised time and time again by students. We've heard it before and, in the absence of protecting extracurricular activities in this piece of legislation, we're going to hear it again.

Interjections.

Mr. Rob Leone: I hear a lot of chatter, Chair. I'm not sure if I should continue or not, but—

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Gentlemen, could we just have a little bit more quiet over there, please?

Mr. Rick Bartolucci: Sorry, Chair.

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): It's okay. Thank you.

Go ahead.

Mr. Rob Leone: I do strongly believe that we have an opportunity here with this piece of legislation to say something to our students, to their parents and to those who actually want to provide extracurricular activities in our schools: that there's going to be certainty with respect to that.

We've moved this amendment to section 2 subsection 1 of this bill to include a definition of co-instructional activities. It's important that we understand what those do:

“(a) support the operation of schools;

“(b) enrich pupils' school-related experience, whether within or beyond the instructional program; or

“(c) advance pupils' education and education-related goals.”

As a university prof, I remember at Wilfrid Laurier University that we have what's called a co-instructional or co-curricular record. This enumerates and lists the activities a student does while they're at Wilfrid Laurier University.

I was reminded of this when I was a professor there, that we actually had the same thing when we were in high school. Although we didn't necessarily call it a co-curricular record, there is a record of sorts. There are awards upon graduation that are awarded to students who participate in co-instructional and co-curricular activities, those being sports, those being drama clubs, those being debate clubs, those being charitable groups and those being other activities or groups that students congregate in. We know that there are anti-bullying groups formed in our schools, as well. These are all of interest in terms of what we want to protect.

In addition to those, we have sports teams. I've mentioned a few of those already. Whether they be football, hockey, baseball, volleyball, basketball, badminton, tennis, swimming or curling, there are so many different kinds of activities that students participate in that are of an athletic nature.

I know that, as we look at trying to improve health and to prevent health problems from occurring, one of those aspects—one of the goals of government—is to get kids more active. So not protecting extracurricular activities and physical activities may have a detrimental effect on children's health. I think that that's something that we have to be concerned about as well.

I would hate for there to be contradictions in the government's outlook on these particular matters. If they decide that they don't want to actually, at the very minimum—we're not even saying what this definition is going to do; we're just saying that we should define it as a component of this particular section, to suggest that it “includes activities relating to school-related sports, arts and cultural activities.” I haven't even touched upon cultural activities.

These cultural activities in our schools enrich the educational experience of students. They provide an opportunity for shared and mutual understanding of different cultural events, different cultural norms. This is important to a vibrant, multicultural society. I would hate

for any particular piece of legislation to ignore this very vibrant point.

I know that my colleague from Prince Edward-Hastings has done an amazing job trying to work toward making the month of January Tamil Heritage Month. It's a very important part of something that he looked forward to presenting as the first bill that was introduced in this Legislature when we returned in February.

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Try to get back on the amendment there.

Mr. Rob Leone: The point I'm making here is that cultural activities are a part of what we, as legislators, do and recommend—

Interjection.

Mr. Rob Leone: I didn't realize. It's a good bill.

This is what we do. We protect these things, and we advance them. Almost every week, when we have private members' bills, it's another part of our culture or another part of our heritage that we try, in some way, to commemorate. I'd want the same thing to happen in our schools. We actually do a good job here in the Legislature, but we need to protect these activities in our schools, because it's so vital to having a vibrant and multicultural society.

This is one thing that I've brought up before, and I'll raise again, because it's part of this definition that I'm seeking here, which includes parent-teacher and pupil-teacher interviews. This is something that I believe many parents would suggest is important to a good education. In particular, I would suggest that they say this because having that feedback about how your child is doing is so vital to their success. It troubles me that we have moved away from having standardized days allocated towards parent-teacher interviews. The result of not having a standardized day, which is widely publicized, which the school sign outside allocates a couple of nights or a couple of days to parent-teacher interviews—the net effect of that is, fewer parents are actually seeing their teachers. If fewer parents are taking the opportunity to visit with their teachers, they're not understanding what could help those students do even better than they are in school.

As a parent, I'm troubled by the fact that this is actually happening in our schools. As a parent, I made the time available to meet my teacher, and my teacher willingly and gladly made the time to meet with me and my wife. But, the fact is, so few people are taking that opportunity, and I think we're losing something in our education system. I actually think that will hurt student achievement rather than help it.

I remember listening on the radio where a teacher said that every year he sent out three different coloured forms: a red form, a yellow form and a green form. The red form he sent to students who really, really, absolutely needed to have their parent visit with the teacher. He sends a yellow form out that said, “You might benefit from coming and visiting with me and helping your student,” and a green form that said, “Your student is doing well. If

you want to meet with me, we can talk about some other things than how your child is doing.”

