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**Official Report
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(Hansard)**

Wednesday 18 February 2015

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Mercredi 18 février 2015

**Standing Committee on
the Legislative Assembly**

Committee business

**Comité permanent de
l'Assemblée législative**

Travaux du comité

Chair: Toby Barrett
Clerk: Trevor Day

Président : Toby Barrett
Greffier : Trevor Day

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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 18 February 2015

Mercredi 18 février 2015

The committee met at 1306 in committee room 1.

COMMITTEE BUSINESS

The Chair (Mr. Toby Barrett): I think we have a quorum. We'll commence our regular meeting of the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly for this day, Wednesday, February 28. Our purpose for meeting is organization. We were unable to have a subcommittee, as we know, over the winter.

I have a conflict. I have a private member's bill before this committee, one of three, so I would wish to ask Mr. Clark to take the gavel. Thank you.

Mr. Chris Ballard: Mr. Chair?

The Chair (Mr. Toby Barrett): Oh, certainly.

Mr. Chris Ballard: Before you recuse yourself from the chair, because we'll be talking about business going on, I wonder if it's appropriate at this time: During the break, I had an opportunity to—well, this has been going on for years, an interest of mine and of my constituents, especially coming out of previous elections. I'm looking at putting a motion in front of the group now to study e-petitions. I felt that, before you stepped down, maybe this is something that we could have a quick look at. Then we can move Mr. Clark into your chair and talk about the other business.

Interjections.

The Chair (Mr. Toby Barrett): I appreciate that. I think I heard something about that. Our purpose is to discuss organization. As you know, there are three books of business presently before the committee.

Mr. Chris Ballard: Near and dear to our hearts, yes.

The Chair (Mr. Toby Barrett): Then let's add that discussion afterwards, if that makes sense.

The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Trevor Day): It can be a part of the whole discussion.

The Chair (Mr. Toby Barrett): Yes, it's part of the discussion.

So I'm going to vacate.

Mr. Chris Ballard: Steve is anxious to get into the Chair.

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: There's no pay raise in it, Steve.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Steve Clark): It's okay. It's all good. I'm anxious to take a look at this.

So we're here to talk about a work plan for the committee on the Legislative Assembly. Mr. Barrett, do you have some comments you want to make in regard to hearing a bill through the committee?

Mr. Toby Barrett: As I actually mentioned, there are now three private members' bills stacked up before this committee. This committee—and I take partial responsibility—has not really addressed any business since the House reconvened last fall. I guess it goes without saying—and if you wish me to start, Chair—

The Acting Chair (Mr. Steve Clark): I do.

Mr. Toby Barrett: There is a private member's bill that did pass second reading. It was the second bill to be referred to this committee. The previous bill was the old original Michael Prue bill on tip-out, which did have public hearings before this committee.

Just very briefly, for the purposes of discussion—I know Michael Mantha of the NDP; I've chatted with him—obviously the interest remains, certainly with respect to Lyme disease, for the Legislative Assembly to address that issue through this committee. The particular bill that I put forward, just for the record, to the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly, is Bill 27, the Provincial Framework and Action Plan concerning Vector-Borne and Zoonotic Diseases Act, 2014.

I will say that I have attended a number of fundraisers since we last met, with respect to Lyme disease alone, which is one of a number of new and emerging infectious diseases. It seems that the province of Ontario is coming up short in some areas, and we could help with a better approach or perhaps by paying a little bit more attention, but there's a host of other issues as well.

I know we've discussed Ebola, and this legislation discusses Ebola; measles—measles vaccination has been in the news; regrettably, mad cow disease, which is another zoonotic disease which can transfer to humans, is in the news again in Alberta. We know—as a farmer—that that has a tremendous impact, and has had a tremendous impact, on Ontario's cattle industry. It's devastated the industry over the past 10 years.

I would like to stop there, Chair. Maybe, for the purposes of Hansard, will you remind this committee of the other two private members' bills that are before this committee?

The Acting Chair (Mr. Steve Clark): I'll ask the Clerk to advise on the other two bills. I believe they are Bill 12 and Bill 42.

