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**Official Report  
of Debates  
(Hansard)**

**Wednesday 4 March 2015**

**Journal  
des débats  
(Hansard)**

**Mercredi 4 mars 2015**

**Standing Committee on  
the Legislative Assembly**

Committee business

**Comité permanent de  
l'Assemblée législative**

Travaux du comité

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Hansard Reporting and Interpretation Services  
Room 500, West Wing, Legislative Building  
111 Wellesley Street West, Queen's Park  
Toronto ON M7A 1A2  
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Service du Journal des débats et d'interprétation  
Salle 500, aile ouest, Édifice du Parlement  
111, rue Wellesley ouest, Queen's Park  
Toronto ON M7A 1A2  
Téléphone, 416-325-7400; télécopieur, 416-325-7430  
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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 4 March 2015

Mercredi 4 mars 2015

*The committee met at 1300 in committee room 1.*

COMMITTEE BUSINESS

**The Chair (Mr. Toby Barrett):** It now being 1 o'clock, I welcome everyone to this regular meeting.

**Mr. Shafiq Qaadri:** We need a gavel, Chair. I'm not doing it until the gavel hits.

**The Chair (Mr. Toby Barrett):** I didn't hit it loud enough.

This is a regular meeting of the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly, on March 4. The agenda we have before us—this book of business—is petition procedures.

I also wanted to alert the committee that we did receive two documents since our last meeting. One is entitled E-Petitions: Overview of Usage in Other Jurisdictions. Secondly, we received the 33rd report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, House of Commons, Canada.

I would open up the committee—yes, Mr. Ballard?

**Mr. Chris Ballard:** Mr. Chair, I have a motion that I'd like to put in front of the group—

**Mr. Steve Clark:** Oh, here we go.

**Mr. Chris Ballard:** —a motion regarding Bill 56, the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan Act, 2014.

**Mr. Steve Clark:** The games begin.

**Mr. Chris Ballard:** I move—if I may read it, sir—  
*Interjection.*

**Mr. Chris Ballard:** I do have copies.

**The Chair (Mr. Toby Barrett):** We'll distribute those.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Chair, if I may, we have a motion from the House already under consideration for this committee. It's a motion to consider e-petitions. That has not been dealt with first so I would suggest that any motion to subvert the business of the committee already would be out of order.

**Mr. Steve Clark:** Absolutely.

**The Chair (Mr. Toby Barrett):** And that would be the motion that was carried, as amended? That would be the one? Yes, the motion relating to Bills 12, 27 and 42, petitions and e-petitions; that was the title. A broad motion?

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** That was a motion that was agreed on by the committee; however, this committee is operating under the instructions from the House right now on the electronic petitions.

**Mr. Bas Balkissoon:** No, it was his motion.

**Mr. Chris Ballard:** It was my motion on e-petitions.

**Mr. Bas Balkissoon:** Two meetings ago he moved it.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Okay, I thought that was—oh, you moved it. Okay. It was not from the House.

**The Chair (Mr. Toby Barrett):** That was the motion for, what, two days of hearings?

**Mr. Chris Ballard:** Three days, actually, yes.

**The Chair (Mr. Toby Barrett):** So the motion is not out of order. I would point out with respect to that previous motion that I just mentioned—I think you were referring to it, Mr. Hillier—the last sentence: That the committee revisit its schedule following the second week of consideration of its review of petition procedures.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Yes.

**The Chair (Mr. Toby Barrett):** So following the second week?

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Yes.

**Ms. Soo Wong:** What motion is that?

**The Chair (Mr. Toby Barrett):** That was the motion related to Bills 12, 27 and 42, and petitions and e-petitions.

**Ms. Soo Wong:** That was last week?

**The Chair (Mr. Toby Barrett):** Yes, it was carried—

**Ms. Soo Wong:** I wasn't here last week, so I'm very sorry, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair (Mr. Toby Barrett):** It was carried, as amended, February 18.

*Interjection.*

**The Chair (Mr. Toby Barrett):** Mr. Hillier? Sorry.

**Mr. Bas Balkissoon:** That was two weeks ago.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** I'll wait for the Clerk to—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Just for clarification: The motion was put before this committee, which, from what I recall, was adopted. That set out a program of three weeks for petitions followed by a number of weeks for three different bills. I understood that that motion had indeed passed.

**Mr. Steve Clark:** February 18.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Then we agreed the petitions would be ranked first, and that that motion was passed by this committee: petitions first, then the three private bills. Is that not correct?

**The Chair (Mr. Toby Barrett):** That is correct, as I understand. I would point out that this committee also has the freedom to change its agenda.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Sure; yes. But I just wanted to make it clear what is already in front of the committee.

**The Chair (Mr. Toby Barrett):** Maybe, as Chair, I will mention that Mr. Ballard has the floor and, now that it's been distributed, wishes to read in a motion.

**Mr. Chris Ballard:** Yes, let me read that in. Mr. Clerk, thank you.

This is a motion regarding Bill 56, Ontario Retirement Pension Plan Act, 2014.

I move that the Clerk, in consultation with the Chair, be authorized to arrange the following with regard to Bill 56, Ontario Retirement Pension Plan Act, 2014:

(1) Three days of public hearings if necessary and one day of clause-by-clause consideration, commencing on the first day following the approval of this motion; and

(2) Notice of public hearings on the Ontario parliamentary channel, the Legislative Assembly's website and Canada NewsWire; and

(3) Witnesses are scheduled on a first-come, first-served basis; and

(4) Each witness will receive up to five minutes for their presentation, followed by nine minutes for questions from committee members;

(5) The deadline for written submission is 3 p.m. on the last day of public hearings;

(6) The deadline for filing amendments with the Clerk of the Committee be 5 p.m., one day following the last day of public hearings on the bill.

That's my motion.

**The Chair (Mr. Toby Barrett):** Any further comments?

**Mr. Chris Ballard:** Just by way of a bit of context, I think the discussion, the debate, the deliberation we're having around e-petitions is important to me, but as I understand, tradition here would say that a bill by government put before or referred to this committee would take precedence over one put on the floor by an individual member. That's why I'm moving this motion today.

**The Chair (Mr. Toby Barrett):** I'll do a rotation. I'll go to the opposition and then I have two names over here.

Mr. Clark.

**Mr. Steve Clark:** Thank you very much, Chair. I just want to take exception to one of the comments that the member for Newmarket–Aurora said about a government bill superseding or—I forget the exact words he used, but he gave the impression that a government bill would take precedence over committee business.

I've been on committees where we have, on a co-operative basis, just like we did on February 18, decided to program bills that were both government and opposition, and it worked very well.

I would like to ask the Clerk a question. It's a technical question based on this motion. I would like to know how this will affect the other programming motion from February 18 and where we would end up with a discussion and where we would end up on public hearings for Bill 12, Bill 27 and Bill 42.

My understanding, from the meeting we had on February 18, was that we had used a significant portion of this committee's meeting times in this session, and I'm just a little worried, based on the motion, how that alters our time. If you could give me a chronology of when we would be dealing with this amendment, when we would be dealing with petitions and when we would be dealing with Bill 12, Bill 27 and Bill 42, I think it would help clarify to me when we'll be able to deal with this business.

My question is to the Clerk.

**The Chair (Mr. Toby Barrett):** Before that—and I'd ask the Clerk to answer that—I'd ask the Clerk, I think you wanted to clarify something just before?

**The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Trevor Day):** Just on the other assertion that was made, there is nothing in our standing orders that allows for precedence of a government bill over a private member's bill. We do have something in our standing orders that speaks of precedence of a government bill over one of the committee studies—I believe it's 126 or 111—but that's where the precedence falls.