Time and again, his claim was that the people whom he sent the green forms to had the highest response rates. The worst response rates were families who had the red forms. This is troubling, because the very people who need the help and need the support of everybody, not just in their schools but even outside our schools—those parents aren’t coming. By not scheduling parent-teacher interviews, this becomes a greater challenge, which will lead to further disparity between who succeeds in school and who doesn’t. That should ultimately be something that we’re very concerned about. I’m very concerned about it, and I hope members of this committee are as well.

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The preparation of letters of support for pupils: I know this is actually quite a time-consuming role. As a university professor, we’ve actually just left the season where folks are applying to graduate school. Inevitably, you would have dozens of requests for references to other programs. I know that teachers play an integral part in writing recommendation letters for their students to get into particular programs, particularly when the grade assigned or the average of that student doesn’t reflect their skill level. Sometimes, post-secondary institutions will take into account the comments of those teachers in allowing those students to get in. Perhaps it was a health issue, perhaps it was a mental health issue; there are various reasons why these will happen.

Also, recommendations for placements into jobs, into co-op positions: All of these things are included in the co-instructional environment, which we cannot necessarily delineate from the educational experience of students. There are a lot of reasons that we would want to include that particular element in our definition as well.

The last part of this is the participation of staff meetings and school functions. I’ve met extensively with teachers. I’ve met with almost every delegation that has requested a meeting. I’ve met with parents. I’ve met with principals. One of the things parents are concerned about is the lack of supervision in the playground. I don’t know if many parents actually visited their children’s playgrounds during their nutrition breaks or recesses or lunch breaks—whatever they’re called throughout the province—but the seeming lack of supervision that is required when children are outside defies a lot of the rationale for having different ratios inside. Some challenges have emerged from that. Principals are talking about how they can get adequate supervision. The difference between being supervised by a teacher and a volunteer is a certain element of concern for parents and principals—all of which should be a discussion point that we would obviously want to engage the partners on, which includes parents and students, on how to move forward on it.

I believe, Chair, that it’s very important that we have this amendment, that we incorporate this definition of co-instructional activities because they’re so vital to what many parents and students are asking for.

I want to move back to the presentation element because during the presentations, many of the delegations—13 delegations, I believe, made to this committee in very rapid fire—there were hints that people wanted to talk about this particular issue. I would guess that if we actually took this piece of legislation and talked to parents about it, we would have so many more asking for different avenues to be explored. I believe there would be some strong consensus that we should move on extracurricular activities. I believe that because it’s what parents are telling us day in and day out.

I think that as a committee, we have an obligation to consider this amendment and to incorporate a definition of co-instructional activities in section 2 of this act because it’s a vital part of what I think is part of the educational experience. If we can protect that in any way, we would be sending a positive message to students and their parents.

If there is a better way of doing it, if you don’t like the way we might be approaching and you have a better way of doing it, then I’m all ears. I’m happy to listen and entertain the suggestions of committee members on how we best do this. But in the absence of that, we are going to put forward a series of amendments that are going to get the job done. We’re very hopeful that the members of this committee—as attentive or inattentive as they may be at the moment—are going to be concerned about what is happening with this definition and do their utmost to protect what parents and students are certainly asking for.

I have to say, Chair, that I have heard from some teachers as well. I know that there are some concerns that have been raised with particular reference to some of the news articles that have emerged on this. I want to stress very clearly that our goal is simply to heed the concerns of so many people who have come before us. We recognize that our teachers are instrumental in delivering co-instructional activities in our schools. We recognize that, we understand that, we thank them for the work that they have done and we know that a great many of them want to continue to do and provide those co-instructional activities for their students. We want to stand with them to make sure that they have an opportunity to continue to do that. I want to make sure that everyone is very clear that our motivation here—we’re not trying to pick a fight. What we’re trying to do is to get legislation that people will be happy about.

Part of the issue is that nobody really knows about this. We talked about a major educational interest group that had no idea that we were even having public hearings, that those public hearings were done.

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): You have about a minute left, Mr. Leone.

Mr. Rob Leone: I think we have an obligation to speak out on this. That’s why I’ve asked questions in question period about this. That’s why you have seen news articles related to it. Our motivation is to help students to protect their extracurricular activities. Many people live for those extracurricular activities in our schools. They are such an integral part of what we do.

They are such an integral part of our educational system. In fact, as the minister said, when she was the chair of the Ontario Public School Boards' Association, they are an essential component to a comprehensive educational experience. All I want to do is to honour that commitment to parents and to students to ensure that those co-instructional activities remain in Ontario schools.