The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Trevor Day): Yes, that's correct. We have Bill 12, the Protecting Employees' Tips Act, 2014; Bill 42, the Municipal Amendment Act (Election of Chair of York Region), 2014.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Steve Clark): Mr. Ballard, did you have something on that?

Mr. Chris Ballard: Other than to say that Bill 42, with regard to electing the chair of the region of York, was a bill that, like Mr. Barrett's, has been to the House and received unanimous consent from all parties, and looks at really bringing democracy to the highest political level in the region of York; that is, as the chair of the region. It has, since introduction and since it has moved to this committee, received a lot of support from not only my residents, but residents right across the region who believe that the most powerful political position in the region should be one that is voted on.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Steve Clark): Mr. Hillier?

Mr. Randy Hillier: Those three bills are all good and valuable bills that have merit to them. In also recognizing the constraints of time, the House does not sit endlessly, and the committees don't sit endlessly. I think the important thing here is to get a time frame put forward to the committee and a plan on how to deal with what's already on the plate, knowing that other things may come up as well.

Of those three bills, although they're all important, one of them deals with the health of people. As a member who represents a rural riding, I've had many, many town hall meetings and meetings with health care providers and people who are afflicted with Lyme disease, and I would say, because it's dealing with people's health, and the very significant financial hardships as well as health hardships that people are experiencing due to these diseases, I would really stress and emphasize and hope that the committee would put matters of health at the forefront and make it the priority of the committee to deal with Bill 27 first.

Not that I don't believe democracy isn't important; it very much is so. Also, people's wages are very important, which the other two bills speak to. However, knowing and seeing first-hand these people who are afflicted by these very debilitating diseases, I would really hope that this committee unanimously views the health of our residents as the greatest priority to expedite. Thank you.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Steve Clark): Mr. Singh.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Just very briefly, can you confirm the—one is obviously the election of the chair of the region of York. The zoonotic disease we've talked about. What was the third private members' bill?

The Acting Chair (Mr. Steve Clark): It was Bill 12. It was Mr. Potts's bill—

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Oh, right. The tip-outs, yes. Okay, thank you. That's good.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Steve Clark): Any other questions or comments by members of the committee?

I guess while it's normal to have a subcommittee meeting to schedule hearings on bills before a legislative committee, it's also appropriate if the committee decides that they wish to schedule the bill to go to hearings by resolution of the committee. That is certainly in order. I'm not sure what you're proposing, Mr. Barrett, regard-

ing your bill, but certainly the Chair is open if you want to deal with one of those three bills as well.

I'm mindful that Mr. Ballard is also wishing, at some point today, to table a motion regarding e-petitions. I guess I'm looking for guidance by resolution if you want to start organizing hearings for Bill 27, Bill 42 or Bill 12.

Mr. Toby Barrett: I do know that at our last regular meeting of the standing committee I did request that we set a schedule for all three pieces of legislation, ever bearing in mind that we have already had hearings on the tip-out bill. Whether that requires—

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: To be redone.

Mr. Toby Barrett: Pardon?

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: It happened once but you've got to do it again.

Mr. Toby Barrett: Yes. I see. We do have to do it again.

I think in our discussion previously, I felt there was agreement that we were going to set the logistics. I think the Clerk had been instructed to map out the logistics to move all three forward. Regrettably, we were unable to get together for a subcommittee meeting over the winter break, and hence, we're discussing it here.

I guess my request remains to lay out a schedule and to get on with the—

The Acting Chair (Mr. Steve Clark): Well, again, I think it's important—I'm looking for a motion.

Mr. Randy Hillier: I'll put a motion on the floor—

The Acting Chair (Mr. Steve Clark): Sure.

Mr. Randy Hillier:—that this committee accept and adopt that it will hear and examine Bill 27 first and allot—I'll go back and give the argument for this after—three weeks for Bill 27, followed immediately by Bill 42 and then Bill 12, with an allotment of two weeks for each of those.

Why I say that: The York region bill is concentrated close here to Queen's Park, the effects of it. The tip-out bill has been heard before, and by and large, the greatest numbers of people who are affected or would benefit from Bill 12 are here in southern Ontario and the GTA, whereas Bill 27 speaks more to diseases which are very prevalent and very frequently found in rural Ontario. Indeed, I don't know if there has ever been a case of Lyme disease reported from the GTA.