**Mr. Steve Clark:** But in terms of the order, when would we be hearing this bill and when would we be hearing the other bills?

**The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Trevor Day):** As it stands now, this motion is giving, roughly at its far end, four weeks of consideration in this committee; that is, that clause-by-clause would start on the fourth week, and I'm going to go with the assumption that it would finish that day. If not, the committee would have to ascertain whether they wanted to continue with the clause-by-clause and keep it moving.

1310

But if we're looking at four weeks' worth of consideration of Bill 56—today is March 4—it would begin on the 11th, then the 25th, April 1 and April 15. Once those four weeks were complete, if the committee was to resume where it left off, a decision would have to be made whether or not the committee would be moving directly to Bill 12 or if it was resuming consideration of the e-petitions.

Under the original schedule, it said it would revisit its schedule following the second week. So there would have to be a determination there whether the committee was going to continue with e-petitions for an additional week or it would move directly to Bill 12, if it chose—Bill 12, I believe, was a two-week, which would take the 22nd and the 29th of April—Bill 27 for three weeks, which would be the 6th, the 13th and the 27th of May, and then Bill 42 for two weeks, of which we'd get one in before the House rises on June 3.

**Mr. Steve Clark:** So whose bill is 42? Which member has Bill 42?

**The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Trevor Day):** It's the Municipal Amendment Act (Election of Chair of York Region), and I believe it's in the name of Mr. Ballard.

**Mr. Steve Clark:** So Mr. Ballard's motion here will ensure that Mr. Ballard's bill wouldn't be finished and be ready to be passed.

**The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Trevor Day):** That is probably determined on a number of choices the committee will have to make, but based on a straight schedule, that's what we're looking at.

**Mr. Steve Clark:** I'm just surprised at that.

**The Chair (Mr. Toby Barrett):** I'd like to go to Jagmeet. Is it okay if I use first names in committee? Is that fine?

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** Jagmeet is perfect.

**The Chair (Mr. Toby Barrett):** Dr. Q?

**Mr. Shafiq Qaadri:** Or Mr. Qaadri. Whatever.

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** Mr. Chair, I just want to clarify: If we address this motion, will we be then moving into discussion—on to the bill in a substantive way, or is it simply a discussion on this motion that we move forward, and then we'd revert back to the discussion on e-petitions?

**The Chair (Mr. Toby Barrett):** It's a decision of the committee, as I understand it.

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** Okay. Could we perhaps get some guidance on behalf of the government? Is that the plan, to deal with this motion and then move back into petitions, or is the plan to deal with this motion and then continue with this motion?

**The Chair (Mr. Toby Barrett):** So we have a question to the government side.

**Mr. Shafiq Qaadri:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thanks to you, Mr. Singh. First of all, just to set the context, as you know, Bill 56, with regard to the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan, this particular motion refers to—this essentially is enabling legislation. From the government's perspective, there's a certain urgency. It's not exactly an emergency, but there's a certain urgency to get, first of all, this act under way: committee consideration, clause-by-clause and sort of finalized. There are a number of subsequent pieces of legislation and other initiatives that are coming forward with regard to governance, with regard to regulatory, with regard to administration. As you'll know, our Associate Minister Hunter has just finished a 12-site, across-Ontario tour as well. This was, of course, a mandated part of our election platform.

I think I would just sort of plead to the committee that there are a number of moving parts, as you can imagine, in the institutionalization of this, regarding negotiations with the federal government, with employers large and small, the self-employed and so on. So that's essentially what we're attempting to accomplish right here. I would certainly echo the words of our esteemed Clerk, Mr. Day, that at the outset this is looking at probably, if all goes well, perhaps a four- to five-week interlude, shall we put it that way, before we consider these other matters.

Mr. Chair, the floor is yours.

**The Chair (Mr. Toby Barrett):** That was your question?

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** No, no. So that's interesting and that's all very good and well. Thank you very much, Mr. Qaadri. I'm aware that this first piece is enabling for the subsequent pieces in terms of the pension plan. But just

reverting to the initial question, is it the plan of the committee to go back to e-petitions after this? I mean, this is an important thing we need to deal with, so no issue with that, but is the plan then to move forward with additional materials around the pension plan or is the plan of the committee to discuss e-petitions today?

In terms of the Liberal Party's position, I'm not overly concerned. I'm just curious as to what is next.

**The Chair (Mr. Toby Barrett):** Do you wish to answer the question, Mr. Ballard, or Chris?

**Mr. Chris Ballard:** Sure. Well, obviously, I can't speak on behalf of all the Liberals at the table, but as I said at the outset, I personally was interested in moving e-petitions along and that's why I leapt at the opportunity to put it on the table. I can't make any promises, because I'm just speaking for myself, but I would like to see it next in line.

**The Chair (Mr. Toby Barrett):** Okay. I'll go to Soo and then to Randy.

**Ms. Soo Wong:** The Clerk has clarified the order of what's before us, so he has answered my question—

**The Chair (Mr. Toby Barrett):** Thank you. Randy?

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Chair, I'd like to move an amendment to the motion. The amendment to this motion would be that Bill 56 be considered after the committee has considered e-petitions.

**The Chair (Mr. Toby Barrett):** We have an amendment to the motion. Do we need this distributed to the members?

**Mr. Bas Balkissoon:** Can we get it written so we can read it?

**The Chair (Mr. Toby Barrett):** All right.

*Interjection.*

**The Chair (Mr. Toby Barrett):** Five-minute recess.

*The committee recessed from 1316 to 1325.*

**The Chair (Mr. Toby Barrett):** We'll reconvene. We now have copies of the amendment to the motion, put forward by Mr. Hillier. Do you want to read that out again?

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Sure, and I'll just give a few comments on justification and rationale.

I move that the words "following the committee's previously scheduled consideration of e-petitions" be inserted after "Bill 56, Ontario Retirement Pension Plan Act, 2014". That is in the first sentence of Mr. Ballard's motion.

**The Chair (Mr. Toby Barrett):** Mr. Hillier, further comments?

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Just for the committee's—a recap and some justification here. The electronic petition discussion has been going on in this committee for a little over two years. As we witnessed last week, we had the Clerk and the Deputy Clerk of the House into this Legislative Assembly committee, and rehashed and did a new summary of the previous summaries over the last couple of years, because, of course, over this prolonged period of time—people on this committee change, people on this committee are no longer members of the House—there comes a loss of information and knowledge. So this

committee, in its wisdom, chose, and freely chose, to agree to a schedule of bills to be dealt with.

I believe four standing committees of this House are not considering any bills at the present time. They are not sitting; they're not conducting any business of the House. When this bill, Bill 56, passed second reading last week, I was astonished when it was referred to this committee, which already had a very robust agenda agreed to, while at the same time there were four other committees that were idle and not considering any government business whatsoever. That's an important consideration for me.

This appears to be attempting to subvert the agreed-upon actions of this committee, this action of referring Bill 56 to the Legislative Assembly committee. Really, even to refer this bill to this committee in the first place—the standing orders are quite clear about the mandate of this committee. Although it can look at government bills, the mandate of this committee is to be engaged in the standing orders, to continually revisit, evaluate and make recommendations to the House on the standing orders.

When you strip away everything to its essence here, what is the government trying to do with this motion of bringing Bill 56 into this committee? It does not appear to be genuine, it does not appear to be honest in its attempt to bring Bill 56 to this committee in this fashion.

Once again, we will have to start this whole process over in maybe a year, maybe two years. Maybe we'll have to get the Clerk back three or four more times to provide knowledge and information to changing members on overviews and the use of e-petitions in other jurisdictions, and we'll just be continually twiddling our thumbs.

