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Thursday 26 March 2015

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Jeudi 26 mars 2015

**Standing Committee on
Finance and Economic Affairs**

Committee business

**Comité permanent des finances
et des affaires économiques**

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

STANDING COMMITTEE ON
FINANCE AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRSCOMITÉ PERMANENT DES FINANCES
ET DES AFFAIRES ÉCONOMIQUES

Thursday 26 March 2015

Jeudi 26 mars 2015

The committee met at 0902 in room 151.

COMMITTEE BUSINESS

The Chair (Ms. Soo Wong): Okay. Good morning, everyone. I've called this meeting to discuss the methods of proceeding with Bill 67, An Act to amend the Liquor Control Act, and Bill 40, An Act to amend the Crop Insurance Act (Ontario), 1996 and to make consequential amendments to other Acts.

As you know, the committees of the Legislature have an obligation to consider any business referred to them by the House. When an item of business is referred to the committee, the normal course of action is for the subcommittee to meet to discuss how to deal with a referral from the House, in order to make some recommendations to the full committee.

Our subcommittee tried but, for whatever reasons, was not able to come together on three separate occasions. As Chair, it is my duty to ensure progress on the work of the committee. So, committee members, I'm in your hands this morning. How would you like to deal with Bill 67 and Bill 40, and which bill would you like to discuss first?

Okay. I've got hands up. I've got Mr. Potts. Do you want to begin?

Mr. Arthur Potts: Sure. I'd like to make this quick, because I'd love to get back up to the House; there are some great discussions going on there. We have a motion I'd like to put forward that we deal with Bill 40, and only Bill 40, at this time. It's an important act. I think it's had all-party support. We want to get this in front so we can get it out, get the regs done and move on with product insurance.

I would like to make the following motion, Clerk, if it's appropriate to do now—

The Chair (Ms. Soo Wong): Okay. The Clerk has asked for copies, if you want to give that to the Clerk. Are there any other hands to speak on my remarks this morning?

Mr. Arthur Potts: I have two copies here.

The Chair (Ms. Soo Wong): Okay. Laura, did you—oh, sorry, Vic.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: I would like us to schedule both. Both have been voted on in the Legislature and sent to us

to handle. If the expression can be “walk and chew gum at the same time,” I think we can handle that.

The Chair (Ms. Soo Wong): Okay. I have Laura.

Mrs. Laura Albanese: To Vic's point, don't we have another private member's bill that has now also been referred to the committee? I forget the name of the bill. It's Marie-France Lalonde—

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: The microbead bill.

Mrs. Laura Albanese: Yes, the microbead bill. I don't know if we want to deal with the private member's bill separately.

The Chair (Ms. Soo Wong): Okay. Ms. Vernile?

Ms. Daiene Vernile: I wonder if we should also give consideration to the fact that we may want to stay flexible in the event that we have the budget bill. Do we really want to be juggling all these balls? I would agree with Arthur: I think we should do one at a time.

The Chair (Ms. Soo Wong): Okay. Mr. Potts?

Mr. Arthur Potts: Let me also say I'm a big supporter of that bill. It's great. I'm a microbrew strategist from way back. I helped change the law 35 years ago to get microbreweries in Ontario, but we've got the Ed Clark stuff coming, and with the budget there are going to be announcements. I think it would be premature to schedule it. Let's see what comes down the pipe and then handle it once we have more information publicly about which directions we're going in. I would heartily suggest that we just deal with the one bill and maintain flexibility.

The Chair (Ms. Soo Wong): Okay. Mr. Fedeli, do you have any other comments? Mr. McNaughton? No?

Okay. So, the Clerk is waiting to get copies for the motion that Mr. Potts is going to share with all of us. I think we're going to have to look at the motion and then see if anything is being added from the opposition.

Mr. Arthur Potts: I can read the motion into the record, and then we can have a discussion about it while it's being photocopied. Would that be appropriate?

The Chair (Ms. Soo Wong): Okay. Why don't you do that? Is that okay? Mr. Fedeli and Mr. McNaughton, Mr. Potts is going to read the motion, and we're going to get everybody a copy, okay? Mr. Potts, do you want to begin?