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Thank you, Mr. Leone. Further debate on the amendment. Mr. Smith?

Mr. Todd Smith: Yes, thank you very much. I would first of all like to applaud my colleague Mr. Leone for bringing forward this amendment. Again, this amendment, although he has discussed it at great length, as we have now for a couple of hours, stressed the importance of including co-instructional activities in the job description of our teachers, but this simply adds the definition to the list of definitions that are included in the bill. I think it's a very important first step for this committee to make and to take, to simply include the definition in the bill moving forward. It's the one thing that has really been hanging this up.

Of course, we have talked about the lack of public consultations that have occurred. The definition of "public consultation"—that's actually something that we should include in the bill; keep that in mind, my friend. But what we're talking about here is including "co-instructional activities" in the definitions of the terms that we're discussing as a part of this bill. We have to do that if we are going to have a real conversation on including these co-instructional and extracurricular activities in the teachers' job descriptions. This is a first step. It's not obligating anything from you in the future except for engaging in this debate on whether or not we do include that in this legislation moving forward.

It is so important to us in the Progressive Conservative Party to include this as part of the teachers' job description because, as the Minister of Education said herself in question period this morning and as far back as 13 years ago, it's an integral part, a very important part, of the school day, and we do have to make sure that these activities—I've used this term a number of times—aren't held hostage in the future.

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We feel it's our obligation, as members of the Progressive Conservative Party, to include co-instructional activities in this bill and to add these into the teachers' job descriptions. We've been talking about the reasons why for quite some time, but they need to be included in the bargaining process.

I can tell you, hearkening back to the fall of 2012, how important these types of activities were to students in Prince Edward-Hastings riding and right across the province. There was so much concern and consternation from students, parents, coaches, teachers and the entire community. Our schools, and particularly our high schools, have such an important status in our communities.

I think back to that fall and the football season. It's not like the southern states, where football is a religion, but

certainly it's a very important part of our communities and our culture here in Ontario. Football season is one of those times of the year when, at Moira Secondary School in Belleville, the Trojans have their pep rallies. They are, by the way, the defending national capital football champions for two years in a row at Moira Secondary School.

But that season could have been wiped out. It could have been wiped out. What a loss. Just imagine if that football season had been lost. What a memory that has been, and what an experience—a life experience—that has been for those players on that team, and those parents and family members of all those boys who played on that football team. That could have been lost, if not for a number of teacher-coaches who said, "You know what? We don't care about sanctions. We don't care about any kind of potential punishment or isolation that we receive from our colleagues. We know this is such an important thing to our students and to our communities that we're going to go ahead and we're going to make sure we have this football season." And what a great football season it was, for the Moira Trojans in particular.

All of the schools in my region and in districts right across the province looked forward to that every year, and not just for the experience of playing football; it's one of the great parts of being a student athlete and one of the great experiences of being in school.

I know that when I was a student a long time ago at Riverview High School in Riverview, New Brunswick—I can't imagine what school would have been like if I hadn't had the hockey team, the football team and the baseball team to participate on. I loved going to class too, and learning, but if I didn't have those extracurricular activities, it wouldn't have been nearly as memorable of an experience. We certainly knew how to throw a pep rally with the Riverview Royals in Riverview, New Brunswick.

Back to Ontario: I know it is an important part of our daily activities in our schools. While we did have the football season in the fall of 2012, there were so many other seasons that were cancelled. There were so many sports teams that never did hit the field. There were curling rinks that were expecting to go to bonspiels and had paid their registration fees and had arranged for their transportation to get to bonspiels across the province, and those were cancelled. It was a travesty for those athletes and their families that those types of activities were held hostage and were unavailable because of something that was completely out of their control. They were collateral damage in this feud that was created, and they never should have been.

This could have been avoided, and that's why we're speaking about this so passionately. It's because we don't want to see this happen again in Ontario. We don't want to see this happen again in our schools.

I know that parents out there and teachers out there and students out there will be supportive of this—not all, but the majority, in my opinion, will be for including this type of legislation. But again, I would love to hear from

my colleagues on this committee, and I'm sure—some of them look like they might have played a few sports or been involved in school activities when they were in high school. No?

Mr. Vic Dhillon: Just Bob.

Mr. Todd Smith: I know Bob is a hockey player.

This is almost a rite of passage for a lot of people to be involved in these extracurricular activities, in their high school years particularly. But I have two children who are involved in elementary school—and the disappointment in their faces when they came to me and they said, “Daddy, what’s going on with our government that we can’t participate in our track and field meet this year? Daddy, why can’t you fix this? You’re in government. Why can’t you make sure that we have our teachers out there coaching our soccer team and our volleyball team?” I heard that from my own children and I heard that from children right across the riding, and of course, across Ontario.