I really suggest that this motion is very—I'd like to use the words, but they would be unparliamentary, how I view having Bill 56 referred to this committee.

My amendment is simple: Let us deal with the e-petitions that we had all agreed to before we consider Bill 56. Thank you very much, Chair.

1330

**The Chair (Mr. Toby Barrett):** Thank you, Mr. Hillier. Further discussion?

Yes, Mr. Singh.

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** One other issue that's come up is that in the normal course of action—regularly in terms of scheduling bills, the way it works is that there's a subcommittee that's struck and in the subcommittee meeting members from each party discuss potentially coming to an agreement on how the bill should progress. I just want to confirm that with respect to the pension plan there hasn't been a subcommittee struck, so we haven't had the opportunity to discuss with each other in a subcommittee setting the way in which we want to move forward.

The other issue is that the reason for that subcommittee is that the member who's taking carriage of this file has been scheduled—Ms. French has been scheduled and been assigned with this file. She knows the file intimately and has experience with it. So she should have been briefed about what's going forward, what's the plan, and

very likely it could have been an agreement about exactly what needs to be done. Then we could have made that agreement and move forward. But there's not been a subcommittee, or the subcommittee's not been held with respect to this. That's another concern. I'm just curious why that hasn't been done. We could easily have a subcommittee meeting, hammer out all the details, come back and then move forward with it.

Those are my two concerns that I wanted to raise.

**The Chair (Mr. Toby Barrett):** Thank you, Mr. Singh.

Further discussion on this amendment to the motion? Mr. Clark.

**Mr. Steve Clark:** Thanks very much, Chair. I, too, share the same concern that Mr. Singh just outlined regarding the fact that there was no subcommittee. I can also speak on behalf of our deputy House leader, Julia Munro, who has the file from our caucus. She was very surprised when Minister Hunter stood up and referred the matter to the Legislative Assembly committee, because she knew, as our critic, the fact that we had already programmed in three bills, plus the discussion on e-petitions.

When I start my comments, I guess I'm going to start my comments with a question to the government: Would the members of the committee agree to approach your government House leader, through his staff here at committee, to ask that this bill, by motion, be discharged from this committee and moved to a committee that has no business before it? To me, that's a very valid question to ask the members of the government, and Eddie from the government House leader's office today. I don't know whether they'll need a break to get that answer, but I think it's a very important question that certainly would provide some clarity to me.

**The Chair (Mr. Toby Barrett):** There's a question to government members—not that you have to answer, as I understand, but we'll just wait a second.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Chair.

**The Chair (Mr. Toby Barrett):** Okay. While we're waiting, Mr. Hillier.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** I think the silence speaks volumes. Questions have been put and there is absolute silence.

**Ms. Eleanor McMahon:** Oh, come on.

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** No, it's true.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** There have been arguments advanced and there has been no response. Arguments have been advanced that this motion, the way it was originally proposed, would waste this committee's time and continually waste the committee's time, waste the Clerk's time, waste the Deputy Clerk's time—just continually.

Really, why is there no comment from any Liberal member about the validity—if my arguments don't have merit, I'd like to hear from the Liberals that my arguments don't have merit. If my arguments are not justified, I would like to hear why. We've laid out arguments why the e-petitions should be considered first, and we have had absolutely no comment from the five members from the government on this committee. I find that atrocious. I

find it abhorrent that arguments are advanced and we think that the government can just turn its back on arguments advanced in committee and dismiss them by their silence.

**The Chair (Mr. Toby Barrett):** Any further discussion or debate? Yes, Ms. Wong?

**Ms. Soo Wong:** Mr. Chair, I wasn't going to talk today, because of my voice, but I want to ask, through you to the Clerk: With respect to any bills before the House, whether it's a private member's bill—is it not the right of the minister or the member who's proposing the private member's bill to discharge that to any committee? Am I correct?

**The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Trevor Day):** That is correct.

**Ms. Soo Wong:** So for the opposition party to say that they now want the minister or the associate minister to go back and to discharge it to another committee—well, you know what, folks? The train has left the station.

You just heard the Clerk say that any minister's bill or private member's bill that goes before the House can be discharged to any committee. He just said that. The associate minister has decided to put it in the LA committee. It is now our responsibility to deal with this as we see fit.

**Mr. Steve Clark:** So you're trying to tell me that the minister just decided, in no consultation with the government House leader, on what committee? She just stood up on her own and picked a committee that was completely logjammed—

**Ms. Soo Wong:** No, that's not what I said. I asked for a clarification, and the Clerk clearly told this committee on the record that any members, any ministers, have a right to discharge any of the bills to any committee. That's what I heard, unless I put the wrong words in his mouth, and I don't think I did.

**The Chair (Mr. Toby Barrett):** Mr. Ballard is next on the list.

**Mr. Chris Ballard:** I just wanted to reiterate what I said at the beginning, when I introduced this motion, and that was that it's the tradition of committee that a government bill be dealt with first, before any other motion that an individual put forward.

I would reiterate as well, maybe a little more clearly, that we can revisit, or we will revisit, e-petitions when the other business is taken care of.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Unless another bill gets referred, or another bill, and another bill, always to subvert the express desires of this committee.

I've been watching you, Chris. I can understand why you're uneasy with this motion.

**Mr. Steve Clark:** He's booting his own bill.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Yes, you're booting your own bill so far down the road that your constituents will never be represented by you.

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** I can understand your uneasiness—

**The Chair (Mr. Toby Barrett):** Committee, we have a problem with Hansard when there are several back-and-

forths. Give me a second to recognize you first, at minimum, just for the purposes of Hansard.

Now, where were we? I'd like to go to Mr. Balkissoon, and then back again. Yes, sir, go ahead.

**Mr. Bas Balkissoon:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I hear what the member on the other side is saying, but I want to correct one statement that he has made, that e-petitions was before this committee. I was a member of the committee, as were Mr. Clark and Ms. MacLeod, and Mr. Dunlop was the Chair. I can tell you there were at least four or five subcommittee meetings where either Mr. Dunlop wouldn't show up, or Ms. MacLeod, to allow the committee to program all the work that was in front of us. So I don't see how you could argue that you wanted to move this ahead—because you came and presented to us that you wanted to move this ahead and it was us who delayed it. The games have been going on on both sides. I just wanted to make that comment.

*Interjections.*

**The Chair (Mr. Toby Barrett):** I'll go to Mr. Clark and then Mr. Hillier.

**Mr. Steve Clark:** I just can't not make a comment after that last statement by Mr. Balkissoon, talking about subcommittees. This committee made some recommendations regarding standing order changes that were clearly put at the foot of the government House leader, and they were recommendations to change the standing orders, that all three parties agreed with over and over and over again. So—

**Mr. Bas Balkissoon:** No, we did not agree on a schedule.

1340

**Mr. Steve Clark:** Yes, we did. I can show you the recommendations that we all agreed upon. Again, this motion today is the same type of mayhem that the Liberal government House leader did with the select committee last week. It's the same type of mayhem he's creating with this motion today. Again, he says one thing about trying to work with the opposition and then he does something completely different every time.

**The Chair (Mr. Toby Barrett):** I'll go to Mr. Balkissoon if you wish. If not—

**Mr. Bas Balkissoon:** I sat on the committee, and I will tell you that during the summer, Mr. Dunlop, the Chair, called several meetings and cancelled them. I believe Mr. Day was the Clerk—I can't remember. You know what? It was the same thing going on.

**Mr. Steve Clark:** You're never going to find a Chair who wants to get stuff done in committee more than Garfield Dunlop. Period.