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: Oh, yes.

Mr. Chris Ballard: There have been.

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: We've had many.

Mr. Randy Hillier: That weren't contracted elsewhere, is what I meant.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Steve Clark): I guess that answers that statement.

Mr. Randy Hillier: But clearly, the rural areas are where the contracting of those diseases is more prevalent, and I think it would give the committee a greater understanding of those diseases if we had the ability to travel.

There's the motion.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Steve Clark): We've got a motion on the floor to consider Bill 27 for three consecutive weeks—so that would be six hours—followed

by Bill 42 for two weeks, followed by Bill 12 for two weeks.

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I'm assuming that for Bill 27 you would have four hours of public hearings and two hours of clause-by-clause. That would be three weeks. Then Bill 42 would be one two-hour public hearing, one two-hour available for clause-by-clause and the same for Bill 12.

Mr. Randy Hillier: In addition, to allow for some travel of Bill 27 to go to the rural areas.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Steve Clark): Yes.

Mr. Randy Hillier: That's just a motion on the floor for discussion.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Steve Clark): I'll go in rotation. Mr. Singh, then Mr. Balkissoon.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Sure. The initial suggestion, I just want to add my voice to it. I'm happy that we—if we can, I'd love to schedule it in committee today. I'm open to that idea as well. On behalf of the NDP, we're supportive of that notion if we can come to an agreement. I particularly don't have a strong preference for what order the bills are done, as long as they're all done. I think that's fair. Beyond that, I limit my comments to those.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Steve Clark): Mr. Balkissoon?

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: Chair, just before we take any vote, I was wondering—at the last meeting, we did send it to the subcommittee. Do we have a copy of that direction that was given to the subcommittee? At least we should review that, and then I'd like to make some comments on Mr. Hillier's motion. I don't know what my other colleagues have in mind—

Interjection.

The Chair (Mr. Steve Clark): My understanding from the Clerk is that the direction was that the subcommittee would meet and program the three bills in committee. No subcommittee meeting took place.

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: Okay. But we did have discussions on—

Mr. Chris Ballard: Order.

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: —on some order, because I'm sitting here remembering that all of us had discussed the fact that the tipping bill, if I could call it that, had been here and never got to third reading. The public has heard—and I don't know. Mr. Prue moved that bill two or three times. Because it's a matter of semantics just to get that through the process, let's get it out of the way quickly. The bill on Lyme disease or all the other stuff that goes with it sounds like a more lengthy process. It doesn't make sense delaying some of the stuff that's easy and simplistic to do. That's why I asked if we had no—

The Acting Chair (Mr. Steve Clark): If you'd like us to check Hansard, we could do a brief recess and check exactly what was in the committee Hansard and we can—

Interjection.

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: Can we do that?

Mr. Toby Barrett: Chair, I have a copy of Hansard here.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Steve Clark): Oh, you have a copy. All right.

Mr. Toby Barrett: And I will say that it did seem to be fairly vague. If we do have a recess—and I just wanted to—for purposes of the discussion as far as the order, we do know that Bill 12 arrived first. We do know—

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: Oh, at the referral date? Okay.

Mr. Toby Barrett: Yes. In fairness—and there are people in the public who watch this and they know that that one arrived first and then there was the second one and the third one. I would just propose—now this would reverse the order you've suggested for the first two—to go with the order that they arrived at the committee.

Mr. Randy Hillier: I'm always open for amendments.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Steve Clark): That's wonderful.

Mr. Toby Barrett: I just wanted to throw that in.

Mr. Randy Hillier: In the spirit of co-operation.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Steve Clark): Ms. Wong, did you have a comment?

Ms. Soo Wong: Mr. Chair, I just want to be on record. As much as I know the Clerk has reached out to the subcommittee members during the holidays—and I also sit, Mr. Chair, as Chair of SCFEA. We met for two weeks in the month of January, and with all due respect, it's not because we don't want to meet in terms of subcommittee. So now that we do know the subcommittee was charged to look at these three bills—and all of us are busy when we have committee work, and SCFEA was meeting while the House was not sitting, during the nine-week recess.