Mr. Arthur Potts: Thank you, Clerk and Chair. I move that the Clerk, in consultation with the Chair, be authorized to arrange the following with regard to Bill

40, the Agriculture Insurance Act (Amending the Crop Insurance Act 1996), 2015:

(1) One day of public hearings on April 2, 2015, at Queen's Park; and

(2) One day of public hearings on April 7, 2015, in Guelph, Ontario, from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. and 1 to 4 p.m.;

(3) That one staff person from each recognized party be authorized to travel with the committee, space permitting, and that reasonable expenses incurred for travel, accommodation and meals be paid for by the committee upon receipt of a properly filed expense claim; and

(4) One day of clause-by-clause consideration on April 16, 2015; and

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

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

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

(8) The deadline for written submission is 6 p.m. on the final day of public hearings;

(9) That the research officer provide a summary of the presentations by 5 p.m. on Friday of the same week following public hearings; and

(9) The deadline for filing amendments with the Clerk of the Committee be April 13, 2015, at 5 p.m.

The Chair (Ms. Soo Wong): Okay. Thank you, Mr. Potts. Are there any comments or questions to the mover? Mr. Fedeli?

Mr. Victor Fedeli: I have a friendly amendment that I'd like to make. First of all, I just have a question for the Clerk. We haven't decided that it's only Bill 40. We haven't had a vote on that.

The Chair (Ms. Soo Wong): No, but we've just been told that there's a motion by Mr. Potts, and we're going to get the Clerk. Mr. Clerk, there's a question from Mr. Fedeli.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: So we're having this motion. I'm trying to determine—we haven't decided that we're only dealing with Bill 40, not the others—is it Bill 67?

The Chair (Ms. Soo Wong): Yes, it's Bill 67, and there's also Bill 75 now.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: So do we not need a vote to decide that first?

The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Katch Koch): It's in whichever order the committee decides to deal with the business. In this case, we have a motion on Bill 40. There could also be a motion on Bill 75. It could also be a motion on Bill 67.

The Chair (Ms. Soo Wong): Okay. So right now there is a mover for Bill 40. Am I correct?

The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Katch Koch): The current motion before the committee is only on Bill 40.

The Chair (Ms. Soo Wong): Ms. Fife? Sorry.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: No, I'm still in the middle of my question. I had a two-part question. One part was: Don't

we need to deal with that first? The answer, you're saying, is that we don't have to decide 40, 67 and 75; we're just dealing with this one.

So, on this one, back to my friendly amendment: For number 2, where you have one day of public hearings in Guelph, I'd like to propose that we change that to two days of public hearings on April 7 and 8 in Guelph and Kemptville, Ontario, from 9 a.m. to 12 and 1 to 4.

The Chair (Ms. Soo Wong): So April 7 is to Guelph and April 8 is to Kemptville? Am I correct?

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Yes.

The Chair (Ms. Soo Wong): Okay. So this is an amendment from Mr. Fedeli. Are there any comments and questions? Mr. Potts?

Mr. Arthur Potts: Yes. With respect, I wouldn't consider that a friendly amendment. This is more than enough time to get—it's a very short bill. It's an enabling piece of legislation. All the major farm organizations are in Guelph; that's why we want to take it there, to save them travelling here. Kemptville would be unnecessary, in my view.

Two days will be more than enough to deal with the issues in front of it with the major stakeholders. I've also spoken with the OFA, and they see no particular reason why we should be outside of Guelph. They are quite supportive of us just doing the two days, so I would like to stick with my initial motion. We would vote against the amendment.

The Chair (Ms. Soo Wong): Okay. I have Ms. Fife.

Ms. Catherine Fife: I think, actually, that it is a friendly amendment. Unfriendly amendments limit consultation or limit exposure to the bill. Friendly amendments actually expand and broaden the scope of consultation, so I see no issue with expanding the consultation to Kemptville.

The Chair (Ms. Soo Wong): Okay. Mr. Fedeli, you have more comments about your amendment?

Mr. Victor Fedeli: If it's not a friendly amendment, can I make an amendment?

The Chair (Ms. Soo Wong): Okay. Let's be on the record: There's no such thing as friendly or unfriendly amendments, okay?