**Mr. Bas Balkissoon:** Go back and revisit our schedule.

**Mr. Steve Clark:** I disagree with you 100%.

**Mr. Bas Balkissoon:** I know that my memory is pretty good.

**Mr. Steve Clark:** Well, so is mine.

**The Chair (Mr. Toby Barrett):** We've had some interjections, actually.

**Mr. Bas Balkissoon:** I'm done.

**The Chair (Mr. Toby Barrett):** I do wish to go to Ms. Thompson.

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** Thank you very much, Chair. I came in here this afternoon to observe because I sit on the Standing Committee on General Government. I'm quite concerned that democracy is getting bogged down by some of the initiatives that our Liberal government is choosing to employ. I'm here because our committee was cancelled this afternoon because we don't have anything to do.

I implore you guys to take a look at what you're doing. Bill 56: Did it have to come to the Legislative Assembly committee? Based on what we heard earlier, it doesn't even fit with the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly.

I encourage you to go back to your House leader and say, "Rethink the games that you're playing here," so that we can get on with democracy.

**The Chair (Mr. Toby Barrett):** I will remind the committee that we are discussing an amendment from Mr. Hillier to the original motion from Mr. Ballard. Do I see any further indications of discussion? Mr. Hillier?

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Yes.

**The Chair (Mr. Toby Barrett):** Okay.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Further to Mr. Balkissoon's comments about subcommittees, and also Mr. Singh's comments, there was no subcommittee meeting for the subcommittee to be informed of Mr. Ballard's motion. This is what happens when your actions—I want to emphasize—are disrespectful to the process and the procedures. I want to make absolutely sure that I'm not suggesting that Mr. Ballard is being disrespectful, but those actions—listen, the members of this committee, although we're all members of caucuses, are independent representatives of our communities. We all have a responsibility to our constituents, not just our caucuses. I would say to Mr. Ballard: Kicking your bill so far down the road that it's not going to be dealt with—that's a bill that I take at face value, that you advanced that bill in the interest of your constituents.

I know you said that we would deal with e-petitions after Bill 56, but the track record indicates otherwise. The government will bring another motion forward to subvert the agreement of this committee. Another bill will be passed in the House, or another bill that's at another committee will be referred back to this one, continually stalling and pushing off these amendments to the standing orders.

Going back to Mr. Balkissoon: Listen, I gave significant representations to that Legislative Assembly committee. I was here for hours speaking on and advancing what I thought were good arguments on why those standing orders ought to be amended. If you like, it's on my Facebook; you can pull up the video from that representation.

**Mr. Steve Clark:** Good video.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** You might be very disheartened if you do watch the two hours of representations to this committee, but if you do, you will see that we've seen

this game time and time before. We've seen the government—listen, we understand that at that time it was a minority government and there were other things at play as well. But regardless, we have seen the government and the government House leader not playing fair ball with this committee.

It's up to you guys. You guys have the most votes. You guys are going to determine if you're going to be played for puppets, if you're going to be played by the House leader, played by your caucus and be engaged in injurious action to the desires of this committee. It'll be you guys. It won't be Mr. Naqvi's name that's attached to your actions; it'll be yours. In Hansard, it's your names that will be on the vote in the public record.

I'm going to say this to everybody on this committee: We may think that we're in this room with 20 people, but our actions are recorded in Hansard forever. The media are watching and are seeing what is being said and done here. It will not go unnoticed. At the end of the day, it's you guys who are going to determine if you're just puppets for your House leader or if you've actually got something to contribute to this committee, and can do it in an impartial and non-partisan fashion that moves and advances the Legislative Assembly forward.

**The Chair (Mr. Toby Barrett):** I'll just make a comment as well with our committee—and there is some disagreement—that we all use parliamentary language. I don't have the authority to name anybody. I just wanted to mention that.

I'd like to go to Ms. McMahon.

**Ms. Eleanor McMahon:** On your comments about parliamentary language, Mr. Chair, I'm new here, but I look at the member opposite who was just speaking, as someone who has been here for—I don't know how long you've been here, Mr. Hillier; seven years, I think—as someone who might show someone like me a good and fine example about parliamentary language. I found, to be perfectly honest with you, some of the comments that you just made bordering on mildly offensive, suggesting "puppets" and this kind of language. I don't think there's a place for that in this conversation. You are entitled to your opinion—

*Interjection.*

**Ms. Eleanor McMahon:** Let me finish—

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** And I'll express my—

**Ms. Eleanor McMahon:** I have no doubt about that, but you will let me speak because I'm not finished. You had your time; now is my time. You have succeeded in getting my Irish up, and that doesn't happen very often, but I am done with listening to your pontifications. I think that your comments towards us, while I don't find them terribly humorous, are mildly offensive. I don't think they have any place in this conversation. While you are entitled to your opinion, I would ask you to reconsider in the future about how you describe other people that sit across from you. Because, to your point, Mr. Hillier, we are all here to get things done together, and I think it makes it a lot more difficult when you make those kinds of comments, which I think border on

personal invective. So I would ask you to take great care in characterizing the work of your colleagues, because I found those comments extremely unfair.

**The Chair (Mr. Toby Barrett):** I wish to go to—Ms. Wong is on the docket and then Mr. Hillier.

**Ms. Soo Wong:** I want to be on record, because there's a suggestion from the opposition party, especially one member, saying that we've done something wrong. We heard from the Clerk that any bill in the House, whether it's from the minister or private members, can be discharged at any standing committee of the House. He nodded again to verify that statement. So there's nothing going wrong.

Everybody knows that this government is committed to bringing the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan Act forward. We saw what happened last June. The people have spoken. We also saw what happened last year when we were in a minority government: Nothing gets done. There was a lot of filibustering and one bill after another got nowhere. So it is the responsibility—the mover of the motion from the associate minister to this committee—my colleague Mr. Ballard has now moved this motion. I think we need to get on with the business.

1350

Second of all, I want to reiterate, Mr. Chair: I do not want to sit on this committee in the future if the language is like what I just heard this afternoon, because for me, as an immigrant child growing up in this city, I get absolutely sensitive to that type of language, because it's not parliamentary, in my words.

**The Chair (Mr. Toby Barrett):** Thank you, Ms. Wong. Mr. Hillier, you had a comment again?

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** I think it should have been clear, and if it wasn't clear, I apologize. I was speaking of the actions of the members of the Liberal government on this committee. The actions are offensive. They offend this committee. They offend because they frustrate this committee. They are actually preventing the work of this committee from being done.

I can't imagine that not every member would find those actions to be offensive when they are purposely frustrating the agreed-upon scheduling of consideration of bills in this House. I will apologize. For anybody who thought my language was offensive to them, my language was elevated based on the actions because, once again, I find those actions to be offensive. If I could find words to describe that frustration that were not unparliamentary, I would use them. But after years and years of being frustrated by the Liberal government in this committee—and it doesn't matter. Mr. Balkissoon is here from the previous one, but many of the members here are new members. They haven't witnessed how your government has frustrated this committee in the past.

I'm not going to accept a continual frustration of this committee. If you want to continually frustrate this committee, be prepared for ever-escalating responses. We need to start working together. This committee had an agreed-upon course of action, and now there's a deliberate attempt to subvert what this committee had already agreed upon.

Listen, I understand that you've got five members over there. I understand that there's an opposition that doesn't have as many votes. But in committee, you're not expected to run roughshod over the opposition. You're not expected to be absolutely dismissive of the arguments of the opposition. If you're going to act in that fashion, not much is going to get accomplished.

My colleague from Leeds–Grenville, Mr. Clark here, has suggested that you go back to your House leader and ask him to refer this bill, Bill 56, to another committee that is not sitting. As we heard from Ms. Thompson, general government has not got any bills in front of it. Bill 56 could be referred there and it could be dealt with in an expeditious manner without frustrating the expressed desires of this committee.