Furthermore, some of us also have New Year's. So I understand what Mr. Barrett, as Chair of the committee, is trying to do, to have the subcommittee meeting, but unfortunately members like myself sit on multiple committees. During that time, the month of January, it was very difficult for me to meet for even one week when you give up two weeks for another committee. So it's not because we didn't try to meet. In fact, on the record, we wanted to make sure that the subcommittee did try. Unfortunately, there were conflicts with other committees of the House. I just want to be on the record about that.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Steve Clark): I'm glad you are, Mr. Ballard.

Mr. Chris Ballard: Earlier I raised the idea of the need for us—this committee, anyway—to look at promoting e-democracy, starting with e-petitions. I would like to propose an amendment to Mr. Hillier's motion that my motion—as yet not introduced, but I'm happy to introduce it at any time—be part of the mix for discussion.

The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Trevor Day): What we have so far is Mr. Hillier moving Bill 27, three weeks; Bill 42, two weeks; Bill 12, two weeks. Mr. Barrett had mentioned changing the order of those.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Steve Clark): He has agreed to move Bill 12 to be first.

The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Trevor Day): Okay, first of all, on the amendment to that, the Chair has to put the question on whether we change the order of those.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Steve Clark): All those in favour?

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: But if I hear my colleague correctly, he wants this to be in the mix of the three.

The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Trevor Day): It will be a subsequent amendment to the motion.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Steve Clark): Let's deal with the first amendment. You're not going to amend changing the two bills with a substantive motion on e-petitions.

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: No; I'm more concerned about what the final order will be.

Mr. Randy Hillier: We'll be very amenable to that.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Steve Clark): On the amendment to place Bill 12 first, before Bill 27 and Bill 42, all those in favour?

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: I thought he said we were going to adopt them in the order they were referred to committee. What was the order all three referred to committee?

Mr. Chris Ballard: Bills 12, 27 and 42. I think that was the order.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Steve Clark): Yes.

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: So it's 12, 27 and then 42. Okay.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Steve Clark): That's the order.

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: All right. So we understand that clearly.

The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Trevor Day): There were weeks attached to each one. Are you keeping the weeks when you move it?

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: Well, are the two weeks for 42 and 12 workable? The three weeks for 27—the member who moved 27 is happy with it. I'm not the mover of 12. Is one day for hearing and one day for clause-by-clause enough?

The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Trevor Day): As it stands now, we have no requests to appear on any of these bills. Not knowing the amount of time for presenters means I don't actually know how—

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: No, but we could restrict it to two hours.

The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Trevor Day): This committee only meets two hours a week.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Steve Clark): Right, 1 to 3.

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: I'm asking: Is that going to be adequate, one day for a hearing and one day for clause-by-clause?

The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Trevor Day): That's up to the committee to decide.

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: Okay. Just practicality.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Steve Clark): For sure. Do you have a question, Mr. Ballard?

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: We're okay with that type of schedule.

Mr. Randy Hillier: Okay, so do we take a vote?

The Acting Chair (Mr. Steve Clark): He's asking a question before the vote.

Mr. Randy Hillier: Okay.

Mr. Chris Ballard: The question I would have, then—we only have so many days to debate bills, and I'm eager to get a fourth one on the table. So I'm a little reticent to assign time allocations to all the bills for fear that that will put a squeeze on the bill that I want to amend to this motion.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Steve Clark): I don't understand. This isn't a bill; this would be an amendment to the standing orders.

Mr. Chris Ballard: An amendment, but we're attaching times to it. That's what we're doing, right?

Mr. Randy Hillier: Yes.

Mr. Chris Ballard: I'm saying that I'm nervous about agreeing to attaching times to it if I'm trying to now put a fourth motion forward.

Mr. Randy Hillier: Well, let's put this on the record. This motion is for planning purposes.

Mr. Chris Ballard: Yes.