We can make a difference. We can prevent this from happening again. We just have to have the discussion and the intestinal fortitude to have that discussion here in this committee room, where we’re making amendments and changes to Bill 122. I know you all heard this from your ridings because you all have schools in your ridings. You all have families and children and sports teams and extracurricular activities that didn’t go ahead because of the way that this whole process is set up in Ontario.

That’s why this is such an important discussion to have, and that’s why this definition is so important to be included in this bill. Again, it’s not just the sports. The sports are a big part of it. They were a big part of it for me, and they are a big part of it for a lot of the kids out there. But, as my colleague alluded to, there are a lot of children who are struggling out there, in particular with math, and my colleague has put a strategy on the floor that he would like to have introduced in the province. There are so many teachers out there who do understand that children are having a difficult time, not just in math but in many subjects. Math is the one that seems to be the most prevalent problem right now in our schools.

Two years ago there were so many teachers who wanted the opportunity to tutor the children after school, but because of the job action that was in place, they were unable to provide that service to the children, and they wanted to do it. That is the reason why most of the teachers get into that profession: because they want to be educators. They want to mold our future leaders. They want to provide them with the skills they need to be able to give you the right change back at the cash register when they’re working at the grocery store for their part-time job in high school, or down at the Tim Hortons, when somebody orders a double-double and they give them five dollars, how much change to give them back. These are the kinds of skills that—and I know you see it because you all go to Tim Hortons for a coffee. There are children now in these retail outlets who don’t have the basic skills to even provide the right change for a \$1.80

coffee when you hand them a five-dollar bill. We have to do a better job—

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Back to the amendment a little more.

Mr. Todd Smith: Thank you very much. I appreciate the opportunity to get back on here.

The extracurricular activities and the co-instructional activities are so important in our schools. I spend a lot of time around the schools when I’m not here, because I have children in the schools, and in my previous career as a sports broadcaster and news broadcaster, I was in the schools an awful lot, participating in charitable events that the schools were hosting, the food drives that they were holding, covering these types of activities, broadcasting their sporting events. I know the enthusiasm that these types of events bring to our communities, and we shouldn’t be in a position where these are held hostage in the province.

1430

One of the other issues that my colleague Mr. Leone has included in his motion is participation in staff meetings for our teachers. I know that this was something that was withheld during the job action of 2012. He brought up the safety issue. One of the groups that we didn’t hear from during our public hearings was the principals’ councils. These staff meetings are an opportunity on a daily basis—maybe not a daily basis, but a couple of times a week, anyway—for the principals to meet with the staff at the schools and ensure that if there is anything that is happening on the school grounds that needs to be rectified, where there might be a hole in the supervision that they are providing that creates a dangerous situation—it’s an opportunity for the principals to address that with the staff. Staff were not able, because of instructions that they were receiving from their various federations, to participate in these staff meetings, which are such an important part of the school day and school experience. This would require participation in those staff meetings.

The principals have so much responsibility on the school property on a daily basis. They have to ensure that there’s a team that’s working to create a safe atmosphere, and that the entire staff are aware of what’s happening on the premises. To not participate in those staff meetings, I feel, creates a potentially dangerous situation.

The other part of this that I wanted to touch on is parent-teacher and pupil-teacher interviews. I don’t know about you guys, but I have children now, and they bring home these report cards—this is going down a different road, but just bear with me for a moment. The report cards these days are so impersonal. There’s just no way, when you’re reading these things, to get a real handle on whether or not your child is doing well in school, or what they really need to work on. There’s just something about them that’s so bureaucratic, and there’s not a personal touch to it. Parent-teacher interviews are so important. I feel that I have to go to these interviews to get a handle on what my child is doing well in, what areas she needs to improve on or what experience we can add to her learning the curriculum that is before her. It just seems to

me that those types of activities should be stressed. Parent-teacher and pupil-teacher interviews are so important to the school experience. These types of issues shouldn't be part of any kind of job action.

I hope we will have some discussion, because I really would like to hear from my fellow MPPs and committee members as to the importance of co-instructional activities in the school lives of their children or themselves. I know they've all experienced memorable moments in their careers in school, and I just can't imagine that they wouldn't want to include the definition for co-instructional activities in the document as we move forward and have this discussion.

If we don't have this discussion, I think we know where this committee is headed, and we're not going to be headed anywhere really fast. There's an opportunity to address this situation by accepting this motion that Mr. Leone has put forward and really having this discussion on whether or not co-instructional activities—extracurricular activities—should be included in the school day of our students and our teachers.