I'm going to put it out: Why do you want to frustrate this committee and leave that other committee idle to do nothing? As I said, the actions of this committee will be noticed by others. Thank you.

**The Chair (Mr. Toby Barrett):** Thank you, Mr. Hillier. Mr. Qaadri.

**Mr. Shafiq Qaadri:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. This afternoon I continue to be calm and adequately caffeinated, and if I might just disengage from the fire and brimstone that's being hurled bilaterally here, I would respectfully ask my honourable colleagues opposite, for example—this bill, or this act, as you know, was passed initially on Wednesday of last—very recently. The House leaders' meeting was the day after. If there were any objection—and I ask this as an information point—to be raised, as you say, to refer back to the House leaders', we're just inquiring, respectfully: Why was this not raised at the House leaders' right at the initial stage?

**The Chair (Mr. Toby Barrett):** There is a question, if you wish—

**Mr. Steve Clark:** Yes, I'd love to answer that question. We had a committee meeting here where we co-operatively passed a motion on February 18 to program this committee for three bills and for e-petitions. Immediately after this committee met, I was admonished by the government House leader at my desk in the Legislature. He was angry that this committee co-operated. He was angry that we programmed these three bills. Quite frankly, I was insulted that he would do that.

The fact is, Mr. Qaadri, that the reason this bill was programmed is because Mr. Naqvi wanted, in a very direct way, to indicate that his members of the committee aren't in charge, and that he's in charge. That's why he made that decision in consultation with Ms. Hunter.

I am offended, as Mr. Hillier has expressed before, because he has done exactly to this committee what he did last week to the select committee. He inserted a motion that would ensure that we wouldn't co-operate. On February 18, we co-operated and programmed three bills, and we were able to accommodate the government's motion. Today, it was done in a very direct way.

Listen, I know why we're here today with that motion. I know why Mr. Ballard was given that motion. He probably wasn't even told that he was going to kick his

own Bill 42 down the road. He was told to come in and move the motion at the start of the meeting before the discussion took place on e-petitions.

We had a very good discussion last week on e-petitions, and both Mr. Hillier and I felt that, in a very short period of time, we would actually make some progress. But the government House leader has assured us today that we will not make any progress, that he will insert himself beyond us deciding co-operatively how this committee is going to co-operate and going to deal with bills.

Regardless of what happened at a House leaders' meeting or didn't happen at a House leaders' meeting, he was very clear to me in the House that he didn't like what happened here with Ryan's Law or the election of the York regional chair or Mr. Barrett's bill that would deal with very important diseases, like Ebola and Lyme disease. He made it very clear to me that he was upset that we actually got some business done here in the Legislative Assembly co-operatively.

The message has been given to us on how Yasir Naqvi wants committees to deal with—it's his way or the highway, and I am frustrated.

**The Chair (Mr. Toby Barrett):** This committee does have an amendment before the original motion. Any further discussion?

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Yes.

**The Chair (Mr. Randy Hillier):** Mr. Hillier.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** This is not a prop, but I want the members of this committee to see. I mentioned in my last comments that others are watching, and our actions are noted and recorded.

This is a news story from the Ottawa Citizen today. I don't know if anybody read it. It's by a journalist named David Reevley. It's a report on the select committee that met last week. The headline is: "Apolitical Committee on Sexual Aggression Bogs Down in Politics." Obviously, this fellow read Hansard or watched, and the government does not look good in its actions.

That's the sort of thing that happens when all members—I mentioned that I was frustrated and that the opposition was frustrated, but I'm sure, Mr. Balkissoon, because you've been here long enough, and the same with Mr. Qaadri, that you see your own activities get frustrated as well, just as Mr. Ballard is now seeing his constituents' initiative on electing the York regional chair is being frustrated.

We are all being frustrated. At the end of the day, it is our constituents and society as a whole that are being frustrated when we allow Mr. Naqvi or any other House leader to purposely and arrogantly frustrate the actions of the members of this House and the members of this committee.

Once again, it will be noted. All of those arguments that have been advanced: There has been no substantive rebuttal of them, no rebuttal of the arguments. That will be noticed, and someday each of us will be called to account for our actions in this committee. I'm confident that my actions are defensible, justifiable and reasonable.

I can't say the same will happen for other members on this committee. Thank you, Chair.

**The Chair (Mr. Toby Barrett):** I'll remind committee members too, just to make sure we are speaking to this amendment, and in a respectful way. I think that goes without saying.

Any further discussion on this amendment to the motion?

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Chair, could I get a 20-minute recess before any vote?

**The Chair (Mr. Toby Barrett):** If the members are ready to vote, then Mr. Hillier is entitled to call a recess.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** And a recorded vote on our return.

**The Chair (Mr. Toby Barrett):** We'll have a recorded vote on our return. So 20 minutes.

*The committee recessed from 1402 to 1422.*

**The Chair (Mr. Toby Barrett):** We have a request for a recorded vote.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** On the amendment to the motion?

**The Chair (Mr. Toby Barrett):** We're voting on the amendment to Mr. Ballard's motion, an amendment from Mr. Hillier.

#### Ayes

Clark, Hillier, Singh.

#### Nays

Balkissoon, Ballard, McMahon, Qaadri, Wong.

**The Chair (Mr. Toby Barrett):** I declare the amendment to the motion lost.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Chair, I'd like to move an amendment to the motion.

**The Chair (Mr. Toby Barrett):** Okay, we have a proposal for an amendment. Is this in paper form to be distributed?

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Yes, I do have a copy of it in paper form. Maybe I should read it first.

**The Chair (Mr. Toby Barrett):** Yes, you could read it, and then I'll ask the Clerk to distribute it.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** I move that the words "following the committee's previously scheduled consideration of Bill 12, Protecting Employees' Tips Act, 2014" be inserted after "Bill 56, Ontario Retirement Pension Plan Act, 2014" in the first sentence of Mr. Ballard's motion.

**The Chair (Mr. Toby Barrett):** The Clerk will get hard copies around to members.

While the Clerk is distributing the motion, Mr. Hillier, did you want to comment?

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Sure, I'd love to comment on it. Many of these arguments will have already been heard and dismissed. Or maybe they weren't heard; they were just dismissed with the previous amendment.

I'll start off by saying that Bill 12, like the electronic petitions motion before, which had been agreed to be considered by this committee, is another one of those

bills that has been frustrated over the last couple of years. This bill was originally passed by the NDP member for Beaches–East York, Michael Prue, in the minority Parliament. It was referred to committee—

**Mr. Steve Clark:** This committee, actually.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:**—this very committee. Of course, the minority Parliament ended, and it was reintroduced a second time by a Liberal member for Beaches–East York, Mr. Arthur Potts.

This bill has been introduced by members of two different caucuses. It's been voted on twice by the House at second reading. It's been debated; it's been voted on. It's been approved by the House on two different occasions and referred to this committee on two different occasions.

Once again, we're seeing an attempt by this government to frustrate the expressed desires of the House. That is not the purpose of the committee. The purpose of the committee is to indeed facilitate and bring life to the expressed desires of the House through legislation. The Liberal members of this committee, at the direction of their House leader, are clearly once again trying to frustrate the will of our Parliament.

My amendment reasserts the supremacy of the bills that were already referred to this committee and agreed upon by this committee to be dealt with. Prior to Bill 56—and I'll say once again, there are other standing committees of this House that are not considering any bills at the present time. It was absolutely purposeful to refer Bill 56 to this committee and not to one of those committees that have nothing under consideration, purposeful to frustrate the desires of the House.