Mr. Randy Hillier: There's no motion that comes before the committee, other than an actual time allocation motion, that isn't amendable at some other time by this committee. As the committee goes through things, if they see that there isn't enough time allotted or afforded for a particular bill, we just put a motion forward to extend that time. I would convey, in the greatest sincerity, that there is no interest on this side to be restrictive in that regard or that we would prevent any matter such as that from affording more time to a bill.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Steve Clark): If I can make an editorial comment, the reason some of the members are here today is because of their interest in e-petitions. I sat in this committee, as Mr. Balkissoon would know, for the better part of two years to look at standing order changes, and they went nowhere. So there's no one at this table today who wants to move faster on this item than me.

1330

Mr. Chris Ballard: Wow. Good.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Steve Clark): That's just an editorial comment.

Mr. Chris Ballard: Okay, an editorial comment. Yes.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Steve Clark): So, unless there are any other comments on the amendment—yes, Ms. Wong?

Ms. Soo Wong: I just wanted clarity, Mr. Chair. I wanted to hear from the mover the rationale behind it, because if I'm hearing correctly, all three bills are equally weighted. I just want to hear from the mover how come Mr. Barrett's bill gets an extra week—

The Acting Chair (Mr. Steve Clark): I think he said why.

Ms. Soo Wong: — compared to the other two bills, right? So can you just comment on that?

Mr. Randy Hillier: I do believe that there will be a greater necessity and requirement to hear from people beyond the GTA and allow for some time for the committee to travel to other locations to see and hear directly from people who are affected by those diseases, whether it be Lyme disease or other zoonotic diseases like mad cow—there are not a lot of cattle farmers right here in the GTA. That's the rationale behind it: just, again, for planning purposes that we allot a little bit more time so that the committee can travel and hear directly from people in rural and/or northern Ontario.

Ms. Soo Wong: Okay. So I just want to hear, then, Mr. Chair, because I'm new on this committee: Is it customary for this committee to travel outside committee time or during these two hours that we schedule? Because I'm hearing Mr. Hillier asking—

The Acting Chair (Mr. Steve Clark): You would need permission of the House—

Ms. Soo Wong: Exactly.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Steve Clark): —for this committee to travel outside of their—

Ms. Soo Wong: The scheduled time, right?

Mr. Randy Hillier: Yes.

Ms. Soo Wong: So there might be an additional request to the House, not just from the motion.

Mr. Randy Hillier: Yes.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Steve Clark): Yes.

Ms. Soo Wong: The other thing here is, I'm also concerned, from the mover, to assume that there might not be other interests, because there are nine municipalities in York region. Mr. Ballard's bill being proposed to this committee for discussion has nine municipalities. When we start that route of one bill travelling and the other bills not travelling, is it fair and equitable when we are saying—okay?

I just wanted to make sure to bring to the attention of this committee that when we're voting, we must be prepared—if we extend one extra week for one bill, the other two bills might have to come back to the committee and we've got to do the same, because that would not be perceived as fair and equitable, Mr. Chair. Those are my concerns.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Steve Clark): Mr. Hillier?

Mr. Randy Hillier: Let me just respond. The committee can seek the approval of the House for a number of different things, such as travel, but it's at the behest of the committee. It's not at the behest of any one individual. The committee as a whole would vote on that. If they find it desirable or necessary to travel, the committee would request that approval from the House.

It's commonplace that some bills get referred and are travelled across the province. A case in point: the Far North Act and the Mining Act. That affected more people in northern Ontario than it did here in southern Ontario, so that committee travelled throughout northern Ontario. That a bill travels or not does not cause it to be inequitable. It's who is bearing the consequences, or where is the information to be found for this committee to make informed choices and decisions?

Again, I put that motion out as a planning process. Okay? It's amendable. It's amendable at any time, but it's to get something on the table that we agree to in concept.

The vote is first off for this order. I don't think there's any disagreement about changing the order in the way it was referred. It allots a certain amount of time. The committee can change that time at any time, and we can also change the order once again. If Mr. Ballard has a motion on to insert—another motion to be dealt with before the other three, then that's acceptable as well.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Steve Clark): Mr. Barrett, you had something further to add?

Mr. Toby Barrett: Yes. Just further to Ms. Wong's comment on Bill 27 and the time required, you would recall that at one of the subcommittees, we were discussing public hearings, and then—I'm not sure if it was you—a proposal was also made that we bring in several expert witnesses separate from the general public hearings. I know you had recommended, I think, the executive director of public health Canada, the executive director of Public Health Ontario and also our Minister of Health to—

Ms. Soo Wong: I did not recommend the Minister of Health.