Mr. Victor Fedeli: I know. It's an amendment I'm making. I thought maybe he could casually change his; that is a friendly amendment.

The Chair (Ms. Soo Wong): Okay. Any more comments or questions to the amendment? We're going to have to vote on the amendment first, then the actual motion, right? This moves procedurally, okay? So any more comments or questions to the mover of the amendment?

Okay. Can I call the question on the amendment?

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Recorded vote, please.

The Chair (Ms. Soo Wong): Recorded vote. Okay. There has been a request.

So, there is an amendment to (2), the two dates—no, there are going to be three dates of public hearings. That's what I'm hearing, right? Three days of public hearings, April 7 to Guelph and April 8 to Kemptville.

Ayes

Fedeli, Fife, McNaughton.

Nays

Albanese, Hoggarth, Milczyn, Potts, Vernile.

The Chair (Ms. Soo Wong): Okay. The amendment is defeated.

Back to the original motion: Are there any questions or comments to the mover of the motion, Mr. Potts?

Okay, I see nothing. I'm going to call the question. All those in favour of the motion presented today by Mr. Potts? You all have a copy.

Mr. Arthur Potts: Do you want to record this one, too?

The Chair (Ms. Soo Wong): Recorded vote? Okay.

Ayes

Albanese, Fife, Hoggarth, Milczyn, Potts, Vernile.

Nays

McNaughton.

The Chair (Ms. Soo Wong): Okay. The motion is passed.

So you've got that before you.

Mr. Arthur Potts: Can I move adjournment?

Mr. Victor Fedeli: No. I have a motion on Bill 67. Can we have time to type it up?

The Chair (Ms. Soo Wong): Oh, okay. You want a recess?

Mr. Victor Fedeli: A 20-minute recess—it doesn't have to be 20 minutes.

The Chair (Ms. Soo Wong): Okay. Can we come back at 9:30?

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Yes.

The Chair (Ms. Soo Wong): Okay, so we'll come back at 9:30. I'll recess the committee to 9:30.

The committee recessed from 0912 to 0931.

The Chair (Ms. Soo Wong): I'm going to resume the committee. Is it Mr. Fedeli who's going to move this motion or Mr. McNaughton?

Mr. Monte McNaughton: Sure, I can.

The Chair (Ms. Soo Wong): Okay. Mr. McNaughton?

Mr. Monte McNaughton: I move that the Clerk, in consultation with the Chair, be authorized to arrange the following with regard to Bill 67, the Raise a Glass to Ontario Act (An Act to amend the Liquor Control Act), 2015:

(1) One day of public hearings on April 23, 2015, at Queen's Park; and

(2) One day of clause-by-clause consideration on April 30, 2015;

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

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

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

(6) The deadline for written submission is 6 p.m. on the final day of public hearings;

(7) That the research officer provide a summary of the presentations by 5 p.m. on Friday of the same week following public hearings; and

(8) The deadline for filing amendments with the Clerk of the Committee be April 28, 2015, at 5 p.m.

The Chair (Ms. Soo Wong): Okay. Any comments or questions to the mover? I'm going to start with Mr. Milczyn.

Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn: Could I amend in line 1 "public hearings" to say "public tastings"?

The Chair (Ms. Soo Wong): Okay, Mr. Milczyn. Is that a friendly? That's a friendly amendment.

Mr. Potts, I saw your hands up.

Mr. Arthur Potts: Yes. As I said earlier in the preamble, I am a big fan of the general concept of this bill, as badly drafted as it is and with the major amendments it will require—no disrespect intended. We've already had that conversation about ensuring that there's more local product in these markets, and the markets are actually attached to the manufacturing establishments. It does need amendments, and hopefully we can get there, but it's just not timely.

Let's wait for Mr. Clark to do his business. We'll have a budget coming down which is going to address a lot of issues around alcohol sales, and then it'll be much more appropriate. We appreciate that this has actually been instructive to Mr. Clark, I think, and we'll be voting against this so we can keep the flexibility in the committee. Thanks.

The Chair (Ms. Soo Wong): Okay. Mr. Fedeli?