I'll put it this way: If we do not agree to this amendment to re-establish the programming considerations that this committee has already done—if we don't do it, this committee would be in dereliction. The members who do not support this amendment will be in dereliction of their responsibilities to their constituents. It will be dereliction of this committee's responsibilities to the House. And once again, committee members on the Liberal side will have their strings pulled by others and, in the process, as I said, will be derelict in their responsibilities to both the House and their constituents.

**The Chair (Mr. Toby Barrett):** Mr. Hillier, just to comment on “pulling strings”: That kind of goes down the road of puppetry, and I know I've been—

*Interjections.*

**The Chair (Mr. Toby Barrett):** Certainly I have been cautioned over the years not to use the word “Pinocchio” in the House. So we just don't want to go down that road.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** I'll take that under consideration, Chair, definitely.

**The Chair (Mr. Toby Barrett):** I go to the government side now. Mr. Qaadri.

**Mr. Shafiq Qaadri:** Chair, a number of things: Again, with respect, as a licensed MD who is empowered to do physical exams, I have yet to find attached strings in any of my colleagues. So I can certify and would be

happy to write a doctor's note to that effect, to begin with.

Secondly, I would like to say with respect to my honourable colleagues that—

**The Chair (Mr. Toby Barrett):** Mr. Qaadri, what's good for the goose is good for the gander. I appreciate the lighthearted nature of your comment, but I feel obligated to make mention of that.

Please continue, sir.

**Mr. Shafiq Qaadri:** Thank you. With respect to my colleagues, what we're attempting to accomplish at this time is to bring forward what we feel is a very important piece of legislation, the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan. This will affect eventually, once formed, once passed, once amended etc., several million people across this province. As I did mention at the outset, there is a certain time urgency, a great deal of governance, administration and regulatory issues to be dealt with, and I would just, with respect, flag that for the committee's consideration.

**The Chair (Mr. Toby Barrett):** Thank you, Mr. Qaadri.

We've had discussion on amendment number 2 to the motion from Mr. Ballard. Are there any further comments? Mr. Clark.

**Mr. Steve Clark:** Thanks, Chair. I appreciate the opportunity to speak. I was very excited back in February when we passed the programming motion to program this bill. I was on this committee in the previous Parliament, and I thought we dealt very co-operatively on programming government bills, private members' bills, Conservative private members' bills and NDP private members' bills. In fact, in the previous session, this was a bill by Mr. Prue, who was a member of the New Democratic Party—it was called Bill 49 at the time—and it went through this process, and unfortunately, wasn't passed within the minority Parliament before the House dissolved for an election.

**1430**

It was presented by the now-Liberal member for that same riding, Mr. Potts, and referred to this committee. As the opposition House leader, I get regular emails from men and women who are servers, who have expressed an interest in this bill which would deal with their tips. In fact, they were very happy and pleasantly surprised that this committee, in a co-operative vein, tabled this bill. I know some of them, to use the words that Mr. Hillier used earlier, were watching very closely when we put some specific parameters around when this bill would be debated. Again, I feel very strongly that this is a motion that we should support, and I will be supporting the motion.

I think we have to send a message that we can work co-operatively. I thought, on February 18, that we were doing something good, that we were able to accomplish the bills that were discharged to this committee, in addition to the priority of the government House leader. He called me prior to Mr. Ballard presenting the motion on e-petitions and expressed to me, because he knew my interest in e-petitions, the fact that it would be back on

this agenda. February 18, to me, was the way this committee should work, that we should be able to put down partisanship and work in partnership. For us to go through a two-hour session and be able to plan those three bills, plus carve out time for an e-petition debate and still have time at the end of the discussion to be able to debate something else, I think, was very important.

Now, as we did with the previous motion, we have changed the priority. I'm going to have to go back to the people who were excited about Bill 12, if the government does what they did the last time and puts their heavy hand down against this amendment, that this again will cause this very needed bill for workers in the province of Ontario—it will again be so close but not be attained. I think that sends the wrong message. I think the government's motion today and the fact that they, in a pre-meditated manner, decided to go directly against the cooperation that this committee had on February 18, to me, is just unconscionable. It just speaks to the fact that the government would rather create chaos with this committee than foster co-operation.

On behalf of the people that email me regularly as the opposition House leader and ask that Bill 12 be put forward for debate and for clause-by-clause consideration so that it would be in a form that it could be passed: I think this is, again, a bill that all three parties have agreed with. The changes that were made in the previous Parliament were certainly agreeable to Liberals, New Democrats and Conservatives. Again, I think we have a duty, in the spirit of co-operation that we had in the February 18 meeting, to pass this amendment and to move this bill forward.

I'll be speaking and voting in favour of the amendment on Bill 12 when you call the question.

**The Chair (Mr. Toby Barrett):** I'll go to Mr. Singh, then Ms. McMahon.

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** I have a couple of questions, a couple of concerns.

Mr. Chair, through you, Mr. Qadri mentioned that this motion was particularly important because there is not exactly an emergency, but there is a time-sensitive nature to the first bill being passed so that the subsequent bills can follow, and there is some necessity for speed. I understand that.

If that was the case, really—and I'm saying this in a frank manner—everybody knew that this committee had a number of other bills in it. Members in this committee might be interested in having those bills move forward. There were three bills, in addition to an e-petition discussion, going on in this committee, which some members might be very interested in seeing move forward. But there are other committees that literally had no other business at all and there would be no reason for any member of those other committees to be concerned in any way to say, "No, we don't want this motion to proceed."

As the NDP, we absolutely support pensions. We 100% support them. We believe in them. Our leader put forward a pension plan in 2010, which, at that time, the Liberal government members voted against. But the point

being, we agree with this. We are in agreement with this plan, but it just doesn't make sense.

If you're truly concerned about moving in a quick manner, (1) to put it in a committee that has no other business, and (2) to get it done in a quick manner—if we had a subcommittee meeting we could discuss, "Hey, we're putting this motion forward. Do you all agree?" And it would be hammered out in subcommittee, come back into the committee and we'd say, "Let's go ahead." So to put it without really any notice in front of this committee doesn't add up. If the goal is to make it happen in a quick manner, this is probably the slowest and most inefficient manner in which to bring forward this motion.

Those two positions don't really match up. If it's important to have this go quickly, then why put it in a committee that has so much other work in it, where other members might be upset and might want their initial plans to move forward? Why not put it in a committee that had no other business whatsoever? It just doesn't make sense, so I'm curious about that.

If your government is not concerned about the timeliness of this motion and doesn't care for it to move in a quick manner, then I understand why you would put it in a committee that had three other bills in it. I'm questioning if it makes sense to say that we want this to move quickly but we're going to put it in a committee that already has other business in it.

My final point is that I also understand that the three bills are non-contentious. They're bills that everyone in the House supported or there was no open recorded vote against: the tip-out bill, the bill regarding Newmarket having more accountability in their municipal government and the idea of addressing zoonotic diseases. None of those three bills have any sort of partisan nature. They're all very good bills that are supportable. And e-petitions are also not a contentious issue, so I don't understand why anyone would be in any way wanting to stop e-petitions from moving forward. Governments are doing this. It makes sense for it to move forward.

I just don't understand. Given that these bills are non-contentious, given that e-petitions are non-contentious, why would you want to hold up that work by putting this bill in this committee when there are other committees that are not—if all other committees were packed with work, I'd get it. My colleague Ms. Thompson just indicated that her committee had no other business and they wrapped up today. Clearly, that committee would have been a good space for it. So I just don't understand the goal.