Mr. Toby Barrett: No, I think I maybe suggested the Minister of Health because I have a great deal of respect for his experience as not only as a physician, but also a public health officer and also a specialist in infectious diseases.

That was discussed, as I recall—I guess it would be in Hansard—during this committee. I think Mr. Ballard indicated that several of those people were caught up in Ebola and were maybe not available. I know you mentioned that.

Mr. Chris Ballard: I just didn't want to pull them away from that.

Mr. Toby Barrett: But anyway, it was not only a certain number of hours for public hearings, but also a certain number of hours for Ontario or Canada's expert opinion to be presented at the witness table. That was just where that came from.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Steve Clark): Ms. McMahon.

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: I was hoping that we could ask for a 20-minute recess, just to have a conversation about what's before us here, if that would be okay.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Steve Clark): If the members agree, we'll come back and we'll vote on the amendment immediately upon coming back to the committee. There's no further debate on the amendment?

Mr. Chris Ballard: Is this including my amendment to the amendment to the amendment?

The Acting Chair (Mr. Steve Clark): It's just changing the order, Mr. Ballard, of—as soon as we get past voting on the amendment that would order this to be 12, 27, 42, then we can hear other suggestions.

Mr. Randy Hillier: And one more thing to add, Chair: I would like to distribute a document. I don't have one for every committee member—

The Acting Chair (Mr. Steve Clark): I already have one.

Mr. Randy Hillier: But I know a number of the committee members do have them. It's called Constituents First: Empowering Local Legislators. It's something that I've developed and put before the Legislative Assembly committee previously, and it includes electronic petitions.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Steve Clark): We can get copies.

Okay. We'll take a 20-minute recess.

The committee recessed from 1337 to 1357.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Steve Clark): We'll reconvene the Legislative Assembly committee. It's now time to vote. We're going to vote on the amendment by Mr. Barrett moving the order to be Bill 12 for two weeks, Bill 27 for three weeks and Bill 42 for two weeks. It's a change in order. All those in favour? Opposed? I'll take that as a motion carried.

All right. We're back on the original motion: that the committee will meet two weeks on Bill 12, tip-outs, and three weeks on Bill 27, followed by Bill 42 at two weeks. Any further debate? Yes, Mr. Ballard.

Mr. Chris Ballard: My motion falls in where, sir?

Mr. Randy Hillier: Before you put that motion in play, did you read the green book?

The Acting Chair (Mr. Steve Clark): I don't know that he had a chance to.

Mr. Ballard, your amendment.

Mr. Chris Ballard: I'd like to move that the standing committee conduct a review of the petition procedures currently in use at the Legislative Assembly of Ontario and the use of e-petitions in other jurisdictions. I've got the full motion typed out here. I can pass that around, if that is what you would like.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Steve Clark): Mr. Ballard, you're going to have to take this amendment that the government House leader gave me and you're going to have to work it into the existing motion that is before the committee on hearing those three bills. So you're going to need to structure this motion so that we can deal with when that review will take place.

The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Trevor Day): Basically, what the committee has done so far is, there was a motion by Mr. Hillier that we look at three bills in a given order. Mr. Barrett has amended that, and the committee voted on it, so the order has been changed, but the committee has not actually agreed to look at those three bills in that order yet, so that's still on the floor of the committee. If Mr. Ballard has something to interject into those three—

The Acting Chair (Mr. Steve Clark): If I can be helpful to you, sir: This committee, if you use our standard meeting time, with this motion, we've dealt with seven of the 12 sittings this committee will have in this session. This committee would meet 15 times if we made a decision to meet during break week.

So you've got 15 opportunities for the committee to meet in its normal time. The motion that's before the committee deals with seven of those 15, if that's helpful.

Interjection.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Steve Clark): Okay, so why don't we just take a couple of minutes' recess? We'll work with you.

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: Give us three minutes to write this preamble.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Steve Clark): Okay, perfect.