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Thank you. You know, to your point, we waited a long time for Don Drummond to come out with a report, and we still haven't enacted the majority of those, so I add that to what will happen to a Clark report: another one that will sit on the shelf.

The Chair (Ms. Soo Wong): Any other comments or questions? Mr. Smith?

Mr. Todd Smith: Yes, thank you, Madam Chair. This is a bill that was agreed to by the government and the official opposition during the debate at second reading, so there is agreement to move forward with the Raise a Glass to Ontario Act. We have a friendly amendment on the floor from Mr. Milczyn that I think shows that there is some—what should I say?—taste to move forward on this bill, and there really is no reason for a delay in moving this bill forward.

Actually, I think that what this will do is enhance the discussions around the problems in the beverage alcohol sector in the province of Ontario, and we can hear from

those who have a stake in this game. There are so many voices out there that don't get the opportunity to speak in the Legislature as we do on issues like this; they would love the opportunity to come to a committee and address a bill like the Raise a Glass to Ontario Act, and they come from all across the province.

I appreciate the motion that was put forward by my colleagues to have at least one day of hearings on this bill, but I'm sure that we couldn't fit all of the people who want to speak to this bill in one day of hearings here at Queen's Park, because we are getting into a pretty important time of the year for a lot of these producers, especially the wine growers in my riding of Prince Edward county, who are now unearthing the vines that they've buried over the winter months and getting ready for their busiest season of the year.

I believe, too, that this is such an important piece of legislation and such an important issue that the government has to deal with that it shouldn't be rolled into an omnibus bill like the budget. I expect that's probably what we're going to see—changes coming in the Ontario budget—whenever it will be delivered, and I believe that this deserves more attention on its own as a stand-alone issue, not to be buried in an omnibus bill like the budget that we're about to get in probably a couple of weeks.

I think it's a very important bill. It's something that's long overdue. There seems to be agreement between the government and the official opposition on the issue. Although some of the wording in the bill may need to be changed—I would agree with that—I think we should go ahead and schedule the bill at committee.

The Chair (Ms. Soo Wong): Okay. I thought I saw Mr. Potts's hand.

Mr. Arthur Potts: No, I'm good.

The Chair (Ms. Soo Wong): No? Okay. Ms. Vernile.

Ms. Daiene Vernile: Just to your comment, Mr. Smith: You are correct that, I believe, we are going to see this addressed in the upcoming budget, and I have to wonder if we might be pre-empting the advisory council on assets and what it's going to say to this particular issue. But I come back to that comment about being flexible and ensuring that we do one thing at a time, that we take care of business and don't start something, leave it unfinished and go on to something else—addressing

what we have in front of us, finishing that business and moving on to other business.

The Chair (Ms. Soo Wong): Okay. Any more comments? Mr. McNaughton?

Mr. Monte McNaughton: More so just a question. I don't see a problem—I mean, obviously; I made the motion. I think we should schedule it. Government bills always come ahead of private members' bills at this committee, no? That was my question.

The Chair (Ms. Soo Wong): Okay. Any other comments or questions for the mover? Mrs. Albanese?

Mrs. Laura Albanese: I think that's by tradition, though. This is what I saw happening for the last seven years.

The Chair (Ms. Soo Wong): All right. Any other—

Mr. Todd Smith: Can I ask a question?

The Chair (Ms. Soo Wong): Mr. Smith.

Mr. Todd Smith: If the budget comes out, the budget would take precedence at this committee, would it not?

The Chair (Ms. Soo Wong): Not really. It's the will of the committee.

All right. Any more questions or comments to the motion? That wasn't a friendly amendment by Mr. Milczyn, okay? I just want to make sure that people get that we aren't going to be voting for that.

Okay. Seeing no more discussion to this motion, I'm going to be calling the question. All those in favour of the motion—

Mr. Monte McNaughton: Recorded vote.

The Chair (Ms. Soo Wong): Recorded vote? Okay.

Ayes

Fedeli, McNaughton.

Nays

Albanese, Fife, Hoggarth, Milczyn, Potts, Vernile.

The Chair (Ms. Soo Wong): Okay. The motion is defeated.

I think there's no more other business. I'm going to adjourn the committee. Thank you very much.

The committee adjourned at 0937.

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