As New Democrats, we absolutely support pension plans. We're encouraged to see this move forward. I just don't understand the strategy, if that's the goal. There are ways to make that happen. I would be more than happy to sit down and discuss ways to make that happen. Clearly we're seeing that there's difficulty in getting it done here, but I'm sure we can find other ways to do it. Let's move ahead and get it done in a way that's efficient and effective.

**The Chair (Mr. Toby Barrett):** Thank you, Mr. Singh. Ms. McMahon?

**Ms. Eleanor McMahon:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm enjoying listening to the conversation and the various points of view that are being put forward. I was listening earlier to my colleague from Leeds–Grenville, who is certainly an excellent constituency MPP, one that I hope to learn from in my parliamentary career, as long or short as it may be.

I, too, have been hearing from my constituents. Almost one in five people in Burlington is a senior citizen, and they are preoccupied with savings rates and the future of young people and those who aren't saving. The ORPP is something that they want us to move forward with.

The associate minister came out to my riding. We did a round table with the chamber. I was the vice-president at the Canadian Chamber of Commerce and know those issues well.

And as a former waitress, by the way, I support the work that's being put forward by my colleagues in terms of a private member's bill. I remember those days. It was many years ago, Mr. Chair, but I still remember them—fondly, as it were.

Bill 56 is an extremely important piece of legislation. I know that some don't support it; we do. I know that my constituents are very concerned that we move forward on that bill.

In terms of the general government committee, I look forward next week to hearing Bill 31 and having two days of public hearings that are already scheduled. That was a piece of legislation that, while outside government, I worked on for over five years. Now, as a legislator, I'm looking forward to that.

Anyway, that's a different perspective, perhaps, than my colleagues, but one I thought was worth sharing.

**The Chair (Mr. Toby Barrett):** Ms. Thompson, then Mr. Balkissoon.

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** Thanks very much, Chair. I just want to revisit this amendment that Mr. Hillier put forward. Mr. Hillier moves that the words “following the committee's previously scheduled consideration of Bill 12, Protecting Employees' Tips Act, 2014,” be inserted after “Bill 56, Ontario Retirement Pension Plan Act, 2014”.

**1440**

I wanted to revisit that amendment, because we need to really take into consideration the big picture that we have going on here. Honest to goodness, everyone who is connected to small business knows that Bill 56 is technically a tax on jobs and that this particular pension plan is not free money. It's money that's going to be coming out of individuals' pocketbooks and money coming out of the small businesses' bottom line.

With that said, I think there's some rich irony here, because Bill 12, with regard to protecting employees' tips, is very, very important, because the very people that will be positively impacted by Bill 12 need all the money they can get if they're going to be contributing to their own pension plan, as prescribed in Bill 56.

I think everyone sitting around this committee table would be well advised—and serving the people of

Ontario—if they pass this amendment and make sure Bill 12 gets dealt with in a proper, timely fashion, before this job tax comes back to the table.

**The Chair (Mr. Toby Barrett):** Mr. Balkissoon.

**Mr. Bas Balkissoon:** I just had a question of clarification to the comments from Mr. Singh.

**The Chair (Mr. Toby Barrett):** To Mr. Singh, was it? Yes.

**Mr. Bas Balkissoon:** Mr. Ballard has presented a motion for us to deal with, but you seem to feel that it could have gone to subcommittee directly. Or are you interested in the committee sending it to a subcommittee today? That's what I want to clarify, because I didn't quite understand the drift of where you were going.

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** Sure. Two parts: One is that there are other committees that have no business in them whatsoever—

**Mr. Bas Balkissoon:** Yes, I understand that part.

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** Okay, so that would be one. The second is that if the members had seen the motion beforehand, as is normally the case, the normal course of action—there's a subcommittee meeting, and in the subcommittee meeting, members from each party meet and discuss the actual motion, and then it's not a surprise.

This is being debated now in this forum because it wasn't something that was discussed at a subcommittee meeting. Normally, in all the committees I've been on, any time there's a really substantive motion, that's something that's discussed at subcommittee. You work through it and then you come out of subcommittee and you can move ahead with it.

**Mr. Bas Balkissoon:** But this committee has to refer it to a subcommittee. It just can't go there.

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** Right, so we could do that, if you'd like—

**Mr. Bas Balkissoon:** So they presented it today for the first time. We had no choice.

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** Normally, if this was something that was going to be discussed, it could have been—a subcommittee meeting could be held any time, right? There's no requirement to have a motion to have a subcommittee meeting. Any time a committee wants to have a subcommittee meeting, it can agree to have a subcommittee meeting. That's a procedural thing, right?

**Mr. Bas Balkissoon:** The government associate minister stood up and referred it here. Really, who would have taken it to a subcommittee?

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** That's normal procedure, that you have a subcommittee meeting. The more important point is, if the government is concerned with having this bill move along in a speedy manner, why put it in a committee that has business instead of putting it in a committee that has no business? That would make a lot more sense, strategically. If your goal is to move this along quickly, to me, it would make sense to put it in a committee where there is no other business—if your goal is to move it along in a quick manner. If your goal is not to move it along in a quick manner, I understand why you're putting it here. But if the goal truly is to move it

along quickly, I would encourage you to put it into a committee where there is no other business, and certainly we can move it along quickly. We support this. As the NDP, we support this.

I'm just confused as to the strategy. Why put it in this committee when there are other committees that literally have no business? And some of them are not even sitting. They're not even active, because they have no business. That's my major question. Otherwise, whether you had a subcommittee meeting or not—

**Mr. Bas Balkissoon:** Unfortunately, with the House proceedings, we could not stand up and ask the minister why. Mr. Clark had the opportunity to discuss it at the House leaders' meeting. I wasn't there.

**Mr. Steve Clark:** It was already done. She had already tabled it.

**Mr. Bas Balkissoon:** Yes.

*Interjection.*

**The Chair (Mr. Toby Barrett):** Thank you for the question, and thank you for the answer.

I have Mr. Hillier on the list.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Just following up on the previous discussion, Mr. Singh made some excellent points. They were not addressed by the Liberal members on this committee.

And to Mr. Balkissoon's point, after this bill was referred to this committee when it passed second reading, yes, the subcommittee could have met and considered how it was going to deal with that referral by the minister of Bill 56. The government didn't call a subcommittee report. They didn't say, "Listen, we have a contradiction here. We have a logjam here. We have a government bill now referred to a committee that just a week earlier had programmed its activities for this session.

It behooves government members as to why that subcommittee wasn't called to say, "We want to work in a co-operative fashion. We want to work in the interest of timeliness and in an expeditious process." Instead, no subcommittee meeting was called and the government member, Mr. Ballard, introduces a motion without any notice to any of the opposition members today that disregards everything that we had agreed to.

As our NDP colleague said, if it was the government's intention to move this bill along in a timely, expeditious manner, that's the course of action they would have taken: they would have had a subcommittee meeting. I think there can be no other conclusion drawn that it is not the government's intention to move this bill along in a timely, expeditious manner.

The actions of the government today, through Mr. Ballard's motion—the objective and the purpose and the goal is to cause turmoil and chaos and to defeat that spirit of co-operation that had been so demonstrably shown just a short period ago. That's really the goal: to kill any co-operation, to run roughshod, to disregard and to just absolutely demonstrate contempt to the opposition in our role in committees. That really was the purpose of it. There can be no other conclusion, especially seeing that there have been no valid arguments presented by any

Liberal member of this committee today as to why it was done in that fashion. Everything is just put the hands up, and "Well, we were told, we were instructed. The minister said 'jump,' and we said, 'Of course we'll jump. Just tell us how high we have to jump, and we don't mind if we have to kick the opposition in the process.'"