The committee recessed from 1400 to 1404.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Steve Clark): We'll reconvene the committee. Mr. Ballard, you have an amendment to the motion, as amended.

Mr. Chris Ballard: It's simply that I move that, prior to commencing consideration of Bills 27, 42 and 12, the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly conduct a review of the petition procedures currently in use at the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, and the use of e-petitions in other jurisdictions, and

That the committee produce a report on the advantages and disadvantages of integrating e-petitions into the assembly's existing petition procedures, and recommend whether e-petitions should be implemented, and if so, which would be the best practical model, and

That, in order to assist the committee's review, the Clerk and Deputy Clerk of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario be invited to appear before the committee; that the table research office be instructed to provide background information on e-petitions and that the committee hear from other witnesses that it deems relevant.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Steve Clark): Thank you, Mr. Ballard. I just have a question. Given that I'm the House leader for the official opposition, I know that there is a substantive report by the Clerks that is available. Prior to you putting the question on the floor, I mentioned the amount of time that the committee has at its disposal from now until the end of this spring session. Are you proposing that the motion be open-ended and not define a particular time that we would sit and discuss this?

Mr. Chris Ballard: I'm somewhat reticent to put an amount of time to it right now, only because—again, I take advice from all around the table from those with more experience than me, but I'm reticent to put a time limit to it. I'm not sure exactly how much time this will take to get the ball rolling.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Steve Clark): Mr. Hillier, on the amendment.

Mr. Randy Hillier: This subject has been brought up at length previously. There is a fairly substantial amount of background documentation that has been done up in the past. Again, all scheduling is able to be amended if the need arises and if the committee deems it necessary. Knowing that there are seven of 12 weeks allotted in the original motion and that we would want to provide some margin in case any of those bills need to take a greater length of time for examination, I would suggest that two or three weeks would be adequate. Just on the safe side, I would offer this as an amendment to your amendment to the motion that this be dealt with and examined within the first three weeks. We would be more than happy to support that fully.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Steve Clark): Just give the Clerk a second here.

Mr. Randy Hillier: At the end of the day, that would then allocate 10 of the 12 weeks of this committee before the end of the session, so we'd still have a little bit of a margin for exigent circumstances or a need for further examination.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Steve Clark): Okay. This brings me back to my old city council days with amended motions and motions as amended.

Mr. Hillier is amending your amendment to place the first three weeks of this committee's deliberations to deal with your motion on e-petitions. Discussion on the amendment by Mr. Hillier? Yes, Mr. Balkissoon, then Mr. Ballard.

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: I'm wondering if Mr. Hillier would put it the way he did, but also accept a friendly amendment that after week two we could revisit this planned schedule of work, which has no dates, really; it just has a plan.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Steve Clark): He's going to actually have to agree to that.

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: So if we need more than three, and say it needs four, we could make that—

Mr. Randy Hillier: Sure, yes.

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: If you could word it that way, I'm happy to support you.

Mr. Randy Hillier: That the amendment be amended to include three weeks—I don't know if there's a need, because the committee can, at any time, alter its course and alter this plan.

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: But I think it will make it clear that it's understood by all of us.

Mr. Randy Hillier: I'll certainly go on record that we envisioned three weeks would be suitable; however, we'd be open for further examination if the committee deems it worthwhile.

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: Sure.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Steve Clark): You would do it the first three weeks. It would be this.

Mr. Randy Hillier: Okay, so the motion: We'll take the first three weeks and we will revisit it after the second week.

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: After the second week, we will at least revisit the schedule.

Mr. Randy Hillier: Revisit the timetable.

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: Yes.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Steve Clark): Any more comments on the amendment by Mr. Hillier?

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: If I may, Mr. Chair?

The Acting Chair (Mr. Steve Clark): Yes.

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: Quickly, in support of my colleague: I don't want to prolong the conversation, but from a rookie's point of view, I guess—oh, Mr. Hillier's gone.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Steve Clark): He's just grabbing a coffee.

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: I guess what I would simply add is that we're trying to get as much information as we

can from other jurisdictions, and we wouldn't want to limit the opportunity to study this issue, which seems to have relative and broad agreement around the table that we examine it. So let's take the time that we need and not hem ourselves in.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Steve Clark): No, and I have the ability because I have the report from the Clerk, and I have sat at this committee and listened to the Clerk talk about e-petitions. It is a substantive report; it is a very detailed report that is available today. You'll probably have it this afternoon.