As I've said in previous comments, and I believe Mr. Leone mentioned it earlier, the extracurricular part is important when it comes to moving on to post-secondary as well, not just for the experience, but the opportunity for families, potentially, to get scholarships. In a time where post-secondary education—and correct me if I'm wrong, but I believe in Ontario it's the most expensive in Canada, or it's right there—

Mr. Rob Leone: Universities.

Mr. Todd Smith: Yes, universities. Any type of scholarship that students can acquire—

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): You have a minute left.

Mr. Todd Smith: Thank you. Any kind of scholarship that students can acquire through extracurricular activities has been removed from these students in the past. That's another reason why our extracurricular activities should be discussed as a part of this bill and potentially included in the job description of teachers too.

I would hope that my committee members agree with the motion that was put forward by the member from Cambridge, our education critic, Mr. Leone, and that we have a real, adult discussion on the future of co-instructional activities.

Thank you very much for your time, Chair.

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Thank you very much, Mr. Smith.

Further debate on the amendment? Mr. Leone?

Mr. Rob Leone: Yes. I do want to clarify a few things and make clear for committee members before we head to a vote. This amendment that I have proposed is going to section 2 of this act. It is simply to state that co-instructional activities should be part of our discussions. It doesn't talk about co-instructional activities being part of, or defined in, a teacher's role. That may well come later on in this debate, but the intent of this particular amendment is to put co-instructional activities on the

agenda as something that we want to talk about in this piece of legislation. It's the opportunity that we have to take a look at this aspect that is completely lost in this particular piece of legislation, and we want to make sure that it's not lost. In fact, we want to state very early on in this process that co-instructional activity is going to be a repetitive concern—particularly from us, but of all members of this committee—should this amendment be accepted.

We are concerned that no one seems to want to talk about co-instructional activities other than the members of the PC caucus. It means that, certainly when it comes to education, we'd love to talk about education as often as we are. I think the proof is in the pudding. If we look at the word counts on this particular piece of legislation—in this committee, I will recommend that someone do that. It will show that the PC caucus has, time and again, been simply the only voice, really, for parents when it comes to some of their concerns.

I want to make sure that we're very clear on what we're voting for, because there is some discussion and debate that will certainly ensue, but right now, with this minimal amendment, we are putting co-instructional activities on the agenda. We're doing that by adding co-instructional activities to the definitions section of this bill. We're not adding and defining co-instructional activities in any other way, but to suggest that this is something that we are going to talk about with this piece of legislation. It's something that has not, to date, been talked about. It's something that we feel is vitally important to students and to their parents. As we have, I think eloquently, stated, if I can be so bold as to say, we have been very passionate.

I know my colleague Mr. Smith has taken part in extracurricular activities when he was in high school. That was more years ago than when I was in high school, but we'll leave that for another day. When I was in high school, I also participated in many extracurricular activities, in sports, in music and—

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Better get on to newer topics; you're repeating.

Mr. Rob Leone: —I think that it's important.

Well, that actually is in the definitions debate, which is to say that those activities are of importance to students. There is no denying that fact. There is no denying the fact that we have an obligation to parents and to families that we will do what we can to talk about the issue and, when the time comes to debate this, that we secure, protect and safeguard co-instructional activities in this piece of legislation.

I want you to know that this is the first opportunity that you're going to get to vote on this and that we're very interested to see how the vote turns out. This is the first sign of good faith that you can provide us in this to-and-fro. Should you be so inclined to agree that we are going to further debate co-curricular activities and instructional activities with this legislation, and should you be inclined to agree that we should have that debate

and discussion and are willing to pass those amendments, we will have that discussion.

I will hope that if you're going to commit to something, you would put that in writing and make sure that we're able to do that. But that's another issue for another time.

All I really wanted is to clarify what we're doing here, which is to add this amendment and this definition of co-instructional activities to the list of definitions that are found in section 2, subsection 1 of this act. That is what we are doing here. We are not doing more than that; we are not doing less than that. We're just adding that—

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Okay. You're repeating yourself. We've heard that.

Mr. Rob Leone: I'm happy to end it on that. I just want to make sure everyone is clear on that, Mr. Chair.

I have concluded my remarks.

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Thank you very much. Are we ready to vote on the amendment?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Yes, a quick question—

Mr. Rob Leone: Twenty-minute recess.

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Okay, the 20-minute recess, ladies and gentlemen, will take us to the next meeting, and we will vote on it immediately at the start of the next meeting, which is next Wednesday afternoon at 12 o'clock.

We're adjourned.

The committee adjourned at 1443.

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