**Mr. Chris Ballard:** Oh, come on.

**The Chair (Mr. Toby Barrett):** Mr. Hillier—

**Interjection:** It's true.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** That's—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Chair (Mr. Toby Barrett):** Mr. Hillier, I—

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Okay. But I want to go back to one other comment here. I'm going to say this: When I first got elected in 2007 and started sitting on committees, I was really astonished as a newbie, as somebody who hadn't been experienced in committees before—but understanding, being somebody who is interested in parliamentary procedures and a careful observer of parliamentary procedures in various Commonwealth jurisdictions—I was really astonished to see the lack of interest by the government members in what the opposition members had to say. It goes back to 2007; that's when I was first elected. I spoke with many Liberal members of the day, and I said, "Why is it that whatever is said is discounted and dismissed and not heeded?"

**The Chair (Mr. Toby Barrett):** Mr. Hillier, again, we're having a discussion on your amendment. We'll stick to that amendment.

1450

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Maybe I'll share that story—maybe I was getting a little bit off track with—

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** I'm interested in the story.

**Mr. Chris Ballard:** Just a little? The track has been torn up.

**The Chair (Mr. Toby Barrett):** Order, order.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** I'll finish that story some other time.

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** Downstairs at the Ducks Unlimited reception.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** You know what? After today's committee hearing, what I'll do is I'll get a copy of Hansard and on my next amendment, I'll finish off the story, possibly.

Anyway, Chair, I'm disappointed that there haven't been any valid arguments advanced by the Liberal members of this committee and that they're so willing to subvert the express desires of the House regarding Bill 12. All those people who work in the service industry and need protection on their tips, and that it has been introduced by both an NDP member and a Liberal member—and as my colleague from Huron–Bruce mentioned, this is a double whammy—

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** It sure is.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** —a double whammy for these people in the service industry that their wages are not being protected by not dealing with this bill that has already been referred to the committee, but, in addition to

that, supplanting it with a bill that will take further money out of their wages.

**Ms. Eleanor McMahon:** Oh, come on.

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** No, it's true. That is true.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** It is ironic—

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** It's rich irony.

**Interjection:** It's opinion. It's an opinion.

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** Well, and we're all entitled to our opinion.

*Interjections.*

**The Chair (Mr. Toby Barrett):** Committee.

I'll go back to Mr. Hillier.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Mr. Chair, I'll leave it at that, and I'm sure others will have some comments on my amendment to this motion.

**The Chair (Mr. Toby Barrett):** Further debate?

**Mr. Bas Balkissoon:** Mr. Chair, I think all my colleagues spoke on—the government ran on a platform that included the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan. It's a well-known fact. It was debated in the House. I think it has been supported by two parties, and the official opposition definitely was against what the government is doing. But the public voted overwhelmingly on that particular issue being on the Liberal platform.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** They also voted for Arthur Potts—

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Bas Balkissoon:** It's here in front of us, and we're just requesting the committee to deal with it—

*Interjections.*

**The Chair (Mr. Toby Barrett):** Order.

**Mr. Bas Balkissoon:** —because it's a government initiative that the public asked for, and we believe that it's important that we move the agenda of the government forward as quickly as we can.

I hear the members on the other side, and we heard that Mr. Clark had his discussion with our own House leader. Obviously, there was disagreement and everything else. But we still have to come back to the one point: This committee is sitting to do business, and the request on the government side is to deal with the motion of the government, which is to deal with this bill and move it forward, schedule the public hearings, hear from the public. And as the member said, it's a double whammy to some people; well, they'll come here and tell us that. All of that will be recorded in Hansard. The government will have to take it under consideration as they move this bill forward.

This is not even the ORPP. This is just a framework document to move the plan forward. We're a long ways from the plan. The plan, as put in the government's plan, is a couple of years down the road. If we don't deal with it right now, because it has got a schedule that is already rolling, we're delaying everything.

My colleagues on the other side complain about the games that are being played, and, you know, it happens on all sides. In fact, if you look at Mr. Hillier's motion—and he mentioned that he has another motion to move—I

can see where he's going, that he's going to move motions to delay the whole process. If you stop to think about it, it's not us guys that are here who are losing anything. We're here day in, day out no matter what. It's the public out there who require this ORPP who are losing out.

*Interjections.*

**The Chair (Mr. Toby Barrett):** Order.

**Mr. Bas Balkissoon:** All the other bills are private members' bills. We support the private members' bills too; there's no question about it. All of us voted for it in the House.

**Ms. Eleanor McMahon:** Yes, we do support them.

**Mr. Bas Balkissoon:** We did vote for it. So I'm kind of struggling as to how far the members on the other side are willing to take today's argument forward. Luckily for this committee, Mr. Clark is here. He is the opposition House leader. The NDP House leader is not here, but I'm sure Mr. Singh will take it back to him.

What days of the week do you meet, Steve? Is it tomorrow? When you have your meeting today or tomorrow, raise the issue with the House leader. I just sat here for two hours, and we got zero accomplished other than to, I guess, voice our frustration with everything on all sides. I'm really struggling as to where we're going with this.

If Mr. Hillier has another motion after this one, we'll sit and debate that for another hour. He's clearly put forward that he has another motion. I listened carefully—

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Yes, a few.

**Mr. Bas Balkissoon:** —so I know what your intent is: to just run the thing out until everybody is frustrated. You know, two wrongs don't make a right.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Withdraw the motion, and I'll withdraw the amendments.

**The Chair (Mr. Toby Barrett):** Mr. Clark, and then Ms. Thompson.

**Mr. Steve Clark:** Chair, I'll just answer, through you, to Mr. Balkissoon. We normally meet every Thursday; the House leaders have conversations in between.

Again, I spoke previously on the amendment, and now I'll speak on the process. There was a very deliberate decision by the House leader to present this motion at committee today, just like there was a very deliberate act by the House leader to ensure there was a motion tabled before the select committee last week.

As the opposition House leader, just scheduling a bill for public comment and clause-by-clause does not guarantee that the bill is going to pass. For some reason, the government House leader now wants us to consider a Wynne hearing and clause-by-clause. He's not negotiating in good faith if he thinks that by creating chaos at the Legislative Assembly committee, when we've had a co-operative committee meeting—we could have gone through our business, dealt with Bill 12, dealt with those other two bills, had, I think, a decision on e-petitions, and we still could have had time to deal with the government bill.

But instead of having that consultation and conversation, this is the motion we get tabled at this committee, with the direct intent by the government House leader to create exactly what happened today, and that was no decisions, that was no bills being decided upon. It was just a malicious act on his part, plain and simple, and I'll be bringing it up tomorrow at our committee.

**The Chair (Mr. Toby Barrett):** This committee adjourns in less than a minute, Ms. Thompson.

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** Okay. I just want to close.

Mr. Balkissoon, you said two wrongs don't make a right. So here's your chance to lead by example. Support Mr. Hillier's amendment and get going on Bill 12.

E-petitions apply to so much. It connects the entire province together, my riding with eastern Ontario and southern Ontario, from turbines to Lyme disease to tip-outs—the list goes on and on. There is a role for e-petitions to play in 2015. I encourage all of you to go back to your House leader and say, "For goodness' sake, let's get all the committees running, so that we can do things in tandem."

**The Chair (Mr. Toby Barrett):** Thank you. This committee will adjourn, and we will continue discussion of amendment number 2, theoretically next week.

*The committee adjourned at 1459.*







## CONTENTS

Wednesday 4 March 2015

Committee business..... M-45

### STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

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

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#### **Also taking part / Autres participants et participantes**

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson (Huron–Bruce PC)

#### **Clerk / Greffier**

Mr. Trevor Day

#### **Staff / Personnel**

Ms. Joanne McNair, Table Research Clerk,

Table Research