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: Why don't we just ask the Clerk to forward it to all members ASAP?

The Acting Chair (Mr. Steve Clark): Yes, for sure. Okay. The amendment for the three weeks: all those in favour?

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: So just to clarify?

The Acting Chair (Mr. Steve Clark): The first three weeks.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: The first three weeks to review e-petitions.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Steve Clark): And review it after the second week to see if you need additional time.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Yes.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Steve Clark): Okay? Carried? On the motion as amended by Mr. Ballard? Carried. All right.

Mr. Randy Hillier: Now the main motion.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Steve Clark): Now the main motion, as amended. Discussion?

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: If I could just add, Chair, I ask the Clerk to forward all of the previous documents to us.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Steve Clark): That whole binder that we had?

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: So we can read it.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Steve Clark): That's lots of stuff.

The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Trevor Day): In this motion, it actually talks about table research providing background information.

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: But as soon as possible.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Steve Clark): There's lots of background.

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: Yes.

Interjections.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Steve Clark): Yes, Ms. Wong?

Ms. Soo Wong: Mr. Chair, I'm totally confused—

Interjections.

Ms. Soo Wong: I don't know about you—this is not like you said earlier. I'm very confused. What are we voting on? Can you do one more read? And I would like to have a recess to know what I'm voting on.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Steve Clark): I will call on the Clerk. He will read the motion. We'll call a recess, and then we'll vote on the final motion.

Ms. Soo Wong: Exactly. Thank you.

The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Trevor Day): What we have roughly is:

That, prior to commencing consideration of Bills 12, 27 and 42, the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly, for a three-week period initially, to be reviewed after two weeks, conduct a review of the petition procedures currently in use at the Legislative Assembly of Ontario and the use of e-petitions in other jurisdictions; and

That the committee produce a report on the advantages and disadvantages of integrating e-petitions into the assembly's existing petition procedures and recommend whether e-petitions should be implemented and, if so, which would be the best practical model; and

That, in order to assist the committee's review, the Clerk and Deputy Clerk of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario be invited to appear before the committee, the table research office be instructed to provide background information on e-petitions and the committee hear from any other witnesses it deems relevant.

Following that, the committee will be looking at two weeks of Bill 12, three weeks of Bill 27 and two weeks of Bill 42.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Steve Clark): Do you still want your recess?

Ms. Soo Wong: Yes. Can we have a recess so I can talk to my colleagues?

Interjections.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Steve Clark): Ms. Wong, you want a recess?

Ms. Soo Wong: Yes, I want a 20-minute recess, please.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Steve Clark): A 20-minute recess, then we'll come back and vote. No other debate.

The committee recessed from 1413 to 1433.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Steve Clark): Okay, folks. We'll reconvene the meeting. We've circulated the final amended motion, and I'm ready to call the question. All those in favour of the motion as amended? Opposed? Motion carried.

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: Toby opposed it.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Who was opposed?

The Acting Chair (Mr. Steve Clark): Toby didn't oppose it.

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: Toby was opposed.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Steve Clark): I'm almost 100% that Toby didn't oppose it.

Mr. Barrett, do you want to come back to the chair to adjourn the meeting, or do you want me to do that?

Mr. Toby Barrett: I'll let you carry on.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Steve Clark): All right. I'll just carry on. Is there any further—

Mr. Randy Hillier: We have such entire co-operation there, I think we should—

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: I have the motion printed up I want to introduce at this point.

Interjection: Good.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: I'm joking.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Steve Clark): But he said it so seriously. He was so serious.

Any further business? Thanks very much. We'll reconvene next week at 1 o'clock to talk about e-petitions. Meeting adjourned.

The committee adjourned at 1434.

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Mr. Chris Ballard (Newmarket–Aurora L)

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Ms. Eleanor McMahon (Burlington L)

Ms. Laurie Scott (Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock PC)

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Mr. Randy Hillier (Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington PC)

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Mr. Trevor Day

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